THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
ANKARA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF WESTERN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES
(ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE)

TRANSCULTURALISM IN MEDIEVAL ROMANCE: ANONYMOUS *THE QUEST FOR THE HOLY GRAIL, THE SONG OF ROLAND* AND CHAUCER'S *TROILUS AND CRISEYDE*

PhD Dissertation

Funda HAY

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Examination Date: 16.09.2019

TO THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
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GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

I hereby declare that in the dissertation "Transculturalism in Medieval Romance: Anonymous *The Song of Roland*, *The Quest for the Holy Grail* and Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* (Ankara - 2019)," prepared under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Ufuk Ege Uygur, all information has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic roles and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work. (21./10./2019)

Funda HAY

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INTRODUCTION

Transculturalism, as one of the new disciplines, studies cultural interaction without any time and nation limitation, because it is known that every nation holds diverse cultural patterns as a result of the process of their social and historical development. In transculturalism, cultures are intermingled by breaking down all the boundaries; for that reason, in general, transcultural studies is often identified with postcolonial studies. However, the cultural transaction is unavoidable even before the occurrence of the communities living as a nation under one flag in a particular land. In other words, transculturalism regards culture as a free field in which various races, languages, or communities are mixed in an eclectic or autonomous way with congruence. The main objective of this dissertation is to explore how transcultural studies dates back to the early periods, and to deduce how the cross-cultural interactions are reflected in the literary works of the time. Through this research, it is claimed in the study that a transcultural approach is applicable to the medieval period because the cultural interactions have managed to cross all the boundaries since the beginning of humanity. As a product of culture, medieval literature also conveys cultural shifts while contributing to those changes. As transculturalism has been applied to few medieval epics, this dissertation aims to put a new output on medieval studies by studying the romance genre. It focuses on the extent to which medieval societies interacted with each other and how history full of wars, and intertextuality, translations and local memory took part in this interaction. By dealing with three matters of the romance genre, namely "matter of France," "matter of Britain" and "matter of Rome," the dissertation demonstrates how the European cultures and religious beliefs were influenced by previous and contemporary cultures and religious attitudes. The study will analyse two anonymous works, the *Song of Roland*, and the *Quest for Holy Grail*, together with Geoffrey Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, in the light of transcultural patterns. Within this context, medieval culture, social and

historical background, the factors which paved the way for cultural interactions are explored. The dissertation focuses on one of the matters of romance in each chapter, and through each matter, the historical and cultural background of Britain are discussed.

Another aim of the dissertation is to show how Eastern culture and Islam had an impact on Christian Europe, by tracing the origin of every cultural shift. For this reason, in each chapter, the cultural exchanges between the East and West are discussed in the light of the given works. The relationship between East and West dates back to the old times, and they have fed each other for centuries. Mutual cultural development has taken place in every phase of the historical process, and it is observed that cultural transactions have been transferred in different ways, at different times. While Edward Said elaborates the interaction between the Orient and the Occident, he especially emphasises the events in the Middle Ages; the rise of Christianity, travels, commercial exchange and the militant pilgrimages like the Crusades (1095-1492)[1] are the major medieval affairs that lead cultures to be related to each other. Said states that literature belongs to these experiences and a restricted number of typical encapsulations such as the journey, the history, the fable, the stereotype, the polemical confrontation appear. In a way they are "the lenses through which the Orient is experienced, and they shape the language, perception, and form of the encounter between East and West" (Said, *Orientalism* 58). Today, the dominance of Western culture and Christianity is irrefutable, and colonial expansion has a significant role in the Western world's establishing such great supremacy. However, Western culture was not created by the contributions of cultures in a specific area; it has also benefited from the East. A single culture either in the West or in the East is the accumulation of various traditions, languages, religions or works of literature from

[1] In this study, the important historic events and wars will be discussed in light of the certain literary works; for the dates and timetable, see Appendix.

different regions. Thus, this study puts forward these interactions and reinterprets the relation between Eastern and Western cultures.

Apart from the above-mentioned factors that affect the transculturality of a piece of work, the educational background of a writer is also pertinent to shape transcultural and transhistorical transmissions. A poet/author applies what he has read/studied while composing his work and every new work bearing traces of its author's educational background contributes to the current literary tradition that will be a heritage for the next generations. Jeffrey Cohen explains the importance of the social background of the author by referring to Chaucer:

> He did not grow up reading classic English literature, for the simple reason that there wasn't any. For the educated class to which he belonged literacy meant Latinity, since Latin was the international language for keeping records, composing official documents, and recording history, and was the language of the authoritative literary classics. ("Postcolonialism" 449)

As seen in the example of Chaucer, who mainly refers to the classics in his works and with the allusions creates a 'classical work' of the medieval period, an author cannot ignore his/her learning. The author reflects what he/she observes in a society and what kind of past that society presents in his/her education. Even the imagination of the author is reshaped with what is read. For this reason, the core of literature in culture is formed with the literary vehicles of society, and educational sources contribute to the transcultural development of the society.

In this study, medieval romances, written in Britain or having a transformation in British literature, are analysed within the framework of transcultural studies since Britain has a deep-rooted past, including various cultures. Many tribes or communities were hosted on the islands of Britain until Britain drew up its territorial borders and set its own

national and cultural values. Hence it adopted literary and cultural principles, ethics, or morals from the occupying powers and established a British culture bearing traces of all the early invaders. As a consequence, British literature is a combination including Celtic (Welsh and Irish), Scottish, Roman, Scandinavian, German and French cultures that were the neighbours of the islands of Britain, and also the Near Eastern culture. For instance, the first works of English literature such as *Beowulf*, derived from a Scandinavian saga, were the results of this cultural interaction. Therefore, English culture shares similarities with other European and even Muslim countries, due to the translations of the legends and myths of the different cultures into English or the adaptations of the works to the British society and religion. Kofi O. S. Campbell points out the colonisation process of England to clarify these parallels, and declares that "by the twelfth century, England itself had been colonised several times, ... since the tenth century, it had colonial interests in Scotland, and … the birth of literary English around the time of Chaucer was a means of establishing independence from French cultural domination" (qtd. in Altschul 591). The ongoing invasions, until the Norman Conquest whose influence had lasted until the fourteenth century, caused Britain to establish a mixed culture.

As medieval British culture was shaped by the contacts with many societies and communities, its historical background and the transhistorical transformations will be the guide of this study. Cultural customs bring history together, and every new generation can learn the history of a place through traditions. A place cannot be regarded as a simple geographical area that hosts peoples. It preserves history and provides new inhabitants with opportunities to make new history. According to Bill Ashcroft,

> Place is never simply location, nor is it static, a cultural memory which colonization buries. For, like culture itself, place is in a continual and dynamic state of formation, a process intimately bound up with the culture and the identity of its inhabitants. Above all place is a *result* of habitation, a consequence of the ways in which people

> inhabit space, particularly that conception of space as universal and uncontestable that is constructed for them by imperial discourse." (156)

The invasions, wars or any historic event in a land affect folks with its past and present. As is seen in British history, the British land writes its history with the contribution of various communities and the historical bond with the past establishes the medieval cultures which also help the following cultures to be formed. The transhistorical transmission in Britain can also be observed in the country's literary heritage. Therefore, since British literary works have been shaped within this deep history, this study analyses medieval romances as evidence of transcultural and transhistorical interactions in the Middle Ages.

Romance presents intertwinement of the religious doctrines, verdicts and historical, and cultural interactions. Since this form was one of the most popular genres in the Middle Ages, some stories were re-narrated in different societies and different languages. The same stories were interpreted in different ways due to the cultural and naturally educational background of the societies; for this reason, they are both the means of cultural transactions and the indicators of those transactions. Unlike the other studies which focus on romance in terms of the chivalric aspects, or a postcolonial approach dealing with "otherness," "being Saracens" or the cause and effect relationship of the Crusades, this dissertation contributes to a new area in medieval studies. Even though *The Quest for the Holy Grail*, *The Song of Roland* and *Troilus and Criseyde* have frequently been studied, they have been interpreted in terms of chivalry, male dominance, violence, social traditions, mythology, Christianity, conversion and translation studies. By evaluating the romances from a transcultural point of view, this dissertation brings a new way of looking at the romances. Moreover, literature shows that the theory of transculturalism is mostly applied in political sciences because of its subcategories such as migration, refugees, and diaspora, and there is a limited application of transculturalism

to medieval epics such as *Alexander the Great*,[2] and travel writings.[3] Within this frame, transcultural patterns such as intertextuality, language and traditions in medieval romances have not yet been focused on. Thus, this research makes up the deficiency by asserting that romances are works which are influenced by the cultural changes in society and reflect them.

Romance has been categorised according to matters, and each matter presents a particular society or period. The matters of romance were specified by the twelfth-century poet Jean Bodel who first divided examples of the genre into three matters; in his *Chanson des Saxons* (*Song of the Saxons*), he defined these matters namely as "the matter of France," "the matter of Britain," and "the matter of Rome" (1).[4] According to Bodel, the romances related to the ancient Rome and Greece are the parts of the matter of Rome; they are principally about the Trojan War and Alexander the Great. The second matter, the matter of France, is about Charlemagne and the last matter, the matter of Britain, is the category in which the Arthurian stories and the other Middle English romances are collected. Although it seems that the matters of Romance were determined in line with the regions related to the works, Bodel's classification cannot be restricted to space. Whitman draws attention to the fact that, for Bodel, the time and functions of romance are as crucial as space:

> Jehan divides the narrative world not only according to space, but also, as it were, according to time and function. He observes that the matter of Rome (which evokes the world of antiquity) is edifying [*sage et de sens aprendant*]. But he pointedly specifies that the matter of France (which evokes the Carolingian world

[2] See, Markus Stock's *Alexander the Great in the Middle Ages: Transcultural Perspectives*.

[3] See, Albrecht Classen's *East Meets West in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: Transcultural Experiences in the Premodern World*.

[4] Unless otherwise stated, the translations in this dissertation are the author's.

> to which he himself turns in his *chanson de geste*) is not only true [*voir*], but also evident every day [*chascun jour aparant*]. As for the matter of Britain (which evokes the Arthurian world), it is emptily entertaining [*vain et plaisant*] – with vain perhaps suggesting that the legendary milieu of ancient Britain is an illusion. (*Romance and History* 5)

Three major matters of the romance genre demonstrate different cultural and historical interactions, and every matter appears as a consequence of cultural influences. Moreover, in some cases, cultures, by developing the literary modes according to their values, produce new types. Thus, the changing values lead to new categories in the romance form. The twentieth-century scholars, such as M. H. Abrams, divide romances into four categories; they have added "matter of England" as the fourth matter.[5] For that reason, in order to argue the temporal and functional characteristics of the romance genre, the analyses are narrowed according to Bodel's classification.

In this regard, *The Quest for Holy Grail, The Song of Roland* and *Troilus and Criseyde* are discussed in individual chapters within the framework of transculturalism and the relevant romance matter. Firstly, the *Quest for Holy Grail* is an example of the matter of Britain, which is about the search for the Holy Grail. Since it has a theme related to Christianity, the medieval Christian mentality is reflected throughout the quest by merging with the Celtic and Islamic traditions. Secondly, the *Song of Roland*, categorised under the title of the matter of France is studied as the example of the *chansons de geste*, the essential works in the matter of France. The *Song* narrates a war between the Muslims in Spain and Charlemagne's paladins; thus, in addition to the French Christian world, Islamic customs are demonstrated in the poem. The last romance, Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, is a love story in the shadow of the Trojan War; hence, the setting leads the

[5] See, Abrams's *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, p. 45.

romance to be a part of the matter of Rome. The various sources of Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* provide an intertextual analysis and the pagan Greek world, interwoven with the Christian elements, presents a transcultural view. By analysing the intentional or unintentional contributions made to the medieval texts, the cultural and historical transformations of medieval literary techniques and traditions are argued.

In the first chapter, the theoretical framework is discussed. As transculturalism is a relatively new approach, the recent studies are restricted to political analysis and to the application to contemporary works. The main concern of this chapter is to prove the applicability of transculturalism to medieval romances; that is why the historical background of the islands of Britain will be given to illustrate its multicultural structure. Britain was invaded throughout history by different tribes and communities, and even today's English race is one of those invaders, and thereby, the internal invasion also has an active role in forming English culture. The chapter discusses how the interaction of a community with other societies varies according to the changing social dynamics and expectations. In this sense, the past of Britain presents many cultural phenomena, yet at this point, it will be essential to highlight the difference between multiculturalism and transculturalism. The chapter draws the outlines of these concepts in order to reveal the primary purpose of the dissertation which is to demonstrate the mingled cultural elements instead of putting emphasis on the cultural constituents that protect their origins. By focusing on the reasons for the transcultural interactions, the first chapter argues the theory within the various means of transcultural and transhistorical constituents such as wars, religions, intertextuality, translations/adaptations, and collective memory. In this context, the approach of transhistoricity will provide a necessary complement to transculturalism as culture develops with historical processes. Within this context, how these factors contribute to the cross-cultural shifts are discussed in detail.

The next chapters analyse the romances in the light of transcultural patterns. The first application will be the example of "matter of France." By studying The *Song of Roland*, the chapter will explain how different cultures meet through war. In fact, like many *chansons de geste*, some scholars classify the *Song* as an epic, yet it is the most famous work of the matter of France and, as the origin of romances in this matter, the work provides a literary transition in accordance with the theoretical framework of this study. The romances, written in the 'matter of France,' are known as the *chansons de geste*, and *Song of Roland* underlies all the works related to Charlemagne and his circle. Therefore, the poem *Song of Roland* is located between epic and romance. With the underlying meaning, "romance simply means a poem or story written in one of the vernacular Romance languages instead of Latin - and so, by implication, less serious and learned; but in time it acquired the sense that indicates the essential quality of these works, their love of the marvellous" (Highet 49). Since the *Roland* poem was the source of the other poems and stories classified in the 'matter of Romance,' as Gilbert Highet reveals, these works "can be called romances" (49). Within this context, the *Song of Roland* will be analysed as the example of the "matter of France" in this dissertation, and as the first work of this category, its transitional position between English and Norman culture, and epic and romance will be discussed.

The poem was composed in Old French under the title *La Chanson de Roland* in the 1040s for the first time, yet with many additions, it is assumed that it could have been finished in 1115. However, it was not the ultimate version of the poem since so many manuscripts of the poem were found in many different languages such as Middle Dutch, Welsh and Middle English. The oldest version of the poem, known as Manuscript Digby 23 was discovered in 1835 in the Bodleian Library in Oxford, and it was published in 1837 for the first time, but it is not the original copy of the *Song* (Burgess; Way;

Whitehead).[6] Gerard J. Brault states, in the "Introduction" of the *Song of Roland: An Analytical Edition*, that the poet of the Oxford manuscript mentions a poet, called Turoldus who was a twelfth-century French poet; for that reason, the critic believes that Turoldus's edition could be older than the Oxford manuscript, yet it did not survive. Thus, the manuscript known as Digby 23 is the oldest "surviving" version (4-5). Although Manuscript Digby 23 was written in the Anglo-Norman language, spoken French in England, it is assumed that the story came to the island after the Norman Conquest and it could be a copy of a copy (Burgess 7). However, the existence of an Anglo-Norman poet who composed the story in a dialect spoken in the British isles and the discovery of the manuscript there strengthens the ideas that the text was written in England rather than coming with the Normans after the Conquest. For that reason, in this study the Digby Manuscript will be followed, and the analysis will be made according to this manuscript.

The *Song* opens with a deal issue between the Franks and the Muslims, which is offered up to end a seven-year occupation. Although it seems that the poet would explain the processes after a war's end, the classic theme betrayal, as a part of the collective memory, changes the course of the story and that betrayal leads to a new war, which is the central point of the story. In the poem, Charlemagne and his knights fight against the pagans in Saragossa that is governed by the Muslim King Marsile. When the king understands his army cannot win the battle, he offers to surrender on the condition that

[6] The oldest copy of *La Chanson de Roland* was discovered by Francisque Michel in 1835; it was written in Anglo-Norman in the eleventh century. The manuscript, known as Oxford, Bodleian or Digby Manuscript, was not a perfect version; on the contrary, it was full of errors. Many versions were published in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In this study, I quote from Charles Scott Moncrieff's translation that is labelled "Companion to the Study" of the Oxford Manuscript by the translator. Moncrieff studied about five different manuscripts of the poem and attempted to "reproduce line for line, and, so far as is possible, word for word, the Old French epic poem which lay dormant for centuries in the Bodleian Library at Oxford" (xiii). Gautier's translation is a revised version of the Bodleian text, he corrected the scribal errors in his text and specified the additions in italics; that is why the French version of the poem is quoted from Gautier's *La Chanson de Roland*. Though the quotations are given from Moncrieff's translation, I follow John O'Hagan's translation which was based on M. Leon Gautier's version that O'Hagan designated the passages which are not in the Bodleian manuscript and Glyn Burgess's modern English translation from Old French.

Charlemagne and his army will abandon his land. Charlemagne accepts the offer, and upon the advice of his right-hand man Roland, he sends Roland's stepfather Ganelon as a messenger. However, Ganelon thinks that it is a trap by Roland to have him slaughtered by King Marsile. For that reason, Ganelon betrays Roland and sets up a trap in his turn with Marsile's men to defeat Roland's rearguard army while Charlemagne is on his way back to France. After Roland's death, Charlemagne takes his revenge, defeats Marsile's army, even though the king fights with the support of Babylon's emir, and punishes Ganelon for his betrayal. Contrary to the historic Battle of Roncevaux Pass (778), with its updated plot, the *Song of Roland* presents some changing cultural characteristics of the medieval French and the rooted perceptions of the Muslims after the Crusades. That newly reconstructed culture in the Norman period is reflected in the text since it narrates an eighth-century battle in the eleventh century.

It is assumed that the Digby manuscript was composed after the First Crusade (1095-1102); therefore, the enemy in the poem is transformed with the changing understanding of the period. Through anachronistic details of the work, the poem includes the cultural, political and social understandings of the time in which it was composed. Moreover, the historical and cultural connections are not limited to medieval France, the re-narration of the story in medieval Britain makes clear some British cultural elements; yet the most critical point in this poem is the cultural influence of the Arabs since the Saracens, as the poet says, are portrayed as the new 'enemy' of not only the French but of all Christian Europe. Within this context, this chapter argues the cultural transactions among medieval France, Britain and the Iberian Peninsula, and the Eastern Muslim cultures.

In the third chapter, the study focuses on another category of the romance genre, "matter of Britain" and *The Quest for the Holy Grail*. The romance is one of the legendary Arthurian stories. *The Quest for the Holy Grail* had different interpretations, yet the very

first known written version, *Perceval ou le Conte du Graal*, was composed in verse in Old French by Chrétien de Troyes (1130 – 1191) in 1190. However, he could not complete his work, and many versions in verse and prose were written about the Grail after Chrétien. The best-known version after Chrétien's text is that of another French poet Robert de Boron's *Joseph d'Arimathe,* in which the Grail of Chrétien turns into the Holy Grail and, unlike Perceval in Chrétien's Grail story, the hero in search of the Holy Grail becomes Joseph of Arimathea, who is believed to have brought the Grail to Britain after many adventures. Although the Grail story was re-narrated in many cultures, "it was England that assured it a new and glorious flowering which kept the legend alive throughout the centuries when the classical revival had killed all interest in it on the Continent" (Matarasso 28); yet there is no rendering of the *Quest* or any certain proof of its influence in Britain until Thomas Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*. Malory rewrote the Grail story under the title *Tale of the Sangreal*[7] in prose and the English poet formed the story as the quest of Lancelot's son Galahad as in the anonymous work the Vulgate Cycle, a collection of Arthurian romances. The Vulgate Cycle, also known as the Lancelot-Grail Cycle and Arthurian Vulgate, is an anthology of Arthurian legends and it was written in French in the first half of the thirteenth century. This version includes five branches starting with the history of the Holy Grail and ends with the death of King Arthur. The cycle is a compilation of incomplete Arthurian stories written until the thirteenth century and presented as a "pseudo-historical narrative." Eugène Vinevar, the editor of Malory's works, states that Malory's version is based "upon a text more closely related than any of the extant manuscripts to the lost original version of the French *Queste del Saint Graal*"

[7] Malory uses the word 'Sangreal/Sankgreal' meaning "Holy Grail," a derivation from the French *san-graal*. There is some speculation about the origin of the word: "Some scholars believe San-greal means 'holy grail,' and others believe Sang-real means 'royal blood.' Sangreal also implies the gradual acceptance of the truth, from 'San' (to acquire grace) 'grail' (in stages gradual)" (Hopkins 82). Daniel Hopkins continues his claim with a connection between a Buddhist bowl and the word 'Sangreal;' according to the critic, "the royal blood (San-greal) signifies the family of the Buddha (Sangha) … Sangreal stands for the real Sangha (Buddhists)" (82). For further information see, Daniel Hopkins' *Father and Son, East is West*, chapter 15.

(141-7), which is the first branch of the Vulgate Cycle. Though Malory's *Quest of the Holy Grail* is regarded as an English translation of *Queste del Saint Graal*, it is shorter than the French version. In this dissertation, the Grail story is studied from the *Quest for the Holy Grail* in the Vulgate Cycle and the *History of the Holy Grail* of the same Cycle and Thomas Malory's *Quest of the Holy Grail* is simultaneously read.[8]

Although the Grail story was brought to Britain from France in the medieval period, it cannot be restricted to France and the Middle Ages; similar tales can be seen in different cultures and in previous times even before Christendom. In Greek and Celtic mythologies there are stories about miracle grails or cauldrons having as marvellous powers as the Holy Grail. The researches show that there is an apparent Celtic background in the *Quest for the Holy Grail*; that is why it is possible to trace the Celtic elements and to focus on the text as a mixture of pagan Celtic story and Christian miracles. The religious variety in the story presents a basis for the transcultural occurrence in British society. From the beginning of the tale, the supernatural elements of the Celtics were reinterpreted as the miracles of Christianity. The quest starts with a sudden appearance of the Holy Grail over the Round Table during a meeting of King Arthur and his knights. The King assumes it is a sign to acquire the Grail and send his knights to find it. The story revolves around the best-known Arthur knights, Gawain, Lancelot, Perceval, Bors and Lancelot's son Galahad. Unlike the other Arthurian stories, in the Vulgate Cycle, Galahad is depicted as the "best knight of the world" in Arthur narrations since he manages to find

[8] In this study, the quotations will be taken from the version edited by Norris J. Lacy *Lancelot-Grail: The Old French Arthurian Vulgate and Post-Vulgate in Translation*; the first volume of this version, *the History of the Holy Grail* was translated by Carol J. Chace and the Volume VI, *the Quest for the Holy Grail* was translated by E. Jane Burns. In order to determine the nuances of the interpretation in the English translation and the French version, I follow the original French version of the story from H. Oskar Sommer's edition, *The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances vol. I Lestrorie del Saint Graal* and *vol. VI Les Adventures ou la Queste del Saint Graal, La Mort le Roi Artus*. Thomas Malory's "Tale of the Sankgreal" is the first surviving Grail story in Middle English, for that reason, the transformation of the story in the late Middle English period is followed from Ernest Rhys's *King Arthur and The Quest of the Holy Grail (*from *Morte D'Arthur)* and Eugène Vinevar's *Malory*.

the Grail at Castle Corbin where first Joseph of Arimathea appear, and then Jesus appears from the Grail. At the behest of Joseph of Arimathea, Galahad and his friends take the Grail to Sarras, a mysterious place where the Saracens live. In that city, Joseph of Arimathea appears again, and he performs some miracles as in the previous scene does Jesus, and finally, the Grail is taken to the sky by mysterious hands. After he completes his Quest, Galahad dies, and his soul rises to the sky with the Grail in Sarras. Even if in Chrétien's story, there is no obvious reference to the Muslims or an Arabic land, the later versions of the story, especially those written after the twelfth century, end the narrative in a Muslim land, and thereby the interactions with the Muslims are presented. Therefore, the multicultural aspects in the story cultivate the hybridity of *The Quest for the Holy Grail*. Within this frame, this study discusses how the Grail story could be interpreted as a transcultural and transhistorical means that breaks spatial and temporal boundaries and establishes a tripartite link among the pre-Christian period, and Christian and Islamic Middle Ages.

The final chapter of the dissertation will focus on Geoffrey Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* as an example of "matter of Rome." The story of Troilus is based on Homer's *Illiad*, which is about the Trojan War. Chaucer's Troilus character appeared in this legend for the first time. Since Homer's time, the story of Troilus has been narrated many times by different authors in different regions; however, most of those works were lost. Although Homer's *Iliad* is the most famous work on the Trojan War, the Trojan priest Dares Phrygius's *de Excidio Trojae Historia* (*History of the Fall of Troy*), a Latin narration of theTrojan War, and Dictys Cretensis' *Ephemeris belli Trojani* (*Chronicle of the Trojan War*),[9] about the Trojan War from the Greek perspective, were significant influences on the medieval authors because they were believed to be the "eyewitnesses"

[9] The chronicles on Troy and the Trojan War can be read from the edition and translation of R. M. Frazer. *The Trojan War: The Chronicles of Dictys of Crete and Dares the Phrygian*.

of the Trojan War (Minnis, *Chaucer and Pagan Antiquity* 24). Chaucer is also one of those authors and benefits from Dares's and Dictys's works rather than Homer's *Illiad*. In fact, those authors are not the only influences in Chaucer's works. The twelfth-century French poet Benoît de Sainte-Maure's *Roman de Troie* is one of Chaucer's inspirations; he also used Dares's and Dictys's works as the source of the narrations about the Trojan War. Thus, before Chaucer, Benoit provides the interaction between the Ancient and medieval cultures. Highet reveals that "*The Romance of Troy* virtually reintroduced classical history and legend into European culture –or rather spread it outside the scholarly world. Its essential act was to connect Greco- Roman myth with contemporary times" (53). Chaucer possibly became aware of the Greek and Trojan authors due to Benoit's *Roman*. Nevertheless, it is obvious that Chaucer's main source was the Italian poet Giovanni Boccaccio's *Il Filostrato*. His *Troilus and Criseyde* is mostly translated from Boccaccio's *Filostrato*. However, it is not a word for word translation of the Italian work, the English poet omits some passages of Boccaccio's poem and adds some sections from the French poet Benoit's *Roman de Troie* and the Roman philosopher Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*.[10] Except for the influences of the previous poets, Chaucer also makes contributions to the Troilus story. For that reason, Chaucer's Troilus story is a relatively original work having multicultural aspects. In this chapter, the transculturality of the romance through the intertextuality and the concept of collective memory are discussed.

In *Troilus and Criseyde*, unlike the other romances that are analysed in this study, the plot is constructed around a love triangle instead of a chivalric adventure or a historic battle. The poet explains the 'double sorrow' of Troilus, the son of King Priam. Troilus falls in love with Criseyde, the daughter of Calchas, a prophet escaping to the Greek camp

[10] Since there are multiple influences on Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, I follow the Longman editions of the work in which B. A. Windeatt compares Chaucer's Troilus story with Boccaccio's and Benoit's versions stanza by stanza and specifies the additions from Boethius's *Consolation*.

since he believes that Troy will be defeated in the Trojan War. With the help of Criseyde's uncle Pandarus, Troilus gains Criseyde's love in a short time. However, the lovers have to separate because Criseyde's father demand his daughter to be sent to the Greek camp as an exchange for a hostage in Troy. The "parliament of Troy," as Chaucer refers, accepts this exchange despite the objections of Troilus and his brother Hector. Before leaving for the Greek camp, Criseyde promises to come back in ten days; however, she falls in love with a Greek soldier in the camp and never comes back. With his second grief, the betrayal of Criseyde, Troilus fights against the Greeks in a battle to take his revenge on all Greeks, but he is killed by Achilles, and his soul rises to the eighth sphere of Heaven in accordance with Christian beliefs.

As in *the Song of Roland*, the plot revolves around betrayal, yet this time, love is in the centre of disloyalty and the legendary Trojan War remains in the background. Unlike *the Quest for the Holy Grail* and *the Song of Roland* which tell stories fictionalised in Christian times, *Troilus and Criseyde* narrates a story of the Ancient times. Therefore, it is supposed to reflect pagan lives. However, the romance anachronistically bears Christian elements, as well. Through the religious details in the story, the pagan beliefs that penetrated in the medieval Christian doctrines are studied as elements of transculturalism. The differences and similarities between Chaucer's storytelling and Boccaccio's and Benoit's will help to clarify how medieval English culture was formed. As a "matter of Rome," *Troilus and Criseyde* presents a transhistorical link between the ancient times and medieval England. For this reason, the chapter argues the transhistoricity through an ancient story, and the characters are discussed in the light of collective memory since they are represented as the stereotypical lovers of the romance genre. Moreover, the love scenes and lovers will be analysed in terms of the courtly love concept of Arabic poetry, which will illustrate the Eastern influence in literary traditions of the Middle English period.

In conclusion, this dissertation discusses the expansion of transcultural studies by analysing three examples from three matters of the romance genre. Each matter is explained in separate chapters, and through the works that will be studied, the influences of the cultural interactions and transformation of the cultural values will be revealed. This dissertation argues that even in the Middle Ages, literature supported the establishment of culture and, as the popular literary form of the period, medieval romances bear the traces of the cultural and historical transmissions among the societies. With the analysis of the *Song of Roland*, the *Quest for the Holy Grail* and *Troilus and Criseyde*, the study explores the borrowing of medieval English culture not only from European cultures but also from Ancient and Arabic cultures. Moreover, cultural transmission and/or transformation could be carried out through changing time; that is why transhistorical changes will be explored within the frame of transculturality. The transmissions coming from the previous times are defined in terms of transhistoricity and the actions taken by the characters are studied in the light of collective memory because the transactions of the past could also be provided through memory.

CHAPTER I

TRANSCULTURALISM AND TRANSCULTURAL MISSION OF ROMANCES

All societies, past and present, contain many different cultures, and culture, by definition, emerges as a consequence of "the distinctive ideas, social behaviour, or way of life of a particular society" or community (*OED*). Culture is one of the oldest terms used to define the shared values and customs of a society. Since a particular culture comes into existence with the contribution of other cultures, creating a pure culture that has not mingled with other cultures is impossible. The multi-layered structure of culture paves the way for studies on multiculturalism, and transcultural studies appears at the point that cultural integration creates a new culture in which diversity is not clear enough to be determined. The transcultural approach deals with how cultures are intermingled by breaking down all the boundaries. In this context, this study discusses how cultural borders were crossed in the medieval period, and the literary texts provide examples of medieval transculturalism. For this reason, the study firstly focuses on the historical background of British society in order to reveal the history of the cultural transactions on this island.

1.1. Historical Background of British Culture

Different tribes and communities throughout history have occupied Britain and every society has left a trace in the current British culture. For instance, the Roman Empire is one of the most important invaders to influence the cultural heritage of the islands. The Roman-Britain period starts, with the invasion of the Romans in the first century, and its hegemony lasts until the fifth century. Because of the accumulative structure of culture itself, even the Roman culture embraced some elements of different cultures and brought them to the islands. Like every invasion, the arrival of the Roman Empire in Britain was a breakdown of the geographical borders and the Romans introduced not only the Mediterranean culture but also the Eastern cultures. The archaeological finds show that

even in the northern part of Britain, Romano-Britons adopted the religious beliefs of Asian cultures such as Egypt and Persia.[11] The texts belonging to this period reveal that the Romans affected literacy itself; as Nicholas Howe states, the Romans mastered the political act of using writing to assert their power publicly besides their material heritage (29-30). With the records they kept, they told stories about their occupation; these texts and inscriptions contribute to the literary heritage. After the Romans arrived in the islands, the cultural structure of the islands was shaped in line with Latin culture. The editors of *From Memory to Written Record* reveal,

> Because England stood on the periphery of Latin culture, its attitude to it was ambivalent. Its writers either excelled in their mastery of Latin learning and enthusiasm for things Roman, as Bede had done in the eighth century and John of Salisbury did in the twelfth, or they eschewed Latin, like the Old English poets and prose writers and the writers of French and Middle English after 1066. (Saunders, Le Saux and Thomas, 18)

Although Britain became the homeland of many communities after the Roman invasion, the Latin influence could not be eliminated because it survived as the cultural heritage in literature throughout Europe. The Latin influence on literature and the vernacular caused the medieval artists to shape 'national' and cultural literary heritage with the contributions of Latin literature. Even the Germanic and Scandinavian tribes and Normans built their culture and vernacular on the Latin base. Besides language and literature, the religious beliefs of those inhabitants have an essential role in the changing culture, which started with the coming of the Romans.

[11] For further information see, Ronald Hutton. *Pagan Britain*; Martin Millett's *The Romanization of Britain: An Essay in Archaeological Interpretation*; Dennis W. Harding's *The Iron Age in Northern Britain: Britons and Romans, Natives and Settlers*.

It is known that in some parts of Britain, Christianity was adopted after the Roman Empire invaded and established their colony in the islands. However, the conversion to Christianity was not a process that was completed during the rule of the Roman Empire. As is known, "the decline of one culture becomes the origin of another" (Howe 25) and the decline of the Romans and their withdrawal from Britain around the fifth century paved the way for another invasion. Thus, before the Romans managed to spread Christianity to the whole country, the Germanic tribes, called the Anglo-Saxons, invaded Britain in the fifth century, and from then until the seventh century most of the Anglo-Saxon tribes converted to Christianity. A new religion affected the cultural heritage and as Ronald Hutton states, "Christianity arrived as part of a package, which included literacy (in Latin as well as the local vernacular), a closer cultural and personal connection with the Mediterranean world, technological improvements in industry and agriculture, and the formation of larger political units" (292). When the English adopted Christianity, they utilised it in every field in their social lives. Language and its most fertile product, literature, were also influenced by Christendom. In the Roman Empire, many religious texts were written in Latin after the conversion, and the Roman theologians and scholars created their own terminology in this writing and translation process. The long history of the Roman Empire before Christianity plays a role in their own vernacular and all the translations from Latin found a new form in the Anglo-Saxon culture. As Hutton reveals "Anglo-Saxon literature, long after the adoption of Christianity, displays an unusually heavy emphasis on the working of a predestined fate, known as *wyrd*, in human affairs, which may be a carry-over from nature paganism" (302). The belief system that was learned through the narratives and discourses of the earlier cultures underlay the ongoing development of the English language and culture. During this period, thanks to the Anglo-Saxon tribes, Germanic culture became dominant, and since they had been with the Roman Empire even before they came to Britain, their languages were influenced by

Latin as well. For this reason, apart from Christianity, Old English that was formed under the influence of Germanic languages, and indirectly from Latin, claimed its place in British history.

After the Latin influence, when the Germanic invasion is taken into consideration, it is seen that the Anglo-Saxon tribes played a significant role in the history of today's England. With the coming of these tribes, the communities on the island laid the foundations of unity. However, the multicultural structure of that unity, with the earlier societies having left traces in the British culture, led to new cultural outputs. The Venerable Bede, the famous British author of Anglo-Saxon literature, emphasises the cultural melding of society in his *Historia ecclesiastica genits Anglorum* (*Ecclesiastical History of the English People*) (731) by stating,

> This island at this present, with five sundry languages equal to the number of the books in which the Divine Law hath been written, doth study and set forth one and the same knowledge of the highest truth and true majesty, that is, with the language of the English, the Britons, the Scots, the Redshanks and the Latin, which last by study of the Scriptures is made common to all the rest. (Baedae 17)

In the eighth century, Bede noticed the cultural variety in Britain that had absorbed many cultures across the ages. Thus, the English culture was fed by this variety, but it is obvious that when Bede revealed multicultural and multilingual establishment in Britain, the poet could observe the cultural transformations that occurred until the Anglo-Saxon period. The country did not reach the ultimate point in diversity in the Anglo-Saxon period. Britain was invaded and occupied after the Germans, and the transculturation continued in the later periods.

In addition to the cultural effects of the Mediterranean, Eastern and central-European societies, the country was also influenced by Northern-European culture

through the invasion of the Vikings coming from Norway and Denmark. These tribes made a significant impact and added another layer of pagan tradition to the already rich historic and prehistoric accumulation (Hutton 321). Even though the Scandinavian tribes only occupied Britain for a short while, their influence on the country is indisputable. By the tenth century, when Alfred the Great unified England and saved England from the Vikings, the pagan Norse tribes influenced the English neighbourhoods.[12] Therefore, for a long time, British society embraced the Christian and pre-Christian features together, and this intermingled change has been reflected in its literature.

The last successful invasion in British history is the Norman Conquest. When the Normans came to Britain under the leadership of William the Conqueror in 1066, they brought the French traditions with them, and the 'Romanesque' culture gradually spread to the whole country. This will be explained in detail in the following chapter. By the fourteenth century, the French language had become one of the official languages in Britain, and an educated Englishman used to speak French and Latin along with English (Gillingham and Griffiths 4). Even in English literature, the dominance of the French language and also of French literature is distinguished; by means of the translations and adaptations of the Middle French works, the French culture has intertwined with the already multicultural English culture. Until England drew its territorial borders and set its own social and cultural values, English society had adopted many literary and cultural principles, ethics, or morals from the Romans, Germans, Scandinavians and Normans, and formed the present culture that exercised power over other societies, especially during the colonial period.

Even after the English people became more eager to gain an understanding of nationhood in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Britain kept interacting with other

[12] For further information, see, D. M. Hadley's *The Northern Danelaw: Its Social Structure, c. 800-1100* and Julian D. Richards's *The Vikings; A Very Short Introduction*.

European and Eastern cultures, adapting some values from those cultures. After the notion *nationalism* became apparent through the end of the Middle Ages, the English are known to "have an antipathy to foreigners, and imagine that they never come into their island, but to make themselves masters of it, and to usurp their goods" (C. H. Williams 196). However, the irrepressible cultural interaction during the medieval times or before that period is significant to the extent that the English ignore the foreigners who have already settled down on their land. Britain has not been politically invaded since the Norman Conquest; yet, the ongoing wars, trade, pilgrims or literary exchanges contribute to the transcultural structure of the country. Culture develops as a result of multidimensional effects, and it would be wrong to say that culture has a final phase in its formation. At this point, the study concentrates on the concept of 'culture' and its multidimensional development.

1.2. Defining Culture and Transculturalism

Culture, in a general sense, is positively related to the accumulation of the past experiences of a community; it has a crucial role in defining the *identity* of a nation or a society. However, the very first meaning of the word 'culture,' derived from the Middle French word *culture* and the Latin word *cultūra*, is 'the cultivation of land' (OED). It has gained a more general meaning over time and is now used to describe every social manifestation. Even though it is not easy precisely to define culture, critics and scholars have elucidated it in different ways over the ages, and many of them have appreciated the concept in different perspectives. Raymond Williams, for example, traces the origin of the word and emphasises that it is difficult to define it. According to him, culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language. This is so partly because of its intricate historical development, … but mainly because it has now come to be used for important concepts in several distinct intellectual disciplines and in several distinct and incompatible systems of thought (87). Williams avoids a strict definition, and

by focusing on the origin of the word, he posits that the term culture has different meanings in different times, which were shaped in accordance with the scientific, artistic, philosophical, or economic development of a society. On the other hand, the postcolonial theorist Edward Said defines culture in the light of Matthew Arnold's views on culture; for Arnold, culture has a refining and elevating element and covers up the brutalizing of the urban existence. In this sense, Edward Said concludes that people shape their intellectual base in accordance with what culture offers them; in other words, culture refines society. That is why Said regards culture as "a source of identity" (*Culture and Imperialism* xiii) and explicitly states that "all cultures are involved in one another; none is single and pure, all are hybrid, heterogeneous, extraordinarily differentiated, and unmonolithic" (*Culture and Imperialism* xxv). As has been pointed out, culture can be interpreted from different perspectives; yet it is evident that culture is related to peoples and their historical and social backgrounds. For this reason, any interaction with other cultures contribute to the development of both. Since culture is the identity of a society or community, all contributions help this identity to create its own characteristics, and a transcultural identity appears as a consequence of those contributions that have been intermingled.

Since culture contains different products of a society, such as literature, philosophy, language, religion, customs and traditions, and the relationship between culture and people intrinsically causes the culture to interact with the systems or movements that people have developed over centuries, cultural studies has a multidimensional aspect in relation to other disciplines. As the German philosopher, Wolfgang Welsch states, "everything is strictly bound to its cultural context. We take all production, experience, and cognition to be fully determined by their cultural framework, hence as restricted to it" (13). The multifaceted aspects of culture and the interdisciplinarity of cultural studies pave the way for cross-cultural studies. As a sub-

discipline of culturalism, transculturalism, by benefiting from many other disciplines, centres upon how cultures are influenced by each other and tries to determine what the main reasons for this interaction are. Transcultural studies elucidates the idea that culture is established with the past and present, and in this field, it is emphasised that other cultures, which interact for a reason, contribute to the establishment of the culture itself. For the transcultural process, any positive or negative transaction is essential because, as the medievalist, Albrecht Classen states, "transculturality begins when representatives of one culture react to elements of another culture, even when this happens in negative terms at first" ("Transcultural Experiences" 682). Therefore, in transculturalism, there is no limitation of time and place, since, in every period, people from different cultures have met in a way, which causes them to interact. Thus, transculturalism does not concentrate on a specific nation or a specific period; it studies multicultural aspects of society within the frame of other cultures and periods.

Some researchers restrict their cross-cultural studies to within the framework of postcolonial studies or the contemporary global world. However, cultural transaction unavoidably began even before the movement of colonisation, which was directed by the national consciousness of the powerful states for the purpose of development of their own countries. For cultural interaction, colonialism or globalisation is not the *sine qua non*, but they are the means of transculturality. To deal with every contribution in a culture causes transculturalism to be regarded as multiculturalism although it is rather different from multiculturalism. Lucia-Mihaela Grosu emphasises that cultural outcomes show the main difference between multiculturalism and transculturalism (107). In transculturalism, transaction among cultures is homogenous; different cultures are intertwined, and the separate characteristics of cultures are hardly identified. Unlike in transculturalism, in multiculturalism cultures keep their identifiable features, and strengthen the boundaries by keeping their discrete values. As Donald Cuccioletta explains, "contrary to

multiculturalism, which most experiences have shown re-enforces boundaries based on past cultural heritages, transculturalism is based on the breaking down of boundaries" (8). Thus, transculturalism builds on a new cultural structure by crossing the boundaries of the present or past cultures; it asserts a new understanding of culture through commingling the cultural heritage of people, living together in the same land. Even though the perspectives of transculturalism, postcolonialism and multiculturalism are different and address different dimensions of a culture or society, transcultural studies is not entirely separated from the other two disciplines, but benefits from them. Arianna Dagnino investigates the position of transculturalism and states, "to a certain extent transcultural fiction flows out from those previous [postcolonial and multicultural] domains/categorisations while still being permeated by them" (11). Within this context, postcolonial and multicultural materials provide multidimensional perspectives for transculturalism.

Even the first usage of the word "transculturation" emerged in a context which explains the cultural history and transformation of a nation, shaped by postcolonial and multicultural effects. The concept of transculturalism appeared in the first half of the twentieth century. In order to explain the cultural process in Cuba, Fernando Ortiz, the Cuban anthropologist, preferred to use the word "transculturation" because any other word related to culture would not convey his meaning. In his book, *Cuban Counterpoint*, he declares,

> … the word *transculturation* better expresses the different phases of the process of transition from one culture to another because this does not consist merely in acquiring another culture, which is what the English word *acculturation* really implies, but the process also necessarily involves the loss or uprooting of a previous culture, which could be defined as a deculturation (102)

With this neologism, he identifies that a new culture is created as a result of both the *deculturation* and *neoculturation* processes. After the loss of a culture, a new culture emerges; "he, [Ortiz] thus places emphasis on both the destruction of cultures and on the creativity of cultural unions" (Coronil xxvi). The term acculturation does not involve deculturation and expresses the one-way movement of culture; it is "used to describe the process of transition from one culture to another and its manifold social repercussions" (Ortiz 98). In the acculturation process, the present culture is influenced by some elements of a dominant culture, and a new culture does not appear after this process; it points up the assimilation. For this reason, a new term was needed, and Ortiz coined the word transculturation to explain the loss and creation process of culture.

Moreover, Ortiz states that the individual is the smallest part in the process of creating a culture, and emphasises that culture is established with the combination of these small parts. In this context, transculturalism is regarded as a "melting pot" in which different cultures coalesce, and new identities and perspectives appear. In his article "Cultural Diversity: It's all about the Mainstream," Roy L. Brooks focuses attention on the inevitable formation process of transculturalism, and states, "transculturalism creates a dilemma for groups thrown into the mix. These groups cannot escape cultural hegemony, as each group contributing to the new melting pot will have to surrender some (perhaps most) of its own identity as it assumes a new identity in the mainstream" (25). As Brooks emphasises, some groups, communities, or identities cross their boundaries and, finally, some changes and interactions come into existence. Each group contributes some aspects of their cultural heritage to the new melting pot. However, the interplay in a melting pot cannot create a homogenous formation all the time. The cultures, developed in the same land, first of all, imitate each other. This assimilation process does not mean the diminish of the minority, yet sometimes, both primary and secondary cultures can assimilate and create new cultures and identities bearing the characteristics of both. The

new formulation is mainly provided with the cultural products from every period, which are carried with peoples.

The relationship between past and present leads some scholars back to the Middle Ages, and they associate transculturalism with that period by claiming that transcultural interactions date back to the medieval era. Transcultural interaction could undoubtedly be observed even before the Middle Ages; archaeological discoveries prove that different cultures and societies were in contact, and sometimes that affected their beliefs. However, in transcultural studies, the inadequacy in the amount of literary texts leads researchers to focus on the Middle Ages when observing the transactions between cultures. Classen, as one of those researchers, starts his transcultural researches from the Middle Ages, owing to the increasing amount of literary works in those periods, and he believes that medieval works are representative of the transformation of cultures:

> … transculturality developed much earlier, particularly in the late Middle Ages, when writers and poets already explored the encounters of representatives of different cultures, religions, and languages by presenting their protagonists as traversing many lands and large bodies of water, meeting foreigners, engaging with them constructively, and reflecting on the commonalities connecting all people with each other irrespective of political or ideological oppositions. ("Transcultural Experiences" 682)

Classen emphasises the importance of the texts in transculturation and suggests the medieval texts as the representatives of the cross-cultural process, due to the increasing number of travel writings and translations of the period. According to transcultural literary studies, the foreign, especially the Muslim characters and the main characters' journeys to other countries, are only one way to determine transcultural exchanges in the medieval texts. For example, in the *Alexander the Great* romance, Alexander's invasion

of Persia results in some cross-cultural influences; while the King starts wearing Persian, or, as it is stated in the story, "barbarian" clothes; he also brings Hellenistic hegemony to that land. In other romances, such as *Floris and Blanchefleur* and *King Horn*, the Saracens are an important element of the plots, and they present orient-centred stories. Through these elements, the cultural interaction between the East and the West can be identified. In fact, literary works related to Muslims (under the name of Saracens) and the orient are more often seen after the West met the East in the Crusades. The influence of the Muslims in the Middle Ages was not based only on characters but also on the Muslim philosophy and literary traditions, which will be discussed in the following subheadings and the analyses of the given works. Therefore, even though Classen comments on the transcultural medieval period as limited, it is evident that the medieval texts present more than the relationship of the Orient and Occident.

1.3. Medieval Texts as means of Transcultural Interaction

The transcultural process can be dated back to ancient times when the first evidence of cultural accumulation can be found, as it spread over a vast area that allowed direct or indirect interaction among the communities. In this field, it can be said that there is no specific boundary either in time or geography; transcultural researchers cross all boundaries. In this regard, transcultural studies can be applied to medieval cultures and societies, since the Middle Ages embraces elements of different cultures from different periods. Classen states "as all historians can confirm, which unfortunately might be misunderstood as a political statement today, all borders throughout times and in all systems, have lasted only temporarily and were eventually permeated so much that they became meaningless" (*East Meets West* 6). Although it is hard to claim that all historians agree that every geographical and temporal border could be destroyed, many medieval pieces of research show the multidimensional layers of the medieval culture; for this reason, in cultural development, the boundaries do not constitute an impediment for

interaction. It is obvious that most of the architectural, artistic and literary works, in short, most of the cultural products, help the cross-cultural progress of society. About the transculturality through arts, Nadia Altschul advocates the following approach:

> As medievalists recognize, each of the texts, manuscripts, paintings, churches, maps, or other artifacts under study show the presence of temporal layers and vestiges of their multifaceted reception – such as marginalia, the use of older spolia in newly built buildings, the multiple copies of a text or the palimpsestic nature of many manuscripts. Medievalists are thus trained to contest the essentialization of cultural artifacts and to perceive and interpret the traces of other cultures and other times in the objects under their scrutiny (597).

Such profound and detailed research reveals that the multidimensional aspects of cultural studies and the traces of the various societies, miscegenation or hybridity lead the medievalist to transculturalism. In this sense, due to their multicultural interactions, medieval works provide the transculturalists with a broad study area. For this reason, some scholars directly associate transculturalism with the Middle Ages by skipping the ancient interactions. They do not restrict their studies to the colonial or postcolonial movements and argue that transculturality began in the Middle Ages and the medieval works are representatives of this transformation.

When the matters of romance, for instance, are taken into consideration, it is seen that their intertextual structures reflect the social reality of the period in which the works were written. The romance genre was the most common literary form that reached every class in those days. For this reason, for the poets, romance was the way of telling the truth and, in a sense, their complaints. As Janet Coleman states “the romances and the complaint poetry were meant to be exemplary, didactic, and also entertaining, the poet as truth-teller, as the commentator on the particular, often by means of the general statement,

was fulfilling an expected role" (94). The fantastic atmosphere of the romances does not prevent the works from reflecting the current social norms, traditions, expectations and historic events. This genre is an example of the merging of reality and fiction, as well as the merging of the ordinary people and aristocrats. With its courtly love tradition and narrative praising court members and chivalry, romance attracts the elite, and with their chivalric deeds and the adventures of the knights, they draw the attention of the peasants and middle-class members. However, the Middle English romances, by combining the epic and courtly love traditions, "created a new literary type for a partly non-aristocratic audience" (Coleman 95). As their pre-Christian origins were overlaid with Christian elements in the hands of medieval priests and they were used as the propaganda of Christianity, the works became popular among the members of the lower class. Therefore, the romance genre became in demand, and it had a considerable audience scale. In order to meet that demand, the priests and poets adapted or translated more works from the other cultures and, especially in the twelfth century, with the increase in the written literature, the songs, ballads and epics of the oral traditions were adapted to medieval romance tradition. Thus, the works of the pre-Christian and Ancient periods were collected in the medieval literature.

Romance is a narrative, which rose to prominence in the medieval period, especially after the twelfth century and became the dominant genre of the period after epics. In the transition process from epic to romance, many epic poems were rewritten in the romance form. In this regard, some critics still cannot reach agreement in determining the genres of some works such as the *chansons de geste*, which are the medieval French songs narrating chivalric adventures. As the origin of the word and the romance genre is taken into consideration, the disagreement about the genres of some French works makes sense:

> The term 'romance' itself, from roman, originally referred to the French language, which was descended from Latin or the Roman language (the term romance

> language now applies to any language derived from Latin). The term came to mean a story or a tale told in French, without the modern associations with love. Ultimately it was applied to the types of tales told by the French; and since many of the early French romans or romances told of knightly deeds and great loves, the word roman or 'romance' eventually came to be associated with such tales. (Lupack 83)

The early examples of the romance genre narrate the chivalric deeds under the influence of the *chansons de geste*, yet when the genre came to Britain, those works were transformed into courtly loves. Since the English did not have their own chivalric narratives, they turned the Anglo-Norman songs and epics into the romances by adapting to their literary culture, which created a new literary heritage known as the Middle English romance. The Middle English romances with the Celtic origins of many tales moved the balance between the worldly and otherworldly elements in the works to a new level and presented their audience a fairy atmosphere with a realistic setting. It is considered to be a mode in which the heroes fight against supernatural enemies and eventually marry the ladies whom they love. Northrop Frye describes romance as a chivalric narration which centres upon quests enhanced with mystic elements. According to Frye, the hero of a romance performs marvellous actions as if they were normal human talents and moves in a world where the ordinary laws of nature are removed (33). Frye's description keeps both the chivalric adventures and supernatural elements in the romance genre. However, even if all Middle English romances do not present a supernatural setting, they protect the chivalric deeds as the heritage of the epic genre. As a literary form which appeared as a result of many social shifts, romance reflects the cross-cultural interactions including elements from the early periods and forms.

Apart from the translations establishing a historical and cultural connection, intertextuality in the works helps the researchers to determine transcultural elements. In

medieval societies, besides the translations of the religious texts, the translations of the classics or rewritings of these works were also popular. For this reason, many Middle English romances have some allusions to the classics and though these Latin or Greek classics narrate the pagans' lives, the medieval authors re-narrated these works by adding some Christian elements. Thus, they mingle the classical cultures with their medieval cultures. For instance, Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* and the *Knight's Tale* are examples of rewriting. The major influences of these works are the Italian poet Boccaccio's *Il Filostrato* and *Teseida*, and the philosophical themes of the romances are formed in the light of Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*, which will be discussed in detail in the last chapter. In addition to these influences, it is also possible to find some allusions to Ovid and Virgil. Therefore, the romances' intertextual dimension has a role in transmitting the cultural phenomena because "intertextual links between texts bear cultural impact, resulting in cultural differences or resemblances of texts from different cultures" (Kornetzki 143). The texts directly or indirectly connect the cultures and cause a culture to be influenced by another. Karen Thornber emphasises the mission of texts and states that "textual contact" refers to transculturating creative texts in the context of appropriating genres, styles, and themes, as well as transculturating individual literary works via the related strategies of interpreting, adapting, translating and intertextualising (2). Therefore, all texts individual or social, formal or informal have the potential to transfer the cultural phenomena.

In the Middle Ages, many classic works were transmitted to the medieval readers through adaptations, translations and intertextuality. Almost every work of literature in the medieval period has traces of classic texts and oral lore. Even though it seems intertextuality is a relatively indirect way to learn about and adapt the cultural elements, it would be wrong to ignore its part in the transformations of the literary traditions. In this

sense, Sif Rikhardsdottir opens her book *Medieval Translations and Cultural Discourse* with an emphasis on the growth of medieval literature based on intertextuality;

> … the history of European literature is one of transformation, refashioning and intertextual relations. Narrative modes and ideas spread across the continent, influencing and enriching existing native literary forms. As old poetic traditions either stagnated or died out, new literary modes were fashioned from pre-existing forms, which were combined with novel narrative structures and ideas from imported materials. (1)

As Rikhardsdottir contends, the existing literary forms were enhanced when the literary forms of the other cultures infiltrated. Thus, exchanges of the literary cultures introduce the subject of new forms as is seen in romance form. In medieval times, the poets and writers translated works in the light of their readers' expectations; even the adaptations were transformed according to the target culture.

In medieval translations, the *auctores*, as the authoritative figures over the literary texts, formed their work as a text that their readers could appreciate in accordance with their cultural background. Thus, "like commentary, translation tends to represent itself as 'service' to an authoritative source; but also, like commentary, translation actually displaces the originary[13] force of its models" (Copeland 4). Therefore, as a consequence of translation, a new literary work emerges from an already narrated story. Medieval historiography shows that translation is not a means of transferring meaning but rather of establishing a bridge between the past and the present cultures. For Ruth Evans and the other co-writers of *The Idea of Vernacular*, "*translation studii et imperi* (the translation

[13] Copeland uses that word deliberately; with this word, she does not refer to the word "original" but rather, she points out the modern philosophical and critical discourse in association with the writings of Heidegger and Derrida in the sense of claiming the value (or attributing the value to something) of a fixed origin or foundational force (230, Notes 2).

of learning and empire) [is] a concept that was of basic importance to medieval reflections on the relationship between present and past cultures, and on the means by which cultural value and authority was transmitted from one period to another" (317). As can be seen, translated texts play a crucial role in literary history by transferring the values of the previous period or another culture in the hands of an *auctor* who does not neglect the values of his own time and culture. Translation serves as a means of effecting the double process of deconstruction and reconstruction, and it intervenes in the dominant discourse and interpolates its cultural realities (Gamal 117). Within this context, cultural diversity can be observed through these 'rewritings' since medieval translations were a way of commentary rather than word for word reworking. As Rita Copeland states: "in the Middle Ages, as in Roman antiquity, translation was a vehicle for expressing or playing out large questions of cultural difference" (222). Therefore, medieval texts could be regarded as the alliances of values combining different elements from various communities and periods.

Within this context, the form of the stories - oral or written - does not change the contributions of the other cultures. In fact, the stories belonging to the oral tradition were more reformed in accordance with the cultural exchange since the poets narrated the stories from memory and memorization could affect the originality of a work. Every minstrel told the stories in their own vernacular, but it is assumed that keeping more than one work in mind paves the way for a mixture of stories. Such a mis-narration could affect both the original language of the story and the local memory that the tale is transmitting. As Murray McGillivray states,

> The generally formulaic nature of their [minstrels'] language would work against the discovery of borrowings of small phrases, and the looser ideas of the nature of authorship prevalent in the Middle Ages would probably have allowed the intentional re-use, by the author of romance or by a minstrel or scribe engaged in

> its transmission, of lines from elsewhere. It is very plausible, however, that a minstrel who had memorized more than one romance in the same verse-form might confuse passages of one with similar passages of the other and accidentally transfer lines from one to the other. (52)

When the literary works of the oral lore started to be transferred into written forms, the errors that had been already made by the minstrels were ingrained in the existing cultures. However, after the increase in the number of written works, the narratives of the minstrels also reshaped the vernacular because "language is integral to human cultural experience," and "the role of language as a memory carrier can be constructed as a means by which the community establishes the common ground of experience shared across generations of its members" (Stadnik 127, 131). The movement of literary works brings with them the language and, before arts, language establishes a link among societies. Therefore, in oral or written form, vernacular also connects the periods, and the transhistorical encounters in cultures that are provided with language accompany the cultural exchanges. Finally, historical changes in language lose their distinguishing characteristics and become the intermingled parts in literary heritage that are conveyed to the next generations and start a new process of change.

1.4. Transhistorical Correlation with Transculturalism

Culture is created within the historical process of a society so that it cannot be separated from history itself. Cultural development is possible not only when a society interconnects with other societies existing in the same period but also when it keeps in touch with history. Therefore, the transcultural exchange of a community is supported with transhistoricity, and it is evident that texts from the past help the transition between historical periods, and thus they gain a "transhistorical" mission between the past and present. Even though the author specifies the limits of his narrative, the perspective of the

readers provides a connection between the time of the text and his own time, which manages to cross the historical boundaries. E. D. Hirsch explains the transhistorical feature of a text by focusing on realistic stories that manage to embrace the readers. According to this critic,

> The best way to transcend history is to immerse one's plot and characters in the particularities of history. The explanation of this paradox lies in the truth that all human experience is colored by particularities of time and place. … The broad interest and emotional force of realist literature would be lost unless it implicitly encouraged readers to analogize to their own experience. There are implicit mediations between the particularity of the story's world and the particularities of the reader's world. (554-5)

The allusions to the previous works and adaptations from them are the means of composing a story that touches a reader's personal life and connects all readers with a past with which they can identify themselves. In medieval literature, that transhistorical correlation is established in the light of the classics. Many medieval authors improved their writing skills by reading the classics; for that reason, in this period, similar plots were repeated by different authors, especially in different forms of literature. Epic and romance, for instance, circulate around similar historic events such as the Trojan War, the Crusades, the battles of Charlemagne or the adventures of King Arthur's knights, and many other wars against the Muslims.

Due to the dominance of the epic form in literary tradition, the influence of the wars cannot be underestimated. Apart from the battles between the Muslims and Christians, such as the Crusades, there are many other military struggles that were repeatedly narrated in works. In the early period of the Middle Ages, when oral tradition was dominant, epics, songs and ballads were generally about the victories and chivalric

deeds of the knights. Those works were popular, and sometimes the same battles were re-narrated in diverse cultures to encourage the society to fight against every threat. For that reason, historic events became the subjects of medieval texts in almost every phase of the period. As Saunders, Le Saux and Thomas elaborate,

> War is a powerful and enduring literary topos. Literature of different types, in different times, and in different countries, engages with the practice of war, and reflects too the cultural attitudes of a period to war. The idea and practice of war are central to some of the most dominant subject matters in the medieval period – chivalry, religion, ideas of nationhood, concepts of gender, the body and the psyche. War is a repeated theme in both secular and religious literary genres. (8)

Literature has been fed by many battles across the ages, and as a significant part of local memory, wars affect the cultural and literary identity of a society. With the narration of the glorious victories, people become aware of their own history and of what kind of struggles have helped them to obtain all they have. The circulation of the war stories causes them to be affected by the historical, social and political development of the society and leads people to find their own cultural identity by merging past and present.

After the epic genre, romances continued to convey the chivalric deeds, and the transmission of history and culture through wars was provided by romance. Besides, it is believed that this literary form is a result of the wars. Although it is known that in the Ancient Greek and Roman literatures there are some examples of the romance genre, some eighteenth and nineteenth-century scholars, such as Thomas Warton, claimed that the Westerns learned "the art of romance-writing, from their naturalised guests the Arabians" in Spain (114). Some modern researchers such as Carol Heffernan take the same view by pointing out the similarities in the Arabic tales and emphasise cultural transmission through the romance genre. As Heffernan states:

> … the subject matter and other narrative elements of Arabic tales were transmitted to the Western literary tradition by the Moslems through Arabic Spain and Sicily and through cultural contacts that accompanied East-West encounters along pilgrimage routes, in arenas of trade in the Mediterranean and the Levant, and during centuries of Crusading wars. These historical realities created intersection points for cultural exchanges between East and West that reveal themselves in the details of texts as well as in exchanges of texts themselves (2).

Even if not every scholar agrees that the romance genre is derived from Arabic tales, it is obvious that after the Crusades, the East and Muslim culture had repercussions for European cultures.[14] Arthurian romances, for example, deal with the Crusades and in different versions of these romances, a Saracen may be seen as one of the characters, or King Arthur himself may be represented as the Crusader, and thereby, the connection with the Muslims is kept alive. In some medieval romances, written after the Crusades, such as *Sir Isumbras* and *King of Tars*, the battles between the Christian and Muslim armies have important roles in the plot. Therefore, as evidenced by these romances, the Middle Ages became a period when the cultural borders across the Muslim East were gradually crossed. Even if the Western romancers did not learn romance from the Arabic poetry, it is certain that they improved their storytelling techniques with the contributions of the Muslims.

After the adaptation of French literature, with the coming of the Normans in the eleventh century, the focal point of the works shifted to the Crusades. Every piece of literature turned into Christian propaganda against the Islamic powers. Despite the fact

[14]The Cuban scholar Maria Rosa Menocal does her research according to "the hypothesis that the interaction of Romance and Arabic cultures in northern Spain and Provence had been substantial." Even though she does not openly say that the Romance genre was transferred from the Arab world to the Western literature, throughout the work she studies this claim and reveals the Arabic elements in romance. See, María Rosa Menocal's *The Arabic Role in Medieval History: A Forgotten Heritage*.

that the Crusades were a series of wars supposed to protect the holiness of Christian and Christian lands, the Muslims also managed to involve themselves in Christian culture. The Crusades caused mutual interaction between the East and the West, and they cannot be considered to be simply wars:

> The Crusaders and the subsequent wars between the Christians and the Arabic Muslims (later especially the Turks) represented just one dimension, but below the military surface we can always and rather easily recognize countless cultural, linguistics, mercantile, and perhaps even literary and artistic contacts of great profit for both sides. (Classen, *East Meets West* 6)

Classen extends his comment by giving examples of the Christian missionaries who learned Arabic, the coexistence of Muslim farmers and Christian lords and Arab writers, geographers and travellers whose works were translated and inspired Christian writing and philosophy. The scope of the interaction was broad; the connection changed the history of many Western societies, and the transmission of that history transhistorical encounters in literature.

Every connection with other societies leads to a connection with their history and their previous interactions too. For that reason, the Crusades that Classen emphasises, and many other earlier encounters with the Muslims brought not only Islamic philosophy and culture but also Greek philosophy. Through the Arabic works, early medieval European societies encountered Greek traditions; "the 'arts' and 'values' of Christian Latin culture had been adapted from Greek culture, yet, paradoxically, knowledge of Greek sciences and of the philosophy of Aristotle was introduced into the West for the first time as a result of contact with Islamic culture" (Murdoch and Sylla 152). It is known that many Islamic philosophers and scientists read the Greek philosophy and formed their opinions within the perspective of those philosophers. For that reason, reading Arabic philosophy

and science introduces Greek culture.[15] As Heffernan states, "Arabs were respected for their learning in philosophy and the sciences and were regarded as the mediators of Greek and Byzantine traditions" (5). When the medieval Europeans translated the Arabic works, they transmitted Greek philosophy and science. Thus, learning of Eastern science (including the Greek) was accomplished both directly and indirectly. However, it could be said that the transmission of the Greek philosophy through the Arabic texts must have included the views and interpretations of the Arabic philosophers. The indirect influence of the Greek teachings thus reached Western Europe as the product of transcultural transformation.

The multidimensional function of translation leads the Greek philosophy, language and some cultural features to be known by the cultures under the influence of Latin. Murdoch and Sylla elaborate the power of translation and bring to the light that any text could be the medium of cultural transaction by stating, "when Arabic medical works began to be translated into Latin in the tenth and eleventh centuries, the encyclopedic array of sciences they contained was adapted to the Latin encyclopedia, which had been influenced by the Hebrew and Greek encyclopedias in the course of its formation" (157). As is seen, the connection with a particular culture helped the northern and central European Christian societies meet Eastern cultures from the Greeks to the

[15] The Arabic scholars started to translate the works of the Hellenistic culture in the eighth and ninth centuries, and on the basis of the translated works, they improved their own scientific researches. Especially in the natural sciences, the Arabic scientists made progress in the light of Aristotle. In the twelfth century, after the Crusades, the interest in Arabic language and works increased and in many medieval European institutions, the Arabic works relating to philosophy and natural sciences (astronomy, medicine, mathematics, etc.) were translated. In those years, the Greek works were directly translated from their original language, but it is known that the Arabic translations and also original works helped the Western scholars to learn especially mathematical treatises of Greek and Arabic origin, to understand astronomy and medicine based on the philosophical underpinnings of Aristotle and other Greek philosophers. For further information see, Mohammed Abattouy's "The Arabic-Latin Intercultural Transmission of Scientific Knowledge in Pre-Modern Europe: Historical Context and Case Studies," an article in *The Role of the Arab-Islamic World in the Rise of the West* which consists of articles giving information about the Islamic influence on Western civilisation. Detailed information about the relationship between the Arabic culture and Western culture is explained in the fourth chapter.

Israelis. Meeting the East changed the literary tradition, and for a long time, the Western poets developed their works with Muslim characters even though they presented non-Christians as pagans and the enemy of the Christians. Therefore, the historical background of the Muslim-Christian conflict was kept alive due to literature. As Edward Said states "the Orient is an integral part of European material civilisation and culture" (2), and on this account, traces of the East could be found in many of the conventionalised Western traditions and literature. For example, the *Song of Roland* or *Richard Coeur de Lyon* are romances where one can see the transactions between the Western and Eastern cultures through the Crusades. Moreover, the hostility fostered by the Crusades was provoked by the texts and took its place in the collective memory of the Christians, and transhistorical connection between the past and present was set up through the literary texts.

Memory transmission through theology was one of the essential discussions of the Middle Ages since the medieval philosophical views generally focused on theological existence and intuitive cognition as the requirement of individuality and knowledge. These perspectives aimed to question the essence of life and to prove the existence of God. Some of those philosophers such as John Duns Scotus (c. 1266 –1308) elaborated the connection between memory and intuitive cognition. Duns Scotus' ideas on memory are based on intuitive cognition; according to him, the act of 'remembering' has some phases and sensible memory related to a "remote object" can induce the intellectual memory which is based on a fact or a desire and which requires intellectual intuition of a proximate object. Scotus states that "if there is something in the mind that is the parent of a word [i.e., of an actual thought], it must be so through something that is internal or that exists in [intellective] memory. But there is no parent of a word unless memory has within itself the object present to the mind; otherwise, it will not be a parent" (187). Scotus emphasises that people cannot have any knowledge about something that they do

experience it personally or learn through intellective memory. With the intellective memory, the philosopher establishes a connection with the past actions and present situation as literary works do. For Scotus, "Remembering is cognition of some past act of the person remembering where the act is recognized as being past" (qtd. in Wolter 82). Therefore, certain objects and stories can recall certain historic events whose knowledge has been gained through memory transmission. The emphasis on Christianity in medieval romances utilizing religious wars such as the Crusades keeps the memory of Christ's Crucifixion and the sacrifices for Christianity alive.

Moreover, rewriting the battles in different forms and languages could be interpreted as a way of showing a yearning for the past. The magnificent eras of a particular society would be narrated with longing to the contemporary audience. Thus, nostalgia carries the previous cultural characteristics into the present and has an influence on the current society. Anna Tomczak declares the connection between yearning for the past and transhistorical rebuilding as follows: "Restorative nostalgia focuses on *nostos* (return home) and centres on the positive elements of the past simultaneously attempting to rebuild (or construct a new) the lost home. It is a form of cultural retreat concerned with tradition and continuity, a desire for a transhistorical reconstruction" (Tomczak 242). Tomczak, here, explains that nostalgia has a restorative aspect that helps societies to find their identities. Therefore, the re-narrated battles connect the past identity with the current one, and except for the emphasis on warrior identities of peoples, the transhistorical connection can be built with the reflection of the previous beliefs and traditions.

The nostalgic narratives also determine the traditional themes that would be revived in texts based on the translators' and authors' desire for a specific past *topos*. The desire reflected through the texts could vary, and so many feelings could be brought from the past. As Volčič states "[n]ostalgic visions establish an emotionally charged

relationship between an individual and the past insofar as nostalgia complements rather than replaces memory. As much as nostalgia expresses a love for the past, it can also serve as a vehicle for xenophobia, anger, fear, hatred, and anxiety" (25). Nostalgia, an integral part of memory, focuses on past feelings as well as on the historic events. The Crucifixion, for instance, was the most significant event in Christian history and the explicit or implicit association with that torture reminded the Christians to be ready to sacrifice their lives for their religion and land when the need arose. In addition, it could be said that the medieval texts revived hostility, a past antipathy towards a particular community, as well as courage. Sometimes the historic battles were rewritten with the contemporary enemy in mind, and through the texts, the past hatred was transferred towards the new opponent. After the First Crusade, the contexts of the stories were adapted, and the Muslims became the everlasting enemy of the Christians. The negative feelings and attitudes towards the Muslims persisted for a long time. The role of the Church in influencing local memory through the nostalgic attitudes is not in doubt:

> Until the Reformation, the Church's response to the challenge of Islam comprised, for the most part, polemical treatises that presented Islam as the arch-enemy of Christianity and explained the growth of that religion in terms of biblical eschatological prophecy. Medieval writers were mobilized to disseminate a distorted vision of Islam, depicting Muslim civilization with the most despicable and horrifying traits. (Guerin 41)

The antipathy for the Church against Islam developed into a negative understanding of all the Muslims and, consciously or unconsciously, literature was used as a means of delivering this view to all medieval societies. By taking into account the pressure of the Church in the Middle Ages, it could be assumed that the perspective of a higher council guided the collective memory and under this guidance of the Church, authors supplied

the enemy that society needed and led people to protect their lands and governments against any upcoming danger.

The birth of Christianity and Christian doctrines formed the vernacular and historical narratives. Language carries out cultural interaction through either intertextuality or translations. When the Middle Ages is considered, an official language cannot be expected, because in every land different communities speak their local dialect and it creates a vernacular, the daily language spoken by ordinary people. Hence, vernacular becomes the vehicle to reflect both the current daily lives and collective memory of society that dates back to common historic events. As a means of cultural transformation, the vernacular carries the historical transformation of society, and through the particular words, the same connotations attach to the same memory. In general, people tend to transmit their pain and trauma because they are the most personal problems that occupy an essential place in memory, and it is mostly the traumatic memories that show themselves in every piece of art.

Even in translations, personal pain find places through the chosen works or chosen words. Thus, sharing the same feelings bring people together and make them find these common perspectives from the same work, and the translated *topos* turns into social values. Transferring trauma is a matter of collective memory since "much narrative trauma circulated among the question and theological difference. Direct physical and psychological pain were often results of ideological struggles for power" (Labbie 250). After the emerging of Christianity, struggles between pagans and the followers of Christ, and even the Crucifixion itself, created such traumas in the collective memory of people, especially who shared the same historical and ideological background.[16] In the Middle Ages, the dominance of Biblical texts contributed to the collective memory with the

[16] For further information, Patricia A. DeMarco's "Cultural Trauma and Christian Identity in the Late Medieval Heroic Epic.

revival of the Crucifixion. Almost every text, even the literary ones, reminded the reader of Christ's pain and this traumatic experience was shared by all Christians. Alan Kirk and Tom Thatcher elaborate,

> social memory theory naturally intersects with several key issues in Christian origins: the early Christian memory of Jesus; the development and transmission of Jesus traditions; the impact of community experience on these memories and traditions; the commemorative rituals of the early communities; the significance of the shift from tradition to text in the composition of written Gospels; the diversity of early Christian thought; and the implications of all these issues for reconstructions of Jesus, Paul, and other founding figures of Christianity. (25)

Since Christ's Crucifixion plays a significant role in the adoption and spread of Christianity, the texts including information about Christ and Christianity, lead up to the traumatic rise of the religion. Through the texts, medieval literary traditions were developed on the basis of a struggle against those who denied Christianity. The struggle continued after the emergence of Islam. With the religious wars, and the everlasting problem of 'othering,' trauma remains in memories, because trauma, as Jeffrey Alexander states, "is not something naturally existing; it is something constructed by society" (7). Thus, linguistic and literary connections help the transference of this trauma; both written and oral languages prepare for establishing a "shared trauma" in local memory through cultural interpretation.

By way of the vernacular, both individual and collective memories are transferred to new generations, and it is a way of sharing the previous values of the land that has been home to people from many different races across the ages. Katarzyna Stadnik emphasises the importance of language as the vehicle of memory transfer and elaborates that "as a memory carrier uniting past and present generations, language can help community

members share knowledge across space and time, and thus negotiate the collective conceptual order before it is passed to subsequent generations of language users from the community" (Stadnik 137). The development of language and the external factors behind it allow for the discovery of the cultural influences on language and, as might be expected, on society. When flexibility and dialectical variety of language are considered, the vernacular texts elucidate the transcultural and transhistorical diversity via the allusions, allegories, imagery, classical symbolism and even the origin of the words. Alastair Minnis draws attention to the mission of the vernacular in cultural transmission and states: "the term 'vernacular' is far too potent to be strait-jacketed within the narrow sphere of language-transfer. Rather it can … be recognized as encompassing a vast array of acts of cultural transmission and negotiation, deviation and/or synthesis, confrontation and/or reconciliation" (*Translations of Authority* 16). Minnis' emphasis on the function of the vernacular demonstrates that in the Middle Ages, after years of the dominance of the oral tradition and spoken language, different cultural elements meet in the texts through translations from Latin or French into vernacular. Therefore, the text itself proves the diversity in culture as much as the social interactions.

The increasing impact of the translated texts in British literary history dates back to the ninth century. With the translations of Alfred the Great, the importance of the vernacular arose in English history, and the King helped to establish a unique English society. His aim was to create an English culture where the English language was used in spoken and written communication. For that reason, he objected to the Anglo-Latin traditions and ordered the Latin works, especially the Biblical texts, to be translated into Old English. In his translation of *Pastoral Care* written by Pope Gregory I, King Alfred realised that works written in the vernacular introduces the subject of effective learning among the general populace:

> Then I remembered how the law was first known in Hebrew, and again, when the Greeks had learnt it, they translated the whole of it into their own language, and all other books besides. And again the Romans, when they had learnt it, they translated the whole of it through learned interpreters into their own language. And also all other Christian nations translated a part of them into their own language. Therefore it seems better to me, if ye think so, for us also to translate some books which are most needful for all men to know into the language which we can all understand… (5-6)

This 'nationalistic' approach by King Alfred to translation opened the way for ecclesiastical deviations in vernacular, bearing the characteristics peculiar to Latin. For this reason, since the ninth century, many Latin works had been translated into Old English, and those translations had an enormous influence on the literary traditions and vernacular of English society.

Since every work of literature embraces diverse cultures, which directly or indirectly interact with the society in which the literary work is written, transculturalism as a methodological approach provides researchers with a broader perspective for thoroughly evaluating the culture of the Middle Ages, and for understanding medieval political, social and cultural development more rigorously than had been done in the past. According to Gunilla Lindberg-Wada, "transcultural literary studies could play a crucial role in the refurbishment of comparative literature by providing a deeper view of literary cultures of the world and by making them, and their interrelationships, more comprehensible to students of literature and to a wider audience" (3). This point of view shows that transcultural re-readings of literature enable researchers to find new information about the old works because of "what transculturality could mean in the literary context, that is, the acknowledgement of representatives of other cultures in their own terms, without imposing their own value on the foreign culture" (Classen,

"Transcultural Experiences" 680). Texts themselves explore other cultures and transmit the characteristics of those cultures by presenting their principles in the background. Thus, the traces of the other cultures in medieval literary works make possible the applicability of transcultural studies to the Middle Ages.

Therefore, the transcultural and hybrid Middle Ages is reflected in the literary works of that period; the social, cultural and religious products can be observed within the framework of transculturalism. Unlike multiculturalism, transculturalism brings the hidden details in cross-cultural interaction to the fore. Like transculturalism, transhistoricity crosses the borders of time and focuses on interwoven epochs; that is why the literary works, created with the *auctores*' cultural background, present the interconnection of culture, and as a consequence, history. Furthermore, literature, while merging the cultures, benefits from various elements such as intertextuality, allusions, collective/local memory, and nostalgia. All these elements are both the means of cultural and historical transformation of a particular society and the results of that change. In this sense, this study discusses every factor as a sign of the cross-cultural transmission in the texts to be analysed in the dissertation, and as the elements that have been affected during the historical, political and social conversion.

CHAPTER II

TRANSCULTURAL AND TRANSHISTORICAL PATTERNS IN THE *SONG OF ROLAND*

The anonymous work, the *Song of Roland,* is assumed to have been composed in the eleventh century by an Anglo-Norman poet. The *Song of Roland,* regarded as the origin of the *chansons de geste*, and thereby, romances of the category "matter of France," has been translated into many languages since the Middle Ages, and in a variety of medieval societies, the work was interpreted according to their cultural values. However, the first copy has never been discovered; as it is stated in the "Introduction," the oldest known copy of the work was found by chance in the Bodleian Library at Oxford University in the nineteenth century. The eleventh-century version, the Digby manuscript, was written in the Anglo-Norman dialect in the twelfth century in England, and since it is not the first copy of the work, some changes and the interpretation in accordance with the social and cultural circumstance seem inevitable. The dialect that appeared as a result of the Norman Conquest is the evidence of the hybrid structure of the British culture and literature. Therefore, the *Song of Roland* presents a multidimensional cultural change beginning with its language through to the plot.

As explained in the previous chapter, translation, interpretation and adaptation are means of establishing a bridge between societies and times, and transmission of the traditions was widespread in the medieval texts. Ruth Evans states that "in medieval histography, the concept of *translation* (transference) underwrote notions of empire via the "modernizing" narrative of conquest and displacement that was known as *translatio studii et imperii* … This discursive structure, which is essentially metaphoric, serves to define and reproduce cultural norms through translation and composition ("Historicizing Postcolonial Criticism" 367). Every translator, and every romancer in the medieval period rewrote the texts of other cultures and/or previous cultures in the light of their norms

because the target readers of the period, but above all, the dominant culture at the court, determined the course of translation. Within this context, this chapter discusses the transitions and transformations of the traditions through the *Song of Roland*, written as it was in a mixed society bearing transhistorical and transcultural interactions of both the English and the Normans. Therefore, it explores how the Norman culture penetrated the Saxon culture and created Anglo-Norman norms, how the French epics/romances affected the English narrative style and how the *Song of Roland* reflects the adapted traditions through military and religious elements. Moreover, the impact of collective memory and cultural trauma on the medieval texts is analysed with examples from the *Song*. Firstly, the study discusses the place of French literature in Britain.

2.1. Charlemagne Romances in Britain

As is known, the Norman Conquest had a significant role in British history. Even though the British had contact with the French people before the Conquest, the interaction was limited. After the Normans conquered Britain, they established their cultural hegemony. The dominance of the French language was undeniable, and they also brought their literary accumulation with them. With the cultural and governmental changes in the country, the Anglo-Norman period started. For this reason, the early Middle English romances were composed under the influence of French chivalric romances. In Britain, many works were rewritten in French, not in English in those days. The romance genre itself increased the impact of the French as medieval romance evolved in twelfth-century France (Barron 11). Even the first romances about the English heroes and some texts under the heading "matter of England" were written in France and in French. In Britain, that cultural diversity encountered the British heritage that already included the values of the Celtic, German and Scandinavian tribes among other tribes and/or communities. The multicultural structure of the society seen after the eleventh century broadened and a new cultural formation called Anglo-Norman culture appeared. After the Conquest, the new

generation, the “Anglo-Normans” made contributions to the already mixed culture and produced new cross-cultural literary works.

The penetrating process of the Normans into English society took some time yet, after that process, the English people were inevitably affected by the Normans. Moreover, that influence was not one-sided; the Old English tradition also had an influence on the Normans and their literary culture. As Ian Short states, “native traditions in the use of the vernacular as a language of instruction and the Old English cultivation of literary prose exerted some indirect influence on Anglo-Norman literature. The influence of French traditions on English literature, on the other hand, is clear not only in the formal sphere of rhyme and syllabic prosody, but also in matters of literary technique and themes” (210-11). Thus, both cultures set an example of transculturality with the mutual influences on each other and by managing to produce a new culture: “Anglo-Norman.” The cultural connection of both communities resulted in the famous Oxford manuscript of the *Song of Roland*:

> This confrontation with Anglo-Saxon literature may have inspired the Norman conquerors to have the *Chanson de Roland* written down, in order to commemorate their victory at Hastings and show that the ‘French’ (as *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* called the Normans) had something as good in their language. This is no more than a conjecture, but it has the merit of explaining why the earliest manuscript (dating from the twelfth century) of the *Chanson de Roland* is preserved in England and probably originated there. (Clanchy 218)

The development of the *chansons de geste* in Britain affected the English literary forms and many Old French epics were rewritten in the new language of the country. The construction of the Anglo-Norman dialect emerged after many linguistic transformations of the Norman language. Before the Normans came to Britain, their language had been

affected by their previous connections. Like many medieval European texts written in any language, the medieval French texts, e.g. *Vie de saint Alexis* and *Bestiaire*, a translation of Latin *Physiologus*, are also copies of Latin texts. Therefore, the French texts written in continental France brought a Latin influence into the culture that adapted the French literature. Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay explain

> In the Middle Ages the recording of any French text in writing meant aligning it, to some degree, with Latin culture since literacy was almost always taught through the medium of Latin, more was written in Latin than the vernacular, and the main business of *scriptoria* (workshops of scribes devoted to producing manuscripts), at least before the fourteenth century, was to copy Latin texts. (5)

Since Latin was the dominant language of medieval Europe, the vernacular of western societies was established in common points, and communication through literature could be improved in a relatively easy way. Nevertheless, "there was … not only continuity of culture between the ancient world and his [Chrétien de Troyes], but also a direct transfer of learning from one to the other – a cultural counterpart to the *translatio imperii* – from Greece to Rome and ultimately to the French-speaking world of the twelfth century" (Short 192). By the time the medieval French language had emerged as a close version of the modern French, the Franks had produced their own dialect under the influence of the Romans before the twelfth century.

It is known that "the Franks had been conquerors of a great part of Roman Gaul for more than three hundred years. Multitudes of Charlemagne's soldiers and servants must have spoken one of the dialects of the *lingua Romana*, and as we find that language so to speak in possession, as being vehicle of all the succeeding poetry" (O'Hagan 6-7). O'Hagan states that the Franks composed their works both in Teuton and Gaulish Latin

even in Charlemagne's time, and then, a mixed dialect *lingua Romana* appeared.[17] The *lingua Romana* had many varieties and expanded according to the communication with other societies. The German invasions in the northern part of France also affected the language. In Northern France, a dialect, known as *langue d'oïl*, was spoken whereas the southern people spoke *langue d'oc*. Then, in time, *langue d'oïl* became the Old French spoken from the eighth century to the fourteenth century in the northern part of the Kingdom of France.

The Old French, affected with the Germanic languages of the area where it was dominant, came to Britain with the Normans. When the Normans inhabited Britain, they did not easily conquer the culture, or naturally, the language. The Old French was never the single official language in the Kingdom of England, but after the Conquest, the Normans and Saxons needed to find common ground in order to communicate. The Latin and German origins in both languages provided an opportunity to create a common form of communication. Besides, with the need to transfer their literary tradition to each society, both the Normans and English formulated a new dialect. Ian Short mentions that requirement in his article and states that "the implications of the incomers' progressive bilingualism would be that, while their literature remained inaccessible to non-French speakers and was in this sense class-exclusive, the new Anglo-Norman English would increasingly have had access to texts delivered and written in English, which would thereby become a class-inclusive language" (205). The Anglo-Norman dialect consisted of lexical features from both English and French, and since both languages included Latin

[17] In the nineteenth century, Sir George Cornewall Lewis studied the origin and the dialects of Latin in his *An Essay on the Origin and Formation of the Romance Languages*. He discovered that *lingua Romana* is distinguished both from Latin and Teutonic, but a kind of union of both languages. Lewis emphasises that *lingua Romana* was "used by Lewis the Germanic in the oath of 842, and by Charles king of France in the treaty of 860" (29-30).

and German influences, the mixed dialect could easily create a link between the English and Norman societies.

The vernacular of a society, while demonstrating the cultural improvement and traces of other cultures, also helps a certain language to dominate a whole period. In the Middle Ages, the French language gained such dominance, and with its multilingual structure, it became the means of transmission of culture. In this sense, Evans declares, "within medieval Europe, the only vernacular with cultural authority across the whole continent was French" ("Historicizing Postcolonial Criticism" 366). Thus, even if the Normans had not brought their language to the country, the French language would still have invaded Britain with its texts, since medieval French literature, together with the French language, spread far and wide throughout Europe. However, when the language came to Britain, it could not totally establish hegemony over the English language. The two cultures produced mutual products and culturally supported each other. The Digby manuscript of the *Song of Roland*, which became the main source of many Charlemagne romances, is the result of that unity. Even after the decline of the hegemony of the Norman influence in the fourteenth century due to Chaucer's contribution to the 'national' literariness the *Song of Roland* and the other French epics such as *Otinel* continued to inspire the English poets, and many romances were written about the adventures of Charlemagne and his knights.[18] As Michelle Warren emphasises, the multiculturality of

[18] Charlemagne romances were popular during the Middle Ages because of their stories full of victories against the Saracens. Jace Stuckey states that "Many vernacular epics in the early to mid-twelfth-century were loosely based on historical traditions, and they often mirrored the crusades directly" (140). The enemy is always a Saracen hero, and usually, a war the war waged against him and his army is narrated, and some romances end with that Saracen hero's conversion to Christianity. Apart from Roland, many other knights of Charlemagne stand out in these romances. For that reason, also the Charlemagne romances have been divided into broad categories according to the heroes:

a) The Firumbras Group: romances inspired and derived from *Fierabras*, a chanson de geste. The romances in these categories are *The Sowdon of Babylon*, *Sir Firumbras*, and Caxton's *Charles the Grete*.
b) The Otuel Group: romances derived from a chanson de geste known as *Otinel*. *Otuel and Roland*, *The Siege of Milan*, *Roland and Vernagu*, *Otuel a Knight*, and *Duke Roland* and *Sir Otuel of Spain* are the romances in this group.
c) Miscellaneous Romances: They are the romances cannot be included in these other groupings. *The Tale of Ralph Collier* is included in this section (Norako).

the work starts with its Anglo-Norman dialect which does not have "a direct connection to continental France" (290). For that reason, as a work written in Britain in a language established with the contributions of the English, the *Song of Roland* could not be studied by ignoring the British influences.

The mixed structure of the language proves the cultural variety in the *Song of Roland*. O'Hagan states in the "Introduction" to his translation of the *Song of Roland*, "the language of the 'Roland' is the *langue d'oil* -the language of the north and centre of France, as distinguished from the *langue d'oc* of the south" (22). Within this context, its composition process in the Anglo-Norman society changed the perspectives on the work. As Léon Gautier states in the "Introduction" of the modern French translation of the *Song of Roland* "the dialect of a manuscript is the reality of the copyist, not the author" (lxviii). As in translation studies, the copying of works some additions for one reason or another. The multilingual vocabulary of the *Song* confirms that the Oxford manuscript is the product of both English and French cultures due to the Anglo-Norman poet. The critics studying the language of the *Song* determined that despite the fact that the poem was predominantly written in the Norman dialect, some words derived from Anglo-Saxon. O'Hagan, for instance, gives the word "algier" as an example of the Anglo-Saxon dialect; the English word javelin in the line "Arrows, barbs, darts and javelins in the air" (CLIV. 2075) is claimed to be a derivative of the Anglo-Saxon "ategar" (24). In this regard, it cannot be expected that the *Song* is pure French heroism; it is evident that even if the poet was a Norman and moved to Britain after the Conquest, he composed the work under the influence of the Anglo-Saxon culture.

Apart from the language of the poem, the original measure of the *Song of Roland* displays the English influence to which some contemporary French translators do not pay attention. When the metre of the poem is studied, the English origin in the metrical style and rhyming patterns in the *Song of Roland* is clear since the French Alexandrine metre

is syllabic while the English metre is based on the accentual syllable, as is seen in the following stanza:

Franc s'en irunt en France la lur *tere*.	"Franks will retire to France their own terrain.
Quant cascuns iert à sun meillur repaire,	When they are gone, to each his fair domain,
Carles serai ad Ais, à sa capele.	In his Chapelle at Aix will Charlès stay,
A seint Michiel tiendrat mult halte *feste*.	High festival will hold for Saint Michael.
Viendrat li jurz, si passerat li lermes.	Time will go by, and pass the appointed day;
N'orrai de nus paroles ne *nuveles*.	Tidings of us no Frank will hear or say.
Li reis est fiers, e sis curages pesmes:	Proud is that King, and cruel his courage;
De noz ostages ferat trenchier les lestes;	From th' hostages he'll slice their heads away
Asez est mielz que les chiefs il i *perdenl*	Better by far their heads be shorn away,"
(IV. 50-58) (emphasis added)	

O'Hagan explores the similarities in the metre of the *Song* and the Middle English poems, and states that "the metre is decasyllabic, the same as in Chaucer; the same which we have preserved in our heroic measure, but which the French, unfortunately, as many have thought, afterwards discarded for the longer Alexandrine" (26). The English poets omit the extra syllables and if the line needs a syllable, they provide it with an accent on the word.

The English poetic heritage brought the Celtic influence, and as is seen in the previous stanza, the rhyming in the poem reflects the Celtic style. The imperfect assonant rhyme of the *Song* such as "Vele," rhyming with "perdent," and "tere" with "feste," is in the tradition of Celtic poetry.[19] O'Hagan emphasises that "this assonant rhyme, which

[19] Rhyme patterns of the Celts are different from the Ancient and the rest of the European literature, and they had influence on many European pieces of literature in the early medieval period. In his study on the Celtic literature, Matthew Arnold declares that rhyme is a poetic device and that English literature adopted this tradition from Celtic poetry. Arnold states that "rhyme -the most striking characteristics of our modern poetry as distinguished from that of the ancients, and a main source, to our poetry, of its magic and charm, of what we call its *romantic element*, - rhyme itself, all the weight of evidence tends to show, comes into our poetry from the Celts" (159).

quite satisfies an uneducated ear, appears to have been universal among European nations in the early stage of their civilization. It is almost only species of rhyme known in Celtic poetry, and it long remained a feature even of Irish ballads written in the English tongue" (26). The Celtic culture invaded many European cultures in the early medieval period and with its distinguished literary devices gained a place in Western literature.[20] Maria Tymoczko elaborates the expansion of the Celtic literature in Europe and explains how Old French literature met the Celtic literature as follows;

> The literature of Byronic Celts (rather than Irish literature) was not influential in the twelfth century and the later Middle Ages during the second major period of the European absorption of Celtic literature. During that period Old French culture, the dominant vernacular culture of Europe, came into close contact with Brytonic cultures (the Celts of Wales, Cornwall, Devon, and Brittany) as a result of conquest and other forms of cultural interchange. (161)

The interaction between the Old French culture and the Celtic culture indirectly took place. As the French became familiar with the Celtic literary traditions before the Norman Conquest, the cultural diversity in the style of the poem could be borrowed from the original copy of the work. However, it is evident that the Anglo-Norman poet keeps known characteristics of both British and French cultures.

The texts of the Middle English period demonstrate that even though the rewritings of the Norman texts were detailed with the English culture, the history of French culture was not abandoned. As much as British history, the history of the French and the establishment of the Kingdom of France reveals the transcultural layers in the *Song of Roland*. Warren focuses attention on the Germanic origin of the French and states "Franks

[20] The influence of Celtic literature will be discussed in detail in the next chapter as the significant influence in Arthurian romances.

could function as the ethnic predecessors of both the French and the Germans" (290). The Frankish Empire that was the previous unity of the Franks consisted of many communities from Roman Gaulish to Germanic tribes that inhabited the French land for a long time and formed the medieval Frankish culture. In her article "Medievalism and the Making of Nations," Warren declares the cultural variety reflected in the *Song of Roland* and how the nineteenth-century nationalism covers that variety:

> As early as 1831, Edgar Quinet[21] identified epics as repositories of ancient Gaulish culture; later analyses of the *Roland* minimize its debts to Germanic and Arabic cultures in order to reinforce purely "French" genealogy. These discourses of ethnic nationalism deploy colonialist metaphors as they deny European cultural hybridity and exclude "foreign" elements from national foundations. (Warren 292)

Historians such as Quinet were aware of the fact that the literary texts were imbued with the previous works and shaped by the contemporary culture. As Quinet mentions, Gaulish culture is such a wide region, home to Celtic tribes, Romans, Germans and Franks that the epic tradition brings many cultures together.[22] Thus, the *Song of Roland*, as the product of that literary heritage, connects the ancient Gaulish culture and contemporary Frankish culture.

[21] The French historian and poet Edgar Quinet (1803-1875) studied Christian mythology; therefore, he was familiar with the medieval texts. The historian witnessed the French Revolution and published some works on it.

[22] Greg Woolf, by claiming that each region witnessed the creation of distinct civilizations that reflected their various predecessors studied the cultural change in the Gallo-Roman period. He mapped the cultural change and drew the outline of the cultural geography of Gauls and Romans. Except for the geographical width of the Gaul, expanding from Germany to Iberia, Woolf considers the trade roads and communication of the Romans with the other societies and puts forward the extent of the cultural change. For further information, see, Woolf's *Becoming Roman. The Origins of Provincial Civilization in Gaul*, chapter 4, Mapping Cultural Change.

As Warren emphasises, the multicultural aspect is naturally seen in the *Song of Roland*. However, it is also seen that the English had already adopted the *Song* and many other Norman works as their own literary products. In the English translation of the *Song of Roland*, Douglas D. R. Owen states "the Franks had their own heroic songs, for which Charlemagne himself had some affection; but by about 1100 when it is generally supposed, our *Song of Roland* was given its present form, the ancestral legends were being handed down in the French tongue and given the characteristic form of *chansons de geste*" (2). The English translator mentions the *Song* as if it was their work, due to the existence of the oldest surviving manuscript being in Oxford. Like the *Song of Roland*, many French adaptations in the Middle English period were interiorised in the 'national' English culture by being enhanced by English customs.

After the twelfth century, the English started to show they could compose better works than the French and the well-known medieval "English" romances were written by improving and expanding the narrative styles of the Charlemagne stories. During this period, many Anglo-Norman romances about the chivalric adventures of Charlemagne and his knights were written. Nevertheless, contrary to the English people's national adoption of the works written in Britain, the Anglo-Norman works or the Middle English ones never became completely English. While rewriting the Norman poems, such as *King Horn* and *Havelok the Dane*, in English, the English romancers consciously or unconsciously protected some characteristics of the rhyming techniques of the Anglo-Norman poetry. Many romances written in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries show these kinds of similarities with the Anglo-Norman poetry.[23] Moreover, the literary works after

[23] Both *Havelok the Dane* and *King Horn* are the adaptations of some earlier Anglo-Norman poems. The poets, while re-writing the stories, adapt the literary styles of the works, as well. For further information, see. W. R. J. Barron's *Medieval English Romance*.
For instance, in *Havelok the Dane*, there is an irregular rhyming schedule. The Celtic tradition is seen in Anglo-Norman poetry and even in the Middle English version of the romance, the poets keep the Anglo-French words to create a rhyme, and in some lines, the Norse words were used instead of the English words to maintain rhyming. Walter W. Skeat studies all the rhyming patterns and spelling deviations in different manuscripts of the romance and the scholar concludes that many of the "earlier MSS., especially

the Anglo-Norman period seem more 'French' than the previous works. Barron emphasises that "for a century … until the Norman dialect of the invaders took on a distinctive insular form, no clear division can be made between literature produced in northern France and in England" (Barron 48). The existence of the Norman dialect in the country became the most significant indicator of the changing culture. The Normans had many stories that affected the English literature, but they did not write them down until they invaded Britain. Therefore, the literary French language was the transcultural element of Britain since "French first developed as a written language not in France, but in England in the century after the Norman Conquest" (Clanchy 18). By the time of the Conquest, French was one of the vernaculars spoken in the Kingdom of France and in the Kingdom while Latin was preferred in written documents. Until the French language gained dominance throughout the country, the Normans continued to introduce their legends and epics to the English.

The common religion and enemy of the English and Normans eased the Norman influence on the English. It seems that after they regarded the French people as the Knights of Christianity, not the soldiers of the Kingdom of France, the Norman culture gained acceptance. The British people adopted many French values and their literary works, for they were seen as the products of a Christian society. Robert Warm considers the transformation of the Charlemagne romances into British literature as a consequence of Christian unity:

> The Middle English Charlemagne romances are celebrating heroes who happen to be French, rather than French heroes who happen to be Christian. They are

those of the thirteenth century, abound with spellings which can only be understood rightly when we observe that the scribe was of Norman birth, and more accustomed to the spelling of Anglo-French than to that of the native language of the country, which he had acquired with some difficulty, and could not always correctly pronounce" (xxxviii). The following lines show that the English poet preferred the Anglo-French spelling; "And died greyþe a super *riche*, / Also he was no with *chiche*" (1762-63; emphasis added). For further information see, Walter W. Skeat's edition of *the Lay of Havelok the Dane* and Dennis Freeborn's *From Old English to Standard English*.

> deliberately ignoring the deadly rivalry between the two countries, and constructing an idealised vision of the past, within which true Christian knights fought the infidel rather than one another. (87)

Warm bases his argument around Christian ideals and supports it with the increasing Crusade propagandas, but does not ignore the current Anglo-French hostility. During that period, the acculturation process of the British and French conflicted with their 'national identities.'[24] Two dominant societies on the continent came together with mutual religious interests that introduced the subject of fighting shoulder to shoulder for the same religion. After they managed to establish that connection, the literature and vernacular of the period began to reflect the French traditions and discourse. The Middle English Charlemagne romances, therefore, by merging the British and French national benefits, "were produced in order to counter the increasing obsolescence of unitary Christendom by fostering a sense of metanational identity" (Warm 99). Within this context, the heroes of these romances direct their hatred towards the chief enemy, the Saracens, in other words, the 'pagans' who do not serve a Christian god.

Even though the hostility between the theists of the two religions formed the basis of some medieval texts, the Muslims also affected their national identity. It is claimed that the word "Frank" was used for the first time by the Muslims and their Greek neighbours to name the people from northern France. In the Mediterranean culture, a word was produced for their opponents according to the region from which they came. In the *Song of Roland*, the French are named as the Franks, and it seems that the French and Normans adopted that form of address. In this respect, Sharon Kinoshita, by starting from

[24] In this period, as mentioned in the first chapter, the use of the word 'nation' is paradoxical since a national consciousness was not established. However, England and France as the dominant powers of the medieval time had already laid a national foundation before determining the boundaries of their nation-states. However, it has to be recognised that "the nation-state as we know it today did not then exist" (Barron 11).

Robert Bartlett's view in *The Making of Europe*, elaborates the origin of the word "Frank" that is used for the French:

> The name itself was originally an ethnic term, and the crusaders themselves first used it in a narrow sense to mean "men from northern France." It was the Greeks and Muslims who began using it as a general term for all westerners, but the westerners soon found it convenient to adopt this broader usage for themselves. … In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the designation Frank "implied modernity and power." It came to refer to men from the "core" of the former Carolingian Empire. (87)

In fact, the word "Frank" was not used by the Muslims for the first time; the Franks were the members of the Germanic tribes that settled down in northern Europe. After the Germans invaded the Roman Empire, they established a Germanic Frankish empire. That empire expanded through central Europe and conquered the lands of today's France, Italy and the Netherlands.[25] The word "Franks" in the *Song of Roland* is used independently from the Muslims. The poet must have consciously referred to the French as the Franks by considering the pre-Carolingian period and their German-Frankish origin. However, in general, the Muslims and the Byzantines, who had contact with the westerns, "seem to have labelled any westerners 'Franks'" (Bartlett) in the tenth and eleventh centuries. As Bartlett and Kinoshita explore, the Muslims and Greeks did not coin the word, but they broadened its meaning. By the thirteenth century, the use of 'Franks' spread to Scotland.[26]

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[25] For further information, see, Avner Falks's *Fanks and Saracens: Reality and Fantasy in the Crusades*, Chapter III – Frankish myths of origin.
Robert Bartlett gives information about the Germanic ancestors of the Franks and the usage of the word "Frank" in terms of "modern" people from northern France. See, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change, 950-1350*.

[26] The French language itself reflects the specific use of the word "Frank," as well. The words France and French derived from "Frank" and except for the linguistic deviation of the word, the multicultural background of the Franks also affected the language. Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay reveal the accumulative structure of French, by stating that "[i]n the northern part of the Roman province of Gaul

Glyn Burgess, in the "Introduction" to his *Roland* translation, by declaring the variety in the use of the name Franks, remarks that the Christians are referred to both as Franks ("Franks will retire to France their own terrain," IV. 50) and the French ("The Frankish host you'll see them all away," IV. 49)[27] (20). However, the difference in the use of that word is not that certain. In some parts, the poet uses the word "Franks" to refer precisely to the French as in the following lines: "Then turned away the Baivers and Germans / And Poitevins and Bretons and Normans. / Fore all the rest, 'twas voted by the Franks" (CCLXXXIX, 3960-2). However, the Saracens generally address their opponents as the Franks without any exception. The Frankish Empire consisted of many regions and communities, and as Burgess mentions, in the poem, the variety of the territories conquered by Charlemagne is emphasised. Nevertheless, those territories given by the poet include the areas that were never conquered by Charlemagne nor by any Frankish emperors. The poet, for instance, refers to the Bretons as the subjects of Charlemagne ("The sixth column is mustered of Bretons," CCXXI. 3052), and many other regions such as Scotland, Ireland and Constantinople (CLXXII. 2320-36). It is known that Charlemagne did not conquer these territories, and some of them were not even under the rule of the Carolingian dynasty even after Charlemagne. Such addition could be the poet's ignorance, yet throughout the poem, the Muslims simply call their opponents the 'Franks.' As the poet pays attention to that reference in the Muslims' speeches, it is evident that the generalisation of the Saracens is also adopted by the Westerners. On the battlefields, like the Westerners, the Muslims do not care with whom they fight, and all enemies from the West are considered Franks. The same prejudice is valid for the

Latin underwent the influence of a Celtic 'substrate' (largely lexical), then a Germanic 'superstrate' brought by invading tribes, notably the Franks, who had a major impact on pronunciation, vocabulary and syntax, and who gave France its name ('Frankia')" (2).

[27] The lines are taken from Charles Scott Moncrieff's translation since Burgess cites from the French version of these lines in his explanation. In line 49, both Burgess and Moncrieff prefer the word "Frankish;" however, the poet uses the word "Franceis," which means "French" in Old French (See, Einhorn's *Old French: A Concise Handbook*, p. 144).

Christians since they address all the Muslims as 'Saracens.' With these forms of address, both East and West create a general perception in their cultures, and by transmitting those notions in their literary heritage, they contribute to the cultural transaction.

The religious references in the *Song of Roland* come into prominence, and those references prevent the work from being secular. The holiness of Christianity is associated with the ideologies of the Crusades, and the existence of the eternal enemy of the Christians, Muslim pagans dating back to the Carolingian Empire. It is obvious that the poet does not aim to compose an objective and secular poem purified from the prejudiced Christian perception, and many other versions of the *Song*, written after the Digby manuscript, demonstrate that interpretations of the poem have usually been analysed under the shadow of the Crusades. However, as a historian and expert on medieval English literature, Laura Ashe elaborates that the *Song of Roland* presents a secular Christendom, although its divinity is not ignored:

> The Roland, perhaps more than the later chansons - which are riven by the doubts of conflict and rebellion - precisely takes up these unifying themes which ideologically connected the First Crusade with the Carolingian empire, to offer a completed and coherent depiction of a society which, without contradiction, fulfils its secular and religious goals, celebrating a Christendom secular but divine. ("A Prayer and a Warcry" 353-354)

She emphasises the relatively laic narrative, yet the significance of Christianity is still evident in the work. As Ashe points out, the ideological background of the Franks is reflected even after the Carolingian Empire.[28] Thus, by bringing in the eighth-century

[28] The Carolingian Empire was named after Charles the Great, also known as Charlemagne, who was crowned Roman Emperor in 800. Charlemagne expanded the boundaries of the empire during his reign, and he is known for his battles with the Iberian Saracens in Spain. Even before his coronation, in the last period of the eighth century, Charlemagne gained victories against the Arabs in Spain. For further information see, Roger Collins' *Charlemagne*, chapter 4 – Italy and Spain.

conflict with the Iberian Basques, the Roland poet revives the history, and with an updated animosity, reawakens the spirit of the Crusades. Through the transhistorical transmission, the Islam-Christianity conflict is kept alive, and the work, with a nationalistic perspective, recalls Charlemagne's victory against the Muslims and affects the historical transition.

In the early twelfth century, after the transformation of *chansons de geste* in Britain and naturally, with the influence of the Crusades, romances narrated more heroic and 'bloody' stories that fostered the fever of national or religious struggle. The romances in the matter of France usually narrate French history; that is why the new form of narrative in the twelfth century analysed under the headings of *chanson de geste* are history-writings as they reveal the truth in many aspects (Kay 41). Thus, the *Song of Roland*, as one of the oldest stories of the *chansons de geste*, narrates a contemporary hostility in the light of a historic war in which the opponents are all different. In the twelfth century, the text was used as a means of the propaganda to keep alive the motivation of the Crusades that lasted for a long time in the medieval period. As an umbrella plot, the adventures of Charlemagne and Roland were the subjects of many romances in that period and the source text *Song of Roland*, hence, contributed to the transhistorical process. The transmission between the past and the present provides the transcultural exchanges by bringing the spirit of the Crusades with various adaptations and rewriting of the Charlemagne stories, including 'bloody' battles against the Muslims, known as the pagans.

Charlemagne and his family attempted to revive the Roman Empire and to establish an *Imperium Christianum*. The universal influence of the concept survived after the Carolingian Empire and, in accordance with this purpose, the struggle with the non-Christians, especially with the Muslims, continued, and the conflict turned into the Crusades in the eleventh century. For further information about the impact of the Carolingian dynasty, see, Herbert Schutz's *The Medieval Empire in Central Europe: Dynastic Continuity in the Post-Carolingian Frankish Realm, 900-1300*.

2.2. Meeting the Muslims/Pagans in the *Song of Roland*

The updated enemy in the *Song of Roland* in accordance with the political situation of the period reflects the canonical understanding of Islam which changed over three hundred years with the new invasions and occupations. In the work, the enemy or time is no concern of the poet, the main point is to deliver a heroic story, as Cooks states, "neither does it matter precisely who the Saracens were, or that the Arabs of Spain were not all Charles's enemies in the eighth century. The poem was written about soldiers, and for better or worse, soldiers are not concerned with the ultimate origins of evil" (210). The *Song* puts forward the heroic actions, which is why the military strategies on the battlefields have importance for the poet in his narration. Apart from what is narrated, how they are narrated helps the researchers to find the focus of the work.

The anachronistic details of the *Song* reveal the cultural transactions that have been established for centuries. In fact, not every item of anachronistic information in the work reflects transcultural or transhistorical exchange among societies. Nevertheless, some points demonstrate that the French culture borrows certain characteristics from other cultures. Robert Francis Cook emphasises that "the characters of *the Song of Roland* are all alike, whether pagan or Christian, Saracen or 'Frank.' It is true that both groups are equally dedicated to warfare and that they appear to belong to societies organized in the same way - the way familiar to the poet and his hearers. They dress alike, use the same equipment, and often talk alike" (4). The critic elaborates that the pagans and the Franks, though they have differences, even look alike at some points. The Muslims, whom the Christians called 'pagans,' lived in the Iberian Peninsula for a long time and many Muslims were in contact with the Christians on the same continent. As they lived in the same part of Europe, interaction between the two cultures - Christian and Muslim - was inevitable. However, the basis of the cultural transaction is not restricted to the Muslims having lived in Europe; historical documents prove that the Franks adopted some features

from the Saracens during and after the Crusades, and they were naturally impacted by the communities that they colonised while crusading. R. C. Smail summarises the colonial attack and interaction process of the French and the Syrians during the First Crusade:

> The French have a genius for colonization …, and even in those lands they have lost, their name and, above all, the justice of their rule have never been forgotten. So it is in Syria. The French were beloved because they did not, although conquerors, remain aloof from the people over whom they ruled. They adopted their dress and manners, learned their language, maintained with them close and friendly relations. The result was the intermarriage of East and West. The offspring was not only 'une civilization originale,' but also 'une nation franco-syrienne.' (42)

As a tactic of crusading, the French learned many Eastern customs and their assimilation had an influence on their storytelling and way of developing the plots of the works. Above all, they formed their Muslim enemy in their literature, according to what they learned at the Crusades. The Saracens' method of attacking in the *Song of Roland* gives clues of the Eastern impact on the French. As a story about the historic war, the poet benefits from contemporary military tactics while updating the enemy.

People engaged in wars naturally learn from each other how to win a battle; and at this point, in order to transmit the chivalric deeds of the knights, literature helps to prove how bravely they fought. It could be said that many battles take their places in the local memory through the poems, romances or epics of the medieval period repeating the stories of how those heroes improved the literary cultures. To some extent, war or any kind of struggle between societies forms a narrative and leads to transculturality. Maurice Keen states that "war is thus central to the narrative political story of the middle ages. It is also central to their cultural history" (3). In this sense, the political or military struggles

of societies introduce new cultures. While the success of the emperors is made into a legend, through the battle scenes, literary tradition contributes to the political development of the societies. The *Song of Roland* is a literary product of such a military success; Charlemagne and Roland's achievement at the Battle of Roncevaux and the Battle of Hastings and the Crusades improves the plot, and the attacks of the opponents are conveyed to the readers.

In the *Song of Roland,* the story is based on the war that broke out as a result of the devious plans of Ganelon and the pagan King Marsile. The seven-year siege of the Muslims in Saragossa is not explained, yet the last attempt of the Muslims to defeat Charlemagne's army becomes prominent in the narrative. Through the betrayal, the battle demonstrates the different aspects of cultural and historical traditions that connect various societies and times. In their plans, Ganelon expects to take his revenge on his stepson, Roland, whereas King Marsile would defeat Charlemagne by attacking his weak point. King Marsile asks Ganelon how he could kill Roland and Ganelon explains how Charlemagne and his soldiers will leave Saragossa:

> Answers him Guenes:[29] "That will I soon make clear:
> The King will cross by the good pass of Size,
> A guard he'll set behind him, in the rear;
> His nephew there, count Rollant,[30] that rich peer,
> And Oliver, in whom he well believes;
> Twenty thousand Franks in their company.
> Five score thousand pagans upon them lead,
> Franks unawares in battle you shall meet,
> Bruised and bled white the race of Franks shall be;

[29] Ganelon.
[30] Roland.

……

So, first or last, from Rollant you'll be freed. (XLIV. 582-593)

Before leaving Saragossa, Charlemagne asks a group of soldiers to protect them while passing through the valleys. Roland's stepfather Ganelon invites Roland to put himself forward as the commander of the rear guard to put his plan into action. Attacking the rear guard at a war became a relatively common tactic in the Middle Ages and historical documents prove that such an attack was peculiar to the Muslims, especially the Turks whom the French met during the Crusades. The text was composed after the First Crusade and contains some details that the Franks learned from that battle. Smail explains the military strategies of the Crusaders and their opponents in detail and elaborates the interaction among the belligerent powers:

> The Turks used their mobility to attack an enemy and to force him to fight on the march. This is possible only when the attacker is able to move faster and further that his opponent. It was a method of warfare new and particularly vexatious to the Franks, who liked before fighting to marshal their squadrons and to undertake the contest in good order. When they attacked a marching column, they always made their main effort against its rear. (80)

Smail summarises the Turkish military attack and emphasises that the Franks encountered these tactics for the first time. To defeat their new enemies, the Franks developed new strategies and, to some extent, adopted their enemies' way of fighting. In accordance with the historical facts, the poet of the *Song of Roland,* accredits such an attack to the Muslim opponents of Charlemagne. By narrating the details about the battlefields and military tactics, the *Roland* poet increases his work's reliability and his narrative gives information about a historic event, and the interpretation of this work would lead the successors of a community to learn such mixed military tactics. In the *Song* example, the military detail

does not reveal a direct Muslim influence on the Franks, and readers do not read them as being the influence of other societies; yet the historical documents prove that the French adopted a similar tactic in their wars. Moreover, some literary documents show that the *Roland* poet joined the Battle of Hastings by singing the *Song* in front of the army[31] and, within this context, it might be assumed that he narrated what he saw at the battlefields. Therefore, through a martial tactic of this sort, the connection between the French and the Muslims can be established and it is works such as the *Song of Roland* that enable such cultural and social influences.

Battles are highlighted in the Charlemagne romances; for this reason, the dialogues or actions that lead the characters to the battlefields give clues to the historical and cultural transformation of the societies. The soldiers that fight both for the Franks and Saracens help the reader discover the past transmission. Blancandrin, King Marsile's advisor, "a pagan very wise," advised the pagan king to pay bribes to Charlemagne to persuade him to leave Saragossa. His speech includes some details about military service both in the West and East and it is clear how cultures arrive at the same defence method:

> And thus he [Blancandrin] spoke: "Do not yourself affright!
> Yield to Carlun, that is so big with pride,
> Faithful service, his friend and his ally;
> Lions and bears and hounds for him provide,
> Thousand mewed hawks, sev'n hundred camelry;
> Silver and gold, four hundred mules load high;
> Fifty wagons his wrights will need supply,

[31] A minstrel "went in front of the Norman Army at the Battle of Hastings in 1066, throwing his sword in the air and singing the *Song of Roland*" (Chesterton ix)

Till with that wealth he *pays his soldiery*.[32] (III. 27-34) (emphasis added)

The reference to paying the soldiers proves the existence of mercenaries in the Middle Ages. Those soldiers are not a new concept for medieval people. Since they have been usual across the ages, in texts, the poets do not need to explain their origin or background. In medieval European societies and Arabic cultures, the Kings paid soldiers to fight on their side. The significant point in the poem is that "the poet probably lived at a time when soldiers were already being paid in order to assure a ready fighting force not dependent on the various conditions placed on feudal duty" (Cook 5). The historical documents reveal that since Ancient times, kings have hired soldiers when they could not raise their military forces or did not have enough soldiers to fight in a war and, as Cook states the *Roland* poet must have witnessed such a period during which the emperors/commanders hired soldiers. At this point, how the mercenary tradition reached England in the Anglo-Norman period can be discussed.

The texts written before the Norman Conquest show that there were no appropriate words to describe the notion of 'hiring' in the vernacular of Britain. The concept of 'being hired' was not introduced either in military survive or in any occupation in that period. The use of such words was highly limited, and all those words appeared in Anglo-Norman society after the increase in the translations:

> Terms for hired labor appear relatively rarely in Anglo-Saxon literature, and then mostly in late texts, which may reflect the generally uncommercialized character of the English economy before the mid tenth century. *Celmertmonn* and *esne-*

[32] In the modern English translation by Glyn Burgess, he prefers using the word mercenary but in the Old French version the poet emphasises the act of paying soldiers.

man,[33] for instance, are found only in translations of the Vulgate, and one suspects that may have been coined for that purpose. (Abels 144)

Richard Abels, by focusing on the etymology of the words, points out the cultural influences on language, and draws attention to the negative meaning of the words for 'being hired.' Before the eleventh century in Anglo-Saxon society, fighting for a king did not depend on economic conditions; the king formed his military power and, within the feudal framework, the soldiers were given a share. However, mercenary service was carried out not only in medieval times but also in the Ancient times. Through the translations, English society enhanced not only its vocabulary but also the new systems that were adapted to their social lives.

The historical transmission of the mercenary system proves that interactions through the wars contributed to the defence system of the societies; therefore, literature developed in the light of these historical records reflect such details. The written documents related to wars foster the transmissions of cultural or social characteristics; as the first literary texts are considered, it is clear that the main themes of those works are wars. Many legends and epics, even the ones produced in the oral tradition periods, narrate heroic stories about historic wars. Thus, the spreading of the works of literature helps other communities to learn from the cultures established even in distant lands. Within this context, the military tactics in the *Song of Roland* lead medievalists to look at the past to determine the transhistorical interactions among the cultures. The historical documents demonstrate that in different forms, the kingdoms and empires used 'paid military service' at the battles.[34] The evidence of the mercenary service proves that no

[33] Both words mean "hireling" in the Old English.

[34] The origin of the mercenary system goes back to Ancient Egypt in the twenty-fourth century BC, and this order crossed many cultures and times, and then reached the Frankish society. Some sources date mercenaries back to Ancient Egypt; Kamose, one of the pharaohs of Ancient Egypt, used "tribal mercenary troops" at the battle against the Hyksos, the foreigners having occupied their land in the seventeenth century BC. While in another study, Stephen Morillo discovers older evidence of the use of

matter in which year it appeared for the first time, the important point is that this military group made an impact around the world, by expanding from the East.

Another aspect of the mercenary system is its multinational structure; in the Middle Ages, with the rise of the Roman Empire, military achievements depended on mercenaries that consisted of soldiers from different regions. Saunders, Le Saux and Thomas elaborate on that new military structure and emphasise the multicultural dynamics of the Norman Conquest "the eleventh century saw the rise of a new militant people, the Normans, who collected as mercenaries from France, northern Italy and Normandy itself" (4). As a multicultural community, the Normans conquered many lands with the help of the soldiers from different societies and by expanding the special borders, they welcomed many other cultural elements. As a consequence of the cultural variety, they introduced a new "transcultural" society which affected other cultures after every occupation. Therefore, that new military group consisting of the diverse mercenary system was applied to social life, and the hybrid structure of the societies was reflected in literature. Throughout the *Song of Roland*, the lands conquered by Roland or Charlemagne and the soldiers hired from other lands are repeatedly emphasised; "Saxons, Baivers, Lotherencs and Frisouns, / Germans he calls, and also calls Borgounds; / From Normandy, from Brittany and Poitou" (CCLXVII. 3700-2). Thus, the poem proves the multicultural structure of the Frankish Empire and the mercenary system that they used

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mercenaries than the ones at the Ancient Egyptian battles. In his article, "Mercenaries, Mamluks and Militia towards a Cross-Cultural Typology of Military Service," the researcher outlines the mercenaries' movement crossing the boundaries and claims that in the second half of the twenty-fourth century BC, the Akkadian Empire hired a paid 'captain' (243).

Mark Healy explores the period of the New Kingdom of Egypt and discovers the military strategies used in Ancient Egypt even before the New Kingdom period. For further information, see his book *New Kingdom Egypt*, chapter "The Rule of the Hyksos."

Alan Axelrod follows the evidence of the first mercenaries and explains the history of mercenaries in his book *Mercenaries: A Guide to Private Armies and Private Military Companies*. In the first chapter, he gives information about the First Battle of Megiddo between the Egyptians and the Canaanites in the fifteenth century BC. This battle was recorded by the people who witnessed the war; that is why, it is accepted as the first fully recorded battle in history, for further information see, Major Gary J. Morea's *Angels of Armageddon: The Royal Air Force in the Battle of Megiddo*, chapter I.

is transmitted to the later period through the other adaptations of the Roland stories. The literary tradition continues to connect the historical military methods, and the contemporary society for the poets narrate their chivalric stories with the partly historical facts of the battlefields. As has been argued so far, both regional and periodical boundaries become meaningless when it comes to human activities. The transmission of a military service developed in the East is the result of the endless wars among the empires, and of literary culture, narrating the military victories in different forms through the centuries. Even though not every work is a historical document, the medieval poets' tendency towards enhancing their work with the historical facts makes cultural exchange possible.

The cultural connection between the Muslims and Christians could be seen in their method of communication. Many pieces of literature written after the Crusades dealt with the Muslims, and their common point is obviously language. In the poems, the resemblance between two opponents is reflected through the language since both speak the same language without an interpreter. This situation reveals that the poet is aware of the fact that the Muslims and Christians could communicate no matter how different the cultures they came from or no matter what religion they believed in. In her article "Pagans are wrong and Christians are Right," Kinoshita points out this situation and reveals that the Muslims are the "mirror images of the Christians" in the *Song of Roland* (80); and she states that "beyond their exotic names and their occasionally frightful attributes, the pagans speak the same language as the Christians. Whether exchanging ambassadors or haranguing each other in formulaic displays of bravado, the two sides have no need of interpreters. Each camp, as critics inevitably note, is in fact a mirror image of the other" (83). Even though both sides are different from each other, the critics notice the similarities. First of all, they are opponents who lived in the same area for a long time. This intimacy affected their vernacular, and when the spoken languages in that region are

considered, it is seen that both the Spanish language and other languages, spoken in southern Europe, borrowed many words from Arabic and the same interplay is acceptable on the opposite side.[35] In Roland's story, the poet must have been aware of the fact that the Muslims and Christians could develop a connection, and they could communicate without any interpreters. The Roland poet, by sending the messengers to each camp without any interpreters, demonstrates that there is no need for a mediator as is the case of King Marsile's right hand, Blancandrin: "The foremost word of all Blancandrin spake, / And to the King …" (IX. 122-3). The fact that the Muslims lived in Europe, especially on the Iberian Peninsula is not in doubt; therefore, the interaction of the 'neighbours' lead to transferring many customs.

The Moors on the Iberian Peninsula were the important contributors to the transcultural exchange in the Middle Ages before the Crusaders.[36] They helped many Eastern traditions to spread throughout Europe. Even the leisure activities of the Eastern cultures were transferred to Western cultures, and the texts show that the Westerners adopted them as part of their own cultures. The board games of the far Eastern societies coming by way of the Persians and Arabs for instance, mentioned in the poem, are

[35] When the Arabs conquered the Iberian Peninsula in the eighth century, the Arabs had direct contact with a Romance-speaking population in Arab Spain. Some scholars claimed that by the end of their existence in Europe in the sixteenth century, the Arabic language had replaced the native Romance, yet some think that Arabic never ousted Romance as a colloquial language. After all these debates, Kees Versteegh analyses the stylistics of both Arabic and Romance languages and reveals that both are mixed for stylistic reasons, and the researcher also traces the Arabic language in other countries in Western Europe. See, Versteegh's *Arabic Language* especially chapters 1 and 14.
Apart from the linguistic connection between Arabic and Romance languages on the Iberian Peninsula, it is known that the Arabic language was influential in the rest of southern Europe. In the Kingdom of Sicily, for instance, Arabic was one of the languages at the court. Even though at first, it was considered to be the language of the minority, in the thirteenth century, even the kings began to read and write Arabic. For further information, see, Alex Metcalfe's *Muslims and Christians in Norman Sicily: Arabic-Speakers and the End of Islam*.

[36] The Moors are the Muslims who lived in Northwest Africa (Maghreb) and the Iberian Peninsula in the medieval time. They conquered Spain, Scilly and Malta and ruled in this region for a long time. It is known that the Moors became the link between the Western and Eastern cultures. For further information, see Richard Fletcher's *Moorish Spain*, Fletcher, by claiming that "Islamic Spain would come in time to offer the fruits of a higher civilisation to barbarian Europe," elaborates the invaluable contribution of the Moors (1).

examples of the cultural exchange between the West and the East. In the *Song*, the poet refers to chess as follows:

> On white carpets those knights have sate them down,
> At the game-boards to pass an idle hour;
> Chequers the old, for wisdom most renowned,
> While fence the young and lusty bachelours. (VIII. 110-3)

The poet defines how the Franks spend their time at the camp and the wiser and older of them play chess. The word "chequers" in the poem, means chess in Anglo-French, and it is a well-known board game that came from China to England. However, the history of that game demonstrates that the Persians and the Moors introduced it to the Europeans. Harold James Murray has studied the history and geographical mobility of chess in detail and explores the difference between European and Asian chess, but he reveals that when "chess was first played by Christians in Western Europe it was played with the same rules that were followed throughout the Muhammadan world, and for a period - lasting, perhaps, as late as 1200 - there was no serious difference of rule or move from the Indus to the Atlantic and from the Sahara to Iceland" (156). The journey of chess from India started in the seventh century, and it was natural for the game to eventually reach Europe. The introduction of such games is the result of the meeting of two cultures on the Iberian Peninsula. Furthermore, 'the modernised European chess,' as Murray states in his *A History of Chess*, is the evidence of the transcultural process of the game in Europe; after the Christians discovered chess, they transformed it in accordance with their own cultures. However, meeting the pagans on the battlefields did not only teach the ways of war of the Muslims but also their social activities. At these meetings, the most significant interaction was inevitably on religion. The wars such as the Battle of Roncevaux and the Crusades

taught the Christians what the 'Saracens' believed. At this point, the study is directed to discuss the religious biases in the Christian culture.

2.3. Crossing the Religious Boundaries with Monotheistic and Polytheistic Gods

The poem declares that medieval Europeans intertwined not only with the diplomatic traditions but also with the religious customs of the Muslims. However, the poet shapes his narrative to prove that all the believers other than the Christians are pagans worshipping the 'wrong gods.' The *Song of Roland* presents two religions, respectively 'Christians' and 'pagans;' it is not clearly stated in the work, in which religion those pagans believe and the words 'Islam' and 'Muslims' are never used. However, the critical analyses of the poem prove that that the pagans fighting against the Charlemagne army in the poem are the Muslims. Islam might not have consciously been presented as the enemy of the Franks, but the poet needed an opposite army, and it is obvious that the infamous religious conflict between the Christians and the Muslims would lead the poet to focus on Islam. Moreover, the time when the poem was composed determines the possible enemy of a Christian army; as it was written after the First Crusade, the Muslims were the opponents of the Christians at the time, and it was assumed that the Muslims also could come to Europe to invade the Christian lands as the Turks did during that period. In the poem, the enemies of Charlemagne pray to Mohammed and the hostility against Islam in that period leads readers and scholars to interpret the conflict between the Franks and pagans as the conflict between the Christians and the Muslims. Nevertheless, the poet does not give obvious clues about Islam and confuses the readers at some points since he includes two more gods and makes changes in the belief system of the Muslims. These changes could arise from either a misunderstanding about Islam or an indifference to that religion.

By the twelfth century in which the poem was written, five hundred centuries after Islam emerged, few Christians knew about the Muslims and their way of worship. Islam

was still a mystery for many Christians in the Middle Ages, and for this reason, they generalized it as a pagan religion. In the early medieval period, probably due to the limits in communication and the lack of literacy, people only knew about Islam from oral and written texts. Therefore, a limited number of people explained the Muslims by distorting the facts, and it seems that they explained the prophet Mohammed as the god of the Muslims as is seen in the *Song of Roland*. Joseph Francis Kelly declares this situation as follows, "few Westerners knew much about the Muslims, which made them easy to demonize and their religion easy to distort. Nowhere is this better seen than in great French epic *The Song of Roland*" (Kelly 68). *The Song of Roland,* in the first laisse, introduces the Muslim king, Marsile and the "gods" he worships: "Marsile its King, who feareth not God's name, / Mahumet's man, he invokes Apollin's aid, / Nor wards off ills that shall to him attain" (I. 7-10). King Marsile's introduction to the audience demonstrates that the Westerners do not think that the Muslims love or obey the true God. O'Hagan translates the line about Marsile as "who loveth not God, nor seeks His grace" (I.8), the common belief being that if a person is not Christian, it means he/she does not respect God. Moreover, the rest of the laisse confirms that the Muslims are pagans in the Christians' eyes. For that reason, throughout the poem, the prejudice against the Muslims demonstrates whatever they do or however brave the knights they are, the "pagans are wrong: Christians are right indeed" (LXXIX. 1015). According to Ashe, "the pagans are in the wrong because they fight for the wrong gods" ("A Prayer and a Warcry" 362). Therefore, the poem reflects the general view on Muslims in the common memory of medieval Christian society.

Another diversion in the Muslims' belief system is their 'multiple' gods. As it is known, the Muslims neither serve Apollon nor worship him; Apollo is a god that belongs to Ancient mythology. The multiple gods in the text do not demonstrate the ignorance of the poet. Kablitz writes that "from the perspective of the eleventh and twelfth centuries,

however, the observation is consistent with a Christian viewpoint for which the only distinction that mattered was whether one believed in [the Christian] God or not. They did not establish categories of unbelievers" (151-152). The text was written in an era when the Ancient gods were not recognised anymore; yet, as a Christian, the poet seems not to pay attention to what kind of religion the Muslims believed in. As Kablitz states in the previous quotation, the Christians did not bother to categorise the other religions. For that reason, Islamic faith was intertwined with the Ancient belief, and that polytheistic structure attributed to Islam reflects the general perception in medieval Europe. Thus, despite the presence of an Ancient Greek god and Muslim prophet together, the audience is aware simply that King Marsile leads a Muslim army, and the researches on the *Song* centre around that claim.

As well as the god of the Ancient Greeks, the poet adds another god for the Muslims and creates a kind of trinity in Islam. As in many *chansons de geste* that adapt the mission to spread Christian propaganda, the *Song of Roland* undertakes another mission to denigrate Islam with an 'unholy trinity' against 'holy trinity.' In the poem, the Muslims pray to a god, named Tervagan; for instance, in the 194th laisse the Muslims curse all three gods, Tervagan and Mohammed and Apollo respectively after they are defeated by Charlemagne:

> About that place are seen pagans enough,
> Who weep and cry, with grief are waxen wood,
> And curse their gods, Tervagan and Mahum
> And Apolin, from whom no help is come. (CXCIV, 2694-2697)

Tervagan, also known as Termagant, is a common point of *chansons*, and it is generally attributed to women and any evil creature that the Muslims were believed to worship. The medieval poets with their religious prejudice believed that the Muslims were not able to

reach heaven because they were villains who did not believe in the true God, and their gods could not in any case protect them. In a general sense, the *Song*'s poet reflects that thought: "in the Spanish city of Saragossa the Muslims venerate an idol of Mohammed. They invoke their gods in battle. They even have a sort of trinity, combining Mohammed, Termagant, and Apollyon … The unbaptized Muslims cannot go to heaven, so even if a Muslim warrior fights bravely and dies a noble death, Satan still carries him off to hell" (Kelly 69). From this comment, it is suggested that the Muslims cannot be rewarded with heaven even if they are religious because they believe in three wrong gods and do not have a 'holy' unity.

Although Termagant is believed to be a deliberate deception used by the French poet, surprisingly that figure was included after the Old French romances came to England. The Old French epics socially and culturally were affected by the English culture; thereby, it is assumed that the interaction occurred after the Normans came to the country and encountered the Saxon culture. Some researchers such as Sharon Kinoshita and Siobhain Bly Calkin associate the misleading trinity concept about the Muslims with the *Song of Roland*, and some such as Thomas Percy claim that the old French Romancers created the pseudo trinity by having "corrupted *Temagant* into *Tervagant*, couple it with the name of Mahomet as constantly as ours [the English's]" (Percy 404). However, Tervagan, in some *chansons de geste*, was depicted as a Saxon god such as Layamon's *Brut*[37] (Fumo 115) and it is not totally related to the Saracens. Herbert Pilch did some research on Tervagan and its connection with both the Saxons and Muslims; he discovered that in *chansons de geste* the Saracen was a term used for all enemies, including the Saxons (127). After the *chansons de geste* were brought to Britain, the poets

[37] The priest Layamon's *Brut* (1190-1215) is accepted as the first chronicle written in English after the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, written in Old English in the first half of the twelfth century. Laymon's *Brut* is a loose translation of Wace's *Roman de Brut* (1150-155), which is the Norman adaptation of Geoffrey of Monmouth's Latin chronicle *Historia regum Britanniae* (*The History of the Kings of Britain*) (1135-113).

might have added some traditions of the Saxons, and they might have presented Tervagan as a god in Islam under the influence of Saxon culture. When the *Song*'s original Old French version was taken into consideration, it could be concluded that the trinity was made up by the Norman poet who copied the French text. As did many translators in that period, he might have included the ethnic figures from the Saxon tradition with which the English audience was familiar. Moreover, the other poets of the French epics and romances, which were put down on paper after the Battle of Hastings, embrace the same misunderstanding.

The purpose of the 'unholy trinity' is to show how the pagans' gods are weak to protect their believers, and to some extent, by creating the Saracen trinity, the chanson poets merged three figures from three cultures, respectively Mohammed from Islam, Apollo from the Greco-Roman mythology and Tervagan from the Saxon culture. Thus, the poets by combing three periods -the Ancient time, the Old English period and the contemporary medieval time when the *Song* was written caused the literary works to cross temporal borders. As the oldest *chanson de geste*, the *Song of Roland* transfers the concept of the unholy trinity to the other medieval cultures and it "becomes the standard, indeed formulaic, representation of Saracen religion throughout the rest of the European Middle Ages - primarily in epic, but also across a range of texts and genres influenced by it" (Kinoshita and Calkin 29). The Islamic trinity seems a convention of the French romancers in the Anglo-Norman period; therefore, those poets, by mingling the literary traditions of the Saxons and the French also affected the new Anglo-Norman culture. The readers of Anglo-Norman literature naturally embraced the unholy trinity concept, and it gained a place in both the Anglo-Norman culture and later medieval cultures emerging in Britain.

The position of the *Song of Roland* between the Norman and Anglo-Saxon cultures manifests itself in the political structure of the country. In England, the Norman

traditions did not immediately take their place in cultural development but, by the 1150s, the society had been through a transitional process both in cultural and diplomatic terms. The traditional first feudal age, based on the classic hereditary nobility, starts to give place to a period known as the second age when the nobles exploit the traditions, which introduces the subject of a baronial rising. Within this context, *The Song of Roland* reflects that transitional period, as it is believed to have been written between 1129 and 1165. Robert Francis elaborates the place of the work by stating,

> The poem is often studied as though it were firmly rooted in the second [feudal age] … It has been described both as propaganda for Capetian centralization and as a manifesto for baronial autonomy … It describes … rules that are thought of as immutable and more-or-less- God-given, rules that is the right-thinking man or woman's grace to follow, and the evil's man curse to flout… the *Song of Roland* is in these terms a transitional document, mustering some of the emotions and instincts of the age in the service of that increasing desire for order often said to characterize the second. (204)

In the *Song*, the baronial hierarchy is seen through the relationship of Roland and the other knights. As the second commander after Charlemagne, Roland does not allow the other knights to advise him even in the course of the battle. His arrogant attitude as the leader of the rear guard shows his power, which he gained after the transformation in the feudal order. Roland's authority reflects the changing balance of power in medieval society. In Britain, the second phase is seen after the Norman Conquest, but, it would be wrong to say that the transitional period was as effective as the Conquest. The changes in diplomacy and dominance of the classes in the court affected both the social life and the literary culture throughout Europe. The medieval European states gradually underwent that period, and the interaction among the societies increased the effect of that

development. As the Second Feudal Age depended upon the changing power relationships among the elites, the role of the noble Franks settling in Britain gained importance in the transition process of the English culture. Thus, the new literature, combining Anglo-Saxon and Norman literary traditions, holds a mirror up to the socio-political structure of the society. Such social transformations and cultural shifts reflected in the texts left marks in the local memory of the period and were passed down to the generations.

2.4. Memorisation and the *Song of Roland*

In transculturality and transhistoricity, the collective and/or local memory of a society has an active role. Especially in the transhistorical process, people bring what they still culturally accept and what is still valid for the future. In many cases, chiefly in the Middle Ages, the chivalric and tragic stories gained more attention. Down the ages, the minstrels told of the heroic deeds of the knights, and the sometimes emotional sometimes legendary deaths of those knights became the centres of the poems, which are narrated as tragedies. The primary purpose of these similar *topos* is to be remembered because, in the memorisation process, communities mainly remember the traumas, tragedies and glorious success of the ancestors to transmit to the next generations. Peter Novick discusses the timelessness of memory and emphasises the limitless transmission since "memory … has no sense of the passage of time; it denies the 'pastness' of its objects and insists on their continuing presence" (4). The continuity is provided by texts or other visual materials such as images and scriptures. Furthermore, the tales and legends belonging to the oral tradition were memorised and transferred to the written literature, and thus, the pieces of art turned into living memories that would be refreshed again and again.

The memorisation includes the historical and cultural changes, and transformation of the texts are made according to social expectation. In this sense, the works of the oral tradition were transmitted mostly in verse form since it is a relatively easy way to

remember. The *Song of Roland*, coming from the oral lore, was sung for centuries and written in various languages; thus the death of Roland and Charlemagne's achievements were repeated in different regions and at different periods. When the text is considered as a whole, it could be concluded that the *Song of Roland* contributed to the transhistorical transmission among the societies and historical times:

> The legend of Roncesvalles would appear to be a paradigmatic case for the study of these [the interface of the Latin/written/clerical with the vernacular/oral/lay] and related axes of medieval cultural diversity, since it is developed, as far back as we can trace it, on both sides of the medieval cultural divide. In the early twelfth century, we have the *Chanson de Roland*, which, though written, clearly belongs to the oral episteme. (Rushing 118)

The oral tradition involves a variety of cultural phenomena and transmitting a work from memory leads to some changes in the discourse and also in the course of the narration. By the time the work had been written, the story was enlarged with the contributions of the narrators and the environments. In the written tradition period, with the support of the visual arts the texts gained safe places in memories. For instance, after the legend of Charlemagne and Roland appealed to the ears, with its increasing popularity in the twelfth century, the illustrations about Charlemagne and Roland took their place in the collective memory. As Paula Leverage states in her *Reception and Memory*, "seeing and hearing are closely associated with memory in the medieval mnemonic tradition, in modern cognitive science, but also in the vernacular literature of the Middle Ages" (140). Even though the Roland stories were narrated both in visual and audial methods, its popularity in written form gave rise to for the expansion of the certain vernacular.

The preference for the Charlemagne stories even in romance versions in the medieval period demonstrates the validity of some topics in medieval Europe. The

increase in the ecclesiastical interest directs the Christians' attention to the cultural trauma that was the birth of Christianity. Cultural trauma expresses an event marking the consciousness of a group or society and affects their future identity. While establishing new cultures, the past forms the present and thereby, previous hatred and traumatic events intervene in the plots of the texts so that the historical transmission between the cultures can be carried out. In the *Song of Roland* that trauma could date back to the Crucifixion since the hostility towards non-Christians is a way to celebrate Christianity and to feel empathy for the torture of Christ. Christians, by fighting against all non-Christians, prove their loyalty to Christ and Christendom. Patricia DeMarco establishes the connection between the cultural trauma of Christians and the Crucifixion:

> By the late fourteenth century, remembering Jesus's torture and Crucifixion had become central to the collective identity of Christians across a range of backgrounds (rich and poor), lifestyles (religious and lay), and occupations (from butchers and brewers to aristocratic landholders and leaders of military contingents). Recollection of the trauma-inducing spectacle of the Crucifixion in whatever form … was culturally obligatory; there was a felt sense that one's very identity as a Christian demanded the repeated, imaginative reproduction of this violent spectacle. (281)

Thus, the religious texts are not only the products of the developing ecclesiastical structure of the medieval period but also reflections of the collective identity established throughout the ages. The Crucifixion, meaning "torture" in Latin, and as Cicero describes it, torture is "the most extreme form of punishment" (Carr 157) is accepted as the ultimate pain that a Christian can experience. Within this context, the presentation of the Crucifixion and biblical pain are transmitted from generation to generation, and

sacrificing life for country and/or community gains is seen as the sublimity that Christ reaches.

In the *Song*, Roland's insistence on fighting against Marsile's army without the help of Charlemagne resembles an attitude that a 'true' Christian can adopt since Christ abandoned his life for the sake of Christendom. After Charlemagne and the rest of the army depart for France, Roland and his rear guard are supposed to be on guard at the back. However, with the treason of Ganelon, they face the Muslim army. When Oliver sees thousands of pagans ready to attack them, he warns Roland to blow his horn: "Pagans in force abound, / While of us Franks but very few I count; / Comrade Rollanz, your horn I pray you sound!" (LXXXIII. 1049-1051). However, Roland thinks of his good name instead of their lives, he says that "A fool I should be found; / In France the Douce would perish my renown" (LXXXIII. 1053-4). Even though Oliver repeatedly begs him to blow the horn, he refuses, and when he decides to ask for help, it is too late for all the rear guard. Roland's opposition to blowing his horn to ask help from Charlemagne could be explained as his consent to the pain that he, Roland, will experience as well as the dignity he possesses. When Roland dies as a result of the combat with the pagans, he will have sacrificed his life for his country and will be a hero. Furthermore, the possible torture of Roland will make him a true Christian. During the medieval period, the re-narrating of this story in other societies and translating the work reinforced the understanding of 'being a hero' and 'being a true Christian' fighting against the pagans.

The conflict between Muslims and Christians is another issue that could be associated with being a true Christian and sacrificing one's life like Christ. After the agreement on gathering a Christian army against the Muslims to occupy the Holy Land, an understanding of Holy War appeared in medieval Europe. For that reason, many Christians joined the army to protect the Holy Land as in the fulfilment of a divine command. Fighting against non-Christians is a way to defend the religion for which Christ

died, which has an important place in the collective memory of Christians. The Crusades started with such a holy mission, and local memory ensured those wars would be remembered for a long time. William W. Comfort elaborates that "in the time of the Crusades the local memory of the presence of the Saracens preserved in the popular tradition and in clerical records was utilized by the clerks and jongleurs for the specific purpose of arousing popular interest in the holy war" (628). It could be said that during the Crusades from 1096 to 1271, the hostility towards non-Christians, especially the Muslims, was transferred through literature and the texts became Christian propaganda.

In the medieval period, the relationship between Christians and Saracens reached a racist level that covered a general hostility towards all non-Christians. Hence, the antipathy towards people who believed in religions other than Christianity led the communities to meet in literature; that is to say, "prejudice in favour of Christianity … accounts for the racist attitudes towards Jews and Muslims that are rife in medieval texts. 'Saracens,' for instance, are slanderously depicted as pagan idolaters" (Kay 25). After the First Crusade, many poets composed their romances and epics within the concept of a war against Saracens. However, the Saracen enemy did not reflect the hostility against Muslims alone; many texts involve Jewish characters as notorious as the Muslim ones. As in many *chansons de geste,* in the *Song of Roland,* there are references to the Jews, and as is understood, the pagans of the text consist of Jews as well:

> And Sarraguce is in te Emperour's keep.
> A thousand Franks he bid seek through the streets,
> The *synagogues* and the mahumeries;[38]
> With iron malls and axes which they wield
> They break the idols and all the imageries;

[38] Glyn Burges translated that word into modern English as 'mosques' (272.3662).

So there remain no fraud nor falsity. (CCLXVI. 3660-5) (emphasis added)

The aggressive attitude of the Franks in Spain summarises the general understanding of the Christians in the Middle Ages. Both Jews and Muslims are viewed as their enemies, and transhistoricity helps the texts preserve such memory to the present time. The critical point of those texts and the *Song* is the holiness of Christianity and with the impact of the Church, which gained power over the society in the Middle Ages, the texts are presented as a form of Christian propaganda. Even though many aspects of the literary works were repeatedly adapted in different times and cultures according to the changing understandings of society, the Christian-Saracen conflict did not change:

> The Anglo-Norman adapters did take their material from the French and passed it on to the Middle English writers, but in the process of transmission they transformed some aspects of the material and made it their own. What makes the difference in the evolving role of the Saracen and the nature of the Saracen-Christian conflict is not so much the dates as the place of the text within the literary traditions: as conservative or innovative. All these texts make extensive use of the conventions of Christian-Saracen opposition in the continental French *chanson de geste* tradition. (Hardman and Ailes 54)

Although not every adapted text deals with the Crusading directly, no matter what kind of battle is created in the narrative, the Crusade and Christian propaganda forms the core of the story. The knights of the story are sometimes the Crusaders who have been to the East or the battles, and military strategies could recall the war waged against the Saracens. Hardman and Ailes outline the general characteristics of the Anglo-Norman romances and point out that "the contrast between Christian and Saracen becomes perhaps more stark as the actual and potential nobility of a Saracen is given less emphasis, while the Christian homeland is seen as vulnerable to invasion" (54). The emphasis on the Saracens

and the Christians demonstrates the prejudiced perspective of the Anglo-Norman poets but what is more to the point is that the literary traditions still encouraged the Christians to protect their homeland from the potential attack of the pagans even after the victory against the Saracens in the First Crusade.

Within this context, the motivation of the Crusades or any 'Holy War,' which connects contemporary and past Christians, depends on the Islamic 'jihad.' Even though scholars do not entirely agree on this claim, the debates show that such an interaction is not impossible. Maria Roma Menoral studies the Arabic influence on medieval literary history and she explains how "within this framework of disagreement there is a particularly thorny debate over the idea that the very notion of a crusade, a holy war, is a cultural borrowing, a direct response to the Islamic *jihad* or holy war, a feature of Arabic culture of which Europeans were aware" (46). Above all, it would be useful to remember that the Christians and Muslims had contact even before the Crusades, and even if it was limited, the Christians might have been aware of the Islamic jihad. Menoral continues her argument about the Islamic impact on the 'Western jihad,' and states, "it is sufficient for the purposes of this argument to accept the fact that the crusades, both within and outside of Europe, were an important fact of life, whatever may have been their motivation, whether political or religious, patristic or borrowed from Islam" (46). The works, such as the *Song of Roland*, with its adapted enemy profile after the Battle of Roncevaux, triggered the understanding that the struggle is to serve Christendom for a Holy War. The sermon of Archbishop Turpin at the battlefield confirms that the war in Spain is as holy as the battles in Muslim lands;

> My lords barons, Charles left us here for this;
> He is our King, well may we die for him:
> To Christendom good service offering.
> Battle you'll have, you all are bound to it. (LXXXIX. 1127-30)

Including a clergyman at the battlefield shows the soldiers have been blessed and by promoting the idea of martyrdom, the song connects religion and nationality. As a song, sung in many battles like at the Battle of Hastings, the *Song of Roland* travelled through many Christian lands and not only introduced the French culture but also refreshed the local memory by a strong association with the Crucifixion and divine command.

As a song, the work was easily remembered and sung in many battles to give encouragement to the knights, and with the expansion of the Frankish Empire and/or Normans the *Song* affected the chivalric ideals in the medieval period. In medieval chivalric stories, it is emphasised that a hero is someone who has dignity and is ready to die to protect it. In this sense, Charlemagne stories plant the notion of 'honour.' The importance of 'honour' for the Franks is repeated throughout the poem, and the text reveals that the transmission that came from the past shaped the contemporary perspectives. The discourse of the characters demonstrates that the concept of 'having honour' and 'fighting for it' are the significant characteristics of a knight and/or soldier. For that reason, Roland dies for his honour as it is his cultural heritage. As a knight, he was taught to preserve his dignity, one of the chivalric codes in the Middle Ages. Thus, the knights codify each other according to the honour that they have, "Remembering their fiefs and their honours" (LXVI. 820); "Remember well a vassal brave he might" (CXLVII. 972). Aside from dignity, the *Song of Roland* reveals many other codes known as "Charlemagne's Code of Chivalry."[39] Louise Park and Timothy Love claim that "medieval knights were established by King Charlemagne … came from the countries that formed part of Charlemagne's kingdom and for hundreds of years they were influential across Europe" (4). With the renewed idea of chivalry, Charlemagne changed

[39] "Charlemagne's Code of Chivalry" consists of twenty-four virtues whose first seven are the codes known as "core seven" that was a historical list. The *Song* adds seventeen more codes and improved the concept of chivalry. For further information, see Daniel Biddle's *Knights of Christ: Living Today with the Virtues of Ancient Knighthood*.

the concept of knighthood in medieval Europe, and the *Song of Roland*, by narrating Charlemagne's chivalry both in oral and written forms, establishes the concept of knighthood in the collective memory of the medieval people.

Apart from the contribution to the collective memory in the medieval period, the *Song of Roland* formed the national identity in France in the later centuries. While the poem establishes a bridge between the twelfth century and eighth century, it demonstrates the transcultural interactions in the Anglo-Norman and Frankish societies. Its discovery in the nineteenth century provided the same connection and the memory transmission through the work connected eighth-century heroism with nineteenth-century nationalism. Jane Gilbert explores the importance of memory transmission through the *Song*: "The national memory invested in the *Song of Roland*, as in any *lieu de mémoire*, represents a retrospective fantasy serving a modern audience's sense of its own identity rather than an accurate reflection of the medieval past" (21). The concept *lieu de mémorie*[40] is related to space that has a special meaning for a particular people; thus, the *Song of Roland* has a mission as a song of the glorious history of France. It is believed that the Franco-Prussian War in 1870 had an effect on the scholars' perspective; they eliminated the German discourse or influence in their interpretations to recall their 'magnificent' victories achieved by Charlemagne eight hundred years ago.[41] When the French critic first discovered the poem, it became famous in France since its heroic narrative appeared at a time when the French needed historical support to defeat the Germans. In this regard, the *Song* presents a space where the audience could establish a nationalistic identity they could defend against every threat.

[40] *Lieux de memoir*, also known as sites of memory, is a cognitive space "where memory crystallizes and secretes itself" (Nora, 7).

[41] Andrew Taylor discusses the translation process of the *Song of Roland* and its importance in nineteenth-century France. For further information, see Taylor's "Was There a Song of Roland?"

The work was used to revive the nationalistic spirit during many wars of the French. Therefore, the people were reminded of their historic achievement and the *Song of Roland* with Charlemagne's and Roland's legendary success and heroism was expected to provide the required courage. According to Gilbert, "France may have lost its champions but their exalted memory will be translated into glorious actions encouraged by their example" (29). Therefore, the medieval text is used as a means of memory transmission between the centuries, but it also reveals what kind of transaction is carried out. The collective memory for the French revolves around their magnificent King who can gain a historic victory:

> There sits the King, that holds Douce France in pow'r;
> White is his beard, and blossoming-white his crown,
> Shapely his limbs, his countenance is proud.
> Should any seek, no need to point him out. (VIII. 116-119)

Charles, "who holds all France by might," (XXXVII. 488) dedicated his life to protect France and he is the symbol of courage that is recalled throughout the poem. Charles means French victory and achievement; thus, the association with heroism became the subject of many epics and romances. In Roland for example, national heroism is emphasised with more recent comments and interpretations in the shadow of the French Revolution, yet the *Song of Roland* also demonstrates that 'memory space' is determined by the contemporary needs of a certain society. Moreover, the phrase 'Douce France,'[42] meaning 'sweet France,' is used throughout the poem as in the previous stanza and with the popularity of the *Song of Roland* in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the phrase 'Douce France' became the national slogan of the country even during World War II.

[42] Even in the English translation of the work, the translators preferred not to translate the French word 'douce.'

Thereby, by breaking the temporal borders, the *Song* reaches the nineteenth-century society as a nationalistic example of heroism.

With its fictional victory, the *Song of Roland* gained popularity in contemporary literature, hence proving that the transhistorical journey of the texts will never end. As in the case of the Anglo-Norman culture, nineteenth-century France needed heroism and, even after eight centuries, the pseudo success of the Franks was employed to evoke national heroism. Even though it is an apparent fictional work, the contemporary French society celebrated their glorious history and the anachronistic invasions repeated in the *Song* crossed the temporal borders. As is seen in the following stanza, the magnificent Frank emperor and his knights got more attention than the plotline:

> The count Rollanz, beneath a pine he sits;
> Turning his eyes towards Spain, he begins
> Remembering so many divers things:
> So many lands where he went conquering. (CLXXVI. 2375-78)

These lines and many other lines like them encourage the knights and soldiers to take Roland as their model while fighting for their lands or for their religions. No matter what period or region people were in, the local memory promoted the *Song of Roland* as the poem associated with heroism/chivalry and martyrdom/Crucifixion.

Lastly, it is essential to mention the influence of the *Song* on English heroism and heroic narratives, which established the English literary heritage. During the oral tradition period, every culture has its own epic stories, sagas or legends that impose on people some chivalric codes to fight as a hero or knight. It is known that Charlemagne epics and romances had a significant role from Italy to Spain, from Germany to Britain. The legend expands all around Europe so comprehensively that the valour of Roland took its place in medieval European literature as a matter of course. According to Burland, “medieval

Roncevaux textual tradition[43] was the written stage of a literary legend that redated the Oxford manuscript in oral transmission and then continued independently for centuries afterward" (2). As a result of this independent expansion across Western Europe, the idea of chivalry was formed with the deeds of Charlemagne and his knights. In the Middle Ages, the *Song of Roland* was revisited in every culture to be sung to increase the courage of the knights, since "every great historical revision has sought to enlarge the basis for collective memory" (Nora 9). It is assumed that during the Battle of Hastings, the Normans attended the battle accompanied by the minstrel Taillefer's[44] song (Wollock 120). When the Normans conquered Britain, they also captured the literary tradition of the English. Arriving in the country with a song narrating the heroic deeds of the knights left a lasting impression on English literature. Before the Normans, English literature did not present various epic examples; hearing the *Song of Roland* reminded the English of the deficiency in national epic of their literature. According to Clanchy, "the pride of the Norman 'French' knights, who had sung the *Chanson de Roland* at the battle of Hastings, may have become self-consciously literate in England because of the need to compete with national epic writing in English like *The Battle of Maldon*"[45] (18). Although the classical epics such the *Aeneid* were known in English society, the epic tradition was not imitated in accordance with their cultural development until the *Song of Roland*. With the growth in the number of the *chansons de geste* in Britain, the English poets adapted the new genre and developed the English romance that left its mark in medieval literary history. The English produced their chivalric stories by modelling the *Song of Roland* and created their own heroes such as Guy of Warwick, the King of Tars. Thus, with its storytelling. the Norman narrative contributed to the local literature and changed the

[43] Since the *Song of Roland* narrates the Battle of Roncevaux that was a historic battle between Charlemagne's army and the Basques, the Roland series are also called Roncevaux texts.

[44] The name of the minstrel who attended the Battle of Hastings with the Normans.

[45] It is an Old-English epic poem about the battle which happened 911 AD between the Anglo-Saxons and the Vikings.

understanding of chivalry that became a marker of the Middle English romances in the "matter of Britain," which is discussed in the following chapter.

In conclusion, the *Song of Roland*, as one of the significant works that link medieval England and France, connects the Middle Ages and contemporary period. Its language and characteristics belonging to Anglo-Norman and Celtic poetries and details borrowed from the Eastern cultures or transferred from the earlier cultures prove that even in the medieval period temporal and spatial boundaries could be crossed with a literary work. Despite the fact that it was anonymous, the *Song of Roland* was a popular *chanson de geste* that was translated and adapted to other medieval languages and cultures. The deliberate change in the enemy of Charlemagne's army proves that the work was written under the influence of the Crusades and the anachronism in such details reveals that the work was adapted according to the contemporary cultural development. Thus, it had a prominent place in the collective memory of the medieval European people. With its chivalric plot, the *Song* presented a universal theme for the later works, and it became the essential source for the romances in 'matter of France.'

CHAPTER III

TRANSCULTURAL ENCOUNTERS IN THE *QUEST FOR THE HOLY GRAIL*

The French poet Chrétien de Troyes re-narrated some Arthurian romances in the twelfth century and composed new tales in the context of the Arthurian legends. The Grail story and the Lancelot story about his forbidden love with Guinevere are the romances that he most famously contributed to the Arthurian stories. Arthurian romances are the most rewritten stories in the Middle Ages; from the oral lore to the end of the medieval period every culture interpreted their own romance either about King Arthur himself or about the individual knights of the Round Table such as *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, *Perceval* and *Lancelot*. Thereupon, in the thirteenth century, an author or a group of authors organised a collection of these romances and prepared the Vulgate Cycle, also known as the Lancelot-Grail Cycle, the Prose Lancelot, or the Pseudo-Map Cycle; and those writers "constitute the most extended attempt to elaborate the full story of the Arthurian era and to set that era in a framework of universal history" (Lacy v). All the romances in this cycle were written in Old French, but the manuscripts were found in various libraries in Europe, such as the British Library and Bibliothèque Nationale de France (The National Library of France).[46] For this reason, it is not certain where the manuscripts were composed, yet it is assumed that they were written by some Cistercian[47]

[46] There are many manuscripts of the *Lancelot-Grail Cycle* throughout Europe. There are approximately 220 surviving manuscripts, and a third of the survivors have been in England or Wales. It is assumed that there were many more manuscripts of the cycle during the Middle Ages. For further information about the manuscripts of the *Lancelot-Grail Cycle*, see Roger Middleton's "Manuscripts of the *Lancelot-Grail Cycle* in England and Wales: Some Books and their Owners," in *A Companion to the Lancelot-Grail Cycle*.

According to new research from the beginning of 2019, new fragments thought to belong to the Vulgate Cycle were discovered in the Rare Book Section at the University of Bristol. Dr Leah Tater, reader in Medieval Literature at the University of Bristol and president of the British Branch of the International Arthurian Society, revealed that the fragments were found in a four-volume set of the fifteenth-century French scholar Jean Gerson. The researchers have not deciphered the fragments, but they believe "time and research will reveal what further secrets about the legends of Arthur, Merlin and the Holy Grail these fragments might hold." For further information, see James Rogers's article at Fox News.

[47] A member of the Catholic Order of monks. The monks of this Order are also known as "White Monks" because of the gown they wear. That religious Order was founded through the end of the eleventh century

monks. In the Cycle, it is obvious that in the hands of the monks, many Celtic myths, the origin of the Arthurian legends, were transformed into Christian propaganda with direct references to the New Testament.

Though many Arthurian romances were rewritten in the Vulgate Cycle, the main focus is the quest for the Grail that Chrétien de Troyes could not complete since it is a visible Christian symbol that would be useful for the publicity of Christendom. Derek Pearsall declares the primary concern of the author/authors of the Vulgate Cycle as follows: "The central purpose of the compilers of the Vulgate cycle is most evident in the incorporation of the Grail story as an integral element in the larger narrative, with a significance given to the Grail itself which was anticipated in the continuators and imitators of Chrétien" (*Arthurian Romance* 45). For that reason, the Cycle presents a more detailed narrative than Chrétien or Sir Thomas Malory, who rewrote the Grail story three hundred years later than the French poet. After the Vulgate Cycle, a shorter version Post-Vulgate Cycle was written by an anonymous author; the poet of this Cycle omitted some stories, and some of them are fragmented. However, since they presented a compact text for the readers, both cycles were influential in Western medieval literature. The stories were translated into other European languages and many of them were rewritten in light of the Cycles. Moreover, it is known that while writing his *Le Morte D'Arthur*, the most important Arthur legend in the Middle English literature, Malory chiefly

and, by the end of the twelfth century, the community spread across almost the whole of Europe. The Cistercian monks were influential figures in the Middle Ages, their writings and spiritual ideas influenced the religious culture, and many Cistercian monasteries became centres for economic and technological change. For further information, see Martha G. Newman's "Foundation and Twelfth Century" article in *The Companion to the Cistercian Order*.

At this point, in the *Quest of the Holy Grail* of the Vulgate Cycle, Galahad takes his shield from the *blanche abaie* that the translators prefer translating into English as "Cistercian abbey" and one of the knights, Bors arrives at the abbey of the "White Monks" in Chapter 58; these specific references to the Cistercian monks could have made scholars believe that the anonymous author/authors could have been the members of the Cistercian Order.

benefited from the Vulgate Cycle. Thus, the Cycle became the primary source in the Arthurian narratives since the stories could be completed, unlike Chrétien's *Perceval*.

The significant point about Arthurian stories is that most of them, including the cycles, were initially written in French even though they are about the legendary British king and his knights. Mainly, the Grail story was originated by Chrétien in France in the second half of the twelfth century and developed as the Holy Grail by another French poet Robert de Boron at the end of the same century. The historical details in the Lancelot-Grail Cycle blended in the romances, prove that the stories were not adapted following only the earlier French versions. The monks who composed the cycle must have read or rewritten some other chronicles such as the Anglo-Norman poet Wace's *Roman de Brut* that tells the history of King Arthur, and the English chronicler Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* (*History of the Kings of Britain*) which is also the basis of Wace's *Brut*. All these works tell the same pseudo-historical events, and they give the names of some "historical kings." Richard Trachsler reveals the reason for blending history and fiction that is seen in the Vulgate Cycle as follows:

> The desire to create an impression of authenticity is particularly visible at the beginning of the *Lancelot*, where a King *Aramon* is mentioned, a name that inevitably evokes the 'historical' Pharamon,[48] a character unknown to the chronicle tradition but evidently necessary to the *Lancelot* author who was eager to create the most 'realistic' atmosphere possible (25).

The desire to create a realistic atmosphere is reflected in the religious interpretation of the romances, as well. Apart from the details about French history, Trachsler claims some Saxon influences on the romances, especially in the *Merlin* episode of the Cycle. Thus, the cultural blending can be followed in the *Quest for the Holy Grail*, which presents the

[48] The First French King.

universality of the topic for Christians as a cultural variety. In the Grail story, the bloodline of some knights who are, it is claimed, descended from Christ proves the historical and religious additions. Thus, the chapter argues how the *Quest for the Holy Grail*, as an important romance in Arthurian Cycle, reflects transcultural elements since it comes from Celtic mythology and evolves according to Christian doctrines. Moreover, its prehistoric roots reach to the medieval period (and even to the twentieth century), and thereby, the plotline that crosses the temporal borders, is discussed in the light of transhistoricity between the Ancient and medieval periods.

The Grail story starts with the need to find the relic of Christ after its image appears over the table during a Round Table meeting. Arthur takes the image as a sign and asks his knights to find the Grail and to bring it back where it belongs, to Camelot. Five knights of the Round Table, respectively Lancelot, Gawain, Perceval, Bors and Galahad leave Camelot, and throughout the story, all these knights experience individual adventures. The episodic structure of the romance allows the poets to move the focus from one knight to the other and on how they are religiously tested throughout the story. At the end of the quest, only one knight, Galahad, son of Lancelot, passes his test and finds the Grail at the Grail Castle, known as the Corbenic Castle under the protection of King Pelles, the Fisher King.[49] Galahad, "as clean and pure as a mortal man can be" (165) can protect his soul and achieves to hold the Grail. When Galahad approaches the Holy Vessel, Joseph of Arimathea[50] appears and tells the knight the Grail is not in situ and it

[49] Fisher King is a title given to the person who protects the Holy Grail in the Arthurian romances. In the Vulgate Cycle, the Fisher King is King Pelles.

[50] Joseph of Arimathea is told in all four gospels; he buried Christ after the Crucifixion. It is believed that he gathered Christ's leaking blood from the cross and kept that Grail with him. Shortly after the Crucifixion, he came to Britain in AD 35 with the Grail and helped Christianity to be carried to the islands. (Since he is believed to have brought the Grail to Britain, in Grail story Arthur's command to find the Grail and bring it to its home depends on this belief; see, Barry Windeatt's "The Fifteenth-Century Arthur"). Joseph is respected as a saint because of his loyalty to Christ and Christianity. Some sources state that he was the uncle of Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ. After his death, his son, or nephew for some sources, was also called Joseph of Arimathea and he became the guardian of the Grail. Moreover, it is believed that the Fisher Kings were descended from him. In the Grail story, the person

should be taken to the holy land, Sarras,[51] somewhere in the Middle East. When Galahad and his companions come to Sarras, the Grail is lifted up to the sky through a light; thus, God's will is fulfilled, and Galahad dies there shortly after.

Although the story is depicted as a holy quest based on Christ's Crucifixion and the references from the New Testament increase the religious effect of the text, there are some paradoxes between the documents on the Crucifixion and the stories attributed to the relics of Christ. Joe Nickell claims that "there is no provenance for any Holy Grail chalice or its contents until centuries after the Crucifixion, and there is no first-century evidence as to what happened to either of them or to Joseph of Arimathea" (63). In religious terms, the tales of the Holy Grail and its journey to Britain seem to be concocted by Robert de Boron. Moreover, his main character, Joseph of Arimathea, as the Fisher King, the guardian of the Grail, and as one of the apostles of Christ was not mentioned in any other religious texts before Boron. Even Boron's precursor Chrétien de Troyes does not narrate the quest with the direct base of Christ and the Testament. In this regard, while Chrétien protects the pre-Christian roots of the Grail with a more magical atmosphere, Robert de Boron establishes a more pseudo-Christian image on the pagan myth and presents a more religious quest to his medieval audience. Thus, his religious additions led the authors of the Vulgate Cycle and many others to compose the story with a Christian narrative.

As the other romances in the Vulgate Cycle, the Grail story is a prose romance that became popular in the thirteenth century. In the medieval period, the tales were written in verse form since it was easy to remember, and they generally appealed to the

mentioned as Joseph of Arimathea must be his son/nephew, not the saint himself. For further information, see Laurence Gardner's *Bloodline of the Holy Grail*.

[51] Sarras (Saraz) is believed to be the land where Mary Magdalene's son Joseph became the bishop. "In Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, Saraz features as the realm of King Evelake, as mentioned in the story of Lancelot's son Galahad" (ibid. 181).

audience orally. Besides, by the thirteenth century, only Biblical texts and historical documents were written in prose. Kay elaborates that "before 1200 there is virtually no vernacular prose. By the middle of the thirteenth century literary prose is well established. By the end of that century it is the standard medium in which factual texts such as histories are written. By the late fourteenth century it is standard medium for narrative" (57). The increase in vernacular prose could be related to the religious themes and figures in the works. In the thirteenth century, with the translation of the religious texts from Latin and the obvious dominance of the Church in the whole of Europe, the medieval poets leaned towards theological and mystical themes. Thus, the spirituality of the texts could have affected vernacular prose, and "the scope of the courtly narrative became simultaneously more historical and more religious, as the Vulgate Cycle readily attests" (Burns xxxi). The original Grail Story written by Chrétien de Troyes was in verse form; yet, the later versions of the story were developed with the religious discourse and some Biblical references were added into the story. For that reason, by writing their prose romances, the authors could have preferred presenting their works to be as accurate as the Bible, and finally the Vulgate Cycle turned into the archetype of prose romances.

The rewriting process of the Grail story since the twelfth century reflects the changing values in British society. Burns proclaims the temporal shift of the story, "certainly one of the major shifts as we move from courtly romance of the twelfth century to the cyclic Grail material of the thirteenth is the shift from a secular quest for the Arthurian lady to the spiritual search for the venerated if mysterious Grail object" (Burns xxvii). Whereas the French versions were positioned between fantasy and historical truth, in religious terms, the thirteenth-century Grail story upset the balance since "of all the Vulgate romances, the *Queste del Saint Graal* goes the farthest in attempting to mask the literariness of vernacular romance by imposing upon it a grid of religious interpretation (Burns xxxiii). The shift of the Grail story does not end with the Vulgate Cycle, and in

the fifteenth century, Malory adapted the story into the new English culture that becomes more secular with the influence of the Renaissance. In the Renaissance period, the works were produced with more artistic concerns and secular narratives. Malory, by keeping the magical atmosphere of the story, presents the romance with a more worldly narration:

> Malory's attachment to the world and his respect for secular chivalry, his refusal to accept the nothingness of secular chivalry set beside spiritual chivalry, his tendency to treat the Grail as a magical object rather than as the bearer of mystical communion with Christ, involves some devaluation of the Grail imagery. He also shows a characteristic tendency to transform otherworldly transcendental mysticism into worldly morality. (Pearsell, *Arthurian Romance* 94-95)

The shifts in the narrative of the same story in three hundred years demonstrate how literature is shaped according to the changing perspectives. Europe's political situation in the medieval period became the determinant of the transformation of the Grail story. Godwin explains that "the essential failure, or at the best the very limited success of the Grail quest, is intricately interwoven with the state of Europe's physical and spiritual health at the time when the legends first appeared" (194). Since the Church was occupied with the Crusades from the eleventh to the fourteenth centuries, the story could not meet the expectations of the Church and it could be assumed that the poets increased the religious aspects of the story in each version. For that reason, the fantastic narrative of the Grail quest turned into a Christian sermon century by century.

As a significant example of the romance tradition, the *Quest for the Holy Grail* presents some chivalric deeds to attract the attention of the readers. However, the understanding of the struggle in the *Quest* is different from the *Song of Roland* and *Troilus and Criseyde*. While the reader can see a physical struggle in the later works, the *Quest* presents a spiritual war, and the knights start their adventure on behalf

of all Christians; "the Grail allows Arthur's knights even greater opportunity for winning 'glory in this world'" (Whetter 175). According to the medieval perspective, their glory belongs to all Christians who believe in the only true religion in the world. Under such a strong belief, the religious interpretation of the Grail story forestalled the Grail's origin. In the Celtic myths, there are many stories related to cauldrons or grails; and it seems that the Christian poets turn the magical cauldron of the Celts into a holy vessel. Apart from its shape, the symbolic meaning of that cup changed, and the poets combined the Grail with Christian beliefs. For Godwin, "the first written versions of the Grail legend coincided with the years in which the Church first introduced the Eucharist[52] for laymen. In this course, the cup contains the wine which symbolizes the blood of Christ. The cup is that of the Last Supper, the blood is the redemptive symbol of Christ's sacrifice" (53). Thus, the folkloric symbols and beliefs of the Celtic culture were adopted by the Christian people, and gradually the British people set up a 'national' connection with the Grail and the knights who are in search of it. Due to the Arthurian stories' Celtic roots, this study argues the deviation of the Celtic stories in Middle English romances.

3.1. 'Matter of Britain' and Its Celtic Origin

The romances developed under the category of the 'matter of Britain' are generally derived from other cultures. However, the medieval English poets reformed the plots with the cultural transformation of the society and changing literary understanding, and composed 'British' stories. The 'matter of Britain' romances have a multicultural and historical journey expanding the Celtic and continental cultures. Kay declares that "the matter of Britain involves the recasting of the history associated with either Britain or Brittany, much of which seems to derive from Celtic sources" (42). Despite the Celts'

[52] The Eucharist is a ritual, also known as the Lord's Supper. It is based on Christ's Last Supper. The word means "thanksgiving," and stands for Christ's service of bread, as his body, and wine as his blood to his disciples.

existence in Britain for many years, the customs of the Celtics reflected in the "matter of Britain" romances were not directly borrowed from Ireland or Wales. When the Anglo-Saxon tribes invaded the island, the Celtic inhabitants were forced to move to the West Coast, Ireland and Brittany (Little Britain on the west of France); for that reason, many Celtic legends came to Britain through the French after a couple of centuries. By the time Arthurian romances had reached Britain, they must have gathered characteristics from the other cultures because of the multicultural structure of the Old French literature. In her article, Maria Tymoczko notes the meeting of the Old French and the Celtic cultures, and explains how, like many literary genres, the development of the Arthurian romances dates back to the Norman Conquest:

> During that period Old French culture, the dominant vernacular culture of Europe, came into close contact with Brythonic cultures (the Celts of Wales, Cornwall, Devon, and Brittany) as a result of conquest and other forms of cultural interchange. Following the Norman conquest of England and Wales, there was a burgeoning of Arthurian literature in the several genres of chronicle, romance, and *lai*[53] in most of the vernaculars of Europe, as well as in medieval Latin. (161)

Since the Old French vernacular was the language of medieval literature, the influence of that culture introduced the subject of the expansion of various Celtic myths throughout Europe. The variety of the stories based on the pre-Christian legends increased the numbers of the Arthurian romances, and it is posited that over one hundred and fifty manuscripts were written in medieval Europe. The increase in the number of Arthurian stories in the medieval period demonstrates the need for national tales about English

[53] Lai or lay is a short poetic form. It is assumed that lais could derive from the poetry of Brittany or Wales, though they generally have Celtic themes. Lais are short tales written in octosyllabic couplets, dealing mainly with love and including supernatural elements. For further information, see, R. M. Wilson's *Early Middle English Literature*.

history. In the twelfth century, English historians wrote some chronicles about their history and the information given in those texts led the English poets to produce works about their kings and heroes. Moreover, the Normans' arrival with their chivalric legends inspired the English poets. Thus, the romances based on their heroes contributed to the 'matter of Britain.'

As the primary sources of the Arthur poets, the chronicles provided the required information about their 'glorious' history. The Latin chronicle *Historia regum Britanniae* by Geoffrey of Monmouth has a prominent place among the English chronicles. The work inspired other historians and was finally translated into English in the thirteenth century.[54] Wace's Anglo-Norman version, *Brut* and its English translation, *Roman de Brut* by Layamon reached many poets in the Middle Ages and provided historical information for the works. Even though these works are named as the 'chronicles of British history,' there is speculation about their reliability. Geoffrey of Monmouth's chronicle is generally regarded as a "pseudo-historical" text, and the scholars regard the Arthurian sections in the chronicle as misleading information of history since there is still no precise evidence on King Arthur's existence.[55] For that reason, by following his work, Wace and then Layamon repeated the same historical deviations. It seems that the chroniclers composed their works in light of the Old Welsh and Irish poets and transferred their legendary heroes from the Celtic mythology into the Anglo-Saxon king and knights. Furthermore, all these three historians protected the supernatural atmosphere of the stories and depicted their Arthur as an unworldly king with magical weapons:

[54] See footnote 35.

[55] Laura Ashe, in her *Fiction and History in England, 1066-1200* discusses the critics' view on Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia* and other translations of the work during the Middle Ages. She emphasises the variety in theories about the text; Ashe concludes that "claims for the text's political encoding of Norman power have been numerous; many have agreed with the assertion that it 'could hardly be more deeply embedded in the long-term Norman project'. Alternatively, it has been suggested that the propaganda of the text is in service of the twelfth century Welsh, the descendants of the Britons. Others have argued that it displays deep and ambiguous complexities which militate against any such simplistic engagement with its audience; some have seen the text largely as an intellectual joke" (60).

> These facts are mainly important as testimony to the Celtic element in Arthurian romance, and especially to Layamon's use of current Welsh Arthurian tradition. The large variety of magical possessions assigned to Arthur is also a notable indication of the great emphasis that Welsh legend laid upon his mythological attributes and his character as otherworld adventurer. (Wace 17)

Layamon states that the "spear he took in hand, that was named Ron" (464); Ron is a Welsh noun meaning 'spear.' The objects described in these chronicles give incredible powers to Arthur as in the Welsh and Irish poetry, which lead the audience to Celtic mythology. The chronicles on the Welsh and Britons such as *Historia Brittonum* (History of the Britons), written before the texts of Geoffrey of Monmouth and his followers, also include the name 'Arthur.' These documents reveal that whether or not Arthur is a historical figure, the Arthurian stories date back to the pre-Christian period and they were transmitted to the medieval period keeping their mythological characteristics. When different Grail themes in Irish literature are considered, it can be said that the Grail story that is dealt with in the Vulgate Cycle must have transformed by the thirteenth century. Godwin claims that even Chrétien de Troyes could have formed his work taking various Grail stories into consideration: "By the time Chrétien de Troyes wrote *Le Conte del Graal* he could have had access to a wide range of both written and oral material from which he could create his masterpiece" (18). In this regard, by the time the author/authors of the Vulgate Cycle had composed and completed Chrétien's *Graal*, the cultural exchanges already had an influence on the course of the story.

Arthurian romances are evaluated as the major sources in the "matter of Britain" category, yet the adventures of the Round Table knights, especially Lancelot and Gawain, by presenting more mysterious and heroic stories outshine the narratives of King Arthur. As Sarah Kay states, "the matter of Britain increasingly portrays indigenous origins as absurd inept (in the figure of King Arthur); while his knights of the Round Table are

outplayed and undermined by the supernatural powers of the Otherworld" (45). The Otherworld is a dream space where the actions of The Round Table knights take place since the authors never give its exact place and time. Even though the original manuscript from which Chrétien de Troyes benefitted, is unknown, the 'Otherworld' motif is seen in almost every Arthurian narrative. The oldest manuscript of Arthurian romances is found in the twelfth century, and even that work had already been adapted to the Christian societies. Despite its religious transformation, the 'Otherworld' motif, that provides a mystical scene in the narratives, establishes a connection between the Celtic mythology, full of unworldly elements and matter of Britain romances composed with religious details.

Otherworld castles are the common images in the Irish and Welsh poems which illustrate a concept of the "fairyland" where people could get plenty of drink and food, and every wound was easily healed. In Welsh "Annwn /Annwfn designates the Otherworld or 'Un-world' in Welsh tradition. It is, for example, one of the central themes in the medieval Welsh tales known as the *Mabinogi*"[56] (Koch 75). In these tales "Otherworld" is depicted as a supernatural world at which one can arrive through a porter. In many cultures there is a depiction resembling the Otherworld portal; however, there is no direct connection with the understanding of a passage to Paradise and "'Otherworld' is used loosely and agnostically to mean 'supernatural place(s)' more specifically, those not directly borrowed from Christian tradition" (Koch 1403). In the Grail story, there are no direct references to the Otherworld castle as in other Arthurian romances. However, the critics claim that the last destination of the quest, Sarras, is the "otherworld," where the Holy Vessel cannot return (J. Taylor 62). In religious terms, Sarras could be the gate

[56] The *Mabinogi* consists of four branches and part of a collection of eleven medieval Welsh prose tales known as the *Mabinogion*. In his *Celtic Culture*, Koch explains that "there is a general consensus that the tales were written down for the first time c. 1050–1120, though they circulated orally, in some form or another, prior to this, when tales such as these were the domain of the *Cyfarwydd* (storyteller)" (1207).

of the otherworld of the *Quest for Holy Grail* of the Vulgate Cycle, since the land is depicted as the place where Galahad died, and his soul is taken to the other world. However, the Grail Castle in the story reflects the magical atmosphere that could be described as in an Irish legend. In many Grail stories, the castle is visualised as being surrounded by water, and the Grail castle depicted in the Vulgate Cycle resembles them: "there was a gate in the rear wall of the castle that opened onto the water, and it remained open day and night. The residents were unconcerned about this gate because it was guarded by two lions that faced each other. Anyone wishing to enter there would have to pass between them" (155). The supernatural atmosphere continues when Lancelot approaches the gate; he hears a voice, and according to the directions that the voice gives, he manages to enter the castle without fighting with the lions. The fantastic castle creates such an image as could be seen in the Celtic legends. Even if the poet does not explicitly use the Castle of Otherworld, he presents the castle using both Christian and pagan characteristics. The 'Otherworld' concept is one of the images that protect the Celtic origin in the Arthurian stories. It is possible to find some other objects such as a magical spear and sword that were transmitted to the medieval era; yet unlike the Otherworld Castle, these images were transformed into Christian relics, and the Celtic roots of the magical elements were eliminated.

3.2. Christian Ideals and their Transhistorical Transmission

In the medieval period, Christianising the works of the oral lore and Ancient times is a natural process since the monks constituted the major part of the literate men in medieval society and, after the oral tradition period, the literary works were put down on paper by the monks. However, apart from the monks, the poets themselves preferred to form their works in line with the social and cultural dynamics of the society as did Robert de Boron. Studying his poem about a lord who attended the Fourth Crusade (1202-1204) and died in the Holy Land, the critics assume that Robert de Boron could have been to Cyprus that

was “a melting-pot of races and languages, and Greeks, Syrians and Franks worked side by side in the royal administration; there were links with Lydda, whose church Joseph of Arimathea was supposed to have founded, and the royal family of Jerusalem seem to have collected relics of Joseph” (Barber, *The Holy Grail* 39). The assumption about Robert de Boron’s being in the East reveals the connection of the quest with the Holy Land and the grail’s transfer to the Holy Grail. The impulsion of the Christian holy war in the Near East led the political trauma of the Christian world to be effective throughout the *Quest of the Holy Grail*. Robert de Boron’s Grail story, *Joseph of Arimathea*, appears after the Third Crusade (1189-1192) and its success (although the Crusaders could not take control of Jerusalem, they restored the Christian order in the Holy Land) guided the French poet to compose his Grail story as a Christian propaganda that ends in a symbolic Holy Land. To some extent, *Joseph of Arimathea* deepens the symbolism of the Grail, as a Jesus relic, and pictures a ‘Holy’ quest in light of the Crusades.

The rewritten Grail tales follow Robert de Boron’s Holy Vessel story and his inclusion of Joseph of Arimathea. As the authors of the Vulgate Cycle are assumed to be the Cistercian monks, the repetition of the religious motifs in the cycle seems a natural consequence. In the *Quest,* even the establishment of the Round Table is somehow associated with Christianity and strengthens the realistic aspect in religious terms. In the *Quest for the Holy Grail* of the Vulgate Cycle, the monks reserve a whole chapter to narrate the story of Joseph of Arimathea and his connection with the Holy Grail and Round Table. The chapter starts at Christ’s table by stating, “You know that since the time of Jesus Christ the world has seen three famous tables. The first was the table where Christ ate on several occasions with the apostles” (*Quest* 48); here, the poet describes the table where Christ ate his Last Supper, and this passage is taken from Psalm CXXXIII. After the depiction of Christ’s miraculous table, he continues “after this table, another was made that resembled the first and preserved in memory. It was the Table of the Holy

Grail, which was responsible for the great miracles that took place at the time of Joseph Arimathea, when Christianity was first brought to this land" (*Quest* 48). The Table of the Holy Grail is described as a table where some miracles are seen and at this table there is always a seat reserved for Joseph of Arimathea's son, Joseph and "no one dared to sit there except the man … Lord had chosen" (*Quest* 49). With the reserved seat at the Table of the Holy Grail, the poet establishes the link between Galahad, as the only hero who can approach the Table of the Holy Grail, and his Christian identity as the chosen man of Christ. Moreover, the emergence of Arthur's Round Table is narrated as another marvel seen after Christ's table and the Table of the Holy Grail:

> After the Table of the Holy Grail there came the Round Table, established according to Merlin's advice and laden with symbolic meaning. The name Round Table signifies the round shape of the earth and the disposition of the planets and other elements in the firmament where one sees stars and other heavenly bodies. One can thus rightly assert that the Round Table represents the world. You can see that to the extent that knights come to the Round Table from any country where chivalry exists, whether Christian or pagan. (*Quest* 49)

Galahad's existence both as a chosen hero and a knight of Arthur proves that the knights of the Round Table could be true Christians of whom Jesus Christ would approve and allow to sit at the Table of the Holy Grail or attend the quest of the Grail. For that reason, gaining the Holy Grail is presented as a Christian ritual recalling the baptism; before submitting the Grail, Joseph of Arimathea blesses Galahad and his companions in accordance with the Christian traditions. Such scenes added after Robert de Boron's *Joseph of Arimathea* lead the audience to accept the Grail itself as a relic of Jesus. However, in Wace's and Layamon's *Brut*s, the Round Table is narrated "as a Pan-Celtic institution" (Wace 18). It was an organisation consisting of knights from all the lands

conquered by Arthur, and the chosen knights were ready to obey the best knight in the world, Arthur, and to gain victories with him:

> It was on a 'yule-day' [holy day], that Arthur lay in London; '… [there] were come to him *men* of all his kingdoms, of Britain, of Scotland, of Ireland, of Iceland, and all the lands that Arthur had in hand; … There were 'come' seven kings sons, with seven hundred knights; without the folk that obeyed Arthur … 'Each had in heart proud thoughts, and esteemed that he were better than his companion.' (Layamon 532)

Layamon and Wace tell the story of the Round Table's establishment in a realistic manner, showing a king recruiting soldiers from his subjects. There is no reference to any religions or religious figures. As a king, Arthur founds a special organisation to protect his lands and his folk. Therefore, Robert de Boron, by remaining loyal to the chronicles, enhances the story with the dominant tradition in literary texts and, since then, the Round Table Knights have been depicted as the protectors of Christianity. With his contribution, the French poet changed the course of a story and canonised that understanding.

Throughout the story, the Vulgate Cycle poets delicately handle every detail of Christ's life and the process of spreading Christianity. The Grail motif is one of them, which unquestionably conducts the audience to Christ's Last Supper. Even though they managed to achieve a miraculous transformation for the Celtic cauldron, its interpretation as Christ's cup that was used at his Last Supper depends on a misunderstanding, in fact, a mistranslation. The Grail story, as a motif of the Celtic myth, derived from images such as the Horn of Plenty, or Cauldron of Rebirth and Knowledge, which are the symbols of abundance. The scholars searching for the connection between Chrétien's Grail and Celtic Cauldron discovered that the change of Grail into a miraculously imbued Holy Christian relic,

> … was actually based upon the trivial mistranslation of one simple word – *cors*, which in old French can signify, amongst many other things, both a horn and a body. Through a series of misunderstandings a Celtic Blessed Horn of Plenty, (*cors benoiz*), became the Blessed Body of Christ (*cors benoit*). And thus it came about that a pagan Graal of Plenty was transformed into a vessel intimately associated with the sacrament, in which Christ's Last Supper is commemorated by the consecration of the bread (host) and the wine (his blood). (Godwin 17)

Such a misunderstanding caused a mystery story in the Christian lands and contributed to the literary heritage. The Christian link, though it was totally fabricated, met the society's need to hear a religious miracle and chivalric deeds. Even if it arose from a mistake, by merging the concepts 'Blessed Horn' and 'Blessed Body,' the medieval European literature produced a transcultural figure 'Holy Grail' in which Christ's blood was gathered while he was crucified. The adoption of the Grail as a religious relic proves that the poets successfully managed to diminish the previous meanings of the object and it completed its transcultural process in the Middle Ages.

Apart from the Grail, many concepts from the prehistoric times were transmitted to the contemporary periods via the transformations in the Middle Ages. The medieval texts taught the poets of later centuries the ancient literary themes with the ancient cultural elements. The Wasteland concept is also a Celtic image created in the Arthurian romances that came to medieval Britain and even to modern British literature. In the *Quest for the Holy Grail*, the Wasteland appears as the land of Perceval's aunt whom Chrétien de Troyes does not include in his *Graal*. The Wasteland, including a forest called Waste Forest, is depicted as the place where the Grail Castle is located. In the footnote of her *Quest* translation, Burns explains 'Terre Gaste' (Waste Land) is as a region occupied by Perceval's aunt before she secluded herself in the 'Forest Gaste' (Waste Forest) and the

realm of the Logres[57] who took the land after defeating Perceval's father (36). Perceval's father is generally depicted as one of the guardians of the Holy Grail, and the wounding of a guardian in the Wasteland symbolically demonstrates the loss of the peacefulness and puts the place into a warlike situation. Even in his *Waste Land*, T. S. Eliot delivers almost the same meaning, which is the transhistorical transmission of a pre-Christian concept of loss of paradise.

> This [Wasteland] was the landscape of spiritual death, in which concepts had become so divorced from the feelings and real life experiences. The coming of the *Mahdi*,[58] or the Desired Knight in the twelfth and thirteenth century was identified variously, depending upon tradition and region, as the second coming of Christ or the long-awaited awakening of King Arthur and Merlin, or some other powerful hero who would defy the oppressors. (Godwin 214)

T. S. Eliot seems to have learned the "lost paradise" concept from the Arthurian stories and probably unconsciously provides a historical transmission for the Celtic figures. The Wasteland concept is a common theme in Welsh and Irish poems, and the critics agree that the motif meaning lost paradise refers to the land that a hero is supposed to restore in the pre-Christian works.[59] The Desired Knight would restore the spiritual 'Waste Land' and "its integrity to life and let stream again from infinite depths the lost, forgotten, living

[57] Logres is a fictional region in which the Kingdom of Arthur was founded. Although its geographical boundaries have not been estimated, some critics assume that the region is the area where Anglo-Saxons and Britons lived. While Malory, in his *Morte D'Arthur* defines Logres "as a never-existent England in the past, a land of forests to ride through and castles to stay the night in" (Derek Pearsall, *Arthurian Romance* 97), Chrétien de Troyes, in his *Perceval: The Story of the Grail*, states that "Of Logres (already known / As the land of ogres)" (6171-72).

[58] The redeemer in Islam.

[59] In the twentieth century, many scholars focused on the "Wasteland" motif after T. S. Eliot's poem. In this subject, even today, contemporary scholars benefit from the articles and books of the certain critics who are accepted as the canon in the Arthurian studies. Roger Sherman Loomis's *The Grail: From Celtic Myth to Christian Symbol*, Jessie L. Weston's *From Ritual to Romance* and William A. Nitze's "The Waste Land: A Celtic Arthurian Theme" are the canonised works that confirm the Celtic origin of the "Wasteland" motif.

waters of the inexhaustible source" (Mihelich). In the Grail quest, from the Christian perspective, the Desired Knight who will restore the Wasteland is Galahad, the best knight in the world. In the Vulgate Cycle version, an old man in a white cloak introduces a knight in red armour and tells King Arthur "I bring you the Desired Knight, descended from the noble lineage of King David and the family of Joseph of Arimathea" (7). Galahad is generally associated with Joseph of Arimathea in Grail stories, and his kinship with King David is explained in the *Lancelot* romance of the Vulgate Cycle; according to that romance, Galahad is the son of Lancelot and the Fisher King's daughter, Elaine, who descends from King David.[60] With the pseudo-historical background, in the medieval Grail stories, a connection between the Arthurian characters and the Christian figures is established, and in this way, the transformations of the Celtic images in a Christian society were accelerated.

Another link between the Celtic legends and Grail story is the guardian of the Grail who is believed to be a descendant of Joseph of Arimathea and Christ. In the original Celtic legends a hero named Brân the Blessed, the main character of the Irish *Mabinogi*, is depicted as the protector or the king of Britain, and in some legends, he is said to have a magical cauldron. According to the *Mabinogi*, he fought against the tyrants to restore peace in Britain, but during an attack by his half-brother he was mortally wounded and asked his surviving followers to chop off his head: "'And take the head,' he said, 'and bring it as far as the White Mound[61] (*Gwynfryn*) in London, and bury it with its face towards France. And you will be a long while on the way. In Harlech you will be seven years engaged in feasting, with the birds of Rhiannon[62] singing above" (qtd. in Koch 236). In some legends, it is said that Brân asks his head to be buried in order to protect his land from the Saxons; thus it is probable that the legend of Brân was composed before the

[60] For further information, see, *Lancelot* Part I, translated by Samuel N. Rosenberg.
[61] White Mount.
[62] A female character in the *Mabinogi*

Saxons managed to occupy Britain. From that pre-Christian period, the theme 'Head of Britain' was transferred to a medieval text. In the Grail story of the medieval period, the characteristics and mission of Brân are attributed to the Fisher King, in the Vulgate Cycle King Pelles. Mike Ashley explains the reason for the title 'Fisher King' in Christian terms; "Christ called his disciples 'fisher of men', and the early symbol of Christianity, prior to the use of the cross, was of a fish" (5). In this sense, by depicting a character derived from Christ's disciples, the medieval Grail story figuratively keeps the concept of 'the Head of Britain' since Joseph of Arimathea is believed to have been sent to Britain as the head of a group of disciples to found the first Christian church at Glastonbury.[63] By providing a sound basis, the Christian poets could use a Celtic motif in religious terms as the culture of the period required. The general outline of the Grail story is depicted as if the story was composed after Christianity and followed the miracle birth of that religion; however, as is seen, the best known thirteenth-century romance appeared as a result of the changing society. Apart from the Celtic and Christian connections, the story also provides an Eastern-Western relation.

3.3. Eastern Inspiration in the *Quest for the Holy Grail*

Historical and social transformations shaped the course of the *Quest for the Holy Grail* as many medieval works since the authors took the initiative in a variety of ways. Wars especially, by providing cross-cultural interactions, managed to penetrate deep into the works. In the stories, including chivalric deeds, tournaments and anything related to knighthood, the reflections of wars distinguish themselves. Within this context, Saunders

[63] Apart from its importance in Christianity, Glastonbury has an important place in Arthurian history since it is believed to be one of the sites of the pseudo-historical King Arthur. Koch reveals that "Glastonbury, Somerset, has been identified with the Arthurian Avalon since the 12th century and was the site of both an aristocratic occupation and an early church in post-Roman pre-English times," and the most famous place associated with Arthur "Camelot itself does not appear in Arthurian literature until the late 12th century and is almost certainly derived from that of the pre-Roman Belgic oppidum of CAMULODŪNON, later a Roman *colonia*, modern Colchester, Essex" (135).

and her colleagues explain how historic wars include the Grail quest and their influences on creating their own realities throughout the text:

> The practices of chivalry, the figure of the knight errant, the ideas of adventure and quest, the glimmering ideal of the Holy Grail, the pageantry and honour of knighthood, deeds of arms and tournaments, chivalric codes and oaths and romance literature, all these must to some extent be detached from the reality of the history of war. Yet at the same time, they played crucial roles in making glamorous the blood, sweat and tears of warfare, and even in the creation of the medieval warrior. (8)

Since the twelfth century, when the first-known Grail story was written, the Grail stories had been related to war. In this sense, the *Quest for the Holy Grail* presents a Crusade reading because of the intensive religious texts of the period. Richard Barber elaborates that "if there are references to the crusades, it is because these were in everyone's mind at the time, and several of the patrons or possible patrons for whom the romances were written were indeed crusaders" ("The Search for Sources" 36). Even though Barber considers that this reading could be a conditioned approach to the texts, the interactions between the Christian and Islamic cultures after the Crusades cannot be denied. For that reason, to determine the return of the Crusades in a religious text written after the twelfth century would be the natural process, rather than a conditioned reading.

Even the increase in the chivalric deeds of the Christian knights are a consequence of the Crusades and the sermons about the 'enemy of the Christians' because "in whatever way the movement began, the First Crusade brought the Church and knighthood together in a fashion which neither had foreseen" (Barber, "Chivalry, Cistercianism and the Grail" 6). As discussed in the previous chapters, any stories in the Middle Ages could be used as a vehicle to transmit Christian doctrines and implicit or explicit references to the

Crusades increased the understanding of the holiness of Christianity in contrast with the other religions, especially Islam. In this sense, the Grail story can be evaluated as a response to the anxiety of the society about the Muslims. As Ben Ramm declares "the Grail as literary symbol is produced at a specific and identifiable point of rupture in an ideological narrative (in this case, the narrative of the Crusade), the moment at which the subjects of that ideology begin to question the legitimacy and viability of the system within which they operate, and which operates upon (subjectivizes) them" (3). In this regard, the story of the *Quest for the Holy Grail* appears as a consequence of the transhistorical transmission dating back to the Muslim movement in the Near East. Thereby, when the Grail stories of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries are taken into consideration, it is obvious that the cross-cultural merge of the Celtic and Christian customs took shape within the contemporary political development in the whole of medieval Europe.

Above all, in the Arthurian narratives, the knights themselves lead the scholars to the Muslim history. There is a link with the Eastern culture and Islam through Arthur's Knights and Grail Guardians; the Knights' significant closeness to the Templars connects the Western literature to Islam and it is seen in the Arthurian romances that the Round Table Knights have a mission similar to that of the Templars in search of the Holy Grail. The Templars, consisting of nine 'warrior monks,' under the guidance of Hugues de Payns (Hugh of the Pagans), appeared in 1118. In fact, their history dates back to the First Crusade when they arrived in Palestine to protect the Holy Land.[64] After the monks gathered as warriors against the threat to Christianity, one of their first deeds was to stand before Baldwin II who occupied Jerusalem where they received the whole of Solomon's

[64] For further information, see Mark Amaru Pinkham's *Guardians of the Holy Grail*.

temple[65] and then they were given the name Knights of the Temple.[66] After the protection of Jerusalem, they did many great services for Christianity and became the protectors of Christian relics. They grew so powerful and "the fight against the Templars could also be perceived as a fight against the Grail" (Scott 156). In this regard, the Knights of Arthur were conflated with the Templars' missions, and the details in their quest resemble the Templars' adventures. The similarities between the Templars and Arthur's knights indirectly connect the Round Table Knights with the Muslim assassins since they are the inspiration of the Templars.

The search for a Grail in literature appeared around the same period as the Templars gained a distinguished power among the Christian warriors and, thereby, the Grail poets could have been inspired by their legendary adventures. Mark Amaru Pinkham claims that "the Holy Grail Mysteries of Europe truly begin with the Knights Templar" (2). The inspiration is seen even in the objects used in the story, such as the ship on which they carry the Grail to Sarras and the shields with red crosses. For instance, when Galahad begins the quest, he does not possess a shield but, at the Cistercian abbey he finds the shield that Joseph, the son of Joseph of Arimathea gave King Evalach to protect the city of Sarras from the Saracens. The shield is s marked with a red cross and after it is used for its holy purpose in Sarras, it is kept at the abbey where the best knight of the world finds and "hangs the shield from his shoulders without regretting it" because "as this shield produced greater wonders than any other, so too the chosen knight will demonstrate more amazing prowess and virtue than any other" (23). The fame and success of the Templars guided the poets when they included the religious and historical details into the Celtic cauldron concept. According to historical documents, the shield is "the

[65] After the Crusaders occupied Jerusalem, they re-named al-Aqsa Mosque as theTemple of Solomon.

[66] After a while, the monks, who were the members of the Order of the Temple gained almost full autonomy and became answerable only to the Pope. In addition to the privileges they were granted, they owned a vast amount of treasure. After two hundred years, they were destroyed by betrayals and abuses. For further information, see, Carter Scott's *The Holy Grail*, chapter XII.

same that Pope Eugenius III gave exclusively to the Templars in 1147" (Scott 156). Moreover, the white shield with a red cross was the emblem of the Crusaders; the two colours symbolising innocence and blood. Such similarities between the Knights of the Round Table and the Knights Templar or the Crusaders reinforce the assumption about the connection of historical and fictional knights. Therefore, the reason behind the Holy Grail Mysteries of the Templars is the root of the inspiration in the Grail quest.

The date of the foundation of the Knights of the Temple shows parallelism with the Ismaili[67] Assassins (Hashishim)[68] of the twelfth century. The Muslim Order of the Assassins was founded in 1090, before the Order of the Temple, and like the Templars, they were in charge of protecting Jerusalem during the First Crusade. The Christian order's official foundation after the Muslim order and their possible encounter in Palestine at the First Crusade make some scholars think that the Christians imitated the Muslims in terms of protection of the Holy Land. The Holy Grail adventure of the Knights of the Temple is based on Sufism[69] which highlights the Eastern influence on the Grail

[67] A branch of Shi'ite that is the sect accepting Ali and the successor of the prophet Mohammed.

[68] The name of assassin derives from the Arabic word "hashashin." The myth about the Assassins were brought to Europe by the Crusades chroniclers. According to the legend, they "projected a secret garden of sensuous delight reserved on earth and in heaven for the fanatical adherents of a secret society absolutely devoted to their master, often called 'The Old Man of the Mountain'" (Friedman and Figg 34). Barbara Walker explains that story as a result of opium, hashish that the assassins used: by means of drugs, they "were persuaded that they died and went to heaven, or Fairyland, where gardens and palaces occupied the valley of the secret cave" (16). Except for these myths about the assassins, the history of this order shows that the foundation of the Order of Assassins was based on the conflict between the Muslim sects. The assassins were hired to carry out political assassinations, especially of the Sunni Muslims. Hasn ibn Sabbah assigned some agents to subvert the political power of the Seljuk Turks and to convert the surrounding areas of Sunnis to his version of Isma'ili Shi'sm. When the Crusaders attacked, Hasan ibn Sabbah sent his missionaries to Syria and the missionaries attempted assassinations of both Christian and Sunni leaders by disguising as Christian monks or Sufis (Friedman and Figg 34-35).

[69] Sufiism (Tasawwuf in Arabic), also known as Islamic mysticism, is a search for divine love and a struggle to spiritually reach God. There are many ways of the movement and various kinds of Sufis, yet, Sufism briefly stated, is a call for perfection and a concept of communication with God. Since Sufism is an inward experience, "communication takes place through the media of the heart, the mind and the soul." Islamic mysticism is based on the Greek philosophy; in Aristotle's and Philo's work there is "recognition of the manifestation of God in this world" (Waugh 9 - 10). For further information, see, Winston E. Waugh's *Sufism*.

story. According to Barbara Walker, when the Templars first gathered as the members of an order (after the First Crusade), they founded their headquarters in Jerusalem near the al-Aqsa mosque that was considered to be the central shrine of Fatima[70] by the Shi'ites, and "Western Romances, inspired by Moorish Shi'ite poets, transformed this Mother-Shrine (the al-Aqsa mosque) into the Temple of the Holy Grail, where certain legendary knights called Templars gathered to offer their service to the Goddess,[71] to uphold the female principles of divinity and to defend women" (509).[72] For the myth created in the first decades of the Templars, after the occupation of the al-Aqsa mosque, the Christians preserved the mosque's major symbolism that is femininity.

The Knights of the Temple probably learned that the mosque was dedicated to an important Muslim figure, and according to their religion and with the contribution of the ancient myths, they turned this female figure into a Holy Grail that also represents the womb. The symbolic meaning of the Grail refers to a woman; thus, the temple was still used as a place where women were defended. Godwin explains the femininity of the Grail as follows: "The Grail is not only the nourishing vessel, bestower of food and drink. It can equally signify the uterus or womb of either the earth/mother Goddess, or the sacred vessel of the holy blood of Christ – which can in turn be both the womb of the Virgin Mother or a receptacle carrying the blood of the crucified Christ" (197). Therefore, with the inspiration of the Eastern 'knights' and their central shrine, the Christian monks created a story based on both Christian Templars and Muslim Assassins that met at the

[70] The daughter of Mohammed and the wife of Ali whom the Shi'ites respected more than the other three caliphs.

[71] In her explanation Barbara Walker refers to Fatima as the Goddess, yet, here, she addresses the fictional Goddess created in the romances, who derives from Fatima.

[72] The women that the Templars were supposed to protect were the subjects of the queen Repanse de Joie (Dispenser of Joy) who kept the Grail in her temple. According to the legend, she married a Moor and "her son John founded the eastern order of the Knights Templar, a group of warriors dedicated to the Grail temple and the defence of women. When a lady needed help, Grail knights like Galahad, Parsifal, or Lohengrin would receive orders in fiery letters on the rim of the Grail and ride to the rescue" (Walker 352).

same temple with the female divinity. The symbolic meaning of the Grail based on the Virgin Mary clarifies the role of the female guardians at the Grail Castle. When Galahad and his companions arrive at the room where the Grail is kept, a voice asks "those who are not sit at the table of Jesus Christ depart, for now the true knights will be fed with heavenly sustenance" and "everyone left the room except King Pelles [the Fisher King] …, his son Elyezer, and a young maiden, the king's niece, who was the holiest and most religious person anyone had ever known" (163). Hence, the holiness of women was transferred to a medieval romance, coming from the East by way of the Knights Templar. As the composer of the first known Grail story, Chrétien de Troyes and his successors may not have adapted every Eastern detail to the medieval Christianity, yet the Eastern influences or parallels between the Templars and Assassins, and Mother-Shrine and the Temple of the Holy Grail prove the cultural derivation.

The philosophical transmissions are also affected as a result of the meeting of the Muslims at the Crusades. Through the Temple, not only is the symbolism of femininity shared between Islam and Christianity, but also Sufi mysticism takes place in medieval Western literature. The romances of the "matter of Britain," in general terms, are famous for their supernatural and magical encounters. In spite of the contribution of the Celtic heritage in the English society, also the Islamic influence on the supernatural elements is undeniable. As Godwin declares, "contact with the sophisticated Islamic culture had been brought through the Crusades. New mystical images of the East and of the great Sufi mystics found a ready affinity with the magical, twilight world of the Celtic legends. Together they created an irresistible fantasy genre which fires the imagination of the whole of Europe" (9). The influence of the East manifests itself in the "exotic" descriptions in the romances since this word is usually used to depict the supernatural places though it means 'foreign and strange.' For Christians, the Eastern lands are the gates opening to another world and many romances are composed with exotically

supernatural places in the East. John Stevens declares that "there is the *exotic*, that is the foreign, strange, and remote. Strictly speaking, the exotic is not *super*natural at all; but since the natural order to which it belongs is out of our reach, out of our experience, it seems supernatural. The Middle Ages held the gorgeous East in fee, at least in imagination" (99). In the Grail story, the mysticism of the East is depicted both through the Grail Castle as the symbol of the Temple and Sarras as the Holy City in the Muslim region. The city of the Muslims is narrated as a place where the journey of the Grail started, and the knights' mission is completed. Joseph of Arimathea transferred the Grail from that city and finally the Grail returns to where it belongs. The cycle in the narration demonstrates that the lands of the Muslims could be the birth of miracles.

According to this view, the mysterious elements coming from Celtic mythology could be reflections of the exotic East. The Grail Castle, for instance, is described as a palace where supernatural phenomena are experienced since it was the gate to the other world, as noted in the heading of this section. The castle and its environment are always depicted with light and brightness, and the light is reflected to the audience as 'the Temple of Light.' When Lancelot arrives at the Castle, the magical atmosphere is narrated; even the moon above the castle, is "shining so bright that one could see for a considerable distance in all directions" (155). On the other hand, the room where the Holy Vessel is kept is full of "a light as bright as if the sun were lodged in that room. The light was so intense that it illuminated the entire house; it seemed as if all the candles in the world were burning there" (156). The 'blinding light of the Grail' and shining castle are the images that date back to Egyptian mysticism and Platonic schools since they believed that "the temple was microcosmically an expression of the beauty and unity of creation. Expressed thus, it was reflected in the soul and became, indeed, 'a bridge for the remembrance or contemplation of the wholeness of creation'" (Matthews and Knight).

Temples are supposed to be places where one's soul can be seen, and the intensive brightness is the symbol of that clarity.

This microcosmic understanding of the Grail temple was probably borrowed from the Muslims since they have adopted the same view for the temples. Matthews and Knight, by referring to the Sufi mystics, claim that the idea of the temple of light belongs to Islam. The scholars state that "this is the origin of the temple of light (the *haykat al-nur*), the macrocosmic temple that lies at the heart of Islamic mysticism, of which the Sufi mystic Ibn al-Arabi[73] says: 'O ancient temple, there hath risen for you a light that gleams in our hearts,' the commentary to which states that 'the gnostic's heart, which contains the reality of the truth' is the temple." In this regard, the Sufi mysticism emphasises the importance of a clear soul, heart and mind to communicate with God, in other words, to see the light of God. Therefore, this view was adapted to the Grail myth and the tests of the Knights that each has failed except for Galahad show how hard it is to protect the soul and heart. When Lancelot tried to touch the Grail, he "felt a breath of air, so hot it seemed to be mixed with fire, strike him violently in the face. Feeling that he had been burned, he was unable to proceed further. His body was so afflicted that he could no longer hear or see, and he had no control of his limbs" (156). He is punished because he could not keep his soul clean and has an affair with Guinevere. In fact, "it is Lancelot's failure, and it is the failure of all who do not listen to the Voice of the Light" (Matthews and Knight). However, Galahad, as the chosen knight, finds the true path leading to the light of God and after he completes the mission, he dies in front of the Holy Vessel and his soul is "carried away by jubilant angels who blessed the name of the Lord"

[73] Ibn al-Arabi is a Muslim philosopher and mystic, born in Spain in the twelfth century. As the other mystics, Ibn al-Arabi believes that God is the essence of light and in his *The Tarjumān al-Ashwāq* (*Interpreter of Desires*), the mystic states that God "hath seventy thousand veils of light" (99). Moreover, within the Sufi culture, he improved the idea of "perfect human being" (al-insān al-kāmil), which means being a true Muslim like the prophet Mohammed. For further information, see, Alexander D. Knysh's *Ibn Arabi in the Later Islamic Tradition*.

(170). The spiritual quest of the Round Table Knights is detailed with mysticism which is reflected as the supernatural elements in the romance. In Christian mysticism, there is the idea to find the divine love as a true Christian, yet with the idea of the light of the Temple the romance mingles Christian mysticism with Islamic, one of the teachings the Templars learned in the Holy Land from the Sufi mystics.

It is obvious that after the occupation of Jerusalem, the Templars were in contact with Muslims and they lived in the same land for a while, and their communication with the Muslims must have formed their religious missions. Hence, the history of the Grail story with the contributions of Sufi mysticism and exoticism appears after that communication. The historians put forward that the Templars acquired religious equality from their Sufi mentors, and thereby,

> … the equality consciousness of the Sufis had enabled them to perceive the same universal truths running through all the major world's spiritual traditions, including Christianity, and their universal vision eventually inspired them to unite the elements from Islam, Egyptian mysticism, Persian dualism, alchemy, Gnosticism, and the knowledge of the Greek philosophers into a host of well-oiled and erudite mystery traditions that subsequently blossomed throughout the Middle East. (Pinkham 5)

The Templars could be one of the key figures that transferred the Eastern science, religion and philosophy to Europe, and their adventures and communications might have guided the poets and monks to re-narrate stories in light of Christian and chivalric perspectives. The similarities between the Templars and the Assassins also provide a link in the concept of Waste Land. As discussed under the previous subheading, the Waste Land is a Celtic image defining the lost Paradise. However, both Christianity and Islam have the same image of an expectation to be saved by a redeemer. According to Walker,

> Like the Arabian brotherhood of *hashishim*, the legendary Knights Templar waited for the Desired Knight, or *Mahdi*, to rescue the world from tyranny and establish the benevolent rule of the Grail. The alternative was a dire prediction of the Waste Land, modelled on the arid wilderness of Arabia Deserta,[74] which some eastern sages attributed to the departure of the Goddess. (Walker 352)

The comparison of the Waste Land with the Arabia Deserta seems a bit far-fetched, yet as an infertile and abandoned land in the Eastern romances, the desert resembles the Waste Land in the Western tradition. It could be possible for the medieval poets - both Eastern and Western- to have been influenced by each other after, the Crusades. Moreover, the belief in Mahdi as a saviour exhibits the religious closeness of the cultures, which expedites the cultural exchanges. As is seen in the understanding of Waste Land, while Islam and Christianity establish another connection between their cultures, these two major monotheistic religions also show similarities with a pagan belief, as well.

It is clear that the Arabian Assassins influenced the Knights of the Temple, and to some extent, their religious missions transferred in many ways. The battlefields of the Crusades and the Holy Land became the places where they could observe their way of carrying out the missions and belief systems. Therefore, the parallelism between the Templars and the Round Table Knights demonstrates the eastern link in the Arthurian romances and naturally in the *Quest for the Holy Grail*. Both orders were founded with a religious purpose and, while fighting for their religions, they gained power in their cultures. Carter Scott pays attention to the power gained by the Templars and their loyalty to Christianity. According to Scott, "the Templars were super knights who combined fighting skills with the spiritual fervour of priesthood. Therefore we should not be surprised that many Grail authors took the Order as a model not only for the knights of

[74] The interior desert on the Arabian Peninsula.

the Grail, but also for those of the Round Table" (160). Thus, the history of the Templars gives information about the Christian Grail stories and its transformation in the medieval world.

The historical transition of the Round Table Knights and their link with the Templars displays that the stories of Arthur's Knights were popular as long as the Templars were in power in the Christian world. The purpose of their foundation, that was to rescue Jerusalem from the Muslim occupation, was unsuccessfully ended when the Muslims took control of the Holy Land after the Seventh Crusade (1248–1254). This ended with a negotiation that left the control of Jerusalem to the Mamluks. As Scott declares "when the kingdom of Jerusalem had been assured, albeit precariously, the Templars, like the Round Table, fell apart" (160). The existence of the Templars was based on the situation in the Holy Land and, at the beginning of the fourteenth century, the Church's aim to retake the Holy Land failed, the Knights were arrested for their "pseudo" secret rites, inappropriate to Christianity, and the Order was dismissed. At the end of the Grail story, some knights of the Round Table do not or cannot return to Camelot - Galahad dies, and Perceval withdraws into a hermitage - and the Round Table weakens even in literature. In fact, when King Arthur sends his knights to this adventure, everyone knows that they will never again be together at the court: "We have now been assured that you'll soon undertake the Quest for the Holy Grail. Knowing that I will never again see you gathered together as you are now" (11). It seems that the Round Table Knights had a last duty as did the Templars. After the Templars' disappearance, so to speak, it seems that medieval poets lost their interest in the Round Table Knights. In the fourteenth century, the Round Table Knights were dealt with individually in literature; by the fifteenth century when Malory wrote his *Morte D'Arthur,* there had been no significant

works depicting the knights as a team, in search of an adventure.[75] The English poets did not abandon their national hero King Arthur, the stories of the king and his knights were transmitted to the next centuries as important parts of their history and naturally local memory. However, the interest in chivalric themes waned, and they were not as popular as in the Middle Ages.

3.4. Grail Story and Memory of the Past

After the oral tradition period, the written works repeated the pre-Christian beliefs and traditions for a while, and the *Quest for the Holy Grail* manifested itself as the product of both the Celtic myth and Christian legend. Therefore, like a Celtic bard who "was the maker and holder of the collective memory and the collective myth," Chrétien de Troyes revived the chivalric stories of the legendary King of Britain (Godwin 6). The emergence of the Grail story in the twelfth century is significant; though it was an old myth of the Celts, in the twelfth century when the medieval Europeans needed courage to take the Holy Land and to embrace the miracles of their religion, a romance on a holy quest appeared. The succession of invasions carried out in the Eastern lands changed the social and cultural expectations, and literature was re-formed according to the turbulence of the period. Thus, "the romances of the Grail fulfilled the thirst for a myth which a changing Europe could identify" (Godwin 8); and in many European works of literature, the Grail story was interpreted in line with the relevant culture. The stories of King Arthur and his knights spread throughout Europe for centuries. Although the first written versions of the Arthurian romances were written in French, and they "broadly reflect contemporary, twelfth-century conditions" (Whitman, "Alternative Scriptures" 7), English society embraced their historic king and produced various stories in every genre in light of the

[75] In the anthology *The Cambridge Companion to the Arthurian Legend* edited by Elizabeth Archibald and Ad Putter, scholars researched the historical transmission of the Arthur romances from the Celtic mythology to twentieth-century literature.

changing conditions. As heroes having a major place in the English local memory, King Arthur and the Round Table Knights played important roles in the cultural interactions of the past and present of the English culture.

The chivalric stories, while drawing the local memory, also shape the cultural identity. The knights of the Round Table and their struggles to protect the codes of chivalry contribute to the English cultural identity. Saunders, Le Saux and Thomas state that "the immense body of medieval chivalric writing attests to the influence of chivalric ideals, and the creation of orders of chivalry could play important political roles in creating a sense of corporate identity" (7). As with the *Song of Roland*, the Arthurian romances shaped the cultural identity of English society to some extent. Whitman points out the connection between the Grail story and English nationalism and states,

> More broadly, long before the English translations of the *Brut*, the idiom and orientation of a range of English chronicles tend to articulate a growing sense of national consciousness in which the recollection of Arthur is central. A story like the French *Quest of the Holy Grail*, with its displacement of Arthur, its subversion of Camelot, and its otherworldly message, would not be easy to reconcile with such approaches to national history. ("Alternative Scriptures" 27)

Here, Whitman refers to Layamon's *Brut*, a turning point in English history as they began to find their national identity by producing texts in their own language. For the English, the stories of King Arthur and the Round Table Knights belong to their own past and recounting the adventures of King Arthur means to transmit their glorious history to the next generations. Even if the French poets reminded the English society of these heroes, the English poets, by re-narrating and adapting the stories to every cultural form, revived the national and religious identities.

The Grail story also reminds readers of a religious tragedy that consists of a significant part of all Christian memory, the birth of Christianity, and in an indirect way, the Crucifixion. The silver table, narrated as the Grail table in the story, and the Round Table itself provide historical continuity from Christ's Last Supper. As Whitman states, "In the *Quest*, the Grail is a historical intermediary that passes transtemporally from the table associated with the Last Supper to the Round Table of Camelot, which according to the *Quest* eventually succeeds that earlier table ("Alternative Scriptures" 13). As has been emphasised, the Grail story is timeless and has travelled down from Christ's time and, because of its Christian connection established by the medieval poets, the Grail became the means of memory transmission among Christians. In the story, the establishment of the Round Table is explained by the comparison with the religiously important tables such as Christ's Table and the Holy Grail Table, and this historical connection is given by the author. While the Grail and Grail table are connected to the birth of Christianity and Jesus Christ, the sword, shield or spear used by Arthur's Knights are included as the relics of the later saints or prominent figures in Christianity.

Through every object, the emphasis on the struggles of the apostles and saints are evoked. For example, the sword that Galahad withdraws from its scabbard and that no one has ever dared to touch, belongs to King David.[76] In the romance, the sword is depicted as follows: "this sword is called the Sword of the Strange Straps, and the scabbard is called Memory of Blood, for no one with any sense can look at the scabbard, which was made from the Tree of Life,[77] and not be reminded of Abel's blood" (140).

[76] As a historic figure, he was the king of the Kingdom of Israel, and head of the House of David. In the Bible and Quran, he is described as the prophet and believed to be Christ's ancestor. After his death, his son, Solomon, came to the throne.

[77] 'Tree of Life' is originally 'Tree of Knowledge' in Bible; the legend about the forbidden fruit of this tree is explained in chapter 67 in the *Quest* and mostly adapted from Genesis III, 1-23. In the *Quest*, after their big sin, Adam and Eve planted more trees out of the branch that Eve broke while taking the fruit, and thereby, they called the 'Tree of Knowledge' the 'Tree of Life' since it came to life and readily took root wherever they stuck its branches into the earth (132).

The sword symbolises the first murder and life itself in history in Christian and Islamic terms. According to the story, Abel, the son of Adam and Eve, was murdered by his brother Cain under the Tree of Life which was watered with Abel's blood and became completely red, eventually losing its green colour. However, the tree retained the colour and remained as it was until the people of the earth had increased and multiplied, and the other trees that grew out of the Tree of Life "survived until the time when Solomon, son of King David, ruled over his father's land" (*Quest* 135). Thereby, the handle of the sword was made out of a tree planted out of the Tree of Life as the result of the insistence of the "evil wife" of Solomon:

> She set out with two carpenters to the Tree where Abel had been killed, and instructed them, 'Cut me enough of this wood so that I can have a spindle made.' … So they began to strike the Tree, but had barely cut into it when, much to their astonishment, they saw quite plainly that drops of rosy red blood were spilling out. Though they wanted to stop cutting, Solomon's wife made them try again, against their better judgement. (*Quest* 138)

With the tales about the miracles in Genesis, the *Quest* transforms every object of King Arthur's knights into a 'holy object,' and the roots of Christianity are protected in the narration. While the Vulgate Cycle poet narrates the origin of the sword in a couple of chapters, Thomas Malory summarises the whole story in two chapters,[78] but, even in a brief narrative, he transfers the essence of being a good servant of God. In this way, the Christian perspective was kept in the other narrations in the following centuries. For Kenneth Hodges, the spindles of the sword memorialise Eve's penitence positively and Cain's murder of Abel negatively (82). After Eve was dismissed from the Garden of Eden, she lived as a faithful servant of God, yet her son commits a sin. Thus, in every version

[78] See, Chapters 4 and 5 in "The Book of the Holy Grail" of *King Arthur and The Quest of the Holy Grail*.

of the Grail story, objects such as David's sword are reminders of the holy purpose of the quest and convey the message that the Round Table Knights have divine souls as do the saints.

In the *Quest*, the similar bloodline to Eve's and Abel's, is drawn with a sinful father and a son, the loyal servant of God. Lancelot is punished as a sinner whereas his son Galahad keeps his soul clean, and hence, the bloodline both in the religious and literary terms proves every mortal body is on his own. As the *Song of Roland* has a connotation with Christ's torture on the cross, the *Quest for the Holy Grail* takes people to the earlier times when humanity, according to the monotheistic religions, began. The religious theme in the Grail story reminds people of both life and death; with the objects like the sword, spear and Grail on which there is blood, the poet refreshes thoughts about life's end. With the sword image, the poets connect the Celtic culture with Christianity as well, since in the Celtic literature there are some poems about the magical swords, as in the Welsh epic poem "Culcwch and Olwen" in which Caledfwlch, or Excalibur, is described (Godwin 47). After being adapted from Celtic literature, the sword was turned into a Christian relic like the Grail, and the object becomes the means of the transhistorical process from the birth of humanity to Celtic culture and from the Celts to the Christian knights. When the use of the sword is considered in the Celtic culture, the transmission of such weapons through the stories of the Round Table Knights could be revealed. The sword was a weapon used by the upper-class members of some Celtic tribes, and the kings and the glorious knights of the tribes also carried a sword. As John Koch elaborates "Swords are the offensive weapons most commonly associated with the Celts, even though their use is by no means universal for all the Celtic-speaking areas and periods and seems to have been restricted to the upper tiers of society, even in those regions and periods where they are common" (1643). The old use of the sword is associated with the Grail story through the Round Table Knights, and the Celtic origin is kept when King

David's sword is given to Galahad, the best knight in the world. Galahad, with his pure soul, deserves to use a sword that a royal can carry, and a good Christian can touch.

The temples and the monks that almost every knight comes across are the signs of religious memory transmission as well. The spiritual atmosphere of the *Quest* shows itself from the beginning of the story and in every temple or castle used as a sanctuary. Through the tale it is emphasised that when people perform altruistic acts like Christ and his apostles, God helps them with his miracles. For instance, during the quest, Lancelot comes to a division in the road marked by a wooden cross which revives the memory of the Crucifixion: "Kneeling before the cross, Lancelot said his prayers, asking Him who was crucified, and in whose memory and honor the cross had been raised, to protect him from mortal sin. More than anything else, he feared a relapse into sin" (81). As a symbol of Christianity, the cross reminds Christians that their Lord sacrificed his life for the sake of 'the only true religion in this world.' Thus, the cross is seen as the beginning of everything and as the essence of being a Christian. In the *Quest*, Lancelot leans against a rock that stands in front of the cross and sees a vision about the miracles and how the Lord laments the sins of his disciples:

> As Lancelot looked up at the sky, he saw the cloud part, as a man surrounded by angels stepped forward. Descending towards the seated figures, the man gave each one his blessings, proclaiming them all to be good and loyal servants. "My longing waits all of you," he said. …
>
> When the knight heard these words, he fled among the others and begged for mercy more piteously than anyone. The man said to him, "If you wish, I will love you, but if you prefer, I will hate you." (82).

At the end of this dialogue between the sinful knight and the man descending from the sky, the man turns the knight into a lion and gave him wings to travel all over the world.

With this scene, the poet refreshes the memory of his readers about sins and good works in religion; being a true Christian is always rewarded, while committing sins is punished. As stated in the previous chapter, there is a strong connection between memory transmission and religious traditions; in fact, many medieval traditions were founded on the Bible and the Biblical texts and, thereby, these traditions were transferred through literature. Thus, "the followers of Jesus told stories about him and the kingdom of God that he proclaimed. Second-generation Christians remembered and repeated the information contained in these stories, while being unable to recall personal experiences with Jesus. This gave birth to that elusive entity known as 'the Jesus tradition.'" (Kirk and Thatcher 26). In this sense, the medieval literature helped the Jesus tradition to be accepted and embraced in society. Almost every piece of literature was turned into a vehicle to evoke religious teachings and naturally religious traumas. The wooden cross in Lancelot's situation is just a reminder of the holiness of Christianity and God's mercy and wrath.

Two hundred years after the Vulgate Cycle, Thomas Malory keeps the same Christian symbols in his *Quest* even though his rewriting is one-third of the Cycle. Malory focuses on Lancelot for the many other stories about the Round Table Knights because he has been known as the best knight by the time his son Galahad appears. For that reason, Malory does not delete the scenes of Lancelot and narrates the scene in which Lancelot discovers a cross where he sees a dream. Unlike the poet of the Vulgate Cycle, Malory narrates that scene not as a vision but as a real event that Lancelot witnesses: "he [Lancelot] put his horse to pasture, and took off his helm and his shield, and made his prayers to the cross, that he might never again fall in deadly sin" (168). The English poet, by emphasising the miracles of the Cross, might have thought that its visual effect would not be effective enough to transmit the importance of being "servants of Lord" and "good and true knights." He, therefore, adds another vision where Lancelot sees the Holy Grail:

“All this vision saw Sir Launcelot at the cross. And on the morrow he took his horse and rode till mid-day, and there by adventure he met with the same knight that took his horse, his helm, and his sword, when he slept, when the Sancgreal appeared afore the cross” (168). The continuity of the story is provided with Christian teachings of the fifteenth century, Malory does not remove the additions related to Christianity. In spite of his omissions, he transmits the quest as an adventure where the good knights, in other words, true Christians are rewarded. Mary Hynes-Berry elaborates that “There is only one chivalry in the *Sankgreal*-the tension in this romance is between good knights and bad rather than between heavenly and earthly chivalry. It has been said that Malory substitutes the Arthurian for the Christian scale of values, but it seems more accurate to say that he regards the Arthurian scale as thoroughly and essentially Christian” (245). She continues to suggest that the *Quest for the Holy Grail* becomes a Biblical adventure rather than a chivalric one. Thus, every object or detail about religion takes its place in the transhistorical transmission of the quest.

Apart from the objects in the story, the text itself is transmitted from century to century. At the end of the *Quest for the Holy Grail*, only one knight, Bors comes back to Camelot from Sarras, and Arthur asks him to tell the whole quest. While Bors is recounting the adventure, the king commands the tale to be written and translated into other languages:

> After they had eaten, the king summoned the clerks who were putting into writing the adventures of the knights at court. When Bors had recounted the adventures of the Holy Grail, as he had seen them, they were recorded and kept in the archive at Salisbury. Master Walter Map withdrew them to write his book about the Holy Grail, for the love of his lord King Henry, who had the story translated from Latin into French. (171)

In this way, everybody can learn and always remember such a miraculous adventure. Through the text, many other readers are included to witness the holiness in Christianity and the bravery of the English knights. One of the translators of *the Quest for the Holy Grail*, Jane Burns, explains in her footnote that "the historical Walter Map was a jurist and a man of letters at the court of King Henry II of England. But Map died before the *Quest* and could not have been its actual author" (171). The information about the writer of the Vulgate Cycle became valid in literary history for a long time, and the Cycle might be known as the Pseudo-Map because of this misunderstanding. As a twelfth-century writer, Walter Map wrote only in Latin, and he was the compiler and archivist of the chronicles of the history of Britain during the reign of Henry II. Today, it has been definitely proved Walter Map is not the author of any versions of the Grail stories or the Arthurian romances.[79] Even though the monks writing the *Quest* made anachronistic mistakes, by giving the names of the historical figures, they increased the reliability of the Grail story. Including historical figures like Walter Map and Henry II is, to some extent, a way of hindering the questioning of the truth of the religious details that were added later. Moreover, to present the text as a chronicle, the Grail poets might have intended to supply a historical transition between Christ's time and the contemporary medieval period.

The Grail legend is a story which stands the test of time and endures against the changing time. Since the oldest manuscript of the Grail story written in the twelfth century, it has been adapted according to the diverse cultural changes. The medieval specialist Juliette Wood emphasises that "as a symbol of personal transformation and cultural renewal, it [the Grail story] continues to fascinate a particular corner of the publishing industry" (168). Wood emphasises the popularity of the Grail story in the

[79] For further information see, Joshua Byron Smith's *Walter Map and the Matter of Britain*, chapter 6: "Walter Map in Archives."

twentieth century, and in this sense, the cultural transformations in the story are the inevitable results of re-narration. However, even when the story is studied within the temporal border of the Middle Ages, the study area is also supposed to cover the pre-medieval periods in order to follow the traces of the contemporary Christians' and Celtic pagans' literary customs,. The monks' rewriting of the Grail story could not cover the Celtic roots of the story and a 'Pagan-Christian' story appears. As Godwin states, "in these legends the already unorthodox views of the Celtic 'Pagan-Christianity' are mixed with ingredients imported from the apocryphal world of the Middle East and its mysterious 'hidden scripture.' From these arise strange tales set within the traditions surrounding the sacrament commemorating the Last Supper – the Eucharist" (81). The transformation of the pagan traditions in a Christian land is a common cultural development, but this time the pagan literature meets the Christian doctrines shaped in the wake of the Crusades.

Even if the historicity of the story is still being debated, the English people embraced their king's and his knights' adventures in the post-medieval period. However, the Renaissance and Restoration periods did remain aloof to the quests of the Round Table Knights, and very few adaptations appeared. The most significant King Arthur adaptation of the seventeenth century is John Dryden's *King Arthur, or The British Worthy*, which was a dramatic opera dealing with Arthur rather than his knights. Later, the Arthurian stories gained in popularity with Alfred Tennyson's collection of poems *Idylls of the King* (1859-1885), written in the nineteenth century. Tennyson revived the legendary adventures of King Arthur and the Round Table Knights and the pre-Raphaelites, who were nineteenth-century poets nostalgic for the medieval period, carried the medieval culture and history into the twentieth century. Even authors across the Atlantic, such as Mark Twain who wrote *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889) contributed to the transmission of the Arthurian legends to modern literature. It seems that, since the

beginning of the twentieth century, Arthur and his knights have become the protagonists of more works than ever. As long as the distance between the contemporary period and the Middle Ages increased, the interest in medieval chivalry also increased. Aside from the literary works, the movie adaptations of King Arthur and his court such as *Knights of the Round Table* (1953), *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* (1975) and video games about the Templars such as *Assassins' Creed* has led to every age group interacting with the legends of Arthur and his knights. Those works, with the supernatural and fantastic elements, introduce the medieval Christian world, including the pre-Christian characteristics. Therefore, King Arthur and the Round Table Knights became the 'cultural attachés' between the medieval period and the new millennium.

In summation, the *Quest for the Holy Grail*, with its Celtic origin, is a story coming from French culture and connecting with the Eastern traditions. The transculturality of the text combines with the history of Christianity and the changing politics in medieval Europe. The pagan Celtic elements were adapted to Christian legends and almost every item was interpreted according to Christ's life or his apostles.' Moreover, encountering the Muslim culture at the Crusades brought some cultural images and orders to Christian society and the monks who rewrote the *Quest* syncretised the Muslim elements with their beliefs. Although the religious attitude of the text overshadows the chivalric deeds of the quest, with the story of the Round Table Knights, the *Quest* provides a 'national' tale within the framework of the 'matter of Britain.'

CHAPTER IV

GEOFFREY CHAUCER'S *TROILUS AND CRISEYDE*[80]

As one of the famous poets of the Middle Ages, Geoffrey Chaucer engaged with themes and materials that can be now interpreted as transculturalism. Chaucer contributed to the English language and literature with countless works. In the first place, he attempted to make English acceptable as the official language of the country after its precarious position in the shadow of French and Latin. Contrary to the intellectuals and scholars who preferred reading texts in Latin and French, Chaucer translated many works into English, wrote his works in his own language and encouraged people to use English. In the fourteenth century, with the contributions of Chaucer, the English language achieved superiority over the other languages.[81] As the poet states in his *Troilus and Criseyde*, he prefers using English in his works despite the various dialects spoken in medieval England, "And for ther is so gret diversite / In Englissh and in writing of our tonge" (V. 1793-4). However, Chaucer could not thoroughly purify his works from the influence of the other cultures. Many of his works are the translations and/or adaptations of other works written by foreign authors or rewritings of classical myths. Even his education, based on Latin, did not allow him to compose a work without being impacted by the canonical Latin writers. For this reason, his writings cannot present pure Englishness and it is possible to detect the traces of other cultures. His famous romance *Troilus and Criseyde* was written in Middle English and narrates the love story between Troilus, the son of Priam the King of Troy, and Criseyde, the daughter of the Trojan prophet Calkas. Thus, with the story dating back to Ancient Greece, this chapter will discuss how

[80] An article about the traits of this chapter, which was later prepared fully for my PhD dissertation, was published in *DTCF Dergisi* (*The Journal of the Faculty of Languages and History-Geography*), vol. 57, no. 1, 2017.

[81] For further information, see Derek Pearsall's "Chaucer and Englishness."

Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, the translation of Boccaccio's *Il Filostrato*, embraces various cultures from Ancient Greece to Rome, from medieval Europe to the Middle East.

The concept of Englishness appeared in the late medieval period, and some authors began to dismiss the cultural dominance of the colonial impacts on their cultures. The emergence of national identity increases the importance of a national language (Pearsall 90), and Chaucer is the pioneer of the movement which improved the use of English as an official and literary vehicle; the author, by purging English literature from the influence of French and Latin, in a way, decolonized it. John Bowers points out Chaucer's cleansing project and emphasises that with his works written in English, Chaucer "began his decolonizing project, English itself showed two major characteristics of an indigenous language in transition under pressure of a ruler language imposed from outside its existing linguistic borders" (54). His decolonising attempts in terms of nationalistic perspective did not prevent him from reflecting the cultural diversity in England; on the contrary, he played a part in English diversity through the translation or adaptation of French and Italian works. As mentioned above, though Chaucer's educational background led the author to compose his works in the light of the classics and, as might be expected, of French literature, his nationalistic attitude could be interpreted as "internal colonialism." Jeffrey Cohen, by referring to Bower's "Chaucer and After Smithfield," states that "hand-in-hand with this internal colonialism, Chaucer quietly erases the outward push of England's imperialism on the island by either relegating it to an ancient past or passing over it in silence" ("Postcolonialism" 453). However, Chaucer's Englishness was mainly limited to the English language since he could not purging his works from the influence of the other literary works, and hence, other cultures.

In the Middle English period, the mission of a poet was to reflect the reality of the society; hence, the multicultural characteristics of the English society could not be

ignored by the poets. They composed their works considering the past events, and using inspiration from reality, the authors fictionalise their works, as is seen in the previous chapters. In this regard, Janet Coleman summarises the understanding of a poet in those days, and states that

> He [the poet] was to be a 'réalisateur', a realizer of past exemplary 'real' events, and thereby was to initiate *at least* a passive reflection on this reality (as in the romances), but *at best* his poem inspired action to alter the thus-described 'real situation'. And the 'real' was largely verisimilitude rather than historical truth, a personal choice of events but also a convincing *fiction*, limited only by the poetic form and style of the medium (94).

Though the romances, in general, are composed of supernatural elements, the works are not totally fictitious. The poet presents certain historic events according to what he chooses to submit to the public; yet, the important point is that poems/romances emerging as a consequence of the poet's preference are the products of what the current culture gives to the poet. Even though they are not historical documents, reality and fiction are mingled within the poet's cultural background.

The intellectual background of English society gives the opportunity to combine the humanism of the classic period and Italian Renaissance with the Arabic love poetry tradition shaped with the French courtliness. With a variety of determinants, Chaucer produces an updated version of the Troilus story, which is both similar to and different from the earlier poems. First of all, Chaucer does not repeat Boccaccio's or Benoit's narrative techniques or approaches; he composes a work to be read by English society and at the English court. For that reason, he adapts the story to one of a society trying to establish its national identity under the influence of the French culture. His understanding of courtliness, for instance, is different from that of his Italian influencer Boccaccio, who

is also distinguished from his precursor, the French poet Benoit's *Roman de Troie*. Charles Muscatine compares the understanding of courtly life in France, Italy and England, and he states:

> Writing two centuries later than Benoit, Boccaccio is able to draw on his knowledge of later romance and on the lyric tradition of the *stilnouisti* to elaborate his story greatly in the direction of love… Courtly life in Italy is characteristically a version of city life … His courtliness thus has a sensuality and a sauce of cynicism, a realistic knowingness, that is foreign to the French and even more to the English courtliness of the Middle Ages. (24)

The artistic development of the cultures affects the products of art; so Boccaccio's interpretation of Benoit's *Roman de Troie* has already embraced the ideas of the Renaissance since Italy went through that process before England. In the Middle Ages, England was engaged in political and religious problems; Muscatine maintains "Chaucer wrote his poem in an England nagged by an interminable war and beset internally by social, political, and religious turmoil, and in a city with an economy based more on hard-won commerce than on feudal tribute" (27). Accordingly, then, Chaucer's *Troilus* is more than a translation of *Filostrato*; the cultural base of the country determining the literary outcome. Since England and Italy were not at the same cultural level, Chaucer focused on the classics and religious texts that would be more appreciated by a medieval English audience. Within this context, Chaucer, as a poet who was not indifferent to the social problems, achieved to mingle reality and fiction in his works. While he narrates a fictional story, Chaucer highlights the collective memory by referring to classical works. The intertextual aspect of his writing demonstrates the cultural transactions which have been embedded in the society. In this respect, the intertextuality of Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* is discussed in the following subtitle.

4.1. Intertextuality in Transcultural Process

Intertextuality in literature could be interpreted as one of the factors which shaped English language and culture, and as a consequence, medieval English society. Reading works from different cultures not only enriches the author's writing skills and perspectives, but also contributes to the culture to which the author belongs through references and allusions. The effects of intertextuality take time and the literary accumulation of a society penetrates into the other cultures in time. Guillaume de Lorris's *Roman de la Rose* (1230s), for instance, could be regarded as one of the most influential works on Chaucer's writing. In her article "Rūmī's *Mathnawī* and the *Roman de la Rose*," Patricia Black remarks that Chaucer was influenced by *Roman de la Rose*, one of the best examples of allegorical dream vision in French literature (490). The mood of the French work was deeply influential in Chaucer's narrative; the intertextuality of dream vision helps the poet to bring the Ancient works to light in fourteenth-century England. Nevertheless, French literature was not the only influence on Chaucer; besides literature, the impacts of French philosophy, Italian literature and culture, Islamic philosophy and culture are noticed in his works. Chaucer's works help the adoption of the new cultural features through their multicultural dimension. Chaucer presents his works as the means of connection between the past and the present, in *Troilus and Criseyde*, he explains the mission of his poetry by referring to the classics:

> Go, litel boke, go, litel myn tragedye,
> Ther god thi makere ȝet, er that he dye,
> So sende myght to make in some comedye;
> But litel book, no makyng thow nenvie,
> But subgit be to alle Poyesye,
> And kis the steppes where as thow seest pace

Uirgile, Ouide, Omer, Lucan, and Stace. (V. 1786-1792)[82]

Chaucer's expectation from his romance is that the work should take its place in society and its transmission to the future. The text itself has a transhistorical aspect with its connection between pagan times and medieval Christian Europe. A. C. Spearing explains the permanence of *Troilus and Criseyde*, "Chaucer's book, like theirs [Virgil's, Ovid's and the other's works] will have a future too: it will go down to posterity, as part of literary history beyond his control, and he can only pray that it will be correctly transmitted and understood" (126). Chaucer's wish for his work to be permanent seems to create a paradox in a temporal condition of time; however, in the changing process of history, texts keep their mission as a vehicle of transmission between historical periods, and as might be expected, cultures. Chaucer's adaptation method is a way of rewriting the works; the poet creates 'new' texts in the light of the original copies:

> Chaucer considered English works 'insufficiently authoritative or fashionable to be worth quoting or alluding to', Chaucer's adoption and transformation of romance language argues that he did take the risk of wrestling 'the word' away from verse that his culture was more likely to associate with *gestours* than with *auctors*. Rather than quoting or alluding to their work in the usual literary sense, he has done something more intimate: he has adopted some of their compositional methods along with their language. (Bradbury 120)

[82] Go little book, go little tragedy,
Where God may send thy maker, ere he die,
The power to make a work of comedy;
But, little book, it's not for thee to vie
With others, but be subject, as am I,
To poesy itself, and kiss the gracious
Footsteps of Homer, Virgil, Ovid, Statius.

(Lines in the modern English are taken from Nevil Coghill's translation).

The English poet, in a way, derives inspiration from the works he has read and produces his texts by merging other authors' style and narrative techniques. His writing revives the previous conventions and helps the present culture meet many traditions from the other communities and the past. History develops in accordance with the social and political conditions in society; hence, its temporality constructs the base of transhistorical occurrence. For this reason, the allusions and/or references in Chaucer's texts as in the other medieval vernacular texts establish a link among the past, present, and future, like the classics to which Chaucer refers in his work.

In Chaucer's example, the political attitude of the kings and newly adopted cultural phenomena affect his writings. Therefore, the poet ineluctably composes his works in light of the present perspectives but adds the aspects of the classics. It can be said that the influence on Chaucer is closely related to the political conditions of England and his diplomatic missions. Chaucer worked as a clerk in the service of Richard II who was a Francophile,[83] which led English politics, culture and literature to be formed under the influence of France. As a government envoy, he travelled around Europe and had opportunities to read European literary and philosophical works, which developed his writing style. He translated some works from Latin, French and Italian into English, and in some translations, by adding new details, he introduced relatively original texts. The works Chaucer was influenced by are not products of his time; it is clear that the classics have a significant place in his writings. Hence, the historical transmission through his work caused the medieval reader to familiarise himself with Ancient history and to establish a connection with that culture.

[83] In his adulthood, Richard II adopted a more peaceful attitude and had an obvious French style. Even though the Hundreds' Year War between France and England continued during his reign, that period was not a glorious phase of the war. For further information see, Kieth E. Fildes's *The Baronage in the Reign of Richard II, 1377-1399* and A. R. Bell's *War and the Soldier in the Fourteenth Century*.

The stanza above from Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* proves that the classic poets like Virgil, Horace and Ovid could manage to reach the Middle Ages since their words, as E. D. Hirsch states, travel "across time because the reader easily applies them to his or her situation through a personal analogy" (553). In this case, the reader of those poets, and above all, Chaucer himself, adapt their thoughts by drawing an analogy between their way of writing and his way of writing. Through the allusions, Chaucer transfers the Ancient doctrines and perspectives to the Middle Ages and hence, transhistoricity of his work contributes to the cultural development. The poet blends different political, religious or cultural features of different societies and times; in this way, the works become the products of that cultural diversity.

Chaucer illustrates the versatility of the English society in his romance *Troilus and Criseyde*, accepted as the first example of the novel genre by some critics. The original story of *Troilus and Criseyde* was narrated in one of the chapters of *Le Roman de Troie*, composed by the French poet Benoit de Sainte-Maure in the middle of the twelfth century. In the fourteenth century, the Italian poet Giovanni Boccaccio was inspired by the *Roman de Troie* and wrote his *Il Filostrato*, and it is obvious that Boccaccio's poem was the main source of Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*. However, even though Chaucer's poem adapts Boccaccio's *Il Filostrato*, it is not a literal translation; he writes a new Troy story. C. S. Lewis touches upon Chaucer's audience, who appreciates poetry with its units, 'matters' and 'stories' in the medieval fashion; according to Lewis, "for them *the Book of Troilus*, was partly, though of course partly, 'a new bit of the Troy story,' or even 'a new bit of matter of Rome.' Hence Chaucer expects them to be interested … in that whole world of story which makes this drama's context" (20). Chaucer does not neglect the expectations of his audience and his time; since in the late medieval period, England was dealing with political problems. Thus, he presents a

classic Troy story with medieval perspective and with a multicultural medieval background.

However, Chaucer's medievalizing does not include the chivalric scenes as in the stereotypical medieval romances. Unlike the previous poets who narrate the Trojan War, Chaucer deals with the Troy story with philosophical, and to some extent, religious views. Winthrop Wetherbee, in *Chaucer and the Poets*, notes Chaucer's "medievalizing of a classical story" (25), and reveals that Chaucer's Troy is different from the Ancient city:

> Chaucer, though he follows Boccaccio in making a brief reference to Troilus's death at the hands of Achilles, gives us no such view of his hero. … the contrast between Vergil's perspective and Chaucer's can tell us a good deal about Chaucer's purpose in creating his own Troy as he did. Chaucer's Troy is a monument to the pursuit of false joys, a world that can exist only by excluding the realities of time and war" (91).

As Wetherbee explains, Chaucer does not create a heroic war story, on the contrary, psychological and philosophical aspects - that will be discussed later - dominate the story and present the characters as more human than Boccaccio's or even Benoit's characters. Chaucer considers the developing humanism of the period. However, with references to the previous works, he leads his audience to the classics from which they can learn the history of the Trojan War and destruction of Troy:

> But how this town com to destruction
> Ne falleth naught to purpos me to tell;
> ffor it were here a long digression
> ffro my matere and ȝow to long to dwelle;
> But the Troian gestes as they felle,
> In Omer or in Dares or in Dite,

Who-so that kan may rede hem as they write. (I. 141-48)

With these lines, while the poet specifies his sources for the Trojan War, he also puts forward that his Troilus story would be different from the other stories. The references to the eyewitnesses of the Trojan War, Dares and Dictys, demonstrate the cultural richness in the work, and to some extent, the poet increases the historical reliability. Nevertheless, as he states in the first stanza of the first book, Chaucer focuses on the emotional aspects of the story and represents his work as a tragedy. The historical background of the war is used as the vehicle of the sorrow that the characters experience and as the means for Chaucer's humanistic transmission from the Italian Renaissance.

Humanism, in England, is a Renaissance concept which was distinguished in Italy and spread to other European cultures; yet, this idea is a revival of antiquity and in late medieval England, especially during Chaucer's time, a humanistic approach springs from the perspective of the classics. It is known that translations of the classic texts in the medieval time model the medieval science, philosophy, religion, in short, medieval culture. For that reason, the medieval legacy makes the transition to Renaissance humanism. John Monfasani discusses the place of the medieval period between the antiquity and Renaissance as follows:

> The medieval universities were built around the recovery of classical texts, specifically, the Aristotelian corpus, the Justinian law code, and select medical texts, combined with modern (i.e. medieval) texts. The Italian humanist redressed the balance by focusing on antique literary writings, but in the process they also revitalized the medieval scientific and religious tradition by fresh discoveries and translations. … The Renaissance completed the medieval recovery of the textual heritage of antiquity. (173)

Therefore, Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde,* written in the late fourteenth century, remains in the middle of the classic humanism and early modern humanism. This view gives the outline of the romances focusing on Ancient Rome, Greece and/or Troy. Therefore, Chaucer, while adapting Boccaccio's *Filostrato,* reshapes the focal points of the story. The characters of the ancient stories are presented with their internal conflicts and human weakness in accordance with Renaissance humanism.

Moreover, the human weakness in the face of destiny is reflected through the religious ideas that were borrowed from Boethius's *Consolation*. For Windeatt, "of all the influences which shape *TC*, Boethius is a touchstone; its distinctive concerns are both echoed and directly cited" (*Geoffrey Chaucer* 12). Boethius' religious doctrines, dominating the understanding of Christianity, are prominent in *Troilus and Criseyde*. Even though the plot was developed between Ancient Greece and Troy in the time of the Trojan War, Chaucer embellished the story with medieval cultural and Christian references in addition to the Ancient Greece world and paganism; thus, Chaucer could stimulate his audience's attention without detracting from the teachings of Christianity. Wetherbee emphasises the Christianity in Chaucer's work, and declares, "The *Troilus* is finally a Christian poem, but it is a Christian poem on a pagan subject in a special sense for which Dante provides the only real precedent" (*Chaucer and the Poets* 22). Except for the pagan story dealt with in the work, Chaucer's allusions to the classic poets, in other words pagan authors, are not considered enough to make the work pagan. The ideas of Boethius and the religious domination in society do not allow the poet to isolate his work from the Christian doctrines. Both his way of story-telling and his language reflect Christian beliefs. The mixture of religious beliefs belonging to the different peoples and periods create a cross-cultural deviation throughout the poem and the following section discusses the work's transculturality in religious terms.

4.2. Philosophy and Religion in *Troilus and Criseyde*

Chaucer's book is shaped with direct references to Boethius's *The Consolation of Philosophy*. Boethius's work was translated into English by Chaucer, and Chaucer's use of this book as a source for his writing contributes to the intertextuality of the romance. Boethius's ideas on religion affected many medieval authors and scholars, in addition to Chaucer; the references in his book demonstrate the general interpretation of Christianity in the Middle Ages. Boethius reflects the views of Aristotle and other Ancient philosophers' thoughts since he translated many works from the Ancient period. Therefore, their influence on Boethius is transferred to other cultures that indigenised Boethius since "his work bequeathed to his ardent students in the Middle Ages" (Casey 193). In other words, as Boethius is a connection between the ancient philosophers and the medieval scholars, reading Boethius brings the previous times to other periods. The transhistorical mission of his *Consolation* dates back to the reign of King Alfred (849 - 899). It is known that Boethius's *Consolation* was translated into Old English under the direction of King Alfred (Wetherbee, "The *Consolation* and Medieval Literature" 280). Since the ninth century, Boethius' doctrines had influenced the medieval English literature, moral values, and in general, medieval religion. In Chaucer's case, the parallelism between *Troilus and Criseyde* and *Consolation* is more striking than its parallelism with Boccaccio's *Filostrato*. As a matter of fact, the most influential thought of Boethius is the "Wheel of Fortune." From the beginning to the end of Chaucer's work, the theme develops "in the hand of Fortune," which causes the work to draw Christianity and a pagan story together.

The late antique Roman philosophers' thoughts cover the understanding of Fortune (Destiny) of Pagan times, as well as the Christian perspective. It will be wrong to say that the concept of 'the Wheel of Fortune' was transferred from the Ancient times to the Middle Ages by Boethius but his contribution is cannot be ignored. In Roman

mythology and Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*, destiny is represented by the goddess Fortune (Fortuna).[84] According to the myth, Fortune spins the wheel randomly and offers good or bad luck to people. Fortune is thought to be blind, that is why a person who has been lucky throughout his life, could suffer from misfortune when it is least expected. In Boethius' words, "when Fortune smiles, she is always false" (57). In the Ancient times, it was generally believed that Fortune was not reliable, and the goddess could wreak havoc in lives and that belief was also adopted by the Christians of the Middle Ages. However, in Christianity, God is the only authoritative figure sealing the fate of human beings and Fortune spins according to divine predestination.

Either in the hands of God or the goddess Fortune, every piece of Boethius' work depicts the weakness of human beings. In his *Consolation*, Boethius draws attention to the impotence of human beings in front of Fortune; Chaucer translates these lines as follows, "You have given yourself up to Fortune; it becomes you therefore to obey her commands. Would you stop the rolling of her wheel? Fool! if Fortune once became stable she would cease to exist" (Chaucer, *Boece* 32). People cannot go against the wish of Fortune because it is her nature; despite all the efforts and struggles, people must accept what Fortune allots them. In a similar way in *Troilus and Criseyde*, Troilus gets to the point where he cannot achieve change. The first poem of the first book alludes to his life as being determined by the Wheel of Fortune:

> The double sorwe of Troilus to tellen,
>
> That was the kyng Priamus sone of Troye,
>
> In louynge, how his aduentures fellen

[84] In Roman mythology, the name of the goddess of Fortune is Fortuna, the Greeks call her Tyche (See Pierre Danet. *A Complete Dictionary of the Greek and Roman Antiquities*). Boethius addresses the goddess as Fortuna in his *Consolation*, the Wheel of Fortune is *Rota Fortunae*. For further information see, Boethius, Anicius M. S. *Chaucer's "Boece" Englisht from Boethius's "De Consolatione Philosophiæ."*

ffro wo to wele, and after out of ioie,

My purpos is, er that I parte fro ye.

Tesiphone,[85] thow help me for tendite

Thise woful vers that wepen as I write. (I. 1-7)[86]

The stanza is a kind of prologue, briefly depicting the reversal of Troilus's fortune, the first pain of his "double sorrow" starts when he suffers before Criseyde falls in love with him and after Criseyde and Troilus become lovers, Troilus's joy turns into another sorrow that is the betrayal of Criseyde. From the very first stanza, Chaucer gives a clue about the tragedy of Troilus and Fortune's hand in this tragedy.

The concept of Fortune's wheel was not peculiar to Chaucer in that period; the Wheel of Fortune was a widespread view to define the sufferings of the characters in literature for a long time. Anthony Grafton et al. state that "Fortune became one of the stars of medieval iconography … During the same period the allegorical novel … seized on Fortune to create a literary topos that remained an obsession until the end of the Middle Ages. Reflection on the sorrows of the times also brought about an analysis of Fortune's nature and her power" (Grafton et. al. 366). Ecclesiastically, the understanding was that human beings cannot resist the ultimate power of destiny, and she has the power to change everything. Chaucer's Pandarus warns Troilus against the ups and downs of life and demonstrates the importance of an understanding of the Wheel of Fortune in the middle of the story; the other poets, Boccaccio and Benoit, do not often mention the mission of

[85] Tisiphone is one of the three Erinyes, goddesses of revenge. They live in the underworld. However, in Chaucer's context, she represents one of the Muses, the inspirational goddesses.

[86] Before we part my purpose is to tell
Of Troilus, son of the King of Troy,
And how his love-adventure rose and fell
From grief to joy, and, after, out of joy,
In double sorrow; help me to employ
My pen, Tisiphone, and to endite
These woeful lines, that weep even as I write.

Fortune. Chaucer, under the guidance of Boethius, leads his audience to the concept of the Wheel of Fortune. The words of Pandarus to Troilus reflect the same alert,

> That I shall seyn: be war of this mischief,
> That, there as thow now brought art in thy blisse,
> That thow thi self ne cause it nat to misse.
>
> ffor of fortunes sharpe aduersitee
> The worste kynde of infortune is this,
> A man to han ben in prosperitee,
> And it remembren whan it passed is. (III. 1622-1628)[87]

Apart from warning Troilus about the mischief of Fortune, Pandarus reminds him how harsh it is to remember the happy days after they all have passed. Through these lines, it is understood that the intertextuality of the works is not limited to Boethius's *Consolation;* other influences could be determined from the last four lines. They reflect the Italian philosopher Thomas Aquinas' thoughts in his *Summa Theologica* and also another Italian poet, Dante's expression in *Inferno*; the harshness of remembering better days is a proverbial statement[88] that was often referred to in the Middle Ages (Windeatt, *Geoffrey Chaucer* 331). The idea of a wheel of fortune was transmitted from the pagan times; even after conversion, many authors transferred some ancient ideas that connect

[87] (Don't be offended!) I should be to blame
Unless I warned you; you are now in joy;
Beware, for it is easy to destroy.

'Think that of Fortune's sharp adversities
The most unfortunate of all, at last,
Is to have known a life of joy and ease,
And to remember it when it is past.

[88] In his *Inferno* Dante states, "There is no greater pain / Than to remember a happy time / In misery" (Luciano Rebay, *Introduction to Italian Poetry: A Dual-Language Book*, p. 33).
Thomas Aquinas uses a similar proverb by stating "self-inflicted pain wounds the pining spirit, which is racked by the prosperity of another." (2.2.36.1)

with Christianity. The great amount of the theological texts in the late medieval period[89] and the original sources that Chaucer translated and/or adapted reveal why Chaucer did not separate the Christian doctrines from his pagan story. After Boccaccio, the other Italian influences on Chaucer give clues about what people culturally absorb through the texts they have read.

The symbol of Fortune's wheel does not include just theological meaning; in time, it turns into an inseparable part of the medieval lifestyle that is applied so as to comprehend and explain everything. All the changes, good or bad, can be interpreted through the power of Fortune:

> As opposed to the theological repudiation of her existence, Fortune was perfectly integrated into medieval imagination: *fortune* was then a word, a figure, and even a power, the usage of which was of a practical nature since it could designate what is not usual, and which resists understanding without invoking divine intervention, whether in the form of punishment or of a miracle. (Grafton et.al. 366)

This view clarifies the understanding of Fortune and the symbolic power of the wheel both in the medieval Christian and Islamic worlds. Fortune and its wheel were dominant figures, even in Islam. According to Islamic belief, human beings have to obey the power of fate that could present unexpected events outside the control of human beings. Fortune's wheel, to some extent, symbolises the authority of God and a Muslim unquestioningly obeys his destiny. The Austrian historian and Arabist, Gustave von Grunebaum explores the Muslim philosophy and theology and declares that "he [the Muslim] is inured to sudden turns of the wheel of fortune and is equipped with the

[89] In his book *The Translation of Religious Texts in the Middle Ages: Tracts and Rules, Hymns and Saints' Lives*, Domenico Pezzini explains the translation process in medieval literature with examples from different languages; the author gives information about the variety and similarities in translation in the Middle Ages.

philosophical apparatus to master life's every whim" (240). As is seen, the Muslim faith that appeared seven hundred years later Christianity shares similar religious traditions and legends to the Christian belief and even to the Antique faith. The commonalities among Islam, Christianity and paganism do not explicitly demonstrate that they imitate every thought in their own ways, nor does it means that Chaucer reflects the Islamic philosophy as well as the Christian and pagan doctrines. However, such similarities prove that beliefs are the products of historical accumulation, which vary by regions and time but are always established on similar perspectives revealing the existence of a creator who holds people's fate in his hands. The literary works such as Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* confirm the transhistorical development of faith, and through the universal themes in the works such as Fortune's wheel, the intertwinement of various societies and periods through religion can be discovered.

In the first three books of the romance, Chaucer deals with Troilus's effort to gain Criseyde's love, and after he fulfils his dream; the poet changes the course of the story. With the fourth book, Chaucer begins to feature the war and composes the rest of the romance according to what war brings. Exchanging hostages – sending Criseyde to the Greek camp to save Antenor from captivity there - and focusing on the heroes of the *Iliad* further reflects the transhistorical theme. At this point, the Trojan War is highlighted, and the other warring faction, the Greeks such as Diomede and Achilles are involved in the course of the story. At the beginning of the romance, Criseyde's father Calkas has escaped to the Greek camp, and now he wants his daughter to leave Troy and join him; that is why, he offers a swap to the Trojans. According to the agreement, the Greeks will release the Trojan warrior Antenor, who is held hostage, whereas the Trojans will let Criseyde cross over to the Greek side. Upon this deal, Troilus proposes elopement to Criseyde, but she refuses and leaves the Trojan camp with the promise that she will come back in ten days. The fifth book tells of Criseyde's betrayal; the lady breaks her promise when she

meets the Greek warrior Diomedes. Troilus writes a letter to her in despair when she does not come back to Troy after ten days, yet Criseyde writes short letters in low spirits since she has fallen in love with Diomedes. Thus, following the conception of the Wheel of Fortune in the first book, in which Troilus accepts that Fortune determines life, the last book of the romance confirms the same view. Troilus laments his fate:

> ffor wel fynde I that fortune is my fo;
> Ne al the man that ridden konne or go
> May of hire cruel whiel the harm withstonde;
> ffor as hire list she pleyeth with free and bonde.
> ……
> ffor if hire whiel stynte any thyng to torne,
> Than cessed she fortune anon to be. (I. 837-848)[90]

Troilus's reaction is how Boethius defines it in his *Consolation*; people tend to regard Fortune as their enemy due to her unstable 'wheel.' With a spin of the Wheel of Fortune, Troilus loses Criseyde's love; as a result of this, he joins the war to take revenge on Diomedes. However Achilles kills Troilus before he achieves his purpose. Fortune has the final word and prevents the lovers from reuniting. Chaucer emphasises the existence of a power beyond the free will of human beings by commingling the religious doctrines of Ancient Rome with the medieval Christian teachings regarding the understanding of fate.

[90] For – well I know it – Fortune is my foe;
Not one of all the men that come and go
On earth can set at naught her cruel wheel;
She plays with us and there is no appeal.'
……..
'For if her wheel should ever cease to turn
Fortune would then no longer Fortune be;

The conception of the Wheel of Fortune is not the only influence on Chaucer. The narrator ends his story with an apology for depicting women as if they were less valuable than men and tells the reader that Troilus' soul has risen to the eighth sphere of heaven where he has found eternal divine love. While the narrator praises the beauty of the lover in terms of physical love in the first poems of the romance, he concludes his work with Boethius' divine love, depicted as the true and ultimate love in the *Consolation*. In the thirty-fourth poem of the first book, the narrator states, "That loue is he that alle thing may bynde, / ffor may no man fordon the lawe of kynde" (I.237-238),[91] Chaucer emphasises that love is the ruler of nature, which shows that Chaucer thinks similarly to Boethius.. For example, Troilus's song about his love for Criseyde at the end of the third book is inspired by Boethius's song in which he depicts divine love. In his song, Troilus says that love is the life source and has an ultimate power: "Loue, that of erthe and se hath gouernaunce, / Loue, that his hestes hath in heuenes hye" (III.1744).[92] Chaucer adds this song instead of Troiolo's response in *Il Filostrato*; the lines are directly retrieved from Boethius' *Consolation.* Through these lines it is emphasised that the absolute power of love is not limited to earth; it is felt even in heaven.

The same thought is reflected in Boethius's work as well: "This concord is produced by love, which governeth earth and sea, and extends its influence to the heavens" (62). Under the influence of the Roman philosopher, Chaucer presents a perception of love which his audience could appreciate in obedience to their religious beliefs. Boethius believes that love could bind not only people but societies: "Love binds nations together" (62). As in Chaucer's Troilus story, the love between Criseyde and Diomedes binds Greece and Troy, but above all, with such a love story Chaucer binds the

[91] For love can lay his bonds on every creature, / And no one can undo the law of Nature.'
[92] 'Love that is ruler over earth and sea, / Love whose commandment governs heaven on high,'

Ancient culture with medieval culture and with regards to the locations of Greece/Troy and England and Italy as the source of Chaucer's book, the poet links the East and West.

As mentioned above, paganism is the dominant religion in the work as it tells a story in times of Ancient Greece. Therefore, the characters are frequently seen to pray to their gods or goddesses such as Minerva and Jupiter; it is obvious that gods and goddesses have essential roles in their lives as well as Fortune. The Trojan War was first narrated in the Greek author Homer's *Iliad*, in which Homer definitely used the figures from Greek mythology. However, both Boccaccio and Chaucer refer to the gods and goddesses of Roman mythology since their primary source was Benoit de Sainte-Maure's *Roman de Troie*. This influence also has roots in other sources; Benoit benefited from the works of Dictys Cretensis, who is believed to have translated the Trojan War into Latin, and Dares Phrygius, the Greek chronicler of the Trojan War.[93] It is claimed that Dares Phrygius witnessed the Trojan War and wrote every detail of the war day-by-day. Gilbert Highet points out that "the Phrygians were neighbours and allies of the Trojans" (51). Thus, he might not have been objective about the war, yet the significant point in Dares's work is not its objectivity or accuracy. Dares's book is "a late Latin translation and abbreviation of a Greek original, now lost but probably also in prose, which pretended to be a day-by-day description of the Trojan war written by one of the combatants" (Highet 51). As Highet clarifies, Benoit's source is a Latin translation from a Greek text; therefore, the work includes elements of both Latin and Greek literary culture. Within this context, Benoit's Latin sources might have been the first transformation of the Ancient Greek gods and goddesses into the Latin versions. Both the Italian poet Boccaccio and the English poet Chaucer maintain the same attitude as Benoit's in their own Troy stories. For them, Athena is Minerva; Aphrodite is Venus, and Zeus is Jupiter. In addition to the adoption

[93] For further information see, Rosemarie Jones's *Theme of Love in the Romans D'antiquité* and Rita Copeland's *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature Volume 1: 800-1558*.

of the gods and goddess from his precursors, Chaucer shows his difference and addresses the pagan gods more than Benoit and Boccaccio to strengthen the tie between the antiquity and medieval period. As in the following lines, he adds classical references and reminds his audience of the Trojan background (Windeatt, *Geofreey Chaucer* 163):

> ffor, Nece, by the goddesse Mynerve,
> And Iupiter, that maketh the thondre rynge,
> And by the blissful Venus that I serue,
> ȝe ben the woman in this world lyuynge -
> Witho-uten paramours, to my wyttynge -
> That I best loue, and lothest am to greve,
> And that ȝe weten wel ȝoure self, I leue. (II.232-238)[94]

It is known that the Roman influence on the British culture was over a thousand years before Chaucer's time; however, the transhistorical transmissions of the Latin works which were in demand in the twelfth century brought the Ancient stories with all their culture to medieval Europe. Moreover, when considering Chaucer's work as a translation of Boccaccio's work, the earlier influences such as the gods' names are inevitable. English people were familiar with the Roman gods because of the dominance of the works translated from Latin, and Chaucer apparently did not regard changing the names as necessary. In the Middle Ages, the works of Homer, Virgil and Ovid were popular, and many medieval poets imitated their literary techniques and were inspired by the epic themes of the Ancient poets and orators. In the transmission process, it is possible to make

[94] 'For, by divine Minerva, dearest niece,
And Jupiter who thunders from afar,
And blissful Venus – whom I never cease
To serve – you, of all earthly women, are
The one I love the best – I'll go so far,
(Not counting mistresses); I will not grieve you,
As well you know yourself; and so I leave you.'

mistakes about the Roman and Greek gods. Nevertheless, it is clear that Chaucer's audience was familiar with the Ancient gods in both Greek and Roman forms; for that reason, Chaucer conveys gods in accordance with the original work.

As stated previously, apart from mingling Roman and Greek mythologies, Chaucer puts some Christian elements into his work, and deviates from the original work in line with medieval Christianity. Criseyde's decision to be a nun or the rise of Troilus' soul to the eighth sphere of heaven are related to Christianity, yet the understanding of the sphere is derived from the Platonic idea which is influential in the whole Western philosophy.[95] In an anachronistic way, Chaucer draws the different religions together. In the discourses of the characters, monotheism obviously stands out; Criseyde's reproach "A, wel bithought, for loue of god" (II. 225) demonstrates the habit of praying to God in accordance with Christian rituals, since Criseyde addresses only one God, and there is no specific reference to any of the Roman gods. The way of addressing the gods indicates the Christian way of worship; they are called "lord" in many lines of the romance, for instance, in the line "O blisful lord Cupid" (V. 524), 'lord' is used for the Roman God of love, Cupid. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* the word 'lord' means "the male head of a household," and it is derived from the Old English word *hlāford* whose origin is *hlāfweard* meaning "loaf-ward" or "bread keeper." As it is seen, when the word was coined for the first time in the English language, it was not used as an appellation for a master. The word 'lord' was used to depict master for the first time in the fourteenth century, and in the translation of the New Testament, it was equivalent to the

[95] The Islam world met the Greek philosophy and mathematics before medieval Europe because of the geographical location of Byzantium. Thus, Hellenistic culture was transmitted to the Islamic culture in the ninth and tenth centuries (see footnote 15). Many Arabic philosophers shaped their ideas according to Plato, and by mingling Plato's ideas with Islam, they composed their works, and many of those works were translated into Latin in the twelfth century. For example, Rhazes (ar-Răzī) and al-Kandi the author of *The Pure Good* (translated into medieval Latin as *Liber de causis*), platonized their views and their works were introduced to Europe after a couple of centuries. For further information see, Dimitri Gutas's *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture*.

Latin *dominus* and Greek *kyrios* (*κύριος*) for the appellation of God in monotheism. Nevertheless, the word 'lord' is applied to the pagan gods in *Troilus and Criseyde*, written in the fourteenth century, the same period when the word was first used in Christian texts. Thus, the romance, about an Ancient Greek legend, comprises both Roman and Christian rituals, and such diversity in the work points to cultural intertwinement. Even though the influences of Ancient Greece could be regarded as the Eastern impact due to the geographical location, the accustomed Eastern contact in *Troilus and Criseyde* is also available.

4.3. Transmission Coming from the East

When the geographical location is considered, the influences of Ancient Greece could be interpreted as an Eastern influence on the English culture, yet it is possible to go further to determine the Eastern impacts. Chaucer and many medieval poets/authors were directly or indirectly influenced not only by European cultures but also by Arabic culture. The Arabic language was the common language in the medieval Islam world, whereas Latin was the preferred language in medieval Christian Europe. The influences of Islam and Eastern cultures were transmitted by way of the Arabic language, and thereby, the cultural effect of the East was defined as the Arabic influence, although it includes Persian, Syrian and Turkish cultures. In this sense, as separate from the influences of Ancient Greece and Rome, *Troilus and Criseyde* also includes some Arabic characteristics.

The Arabic influence in the romance is not as obvious as the Christian elements or Boethius's philosophy. Many analyses ignore the details in the language and origin of some poetic characteristics. In *Troilus and Criseyde*, for instance, Criseyde and her uncle Pandarus use the Arabic word *dulcarnoun* in their dialogue to describe the perplexity of the situation; however, it seems that both refer to the word with a slightly different meaning:

[Criseyde answered,] "I am, til god me bettre mynde sende,

At *dulcarnoun*, right at my wittes ende."

Quod Pandarus, "Ȝee, Nece, wol ȝe here?

Dulcarnoun called is 'flemyng of wrecches.'

It semeth hard, for wrecches wol nought lere,

ffor verray slouthe or other wilfull tecches." (III. 930-35)[96] (my emphasis)

Chaucer's use of the word 'dulcarnoun' is its first recorded appearance in the English language. In Latin, 'dulcarnon/dulcarnoun' was corrupted from Arabic *dhu'lqarnayn* (ðū' lqarnayn), meaning "two-horned" (*OED*). This word seems to have been used in algebra and geometry books since 'dulcarnon' was used to define a 'two-horned diagram.' However, there is no evidence that Chaucer read an Arabic text on algebra or geometry and directly derived the word from the original source; yet some Chaucer scholars, such as Windeatt, suppose that Chaucer borrowed this word from the Greek mathematician Euclid, who uses 'dulcarnon' in his *Elements of Geometry* (*Geoffrey Chaucer* 297). In his work, Euclid used the word to illustrate the Pythagorean Theorem by drawing a diagram with two horns. However, Pandarus states that 'dulcarnoun' means "putting to flight of wretches" (causing the boys to run away), which shows Chaucer compounded the word with another term from Euclid, *fuga miserorum*, which equates to *Elefuga* or *Eleufuga* meaning "putting to flight of pity" (Barney 1041; Euclid 416). For that reason, the misunderstanding of the phrases displays that Chaucer probably read Euclid's work instead of a text written in Arabic since works of Greek philosophy started to be translated directly from the original language a couple of centuries before Chaucer. The English

[96] '… till God clears my mind for me,
I'm in a dire dilemma, as you can see.'

' "*Dilemma*!" Now, you listen to me in turn;
That means *The Donkeys' Bridge*; it beasts a fool,
For it seems hard to wretches who won't learn,
From sloth or wilful ignorance, at school'

poet's use of the Arabic word is evidence of the fact that English society, to some extent, was aware of the Arabic texts. For that reason, the poet's addition of an Arabic word into the English vocabulary[97] by way of a Greek mathematician could be interpreted as further evidence of cultural interaction and contribution to the already known multiculturality of the medieval English culture and literary heritage.

Arabic words were not unfamiliar to the medieval Western people since, after the Crusades, the interest in Islam increased and Arabic works on philosophy and natural sciences especially were translated into Latin. The influence of Islam and Arabic scientists in the rise of the Western philosophy and science cannot be denied, and this influence started in the medieval period and continued for centuries:

> … the Arab-Islamic world and the wider East, as well as Ancient Greek civilization helped to lay the foundations of modern Europe, whether it be in the area of science, law, trade and finance, philosophy, humanism or religious reform. … In fact, Arabs and Muslims played a critical role, not only as the guardians of this corpus of Ancient Greek knowledge, but also as contributors in their own right to the areas of science and philosophy from which Europeans borrowed for the advancement of their own knowledge. (Al-Rodhan 220-221)

Such a claim does not belong only to the Muslim scholars, which could lead the comment to be regarded as subjective. European scholars also concede that the Arabic world prompted the study of natural sciences and many philosophical thoughts in the Middle Ages. María Rosa Menocal elaborates the awakening of the Europeans and states that "there has been a Europeanization, an adaption and absorption into this paradigm of the body of information that reveals that Arabic 'translations,' particularly in the eleventh

[97] Some dictionaries show that the word 'dulcarnoun' continued to be used in the sixteenth and seventh centuries. See, Eric Gerald Stanley's *Words: For Robert Burchfield's Sixty-fifth Birthday*. It probably lost its place in the English language due to its misleading meaning.

and twelfth centuries, contributed decisively to the intellectual revival of Europe at that time" (9-10). It is known that the medieval European scholars were familiar with the Arabic philosophers and scientists. Hispano-Arabic culture in the Iberian Peninsula between the ninth and seventeenth centuries also included the Islamic philosophy in European culture. Apart from the direct translations of the Arabic texts, the Greek interpretation of those works that came from medieval Italy must have affected the transmission of the Arabic language and culture. As is seen in the 'dulcarnon' example, meanings of some words were misunderstood and adopted by the English as Chaucer used them. However, today it is known that Chaucer and his contemporaries must have read some Eastern texts because, even in his *Canterbury Tales,* there are pieces of evidence of his knowledge about the East; he mentions in his book Muslim emperors and knights coming from Anatolia. Therefore, through his works, the connections between the East and West were fostered. As Kathryn Lynch states,

> Chaucer brought English poetry to the continent and continental poetry to England. In the process he also brought English poetry into contact with the world of the Eastern Mediterranean already engaged by his classical sources, for example, in the *Legend of Good Women*, where various Eastern queens wear the crown of "good woman" uneasily; in the Knight's Tale, … retelling of Theseus's victory over the eastern Amazons; or in his various retellings of Aeneas's distraction by the Carthaginian Queen Dido. (6)

The intertextuality establishes the basis of Chaucer's writing techniques. In different phases of his literary life, Chaucer adapted or translated many works from other pieces of literature. Apart from his Italian and French periods, his ancient period leads the poet to history and classics. As is seen in his *Troilus and Criseyde*, the classic works allow Chaucer to introduce the Eastern culture and figures to the medieval audience. While

reviving antiquity, Chaucer also brings the spirit of the Crusades into his works. With the tales of the Knight and the Squire, he reminds his audience about the wars in Anatolia and the Middle East.

It is acknowledged that the place of a woman in the romance tradition was determined after the Western poets became acquainted with Arabic poetry. Some critics believe that the Moors or the southern French could have transferred Arabic poetry to European societies after the Crusades. Godwin elaborates on the relationship between the Crusades and Arabic influence in Western literature and declares that "this was in large part born of the Crusaders' exposure to the exquisite Islamic and Arabic love poetry. These quasi-mystical outpourings, in which the woman acquired an exalted status of literally being worshipped by her lover or admirer, found fertile soil in Europe barren of any goddess at all" (9-10). The description of the ladies and the stories of their desperate lovers must have influenced minstrels who are thought to have brought those stories to Europe. An interest in finding the origin of the courtly love tradition leads many scholars to Moorish poetry. While studying courtly love in Western poetry, Roger Boase focuses on music and rhyme in poetry as well as the origin of the word 'troubadour' to find the route of courtly love. Boase points out the influence of Arabic culture on medieval literature, by sorting the similarities between medieval Western and Arabic poetry:

> (c) *Music.* The music to which the European troubadours set their songs was Arabic in inspiration, and the instrument which they used derived from the Arabs…
>
> (d) *Rhyme and poetic forms.* The Arabs were the first to compose rhymed verse, and Provence learnt the art from Moorish Spain…
>
> (e) *Etymology of 'trobar'.* The verb *trobar*, 'to compose poetry', derives from *tarab*, 'music', 'song', or from the root *daraba*, 'to strike'. The Arabic for minstrel or 'troubadour' was *tarabī*. (62)

The journey of troubadours and Arabic love stories must have started in the Iberian Peninsula since it was the place where Muslims could connect with Europeans. When geography is taken into consideration, it is possible that the Moors firstly affected the southern French. Thus, as the dominant culture in medieval European literature, the French culture must have introduced Arabian literary traditions to the rest of Europe.

As the romance genre was popular at the court, the French aristocracy had an influence on development of this literary form. Godwin explains the appearance of Arabic love image in French poetry and illuminates the process of the Eastern influence: The wife and daughter of Henry II of England, who were indeed French, were fond of the love stories and the King's daughter Marie de Champagne in particular, guided Chrétien de Troyes to write some romances and introduced the subject of the chivalric codes including courtesy to women (10). The depiction of the ladies in Moorish poetry affected Marie de Champagne and she was fascinated with the idea of the existence of ladies in poems. In the Andalusian poems, "the beloved's hair as a mass of dark trees, amid which a white, or bright, face shines through like the sun or the moon. The shape of the beloved is compared to branches of date palms" (Lowin 6). Such a romantic description of a lady in poetry gained approval thanks to Marie de Champagne's involvement in medieval poetry. The themes of the romances varied, but the courtly love tradition followed this change because the poets, especially in France, included more female characters and more romantic scenes as in the Arabic poetry. Therefore, love stories began to be narrated in a comprehensive manner as part of the code of chivalry.

After the Norman Conquest, the increasing number of kings and queens with French origin reveals the coming of the Arabian traditions to Britain, and thereby, this cross-cultural process probably indirectly influenced Chaucer due to the French poets who had been read and translated so far. However, it would be an extravagant claim to say there was no love theme in Western literature before the influence of Arabic poetry.

The Ancient literature, even philosophy, consists of stories about finding love, since it is an abstract concept that the poets of the classic era tried to define in a more philosophical way. Moreover, after the Christian influence on literature, the quest for love transforms to divine love. However, in the early medieval period when the legends of the oral tradition were repeated in every region and society, the epics and ballads full of heroic deeds became more memorable, and the military success of the societies made the tales about the successful kings and heroes more attractive while diminishing the love theme. With the Arabic poems, the love theme in poetry which the Europeans had been familiar since the Ancient times was revived. Herbert Moller elaborates on the multicultural formation of courtly love and emphasises the importance of the Andalusian contribution to medieval literature:

> The Platonic philosophy of love, Ovidian material, Neoplatonic thought, various Eastern ideas, early medieval Latin court poetry, Christian liturgy and drama, as well as autochthonous popular traditions have possibly contributed something to courtly love. The most important single source of influences, however, was the poetry of Muslim Spain which experience its greatest flowering in the 11th century, roughly one hundred years before courtly love developed in southern France. (Moller 138-139)

As is stated here, courtly love appeared in Arabic culture around the tenth century; at least in Muslim Spain there were a considerable number of poems about love, yet not all of them narrate the love between a woman and man. In Arabic and also Hebrew poetries, there is a dual understanding about love; one can love either a mortal person with the worldly pleasures or a divine almighty,[98] and when the person chooses mortal love, his suffering is depicted in poems. With the changing political dynamics on the Peninsula,

[98] For further information, see Shari Lowin's *Arabic and Hebrew Love Poems in Al-Andalus*.

the attitude in poetry also changed and "love poetry of the courtly type, considered to be a dignified format, saw a resurgence and became court-protected" (Lowin 5). The poetry tradition that reached the rest of the Western countries was the form that developed under the Moorish culture on the Iberian Peninsula, and it gained the same position in Europe as in Andalusian Spain. The story of a lover who is in pain because of the beloved's beauty characterised the position of women in medieval Western literature.

The female characters in the epics variegated the plots, and courtly love tradition gained popularity in medieval culture. However, it is known that neither Chaucer nor the previous romancers deliberately formed love stories in their works in light of a courtly love tradition. Courtly love is a term coined in the nineteenth century to define a wide range of ritualised forms of love and their expression across the medieval period.[99] The medieval poets could not have determined the outline of this kind of love, yet they must have developed it by imitating the previous troubadours. Even though the medieval poets did not give this love concept a particular name, it is possible to see examples of courtly love in almost every medieval work after the twelfth century. By the fourteenth century, when Chaucer composed his works, the concept of courtly love had become an indispensable element of romances, and in this sense, also the love between Troilus and Criseyde has been interpreted as the example of courtly love.[100]

Nevertheless, Chaucer's understanding of courtly love is different from the poets by whom he had been influenced. Above all, Chaucer deals with a love story of ancient

[99] Through the end of the nineteenth century, with two articles in 1881 and 1883, The French scholar Gaston Paris coined the term "courtly love" to depict the love between Lancelot and Guinevere and developed it: "The queen reproaches Lancelot not for having been mounted in the cart, but for having hesitated for a moment to ascend it, which is absolutely in accordance with the code of courtly love" (488). For the detailed description of *amour Courtois*, see Gaston Paris's "Lancelot du Lac: Il conte de la charrette. However, "it is not clear that Paris intended *amour courtois* to become a technical term having a precise definition, but after him that usage became common" (Moore 622).

[100] See, Donald R. Howard's *The Three Temptations: Medieval Man in Search of the World*; Thomas Kirby's *Chaucer's "Troilus:" A Study in Courtly Love*, p. 346; Alexander J. Denomy's "The Two Moralities of Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde."

characters and this ancient setting is anomalous because courtly love defines the love between a knight and a lady, which is an imitation of a knight's loyalty to his lord in feudal terms.[101] Troilus cannot be defined as a knight; he does not serve a king; instead, he is a prince protecting his people, having lived long before the concept of chivalry appeared. As a reader of Ovid who taught the nature of art in his book *Ars Amatoria* (*The Art of Love*),[102] by stating "Should any one of the people not know the art of loving, let him read me; and taught by me, on reading my lines, let him love" (379), Chaucer presents a more sophisticated love story, rather than heroic adventures in pursuit of the beloved. Chaucer, with the influence of what he had read and translated, such as *The Romaunt of the Rose*, deals with the love story in a philosophical way, and like Ovid, the English poet gives instructions about love and teaches the secrets of love: "And namelich in his counseil tellynge / That toucheth loue that oughte ben secree" (I. 743-44). These lines from the Middle English version of the French romance *Le Roman de la Rose*,[103] which shows another intertextual structure of the *Troilus and Criseyde*, demonstrate that Chaucer creates a Troilus who knows love and is fond of this feeling. Even when he cannot be together with Criseyde, he does not give up love itself, and his love causes his death.

In *Troilus and Criseyde*, Chaucer uses the love theme as a vehicle for tragedy, and turns love into 'fyn lovyng' (fin amor),[104] because "passionate love cannot avoid tragedy

[101] Pamela Porter gives detailed information about the chivalric roots in courtly love tradition; see *Courtly Love in Medieval Manuscripts*.

[102] It is an elegy written in c. 2 BC and consists of three books. Ovid gives instructions about love and teaches how a man finds love and gives advice to the women on how to keep love. Ovid's doctrines were influential, especially in the Middle Ages and Renaissance in philosophical and cultural terms. In the volume *The Art of Love*, edited by Roy Gibson and his colleagues, the scholars discuss the concept of Ovidian love and its multidimensional structures that cross the spatial and temporal borders.

[103] In Chaucer's version of *The Romaunt of the Rose*, the lines are repeated as follows: "For thurgh me never discovered was / Yit thing that oughte be secree" (130).

[104] A term used to define *amour courtois* courtly love in English, yet it is not the typical understanding of courtly love. Mainly it is categorised as a type of passionate love felt for thwarted or unrequited love, which adversely affects people's lives. For further information, see Helen Cooney's *Writings on Love in the English Middle Ages*.

unless subsumed in marital love" (Schmidt 37). The love between Troilus and Criseyde turns into a tragedy and the couple cannot reach their happy ending as might be expected from a love story. At the very beginning of the romance, Chaucer makes it clear that the story to be told is about Troilus's double sorrow; the reason for his first grief is his fear he will not be united with Criseyde, whom he desires, and his second grief arises from Criseyde's betrayal and thereby, his passionate love, the fyn loving gives its place to tragedy. The concept of *fin amor*, unlike courtly love defines a love that devastates the lovers. Chaucer uses this term for the first time in the prologue of the *Legend of Good Women*: "For she taught al the craft of fyn lovynge, / And namely of wyfhod the lyvynge" (*Complete Works* 495). The poet depicts the same view on love in "The Knight's Tale," and by changing the courtly love perception in his works, he repeats the Arabic philosophers' and medical scientists' thoughts about love that ends with lovesickness and leads the lovers into madness. In the Middle Ages, the philosophers who studied medicine concluded that lovesickness affected the body function, and they described love and lovesickness in terms of medicine, which also finds a place in medieval European culture and literature.

Besides the attitude towards woman and courtly love, Arabic philosophy influenced medieval Christian culture through literature - especially Avicenna[105] and Averroes[106] who were famous Muslim philosophers in medieval Europe, and mediators of the Aristotelian and Platonic philosophy in the West. The concept of humourism, for example, known as "body liquids," was developed by Avicenna in light of ancient

[105] Avicenna (980-1037), Ibn Sina in Arabic, was a Muslim physician and one of the most significant philosophers in medieval Islam. He studied Aristotelian metaphysics and formed his philosophy according to the Aristotelian system. With his *Al-Qānūn fī al-ṭibb* (*The Canon of Medicine*), which was translated into Latin in the twelfth century, he became a respected physician across medieval Europe and guided modern medicine.

[106] Averroes (1126-1198), Ibn Rushd in Arabic, was born in Spain. He was a well-known Islamic philosopher, formed his doctrines in the light of Aristotle's and Plato's thoughts. Since he lived in Al-Andalus on the Iberian Peninsula, he became the mediator to spread the Islamic philosophy across medieval Europe.

philosophers in the "Golden Age of Islam," and this view was transmitted to the West with the classical works. The medieval and Renaissance poets[107] accepted this understanding and they reflected the spiritual changes in their characters by means of this philosophical concept. As one of those poets, Chaucer was familiar with Arabic philosophy, and he too refers to Avicennian concepts in some of his works. In *Troilus and Criseyde*, Chaucer presents Troilus's lovesickness and melancholia in Avicennian terms:

> And some wolde mucche hire mete alone,
> Liggyng abedde, and make hem for to grone;
> And som, thow seydest, hadde a *blaunche feuere*,
> And presydest god he sholde neuere keuere. (I. 914-17)[108] (emphasis added)

Blaunche feuere is white fever known as lovesickness because it causes the victims to turn pale, and because of the melancholic mood of the person, the body is thought to produce black bile, one of the humours. The bile is produced as the sign of the abnormality of an inner organ. In this regard, Shazia Jagot explains the melancholia from which Troilus suffers using Avicenna's medical comments on the reason for the production of black bile:

> Fearful thoughts take hold of the lovesick Troilus, which is indicative of an excessive amount of black bile in his body, causing him to suffer from melancholia. … Avicenna notes how the production of black bile is exacerbated by 'heating agents' and 'repose', and Troilus' melancholia is exacerbated by his

[107] In the sixteenth century, a new mode in drama, the "Comedy of Humour," was developed by the English playwright Ben Jonson. In his play *Every Man out of His Humour* (1599), Jonson metaphorically deals with the body liquids which govern the physiological system.

[108] And some, you said, would is this quote correct here? their meat alone,
Lying in bed and heaving up a groan;
"White-fevered ones", you called them, "shivering lovers".
"Pray god," you said, "not one of them recovers."

> slumber once he has succumbed to love. Initially, it might appear that Troilus is so weakened by the malady of love he has to rest, but 'Liggyng abedde' only serves to increase the excess of black bile coursing through his system, causing him to fall into a deeper melancholy because his internal organs are affected. (Jagot 60)

Troilus's psychological suffering affects his physiology because he cannot properly sleep or eat; thus, the body gives signals about the pain he feels with fever and paleness. Throughout the romance, Chaucer gives his reader information about the physical damage that Troilus experiences because of his lovesickness. According to Avicenna, melancholy hinders organs from working properly, and physiological and psychological damages go through a cycle since they affect each other. As is seen in Troilus example, the person cannot totally heal unless he heals his soul.

Troilus thinks that his only treatment is to gain Criseyde's love, and as long as he is apart from Criseyde, he cannot recover. When Criseyde leaves him after she departs from the Greek camp, Troilus gets in the same trouble as he experienced before Criseyde falls in love with him. With the second lovesickness caused by the absolute separation for the couple, Troilus' sense of free will is also affected. As Mary Wack states, "the growth of his lovesickness is thus correlated with his growing sense of determinism. He forgets that he *chose* to love, and instead claims that he was *destined* to suffer from love" (58). His thoughts about destiny and the choices he has made under the influence of love lead Chaucer's character in a transhistorical suffering that has existed since ancient times. Lovesickness hinders a person from making logical decisions since his brain function has been affected as it is with Troilus. Criseyde's betrayal of Troilus with a Greek soldier, Diomedes makes Troilus feel hatred against all the Greeks, and his suffering and anger bring about his death:

The wrath as I bigan ȝow for to seye

Of Troilus the Grekis boughten deere;

ffor thousandes hise hondes maden deye,

……

But weilawey, saue only goddess wille,

Despitously hym slough the fierse Achille. (V. 1800-1806)[109]

In his act, the lovesickness and the hatred based on that love prevent him from making a sound judgement, which affects his ability to fight. The physical reflection of lovesickness reflecting the true medical information becomes one of the favourite scenes of the love poems in the Middle Ages and Renaissance. Thus, the Ancient medical development merging with the views of the Arabic scientists reach European culture. With the Avicennian medical comments, Chaucer accounts for an ancient suffering caused by love, which is the common theme of many classic and medieval works. Mainly trauma and psychological pain are the common heritage of both the people of the Ancient times and medieval people. This is discussed in the following section in the context of transhistorical transmission and the understanding of collective memory.

4.4. Remembering the Past with a Troy Story and the 'Matter of Rome'

The romances, the examples of the 'matter of Rome,' present a natural transhistoricity since the works deal with plots set in Ancient Rome, Greece and Troy. In fact, the romance genre with its ancient origin is the most appropriate literary mode for memory transmission. Even though romance was the dominant genre in the Middle Ages, and the English examples of this genre were composed in that period, as has been mentioned

[109] The wrath of Troilus, I began to say,
Was cruel, and the Grecians bought it dear,
For there were thousands that he made away,
……
But O alas, except that God so willed,
He met fierce Achilles and was killed.

before, the English borrowed the romance genre from France and developed it. The Ancient roots of the romance genre and its transfer through France contributed to the English literary heritage more than any other form. According to Barron, "the romance mode was not the product of the Middle Ages, and the process by which the epics of Greece and Rome were transformed was already far advanced in those Latin intermediaries which were part of Western Europe's classical heritage and, in an age, when Greek was virtually unknown, made all knowledge of the ancient part of the matter of Rome" (109). The ancient heritage of romance contributes to the accumulative structure of culture and makes their development easier. In the early period of the medieval period, the Latin language was used as the means of conveying the liturgical texts, whereas, after the twelfth century, the Latin epics and romances derived from those epics became the guides in the romance genre and many romances were adapted in light of the classics. The medieval French romances, as the first examples of this mode, spread it across Europe by merging the ancient literary traditions with French culture.

The French poets introduced the "matter of Rome," narrating the oldest themes and stories in romance tradition. For that reason, the transhistorical journey of these works brings transcultural interactions together. In this context, the importance of translations in the cultural transactions is clear, because even the subcategories of the same genre have affected one another. Like, the 'matter of Britain' that appeared after romances of the 'matter of France' and in light of the French epics, the romances of the 'matter of Rome' took its form within the contribution of the French literary culture. Sarah Kay depicts the 'matter of Rome' within the context of French literature: "the matter of Rome consists in the translation or adaptation into French of antique texts, a practice theorized in the concept of *translatio*: the claim, central to the twelfth-century Renaissance, that northwest Europe had assumed the imperial and cultural heritage of the ancient world" (42). With the same literary journey, Boccaccio's Italian translation of the French romance Benoit's

Roman de Troie reached Chaucer with a French influence. Like many romances in this category, Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* narrates a story which came from Ancient Greece and was shaped with a French, and then Italian interpretation.

The historical transformation of the Troilus story started in the twelfth century BC with the appearance of Homer's *Iliad* that became one of the most famous stories of oral lore. Even though the Trojan War was the subject of many ancient Greek poems and tragedies, the most influential telling of the war was Homer's *Iliad* whose oldest known text belongs to the tenth century AD.[110] The medieval poets might indeed have rewritten this war only after many changes arose from the possible fading and confused memory transference during the oral tradition period. In this sense, the past of the romances in the 'matter of Rome' reflect the pagan traditions and heroic deeds which were influential in the Middle Ages despite the fact that conversion to Christianity was already completed in many Western societies. Kay elaborates on the reason why the romances of the 'matter of Rome' were in demand in the medieval period: "The attitude of the *romans antiques* [ancient romances] to the past combines shock at the crimes of which pagan history was capable with admiration for its astonishing cultural achievements. These two elements fuse in one of their most memorable features: descriptions of the funeral rites, entombment, and fabulous funerary monuments, of dead lovers and heroes" (42-3). The Troilus story manages to transmit the concept of dead lovers and heroes, and thereby, in almost every century in the Middle Ages and Renaissance period, a Troilus narration can be seen. Apart from the interest in the dead lovers, the psychological pain is the means of the transmission of collective memory, and lovesickness and sufferings connect the generations through the storytelling.

[110] Venetus A is the oldest manuscript of *Iliad*, written in the tenth century AD. The manuscript is kept at the Biblioteca Marciana in Venice, and it is assumed that it is the work of Aristophanes of Byzantium of the Library of Alexandria (Nikoletseas 31).

Although Chaucer does not focus on the magnificent war scenes that had been narrated since Homer's time, the influence of war on the characters' free will and destiny inevitably manifest themselves. *Troilus and Criseyde* reflects the interactions of a war, which creates a psychological transference that takes place in the collective war memory. According to Meecham-Jones, "if *Troilus and Criseyde* cannot be characterised as a poem of war, it is a poem shaped by the influence of war, a poem in which the ethics of conflict and the psychological disjunction caused by war are granted a potent but implicit significance" (150). Chaucer and the poets who influenced him do not include the chivalric war scenes; instead, they briefly explain them and focus on the inner worlds of the characters. The main point in the work is the function of Fortune and how the characters survive from her wheel turns. As Chaucer states in the romance, the war is just a platform for the ancient enemy of human beings to demonstrate Fortune's mercilessness:

> The thynges fellen as they don of were
> Bitwixen hem of Troie and Grekes ofte;
> ……
> … and thus fortune on lofte
> And vnder eft gan hem to whielen bothe. (I. 134-139)[111]

The English poet conveys the literariness of the antiquity by means of allusions and addressees. Hence, Chaucer establishes the connection between ancient times and contemporary medieval period through more literary and psychological means, which is essential in the collective memory since people remember what touches their soul.

[111] And things fell out, as often in a war,
With varying chance for Trojan and for Greek;
……
Then down and under Fortune whirled them fast
Upon her wheel, until their anger passed.

Chaucer, through his work, draws attention to the people who suffer and depicts their pain as a feeling that has been experienced since the Ancient period.

Chaucer combines different texts in his *Troilus and Criseyde* through direct translations or allusions. While all these references bring the memories to the present, they also help readers evaluate the narrative and the characters. Cohen states that medieval studies, like any discipline, focuses on the past, and is associated with *memorialisation* ("Postcolonialism" 458). Transmitting history means transmitting what is remembered and/or what is supposed to be remembered. In such transmission, memory could be selective, or it can undergo a process by being blended with the cultural and educational background of the person who transmits. However, some experiences, especially traumas, are involved in memorialisation; hence, the past is narrated as a whole with all negative and positive influences. The past images are used to portray the characters with all their inner conflicts, feelings, fears and frustration in an "unchangeable" story. In Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, as the unchangeable story has been narrated since Homer's time, the cultural accumulation of the story is inevitably larger than the romances in the other matters of the romance genre.

Instead of simply re-narrating the bare essentials of the well-known story, however, Chaucer enriches his narration with literary and philosophical allusions. One of the most dominant images in *Troilus* is Boethius's view of the Wheel of Fortune. The familiar motifs, like Fortune, introduce the subject of a connection between the past and the present, and work and the contemporary society. Katarzyna Stadnik labels the use of such images as 'memorable images;' according to her, "such images were known to the poet's audiences (both readers and listeners) from their own situated experience of the contemporary visual culture, e.g. manuscripts" (135). The Roman philosopher Boethius' views have a strong influence on the medieval European understanding of religion, and especially destiny. For that reason, Chaucer uses a well-known symbolic tradition by

"intertwining the imagery of the Wheel with Theban/Trojan myths" (Stadnik 136). Through the Fortune image, Criseyde's choice of Diomedes is represented as a consequence of destiny rather than free will. Chaucer, by using 'medieval mental imagery,' unearths the collective memory of the contemporary readers because Criseyde's betrayal reflects not only the Boethian Fortune view but also the previous narrations of the Troilus story. The traditional wheel image reveals the fact that the narrator does not have the power to change the course of events or the end of the story as he re-narrates a known story which was imprinted in European medieval culture, and he reminds the reader to sympathise with Criseyde.

As mentioned before, intertextuality and traditional images lead a society to remember the past, and they are the ways to transfer some cultural and historical traditions from previous cultures and societies. The author, as an authoritative figure, to some extent, reveals the past in his work; thus, the text undertakes a transhistorical mission. Ruth Evans, remarking Chaucer's view on old books, states that "as Chaucer reminds us in a key passage to the *Legend of Good Women*, memory is kept alive through the textual tradition of *auctoritas*: 'if that olde bokes weren aweye, / Yloren were of remembrance the keye'" ("Memory's History" 90). As an author, who is aware that the past will be lost when old books are destroyed, the narrator establishes a bond between the previous and the present cultures through allusions to the classics or translations including modern views. Therefore, even Criseyde's betrayal is presented as the reflection of past stories.

Through her betrayal, the poet repeats a story of "faithless woman" with a mild narrative. As Ruth Evans states, "in Chaucer's poem, the question of how to present Criseyde is not only bound up with the essential doubleness of language and of signifying processes but with how to represent the 'truth' of the past. Criseyde *will* betray Troilus. The narrator wrestles with having to reproduce a story of female lack of fidelity" ("Memory's History" 94). His 'wrestling' creates a story where the readers can

understand the consequences of the betrayal in Criseyde's inner world. Even though Chaucer presents a classic story, he makes up the 'deficiencies' that the previous authors neglect in their narrations. In the previous versions of this story, the poets focus on Troilus's feelings and suffering more than Criseyde's. However, Chaucer adds extra stanzas or combines both the French and Italian narratives to portray his Criseyde, so his readers understand Criseyde's suffering and inner conflicts. In Book V, Chaucer presents how she is affected by that betrayal and leads his reader to understand that Criseyde is also one of the victims of the war:

> I say nat therfore that I wol ȝow loue,
> Ny say nat nay, but in conclusioun,
> I mene wel, by god that sit aboue."
> And ther-with-al she caste hire eyen down,
> And gan to sike and seyde, "O Troie town,
> Ȝet bidde I god in quiete and in reste
> I may ȝow sen, or do myn herte breste. (V. 1002-1008)[112]

As can be understood from this stanza, Chaucer depicts Criseyde's feelings from a broader perspective. Boccaccio and Benoit do not reflect her feelings in as detailed a way as Chaucer; who expands his narration about Criseyde's predicament and thoughts by adding an extra stanza (Windeatt, *Geoffrey Chaucer* 499). In comparison with the other versions of this character, it is evident that Chaucer lets his readers understand and know Criseyde better. Therefore, the English poet alters the place of women in the romance

[112] 'I am not saying I will be your love,
Nor am I saying no; but, in conclusion,
I mean well, by the Lord that sits above.'
Then she let fall her eyelids in confusion,
And sighed 'O God, let it be no illusion
That I shall see Troy quiet and at rest,
And if I see it not, then burst my breast!'

genre by internalising the classics' humanism, Italian Renaissance, French chivalry and Arabic courtesy.

In this sense, Chaucer's narrator behaves like a knight towards Criseyde and shows courtesy. From the beginning of the romance, the narrator leads his audience in the matter of understanding Criseyde's feelings and despair. He gives more details about her fears and her isolated world surrounded by men even when he introduces her to the reader for the first time:

> Now hadde Calkas left in this meschaunce,
> Al vnwist of this false and wikked dede,
> His doughter, which that was in gret penaunce,
> ffor of hire lif she was ful sore in drede,
> As she that nyste what was best to rede;
> ffor bothe a widewe was she and allone
> Of any frend to whom she dorste hir mone. (I, 92-8)[113]

Criseyde, in some ways, atones for her father's fault, and unlike Benoit and Boccaccio, "Chaucer stresses the treachery of Calkas's deed while emphasising Criseyde's innocence of it" (Windeatt, *Geoffrey Chaucer* 91). Criseyde's innocence can be seen before the betrayal scene when she is supposed to leave Troy as a consequence of the 'prisoner exchange.' Although she is not a prisoner in Troy, the Trojan parliament decides, in her

[113] Calkas had left behind, in these mischances,
One who knew nothing of his wicked deed,
A daughter, whose unhappy circumstances
Put her in terror for her life indeed,
Not knowing where to go or whom to heed,
For she was both a widow and alone,
Without a friend to whom she might make moan.

Boccaccio narrates this part as follows: "In this evil plight, without informing her of his intentions, Calchas had left a daughter of his, a widow, who was so fair and so angelic to behold that she seemed not a mortal, Cressida by name, as amiable, I am advised, as wise, as modest, and as well-mannered as any other lady born in Troy (10-11).

absence, that she will leave the Trojan camp. However, the objection of Hector to this exchange demonstrates the place of women and courtesy towards them in the antique literacy that reaches to the Renaissance: "Ector, … / Gan it withstonde and soberly answered: / 'Syres, she nys no prisonere,' he seyde; / … / We vsen here no women forto selle" (IV. 176-182).[114] Unlike many medieval texts, the classical works depict women as warriors and as goddesses; the people of the Ancient times found a place for their women whereas the medieval monotheism pushed woman into the background.[115] As is seen in the early medieval literary works like the *Song of Roland*, there was not an appreciated place for women in texts. Even with the coming of courtly love, women were presented as the rewards that the heroes could gain after their perilous adventures. By dealing with the exchange scene in his work, Chaucer depicts Criseyde as the victim of the medieval male dominated world and reveals how the view towards women has changed since the Ancient times. Chaucer transmits what he has learned from the classics to his own readers and to other authors of the following periods. Therefore, this literary heritage of the classical period manifests itself in the late medieval period and it reaches its peak in the literature of the Renaissance.

In general, the classical allusions are used to identify Criseyde as a relatively innocent character, and they are the transhistorical means to create a link between the readers and the character. While the other authors depict Criseyde's betrayal, they cannot evaluate her as a person who has weakness. However, by focusing on the betrayal theme, Chaucer changes the understanding of "faithless woman:"

That al be that Criseyde was vntrewe,

[114] Hector, … / Gave them a sober answer; he protested: / 'Sirs, she is not a prisoner of war, / … / It's not our practice to sell women here.'

[115] In *Images of Women in Antiquity*, edited by Averil Cameron, Amélie Kuhrt, many scholars discuss the position of woman in the Ancient period and early middle ages. In chapter 15, Peter A. Ackroyd reveals the transformation of women from a divine figure to the "equivalent of the bad thing" through Jezebel.

That for that gilt she be nat wroth with me:

Ȝe may hire gilt in other bokes se,

And glandlier I wol write, if ȝow leste, (V. 1774-1777)[116]

Chaucer's Criseyde is not presented as a faithless woman as in Benoit's and Boccaccio's works. He accepts what she has done is faithless but does not blame her, as do Boccaccio and Benoit. With the influence of the developing Renaissance ideas, Chaucer deals with his characters in a more humanistic way. Alastair J. Minnis elaborates the difference between Chaucer's portrait and the other authors' ways of portraying her. According to Minnis, "earlier writers had established Briseida-Criseida as a type of the promiscuous and faithless woman. Chaucer, rejecting the traditional character-traits which identified her thus, transformed her into a figure who is simultaneously 'modern' and 'ancient,' a courtly love heroine and an ancient pagan with fear as her ruling passion (*Chaucer and the Pagan Antiquity* 73). While re-narrating a classic story, Chaucer does not neglect the contemporary points of view. Even his translations keep up with the socially changing understandings of his time; hence, his works become texts involving the past and the future.

Chaucer depicts Criseyde as a character who tries to survive in her male-dominated society and suffers from the problems that she has created as much as Troilus. Chaucer's Criseyde is transformed into a woman who has feelings and is aware of her mistakes whereas Boccaccio's Criseida adapts to that world and becomes "much like Troilo: they share the same worldly values, and the reader is fully informed about the urgent desires of both" (Benson 18). Criseida of *Filostrato* does not feel lovesickness or regret about her betrayal as much as Chaucer's Criseyde. Boccaccio's character focuses

[116] That thought, alas, Criseyde was proved untrue,
She be not angry for her guilt with me;
Her guilt is there in other books to see,
And I will gladlier write, to please you best,

on her loneliness in the Greek camp and behaves selfishly by finding consolation with Diomedes' love, but Chaucer's Criseyde is more sensitive and humanistic as his audience expects from a woman. She criticises herself more harshly than the other characters, and in her soliloquy in the last book (V. 1058-1085), Criseyde blames herself and is aware of the fact that no good word will be uttered, nor good songs will be sung about her (Windeatt, *Geoffrey Chaucer* 505). This soliloquy is also the direct French influence in Chaucer's work, one of the parts that Boccaccio omits in his translation.[117] Like Boccaccio, Chaucer also omits some parts, and he does not allow his Criseyde to console herself for her betrayal by finding any excuses. On the other hand, Benoit's Briseida believes that she would not have betrayed Troilus if she had not been alone in the Greek camp (vol. 3, 20290- 96). Chaucer ignores such explanations, and depicts his character as a regretful woman rather than a person who is a self-justifier. In Chaucer's narration, the audience feels Criseyde's remorse, and by creating public sentiment, the poet reverses the view on woman in the collective memory in light of the humanistic approach. Chaucer uses the most appropriate narrative technique to depict his characters and to connect them with modern society by applying humanism.

In Chaucer's work, the betrayal of Criseyde stands in the middle of the Ancient literature and Renaissance literature and, through the betrayal theme, Chaucer develops the transhistorical bonds. As is known, in medieval romances the token has an essential role in establishing a bond between characters; an object that helps the characters remember each other even if they have to separate for a long time. The token could be any object, and generally, it has personal importance rather than a cultural or national significance. However, as Evans explains, a gift or object commemorates people within their community, and it is profoundly affective and seemingly transhistorical bond

[117] In the soliloquy that Boccaccio omits, Benoît's Briseida laments as Chaucer's Criseyde (vol. 3, 20237-40).

("Memory's History" 92); they transmit a collective memory; that is why the tokens can be regarded as transhistorical. Even though the token symbolises positive memories, it can create new and negative memories as in *Troilus and Criseyde*. In her "Memory's History and the History of Criseyde," Evans cites the brooch exchange scene to exemplify the negative effect of the token. In Book V, Criseyde gives Diomedes "a broche… that Troilus was" (1040-1) and by betraying her link to Troilus, she establishes a new bond with Diomedes. The brooch that once symbolised the fidelity and love between Troilus and Criseyde turns into a sign of hope for Diomedes and creates a new memory between Diomedes and Criseyde. When Deiphebe, Troilus's brother, takes the collar off Diomedes's coat during their combat, Troilus sees the brooch "that he Criseyde ȝaf that morwe / That she from Troie moste nedes twynne, / In remembraunce of hym and of his sorwe" (V. 1661-3),[118] and then learns the betrayal of Criseyde. Hence, for Troilus, the token becomes a memory of his suffering and to some extent, the beginning of his end. He falls in the combat with Achilles, in which he engages in anger and frustration and Achilles mercilessly kills him. Chaucer's rewriting is a way to transmit the well-known suffering of the character Troilus because even "violence and suffering are transhistorical, transnational and transcultural experiences" (del Rio, Onega and Escudero-Alías 311). Through the token, the symbol of Criseyde's betrayal, Chaucer re-narrates the transhistorical love story in the Trojan War.

Although the exchange of such tokens is a familiar scene in romance tradition, Boccaccio does not show such a scene in his *Filostrato.* Boccaccio mentions such an exchange at the end of his poem during the argument of the eighth part when Troilus sees the brooch that Diomedes has: "Soon by means of a garment snatched by Deiphoebus from Diomede Troilus recognizeth a brooch which he had given to Cressida and Cressida

[118] The brooch he'd given her when they had to sever, / Yes on the very day she took her leave, / In memory of his grief and him for ever?

to Diomede" (120). By adding this scene, Chaucer creates a cliché and evokes nostalgia for traditional romance writing in the late fourteenth century. However, his nostalgic scene does not only reach the medieval audience, but also the Renaissance poets who maintain the tradition of exchanging tokens between lovers. Chaucer's nostalgia is "a form of cultural retreat concerned with tradition and continuity, a desire for a transhistorical reconstruction" (Tomczak 242). Chaucer reconstructs some parts of his story under the influence of the French version, which allows the poet to transfer the transhistorical and transcultural elements with which his readers are familiar. The intertextuality of the work presents the multicultural dimension, and through this characteristic, various cultural figures are transmitted from different centuries and different societies.

In this sense, Troilus's defeat and suffering could also be interpreted in terms of transhistorical heritage. In Western cultures, heroes, in other words, knights, only suffer when they have to make a choice between heroization and survival. Troilus's suffering after he learns of Criseyde's betrayal creates such a choice. His dilemma is between being a noble hero dying on the battlefield or continuing to suffer from his beloved's disloyalty. Mark Sherman compares Troilus's dilemma with that of Achilles and establishes a connection with the original Troy story; "if Troilus suffers, it is because he is confronted with these opposing perspectives [heroic ideal and non-noble goal], similar to the choice Achilles has in the *Iliad* between heroization and survival" (104). [119] As Troilus's story originally derives from Homer's *Iliad*, the historical continuity and similarities are inevitable, yet Chaucer's narrative presents Troilus's suffering and dilemma with the understanding of destiny that is shaped in line with Christianity. Troilus's choice to be a hero is the transhistorical destiny that is the imitation of the Ancient world and connection

[119] In the *Iliad*, Achilles's mother Thetis does not want her son to attend the Trojan war; despite his mother's rejection, Achilles chooses to join Agamemnon's army and fight for the Greeks.

with the medieval culture. According to Barron, "the medieval view of history [is] as a mirror providing a moral perspective on the contemporary world and the conviction that the Western chivalric values derived from the ancient world lend weight and importance to his story-matter. The supposed Trojan ancestry of the British adds the romantic of the matter of antiquity" (112). Both Homer and Chaucer present their characters with their flaws, and by following the ancient humanity, Chaucer does not depict Troilus and Criseyde as heroes or victims, but human beings. Chaucer's characterisation method is a heritage of the classic poets such as Virgil and Ovid, and this humanistic perspective was conveyed to the English Renaissance; thus, with poets such as Shakespeare, the transition between the Middle English and Renaissance works of literature was completed.

Chaucer's narration covers deeper transhistorical and transcultural phenomena than the works of previous authors, since his romance is a type of original story, including the previous narrations. By directly translating from the previous versions, omitting some parts that are not suitable for his characters or storytelling, and with added lines, Chaucer writes a romance that his contemporary readers evaluate through their cultural heritage. Windeatt states that "for Chaucer, translation constantly involves as it were a 'trans-valuation' of his original, a shifting of perspectives, an intensification, a 'thickening' of the texture of language and idea" (*Geoffrey Chaucer* 4). For that reason, his way of re-narrating Troilus's story makes the work different from the others. Allusions to the classics and the details of the Troilus story that Boccaccio omits prove the intertextuality of his work. The narrator of the romance emphasises the additions in the story by stating "And if that ich, at loues reuerence, / Haue eny word in-eched for the beste, / Doth therwith-al right as ȝoure seluen leste" (III, 1328-30).[120] The mentioned "in-eched words for the best" refer to Chaucer's choices that are made to change the stereotyped narrative

[120] "And if that I, in love's reverence, / have any word added for the best, / do with it whatever yourselves suggest" (Since Nevil Coghill did not translate the current stanza, the lines have been taken from the website P*oetryintranslation*.

of Troilus story and characters' description. Every addition and omission in the fourteenth-century English version separate the Ancient story from the other versions and lead the reader to appreciate the work with the all its Ancient and medieval traditions. The brooch scene, as mentioned before, is a symbol of a transhistorical bond between Troilus and Criseyde, and it is one of those added scenes that the Italian version does not include. With these scenes, Chaucer changes the harsh judgements coming from the Ancient times. Therefore, Chaucer leads his audience and reminds them of the important texts of the literary heritage.

Apart from the translations, the classical allusions that identify Criseyde are also essential elements in forming an opinion of the character. Chaucer benefits from many classic texts in his work and Ovidian images are significant references to illuminate Criseyde's predicament. The allusion to the letter of Oenone, Paris's first wife, prefigures the love between Troilus and Criseyde. In his *Heroides*, Ovid depicts Oenone's sufferings after she has been deserted for Helen and by referring to Ovid's *Heroides* twice, in Book I and Book IV respectively, the narrator reveals the hope and treachery in Troilus's and Criseyde's lives. In the first allusion, Pandare gives hope to Troilus by reminding him of the love of Oenone for Paris:

> "I woot wel that it fareth thus by me
> As to thi brother, Paris, an herdesse,
> Which that i-cleped was Oenone,
> Wrote in a compleynte of hir heuynesse; (I, 652-6)[121]

[121] 'As with Oenone, the fair shepherdess,
Who wrote to your good brother, Paris – she
Made a lament out of her wretchedness;
You saw the letter that she wrote, I guess?'

In the letter, Oenone complains about her suffering and states that she cannot heal her love after Paris's betrayal. Through Oenone's letter, Pandare "alerts to the letter's pastoral impulse, opening the door to a surprising source of hope" (Allen 698). This pastoral image brings Oenone's immortal love to mind and Paris's betrayal of her. Chaucer foreshadows that Troilus's love could be as eternal as Oenone's, yet his fate will be the same as hers. The next allusion to *Heroides* is Paris's vow to Oenone which, like Criseyde's vows to Troilus (IV. 1551-3), does not come true. The Ovidian allusion brings back a collective memory, that of another love story in the Trojan War. Chaucer interweaves the Ancient memories with the medieval social perspectives. As Stadnik states, he "skilfully blends images from symbolic tradition integral to his situatedness, which means that the contemporary perspective onto the classical past was that of late medieval Christian Europe" (Stadnik 136). Through his Criseyde, Chaucer presents transhistorical and transcultural images and keeps alive the memories rooted in the socio-cultural background of medieval cultures.

Apart from the tragedy transmitted from the past, the text itself is also the core of the transhistoricity. Chaucer connects the Middle Ages with the Renaissance period as he links it with the Ancient time. As one of the poets who was most read and imitated even after the medieval period, Chaucer conveys Troilus's story to the Renaissance poets and playwrights. In the fifteenth century, the Scottish poet Robert Henryson wrote a poem about Criseyde's sorrow under the title of "Testament of Cresseid." In his work, the poet narrates what would happen after Criseyde is sent to the Green camp and mainly focused on Criseyde. Henryson's narration points out the ungratefulness of Criseyde, and he depicts her as being punished because she gives up Troilus's love, her rebellious attitude displeases the gods, and they make her blind and suffer from leprosy. In the Scottish poet's version, Criseyde dies after all her sufferings unlike the previous versions in which

Troilus dies, and Henryson presents his text as a warning for women about being selfish and ungrateful:

> Now, worthie wemen, in this ballet schort,
> Maid for your worschip and instructioun,
> Of cheritie, I monische and exhort,
> Ming not your lufe with fals deceptioun:
> Beir in your mynd this schort conclusioun
> Of fair Cresseid, as I have said befoir.
> Sen scho is deid I speik of hir no moir. (610-6)[122]

Henryson does outrageously behave towards his Criseyde like Boccaccio and Benoit, although the poet does not follow the Italian and French poets' texts. Henryson explicitly states that he has taken Chaucer's book as the model for this story: "I tuik ane quair - and left all uther sport - / Writtin be worthie Chaucer glorious / Of fair Creisseid and worthie Troylus" (40-42).[123] However, he does not reproduce Chaucer's narrative techniques or those of the other authors and texts to which Chaucer refers in *Troilus and Criseyde*. Henryson utilises this historical text to give a lesson to all women in his society. By reaching fifteenth-century Scotland, the transformed version of the story demonstrates the transhistorical function of the Troilus story.

After Henryson, Shakespeare the most outstanding playwright of English history, the humanist poet of the Renaissance, adapted *Troilus and Criseyde* into a play with the

[122] Now, worthy women, in this ballad short
Made for your worship and instruction
Of charity I 'monish [admonish] and exhort:
Ming[le] not your love with false deception.
Bear in your mind this short conclusion
Of fair Cresseid as I have said before.
Since she is dead I speak of her no more (Murphy)

[123] "I took a quire (and left all other sport), / Written by worthy Chaucer glorious, / Of fair Cresseid and lusty Troilus." (Murphy)

title of *Troilus and Cressida* (1609). Even though Shakespeare preserves the tragic end of the story, he changes the tragic side in accordance with the legendary Trojan War. The English playwright recognises the other Greek and Trojan soldiers/heroes of the War and ends his play with the death of Hector, rather than of Troilus. In order to entertain his audience, Shakespeare presents his plot with more heroic actions, and he deals with the two topics - the love between Criseyde and Troilus and the Trojan War - at the same time. Like Boccaccio, Shakespeare opens the play with a prologue in which he tells his audience the background of the Trojan War that is a summary of Homer's *Iliad*: "In Troy there lies the scene. From isles of Greece / The princes orgulous, their high blood chaf'd, / Have to the port of Athens sent their ships" ("Prologue," 1-3). With such additions and the omission of long wooing scenes, the playwright adapted the work according to the social expectations of his time. These rewritings or adaptations demonstrate that literary works help the transhistorical interactions among societies. Moreover, every adaptation is a relatively new work and every author transfers the collective memory of their society, which reflects the cultural and political transactions that the society has directly or indirectly experienced.

In conclusion, *Troilus and Criseyde*, as a fourteenth-century English romance, establishes a transcultural connection between pagan Greece and Christian England. Chaucer's interpretation provides a transcultural narration including many different aspects from different eras and different societies. The most striking feature of its cross-cultural structure is the combination of Ancient and medieval beliefs. The poet includes Christian elements through the Roman philosopher Boethius's *Consolation* into a story of the classical period. With an understanding of the 'Wheel of Fortune,' Chaucer follows Boccaccio and Benoit, yet he differentiates a well-known story with a broader aspect of destiny. Moreover, Chaucer's text has the characteristics of the Arabic courtly love tradition, and Arabic philosophy about love shows that medieval English poetry had a

variety of influencers crossing all the boundaries. The transhistoricity of the text is evident in that people tend to remember tragedy, and sufferings bring together cultures from different periods. Thus, as an example of the 'matter of Rome,' Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* proves the insignificance of spatial and temporal boundaries in the context of cultural interactions. With a love story that belongs to the Ancient period, Chaucer presents a wide scope in transhistoricity of the text that bears different cultural phenomena in itself.

CONCLUSION

This study discusses how medieval texts can be analysed within the framework of transculturalism even though it is a recent approach dealing with contemporary globalisation and focusing on modern societies. Transculturalism focuses on the multicultural structure of societies. However, the multiculturality that transculturalism determines is the hidden layers in culture. In this sense, this dissertation has focused on the origin of many details in the *Song of Roland*, the *Quest for the Holy Grail* and Geoffrey Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*. The primary purpose of the study is to demonstrate how the cultural transformations in the Middle Ages were transferred from the Ancient times with pagan elements into a monotheistic culture, and by the nature of culture, they were developed layer by layer. Within this context, the traces of different cultures are reflected in literary traditions, since the poets/authors bring those transmissions intentionally or unintentionally to their periods. This study has demonstrated how the intertextual references of texts, the historical background to the stories, the original versions of the works and the selected details coming from the collective memory construct the transculturality of society. When medieval literature is considered, every element in cross-cultural formation illustrates another work or another historic event. Therefore, by analysing the given works, each chapter of this study has argued the functions of these elements and revealed the history of societies in terms of the cultural encounters.

The theory of transculturalism can elaborate on medieval texts, specifically on the romance genre due to its long history in literature. Transculturalism studies the newly established or integrated cultural phenomena that do not bear the identifiable traces of the cultures having been interacted. In this regard, cultural studies do not have any spatial and temporal boundaries. When the historical background of Britain is taken into consideration, the invasions of the other communities produced a new culture by meeting

with the already settled societies. Since the English themselves were invaders on the British island, the cultural variety of British culture protected its multicultural structure. As a consequence, the multiculturality of the society completed the transcultural process by eliminating the distinguishing characteristics of each society and became a unique culture. The British culture appeared from the contributions of the pre-Christian societies, such as Celts, Picts, Scots, Britons, and others like the Romans and Germanic tribes came with a new religion and introduced that religion to the country. However, the most influential invasion into medieval British culture was seen with the Normans. After the Norman Conquest, the French literary heritage merged with the English culture and reproduced in accordance with the present cultural formation. The other influences that the Normans brought and the English owned, also show themselves in literature. Those influences vary from the East to the West, and thereby, after the Crusades, the Arabic influence on the romance genre itself cannot be denied.

In a literary context, cross-cultural reflections in texts mostly manifest themselves as the results of translations, adaptations and intertextuality. At this point, the educational and social background of the authors merges with the contemporary developments in society. In this sense, the study has put forward that every contact with previous and foreign societies finds a place in literature with a new interpretation, according to context and vernacular. While allusions to the classics provide a transhistorical link, translations become rewritings that include new cultural elements from the translators. For this reason, the text itself turns into a vehicle to transmit cultural encounters and, as is seen in the medieval texts, each piece of literature contributes to the cultural heritage by teaching other societies. The background of the romance genre in English literature shows that it is both an adaptation from other cultures and a heritage of the classic period. In this context, romances provide an opportunity for the cross-cultural structure of the society. Moreover, religious development in the medieval period had a significant role in cultural

interactions, and the dominance of the Biblical texts translated from Latin affected the works of the pre-Christian oral literature. In the following chapters of the dissertation, alongside the cultural invasions and translations, the religious influence has been discussed in the light of the texts chosen from different centuries and different matters of the romance genre.

The birth of the romance genre in written British history starts with the 'matter of France' romances. The *Song of Roland*, coming from the epic tradition of the Old French literature, is the source of these romances. The *Song* was not originally British, but it was written in the twelfth century in Britain, and affected romance writing in the country. Even though a well-known war in French history inspired the poet, throughout the story the changes in historical details can be traced. Firstly, the changed opponents of the war according to the present enemy of the period demonstrates the power of the changing society in literary texts. The *Song of Roland* narrates a semi-fictional battle, based on historical facts, between the Muslims on the Iberian Peninsula and the Franks. Despite the anachronistic details in the work, the text as an adaptation of an Old French epic cannot be evaluated with the historical and cultural background. Since it was rewritten after the First Crusade, the contemporary interactions of the twelfth-century Europe are more dominant in the text that embraces both the Old French, Norman, English cultures and the Arabic culture. With the widespread influence of the Crusades, the emphasis on Christianity and obloquy of the other religions become the centre of the narration and through the transmission of the local memory of the Christians, the historical connection has been revealed. For the poet reflects some scenes in line with being a true Christian as well as a good knight, the selective memory transaction has been discussed through the character Roland.

The transhistorical function of the text is also distinguishable due to its connection with a historic event that became a legend in the oral tradition period. With its history

dating back to the oral lore, the *Song* became the means of national propaganda for the French people. The national heroism of the poem was transmitted to the nineteenth century, and the transhistoricity of the text was reinterpreted in this sense. However, even such a nationalistic poem cannot be regarded as the product of a particular nation. In this sense, heroism in the work has been analysed through the chivalric codes embraced by Roland, the best knight of Charlemagne. At this point, the study has argued the Arabic influence on the romance genre and the *Song of Roland* since the Code of Chivalry was derived from Arabic poetry. Thus, the *Song* is a product that embraces many cultures and periods within the framework of transculturality and transhistoricity. The story was popular in the medieval period and by inspiring the medieval romancers, its themes were transmitted to the many medieval romances. Therefore, with Charlemagne and Roland stories, the Norman influence and Eastern contributions in the *Song* became influential in the romances written in the next centuries, after the Anglo-Norman poem. The poem's position between the epic and romance genres and written and oral traditions provided the scope of transculturality and transhistoricity.

With the coming of the *Song of Roland* to Britain, the Charlemagne romances gains popularity in medieval British literature. This French influence leads the English poet to produce their own romances and the romances dealing with the 'matter of Britain' increases. The well-known matter-of-Britain example, Arthurian legend appear after the Charlemagne romances. As one of the most famous and the most rewritten romances of the Arthurian legend, the *Quest for the Holy Grail* presents both a British nationalistic narrative and multiculturality. The story reflects the Celtic origin of the romances in 'matter of Britain,' and as a text adapted from the Celts, it brings the pre-Christian traditions to a medieval Christian society. The supernatural atmosphere of the story was reinterpreted according to the Christian miracles, and the religious events which took place in the local memory were transmitted to the next generation with the rewritings of

the Grail story. In this study, the version in the Vulgate Cycle, written in the thirteenth century, has been studied since it provides a more comprehensive plot than the previous fragmented versions. The first written literary work on the Holy Grail story was the twelfth-century French poet Chrétien de Troyes's unfinished *Perceval, the Story of the Grail*, but its symbolic outline dates back to the pre-Christian period of Britain. The chapter has revealed the Celtic roots of many details in the *Quest* and interpreted them as post-Christian additions. Unlike the *Song*, the *Quest* presents a more spiritual atmosphere and, with the miracles, leads the reader into a fantastic world. Therefore, religious miracles depicted in the romance can connect the cognitive memory of pre-Christian and Christian societies.

The spirituality of the romance arises from the contemporary social shifts of the period. Therefore, as in the *Song of Roland*, the influences of the Crusades and Arabic culture have been determined and discussed against the background of Islam and Christianity, and hence, the reasons for cultural exchange have been revealed. The chapter has studied the background of the Round Table Knights, which goes back to the Templars, founded after the First Crusade. The connection between the Templars and Muslim Assassins proves the Eastern influence on the writing of the works coming from the oral tradition period. The variety of the influencers - from the Celts to the Middle Eastern Muslims - on the *Quest for the Holy Grail* provide a comprehensive cultural interaction and historical transmission, since the romances on King Arthur and his Round Table Knights are the post-medieval works that have been rewritten and adapted in every genre for centuries. In addition, its adaptations to the cinema in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have established a bridge between the Middle Ages and contemporary popular culture. Thus, the transcultural and transhistorical process of the romance is not confined to the temporal limits of the medieval period.

Geoffrey Chaucer's romance *Troilus and Criseyde* also presents a narrative combining pagan and Christian beliefs as is seen in the *Quest for the Holy Grail*. Chaucer narrates a well-known love story of the ancient period in the fourteenth century, which becomes an example of 'matter of Rome' with the perspective of Christian doctrines. The last analysis of the dissertation provides a balance between historical and spiritual narratives. Chaucer's *Troilus* takes the reader to the fantastic atmosphere of the Ancient times with the gods and goddesses manipulating the destiny of the people. Through the belief system, Chaucer protects the reality in his work and partially keeps his audience in their own time with the familiar phenomena from medieval Christian Europe. As a story coming from the pagan period, Chaucer's anachronistic additions about Christianity prove that the work is more than a rewriting. In this sense, the inspirational sources of the romance have been determined, and the intertextuality of *Troilus and Criseyde* has been discussed as a cross-cultural element. By translating the Italian poet Boccaccio's *Filostrato* and including the French poet Benoit's *Roman de Troie* and the Latin philosopher Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*, Chaucer elaborates the transcultural and transhistorical structure of *Troilus*, which presents a more humanistic narration linking the antiquity and the Renaissance.

Furthermore, Chaucer's influences are not limited to medieval Europe and the Ancient period. As is discussed in the study, Chaucer adopts many concepts from diverse cultures. The most significant influence on the work is the Arabic philosophy, which had an important role in medieval courtly love tradition and the idea of lovesickness. Since the interaction between the Muslim East and Christian West extends back to the early medieval period, it seems that Chaucer applied a literary tradition that had already merged with the Western literature. Thus, the poet conveys a transcultural interaction as a medieval custom of medieval European literature. The psychological sufferings of the characters have allowed an analysis for memory transmission, and the stereotypical

position of women in medieval literature has been discussed by means of literary heritage, which is a transhistorical link between the classics and medieval romance and also establishes a remarkable correlation between Arabic poetry and Western literature. Apart from the cross-cultural and historical elements in the romance, the text itself continues to cross cultural and temporal boundaries with its rewritings and adaptations in the following centuries. Thus, through Chaucer's text, the cultural shifts and transmissions of the Late Middle Ages could be elaborated.

This dissertation has analysed three matters of the romance genre in light of transcultural studies by elaborating the multi-layered elements in the texts. The works studied in this dissertation were selected from three separate centuries, and all of them were either written in Britain or related to the country in terms of the setting and/or characters. Therefore, the cultural shifts that arose from the cross-cultural interactions of English society have been discussed, and the historical background and transmission process of the new adopted cultural elements have been put forward within the framework of the texts. Moreover, the intertextuality, translations and adaptations of the given texts have guided the researchers in medieval studies to determine the cultural borrowings in English society, and the cultural importance of the texts in the transmission process has been argued by tracing back to the origins of the stories. For that reason, the historical changes reflected in the works have highlighted the connection between the Muslims and Christians after the Crusades. In this sense, every work has been analysed as a cultural mixture of the East and West. The touch of the Eastern culture has affected the Christian discourse of the works, and all three works bear the traces of the collective memory about the birth of Christianity and the sacrifice and torture of the first Christians. In this regard, the study has argued the connection between the cultural and cognitive transfers of the stories. The memories of the previous cultures and periods have been studied as transhistorical changes, which are the basis of the cross-cultural encounters. Finally, the

dissertation has concluded that medieval texts are appropriate for a transcultural approach since culture naturally has an accumulative structure that demonstrates itself in literary works and develops within the literature. The authors cannot separate a text from their environments and social background, and thereby, through the storytelling techniques, written or oral, cultural interactions have been established.

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ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın amacı Ortaçağ edebiyat eserleri üzerinden kültürel etkileşimlerin coğrafi ya da zamansal sınır tanımadığını ortaya koymaktır. Kültür ötesilik (transculturalism) kuramı çerçevesinde Norman İstilası sonrasında İngiliz Ortaçağ yazılı edebiyat geleneğinde önemli bir yere sahip olan anonim eserler the *Song of Roland* (*Roland'ın Şarkısı*), the *Quest for the Holy Grail* (*Kutsal Kâse'nin Peşinde*) ve Geoffrey Chaucer'ın *Troilus and Criseyde* (*Troilus ve Criseyde*) eserleri incelenmektedir. Yirminci yüzyılın ikinci yarısında ulus ötesilik (transnationalism) kuramı ile beraber çeşitli çalışmalarda ele alınan kültür ötesilik kuramı, genellikle çağdaş edebi türlere uygulanmaktadır. Ancak bu çalışmada da gösterildiği gibi kültürel etkileşimlerin zamansal sınırı bulunmamaktadır. Antik dönemden itibaren başlayan kültür alışverişinde edebi metinlerin farklı topluluklarda farklı dillere çevrilip uyarlanması ve toplumların dini ya da milli kaygılarla gerçekleştirdikleri savaşların etkisi oldukça büyüktür. Kültür, tarihi süreçlerle beraber oluştuğu için etkileşimlerin tarihi değişimleri de yansıttığı görülmektedir; dolayısıyla bu çalışmada ele alınan Ortaçağ metinleri, tarih ötesilik (transhistoricity) ve toplumsal hafıza (collective memory) konuları doğrultusunda incelenerek, kültür ötesilik kuramının tarihi ve sosyo-psikolojik boyutu da ele alınmaktadır.

Kültür ötesilik kavramı, bir kültürün diğerini etkileyip, başka kültürü etkisi altına almasından çok, karşı karşıya gelen kültürlerin birbirini etkileyerek yeni bir kültür oluşturmasıdır. Ortaçağ dönemindeki gibi eserlerin daha çok yeniden yorumlanma ve ilgili toplumun diline çevrilmesi ile oluşturulan edebiyat geleneği kültürel etkileşimleri en iyi şekilde yansıtmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, çalışmada dil, metinlerarasılık ve dönemin sosyo-politik yapısı gibi kültürlere nüfus eden farklı olgular söz konusu eserler üzerinden ele alınarak bu etkileşimlerin İngiliz toplumundaki yansımaları incelenmektedir. Çalışmanın sınırlarını belirlemek amacıyla Anglo-Norman döneminde şekillenen ve İngiliz Ortaçağ edebiyatında geniş bir yer tutan romans türüne ve bu türün üç temel başlığı

olan “Fransa konusu” (matter of France), “Britanya konusu” (matter of Britain) ve “Roma konusuna” (matter of Rome) örnek olan üç edebi metin seçilmiştir. Ele alınan eserler ya İngiltere’de kaleme alınmıştır ya da doğrudan İngiltere ile ilişkilidir, ayrıca birbirini takip eden üç farklı yüzyılda yazılmış oldukları için erken dönem Ortaçağ İngiltere’sinden başlayarak ve geç dönem Ortaçağ İngiltere’sine uzanan kültürel ve edebi gelişimler çalışmada yer verilen konulardandır.

“Fransa konusu” alanında ele alınan eser *Song of Roland*, sözlü edebiyat geleneğinde Fransa’da üretilmiştir; ancak eserin bilinen en eski metni Norman İstilasından sonra Britanya adasında ortaya çıkan Anglo-Norman dilinde yazılmış ve söz konusu metin Oxford’daki Bodleian kütüphanesinde bulunmuştur. Eserin Britanya adasına ulaşana kadarki kültürel değişimleri ve adada eklenen İngiliz etkisi tartışılarak kültür ötesilik özellikleri ortaya konmaktadır. “Britanya konusu” çerçevesinde *Quest for the Holy Grail* eseri incelenerek, bu alandaki eserlerin Kelt kökeni ve pagan döneminde üretilen eserlere sonradan eklenen Hristiyanlık özellikleri ile tarihi dönüşümler anlatılmaktadır. Dönem Avrupa’sında tarihi bir öneme sahip olan Haçlı Seferleri ve bu savaşlar doğrultusunda Ortaçağ Avrupa edebiyatında etkisini artıran Arap yazın geleneği kültür ötesilik bağlamında örneklerle açıklanmaktadır. Son konu olan “Roma konusu” Chaucer’ın *Troilus and Criseyde* eseri ile ele alınmaktadır. Antik Yunan döneminden on dördüncü yüzyıl İngiltere’sine ulaşan Truva Savaşı hikayesi doğrultusunda kaleme alınan bir aşk hikâyesinin anlatıldığı eserde pagan geleneklerinin ve Hristiyanlık ışığında okuyucuya ulaştırılması incelenmektedir. Bu üç eserde de Avrupa ülkeleri arasındaki etkileşimlerin İngiltere’deki yansımaları görülürken, eserlerin Hristiyanlık öncesi geleneklerle Haçlı Seferleri’nden sonra yazılması Doğu ve İslam kültürlerinden de izler taşıdığını, böylece Ortaçağ edebiyatındaki kültür ötesiliği ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Kültür ötesilik; tarih ötesilik; ortaçağ romansları

ABSTRACT

This study aims to prove that cultural interactions cannot be restricted with geographical or temporal boundaries. In this context, the theory of transculturalism has been applied to the anonymous works the *Song of Roland*, the *Quest for the Holy Grail*, and Geoffrey Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, which were written after the Norman Conquest, and have had essential places in British medieval literary tradition since then. In the second half of the twentieth century, the theory of transculturalism appeared, along with transnationalism, and has been generally discussed within the contemporary literary genres. However, as is discussed in this study, there are no temporal boundaries in cultural interactions because cultures have had contact since the Ancient times. Translations and adaptations of literary texts into different languages and societies and the influences of invasions/wars have had significant impacts on cultural exchanges. Moreover, culture consists of historical processes of a society and historic events contribute to cultural interactions as the heritage of local memory. Therefore, in this study, transhistoricity and collective memory are included in order to follow what kind of cultural elements are transferred through the texts.

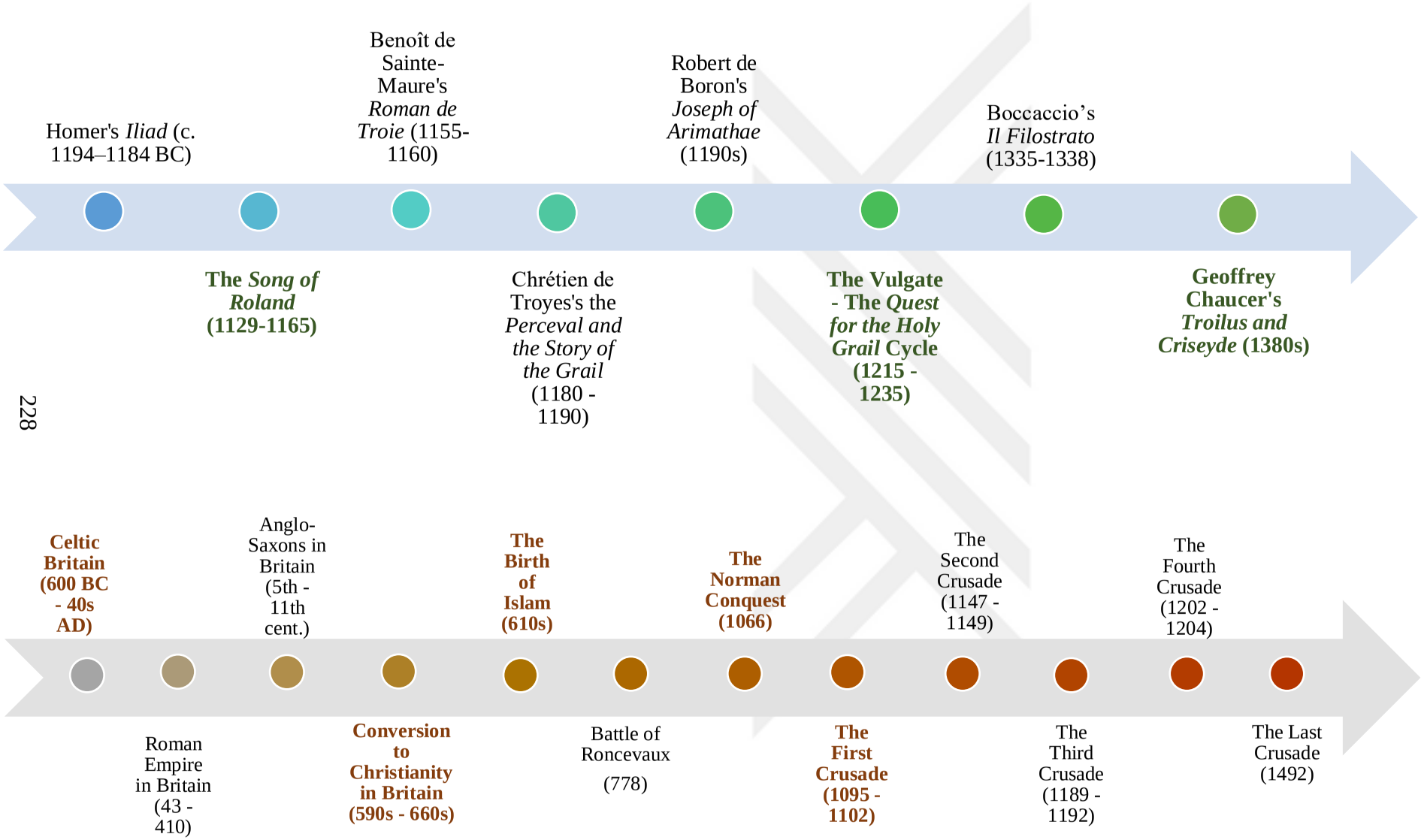
The concept of transculturalism does not deal with the influences of a particular culture on the other, but rather cultures influence each other at the same time, and all together they form a new culture. The Middle Ages, as a period, when the works of literature were reinterpreted and translated into the language of the current society, reflects cultural interactions. For that reason, literature becomes the means of cultural encounters. In this regard, the study evaluates the reflections of the interactions on English society by examining different phenomena that penetrated into cultures through language, intertextuality and the relations shaped according to the socio-political structure of the period. In order to define the boundaries of the study, the given literary texts written in

three different centuries are analysed within the framework of three main matters of the romance genre, namely matter of France, matter of Britain and matter of Rome.

The *Song of Roland*, which is discussed as an example of "the mater of France," was first composed in France during the time of the oral tradition. However, the oldest known text of the *Song* was written in the Anglo-Norman language in Britain after the Norman invasion, and the manuscript was found in the Bodleian Library in Oxford. The cultural changes of the work, which had occurred by the time the story arrived in Britain, and the British influences inserted into the original narrative are discussed as the examples of the transcultural encounters. The *Quest for the Holy Grail* is examined within the framework of the "matter of Britain," and the Christian elements included after the Crusades and historical transformations of the work that has a Celtic origin are studied. In light of the Crusades, the study gives details about the Arabic and Islamic influences in the English romances. The last matter, the "matter of Rome," is discussed through Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*. The love story in the wake of the Trojan War describes the changes from Ancient Greece to fourteenth-century Britain. Both the interactions across Europe and the Eastern and Islamic influences reflected in these three works are the main concerns that the study focuses. The study aims to demonstrate that the transcultural interactions could date back to the Middle Ages and medieval romances could be studied both as means and reasons of transculturation of a society. Therefore, the dissertation brings a new way of looking to the romances and proves that no matter how new an approach is, every theory appropriate to literature could be applied to the medieval texts.

Keywords: Transculturalism; transhistoricity; medieval romance

TIME TABLE


Homer's *Iliad* (c. 1194–1184 BC)
Benoît de Sainte-Maure's *Roman de Troie* (1155-1160)
Robert de Boron's *Joseph of Arimathae* (1190s)
Boccaccio's *Il Filostrato* (1335-1338)
The *Song of Roland* (1129-1165)
Chrétien de Troyes's the *Perceval and the Story of the Grail* (1180 - 1190)
The Vulgate - The *Quest for the Holy Grail* Cycle (1215 - 1235)
Geoffrey Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* (1380s)
Celtic Britain (600 BC - 40s AD)
Anglo-Saxons in Britain (5th - 11th cent.)
The Birth of Islam (610s)
The Norman Conquest (1066)
The Second Crusade (1147 - 1149)
The Fourth Crusade (1202 - 1204)
Roman Empire in Britain (43 - 410)
Conversion to Christianity in Britain (590s - 660s)
Battle of Roncevaux (778)
The First Crusade (1095 - 1102)
The Third Crusade (1189 - 1192)
The Last Crusade (1492)