

THE POSTCOLONIAL  
MIDDLE AGES

*Edited by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen*

(New York, 2000)

This material is presented solely for non-commercial educational/research purposes.

palgrave

## CHAPTER 4

### CILICIAN ARMENIAN MÉTISSAGE AND HETOUM'S *LA FLEUR DES HISTOIRES DE LA TERRE D'ORIENT*

Glenn Burger

*The generic discontinuities and unexpected conjunctions of *La Fleur des histoires* bear witness to the complexities of its author's cultural location as part of a Cilician Armenian diasporic community. The text demonstrates an innovative cross-cultural negotiation in advance of modern European colonialism and in excess of medieval European attempts at cultural hegemony.*

Although little known today, *La Fleur des histoires de la terre d'Orient*, written by the Cilician Armenian prince Hetoum of Korikos, was a popular text throughout the late medieval and early modern period. Fifteen manuscript copies of the original French text and thirty-one copies of the scribal Latin translation survive.<sup>1</sup> The Latin text was later translated back into French: anonymously in British Library MS Cotton Otho.D.V, and then in 1351 by the monk Jean le Long, as part of a collection of Eastern travel literature and works relating to the Mongols.<sup>2</sup> Hetoum's work enjoyed a similar popularity with the early European printers. There were three undated, early sixteenth-century printings of the original French text, under the title *Sensuyrent les fleurs des histoires de la terre Dorient*: first in Paris by Philippe Le Noir, second in Paris by Denys Janot after Le Noir, and third in Lyon, also after Le Noir, for Benoist Rigaud. These editions show that Hetoum's text was considered more than a historical

curiosity, for Le Noir attempts to bring the book up to date by replacing the original Book IV and its plan to reconquer the Holy Land with a new book entitled “des Sarrazins e des Turcz depuis le premier iusques aux presens q’ont conqueste Rhodes Hongrye et dernièrement assailli Austriche” [A history from the beginning to the present of the Turks who had conquered Rhodes, Hungary, and lately besieged Austria]. Also, in 1529, Le Long’s French translation of the Latin text was published under the title *L’Hystoire merueilleuse plaisante et recreative du grand Empereur de Tartarie*. Editions of the Latin text were published six times throughout the sixteenth century.<sup>3</sup>

Even this brief outline of the publication history of *La Fleur des histoires* should make evident the extent to which its early readers viewed the text within the normalizing frames of European crusade propaganda or exotic travel narrative. Similarly Eurocentric tendencies mark the work’s reception by modern audiences, but now work to maintain the text’s obscurity on the margins of Western histories of the Crusades or European travel literature. Indeed, the scribal colophon ending *La Fleur des histoires* already provides such a hermeneutics of incorporation and colonization. Its inscription of the desires of its first European “readers”—Nicholas Falcon, Hetoum’s scribe, and Pope Clement V, the supposed commissioner of the Latin translation—assimilates the potentially disorienting discontinuities and differences of Hetoum’s text within an already known Western *Christianitas*:

Here endeth the boke of Thistoris of Thorient Partes (complyed by a religious man, Frere Hayton, frere of Premonstre order, somtyme lorde of Corc, and cosyn german to the Kyng of Armeny) vpon the passage of the Holy Land, by the commaundement of the Holy Fader the Apostle of Rome, Clement the V, in the cite of Potiers. Which boke, I, Nicholas Falcon, writ first in French as the Frere Hayton sayd with his mouth without any note or example; and out of Frenche I haue translated it in Latyn for our Holy Father the Pope, in the yere of Our Lorde God M CCC vii in the moneth of August. (G3v, p. 85)<sup>4</sup>

Falcon’s account emphasizes both the text’s translatability and Hetoum’s serviceable position as native informant—this “religious man” speaking French, intent “vpon the passage of the Holy Land,” and working upon “the commaundment of the Holy Fader.” In the process, this incorporation of Hetoum and his text within the European imaginary and its colonizing fantasies of the Middle and Far East flattens the text’s diasporic and poly-cultural Cilician Armenian perspective. Hetoum’s Western readers thus can ignore the potentially awkward differences generated by the complex rela-

tionships of Western ecclesiastical and secular desire vis-à-vis the crusade—differences within and between European and Middle Eastern Christian allies,<sup>5</sup> Western and Eastern cultures, Christian and non-Christian.<sup>6</sup>

Certainly the fiction that *La Fleur des histoires* was simply compiled by a “Frere Hayton” writing under papal commandment provides a useful disguise to cover the potentially awkward relationship of the book and its author to contemporary Cypriot and Armenian politics. For if Hetoum did indeed choose to retire to the monastic life in Cyprus, he did so for only a very brief period. Before 1305, as *La Fleur des histoires* makes clear, Hetoum actively participated in the succession of military campaigns necessary to the security of the increasingly beleaguered Cilician Armenian kingdom.<sup>7</sup> Given his close family connection to the royal house of Cilician Armenia and the successful careers of his children, one can presume that Hetoum played an important and dynamic role in the political life of the kingdom.<sup>8</sup> If so, he could not have cut himself off from the dynastic struggles dividing Cilician Armenia between 1295 and 1305, nor could he have failed to align himself with one or more of the feuding parties.

But the exact nature of his role is unclear and has been much disputed. The dates coincide with a period of civil war in Cilician Armenia between King Hetoum II and some of his brothers. In 1295–96 Hetoum II and his brother Toros were in Constantinople arranging the marriage of their sister Rita to Michael, son of the Byzantine emperor. During their absence their brother Sempad seized power, possibly with the support of the catholicos Gregory VII and Pope Boniface VIII. Hetoum II and Toros were arrested and imprisoned by Sempad after an unsuccessful visit to the court of Ghazan, Mongol ilkhan of Persia (and overlord and ally of Cilician Armenia), having been thwarted by a previous mission of Sempad. While in prison, Sempad had Toros strangled and Hetoum blinded. However, two years later, in 1298, another brother, Constantine, deposed Sempad, only to be ousted in turn by King Hetoum II, who had by then partially recovered his sight. Both Sempad and Constantine were exiled to Constantinople under the care of their sister Rita, now wife of Emperor Michael IX. These conflicts were finally resolved in 1305 by the recognition of the son of Toros as King Leon III and his uncle, Hetoum II, as regent. Unfortunately, the young king’s reign was short-lived, for on December 7, 1307, both Hetoum II and Leon III were assassinated by the Mongol general Bilarghu. After a brief attempt by Constantine to seize power, Oshin, another brother of Hetoum II, ascended the throne.

According to the testimony of *La Fleur des histoires*, Hetoum of Korikos played a central role in restoring some measure of internal and external calm to Armenia during these years. At the end of Book Three, speaking

of a victory of the Armenians and Mongol over the Egyptian forces invading Cilicia, Hetoum adds:

And I, Frere Hayton, maker of this warke, was present to this thinges. And longe tyme afore that I was purposed to take the order of relygion, but I coude nat, for the great besynesse that the Kyng of Armeny had at that tyme; I coude nat, for myne honour, forsake my lordes and my frendes in all nedis. But sith God of his grace hath gyuen vs the victory agaynst our ennemys, and also gyuen grace to leue the realme of Armeny in suffycient good state, shortly after, I thought for to make an ende of my vowe. And than I toke leue of the Kyng and of my kynred and frendes, and in that tyme that Our Lorde gaue vs the victory agaynst the ennemys of our fayth I toke my way and cam into Cipres. And there, into Our Lady Delepiscopie chirch of the order of Premonstrey, I toke the abyte of religion—and longe I had ben knyght in this worlde—to thyntent for to serue God the remenaunt of my lyfe. And this was in the yere of Our Lorde God M CCC v. Grace and mercy to God, for the realme of Armeny is reformed in better state than it was, by the yonge kinge, my Lorde Lynon [i.e., King Leon III]. (E2r-v, p. 60)

However, the Cypriot chroniclers always have insisted that Hetoum's sudden departure for Cyprus in 1305 was the result not of a long-held religious vow but of his seditious activities against King Hetoum II.<sup>9</sup> Almost immediately on his return to Cyprus in May 1308, Hetoum proceeded to Armenia—within six days, according to Amadi.<sup>10</sup> His return was probably a consequence of the assassination of Hetoum II the previous December.

Moreover, Hetoum's supposed retirement to a religious contemplative life in Cyprus seems not to have prevented him from being drawn into its increasingly complicated political life. The Cypriot chroniclers also accuse Hetoum of being one of the principal agents in the insurrection of Amalric of Tyre against his brother, King Henry I of Cyprus. And Hetoum's arrival in Cyprus coincides with the first secret plans made against Henry, which culminated in April 1306 with Amalric's self-appointment as governor of Cyprus (supposedly at the request of the Cypriot barons). While Kohler points out that Hetoum was not a signatory of the baronial brief accusing Henry of incapacity to govern, Hetoum's abbot was probably the "frater Bartholomeus, abbas monasterii s. Mariae de Epyra" who did sign the brief.<sup>11</sup> And Hetoum's visit to the papal court in Poitiers a year later was at least in part as an unofficial ambassador of Amalric of Tyre. Hetoum's job (as with other more official emissaries of Amalric to the papal court) was to persuade Pope Clement V (a supporter of plans for a new crusade) that Amalric was the best choice as ruler of Cyprus.

Hetoum arrived in Poitiers sometime late in 1306 and remained there at least until February 8, 1308, when he is mentioned in four papal letters,

none of which concern political matters. Nor is Hetoum referred to in them as an ambassador of Amalric; instead he is called by his Armenian title, "dominus de Curcho," or by his monastic position, "conversus monasterio sanctae Mariae de Episcopia." But a letter written between April 7 and June 4 by Raymond de Pils, papal legate to Cyprus, to Cardinal Rufati, referendary of Clement V, proves that Hetoum did play an important behind-the-scenes role on Amalric's behalf. The cardinal had authorized Raymond to collect the 10,000 florins Hetoum had offered the cardinal if he would help ensure papal recognition of Amalric's governorship. Amalric told Raymond "that he was prepared . . . to comply as far as the sum of the ten thousand florins was concerned for which I asked him in your name, and which the said lord of Curcus had promised you."<sup>12</sup> But Amalric refused to pay the much larger sum of 50,000 or 60,000 florins that Hetoum supposedly had offered to the cardinal on the pope's behalf. Later, when Raymond met with Hetoum in Armenia, the

same lord of Curcus talked to me several times about these matters, and I to him; and . . . he said that he had made you no promise concerning the person of our lord aforementioned [i.e., Pope Clement], but had only made a promise for ten thousand florins payable to you (and to be paid within three years by the lord of Tyre), if our lord, through your good services, would confirm the same through a letter of his in his office of government.<sup>13</sup>

Whatever the personal reasons for Hetoum's support for Amalric, it would also make good strategic sense from an Armenian point of view. By all accounts Amalric had played an active role in attempts to stabilize Cilician Armenia and to oppose Egyptian incursions into Syria. Furthermore, he had shown himself willing to cooperate with the Mongol ilkhans of Persia. From an Armenian point of view his belligerent tactics in Cyprus would promise an aggressive Cypriot foreign policy and future support for the beleaguered Armenian state. Hetoum's diplomatic role also suggests a political motivation, at least in part, for writing *La Fleur des histoires*. One of Pope Clement's main reasons in opposing Amalric's insurrection was that civil unrest in Cyprus would hinder the chances for a new crusade. If Hetoum could show that the lord of Tyre's party was pro-crusade and, furthermore, more likely to have the strength to actively promote one, then Clement might be more inclined to favor Amalric's cause over Henry's.

The growing urgency of the Cypriot situation and the desire for Armenian involvement in it also may have contributed to Hetoum's speedy return to Cilician Armenia in 1308. In June of that year Amalric exiled several of Henry's leading supporters to Armenia and in 1309 took the extreme measure of placing King Henry in prison there under the guard of

his brother-in-law King Oshin. It is perhaps this outright seizure of power that accounts for Amalric's vagueness about, and Hetoum's denial of, any promises of money to the pope, since the pope could hardly now recognize Amalric's blatant usurpation of his brother's throne.<sup>14</sup> All signs point to Hetoum's resumption of an active and influential role in the political life of his country. About this time his daughter Zabel married King Oshin, successor to Leon III, and Hetoum may have resumed his position as constable of the kingdom (if he is the "Haytonus dux generalis" present at the Council of Adana in 1314).<sup>15</sup>

Not only does Falcon's insistence on papal patronage disguise the complexities of the book's relationship to Armeno-Cypriot politics, but his claim that the book is centered "vpon the passage of the Holy Land" plain and simple ignores the fact that only a small portion of *La Fleur des histoires* actually falls into the genre of *passagium*. Of its four books, the first provides a brief geographical survey of the countries of Asia; the second, a brief history of the rulers of Asia until the ascendancy of the Mongols in the thirteenth century; the third (fully half of the total work), an account of the rise of Genghis (Ghinggis) Khan and of Mongol expansion across Asia, and especially of the subsequent conflicts between the Mongol ilkhans of Persia and the Muslim sultans of Egypt; and only the fourth (a mere 20 percent of the total), a proposal for a new crusade involving the Mongols and Latin and Armenian Christians, directions for the conduct of such an expedition, and an account of recent Egyptian history.

The variety of content and narrative forms that constitutes Hetoum's actual text thus forms a loose aggregation of material often only tangentially relevant to its scribe's stated aim of a passage to the Holy Land: Geography, chronicle history, crusade propaganda, military strategy seem, at times, an uneasy fit. But the very discontinuities and unexpected conjunctions of *La Fleur des histoires* bear witness to the complexities of Hetoum's cultural location as part of a Cilician Armenian diasporic community precariously situated on the borders of European Christian, Islamic Egyptian, and Islamic Mongol empires. Nor can Hetoum's text simply be dismissed as mere crusade nostalgia and colonial mimicry from a privileged member of a Frankish-influenced, Cilician Armenian ruling class. Instead I would argue that the record of *La Fleur des histoires* suggests something more complicated: For the text's interventions into European discourses of the crusade do not simply manifest the colonial stereotype, but rather mark an innovative cross-cultural negotiation in advance of modern European colonialism and in excess of medieval European attempts at cultural hegemony.<sup>16</sup>

When members of the First Crusade entered Cappadocia and Cilicia at the end of the eleventh century, they received unexpected assistance from Christians living there. These were Armenians who, for the most part, had

drifted south and southwest from Greater Armenia after its conquest by the Seljuk Turks following the battle of Manzikert in 1071. These Armenians found refuge in the Taurus and Anti-Taurus Mountains or in the cities of the Cilician plain and northern Syria. For nearly a century after their arrival Armenians' political situation was confused and frequently precarious. Those scattered throughout the cities of Cilicia and Syria were under direct Turkish rule or under the control of semiautonomous governors of the Byzantine emperor. However, a few Armenian barons in the relative security of the Taurus and Anti-Taurus Mountains managed to preserve varying degrees of independence. By the early twelfth century two baronial families were beginning to gain ascendancy: The Hetoumids controlled the narrow western pass into Cilicia; the Roupenids, the wider eastern pass into the rich Cilician plain. While the Hetoumids remained loyal to their Byzantine overlords, the Roupenids aimed continually at the establishment of an independent Armenian kingdom in Cilicia.

Finally in 1198 Leon I, a Roupenid and a strong supporter of the Third Crusade, was crowned king, with Archbishop Conrad of Mainz, as the Holy Roman Emperor's representative, bringing the crown and bestowing the other royal insignia on Leon. At the same time the Armenian church submitted to the authority of the Western pope, although it retained its own liturgy and creed. Leon's Latin crown intensified the growing Western influence on the new Armenian kingdom and was a visible sign of Armenia's importance as one of the stronger and more vital of the Christian states in Outremer. For strategic reasons Leon also granted considerable territory in the west of Cilicia to the Hospitallers and Teutonic Knights, in order to free his forces for the struggle against Antioch and the Templars in the East. Leon also began the tradition of intermarriage between Armenians and the Frankish nobility of Outremer, most notably in 1214 with the marriage of his daughter Rita to John of Brienne, regent of the kingdom of Jerusalem.

After Leon's death in 1219, his daughter Isabel succeeded to the throne. She was quickly married to Philip, fourth son of Bohemond IV of Antioch, in the hope of maintaining internal stability and of easing tensions on the kingdom's insecure eastern border. But Philip's high-handed preference for Latin barons and the Latin ritual soon alienated his new subjects and resulted, in 1225, in his deposition and murder. Constantine of Lampron, regent and head of the rival Hetoumid clan, then married Isabel to his son Hetoum, who became king and ended a century of dynastic and territorial wrangling between the two Armenian factions. The accession of Hetoum I marks the beginning of Cilician Armenia's golden age. Throughout his reign the kingdom remained strong, free of dynastic quarrels and, for much of the time, free of foreign invasion. Armenia's ties with

the Franks widened, especially with the kingdom of Cyprus. Hetoum's sister Stephanie married Henry I of Cyprus in 1237, and his daughter, Bohemond VI of Antioch in 1254. Hetoum's brother, Sempad the Constable, translated the Assizes of Jerusalem into Armenian, thereby providing the new kingdom with a basis in Frankish feudal law.

Cilician Armenian identity, then, evidences in a variety of ways a productive and complex *métissage*.<sup>17</sup> As a diasporic community, Cilician Armenia's point of cultural origin is Greater Armenia; however, as the only independent Armenian state, Cilicia is also the embodiment of a proud Armenian culture and history.<sup>18</sup> But its status as an independent kingdom depends in crucial ways on a Western European and Catholic recognition of the state—the crown comes from Western emperor and pope. Moreover, this recognition is achieved and maintained (as in crucial ways is the physical security and integrity of the Cilician state) by incorporation of Armenian bodies within the regimes of European feudal law, Frankish culture (most obviously by intermarriage between the ruling classes of Cilicia and Outremer), and Western Catholicism. That this struck some parts of the Cilician Armenian ruling class as miscegenation rather than *métissage* is evident from the periodic recurrence of factional violence and civil war among them. However, for Hetoum of Korikos (and for those he admires in its history) *métissage* is a productive sign of renewal and strength—for Armenia, for Outremer, and for Europe.

But this concerted Armenian engagement with European presence in the Middle East is matched with an equally open and astute engagement with the Mongols. By 1243 the Mongol invasion of Asia had reached Asia Minor. The Mongols had conquered the Seljuk kingdom of Iconium, devastating Greater Armenia and Georgia on their way. In 1247, facing the imminent demise of his kingdom at the hands of the apparently invincible Mongols, Hetoum I sent his brother, Sempad, on an official peace mission to the Great Khan's capital of Karakorum.<sup>19</sup> Sempad returned in 1250 with a promise of autonomy for the Armenian kingdom, but only under Mongol suzerainty. Three years later Hetoum I himself undertook the long journey across Asia to submit in person to the Great Khan Mongke. Such conditions were unacceptable to the crusader states (except for the Principality of Antioch, ruled by Hetoum's son-in-law); indeed the other crusader states roundly criticized Antioch for acknowledging Mongol authority and for joining the Armenians in fighting with these enemies of Christendom during the successful Mongol invasion of Syria and Palestine in 1260.<sup>20</sup>

Any articulation of ethnic, religious, political, even geographical identity in Hetoum's text is thus complicated by the instabilities of the middle position occupied by Cilician Armenia and its ruling class. For, despite the

newness of the Cilician Armenian kingdom, Hetoum's text makes no attempt to construct a narrative of origins for a ruling house or nation, or to construct Cilician Armenia as a colonial extension of a homeland, or to use *La Fleur des histoires* as the narrative of a *translatio imperii*. This absence of a proto-Armenian nationalism or Roupenid-Lusignan dynasticism may simply reflect the status of Hetoum's book as a "Frankish" text, written by a French-speaking inhabitant of a border zone of European hegemony and directed at a "Frankish" audience interested in securing the threatened borders of Christian Europe. Certainly Hetoum's identifications as a Cilician Armenian in *La Fleur des histoire* do at times focus on that kingdom's distinctiveness vis-à-vis its immediate Islamic neighbors in Syria and Palestine and provide points of association with the Frankish crusader states, especially Antioch and Cyprus. But these identifications also show a keen awareness of Cilician Armenia's location on the margins of several great empires and its potential assimilation by different cultures and religions.

Indeed, Cilician Armenia is a curiously absent presence in Hetoum's text. The description of the realms of Asia that occupies Book One lists the historical Greater Armenia as a separate realm, and Hetoum describes his own country simply as "Silyce," the fourth "prouince" of the realm of Syria, "now called Armeny; for, syth that the enemis of the Cristen fayth had taken this lande from the Grekes handes, the Armins traueyled so moche that thei recoverd the realme of Silyce, and now the Kyng of Armeny holdeth it by the grace of God." Moreover, Syria is marked by a great diversity of peoples—"Grekes, Armins, Iacobyns, Nestorins, Sarasins, and two other nations that is Syrisins and Maroins"—as well as a variety of Christian practices—Greek Orthodox, Maronite, Jacobite, Catholic (B1v, p. 18). Cilician Armenia is even more peripheral to Book Two's account of the history of Asia (as indeed is Europe, except vicariously through the Byzantine Empire, itself a signifier of decline and increasing marginality). And even in Book Three's account of the Mongols and of recent Middle Eastern history, where Hetoum was physically present at many of the events or had access to family members who would have been, the point of view is seldom a Cilician Armenian one. Instead, the narrative emphasizes again and again the vagaries of the circulation of power. No one man, no one country, no one race, no one religion is guaranteed military victory or cultural supremacy. In this sense the instability of the Cilician Armenia kingdom (whose borders are constantly threatened and open to enemy attack and occupation) might be seen as emblematic for its apparently more powerful neighbors.

Thus, King Hetoum I, as the embodiment of the paradoxes of the Cilician Armenian perspective, provides the closest thing to a heroic subject position that might orient the narrative. *La Fleur des histoires* describes his

historic visit to Mongke Khan in highly idealized terms, and the real reason for the visit—Hetoum's potentially humiliating acceptance of Mongol overlordship in return for the Mongols' sparing his country the ravaging that had taken place elsewhere—disappears behind the ritualized account of him presenting Mongke with seven requests (conversion to Christianity, peace between Mongol and Christian, delivery of the Holy Land, destruction of the Caliph of Baghdad, Mongol military aid for Cilician Armenia, and return of any Armenian lands conquered by the Mongols) that Mongke accedes to with alacrity and goodwill.<sup>21</sup> Neither Mongke nor any other Great Khan actually converted to Christianity. But the account does manage to convey the reality of Mongol religious tolerance as well as the very real strategic value of such an "alliance" for the Armenian state. Moreover, the values of diplomacy, moderation, and peaceful cooperation that this account celebrates in King Hetoum's heroism are quite different from the pursuit of personal prowess and glory that Western chivalric accounts so often emphasize and that so often proved disastrous for the crusader cause.<sup>22</sup> Hetoum I's desire to work in concert with the Mongol Great Khan is very different from the interactions of a William of Rubrick or a European prince like Edward I, who display a will to domination and insistence on Western cultural preeminence in their interactions with the Mongols.

In *La Fleur des histoires*, Cilician Armenian métissage means that Hetoum and the imagined community he represents envisage a set of borders permeable enough that the Cilician Armenian ruling class may intermarry with the local Frankish ruling class, can be clearly conversant with French language and culture, and can accept the overlordship of the Western pope and the establishment of a Catholic Armenian church. But the same Cilician Armenians continue to be close collaborators with the non-Christian Mongols (even when they become Muslim as the ilkhans of Persia did) and remain far less dominated than Europeans by the *idea* of crusade (and with it the idea of complete cultural and religious domination) as the motivating impulse for foreign policy and alliances.

Neither does Hetoum attempt to present Armenia's Mongol allies as Europeans before the fact. His account of the rise of Genghis Khan at the beginning of Book Three of *La Fleur des histoires* tells of a knight in armor seated on a white horse coming to Genghis in a dream. The knight then tells him: "the wyll of thy immortal God is suche that he oweth to be shortly gouernor made vpon the vii natyons of the Tartas that ben called Malgothz, and that by hym they shal be delyuerd oute of the saruage that thei had longe ben in, and shall haue worship vpon theyr neighbours." Afterward, "Cangius rose vp merily, herynge the worde of Christ and rehersed the vision that he se to all the gentilmen" (B5r, p. 26). While this story struc-

tures Mongol origins as monotheistic, pseudo-Christian, and beleaguered but for divine intervention—in other words, sufficiently like that of the crusaders to be readable by them, the tale also probably draws on a Mongol legend closely connected to fact. According to Mongol religious beliefs, a ruler could learn the will of Tengri (the ruler of heaven) only through the medium of a shaman. At the great gathering of the Mongols in 1206 that approved the election of Genghis as Great Khan, one such shaman, Kokocu Tab-tengri, claimed to have ridden up to heaven on a white horse, where he learned that Tengri had appointed Genghis as Great Khan. Hetoum may represent Genghis Khan and Mongol origins as inherently monotheistic and open to Christian arguments, but his account attempts to represent a rapprochement with, not colonization of, difference.<sup>23</sup> And unlike most Western observers who comment on the ugliness of Mongol's Asiatic facial appearance as a way of underscoring an often essentializing racial difference, Hetoum treats Mongol rulers in much the same way as the Europeans he describes. The moment that comes closest to such a negative Western representation of Mongol physical otherness actually works to underscore Ghazan Khan's military prowess and generosity in rewarding his men with the spoils of war: "And marueyll it was that so lytell a body myght haue so great vertu; for among a M [1000] men coud nat be so sklender a man, nor so euyl made, nor a fouler man. He surmounted all other in prowesse and vertue." Thus chivalric prowess is not imagined here as a specifically European attribute, nor is Mongol difference essentialized by such a representation of Ghazan's historical specificity.

Hetoum, then, acts as a go-between, presenting an Asia, complete with its own history, customs, religions, and peoples, to a European audience that should be interested. But he does so as one inhabiting both worlds yet not completely identified with either. And while Asia has its own integrity and continuities—where one can "know" the number and disposition of its countries and peoples—as Hetoum's own history makes apparent, ceaseless variability and change accompanies such continuity. Book Two's account of the history of Asia depicts one conqueror succeeding another, recognizing the circulation of power *tout court* rather than presenting a focused account that would establish some essential Asian character or historical otherness to Europe. Instead *La Fleur des histoires* emphasizes for its European audience the plenitudinous variety of Asia's geographic, linguistic, ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity. By implication, no one nation or ruler, no one religion will ever completely dominate it; hence the value of such knowledge in order to allow strategic intervention and alliance of Western and Asian forces. Similarly, Hetoum's descriptions of Islamic forces in Syria and Egypt at times draw on the language of Christian vituperation and otherness. But for the most part these Muslims are singled out for

hatred because they are the *tactical* enemies of Armenia, and for this reason different from Muslim allies such as the Mongol ilkhans of Persia. It is thus necessary to pay attention to multiple differences in order to find security in such a complex landscape; simple binaries will not work. Hetoum's book, then, with its mixture of forms of knowledge, attunement to all points of the compass, and attention to the telling differences between peoples, chronicles the need to know the actualities of the lay of the land around one, to appreciate as many points of view as possible. Perhaps because there could be no one, transcendent point of view that marked a coherent, unified Cilician Armenian identity, Hetoum's narrative seems less concerned with chronicling in its history or charting in its geography a fixed, transcendent signifier, such as *Christianitas* or Europe.

Thus the explicit aim of Hetoum's fourth book may be to persuade the pope to lead a new crusade to the Holy Land and to provide useful practical information for the best way to conduct such a venture. But Hetoum's interest implicitly harnesses a European crusade ideology to "Eastern" tactical needs, focusing on the means by which significant external resources can be harnessed for the defence and security of the Cypriot and Armenian kingdoms. Moreover, this final section is a relatively small portion of a text largely given over to *Asian* concerns; most of the work focuses on a geography of Asia and a history of its rulers (in which recent Mongol and Egyptian history—and by extension, that of the crusader states—are but the latest instalment). In other words, Hetoum's propagandizing might be seen as much an attempt to change the European worldview, to realign it geopolitically, as an attempt to whip up European crusading spirit against a monolithic Oriental other.

Implicitly, Hetoum's text maps Jerusalem as one destination among many, sees it in a geographical context quite different from the usual European one: on the periphery of Asia, *strategically*, not *conceptually*, in the center of Egyptian, Mongol, Frankish, Armenian geopolitical interests. This Jerusalem therefore does not define a whole and originary *Christianitas* (and with it a supreme Latin Europe) by acting as mirror and *translatio*. In a more "standard" crusade or travel account from a European perspective, in "naturally" ending in Jerusalem one thereby proves who one truly is, that is, a Christian subject, and proclaims the centrality of that "I" and the inherent superiority of its point of view.<sup>24</sup> Hetoum's methodology is metonymic rather than metaphoric, a bringing close together into productive contiguity a variety of differences rather than a process of othering in order to define some crucial foundational difference. His Asia thus becomes a productive place of contiguity rather than orientalizing spectacle, part of the multiplicity of crosscultural identifications that *La Fleur des histoires* inscribes and encourages.

## Notes

1. See *Recueil des historiens des croisades: Documents Arméniens*, vol. 2, ed. C. Kohler (Paris: Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, 1906; reprinted Farnborough, England: Gregg, 1967), lxxxv-cxxxi, for detailed descriptions of the manuscript copies and printed editions of Hetoum's texts and their translations. Kohler's is the only modern edition of the French and Latin texts and is based on a collation of thirteen French and eight Latin manuscripts. Kohler argues that Book IV of *La Fleur des histoires* was not part of the first French version of the text but was added as part of the Latin text prepared at the request of Pope Clement V and only later translated into French and added to the original three books (lxi-lxvii).
2. Five manuscript copies of the Le Long collection survive: listed by M. C. Seymour, *Mandeville's Travels* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 277-78.
3. See Kohler, *Recueil des historiens*, cxxii-cxxvii, for a summary of these early printed editions. Numerous manuscript and print translations also testify to the text's continuing popularity throughout the late medieval and early modern period. A Spanish manuscript translation—*La Flor de la Ystorias de Orient*—was commissioned in the late fourteenth century by a grand master of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem (ed. Wesley Robertson Long [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934]). Two Tudor English translations—one manuscript (Royal 18.B.xxvi); the other, printed by Pynson—were produced before 1520. Books I and II of *La Fleur des histoires* were translated into English again in 1625 and included in Samuel Purchas's collection of travel texts titled *Haklvytus Posthumus, or Purchas his Pilgrimes*. There were also numerous translations into the other major European languages published in the sixteenth century: German (1534), Italian (1556, 1562 [twice]), Spanish (1595), Dutch (1563, and three more times in the late seventeenth century). Ironically, *La Fleur des histoires* was not translated into Armenian until 1842, as *History of the Tartars*, trans. Br. P. Mkrtytch [Jean-Baptiste Aucher] (Venice: Imprimerie de Saint-Lazare, 1842). See Kohler, cxxviii-cxxx.
4. G3v, p. 85. References to *La Fleur des histoires* (hereafter included in the text) are given first by folio number (as above) in Richard Pynson's sixteenth-century English translation (which can be found on STC microfilm, *Short-title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, and Ireland, and of English Books Printed Abroad, 1475-1640*, No. 13256), and then by page number in *A Lytell Cronycle: Richard Pynson's Translation (c1520) of "La Fleur des histoires de la terre d'Orient" (c1307)*, ed. Glenn Burger (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988).
5. Thus any crusading endeavor included "foreign" European crusaders present for the limited duration of a given military action, members of the crusading orders (Hospitallers, Teutonic Knights, Templars) permanently based in the Middle East, and knights drawn from the Christian states of Outremer—the latter divided between a state like Cyprus (or

- earlier, Antioch or Jerusalem) containing "native" populations (of Greeks, Jews, Armenians, Muslims, etc.) ruled by Frankish elites and a state like Cilician Armenia (with a diverse population ruled by a "native" Christian elite heavily but not completely Frankicized).
6. As Hetoum's text makes clear, at least six different Christianities coexist in the East: (Roman) Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Armenian (with an Armenian Catholic Church in Cilician Armenia), Maronite, Nestorian, and Jacobite. Non-Christian forces included the Islamic Arabic states in Egypt and Syria as well as the different Mongol states (variously shamanistic, Buddhist, Islamic, and Christian leaning).
  7. This makes him a firsthand observer of many of the events he describes and allows him, for earlier material, to draw on the experience of his uncles, the great King Hetoum I and Sempad the Constable, both of whom visited the courts of Mongol great khans.
  8. Hetoum probably did not assume the title "Lord of Korikos" until after the death of his brother Gregorios (around 1280). About this time, Hetoum married his Cypriot cousin, Isabel of Ibelin. At least six children resulted from the marriage, a daughter, Zabel, becoming the wife of King Oshin I of Cilician Armenia and a son, Oshin, regent during the minority of King Leon IV. See Count William Henry Rüd̄t-Collenberg, *The Rupenides, Hetoumites and Lusignans: The Structure of the Armeno-Cilician Dynasties* (Paris: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Armenian Library, 1963), table III, after p. 48.
  9. See *Chronique d'Amadi*, ed. René de Mas Latrie, in *Collection de Documents Inédits sur l'Histoire de France*, Première Série (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1891). An earlier instance of piety on Hetoum's part is also open to varied interpretation. In a version of the third book of *La Fleur des histoires* found in only one French and eight Latin manuscripts, Hetoum tells of a pilgrimage he made "apud Vallem Viridem" (probably to France between 1297 and 129—see Kohler, *Recueil des historiens*, p. 330). This pilgrimage also took place during a time of civil strife and dynastic struggle in Cilician Armenia. And here too Hetoum's pilgrimage might have been a disguise for a diplomatic mission (to add his voice to those urging a new crusade, to shape papal intervention in Armenian politics, or as a polite term for an enforced exile). Kohler finds support for this accusation in the suppression by Hetoum in *La Fleur des histoires* of any direct reference to King Hetoum II and in Hetoum's passionate support of the young king Leon III (xxxvii–xxxviii). For discussions of Cilician Armenian politics during this period, see Serarpie Der Nersessian, "The Kingdom of Cilician Armenia," in *A History of the Crusades*, gen. ed. Kenneth M. Setton, vol. 2, *The Later Crusades*, ed. Robert Lee Wolff and Harry H. Hazard (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1962), pp. 630–60; *The Cilician Kingdom of Armenia*, ed. T. S. R. Boase (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978), pp. 28–33; Fr. H. François Tournèbize, *Histoire politique et religieuse de l'Arménie* (Paris: A. Picard et fils, 1910); *The Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 4, part 1, *Byzan-*

*tium and Its Neighbours*, ed. J. M. Hussey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), pp. 628–37.

10. *Chronique d'Amadi*, ed. Latrie, p. 280.
11. Kohler, *Receuil des historiens*, xxxix and note 3; "Epyra" is likely a misreading for "Episcopia."
12. "Paratus erat . . . usque ad summam decem milium florinorum per me ab ipso, vestro nomine, petitam et per dictum dominum de Curco vobis promissam complacere"; Vatican Archives *Instrumenta Miscellanea*, No. 484; printed in Charles Perrat, "Un Diplomate gascon au XIVe siècle: Raymond de Piiis, nonce de Clément V en orient," *Mélange d'Archéologie et d'Histoire*, 44th year (1927): 73.
13. "Idem dominus de Curco pluries super hiis fuit mihi locutus et ego secum; et . . . diceret quod nullam promissionem personam dicti domini nostri contingentem vobis fecerat, nisi solum de decem milibus florinis vobis dandis et in tribus annis solvendis per dominum Tirensem, so idem dominus noster eidem officium gubernationis, vobis procurante, per suas litteras confirmaret" (Vatican Archives *Instrumenta Miscellanea*, No. 484).
14. For discussions of Cypriot history in this period, see Peter W. Edbury, *The Kingdom of Cyprus and the Crusades, 1191–1374* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 101–40; Setton, *History of the Crusades*, vol. 3, *The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, ed. Harry W. Hazard (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1975).
15. If this is so, then he was certainly dead by 1320 when his son Oshin, now lord of Korikos, became regent, for no mention is made of Hetoum's presence.
16. I have avoided using the term "multicultural" to describe any of the mixed cultural situations that Hetoum found himself in or attempts to describe in his book. Instead, I would argue, we need to distinguish between three different situations: (1) crosscultural contact, such as that obtaining between Cilician Armenia and the Mongols (especially the ilkhans of Persia); (2) métissage, such as the blending of Frankish and Armenian culture that characterized the Cilician Armenian ruling class during Hetoum's time; and (3) what I would call the polyculturalism that one finds in Syria, with its diverse "communities" of different racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds living in often harmonious but bounded relationship to each other.
17. I emphasize métissage over diaspora in defining the ruling class of Cilician Armenia because, from Leon I onward, actual intermarriage with the Frankish nobility of Outremer is the foundation for a wider mixing of legal, social, linguistic, military, and religious forms with the Frankish West. What is produced, I am arguing through the case of Hetoum and *La Fleur des histoures*, is a set of identifications not strictly Western or Eastern, Armenian or Frankish—in short, the situation of the métis.
18. Kirakos of Ganjak, for example, describes in glowing terms the reception by King Hetoum I of Armenian dignitaries while on a visit to Greater

- Armenia: "He received them all with love, for he was a gentle man, wise and learned in the Scriptures. And he gave them presents in accordance with his means and sent them all away happy: he also gave sacerdotal robes for the adornment of the churches, for he greatly loved mass and the church. He received the Christians of all nations and besought them to live in love with one another, as brothers and members of Christ, even as the Lord had commanded." See J. A. Boyle, "The Journey of Het'um I, King of Little Armenia, to the Court of the Great Khan Möngke," *Central Asiatic Journal* 9 (1964): 186; reprinted as No. X in Boyle, *The Mongol World Empire 1206-1370* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1977).
19. Sempad described some of his experiences during this visit in a letter to King Henry I of Cyprus: see *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France*, ed. Martin Bouquet et al., vol. 10 (Paris, 1840; reprinted, Farnborough, England: Gregg, 1967), pp. 361-63; and Sir Henry Yule, *Cathay and the Way Thither*, rev. H. Cordier, vol. 1, The Hakluyt Society Second Series, No. 38 (London, 1913), pp. 162, 262-63.
  20. See Steven Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*, vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954), pp. 307, 311-12. It was not until twenty years later, when the situation in the Holy Land had grown more desperate and when Abaga, Mongol ilkhan of Persia, had dropped the demand for suzerainty, that the possibility of a general alliance between Mongols and the West could be considered seriously (notably by Edward I of England during his crusade of 1271). The mediation of Cilician Armenians between the Mongols and Europeans and the Armenians' firsthand experience of alliance with the Mongols must have been an important factor in developing this European openness to some limited rapprochement with the Mongols.
  21. Kirakos of Ganjak, in his account of the meeting, mentions only the guarantee of Hetoum's lands and the promise of religious freedom for all Christians living under the Mongols. See Boyle, "Journey of Het'um I," 181.
  22. Lee Patterson notes that chivalry's "deepest ambition was to produce not a better world but a perfect knight. It was committed to codes of behavior not as programs of action but techniques of self-fashioning: the chivalric life was its own goal. . . . Hence the insistence throughout chivalric writing on the simplicity of chivalric selfhood. Chivalric heroes are represented as driven by a single, all-compelling desire. Peter of Cyprus is inspired by a youthful vision to found the Order of the Sword, 'and this was the goal of all his efforts.' Geoffroi de Charny, a preeminent chevalier who died defending his king's *oriflamme* at Poitiers, tells us in his authoritative *Livre de Chevalerie* that the youths who will become successful soldiers are those who have haunted the *mestier d'armes* from their earliest days and are driven solely by the desire 'to have the high honor of prowess.' . . . Machaut, for example, explains Peter of Cyprus's adoption of the sword as an emblem of his crusading order in these terms: 'For when an eminent prince

conquers by the sword, he acquires glory—honor and profit together—and a good name.” Patterson, *Chaucer and the Subject of History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), pp. 175–76.

23. See Mouradja d’Ohsson, *Histoire des Mongols depuis Tchinguiz-Khan jusqu’à Timor Bey ou Tamerlan*, vol. 1 (The Hague: Van Cleef, 1834), pp. 98–100; and R. P. Lister, *The Secret History of Genghis Khan* (P. Davies: London, 1969), pp. 191–95.
24. See Iain Higgins, “Defining the Earth’s Center in a Medieval ‘Multi-Text’: Jerusalem in *The Book of John Mandeville*,” in *Text and Territory Geographic Imagination in the European Middle Ages*, ed. Sylvia Tomasch and Sealy Gilles (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), pp. 29–53, for a discussion both of the tradition of Jerusalem as the centre of the world in some Western medieval *mappaemundi* and of the complexity with which such a concept actually plays out in a travel narrative such as *Mandeville’s Travels*. Because Jerusalem is so often conceived as this originary point, pilgrimages “ended” with the arrival in Jerusalem. As a result, as Donald Howard has pointed out, the pilgrimage account of Friar Felix Fabri from the end of the fifteenth century is a rarity in dwelling on the return journey and the homecoming: “most writers barely mention it, and some do not at all. The same is true of ‘voyages.’” *Writers and Pilgrims: Medieval Pilgrimage Narratives and Their Posterity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), pp. 46–47. In addition, a text like *Godfrey of Bouillon* “romances” crusade history so that Godfrey’s identity as knight (and by extension, the identities of the other crusaders) is fulfilled by the conquest of Jerusalem and his coronation as its first Christian king. But such an ending also fantasizes the successful crusade as ending history, signalling a fulfilling stasis that colonizes not only Islamic/Christian difference but also those between Eastern and Western Christianity and between a Christian present and Jewish past. See William Caxton, *Godfrey of Boloyne*, ed. M. N. Colvin, Early English Text Society Extra Series 64 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1893; reprinted 1987); see also another English translation even more focused on Godfrey as romance hero in BL MS Royal 18.B.xxvi, folios 6v–86v.