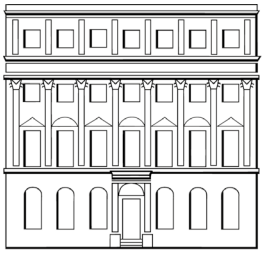

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Conference Report:
Les circulations entre Paris et Londres au Moyen Âge

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CONFERENCE REPORTS

Les circulations entre Paris et Londres au Moyen Âge. ('Flows between Paris and London in the Middle Ages'). Workshop organized by the German Historical Institutes in London and Paris and supported by Sorbonne University, held at the GHIP on 9 December 2024. Conveners: Florence Bourgne (Sorbonne University), Julie Claustre (Université Paris Cité), Frédérique Lachaud (Sorbonne University), and Klaus Oschema (GHIP). Additional session chair: Jörg Peltzer (Heidelberg University).

A joint welcome by Christina von Hodenberg, Director of the GHIL, and Klaus Oschema, Director of the GHIP, set the stage for the workshop's cross-regional perspective on its metropolitan subjects. London and Paris, also home to several of the workshop's participants, are examples *par excellence* for historians investigating cultural connections and comparisons between media, institutions, and people in the medieval period. The case studies presented at the GHIP certainly reflected such interests, including the production and exchange of texts.

Ian Stone (Dartmouth College, London) outlined the thriving book production that was characteristic of both cities, despite their somewhat different contexts. Paris was an episcopal see, home to a royal court with its bureaucracy, and the birthplace of a university. London's situation was different. Although it likewise shared the demand for books associated with a bishopric, it was not the home of a royal court. And instead of a university, it was London's courts of law that generated demand for books. But, as Marlène Helias-Baron (Centre national de la recherche scientifique/Institut de recherche et d'histoire des textes) highlighted, while monasteries are often associated with the production of manuscripts in the Middle Ages, scribes working in the urban contexts of London and Paris were hardly less productive. Data from the 'Mapping Manuscript Migrations' project showed the regular exchange of manuscripts across the English Channel,

facilitated by religious institutions, academics, students, and the interests of royal and princely libraries. Martina Hacke (HHU Düsseldorf) extended this work on the exchange of texts into the era of the printing press. Because London adopted printing later, it eagerly imported early prints from Paris, which supplied English customers with liturgical and theological texts, as well as broader academic literature and even fiction. Géraldine Veysseyre (Sorbonne University) provided a concrete example of such cross-channel exchange on the more literary level. She revealed that people from medieval England and France shared an interest in their intertwined history, but observed that local versions were not necessarily popular in other regions. The twelfth-century Norman French *Roman de Brut* by the poet Wace, for example, was eclipsed on the Continent by various alternative renditions of the alleged origins of the Anglo-Norman kings of Britain. The *Roman de Brut* may have been perceived as outdated (in style and form) and less conspicuously 'insular' than other Brut texts—but 'insularity' may have been rather appealing to readers at the courts in Continental Europe.

A concern with cultural products also featured in another group of papers, which turned from courts to cities and their citizens. Elsa Marguin-Hamon (Centre Jean-Mabillon) presented the overlapping literary interests of two writers on the urban life of thirteenth-century Paris and twelfth-century London, focusing on the *Description of London* by William FitzStephen (died *c.*1191) and the *Dictionarius* by Jean de Garlande (died *c.*1270). For Jean de Garlande, more than for FitzStephen, the city was above all the sum of productive activities, although both authors shared a fascination with the wealth acquired by cities (and their mercantile elites) during the high medieval 'boom'. Converging concerns of medieval authors were also identified by Marie-Françoise Alamichel (Gustave Eiffel University), who traced the significance of cross-Channel trade through a range of later medieval sources, such as the fifteenth-century *Libelle of Englyshe Polycye*, John Gower's poetry, and the later medieval Paston, Stonor, and Cely letter collections produced by gentle and mercantile families. A fascination with economics in medieval texts was also detected by Marcus Meer (GHIL). Mentions of prices, for example, and broader discussions of monetary politics in chronicles from Paris and London, Meer

suggested, may have been employed to strengthen (or weaken) the claims of individuals and collectives at the top of institutional hierarchies by assuming, denying, or assigning responsibility for political decisions and economic conditions.

Migration between Paris and London—and France and England more generally—was another strand of the workshop's contributions. Nathalie Gorochov (Université Paris-Est Créteil) went beyond the classic example of academic travel between intellectual centres like Paris and Oxford by exploring the migration of learned clerics between London and Paris from *c.*1150 to 1230. Gorochov demonstrated the surprising contingency of such exchanges, as when, in 1208, a papal ban drove clerics out of England while, vice versa, the 1229 strike at the University of Paris pushed learned men to London. Another case study for such movements was added by Aude Mairey (Laboratoire de Médiévistique occidentale de Paris/Centre national de la recherche scientifique) in the form of the Benedictine monk–poet John Lydgate (d. 1450) from the abbey of Bury St Edmunds, who resided in Paris under the command of Richard Beauchamp. While in Paris, Lydgate exploited French poetry to bolster English claims to the throne of France, and even after his return to London his knowledge of Paris remained a point of reference. Mairey showed that his later works explicitly compared the two metropolises to promote the grandeur of London. Broadening the perspective to wider socio-economic backgrounds, meticulous work on title deeds by Nicholas Vincent (University of East Anglia) revealed the fate of English emigrants to France after the demise of Angevin ambitions in the early thirteenth century. While members of the clergy are particularly prominent, lay people from England, too, settled in Paris, although Vincent also pointed to the difficulties and uncertainties involved in deducing 'nationality' from the surviving evidence. The same caveat was raised by Boris Bove (University of Rouen Normandy), who analysed fourteenth-century names contained in a collection of miracles and Parisian tallage lists, which reveal a considerable population of English immigrants in Paris. They were, for the most part, occupied as middle-class tradesmen, settled for the long term, and well-established within their French neighbourhoods. Matthieu Scherman (Gustave Eiffel University) put the spotlight on Italian merchants in London,

who, despite occasional xenophobic attacks and legal restrictions, enjoyed much more independence in conducting their affairs than their counterparts in other European trading hubs, such as Bruges.

The sojourns of rulers and their agents occupied a final group of participants. Amicie Pélissié du Rausas (La Rochelle Université) shed light on the splendour and show of affections involved in Henry III of England's 'state visit' to King Louis IX of France in Paris in 1254—a delicate (but ultimately successful) affair given the competing ambitions of both Capetian and Plantagenet kings to acquire territory in France. The paper by Line Bondetti (Sorbonne University) examined the fortunes of King John II of France, who had been held prisoner in England between 1357 and 1360 following his capture at the Battle of Poitiers in 1356. Although a prisoner in name, John II created an 'administrative outpost' at the Savoy Palace that fostered relations between the English and French realms through a growing network of messengers, themselves at times prisoners. Ties between royal courts were also examined by Olivier Canteaut (École nationale des chartes), who explored the office of 'secretary of the French language' at the time of Henry V of England's stewardship over France during Charles VI's incapacitation from 1420. Canteaut emphasized the continuation of established scribal practices at Paris and London chanceries, despite the exchange of personnel resulting from Henry V's ambitions to rule over France as well as England following the Treaty of Troyes. Canteaut interprets this continuity of style as a deliberate political choice by Henry, who was keen to fashion himself as a true heir to his French ancestry, even when his power over France waned after 1449. Exchanges within the dual monarchy were also addressed by Jörg Oberste (University of Regensburg) in his study of John Carpenter, common clerk of London between 1417 and 1437, and the now familiar poet Lydgate. Their literary pursuits reveal that London intellectuals were keenly aware of French literature, which they reworked for their own purposes, as Oberste showed in relation to a deliberately 'Londonized' version of an originally Parisian 'dance of death' for the wall of a new cemetery at St Paul's Cathedral.

Such *circulations*, as the other papers in this workshop also showed in abundance, are an antidote to any notion that the histories of France and England—and the history of the Middle Ages more broadly—were

disconnected, parochial, and at best antagonistic in prolonged periods of warfare. Rather, cultural horizons were shared (and broadened) as people moved and migrated between the two medieval realms—an experience shared by the modern-day participants in this workshop.

Marcus Meer