

## ASSIGNMENT 2: Medieval Historiography and Typology

The purpose of medieval history was to connect the present to the past in an effort to glorify God and demonstrate the work of Providence. Regardless of what the topic was medieval histories always started right at the beginning, e.g. The *Book of Genesis* and “In the beginning...”

Typology is the use of a real historical person, thing or event as a metaphor (symbol) for another real person, thing or event. Typology is the language of the Bible, e.g. Abraham’s near-sacrifice of his son Isaac typifies (or prefigures) God’s sacrifice of his son Jesus. Jonah’s three days in the belly of the whale typifies the three days Jesus spent in the tomb.

**Purpose:** to identify and appreciate the differences between typology and modern historiography.

### Procedure

- 1). Read the excerpts below.
- 2). Identify the specific biblical story being connected to the history. If possible identify the specific passage in either the *New Testament* or the Hebrew scriptures.

### Excerpt 1 Context

The first excerpt is from a history covering the interactions between England’s King Henry II and Thomas Becket. Becket and Henry were close friends; however, once Becket was appointed Bishop of Canterbury the two became antagonistic towards one another. The problems resulted because Henry believed he would be able to control his friend and England’s king was hoping to achieve some measure of independence from the pope in Rome. One thing led to another and some of Henry’s men actually murdered Becket.

#### Excerpt 1

“And when Henry II continued to press, asking again and again if the archbishop of Canterbury would promise to observe his customs entirely, absolutely and without adding the exception of his order; he was unable to obtain what he wanted from the vicar of Christ [Becket]. Therefore, the king was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him, and in this heated mood he left London without notice, with all his business unfinished, and lawsuits left hanging.”

### Excerpt 2 Context

The second excerpt was written by an English monk writing about Bishop Germanus crossing the English Channel to evangelize and convert the peoples of Britain to Christianity. A storm has arisen, threatening the safety of the ship:

#### Excerpt 2 from Bede’s *Ecclesiastical History of England*

“As it happened, their leader, the bishop, was worn out and fell asleep. Their champion having thus

deserted his post (or so it seemed), the storm increased in fury and the ship, overwhelmed by the waves, was about to sink. Then St Lupus and all the rest in their dismay awakened their leader so that he might oppose the fury of the elements. More resolute than they in the face of frightful danger, Germanus called on Christ and in the name of the Holy Trinity took a little water and sprinkled it on the raging billows. At the same time he admonished his colleague and encouraged them all, whereupon with one consent and one voice they offered up their prayers. Divine help was forthcoming, the adversaries were put to flight, peace and calm followed, and the contrary winds veered round and helped them on their way."