THE INVENTION OF ENGLAND: DANES AND IDENTITY IN MEDIEVAL ROMANCE

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ROMANCE

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This dissertation explores the relationship between the emergence of English romance and rhetoric of English nationalism in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Four historical romances set in England's past – *Havelok the Dane*, *Guy of Warwick*, *Of Arthur and Merlin*, and *Horn Childe and Maiden Rimnild* – are my primary focus. The concepts of England and Englishness that emerged in the late medieval and early modern periods were not the inevitable outcome of the Middle Ages, but the result of complex mediations explored in historical romances. Historical romances offered the primary stage for popular dramatizations of a national community bound by its shared triumphant history, and it is in such romances that ethnic, regional, and national identities were forged and disseminated. My project argues that a vital, though generally unrecognized, aspect of Middle English romance narratives was the castigation and delegitimization of the Scandinavians, or the "Danes," who became anathema to England and Englishness even as they settled throughout the British Isles in potentially massive numbers, as recent archeological and linguistic evidence has suggested. In the post-Conquest process of reconciliation between Anglo-Norman and Anglo-Saxon historiographical traditions, the Danes represented a philosophy of non-Christian "might is right" that was opposed to the God-ordained English system of rightful rule by proper, lawful inheritance. As secular texts written in the vernacular and designed to appeal to a wide range of the public, the historical material in Middle English romances has been perceived as reflective of the historical consciousness of the non-

elite. However, my project argues that thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Middle English historical romances were not representative of a gradual emergence of long-buried folk-memory, but were themselves producing a national historical framework stressing continuity over fractures. While it has often been taken for granted that the frequent appearance of the Danes in many Middle English historical romances must have been based on lingering "folk memory" of pagan invasions centuries earlier, my project shows that historical romances were crafted so as to seem like they were recording popular traditions about the past, when in fact they were creating such traditions themselves.

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PREFACE

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1.0   INTRODUCTION

1.1   A SINGLE NATION

The world of medieval romance – its violent duels and magical potions, invisible castles and Round Tables, giants and dwarves, questing knights, fairy queens, bumbling kings and evil stewards – is one whose intrinsic worth is often negatively contrasted with the serious work of the real world. Consider Friedrich Engels senior, the father of the co-founder of international communism, who, upon finding some books of romance lying around his fifteen-year-old son's desk, wrote with obvious displeasure, "Thus today I was again distressed to find in his desk a dirty book which he had borrowed from the lending library, a story about knights in the 13th century. The careless way he leaves such books about in his desk is remarkable. May God watch over his disposition, I am often fearful for this otherwise excellent boy."[1] Romance is set in stark relief against practicality and productivity. For Friedrich senior, it was not only the contents of the "dirty book" that vexed him, but how merely taking an interest in such books might reflect poorly on his son's reputation and his character, leading the young Friedrich astray from a pious and commercially productive life. Yet the teenage Engels was apparently little dismayed by his father's disapproval of his "dirty books," penning poems and articles defending "old popular

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[1] *Marx-Engels Collected Works* (New York, 1975-2005), vol. 2, p. 582, quoted in Tristram Hunt, *Marx's General: The Revolutionary Life of Freidrich Engels* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2009), 20.

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books with their old-fashioned tone," which "transport me from our artificial modern 'conditions, confusions, and fine distractions' into a world which is much closer to nature."[2] For young Friedrich, the fantastic medieval world is both an antidote and an antithesis; a return to it both rejuvenates the soul and reveals many problems of contemporary life. The romantic portrayal of the Middle Ages as an organic whole, as opposed to the staccato, disorderly modern world of industry, is a familiar story, and Friedrich senior's portrayal of the world of medieval romance as a silly waste of time is no less familiar. His concern for his son seems to be that he will become like Don Quixote, who "lost his wits" as his "brain dried up" from reading too many chivalric romances.[3]

The folly of Don Quixote is that he mistakes the intent of fictional texts by reading them not as fiction at all. The old knight takes medieval romances seriously because he is unaware of their generally accepted genre, believing these fantastic narratives to be true accounts of exploits that were undertaken at some moment in the past. The other readers in La Mancha read within the boundaries of a public cultural framework that Quixote not only ignores but to which he seems totally oblivious. His neighbors read romances "properly," aware that medieval romances are *romances* primarily because they celebrate ideals like chivalric life and courtliness and float free of historical reality. Quixote mistakes the intent of romance: "He filled his mind with all that he read in them, with enchantments, quarrels, battles, challenges, wounds, wooings, loves, torments and other impossible nonsense; and so deeply did he steep his imagination in the belief that all the fanciful stuff he read was true, that to his mind no history in the world was more

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[2] *Marx-Engels Collected Works*, vol. 2, p. 33, quoted in Hunt, *Marx's General*, 24-5.
[3] Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *The Adventures of Don Quixote*, trans. J.M. Cohen (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1950), 32.

authentic."[4] For Quixote, the worlds of history and romance are not mutually exclusive. Don Quixote is convinced that the romances' authors were truth-telling historians rather than skillful raconteurs of fiction. When he takes up his ancestors' dusty arms and armor to "translate his desires into action," Don Quixote becomes precisely what Engels' father was afraid his son would become, a trivial laughing stock; yet Quixote's extreme enthusiasm for medieval romance clearly makes him the one person in the world of Cervantes' mock-epic whose life is worth following. Quixote's unrealizable desire to bring romance into the real world, to make romance real, is the heroic struggle underlying the entire work.

Would it have been any less silly for a fourteenth-century reader – or, more likely, listener – to take romance narratives seriously as history, as Don Quixote does? *Don Quixote* is the end of the medieval romance tradition, a capstone on a genre that had long run its course after developing in the early modern period into romance-epics like Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (c. 1532) and Spenser's *The Fairie Queene* (c. 1596). It is plausible that fourteenth-century audiences would have thought of the chivalric romances that are set in the past as having some historiographic value. The historical and geographic verisimilitude of so many chivalric romances – such as Bevis of Hampton racing through the streets of Cheapside or Guy of Warwick aiding King Athelstan – did not help audiences to delineate between myth-history and more conventional historical material, and these tales probably had a significant impact on laymen's notions about the past. According to Keith Thomas, medieval romance narratives "did as least as much as more conventional historical writing to shape popular notions of the past," resulting in non-historians' and non-antiquarians' notion of a "single conflated past" rather than

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[4] Cervantes, *Quixote*, 32.

a temporally ordered, chronologically sound historical framework.[5] Through the eighteenth

century, chivalric romances, often simplified and printed as chapbooks and thus much more

widely available than they had been in the Middle Ages, permeated popular consciousness about

the past.

The fundamental strategies of both late medieval historians and composers of romance

were not inherently different, as their respective genres called for them to design a logical

sequential narrative by organizing and narrating events and then analyzing them by reflecting on

their larger significance. As Robert Stein puts it, the "need to make the secular world intelligible

as driven by secular imperatives" compelled the writing of both fictive and historiographic texts

in the Middle Ages.[6] The act of writing itself, and in turn, the process of reflecting on the past

via writing, served as evidence of a turn from barbarism to the civilized life. At the beginning of

the *Gesta Danorum* (ca. 1208), the first complete history of the Danish people, Saxo

Grammaticus links "remembrance" with "glory" and "renown." Saxo begins by offering an

apologia for his people's lack of written records, lamenting that without a written record

Denmark's history was "sunk into the oblivion of antiquity." The recording of Denmark's history

from its legendary foundations to the present day will serve to burnish "the repute of our own

people." [7] Although they were not writing chronicle material that learned, Latin scholars would

recognize as valid, Saxo excuses his ancestors by suggesting that they would have produced

books had they known about them or about the Latin alphabet; by carving runic inscriptions onto

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[5] Keith Thomas, *The Perception of the Past in Early Modern Literature: The Creighton Trust Lecture, 1983* (London: University of London, 1983), 4-6.

[6] Robert M. Stein, *Reality Fictions: Romance, History, and Governmental Authority, 1025-1180* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 2.

[7] Saxo Grammaticus, *The First Nine Books of the Danish History of Saxo Grammaticus*, trans. Oliver Elton, with some considerations on Saxo's sources, historical methods, and folk-lore by Frederick York Powell (London: David Nutt, 1894), 2-5.

rock faces recording their "glorious deeds," the ancient Danes exhibited a Roman rather than a savage nature. For Saxo, his own turn to writing indelibly links Denmark with the civilized traditions of the continent. The recording of the history of a people as a clear benchmark of civilizing progress was not an idea confined to the medieval period. In his preface to *Britannia* (c. 1586), an immense survey of Britain's history, customs, geography, towns, and laws, antiquarian William Camden speaks of the original inhabitants of Britain as "perfectly rude" because they had no desire to record their history and were "without any Learning, which as it is the effect of a civiliz'd life, of peace and leisure, so it is the only sure and certain means of preserving and transmitting to posterity the memory of things past."[8] In Camden's formulation, a culture that enjoys sustained peace and prosperity will necessarily begin to reflect on its own history. For both Saxo and Camden, sequentially organizing and narrating a people's past is not only the result of an advanced cultural apparatus, but a necessary step to becoming a civilized culture.

However much an antiquarian like Camden might have desired to see writing as a spontaneous and natural expression of a people as they become increasingly refined and civilized, in the medieval period those writers with the right to speak about the past created the past.[9] Historical romances played a vital role in the shaping of England's conceptualization of itself as a national community by (according to Geraldine Heng) "intervening, persuading,

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[8] William Camden, *Camden's Britannia*, *A facsimile of the 1695 edition published by Edmund Gibson (*New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1971), iv.

[9] Patrick Geary writes that one's "right to speak the past…implied control over that which gave access to the past – the 'relics' by which the past continued to live into the present." Preserving such written relics, or making them disappear, were "fundamental aspects of power and authority," so that competition to control the past helped shape people's comprehension of the larger world around them. See Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 7.

influencing, innovating, and deciding"[10] communal discourse, helping a diverse society of people to develop a sense of a larger communal identity. Middle English romances of the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries are considered to be "popular" texts – "popular" meaning here that they were generally written by non-aristocratic writers for a broad spectrum of society. Auerbach goes so far as to claim that the widespread use of English as a literary language in the fourteenth century and the emergence of Middle English represent the "political, religious, and economic awakening of the masses."[11] A more modest proposal by Derek Pearsall is that Middle English romances had "primarily a lower or lower middle class audience, a class of social aspirants who wish to be entertained with what they consider to be the same fare, but in English, as their social betters."[12] The chivalric ideals and courtly social manners embodied by Middle English romances became a guide and model to such courtly behaviors in life, and generally speaking medieval romances could be called "secular fictions of nobility,"[13] though the upper strata that is portrayed in many medieval romances was not their sole or in some cases their likely intended audiences. Yet, neat binaries distinguishing French-language texts as courtly and English-language texts as popular gloss over "areas of significant duplication and change" [14] by painting an oversimplified picture of the reality of later medieval England, a trilingual culture with many writers fluent in at least two languages. Simply because a romance is written in English or its diction is less sophisticated than another text does not necessarily imply that its audience was

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[10] Geraldine Heng, *Empire of Magic: Medieval Romance and the Politics of Cultural Fantasy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 8.

[11] Erich Auerbach, *Literary Language and Its Public in Late Latin Antiquity and in the Middle Ages*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 325.

[12] Derek Pearsall, "The Development of Middle English Romance," in *Studies in Medieval English Romances*, ed. Derek Brewer (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1988), 12.

[13] See Susan Crane, *Insular Romance: Politics, Faith, and Culture in Anglo-Norman and Middle English Literature* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986), 9-10.

[14] Rosalind Field, "The Anglo-Norman Background to Alliterative Romance," in *Middle English Alliterative Poetry and Its Literary Background*, ed. David Lawton (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1992), 55.

unsophisticated. On the whole, Middle English romances, perhaps more so than continental works, seem to have appealed to a wide spectrum of society, not only those of the lower classes. They were not written by a dominant class for mindless audiences. Considering the multifarious array of perspectives in these texts, it is likely that the audience for romances in English included kings, noblemen and women, and court officials as much as commoners and merchants.[15] It was precisely romances' popularity, addressing a broad variety of constituencies, that facilitated their projection of a world in which a diverse array of people divided by rank, geography, and creed could conceptualize themselves as a single nation.[16]

The subject of England's past was especially attractive to later medieval Anglo-Norman and English composers of romances because it offered a template onto which historical fissures and trauma could be reprocessed as triumphant celebration. The singular traumatic event of the English Middle Ages – at least for writers who needed to come to terms with an almost wholesale replacement of one dominant group for another among the crown, his magnates, and the Church – was the Norman Conquest. The fact that Middle English historical romances are completely silent about the event itself suggests the idealistic tendencies and cautious impulses of texts that glorified existing power structures and validated the present order. In this sense, medieval romance is an inherently conservative genre. Historical romances reflect the continuously developing revision of England and English identity that eleventh- and twelfth-century chroniclers after the Norman Conquest and their Anglo-Norman romance counterparts

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[15] According to Thomas Hahn, the majority of romances' audiences were treated to what amounts to "popular performance art" in the vein of a burlesque. See Hahn, "Gawain and Popular Chivalric Romance in Britain," in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Romance*, ed. Roberta L. Krueger (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 229-30. For a discussion of the probable audiences for English romances, see Simon Gaunt, "Romance and other Genres," in *Cambridge Companion to Medieval Romance*, ed. Roberta L. Krueger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 47-8.
[16] Heng, *Empire*, 7-8.

had been telling. The earliest accounts after the Norman Conquest such as the Bayeux Tapestry

and Norman historiographical works by William of Poitiers and William of Jumièges sketched a

narrative of justified triumph. These two writers, along with the earliest chronicle of the Norman

dukes, the *Historia Normannorum* (ca. 1015-30) by Dudo of St. Quentin, were crafting what has

come to be known as the "Norman myth," a myth of origins produced by Normans vindicating

themselves as Christian Frenchmen, both a part of continental Christian culture and yet distinct,

negotiating their earlier Scandinavian heritage with a new Christianity. In the absence of a long

and glorious history, "Normanness" came to be inextricably tied to the conquered land of

Normandy itself, so that Normandy was always destined to be the land of the Normans even

before "its" people had arrived.[17] Though they were a parvenu "racial" group, the Normans were

deft at utilizing historical narratives to construct a sense of identity as a single, united people; in

Marjorie Chibnall's apt phrase, they were "united by history, not by blood."[18] Without a self-

identified and long-standing literary "tradition" of their own – folklore, poetry, ecclesiastical

records and practices – when they conquered England, replacing its monarchy and nobility

almost wholesale, the Normans essentially co-opted English historiographical traditions over the

following two centuries after the Conquest and through historical romances wrote themselves

into the story of England. The assimilative process of representing the Normans as the rightful

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[17] The essential study on *Normanitas* remains R.H.C. Davis, *The Normans and Their Myth* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976). More recent discussion of the Norman myth and challenges to Davis' work have been offered by G.A. Loud, "The Gens Normannorum" – Myth or Reality?", *Anglo-Norman Studies IV* (1982), 104-16; Laura Ashe, *Fiction and History in England, 1066-1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 1-27; Emily Albu, *The Normans in their Histories: Propaganda, Myth, and Subversion* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2001); Hugh Thomas, *The English and the Normans: Ethnic Hostility, Assimilation, and Identity, 1066-c.1220* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Elisabeth M.C. van Houts, "Scandinavian Influence in Norman Literature of the Eleventh Century," in *Anglo-Norman Studies IV: Proceedings of the Battle Conference*, ed. R. Allen Brown (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 1984), 107-21.

[18] Marjorie Chibnall, *The Debate on the Norman Conquest* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1999), 2.

inheritors of English traditions began almost immediately after the Conquest. In the *Gesta Guillelmi* of William of Poitiers (c. 1071-7), ostensibly a history of the deeds of William the Conqueror but actually a panegyric for him, the Norman duke is credited with "linking together by his sway the wide extent of the English and Norman lands."[19] The Latin verse chronicle *Carmen de Hastingae proelio*, probably written by Guy of Amiens in 1068, goes further than William of Poitiers by positioning William the Conqueror not as a conqueror at all but as the rightful inheritor of the English throne by descent, election, and feudal right.[20]

The account of William offered in the *Carmen de Hastingae proelio* is not simply a biased vindication of a military invasion; in fact the English throne and the Norman dukedom had been intertwined well before William's seizure of the crown. Edward the Confessor was a cousin of William's, and Edward's mother Emma was Norman. Under Edward's tenure, many Normans had been placed in high positions and both Edward and his brother Alfred spent most of their childhoods in Normandy. From William's perspective, his invasion of England was merely a setting to rights of the wrongs of Harold Godwinsson, a usurper in William's eyes. Indeed, according to William of Malmesbury it was not William who was a "stranger" (*alienum*) in England but Harold.[21] The phrase "Norman Conquest" itself obscures the reality that William thought of himself as the lawful heir to the English throne, and thus by invading England he was able to argue that he was merely claiming what was his by right. William's desire to see himself as the crown's rightful inheritor and the Normans' need in general to confirm their dominion were largely responsible for the surge in historical writing after the Conquest to support, justify,

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[19] *The* Gesta Guillelmi *of William of Poitiers*, ed. and trans. R.H.C. Davis and Marjorie Chibnall (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 113.
 [20] See Stein, *Reality Fictions*, 71.
 [21] William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum (The History of the English Kings)*, trans. and ed. R.A.B. Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 3.247.

and defend the Normans' claims. For instance, the chronicler Orderic Vitalis, though born an Englishman and often sympathetic to English viewpoints, justifies the Conquest by arguing that the Anglo-Saxon church had been corrupted and the people, due to the Danish invasions, had become slovenly, barbarous, drunken, and lustful.[22] The rupture of the Norman Conquest, as we might think of it today, was not portrayed as a rupture at all by medieval Anglo-Norman post-conquest writers, but as a rightful reclamation and a setting to rights of the wrongs of Harold Godwinsson.

1.2   THE DANES

If William and Norman writers of the eleventh and twelfth centuries intended to portray their sovereignty as right rule, then they needed a contrast larger than Harold Godwinsson alone to embody wrong rule. This contrast was the Danes. It was not only Normans and English vying for control of the Isles in the eleventh century; there were also Scandinavians vying for the English throne, and England was essentially up for grabs for all three. It would not have been at all clear to an English person in 1065 that the country was headed in a Norman direction; the possibility that England could return to the rule of Scandinavian kings was entirely plausible. Between 1013, when Swein Forkbeard of Denmark invaded England and claimed the throne, and 1042, when the last Danish king of England, Harthacnut, son of Cnut, died, England was essentially part of a vast Danish empire. While Orderic Vitalis portrays the line of Danish kings as a time of

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[22] *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, ed. and trans. Marjorie Chibnall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), vol 2., 206-8. See also Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England, c. 550-c. 1307* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 152-65.

English subjection, it is not clear that some regions of Anglo-Saxon England, notably the north and the east, in which Scandinavians settled in significant numbers, would have shared Orderic's opinion. It was not at all clear that the Normans would conquer and subdue as easily as they were able to, or that the Norwegians would be defeated at Stamford Bridge, or that more Danish and Norwegian kings would not submit their claims to the rights of the throne. Though Anglo-Norman writers vilified the Danes – a medieval catch-all term for Scandinavians[23] – to an unprecedented degree in England, it is possible that many English would not have seen them as a marauding, violent, satanic people – an image that lingers to this day. The Normans, after all, were essentially French-speaking Scandinavians; only a century and a half before their self-justified, God-ordained invasion of England, the Danes and Norwegians who invaded and conquered a small region in northern France were Norse-speaking pagans. A primary mechanism to distance themselves from their recent Scandinavian past and justify their power in England was to vilify the Danes in pre-Conquest Anglo-Saxon history and politics.

Twelfth-century chroniclers on the whole offered an incredibly simplified picture of English society both before and after the Conquest, subsuming potentially competing regional and ethnic identities under the vast rubrics of "English" and "Norman." Robert Stein writes that for William of Malmesbury

> the conquest levels a diversity of peoples into a conqueror and a conquered, two *gentes* (peoples or nations or bloodlines) and two peoples only, each occupying the same space. The Celts, never treated seriously in William's narrative, disappear altogether. The Danes are described as merely temporary visitors even if they

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[23] We cannot assume that people of Scandinavian descent living in England or those of invading forces had a shared, singular identity; it was opposing chroniclers that lumped them together as "Danes." Viking war bands in the early Middle Ages were likely to have been of mixed ethnicities. See D.M. Hadley, *The Northern Danelaw: Its Social Structure, c. 800-1100* (London and New York: Leicester University Press, 2000), 306-9.

manage to install a king from to time to time. The Mercians, Northumbrians, East Anglians, and the rest become by 1066 simply English.[24]

Reducing multiple, potentially competing identities into a single homogenous national group is characteristic not only of twelfth-century England but of national peoples in general. Hardt and Negri have argued that a people's identity is constructed on an "imaginary plane" that eliminates or hides differences via "racial subordination and social purification."[25] In the Middle Ages, diverse and often antagonistic populations with clashing interests provided a powerful incentive for political leaders and intellectuals to imagine a larger national English community.[26] The flourishing of historical writing in the twelfth century addressed the needs of intellectuals and their patrons who wished to consolidate and clarify the past as an English past that served as justification for the present order. On the writing of national history Schlomo Sand shows that it is "not seriously meant to uncover past civilizations," but rather it is written for "the construction of a meta-identity and the political consolidation of the present."[27] The nation only exists insofar as its members' believe that it exists. Although England's neighbors remained "defiantly conscious of being distinct peoples"[28] through the medieval period, there was a powerful drive among English writers to develop a sense of national solidarity despite the reality of distinct

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[24] Robert M. Stein, "Making History English: Cultural Identity and Historical Expectation in William of Malmesbury and Laȝamon's *Brut*," in *Text and Territory: Geographical Imagination in the European Middle Ages*, ed. Sylvia Tomasch and Sealy Gilles (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 98.

[25] Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), 103.

[26] See Thomas Hahn, "The Difference the Middle Ages Makes: Color and Race before the Modern World," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 31:1, Winter 2001, p. 7.

[27] Schlomo Sand, *The Invention of the Jewish People*, trans. Yael Lotan (London: Verso, 2009), 248.

[28] Susan Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe, 900-1300* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 273.

ethnic and linguistic groups. Medieval descent-myths were about political unity rather than social divisions.

Until the last century, in much historical writing there was a tendency to treat the Danish settlement of the ninth and tenth centuries as merely a temporary episode, having little to no permanent effect on England.[29] Slightly amending the position of a medieval historian like William of Malmesbury who considered the Danes foreigners temporarily living in England, it was assumed by many modern historians that the Danes quickly assimilated and their numbers were small; in both scenarios, their impact on English culture, language, and politics was minimal if not non-existent. The preeminent nineteenth-century medievalist, E.A. Freeman, for instance, minimized the impact of the Danes in England by suggesting that they were "easily turned into Englishmen" due to the similarity of languages and institutions between the two peoples, a position that is not inherently wrong but which minimizes the potential existence of competing ethnic and regional affinities apart from national affinities.[30] More recently, historians, archeologists, and linguists, and place- and personal-name scholars have painted a much more nuanced picture of medieval England, showing that the Danes settled in huge numbers and had a tremendous impact on the language, laws, customs, and social order of England, especially in the North and East where Scandinavians settled in large, potentially massive, numbers.[31] Nevertheless, for a literary critic the discrepancy between large settlements

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[29] See Sir Frank Stenton, *The Danes in England: The Raleigh Lecture on History, British Academy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1927).

[30] E.A. Freeman, *History of the Norman Conquest: Its Causes and Its Results*, Vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1867-79), 148.

[31] For general surveys of Scandinavians in England, see Stenton, *Danes*; D.M. Hadley, *The Vikings in England: Settlement, Society, and Culture* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2006); H.R. Loyn, *The Vikings in Britain* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1977); *Cultures in Contact: Scandinavian Settlement in England in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries*, ed. D.M. Hadley and Julian D. Richards (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2000); on the constitution and impact of the Danelaw

of Scandinavians in pre-Conquest England and their representation in medieval historical writing (most especially in historical romances) as anathema to England and Englishness poses a compelling problem. The "disappearance" of the Danes in England, whether due to their total removal from England (a narrative common in both medieval chronicles and romances) or their hasty assimilation,[32] raises intriguing questions about the relationship between historiography and representations of a burgeoning English nationalism in the later Middle Ages, as the ousting of the Danes become key to formulations of a consolidated, triumphalist English community bound by its shared history.

Although they may have shared many cultural traits with the English, from the perspective of Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman kings the Danes did pose a clear threat to Anglo-Saxon and Norman sovereignty in England. The Danes could potentially make legitimate claims to the English throne and they were essentially vying for power in the British Isles with the English and then with the Normans. Cnut (r. 1016-35), ruler of Denmark, Norway, and England, had married Emma of Normandy, the recent widower of King Aethelred II (the "Unready"), in 1017. Emma was the daughter of Duke Richard of Normandy; thus in addition to

see Cyril Hart, *The Danelaw* (London and Rio Grande: The Hambledon Press, 1992); D.M. Hadley, *The Northern Danelaw*; on Cnut and England as part of a vast Scandinavian empire see *The Reign of Cnut: King of England, Denmark, and Norway*, ed. Alexander R. Rumble (London: Leicester University Press, 1994); M.K. Lawson, *Cnut: The Danes in England in the Early Eleventh Century* (London: Longman, 1993); on the Norman impact on the North and the changing world of the Anglo-Scandinavian population in the eleventh century see William E. Kappelle, *The Norman Conquest of the North: The Region and its Transformation, 1000-1135* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1979); Kelly DeVries, *The Norwegian Invasion of England in 1066* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1999); on representations of the Danes in the early modern period see Daniel Woolf, "Of Danes and Giants: Popular Beliefs About the Past in Early Modern England," *Dalhousie Review*, 71, no. 2 (1991), pp. 192-8; Keith Thomas, *The Perception of the Past in Early Modern England: The Creighton Trust Lecture, 1983* (London: University of London, 1983).

[32] From the very early stages of Scandinavian settlement of England, English rulers had "to devise strategies to facilitate the incorporation of the settlers into the social, political, and legal structure of England." Diplomatic negotiations between the Danish and English were common; over successive generations, Scandinavian settlers and their descendants had to be incorporated into the English kingdom. See D.H. Hadley, *Vikings*, 67.

solidifying his position in England, Cnut had gained a foothold in Normandy. When Cnut's sons

Harold Harefoot (r. 1037-40) and Harthacnut (r. 1040-2) both died without clear heirs, the line of

Danish kings in England was finished. Nevertheless, Norman writers were keen to delegitimize

this Scandinavian line. William the Conqueror wanted to see himself as the true successor to

Edward the Confessor, whose own image as the savior of the Wessex kings and of the English

people and Church began to be burnished by Anglo-Norman historians.[33] In turn, the immediate

predecessors to Edward, the Danish kings, were delegitimized as their claims and kingship were

drawn as antagonistic and antithetical to England's history of right rule.

The Danes, especially in the North and East, areas designated as the Danelaw due to

heavy Scandinavian settlement, proved a regional threat to the newly minted Norman monarchy

based in the South. The transition from Anglo-Saxon past to Anglo-Norman present – and the

shifting of the meaning of Englishness that came along with that transition – meant that other

ethnic loyalties could pose a challenge to the southern rule. Anglo-Norman chronicles, along

with Anglo-Norman historical romances of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, amplified the

picture of the marauding heathen Danes that they found in Anglo-Saxon sources like the Anglo-

Saxon Chronicle, the historian Aethelweard's chronicle (ca. late-tenth century), and Asser's *Life*

of Alfred (commissioned ca. late-ninth century) and refined and fashioned an image of the Danes

as the eternal hostile enemy. In the complex effort after the Conquest to re-imagine the English

past as an Anglo-Norman past by giving their bloodlines and their houses mythological histories

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[33] On William's view of Edward the Confessor, see M.T. Clanchy, *England and its Rulers, 1066-1272*, second ed. with an epilogue on Edward I (1272-1307) (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 24. In the Anglo-Norman poem *La Estoire de Seint Aedward le Rei* (c. 1245), directly after William's coronation he pays homage at the tomb of Edward the Confessor, opening it and placing a rich pall on him, thus completing the proper ascendance from Edward to William. See *La Estoire de Seint Aedward le Rei*, in *Lives of Edward the Confessor*, ed. Henry Richard Luard (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, and Roberts, 1858), l. 4665.

within the larger frame of England's national story, the Danes were represented as illegitimate predecessors to William and the Norman kings, constantly threatening to disrupt this national mythology. The Conquest itself came to be blamed on the Danes; the opinion that their attacks had weakened the morality and morale of the Anglo-Saxons is one that can be attributed to historians as disparate as William of Malmesbury and David Hume.[34]

While Norman chronicles composed soon after the Conquest worked to justify Norman claims in England by casting both Harold Godwinsson and the Anglo-Saxons on the whole as immoral and barbarous, for the next generation of historians working in the twelfth century, though they continued to justify the Conquest, it became impolitic to continue to lambaste the English wholesale. This was partly due to the mixed nature of the writers themselves: for instance, William of Malmesbury was half-Norman and half-English, Gerald of Wales was half-Norman and half-Welsh, and Orderic Vitalis, the son of a French priest and probably an English mother, was born in England and lived and wrote in Normandy. Each of these twelfth-century historians was sympathetic to the Anglo-Saxons to some degree. While William, Gerald, and Orderic are certainly critical of Anglo-Saxons as well – William considers them effeminate drunks – the historians' works reveal an effort to incorporate the Anglo-Saxon historiographical tradition established by Bede and developed by Anglo-Saxon chroniclers and biographers into a new post-Conquest narrative. It became more politically expedient to cast the Danes, potential rivals to Norman claims, as the primary historical enemy of England rather than continually

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[34] David Hume: There "were several vices in the Anglo-Saxon constitution, which rendered it difficult for the English to defend their liberties in so critical an emergency. The people had in a great measure lost all national pride and spirit, by their recent and long subjection to the Danes." According to Hume, because Cnut governed them "equitably" by their own laws, the English came to prefer subjugation to bloodshed, and this made them more susceptible to foreign conquest, unable "to withstand the victorious arms of the Duke of Normandy." David Hume, *The History of England: From the Invasion of Julius Caesar to the Revolution in 1688*, Vol. 1 (London: 1830), 198-9.

alienate and vilify Harold Godwinsson or the Anglo-Saxons as a whole, people whom the new Norman rulers wished to pacify. Twelfth-century Anglo-Norman chroniclers wanted to establish clear lines between the Anglo-Saxon Church and monarchy and the new Norman line; they wanted to show that the Anglo-Normans had worthy predecessors in England.

Though the heathen Danes were clearly a source of terror in Anglo-Saxon writings, it is in post-Conquest writing, when they had ceased to be any martial or existential threat to England, that they most fully take on the image of violent, cruel raiders that will probably always be associated with the Vikings. But there was a clear divide between the pagan Vikings being castigated in Anglo-Norman writings and the contemporary people of Denmark. At the same time that Geoffrey Gaimar was calling the Vikings in English history "foreign dogs," "accursed people," and "Danish devils,"[35] the Danish population was increasingly entering the continental fold culturally and religiously. By the middle of the eleventh century – before the flourishing period of Anglo-Norman histories a century later – Denmark had gained the Church, the first fully organized Church in Scandinavia. In the late tenth and eleventh centuries, the Danes converted to Christianity led by their kings; by 1100, there were eight bishoprics in Denmark, and in 1104 the bishopric of Lund was raised to archiepiscopal status.[36] The establishment of Church institutions meant that Denmark from the twelfth century onwards was incorporated into the fabric of European linguistic and religious culture. The German chronicler Arnold of Lübeck, writing around c. 1200, noted that the Danes had "adjusted themselves to other nations," meaning that they had adopted German clothing fashions, engaged in mounted warfare, and

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[35] Geoffrey Gaimar, *Estoire des Engleis* (*History of the English*), ed. and trans. Ian Short (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 165, 167, 187.

[36] Bartlett, *Making of Europe*, 289.

embraced both secular and religious literacy and learning. [37] Saxo Grammaticus' history of the Danish people is representative of a larger effort by Danes to bring their country into the increasingly homogenized European community.

In the model of the blending of Anglo-Norman and Anglo-Saxon historiographical traditions that was prevalent in twelfth-century writings, the Danes represented a philosophy of non-Christian "might is right" that clearly contrasted with the God-ordained English system of rightful rule by proper, lawful inheritance. Within a decade after the Conquest William of Poitiers formulated a clear distinction between royal legitimacy and illegitimacy in England, associating the former with William and the latter with both the Danish kings of England and Harold Godwinsson. William of Poitiers opens his chronicle by writing of Cnut that "he owed the [English kingdom] not to others but to his own and his father's conquest,"[38] thus with an illegitimacy equal to Harold Godwinsson, the "mad Englishman" who "violated his oath and seized the royal throne with acclamation, with the connivance of a few wicked men."[39] William, by contrast, claims the kingdom is his by right and desires to act within the bounds of the law of both peoples. The theme of Danish rule by wrong – seizing the crown by force – as opposed to Norman and Wessex rule by right – inheriting the crown through proper bloodlines – became the prevailing narrative of the transition from Anglo-Saxon to Norman sovereignty. Twelfth-century historians align the Norman and Angevin lines with the house of Wessex, rendering William I as the true successor to Edward the Confessor and Henry II, whose mother Mathilda was a claimant to the English throne and whose father, Geoffrey Plantagenet, was Duke of Normandy after

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[37] Bartlett, 289.
[38] William of Poitiers, 2-3.
[39] William of Poitiers, 101.

1144, as the ultimate reconciliation between England's past and present.[40] After the eleventh century, historians in England were no longer interested in Norman history; instead, the histories of the Normans and the English were reconciled as following a legitimate line of succession, thus rendering the English past as a shared Norman past. In this historiographic model, the Danish and English connection suggested by earlier, clearly pro-Norman writers had to be effaced. The valorization of both Anglo-Saxon ancestry and the Norman kings was manifested by the linking of Edward the Confessor to William the Conqueror, thus aligning the Wessex kings to the Norman kings as the proper line of succession. It was under such a model that the Danish kings of England, along with Scandinavian populations that had settled in England, were cast as tyrannical usurpers.

After the twelfth century, the Danes in English histories are shaped into feudal overlords, burdening the good, Christian English with unjust taxes like the Danegeld constantly subjecting and humiliating the population. In his *Estoire des Engleis (History of the English*, c. 1136-7), which he claimed was based on English, Latin, and French sources, Geoffrey Gaimar writes of the cruelty of the Danish kings of England and the joy felt among the English once their own "native" line is restored:

> This caused great rejoicing among the English, since the Danes had treated them little better than serfs and often humiliated them. If a hundred Englishmen were to meet one lone Dane, woe betide them if they did not bow and scrape to him. And were they to come to a bridge, they would have had to wait, and woe betide them if they dared move before the Danes had crossed. And as he passed by, each one would have to bow and scrape, and anyone not doing so would be arrested and

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[40] Aelred of Rievaulx, dedicating his genealogy of the English kings (c. 1153-4) to Henry II, details the purpose of his history as glorifying the "integrity of [Henry II's] ancestors" and traces the king's genealogy back to Adam. Aelred clearly saw Henry (or at least was aware that Henry wanted to see himself) as a reconciliation between Norman and English; Aelred writes, "To know that one has been bequeathed nobility of blood from the finest on both sides is a great incentive to acquiring habits." See Aelred of Rievaulx, *The Historical Works*. Trans. Jane Patricia Freeland and ed. Marsha L. Dutton, Cistercian Fathers Series: No. 56 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 2005), 71.

given an ignominious beating. This is the sort of subservience the English were kept in, and the Danes abused and humiliated them.[41]

Despite the fact that Cnut explicitly desired to maintain the laws of Edgar, accepted Christianity and made a pilgrimage to Rome, and generally seemed eager to get along with the English – aspects that Gaimar notes – such subtlety was not welcome in a larger picture that required the justification and triumph of the present order, where the Danes and the English are "bitter enemies" and the English revel in having finally rid the land of their Danish overlords when Edward the Confessor ascends the throne.[42] It is therefore not surprising that the Danes are vilified in Gaimar to an unprecedented degree. Gaimar lays the invectives on rather thick: the Danes are "foul heathens," an "accursed people," "Danish devils," "dastardly," "by disposition exceedingly evil," "arrogant," "foreign dogs." Of course, an earlier text like the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle had defined the Danes as heathens; but compared with the degree of disparaging calumniation in twelfth-century and later histories and romances, a text like the Chronicle generally appears rather objective when speaking of the Danes, calling them pagans and heathens – terms which were practically truisms – but generally not going much further.

For twelfth-century historians writing in England wishing to reconcile English history with the Norman Conquest, along with the name-calling vilification of the Danes it became important to cast the Danes as plunderers and destroyers bent on anarchy, as opposed to the right rule of both the English and then the Normans. In his *Historia Anglorum* (*History of the English*, ca. 1130) Henry of Huntingdon declares that unlike the Saxons and the Normans, invaders who ultimately wished to civilize the land by establishing laws, the Danes "swooped and rushed" over

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[41] Geoffrey Gaimar, *Estoire des Engleis (History of the English)*, ed. and trans. Ian Short (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 260-1.
[42] Gaimar, *Estoire,* 163.

England "not aiming to possess it but rather to plunder it, and desiring not to govern but rather to destroy everything."[43] The Danes are opposed to being productive; instead, they are constantly attempting to subject the English and instill fear by destroying everything in their path. Rather than settling, governing, or building upon the land as the Saxons and Normans do, the Danes seize the land and possess it unlawfully. In the same breath that he calls the Danes "greedy and warlike" as they burn churches and slaughter women and children, Matthew Paris, in his *History of Saint Edward the King* (ca. 1230-40s), has King Aethelred II call them "foreigners who have no rights here."[44]

Three processes were essential to the literary production of the Danes as national enemies: delegitimization of Scandinavian claims of right in England, an insistence on the total removal of the Danes from England after the Conquest and denouncing their role in the country's history, and the vilification of them as a savage and cruel people. If the Danes could be effectively portrayed as antithetical to the very idea of England – an idea of right rule over a God-ordained, Christian people unified by religion, history, customs, laws, and language – then room was made for the Normans and their Conquest to be seen as a boon to the country. In his life of Edward the Confessor Matthew Paris consistently makes clear distinctions between the native-born English and foreigners; at the same time, he valorizes not only Anglo-Saxon ancestry but the mixing of Norman and Anglo-Saxon blood in the person of Edward, favoring a model of hybridity in which his text grafts "the Norman 'branch' onto the AS 'root.'"[45] It is no surprise that in such a model, where the Normans and the Anglo-Saxons merge to form a new England

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[43] Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum: The History of the English People*, ed. and trans. Diana Greenway (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 273.

[44] Matthew Paris, *The History of Saint Edward the King*, trans. Thelma S. Fenster and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2008), 56.

[45] Fenster and Wogan-Browne, "Introduction" to *The History of Saint Edward the King*, 22.

and a new sense of Englishness, the Danes are the true foreigners. Swein Forkbeard is condemned for pursuing a "war of acquisition" in England, coveting gold, attacking towns, plundering the land, burning churches, taking hostages, and breaking oaths, so that "the people fled before him and he scooped up and kept all their possessions."[46] Swein's evil nature is then ascribed to the Danes as a whole; they are "greedy and terrible," warlike, immoral, killers of women and children "doing evil everywhere."[47] A contemporary of Paris', writing his own life of Edward in Anglo-Norman, makes the English into the bearers of civilization and noble chivalry, a way of life that is threatened by the Danes, who are an anarchic mob: under Harthacnut, the Danes kill the nobles throughout England and the

> rabble and low-fellows
> Get possession of their lands.[48]

The ravages of the Danes cause the overthrow of privilege, rank, and the proper hierarchy on which peaceful society is founded. Noble conquering is contrasted with ignoble conquering:

> Sweyn and Cnut with their Danes
> Have slain the gentle English,
> Whose parents, whose ancestors
> Were noble conquerors:
> Coming in the company
> Of Brutus of the bold countenance[49]

When William claims his right to the English throne, his invasion is portrayed as just such a noble conquering, done out of right, where causalities and brutalities are minimized in favor of justification. As opposed to the "bastardy" (l. 770) that the Danes commit by murdering nobles,

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[46] Paris, *History*, 55.

[47] Paris, 56.

[48] *La Estoire de Seint Aedward Le Rei*, in *Lives of Edward the Confessor*, ed. Henry Richard Luard (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, and Roberts, 1858), ll. 568-9.

[49] *La Estoire*, ll. 782-89.

dismissing rank, and unseating the rightful sovereign, the Normans remedy this savagery, "richly

clothed [England] again with verdure," setting it back to right:

> Now are king, now are barons
> And the kingdom, of a common blood
> Of England and Normandy.[50]

When the Danes have been totally ousted from England, "the world is renewed."[51] This renewal

is a re-legitimization, implying the importance that is attached by the present on the past. To the

twelfth-century historian, to Matthew Paris and the writer of *La Estoire de Seint Aedward*, and to

the composers of Anglo-Norman and Middle English historical romances, portraying the Danes

as the pursuers of wrong and the symbol of the misguided political philosophy of "might is right"

was a way of legitimizing and justifying the proper order of the monarchy, the nobility, and the

Church, all of which were at least partly empowered by their connection with the past.

The Danes as the symbol of wrong, of "might is right," was a theme that persisted well

past the medieval era. In the history play *Edmund Ironside*, *or War Hath Made All Friends*, an

anonymous Elizabethan drama (though there is a small chorus of critics, including its most

recent editor, that have claimed the play is Shakespeare's earliest) about the settlement made

between Cnut and Edmund Ironside to jointly rule England, one of the memorable scenes of the

play is a debate between Cnut and Edmund over Cnut's right of conquest against Edmund's right

of inheritance. Claiming that "this land is mine, Canutus, it is mine," Edmund, making a clear

distinction between conquering nobly and ignobly, accuses Cnut and his "gripple-minded dad"

Swein of fighting not with valiant arms but by "treason,"

> Against all justice, law, and equity
> Did first intrude yourselves and then extrude

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[50] *La Estoire*, l. 3835, ll. 3851-3.
[51] *La Estoire*, l. 1389.

Our woeful subjects from their native home.[52]

Though Cnut had tried to "moderate myself,/as Englishmen will think me English born," he remains a villainous foreigner delighting in English tragedy. *Edmund Ironside* encapsulates five key themes on the Danes that were consistently associated with them in medieval chronicles and romances and which persisted into the early modern period: their foreignness and the necessity of England to be ruled by native kings; the Danes' dismissal of feudal right[53]; their delight in wanton violence and destruction and the killing of women and children; Normandy as a place of peace, safety, and serenity, a haven and cousin to England[54]; and the concept of the Danish yoke. The word "yoke" is explicitly used by a rustic character, referring to the Danes living off the fat of the land without having worked for it and forcing the Saxons to be "slaves," "drudges," and "dogs."[55] That a rustic mouths the sentiment of the Danish yoke is telling; in the early modern period, it was the myth of the Danish yoke, not the Norman yoke, that most proliferated among local populations throughout England. It was not until after the 1640s that the Norman yoke started to emerge as a potent theme in the popular historical imagination.[56]

A tradition of Danish oppression and local and national victories, borne from medieval chivalric and historical narratives and adapted into ballads, chapbooks, and penny histories, proliferated into the early modern period. Gleaning the most exciting episodic content from

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[52] *Shakespeare's Lost Play* Edmund Ironside, ed. Eric Sams (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), 5.2.1824-8).

[53] Erdricus, the Duke of Mercia, though he was promoted by Edmund's father Aethelred II from a ploughman to duke, sides with Cnut because he and his Danes will not remind Erdricus of his base origins. Although it was his own English who promoted him in the first place, the Danes apparently pay no attention whatsoever to such matters and so Erdricus feels safer with and more loyal to them. See 1.2.318-24.

[54] In the play, Queen Emma muses on the golden age before the coming of the Danes, when Normandy and England enjoy freedom. Emma laments that the English must endure "unknown enemies," while the Normans are "true-approvèd friends." See 4.2.1442-3.

[55] *Edmund Ironside*, 1.1.114-123.

[56] See Thomas, *Perception of the Past*, 6-7.

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medieval romances that were often incredibly long, early modern ballads and chapbooks would boil a chivalric hero's exploits down to a series of valiant encounters against his enemies. In turn, an English hero fighting the Danes became a tradition in ballads and other early modern works, spurred by the writings of antiquarians in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, who incorporated legendary deeds, battles, and heroes into local and national histories.

1.3   THE "ABSENT PRESENCE" OF THE DANES

The complete removal of Danes from England, whether by heroic English military triumph (in romance narratives) or Edward the Confessor's restoration of the Wessex line (in chronicle accounts) became the archetypical medieval and early modern model of England before the Conquest. Henry of Huntingdon writes definitively of the Danes in England having completely disappeared: they "conquered it by warfare, but afterwards, they perished" (*sed postea deperierunt*), soon followed by the Normans who still rule and "have dominion over the English at the present time."[57] The Danes and Scandinavian culture did indeed "disappear" from England as the pressures to assimilate and adopt their English neighbors' customs, language, religion, and laws superseded the conservation of strong ethnic affiliations; at the same time, this assimilation was not the narrative being told of the Danes in England by the vast majority of medieval texts. They were written out of the story of the English people.

Yet as a literary production the Danes in England survived for many centuries, consistently deployed as the un-English arbiters of injustice and intolerance, the very thing that

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[57] Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, 15.

needed to be ousted from England if it was to consider itself an ideal national community. In this sense, the Jews in England serve as a profitable contrast with the Danes. Expelled by Edward I in 1290 after two centuries of widespread anti-Semitic feelings, it was illegal to be an openly practicing Jew in England until a provisional right of return was passed under Cromwell in 1656. Nevertheless, in the absence of real Jews after 1290 there existed (according to Sylvia Tomasch) the "virtual Jew" who existed in a kind of "absent presence," there but not there; although openly practicing Jews were not permitted to reside in England, late medieval literature, especially devotional material, is rife with images of Jews.[58] Yet the Jews are not merely images of alterity, simplified others. Following Denise Despres, Colin Richmond, and James Shapiro, Tomasch argues that the Jew was central to "the construction of Englishness itself" in the late Middle Ages. Shapiro writes that "between 1290 and 1656 the English came to see their country defined in part by the fact that Jews had been banished from it."[59] For Tomasch, the Jew is an "enduring sign" that marks "the persistence of colonialism in England from the thirteenth into the fourteenth century" as the colonizing subjects, the English, employed the Jew as part of their "colonialist program."[60] In medieval English writing it was as if the Jews were expulsed over and over again as Christianity expressed a need to preserve Jews. For medieval Christians, Judaism was a "disavowed heritage," clearly "made into that which was definitively past" – but this was "a past that (spectrally) inhabits the present."[61]

Similar to the Danes in the English past, the very definition of a good society came to be one in which there were no Jews. The construction of Englishness was vital to some medieval

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[58] Sylvia Tomasch, "Postcolonial Chaucer and the Virtual Jew," in *The Postcolonial Middle Ages*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 243.

[59] James Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 42.

[60] Tomasch, "Postcolonial," 244.

[61] Steven F. Kruger, *The Spectral Jew: Conversion and Embodiment in Medieval Europe* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 29.

writers' conceptions of the good, Christian society; defining Englishness as embodying certain values at the expense of those it has expulsed is key to Chaucer's *Prioress' Tale* (to borrow one of Tomasch's examples), where Jewish presence and actions pollute Asia, which is implicitly contrasted with a purified England "whose sanitized state is founded on the displacement of the Jews."[62] Thus while actual (openly practicing) Jews may have been eliminated from England, the "virtual Jew" subsisted in a kind of absent presence. The Danes "disappearing" from England was a two-fold process: on the one hand they were pressured to assimilate as an increasingly homogenous English identity, subsuming competing ethnic identities, developed through the twelfth century; and on the other hand, they were consistently deployed by historical writers as "virtual Danes," there only to be defeated. In this sense both the Jew and the Dane played similar roles the in late medieval English writing, positioned as to better define what it is to be English, purified and whole.

When Anglo-Norman composers turned their attention to romance around in the middle of the twelfth century, they were drawn to stories of "assimilation, of homecoming, and of continuity."[63] Anglo-Norman romances, like English romances, are often set in the past, sometimes in the pre-Conquest insular past. They reiterated the status quo of the Anglo-Norman social order by providing foundation myths for the inter-connected families of the aristocracy, the patrons and audiences of romance. The romance hero and the court that enjoyed his adventures were engaged in a mutually beneficial relationship; the hero gave prestige to the court with his victories and the court's reputation and recognition confirmed his inherent value.[64]

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[62] Tomasch, 248.

[63] Rosalind Field, "Romance in England," in *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*, ed. David Wallace (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 161.

[64] Sarah Kay, *The* Chansons de geste *in the Age of Romance: Political Fictions* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 2.

English-language romance, which began to be written around the middle of the thirteenth century but reached its apogee through the next century, like its Anglo-Norman counterpart inherited the tendency to "encourage assimilation rather than resistance or resentment, acceptance rather than rebellion,"[65] and sometimes utilized the Anglo-Saxon past as a testing ground for contemporary values and ideals. Heng writes that the primary objects of romance's attention "are crises of collective and communal identity," including national, racial and Christian identity.[66] Romance narratives are often about searching for a "true" identity through love and chivalric exploits and the chivalric hero's negotiation of his social position.[67] As the chivalric hero discovers multiple but non-contradictory identities through performative action, his identity comes to reflect the ideals and desires of the larger community. National heroes, as Robert Rouse has suggested, are vitally important for the articulation of national identity.[68]

The Middle English historical romances that my dissertation examines – *Havelok the Dane*, *Guy of Warwick*, *Of Arthur and Merlin*, and *Horn Childe and Maiden Rimnild* – seek to explore, define, and extol English identity. These four chapters set out to characterize the relationship between the past and present in historical romances of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Each chapter addresses how and why expressions of English nationalism and literary English appear to have flourished simultaneously in the fourteenth century. The problem of identity – an exclusive category of belonging of which the individual agent is at least partially self-aware – is central to this dissertation; it explores the meanings of multiple discourses of national, ethnic, and religious identity in four historical romances. The writing of history is

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[65] Rosalind Field, "Romance as History, History as Romance," in *Romance in Medieval England*, ed. Maldwyn Mills, Jennifer Fellows, and Carol Meale (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1991), 164.
[66] Heng, *Empire*, 3.
[67] Gaunt, "Romance," 47.
[68] Robert Rouse, "Guy of Warwick as Medieval Culture Hero," in *Guy of Warwick: Icon and Ancestor*, ed. Allison Wiggins and Rosalind Field (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2007), 109.

essential to the development of national identity, persuading a group that they have illustrious ancestors and that they share cultural behaviors passed between generations. As English becomes recognizable as a "literary language"[69] with the emergence of mid-late fourteenth century writers like Chaucer and Gower, a tradition formed that assimilated earlier and current literary sources, drawing on and combining Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-Norman, Old French, Latin, Scandinavian, and Celtic source-material. Romance was central to the formation of an English literary tradition. Although it is difficult to draw a clear cause-and-effect relationship between the rise of Middle English romance in the thirteenth century and Chaucer, according to Cannon "the spirit of romance became the spirit of English literature."[70] Historical romances offered a unifying account of national origins and the national character by constructing chivalric adventures and massive pitched battles in which individual heroes embody national values of perseverance, courtly manners, devotion to a lady and to God, physical strength, and endurance. Each of my chapters focuses on a hero – Havelok, Guy of Warwick, Arthur, and Horn – whose narratives shift as their story is adapted into Middle English from earlier Anglo-Norman (and Old French, in the case of *Arthur and Merlin*) sources. As their heroic exploits were adopted into Middle English, Havelok, Guy, Arthur, and Horn all become figures on the hazy margins of history, the

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[69] Christopher Cannon characterizes literary English as a style that becomes its own subject, meaning that it becomes self-conscious of its own conventions. As early as c. 1412 Richard Hoccleve, in *The Regiment of Princes*, calls Chaucer "[t]he firste fyndere of our fair langage," charactering him as the inventor and founder of a recognizable tradition in which Hoccleve also writes. Cannon distinguishes between Hoccleve's "originator" model of Chaucer and Lydgate's characterization in *Life of Our Lady* (c. 1416), which positions Chaucer as a "goldsmith" spinning "rude" speech into literary language. Though distinctions must be drawn between the Hocclevean model of "boundless originality" (quoting Cannon) and Lydgate's improvement model, both writers are clearly depicting the arrival of a new style of English writing. See Thomas Hoccleve, *The Regiment of Princes*, ed. Charles R. Blyth (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1999), l. 4978; Joseph A. Lauritis, ed., *A Critical Edition of John Lydgate's* Life of Our Lady (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University, 1961), II.1628-37; Cannon, *The Making of Chaucer's English: A Study of Words* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 11-9.

[70] Christopher Cannon, *The Grounds of English Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 176.

locus of a collective remembrance that always uses, rather than reports, the past. It was primarily through historical romance narratives that a centralized English identity was concocted and developed, influencing a collective self-awareness of an English people with a shared past and a destined future. In the romances that serve as the primary material of my chapters, all four historical heroes were pitted against armies of Danes that were precisely like the romance heroes themselves: plastic and serviceable. Medieval romance heroes and villains are engaged in homologous fashions, fostering the illusion of a long and powerful tradition of national victories that justifies and explicates the present political order. The romances that I have selected as my primary texts each explore a different facet of the development of a national collective historical consciousness in the later Middle Ages. The first chapter on *Havelok* addresses the romance's reconciliation of national with regional and ethnic identities in Lincolnshire's past; the second chapter on Guy of Warwick speaks to the ways a romance hero could be transmuted and adopted across genres and centuries according to the present need for certain narratives of the past; the chapter on *Arthur and Merlin* examines the entwined reciprocity between chronicle writing and romance writing that licensed the composer to create an illusion of English power across time and space; and in the final chapter on *Horn Childe*, medieval English romance as a vehicle for a fantasized imagining of the inception of the nation and the origins of the establishment of English sovereignty.

While the Danes were almost always characterized as a pestilence that needed to be excised from England in order for its people to establish good laws and Christianity, my first chapter, "Blood and Belonging: *Havelok the Dane* and Historical Memory," examines a romance that offers an account of the Danes in the English past that differs from any other extant romance account of them, which is perhaps due to its production (and setting) in Lincolnshire, an area of

dense Scandinavian settlement. I address the economic and cultural ties between the "native"

Anglo-Saxon Lincolnshire populace and Scandinavian settlers, discussing Linconshire's contact

and affiliation with its Danish settlers and the contact merchants in the region continued to have

with northern European traders. Although precise economic data before the fifteenth century is

often very difficult, if not impossible, to obtain, it is entirely plausible that the assimilation of

Scandinavians with Anglo-Saxons in the ninth and tenth centuries had an economically

beneficial impact on the region, and that urban centers throughout England flourished under the

Danish kings Swein, Cnut, Harold Harefoot, and Harthacnut (c. 1013-4 and c. 1016-42). While I

do not argue for a definitive cause-and-effect connection between a mutually beneficial

economic situation and a cohesive Anglo-Scandinavian identity that emerges as its direct result, I

suggest that *Havelok* is evidence of a regional identity and ethnic affinity that existed alongside,

not in competition with, a larger English national identity. The romance thus attempts to

reconcile multiple communal identities. While the "nation" as a sociopolitical form dates only

from the eighteenth century,[71] the ideological sentiments that drive a group to think of itself as a

discrete people with shared customs, laws, language, and history are prevalent in a romance like

Havelok. This chapter argues that *Havelok* envisions the "nation" as a self-aware community by

stressing the continuity of law, justice, and right rule via proper inheritance, even as that

community consists of disparate ethnic groups (English and Dane). *Havelok* consistently

emphasizes the God-ordained right rule of the Danes in England and their maintenance of law

and order precisely because these are the aspects of English society that the Danes were taxed

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[71] I do not mean to imply that the impulses and sentiments that led to the development of the modern nation-state did not exist prior to the revolutionary period. Nationalism predates the nation; indeed, nationalism leads to the formation of nations, an axiom Ernest Gellner famously proposed. Medieval writings on England and the English people serve similar ideological purposes as post-eighteenth century literature on the nation: consolidating potentially competing identities to a unified, whole, national community. This issue is directly addressed in the Conclusion, esp. 2-9.

with attempting to destroy in chronicles and Anglo-Norman romances. The ideal of *Havelok* is not the national "purification" or renewal of English identity as a result of its contact with the Danes, but continuity; it defends settlement and assimilation as productive processes without the negative effects of a hybrid, multiethnic culture. What makes *Havelok* an anomaly among Middle English historical romances is its illustration of the ideal society: a national population bound not by blood ties but by each individual's willing contribution to creating and maintaining a economically viable England.

If *Havelok* serves as a portrait of the ideal kingdom with a flourishing economy, *Guy of Warwick* reflects the utilization of an idealized romance hero for national identity construction. Whereas Havelok is placed as the heroic centerpiece of a fleshed out world with the verisimilitude of economic reality, the world beyond Guy is blurred, making the knight-hero and the development of his identity the romance's central concern. The second chapter, "The Transformative Knight: Guy of Warwick at the Crossroads of Romance and History," examines the legendary medieval knight who over his very long (though now decidedly finished, at least in popular culture) career became a quasi-historical figure in the early modern period and a hero for child readers after the eighteenth century. Medieval historical romances were accepted as having significant historical value during and well beyond the Middle Ages, affecting how postmedieval audiences thought about the medieval past, romanticizing it by imagining medieval romances "as a form of history before historical consciousness" truly takes shape.[72] Nations require histories, and national identities need heroes like Guy, who was a heroic representative of a communal, national memory that romanced the English past. The protagonist-knight at the helm of a

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[72] John H. Ganim, "The Myth of Medieval Romance," in *Medievalism and the Modernist Temper*, ed. R. Howard Bloch and Stephen G. Nichols (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 151.

medieval romance narrative becomes the locus of identity construction: through him, the audience is invited to reflect on its own position in England, at times in a particular region (in Guy's case, Warwick), and in Christendom. As a hero saving the nation from invading Danes who threaten to overrun the country's core institutions and values, Guy's singlehanded triumphs across Europe and especially in England reflect the inherent rightness of English society itself, reveling in its past martial victories and its ability to resist colonization and settlement of outsiders. Guy's long career as a quasi-historical chivalric hero reveals the tightly interlaced relationship between historical romances and more conventional historical material in the late medieval and early modern periods. While by no means comprehensive of Guy's full career as a literary icon, the chapter explores how the legend of Guy reveals the real world impact medieval romances had as they became intertwined with political ambitions and the popular imagination. The Danes, I argue, are vital to the narrative of fantasized Anglo-Norman and Anglo-Saxon unity, as an English community unified against its enemies throughout history. Eager to align the new Norman aristocracy and monarchy with the past of their adoptive homeland, writers of post-Conquest Anglo-Norman and Latin chronicles of England cast individual Anglo-Norman knights against invading Danish swarms, having these knights defend England rather than invading it in the Conquest. My second chapter argues that the invasion of the Danes becomes the primary invasion narrative of England, taking on the themes and motifs of other invasion narratives while replacing more provocative narrative material like the Norman Conquest. *Guy of Warwick* features one of the most popular chivalric knights of medieval England, who happens to be an Anglo-Norman knight anachronistically cast in Anglo-Saxon England. Guy's single-handed victories against the Danes were used to bolster the prestige of the aristocracy in Warwick in the medieval period and later, in the early modern period, his exploits developed into national

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memories of past triumphs. The local uses of the *Guy* narrative also came to serve national ends. My pursuit of this national genealogy of the Middle English *Guy* encompasses earlier Norman and Anglo-Norman material, including *Gui de Warewic* and Dudo of St. Quentin's early-eleventh century *Historia Normannorum*, the earliest history of the Danish settlement in northern France. I examine how the process of ethnogenesis in both chronicle and romance crucially informed the national ambitions of a popular Middle English romance like *Guy*. I argue that this Middle English adaptation of earlier Latin and French sources constructs a rhetoric of English nationalism that validates the present political and social order by constructing a historical English community unified against its enemies throughout time.

Presenting the history of the land as exclusively English, rather than a story of disparate ethnic groups engaged in conquest, warfare, and uneasy settlement was characteristic of fourteenth-century Middle English historical romances. Even where potentially competing identity groups are shown to co-exist in England, as in *Havelok*, the endpoint of medieval historical romance is a single united kingdom ruled by a righteous, rightful Christian king maintaining peace and justice. Though the narratives and themes that the genre explores are highly variable, in general the medieval romance nearly always begins with a period of political and social stability that is suddenly broken and gradually restored by the end of the narrative, usually by a single knight serving as the central hero. In *Guy*, the English king Athelstan is helpless without his strongest noble, Guy; while he is shown to be a pious and wise king, Athelstan's chief recourse for repelling the Danes is praying for God's aid. Not surprisingly, the savior-noble Guy quickly became a role model and icon for earls of Warwick over multiple generations and not the chosen symbol for any king. Arthurian imagery, on the other hand, was lionized and manipulated by English kings from Henry III to Henry VIII.

Moving from reconciling regional and ethnic identities with a national English identity to the construction of national identity via identity construction of a savior-hero, the third chapter turns to the cultural arm of medieval nationalism: the anglicizing and "colonizing" of history. This chapter turns to the most famous of medieval heroes to explore how the medium of historical romance was utilized to redraft insular history, advancing an ideology of eternal English sovereignty. In "Our Blood and Our King: *Of Arthur and of Merlin* and the Eternal English," I focus on the earliest extant Arthurian romance in English, which attempts to repatriate Arthur as an English rather than a British hero.[73] In *Arthur and Merlin*, a largely neglected work in which the knights of the Round Table struggle against Danes bent on invading and conquering England, the history of the British Isles is presented as exclusively English history, and Arthur and the Britons lose their British identity and are remade as English figures. *Arthur and Merlin* radically redrafts the entire accepted narrative (as written by Bede and twelfth-century historical writers like Geoffrey of Monmouth, William of Malmesbury, and Wace), of the invasions of the Angles, Saxons, and the Jutes against Arthur's Celtic Britons as one of invading Danes against the English, thus turning what is called by Henry of Huntingdon the "plague" of Anglo-Saxon invasions into a victorious moment for the English. Hengist, the quasi-historical figure who led the initial Anglo-Saxon invasions into the British Isles, becomes the Danish war leader Angys, and Arthur, who for Geoffrey of Monmouth is a Briton ancestor to the Normans, becomes an English king. Though the Britons were modeled as heroic defenders against invading Saxons in Geoffrey of Monmouth's famous chronicle, *Arthur and Merlin* elides narratives of ethnic conflict, effectively subsuming British history within an English past. *Arthur*

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[73] As discussed in the chapter, I use the term "Briton" and "British" to mean the Christian Celtic people of Britain who inhabited the island when the Romans invaded and who were displaced to Wales, Cornwall, and Brittany when Germanic pagans invaded in the fifth and sixth centuries.

and Merlin anglicizes the past, projecting an idealized English historical community, homogenizing English history to promote and defend an ideology of eternal English sovereignty, justifying and defending the present order by "colonizing" history. The Danes in *Arthur and Merlin* are essential to early-fourteenth century conceptions of the process of history; England and its culture are not an accident of history but the inevitable result of past triumphs and the English are the natural and rightful possessors of their land. The romance elides over discontinuities and ruptures by projecting continuity onto and removing ethnic fissures from the past, inventing a fictive-historical space in order to remodel the past without historiographical limitations.

Following the work of R.R. Davies, who writes of the establishment of empire and English power in the later Middle Ages as a psychological process, this chapter positions *Arthur and Merlin* as a representative of the need for narratives of English unity and sovereignty through the past in the later Middle Ages. Potential regional and ethnic splits are elided over for national ones. Internal divides in the kingdom are presented only as political rather than ethnic or national disputes, and even these internal political disputes are handled and defused by Arthur so as to defend the country from the true enemies, the foreign Irish and Danes, people who can never be "made" English and deserve only to be destroyed. Characters are either "English" – accepting the rule of Uther and Arthur, speaking the language, fighting on the nation's behalf – or not. *Arthur and Merlin* demonstrates the essentially conservative nature of medieval English romance and the romance mode, medieval and later, in general. Romance was utilized in the fourteenth century as a vehicle for the spread of nationalist sentiment because it offered fantasies of single, national communities led by sovereign king re-establishing and maintaining ancient-seeming legal and cultural traditions.

Even where ethnic diversity is admitted to exist, as in *Havelok*, the endpoint of the medieval romance is always political and social unity under a strong central monarch. The "nation" as an expression of political, linguistic, ethnic, and religious solidarity pushes for a rhetoric of homogeneity and wholeness. In medieval English romance, this solidarity was represented by the king or, in some cases (as in the case of *Guy*), by the king and by his strongest and most loyal noble. *Horn Childe and Maiden Rimnild* narrates the founding of England led by a new king, Horn, who unites the northern kingdom of Northumbria with southern England. The final chapter, "Remembering the Danes: *Horn Childe and Maiden Rimnild* and Literary Tradition," considers this mid-fourteenth century romance via two chief approaches: first, its deployment of the Danes, who are drawn as an established stereotype rather than vibrant, organic figures; and second, the degree to which medieval romance was used as a means of imagining the inception of the nation and the ascension of a rightful, righteous sovereign. Horn's expulsion from his home kingdom of Northumberland, his quest across southern England and wooing of Rimnild, his martial travails and victories while using a pseudonym in Wales and Ireland, and his return to England as the first king of a united England, simultaneously examines the development of Horn's identity as he grows from a child to a man and England as it grows from a divided land to a united kingdom. The romance mode employs a very similar superstructure as the comic mode: beginning with order, devolving to disorder, and the establishment of a new, better order at the end of the narrative. Romance differs from comedy in its exploration of identity, adding the questing knight whose search for a renewed identity is the essential psychological quest underlying the knight's geographic, pious, and martial quests. It is this "identity quest" that makes medieval romance ideal as a genre exploring the construction of national identity.

By the middle of the fourteenth century, the Danes had become familiar literary figures deployed to make fictive texts appear to have a basis in historical reality. This chapter discusses the Danes as a literary production, as the composer of *Horn Childe*, well versed in contemporary romance tropes, adds the Danes (as well as geographic markers) to existing Anglo-Norman and Middle English Horn-material to create an illusion of historical verisimilitude. The intersection constructed by *Horn Childe* between historical romance and more conventional historiographic material had a profound impact on perceptions of the past among laypersons and historians and professional antiquarians through the medieval and early modern periods. While the romance's historical material is intended to appear to be the product of collective, oral "folk" memory, I argue that in reality it reveals the process of "cultural memory" in the late medieval period, by which I mean written discourse that speaks to the collective memory of a people. The end of the final chapter turns to representations of the Danes in popular memory in the early modern period, who continued to exist through the seventeenth century in a kind of absent presence, haunting the popular historical consciousness as a result largely of medieval historical romances.

2.0   BLOOD AND BELONGING: *HAVELOK THE DANE* AND HISTORICAL MEMORY

The historical romance *Havelok the Dane* employs late medieval theories of ethnicity and the nation by stressing the continuity of law, justice, and right rule via proper inheritance over heterogeneity. *Havelok* is consistently interested in the continuity of law, justice, and right rule, emphasizing problems of legitimate kingship, God-ordained right rule, and law and order not just because these are staple interests of Anglo-Norman and Middle English romances, but more importantly because these are precisely the things the Danes in medieval English chronicles and romances were accused of attempting to destroy. *Havelok* operates in a different framework from other Matter of England romances, offering a different account of the Vikings in England than chronicle accounts, though it seems to be quite aware of chronicle conventions. This chapter suggests that *Havelok* offers an account of Havelok and the Danes in the English past that likely reflects a Lincolnshire account of the Danes very different from texts produced outside areas of dense Scandinavian settlement.

2.1   ETHNICITY AND NATIONALISM IN *HAVELOK*

As far as its treatment of the Danes in English history is concerned, *Havelok the Dane* (ca. 1280-1300) is an anomaly among late-thirteenth and fourteenth-century English romances.[1] Of the romances that take place in pre-Conquest England featuring Danes, *Havelok* is the only text that presents Scandinavians in England not as pagan invaders but as Christian tradesmen and settlers, as having had a productive impact on the native English, both high- and low-born, and on the English monarchy. This has led some critics to consider the romance as a reflection of the ethnic loyalties of the East Anglian populace, where *Havelok* was probably composed. Scott Kleinman has argued that the East Anglian populace desired to see their forebears as productive

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[1] The narrative of *Havelok the Dane*, when compared with some of its contemporary romances, is relatively straightforward. Sometime in a hazy past ("bi are-dawes," l. 27), though considering the king of England's name, presumably during the Anglo-Saxon period,[1] Denmark and England experience parallel usurpation plots. We are first introduced to Athelwold, the virtuous, exemplary king of England, who is dying. Because his daughter Goldeboru is too young to rule, he entrusts his kingdom – all of England, as the text repeatedly makes clear – and his daughter to his steward Godrich who, like any medieval steward worth his salt, promptly throws Goldeboru in prison and takes England for himself and his heirs once the king has died. The scene then switches to Denmark, where the good king Birkabein, whose flawless kingly qualities are noted but not detailed like Athelwold's, is also dying. Making the same mistake as Athelwold, he entrusts the care of his kingdom and his three children including Havelok (the male heir) to his steward Godard, who slays Havelok's two young sisters and sets Havelok, still a small boy, out to sea to drown. Grim, a fisherman, is tasked with the job of drowning Havelok, but before he can do it, Grim sees a bright light shining out of Havelok's mouth, and a red cross emblazoned on his shoulder. Recognizing these as signs of his royal birth, the material markers that prove his status as rightful heir, Grim saves Havelok's life, and moves with the rest of his family to England for safety. (The text makes clear that the town of Grimsby is named for this very Grim.) Havelok grows up in a poor household, working for a living as a fisherman and a porter. Mistaking Havelok for a commoner, Godrich marries Goldeboru to him to assure that she cannot have royal claims to the throne. But on the night of their wedding Goldeboru sees the shining light and the red cross; she is then visited by an angel who explains the situation to her, while Havelok simultaneously dreams of his future possession of both the English and Danish kingdoms. They return to Denmark to avenge Havelok's sisters, though first Havelok poses as a merchant, winning over the Danish people, high and low (a phrase repeatedly used throughout) once the shining light and red cross are revealed. Once they have killed Godard and rejoiced at a festival with their new Danish subjects, they return to England, killing Godrich and taking back the English crown. Denmark and England are then united under Havelok and Goldeboru as the nobles of both kingdoms swear fealty to them. The king and queen dole out lands and titles to their allies, have fifteen children who all become kings and queens themselves, and all is set right in the end.

participants in the national story and as eventual settlers into the fabric of English identity, and that the English *Havelok* reflects a "process of East Anglian history-building, a learned and literate enterprise that attempted to establish an identity for the region."[2] Thorlac Turville-Petre has called *Havelok the Dane* a "revisionist" history" of the Viking settlement of northern England, which recent anthropological work has shown was massive.[3] For Turville-Petre, *Havelok* presents a "revisionist view" of the Vikings in England because it depicts the Danes becoming part of the English national stock by conveying a sense of "a society, a diversity of people together involved in the actions of just kings and faithless lords."[4] A story of Scandinavian settlement and assimilation might have been especially appealing to an audience with Scandinavian roots. *Havelok the Dane* suggests a Lincolnshire community with a very different opinion of Scandinavians in England's past than other Matter of England romances. The romance is a text offering a secular vision of the Lincolnshire past, emphasizing the mercantile aspects of Danish settlers because this is the contact Lincolnshire populations continued to have with northern European traders. Medieval historical romances and legendary figures like Havelok offered secular audiences a medium for exploring the meaning of the past without being confined to the material of chronicle narratives. The people of Lincolnshire at the turn of the fourteenth century might reacted to Scandinavians as ancestors rather than wrongful invaders. In *Havelok*, it is possible that we can glimpse a regional response to Scandinavians shared neither by chronicles nor by literature produced beyond pockets of the Danelaw.

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[2] Scott Kleinman, "The Legend of Havelok the Dane and the Historiography of East Anglia," *Studies in Philology* 100 (2003): 249.
[3] Thorlac Turville-Petre, *England the Nation: Language, Literature, and National Identity, 1290-1340* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 151.
[4] Turville-Petre, 154.

Though recent evidence has begun to show that Scandinavians probably settled in massive numbers in England, especially in the North and East, starting in the ninth century, this is not a conclusion that could be reached based on the evidence of medieval English literature. With the notable exception of *Havelok the Dane*, thirteenth- and fourteenth-century histories and romances indicate that after several centuries of violent and unjust invasions, the Danes were either totally ousted from England at the death of Harthacnut in c. 1042, when Edward the Confessor restored the Wessex line, or they remained a people apart. In either case, integration and settlement was not a reality or even an option. Despite recent research (see Hadley) that has suggested that Scandinavians settled in England, especially in the North and East, in massive numbers before the Norman Conquest, *Havelok* is anomalous among Middle English texts in depicting any settlement at all. There are few other contemporary literary works suggesting that Scandinavians had any kind of positive impact on English history,[5] and there are barely any medieval works suggesting that Scandinavians settled in England at all. Instead, among *Havelok*'s contemporary chronicles and romances, the Danes were either driven from England down to the last person once Harthacnut dies without an heir, restoring the Wessex line in Edward the Confessor, or they simply disappeared. Although it would have been impossible to remove or to demand the removal of all Scandinavians from England by as early as the end of the ninth century due to massive settlement,[6] this is precisely the story told in many fourteenth-century historical English romances. By the end of the ninth century, Anglo-Saxon England had

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[5] Two notable exceptions, related to the Middle English *Havelok the Dane*, are the *Lai d'Havelok* and the Havelok episode in Gaimar's *L'Estoire des Engleis* (discussed below).

[6] See Kelly DeVries, *The Norwegian Invasion of England in 1066* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1999), esp. 16-21. DeVries notes that no peace treaty signed by Alfred, the first English king to successfully resist Scandinavian invaders, demands the removal of Viking settlers. According to DeVries, this would have been impossible. Scandinavian settlers had adopted the institutions and culture of England, becoming Christian and using a Latin script.

become Anglo-Scandinavian England[7]; yet *Havelok* is the only Middle English historical romance reflecting this reality.

With the exception of *Havelok*, fourteenth-century historical romances mirror chronicles' the Dane-disappearance narrative, while embellishing them with touches of the fantastic like giants and dragons. At the end of these romances, the Danes are completely ousted from England, down to the last man, with no lasting effects and no leftover settlers. There is no integration because the Danes' sole desire is to dominate and subdue the English and to control England as feudal overlords, not to trade or settle peacefully. However, in *Havelok* the Danes do indeed trade with and live among the English, and no character besides the steward Godrich draws any distinction between the two peoples. Ultimately, *Havelok* depicts an aspect of the Scandinavian impact on England that is left out of most medieval chronicles and romances: their role as peaceful merchants and traders, not just violent, foreign invaders.

The originator of the "disappearance model" of the Danes appears to be Henry of Huntingdon, who wrote in his *Historia Anglorum* (ca. 1135) that after attacking England with cruelty for many years, the Danes "disappeared" (*deperierunt*) once the Norman conquerors take the land.[8] Historians working closer to the time of *Havelok*'s composition did not have a more nuanced viewpoint on what become of the Danes in England. Castleford's Chronicle (ca. 1330), a long verse chronicle recounting the traditional history of Britain from its foundation through c.

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[7] See H.R. Loyn, *The Vikings in Britain* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1977); William Kapelle, *The Norman Conquest of the North: The Region and its Transformation, 1000-1135* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979); *Cultures in Contact: Scandinavian Settlement in England in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries*, ed. D.M. Hadley and Julian D. Richards (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2000); Devries, *Norwegian Invasion*, esp. 16-21; Sir Frank Stenton, *The Danes in England: The Raleigh Lecture on History, British Academy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1927).

[8] Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum (History of the English People)*, ed. and trans. Diana Greenway (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 15.

1327 and written in a northern English dialect, portrays the Danes as being completely ousted from England at the death of Harthacnut:

> Qwen alle was ceste slik sorrow and dout*,   *When all sorrow and doubt ceased
> Þe Dakes* al slane, of lande put out,   *Danes
> Sua* in Englande na Dakes wer fonden,   *So
> Erls and barons assemblede to Londen.[9]

Castleford's Chronicle's account of the total disappearance of the Danes from England after the death of Harthacnut and the subsequent invitation to Edward the Confessor to return from Normandy to claim the throne reflects the dominant narrative in contemporary chronicles. The anonymous prose *Brut* chronicle, the most popular secular vernacular work in later medieval England, surviving in roughly 250 manuscripts and thirteen early printed editions in Anglo-Norman, Middle English, and later in Latin,[10] has the Danes comprehensively ousted from England twice and ultimately for all time. In the oldest version of the Anglo-Norman prose *Brut* (ca. 1272), drawing on Gaimar's chronicle, when Harthacnut dies, the English are glad to be rid of their oppressive overlords and the Danes "were all driven out of the land," as "the Danes left England so that they never again returned."[11] They do return with Harald Harefoot, but they are defeated by Harold's English forces so that "the Danes were all defeated, and those who remained alive fled to their ships and returned to their country with great shame."[12]

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[9] *Castleford's Chronicle, or the Boke of Brut*, ed. Caroline D. Eckhardt, 2 vols., EETS o.s. 305, 306 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), ll. 31124-7.

[10] See the Introduction to Julia Marvin's edition and translation, *The Oldest Anglo-Norman Prose* Brut *Chronicle*, ed. and trans. Julia Marvin (Cambridge: The Boydell Press, 2006), especially 1-15.

[11] *"[I]l furent tretuz enchacez hors de la terre après la mort le Roi Hardeknut…En ceste manere voiderount les Daneis Engleterre qe onqes pus ne reuindrent,"* in *The Oldest Anglo-Norman Prose* Brut *Chronicle*, trans. Julia Marvin, 226-7.

[12] *"e trestuz les Daneis furent desconfiz, e ceux qe remistrent en vie senfuirent a lor niefs e returnerent en lor pais oue graunt hounte,"* Marvin, 238-9.

Even when medieval historians recognized that there were descendants of Scandinavian settlers living in England, they remained a people apart and their presence remained problematic at best. Robert of Gloucester, an historian writing around the mid-to-late-thirteenth century, though he does not claim that the Danes vanished, still does not see them as having settled, writing, "Of the folc of denemarch that ne beth not yet isome" ("the Danish people that are not yet reconciled") in England, even though Scandinavians had begun settling at least three centuries earlier.[13] Robert's point contradicts Danish "disappearance" claims but does not reflect the social reality of thirteenth-century England; it implies that the Danes will forever be a people apart, and that assimilation into the English community was not possible for those of Scandinavian extraction. Turville-Petre notes that in chronicles like Robert's "it is impossible to be a loyal Englishman and at the same time to have pride in one's Danish ancestry."[14]

In the *Descriptio Cambriae* (*The Description of Wales,* c. 1194), Gerald of Wales differentiates between the two-part singing style among the English of the north ("across the Humber and in Yorkshire") with the style of the English in general, attributing the difference not to disparate ethnicities or bloodstock but to Danish domination: "As the English in general do not adopt this way of singing, but only those who live in the north, I think that these latter must have taken their part-singing, as they did their speech, from the Danes and Norwegians, who so often invaded those parts of the island and held them longer in their dominion."[15] Gerald neither explicitly states nor implicitly suggests that the northern English have assimilated English and Scandinavian blood. In this account, the northern English did not integrate with and descend

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[13] *The Metrical Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester*, ed. William Aldis Wright (Wiesbaden: Kraus Reprint, 1965), ll. 51-3.

[14] Turville-Petre, 151.

[15] Gerald of Wales, *The Journey Through Wales/Description of Wales*, trans. Lewis Thorpe (New York: Penguin Books, 1978), 242-3.

from Scandinavian settlers, but show marks of Scandinavian influence because they were held

under the Danish boot heel for longer than other parts of England. Northern English culture,

represented by the shibboleth of two-part singing, is the result of temporary force rather than

permanent assimilation. Thus even as Gerald recognizes the increased Scandinavian influence in

the history and culture of the North, he ascribes this influence not to peaceful integration but to

their unjust supremacy over the native English.

Ultimately, it is too simplistic to see the Danes as having been totally absorbed or totally

separated from their native English neighbors. The Danelaw was not merely a geographical

location; instead, it signified that England was not one homogenous society. G.O. Sayles has

shown how England was the "home of two types of civilization with different racial

composition, institutions, and laws and with social and economic structures of their own"; but

this does not mean that they remained completely isolated from another. For Sayles,

> The fundamentally common Germanic origin of their race and speech, the
> incentive to unity of a common religion, and the absence of great physical barriers
> to shut the Danes, as they shut the Welsh, from the rest of England, made it soon
> possible for them to live in peace side by side, and, though only after the lapse of
> centuries, to become properly assimilated. There was no underlying bitterness to
> prevent the ultimate production of an undivided community.[16]

A text like *Havelok the Dane*, reflecting the interests of a broad, urban audience rather than the

patronage of a lord and which was most likely meant to be recited aloud is just the sort of text

that might reflect, after the lapse of centuries, the assimilation of Danish settlers into the fabric of

English life and culture. Medieval perceptions of national difference were simultaneously

perceptions of racial difference; if the Danes accepted Christianity and began to speak the native

language, then "after the lapse of centuries" their "racial profile" might have been perceived to

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[16] G.O. Sayles, *The Medieval Foundations of England* (London Methuen, 1945), 139.

have altered. Jeffrey Cohen has recently offered a more nuanced view of the Vikings that takes into account postcolonial theory in his reading of medieval identity formation. For Cohen, the Danes did not simply disappear, but were absorbed into Englishness:

> The Danes of the Danelaw were not exactly absorbed; they did not completely vanish. Rather the Danes became anglicized while the nearby English adopted Scandinavian ways, precipitating a hybrid culture that became even more complex with the arrival of the Normans. Likewise with post-conquest England: by the time the Normans began to self-identify as English, England was an inalterably compound expanse, a space where both groups had been profoundly transformed.[17]

Scandinavians in England, for Cohen, were not absorbed into England via blood transfusions, mixings, or purifications, as Sayles might have it; rather, their culture and their language became slowly adopted over time.

Assimilation, meaning political, cultural, and religious unity between Danes and English, is precisely the endpoint of *Havelok*. At the end of the narrative, after having fifteen children who all become kings and queens with Goldeborough, the heir to the English throne, Havelok's Danish blood is infused – legitimately, rightfully, legally, as the romance continuously insists – with English blood. It is not implied that Englishness, the crown, or the customs and laws of either land are altered from the beginning of the romance, when Athelwold, Goldeborough's father, rules England and Birkabein, Havelok's father, rules Denmark. The destruction of England is not at stake in *Havelok* as it is in other historical romances featuring invading Danes; instead, it is continuity that is at stake. The good rule of Athelwold at the beginning of the romance is renewed and maintained by his rightful heir, and the proper royal line – now joined with Danish blood – is restored after the rupture caused by the treachery of Godard and Godrich.

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[17] Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Hybridity, Identity, and Monstrosity in Medieval Britain: On Difficult Middles* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 24.

Havelok the Dane, as a response to and revision of depictions of the Danes as wrongful usurpers propagated by post-Conquest histories, uses similar mechanisms and themes as these histories – right rule, continuity of legal traditions and justice, and ethnic identity construction. *Havelok* is aware of depictions of Danes that were common in chronicles, which over the next century were to become common fodder for Middle English historical romances, using the language of "Dane-baiting" in chronicles to show how such depictions are ultimately unfair and unjustifiable. Havelok's capacity to become Anglo-Danish is a symbol for the two peoples being able to meld into a new whole rather than having to merely co-exist. His ethnicity – and, by implication, the concept of ethnicity in the work as a whole – is founded on his adherence to the shared law-codes of his own Danish father, the king Birkabein, and Goldeboru's English father, the king Athelwold.

Recent studies on the construction of ethnic identity have shown that ethnic identity is not an objective phenomenon, but rather a construct that may be mobilized for political conflicts in order to consolidate one's sense of community and shared identity in the face of the enemy. Ethnicity is now seen as a socially constructed identity marker. Like ethnicity, nationality is no longer seen as an objective classification, but a matter of identification, a "social process in which self-identification exists in a close relationship with identification by others and identification of others."[18] Feelings of nationalism are not a natural precursor to the formation of nations, but a constructed group identity that invents nations; in Gellner's poignant proposition, "Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness; it invents nations where they

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[18] Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe*: *Conquest, Colonization, and Cultural Change, 950-1350* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), quoted in John Gillingham, "Henry of Huntingdon and the Twelfth-Century Revival of the English Nation," from *Concepts of National Identity in the Middle Ages*, ed. Simon Forde, Lesley Johnson, and Alan V. Murray (Leeds: University of Leeds, 1995), 75-6.

do not exist."[19] An early critic of modern conceptions of race, the nation, and ethnicity, Ernest Renan posited the idea in a now-famous 1882 lecture that the ethnic make-up modern nations consists of a "cauldron" in which "the most diverse elements have together been simmering," that national identities are "made and unmade."[20]

Renan's "cauldron theory" can be productively applied to *Havelok*, which proposes a new English identity founded on a mixture of Danish and English ethnicities. There is no palpable difference between England and Denmark at the beginning of the romance and at the end; the ultimate endpoint is continuity, not change, and the establishment of Havelok on the English throne is a renewal of the order of Athelwold at the beginning of the narrative. Instead of being depicted as two distinct ethnic communities distinguished and separated by blood-ties, in *Havelok*, the Danes and the English share values of right, good laws, and Christianity, and it is ultimately their shared values that allow Havelok and his fellow Danes to settle in England to become English. In *Havelok*, it is the usurpers, Godard and Godrich, who are clearly ostracized as dangerous enemies, and both of these figures mobilize constructed ethnicities for political gain. Havelok's ultimate victory, which leads to a long-lasting peace between the two nations rather than the wholesale destruction and subjugation of either one, is not a victory for the glory of Denmark alone, but a victory for both Denmark and England. Rather than being just a "national" victory, the true victor that emerges is a newly integrated community forged by the mixing of Danish and English blood through the marriage of Havelok and his English queen Goldeboru. The unambiguous loser is not the English army that has been defeated in battle –

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[19] Ernest Gellner, *Thought and Change* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 169.
[20] Ernest Renan, "Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?" ("What is a nation?"), in *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi K. Bhabha (London: Routledge, 1990), 15.

they quickly repent their error, begging Havelok's forgiveness and swearing fealty – but Godrich, who recognizes and exploits tensions between Dane and Englishman.

Medieval theories of nations held national populations to be eternal, having and maintaining an originary homogeneity; thus they needed pasts to affirm the present.[21] It was through the writing of history, through the creation of a "rich legacy of memories,"[22] that nations were offered as timeless identities. At its core, *Havelok* is a romance of identity construction between two nations: its narrative explores the struggles and eventual triumph of a nation, celebrating the "marriage" of Denmark and England to form one unified whole. It is essentially an allegory of settlement and ethnic hybridity in lieu of the greater national good. Like romance heroes and ladies, the kings, hero, and lady of *Havelok* are idealized, and they must suffer before

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[21] Medieval accounts of national identities as pure, timeless, homogenous entities were based on biblical sources. *Genesis* recounts the divvying up of the world after the fall of the Tower of Babel. Before the Tower was built, all the world's people spoke a single language, but since humankind refused to accept limitations, God dispersed them all over the earth, thereby establishing the nations of the world divided by language. Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies,* a seventh-century compendium of universal knowledge, closely follows the biblical account of the origins of the world's divided nations. For Isidore, as in the Old Testament, nations arose from languages, rather than languages from nations. After Babel, nations, separated by language, took on their peculiar characteristics as a result of environment. Every *gens*, or nation, has innate physical and moral characteristics that are shared by a homogenous population: "People's faces and coloring, the size of their bodies, and their various temperaments correspond to various climates. Hence we find that the Romans are serious, the Africans changeable, and the Gauls fierce in nature and rather sharp in wit." Isidore neatly divides the world into seventy-three peoples (diverging slightly from the counts in the books of *Genesis* and *Chronicles* of seventy-two), naming all of them and attempting in a sentence or two to trace the origins of each one's name. For the Britons, Isidore writes that they are so named in Latin because they are brutes (*brutus*), adding only that "their nation is situated within the Ocean, with the sea flowing between us and them, as if they were outside our orbit," which he cites from Cicero. For Isidore, uncovering the origins of a nation's name is equivalent to uncovering their origins as a people, a distinct and separate community whose characteristics, like their names, are permanent throughout time. Regino of Prüm's (d. 915) declaration that the nations of the world are distinguished by customs, language, law, and descent (*genere, moribus, lingua, legibus*) was already a well-established idea by the early-tenth century. Laymen would likely have agreed with Regino's idea of peoples as cohesive units of custom and law, as "the general ideas about peoples as real and permanent entities which they embodied, and the desire for a sense of corporate identity which they fulfilled, were probably shared by laity as well as clergy." See Isidore of Seville, *The Etymologies,* trans. Stephen A. Barney, W.J. Lewis, J.A. Beach, and Oliver Berghof (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), IX.2.102-5; Susan Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe, 900-1300* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), esp. 252-8; Robert Bartlett, 197-203.

[22] Renan, 19-20.

they can come together happily. The sovereigns and rightful heirs of England and Denmark are symbolic of the nations as a whole: the idealized kings of both England and Denmark, Athelwold and Birkabein, respectively, and their idealized heirs, Goldeboru and Havelok, are the best their nations have to offer in terms of beauty and morals but also strength in the case of Havelok. The Christian, lawful values of both nations are embodied in the identities of Havelok and Goldeboru as the rightful heirs; they implicitly promise to continue the good rule of their fathers by virtue of their shared values. The exploration of identity is central to romance.[23] According to Christopher Cannon, the projection of a collective group's identity onto a particular individual, "developing their ethics by way of that's knight's successes and failures," is typical of medieval romance.[24] Whereas twelfth-century French romances present an idealized aristocratic world in which the questing knight-hero defends the values of his aristocratic milieu while at the same time constructing that very value-system by unflinchingly engaging in certain chivalric behaviors,[25] later Middle English romances expand their worlds to also depict mercantile and middle class characters. The terms of medieval romance demand that a hero and a heroine embody the best qualities of their societies, and that moral perfection is equaled by physical perfection. Goldeboru is "þe fairest wman on liue" (l. 281)[26], and Havelok is chosen by Godrich to marry Goldeboru because Havelok meets Athelwold's requirement that her husband be "þe beste, þe

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[23] On the predominance of identity as a theme across medieval romance, see Roberta Krueger, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Romance* (Cambridge, UK: University of Cambridge Press, 2000). Phillipa Hardman has written that "the subject of identity if the matter of all romance" ("Introductison," in Phillipa Hartman, ed. *The Matter of Identity in Medieval Romance* [Cambridge, UK: University of Cambridge Press, 2002], 1).

[24] Christopher Cannon, *Middle English Literature*: *A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008), 16.

[25] Julia Nelson Couch notes that the deeds of knights in prototypical romance narratives reaffirm "the particular social identity of an empowered, glorified nobility" while at the same time allowing for an exploration of the individual identity of the knight. See Julie Nelson Couch, "The Vulnerable Hero: Havelok and the Revision of Romance," *Chaucer Review*, Volume 42, Number 3, 2008, pp. 330-1.

[26] All references to *Havelok the Dane* refer to *Havelok the Dane*, ed. G.V. Smithers (New York: Clarendon Press, 1987). Line numbers will be provided for all subsequent references to the text.

fairest, þe strangest" man (l. 1082) in England. Havelok and Goldeboru are symbols for their nations, and their marriage and joining of Danish and English bloodlines suggests a much larger process of assimilation occurring in Lincolnshire. In that sense, in *Havelok* we view Renan's cauldron firsthand, as the composer stirs together two ethnicities to form a larger, better whole, a new England infused with Danish blood.

2.2   LINCOLNSHIRE CONTACT WITH THE DANES

In *Havelok*, Danish culture – their religion, language, customs – is conspicuously absent. There is no suggestion that they speak their own language, that they are pagans, that they eat different foods, or that their society is structured differently than the English. The composer exhibits no knowledge of Scandinavian customs or language or of the geography of Denmark itself. There is no indication of a distinct Danish culture at all; instead, the Danes seem to share the customs and manners of the English. The romance emphasizes the absolute similarity of England and Denmark, and the subsequent ease with which a member of Denmark might assimilate himself into English society.

For the thirty years of Cnut's reign (c. 1016-42), England was part of a vast Scandinavian empire that stretched across Denmark, Norway, and parts of Sweden. Cnut was hardly an oppressive overlord: he negotiated with the English, converted to Christianity, and in many ways maintained the laws of his Anglo-Saxon predecessors. Neither was Cnut a parvenu foreigner completely alien to the laws and culture of England. Scandinavians had long settled and assimilated into English society; from the very early stages of Viking settlement of England, English rulers had "to devise strategies to facilitate the incorporation of the settlers into the

social, political, and legal structure of England."[27] Diplomatic negotiations between the Danish and English were common; over successive generations from the later ninth century onwards, Scandinavian settlers and their descendants had to be incorporated into the English kingdom. While the kingdom that Cnut inherited was to some degree ethnically divided between an Anglo-Scandinavian North and an Anglo-Saxon South and West, it is quite unclear how divided it would have seemed to Englishpersons at the time. Some influential Englishmen fought on the side of the Danes; Aethelred in the early eleventh century used Scandinavians as soldiers.[28] Indeed, England had been intimately connected with the Scandinavian world for centuries, primarily via mercantile connections. Anglo-Scandinavian trade probably reached its peak during the reign of Cnut.

Regular exchanges between eastern England and Scandinavia continued well beyond the period of heavy Scandinavian settlement in England in the later ninth and tenth centuries, and these connections must have had a significant effect on the social fabric of many communities. During Cnut's reign, a large Scandinavian community emerged in London, especially in the western and southern suburbs. When he died and power was reestablished to the Wessex royal line, England continued to trade with Vikings and remained within the trading purview of the Scandinavian world. Five churches in London were dedicated to St. Olaf of Norway, who died in 1030; judging by the date of his death, it is likely that these churches were dedicated after Cnut's death in 1035.[29]

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[27] D.M. Hadley, *The Viking in England: Settlement, Society, and Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), 67.
    [28] M.K. Lawson, *Cnut: The Danes in England in the Early Eleventh Century* (London: Longman, 1993), 47.
    [29] Richard Britnell, *Britain and Ireland, 1050-1530: Economy and Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 101. While precise details of the nature of the trading between England and

English contact with Scandinavians did not suddenly begin when the first Viking raiding ships appeared off the coast; Anglo-Saxons had to some degree always lived within a Scandinavian or northern European world, migrating from northern Germany and from Jutland in modern-day Denmark in the fifth and sixth centuries.[30] The English reigns of the Danes Swein, Cnut, and Cnut's two sons, Harold and Harthacnut, were, according to M.K. Lawson, "natural to a long-established order"; the English and Scandinavians shared a common Germanic background, probably sharing social customs and law to a significant degree.[31] Some recent studies have argued for a very close kinship between the English and Scandinavians, suggesting that England actually benefitted in many ways from the settlement of the Danes.[32] From a southern English perspective and from the Christian perspective of the monasteries that were producing histories of England, the settlement of the Danes must have looked very different than from the perspective of townspeople in cities like York, Bristol, or Lincoln. Though it is difficult to definitively quantify economic activity in this period since economic statistics are scarce in English towns before the coming of the Vikings, it is possible that many areas of England actually enjoyed a considerable economic boost and that some urban centers grew due to the influx of Scandinavians. There is clear evidence of urban expansion throughout the Danelaw in the ninth and tenth centuries due to the growth of trading contacts locally, nationally, and between England and Scandinavia. Though it cannot be conclusively proven that this growth was

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Scandinavia cannot be ascertained, but it is probable that England imported furs, amber, and whetstones and exported wheat and cloth, as well as silver coin to the Baltic states and Scandinavia.

[30] Leach writes: "While most of us recognize the Scandinavian origin of Danes and Normans, we have not so generally recognized that the Angles and Jutes were also Scandinavian in origin. But evidence has accumulated to show that they too had their home for centuries in Denmark and were allied in blood and customs to the men of the North." Henry Goddard Leach, *Angevin Britain and Scandinavia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1921), 3.

[31] Lawson, *Cnut*, 1-3.

[32] In addition to Lawson, see D.M. Hadley, *The Northern Danelaw: Its Social Structure, c. 800-1100* (London: Leicester University Press, 2000).

directly related to Scandinavian influence, it is unquestionable that there was rapid urban economic development under Scandinavian rule: York, Lincoln, Tetford, Norwich, and Stamford all experienced urban expansion in the late ninth through tenth centuries.[33] From the ninth century onwards, York and Lincoln certainly benefitted from their commercial contacts with Scandinavia; the pottery industries of Norwich, Thetford, and Stamford arguably owe their inception to commercial ties with Scandinavia; and the prosperity of Chester and Exeter in the tenth century, as well as Bristol's emergence as a port in the early-eleventh century, were probably due to trade with the Norse in Ireland.[34] It was primarily through Scandinavian seamen and merchants that England at the time of the Conquest was linked economically with parts of the continent, and it was because of these European commercial connections that a rapidly emerging merchant class appeared in thriving port cities and coastal towns such as London, Southampton, Dover, and Ipswich.[35] In addition to being highly skilled warriors, sailors, and shipbuilders, the Vikings were comprised of equally skilled merchants, and it is precisely this economic aspect of Scandinavian culture that is emphasized in *Havelok the Dane*.

From cultural and linguistic perspectives, Anglo-Saxon England shared many attributes with Scandinavian peoples. From the ninth century onwards, the English language on the whole, and especially in the North, became a hybrid of Scandinavian and English, not only borrowing vocabulary but also becoming structurally altered both syntactically and grammatically.[36] The language spoken in England and the languages spoken in Denmark and Norway were seen as

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[33] Hadley, *The Northern Danelaw*, 31.
[34] Lawson, 3.
[35] Graeme Donald Snooks, "The dynamic role of the market in the Anglo-Norman economy and beyond, 1086-1300," in *A Commercializing Economy: England 1086-c. 1300*, ed. Richard H. Britnell and Bruce M.S. Campbell (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 37.
[36] Lawson, 5; see also Otto Jespersen, *Growth and Structure of the English Language*, 10th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 60-77.

similar enough that the Icelandic *Gunnlaug's Saga* (ca. late-thirteenth century) says that "the language in England was the same as that spoken in Norway and Denmark" at the turn of the eleventh century, but that "there was a change of language when William the Bastard conquered England."[37] The evidence of place-names – including very small geographical features like the names of fields – suggests Scandinavian settlement in England on a massive scale. Scandinavians and the English seem also to have shared certain folklore traditions, such as the legend of Weyland the Smith, who appears in the Anglo-Saxon poem *Deor* (ca. tenth century) as well as the *Poetic Edda*, a collection of Old Norse poems in alliterative verse (Weyland also gets a brief mention in *Horn Childe and Maiden Rimnild*). *Beowulf*, which has become the iconic cultural artifact of the Anglo-Saxons, does not mention Britain or England even once, though it is of course written in English. It deals instead with the deeds of Scandinavians without any notice that they are aliens or wrongdoers, and it was written as late as the ninth or tenth century when the Viking invasions of the British Isles were well underway.

By the turn of the tenth century, relations between the settled Danes of the North and East and the indigenous English had changed from antagonistic to relatively benign. Danish armies had been established for at least a generation: the English were becoming familiar with their language and customs and the Danes had begun to accept Christianity.[38] The areas under Danish control, the Danelaw, the essential heart of which was in the North between the Rivers Tees and Welland, were not uniform across all regions; the "social order" differed depending on the history of settlement and the distance from the eastern coastline.[39] Scandinavian settlement was heaviest in the shires on both sides of the Wash, especially Norfolk, Suffolk, and Lincolnshire,

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[37] *The Saga of Gunnlaug Serpent-Tongue*, trans. Katrina C. Attwood, in *The Sagas of the Icelanders: A Selection* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 2000), 572.

[38] F.M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 322.

[39] Stenton, *Danes,* 13.

and throughout the Anglo-Scandinavian period the population of these regions formed the backbone of the Danish regime.[40] In East Anglia and Northumbria most especially, Danish influence endured; the region developed a "distinctive form of rural society" with many Scandinavian features resisting the drift towards manorialism.[41] Judging by the evidence of personal names, Lincolnshire was replete with the descendants of Scandinavian settlers; in the eleventh century, roughly forty percent of its population had names of Scandinavian origin (whereas outside the Danelaw, names of Scandinavian origin were uncommon).[42] During the period of Scandinavian control in the late ninth and tenth centuries, the city of Lincoln experienced considerable growth according to archeological excavations.[43] Precise dating of industrial activity in the early medieval period is often not possible; nonetheless, despite these difficulties it is possible to attribute tenth-century urban expansion in the north and east midlands to the Scandinavian conquest, especially to the growth of the pottery industry.[44] Though rapid urban development in the later ninth and tenth centuries was not a phenomenon pertaining only to areas of Scandinavian settlement, the fastest growth appears to have occurred in these places.[45] The material evidence from these areas suggest a "hybrid artistic culture" rather than unadulterated Scandinavian work; it appears that the indigenous English population worked among the new Scandinavian settlers, creating work to appeal to both populations in burgeoning manufacturing and trading centers. It may have been the Scandinavian conquests themselves that initially caused urban growth: after disruptions to the political and administrative systems that

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[40] Harald E. Heyman, *Studies on the Havelok-Tale* (Upsala: Wretmans Tryckeri, 1903), 7.
[41] Stenton, *Danes*, 13.
[42] Cecily Clark, *Words, Names, and History*: *Selected Writings of Cecily Clark*, ed. Peter Jackson (Rochester, NY: D.S. Brewer, 1995), 247-9.
[43] Hadley, *Vikings*, 163.
[44] Hadley, *Vikings*, 174.
[45] Hadley, *Vikings*, 181.

weakened tenurial control, many rural dwellers may have been more willing to move to new manufacturing centers for work.[46]

Unlike *King Horn*, *Havelok* takes place in the real world milieu of towns like Lincoln and Grimsby, and quite unlike a typical wandering knight who stumbles upon magical and perilous castles, when Havelok leaves his foster parents' boat-home, he starves and must find work to make money to feed himself. Lincoln in particular is depicted as a thriving commercial hub, where trade, money, and work are essential to the well-being of the populace. *Havelok* was certainly composed by 1310 at the latest, before the devastation of the Black Death turned Lincoln into virtually a single-street city, desolate and impoverished, by the end of the fifteenth century.[47] Like an increasing proportion of the English rural population from the eleventh through fourteenth centuries, Havelok migrates to an urban center to find work. At the turn of the fourteenth century, roughly fifteen to twenty percent of the English population was urban, mostly owing to towns in the south and east. The period between ca. 1050 and 1300 saw a proliferation of towns and markets; by 1300, the population of London may have been as large as 80,000, making it one of the most populous cities in Europe. Its growth was rapid; in just a century, it had probably doubled in size.[48] Such urban growth, both in the Anglo-Scandinavian period and the later Middle Ages, depended on migrant workers like Havelok, and the inhabitants of a city like Lincoln must have been aware that newcomers were essential to economic prosperity. In the early fourteenth century around the time of the composition of *Havelok*, Lincoln continued to

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[46] Hadley, *Vikings*, 182.
[47] J.L. Bolton, *The Medieval English Economy, 1150-1500* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Littlefield, 1980), 249.
[48] Britnell, *Britain and Ireland*, 138-40.

attract more immigrants from all over the East Midlands than other nearby towns such as Nottingham and Leicester, which were mostly populated by people from surrounding villages.[49]

Havelok reflects a real-world milieu of markets, money, and trade; we witness Havelok working for a living as a scullion (a lowly kitchen servant), and we see Grim regularly going to Lincoln to sell the fish that he catches in order to feed his family. The romance appears to be aware of the economic realities of commerce and money. When Grim decides to move his family to England from Denmark for fear of Godard, his livelihood changes from farm-based to sea-based out of economic necessity, presumably because it is fish, not cattle and grain, that Grim is best able to trade and sell in Lincolnshire. Before he leaves Denmark, he sells off

al his corn*,	*grain*
Shep wit wolle, neth wit horn*,	*cattle*
Hors and swin, geet wit berd*,	*goats*
Þe gees, þe hennes* of þe yerd (ll. 700-3)	*hens*

Grim turns his commodities into cash, which provides him with enough capital to set up "a litel cote" (l. 738, a small cottage) and begin his fishing trade in Lindsey, where the family lands in England. Some of the commodities he sold off in Denmark are precisely the things Grim trades for when he begins trading in England, when he no longer owns a farm:

Hise pokes* fulle of mele an korn,	*bags*
Netes flesh*, shepes and swines (ll. 781-2)	*beef*

Once his business is up and running, Grim prospers as a fisherman, so that "Kam he neuere hom hand-bare" (l. 767, "He never came home empty-handed"). Grim is well-aware of the reality of market rates; after a list of his catches that includes twelve different fish, Grim sells these particular commodities in every town and farm that he can. But when he catches the "grete

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[49] Alan Vince, "The New Town: Lincoln in the High Medieval Era (c. 900-c. 1350)," in *The City by the Pool: Assessing the archeology of the city of Lincoln*, ed. David Stocker (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2003), 166.

laumprei" (l. 772), he is sure to make his way to Lincoln to sell it, where he is successful, selling everything and counting his pennies (ll. 776-7). Later in the romance, it is clear that lamprey would have fetched a greater value than most of the other fish Grim catches and sells anywhere; it is named as one of

> Þe beste mete[s]
> Þat king or cayser wolde ete (ll. 1725-6)

Thus Grim's decision to sell a catch of greater value portrays Lincoln as the primary urban trading center of the East Midlands, and Grim and Havelok exist not in a world of chivalric values but in the real world of economic value, of hard work leading to prosperity and money as the primary source of value.[50]

The world of *Havelok* is conceived in economic terms; money and trade are the primary emphasis of at least the first third of the romance. In the encomium for the English king Athelwold that opens the romance, Athelwold is praised first for his love of Holy Church and second for the flourishing of commerce that occurs under his tenure. Under Athelwold, those who would disrupt the workings of licit business, "[v]tlawes and theues" (l. 41), are all hanged, and Athelwold cannot be persuaded by the workings of illicit business: "For him ne yede gold ne fe" (l. 44, he cannot be bribed). As a result, the economy of England thrives, as any person with "red gold upon hijs bac" (l. 47) is guaranteed not to be waylaid in the course of his travels. The safe and free circulation of merchants is essential to the economic well being of the kingdom:

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[50] For a discussion of the economic realism of *Havelok*, see Roy Michael Liuzza, "Representation and Readership in the Middle English *Havelok*," *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, Vol. 93, No. 4 (Oct., 1994), 504-19, esp. 508-12. Smithers suggests that the composer might have based the market scenes on first-hand observations of real life at Lincoln. The romance alludes to "þe brigge" at lines 876 and 882 as the place where the earl's cook bought fish and meat, i.e. as a market; a writer in 1737 speaks of a fish market "between the Stonebow and the High Bridge." See Smithers, 109n.

> Þanne micthe chapmen fare
> Þuruth Englond wit here ware,
> And baldelike* beye and sellen   *baldly*
> Oueral þer he wilen dwellen (ll. 51-4)

The ideal circumstances in England, according to *Havelok*, are those in which commerce can be conducted licitly and freely and merchants need not fear being robbed of their gold. England flourishes when it is economically vibrant, and this vibrancy depends on markets allowing for upstanding foreign tradesman and migrant workers such as Grim, his sons, and Havelok to partake in them. In *Havelok*, the arrival of Danes does not signal the destruction of England's religious and economic vitality; instead, the Danes augment it. Open and free trade that tolerates the inclusion of foreign merchants, rather than closed, regionalized markets, determines economic prosperity in *Havelok*. The romance's ethos is that anyone who is willing to work hard, be morally righteous, and contribute to the business workings of the city and towns ought be accepted into the fold of England.

Havelok envisions idealized Lincolnshire and English communities that cut across socioeconomic divides, as courtly and bourgeois societies are united in their mutual concerns for the greater good of regional and national communities. An oft-noted aspect of the Middle English *Havelok*, in contrast with the earlier Anglo-Norman versions, the *Lai* and Gaimar, is that it nationalizes what was formerly a localized story, repeating the phrase "everi del" ("every part") sixteen times in its roughly three thousand lines to refer to all of England as a single, unified community bound by common economic and political interests.[51] Susan Crane writes

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[51] In the Anglo-Norman poems there are two local kings with very definitive territories, and all of the action in England takes places within the specific territories assigned to both kings. Godrich, the usurping Earl of Cornwall in the English version, is in the Anglo-Norman versions a British king ruling Lincoln, Lindsey, Rutland, and Stamford. The area around Surrey is ruled by King Achebrit (Adelbriht in Gaimar, Athelwold in the English), who is married to Edelsi's sister Orwein and has a daughter named

that *Havelok* exhibits an "ideology of cohesion,"[52] a cohesion that is achieved by common economic interests and by individual characters like Havelok and Grim who themselves transcend class lines: Havelok is both scullion and king, and Grim is both a landowner in Denmark and a peasant in England. Far from being what John Halverson calls a "peasant fantasy of class ambition and resentment,"[53] *Havelok* illustrates and values an ideal society in which protected, free markets allow merchants to prosper and peasants to find gainful employment. All upstanding individuals are welcome in England regardless of origin; Athelwold is praised because he

> Ricthwise men he lovede alle*   **he loved all righteous men*
> And overal made hem for to calle* (ll. 37-8) **He had them called from all over*

Athelwold, "Engelondes blome" (l. 63), attracts and desires as his subjects upstanding individuals without thought of their social station. Rank itself is malleable in *Havelok*, as those who act righteously are rewarded with land and titles without any thought to their birth or nationality: Bertram, Godrich's cook, is knighted and awarded the earldom of Cornwall by Havelok at the end of the narrative, for having provided Havelok with food, work, and shelter when he himself was a peasant (ll. 2898-927); Grim's sons, Robert the Red, William Wenduth, and Hugh Raven are made barons in Denmark, awarded land and wealth and a train of twenty knights each. The disregard for inherited rank works both ways in the romance, both enfranchising and disenfranchising subjects in order to set England back to the right rule

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Argentille (Goldeboru in the English). For a discussion of the "nationalization" of the Middle English version, see especially Turville-Petre, *England*, 145-54.

[52] Crane writes that *Havelok* reflects "interests that the barony shared with the emerging professional and mercantile class" (44) and that it "embodies the barony's concern for landed stability and the middle class' affinity for social order" (52). It represents an "ideology of cohesion" in which all classes benefit from a peaceful, well-run kingdom" (47). See Susan Crane *Insular Romance*: *Politics, Faith, and Culture in Anglo-Norman and Middle English Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

[53] John Halverson, "*Havelok the Dane* and Society," *Chaucer Review* 6 (1971-72), p. 151.

established by Athelwold: the children of Godrich, who had been Earl of Cornwall before being ousted by Havelok, are made "thral" as Godrich's descendants are disinherited forever (ll. 2564-5). A character such as Grim, however, straddles hierarchical and professional fences. He is called by Godard a "drit-cherl" and a "þral" (l. 683, 685; a peasant, a lowly servant), yet when he leaves Denmark he sells cattle, horses, pigs, goats, hens, and grain, which are curiously greater possessions than one would expect a peasant to have; and he is referred to as a "fishere" (l. 524) while still in Denmark, before he becomes a fisherman in England.[54] Grim embodies the socioeconomic unity that *Havelok* envisions: he is a peasant, merchant, fisherman, foster father and nurturer all at once.

Yet, the overturning or disregarding of inherited privilege and rank that resides at the core of *Havelok*'s vision of an English utopia is, ironically, precisely one of the things the Danes were traditionally accused of doing to destroy Anglo-Saxon England. Medieval and early modern chronicles of England from at least Geffrei Gaimar commonly refer to the disdain the Danes felt for England's traditional hierarchies and for the haughty manner in which they treated the native population. Gaimar's characterization of the arrogant attitude of the Danes while their kings sat on the English throne is typical of subsequent chronicle treatments of the Anglo-Scandinavian period. The Danes act as brutish feudal overlords, and the English are greatly pleased when Edward the Confessor ascends the throne:

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[54] Grim's inconsistent livelihood extends to other Havelok narratives: in the *Lai d'Havelok*, Grim is referred to as "un barun de la cuntrée" (l. 57) and also as a "pescher," or fisherman (l. 137). See *Le Lai d'Havelok and Gaimar's Havelok Episode*, ed. Alexander Bell, Publications of the University of Manchester French Series, No. IV (Manchester: The University Press, 1925). Edmund Reiss has suggested that Grim's "blending of the noble and the peasant" can be explained by Grim's resemblance to "a Norse deity, especially the great Norse god Odin (or Woden)," as the noble god often disguised himself as a peasant or fisherman. See Edmund Reiss, "*Havelok the Dane* and Norse Mythology," *Modern Language Quarterly* 1966 27 (2): 115-24.

"This caused great rejoicing among the English, since the Danes had treated them little better than serfs and often humiliated them. If a hundred Englishmen were to meet one lone Dane, woe betide them if they did not bow and scrape to him. And were they to come to a bridge, they would have had to wait, and woe betide them if they dared move before the Danes had crossed. And as he passed by, each one would have to bow and scrape, and anyone not doing so would be arrested and given an ignominious beating. This is the sort of subservience the English were kept in, and the Danes abused and humiliated them."[55]

In contrast with the Danes, Gaimar presents the Normans as closely allied with the English, and the Conquest as a setting to rights the wrongs of the Danes and later, Harold Godwinsson. The low state to which they forced the English justifies their total and complete disappearance from England once Edward the Confessor restores the Wessex line. Despite the fact that Gaimar opens his chronicle with Havelok, when his narrative comes to events within roughly a century and a half of his day, the Danish presence is entirely effaced from England, and no possibility of settlement and assimilation is entertained.

The Middle English *Havelok* is entirely distinctive for its depiction of Danes in England as they might have been seen by certain regional populations in the North and East, whose view of Danes is largely not represented by the medieval chronicle record. Susan Crane has written that *Havelok* reflects "interests that the barony shared with the emerging professional and mercantile class," and that it "embodies the barony's concern for landed stability and the middle class's affinity for social order."[56] Both Gaimar's Havelok episode and *Havelok* potentially reflect the attitudes Lincolnshire audiences – the former baronial and the latter mercantile and middle class – might have held towards Danes both as a part of their past and as current trading partners, as Lincolnshire continued to foster commercial ties with Scandinavians and northern Europeans through at least the thirteenth century. Texts in the chronicle tradition were written by

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[55] Geffrei Gaimar, *Estoire Des Engleis* (*History of the English*), ed. and trans. Ian Short (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 260-1.
[56] Susan Crane, *Insular Romance*, 44, 52.

clergymen drawing on the work of earlier clerical writers, following a pattern of Danes as illegitimate invaders with no rights in England. But in *Havelok* the Danes are something quite different: not warriors hell-bent on destruction of towns and churches but merchants, workers, and fisherman, which is precisely the way people in Lincolnshire might have thought of their own ancestors of the ancestors of their neighbors.

2.3   RIGHT RULE AND DANISH SETTLEMENT: GAIMAR, LINCOLNSHIRE CHRONICLES, AND *HAVELOK*

From their earliest appearances, medieval Havelok narratives were intricately tied to Lincolnshire history, playing an important part in the region's memory of the past by connecting Havelok and the Danes to larger regional and national historical narratives. Yet, even chroniclers sympathetic with Havelok need to fit his story into the larger English narrative of Danish aggression and cruel hostility, which was a major theme of Anglo-Norman histories from the mid-eleventh century onwards. There are two major predecessors of the English *Havelok* that have survived: Geoffrey Gaimar's 816-line episode in his *Estoire des Engleis* (ca. 1135-40) and the *Lai d'Havelok*, a 1112-line Breton lai (ca. 1190-1220), both in octosyllabic (as is the English *Havelok*) Anglo-Norman verse about one-fourth and one-third the length of the Middle English *Havelok*, respectively. Beyond the *Lai* and Gaimar, many chronicles of Lincolnshire provenance include a Havelok episode, including Rauf de Bohun's *Le Petit Bruit*, produced in 1310 at the request of Henry de Lacy, Earl of Lincoln, and Robert Mannyng's *Chronicle of England* (c.

1338), a Middle English account of 82 lines in rhymed couplets.[57] From Havelok's earliest

appearance in the mid-twelfth century through Robert Mannying's "Lambeth Interpolation," the

story of Havelok the Dane marrying the English heiress and becoming king of England served as

an integral chapter in the "bildungsroman" of Lincolnshire. Robert Mannyng speaks of

Lincolnshire legends concerning Havelok, including a giant stone, which people pointed out, that

he threw to prove his strength (featured in the English *Havelok*), and the chapel where he was

married. The seal of the town, which is at least as old as the reign of Edward I, potrays the

figures "Grym," "Habloc," and "Goldeburgh" in commemoration of the Havelok legend. Thus at

the time of the English *Havelok*'s composition, there were probably current stories circulating in

Lincolnshire concerning Danish elements of their history, with national implications.

The earliest extant version of the Havelok narrative is Geffrei Gaimar's *Estore des*

Engleis, written for Constance Fitzgilbert, wife of Rauf Fitz Gilbert, who held lands in

Lincolnshire and Hampshire.[58] The *Estoire* is very much a regional text: as a secular writer,

Gaimar's audience was most likely the well-connected members of the provincial Lincolnshire

Anglo-Norman baronage; Fitz Gilbert was a member of a family of Lincolnshire minor

aristocracy, and Gaimar's work in general "shows particular interest in and knowledge of affairs"

in Lincolnshire and the north, according to Antonia Gransden.[59] The chronicle allows these

relative newcomers to England to "put down new roots for themselves in the past of their

adoptive homeland."[60] According to Ian Short, the *Estoire*'s most recent translator and editor,

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[57] On the relationship between different versions of the Havelok narrative, see Smithers, xxxii-lxiv.

[58] Laura Hibbard Loomis, *Medieval Romance in England*: *A Study of the Sources and Analogues of the Non-Cyclic Metrical Romances* (New York: B. Franklin, 1969), 108.

[59] Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England I, c. 550-c. 1307* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 209.

[60] Ian Short, xlix.

Gaimar's chronicle harbors "pro-Danish sympathies," making room in the English historical record for Danish ancestry as Havelok and other Danish kings establish sovereign rights prior to the Saxon conquests. For Short, Gaimar "was writing in support of a specific historico-political thesis of particular interest to inhabitants of the Danelaw," a thesis that may have served to legitimize Cnut's eventual succession.[61] Gaimar's ultimate aim, according to Short, was to assist newcomers by "contributing to a form of multiculturalism that enabled the many different ethnicities that constituted English society to assimilate at their own pace and in their own time," allowing for a range of cultural allegiances "on which to foster mutual understanding and respect, and peaceful cohabitation, between peoples of different cultures in Anglo-Norman England and beyond."[62]

In order to make this argument work, however, Short must disregard some of the later sections of Gaimar's chronicle, which repeatedly lambaste Danes in the most vituperative terms as evildoers making claims in England without right. Short goes too far in asserting the multiculturalism and desire for reconciliation in Gaimar's *Estoire*. Like *Havelok* a century and a half later, Gaimar's Havelok episode probably does reflect the ethnic affiliations of the Lincolnshire populace and the likely provenance of the Havelok tale as Scandinavian in origin; at the same time, Gaimar must piece together this early, pre-Saxon history of the Danes in England with the later Norman Conquest, which had to be defended and justified at the expense of the four Anglo-Danish kings and the Anglo-Scandinavian populace as a whole. At best, Gaimar is at odds about how to reconcile these aspects of his history; ultimately, he errs on the side of ambivalence, shrugging his shoulders at the rightful inheritance claims of Danes invading Anglo-Saxon England. Gaimar's ultimate aim is to appease Anglo-Scandinavian audiences in the

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[61] Short, 358.
[62] Short, xlix.

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Danelaw and also justify the present order of Norman rule. Gaimar's somewhat schizophrenic depiction of the Danes as both ancestors and wrongful invaders implies two key characteristics of the Havelok legend: first, along with the English *Havelok* we are offered a glimpse at Lincolnshire sympathies with their ancestors that was not perpetuated in literature produced beyond the limits of the Danelaw; second, the emerging rhetoric in chronicles of the total defeat of the Danes in order to justify the Norman Conquest, rhetoric that was in the process of becoming the accepted narrative of the Conquest and that became standard fare in fourteenth century Middle English historical romances.

In both Gaimar and the English *Havelok* there is an overarching concern with rights associated with Havelok and his Danish cohorts, as both texts emphasize the settlement of Havelok and the Danes as a continuity and restoration of lost rights. As a hero setting wrongs to right, Havelok, along with the claims he makes in England, is distinguished from other Danes in Gaimar's chronicle. In Gaimar there is a deliberate attempt to make the material Arthurian, as the action is placed between the years of the death of Arthur and the settlement of Cerdic in c. 495.[63]

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[63] Gaimar's narrative, from which the *Lai* very slightly diverges, can be summarized as follows. Shortly after the time of Arthur, there are two kings in Britain – Edelsi, a Briton, who rules the area from the Humber to Rutland, and Adelbriht, a Dane, who rules from Colchester to Holland and possesses four earldoms in Denmark. The sister of Edelsi, Orwain, marries Adelbriht, and they produce one child, a daughter Argentille. When Adelbriht dies and Orwain dies shortly thereafter, Edelsi deliberately mismarries Argentille to a dishwasher, Cuaran, who is of great strength and moral rectitude, so that Edelsi can claim the kingdom for himself. On their wedding night, Argentille dreams a strange dream involving boors, pigs, lions, and foxes, and wakes up to see, as Cuaran sleeps, a flame issuing from his mouth. They decide to head back to Grimsby, where Cuaran grew up under the care of a fisherman named Grim; there, Grim's daughter Kelloc informs Cuaran (now called Havelok) of his true past and identity as rightful heir to the Danish throne, since he is the son of Gunter, who was defeated in battle by Arthur after he had invaded to conquer it for tribute. Gunter was killed in that battle, and his wife the queen fled with Havelok to Grimsby. On the way, pirates attack and kill all but Grim and his family; Grim raises Havelok. When Havelok and Argentille discover this, they decide to sail back to Denmark to claim what is theirs. King Odulf, whom Arthur had empowered, was much hated by the Danish people. After being recognized as the rightful heir (he is tested by being able to sound a horn that only the rightful heir could blow), Havelok leads thirty thousand Danes against Odulf, who is defeated. Afterwards, all Danes, common and noble, praise Havelok as lord and king, and there is great rejoicing. Danes then sail to England and do

Gaimar's material draws heavily on Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain* (ca. 1135), which Gaimar probably translated; accordingly, there are a number of references throughout Gaimar's Havelok episode connecting Havelok and his father (named Gunter) to Arthur.[64] In Gaimar, unlike the Middle English *Havelok*, Danes are already ruling in England when the story begins, so that when the British king Edelsi traitorously claims the inheritance of the daughter of King Adelbriht, a Dane ruling territory from Colchester to Holland, Havelok's actions then become a means of legitimately reclaiming his territory. While Havelok's actions are clearly morally and politically justified in Gaimar's text, Danish claims in England made later in the chronicle, some based on Havelok's own claims, are just as clearly maligned as illegitimate. Havelok's claim and later Danish claims are treated very differently in Gaimar, with the one clearly being legitimate and justified and the other equally illegitimate. Paul Dalton and John Gillingham have noted that a recurring theme in Gaimar's chronicle is the notion of an ancestral Danish right to the English throne. Gillingham calls it "one of the most memorable features of Gaimar's history"; at the same time, however, Gaimar presents Anglo-Saxon England as "an anarchic period of violence and lawlessness" due largely to the Danish invasions and the history of England as one of "civilizing progress."[65] Dalton suggests that the Havelok episode serves "Gaimar's aim of stressing the Danish claim to insular dominion and responding to the perennial concerns of the Anglo-Norman nobility about 'feudalism' and the security of land

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battle with Edelsi, who is defeated and hands over the territories of Adelbriht, dying shortly after. The English barons grant Edelsi's lands as well as Argentille's rightfully inherited territory to Havelok, who then reigns for twenty years.

[64] *Le Lai d'Haveloc and Gaimar's Haveloc Episode*. ed. Alexander Bell. Publications of the University of Manchester French Series, No. IV (Manchester: The University Press, 1925), 49-50.

[65] See Paul Dalton, **"**Geffrei Gaimar's *Estoire des Engleis,* Peacemaking, and the 'Twelfth-Century Revival of the English Nation,'" *Studies in Philology* 10104:4 (2007): 427-54; and John Gillingham, "Gaimar, the Prose *Brut*, and the Making of English History," in *The English in the Twelfth Century: Imperialism, National Identity, and Political Values* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2000), 113-122, esp. 119-22.

tenure."[66] Dalton's point is certainly valid; in Gaimar both the legitimacy of Havelok's claim and the illegitimacy of later Danish claims address concerns of the Anglo-Norman nobility who were the primary audience for the chronicle, albeit in quite disparate ways, in that Havelok's claim upholds land rights whereas later Danish claims against the English attempt to displace them. Yet Dalton does not explain why the chronicle is so eager to use Havelok as an example of the proper securing of land tenure when Gaimar excoriates the Danes throughout the rest of the work. Reading the *Estoire*'s account of the Danes in pre-Saxon Britain and later England is like reading two different writers with two radically different opinions on the role of the Danes in the history of the Isles. Whereas Havelok and his Danish cohorts protect Britain from the treacherous British king Edelsi, all Danes that make claims once the English are in power are denigrated as treacherous and false. One way of approaching this problem is to consider the period and the context in which Gaimar places the Havelok episode: Arthurian and post-Arthurian Britain at the end of the fifth century, before the coming of the Anglo-Saxons. It is Gaimar's invention to put the Danes before the Saxons in Britain. Short has called this politically charged, but is possible to see Gaimar placing Havelok in the British period precisely in order to neutralize the politics of the Havelok legend. If Gaimar found the Havelok story and wanted to include it, placing it in the British era ultimately appears less politically charged than putting it in the Anglo-Saxon era, licensing Havelok to be an ancestral Dane rather than one of the later treacherous Danes threatening the stability of the Anglo-Saxons, who are presented as predecessors to the proper inheritors, the Normans.

Legitimate Danish claims in the *Estoire* are made only under the tenure of Arthur and his British heirs; once the Saxons invade and Britain becomes England, Danish claims are suddenly

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[66] Dalton, 433.

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rendered illegitimate and the Danes are continuously maligned as devils beguiling the island.

When the Danish decide to attack England, ruled by the English who have displaced the Britons,

they attempt to do so legitimately, by claiming their inheritance rights that predate the arrival of

the English. Gaimar, though, even as he reports the inheritance claim, is entirely indifferent to

its legitimacy:

> It was during this time [ca. 787] that the Danes arrived to wage war on the English. They killed a certain royal steward, seized and secured the land and, despite their only having three ships, caused a great deal of damage throughout the region. They then returned home and enlisted their allies with the intention of coming to Britain to seize the island from the English, for they had reached the decision, between them, and claimed that this country was part of their heritage, and that many of their ancestors had established an inheritance claim before any English had even arrived or before anyone from Saxony came to live there. King Danr, who was born in Denmark, had ruled over the kingdom, as had Adelbricht and Havelok, and they named others in addition who had done so. It was on this basis that they claimed it to be true that Britain was their rightful inheritance. That, however, is neither here nor there.[67]

Why this should be "neither here nor there," however, is not clear; after all, the claims the Danes

are making are backed up by Gaimar's own narrative. But the Danish claim to legitimacy – that

the kingdom is rightly theirs because their ancestors were ruling Britain before the English ever

arrived – is not the kind of legitimacy that holds any real weight in the *Estoire*. Havelok's claims

against a British king are valid while later Danish claims against English kings are invalid

because Havelok was waging just war against a treacherous king, whereas the Danes attacking in

the eighth century and after, by acting as aggressors are not waging just war. Moreover, because

the English had established their own rule in Britain and had displaced the Britons, inheritance

claims that rested on rights established before the tenure of the English are inherently invalid,

and Gaimar's indifference to the legality or justness of the Danish claims implies that he took

this position. Ultimately, if the Normans are the true successors to the English crown in the

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[67] Gaimar, pp. 114-5 (ll. 2065-87).

Estoire, then the English must rule rightfully and legitimately, without rival claims from the Danes; if the Danish claims against the English are valid, then they could theoretically have challenged the Norman crown as well.

Returning to *Havelok*, the composer was likely familiar with Gaimar, and the *Havelok* composer's own emphasis on right rule, just inheritance, and the continuity of good laws was essentially a reiteration of the ideas about Havelok's claims that he found in the *Estoire*. *Havelok* stresses the continuity of right rule and good laws between the English king Athelwold and the new Danish king, Havelok, implying that the ethnic background of the king of England is of no significance compared with the sovereign's ability to maintain the rule of law and allow the kingdom to flourish economically. Where *Havelok* departs from the *Estoire*, however, is in its refusal to consider the Danes as the "dastardly" "devils" that Gaimar claims they are. Some of the language and imagery of *Havelok* implies that its composer was aware of chronicle depictions of Danes, deploying these very depictions in order to debunk them. Indeed, *Havelok* seems entirely aware of common, chronicle characterizations of the Danes as violent evildoers, employing this chronicle rhetoric to show how such characterizations of the Danes are unfounded and unfair. Havelok himself verges on being the kind of monstrous, heathen Dane commonly found in chronicles. He is described as a kind of borderline monster: he eats more than Grim and his five children combined (ll. 794-5); he carries a bucket of fish as heavy as four other buckets combined (ll. 816-7); he is a head taller than any other man in Lincoln (l. 980); when he is stabbed twenty times at Bernard Brun's house in Denmark, Havelok is described as "wod," an Anglo-Saxon word dating from c. 725, that means to rage and lose one's mind like an animal.[68]

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[68] *OED*, s.v. "wood," adj., n.2

Godrich, the treacherous Earl of Cornwall who has usurped Goldeborough, the rightful

heir to the throne, employs a Gaimar-like anti-Danish rhetoric by casting the Danes as a foreign

threat to a unified English community and as a threat to both individuals' and England's very

existence. As the final, climactic battle nears, which Havelok fights to stake his rightful claim to

rule England, Godrich rallies his troops and musters up their fighting spirit against Havelok's

invading Danes by appealing to the English soldiers' and nobles' love of the homeland. Three of

the charges that Godrich levels against Havelok and the Danes – the destruction of churches, the

killing of wives and tearing apart of families, and the Danes as "uten-laddes," or foreigners – are

specifically challenged and proven false by the end of the romance:

> Hwan he wore come, sket* was þe erl yare   *eager
> Ageynes Denshe men to fare,
> And seyde "Lyþes nu, alle samen!
> Haue Ich gadred* you for no gamen,   *gathered
> But Ich wile seyen you for þi.
> Lokes hware here at Grimesbi
> His uten-laddes here* comen,   *foreigners' army
> And haues nu þe priorie numen* –   *captured
> Al that euere mithen he finde,
> He brenne kirkes and prestes binde;
> He strangleth monkes and nunnes baþe*. *both
> Wat wile ye, frend, her-offe raþe*?   *advise
> Yif he regne þus-gate longe,
> He moun us all ouer-gange* –   *overcome
> He moun vs alle quic henge or slo,
> Or þral maken and do ful wo,
> Or elles reue us* ure liues   *rob us of
> And ure children and ure wiues (ll. 2575-92)

Godrich's divisive strategy is to drum up patriotism via negation, casting the invading Danes as

un-Christian, un-English bloodthirsty pagans bent on nothing less than total desecration of the

English way of life, burning churches, desecrating the leaders of the Christian community, and

turning the free English into subjects of a foreign, barbaric overlord.[69] But because a usurping

traitor employs such a divisive strategy rather than a hero, this rhetoric in *Havelok* ultimately

serves to undermine and nullify the usefulness of Godrich's xenophobic brand of nationalism.

Godrich's anti-Danish imagery overlaps with that of Gaimar's: both call the Danes "dogs" and

both express an English desire to drive the Danes completely out of the land.[70]

Godrich's claims are proven to be either totally false or at least misleading by other parts

of the romance. Not only does Havelok not burn churches and kill clergymen, he actually builds

a priory for Benedictine monks at Grimsby in honor of his foster-father Grim, who was buried in

the town (ll. 2520-30). The priory-building lines come directly before Godrich gets word that

Havelok and his Danes are en route to challenge him, so that when Godrich gives his anti-Danish

speech, the audience is positioned to disregard his speech as a series of obvious lies. Godrich's

use of the phrase "uten-laddes" (foreigners) to describe the Danes is the second time that

particular phrase is used to describe outsiders, but the earlier use, roughly 400 lines before

Godrich's speech, prepares the audience to see Godrich's use of it to describe Danes as a

mischaracterization. When Havelok returns to Denmark to claim his right to the throne from

Godard, the Danes see Havelok's "kunrik" (king-mark, l. 2143) of a cross on his shoulder and

recognize him as the son of Birkabein, who governed well and protected Denmark "[a]geynes

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[69] W.R.J. Barron, in his survey of Middle English romance, does not provide a full picture of Godrich's intentions in this scene. Barron focuses on Godrich's threat, given before his rallying speech, to make any man "thral" (l. 2564) if he should refuse to fight in Lincoln, a threat which is a gross violation of feudal law. Though Barron is right to argue that Godrich is, first, a reflection of the reality of contemporary politics, in that the absolute power of a king must be mollified to a certain degree by the governed if his rule is not to disintegrate into tyranny, and second, that the "inherent weakness" of Godrich's position is demonstrated in the text, Barron does not discuss Godrich's success in stoking his men's fears of the Danes via propaganda. The effect of such propaganda in this scene should not be overlooked. W.R.J. Barron, *English Medieval Romance* (London: Longman, 1987), 71.

[70] "Dogs": l. 2596 in *Havelok* and p. 165 in the *Estoire*; being driven out the land: l. 2599 in *Havelok* and p. 261 in the *Estoire*.

uten-laddes here" (against foreign armies, l. 2153), though it is not specified who these foreigners are. "Uten-laddes" is clearly used to describe people other than the Danes, but because Havelok is the rightful heir to the English throne and the Danes and English seem to share culture, language, and religion, the audience is prepared to view Godrich's use of the term "uten-laddes" to describe Danes as a misuse of the term.

Contrary to Godrich's claims that the Danes, should they win the battle, would make the English slaves and tear families and lives apart, when the battle is won and Havelok stands victorious, he does precisely the opposite, enfranchising both the English and the Danes with land, wealth, and wives. Havelok enacts two marriages, both of which are between a Danish woman and an English male: the Earl of Chester, who had been loyal to Godrich, is married to Gunnild of Grimsby, a daughter of Grim's (ll. 2856-93), and Bertram, Godrich's cook who employed, clothed, and fed Havelok when he was poor and starving in Lincoln, is given the earldom of Cornwall and is married to Levive, Grim's other daughter (l. 2908-27). Both marriages are productive, with the former resulting in "sones five" (l. 2893) and the latter in "mani children" (l. 2934), implying the settlement and assimilation that occurs as a result of Havelok's victories. Havelok then offers rewards to his loyal Danish followers and is crowned in London and feted for forty days by "Henglishe ant Denshe" (l. 2945) alike. The narrative ends with the note that Havelok and Goldeborough gave birth to fifteen sons and daughters.

In *Havelok's* fantasy of Danish integration into English society, Havelok literally fantasizes about such assimilation in a dream he has one night, a dream whose meaning is intended to be both obvious and prophetic, looking towards the end of the narrative. After Goldeborough wakes up from a dream in which an angel tells her that Havelok shall "Denemark

haven and Englond al" (l. 1271), Havelok also wakes up from a dream he had just been having.

Standing on the highest hill in Denmark,

> I bigan Denemark for to awe*,   *possess*
> þe borwes* and þe castles stronge; *boroughs*
> And mine armes weren so longe
> þat I fadmede* al at ones   *embraced*
> Denemark with mine longe bones.
> And þanne Y wolde mine armes drawe
> Til me and hom for to have,
> Al þat evere in Denemark liveden
> On mine armes faste clyveden*,   *clung*
> And þe stronge castles alle
> On knes bigunnen for to falle –
> þe keyes fellen at mine fet. (ll. 1293-1304)

Havelok's dream takes the angel's prophecy and re-imagines it literally, grasping all of Denmark

at once (the good parts anyway, without "bondemen and here wives") in his hand and taking it to

England to present to Goldeboru as a gift.   What happens in Havelok's dream, whose

interpretation is already produced by the angel, is comic, as he essentially bear-hugs Denmark,

picking all of its castles and towns and people up in his elongated arms, walks over the North

Sea, and sets it all down in England as a gift to Goldeboru. It is in "another drem" that he dreams

directly after the first that Havelok takes all of Denmark, except for "bondemen and here wives,"

into England, where he takes what is in his arms,

> Al closede it intil min hond,
> And, Goldeborw, Y gaf it þe (ll. 1311-12)

Though Havelok is confused by the provenance of the dream, Goldeboru understands its full

implications since the angel has made the situation clear to her. She explains to Havelok that he

will have all England and all Denmark in his possession, and all the people, every uncle, brother,

father and son, high and low, will praise him as their rightful king. The dream sequence in the

English *Havelok* literalizes the processes of integration and settlement, though its may render

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such processes simplistically. In the dream, integration happens in an instant: all of Denmark, being carried in Havelok's arms, gets plunked down into England, and thus both begins and ends the Scandinavian settlement. At the end of the romance, when Godrich and Godard have both been defeated and the English and Danish people (from all social classes, as the text repeatedly emphasizes) have sworn fealty to Havelok and Goldeboru, Havelok distributes English land and titles to his Danish supporters, thereby realizing settlement as revealed in his dream. *Havelok* offers a fantasy of ethnic integration, a reality of a Lincolnshire past that saw Scandinavians settle in large numbers, slowly assimilating into English people.

2.4   A LOCAL LEGEND

Criticism of the English *Havelok* in the last half-century has generally turned to the written record, specifically the *Lai* and Gaimar (or a lost ancestor of these two texts), when discussing the origins of the Havelok-narrative, whereas prior to the 1940's, critics of the English *Havelok* generally agreed that the *Lai*, Gaimar, and the English *Havelok* were likely based on orally circulating Lincolnshire folk tales. *Havelok*'s most recent (and definitive) edition by G.V. Smithers has solidified opinions that *Havelok* is based on Gaimar and the *Lai* rather than orally transmitted legends.[71] However, not all recent critics are in agreement; following the line of Antonia Gransden's argument, who suggested that Gaimar's Havelok episode is probably based on local Lincolnshire lore, Bradbury argues persuasively that local Lincolnshire legends are the

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[71] Smithers, xvi-lvi. Not all recent critics are in agreement. Gransden, in her distinguished survey of historical writing in English, argues that "Gaimar probably collected the legends [such as Havelok] from local oral traditions," and that the stories concerning Danes must have been of Danish origin, although there is no material evidence either way for this claim. See Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England I, c. 550-c. 1307* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 210.

basis of the English *Havelok*, and that the romance "is an early experiment in the sophisticated retelling of an artistically simple but emotionally powerful local legend."[72] Bradbury focuses on Robert Mannyng's Havelok episode in his *Chronicle* (c. 1338), the so-called Lambeth Interpolation, positing that Mannyng's Havelok narrative, like *Havelok*, is based on "memorially transmitted" folkloric traditions, and not on contemporary written sources. Bradbury's analysis, if correct, suggests that there was a vibrant oral tradition in Lincolnshire that might have addressed the local populations' desire to hear about their Scandinavian forebearers.

Robert Mannyng's *Chronicle of England* is an English translation of Peter Langtoft's Anglo-Norman *Chronicle* (c. 1300), but the so-called "Lambeth Interpolation" is an addition of Mannyng's. The Interpolation is a commentary that momentarily departs from Langtoft's work. Mannyng, himself of south Lincolnshire, was clearly interested in the local history of the region, and has heard variants on the Havelok legend that differ from Langtoft's version, which rather closely follows Gaimar's version of the Havelok episode. In the Interpolation, Mannyng questions the veracity and provenance of aspects of the Havelok legend that are very similar to the English *Havelok*, such as the names of characters, a stone-throwing episode found only in the English *Havelok*, and the church where Havelok and Goldeborough were married. Mannyng appears concerned that he has found no authoritative written sources for these aspects of the Havelok narrative, but only local legends:

> Bot I haf grete ferly þat I fynd no man
> Þat has written in story how Hauelok þis lond wan:
> Noiþer Gildas, no Bede, no Henry of Huntynton,
> No William of Malmesbiri, ne Pers of Bridlynton
> Writes not in þer bokes of no King Athelwold,
> Ne Goldeburgh, his douhtere, ne Hauelok not of told.
> Whilk tyme þe were kynges, long or now late,

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[72] Nancy Mason Bradbury, "The Traditional Origins of *Havelok the Dane*," *Studies in Philology*, Vol. 90, No. 2 (Spring 1993), pp. 117-8.

Þei mak no menyng whan, no in what date.
Bot þat þis lowed men vpon Inglish tellis,
Right story can me not ken þe certeynte what spellis.
Men sais in Lyncoln castelle ligges ȝit a stone
Þat Hauelok kast wele forbi euerikone,
& ȝit þe chapelle standes þer he weddid his wife,
Goldeburgh, þe kynges douhter, þat saw is ȝit rife,
& of Gryme, a fisshere, men redes ȝit in ryme
þat he bigged Grymesby, Gryme þat ilk tyme.
        Of alle stories of honoure þat I haf þorgh souht,
        I fynd þat no compiloure of him tellis ouht.
        Sen I fynd non redy þat tellis of Hauelok kynde,
        Turne we to þat story þat we writen fynde. (ll. 519-38)[73]

Mannyng uses the episodes and names from the English Havelok, concerned that he can find no source for them. He then turns to the story that he finds in Langtoft, which uses the names found in Gaimar and the Arthurian context for the story. So it seems as though Mannyng is trying to reconcile the two different Havelok traditions: Gaimar's Anglo-Norman one and the more recent Middle English one. When Mannyng refers to what "men redes ȝit in ryme," it is unclear, and has caused scholars a fair degree of consternation, whether he is referring to stories that have been told to him by people in Lincolnshire, whether these people are basing their stories on *Havelok* after having heard it, or whether he is referring to the English *Havelok*, which he himself may have read or heard. It is uncertain whether Mannyng is familiar with the English *Havelok* at all, though he is clearly aware of particular aspects of the story as it is told in the romance. As Bradbury points out, "rede" (l. 533) often was used to mean to be read out loud (publicly or privately) or recounted and so does not necessarily imply that people were reading a specific story; thus Mannyng might have meant that he has heard people recounting the Havelok

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[73] Robert Mannyng, *The Chronicle*, ed. Idelle Sullens (Binghamton, NY: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1996), 499-500.

legend but not reading the English *Havelok*.[74] Unlike two of *Havelok*'s editors, Smithers and Skeat,[75] Bradbury does not think there is any hard evidence that Mannyng is referring to *Havelok*, that the "men speaking" ("Men sais," l. 529) in Mannyng of Havelok's episodes are speaking broadly of the Havelok legend and not of *Havelok* itself. However, the evidence is unfortunately, inconclusive, and it appears impossible to definitively state whether Mannyng was aware of the Havelok episode. Did Mannyng use the names from the English *Havelok* because he was familiar with it, or because these were the local legends that *Havelok* itself was based on? It seems impossible to state with any certainty. The larger point, however, is that Lincolnshire audiences were eager to hear stories of their Danish heritage, and both Mannyng's Interpolation and *Havelok* serve as records of this desire.

What is clear, though, is the unmistakable distinction Mannyng draws between "stories of honoure," presumably the chronicles he has "þorgh souht" like Bede and William of Malmesbury, and the stories he has heard "þat þis lowed men vpon Inglish tellis" (that unlearned men tell in English). The implication is that there were two disparate Havelok strains: that narrative found in chronicles (which Mannyng goes on to recite from Langtoft), and that narrative found in Lincolnshire, a narrative that was either established by the English *Havelok* or that *Havelok* was based on. Either way, whether Mannyng is referring to the story men knew through *Havelok* or whether their folktales predate that composition, it seems clear that in Lincolnshire people were interested in hearing about Havelok and their Danish ancestors. Mannyng's inability to find the local Lincolnshire legends about Havelok in the chronicle record implies that there were two distinct Havelok traditions, a national one and a local one, and the

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[74] Bradbury, 69.
[75] Smithers 163; Skeat xvi.

local tradition is the one that lauds and commemorates the Danes as ancestors and productive tradesmen.

Mannyng's Interpolation reveals the latticework that was medieval historiography. Romance-history was enshrined into the historical narrative of England. Based on Mannyng's account, the population of Lincolnshire appears to have meshed together chronicle and romance accounts of a local legend, constructing a heroic history of the region through the Havelok legend: local towns (Grimsby), buildings (the marriage-church), and sites (the place where Havelok heaved a stone) acquired historical significance and the history of the region itself acquired national significance. *Havelok* is likely a product of those descended from Scandinavians creating a place for themselves within mythic, national history. It attempts to reanimate the Viking settlement of northern and eastern England by suggesting that Scandinavians did not come to simply to plunder, but to infuse themselves into the national story and the national blood. *Havelok* suggests that the Danes neither conquered nor perished, but rather, settled and assimilated, becoming a pattern in the fabric of English culture.

3.0 THE TRANSFORMATIVE KNIGHT: GUY OF WARWICK AT THE CROSSROADS OF ROMANCE AND HISTORY

3.1 NATIONS AND HEROES

In 1821, John Merridew had a new edition of the chivalric exploits of Guy of Warwick issued for Bertie Greatheed, a playwright and the heir to Guy's Cliffe, a country house in Warwickshire. Because this was the place where Guy is said to have retired to become a hermit after a life of pilgrimage and chivalric service all over the known world, Guy's Cliffe was named in honor of the penitential knight. Merridew praises Guy's Cliffe as a "truly admired and delightful place of residence" originating "in Saxon times, the final retreat of the renowned Guy of Warwick."[1] However, Guy's Cliffe no more dated from Saxon times than did Guy of Warwick himself (Guy's Cliffe is discussed at some length below). Though rational and scholarly analyses by men of letters in the eighteenth century systematically refuted the historical value of legendary figures like Guy, he continued to enjoy success through the nineteenth century as a famous and popular icon of a romanticized past. Merridew's dedication to Greatheed in his edition of the Guy legend promises that the tale will memorialize the "chivalric exploits" of the famous former tenant of Guy's Cliffe, implying that the medieval knight's heroic adventures could still lend a sheen of preeminence to Greatheed's estate. Pointing to images of Guy's arms and armor engraved into the book (the armor can still be found at the site today), Merridew categorizes the tale as

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[1] *The Noble and Renowned History of Guy Earle of Warwick, containing a full and true account of his many famous and valiant actions, remarkable and brave exploits, and noble and renowned victories* (Chiswick: C. Whittingham, 1821). Available at http://www.archive.org.

"Popular History": neither authentic enough to satisfy the scholars and too useful as heroic national and regional history to discard altogether as entirely false.

Guy always had one foot in legend and the other in history. From his beginnings as a thirteenth century knight in an Anglo-Norman romance to being a quasi-historical figure in early modern antiquarian texts to a hero for child readers after the eighteenth century, Guy's career demonstrates the degree to which medieval romance histories were accepted as having significant historical value during and well beyond the Middle Ages. Like Arthur, Edward the Confessor, Robin Hood, and St. George, Guy of Warwick was a medieval English cultural icon, but unlike his fellow icons, Guy's star is one that has not quite survived. After having waxed and waned from the thirteenth to the nineteenth centuries, the legend of Guy completely disappeared from the popular imagination. If Guy was able to serve a multitude of roles for many different audiences at very different times, this is because the literary origins of his legend, the Anglo-Norman *Gui de Warewic* (c. 1220) and its Middle English redaction *Guy of Warwick* (ca. 1330), paint Guy as a composite romance hero borrowing major romance tropes, imagery, and forms. Embodying almost every characteristic of a medieval romance hero, in *Gui* and its Middle English redaction, Guy is simultaneously a slayer of dragons and giants, a courtly lover, a penitent pilgrim, one of the Nine Worthies, a savior of the English nation, a hermit, and a saint, and medieval Guy romances employ the most prominent romance structuring devices: diptych, interlace, and repetition.[2] Guy's successive transformations over many centuries are essentially built in to his medieval romances, allowing later readers and writers to turn him into any kind of

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[2] See Maldwyn Mills, "Structure and Meaning in *Guy of Warwick*," in *From Medieval to Medievalism*, ed. John Simons (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), pp. 54-68; and Robert Rouse, "Guy of Warwick as Medieval Culture Hero," in *Guy of Warwick: Icon and Ancestor*, ed. Alison Wiggins and Rosalind Field (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2007), pp. 94-109; on medieval romance's major structuring devices, see Carol Fewster, *Traditionality and Genre in Middle English Romance* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1987), p. 82.

hero that they desired. Because Guy could perpetually be transformed into a new hero with a long history, he was ideal as a representative of the national "memory," an historical sense buoyed by histories and historical romances of a glorious past that itself changed according to the needs of the present. Guy represents the dream of an eternal English "cultural ethnicity" existing through time immemorial.[3]

Nations require histories, and the development of national identity relies on national heroes like Guy. The nation presupposes a shared past, and it is the "rich legacy of memories" that continually reaffirms and perpetuates the present order.[4] In medieval historical writing the past serves as a model for the present and at the same time always works to reify the present order. Medieval historical romances in particular were essential to the shaping of Englishness, or a sense of what it meant to be an English subject, by offering heroes who reflected idealized national values. The worlds that historical romances offered were worlds of fantasized conquest and triumph; by the fourteenth century heroes of medieval romance were increasingly used as models for the lives of English kings and nobles borrowing some of that romantic caché. In his famous "Exhortation to the Knights of England" William Caxton implores late fifteenth century knights to return to the ways of literary hero-knights:

> Byhold that noble kyng of Brytayne, Kyng Arthur with the noble knyghtes of the Round Table, whos noble actes and noble chivalry of his knyghtes occupye so many large volumes! That is a world, or as thyng incredyble to byleve. O ye knyghtes of Englond, where is the custome and usage of noble chyvalry that was

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[3] The phrase "cultural ethnicity" is Patrick Geary's. Geary contrasts cultural ethnicity with political ethnicity, showing that neonationalists, while recognizing the recent vintage of politically self-conscious modern nationalism, claim that cultural ethnicity – the idea that "the people was a people…before it knew itself" – is eternal, or at least ancient. See Patrick Geary, *The Myth of Nations*: *The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 33.

[4] Ernst Renan, "Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?" (What is a Nation?) (1882 lecture), in *Nation and Narration,* ed. Homi K. Bhabha, (London: Routledge, 1990), pp. 19-20.

used in tho days? What do ye now, but go to the baynes and play att dyse?...Leve
this! Leve it, and rede the noble volumes of Saynt Graal, of Lancelot, of Galaad,
of Trystram, of Perse Forest, of Percyval, of Gawayn, and many mo. There shalle
ye see manhode, curtoyse, and gentylnesse.[5]

Caxton's exhortation suggests the renewed importance over the next century of English

"memories" produced by medieval literature, a romantic past that seemed more attractive and

authentic than solemn histories. By the Tudor period, chivalry became a locus of nostalgia, a

longing for a past that had existed mostly in the imaginations of romances' audiences. For

Caxton, the past serves present political and social ideological ends; he deploys his Arthurian

subjects to critique the present and in turn to serve as an advertisement for the work he printed.

Like Caxton's knights of the Round Table, Guy of Warwick became a kind of "culture hero" in

the later medieval and early modern periods, standing in for the highest of English valor and

values throughout time. His multiple identities as Earl of Warwick, paragon of chivalry, dragon

and giant slayer, pilgrim-saint, and national hero are what give Guy the malleability to be shaped

into a pluralistic symbol, and help to explain why Guy remained popular for so many centuries

after his initial literary debut in the thirteenth century.[6] Long after it would have seemed like

Guy's story was due for extinction, his legend continued to be reworked into the popular forms

of the day, from seventeenth-century plays to ballads, chapbooks, and penny histories in the

eighteenth century.[7]

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[5] William Caxton, "Exhortation to the Knights of England," in *Chivalric Literature: Essays on Relations Between Literature and Life in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. Larry D. Benson and John Leyerle (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), p. xiii.

[6] Rouse, "Guy of Warwick," 107-9. Rouse offers an insightful discussion of Guy's transformations in the Middle English *Guy*.

[7] Guy's postmedieval career has been most extensively studied by Ronald S. Crane, "The Vogue of *Guy of Warwick*, from the close of the Middle Ages to the Romantic Revival," *PMLA*, 30 (1915), 125-94; and Velma Bourgeois Richmond, *The Legend of Guy of Warwick* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1996).

Following along a similar trajectory as Guy – emanating from medieval romances and chronicles and later adapted as "popular history," to borrow John Merridew's phrase – were the Danes, as traditions of their total defeat in pre-Conquest England and the eventual triumph of a concerted effort by the English and the Normans became almost proverbial throughout England. The climax of Guy's Anglo-Norman and Middle English romances is his final battle, his single combat with an African giant Colbrand, the Danes' champion, and it was Guy's triumph over the Danes (and by proxy England's triumph over them) that became the most pivotal and most re-told feature of Guy's long romance narratives. The Danes are both the source of and the result of Guy's reputation and fame: his driving the Danes away from England sealed Guy's position as a national treasure by making him vital to the survival of present day England, and at the same time his reputation was maintained through the centuries because the Danes remained the primary enemy of English historical literature through at least the sixteenth century, ensuring that Guy's Danish episode remained current with changing needs.

The career of Guy of Warwick as a quasi-historical chivalric hero demonstrates the tightly wound interlacing between chronicles and historical romances in the late Middle Ages, and the significant degree to which such historico-mythic narratives influenced postmedieval perceptions about England's past. The legend of Guy reveals the real world impact that medieval historical romances had as they became intertwined with political ambitions and the popular imagination. In this chapter, I examine how the process of ethnogenesis in both chronicle and romance crucially informed the national ambitions of popular romances like the Anglo-Norman *Gui* and the fourteenth century Middle English *Guy*. I argue that this Middle English adaptation of earlier Latin and French sources constructs a rhetoric of English nationalism that validates the present political and social order by constructing a historical English community unified against

its enemies throughout time; and the Danes are vital to the narrative of a fantasized Anglo-Norman and Anglo-Saxon partnership and unity.

3.2   ROMANCE HISTORY AND IDENTITY: ETHNOGENESIS IN THE ANGLO-NORMAN *GUI DE WAREWIC*

Anglo-Norman ancestral romances like *Gui* allowed elite audiences to imagine themselves as English by offering a legacy of memories where they had not previously existed. The development of a post-Conquest English identity relied on dramatizing the similarities, rather than the differences, between Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman cultures. As Brubaker and Cooper remind us, group identities are based on persuading people that they are united, "that they comprise a bounded, distinctive, solidary group; that their internal differences do not matter, at least for the purpose at hand."[8]   By conflating the Anglo-Norman present with the Anglo-Saxon past, by rendering pre-Conquest English kings like Athelstan as ancestors, Anglo-Norman romances were involved in a process of ethnogenesis, the creation of a new ethnic identity, or the process by which a group comes to see itself as ethnically distinct. While ethnogenesis specifically refers to ethnic identity, I am using the term here to refer to the formation of a post-Conquest English national-racial identity that emerged and developed through the later Middle Ages. Ethnogenesis is a process describing the origins of ethnic identity, but the process continues as the needs of a group, whether national ethnic, religious, or otherwise, change. One of the methods by which an ethnic group comes to identify itself as distinct or a group apart is by

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[8] Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, "Beyond Identity," in *Ethnicity Without Groups* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 60.

the merging or amalgamating of two or more groups into one group.[9] In post-Conquest England,

this involved a conscious effort on the part of writers, especially chroniclers and composers of

historical romances, to narrate the story of an English community that was distinctive due

primarily to its shared history. The language of English nationalism in both the Anglo-Norman

and Middle English Guy-narratives is, to borrow a phrase from Ernest Gellner, not the

awakening of the English nation to self-consciousness, but the conscious invention of an England

that did not exist.[10]

Both the Anglo-Norman *Gui* and the Middle English (Auchinleck) *Guy* exhibit Guy as a

fantasized amalgam of Norman and Saxon cooperation against the foes of Christendom and

England.[11] While most critics agree that the Auchinleck version of the Middle English *Guy of*

Warwick (ca. 1330-40), Guy's literary debut in English, is more patriotic than its Anglo-Norman

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[9] Davia Cox Downey, "Ethnogenesis," *The Routledge Companion to Race and Ethnicity*, ed. Stephen M. Caliendo and Charlton D. McIlwain (London: Routledge, 2011), 136-8.

[10] Gellner's phrase is: ""Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness; it invents nations where they do not exist." Ernest Gellner, *Thought and Change* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 169.

[11] This chapter focuses on the second, stanzaic part of *Guy of Warwick* out of the three that appear in Auchinleck. In Auchinleck, the Anglo-Norman romance is broken up into three parts: the first, comprised of 7306 lines in rhyming couplets, narrates Guy's life from the time he falls in love with his social superior Felice, journeying throughout continental Europe to gain enough fame by winning tournaments to curry her favor, to his slaying of an Irish dragon that threatens Northumberland; the second, tail-rhymed, beginning with Guy's marriage to Felice, illustrates Guy's "conversion" from chivalric to penitential knight and his travelling around Europe and the Near East disguised as a pilgrim, defeating the Egyptian giant Amoraunt, and ends with his settling down and eventually dying as an anonymous hermit after driving the Danes from England; the third part, which comprises an entirely separate romance, concerns the life of Guy's son Reinbroun. The splitting of the *Guy* narrative in the Auchinleck Manuscript into three parts has received much scholarly attention. Midway through the narrative, the manuscript shifts from couplets to tail-rhyme stanzas and isolates all the Reinbroun material into a separate romance, *Reinbroun gij son of warwike*. For a detailed analysis of the tri-partite structure of the romance, see Julie Burton, "Narrative Patterning and *Guy of Warwick*," *The Yearbook of English Studies*, Vol. 22, Medieval Narrative Special Number (1992), 105-116, and Allison Wiggins, "The Manuscripts and Texts of the Middle English *Guy of Warwick*," in *Guy of Warwick: Icon and Ancestor*. For analysis of the Auchinleck manuscript see the facsimile *The Auchinleck Manuscript: National Library of Scotland Advocates' MS 19.2.1*, introduced by Derek Pearsall and I.C. Cunningham (London, 1977).

source, *Gui de Warewic* (c. 1230-40), Guy's first literary appearance,[12] such claims tend to be grounded on rather minor deviations of the Middle English romance from the earlier French material. The Auchinleck *Guy* follows the Anglo-Norman *Gui* very closely, down to many shared, virtually identical lines. Dieter Mehl, no great admirer of the Middle English *Guy*, has written that the English follows the French "very exactly," and Julius Zupitza, the editor of the still-used late nineteenth century editions of the various Middle English *Guy*'s, considers all Middle English versions of the Guy romance to be "translations from the French."[13] These deviations that have been said, especially by Thorlac Turville-Petre, Susan Crane, Carol Fewster, and Velma Bourgeois Richmond, to make the Middle English *Guy* more patriotic than the Anglo-Norman source are small indeed: for instance, in the Auchinleck *Guy* he fights "for Inglond" (248.11-12), and to "today saue Inglondes riȝt" (252.11).[14] While both the Anglo-Norman and Middle English romances pit the hero defending England against its enemies, it is the fourteenth-century English version compiled in the Auchinleck manuscript that is commonly

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[12] Dating the Anglo-Norman romance precisely has proved particularly difficult. It was first edited from twelve extant manuscripts in 1933 by Alfred Ewert who dated it sometime between 1232-42, basing his claim on the fact that Gui is the son of the count of Warwick's seneschal; this seneschal, Gui's father, owns Wallingford. Wallingford was restored in 1242 by Richard of Cornwall, but in *Gui* Wallingford has not yet been restored (ll. 9013-20). More recent research suggests that the romance is closely modeled on *Waldef*, an earlier Anglo-Norman romance. Judith Weiss suggests that due to the absence of any mention of the Fourth Crusade and the sacking of Constantinople, *Gui* was probably written before 1204; See Judith Weiss, "Introduction," Boeve de Hamtone *and* Gui de Warewic: *Two Anglo-Norman Romances*, trans. Judith Weiss, 12-14; and "*Gui de Warewic* at Home and Abroad," *Guy of Warwick: Icon and Ancestor*, ed. Alison Wiggins and Rosalind Field (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2007), 1-11; and Emma Mason, "Legends of the Beauchamps' Ancestors: The Use of Baronial Propaganda in Medieval England," *Journal of Medieval History*, 10 (1984), 25-40.

[13] Julius Zupitza, *The Romance of Guy of Warwick*, v. For a discussion of the Middle English *Guy* as a translation from the Anglo-Norman source, see Ivana Djordevic, "*Guy of Warwick* as a Translation," in *Guy of Warwick: Icon and Ancestor*, ed. Allison Wiggins and Rosalind Field (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2007), 27-43.

[14] Unless otherwise stated, all quotations are from the Auchinleck *Guy of Warwick* and refer to Zupitza's edition of the text: *The Romance of Guy of Warwick*, Early English Text Society, e.s., 42, 49, 59 (London, 1883, 1887, 1891). Quotations from the stanzaic *Guy* will henceforth be marked by the stanza and line numbers in parentheses; quotations from the couplet *Guy* will be marked by the line numbers in parentheses.

characterized as being more patriotic, along with the rest of the manuscript, which for Thorlac Turville-Petre "shows particular interest in material that has a bearing on the state of England and its history" and "stresses the nationalistic aspect again and again."[15] Although in the first part of *Gui/Guy,* according to Rosalind Field's reading, it is difficult "to distinguish the treatments of the material in terms of patriotic content," during the Danish invasion of England, "dramatically and thematically the centrepiece of Guy's career," the Auchinleck repeatedly changes the Anglo-Norman's description of England as "la tere" ("the land") to "Inglond," so that whereas in the Anglo-Norman Gui swears to "defendre la tere" (l. 11064) in Auchinleck Guy will "make Inglond fre" (248.5).[16]   It is these types of linguistic choices, especially the clear statements about defending England from annihilation, that are often taken to denote an increase of patriotism in the Auchinleck version of *Guy*.

Yet there cannot be a doubt that in the earlier Anglo-Norman *Gui*, though it does not say explicitly that Guy fights "for Inglond," this is precisely what is happening. As Rosalind Field has observed, all too often readers find what they are looking for; in this case, "an English-language text creating a hero for England."[17] What the Auchinleck *Guy* offers is not ideologically different from what the Anglo-Norman *Gui* offers. In a heroic battle for the future of the nation, Gui/Guy fights to save England from the marauding Danes who wish to conquer and claim the land as their own, rendering Christian England a new, pagan Denmark. Carol Fewster considers *Guy* to reflect nationalistic concerns since it implies, in the fight between Guy and the Danish champion Colbrond, greater consequences than Guy's own well-being or honor;

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[15] Thorlac Turville-Petre, *England the Nation: Language, Literature, and National Identity, 1290-1340* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 114-9.
[16] Rosalind Field, "From *Gui* to *Guy*: The Fashioning of a Popular Romance," *Guy of Warwick: Icon and Ancestor*, ed. Alison Wiggins and Rosalind Field (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2007), pp. 58-9.
[17] Field, "From *Gui* to *Guy*," 59.

as Guy's personal success is subsumed under England's success, the two come to be identical goals.[18] But these implications of a greater national honor than Guy's personal honor are also in the Anglo-Norman *Gui*. While it is true that the Anglo-Norman romance does not say explicitly that Guy fights "for Inglond" or for England's "riȝt," if the Auchinleck *Guy* reveals more nationalistic tendencies than the Anglo-Norman *Gui*, the basis for such claims must rely on minor textual deviations and additions to the Middle English *Guy* that are implicit in the Anglo-Norman text. Even if the Middle English version is clearer in its nationalistic language, both of Guy's romances written in English, regardless of their language, offer an enthusiastic depiction of English triumph that was sure to have stirred audiences' patriotic feelings, whether in the thirteenth century or the fourteenth.

Where the Anglo-Norman and Middle English versions of *Guy* do significantly differ is in their depiction and emphasis on the barony, with the Anglo-Norman romance highlighting their importance and issuing challenges to the king and the Middle English largely removing both of these aspects. Susan Crane has observed a deemphasizing of baronial concerns – feudal terminology, titles and property – in the Auchinleck *Guy* and a strengthening of "expressions of nationalism," in order to align baronial concerns with and be ultimately superseded by national interests.[19] After the Conquest, chivalric literature was vital to the political ambitions of the newly established Norman aristocracy. In ancestral-baronial romances,[20] the Anglo-Norman

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[18] Carol Fewster, *Traditionality and Genre in Middle English Romance* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1987), 84.

[19] Susan Crane, *Insular Romance: Politics, Faith, and Culture in Anglo-Norman and Middle English Literature* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986), 65-6.

[20] The term "ancestral romances" is Legge's, whose survey of Anglo-Norman literature and culture, *Anglo-Norman Literature and its Background*, is still seminal to the field. She writes, somewhat wistfully, of the role such ancestral romances might have played for young eleventh-century nobles looking for a heritage: "It is perhaps difficult to realize the homesick feelings of families isolated in castles and on manors, surrounded by people who did not even speak the same language, and without the

aristocracy could establish and celebrate an English past tailor-made to suit their interests and to include them in the English national story. The stories of Fulk le Fitzwaryn, Bevis of Hampton, Horn, and Guy exalt the Anglo-Norman aristocracy by celebrating its martial and chivalric values and its connection with the English legendary past.[21] Rosalind Field has suggested that perhaps the central reason why there is so little Arthurian material in Anglo-Norman romance is that the baronial interests that lay behind the texts were not concerned with promoting an ideology of strong, centralized monarchy[22]; conceivably this may also account for the genesis and subsequent popularity of the Guy as the prototypical Anglo-Norman hero, whose romance portrays its subject as a crusading, chivalric knight capable of saving England from the Danes, a feat that the king Athelstan could not accomplish without his best knight. Anglo-Norman romances, patronized and enjoyed by the interconnected families of the aristocracy, provided foundation myths for families, cities, regions, and, ultimately, for the whole Anglo-Norman social order; such myths are less about conquest and domination (as in Brutus' triumph over Gogmagog and the native island monsters), instead lauding assimilation and continuity.[23] Guy of Warwick's earliest characterization as an Anglo-Norman savior of Anglo-Saxon England promotes an ideology of continuous, rightful rule, linking the Anglo-Saxon past with the Anglo-Norman present.

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comfort of going to church surrounded by the stone effigies of relations whom they hoped to join. Poets would benefit by this feeling and could supply interesting legends of the past glories of the new home and even suggest a connexion with some famous figure of the past, preferably a king and a saint. The simplest way of ministering to this need would be to take some old story or stories and provide a local setting. How much the resulting legends would be taken seriously it is impossible to say. Certainly, in some cases, the families pretended to believe in them, and, after all, it was a time which could produce and swallow any number of forged charters." See M. Dominica Legge, *Anglo-Norman Literature and its Background* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 141.

[21] William Calin, *The French Tradition and the Literature of England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 87.

[22] Rosalind Field, "Romance in England," in *The Cambridge History of Middle English Literature*, ed. David Wallace (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 161.

[23] Field, "Romance in England," 161.

In addition to establishing clear indicators of status such as titles, feudal terminology, and property, the Anglo-Norman *Gui* voices baronial interests as a compliment to the authority of Athelstan, who is shown to be martially ineffective without his champion Guy and politically ineffective without his nobles. In one scene that is omitted from the Auchinleck *Guy*, when Athelstan calls together his nobles to warn them of the coming of Anlaf and the Danes, he is challenged by the Earl of Cornwall, Modred. Guy is abroad, disguised as a pilgrim, fighting the Saracen giant Amarant on behalf of King Triamor, a pagan who turns Christian after Guy's defeat of the giant, and Guy's son Reinbrun has been kidnapped by Russian merchants. Heralt, Guy's tutor and lifelong companion, is favored by Athelstan and treasured by the king above all his nobles because he is "*de greindre afaire*" (of nobler character) than any other Englishman.[24] Though the counts and barons are described as "wise and sensible," (*Qui sages erent de raisuns*, l. 9106) they are also "very envious" (*grant envie*, l. 9111), grumbling about the favor shown to Heralt and faulting the king for doing "great dishonor to his barons" (*Ses baruns feseit grant deshonur*, l. 9116) by showing so much honor to the son of a "poor vavasur" (*povre vavassur*, l. 9115). The nobles attempt to maintain a strict observation of feudal rank, a position that is contrasted with Athelstan's rewarding of merit over station. While their position is clearly wrongheaded and a distraction from the larger, more pressing issue of the invading Danes, the only direct challenge to the king's power is voiced by the Duke of Cornwall, named Modred, who faults Athelstan: "'My lord,' he said, 'listen to me: you don't behave as you should when you believe rogues, and love and honor them more than you do your barons – we are wrong to serve you'" (*Sire, fait il, ça entendez:/N'estes pas cum estre devez/Quant vus les losengers*

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[24] *Gui de Warewic: Roman du XIIIᵉ Siècle*, ed. par Alfred Ewert, Vol. 2 (Paris: E. Champion, 1933), l. 9110. An English translation can be found in Boeve de Haumtone *and* Gui de Warewic*: Two Anglo-Norman Romances*, trans. Judith Weiss (Tempe, AZ: ACMRS, 2008). Quotations from the Anglo-Norman *Gui* will henceforth be marked by line numbers in parentheses.

creez/E plus les amez e honurez,/Plus que ne faites voz baruns/A grant tort vus servons, ll. 9165-70). Modred goes on to call Heralt a "proven traitor and evil-doer" (*Car fel e traitre est prové*, l. 9186). Modred, however, is clearly designed as the real traitor of the scene. The name Modred evokes Mordred, the traitorous nephew of King Arthur, whom the *Gui* composer certainly could have known. The earliest full treatment of Mordred appears in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*, where Mordred is an "infamous traitor" who gathers 80,000 pagan and Christian insurgents to defeat Arthur and take control of the British throne.[25] In Geoffrey's text, Mordred is clearly a figure on the margins of Britain, politically aligning himself with the Scots, Picts, and Irish and escaping to Cornwall where his final battle with Arthur occurs. It is entirely possible that audiences of the Anglo-Norman *Gui* would have associated the Modred of *Gui* with the treacherous Briton of Geoffrey's text or subsequent Arthurian treatments, which made the name Mordred synonymous with both Cornwall and treachery. Thus this scene of baronial challenge serves to reinforce the alignment of Anglo-Saxon (Athelstan) and Anglo-Norman (Guy and Heralt) interests, a power base centered in Winchester, while marginalizing the concerns of nobles like Modred, far away from the center of power. Ultimately this scene, omitted from the Auchinleck *Guy*, serves to reinforce Norman and Saxon partnership at the expense of a marginalized Brittonic outcast.

It is possible to see the Anglo-Norman *Gui* utilizing elements of Geoffrey's Arthurian narrative, ultimately turning Guy into a new, up-to-date Arthur-figure, replete with ascetic and hagiographic sentiments and without the Arthurian atmosphere of lust and sexuality. Heralt's seneschal, the knight Edgar – a clearly Anglo-Saxon name – plays the role of the "good" Mordred, tending to Heralt's lands in Wallingford while Heralt searches around Europe and the

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[25] Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, trans. Lewis Thorpe (Baltimore, MD: Penguin Books, 1966), 257-61.

Near East for Reinbrun. Edgar is described as "very valiant" (*qui mult ert ber*, l. 9236) and "full of courage" (*Mult grant prouessce*, l. 9238) praise he comes to earn. When Heralt is away searching for Reinbrun, Modred gathers the Cornish army and attacks Wallingford, "ravaging the surrounding countryside" (*Le pais environ as degasté,* l. 9376), but Edgar "defended himself impressively, like a bold and valiant knight" (*Mais Edgar noblemen se defendi/Cum chevalier vaillunt e hardi*, ll. 9377-8) and defends cities and castles so well that Modred "returned to Cornwall, leaving behind many of his men, dead" (*Arere en Cornewaille repeira/De ses homes morz assez I laissa*, ll. 9391-2); a scene which reminiscent of Mordred's retreat in Geoffrey's *Historia*: "He made no arrangements whatsoever for the burial of his dead, but fled as fast as ship could carry him, and made his way towards Cornwall."[26]

Guy himself is a new Arthur-figure; indeed, it is possible to see Guy as the Anglo-Norman Arthur, whose exploits are those of an earl more powerful martially and politically than the king himself. Like Geoffrey's Arthur, Guy fights (in the second, stanzaic part of the romance, after the renunciation of his youth in which he fought for personal glory in tournaments) for justice, God, and England (Britain in Arthur's case); like the Arthur of Geoffrey and Wace, Guy becomes the paragon of chivalry, largesse, and courtesy, the most preeminent courtly figure in Christendom, to whom all nobles desire to pay homage. Unlike Arthur, however, Guy has no express desire to augment his property or wealth and repeatedly turns down offers of titles, castles, and land; in Wace's *Roman de Brut* (c. 1155), Arthur "wants to rule everywhere," and much of Arthur's narrative in Wace in spent conquering foreign kingdoms.[27] Guy's explicit

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[26] Geoffrey of Monmouth, 259.
[27] Wace, *Roman de Brut: A History of the British*, trans. and ed. Judith Weiss (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2002), 245. Wace has Arthur conquering Norway, Iceland, Ireland, Denmark, France, Burgundy, Lorraine, Normandy, Flanders, Anjou, Gascony, Touraine, Auvergne, Poitou, Germany, and Rome.

renunciation of titles and lands reflects the social and political bent of Anglo-Norman romance as a whole, stressing the continuity of England from its past to its present and highlighting domestic assimilation and security rather than empire-building, which Wace's Arthur relishes. Whereas the Arthur of Geoffrey and Wace is a British hero warring against the invading Saxons, Guy is the epitome of post-Conquest knighthood because he fulfills Anglo-Norman desires to imagine themselves as an integral part of England's history and the rightful inhabitants of English land. Guy's legend is a way of making historical connections between past and present traditions; his Anglo-Norman romance (and its Middle English adaptation) blend post-Conquest Anglo-Norman chronicle traditions with the Anglo-Saxon historical record.

One of the primary sources for the validation of Norman rule in England was Anglo-Norman romances, which were likely patronized and enjoyed primarily by the inter-connected families of the aristocracy. Many of these tales were historically situated stories providing foundation myths for these families and for local regions, reiterating the status quo of the Anglo-Norman social order by recounting narratives of assimilation and continuity rather than conquest and domination. [28] The romance hero and the court that enjoyed his adventures were thus engaged in a mutually beneficial relationship; the hero gave prestige to the court with his victories and the court's reputation and recognition confirmed his inherent value.[29] English-language romance, which began to be written around the middle of the thirteenth century but reached its apogee through the next century, like its Anglo-Norman counterpart inherited the tendency to "encourage assimilation rather than resistance or resentment, acceptance rather than

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[28] Field, "Romance in England," 161.
[29] Sarah Kay, *The* Chansons de geste *in the Age of Romance: Political Fictions* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 2.

rebellion,"[30] and likewise exploited the Anglo-Saxon past to confirm to value of present-day English culture.

3.3 FROM ROMANCE TO CHRONICLE AND BACK AGAIN: THE DANES AND ENGLISH IDENTITY

The image of cooperation and assimilation of English and Normans that medieval Guy narratives offer comes at the expense of the Danes, who are clearly cast as villainous, rampaging foreigners rather than as a people who had settled in England and assimilated into English culture. Guy's single combat with the African giant Colbrand, the champion of the Danes, is clearly the pinnacle of Guy's career and the climax of the many singular adventures in the long romance. Guy is an older man when he returns to England towards the end of the narrative to fend off the invading Danes and save England from destruction. His victory over the Danes is situated in the romance to be the greatest of his achievements, and his duel with Colbrand is the episode in the romance that became the most famous exploit of Guy of Warwick through the early modern period, frequently excerpted and circulated as a separate story. Along with historical personages like Athelstan and the Danish king Anlaf, it is the inclusion of the Danes as a whole that lends Guy narratives a historical verisimilitude, a quality that led to Guy being absorbed into historical tradition by the mid-fourteenth century. Guy's fight with the Danes came to be considered a foundational episode in English history in the late Middle Ages. J.J. Cohen points to the Colbrand episode as "Guy's birth into national heroism," which was interpreted by medieval

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[30] Rosalind Field, "Romance as History, History as Romance," in *Romance in Medieval England*, ed. Maldwyn Mills, Jennifer Fellows, and Carol Meale (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1991), 164.

historians as "the moment when England assumed its full national identity," an interpretation that prevailed through the early modern period.[31] Cohen's central idea regarding gigantomachia and nationalism is that "England comes of age with the monsters it invents."[32] The defeats of monsters such as Colbrand and Gogmagog, whom Brutus defeats to settle and civilize Britain, signal vital moments in the unfolding of English destiny. For Cohen, through the body of Guy England "retroactively confers upon history a manifest destiny," coopting the past to explain and justify the present order.[33] Though Cohen restricts the significance of the Danes in *Guy* to the gigantomachia scene, it is the inclusion of the Danes themselves, rather than simply their giant champion, which signals the romance's intention to construct a heroic, triumphant history free of ruptures and conquests over England and the English. The invading Danes in *Guy* represent a triumph by a united Norman and English front over their enemies, a victory for England rather than a conquest of England.

The Danes are consciously selected as the prime, final enemy in Guy narratives because English triumph over them was considered by post-Conquest writers to have been the most significant episode of Anglo-Saxon history. The re-establishment of English power by Edward the Confessor in the eleventh century, implying English political superiority over the Danes, established the laws and values that the Norman kings wanted to be seen as inheriting and upholding, as opposed to the Danish kings who were un-English and ruled with wrong. The Anglo-Norman Prose *Brut* (ca. late-thirteenth century) praises Edward as God-fearing, humble, and charitable, the English king who "made all the good laws in England that still are for the

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[31] Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Of Giants: Sex, Monsters, and the Middle Ages* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 90.

[32] Cohen, *Of Giants*, 90.

[33] Cohen, 95.

most part retained."[34] Edward's ascension and his pious reign made him an ideal candidate to become an *antecessor* for Norman kings. Frank Barlow writes that Edward "had made the barbarous 'pre-history' of England more respectable"; his memory appealed to both English and the Normans, reconciling the two groups and at the same time helping to legitimize Norman and Angevin rule. His appeal lasted well beyond the eleventh century: in coordination with Edward's canonization under Henry II in 1161, the abbey at Westminster was expanded as a shrine to the Confessor, and Ailred of Rievaulx recrafted the *Life of King Edward* in 1162-3, which buttressed Henry II's position as a direct descendant of the Anglo-Saxon king; in 1239, because the Confessor was Henry III's favorite saint, he named his first son after him.[35] Like the canonization of Edward and the use of his personage in the twelfth century, the popularity of Guy's single combat with the Danish champion-giant for centuries after its original literary appearance suggests the ways in which literature intersects with the real world, as the one speaks back to the other.

Though Guy fights and kills heathens and giants in other episodes of the romance, it is his triumph over the Danes, with its nationalistic implications, that became the centerpiece of his legend. Carol Fewster suggests that Guy's fight with Colbrand took on nationalistic significance because it involves "consequences greater than Guy's own success or failure."[36] Guy's fight against the 30-foot long Irish dragon in Northumberland (ll. 7138-306), the episode that concludes the couplet *Guy,* is a standard romance hero's adventure with no consequences beyond Guy's valor, whereas Guy's fight with Colbrand is given a social and political context so that it

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[34] "Cesti bon Roi Edward fist tutes les bones leis en Engleterre qe vnquore sunt tutes les plus tenues." *The Oldest Anglo-Norman Prose* Brut *Chronicle*: *An Edition and Translation*, ed. and trans. Julia Marvin (Woodbridge, UK: The Boydell Press, 2006), 228-9.

[35] Frank Barlow, *Edward the Confessor* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 296-8.

[36] Carol Fewster, *Traditionality and Genre*, 84.

becomes a historical moment with clear implications for the present day audience of the romance. For the composer of *Gui/Guy*, history is less a matter of relating specific events in chronological order than evoking an atmosphere of historicity, which is essential to the success of the romance.[37] The figures Athelstan and Anlaf are deployed to evoke history rather than faithfully recount past events. Athelstan (r. 924-39) and Anlaf (or Olaf, d. 981, king of Northumbria and Dublin) are the English and Danish kings in the Battle of Brunanburgh in c. 937 as recorded in alliterative verse in perhaps the most famous episode of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.[38] The actual battle between English and Danes in *Guy* is entirely unlike the Battle of Brunanburh's *ASC* entry (other than completely differing in form, style, and tone, *Guy* features single combat rather than the massive war between the English and the Northmen and Scots in *ASC*), so it seems unlikely that the *Guy* composer used the *ASC* as a source. Nevertheless, using historical personages probably influenced its reception and led readers of the romance to believe in its historical value. From the early-fourteenth century onwards, Guy is included as Athelstan's champion against the Danes in chronicles as varied as Robert Mannyng's mid-fourteenth century work and Holinshed's chronicle over two hundred years later.

When Guy returns to England for his final chivalric exploit against a Saracen giant, we have already seen Guy defeat an Egyptian giant in Alexandria, so we are prepared to watch him succeed again. The previous battle against Amorant, whom he defeats in single combat on behalf of the sultan, King Triamor, positions Guy fighting to liberate Christian prisoners and allow pilgrims safe passage to the Holy Land. In the stanzaic *Guy,* Guy never fights for personal pride,

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[37] Rosalind Field writes, "History for [romance writers like the writers of *Gui/Guy*] is the creation of the clerk: it is less a matter of what happened in the past than of what events defy time and are preserved in written memorial, passed from one writer to another irrespective of the boundaries of language." See Field, "Romance as History, History as Romance," 168-9.

a "vice" he renounces after the tournaments and adventures across Europe in the couplet *Guy*.

One starry evening several weeks after his marriage to Felice, the event that opens the stanzaic

Guy, Guy recounts his deeds of heroism that he now realizes have been sins: "Mani man he

hadde slayn wiþ wrong" (21.10); "wer & wo ichaue don wrouȝt/& mani a man to grounde y-

brouȝt" (22.7-8); "Ich haue y-sleyn, sikerly,/& strued cites fale,/& for ich haue destrued

mankin/Y schal walk for mi sinne/Barfot bi doun & dale (I have assuredly slain men and

destroyed many cities, and because I have destroyed mankind I shall walk barefoot everywhere

for my sin, 29.5-9). Each of Guy's laments suggest that beyond the sin of having fought for

personal rather than spiritual glory, what makes Guy's deeds criminal is the monstrous nature of

having killed indiscriminately. He does not promise to give up killing altogether; he merely vows

to choose his battles more selectively. When Guy renounces his heroic deeds done in the service

of personal honor and pledges to dedicate the rest of his life to Christ, what Guy essentially

renounces is the very monstrousness that he soon encounters in Amorant and Colbrand and the

indiscriminate killing and rampaging of which the Danes are guilty. Rather than killing "mani a

man," in the second, stanzaic part of the romance Guy kills only single opponents in the defense

of Christendom and England. The Danes, by contrast, kill many "wiþ wrong" (239.1):

> For sir Anlaf, þe king of Danmark,
> Wiþ a nost store & stark
> Into Inglond is come
> Wiþ fiften þousend kniȝtes of pris:
> Alle þis lond þai stroyen, y-wis,
> & mani a toun han nome.
> A geaunt he haþ brouȝt wiþ him
> Out of Aufrike stout & grim:
> Colbrond hat þat gome.
> For him is al Inglond forlore
> Bot Godes help be bi-fore,
> ȝat socour sende hem some. (235.1-12)

The Danes' crimes – destroying cities and people indiscriminately – resemble the sins of Guy's early knightly career. Guy slayed many men "wiþ wrong"; the Danes now invade England and threaten the livelihood of its people with wrong: "For þe king of Danmark wiþ wrong/Wiþ his geaunt þat is so strong/He wil ous al schende (239.1-3). The words "al" and "schende" (shame) are echoed in the previous stanza, as Athelstan implores his barons to give him sound advice: "Gode conseyl ȝiue me now,/Or elles we ben al schent (238.11-12). What makes this battle especially climactic for Guy is its colossal national consequences, which could not be any weightier; the very survival of England is placed on Guy's shoulders.

The stark conflict between right and wrong, between justified and unjustified violence, is a theme running throughout Guy's encounters in the stanzaic part of his romance. In the gigantomachia with Amoraunt, King Triamour praises Guy for fighting against "michel wrong" twice (63.9, 72.8), and pleads with him to "defende me wiþ riȝt/þe wrong is on me souȝt" (87.8-9). Amoraunt's unjust combat is associated with the numbers of men he has killed rather than the quality of them: "mani he slouȝ þer-wiþ wiþ wrong/In batayle & in destaunce" (98.8-9). Surprisingly, the concept of just and unjust combat does not simply divide along Christian and heathen lines; even Amoraunt associates wrong fighting with killing multitudes rather than fighting in single combat. In the middle of his duel with Guy (who is disguised as a pilgrim named Yun), Amoraunt discovers that Guy is English and says that he wishes he were Guy of Warwick, who "haþ don ous forlore/Wiþ wel michel wrong" (111.11-12). Amoraunt is clearer about this wrong in the next stanza: "Wiþ michel wrong & michel wouȝ/Fourti þousand of ous he slouȝ" (112.1-2) and charges Guy with having "destrud our lawe" (112.5), implying that Guy disgraced his religion. Amoraunt reminds Guy of the kind of unjust fighting he no longer partakes in – killing indiscriminately rather than a single target – right in the middle of deadly

combat. We are reminded both of the penitential transformation that Guy has willfully undertaken and the moral barometer of the second part of the romance, as Guy fights with chivalry in single combat for consequences greater than personal glory.[39]

When the disguised Guy fights in single combat rather than against massive armies, God sanctifies the fighting and the results yield benefits that render Guy a savior of Christendom and England. Saracen and Christian alike recognize and value the concept of justified combat. Fighting with "right" against Amoraunt results in King Triamour freeing all Christians from prison and ensuring safe passage to the Holy Land (88.1-12); Triamour knows that Guy will "defende me wiþ riȝt/þe wrong is on me souȝt" (87.8-9), which will bring Guy worldwide fame forever: "men schal speke þereof evermo/As wide as þis warld is wrouȝt" (87.11-12). The fame that Guy would enjoy for centuries is thus inscribed directly into the romance. His driving away of the Danes from England assures Guy's fame in the annals of English heroic history. The stakes of the battle are made explicit, as Athelstan informs his "parlement" that if Anlaf's champion should win the day,

> He wil slen ous alle, saunfeyle,
> & strouen al our kende:
> Þan schal Inglond euermo
> Liue in Þraldom & in wo
> Vnto þe wardles ende (239.7-12)

Athelstan's warning of the impending destruction of England should the Danes succeed is typical of chronicle accounts of marauding Danes, as they pose an existential threat to the very survival of England as a law abiding, Christian kingdom. Christ sanctions their defeat. An angel is sent to

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[39] For a discussion of Guy's penitential knighthood and his place in the genre of medieval "penitential romances" – romances identified by Hopkins as varying the traditional romance pattern from virtue being tested and rewarded to sins repented, atoned for, and forgiven – see Andrea Hopkins, *The Sinful Knights: A Study of Middle English Penitential Romance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

Athelstan as he sleeps, promising him a pilgrim who will save England, so that Guy is clearly divinely guided to Winchester to save the day. It is Guy alone who will "save ous the riȝt of Inglond" without any human help of any kind (246.11). Guy recognizes the stakes and engages in the process of his own fame-building, as he turns to the "parlement" and claims he will fight "For God in Trinité/& forto make Inglond fre" (248.4-5); the idea is repeated twice when Athelstan rejoices that he has found a knight to "fiȝt for Inglond" (248.12) and Guy prays to "Levedi Mari" to help him "Today saue Inglondes riȝt" (252.11). Should Guy win the day, Anlaf and his Danes vow to never again return to England (253.7-12), a promise they keep win Guy kills Colbrand (269.11-12). The single combat between England and Denmark offers an all-or-nothing proposition, heightening the intensity of the scene for audiences: either England will be destroyed and its entire population enslaved or the Danes will be totally removed from England forever. Both of these scenarios – total destruction by the Danes and their total removal from England – were common themes in chronicles of England from the eleventh century through at least the eighteenth century.

The process of ethnogenesis undertaken by Anglo-Norman historians and writers of historical romances to make a single English people out of disparate groups was founded on concepts of shared history (Norman Guy and Saxon Athelstan) and shared values (right and wrong) that we can see at work in both the Anglo-Norman and the Middle English Guy narratives. In the century before the Conquest, the Normans had become experts at crafting an ethnic identity for themselves by utilizing literature to portray themselves in certain lights at the expense of others. After the Conquest, Norman historians almost immediately set themselves to work on crafting the Anglo-Saxon past to suit their needs. The subject of England's past was one that was especially attractive to composers of romances writing in England in the thirteenth and

fourteenth centuries. These historical romances reflected the revised story of England and Englishness that chroniclers after the Norman Conquest had been telling. Almost immediately after the Norman Conquest, an historical document like the Bayeux Tapestry and Norman historians like William of Poitiers and William of Jumièges were telling a narrative of justified triumph. These writers, along with the earliest chronicle of the Normans, the *Historia Normannorum* (ca. 1015-30) by Dudo of St. Quentin, were crafting what has come to be known as the "Norman myth," a myth of origins produced by Normans vindicating themselves as Christian Frenchmen, both a part of continental Christian culture and yet distinct, negotiating the old Scandinavian heritage with a new Christianity. In the absence of a long and glorious history, "Normanness" came to be associated with the land itself, so that Normandy was always destined to be the land of the Normans even before "its" people had arrived.[40] Though they were a parvenu "racial" group, the Normans were deft at utilizing historical narratives to construct a sense of identity as a single, united people; in Marjorie Chibnall's apt phrase, they were "united by history, not by blood."[41] Without a self-identified and long-standing literary "tradition" of their own – folklore, poetry, ecclesiastical records and practices – when they conquered England, replacing its monarchy and nobility almost wholesale, the Normans essentially co-opted English traditions over the course of the following two centuries after the Conquest by writing

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[40] The essential study on *Normanitas* remains R.H.C. Davis, *The Normans and Their Myth* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976). More recent discussion of the Norman myth and challenges to Davis' work have been offered by G.A. Loud, "The Gens Normannorum" – Myth or Reality?", *Anglo-Norman Studies IV* (1982), 104-16; Laura Ashe, *Fiction and History in England, 1066-1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 1-27; Emily Albu, *The Normans in their Histories: Propaganda, Myth, and Subversion* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2001); Hugh Thomas, *The English and the Normans": Ethnic Hostility, Assimilation, and Identity, 1066-c.1220* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Elisabeth M.C. van Houts, "Scandinavian Influence in Norman Literature of the Eleventh Century," in *Anglo-Norman Studies IV: Proceedings of the Battle Conference*, ed. R. Allen Brown (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 1984), 107-21.

[41] Marjorie Chibnall, *The Debate on the Norman Conquest* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1999), 2.

themselves into the story of England. Historical romances were vital to this process because they resembled history but were not constrained by the limits of historians' craft. As in Normandy, Anglo-Norman writers associated the land itself with the English people, as a place forever belonging to the English, which soon meant Normans as well as Anglo-Saxons. Within a century and a half after the Conquest, most Normans probably saw themselves as English subjects, and the land of England, the destined land of the English people, thus belonged to them and their history. The history of England and the English people became a part of Norman history. Not surprisingly, Anglo-Norman histories after the Conquest emphasize the Insular past while virtually ignoring the history of Normandy, a history in which the primary enemy of the Anglo-Saxons, the Danes, invaded and settled in northern France to become the very invading force that would soon conquer England.

The theme of Norman and English cooperation and integration that underlies medieval Guy narratives had been proposed from the very earliest of Norman historical writings. Significant portions of the Anglo-Norman *Gui* and the Middle English *Guy* essentially utilize the narrative framework of Dudo of St. Quentin, whose prosimetric *De moribus et actis primorum Normannaie Ducum* (*The Manners and Deeds of the First Dukes of Normandy*, ca. 996-1015), the earliest Norman chronicle, depicts a close partnership of the English and Normans and shows Athelstan to be the same pious, Christian king as he is in *Guy*. Commissioned by Duke Richard I of Normandy (of mixed Danish and Breton parentage) to produce a history of the Normans by relating their pagan origins and the deeds of their first three dukes, Rollo (r. 911-31), William Longsword (r. 931-42), and Richard I (r. 942-96), Dudo's chronicle recounts the story of the Norse, Norse-Celtic, and Anglo-Saxon settling of northwest Neustria (what soon came to be

known as Normandy).[42] The thematic arc of Dudo's history is the assimilation of the pagan

Normans into Christian French culture, though whether Dudo wanted to show that the newly

settled Danes retained some of their Viking traits is still debated. In R.H.C. Davis' formulation,

Dudo's ultimate intention was to show that by the end of the tenth century, the Normans had

shed their Viking roots and become civilized Christian citizens.[43] For Davis, Dudo's thesis of the

Frenchness of the Normans found a receptive audience, so that by the end of the eleventh

century, the words *Galli* and *Franci* became synonyms for *Normanni*, and Normans seemed to

care little whether they were called Norman or French. This is not to say that the Normans were

indifferent as to their "racial" makeup, or that they saw themselves as Franks. Since the 1980's,

some scholars have challenged Davis' view that the Normans had completely shed their

identification with their Viking roots. [44] There is general agreement that by the 1050's the

Normans became somewhat disinterested in their precise ethnic composition, and they were

aware that they were from a mixed background and thus "were Scandinavian enough to be

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[42] For overviews of the early history of the Normans, see Eleanor Searle, *Predatory Kinship and the Creation of Norman Power, 840-1066* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988); and David Bates, *Normandy Before 1066* (New York and London: Longman, 1982).

[43] Davis, *Normans*, 53.

[44] Davis, 54. Davis' work on Dudo's "Frankification" of the Normans has faced serious criticism since its publication in the mid-1970's, most notably by G.A. Loud, E.M.C. van Houts, Laura Ashe, and Emily Albu. Albu argues instead that Dudo did in fact stress the balance the earliest Normans had struck between their Scandinavian roots and their Christian Frenchness, rather than showing that they had completely shed their Viking roots. For Albu, the Norman dukes negotiate their Viking past with their Christian present. They don't want to cover up the pagan past – instead, Dudo reconciles the problem by showing how the Normans retain their "Viking traits" while progressing from it in their dress, their religion, and their society. By making others aware of the threat of the Viking inside them, the Normans can reconcile their Christianity while using their Viking heritage to their advantage. Albu writes, "Although Dudo cared little for authenticating details from Normandy's first hundred years, he did create a plausible heroic version of Norman origins from the potent combination of Roman and Christian, Frankish and Scandinavian elements. And he endowed his story with an essential truth about the persistence of Scandinavian traits among the Normans. However quickly the Northmen assimilated, Dudo understood that it was critical for them to harry neighbors and foes with the threats of Scandinavian affinities," Albu, *The Normans in Their Histories: Propaganda, Myth, and Subversion* (Woodbridge, UK: The Boydell Press, 2001), 11-12.

separate but Frankish enough not to offend.[45] As feared as the Northmen may have been

throughout early medieval Europe and despite the hostility of their Carolingian neighbors, when

they settled near Paris in the Seine valley they assimilated by assuming the Frankish religion and

language and by marrying Frankish women.[46] The Normans were well aware that they were not

of a single blood, that their unification by the mid-eleventh century into "the most disciplined,

cooperative warrior society in Europe" was a political, rather than a biological unification.[47]

Seeking to justify their sovereignty via history, the Normans engaged in the process of

ethnogenesis, manufacturing a myth about their ethnic-national identity that encompassed

legend, history, religion, poetry, and folklore.[48] Dudo was the first to produce such a myth,

laying the framework for Norman identity construction that was vital to the "invention" of

England and Englishness after the Conquest.

Instead of writing an objective critical history, Dudo's work provided the newly settled

Northmen with just what Duke Richard desired: an entertaining panegyric offering a "patterning

of their past that would account for their destiny."[49] The chronicle features Rollo, the founder

and first duke of Normandy, as a heroic leader fulfilling the destiny of his people. Since Dudo's

patrons (after Richard I's death in 996, his son and heir to the dukedom, Richard II, begged Dudo

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[45] Nick Webber, *The Evolution of Norman Identity, 911-1154* (Woodbridge, UK: The Boydell Press, 2005), 26.

[46] Cassandra Potts, "Normandy, 911-1144," in *A Companion to the Anglo-Norman World*, ed. Christopher Harper-Bill and Elisabeth van Houts (Woodbridge, UK: The Boydell Press, 2003), 19. While there is some debate over the amount of Scandinavian influence and the pace of accumulation of Frankish culture for the Normans, it is widely accepted that by 1066 French culture dominated. See Hugh Thomas, *The English and the Normans" Ethnic Hostility, Assimilation, and Identity, 1066-c.1220* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 32-45; Elisabeth M.C. van Houts, "Scandinavian Influence in Norman Literature of the Eleventh Century," in *Anglo-Norman Studies IV: Proceedings of the Battle Conference*, ed. R. Allen Brown (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 1984), 107-21.

[47] Searle, *Predatory Kinship*, 1-2.

[48] Davis, 49.

[49] Searle, 62.

to continue writing the history)[50] did not have any reliable accounts of Rollo's life, Dudo was

essentially given a free hand to construct a "patterning" of Rollo's deeds that suited his purposes.

This historiographical unreliability, especially concerning Rollo, accounts for Dudo's almost

total neglect by contemporary historians.[51] But it is precisely Dudo's imaginative patterning of

history that enables us to see how the Normans – or at least their rulers – wanted themselves to

be seen, and how Dudo weaves a history of a newly settled people out of the raw materials of

myth and epic, especially Virgil's *Aeneid*. Dudo forges his history "like a northern goldsmith,"

writes Eleanor Searle, describing his work as "neither annal nor history in the sense of

attempting to set down a reliable account of events. It is art, myth, saga, concerned with

fashioning raw material into a satisfying pattern, itself made up of the intertwining of subsidiary

patterns."[52] Dudo's chronicle recognizes the polyethnic nature of the *gens Normannorum* and

joins identities together to form a group unified by Christianity and common interests. The

ideological goal of Dudo's history is epitomized by a dream of Rollo's, an abstract dream

portraying a variety of birds unifying into a single flock, that is one of the centerpieces of the

work.[53] Rollo's advisors interpret the dream-vision as a prophecy for the Norman people: "men

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[50] Searle, 62.

[51] Dudo's history of the Normans has more recently been utilized by scholars of Norman identity, including the preeminent study of the Normans by R.H.C. Davis, *The Normans and Their Myth;* Nick Webber, *Evolution*; Hugh Thomas, *The English and the Normans*; Leah Shopkow, "The Carolingian World of Dudo of Saint-Quentin", *Journal of Medieval History*, 15 (1989), 19-37; and Emily Albu, *The Normans in Their Histories*.

[52] Searle, 64.

[53] Nick Webber calls the dream-vision "the single most important passage in the *Historia Normannorum* from the point of view of identity." Webber, *Evolution*, 25. The dream reads: "One night, while sleep was gently creeping over his drowsy limbs from the jaws of Lethe, he seemed to behold himself placed on a mountain, far higher than the highest, in a Frankish dwelling. And on the summit of the mountain he saw a spring of sweet-smelling water flowing, and himself washing in it, and by it made whole from the contagion of leprosy and the itch, with which he was infected; and finally, while he was staying on top of that mountain, he saw about the base of it many thousands of birds of different kinds and various colours, but with red left wings, extending in such numbers and so far and so wide that he could not catch sight of where

of different provinces with shields on their arms, who have done fealty to you, and whom you will see joined together in a countless multitude…The birds of different sorts will obey you: men of different kingdoms will kneel down to serve you."[54] It is in such visions that Dudo helped to invent the Norman *gens*, and it is the same process of self-identification by appropriating the Anglo-Saxon past that would occur after the Conquest.

The seeds of English and Norman cooperation are planted in Dudo's *Historia* in the partnership between Athelstan and Rollo, a relationship that is similar to the one between Athelstan and Guy. In Dudo's account of the Anglo-Saxon king, Athelstan (named Alstemus, the Latinized contraction of Athelstan) is a "most Christian king of the English…most piously holding the reigns of the English kingdom; he was adorned with a reputation for all kinds of goodness."[55] Rollo makes a pact with Athelstan to "[a]lways remain...part of my soul and companion," and together they conquer Normandy. Though the English are ultimately depicted as a fickle, disloyal, unruly rabble, "insolent and arrogant and fierce," Athelstan's reputation is upheld and he remains a friend of the Normans throughout the *Historia*. The negative portrayal of the English as a whole recalls Modred in the Anglo-Norman *Gui*, who challenges Athelstan and is depicted as a perfidious traitor; but Modred suggests a Briton, rather than an English, threat from the borderland of Cornwall. In the Middle English *Guy*, the English nobles are almost entirely silent, decorating the background of scenes while Guy and Athelstan save the

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they ended, however hard he looked. And they went one after the other in harmonious incoming flights and sought the spring on the mountain, and washed themselves, swimming together as they do when rain is coming; and when they had all been anointed by this miraculous dipping, they all ate together in a suitable place, without being separated into genera or species, and without any disagreement or dispute, as if they were friends sharing food. And they carried off twigs and worked rapidly to build nests; and furthermore, they willingly yielded to his command, in the vision." Dudo of Saint-Quentin, *History of the Normans*, ed. and trans. Eric Christiansen (Woodbridge, U.K.: The Boydell Press, 1998), 29-30.
        [54] Dudo, *Historia*, 30.
        [55] Dudo, 30.

nation. While Guy and Athelstan together defend England against the Danes, in the *Historia* Rollo helps Athelstan besiege and destroy many English cities, a feat for which Athelstan offers Rollo half the kingdom – precisely the same offer made to Guy for defeating Colbrand ("Half þe reme of Inglond," 275.11). Both Rollo and Guy turn down the reward; it is merely the prestige of being offered a reward of half of England by the pious Athelstan that is prioritized by both texts, rather than the actual land and wealth themselves. Guy is a thirteenth century analogue of Rollo and Arthur, two figures who were critical to Norman and Anglo-Norman chronicles (respectively) but whom did not find success in Anglo-Norman romance. As a thirteenth century knight placed in the English past to save England from its enemies on behalf of Athelstan and God, Guy was an ideal figure to navigate the inroads forged by Dudo and continued by post-Conquest writers, inroads which reshaped the English past as one of Norman and English partnership.

Post-Conquest Anglo-Norman writers continued the process of ethnogenesis initiated by Dudo, crafting a new English people out of the disjuncture caused by Norman settlement. While Dudo's *Historia* was likely a success,[56] his greatest fame came during the mid-twelfth century with the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum* (*The Deeds of the Norman Dukes*), a work that updates Dudo's chronicle to essentially justify the Norman Conquest. Begun by William of Jumièges in the 1050's, reworked and updated by several anonymous writers, and then revised elaborately in the early-twelfth century by Orderic Vitalis and Robert of Torigni, the *GND* used Dudo's account of the genesis of the Normans and added to it an updated account of the Normans up to

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[56] About fourteen manuscripts of the *Historia* survive. His work was known at Bury St. Edmonds in England, at Jumièges, St.. Evroul, and Fécamp in Normandy. See G.A. Loud, "The 'Gens Normannorum'," 107.

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and after the Conquest.[57]   Widely read in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the *GND* is the earliest prose account of the Conquest and is clearly a legitimization of William's claim to the English crown, though it is uncertain whether William himself commissioned the work.[58] Removing many of Dudo's invectives against the English, on the whole the *GND* tempers its account of the English. An episode in Rollo in which the English revolt against Athelstan is condensed to 150 words from the roughly 115 prose lines (approximately 1500 words) that Dudo devotes to it. Depictions of English perfidy and sinfulness are saved for the Conquest, although both the English and the Normans on the battlefield at Hastings are punished by God as "countless sinners."[59] The destruction of the English army is attributed to divine retribution for their merciless slaying of the Norwegian army and their leaders the week before at Stamford Bridge, thus justifying the Normans' invasion by attributing it to the will of God. One of the primary themes of Dudo's *Historia* – partnership between the English and Normans – is kept intact by the *GND*, as it puts the theme to work to justify William's right.

Writings that did not allow for a model of inclusiveness and continuity between the Anglo-Saxon past and the Anglo-Norman present, stressing incongruity and "racial" separation instead, simply did not find success after the eleventh century. William of Poitiers, possibly William I's chaplain during and after the Conquest, did not finish his *Gesta Guillelmi* (ca. 1071-7), a work that lauds the Conqueror as a hero on par with Caesar and Xerxes (he is lauded as *gloriossimus dux*) and lambastes Harold Godwinsson as a cruel and perfidious "mad

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[57] Elisabeth M.C. van Houts, "Introduction," *The Gesta Normannorum Ducum of William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis, and Robert of Torigni*, ed. and trans. Elisabeth M.C. van Houts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), xxi.

[58] There are forty-seven extant manuscripts; in the Middle Ages it was considered one of the most important narrative sources for Normandy and England up to the death of Henry I. See Van Houts, "The *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*: a history without an end," *Anglo-Norman Studies* III, ed. R. Allen Brown, (Woodbridge, UK: The Boydell Press, 1981), 106-11.

[59] *GND*, 169.

Englishman" who "violated his oath and seized the royal throne acclamation, with the connivance of a few wicked men."[60] In the *Gesta*, the Normans act innocently and with right and the English cause is "unjust."[61] William even proposes that the Danes and the English, "allied by blood" according to the Conqueror, team up to defeat the Normans. By the twelfth century, such associations between English and Danes would be unthinkable; for chroniclers writing in the shadow the Conquest, the English and the Normans partnered against the Danes, a narrative that persisted for centuries. When Orderic Vitalis incorporated parts of the *Gesta* into the *GND*, he balanced out William's divisive characterizations and removed suggestions that the English and Danes were allies in blood and in combat. Like the *Gesta*, Wace's *Roman de Rou* ("Story of Rollo," ca. 1160-1170's), intended to be a story of the origins of the Normans from Rollo to Henry II, was left unfinished, and the continuer of the narrative, Benoît, never finished it either.[62] Benoît and Wace represent the end of medieval Norman historical writing. After the *Rou* and Benoît's *Chronique des ducs de Normandie*, there is one prose chronicle ("undistinguished," according to Albu) from Rollo to King John, and one Latin history, *Draco Normannicus* ("The Norman Dragon") written in Normandy by Stephen of Rouen, a monk of Bec, in 1169.[63] Laura Ashe traces the lack of interest in Wace's *Roman de Rou* to its "illusory racial politics": "its complicity with and dependence upon the idea that the Norman rulers and aristocracy of England

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[60] *The* Gesta Guillelmi *of William of Poitiers*, ed. and trans. RHC Davis and Marjorie Chibnall (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 101.

[61] William of Poitiers, *Gesta*, 127.

[62] On the failure of the *Rou*, Laura Ashe writes: "*Rou* was in many ways a failure: it shows signs of at least one false start; its writing extended over more than a decade, and it is unfinished; its patron abandoned it, and the contemporary audience seems never to have been extensive; it survives only in four manuscripts and one fragment, including one seventeenth-century copy, of which none carries the complete extant poem." See *Fiction and History in England, 1066-1200* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 49-50.

[63] Albu, *Normans*, 217-19.

were, and remained, a distinct race."[64] Wace's *Brut*, on the other hand, follows the story of a land rather than a people, and was widely read in England.[65] The *Rou* had little appeal for the people of England because it stressed the rupture caused by the Conquest rather than continuity. Late-eleventh and twelfth-century historians writers like Orderic, William of Malmesbury, Henry of Huntingdon, and Gerald of Wales, whose works stress cross-ethnicity and the continuity of pre- and post-Conquest England, were the writers who found wide readership. In England by the twelfth century there was a waning sense of a Norman ethnicity distinct from the native *gens*. The nobles and the clergy were assimilating; Henry II (r. 1154-89) was the first non-Norman king of England (of mixed Angevin and Norman parentage) since Harold. This rapid acculturation of the Normans after a hostile takeover of English royalty, the church, and land accounts for the popularity of Anglo-Norman historical romances that place Norman knights in the pre-Conquest past. The Normans in England essentially willed themselves out of existence for the sake of assimilation.[66]

While eleventh century Anglo-Norman chroniclers were busy at work establishing a right of conquest based on the delegitimization of the claims of Harold Godwinsson and the right of William and the Normans to rule, over the next century historians writing in the shadow of the passing Conquest were anxious to justify what had essentially been a forceful seizure of the crown. In chronicles like William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum Anglorum* (c. 1125) the English are no longer barbaric natives better off ruled than ruling as in William of Poitiers' *Gesta*; they are merely precursors and cousins to the Normans whose defeat was ordained by

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[64] Ashe, *Fiction*, 50-1.
[65] Judging from manuscript evidence, the *Brut* was significantly more popular than the *Rou*. There are seven extant manuscripts of the *Rou*, whereas eighteen of Wace's *Brut* have survived. See Albu, 219.
[66] Albu, 220-1.

God for Saxon sins. In this tradition, at fault were the Danes, who offered a model of Conquest similar to the Normans' Conquest but who were not Christian and therefore could be cast, like Saracens, as un-English wrongdoers. If William and his Norman descendants intended to portray their sovereignty as right rule, then they needed a contrast larger than Harold Godwinsson alone to embody wrong rule. This contrast was the Danes. In the eleventh century, it was not just the Normans and English vying for control of the Isles. There were also Scandinavians vying for the English throne, and England was essentially up for grabs for all three. It would not have been at all clear to an English person in 1065 that the country was headed in a Norman direction; the possibility that England could return to the rule of Scandinavian kings was entirely plausible. Between 1013, when Swein Forkbeard of Denmark invaded England and claimed the throne, and 1042, when the last Danish king of England, Harthacnut, son of Cnut, died, England was essentially part of a vast Danish empire. While Orderic Vitalis portrays the line of Danish kings as a time of English subjection, it is not clear that some regions of Anglo-Saxon England, notably the north and the east, in which Scandinavians settled in significant numbers, would have shared Orderic's opinion. It was not at all clear that the Normans would conquer and subdue as easily as they were able to, or that the Norwegians would be defeated at Stamford Bridge, or that more Danish and Norwegian kings would not submit their claims to the rights of the throne. If the Danes and then Harold Godwinsson had been subjecting the English to wrong rule, then William's success was less as a conqueror than as a rightful inheritor doing God's work.

Historical romances like the Anglo-Norman *Gui* and the Auchinleck *Guy* served the tastes of thirteenth and fourteenth century audiences eager to entertain the notion of a triumphant English past with victories won by heroes ordained by God. A saint-hero like Guy joins England

to the world's divine order, justifying the present order by seeing in the past a manifest destiny.[67]

Guy's climactic fight with Colbrand that drove the Danes out of England became the most famous episode of the Guy legend through the early modern period because this was a celebratory moment of national maturity, a point when England adopted a victorious character that texts like *Guy* suggest it was destined to achieve. Guy's inclusion as one of the Nine Worthies in the late sixteenth century – an honor praising heroes of antiquity, Old Testament Hebrews, and chivalric Christians – elevates England to the world stage, fostering patriotic sentiment by connecting its national mythology with the universal order.[68]

The legendary career of Guy epitomizes the degree to which legend and history intertwined in the medieval and early modern periods to create a sense of English identity across past and present. From the early fourteenth century through the eighteenth century, Guy appeared in chronicles as a veritable historical figure. The *Short Metrical Chronicle* in the Auchinleck Manuscript with *Guy* includes Guy as if he was a real historical personage:

> In Aþelstonis time, ich vnderstond,
> Was Gij of Warwike in Jnglond
> & for Aþelston he dede a bateyle
> Wiþ a geaunt gret, saunfaile.
> Þe geaunt hiȝt Colbrond,
> Gy him slouȝ wiþ his hond.
> At Winchester þe bataile was don
> & seþþe dede Gij neuer non.
> Seuen ȝer king Aþelston

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[67] "When the king or hero of a nation becomes a saint, the nation is joined to the universal order of the universe, thereby contributing to the justification of its territorially bounded, cultural distinctiveness." Steven Grosby, *Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 88; cited in Rouse, "Guy of Warwick," 109.

[68] In England especially, Guy typically replaced Godfrey of Bouillon, the first Latin king of Jerusalem and a leader of the First Crusade, after the Middle Ages. The substitution may have been initiated by John Rous' attempts to link the earls of Warwick with the Worthies in the *Rous Roll* of 1483 (discussed below). Richard Lloyd includes Guy as one of the Nine Worthies in *A brief discourse of…the Nine Worthies* (1584). See Richmond, *Legend*, 191-5.

Held þis iche kingdom.[69]

[I understand that in Athelstan's time Guy of Warwick was in England and for Athelstan he did battle with a great giant, to tell the truth. The giant was named Colbrond, Guy slew him with his hands. At Winchester the battle was done and that was Guy's last deed. Seven years King Athelstan held the kingdom.]

The mythical, heroic past is interlaced with actual historical figures, and romance combat occurs in a recognizable location, Winchester. Robert Mannyng, a more fastidious writer of history than the composer of the *Short Metrical Chronicle*, includes Guy at the year 940 in his *Chronicle* with no suggestion that Guy is a figure of legend. Though Mannyng was scrupulous in his Havelok interpolation about drawing a sharp line between history and romance, Guy was apparently a real enough figure of history to merit mention without hesitation. God sends Athelstan a champion to defeat the Danes' giant:

> þat was Guy of Werwik as þe boke sais;
> þer he slouh Colibrant with hache Daneis.
> Anlaf turned agayn (I trowe him was wo),
> He & alle his to schippe gan þei go.[70]

Mannyng's acceptance of the reality of Guy's place in history, as opposed to his skepticism about Havelok's historical authenticity, possibly stems from Guy's appearance in Mannyng's source, Peter de Langtoft's Anglo-Norman verse *Chronicle* (ca. 1305). Whereas the story of Havelok, as Mannyng tells us, cannot be found in Gildas, Bede, Henry of Huntingdon, William of Malmesbury, or Peter de Langtoft ("noiþer Gildas, no Bede, no Henry of Huntynton,/no William of Malmesbiri, no Pers of Bridlynton," ll. 521-2), Mannyng relates Guy's story "as þe

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[69] *An Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle*, ed. Ewald Zettl, Early English Text Society no. 196 (London: Oxford University Press, 1935), ll. 1663-72. The translation is mine.
[70] Robert Mannyng, *The Chronicle*, ed. Idelle Sullens (Binghamton, NY: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1996), ll. 697-700. Guy's work is largely an English translation of Peter de Langtoft's Anglo-Norman verse *Chronicle* (ca. 1305), which is itself a re-working of Wace's *Brut*, Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum*, and other sources.

boke sais." The appearance of Guy in an appropriate historiographical source is enough evidence for Mannyng to accept the legendary knight as a figure of history, and after the fourteenth century Guy's defeat of Colbrand and his role as England's savior against the Danes appears to have been accepted as historical truth. Gerald of Cornwall, Rudborne, Knighton, Hardyng, Rous; the major fourteenth and fifteenth century histories include Guy's fight against Colbrand, so that it was clearly an accepted truth and it was repeatedly recounted as an historical event.[71] Sixteenth century chroniclers and antiquarians were no less interested in Guy; the popular chroniclers Fabyan, Grafton, Holinshed, and Stow all recounted how Guy at the request of Athelstan saved England from the Danes by defeating the giant Colbrand.[72] Guy's victory was not a romance at all, but a genuine historical event of which all English people could be proud.

In the later Middle Ages, the legend of Guy's battle against the Danes was solidified as a foundational moment in English history, but it still could serve as a popular romance and was often re-told in a variety of forms. In 1425 the battle between Guy and Colbrand was turned into a 592-line poem by the poet John Lydgate, who versified the narrative from the Latin history of Gerard of Cornwall. Lydgate's poem was commissioned by the Earl of Warwick's daughter, the Countess of Shrewsbury, who, according to Lydgate's preface, desired a "lyf of þat moste worþy knight Guy of Warwike, of whos bloode shee is lyneally descendid."[73] Lydgate's preface suggests that the practice of fifteenth century nobles was similar to that of their Anglo-Norman forebears, meshing legendary and historical material to glorify family reputation and to value families' historical significance as vital to the survival of England. Even as Lydgate's poem

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[71] Ronald S. Crane, "The Vogue of Guy of Warwick from the Close of the Middle Ages to the Romantic Revival," *PMLA* (30:2) 1915, p. 127.
[72] Crane, "Vogue," 135.
[73] John Lydgate, "Guy of Warwick," in *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate*, ed. Henry Noble MacCracken, Early English Text Society no. 192 (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), p. 516.

shifts the Guy legend back into romance by dwelling on the bloody details of his gigantomachia with Colbrand, at the same time it situates Guy in a material historical framework by offering a precise date, July 12 in the year 927 (ll. 1-2, 371) and a precise place, Hyde Meadow, "nat fer from the Cyte" (l. 380). Yet the general time period of the poem is named as "Brutys Albyoun" (l. 4), revealing the fence between myth and history that Lydgate's *Guy* straddles. Giving the battle with Colbrand a place and date serves Lydgate's purpose of lionizing both the ancestral Earl of Warwick Guy and the current Earl of Warwick, Richard Beauchamp, by marking Guy's exploits on a recognizable plain of time and geographical space. The conflation of England's mythological and historical past was grounded on the habit, exhibited in Lydgate's *Guy*, of attaching famous heroes' deeds to specific localities.[74]

3.4   "TO THE HERMITAGE, WHEN THEY COME": GUY'S CLIFFE AND THE MAKING OF A HISTORICAL GUY

The location that became most directly associated with the Guy legend was the final resting place of the chivalric knight, Guy's Cliffe, a place on the Avon about a mile north of Warwick, where there was a medieval hermitage in use from at least the early fourteenth century.[75] In John Merridew's early nineteenth century dedication to Bertie Greatheed in the edition of *Guy* that he had printed for the current owner of Guy's Cliffe, the legendary character of the Cliffe's chapel

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[74] For a general survey of the reception of medieval chivalric romances through the eighteenth century and a discussion of the conflation of the mythological and historical pasts, see Keith Thomas, *The Perception of the Past in Early Modern England: The Creighton Trust Lecture, 1983* (London: University of London, 1983).

[75] John Frankis, "Taste and Patronage in late medieval England as reflected in versions of Guy of Warwick," *Medium Aevum* 66:1 (1997): 85.

still lent an air of distinction to what would otherwise be like any other country chapel. Since at least the late fifteenth century, the association of the chapel with Guy of Warwick distinguished the location – and its owners – as having broader national significance. However, its original name was not Guy's Cliffe but Gibcliff; presumably because of its proximity to Warwick, the hermitage came to be associated with the legendary Guy of Warwick in the late Middle Ages, just as various places throughout England were said to have connections with Arthur or Robin Hood and were named accordingly. Though there are no references to Guy's Cliffe before 1400, by the end of the fifteenth century, the association with Guy became strong enough that the name changed and references to Gibcliff disappear around 1500 while Guy's Cliffe became regular.[76] Guy's legend thus appears to have grown more widespread as the medieval period waned.

From an unnamed forest in the Auchinleck *Guy of Warwick* to Guy's Cliffe in antiquarian texts and early modern retellings of the legend, the location of Guy of Warwick's death demonstrates the integral role medieval romance played in the construction and dissemination of English identity. The Auchinleck *Guy of Warwick* has Guy's final resting place as a hermitage in a forest outside of Warwick: "Into a forest wenden he gan/To an hermite he knewe er þan" (282.6-7). Though the precise location is not named and the only edifice is a hermitage, the Auchinleck *Guy* generates the possibility for future adapters to fill in the blank. Over the fifteenth century, it became important to specifically name the place of Guy's death, as the prestige of the association between the chapel at Gibcliff and Guy increased. A late fifteenth century version of *Guy of Warwick* (c. 1475) gives a name to the location of Guy's place of death and partially describes its location. Guy goes

To an ermyte, þat he knewe or þan.

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[76] Frankis, "Taste," 85.

On a ryuere syde hys hows he hadde
(a full holy lyfe he there ladde)
Besydes Warwyke, þat was hys,
That Gybbeclyf clepyd ys.[77]

Thus by 1475 the chapel known as Gibcliff on the Avon just outside of Warwick was clearly identified as the particular place where Guy of Warwick died. The Auchinleck *Guy* laid the foundations for the association and over the next 150 years the identification was solidified. It took only a small sleight of hand to slightly alter "Gib" to "Guy" and for the chapel to be forever known as Guy of Warwick's chapel.

After 1500 or so, it became almost obligatory to make mention of Guy's Cliffe, especially when the writer was composing a work on behalf of the Beauchamp family, the earls of Warwick from William de Beauchamp (1237-1298) through Anne de Beauchamp (d. 1448), Countess of Warwick. From William onwards, the Beauchamps actively cultivated Guy as their Saxon ancestor. William Beauchamp, the first Beauchamp earl of Warwick, clearly saw enough prestige in the Guy legend that he named his son Guy in 1272. Seventy years later, Thomas Beauchamp, the eleventh earl of Warwick and a founder of the Order of the Garter, named his sons Guy, Thomas, and Reynbrun, so the sons represented Guy the grandfather, Thomas the father, and Reynbrun the son. Tradition dictated that elder sons could only be named after ancestors; by naming his son and heir Guy, William imparted a reality upon the legend of Guy as much as the romance itself lent prestige and a historical reality to Guy's Cliffe and to the Beauchamp house.[78] Although the life of Guy had little to do with the Beauchamps (other than

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[77] *The Romance of Guy of Warwick: The second or 15th-century Version*, ed. Julius Zupitza, Early English Text Society nos. 25-6 (London: 1875), ll. 10526-30.
[78] Cohen, *Giants*, 94.

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the fact that they were both earls of Warwick), the house adopted him as a heroic ancestor and

potentially revivified Guy's popularity for centuries to come.[79]

By the mid-sixteenth century, while there was some lingering confusion regarding the

precise name of the chapel on the Avon, its identification as the place where Guy of Warwick

went to live out his final days was no longer in question. The poet and antiquarian John Leland

records in his *Itinerary of England and Wales* a chapel dedicated to St. Mary of Magdalene on

the Avon a mile north of Warwick that

> of some is caulyd Giblclif, of some Guy-clif; and old fame remaynethe with the
> people there, that Guydo Erle of Warwike in K. Athelstan's dayes had a great
> devotion to this place, and made an oratory there. Some adde unto [it], that aftar
> he had done great victories in outward partes, and had bene so long absent that he
> was thought to have bene deade, he came and lyved in this place lyke an heremite,
> onknowne to his wife Felicia ontyll at the article of his deathe he shewyd what he
> was. Men shew a cave there in a rok hard on Avon ripe, where they say that he
> usyd to slepe. Men also yet showe fayr springs in a faire medow thereby, where
> they say that Erle Guido was wont to drinke. This place had fore the tyme of
> Richard E. of Warwike only a smaul Chappelle and a cotagw wherein an heremite
> dwellyd.[80]

The earl Richard, Leland relates, "beringe a greate devotion to the place," founded a new chapel

and "set up there an ymage of E. Guido great lyke a giant." Phrases like "of some is caulyd,"

"old fame remaynethe," "[s]ome adde unto," "[m]en shew," and "they say" suggest that local

legends around Warwick were widespread by the middle of the sixteenth century. Rather than

reading them in chronicles and romances, Leland seems to have been told and shown the local

sites of Guy's fame. Leland was commissioned by Henry VIII to travel throughout England from

1535-43 in order to search monastic libraries and read the "hystoryographers" so as to bring "out

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[79] Fewster, *Traditionality*, 106-7.
[80] *The Itinerary of John Leland, in or about the years 1535-43, Parts IV and V*, ed. Lucy Toulmin
Smith, Vol. 2 (London: Centaur Press, 1964), 45-6.

of deadly darknesse to lyuelye light…the monumentes of auncyent wryters."[81] Leland's searches did not mean that England and the Tudors were ready to eliminate all traces of "Roman" learning and history; instead, Leland's passage on the folklore surrounding Guy suggests that Guy was a national hero to be salvaged for the honor he afforded the English in history. The stories of Guy that Leland relates bestow historiographical value upon medieval romance: as historical romances invent the nation's and region's past out of diverse textual materials, blending romance and history, these romances in time were utilized as conduits relating England's heroic past and the formation of an English identity through time.

The earl Richard, whom Leland credits with rebuilding Gibclif and dedicating it to Guy with an image of Guy on the wall of the new chapel, was likely the first to encourage the usage of "Guy's Cliffe" as opposed to Gibclif. The first appearance of "Guy's Cliffe" was probably in *The Beauchamp (Warwick) Pageants* (ca. 1485-90), an illustrated life of Earl Richard Beauchamp, who clearly wanted to make inroads between himself and his illustrious ancestor. There appears to have been a desire after 1420 to revive and foster the Guy legend and give it a "cult center" in Warwick, presumably out of a romantic enthusiasm for the past and to bolster Beauchamp family prestige.[82] As the Beauchamps cultivated Guy's heroic legends and claimed him as their own illustrious ancestor, Guy's fame steadily grew and he continued to enjoy success in new literary forms in new centuries.

The conflation of romance and chronicle was reinforced by the inclusion of a specific location like Guy's Cliffe; if a particular place that still existed could be pointed to as a place where a historical figure had visited, then a reality is bestowed both upon the place and upon the hero himself. John Rous, a chantry priest at the new chapel erected by Earl Richard at Guy's

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[81] Johan Bale (London, 1549), B viii; cited in Richmond, *Legend*, 183.
[82] Frankis, "Taste," 86.

Cliffe (d. 1491), is careful to mention Gibclif twice in the short passage dedicated to Guy in the *Rous Roll*, made by Rous for Queen Anne and King Richard III on the occasion of a state visit to Warwick in the summer of 1483.[83] The *Roll*, intended as a history of the earls of Warwick, provides a genealogy between Guy and the Beauchamps that was accepted as historical and cited for centuries and vividly illustrates the blurring of romance and history in the late medieval period. Beginning his history of Warwick in the time of Alexander the Great and ending with an entry on Edward, Prince of Wales, the son of Richard III, the *Roll* includes mythical figures such as Aeneas, Guy, Arthur, and his cousin Gwere (who called the city Caer Gwere, later Warwick) but also historical personages like Edward the Confessor. In his passage on Guy, Rous calls him the "flour and honour of knyghthode" and a "noble warreur" (figs. 21-2).[84] The only deed that is specifically mentioned is his defeat of Colbrand at Winchester, and Gibclif is noted both as the place where Guy died and the placed where he and Felice were buried. Interestingly, Rous goes on to note that pilgrimages to the area of the Cliffe and the cave where Guy lived as a hermit continue to the present day, as two "pore men" are "continually present weryng hys pilgrim habit" ready to show visitors "the place and theyr habitacion…over hys caue in the roke" (fig. 22). Like a modern day tourist trap, Rous here describes how the legend of Guy was perpetuated at Guy's Cliffe, telling of a shrine visited by pilgrims and perpetuated by local priests encouraging alms-giving by stationing two peasants in the area dressed in Guy's pilgrim costume. Further in the history, Guy's arms and armor are used by several subsequent earls, including all of the male Beauchamps. The idealized meshing of chivalric romance and historiography is on full display in the *Roll*, as Guy's legend continued to provide a useful

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[83] Richmond, *Legend*, 127.
[84] John Rous, *The Rous Roll*, with an introduction by Charles Ross (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1980).

chivalric past to legitimize the present Tudor order. By the mid-seventeenth century, the usage of Gibclif or Guy's Cliffe was no longer an issue; indeed, it apparently did not matter what the place was called so long as it was identified with Guy. The 1661 play by a "B.J." (it has sometimes been attributed to Ben Jonson but no author can be definitively proven), *The Tragical History, Admirable Atchievements and various events of Guy Earl of Warwick*, has Guy at the end of his life alone on stage declaring,

> Now am I come in sight of my fair Home,
> That's cal'd Guye's Crosse, for that I did erect,
> before I went to fair Jerusalem;
> here was I wont to sit and view my Land,
> and eke my Castle that on Tiptoes stand,
> to overpeer this part of Warwickshire.[85]

Neither the Middle English *Guy of Warwick* nor Leland nor Rous suggests that Guy erected a home or that his final resting place was called Guy's Crosse. But Guy is here a proud seventeenth century earl surveying his land from his country estate; the details of place names and personal titles are subsidiary to the larger character model. From the middle ground between legend, romance, and chivalric history that Guy inhabits, the past is surveyed through the eyes of a transformative knight.

The fate of the Danes and Guy as literary traditions followed similar trajectories: rising in the late Middle Ages, bolstered in the Tudor era, utilized in new forms, especially drama, in the seventeenth century, and fading from the eighteenth century into fodder for children. At roughly the same time when Guy of Warwick's star faded after the eighteenth century due primarily to changing literary tastes, traditional histories of the role of the Danes in England also began to be questioned. Thoyras de Rapin, a French historian writing under English patronage, published a

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[85] *Guy of Warwick, 1661*, ed. Helen Moore, The Malone Society Reprints, Vol. 170 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), 33.

massive seven volume work in 1724 that was clearly skeptical of medieval and early modern accounts of English triumph, Danish defeat, and the total removal of the Danes from England before the coming of the Normans. T. de R. (as his name was often stylized) asks how it is possible "that this [English] Superiority that was so great as to enable them to expel the Danes out of the Kingdom? How is it possible to believe, that the Danes shou'd suffer themselves to be thus treated without making the least resistance"?[86] T. de R.'s skepticism is essentially an implicit critique of romance history, and his questions call attention to the arrival of a more objective historiographical method that would characterize the modern era. As Guy's exploits fell into the hands of children and out of the favor of learned people,[87] the Danes too gradually became more of a sober fact of pre-Conquest history than a locus of English struggle and chivalric victory. Guy had been replaced by more useful heroes and the Danes by more useful villains. In Dickens' *A Child's History of England*, the very place where we might expect a highly stylized vision of single combat between Guy and Colbrand, the Danes are benign and friends with the English: "They plundered and burned no more, but worked like honest men. They ploughed, and sowed, and reaped, and led good honest English lives. And I hope the children of those Danes played, many a time, with Saxon children…and that Danes and Saxons

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[86] Thoyras de Rapin, *The History of England, as well ecclesiastical as well as civil*, Vol. 2. Freely available at books.google.com.

[87] The legend of Guy can be definitively shown to have been known by such late medieval and early modern writers as Skelton, Udall, Puttenham, Drayton, and Shakespeare. See Crane, "Vogue," 131. Shakespeare makes two casual allusions to Guy and Colbrand, suggesting the legend as being of general knowledge. One reference is in *King John* (1.2.225) and the other is in *Henry VIII*, where the Porter's servant refuses to fire upon a noisy rabble: "I am not Samson, nor Sir Guy, nor Colbrond,/To mow 'em down before me" (5.4.20-1), lines which intriguingly suggest that Shakespeare associated Guy with the very wrong – killing indiscriminately – for which Guy feels that he needs to repent. At the very least, Guy and Colbrond are illustrated as moral equals.

sat by the red fire, friends, talking of King Alfred the Great."[88] Guy is not even mentioned in the

history.

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[88] Charles Dickens, *A Child's History of England*, Chapter III. Available at http://www.gutenberg.org/files/699/699-h/699-h.htm

4.0   OUR BLOOD AND OUR KING: *ARTHUR AND MERLIN* AND THE ENTERNAL

ENGLISH

My first two chapters address romances that have been categorized under the rubric of the Matter

of England, non-Arthurian romances dealing with English subjects and history. But as Rosalind

Field has persuasively argued, the Matter of England is a problematic category, suggesting a

thematic coherence between the six romances that comprise the matter (*King Horn*, *Guy of*

Warwick, *Athelston, Havelok the Dane*, *Gamelyn*, *Bevis of Hampton*) that is not necessarily

there.[1]   Over 125 years separates the earliest romance, *King Horn* (c.1225), from the latest,

Gamelyn (c. 1350-70). The only certain overlap between these romances is their setting in pre-

Conquest England. Field reminds us that "the Matter of England was imperceptible to medieval

authors and audiences, and we should not assume its taxonomic value in assessing the wide

range of narratives dealing with English history or the contemporary medieval English scene."[2]

Scholars on the whole have overlooked such insular, non-Arthurian romances, resulting in what

Field has called a "silent conspiracy of exclusion."[3] The material of the Matter of England was

not the only Middle English romances addressing pre-Conquest insular history; the Matter of

Britain, the collective name given to romance material associated with pre-Saxon Britain,

especially Arthur but also including figures such as Brutus and Lear, is another body of medieval

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[1] Rosalind Field, "*Waldef* and the Matter of/with England," *Medieval Insular Romance: Translation and Innovation*, ed. Judith Weiss, Jennifer Fellows and Morgan Dickson (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2000), 30.
[2] Field, "*Waldef*," 31.
[3] Rosalind Field, "Introduction" to *Tradition and Transformation in Medieval Romance*, ed. Rosalind Field (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1999), xi.

romances that addresses insular history before the Normans. Though technically filed under the Matter of Britain, *Of Arthur and of Merlin* (*AM*) is an insular, Arthurian text that consciously reshapes English history to invent Arthur as an English forebear. Like the Matter of England romances, *AM* has been largely ignored by scholars.[4] The first and second chapters of my dissertation have examined how composers of such Middle English romances as *Havelok the Dane* and *Guy of Warwick* employ fictive-historical spaces to remodel the English past without historiographical limitations. Robert Stein insightfully argues that fiction can be a way of writing history without the limitations of historical methodologies. Characterizing "a perfect definition of good fiction," Stein writes, "Fiction is the narrative representation of an invented place, the invention of a dream world containing infinite realms in which to locate events that can be narrated and analyzed for their significance *as if* one were writing history – but without history's constraints."[5] Through the relative freedom allotted by the romance form, *AM* proposes a history of England in which English values are universal and eternal. It confers a manifest destiny on the past by colonizing the past with the present. The English never arrived in what would become England; they were always there, and the land was always England.

Late medieval and early modern English kings embraced Arthur as an English, rather than a British, ancestor. "Briton" and "English" are not synonymic and do not signify the same cultural or ethnic groups.[6] In this chapter, I use the terms 'Briton' and 'British' to mean the

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[4] The editor of the most recent edition of *AM*, O.D. Macrae-Gibson, provides a lengthy discussion of the poem in his introduction. The last chapter of Siobhain Bly Calkin's *Saracens and the Making of English Identity: The Auchinleck Manuscript* is the fullest reading of the romance available.

[5] Robert Stein, *Reality Fictions: Romance, History, and Governmental Authority, 1025-1180* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 107.

[6] For discussions of "British" and "English" identities and the sleights-of-hand that led eighteenth and nineteenth century writers to reduce "British" to mean English, see the essays in *Uniting the Kingdom?: The Making of British History*, ed. Alexander Grant and Keith J. Stringer (London and New York: Routledge, 1995).

Christian Celtic people of Britain who inhabited the island when the Romans invaded and who were displaced, according to Bede's account, to Wales, Cornwall, and Brittany when Germanic pagans invaded during the fifth and sixth centuries. The use of the term "English" refers to the inhabitants of Britain after the sixth century, which included descendants of the Germanic pagans, some Britons, descendants of the Scandinavian invaders of the ninth and tenth centuries, and the French-speaking Norman settlers after 1066. When *AM* is composed in the early-mid fourteenth century, Britain was comprised of three distinct peoples who called themselves and were known to others as the English, the Scots, and the Welsh; thus when "Britain" is used in this chapter I am referring to the contemporary realms of England, Wales, and Scotland. As the first Arthurian romance in English, *AM* is integral to the development of late medieval Arthurian symbolism because the romance fully re-crafts Arthur as an English rather than a British hero and redrafts insular history to be one of eternal English dominion, advancing an ideology of eternal English sovereignty. In order to validate this process, *AM* transforms the Britons into the English and substitutes Danes for Saxons, offering an entirely negative vision of colonization, settlement, and integration; those who do threaten to settle, Angys and his Danes, are outed as foreign evildoers. In order to consciously craft Arthur and his kingdom as English, *AM* radically redraws the Anglo-Saxon invasions of the fifth and sixth centuries. More than simply "flipside" reflections or the "other" of the English, the Danes reveal the model of historical, national convergence that *AM* harbors. Through the Danes we can view the process of convergence between, on the one hand, Anglo-Norman and continental Arthurian romance and history (Geoffrey, Wace, the *Cycle*), and on the other, with Laȝamon and with the Anglo-Saxon past. *AM* proposes a history of England in which English values are universal and eternal. *AM* colonizes history, anglicizing the past. Anglicization, which Rees Davies defines as "the

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penetration of English people, institutions, norms, and culture (broadly defined)" into non-English regions,[7] was not merely the forceful conquering and exploitation of weaker powers. It was also a psychological process, "a confident conviction in the superiority of [English] norms and lifestyle."[8] A significant aspect of this psychological process, this chapter will argue, was the homogenization of insular history to promote an ideology of eternal English sovereignty, reflected in a historical romance like *AM*. Like *Guy of Warwick*, *Bevis and Hampton*, and other Matter of England romances that anachronistically place Anglo-Norman knights in the pre-Conquest past, *Of Arthur and Merlin* essentially renders the whole of pre-Saxon Britain as an English past, as if the English, their culture, and their language were always on the island, in the form of the Britons, who become the ancestors, not the antagonists, of the English.

Because post-conquest English kings could not trace their genealogies back to a heroic founding figure like French royalty could with Charlemagne, a myth of legendary British origins was able to vigorously flourish from the mid-twelfth century onwards. Instead of a smooth line of descent from a heroic ancestor, the political genealogy of England was, for Lee Patterson, "broken by violence and impeached by its own discontinuities."[9] On the whole, *AM* attempts to patch such discontinuities by projecting continuity onto and removing fissures from the English past. While England may be threatened by heathen invasions, it offers both a fantasy of union between the English and their neighbors on the borders, the Scots and the Welsh, as well as a fantasy of violence between the Arthurian court and Danes, so as to render Arthur both a British king and an English king. Shifting the hordes of invaders to Danes from the Saxons of earlier

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[7] R.R. Davies, *The First English Empire: Power and Identities in the British Isles, 1093-1343* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 143.

[8] Davies, *First English Empire*, 169.

[9] Lee Patterson, *Negotiating the Past: the Historical Understanding of Medieval Literature* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), 202.

chronicle accounts is a vital aspect of this fantasy of greater British unity and a necessary component in re-imagining the Britons as *antecessors*, to create a sovereign fantasy of Arthur as both British and English.[10]

Both before and after the Conquest, English writers were continually confronted with the problem of determining who was English and who was not, given the invasions and settlements of diverse peoples such as the Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Danes, and Normans into an island once inhabited by the Celtic Britons. The early fourteenth century, marked by the emergence of English as a prominent literary language, also saw the emergence of novel political, racial, and geographic definitions of Englishness. *AM* clearly reflects the predominant concern in the fourteenth century with making the geography and history of the island into purely English features, effacing historical difference and ethnic diversification and replacing them with an increasingly homogenous culture. For medieval writers, the nation was a race whose identity is originary and grounded in historical continuity. In this chapter, I will examine how *Of Arthur and of Merlin*, the earliest surviving Arthurian romance in English, deploys the Danes in place of the Saxons to signal a new version of Arthur and pre-conquest English history by removing both the Britons and the Saxons: as in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia*, it is no longer Saxons invading and displacing the Britons but Danes warring against the English. While the Irish are paired with the Danes as Saracens invading England, it is the wholesale substitution of the Danes

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[10] I am drawing here on Patricia Clare Ingham's phrase "sovereign fantasy." Ingham's central argument is that "late Middle English Arthurian romance offers a fantasy of insular union, an 'imagined community' of British sovereignty. Stories of Arthur, King of Britain, rework notions of insular British unity because Arthurian sovereignty can be used to designate an indigenous tradition (based upon its Welsh associations). As 'native' folk hero, Arthur offers a royal legend grown on British soil" (2). Ingham does not address *AM*, focusing instead on Middle English Arthurian romance of the mid-fourteenth century through the late-fifteenth century.

for the Saxons, the traditional enemies of the Arthurian court in medieval chronicles, that signals *Arthur and Merlin*'s intention to re-craft the English past as one of convergence and conciliation.

4.1   ENGLISHING ARTHUR

AM employs three chief methods to "English" Arthur: first, the romance crafts an English national community bound by a shared history, language, and religion; second, *AM* bends and molds romance and chronicle sources to its own ends, producing a new version of Arthur and the Britons that not only makes them *antecesors* to the English, but that makes them English themselves, so that the history of the island is essentially the history of one people rather than a multitude of warring, successive peoples and cultures; third, by deploying the Danes, the traditional enemies of the Anglo-Saxons in both pre- and post-Conquest writings, in order to make Arthur a King Alfred-like figure defending England.

Written in octosyllabic couplets (couplets of four-stress lines, common in Middle English romances based on French material), *AM* is the earliest Arthurian romance in English that has survived.[11] Because its earliest iteration can be found in the Auchinleck MS, produced in 1330s London, *AM* was composed no later than the 1330s. In addition to being the earliest *AM* the Auchinleck version is also the fullest; there are three extant later manuscripts, but they all end at the coronation of Uther Pendragon, Arthur's father, and thus are misnamed, focusing instead on the birth and life of Merlin, the traitorous British king Vortigern, and the Danish invasions of

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[11] Laȝamon's *Brut* (c. 1215) is the earliest surviving work in English that deals with Arthur.

England.[12] At 9938 lines, the Auchinleck *AM* is rather long, and it appears to be unfinished. The roughly 7000 lines found only in the Auchinleck *AM* dealing with Arthur's childhood, his accession to the throne, fending off disloyal nobles, the winning of Gvenour (Guinevere), and a great many incredibly long battles with heathens in both an unnamed foreign kingdom and in England, are the lines that have drawn many critics to ignore or mostly dismiss the romance for its lack of literary qualities. Finding the work "pedestrian," Deiter Mehl's distaste for *AM* is typical of the general critical response to the romance: "Whereas the first part is at least held together by a certain tension and unity of plot, the second, more extensive part consists almost entirely of an endless sequence of military campaigns and mass-battles which are described in great detail and evident relish, but whose monotony is perhaps one of the reasons why the novel was never finished."[13] However, Mehl's outright dismissal of the romance ignores key critical issues: through *AM*, we are able to connect the desire for literary material written in English with a nationalistic desire to establish English dominion across historiographical space and time,

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[12] They are Lincoln's Inn Library, MS Hale 150 (c. 1450); Bodleian MS Douce 236 (ca. early fifteenth century); and Percy Folio MS (British Library Additional 27879, ca. seventeenth century). Fragments from each version are placed adjacent to the Auchinleck version in Macrae-Gibson's edition.

[13] Deiter Mehl, *The Middle English Romances of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968), 239. Mehl's disappointment with the romance, especially the second part, is perhaps partially the fault of the *Cycle*, the primary source material. Since the sixteenth century many critics have declared the Vulgate cycle repetitive, tedious, and unfocused at best. But the *Cycle* ought not to be written off for aesthetic reasons alone. Surviving in hundreds of manuscripts and dozens of printed editions across Europe, it has been called "the most important single romance of the Middle Ages" (Calin 32) and the "most widely read and the most influential group of Arthurian prose romances" (Frappier 295). The *Cycle* represents a shift in French romance from verse to prose, the same shift that would occur in England at the end of the fifteenth century with Malory. This move was accompanied by the beginning of the writing of epic cycles in French, overlong narratives that covered generations and, underscored by biblical and historical narratives, which analyze the foundational origins of dynasties and kingdoms. Though Dante admired the cycle and Malory relied on it for the *Morte D'Arthure,* this "medieval bestseller" was largely written off by critics from the sixteenth century through the nineteenth century. See Carol Dover, Introduction to *A Companion to the* Lancelot-Grail Cycle; William Calin, *The French Tradition and the Literature of Medieval England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 87; and Jean Frappier, "The Vulgate Cycle," in *Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages: A Collaborative History*, ed. Roger Sherman Loomis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959).

utilizing the past to defend the present social and political order. *AM* "Englishes" traditional Arthurian material to an unprecedented extent; it is decidedly more interested in the founding and growth of Arthur's power than in dutiful knights of chivalric prowess undertaking fanciful quests.[14] That which is outside of the political concern to defend the Christian homeland and enact successful dynastic rule is mostly excised. The major theme of AM is the desire for and the achievement of national solidarity. But we do not witness England's originary foundation (as in *Horn Childe*); instead, we witness Uther and Arthur defend English power from foreign enemies, which both ensures the continued survival of the kingdom and reiterates the English people's natural worthiness to rule.

4.2   LANGUAGE AND PATRIOTISM

The first of these methods by which *AM* creates a distinctly English Arthurian narrative is accomplished by its invocation of the use of English as a literary language. By and large the aspect of *AM* that has received the most critical attention is the declaration at the opening of the work of its use of the vernacular:

> Auauntages þai hauen þare
> Freynsch & Latin euerywhare.
> Of Freynsch no Latin nil y tel more
> Ac on I[n]glisch ichil tel þerfore:
> Riȝt is þat I[n]glische vnderstond
> Þat was born in Inglond.
> Freynsche vse þis gentil man
> As euerich Inglische Inglische can,

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[14] This political focus is discussed by Cooper, "The *Lancelot-Grail*," 148; and Elizabeth Sklar, "*Arthur and Merlin*: The Englishing of Arthur," *Michigan Academician* 8 (1975-6), 54-6.

Þat no Freynsche couþe seye,
Biginne ichil for her loue
Bi Ihesus leue þat sitt aboue
On Inglische tel mi tale –
God ous sende soule hale. (19-30)[15]

The composer implies that it is knowledge of the English language that differentiates the English as a distinct national-racial group. Even if there are some "gentil man" who speak French, every English person, meaning every person "born in Inglond," understands English regardless of her social rank, so that knowledge of English cuts across social divides. This is contrasted with French and Latin, which are associated with "advantages"; while the composer's precise meaning of the lines "Auauntages þai hauen þare/Freynsch & Latin euerywhare" is not clear, it is likely that he is implying that those with material advantages have their French and Latin, since he directly associates French with those of higher social class. French and Latin are dismissed ("nil y tel more") because they work against *AM*'s ethos of uniting all English persons under a common banner rather than recognizing and addressing ethnic or class divisions. Moreover, the composer implies that every English person, regardless of any other identities he could claim (as a gentleman, for instance), ought to know English, that it is "Riȝt" for English to be the national language of the English people. This defense of the vernacular appears only in the Auchinleck MS and not the narrative's later versions, an indication that by the mid-fifteenth century there was perhaps no longer such a pressing need to defend the use of English as a literary language.[16]

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[15] All references to *Of Arthur and of Merlin* refer to the Auchinleck MS version in *Of Arthur and of Merlin*, ed. O.D. Macrae-Gibson, vol. 1, Early English Text Society, o.s., 268 (London: Oxford University Press, 1973). All further references to *Of Arthur and of Merlin* will be indicated by reference to line numbers in Macrae-Gibson's edition, and these line numbers will be in parentheses in the body of the text.

[16] In the Prologue to his edition of Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur*, Caxton does not defend his use of English as a literary language, instead lamenting the lack of an Arthurian tradition in English: "For in all places Crysten and hethen he is reputed and taken for one of the IX worthy and the first of the thre

This defense of the vernacular is significant for two chief reasons: first, its suggestion that there are some nobles born in England who do not understand French is a surprising claim for this period, implying that English may not have been as fully displaced by French among the elite as has been supposed;[17] and second, its suggestion that understanding English is a patriotic duty goes beyond other similar types of vernacular defenses contemporary with *AM*, of which the most famous is probably Dante in *De vulgari eloquentia* (c. 1305), an unfinished Latin treatise on language and poetry.[18] Although defenses of or apologies for the vernacular are commonplace in the fourteenth century, even to the point of being formulaic, *AM*'s linking of patriotism with the use of English as a literary language, as well as its suggestion that it is intended for all English people regardless of rank and education, sets it apart from other similar invocations. The composer of the *Cursor Mundi* (c. 1300) states that in this 30,000-line verse history of the world he will use the "Inglis tong" "For the loue of Inglis lede/Inglis lede of Ingland/For the commun at understand"; out of love for the English "lede," a community or people, the composer offers a history intended only for the "commun," thus suggesting that only the unlearned are united by

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Crysten men. And also he is more spoken of beyonde the see, moo booked made of his noble actes, than there be in Englond: as wel as in Duche, Ytalyen, Spaynysshe, and Grekysshe, as in Frensshe. And yet of record remayne in wytnesse of hym in Wales, in the toune of Camelot, the grete stones and meruayllous werkys of yron lying vnder the grounde, and ryal vautes, which dyuers now lyuyng hath seen. Wherfor it is a meruayl why he is nomore renomed in his owne contreye, sauf onelye it accordeth to the word of God, whyche sayth that no man is accept for a prophete in his owne contreye." In a sense this is closer to the composer of *AM*'s sentiments than either the *Cursor Mundi* or Mannyng, since it implies that it is proper for the English to glorify English heroes rather than foreign ones. James W. Spisak and William Matthews, ed. *Caxton's Malory: A New Edition of Sir Thomas Malory's* Le Morte Darthur *Based on the Pierpont Morgan Copy of William Caxton's Edition of 1485* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 2.

[17] Macrae-Gibson, 76n.

[18] Dante states plainly at the opening of *De vulgari* that eloquence in the vernacular "is necessary to everyone – for not only men, but women and children" as well (*scilicet eloquentiam penitus omnibus necessariam videamus*). Dante makes an aesthetic, rather than a patriotic, claim. See Dante, *De vulgari eloquentia*, ed. and trans. Steven Botterill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 2-3.

English as a shared literary language.[19] In his *Chronicle* (c. 1338), Robert Mannyng opens with

a similar apologia:

> Lordynges that be now here,
> If Ȝe wille listene & lere
> All the story of Inglande
> als Robert Mannyng wryten it fand,
> & on Inglysch has it schewed,
> not for þe lerid bot for þe lewed.[20]

The learned, Mannyng implies, do not need another history of England because they have it in

languages other than English that they can understand. It is the unlearned, the commons, who

need such histories translated into their native tongue. But *AM* does not suggest that it is intended

for the "lewed" alone; instead, it is for a national English community, who "al" "Inglische can,"

even if some in that community may also understand French or Latin. It is the English language,

the *AM* composer implies, that unites English persons and allows them to identify as a distinct

group. Lollard writings emerging in the 1380s use similar invocations of a community bound by

its national vernacular through such phrases as "þe pepel of Englond," "we English men," and

that "Englische is comoun langage to oure puple."[21] Though defenses of the vernacular may be

common or even formulaic for the time, *AM* differs from the apologias of the *Cursor Mundi* or

Mannyng's *Chronicle* in its defense of English as the only proper choice for English people.

More than simply being a matter of circumstances where the unlearned ("lewed") happen to

speak English, the Auchinleck *AM* suggests that everyone who is born in England ought to speak

English, that it is right and natural that those born in England have a patriotic duty to understand

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[19] *Cursor Mundi*, ed. Richard Morris (EETS 57, 1874-93), ll. 233-6.

[20] Robert Mannyng, *The Chronicle*, ed. Idelle Sullens (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, Binghamton University, 1996), ll. 1-6.

[21] Jill C. Havens, "'As Englishe is comoun langage to our puple'": The Lollards and Their Imagined 'English' Community," in *Imagining a Medieval English Nation*, ed. Kathy Lavezzo (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 96-128.

English and to have their own literature in their own mother tongue. Thus between Mannyng or *Cursor Mundi* and *AM* there is a change from happenstance to necessity and obligation, with English acting in *AM* as a medium of unification between ethnic and class groupings. Further distinguishing *AM*'s apologia is its appearance in a secular text – this is the earliest example in English defending the vernacular in a strictly secular work.[22] Scholars frequently cite these lines as evidence of a growing audience for English poetry around the turn of the fourteenth century, but few have discussed *AM*'s literary qualities at any length or taken into account the entire romance beyond the apologia for the vernacular.[23] If the chief theme of *AM* is the fulfillment of national unity and the restoration of national strength to England rather than the Grail quest, then the defense of the vernacular allows *AM* to imagine a national community bound together by a national language, and *AM* positions itself to offer a revised history to the new cultural expectations of an emergent English-speaking community eager for its own literature.[24]

Even if contemporary theorists on the nation and nationalism have long argued that language itself is not a sound basis for defining what constitutes a national community, an historical romance like *AM* suggests that language did serve as a marker of national-racial distinctiveness in the later Middle Ages. Language was crucial for defining medieval nationalities because ethnic and linguistic identities tended to blend into one another.[25] The conscious construction of a language group was central to medieval group identity, especially to the formation of a national character, a connection that still lingers today. Though Ernest Renan in 1882 dismissed language as an adequate basis for the constitution of modern nations, writing

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[22] Sklar, 51.

[23] Nicole Clifton, "*Of Arthur and of Merlin* as Medieval Children's Literature," *Arthuriana* 13, no. 2 (2003): 9.

[24] *AM* removes or truncates all Grail material. There are four mentions of the Grail in the romance (l. 2222, 2750, 4294, 8902), but they are all in passing and are not a part of the main plot or any subplot.

[25] See Bartlett, 198-202.

that language "invites people to unite, but it does not force them to do so,"[26] nationalists nonetheless continue to position national communities as language communities whose political sovereignty is justified by a stable, timeless culture that its language represents. Even when modern neonationalists, according to historian Patrick Geary, recognize that the idea of the nation-state as a political entity is a product of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the concept of "cultural ethnicity" represented by a national language is thought to be much more ancient; in such recent neonationalist formulations, the "people was a people…before it knew itself and language is both the sign and innermost reality of this immutable identity."[27] According to Geary, the Middle Ages (especially the early Middle Ages) is seen by contemporary nationalists as a period of "primary acquisition," a vast, hazy era where modern nation-states "attempted to trace their legitimacy," an era in which ancestors were "speaking their national language, which carried and expressed specific cultural and intellectual modes," establishing their "sacred and immutable territories" by conquest and thereby clearly delineating their natural enemies.[28] One of Geary's chief objectives is to "speak out," discrediting such misuses or misrepresentations of the medieval period by offering "a clearer understanding of the formation of Europe's peoples" in the Middle Ages.[29] However, *AM* reveals that at times medieval English historical and romance texts invite audiences to view Englishness as a fully formed, immutable identity, a stable, core essence whose very timelessness justifies its hegemony. In this sense, *AM* anticipates modern (especially nineteenth century) discourses on the nation as an "irreducible and original

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[26] Ernest Renan, "Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?" ("What is a nation?"), in *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi K. Bhabha (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), 16.
[27] Patrick Geary, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 33.
[28] Geary, *Myth*, 34.
[29] Geary, 13-14.

quality, an almost transcendent reality, which we could best grasp through 'mother tongue' and national literature."[30]

The use of English to relate earlier Arthurian material is merely one marker of the *AM* composer's interest in "Englishing" Arthur and the Round Table; indeed, much of the source material is altered in ways that provide its readership with a particularly nationalistic narrative of a homeland. As the earliest extant Middle English reworking of French Arthurian romance material, Elizabeth Sklar (in one of the few readings of the entire *AM*) has written that *AM* "marks the first stage in the repatriation of Arthur," a process that culminated in Malory's Arthuriad of the late-fifteenth century.[31] While I would add that the first steps of this re-patriotization were taken in Laȝamon, Sklar is right to say that there is a "strong nationalistic bias" in *AM* not present in the Vulgate *Cycle*, a bias that clearly speaks to the specifically English audience for whom *AM* was intended. This audience must have had different "cultural expectations" from the French-speaking audience of roughly a half-century earlier; such expectations, in Sklar's estimation, include an alteration of the major theme of the work from the Grail quest to "the need for and the achievement of national unity" and "the restoration of national strength to Britain."[32]

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[30] James Snead, "European pedigrees/African contagions: nationality, narrative, and communality in Tutuola, Achebe, and Reed," in *Nation and Narration*, 231-2. Snead specifically refers to Herder, Novalis, Fichte, and Schleiermacher as examples of nineteenth century thinkers who characterize language as capable of recapturing a 'lost' national identity.

[31] Sklar, 50.

[32] Sklar, 54.

4.3   TWO TRADITIONS

AM consciously combines two Arthurian traditions: the chronicle tradition, referred to explicitly in AM as the "brut" or "brout," and the *Lancelot-Grail Cycle*, referred to in *AM* as the "romaunce." *AM* is an amalgam of the Arthurian material found in Wace's *Roman de Brut* (c. 1155), Laȝamon's *Brut* (c. 1215), and the Old French *Lancelot-Grail Cycle* (ca. 1215-35).[33] *AM* is largely derived from the second section out of five of the *Cycle*, the prose *Estoire de Merlin*, as well as the histories of the Britons composed by Wace and Laȝamon, works that are in turn derived from Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* (c. 1138).[34] *AM* is more than simply a translation of earlier French and chronicle material, however, as the composer selects and discards much of the *Cycle* narratives, and appears to have borrowed heavily from the chronicles of Wace and Laȝamon, thus bringing the *Cycle* into line with an Arthurian history for

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[33] The *Cycle* was composed between 1215 and ca. 1235 by an anonymous author or group of , authors, and is also variously called the *Vulgate Cycle* (due to its popularity with the lay public), the *Prose Lancelot*, the *Lancelot-Grail*, and the *Pseudo-Map Cycle*. The *Cycle*, in turn, largely develops out of the early Grail romances of Robert de Boron (ca. 1191-1202), the Arthurian verse romances of Chrétien de Troyes (ca. late 1150s – ca. 1190), and Wace. The five immense romances that comprise the *Cycle* run to several thousand pages in length. They attempt to relate the entire history of the Arthurian era from the origins of the Holy Grail in the Middle East around the time of Christ in the first romance (the *Estoire del saint Graal*) to the death of Arthur in the final romance (*La Mort Artu*).[33] The central theme of the *Cycle* is the history of the grail's travels from the table of the Last Supper to the miraculous Round Table of Arthur in Great Britain, thus aligning the Arthurian era with the timeline of universal, Christian history. See *The History of the Holy Grail; The Story of Merlin,* Vol. 1 of *Lancelot-Grail: The Old French Arthurian Vulgate and Post-Vulgate in Translation* (New York: Garland, 1993), especially Norris J. Lacy's preface to the Introduction. For a discussion of the relationship between the *Estoire de Merlin* and AM see O.D. Macrae-Gibson, introduction to *Of Arthur and of Merlin*, ed. Macrae-Gibson, Vol. 2, Early English Text Society, o.s. 268 (London: Oxford University Press, 173), 3-35.
[34] The *Merlin* is likely based on a verse *Merlin* by Robert de Boron, the first composer to produce a cycle of Grail romances. Only a 504-line fragment of this verse work still exists, though a slightly later prose romance *Merlin* by an anonymous redactor survives. See Nigel Bryant, "Introduction" to *Merlin and the Grail:* Joseph of Arimathea*;* Merlin*;* Perceval*: The trilogy of prose romances attributed to Robert de Boron* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2001), 2-3.

English-speaking audiences.[35] While AM is an amalgam of the *Cycle* and Brut-narratives, because a clear and detailed dependence on any one source cannot be claimed, it is probably "best to regard the poem as an independent adaptation of an inherited tradition."[36] Though it is only in the fifteenth century that *Cycle* material comes to dominate English Arthurian writing, *AM* clearly draws on significant portions of the *Merlin* from the *Cycle* well before Malory.[37] Cooper has written off AM as little more than a translation of Geoffrey, arguing that it "brings the *Cycle*'s *Merlin* into line with Geoffrey's account, to the point where anyone not thoroughly familiar with the *History of the Kings of Britain* would probably believe themselves to be reading an English version of Geoffrey."[38] However, Cooper's dismissal of *AM* is problematic in that the ethos of Geoffrey's work – the differentiation and abjection of the English, in Cohen's formulation[39] – is diametrically opposed to the representation of the English in *AM*, where they are lionized and rendered as a immutable, stable presence throughout time. Moreover, *AM* significantly departs from the *Historia* in that the last two-thirds of the romance (roughly lines 3000-9937) draw almost entirely from the *Cycle* and not from Brut-narratives (of which Geoffrey's work is the prime example), traditional stories of the founding of Britain by Brutus and the Trojans and the succession of British kings through Arthur. The "brut" and "romaunce" represent the two prevailing Arthurian traditions of medieval England and France: respectively, the dynastic chronicle and romance material stemming from Welsh folk-tales. While these were not mutually exclusive traditions, in England until the fifteenth century *Cycle* material was

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[35] Helen Cooper, "The *Lancelot-Grail Cycle* in England: Malory and his Predecessors," in *A Companion to the* Lancelot-Grail Cycle, ed. Carol Dover (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2003), 150.

[36] David Burnley, "Dynastic Romance," in *The Arthur of the English: The Arthurian Legend in Medieval English Life and Literature*, ed. W.R.J. Barron (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2001), 83.

[37] Cooper, "*Lancelot-Grail*," 148.

[38] Cooper, 150.

[39] Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Hybridity, Identity, and Monstrosity in Medieval Britain*: On Difficult Middles (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 68.

mostly written in French and Anglo-Norman whereas sources for early English-language

Arthurian material mostly lay in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia* and its many Brut

derivatives.[40] The "romaunce," or *Cycle* tradition, rooted in Welsh poetry and (probably) oral

traditions and brought to the continent by Chrétien de Troyes in the late twelfth century, depicts

Arthur's court as the locus of fantastical chivalric adventures of the knights of the Round Table,

emphasizing the domestic affairs of the court; most famously, the *love fin* of Lancelot for the

queen Guinevere. The Arthurian chronicle tradition on the whole substitutes the world of

dynastic British politics over the world of fairie and chivalric adventures, highlighting Merlin

and the story behind Arthur's birth, Arthur's establishment of a massive British empire through

battles with pagans and other foreign kings, and the king's tragic death via the betrayal of his

stepson Mordred. Geoffrey, his Anglo-Norman translator Wace, and the early thirteenth century

English translator Laȝamon draw Arthur as a great warrior-king and a conqueror of many lands

across the globe, rather than as an Arthur who presides as the high-king over a court that serves

as the touchstone for knights wishing to flex their chivalric muscles. The dynastic focus of

Arthurian chronicle writing in England before Malory (c. 1485), as opposed to the continental

focus on romance, has prompted critics to reflect on the need for English foundation myths after

the social, cultural, and political rupture caused by the Norman Conquest. These foundation

myths could serve to bolster Anglo-Norman claims (either explicitly or implicitly) by offering a

version of the English past tailor-made to their liking, favoring a legendary foundational history

of King Arthur over the exploits of the knights of his Round Table.[41]

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[40] Cooper, 147-8.
[41] William Calin, *The French Tradition and the Literature of Medieval England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 87.

The deployment of source material in *AM* does not appear to be arbitrary but the conscious choice of the composer to suit his needs. The composer of *AM* references his sources explicitly throughout the text: when drawing on Brut material he refers to the "brut" or "brout," and when he draws on the *Cycle* he refers to the "romaunce." Explicit references to the "brut" occur only in the first one-third of the romance (538, 2730, 3486), the section of the narrative that concerns the treachery of the British high-king Fortiger (Vortigern in Geoffrey), his partnership with Angys (a "Danishizing" of Hengist), Uther Pendragon's triumph over Angys, Fortiger, and the Danes, the birth and childhood of Merlin, and the death of Uther. The composer only refers to the "romaunce" as his source material in the last third of the narrative (7271, 8228, 8585, 8908, 9482); this section deals largely with the marriage of Gvenour and Arthur and the treacherous invasions of the Irish high-king Rion. The references to the "brut" and "romaunce" appear to be intentionally deployed. Whereas Hengist is a major figure in Geoffrey's *Historia* and its numerous adaptations, he is hardly featured in the *Cycle* at all; likewise, Rion, a chief antagonist in the *Merlin* of the *Cycle*, does not appear at all in Geoffrey, Wace, or Layamon. The composer appears to have been aware of the disparate natures of the two Arthurian textual traditions, turning to chronicle material to alter the Saxon Hengist, often portrayed as something of a villain, into a Dane named Angys, and turning to the *Cycle* for material on the Irish threat Rion.

4.4   HYBRIDITY: HENGIST/ANGYS AND THE SAXONS/DANES

As a pagan leader, Hengist was a problematic figure for medieval historians, acting as a touchstone for writers' political affiliations and ambitions. Writers sympathetic to the role of the

Anglo-Saxons in pre-Conquest England praise Hengist as a foundational figure and worthy

forebear, whereas a historian like Geoffrey denigrates Hengist by accusing him of treachery and

malice.[42] Diametrically opposed to Geoffrey's malign characterization of Hengist is the Hengist

of *The Short English Metrical Chronicle*, the only chronicle material in the Auchinleck MS.

Mountains of praise are heaped upon Hengist, who is idealized as a "strong," "wiis,"

"conquerour of pris": to the wealthy "he was gode" and to the poor "mild of mode."[43] He is

credited with establishing the cities of Lincoln, Chester, Shrewsbury, Oxford, Reading,

Wallingford, Bedford, Gloucester, and more. Because Hengist "wan to his hond/Inglond, Wales,

& Scotlond," he is lionized as an Edward I-like *antecessor*.[44] Hengist is practically superhuman,

ruling for 150 years before Caesar and the Romans even arrive on British shores. Instead of

Hengist and the Saxons invading Britain, in the *Short English Metrical Chronicle* it is Fortiger

who comes "Into þis lond and it wan/Wiþ host and wiþ war strong," ransacking the land, at

which point Arthur, like Hengist a "strong conquerour" (1049), is invited to help defeat Fortiger.

A more objective historian like Layamon, however, was typically ambiguous about Hengist, who

is venerated repeatedly as the fairest and strongest of men but whose blood is tainted by

paganism. *AM*'s "translation" of the Saxon Hengist into the Danish Angys thus removes a

potentially controversial figure who might remind audiences of the defiling stigma of paganism

attached to the Anglo-Saxons when they arrived from the Continent. By removing the potentially

thorny Hengist, *AM* also largely removes the Saxons from the narrative, thus rendering Arthur's

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[42] Bede was the first to mention Hengist and Horsa, but their role in his work is minor and their political significance is uncertiain. It is not clear whether they are the leaders of all the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes to arrive in Britain or merely those who settle in Kent. See Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. Judith McClure and Roger Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 1.15.
[43] *An Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle*, ed. Ewald Zettl, Early English Text Society, o.s. 196 (London: Oxford University Press, 1935), ll. 656-74.
[44] *Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle*, ll. 675-6.

line as fully English without having to bother with Saxon invasions and conquest of the native Britons. In *AM*'s historical framework, there was no Anglo-Saxon invasion of Britain led by a pagan Hengist. In order to streamline England and the English as a timeless people, *AM* elides the processes of colonization and acculturation, posing foreign colonization by the Danes and the Irish as an existential threat to the nation. When Angys is besieged in his castle after having been defeated on the battlefield, he is pursued by "our folk" (341), which clearly implies (as the romance explicitly points out) all English people, since all English persons understand the English language in which the romance is written. The word "our" is repeatedly used to imply an English community with a shared heritage: "our men" (139, 323), "our princes" (162), "our folk" (341), "our blod" (484), "our king" (2196, 2227, 2427, 2591, 2823). The romance is unequivocally told from the point of view of the English, who are invited to view Arthur and his fellow English knights as their forebears, and the Dane Angys and the Irish Rion as foreign evildoers.

The Saxons and Saxony are not completely erased from the romance: they are mentioned twice, the first time as part of Angys' army ("[Angys] gadred him folk wel felle/Of Danmark & of Sessoyne," ll. 110-1) and the second in passing, as the heathen King Brangore's land ("Of Sessoine þis heiȝe king was," l. 6931). Macrae-Gibson glosses Sessoyne as Saxony, but it is possible, though not likely, that Saxony is not the region intended by Sessoyne.[45] There is no

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[45] The place "Sessoyne" (or variants) appears in other Arthurian texts and while it sometimes explicitly refers to Saxony, it is not always clear to what it refers. In Geoffrey, the site of Arthur's victory over the Roman army led by the Roman procurator Lucius is stated to be a valley named Siesia (168.242), which is obviously not Saxony; various manuscripts of Wace's *Brut* state the place as Saoise, Soefie, Soissie, and Suison; Layamon gives Sosie; Mannyng has Swesy; the alliterative *Morte Arthure* uses Sexone and Sessoyne; and Malory uses Sessoyne. Tatlock has suggested several possible locations for "Siesia/Sessoyne" in present-day France including Soissons; William Matthews offers the small village of Val-Suzon as a candidate. Thus there is some doubt over the implications of Sessoyne and it is possible, though not probable, that *AM* does not mean Saxony by "Sessoyne." At the very least the ambiguity of

mention of "Sessoyne" or the Saxons beyond these references, and Angys and his forces are referred to as either Danes or Saracens throughout the romance. In the French prose *Merlin* as well as in Geoffrey and subsequent medieval Brut narratives, the countless hordes of invaders in Britain after the departure of the Romans in the fifth century are always Saxons. Like Hengist, for some medieval writers the very term "Saxon" entailed negative connotations. As a writer whose sympathies lay with the Britons, the sixth century cleric Gildas, whose work was read throughout the Middle Ages, excoriates the Saxons as a "brood" of "wolfish offspring" devouring the land with their "doggish mouths."[46] Though Bede omitted the invectives for his people, Geoffrey picked up Gildas' denigrating, animalistic rhetoric by calling the Saxons "terrible barbarians" who "laid waste to all regions" and "attacked the people like wolves attacking shepherdless sheep" (105.495-8). The use of animal imagery to debase a foreign people implies that the outsider group is irrational and without agency and autonomy, making such imagery ideal, even inevitable, as "receptacles for uneven discourses of race, especially in the wake of conquest," as Cohen puts it.[47] Gildas' and Geoffrey's racialized narratives of English difference make the English strangers in a land they had ruled (in Geoffrey's case) for centuries.

The "disappearance" of the "Saxons" and the ascendancy of the "English" is a process that Cohen traces to Bede, whose work, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ascribes a single ethnic-racial identity, the *Angli* or English, to the Saxons, Angles, and Jutes. Though *AM* removes the Saxons from the narrative, foreigners in the romance are still racialized

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the reference could have served the political purposes of the *AM* composer to remove the Saxon invasions of the fifth and sixth centuries from the narrative. See William Matthews, "Where was Siesia-Sessoyne?," *Speculum,* Vol. 49, No. 4 (Oct. 1974), 680-6; and J.S.P. Tatlock, *The Legendary History of Britain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1950), 101-4.

[46] Gildas, *De Excidio Britonum*, ed. and trans. Michael Winterbottom (London and Chichester: Phillimore, 1978), 23.

[47] Cohen, *Hybridity*, 40.

by bodily differences via animalization, only the foreigners are now Saracens – Danes and Irish – rather than Saxons. Repeatedly described in animalistic terms, the Saracens are described as having "rowe snoute" (7688), a derisive way of saying they have hairy (or rough) faces; they are described as some variation of "heþen houndes," a common phrase in Middle English romances (5944, 6823, 8824, 9215); Rion is a "vile hounde" (8807); fathers and sons are murdered by "helle-fende" (8366); after Fortiger marries Angys' daughter, there are such festivities among the Danes that they are criticized as respecting "no better lawe/þan þe hounde wiþ his felawe" (491-2); Angys is called a "welp" (415), a term of abuse implying a worthless dog, according to the *Middle English Dictionary* (s.v. "whelp"). Virtually every pagan king that invades is a giant, fourteen or fifteen feet tall; one Irish King Sanigran is described as an "vnsely hoge man" (4892), implying that his gigantic stature is indicative of his accursed nature. The English, by contrast, have healthy human bodies. When 15,000 Saracens attack London while Arthur is away helping Leodegran (Gvenour's father) defeat Rion, though the English only number 1200 men, the lopsided battle is balanced by the soundness of Englishmen: "Our were gode bodis alle" (5071). The English fighting force is a united front of knights, "uplondis" or rural folk who bring their "[c]artes & somers" (carts and pack-horses, 5078), and "citisains," or city folk (5077, 5080); out of the 1200 fighters, only eighty are knights. The English army is the epitome of a united England, a cross-section of English society fighting together for a common purpose; like the bodies of Englishmen, the English army is whole and hale. *AM*'s association of the Danes with reasonless beasts is not quite a "translation" of Geoffrey's Saxons into Danes (as Hengist into Angys) as it is a reflection of standard later medieval English rhetoric about the Danes. Like other disparaged groups represented as bestial, the Danes are typically described in later medieval in non-human terms. Twelfth century English chronicler Roger de Hoveden describes

the Danes of c. 1013 as "raving with the rabidness of wild beasts" as Swein orders his men to "lay waste the fields, burn the towns, spoil the churches, slay without regard or mercy all those of the male sex…and reserve the females to satisfy" their lust.[48] Their lack of reason implies a lack of agency; their inhumanity is deployed as justification for English assaults upon them. The Danes in *AM* are derided most frequently as dogs, creatures that are both bestial and servile, among humans but always beneath them.

It has been argued that Bede essentially willed the *Angli* into existence by conflating the disparate protagonists (Angles, Saxons, Jutes) of his work into a single ethnic identity;[49] *AM* takes the existence of a single English people for granted and in turn conflates the enemies of England (Danes and the Irish) as Saracens, heathens, and pagans, opposing the English who are "our Cristiens" (6907). The reconsolidation of a single English people by the end of the twelfth century relied, in part, on the dehumanization of those differing in religion, language, custom, decent, and history.[50] Although in reality racial-ethnic-national groups were "heterogeneous solidarities that altered over time"[51] and thus were largely social-cultural constructs, many medieval writers took it for granted that racial-ethnic-national groups possess a core or stable essence.[52] The Archbishop Isidore of Seville (d. 636), whose *Etymologies* was accepted as a

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[48] *The Annals of Roger de Hoveden*: *Comprising the history of England and other Countries of Europe from A.D. 732 to A.D. 1201*, trans. and ed. Henry T. Riley, Vol. 1 (London: H.G. Bohn, 1853), 92.
[49] See Cohen, *Hybridity*, 44-52; Nicholas Howe, *Migration and Mythmaking in Anglo-Saxon England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); Patrick Wormald, "*Engla Land*: The Making of an Allegiance," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 7 (1994) 1-24; Sarah Foot, "The Making of *Angelcynn*: English Identity Before the Norman Conquest," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th Series 6 (1996) 25-49; and Patrick Campbell, "The United Kingdom of England: The Anglo-Saxon Achievement," in *Uniting the Kingdom? The Making of British History*, ed. Alexander Grant and Keith J. Stringer (London: Routledge, 1995), 31-47.
[50] Cohen, *Hybridity*, 3.
[51] Cohen, 3.
[52] Walter Pohl writes that Bede's ethnic model precluded the reality of ethnogenetic processes. In Bede's model, groups "can come and go, or even be destroyed, but they do not mix or change. Thus, after

compendium of universal knowledge through the later Middle Ages, writes of every *gens* as "a number of people sharing a single origin." From the concept of *gens*, Isidore writes, emerges the term *gentilitas*, or shared heritage.[53] Thus for Isidore every people has a shared, distinct origin and their heritage, their culture, language, and customs, is the material evidence of that singular origin. Moreover, Isidore associates racial-national groups with the land they inhabit, claiming (by following the Old Testament story of the Tower of Babel) that there are seventy-three nations "into which the earth is divided."[54] According to the Etymologies, a *gens* cannot will themselves into existence or engage in an ethnogenetic process of *gens*-building; every *gens* has innate national characteristics and culture with a shared language, and their geographical territory is innate to one people. The realities of colonization, settlement, and assimilation of peoples did not find much footing in medieval writing. Instead, those who were depicted as hybrid beings were foreigners or enemies who were shown mingling humanity with bestiality. The consolidation of multiple foreign enemies into a single Saracen threat in *AM* mingles different negative traits the Danes and Irish are shown harboring into a composite enemy: both Eastern and domestic, historical and contemporary. Though they have no distinctive Eastern features, the non-Christian invaders are named Saracens, which *AM* uses as an umbrella term for any heathen or pagan who challenges the sovereignty of English power. Saracens in the poem are not depicted as Muslims of Middle Eastern descent but as Danes and Irishmen who conflate

almost 400 years of Roman rule, the Romans can simply leave or be killed, and leave the Britons they had once conquered to themselves. Bede also disregards – or rather denies – the possibility that many Britons might have become Angles or Saxons." Pohl suggests that Bede's ethnic model helped stabilize "ethnic identities as a basis for political legitimacy." See Walter Pohl, "Ethnic Names and Identities in the British Isles: A Comparative Perspective," in *The Anglo-Saxons from the Migration Period to the Eighth Century: An Ethnographic Perspective*, ed. John Hines (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1997), 7-31.
[53] Isidore of Seville, *The Etymologies,* trans. Stephen A. Barney, W.J. Lewis, J.A. Beach, and Oliver Berghof (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), IX.ii.1.
[54] Isidore, *Etymologies*, IX.ii.2. The Old Testament lists seventy-two nations, descended from Japheth, Ham, and Shem, the sons of Noah (Genesis 10).

paganisms, fighting for "love of Apolins" (6096) and praying "bi Mahoun and Dagon" (5775),

the former implying either a nonspecific representative false god or a misnaming of the prophet

Mohammed[55] and the latter being the national deity of the ancient Philistines, a god with a

human head and torso and the tail of a fish. Whether the Prophet Mohammed or a more general

pagan deity is implied is not clear and was not likely to have been at all significant to the *AM*

composer; indeed, as in its use of "Saracen" to mean any non-Christian threat, *AM* blends a

variety of non-Christian deities, rendering them all equally foreign and false and showing

Christian English power and belief to be unassailably sanctified.   Siobhan Bly Calkin has

recently argued in a full-length study of *AM* that the Saracens in the romance are "fluid and

shifting ciphers of otherness" rather than mimetic representatives of Muslim Arabs, signifying a

universal, totalizing (cultural, political, religious) otherness rather than a particular historical

enemy.[56] *AM* offers an English past that is a Christian crusading past; the struggles of Uther and

Arthur to establish and defend English dominance is depicted as a crusade against England's

historical enemies (the Danes) and its contemporary enemies (the Irish)[57] who are both dressed

up as hybridized Eastern pagans.

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[55] According to the *Middle English Dictionary*, s.v. "Mahoun."

[56] Calkin, *Saracens*, 176.

[57] Fourteenth century Englishpersons would have likely thought of the Irish as a barbaric people (Calkin 181; Morris 218-20). Because the Irish were disallowed from using their own law and were denied the full rights of English law, they were "destined to remain a race apart," resulting in "further marginalization and military repression" under Edward I (Morris 220). Furthermore, Ireland was considered to be a dangerous place, with the threat of war constantly hanging over any ruling lord's head; thus lordships in English-controlled Ireland came to take on a "distinctly military flavor" (Davies 24). The impression among the English that the Irish were a wild, barbaric people (*sauvage* was Richard II's invective of choice) became so common in the later Middle Ages that associating savagery with the Irish became standard and normal, so that "a wild Irishman was almost by definition dangerous and an enemy" (Lydon 19). By the fifteenth century, the terms "Irish" and "enemy" were virtually synonymous; an official record in 1537 refers to "Iryshe men, our naturall enymyes" (Lydon 20). See Marc Morris, *A Great and Terrible King: Edward I and the Forging of Britain* (London: Hutchinson, 2008), 218-20; R.R. Davies, *Lords and Lordship in the British Isles in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. Brendan Smith (Oxford:

Many recent postcolonial studies of the Middle Ages have focused on medieval Europe's interactions with the East, especially Jews and Saracens, depicting them as the "exotic, atavistic 'other' of European expansionism."[58] In England, the expansion of English power over the Isles was accomplished in part by a "colonization" of the Isles' past, justifying present-day sovereignty by reclaiming the land's history as exclusively English. Essential to the process of establishing a new English identity after the Conquest was the construction of a pure, homogenous English ethnicity that had existed for time immemorial. As in most other Middle English historical romances, the Danes are deployed in *AM* as the representatives of wrong, both morally and as claimants to the English throne. Thus the gravest threat that the Danes/Saracens pose in *AM* is not destruction; when in "þe cuntre aboute Lounde/Slowen & brent to þe grounde" (4733-4), this merely serves as an opportunity for the English to prove their valor and overcome the odds, and ultimately London perseveres intact ("To Lunden al þai comen þo,/Men hem oȝain comen of þe toun/Wiþ wel fair processioun," 5326-8). By far the most serious threat the Danes pose is miscegenation, tainting English blood with pagan blood and thereby "poisoning the well" of English blood, creating a hybridized other. *AM* positions its audience as the inheritors of a pure national tradition, the ethnic model of which precludes the possibility of cultural, political, and social assimilation. Entering England "bi water" with "mani a man" (121, 133), after a "sleiȝster" of the English forces, Angys' first order of business is to seize castles and towns and to populate them with Danes:

Angys tok in a þrowe

Oxford University Press, 2009), 24; James Lydon, "The Middle Nation," in *The English in Medieval Ireland*, ed. James Lydon (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1984), 19-20.
    [58] Laurie A. Finke and Martin B. Shichtman, *King Arthur and the Myth of History* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), 57. Seven of the fourteen essays in *The Postcolonial Middle Ages* address the Eastern other: Akbari, Biddick, Burger, Davis, Ganim, Heng, and Tomasch. See *The Postcolonial Middle Ages*, ed. Cohen (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000).

Mani castels and tounes arowe
And put þerin his men
Forto stonden our oȝen
And sent after eld and ȝing
Forto help in his fiȝting (147-52).

Angys has his Danes forcibly occupy and populate many English strongholds and towns, establishing a base of power via settler communities, usurping the English and replacing them with Danes. Calling for both young and old, Angys' primary goal, while not made explicit, is the subjugation and colonization of England and the inception of a new kingdom under Danish dominion. Going directly for the castles was a way of protecting and maintaining power, as the medieval castle was the site where conquest was transformed into lordship.[59]   Angys and his "Sarraȝins of pris" (474) threaten to become the feudal overlords of the English, killing nobles and knights as they take English lands:

Angys hem hadde ouercome
& michel of her lond binome*　　　　　　* *taken away*
& mani barouns & kniȝt yslawe
& her kin brouȝt of dawe" (185-8).

After establishing this base of defensive power, Angys and the Danes are soon routed by Fortiger's forces, and Angys flees to a castle, the symbol of both his conquest and his shameful defeat, where "was michel of his rout" (many of his company of men, 330). At this point, Angys and the totality of his Danes flee England; but they return soon after at the request of Fortiger, who offers Angys "half his fe" to return to England and kill the many English barons who oppose Fortiger, whom they now recognize as a false traitor. Angys gladly obliges and brings

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[59] R.R. Davies writes that in the Middle Ages there existed a "close relationship between castle and colonization." The castle was the symbol of domination, power, and aggression, which "revolved very considerably around the castle and castle-owners"; the castle brought order, peace, and stability, converting conquest into lordship. See R.R. Davies, *Domination and Conquest: The Experience of Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, 1100-1300* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 40-2.

"[m]ani þousand" men to colonize England again; and once again, after defeating "mani a gret lording" (442) and many knights, Angys and his nobles are rewarded with "lond & tour castle & halle" (472). More than a coldly calculated political relationship, there is "loue of hert cler/Bitven Angys and Fortiger" (475-6), as Angys is made a "half-felawe" (426), or a half-sharer, of a now divided and infected land.

Like the hybridized, animalistic nature of the Saracens' bodies, England itself temporarily becomes a hybridized, monstrous place, as *AM* condemns the settlement of Danes in England as a polluting of the land with foreigners' blood. Directly after we are told that Angys and Fortiger shared a mutual affection for one another, Fortiger, as a result of "loue fin" for Angys' daughter, marries her and produces heirs, which results in Christian-pagan marriages across England. What appears to be the most distressing aspect of the Danish invasions is the tainting of Christian, English blood with the blood of heathens. Though Angys' daughter (she is unnamed) is "boþe fair and gent" (478), she is a Saracen and thus unworthy of a Christians' attention. Fortiger's sin of desiring and marrying a Saracen curses him for the rest of his life:

> And Fortiger for loue fin
> Hir tok to fere and to wiue—
> And was curssed in al his liue
> For he lete Cristen wedde haþen
> And meynt* our blod as flesche and maþen*.　　**mixed/maggots*
> Mani þousand was swiche in weddeloc
> As we finde written in bok
> Þer was wel neiȝe al þis lond
> To þe Deuel gon an hond,
> Festes he made gret and fele
> And hadden al warldes wele
> And held no better lawe
> Þan þe hounde wiþ his felawe. (480-92)

The traditional lexicon of courtly love (*fin amour*) to describe Fortiger's desire for a pagan female is unexpected. The preceding lines describe how Angys' daughter's beauty and nobility are wasted on a Saracen, so Fortiger is condemned for valuing her physical attributes above her heathenness, for placing private satisfaction above the interests of England. "Love fin" is denigrated as a kind of foreign, malevolent desire; its traditional literary role (at its twelfth century Provencal zenith) as a vindication of adulterous love and a castigation of the deceived husband is here repositioned as sinister, opposed to "proper," productive, Christian marriages ordained by God.[60] The adultery committed is not extramarital but extranational. *AM* on the whole downplays or omits episodes of courtly love in favor of massive violent battles; here, Fortger's feelings of courtly love are directly responsible for the dissolution and decay of the entire realm. "Love fin" results in Fortiger's tolerance for Christian and heathen marriages, which clearly revile the composer. He writes of these marriages as an infestation of English blood, the mixing of maggots and flesh; the collective body of the English ("our blod") suffers from hybrid marriages, which are themselves indicators of England's having gone over to "þe Deuel." Just as the language of courtly love is ironically used to denounce lust's capability of leading one to treachery, we see the "[m]ani þousand" Christian-pagan marriages celebrated with riches and feasts ("Festes he made gret and fele/And hadden al warldes wele") only to see such celebrations censured as misguided by evil. It is the "moral law" of keeping English blood pure that ensures the divine protection England enjoys; when foreign, non-Christian blood is admitted, God's favor is revoked.

The ultimate fear is that contact and reproduction between Christians and heathens would result in a hybrid English-Dane population, an obliteration of differences between the two

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[60] Moshe Lazar, "*Fin'amor*," in *A Handbook of the Troubadours,* ed. F.R.P. Akehurst and Judith M. Davis (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), 74.

national people. Even before mingling with the English, the Danes/Saracens are already hybrid beings, part-animal and part-human, and they threaten to import their mixed nature into an England that has heretofore been walled off by its racial purity. Compared with the Vortigern/Ronwen miscegenation scenes of Geoffrey, Wace, and Layamon, *AM* is especially condemnatory, going farther than any of these writers in lambasting the mixing of Christian and pagan blood. Whereas for Geoffrey, Wace, and Layamon, the marriage of Vortigern and Ronwen initiates the assimilation of the Saxons into Britain, *AM* envisions this ethnic-national cross-pollination and dilution of English blood as reversible. Of the three Brut-writers, Geoffrey is clearly the most troubled by the mixing of Saxon and British blood; Merlin calls the Saxons a "wicked race" (*nefandum populum*, 118.10) after we see pagans and Christians, violating Christian law forbidding them to marry, reproduce, or even communicate, intermarrying to the extent that "no one knew who was pagan and who Christian, since the pagans had married their daughters and relatives" (101.391-5). Yet the result of this interethnic marrying is not corporeal, affecting flesh and blood as in *AM*; in Geoffrey, reparations made as a result of the assimilating Saxons require institutional, not racial, restoration. Ambrosious Aurelius, the British king and brother of Uther Pendragon, makes provisions for his kingdom by reviving the "long-forgotten laws" and restoring "to grandchildren their grandparents' lost possessions"; his "sole concerns" are the "reorganization of the churches, the renewal of peace and law, and the enforcement of justice" (127.196-202). For Geoffrey, Saxon and British blood cannot be unmixed. Wace appears relatively neutral on the matter, writing only that it became difficult to tell Christian from non-Christian (ll. 7063-82). Layamon is the most even-tempered of the three Brut-writers, playing the scene down to almost nothing in order to make the Saxons appear less nefarious and diabolic (ll. 7169-84). He does so primarily by limiting the denigration of Christian blood to Vortigern alone;

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only Vortrigern is described as defiled because he has allowed himself to marry without Christian rites, in heathen fashion. But the defilement ends with him, as his three sons are Christians who become disgusted with their father and challenge his sovereignty.

Whereas the mixing of pagan and Christian blood in Geoffrey, Wace, and Layamon that implies the integration of Saxons into Britain is an irreversible process, *AM* offers the possibility of invasions and settlement without permanent colonization. Undesirable foreign elements can be totally ousted from England without a trace. After building a defensive tower to protect himself against assaults by Uther and the right English heirs, Fortiger seeks a fatherless boy, Merlin, to explain to him why the tower continually falls each time it is rebuilt. In Geoffrey's account, Merlin's famous (and politically potent) prophecies reveal the existence of two dragons warring in the foundations of the tower: a white dragon signifying the treacherous Saxons and a red dragon, whose "end is near," representing "the people of Britain, whom the white will oppress" (112.34-6). In *AM*, the white dragon symbolizes the English and the red dragon represents the hybrid strain of Fortiger's kin, so that *AM* recovers the white dragon as a patriotic English symbol and disparages the red dragon as a foreign other. The dragons are explicitly linked with two bloodlines, the right heir's and the wrong usurper's, that are entirely separate. According to Merlin's prophecy, the white dragon, which "[b]itokeneþ þe air of þis lond," will drive Fortiger along "[w]iþ þine children & þi wiue/& mani noble of þine menne" into Fortiger's tower, where they will all be burned to death by the dragon (1659-64). Merlin is clear that the red dragon symbolizes the new mixed race of Anglo-Danes that will perish. The tail of the red dragon

> Signifieþe þe wicke stren
> þat schal com out of þi kin
> & of þi wiues fader Angys
> þat schal be ded & lesen his pris (1667-70)

According to Merlin, in Fortiger's tower all the traitorous Anglo-Danes, including their wives and children, symbolized by the "wicke stren" of Fortiger and Angys' daughter, will be collectively murdered, thus completely destroying the "contaminated" English. In its place, those of "right blood," or pure English blood, will rule, symbolized by the white dragon who "[s]ignifieþ gret conseyle/þat schul held wiþ þe kings blod/Of þe gentil men & gode" (1674-6). The "kings blod" is explicitly equated with "right blood" as Uther, the "stren" of King Constance, returns to England to claim the throne as the nobles turn their hearts to "Vter Pendragouns riȝt blood" (1807-9). The wrong, racially mixed "stren" of Fortiger and the pure English "stren" of Arthur's line contrast illegal seizure and rightful inheritance of the throne. *AM* offers a fantasy of homogenous, unmixed English blood capable of remaining stable and hermetic from the forces of colonization and assimilation that are the result of conquest. When Fortiger is indeed burned in the tower by Uther as prophesied, the composer assures us once again that Fortiger's wife and child are killed alongside him (1891). His ill-fated desire for a defensive tower to shield him from his foes ultimately serves as a trap for the "wicke stren" of mixed blood.

When the Danes are defeated once and for all by Arthur, they leave no trace of their temporary settlement, and England is able to revert to the land – with its rightful monarchs—that it was before the Danish invasions ever began. Such a scenario is a form of wish-fulfillment, the desire to imagine an Englishness untainted by undesirable blood. As thorough and insightful as Calkin's chapter on *AM* is, the complete ousting of foreign blood from England is one point that Calkin's reading mishandles. Calkin argues that the Saracens cannot be fully excised from England – once the floodgates have been opened, there is no closing them. She writes:

Saracens in *Of Arthur and Merlin* become, through their recurrent returns to England, a fact of life for the realm and its various rulers. They appear at the poem's beginning as the external menace that topples Moyne (Costaunce's heir) from the throne, they reappear as Fortiger's allies and a cultural graft onto English society, and thenceforth they are an inescapable preoccupation for Uter and his son Arthur. Having intermingled with the English, the Saracens become an undesirable element of English identity that cannot be excised. They repeatedly sail in to kill Christians, challenge kings, pillage the land, and despoil the economic and social foundations of the English polity.[61]

However, the romance makes it clear a number of times that whenever the heathen enemy is defeated, they "all" – the word is used explicitly – return to their homelands without leaving a trace in England. Early the narrative, Angys is driven back to a castle that is soon besieged. Working out a deal with Fortiger, Angys promises to leave in "pays":

> Angys sent hem þan to say
> ȝif he in pays wende most
> He wold taken al his ost
> And leden hem to his cuntraye
> And neuer eft don hem traye,
> Fortiger by his conseyle
> Lete hem wende hole and hayle
> (Ac ferst þai sworen him an oþ
> þai schuld him neuer waite loþ)
> þus þai wenten to þe strond
> And ferden ouer to her lond. (344-54)

Angys takes "al" his host, or forces, "hole and hayle" (safe and sound), back to their land, swearing an oath never to return, an oath that is predictably broken. While Calkin is surely right to say that the Saracens are constantly attacking so that it seems their attacks will never cease and England will never be at peace, the prospect of them permanently "intermingling" is not raised. When the Danes do intermarry with the English and produce children of mixed Christian

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[61] Calkin, 188.

and heathen blood, *AM* makes it clear that this is only a temporary state of affairs. After the English have recognized Uther's "right blood," Angys, the "eldfather" (father-in-law) of Fortiger, is finally (and anti-climactically, since we hear of it second-hand, as it happens "off-stage") killed by Uther's brother Aurilis Brosias, at which point his Saracens leave England: "Alle þai wenten to her lond" (2044). Even if some of them had intermarried, they "alle" leave without a trace, and England, for a very short while, is free of Saracens. The proper royal bloodline has been restored, and England is once again a Christian nation with the right king with the right blood as its sovereign. Because Calkin contends that English identity is built upon the "productive violence" of a never-ending cascade of Eastern-styled enemies, she largely ignores the flipside of the Saracen coin – that they are also Danes and Irish, two real-world peoples who ultimately *must* be fully excised from Arthurian Britain. Otherwise, the romance would be implying that the Danes and the Irish permanently intermingled with the English via settlement, an implication it certainly does not make. Calkin argues that *AM* "advances a vision of 'Inglisch' identity as a melding of invaders and invaded," warning its audience against the "hybridizing effects" of conquests on English identity, offering "an exceptionally negative vision of invasion and integration as cultural formation," with intermingling as "unalloyed corruption and destruction."[62] Ultimately, Calkin is right to claim that *AM* is repelled by racial integration, positioning miscegenation as the necessary result of colonization, but its warnings against the effects of successful invasion and settlement serve to ensure its audiences that the melding of invaders and invaders was a brief lapse in English history confined to Fortiger, Angys, and their retinues. English identity exists prior to the Danish invasions and temporary assimilation and it endures far beyond them.

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[62] Calkin, 183-4.

4.5   DEFENDING THE REALM

AM offers a fantasy of a timeless, absolute Englishness, depicting the English as a pure, homogenous *gens* resistant to colonization and the effects of what Cohen calls "conflictual convergence."[63] Once Arthur ascends the throne, his central task (and essentially all we ever see him doing) is to defend England against endless swarms of invading Saracens. Unlike the Arthur of Geoffrey and Wace, the Arthur of *AM* is a defender rather than a conqueror; he leaves England once to fight in an unnamed foreign kingdom. His role is to fortify England against the permanent settlement of foreign elements, to ensure that the level of colonial success that Angys enjoyed does not happen again. Unlike the Arthur of Geoffrey and Wace, where Arthur subdues Scotland, Ireland, Norway, Denmark, France, Burgundy, Lorraine, Normandy, Anjou, and more continental kingdoms – Arthur "wanted to rule everywhere," Wace writes[64] – the Arthur of *AM* inherits all these lands by birthright; he does not conquer a single foreign kingdom, nor is it he who enacts the Round Table. An Arthur that strictly defends England and who inherits the Round Table was an unprecedented Arthur-figure. Even in Layamon, where Arthur has been called "Arthur the Defender" rather than Arthur the Alexander-like Conqueror of Geoffrey and Wace,[65] Arthur nevertheless conquers Scotland, Iceland, Orkney, Jutland, Wendland, Norway, and Denmark, and in each place the local sovereign swears an oath to "þi mon bicumen."[66] In *AM*, it is Uther, not Arthur, who establishes the Round Table, and it is Uther who establishes an

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[63] Cohen, *Hybridity*, 1.

[64] Wace, 245.

[65] W.R. J. Barron, "Dynastic Chronicles: Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*," in *The Arthur of the English: The Arthurian Legend in Medieval English Life and Literature*, ed. W.R.J. Barron (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2001), 11-18.

[66] See for instance lines 11222-3: "þu scal beon min haehȝe king; and ich wul beon þin under-ling./Ich þe wullen heren; swa mon scal don his haerren" [You shall be my high king, and I will be your underling./I will owe you such obedience as one ought his overlord].

English empire that stretches across Normandy, Gascony, Boulogne, Poitiers, Champagne, Anjou, Brittany, Scotland, Wales, and Cornwall. Uther defeats Harinan, the first husband of Ygerne (Arthur's mother), which nets Uther most of France, and he defeats Hoel, Ygerne's second husband, and Tintagel, her third husband, to get Cornwall. Thus Arthur's empire is his by right of inheritance, through battles won by his father.

Whereas the precise borders of England and the empire Arthur inherits are blurred enough that the geographical limits of Arthur's sovereignty are never quite clear, what Arthur and his Round Table knights defend is an English culture rooted in a centralized base of power. The "imagined community" that is fully formed at the beginning of the romance and that Uther expands and Arthur defends corresponds with Benedict Anderson's description of pre-modern state power, in which "states were defined by centers, borders were porous and indistinct, and sovereignties faded imperceptibly into one another."[67] Though some of the poem does take place outside of England where the knights of the Round Table defeat massive hordes of heathens, it is clearly England, and more specifically London, that is the locus of the narrative. The "noble toun" of London (4706), rather than a legendary place like Camelot, is the seat of Arthur's power. It is here that he returns for both safety and celebrations. When Arthur is crowned, the festivities are held in London (3393); when four Irish kings invade to shatter Arthur's sovereignty, they head straight for London, except the city is so well-fortified and secure that they resolve to just burn everything around London to the ground rather than bother with a full-scale urban attack (4719-34). The legendary place name "Logres," used by Geoffrey and Matter of Britain texts to describe Arthur's Brittonic realm and used by the French *Merlin* to mean London, is changed in *AM* to London, and the vagueness and dubiousness of British place-names

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[67] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (New York: Verso, 1991), 19.

in the French are anglicized; for instance, Bedingran is changed to Bedingham. When compared with the many English towns that are named from Portsmouth to Rockingham to Bedingham, the geography of regions outside England is blurry at best: "A gret wildernisse þai founde/Bitven Fraunce and Breteyne," or Brittany (3444-5). The "gret wildernisse" probably masks the composer's unfamiliarity with the continent and, more importantly, suggests that defending Christian regions other than England against heathens is of little consequence when compared with defending England against its enemies.

Arthur's heroic reputation is taken for granted by *AM*, so that his persistent defending of the homeland and Englishness works as a variation on a figure whose fame was widespread by the fourteenth century. Arthur is a defensive protagonist, not a culture-bringer or bearer of civilization to heathen peoples as is the Arthur of Geoffrey; nor does he advance any novel sense of what it means to be English. He has no sovereign territory to expand and no superior culture to establish. *AM* proposes a historical space in which English power and culture did not develop along standard chronological pathways; instead, the English people are depicted as a stable, core essence existing throughout time. Arthur and his idealized court in *AM* do not experience any downfall, so that at the end of the narrative it is as if England will go on defending itself for time immemorial. Whereas the romance tradition of the *Cycle* and the Brut tradition depict Arthur's demise as a result of, respectively, his mishandling of the domestic affairs of Camelot or as a result of his "territorial ambitions" and "expansive militarism" (according to Ingham),[68] *AM* presents an Arthurian court whose adventures begin but never end. England's resources are inexhaustible and its knightly heroes never fail. More than simply a story of the gradual advance and triumph of the English in the Isles, *AM* serves a historical mythology in which English

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[68] Patricia Clare Ingham, *Sovereign Fantasies: Arthurian Romance and the Making of Britain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 80.

culture and power had always existed. Through Arthur's famous sword Excalibur ("Estalibur" in *AM*), the English language is literally inscribed onto the British past. These words are carved into the pommel:

> 'Icham yhot Estalibore
> Vnto a king fair tresore' (2817-8)

Directly following these lines is a parenthetical couplet:

> (On Inglis is þis writeing
> 'Kerue stiel and iren and al þing') (2819-20)

Excalibur, of course, is the sword that tests the authenticity of the true heir to the throne. If Excalibur has English words carved into its pommel, then it is an English artifact, suggesting that the land was always an English one even before the "English" had arrived. Although the English couplet-inscription is explicitly provided, the composer ensures that we are aware that the words are written in English. The "stiel and iren" into which the words are carved connotes the permanent and immutable status of English as a language in Britain, implicitly linking the English language with English sovereignty throughout the past and the future. The famous sword predates Arthur and will last far beyond his reign, an artifact justifying the timeless dominion of the English in the Isles and the right rule of any monarch that can be portrayed as a true heir of Arthur. The English inscription is discreet evidence that the English, which means everyone "born in Inglond" (22), are an ancient people destined to enjoy dominion over others.

If by imagining medieval England as a homogenous political and cultural entity *AM* subsumes "the spatial histories of displacement, relocation" and subjugation that postcolonialism

attempts to expose,[69] the romance demands to be read as a privileging of discourses of a singular

English nation-race. Even if we now recognize that (in Robert Bartlett's words) "nationality is

not a matter of objective classification at all" but "a social process" in which "[s]elf-

identification exists in a close relationship with identification by others and identification of

others,"[70] nevertheless *AM* assumes that England was a culturally homogenous island that

naturally belonged to the English king and English landowners. It ossifies identities, partly by

contrasting Englishness and a civilized, exclusively English culture with the barbarous cultures

(or, that is, lack of any culture) of the Danes and Irish, and partly by eliminating identities (the

Saxons and Britons) from its narrative that could potentially complicate the concept of

immutable Englishness. The very act of naming the Arthurian court as English, as opposed to

British, is an act of identity-branding. As Cohen puts it, "Names are transformative," rendering

those whom they denominate distinctive by making them appear "unchanging in the past but

actually resistant to further transformation."[71] A people's name becomes inseparable from its

history; despite evidence to the contrary, the history of a people is usually based on some myths

of shared descent. *AM* provides such a myth.

Dismissing race, language, religious ties, and geography as adequate requirements for the

constitution of a nation, Renan argues that the fundamental building blocks of nations are the

"spiritual principle" of a people, a commonly held belief that our ancestors have made us what

we are today. In casting race, language, religion, and geography aside, Renan discards traditional

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[69] See Homi K. Bhabha, "Postcolonial Criticism," in *Redrawing the Boundaries: The Transformation of English and American Literary Studies*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt and Giles Gunn (New York: Modern Language Association, 1992), 437-65.

[70] Robert Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales, 1146-1223* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 10; cited in John Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century: Imperialism, National Identity and Political Values* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2000) 124.

[71] Cohen, *Hybridity*, 31-2.

medieval understandings of the ties that bind communities together. Writing around c. 900, Regino of Prüm declares that the four categories for classifying ethnicity are descent, customs, language, and law (*genere, moribus, lingua, legibus*), which are essentially cultural concepts that are malleable and could be transformed depending on the needs of a people.[72] For Renan, the nation is not the sum of its material parts but "a soul, a spiritual principle," which primarily relies on "the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories" to assure a community that they are the heirs of a "heroic past" filled with "great men" and "glory"; for Renan, "this is the social capital upon which one bases a national idea."[73] Emerging from a post-Conquest culture whose historiographical works were marked with disjuncture and forced colonization, *AM* offers a historical model of England that removes ethnic rupture and problematic colonization and replaces it with a monolithic and stable England that need only defend itself against the Danes and Irish to survive. It offers the English a rich legacy of memories, transforming non-English traditions into English history and alien heroes into English great men.

To return to the red and white dragons fighting in the fundaments of Fortiger's tower, *AM* takes the red dragon, the traditional symbol of the Welsh and the clear paragon of the two dragons in the accounts of Nennius, Geoffrey, and *Llud and Llefeyles* in the *Mabinogion*, and turns it into a symbol of the treacherous, hybrid kin of the English Fortiger and the Danish Angys, fighting against the white dragon of the heroic English. In Geoffrey's *Historia*, Hengist's settlement initiates the fall of Briton dominion and the rise of Saxon power, and Vortigern's failed tower, whose foundations were continually unsettled by the two dragons representing the Saxons and Britons, "immures the fragility of dominion and portends the fall of

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[72] Regino cited in Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization, and Cultural Change, 950-1350* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 197.
[73] Renan, "What is a nation?", 19.

Britain itself."[74] No such fragility subsists in *AM*; instead, it is the very stability and enduring

strength of English values, embodied by heroes like Arthur, that ensures England's perpetual

victories over an endless stream of invaders. The red dragon as a symbol for the kin of the Dane

Angys and the English Fortiger instead of the Britons does not imply that *AM* sets out to

demonize or castigate the Welsh, who were considered by Geoffrey to be the descendants of

Arthur and the Britons ("As their culture ebbed, they were no longer called Britons, but Welsh,"

207.592-3). The tragic ending of the *Historia* is marked by the instability of dominion and the

passing of the heroic Britons, who retreat to Wales as the Saxons "filled the empty tracts of land

from Scotland to Cornwall" with "no natives to stop them, save a few remaining Britons living in

the remote forests of Wales" (204.555-8). For Geoffrey, "This marked the end of British power

in the island and the beginning of English rule" (204.558-9). Though scholars are not yet decided

on the larger political purpose of Geoffrey's work, John Gillingham argues that the *Historia*

exalts the contemporary Welsh at precisely the same time that in the Anglo-Norman world it was

becoming fashionable to despise Welshmen and to denigrate them as barbarians without any

history.[75] The Britons (and in turn the Welsh), in Gillingham's account of the *Historia*, are

presented as having a long and heroic history and having long been civilized, and it is the Saxons

who are presented as barbarians. The Welsh and Normans are depicted as two noble confederates

allied by blood, thereby connecting the British past to the Norman present.[76] Turville-Petre

elucidates this connection: "The story of the Britons offered the Anglo-Norman rulers a record of

their illustrious predecessors who had brought culture and prestige to the homeland. As

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[74] Warren, *History*, 43.
[75] Gillingham, *English*, 27-33.
[76] Gillingham suggests that Geoffrey's larger purpose in drawing connections between the Welsh and the Normans might have been to present the Welsh as suitable allies for the Normans opposed to King Stephen.

descendants of the Trojans themselves, the Normans could bear the torch of Trojan civilization throughout their empire."[77] If the Normans are allied with the Britons and the English are positioned as differentiated and ignominious, then Geoffrey's history worked to ensure Norman newcomers that their sovereignty rested on rightful entitlement rather than forceful invasion and settlement.

By making the Britons English and Britain England, *AM* is not engaged in a diametrically opposed operation as the *Historia*; it does not castigate the Welsh or paint them as vile barbarians, but as faithful, albeit subordinate, allies to the English. *AM* renders each of the corners of the island – "Fram Kent to Norþhumberlond/Fram Wales & fram Scotlond" (2235-6) – their barons, earls, dukes, and knights, as part of a homogenous, stable English kingdom with power clearly centralized in the English monarch. When Uther is shown to have the "Noble kinges of þis lond/Al wonnen vnder his hond" (2405-6), we see all of the peoples of the island not divided into separate communities as in Bede and Geoffrey, but as agreeably ruled under English hegemony. Although Cradelman, the king of North Wales, joins five other rebel kings to challenge Arthur's rule, Cradelman is not depicted as a lowly barbarian but as a "Hardi man & wise of tales" and a "wise man" (3734, 4314). When he is overwhelmed by Arthur's forces he becomes an ally of the English king, agreeing with fellow kings that it is in his best interest to aid the English high-king who "helpen ous oȝain Angys kende" (4279). In *AM* it is the invading Danes and Irish, who that are clear enemies because they threaten to colonize an already-settled land, displacing the native English, the rightful inhabitants of their own island. Ultimately, *AM* does not set out to clearly distinguish the Welsh from the English, but instead attempts to draw Wales into the political sphere of England to make them English themselves, which potentially

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[77] Thorlac Turville-Petre, *England the Nation: Language, Literature, and National Identity, 1290-1340* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 81.

reflects Edward I's and his descendants' efforts to make the Welsh and Scots "English" by their subjection to an English king.[78]

If Matter of Britain romances appealed to the English and Anglo-Normans alike "in part because it willed away the Normans," according to Emily Albu, by assimilating them into the history of Britain and making Arthur their legitimate ancestor, it is possible that *AM* appealed to early-mid fourteenth century audiences for its willing away of the Saxons and Britons. While it is possible to see the Welsh as the proper *antecessors* of the Normans in the *Historia*, *AM* does not quite transform the Britons into the ancestors of the English, as in Layamon's *Brut*, but instead makes the Britons English themselves, removing any suggestion of their distinct ethnicity. By omitting the Saxons of the romance and chronicle Arthurian traditions, the transition from Britain to England and from Briton to English can be portrayed as no real transition at all, but a slight change in names. The Germanic ancestors of the English are thereby vindicated of their part in the downfall of Christian Arthurian Britain. Early in *AM*, the composer writes that "Inglond was yhoten þo/Michel Breteyne wiþouten no" (117-8), informing us of a change in national taxonomy. On its own, this statement is fairly common in later medieval writing,[79] but the following line reveals that "Michel Breteyne" did not have a different name because it was ruled by an ethnic group distinct from the English: "þe Bretouns þat beþ Inglisse nov" (119). Clearly denominated as the contemporary Welsh in Geoffrey, the Britons in *AM* are the very same national-ethnic group as the English. They were not pushed (and would not later be pushed) to the fringes of the island when the Saxons conquer. *AM* essentially sidesteps the entire

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[78] See Calkin, 9.

[79] Examples are widespread; I've chosen *Cligés* and Wace's *Roman de Brut* as typical examples. In *Cligés*, Chrétien writes, "[Cligés' father] was so valiant and bold of heart that, in order to win fame and glory, he went from Greece to England, which in those days was called Britain." In the *Roman de Brut* Wace writes, "From Britain, his own land, now called England." See Chrétien de Troyes, *Arthurian Romances*, trans. William W. Kibler (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1991), 123; and Wace, 281.

invasions of the Anglo-Saxons during and after the Arthurian era. The Celtic Britons were not forced into Wales and their lands and towns were not taken from them (an account we find in Geoffrey); instead, British history becomes English history, so that audiences are ensured that Arthur and his renowned knights were English heroes. Michelle Warren shows how a similar process of ethnic co-opting occurs in Layamon's *Brut* and in the chronicle of Robert of Gloucester (ca. mid-late thirteenth century), writers who "endeavor to graft the Britons onto the English family tree" by equating the land with the English, thus validating the Saxon invasions.[80] For Warren, Robert and Layamon employ the postcolonial strategies of turning the Britons into English ancestors and legitimating the transition from Briton to Saxon dominion in order to "take history away from Norman colonizing desire."[81] But by the early-mid fourteenth century when *AM* is composed, the Normans were most likely considered by English people to be a group that had long ago assimilated into English culture and society. They did so by writing themselves into the "rich legacy of English memories" (to slightly alter Renan's phrase). Similarly, in *AM* the English occupy the island from its earliest times, expunging the distinct ethnic origins of disparate peoples on the island, rendering them all subordinate to English dominion. *AM* consistently draws our attention to the English milieu of the romance. It explicitly informs us of Arthur's English heritage from the outset, showing King Constaunce, Arthur's grandfather, as one who "regned in Inglond" (33); when the Danes first invade it is "into Inglond" that the host arrives (116); England is mentioned twenty-two times in the poem (22, 33, 116, 117, 144, 614, 1700, 1766, 2050, 2836, 4108, 4129, 4460, 4488, 4536, 4674, 6594, 7420, 8574, 8580, 8898, 9485). By contrast, "Britain," when used to mean Great Britain (rather than "lesse" Britain or Brittany), appears three times in the poem, and in the first of these times, as we have seen,

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[80] Warren, 83-129.
[81] Warren, 95.

"Breteyne" is used only to efface it by calling it England (118, 3513, 9566). *AM* insists on the Englishness of its setting and its characters, making certain that audiences are aware of the ethnicity of their heroic ancestors and the English kingdom for which they fought.

The story of the advance of English power in the British Isles between the late eleventh and early fourteenth centuries has been recounted primarily "in terms of domination and conquest, campaigns and castles, political masterfulness and even, occasionally, moral shabbiness," according to Davies,[82] in reality English dominion relied on the flourishing influence of an increasingly centralized English culture. It was the crafting and subsequent spread of a consolidated, recognizable sense of Englishness, as much as military endeavors, that ensured the dissemination of English power throughout the British Isles. Stable ethnic identities could serve as foundations for political legitimacy, assuring an already dominant group of their present right to rule by rooting that right in the past. *AM* consciously crafts a new historical English tradition, proposing as its audience all English people – anyone born in England – and setting out to construct a past in their image: an Arthur with an English pedigree, a London that is a Camelot, an Excalibur with English words inscribed in its pommel. Though works written in England during the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries tend to remain relatively neutral towards the Welsh, by 1125 a historian like William of Malmesbury writes of the Welsh, Scots, and Irish as barbarians and the Anglo-Normans as civilized.[83] William's antagonism is not unique to him, and it is possibly a reflection of the attacks by the Scots and Welsh on Normans immediately after and in the century beyond the Conquest.[84] The later Middle Ages on the whole saw a rise in racial discrimination and a hardening of racial boundaries, and a critical racial divide between

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[82] Davies, *First English Empire*, 143.
[83] See Gillingham, 27-9.
[84] M.T. Clanchy, *England and its Rulers, 1066-1272*, second edition with an epilogue on Edward I (1272-1307) (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998). 25.

the English and Welsh appears to surface in the thirteenth century.[85] Though a strict racial divide between the English and Welsh had been developing since at least the mid-eleventh century, in the later thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, Edward I was trying to pull the Welsh and the Scots into the sphere of English dominion, making them "English" by humanizing them via anglicization. At the same time, in thirteenth and fourteenth century historical romances written in England about the insular past, it is the Danes who become the archetypal barbarians, whose persistent invasions induce the English to unite with the Scots and Welsh. If medieval identity is based on notions of timeless purity and homogeneity, then peoples needed plausible histories for substantializing their claims. After the thirteenth century, the Danes served as an ideal other in historical memory: barbarians at the gate who are turned away and entirely disappear thanks to the triumphant English.

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[85] Bartlett, 236-7.

5.0   REMEMBERING THE DANES: *HORN CHILDE AND MAIDEN RIMNILD* AND LITERARY TRADITION

5.1   DANES IN THE ENGLISH EARTH

Constructed during the Roman period in Britain, deneholes, or daneholes, are underground chambers that have been discovered as deep as eighty feet beneath the surface, consisting of a narrow shaft with foot notches leading down to the main chamber.[1] They appear in woodlands, usually occur in clusters, and have been found mostly in the chalk-rich regions of Kent and Essex, though some have been found elsewhere. The uncertainty about their proper name, dene or dane, is telling; *den* is an Old English word for depression, cave, den, or hole,[2] but it is likely that daneholes came to be known as such because of the similarity of the words *den* and *Dane* and the assumption that the Danes, those heathen enemies somewhere in the past, must have had something to do with them. Despite the rather prosaic likelihood that the pits were used as chalk wells or quarries and had nothing to do with Danes at all, myths nonetheless developed about the historicity of the holes in the early modern period. The most prominent early modern myth was

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[1] The scientific literature on deneholes is dated, but some confusion over the origins and uses of the excavated sites remains. See "The Essex Deneholes," *Science*, Vol. 5, No. 105 (Feb. 6, 1885): 113-4; J.W. Hayes, "Deneholes and Other Chalk Excavations: Their Origins and Uses," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. 39 (Jan. – Jun. 1909): 44-76; W.M. Newton, "On Deneholes or Drainage Pits and their relation to Grime's Graves, or First Antler-Pick Period," *Man*, Vol. 28 (May 1928): 78-83. For a general survey of the debate on deneholes, see Walter Johnson, *Folk Memory: Or the Continuity of British Archeology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908), 237-46.
[2] *DOE*, s.v. "den"

that the deep holes were hiding places for the English and their grain whenever the Danes would invade.[3] Though there is evidence that medieval agrarian people apparently thought, probably correctly, that the holes were built by the Romans and Celtic British and were not associated with the Danes,[4] a tradition developed in the early modern period that the deneholes were actually *dane*holes, meant to provide shelter from pagan foes.

Like daneholes, popular testaments to early English battles with and victories over pagans, there are Danish bones buried in the English soil in the Middle English historical romance, *Horn Childe and Maiden Rimnild* (ca. 1330-40).[5] The bones serve as memorials of ancestral battles against foreign invaders. After the Danes are defeated by Horn's father,

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[3] A certain mystery still surrounds the deneholes in the modern era: according to one early-twentieth century tour guide, a square hole carved into one of the chambers was used by the Danes to baptize their children, though in fact the square hole had been dug only a year earlier. See Hayes, 45.

[4] See Johnson, 239.

[5] The only surviving copy of *HC* is that found in MS Auchinleck (Advocates MS 19.2.1, National Library of Scotland), ca. 1330-40. The basic outline of the narrative is as follows. Opening with a few lines promising a story of England's "elders," a northern King Hatheolf, whose realm stretches from the Humber to the Firth of Forth, has one child, a son named Horn. There is another unnamed king ruling southern England, but presumably it is Rimnild's father, Houlac. A huge Danish army invades England, and a great battle ensues in Cleveland. The Danes are defeated, and Hatheolf doles out rewards and titles and builds churches. Soon after, an army led by three Irish kings attacks Hatheolf's lands and destroys Westmoreland. Thorbrond, a Northumbrian earl, seizes all of Hatheolf's kingdom, and Horn, along with loyal men Arlaund and his son Hatherof, escape to southern England. In southern England, Houlac brings up Horn until he is fifteen, training him in noble pursuits and teaching him harping and romances. Houlac's only child is a daughter named Rimnild, whom Houlac has forbidden Horn to court; of course, they fall in love. Their love is soon betrayed and Horn is exiled from England. Before Horn leaves, Rimnild gives him a magic ring, telling him that while it is dark, she has been faithful, but if it turns red, that she has chosen another. Horn claims he will return in seven years' time. Horn, going by the pseudonym of Godebounde, arrives in Wales, where he becomes attached to the court of King Elidan of Snowdonia and wins tournaments and duels. In Ireland, the kingdom of Elidan's son Finlak is attacked by the Irish King Malkan (who had killed Horn's father Hatheolf). Led by Horn, Finlak's forces defeat Malkan's army, and Horn is given all of Malkan's lands. Horn then returns to England to pursue Rimnild. Upon arriving in southern England, Horn hears that she is to be married to King Moging. Dressed as a pauper, Horn enters the hall on their wedding day, subtly letting Rimnild know that he has finally returned. In a tournament, Horn kills Wikel and Wikard who had earlier betrayed his love with Rimnild to Houlac, defeats Moging, and marries Rimnild with Houlac's blessing, who offers Horn half his kingdom and the rest when he dies. After five days of feasting, Horn plans to return to Northumberland to wrest his father's lands back from the earl Thorbrond, at which point about 140 lines are lost and the narrative ends.

Hatheolf, the king of Northumbria, the romance offers the possibility for its audience to tour the

site of the Danish dead:

> When þat euen bicam,
> þe Danis men were al slan,
> It began to mirke*.   *darken
> Whoso goþ or rideþ þerbi,
> ʒete may men see þer bones ly,
> Bi Seyn Sibiles Kirke.[6]

The precise location of St. Sibyls Church is unclear,[7] but because the poem explicitly names

Cleveland as the site of the battle between the Danes and the English, presumably it would have

been possible for an interested traveler to visit the chapel and "witness" history.[8] Daneholes and

the landscape in *HC and Maiden Rimnld* (*HC*), especially the bones buried at St. Sibyl's Church,

act as storehouses of memory, material evidence of a plausible past. Though Matthew Holford

has argued that it is "folk memory"[9] – oral histories that evolve as they circulate – that

influenced *HC*'s reference to the Danish bones, the obverse of this argument is equally plausible:

that *HC* is itself is creating a memory of the past, deploying place-names to provide an imaginary

heritage to local regions and towns. The authenticity of the Danish bones is ancillary to their

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[6] *Horn Childe and Maiden Rimnild*, ed. Maldwyn Mills, Middle English Texts 20 (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1988), ll. 79-84. All quotations from *HC* are from Mills' edition and will henceforth be referred to by line numbers in the body of the chapter.

[7] See Mills, 109 (n84). Mills' belief is that the church, though now gone, was located in Warrenby, based on the findings of the County Archeologist of Cleveland.

[8] Matthew Holford notes that the "romance's reference to 'Seyn Sibiles Kirke,' and its assumption that its audience will understand that reference, indicates that it was originally composed for an audience specifically familiar with northern Yorkshire," and that the poem originated in Yorkshire. See Matthew Holford, "A Local Source for *Horn Childe and Maiden Rimnild*," *Medium Aevum* 74 (2005): 34-40.

[9] Walter Johnson defines folk-memory as "the conscious or unconscious remembrance, by a people collectively, of ideas connected with the retention of rites and superstitions, habits, and occupations. Such memory may be clear and sound, the outcome of an unbroken succession of impressions; it may be dim and fugitive, almost to the point of extinction; it may be distorted and misleading; it may, by occasion, represent but the recovery of a clue which has, at an earlier period, apparently been quite lost. Walter Johnson, *Folk-Memory: Or the Continuity of British Archeology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908), 11.

central purpose of creating an illusion of genuine historicity. Unlike earlier Horn-narratives, the Anglo-Norman *Romance of Horn* (ca. 1150-70) and the Middle English *King Horn* (ca. 1225-1250), which employ a mostly imaginary geography, *HC* attempts to create the perception of realism and historicity by locating the story in a detailed northern England and the British Isles. Because *HC* is a reworking of earlier Horn-narratives that largely used legendary place-names, it should not be assumed that the inclusion of real place-names suggests orally circulating folklore about these places, but rather their inclusion grounds the romance material in a recognizable reality. To borrow phrases from Rosalind Field, *HC* offers a "convincingly authentic" past, giving the "effect of perceived historicity."[10] It consciously purports to retell and patch together a lost past in order to glorify the political present, to recapture the story of England's "lost" culture by plotting reference points onto a map of the English past. *HC* grafts a romance onto historical and geographical realities, and exists along the fringes of D.H. Green's characterization of the emergence of fiction in the twelfth century. For Green, this emergence was a three-stage process: first, fabricated non-fiction, which was meant to be interpreted and accepted as history, such as Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae*; second, episodic fiction in which fictional interpolations are added to historical material; third, full-fledged fiction, in which the world was meant to be recognized as fictional.[11] *HC* offers a fictional world onto which historical interpolations are added. The romance takes earlier Horn narratives and reworks them to appeal to fourteenth-century audiences thoroughly familiar with the conventions of the romance form. At the same time, *Horn Childe* deploys specific cultural, topographical, and architectural features to give the appearance of an actual historical milieu,

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[10] Rosalind Field, "Romance as History, History as Romance," in *Romance in Medieval England*, eds. Maldwyn Mills, Jennifer Fallows, and Carol Meale (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1991), 171.

[11] D.H. Green, *The Beginnings of Medieval Romance: Fact and Fiction, 1150-1220* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 187.

situating a fantasy narrative in a detailed northern England as the hero battles real-world enemies of past and present, the Danes and the Irish. *Horn Childe* reveals that the Danes were familiar literary figures by the fourteenth century, the fruit of a long tradition of "producing" Danes in romances and chronicles. This chapter will show that *HC* deploys current literary models of the Danes, along with other real-world geographic and historical markers, to create an intersection between historical romance and romance-history that had a substantial impact on perceptions of the past among both laypersons and professional historians through the later medieval and early modern periods.

As a literary production, *HC* has suffered the wrath of its critics from the very start. Chaucer apparently thought little of it, comparing his mock-knight Sir Thopas to other famous knights of metrical and tail-rhymed romances:

> Men speken of romances of prys,
> Of Horn child and of Ypotys,
> Of Beves and sir Gy,
> Of sir Lybeux and Pleyndamour –
> But sir Thopas, he bereth the flour
> Of roial* chivalry![12]   **real*

This soon prompts the impatient Host (or, less generously, the patient Host, for allowing Chaucer to speak of Sir Thopas for over two hundred lines) to interrupt and cut the story short. Though Horn is only called "HC" in *King Horn* and is not called so in *HC*, Chaucer is probably referring to the latter romance because, on the one hand, he is mocking fourteenth-century verse tales, which *King Horn* is not, and on the other hand, Bevis and Guy are both Auchinleck romances (as is *HC*), and this is the only instance in which they are explicitly paired with a Horn-text. Chaucer's disdain for contemporary metrical and tail-rhymed romances disguises his intimate

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[12] Geoffrey Chaucer, "Sir Thopas," in *The Riverside Chaucer*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1987), 216 (ll. 897-902).

familiarity with romance material, as the tale is a sophisticated parody showcasing the genre's diction, meter, and style.[13] It is even possible, though of course not demonstrable, that Chaucer himself had seen and was familiar with the contents of the Auchinleck volume.[14] The defects of romance that "Thopas" is meant to burlesque are, according to Arthur K. Moore, "extravagant physical description, tedious and irrelevant cataloguing, sacrifice of meaning to the exigencies of rhyme, trite imagery, and exhausted formulas."[15]

Whatever the Host might have thought of the literary skills of the *HC* composer, like Chaucer he was a sophisticated reader of contemporary romance, engaging the motifs, diction, and styles of romance that were in vogue in the early to mid-fourteenth century, adapting the Horn-narrative from its earlier versions – the Anglo-Norman *Romance of Horn* (also called *Horn et Rimenhild*) and *King Horn* – to meet the demands of an audience eager for romance. Yet *HC*'s adaptation of romance strategies led at least one critic, William H. Schofield, to dismiss the work as a "late and unwarranted combination of diverse traditions…a product of a late period when old themes were being boldly remodeled to satisfy depraved tastes…when art was yielding to artifice and originality to convention."[16] Schofield's critique of *HC* essentially rewords Chaucer's implicit critique – that *HC* lacks originality, innovation, and distinction – and,

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[13] See Edward R. Haymes, "Chaucer and the English Romance Tradition," *South Atlantic Bulletin* 37 (Nov 1972): 35-43. Haymes provides a brief but useful line-by-line comparison of lines from the *Canterbury Tales* and various thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Middle English metrical romances. See also Laura H. Loomis, "Sir Thopas," *Studies and Analogues of Chaucer's* Canterbury Tales, ed. W.F. Bryan and Germaine Dempster (Chicago: The University Press, 1941), 486-559. Loomis argues that Chaucer was not critiquing the subject matter of contemporary romances so much as their phraseology and rhymes.

[14] Laura Hibbard Loomis, "Chaucer and the Auchinleck MS: 'Thopas' and 'Guy of Warwick,'" in *Essays and Studies in Honor of Carleton Brown* (New York: New York University Press, 1940), 111-127.

[15] Arthur K. Moore, "'Sir Thopas' as Criticism of Fourteenth-Century Minstrelsy," *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 53(Oct 1954): 534.

[16] William Henry Schofield, Introduction to *The Story of Horn and Rimenhild*, ed. W.H. Schofield (Modern Language Association, 1903), 75.

following Chaucer's lead, most other nineteenth- and twentieth-century critics lambasted *HC*.[17]

Much of the criticism of *HC*, however, seems aimed more generally at a disparaging of fourteenth-century romance as a whole, using *HC* as an example of the aesthetic failings of the genre, rather than a directed critique against this particular romance. Dieter Mehl, who is generally a rather sympathetic reader of Middle English romances, denounces *HC* as being "full of apparently irrelevant detail" that "shows more interest in the extraordinary events than in the person of the prince," which ultimately could be leveled as two cardinal failings of medieval romance as a whole. Indeed, Mehl admits that *HC* is ultimately "more typical of the English romances" than the earlier *King Horn*.[18] The *HC* composer seems to have been well versed in contemporary romance tropes. He repeats stock phrases of the day: "In herd is nouȝt to hide" (39, 57, 189, 396, 669, 729), "In bok as we rede" (276, 277, 468, 1119); adds fabulous touches like a magical ring and a magical well; and references the subject matter of another Auchinleck romance, *Sir Tristrem*, by name (311). The changes in *HC* from *King Horn* appear to be deliberate choices, suggesting a composer who was widely versed in popular romance and who fit the Horn-story to suit new audiences by "effecting new combinations such as were then in vogue."[19]

HC is tail-rhymed in 1136 lines, with some missing, including roughly 140 lines at the end of the romance where (presumably) Horn recaptures his native land of Northumberland.

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[17] It has been called a "late product of degenerate minstrelsy" (Schofield 66); "rather commonplace" (Pearsall 109); a romance "with little variety or vigor" told by a composer with "an unhappy genius for the concrete and trivial at the expense of the imaginative effect" (Loomis 97). See Schofield, "Introduction," 66; Derek Pearsall, "The Development of Middle English Romance," *Medieval Studies* 27 (1965): 109; Laura Hibbard Loomis, *Medieval Romance in England: A Study of the Sources and Analogues of the Non-Cyclic Metrical Romances* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1969), 97.
[18] Dieter Mehl, *The Middle English Romances of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968), 52.
[19] Schofield, 76.

Each stanza is twelve lines, rhyming aabaabccbddb. This is virtually the same rhyme as in two other Auchinleck romances, *The King of Tars* and *Amis and Amiloun*, although versions of these two romances in other manuscripts will occasionally substitute a five-rhyme type of aabccbdddbeeb.[20] The Auchinleck *HC* is the only extant version of the romance. Due to its linguistic differentiation from other Auchinleck texts, according to Mills, *HC* is most likely a product of the North Midlands, though the main scribe of Auchinleck has been described as having the linguistic characteristics of an early form of London English and the anthology was probably produced in London.[21]

5.2   "CASTLE, COLONIZATION, AND ENGLISHNESS"

HC begins by imagining its audience as an English community bound by shared history. It offers to tell a story

> Of our elders þat were
> Whilom* in þis lond (ll. 5-6)   *once*

Keeping with the pattern set by other Auchinleck historical romances of pre-Conquest England like *Guy*, *Arthur and Merlin*, and *Bevis of Hampton*, the history of the land in *HC* is not presented as a succession of peoples and cultures being successively conquered and displaced (as it is in a twelfth-century chronicle like Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum*)[22]; instead, the

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[20] Maldwyn Mills, Introduction to *HC and Maiden Rimnild*, ed. Maldwyn Mills, Middle English Texts 20 (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1988), 19.

[21] Mills, 29, 40. See also Laura Hibbard Loomis, "Chaucer and the Auchinleck MS," 112-3.

[22] As an ecclesiastical historian, Henry sees foreign invasions as plagues sent by divine will. He writes that "divine vengeance" has sent England five plagues, "punishing the faithful as well as the unbelievers." These are the Romans, who later withdrew after conquering; the second is the Picts and

land itself is branded as England and its inhabitants from the very beginning become the English.

Employing specific English place-names concentrated in and around Yorkshire, *HC* consistently

emphasizes its setting as a recognizable England, and "our elders" can only mean our English

ancestors. *HC* is ultimately a narrative about English power in the British Isles, with Horn

eventually taking possession of Wales and Ireland, distinguishing *HC* from the earlier *Romance*

of Horn and *King Horn*, where Horn's sovereignty is not expanded beyond the mythical region

of his kingdom, Suddene. *King Horn*, by contrast with *HC*, offers to tell not a story of a nation

but a much more localized story:

> A sang ich schal ʒou singe
> Of Murry Þe kinge[23]

Murray, a legendary king, rules the mythical kingdom of Suddene, which is somewhere

"biweste," (5) though west of what, exactly, it is impossible to say. In *HC*, by contrast, every

town name specified is a real place, and real-world place names are relegated entirely to the

Yorkshire region, mostly in the North Riding. Yorkshire place-names like Allerton Moor,

Pickering, Stainmore, Teesside, and Blakey Moor ground the story in a recognizable reality,

creating an impression of realism and historicity through the use of geographical and

topographical detail. Areas outside of Yorkshire are spoken of generally: France (448), Brittany

(457), Snowdon in Wales (662), Cornwall (1075). According to Maldwyn Mills, the editor of the

only single edition of *HC*, the distribution of place-names is not arbitrary, but is deployed to

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Scots, who beleaguered the land but did not conquer it. Third is the English, who conquered; fourth, the Danes who "conquered it by warfare, but afterwards, they perished" (*sed postea deperierunt*). The fifth plague is the Normans, who still rule and "have dominion over the English at the present time." Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum: The History of the English People*, ed. and trans. Diana Greenway (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 15.

[23] *King Horn: An Edition Based on Cambridge University Library MS Gg. 4.27 (2)*, ed. Rosamund Allen (New York: Garland, 1984), ll. 3-4. All references to *King Horn* are from this edition, and quotations from this text will henceforth be referred to by line numbers in the body of the chapter.

allow the poem to position itself as having literary and historical sources, even if it does not actually have them.[24] *HC* has been noted for its "chronicle realism," a phrase Rosalind Field intended to address the romance's realistic treatment of warfare and the consequent suffering it entails – Horn is actually injured in battle – but beyond its usually brief and relatively believable battle-scenes *HC* gives off the air of being grounded in historical truth, thereby producing the feel of a chronicle while remaining entirely fictional. [25] Stemming from Anglo-Norman romances that crafted myths of "assimilation, of homecoming, and of continuity" to commemorate the pre-conquest past,[26] Middle English romances as a whole generated a "romance past" that was very different from the vague past offered by Chretien's Arthurian romances. In Middle English romances, place is precise and often of the real-world. The plausibility of space adds credence to the plausibility of the past-world that the romance is attempting to portray. *King Horn* and the *Romance of Horn* are different from other Middle English and Anglo-Norman romances of the pre-Conquest past in that they use false or mythical place-names rather than what has been assumed by all critics to be England (though neither text actually uses the word England). But *HC* uses so many real place-names, especially in northern England, that it starts to resemble an individual episode from a chronicle.

Early-twentieth-century critic William Henry Schofield, responding to the promise at the opening of *HC* of a story of "our elders þat were," writes that such a story is always interesting "not only because it tells a tale of an ever-pleasing type, but also because it purports to record native English tradition," a tradition "to which we also willingly respond."[27] The past in *HC* – a rather hazy English past – must have been as engaging and enjoyable for that romance's

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[24] Mills, 40-1.
[25] Field, 171.
[26] Field, 164.
[27] Mills, 1.

medieval audience as it was for an early-twentieth century critic like Schofield. The relatively little criticism that *HC* has received (compared with the *Romance of Horn* and *King Horn*) reflects Schofield's interests: determining how *HC* helps to clarify from whence (geographically, politically, paleographically) *King Horn*, the aesthetically superior romance (according to virtually every writer on the Horn-narratives) derives. *HC* has succeeded, then, in capturing the interest of its audience with its promise of a story of "our elders." But who precisely are "our" elders, for the *HC* audience?

The answer for *HC* is clear: we are English, and we live on an island that has always been and always will be England. This formulation is deceptively simple, however, since many texts in the Auchinleck manuscript consistently work at crafting the English people into a cohesive unit via an ancient though shared history. My third chapter on the Auchinleck romance *Of Arthur and Merlin* examines how that narrative effaces pre-Saxon Britain, rendering the hero Arthur English and his kingdom England. This chapter will continue to address the narratival, rhetorical, and structural strategies that Auchinleck employs to construct a version of English history free of cataclysmic ruptures, in favor of a heroic past led by audacious English hero-figures embodying timeless values of English culture.

The ethos and end-point of *HC* is centralized English power under a single king ruling with the unanimous consent of his nobles. However, unlike contemporary historical romances of England, the narrative of *HC* does not begin with England in ideal socio-political circumstances only to have that ideality attacked and ultimately restored at the narrative's end (*Havelok* is typical of this order-disorder-new order structure). Instead, *HC* is unique among Auchinleck historical romances of England (*Guy of Warwick, Of Arthur and Merlin, Bevis of Hampton, Sir Tristrem, King Richard*), in that it displays the process of England becoming a unified whole,

rather than starting the narrative with the polity of England already fully formed. As the romance opens, there are two kings of England, one in the north and one in the south. After promising a story of "our elders," *HC* goes on to depict England as ruled by

> kinges tvo
> (Hende* Haþeolf was one of þo)   **good/noble*
> þat weld al Ingelond;
> Fram Humber norþ þan walt he,
> Þat was into þe Wan See,
> Into his owhen hond. (7-12)

Horn's father, the "Hende" Hatheolf, rules the northern part of England that stretches from the Humber estuary to the Wan See (the Firth of Forth); it is twice described as Northumberland (1123, 1130). The second king of southern England is not named, but presumably it is Houlac, Rimnild's father, ruling "[f]er souþe in Inglond" (253). Thus at the beginning of *HC* England is not a united kingdom, but becomes one over the course of the romance via Horn's rightful inheritance of his father's throne and his marriage to Rimnild; in addition to a united English kingdom, Horn (and thereby England) is bequeathed the majority of Ireland over the course of the romance. Horn's success as a hero is ultimately based on two primary victories: first, the integral role he plays in creating a unified England; and second, his ability to extend English sovereignty beyond its domestic borders to Ireland and Wales.

A common exploit of English kings in Middle English romances was their acquisition and fortification of English dominion in foreign lands, especially Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. By celebrating English influence in British peripheral and foreign lands, these places became no longer foreign at all.[28] In addition to securing a large annual tribute of gold from the Welsh king

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[28] *Ywain and Gawain*, a fourteenth-century Middle English adaptation of Chrétien de Troyes' romance *Le Chevalier au Lion*, is typical in its praise of Arthur having "wan al Wales with his hand,/And

Finlac, Horn gains dominion over Ireland by defeating Malkan, an evil Irish king, becoming the

sovereign lord over Irish castles and towns:

> Finlac King him biþouȝt
> Hou he Horn ȝeld mouȝt
> To ȝif him his warisoun*;   *reward
> He tok Malkan Kinges lond
> & sesed it into Hornnes hond,
> Boþe tour* and toun.   *tower (of a castle)
> Erles, barouns, euerichon*,   *everyone
> In Irlond was þer non
> Þat no com to his somoun. (808-16) *summon/beck and call

A knight being offered gifts of land and "gold and fe" (724) is standard fare for medieval

romances, but the knight's acceptance of these gifts is quite rare. (One of the more distressing

aspects of *Guy of Warwick* for a modern reader is Guy's repeated refusal of mountains of riches.)

By accepting Finlak's gifts of wealth in Wales and land in Ireland, Horn becomes the sovereign

lord of castles and towns and the high king of all Irish people, from commoners ("euerichon") to

"erles" and "barouns." The romance ensures that when he becomes the first king to rule all of

England at the end of the narrative, Horn will be paid homage by the Irish and Welsh nobility

and England will have a solid foothold on Irish land. *HC*'s concern with establishing English

power throughout the British Isles distinguishes it from the earlier Horn-narratives, *King Horn*

and the *Romance of Horn*, which are not explicitly about England and where Horn does not

expand his territory. The expansion of Horn's sovereignty is exclusive to *HC* – the episode in

which Finlak grants Horn all of Malkan's Irish lands does not appear in either the *Romance of*

Horn or *King Horn* – and this expansion of land and power represents *HC*'s larger interests in

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al Scotland." See *Ywain and Gawain*, ed. Stephen H.A. Shepherd, in *Middle English Romances: A Norton*
Critical Edition (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1995), ll. 8-9.

creating what Matthew Holford has called a "national origin story."[29] Rather than starting the "story of the nation" *in medias res* as in other Middle English pre-conquest romances, in *HC* England gradually emerges as a unified kingdom with Horn as its sole sovereign, drawing our attention to the national implications of the narrative by consistently referring to England throughout the romance (9, 50, 253, 292, 406, 455, 848).[30] According to Holford, *HC* "creates an idiosyncratic narrative about English history, identity, and power within the British Isles," giving an unusually focused account of the cooperation of king and people.[31] Horn's reward of Malkan's Irish territory replaces a "proude" (153) king who invades England and acts "wiþ wretþe" (223) with a noble, sophisticated Englishman who brings courtly manners to the land. Before Malkan's defeat at the hands of Horn, it is Finlak alone who stands against Malkan in all Ireland: "In Yrlond was þer nan/þat alle þai be to Malkan gan,/So Michel was his pouste" (730-2), so that when Horn is given his "warisoun" of Malkan's territory, along with that land comes the consent of all Irish people and an assurance of English sovereignty across Ireland.

Horn ultimately fulfills all three essential parts of Rees Davies' formula for the success of the anglicization of the British Isles: "castle, colonization, and Englishness."[32] According to Davies, English dominion was established and extended throughout the British Isles in the later Middle Ages through a process of political, martial, and cultural domination, and anglicization would have been much more difficult, if not impossible, without any one of these three features. The Irish "tour" that Horn becomes master over is the site of domination and conquest; according to Davies, "domination, power, and aggression revolved very considerably around the

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[29] Holford, "History and Politics," 156.

[30] For a discussion of *HC*'s connections with thirteenth- and fourteenth-century politics, especially with the policies of Edward I, see Holford, "History and Politics," 149-168.

[31] Holford, "History and Politics," 168.

[32] R.R. Davies, *The First English Empire: Power and Identities in the British Isles, 1093-1343* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 148.

castle and castle-owners," and the castle brought "order, peace, and stability," converting conquest into lordship.[33] Thus Horn's possession of Irish land, towns, and castles reflects what Davies terms the anglicization of the Isles – "the penetration of English peoples, institutions, norms, and culture (broadly defined) into the other, non-English parts of the British Isles." [34] This was a process that was well established by the time of *HC*'s composition. By the time the narrative ends, Horn is either the sovereign over or the heir to all of southern England and Ireland, and at the point when the last lines of the romance go missing, Horn is on his way to win back his father's usurped Northumbrian kingdom. Referring to the kingdom Horn will win back in Northumberland, the phrase "tour and toun" is repeated (1134), underscoring the re-colonization of northern England that Horn will enact. The romance makes it clear that Horn will serve as the sole king of England and the high king of Ireland, uniting an England that is divided at the beginning of the poem and bringing Ireland into its sovereign scope.

In addition to English political dominion, the third aspect of Davies' formula, cultural anglicization of Wales and Ireland, is instituted by the very presence of Horn in those lands. From boyhood, Horn and his companions are trained in noble manners and culture, and Horn, like any romance knight worth his salt, becomes the flower of English chivalry. As a youth in England Horn is schooled in noble pursuits of leisure:

> Harpe and romaunce he radde ariȝt:
> Of al gle he hadde insiȝt,
> þat in lond ware" (286-8)

When he arrives in Wales, after displaying his mastery of chivalric games at a tournament, Horn is praised by a Welsh knight as being the mightiest and the most refined knight in all the Isles.

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[33] R.R. Davies, *Domination and Conquest: The Experience of Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, 1100-1300* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 40-1.

[34] R.R. Davies, *The First English Empire*, 143.

As Horn defeats the Welsh at their own "lawe" (custom, 618) of jousting to prove one's valor, he is told that

> In Walis lond is Þer nan
> Man ymade of flesche no ban
> Oȝain Þe may stand (637-9)

As he conquers lands outside England, Horn takes his superior English culture and knightly prowess with him. As in *Ywain and Gawain*, which praises Arthur's conquering of Scotland and Wales above all his other deeds, *HC* implicitly portrays its hero-knight as a new Arthur, a new Brutus, and as a worthy predecessor to Edward I (r. 1272-1307).[35] *HC* exhibits the proclivity of Middle English romances (as well as chronicles) to conflate and draw parallels between mythical, historical, and contemporary rulers, justifying and propounding English imperial ambitions across time and space by making actual sovereigns like Edward I resemble romance heroes like Horn, and vice versa. Along with other thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Middle English historical romances, *HC* was the vehicle driving Englishness from the present to the past and back again.

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[35] The *Liber Regum Anglie* (also known as the *Short Metrical Chronicle*) praises Edward I, "Þat Brut," for being a "wel duhti kniȝt" who "held Jnglond to riȝt" for having "wan to his hond/Inglond, Wales, and Scottlond." For the *Liber Regum Anglie* it is Edward's ability to conquer and subdue the Isles as a whole, Ireland notwithstanding, which renders him a new Brutus. Similarly, Horn is praised for his imperial triumphs and his ability to unite England into one kingdom. See *An Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle*, ed. Eward Zettl, Early English Text Society no. 196 (London: Oxford University Press, 1935), ll. 2309-12.

5.3   THE DANES IN *HORN CHILDE*

HC presents itself as a retelling of historical events that actually happened at some point in the distant past among "our elders" who once lived in England. The romance stretches English dominion across time ("our elders") and space (the unification of England under Horn and the growth of English power across Wales and Ireland). In order to develop a plausible historical milieu, *HC* includes an element that was certain to make it seem like genuine history to its audience: invading Danes. In the earlier Horn-narratives *King Horn* and the Anglo-Norman *Romance of Horn*, the central adversary are Saracens, who constantly invade Horn's mythical kingdom of Suddene. *HC*, however, changes the Saracens to Danes because they had greater national currency than Saracens; they had become popular symbols of wrongful, violent invasions and their ultimate defeat was a symbol of English strength. Due to the popularity of historical romances that adapted and were influenced by chronicle material, audiences had come to accept the Danes as the primary enemy of England's past, and the composer of *HC*, a skilled adapter of popular romance tropes and themes, seems to have been well aware of the usefulness of Danes in validating English supremacy and self-determination.

When the Danes appear on English shores in *HC*, they are quite literally counter-productive, bringing all the livestock they can find back to their ships along with other plunder. Although we are told the Danish "here" (invading army, 49) descends upon England "forto were" (to make war, 50), a portion of that war plan apparently includes robbing England of its animals:

> Wiþ yren hates, scheld, & spere,
> Alle her pray* to schip þai bere   *plunder*
> In Clifland bi Teseside.
> Schepe & nete* to schip þai brouȝt   *sheep and cattle*

       & al þat þai haue mouȝt (52-6)

When the battle is won and the "Danis men were al slan" (80), Haþeolf replaces bondmen's sheep and cattle that were slain by the Danes, making restitutions to his soldiers by dubbing sixty new knights and to his poorer subjects by returning their livelihood to them. Instead of robbing the English land of its economic well being, the Danes ultimately leave their bones by St. Sibyl's Church to serve as reminders of English triumph.

In the three Auchinleck romances I examine in my dissertation – *Guy of Warwick*, *Of Arthur and Merlin*, and *HC* – source-material is either re-constructed to include the Danes (*Arthur and Merlin* and *HC*) or the romance is a profound reworking of contemporary historical materials anachronistically pitting an Anglo-Norman knight against the Danes (*Guy*). In each of these romances, the Danes invade without a clear motive beyond destruction and the sheer joy of making war. Like the Saracens in chansons de geste,[36] the Danes are pitted against the English in order to make English heroes stand out as valiant saviors of a nation. But, unlike the Saracens against the French in a chanson de geste like the *Chanson de Roland*, the Danes did actually invade England over a period of roughly two centuries, and not just for the sake of plunder and, quoting *HC*, "forto were" (to make war, 50). Linguists and place-names scholars were the first to argue for Scandinavian settlement in England on a massive scale, as evidenced by the first published volume of the English Place-Names Society in 1924, which used toponymic evidence

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[36] Or like the Saracens in Middle English romances adapted from French chansons de geste. One such romance is the Auchinleck *Otuel a Kniȝt* (c. 1330), an early version of what would nearly three centuries later become *Othello*. *Otuel* was adapted from the French *Otinel*, named for a Saracen messenger who is induced to seek out Christian love and marriage. *Otuel a Kniȝt* opens:

    Of bolde batailles ich wole ȝou telle
    Þat was sumtime bitwene
    Cristine men and Sarrazins kene (ll. 4-6)

    See http://www.nls.uk/auchinleck/mss/otuel.html

to show the extent of settler personal and place-names in Anglo-Saxon England. Their views were contested in the 1950s by R.H.C. Davis, who argued that, like the Normans after their conquest, a small number of Danes launched a new trend in naming. However, more recent archeological research, such as the recovery of large amounts of Scandinavian-style metalwork in eastern England, has supported earlier evidence of mass settlement.[37]

While there is still some debate over the extent of Scandinavian settlement in England, recent scholarship has suggested that they settled in very large numbers in the eastern and northern parts of England. Clearly there were enough Danes settled in England by the turn of the millennium to prompt Archbishop Wulfstan II of York to coin in c. 1008 the phrase *Dena lagu*, or Danelaw (literally, "the law of the Danes"), to distinguish the legal traditions of northern and eastern England from those of Mercia and Wessex.[38] Wulfstan had to be diplomatic about legislating what was essentially a divided kingdom, and as Archbishop he legislated under both the English king Aethelred II, who fled to Normandy in late 1013 after being routed by the Danish Swein Forkbeard, and under Cnut, Swein's son. But Wulfstan was more than diplomatic; he was a shrewd manipulator of the past. In the so-called "Laws of Edward and Guthrum," which purported to be an agreement made between Alfred, Edward the Elder, and the Viking war-leader Gurthrum but was actually a forgery drawn up by Wulfstan himself, the Archbishop crafted a nostalgic image of the days "when the English and the Danes unreservedly entered into

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[37] For a general discussion, see D.M. Hadley, *The Vikings in England: Settlement, Society, and Culture* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2006), 1-27. See also D.M. Hadley, *The Northern Danelaw: Its Social Structure, c. 800-1100* (London: Leicester University Press, 2000); M.K. Lawson, *Cnut: The Danes in England in the Early Eleventh Century* (London: Longman, 1993); Gwyn Jones, *A History of the Vikings*, rev. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), esp. 421-24; Otto Jespersen, *Growth and Structure of the English Language*, 10th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 60-77.

[38] D.M. Hadley, *Vikings in England*, 69.

relationships of peace and friendship."[39] Wulfstan was attempting to paint of picture of England as a place where the laws could accommodate both Danish England and English England into one cohesive whole. It apparently worked; when Cnut ascended the throne in 1016, he declared that the laws of Edgar would be observed, and the stability of England's legal traditions was largely unaffected.

Wulfstan's concept of the Danelaw does not necessarily imply a rupture between Danish England and English England, but rather recognition of and even a conciliatory nod to recognizing the disparate regional legal traditions of northern and eastern England from southern England. The archbishop was clearly trying to incorporate the descendents of the Danish settlers into the larger English polity by allowing the region some semblance of legal autonomy. Historians have often assumed that for a long time after the Danish invasions and settlement in England, which occurred from the late-eighth through the eleventh centuries, the Danes were considered to be a distinct ethnic group, and distinctions between Danish, West Saxon, and Mercian law continued into the twelfth century, so that those living under Danish law would probably have thought of themselves as more Danish than English. But Susan Reynolds has argued that the distinctions between the Danish and English might have been much less significant than previous historians have assumed, due to social assimilation, Christianity, and similarity of customs and languages between Old Norse and English, factors that would have made the two peoples difficult to distinguish soon after settlement. According to Reynolds, "By the end of the [tenth] century most subjects of the *rex Anglorum* probably felt themselves to be

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[39] Dorothy Whitelock, "Wulfstan and the so-called Laws of Edward and Guthrum," *EHR* 56 (1941): 1-21; quoted in D.M. Hadley, *Vikings in England*, 69.

as a matter of course part of the *Anglica natio* which constituted its kingdom."[40] Gwyn Jones corroborates Reynolds' position, arguing that after the Danes were largely subdued by the strong king Edgar (whose reign started in c. 959), they were no longer "the alien people of a conquered province, but fellow subjects with the English of an English king."[41] They served the English monarchy in war and submitted to lay and ecclesiastical lords. Probably driven by self-interest – desiring to prosper economically and to discourage attacks from the king – the Danish settlers' loyalty was rewarded by the English crown with "an ungrudging recognition of Danish law and custom, and the right to manage regional affairs in their own way."[42] By the time Swein ascended the English throne in 1016, it would likely have been impossible to distinguish between those of English and those of Danish descent. The Danes in the north "had become firmly wedded to indigenous society," and there are more regional differences than ethnic ones by the late-tenth and early-eleventh centuries.[43] In short, there is reason to doubt assumptions that the northern English maintained a Danish identity well into the eleventh century. Thus it is possible to see Wulfstan's distinction between the Danelaw and areas under English law not so much as a delineation between antagonistic or merely heterogeneous cultures or ethnicities but as a conciliatory gesture recognizing the existence of regional legal traditions that were not always in line with the centralized legal traditions of the crown in London.

The point here, in regards to *HC*, is that the romance, presumably a product of the North due to its intimate familiarity with Yorkshire place-names, evinces little trace of any Danish strains in its rendering of the Horn-story. The missing lines at the end of the romance, in which

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[40] Susan Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe, 900-1300* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 263.
[41] Gwyn Jones, *History*, 355.
[42] Jones, 355.
[43] D.M. Hadley, *The Northern Danelaw*, 305.

Horn presumably returns to Northumberland to win back his father's realm from an earl named Thorbrond, promise to remove the Danes from England once and for all. Thorbrond is a Scandinavian name;[44] keeping with the literary characteristics of Danes as treacherous usurpers, it was Thorbrond who "sesed in his hand" (244) the Northumbrian throne after Horn's father Haþeolf is killed in battle. Though it is of course impossible to know what those missing lines might reveal, Horn's mission to "no man spare/To winne al þat his fader ware" (1132-3) will clearly unite northern and southern England as a single kingdom ruled by English kings, without the threat of Danish usurpers. Yet, traces of Scandinavian culture subsist in England, even as the Scandinavian aspects of those traces are forgotten. Before Horn departs England for Wales, Rimnild gives him a sword named Bitterfer that "is þe make of Miming/Of al swerdes it is king/& Weland it wrouȝt" (400-2). Weland (or Wayland) is a legendary blacksmith known in Old Norse mythology as Völundr, a master smith with supernatural skills.[45] Weland appears in the Anglo-Saxon poems *Deor*, *Waldere*, and *Beowulf* as well as some Germanic poetry and the *Poetic Edda*, a thirteenth-century collection of Old Norse poems concerning mythological and heroic legends. Miming (or Mimung) is a sword that Weland was said to have forged, and it appears in two Norse sagas, *Karlamagnus Saga* and *Thidreksaga*.[46] Thus *HC* appears to have absorbed aspects of Scandinavian culture and mythology while employing the Danes as characteristically uncivilized.

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[44] In Simeon of Durham's *Gesta regum Anglorum* (ca. 1129), known especially for its treatment of the northern provinces and the kingdom of Northumbria, a Danish warrior Thorbrand kills the Bamburgh earl Uchtraed with the consent of Cnut. See Simeon of Durham, *A History of the Kings of England*, trans. J. Stephenson (Lampeter, Wales: Llanerch Enterprises, 1987).

[45] Jennifer Westwood, *Albion: A Guide to Legendary Britain* (London: Grafton, 1992), 278-83.

[46] See M.K. Lawson, *Cnut: The Danes in England in the Early Eleventh Century* (London: Longman, 1993), 10.

If recognition of the Danelaw was not necessarily evidence of a separate and distinct people living among the native English, but merely recognition of differences between regional traditions and customs, then Henry of Huntingdon's claim that the Danes, after harrying the land, simply disappeared (*deperierunt*) implies not a mysterious vanishing but, more prosaically, social and political integration.[47] Scandinavians who settled in England, possibly in very large numbers, became English by submitting to the authority of the crown, and once they submitted and integrated, a distinct Anglo-Danish cultural identity was quickly subsumed by a larger English national identity. The defeat of the Danes in Auchinleck historical-romances was not evidence of residual English "folk memory" of their historical enemies-cum-neighbors but a conscious construction of the "Danes" as a marker of an historical enemy of England that had to be defeated. Even in a story like *HC*, presumably from Yorkshire where many Danes had settled,[48] the Danes are the enemy. This is not because the English "natives" there retained memories of the distant past, but because the Danes who settled in England were brought into the polity and came to see themselves as native English. By the mid-fourteenth century, romances and chronicles that consistently portrayed the Danes as heathen wrongdoers emanated out of a London-centered culture that was quickly gaining cultural prestige throughout the kingdom. The Danes, then, had developed into a literary model.

Three centuries after Wulfstan's coining of the Danelaw, regional difference in England was still an important part of political, cultural, and social life in fourteenth-century England. Turville-Petre notes that "within England there were marked regional differences, and for many purposes the country could still be divided at the Humber," with the northern territory presided

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[47] Henry of Huntingdon, 15.
[48] See Alfred P. Smyth, *Scandinavian York and Dublin: The History and Archeology of Two Related Viking Kingdoms* (Dublin: Irish Academic, 1987).

over by powerful lords in shifting allegiances to the crown, whose authority in the region was far from secure.[49] Telling a story about "kinges tvo" (7) whose kingdoms are divided at the Humber, and the ultimate union between these northern and southern kingdoms under Horn, *HC*'s narrative reflects the union of northern and southern England under King Edgar (r. 959-975). The two kingdoms of Hatheolf in the north and Houlac in the south mirror the political division of England prior to the unification of Northumbria with Southern England that occurred under Edgar.[50] Before Edgar, already king of both Mercia and Wessex, succeeded his brother to the crown of Northumbria, there were in fact two kings of England divided by the Humber. In his *Estoire des Engleis* (ca. 1130s), Gaimar spoke of Edgar as holding the land like "an emperor…He alone ruled over all the kings. And over the Scots and the Welsh. Never since Arthur had any king such power."[51] For Robert Rouse, the union of the two kingdoms by Horn tells the history, in the guise of romance, of Northumbria's incorporation into post-conquest England, re-envisaging "King Edgar's unification of England in a manner attractive to post-conquest readers of romance."[52]

HC nationalizes the land; rather than seeing the history of the British Isles as a succession of competing peoples vying for power and dominance (as in Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia*), for *HC* the history of the land itself is the history of the English, so that any group that settles in the land is rendered English while the land itself – the nation – perseveres intact. A key part of *HC*'s "project" – that is, nationalizing the land and justifying English dominance of the Isles – is accomplished by appropriating geography and history into a cohesive English whole. The

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[49] Turville-Petre, *England the Nation: Language, Literature, and National Identity, 1290-1340* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 7.
[50] Robert Allen Rouse, *The Idea of Anglo-Saxon England in Middle English Romance* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2005), 66.
[51] Gaimar, *L'Estoire des Engleis*, ll. 3561-7, quoted in R.R. Davies, *The First English Empire,* 10.
[52] Rouse, 68.

ruptures that characterize England's history for a historian like Henry of Huntingdon are effaced by *HC*, so that the history of England becomes a history of the land rather than a history of disparate races vying for dominance. According to Rouse,

> The materializing and memorializing function of geographical place within the [Auchinleck] romances operates to incorporate these constructions of Anglo-Saxon 'pasts' into the English historical consciousness, re-mapping the fourteenth century world in a manner that emphasizes both the importance of, and continuity with, the pre-conquest period. In these romances the Anglo-Saxon past can be seen to operate as an important stage for the articulation of English history and English values.[53]

The settlement of the Danes in England would probably have been of little interest to the composer of *HC*, and one of the key aspects to emphasizing "the importance of, and continuity with, the pre-conquest period" in *HC* is the definitive separation between the English, the Danes, and the "evil" Irish led by Malkan. Defending the kingdom from the invasions, and even the mere influence, of all non-English is essential to the ethos of *HC*. After the Danish invasion, Hatheolf makes Horn's companions swear their fealty, a contract they can prove by defending the kingdom from the "outlondis" (138, 168), or foreigners. According to the *Middle English Dictionary*, this is the first instance of the use of such a word in English to describe the non-English, and it becomes more common in fifteenth-century chronicles (s.v. "outlond"). In *HC*, the highest ideal a knight could hope to attain is defending against the "outlondis." Mustering all the freely born English when the three Irish kings led by Malkan invade, Hatheolf declares that it is

> Better manly to be slayn
> Þan long to liue in sorwe & pain,
> Oȝain outlondis Þede*.   *people

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[53] Rouse, 68.

Living under the yoke of foreign forces is shameful in *HC*, and the fear and disgrace engendered by the possibility of non-native sovereigns and the anxiety about invaders suggests strong feelings of patriotism in *HC*, a quality that is not to be found in the earlier *King Horn* and the *Romance of Horn*. What can be positively and categorically said about the Danes in *HC* is that they are non-native and they are war mongering. Other than being belligerent foreigners, the Danes are not physically, culturally, or socially distinguished from the Irish or the English in *HC*. They are simply the "outlondis" people; material differences between the Danes and the English are virtually non-existent, and where they appear they are insignificant. The Danes are described as bearing "yren hattes, scheld, & spere" (52), distinguishing them from the English who wear "helme on heued & brini* briȝt" (*coats of mail, 64). While spears were a common Viking weapon and most Vikings also possessed a helmet and a shield (though not a mail shirt),[54] this difference in arms and armor is morally neutral. Ultimately, the Danes' episode in *HC* appears sober, unsentimental, and mostly unembellished with the typical sensationalism of depictions of warfare in medieval romance.[55] The lack of distinguishing characteristics of the Danes in *HC* is likely due to the probability that the composer had few ideas about them beyond what he had read (or heard) in other literary works.

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[54] Angus Konstam, *Historical Atlas of the Viking World* (New York: Checkmark Books, 2002), 120-1.

[55] For example, Chrétien de Troyes relishes the gory fine points of warfare, especially hand-to-hand combat. See *Erec and Enide*: "The giants had no spears, shields, sharp swords, or lances, but only clubs, and both were holding whips. They had struck and beaten the knight so badly that they had already cut the flesh on his back to the very bone. The blood ran down his sides and hips so that the nag was covered in blood even under its belly…For all their arrogant threats [Erec] did not fear either of them, but struck the first in the eye. The blow went through the brain so that brains and blood spurted out at the back of his neck. He fell dead. His heart stopped…[Erec] struck him through his skull and split him down as far as the saddlebows. His guts spilled out along the ground, and his body, split into two halves, fell its full length." *The Complete Romances of Chretien de Troyes*, trans. David Staines (Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press, 1990), 55-6.

The Danes in *HC* are the other of the English only insofar as they oppose Christian virtue; if the other means the cultural, theological opposite, the unfamiliar, or the demonization of an inferior group, then the Danes cannot be considered the other in *HC*. Instead, they are an existential threat to the English polity, narratival icons in the national story this particular romance as well as the other Auchinleck historical romances strive to tell. There would have been little compelling motivation for a fourteenth-century English writer to demonize a group of people and ostracize them as the other who had no bearing on contemporary English culture and politics, and who had not been the primary national threat for at least three centuries. In *King Horn* and the *Romance of Horn*, the "othering" of the Saracens, non-Christian enemies of the East, would have had Crusading currency.[56] In *King Horn*, the *Romance of Horn*, and in any number of medieval romances that take place in the Middle East or Asia, the Saracens were drawn as the antithesis of the West. According to Rouse, this antithesis was based on "the Saracen Other" as "constructed through contrasting archetypes of religion, honour, and physical appearance." The simplification of the Saracens into a binary paradigm of good against evil obscures the complexities of identity formation. Rouse writes, "By adhering to the binary paradigm of Christian as good and Saracen as evil, the oppositional model of identity formation produces a construction of identity that, while reductive, allows a clearer and less problematic definition of self and nation."[57] Though their honor is impugned by their stealing of "[s]chepe and nete*" (*sheep and cattle, 55) and "al Þat Þai haue mouȝt" (56), the Danes are not distinguished from the English by their religion or physical appearance. The sole physical

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[56] While fervor for crusading in the Holy Land was gradually declining, according to Christopher Tyerman crusading "in fourteenth-century England was as habitual as it had been in the thirteenth"; even if increasingly fewer knights and soldiers were actually making the crusade, the ideal of crusading against heathens continued to play a significant role in the popular imagination. See Tyerman, *England and the Crusades, 1095-1588* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 259-301.

[57] Rouse, 76.

description in the romance is of Horn, who, as a proper medieval hero, enjoys unrivaled beauty and strength: "Michel* he was & wele ymaked,/As white as milke he was naked" (*mighty, 295-6). But the Danes did not need to be made the other by *HC*; they would probably have been recognized as figures of otherness through post-conquest histories and romances of England, which had solidified the trope of invading Danes as a literary tradition.

5.4   THE DANES AS A LITERARY PHENOMENON

In 1990, Diane Speed attempted to significantly change the tone of Horn-scholarship.[58] Contrary to what many late-nineteenth and twentieth century scholars had argued (or assumed), Speed contended that the invading Saracens in *King Horn* are not really just Vikings disguised as Muslim Saracens, but that the Saracens are a purely literary phenomenon emanating directly from Anglo-Norman and continental French chansons de geste traditions, based on representations that by the mid-late-thirteenth century had become "popular" and conventional.[59] For Speed, the Saracens of *King Horn* had no foundation in historical memory, but instead are based on contemporary literary depictions of Saracens. This essentially reversed a century of Horn scholarship that attempted to set the story of *King Horn* in pre-conquest England and which, on the whole, tried to show the narrative as based on "folk-memory" of Viking invasions. Since the only non-Christian invaders of pre-Conquest England after the Saxons were

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[58] Diane Speed, "The Saracens of *King Horn*," *Speculum* 65 (July 1990): 564-595.
[59] Speed's argument is largely based on linguistic and historico-literary factors, as she shows the close kinship between *King Horn* and certain chansons de geste traditions. Though there is a generally low instance of words of French origin in the romance, descriptions of the Saracens rely heavily on French expressions rather than English ones. For instance, words to describe the Saracens in *King Horn* such as "payn" (pagan) and "painime" (pagandom) are of French origin and are used extensively in chansons de geste of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. See Speed, 573.

Scandinavians, it has been assumed by many Horn-scholars that the Saracens in *King Horn* must be identified as Scandinavian raiders in disguise. For Speed, this "interpretation is often accepted as a matter of course and repeated without scrutiny."[60]

Why, then, have so many scholars assumed and "repeated without scrutiny" the notion that the Saracens in *King Horn* must be costumed Scandinavians? This question begs a second, more central problem for this chapter: Why does *HC* essentially make the same assumption that modern critics have made – that the Saracens are (or can easily be made into) Scandinavians (and Irishmen, in *HC*'s case)? Regarding the first question, Pope's response might be straightforward enough: it is because, on the one hand, the invaders are sea-raiders, and there could have been no memory or experience with Muslim raiders in the British Isles; and on the other hand, Pope, along with a majority of Horn-scholarship, focuses on the provenance of personal names and place names. Such arguments regarding the provenance of names in the Horn-narratives are quite exhaustive, while unfortunately they are also rather unhelpful to determining the story's origins. In short, Pope argues that the *Romance of Horn*'s personal names correspond to place names. Horn's pedigree and court in Suddene are characterized by Germanic names (Silauf, Baderof, Goldeburc); the invading pagans have Scandinavian names (Gudolf, Egolf, Gudbrand, Rodmund); most of the minor personages at the Breton court have French names (Bertin, Godefrei, Jocerand); and in Ireland, most bear Germanic or Norse names.[61] The chief problem with placing too much weight on the origin and significance of medieval personal names, as Walter French notes in his essays on *King Horn*, is that the country of origin of personal names in medieval texts is usually untraceable, because medieval European names that originated in one

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[60] Speed, 565.
[61] Pope, 2:19.

country would often migrate to others.[62] While it is often possible to trace a name back to its ultimate textual source, if a name can be shown to be in usage among the English, Danes, and French, the fact that the name in one instance is spelled in an English fashion is not decisive proof that it was originally an English name.

The "Danish" interpretation of the Saracens in *King Horn* was not relegated to any particular period of Horn-scholarship, but was reiterated throughout the last century by a broad cross-section of critics. As Speed offers a number of examples of this position, two examples will suffice here, one early and one relatively recent.[63] In his 1901 single edition of the three extant *King Horn* manuscripts,[64] Joseph Hall is very clear that *King Horn* "is a story of the Danish raids on the south coast of England."[65] For Hall, *King Horn*, produced in southern England, reflects events that actually took place in southwest England during the Anglo-Saxon conquest; ultimately, the "original" source-story was a British tradition in which the Cornish, aided by the Irish, temporarily stopped the westward advancement of Anglo-Saxon forces. The story, in Hall's view, was later changed by an anonymous English poet (whose version has been lost) to reflect the resistance of his countrymen against invading Danes. It was then recovered at a much later date "under the impulse of the rising spirit of the English people recovering from the Norman Conquest" and is thus part of the same "literary expression" as the outlaw and exile

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[62] Walter H. French, *Essays on* King Horn (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1940). See his chapter on the evidence of the names in the Horn-narratives, 117-46. French provides a useful, national breakdown of the names in the three romance-versions of Horn.

[63] Speed points to four critics since the 1960s that have rehashed the "Danish" interpretation. Charles W. Dunn in 1967: "The setting…seems to reflect the period of Viking raids in Britain"; Thomas J. Garbáty in 1984: " The sea raiders were probably originally Danes"; and Beatrice White and Norman Daniel, as quoted above.

[64] The three *King Horn* manuscripts are Cambridge University Library MS Gg.4.27.2, British Library MS Harley 2253, and Bodleian Library MS Laud Misc. 108.

[65] Joseph A. Hall, Introduction to *King Horn: A Middle English Romance*, ed. Joseph Hall (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901), liv-lv.

stories of the *Gesta Herwardi*, *Fulk Fitzwarin*, and the Robin Hood tradition. According to Hall, the origin of the Horn-narratives can be placed as far back as the English Conquest in the early-fifth century, where actual events in southwestern Britain resulted in the southern-produced *King Horn*. The story was then carried north about the time when Norsemen teamed up with the Irish to harry northern England (roughly the ninth century), which later resulted in the northern-produced *HC*, and the Anglo-Norman *Romance of Horn* was based on both the northern and southern traditions, embellished with the atmosphere of a French chivalric romance.[66] What Hall's analysis implies is that both the English versions of the Horn-narrative, *King Horn* and *HC*, are reflections of lost history; that they are records of memories of past conflicts and battles ultimately based on events that had happened between four hundred to eight hundred years earlier. Thus for Hall the Horn-narrative shape shifts to serve three separate patriotic impulses: the Britons against the English, the English against the Danes, and the English against the Normans. There is very little, if any, direct evidence for Hall's speculations. As a result, Speed has called Hall's contention that *King Horn* was originally a story set during the pagan English invasions of Britain and then adapted later to serve the interests of Christian England against pagan Scandinavians "too remote to discuss in any useful way."[67] Nevertheless, critics as recent as Norman Daniel in 1984 have maintained the possibility of the Saracens in *King Horn* as Danes in disguise. Daniel claims, without clarification, that the "Vikings are Saracens…in *King Horn*," and Beatrice White writes without qualification that in *King Horn* "the Saracens are common-or-garden Viking marauders."[68]

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[66] Hall, liv.
[67] Speed, 566, n5.
[68] Norman Daniel, *Heroes and Saracens: An Interpretation of the* Chansons de Geste (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1984), 290, n51; Beatrice White, "Saracens and Crusaders: from Fact to

The "Danish" interpretation is not limited to *King Horn*. Judith Weiss has written that the *Romance of Horn* "probably reflects the Viking raids on Britain in the eight to tenth centuries, even though in the poem these raiders are said to come from Africa."[69] In her two-volume edition of the twelfth-century Anglo-Norman *Romance of Horn*, Mildred K. Pope writes that the main conflict of this version is the conflict between Christian and pagan, "a conflict in which the influence of the Danish invasions is very apparent," since the Saracens are sea-borne pirates in whom "lust of conquest and religion are twin motives."[70] Schofield agrees with Pope, taking for granted that in the *Romance of Horn*, composed during a crusading epoch, "we are not surprised to have heathen Vikings envisaged by the French as pagan Saracens, or their leaders as giants"; in a surprising and unverifiable twist, Schofield goes so far as to claim that the original Horn-story was a Norse saga, and though Horn is dressed in the accoutrements of romance, he nonetheless remains "an adventurous Norse youth who had experiences similar to those of Gunnlaug and Olaf in the West," referring to Gunnlaug of *Gunnlaug's Saga* and Olaf of the *Laexdala Saga*, both of whom sail to England and Ireland.[71] Beyond the narrative similarity of sailing to the British Isles, there is little to no evidence for Schofield's claim and it did not enter the critical discourse.

Perhaps the foremost aspect of the *Romance of Horn* and *King Horn* that has attracted commentary is the largely mythical geography of the texts, which has led many critics to guess at the real-world counterparts of the two romances' imaginary places. Two of the Horn-narratives

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Allegory," in *Medieval Literature and Civilization*: *Studies in Memory of G.N. Garmondsway*, ed. D.A. Pearsall and R.A. Waldron (London: The Athlone Press, 1969), 171.
   [69] Judith Weiss, Introduction to *The Birth of Romance in England: Four Twelfth-Century Romances in the French of England*, trans. Judith Weiss (Tempe, AZ: ACMRS, 2009), 3.
   [70] Thomas, *The Romance of Horn*, ed. Mildred K. Pope, Anglo-Norman Texts 9-10, 12-13, 2 vols. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell for ANTS, 1955, 1964), 2:8.
   [71] Schofield, 44-7.

(*Romance of Horn*, *King Horn*) have three geographical settings: Horn's kingdom, the kingdom to which he is first exiled, and a second place of exile after being chased out of the first. In *Romance of Horn* and *King Horn*, the first setting, Horn's kingdom, is named Suddene, which is not a real-world place, though many suggestions have been put forth as to its real-world analogue[72]; the second setting is Westernesse in *King Horn* (a poetical invention) and Brittany in *Romance of Horn*; and the third is Ireland (*King Horn*) and Westir (*Romance of Horn*). By suggesting real-world analogues in the British Isles that had seen their share of Scandinavian raiders for the poetical inventions of Suddene and Westernesse, *King Horn* and *Romance of Horn* are easily, even logically, turned into reflections of an Anglo-Saxon past, even though neither of them mentions the words "English" or "England" at all.

No such guesswork applies to *HC*, however; in *HC*, not only are all of the geographical names real-world places, the redactor actually adds a number of detailed geographical touches so as to make the romance give the impression of "perceived historicity," borrowing Field's phrase.[73] There are actually four rather than three settings in *HC*. They are northern England (Hatheolf's/Horn's kingdom), southern England (Houlac's/Rimnild's kingdom to which he is exiled), Snowdonia in Wales (Finlak's kingdom, Horn's second exile), and Ireland (where Horn helps Finlak's son Elidan defeat other Irish forces). England is split in two at the beginning of the poem: northern England, ruled by Hatheolf, and southern England, ruled by Houlac. By the end

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[72] Throughout the earlier part of the twentieth century many critics, especially Germans, were content to place Suddene as South Denmark, the same region from which Beowulf comes; but both Hall and McKnight disagree, claiming that Suddene is somewhere on the south coast of England. Hall argues for South Damnonii, or Cornwall, but does not have solid evidence. McKnight claims it is situated on the south coast of England. Pope argued in favor of South Devon in southwestern England based on the narratival evidence that Horn's ship blows by a wind coming from the northwest to Brittany, and on geographical points mentioned at the end of the poem. Schofield argues for the Isle of Man. See Schofield, 5-6, 26; Hall, lv; McKnight, xix; Pope, 2:4.

[73] Field, "Romance as History, History as Romance," in *Romance in Medieval England*, ed. Maldwyn Mills, Jennifer Fellows, and Carol Meale (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1991), 171.

of the poem, they are united with Horn as the sole sovereign. Between *King Horn* and *HC* there is a shift to real-world place-names from imagined places, suggesting the *HC* composer's desire to locate the narrative chronologically and geographically along the timeline of England's past; moreover, not only does *King Horn* not use real-world names, it never once mentions England, and simply because the romance is composed in English does not necessarily imply that it is set in England. Ultimately, *King Horn* evinces no trace of English patriotism whatsoever.[74] The *HC* poet, however, attempts to combine "local color and patriotic feeling"[75] with the motifs and style of contemporary romance.

Speed contends that the Saracens in *King Horn* stem (whether directly, via the *King Horn* composer's familiarity with the late-twelfth century Anglo-Norman *Romance of Horn*, or indirectly, through a lost intermediary-Horn text) from representations of Muslim Saracens in the chanson de geste tradition, laying significant doubt on the prospect of the Saracens as "really just" Scandinavians.[76] Speed partly bases her argument against Saracens as Scandinavians in *King Horn* on the pagans' particular motives for destroying Suddene and Westernesse. In *King Horn*, the Saracens explicitly wish to destroy Christianity and Christians, forcibly converting Christians or killing them if they resist. Speed contends that Scandinavians are never associated with religious motives for destruction either in Anglo-Saxon poetry like the famous *Battle of Maldon* or the "Battle of Brunanburh" from the Chronicle or later medieval English ecclesiastical histories; instead, they are invariably driven by the secular motives of wealth, land,

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[74] Schofield has noted this as well. See Schofield, 53.

[75] Loomis, *Medieval Romance in England*, 98.

[76] Chansons de geste, a form of epic literature popular in twelfth-century France, on the whole depict large-scale conflicts between Christians and pagans, usually Saracens of African, Persian, or Mediterranean descent. In *The Romance of Horn*, which falls somewhere between being a chanson de geste and a romance, the central conflict is the massive waves of pagan Saracen armies that continually harass the Christian lands of Suddene, Brittany, and Ireland.

and power. Saracens in chansons de geste, however, are usually driven by the religious motive of total eradication of Christians and their faith.

Speed is correct about the Saracens' religious motives in *King Horn*, and Scandinavians as secular rather than theologically-driven destroyers is commonplace in Middle English romances like *Guy of Warwick* and *Of Arthur and Merlin*. As my second and third chapters have shown, while the Danes in *Guy* and *Arthur and Merlin* are pagans and the English are Christians, the Danes in both of these romances are clearly driven by political dominance – decimating and then controlling England – and not a need for theological superiority, though they do demolish churches as a matter of course. Whereas *King Horn* states explicitly that the Saracens

> come to londe
> And neme* hit on here honde;   **take*
> Folc hi gunne quelle*   **began to kill*
> And churchen for to felle. (63-6)

The Saracens here, unlike the Danes in *Arthur and Merlin* and *Guy of Warwick*, set out to destroy churches, using the defeat of Christianity as a motive rather than a mere side-effect. In *HC*, the "motiveless malignity" of the Danes is typical of fourteenth-century romances. In *HC*,

> Out of Danmark com an here*   **host, army*
> Opon Inglond forto were*   **to make war*
> WiÞ stout ost* & vnride*;   **host/violent*
> WiÞ yren hattes, scheld &spere:
> Alle her pray* to schip Þai bere,   **plunder*
> In Clifland bi Teseside.[77]

The Danes come to England for the rather practical purpose of plunder as well as the less tangible reward of making war for war's sake, not to institute their pagan religion in place of Christianity. The Saracens' motives in *King Horn*, following chanson de geste tradition of

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[77] All quotations from *HC* are from Mills' edition and will be referred to by line numbers.

Saracens as theologically driven, do indeed differ from *HC*'s secular-driven Danes. The Danes in *HC* are typical of the Danes in Middle English romance on the whole: violent, motivated by the desire for political and social dominance, an existential threat to the English way of life.

What *HC* demonstrates is that in the fourteenth century the Danes were being imagined as England's Saracens, and like the Saracens in chansons de geste and *King Horn,* were themselves a "literary phenomenon." As evidenced by late medieval historical romances and early modern antiquarian writings, "memories" of the fierce Danes came to overshadow all other perils and conflicts from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries. These "memories" of the nation's historical triumphs and trials, like many popular beliefs about the past in the later medieval and early modern periods, were not grounded in genuine oral tradition passed down through the generations; like the Saracens in *King Horn*, they had literary origins.[78] The *HC* redactor, much like *Arthur and Merlin*'s substitution of Danes for Saxons, took the Horn-narrative and remade Saracens as Danes and Irish, giving the romance a touch of historical verisimilitude. Thus the *HC* redactor had the same reaction as early Horn-scholars to *King Horn*'s Saracens: the invaders must have been Danes. By the early-fourteenth century they are being woven together with the "Saracens" to form an historical English enemy with a clear implications for the present.

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[78] Keith Thomas has argued that in most cases folklore ought not to be taken as direct evidence of lower-class traditions about the past. Instead, "Many stories about the past survived because they were colorful, humorous, intrinsically memorable," not because they were clearly grounded in actual historical events; in any event, most of them tend to have literary origins. See Keith Thomas, *The Perception of the Past in Early Modern England: The Creighton Trust Lecture, 1983* (London: University of London, 1983), 7-8.

5.5   CHRONICLE REALISM AND THE *LIBER REGUM ANGLIE*

The actions of medieval historical fiction (such as *Havelok the Dane*, *Bevis of Hampton*, *Athelstan, Guy of Warwick, Of Arthur and Merlin*) were located in the lacunae in chronicle histories. Take, for instance, Wace's *Roman de Brut*, in which a lacuna is explicitly opened to make space for Arthurian romance.[79] After recounting how Arthur conquered foreign enemies both at home and in their own lands, the young king returns to England to enjoy a period of twelve years of peace. In this peaceful period there is little "history" for Wace to relate; instead, this is the time for romance. Though Wace skips the romance material itself, he suggests that it is here that Arthur becomes the paragon of chivalry and largesse, establishing the Round Table and undertaking the "wondrous events" and "adventures" that had engendered so many embellished stories of the legendary court. In these twelve "non-historical" years, Wace denounces the liberties raconteurs had taken with Arthur while, at the same time, he renders such Arthurian romances plausible by offering a specific period of time in which they could have happened. For Green, "Fiction thus emerges from such gaps and profits from their supposed existence. It blurs the dividing line between truth and untruth and invites confusion between the real and the unreal."[80] Wace toes a fine line here: he does not want to disappoint his audience by suggesting the romances are entirely imaginary and at the same time he leaves open the lacunae for their continual retelling.

The *Liber Regum Anglie* (ca. 1330-40, also known as the *Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle*), the sole chronicle material of the Auchinleck manuscript and placed just

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[79] *Wace's Roman de Brut: A History of the British*, *text and translation*, ed. and trans. Judith Weiss (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2002), 245-7.

[80] D.H. Green, *The Beginnings of Medieval Romance: Fact and Fiction, 1150-1220* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 152.

before *HC* in the anthology, offers revealing analogues with *HC,* as both texts streamline English national history to a series of English triumphs that result in the unification of disparate groups into the single English people. Like the suggestion to the audience in *HC* that a present-day traveler might find Danish bones at St. Sibyl's Church, the *Liber Regum Anglie* (*LRA*) points its audience towards geographical spaces in England that embody historical memory. After King Aethelred and his brother Alfred the Great defeat the Danish invasion, the *LRA* states that Aethelred reigned another seven years, and

> At Wobourn* abeye is write, ywis,   **Wimborne, in Dorset*
> His gode body ybirid is (1479-80)[81]

Aethelred was indeed buried at Wimborne,[82] so unlike the Danish bones in *HC*, there is truth to the historical significance attached to this location. But by having two concurrent texts both pointing audiences to precise geographical locations in England where one may engage in the process of historical memorializing, the two texts parallel one another by constructing national unity via a shared past, a past that is embodied in a shared geography.

Medieval romance turned to the past as a direct analogue with the present. Likewise, the *LRA* makes explicit connections between the past and present. At 2370 metrical lines, the Auchinleck *LRA* is the longest metrical version of the *Short Chronicle*; it begins with Albin, the legendary first inhabitant of Britain who gave Albion its name, and ends with the present day of "þe ȝong king Edward" III (2349).[83] The *LRA* aligns contemporary English kings with the

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[81] Unless otherwise noted, all line numbers from the Auchinleck *Liber Regum Anglie* will refer to Zettl's edition. *An Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle*, ed. Ewald Zettl, Early English Text Society no. 196 (London: Oxford University Press, 1935).

[82] F.M. Stenton, *The Oxford History of England: Anglo-Saxon England*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 250.

[83] The other extant versions are: British Museum Additional MS 19677; University Library Cambridge, Ff. V. 48; University Library Cambridge, Dd. XIV. 2; Bodleian Library, MS. Rawl., poet.

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glorious kings of England's past. For example, addressing the birth and reign of Edward I, the chronicle praises the conquering king as a new Brutus:

> He was a wel duhti kniȝt
> For wele he held Jnglond to riȝt,
> For þat Brut wan to his hond,
> Inglond, Wales & Scottlond (2305-9)

Edward is here both a transhistorical new Brutus and a figure that straddles the line between historical fact and mythical fiction. Like the much more popular Geoffrey of Monmouth before it, in the Auchineck *LRA*, romance and history are tightly coiled together. According to Thorlac Turville-Petre, in the "cyclical view of history" that is presented in the *LRA* "contemporary life is a reenactment of the distant past."[84] The *LRA* reflects the political concerns – especially centralized power in southern England – and romance-aesthetic of the early-fourteenth century, and the distant past that is presented blends romance and chronicle motifs and strategies to form a narrative of "Jnglond þat is so miri" (1671).[85]

The Albin episode that appears at the very beginning of the *LRA*, common in Anglo-Norman and Latin histories of Britain but included only in the Auchinleck version of the *LRA*, illustrates the romance-chronicle blend offered by the chronicle as well as its deployment of common romance strategies. Albin is the eldest of twenty daughters of a Greek king. Because their husbands have treated them cruelly, Albin, induced by "þe deuel" in her heart (35), convinces all twenty of her sisters to kill their husbands in cold blood, so that they may "liue in

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145; British Museum MS Cotton Caligula A XI; and University Library Cambridge, Gg. I. 1. All seven versions are collected and annotated in Ewald Zettl's 1935 edition for the EETS series.

[84] Thorlac Turville-Petre, *England the Nation: Language, Literature, and National Identity, 1290-1340* (London: Clarendon Press, 1996), 111.

[85] Because Zettl's idiosyncratic edition of the *Liber Regum Anglie* does not include these particular lines from Auchinleck, I am quoting here from the National Library of Scotland's website, which hosts the Auchinleck MS in its entirety:
http://www.nls.uk/auchinleck/mss/smc.html

gret anour" and be "maisters," getting "[e]uerich man to don our wille" (93, 94, 96). But the youngest sister, who apparently thinks more highly of her husband than the others, informs him of the plot; he then informs their father the king who – in a plot-point that closely resembles the first exile of Horn in *HC* – exiles his daughters by placing them in a boat without oars or sails and setting them adrift. They eventually land, finding an uninhabited, endless wilderness. Albin, not humbled by the utter failure of her husband-slaying plot, names herself sovereign and names the island Albion. A devil comes along to satisfy their desire for men, and they give birth to giants. The giants and Greek sisters rule for eight hundred years until the arrival of Brutus, which is given the specific year of 1200 B.C.E. The Albin episode, however, is not dated. That seemingly precise dating of 1200 B.C.E. clearly cites the event in a historically verifiable structure. The Albin episode, which at roughly 375 lines is by far the longest episode in the chronicle, utilizes common romance techniques: line repetition ("Erliche and late, loud and stille" is repeated three times: 95, 145, 271); messengers who constantly ride back and forth; a fully armed, loyal knight; a faithful daughter; a steward. It is a section of the chronicle that, as Turville-Petre has noted, deploys the "paraphernalia" and "characteristic language" of romance.[86]

The *LRA* does more than combine romance and chronicle techniques and language to form a romance-history of England beginning with its "natural" state of uninhabited wilderness through the present reign of Edward III; it locates knights and kings who star in Auchinleck romances in this chronologically ordered story of the English nation. Guy of Warwick, Richard Coeur de Lyon, and Arthur all make appearances in *LRA*; according to Turville-Petre, the chronicle acts as a "chronological grid on which to locate the disconnected lives of saints or

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[86] Turville-Petre, 111-2.

heroes elsewhere in the collection," placing English romance figures in the national story.[87]

Thus the Auchinleck *LRA* works to validate the English heroes' lives and values while opening lacunae in which their romance adventures take place. Unlike the extended Albin narrative, the *LRA* devotes very limited space to its fellow-Auchinleck heroes: Guy receives eight lines (1659-66), Arthur receives roughly seventy lines (1040-1112), and Richard receives roughly 150 lines in an account of his victory at Acre over the Saracens (2034-2183). The amount of space each hero is afforded in *LRA* is in inverse proportion to the length of his other Auchinleck narratives; that is, while Guy receives the fewest lines in *LRA*, in the Auchinleck anthology as a whole his combined narratives (*Speculum Gy de Warewike*, the stanzaic *Guy of Warwick*, the couplet *Guy of Warwick*) add up to 11,541 total lines (not including the romance of his son Reinbrun). While many leaves of *King Richard* have been lost, leaving the narrative at only 1046 lines from its probable original state of roughly 6000 lines, the Auchinleck version is still significantly shorter than Guy's or Arthur's (unfinished at 9937 lines) romances.[88] The more romance (and in the case of Guy, homiletic as well) material there is in other Auchinleck texts, the less *LRA* feels the need to dwell on the figure. Thus while the romance accounts of Guy, Arthur, and Richard in Auchinleck take precedence over the historical-chronicle account, the *LRA* works to incorporate the romance-heroes into a chronologically grounded story of the nation. Though Guy and Arthur (and to a lesser degree King Richard) are not major figures in the *LRA*, the chronicle works to point the reader to other, fuller accounts of the romance-historical heroes in Auchinleck, where

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[87] Turville-Petre, 108.

[88] The Auchinleck version of *King Richard*, along with the versions appearing in Egerton 2862, Harley 4690, College of Arms Arundel 58, and Douce 228, is known as the B version. While the Auchinleck *King Richard* has not fully survived, the other B versions are roughly 1200 lines shorter than the A version, entitled *Richard, Coer de Lyon*, which is later and is about 7258 lines in its various manuscripts. Thus the Auchinleck *King Richard* was likely about 6000 lines long. See John Finlayson, "Richard, Coer de Lyon: Romance, History, or Something in Between?," *Studies in Philology* 87 (Spring, 1990): 159-161.

their individual exploits are more fully explored. Thus the *LRA* creates relationships between England's past heroes, showing how figures as diverse as Arthur, Guy, and Richard are all connected by their roles in the broader national story. The *LRA* acts as a "backbone" to the historical-romances in Auchinleck, giving shape to the other items in the anthology.[89]

Turville-Petre has called the Auchinleck manuscript a "handbook of the nation," a manual guiding its audience to a clearer understanding of England's past and its role in shaping the present.[90]   Like *HC*, which is placed next to the *LRA* in Auchinleck, the *LRA* justifies England's dominance of the Isles by demonstrating that the land always was England. Keeping with the pattern set by Auchinleck historical-romances of pre-conquest England like *Guy*, *Arthur and Merlin*, and *Bevis of Hampton*, the history of the land is not a succession of peoples and cultures being successively conquered and displaced (as it is in a twelfth-century chronicle like Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum*)[91]; instead, the land itself is branded as England and its inhabitants from the very beginning become the English. *HC* begins in much the same fashion as the *LRA*, promising a story of "our elders þat were/Whilom* in þis lond[92] (5-6). Resembling *HC*'s opening promise to tell a story of "our elders," the *LRA* opens:

Here may men rede whoso can

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[89] Turville-Petre, 112.

[90] Turville-Petre, 112.

[91] As an ecclesiastical historian, Henry sees foreign invasions as plagues sent by divine will. He writes that "divine vengeance" has sent England five plagues, "punishing the faithful as well as the unbelievers." These are the Romans, who later withdrew after conquering; the second is the Picts and Scots, who beleaguered the land but did not conquer it. Third is the English, who conquered; fourth, the Danes who "conquered it by warfare, but afterwards, they perished" (*sed postea deperierunt*). The fifth plague is the Normans, who still rule and "have dominion over the English at the present time." Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum: The History of the English People*, ed. and trans. Diana Greenway (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 15.

[92] The phrase "Whilom in þis lond" can also be found in the opening of the brief poem "A PeniworÞ of Witt" in Auchinleck: "Of a chaunce (*situation*) ichil ӡou telle/Þat whilom in this lond bifelle" (l. 1-2). Auchinleck attempts to build "national memories" through narratives set in the past. "A PeniworÞ of Witt" is available online: http://www.nls.uk/auchinleck/mss/penny.html

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> Hou Jnglond first bigan
> Men mow it finde jn Englische
> As þe Brout it telleþ, ywis.
> Herkeneþ hiderward lordinges,
> ȝe þat wil here of kinges,
> Ichil ȝou tellen as y can
> Hou Jnglond first bigan[93]

Both *HC* and the *LRA* vindicate and defend English dominance of the Isles by colonizing the past. Disparate ethnic groups become prologues to the story of the English. England begins, for *HC* and the *LRA*, when civilization is first brought to the island, rather than when the Angles and Saxons arrive from the Continent. The English rule in both texts not as overlords but with the full consent and pleasure of everyone living in the Isles. The word "euerichon" in the phrase "erles, barouns, euerichon" (814, quoted above) to describe Horn's full hegemony over the Irish suggests that in addition to the homage paid by his new Irish earls and barons, Horn's sovereignty over Ireland and later over all of England is total as he becomes high-king.[94] Similarly, the *LRA* praises Edward I, "Þat Brut," for being a "wel duhti kniȝt" who "held Jnglond to riȝt" for having "wan to his hond/Inglond, Wales, and Scottlond" (2309-12). For the *LRA* it is Edward's ability to conquer and subdue the Isles as a whole, Ireland notwithstanding, which renders him a new Brutus. While it is not explicitly stated in *HC* that Horn inherits Elidan's Welsh kingdom, Elidan does offer Horn "gold and fe" (l. 679) and a thousand pounds per year, which Horn accepts. *HC* exploits the Danes as an eternally invading threat whose defeat ensured the survival of England. The "project" in the *LRA* and in *HC* is to render the history of the land

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[93] http://www.nls.uk/auchinleck/mss/smc.html, ll. 1-8.
[94] Once this is settled, after a brief episode in which the daughter of another Irish king Finlak, Acula, tries unsuccessfully to court Horn, Horn directly returns to southern England to be reunited with Maiden Rimnild. The brevity of the Acula episode highlights the emphasis that *HC* generally places on political matters at the expense of "romance" material.

as the history of England, ascribing a continuous, teleological story of the nation throughout time onto the Isles.

5.6   A TRADITION FLOURISHES: MEMORIES OF THE DANES IN THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD

Returning to the Danish bones at St. Sibyl's Church in *HC*, Matthew Holford has argued in favor of the possibility that the reference to Danish bones is based on a local tradition of Viking invaders and settlers of which the composer of *HC* was aware. Holford bases his evidence on a letter written between 1601 and 1607 to Sir Thomas Challoner describing his lordship of Guisborough, which references the coast where the Danes had once landed and where their bones, giant-like in their "strength and bignes," now lie in the sands.[95] Because both *HC* and the early-seventeenth century letter refer to Danish bones in the same general area, Holford concludes that there must have been a tradition about such relics in the local region that pre-dated *HC*. However, according to Fox's study of early modern antiquarianism, the type of local anecdote in Challoner's letter was common in the popular tradition of early modern England. Fox writes,

> By the early modern period, centuries of chronicle and hagiographic writing, of chivalric romance, sermon exempla, poetry, and drama, had been providing a variety of written sources of knowledge about the past and they provide the key to understanding the genesis of a large part of popular tradition. Time and again, the kind of local anecdote which was increasingly coming to be dismissed as

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[95] Holford, "A Local Source for *Horn Child*," 34-40.

erroneous by antiquarian scholarship in the seventeenth century can be found to derive from some written source, perhaps long forgotten.[96]

Thus it is equally plausible to see the reference in Challoner's letter as based on a local anecdote that *HC* itself may have introduced, as it is to presume that there was a local tradition about the Danish bones of which both *HC* and Challoner's letter almost three centuries later were aware. Holford concludes that *HC* "offers a rare record of fourteenth-century local tradition, and impressive evidence for the continuity of local tradition into the seventeenth century."[97] But beyond the buried bones, the Danish episode in *HC* offers very little that corroborates this argument, as the battle against the Danes appears as a conventional trope, drawn along the same lines as the prevailing model of Danish battles offered elsewhere in the Auchinleck volume.

The notion of a pure oral tradition – that is, a tradition passed down through generations without being written down – can be misguided, as written sources were often, during both the medieval and the early modern periods, responsible for "augmenting and enhancing" an oral narrative, preserving it and disseminating it when it might have otherwise died out.[98] Written sources could and often did enter into popular oral tradition. Local legends circulating in the early modern period were often based on manuscript sources derived from the Middle Ages; the new print culture would "enormously stimulate the creation and augmentation of the legendary repertoire," and the prodigious output of antiquarian writings beginning in the sixteenth century can be equally credited with creating and sustaining popular belief about the past as with

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[96] Fox, *Oral and Literature Culture in England*, 228.
[97] Holford, "A Local Source for *Horn Child*," 38.
[98] Fox, 228.

recording it.[99] Medieval historical literature was continually producing popular traditions about the past.

The Danes are consciously deployed in *HC* to satisfy the need for a validation of Horn's importance in England's past. Like the Saracens in *King Horn*, the Danes in *HC* are derived from and are a crucial example of a literary tradition of the Danes that had been developing in post-conquest England, and which led to rituals like Hocktide as early as 1416.[100] Hocktide plays, performed on the second Monday and Tuesday after Easter and widely popular from the late-fifteenth century onwards, included processions and symbolic battles commemorating the defeat of the Danes. Given the gap of time between the last invasions of the Danes in the eleventh century and the rise of Hocktide plays, as well as the brief shelf life of popular memories without written or some other physical evidence,[101] it appears likely that a tradition of the defeat of the Danes was being preserved and amplified in texts like *HC*. In the early modern period, the Danes were still being employed as a barometer of the worth of local heroes. There is much evidence from many communities relating tales of bravery and strength against the incursions of the barbarous Danes, and if a monument of some kind could be associated with the tale, the imagined tradition was all the more likely to endure. Thus in Sherston near Malmesbury, where a

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[99] Fox, 242.

[100] The first evidence of a Hocktide, or Hock Tuesday, play was in Coventry in 1416. The Coventry ritual was suppressed as superstitious in 1561, but revived in 1575 at Kenilworth for Queen Elizabeth. See Woolf, 192-98; Sally-Beth MacLean, "Hocktide: A Reassessment of a Popular Pre-Reformation Festival," in *Festive Drama*, ed. Meg Twycross (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1996), 233-41; Ronald Hutton, *The Rise and Fall of Merry England: The Ritual Year 1400-1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994); E.K. Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage*, Vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903), 155-158. For a discussion of gender and Hocktide rituals, see Katherine L. French, *The Good Women of the Parish: Gender and Religion After the Black Death* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 157-179.

[101] Fox writes that the "survival of visual evidence…was often crucial to the preservation of local tradition," and that "historical memory was likely to die out if the landmarks or monuments which it kept it in mind were once destroyed or allowed to crumble." Without visual evidence, "within a couple of generations" a narrative will "lapse from popular memory." See Fox, 219.

famous battle had taken place between Cnut and Edmund Ironside in 1016, a tale was engendered of one Rattlebone who "did much service against the Danes," and a little statue above the church porch was claimed as an effigy for the English hero.[102] But the effigy was merely a fifteenth-century statue of some churchman. Entire towns would base the origins of their name in the time of the Danes to give it a little historical shine. Inhabitants of the city of Manchester in the sixteenth century claimed that their city's name (City of Men) derived from the hardy resistance of their ancestors against the Danes,[103] and many towns across England in the early modern period were able to point to a spot where its local people had given the Danes a run for their money.[104] The people relating such stories of daring heroism and plucky survival may have been handing down tradition, but such traditions are more likely to have derived from written evidence creating and shaping them as from a popular, orally transmitted historical consciousness. When early modern antiquarians went looking for popular memory, what they found was a culture that had digested and absorbed medieval writing.

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[102] Fox, 245-6.
[103] Woolf, 173.
[104] Fox, 246.

6.0   CONCLUSION

The cornerstone of university-level English curricula, the *Norton Anthology of English Literature*, assures us that in 1485, the year that witnessed the beginning of the Tudor line and the publication of Malory's Arthurian masterpiece, English modernity as we know it finally commenced. The *Norton*'s introduction to the literature of the late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth centuries characterizes the Middle Ages as a time of European homogeneity with a marked lack of national, regional, and ethnic antipathies, in stark contrast to the Tudor era in which many Englishpersons became "newly aware and proud of their Englishness." Before the ascension of Henry VII to the throne,

> most people would have devoted little thought to their national identity. If asked to describe their sense of belonging, they would probably have spoken first of the international community of Christendom, and secondly of their local region, such as Kent or Cumberland…In the wake of the Reformation, the most prominent "others" were those who had until recently been more or less the same, that is, the Catholics of western Christendom.[1]

Beyond the objection that, based on the existing textual evidence, it is extremely difficult to judge what "most people" would have thought of their identity a millennium ago,[2] the idea that

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[1] Stephen Greenblatt, ed. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed., vol. 1 (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2006), 496.

[2] One could make the same suggestion today. Eric Hobsbawm warns that "official ideologies of states and movements are not guides to what is in the minds of even the most loyal citizens or supporters." Surely this caution should be applied equally to medieval as contemporary peoples. See Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 11.

the diverse populations of Western Europe were "more or less the same" as a vast community of

Catholic believers is both a misreading (or non-reading) of much of the literature of the later

Middle Ages and a gross over-simplification. Yet this characterization of undifferentiated

medieval homogeneity has proven common; the myth of the Middle Ages as a "universal sacral

West" has prevailed in intellectual thinking among non-specialists seeking to contrast a stark

disparity between the modern and the premodern.[3] It is not necessary to determine that any one

category of identity was always and everywhere dominant over others;[4] as this dissertation has

sought to demonstrate, Catholic Christianity in the Western European Middle Ages was merely

one category of identity that writers juggled, laboring to reconcile it with regional, ethnic, and

national identities. Examples of national identity taking precedence over (or being on par with)

potentially competitive identities are rife: for instance, a writer (and monk of Durham Priory)

like the twelfth-century chronicler Simeon of Durham has the "Christians," consisting of men

banding together from Kent and Surrey, defending themselves against invading pagan Danes

both in defense of Christianity and in defense "of the liberty of their nation," a nation that clearly

consists of disparate groups.[5] The need to defend the laws and customs of England does not

preclude the need to defend Christendom; the two impulses are of equal consequence. As I have

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[3] Kathy Lavezzo, "Introduction," in *Imagining a Medieval English Nation*, ed. Kathy Lavezzo (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), vii-viii.

[4] Arguing against the supposition that there cannot have been any feelings of national identity in the Middle Ages because of a universal Church that overrode national boundaries, dividing Christian from infidel but not nation from nation, Turville-Petre writes, "Such views reflect the fundamental misconception that one identity must exclude or diminish another. A moment's introspection will demonstrate that each individual has numerous social identities, with multiple allegiances to family, town, workplace, class, and so on. It is in the interest of the individual that these identities exist on different planes and so overlap and co-exist, more often reinforcing one another than conflicting." See Turville-Petre, *England the Nation: Language, Literature, and National Identity, 1290-1340* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 41.

[5] Joseph Stevenson, trans., *The Historical Works of Simeon of Durham*, Vol. 3 (London: Seeleys, 1855), 467.

shown in each of my chapters, Simeon's language is not at all anomalous for the later English Middle Ages.

The "nation" as a social and cultural representation of a people, as opposed to a discrete political structure, has been shown by medievalists in the past two decades to be a phenomenon clearly recognizable before the Tudor period. Even if the political form of the nation-state as an entity with citizens engaged in a self-conscious community that cuts across ethnic lines, rather than subjects under patrimonial dynastic rule, is an exclusively modern phenomenon, as claimed by theorists such as Hobsbawm and Hardt and Negri (though thoroughly disputed by a number of medieval scholars), the move to imagine the social body of the nation as a unified whole bound by common material culture and laws can be found readily in a writer like Bede, imagining a single English community out of the disparate populations inhabiting eighth-century Britain. Hobsbawm writes that the "nation" in the political sense that it is commonly used today is exclusively modern, belonging only to a particular, historically recent period: "The basic characteristic of the modern nation and everything connected with it is its modernity."[6] While the earlier scholarship of Hans Kohn held that the "nation" is exclusively modern because similar feelings of "nationalism" that existed before the modern era were "largely unconscious and inarticulate," only affecting individuals here and there,[7] Hobsbawm's analysis maintains that the nation is exclusively modern because it is the effect of a "particular political programme" (in Lesley Johnson's words), a program that only arose after the later eighteenth century. For Benedict Anderson, whose concept of the nation as an "imagined community" has been thoroughly and roundly challenged by medievalists of all stripes, the nation is a community of

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[6] Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*, 14.
[7] Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism: A Study in its Origin and Background* (New York: Collier Books, 1967), 6.

citizens larger than any individual could ever meet directly, thus requiring representational work. For Anderson, representational labor on such a massive scale could only have been produced in the modern period with the rise of mass print-media like newspapers and pamphlets.[8] While the "modernist" viewpoints of Kohn, Hobsbawm, and Anderson clearly indicate that nations are ideological constructions creating communities of a different order from those of the kinship-based, dynastic states that pre-dated them, historians of the Middle Ages such as James Campbell and Adrian Hastings have vociferously disputed the "otherness" and uniformity assigned to the pre-modern period in such schema. Hastings has gone so far as to suggest that England was a prototype of the nation-state, with English nationalism and an English nation-state already detectable in the tenth century, which continued to grow through the vernacular literary renaissance of the fourteenth century.[9] England pioneered the development of the nation-state, producing and promulgating a national culture and presenting other markers of a "substantial uniformity" such as a singularly unified system of taxation and coinage as early as the mid-eleventh century.[10] For Hastings, if tolerant ethnic pluralism that "presupposes a confident

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[8] For Anderson, the reading of the morning newspaper is an "extraordinary mass ceremony" in which each reader is "well aware that the ceremony he performs is being replicated simultaneously by thousands (or millions) of others of whose existence he is confident, yet of whose identity he has not the slightest notion." Thus it is the daily newspaper that creates "that remarkable confidence of community in anonymity which is the hallmark of modern nations." See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 2006), 35-6.

[9] Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion, and Nationalism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 4-5.

[10] The phrase "substantial uniformity" is Campbell's. On the subject of the economic unity of eleventh century England, Campbell points to the Domesday Book, which he sees as demonstrating that nearly all villages and estates were assessed for tax purposes before the coming of the Normans; the scope of this tax-raising capability is unparalleled in Europe at the time. Campbell also points to the coinage of Anglo-Saxon kings as further proof of a relatively uniform politico-economic system. Every coronation required a re-minting of coins with the image of the new king, so England was, at the very least, unified economically under the image of a single monarch. Such coins would have been part of a rather extensive system of trading routes throughout England that is evidence for a thriving, highly interconnected economic system; such a system would have relied on mutual cooperation between communities who, though diversified through such markers as dialect and ethnicity, must have worked

territoriality" is indicative of the mature, modern nation, then representations of an England with diverse mythological origins (Roman, Norman, the Celtic Britons) from the twelfth-century onwards qualifies as a form of ethnic pluralism. Beyond its mythological origins, medieval England was indeed a realm well aware of its internal, regional differences and, significantly for the problem of the "nation," the need to eclipse these differences with a dominant national group. As each of my chapters has shown, a process of smoothing over internal ruptures with national culture was transmuted via romance narratives onto the past, where Anglo-Saxon, Norman, and Celtic Briton (and Danes, in the case of *Havelok*) could be portrayed as fusing into one English nation: a "bounded, distinctive, solidary group" whose collective interests outweigh internal differences.[11]

Conditions in later medieval England were ripe to yield a prototypical "nation" – that is, a self-determining sovereign political state. In England especially, there was a relatively long history of political unity under one dynasty, a common language, and a secure island location that all created an English nationalism and continuous, self-evident history than the nationalisms of most other parts of Europe.[12] Along with medievalists such as Lavezzo, Heng, Cohen, Turville-Petre, and Robert Bartlett, in this project I sought to address the nation and nationalism in the Middle Ages, both the representation of the political form of the English state that existed

together for the will of a sovereign ruler who claimed to represent all England. Thus the changing image on the coins is evidence not only for a unified economic structure, but also for political unity, a unity that was bound together by a tightly-knit nobility acting for their mutual interests. The great pre-Conquest English families, which extensively intermarried and from which every king would have emerged – forming a kind of extended "cousinhood" – were not provincial and were often acting in the interests of the nation. See James Campbell, "The United Kingdom of England: The Anglo-Saxon Achievement," in *Uniting the Kingdom?: The Making of British History*, ed. Alexander Grant and Keith J. Stringer (London: Routledge, 1995), 31-4.

[11] Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, "Beyond Identity," in *Ethnicity Without Groups* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004), 60.

[12] Robert Bartlett, "Medieval and Modern Concepts of Race and Ethnicity," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 31 (2001): 53.

prior to the modern era as well as the representation of the cultural legacy that that English state developed and promulgated. Even if we accept the "modernist" view that the political entity of the nation-state could not exist prior to the eighteenth century, the ways of speaking about the social body of the nation – common culture, shared blood, history, laws, and language – did exist, and the nation in this sense was represented in a variety of ways by very different writers.

An ironic aspect of the *Norton*'s postulation of medieval populations composed of people self-identifying as "more or less the same" is that it is nationalism and the move to nationhood, which the *Norton* implies are totally modern phenomena, that impel a people to imagine themselves with common origins, blood, and customs.[13] A second ironic aspect of the work of "modernist" thinkers like Hardt and Negri is that when they propose a medieval past in which Western European populations blended together into a uniform wholeness, they thereby craft a past that a contemporary people might base its identity on: that is, if national identity is predicated on the sense of a recognizable, distinct group with common customs buried deep in a hazy past, then Hardt and Negri (among others) offer a picture of the Middle Ages that serves to fulfill this need. Hardt and Negri argue that it is with the nationalism of the modern era that internal differences in a country become obscured by the representation of a whole, hegemonic race or group.[14] The rhetoric of the nation is a rhetoric of uniformity, founded on political and cultural unity; as this dissertation has shown, we clearly discover this rhetoric of national

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[13] Hardt and Negri argue that the nation evolves out of the "patrimonial and absolutist state," which was the "political form required to rule feudal social relations and relations of production." The modern concept of nation thus inherited the patrimonial body of the monarchic state and reinvented it in a new form, structured by new capitalist processes of production and the old absolutist order. For Hardt and Negri, "This uneasy structural relationship was stabilized by the national identity: a cultural, integrating identity, founded on a biological continuity of blood relations, a spatial continuity of territory, and linguistic commonality." See Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 93-5.

[14] Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, 104.

wholeness in the later Middle Ages. Medieval historians and medieval writers of historical romances engaged in a process of justifying the present order of centralized English sovereignty by constructing an English past that logically led to the English present. Race (genetically continuous groups),[15] nation (sociopolitical groups), ethnicity (cultural groups) – these are all constructions of peoplehood, and they are all "inventions of pastness,"[16] utilizing the past as political justification of the present. According to Hardt and Negri, national and political sovereignty are produced by the construction of a singular identity;[17] it is in the past where such construction always begins, whether it is a modern nation using the medieval era as an identity "seedbed"[18] or a medieval writer building on the discourse of a mythic, romanticized past.

For the medieval writer of history, the past and the present were engaged in a symbiotic relationship. The past helped to shape the present and the quest for the past was conducted

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[15] The common modern usage of the term "race," which has been shown to be a construct without basis in biological science, is undoubtedly a loaded term; moreover, medieval uses of the term "race" are not equivalent to contemporary uses. The earliest use of the word "race" in English to mean something like biological continuity within a set group was probably by the Scottish poet William Dunbar, who in a 1508 poem *The Dance of the Seven Deidly Sins* refers to "bakbyttaris of sindry racis"; at the very least use of the modern connotation of race did not become common until after the seventeenth century. See O.E.D., s.v. "race." In the postwar West the concept of "race" as anything other than a construct maintained by cultural perceptions is no longer accepted by any serious scholars. Because the concept of race is so fluid and multivalent, sociopolitical discourse employing race as a viable category of human classification continues to animate certain anthropological studies, as in the mid-90's controversy over the reactionary *The Bell Curve*. For a discussion of medieval uses of the terms *natio*, *gens*, and race, see Bartlett, "Medieval and Modern Concepts of Race and Ethnicity," esp. 39-42. For a discussion of the discrediting of "race" as a biological category, see Michael Banton, *Racial Theories* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[16] The term is Wallerstein's: "Pastness is a mode by which persons are persuaded to act in the present in ways they might not otherwise act. Pastness is a tool persons use against each other. Pastness is a central element in the socialization of individuals, in the maintenance of group solidarity, in the establishment or challenge to social legitimation." Thus for Wallerstein the past changes as needed by an inconstant present. See Immauel Wallerstein, "The Construction of Peoplehood: Racism, Nationalism, Ethnicity," in *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, by Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein (London: Verso, 1991), 78.

[17] Hardt and Negri, 104.

[18] Anthony D. Smith writes of a modern "romantic genealogical nationalism" that has fueled the "long and powerful" European tradition of tracing the origins of a nation to a "medieval seedbed." See Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 110.

according to present needs. As Gabrielle Spiegel shows, the medieval use of the past was a

fruitful enterprise; because the past was so obscure in any critical sense, it could become a

"vehicle for change." Spiegel writes, "All that was needed was to recreate [the past] in the image

of the present and then claim its authority for the legitimation of contemporary practices."[19] The

past served not only as a moral model to teach people how to live, but as a storehouse for a

legacy of national memories where the construction of a national identity formed and developed.

The primary means of exploring this two-fold purpose of the past – moral instruction and

identity construction, of the knight-hero and, by extension, the nation he represents and embodies

– was romance. Northrop Frye speaks of the "perennially childlike quality" of romance due to its

"extraordinarily persistent nostalgia" – romance, whether chivalric, early modern aristocratic, or

bourgeois after the eighteenth century, is at its core constantly searching for a golden age onto

which the ideals of the ruling social class can be projected.[20] A typical trope of medieval

romance, especially Anglo-Norman romance, is the rightful reclamation of rank and land by

bachelors unjustly exiled from their proper place in society; the virtuous hero represents the

ideals of the community – national, regional, Christendom – and the villains threaten to thwart

the heroes' ascendency. The "chivalric hero's negotiation of his position in society"[21] is the

search for a "true" identity, an identity that is molded and determined by his exploits in love and

war. When Helen Cooper writes that romance was "the dominant secular literary genre of the

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[19] Gabrielle Spiegel, *The Past as Text: The Theory and Practice of Medieval Historiography* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 85-6.

[20] Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947), 191.

[21] Simon Gaunt, "Romance and other Genres," in *Cambridge Companion to Medieval Romance*, ed. Roberta L. Krueger (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 47.

period,"[22] what this means is that romance was the primary medium by which communities represented themselves and projected, developed, and maintained their cultural values and ideals. From the twelfth through the seventeenth centuries, romance was at the very heart of Western European cultures, offering models of strength, courage, and fidelity that served to reaffirm values. Heng sees romance as the cultural medium for the nation to conceptualize itself, projecting a world "for a diverse society of people otherwise ranged along numerous internal divides," thereby projecting a national community.[23] Romance-heroes – Havelok, Guy, Arthur, Horn – served as a locus and personification of the ideals of an English national community distinguished by its past.

Benedict Anderson has written that "nations dream of being free" and that the sovereign state is the "gage and emblem" of the attainment of such freedom;[24] in the Middle Ages, these dreams were dreamt in the form of romance. In romance, grand battles, fought by idealized knights, whose successful conclusion resulted in a venerated, liberated England, served as the triumphant thread tying together a disparate population under one banner. The exploits of the knight-hero in historical romances mirrored the exploits of mythic national founders. As discussed in my first chapter, in the medieval period, the peoples of the world were thought of as being connected into a human family tree consisting of "race-nations,"[25] each of which had unique originary descent myths. Most race-nations were given founders who were often

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[22] Helen Cooper, *The English Romance in Time: Transforming Motifs from Geoffrey of Monmouth to the Death of Shakespeare* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 6.

[23] Heng, *Empire of Magic*, 6-7.

[24] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 7.

[25] As noted in my chapter on *Havelok* (11), Isidore of Seville, whose seventh century *Etymologies* was considered a reliable source of universal knowledge throughout the Middle Ages, divides the world into a series of seventy-three race-nations, following the biblical account of the fall of the Tower of Babel. The terms *gens* and *natio* were practically interchangeable in medieval usage, both having etymological roots in racial descent myths. See Bartlett, "Medieval and Modern Concepts," 39-42.

connected etymologically with its people (as in Brutus with Britain). By giving races an originary, legendary founder, their history became a type of romance-history, as their paragon embodying national ideals becomes a kind of "blood fount" from which all later descendants, both high-born and low-born, flow. The myth of medieval national origins is essentially romance in structure: a hero-founder goes in quest of a land, discovers it and subdues his enemies, and establishes a new people. Origin myths and late-medieval historical romances both construct a past that explicates, justifies, and lionizes the present order by offering models of conduct and a lengthy record of heroic success. The romance past was the golden age that could never be fully recaptured, but it could be endlessly restaged.

6.1   HOCKTIDE

When Hans Kohn speaks of the "communal mind" in the Middle Ages as being able to think only in terms of Christians and heretics rather than along smaller, national lines, he does so in order to offer a model of nationalism and the nation predicated on a necessary re-shifting of the roles of rulers and ruled and the rise of the third estate.[26] He draws a picture that simplifies the past to more easily fit it into a larger narrative of dissimilarity between past and present. But using the past for the purposes of present communal identity is a continuous phenomenon not confined solely to modern thinkers considering the pre-modern past; for medieval writers and populations, the past was a thing to be shaped and applied, existing in histories and romances not simply for its own sake. Aelred of Rievaulx justifies his history of the kings of the English as an

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[26] Kohn, *Idea of Nationalism*, 3-4, 78-9.

explanation of the genealogy of Duke Henry (later Henry II), buffing the "integrity of your ancestors" so that Henry might "know that one has been bequeathed nobility of blood from the finest on both sides," which is a "great incentive to acquiring habits."[27] The viability and impact of the "romance past" on the later Middle Ages through the early modern period is well-illustrated by Hock Tuesday, or Hocktide, pageantries. While the earliest usage of "Hock Day" or "Hock Tuesday" as a term-day on which rents were paid dates from c. 1175, evidence of a two-day folk festival dates only from 1416.[28] Hocktide plays, performed on the second Monday and Tuesday after Easter and widely popular from the late-fifteenth century onwards, were probably so-named because a town's women "hocked" the men by capturing and binding them and exacting a forfeit on Monday, and then the men would hock the women on Tuesday. From the late-fifteenth century, the central purpose appears to have been to raise money for the church; the first recorded instance of Hocktide being used as a parish fundraising activity was ca. 1469-70 in Cambridge. Though the earliest reference to "hocedei" is c. 1175 (Matthew Paris also refers to "Hokedai" on *quindena paschae* [the two weeks before and after Easter]), the earliest explicit reference to "Hocktide" as a day of sport or play is in a proclamation of Henry IV in 1406.[29] The ritual pageants became widespread over the next three decades, reaching their

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[27] *The Historical Works of Ailred of Rievaulx*, trans. Jane Patricia Freeland, ed. Marsha L. Dutton, Cistercian Fathers Series 56 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 2005), 71.

[28] Sally-Beth MacLean, "Hocktide: A Reassessment of a Popular Pre-Reformation Festival," in *Festive Drama*, ed. Meg Twycross (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1996), 234.

[29] In *London Letterbook I*: *Qe null persone di ceste Citee…teygne, ou constreyne ascun persone…deinz meason ou de'hors pur hokkyng lundy ne narsdy procheins appelles Hokkedayes* ("that no person of this city…should hold or constrain any person…in their house or outside for hocking on Monday or Tuesday next, called hockdays": fol. 49^v. The full text of the proclamation is translated by Henry Thomas Riley, *Memorials of London and London Life in the XIIIth, XIVth, and XVth Centuries* (London: Longmans, 1868), 561; cited in MacLean, "Hocktide," 235. See also *OED*, s.v. "hocking" and "Hock-day."

apogee in the early sixteenth century.[30] After being banned for a brief period as popish superstition after the break with Rome, the Coventry Hock Tuesday play was revived for Elizabeth I at Kenilworth in 1575. Parishes in towns and cities were more likely to celebrate Hocktide than rural areas. Parishes in London, Reading, Salisbury, Oxford, Westminster, and Canterbury had celebrations, meaning they were concentrated in southern and central England; there are none in the North and very few in the East.[31] There is a "Hockey-day" is still held at Hungerford.[32]

For reasons that remain unclear, from the early-fifteenth century the festival came to include processions and symbolic battles commemorating the English defeat of the Danes. At Coventry, according to one eyewitness the performance saw the captive Danes led away by English women, who would then exact a forfeit for their captured Danes. Though suggestions about the origins of the historical aspect of the pageantries have been offered since at least the mid-nineteenth century,[33] it is still not clear why or how Hocktide became connected with Danes and Saxons. At Coventry, the Hocktide play was thought by nineteenth-century antiquarians Brand and Ellis to have commemorated the massacre of the Danes by Ethelred on St. Brice's Day in 1002, but the fifteenth-century chantry priest John Rous claims that it was connected with the sudden death of Harthacnut and the restoration of the Wessex line.[34] Neither explanation is

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[30] Ronald Hutton, *The Rise and Fall of Merry England: The Ritual Year 1400-1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 59-60.

[31] Katherine L. French, *The Good Women of the Parish: Gender and Religion after the Black Death* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 164-6.

[32] A group of appointed "tutti-men" are selected by a Hocktide Court to collect pennies from the men and kisses from the women. See Christina Hole, *A Dictionary of British Folk Customs* (London: Hutchinson, 1976), 146-8.

[33] See John Brand and Sir Henry Ellis, *Observations on the Popular Antiquities of Great Britain* (London: Bohn, 1849), 185, 189. MacLean offers a brief synopsis of nineteenth-century approaches to Hocktide. See MacLean, 233-4.

[34] E.K. Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage*, Vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 155.

entirely satisfactory; Harthacnut died in June 1042 and St. Brice's Day is celebrated on

November 13, both well after the Easter season. What does seem clear is that the historical,

Danish element of the Hocktide celebrations was entirely a fifteenth-century invention that was

added on to already existing festival customs; I put forth the suggestion that the celebrations

were not based on historical reality but on the widespread popularity of historical romances in

which the Danes played key roles as national enemies.[35] Given the gap of time between the last

invasions of the Danes in the eleventh century and the rise of Hocktide plays, as well as the brief

shelf life of popular memories without written or some other physical evidence, it appears likely

that a tradition of the defeat of the Danes was being preserved and amplified in medieval

historical literary texts. After having been an unfailing means of explaining so many English

popular customs in the medieval period, Hocktide plays decline in frequency and popularity and

are even at times banned as a Catholic diversion from the sixteenth century. England had new

enemies with which to contend, and the desire to glorify English heroes against pagans was no

longer current. The Danes became nothing more than an antiquated tradition.

Robert Lanehame, a member of the Elizabethan court, gives an eyewitness account of the

Coventry Hock-Tuesday festival. After mentioning the Danes and Aethelred, he writes of the

people of Coventry:

> The thing, said they, iz grounded on story, and for pastime woont too bee plaid in
> oour Citee yearly: without ill exampl of mannerz, papistry, or ony superstition:
> and elz did so occupy the heads of a number, that likely inoough woold haue had
> woorz meditationz: had an auncient beginning, and a long continuauns: tyll noow
> of late laid dooun, they knu no cauz why, onless it wear by the zeal of certain
> theyr Preacherz.[36]

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[35] Of the ten or so Middle English romances that are explicitly set in England's past, five
(*Havelok the Dane*, *Guy*, *Horn Childe*, *Arthur and Merlin*, and *Reinbrun*) feature invading Danes.
Additionally, *Partonope of Blois* (ca. 1400-1450), based on a thirteenth century Old French romance,
prominently features invading Danes.
[36] Cited in Appendix H, Chambers, *Mediaeval Stage*, Vol. 2, 264-5.

Lanehame implies that the pageantry is totally divorced from parish proceedings and Catholic practice but has a basis in the historical reality of Coventry ("is grounded on story"). According to the people of Coventry whom Lanehame had spoken with, the Hocktide traditions are "auncient," having been continuously performed from ancient times. Yet despite their belief in the long-standing running of the plays, it seems to clear to historians from at least Brand in the early nineteenth century that the historical aspect of the plays were a recent addition. What seemed "auncient" to spectators was designed to appear so. The past never has meaning in and of itself; it is always used as a means to an ideological end.

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