

**REGIONAL IDENTITIES AND CULTURAL CONTACT
IN THE LITERATURES OF POST-CONQUEST ENGLAND**

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Abstract

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This thesis explores the geographic complexity of English identity in the High Middle Ages by examining texts that reflect moments and spaces of cultural contact. While interaction with a cultural Other is often thought to reinforce national identity, I challenge this notion, positing instead that, in the texts analysed here, cultural meetings prompt the formation or consolidation of regional identities. These identities are often simultaneously local and cross-cultural, inclusive but based in community ties and a shared sense of place. Each of the four chapters examines a different kind of regional identity and its relation to Englishness through romances and historiographical texts in Anglo-Latin, Anglo-Norman, and Middle English. Discussion primarily focuses on the *Gesta Herwardi*, Gaimar's *Estoire des Engleis*, *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*, *Gui de Warewic*, *Boeve de Haumtone*, *Le roman de toute chevalerie*, and *Richard Coer de Lyon*. Each of these texts negotiates English identity in relation to a cultural Other, and balances various aspects of cultural identity and scales of geographic affiliation. While some focus exclusively on a particular locality, others create inclusive regional identities, draw together the foreign and the familiar, or depict England as a region on the edge of an interconnected world. These texts show that Englishness can carry different meanings, nuances, and identitary strategies that depend on context, location, or ideology. Together, they forge an image of England that is diverse and multinucleated. Its borders become spaces of meeting, connection, and cultural overlap, as well as division. These works establish a strong English identity while articulating England's necessary relationship with other places, spaces, and peoples, challenging not the borders of England, but the borders of Englishness.

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List of Abbreviations

ACMRS	Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies
AND	<i>Anglo-Norman Dictionary</i> , The Anglo-Norman On-Line Hub, http://www.anglo-norman.net/gate/index (accessed 23 September 2016).
ANS	<i>Anglo-Norman Studies</i>
ANTS	Anglo-Norman Text Society
ASC	<i>Anglo-Saxon Chronicle</i>
BL	London, British Library
CUP	Cambridge University Press
EETS	Early English Text Society
EHOV	Orderic Vitalis, <i>The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis</i> , ed. and trans. Marjorie Chibnall, 6 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968–80).
GPA	William of Malmesbury, <i>Gesta pontificum Anglorum</i> , ed. and trans. Michael Winterbottom and Rodney Thomson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007).
GRA	William of Malmesbury, <i>Gesta regum Anglorum</i> , ed. and trans. R. A. B. Mynors, Rodney Thomson, and Michael Winterbottom (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).
Historia	Geoffrey of Monmouth, <i>Historia regum Britanniae</i> . Edited in Geoffrey of Monmouth, <i>The History of the Kings of Britain</i> , ed. Michael D. Reeve and trans. Neil Wright (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2007).
JMEMS	<i>Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies</i>
MIP	Medieval Institute Publications
OUP	Oxford University Press
RTC	Thomas of Kent, <i>Le roman de toute chevalerie</i> . Edited in Thomas of Kent, <i>Le roman d’Alexandre ou Le roman de toute chevalerie</i> , ed. Brian Foster and Ian Short and trans. Catherine Gaullier-Bougassas and Laurence Harf-Lancner (Paris: Champion, 2003).
SBHLT	Jennifer Fellows and Ivana Djordjević, eds., <i>Sir Bevis of Hampton in Literary Tradition</i> (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2008).
TRHS	<i>Transactions of the Royal Historical Society</i>

Introduction: The Borders of Englishness

In his *Historia regum Britanniae*, Geoffrey of Monmouth describes a magical square lake: ‘quatuor genera piscium infra quatuor angulos procreabat, nec in aliqua partium pisces alterius partis reperiabantur’ [‘it supported in its four corners four species of fish, none of which ever strayed into the space of the other three’].¹ These fish are often read as a thinly veiled metaphor for the four peoples of pre-Germanic Britain: the Britons, Saxons, Picts and Scots.² This marvel of nature representing the fantasy of separation is miraculous precisely because cultural and ethnic groups cannot isolate themselves from one another.³ Just as a regular pool cannot keep fish separate, so too is it unlikely that people of diverse identities sharing an island could remain in isolation. Although the categorical details had changed, this concept was no less true in the twelfth century, when Geoffrey was writing. In order to understand English identity in the High Middle Ages, England cannot be investigated on its own; it must be explored in relation to the cultures with which it had contact.

This thesis examines texts that emerged from or reflect situations of cultural contact in the centuries after the Norman Conquest, as English identity was reassessed and renegotiated in a new cultural context. It differs from existing scholarship by taking regional—rather than national—identity as its main subject;⁴ this allows for greater

¹ Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, ed. Michael D. Reeve and trans. Neil Wright (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007), 202, 203.

² Michelle Warren, *History on the Edge: Excalibur and the Borders of Britain 1100–1300* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 43–44.

³ See Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Hybridity, Identity, and Monstrosity in Medieval Britain: On Difficult Middles* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 72.

⁴ In modern literary scholarship, regional differences are often acknowledged, but these are frequently in the context of discussions of national identity or England as a nation, such as in Thorlac Turville-Petre, *England the Nation: Language, Literature and National Identity, 1290–1340* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); alternatively, they present in-depth studies of one of England’s regions, such as Catherine A. M. Clarke, ed., *Mapping the Medieval City: Space, Place, and Identity in Chester c. 1200–1600* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2011); Adrian Green and A. J. Pollard, eds., *Regional Identities in North-East England, 1300–2000* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007); Robert W. Barrett, Jr. *Against All England: Regional Identity and Cheshire Writing, 1195–1656* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press,

flexibility in terms of scale, since regions can vary from the local to the international, and they are largely defined by cultural, rather than political, communality.⁵ By understanding the place of England in relation to these regional identities, a more complex, pluralistic, and heterogeneous image of England can be discerned, which transcends or defies systematic or categorical interpretation.⁶ When considered together, these regions forge a multinucleated country, where borderlands and frontiers not only serve to define the extremities of England, but also challenge dominant and persistent ideas of ‘Englishness’.

In the High Middle Ages, England was an important node in a large international and transcultural network of encounter and exchange. Trade, intermarriage, travel, migration, religious alliances, and warfare contributed towards England’s status as an intercultural, multiethnic space.⁷ Cities like London and York were cosmopolitan centres

2009); Ralph Hanna, *London Literature, 1300–1380* (Cambridge: CUP, 2005); Gail McMurray Gibson, *The Theatre of Devotion: East Anglian Drama and Society in the Late Middle Ages* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1989); John Taylor, *Medieval Historical Writing in Yorkshire* (York: St. Anthony’s Press, 1961). Important work has also been conducted in relation to regional manuscript production, such as Wendy Scase, ed., *Essays in Manuscript Geography: Vernacular Manuscripts of the English West Midlands from the Conquest to the Sixteenth Century* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007); Wendy Scase, *The Making of the Vernon Manuscript: The Production and Contexts of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Eng.poet.a.1.* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013); Ralph Hanna, ‘Some North Yorkshire Scribes and their Context’, in *Medieval Texts in Context*, ed. Denis Renevey and Graham D. Caie (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 167–91.

⁵ Regional scales within this thesis vary; I have treated a region as a relative concept, taken to mean a constituent part of an assumed whole. For a theoretical discussion of regions and regional identity, see Anssi Paasi’s essays ‘The Region, Identity, and Power’, *Procedia: Social and Behavioural Sciences* 14 (2011): 9–16 and ‘Region and Place: Regional Identity in Question’, *Progress in Human Geography* 27 (2003): 475–85. For discussion of England’s regions, see A. J. Pollard, ‘Introduction’, *North-East England in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. Christian D. Liddy, Richard H. Britnell (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2005), 1–12, especially 5. See also Charles Phythian-Adams, ‘Introduction: An Agenda for English Local History’, in *Societies, Culture, and Kinship 1580–1850: Cultural Provinces in English Local History*, ed. Charles Phythian-Adams (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1993), 1–23.

⁶ A monolithic sense of ‘Englishness’ is often assumed, especially when discussing cultural contact, which Robert Rouse claims ‘brings with it risks of external contamination of one’s own culture’. See ‘For King and Country? The Tension between National and Regional Identities in *Sir Bevis of Hampton*’, in *Sir Bevis of Hampton in Literary Tradition*, ed. Jennifer Fellows and Ivana Djordjević (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2008), 114–26, at 117–18.

⁷ I use the term ‘intercultural’ because, as Peter McDonald has argued, ‘intercultural’ focuses on movement across various types of cultural borders. These boundaries are fluid and labile. By contrast, ‘multicultural’ adheres to a logic that suggests firmer boundaries, plurality rather than an ebb and flow of identity. See Peter McDonald, ‘Thinking Interculturally: Amartya Sen’s Lovers Revisited’, *Interventions* 13, no. 3 (2011): 367–85, at 372.

that saw the arrival of peoples and goods from all over the known world, while Britain functioned as ‘the meeting point for four different cultures in everyday contact: its own, the Celtic, the cross-Channel French and that of the international Latin tradition’.⁸ Traces of the island’s Scandinavian connections lingered well into the twelfth century and became inextricably engrained in the fabric of Englishness. Britain may have been an island, but it was far from insular.

To a large extent, this ethnic plurality and multiculturalism prompted literary innovation in the century after the Norman Conquest.⁹ The period saw the development of a new literary genre, the romance, and served as the heyday for England’s historiographical tradition. Both of these genres display a preoccupation with identity.

The Conquest prompted a drastic reassessment of what it meant to be English, and the

⁸ Ian Short, ‘Language and Literature’, in *A Companion to the Anglo-Norman World*, ed. Christopher Harper-Bill and Elisabeth van Houts (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003), 191–213, at 193.

⁹ Short, ‘Language and Literature’, 193. It is worth noting that ethnicity is, like other kinds of identity, a social construct that groups use to define themselves against others. Ethnicity is subjective and flexible; Marcus Banks has described it as a ‘kind of jellyfish identity, constantly wobbling and never quite fitting into rigid containers’. Rees Davies observes that ‘jellyfish may be difficult to handle; but at least they are alive’, and as such, ideas of ethnicity or identity are never static. This idea was not alien to those in the Middle Ages: they believed themselves to belong to groups of peoples, *gentes*, and nations, *natios*. Isidore of Seville defines *gens* as ‘multitudo ab uno principio orta’ [‘a multitude sprung from one principle’], which explains the fervour within medieval texts to trace genealogical lineages back to important founding figures, such as Brutus. They ‘assumed that blood-descent, actual or fictive, was a qualification for membership of a people or nation.’ A *gens*, however, was distinct from the idea of *natio*; like ethnicity, it can transgress, or even disregard, political boundaries. Fredrik Barth notes that ethnicity is concerned with culture, especially how cultural difference is socially constructed. Ethnicity involves ‘perception of common descent and familiar kinship, a common language or languages, distinctive customs and traditions, and a consciousness of the [group’s] place of origin and specific historical experience’. Marcus Banks, *Ethnicity: Anthropological Constructions* (London: Routledge, 1996), 147; R. R. Davies, ‘Nations and National Identities in the Medieval World: An Apologia’, *Revue belge d’histoire contemporaine* 34 (2004): 567–79, at 568–70; Isidore of Seville, *Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi: Etymologiarum Sive Originum: Libri xx*, ed. W. M. Lindsay, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911), 1:IX.ii.1; Isidore of Seville, ‘Book IX: Languages, nations, reigns, the military, citizens, family relationships (De linguis, gentibus, regnis, militia, civibus, affinitatibus)’, in *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, ed. and trans. Stephen A. Barney et al. (Cambridge: CUP, 2006), 191–212, at 192; David Graizbord, ‘Religion and Ethnicity Among “Men of the Nation”’, *Jewish Social Studies* 15, no. 1 (2008): 32–65, at 43. For a discussion of ethnicity in the Middle Ages, see Robert Bartlett, ‘Medieval and Modern Concepts of Race and Ethnicity’, *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 31, no. 1 (2001): 39–56. For further discussions, see John Moreland, ‘Ethnicity, Power and the English’, in *Social Identity in Early Medieval Britain*, ed. William O. Frazer and Andrew Tyrrell (London and New York: Leicester University Press, 2000), 23–51; Peter Hoppenbrouwers, ‘The Dynamics of National Identity in the Later Middle Ages’, in *Networks, Regions and Nations: Shaping Identities in the Low Countries, 1300–1650*, ed. Robert Stein and Judith Pollmann (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 19–41. For discussions of ethnicity more generally, see Fredrik Barth, Introduction to *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (Long Grove: Waveland Press, 1969), 9–39.

texts that recounted the stories and histories of the country reflect an attempt to grapple with the ontological shift that accompanied the advent of Anglo-Norman rule.

Each of the four chapters of this thesis offers an in-depth study of a particular region or circumstance of cultural interaction by examining romances and historiographical texts from the twelfth to fourteenth centuries: principally the *Gesta Herwardi*, Gaimar's *Estoire des Engleis*, the *Lai de Haveloc*, *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*, *Gui de Warewic* and *Boeve de Haumtone*, *Le roman de toute chevalerie* and *Richard Coer de Lyon* although other texts are included to provide literary and historical context. The literatures of England in this period often exhibited a 'careful management of difference' in order to balance various kinds of cultural identity and scales of geographic affiliation.¹⁰ For instance, as we shall see, Geffrei Gaimar's *Estoire des Engleis* was written in part to help the new Anglo-Norman elite situate themselves in a wider context of English history, and hence to foster in them a better understanding of, and affinity for, English identity.¹¹ Similarly, some have argued that the *Gesta Herwardi* was written in

¹⁰ Sylvia Huot, *Postcolonial Fictions in the Roman de Perceforest: Cultural Identities and Hybridities* (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2007), 207. Geographic identity denotes the place with which an individual primarily associates him or herself; this can be local, regional, national, supranational, or otherwise. Sometimes these identities can coexist simultaneously. At other times they compete with one another. For discussions of geographic identity and its relative scale, see David Kaplan, 'Territorial Identities and Geographic Scale', in *Nested Identities: Nationalism, Territory, and Scale*, ed. Guntram H. Herb and David H. Kaplan (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999), 31–49.

¹¹ Over the course of the twelfth century the Norman elite gradually began to see themselves as English. The nature of this shift, the time-scale in which it happened, and the socio-political forces that underpinned it are much debated, however. Ann Williams explains that although Norman invaders would not have seen themselves as 'English' immediately, intermarriage between the English and the Norman settlers 'may well have produced an "English" identity at [the middle] level of society by—at the latest—the second generation'. Ian Short suggests that evidence of English–Norman assimilation was visible by the 1130s and 1140s, and John Gillingham posits a similar date of 1140 as the pivotal moment at which a new sense of Englishness was emerging. Evidence for this is found in historiographical texts, especially William of Malmesbury's *Gesta regum Anglorum*, which positions England's non-Norman neighbours—the Danes, Norwegians, Welsh, and Scots—as barbarous Others. Hugh Thomas has suggested that certain individuals had both Norman and English identities available to them; the identities were not mutually exclusive. Meanwhile, Elaine Treharne argues that English–Norman tension persisted throughout the twelfth century, as indicated by the continued copying of Old English texts, and Thorlac Turville-Petre suggests that non-elite English speakers resented the Normans until the fourteenth century. See Ann Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1995), 4; Ian Short, 'Tam Angli quam Franci: Self-Definition in Anglo-Norman England', *ANS* 18 (1996): 153–75; John Gillingham, 'Conquering the Barbarians: War and Chivalry in Twelfth-Century Britain', *Haskins Society Journal* 4 (1993): 67–84; Hugh

part to promote intercultural understanding between the English and the Normans, and to provide the English with a sense of honour in spite of their defeat at the hands of William the Conqueror.¹² Cultural interaction often defines or influences the presentation of geographic or spatial identities in literary texts. By examining cultural interactions, we can gain a more complex understanding of English identities.¹³

Although the very fabric of English identity was in flux following the Norman Conquest, the negotiation of identity was not unique to that particular moment of cultural interaction. While the scale and the consequences of the Norman Conquest mark it as a particularly disruptive and defining event in English history, more localised interactions with other cultures occurred throughout England both before and after the Battle of Hastings. In the twelfth century, the north east of England still bore the effects of the Danish contact, conflict, and coexistence that had occurred from the eighth to eleventh

M. Thomas, *The English and the Normans: Ethnic Hostility, Assimilation, and National Identity 1066–c.1220* (Oxford: OUP, 2003), 73–74; Elaine Treharne, 'English in the Post-Conquest Period', in *A Companion to Anglo-Saxon Literature*, ed. Philip Pulsiano and Elaine Treharne (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), 403–14; Thorlac Turville-Petre, 'Politics and Poetry in the Early Fourteenth Century: The Case of Robert Mannyng's *Chronicle*', *Review of English Studies* 39 (1988): 1–28, at 1. See also Short, 'Patrons and Polyglots: French Literature in Twelfth-Century England', *ANS* 14 (1991): 229–49, especially 244; John Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century: Imperialism, Nationalism, and Political Values* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), 120; R. H. C. Davis, *The Normans and their Myth* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976), 131. Writing in the second half of the twelfth century, Richard fitz Nigel (sometimes called Richard fitz Neale) wrote: 'iam cohabitantibus Anglicis et Normannis et alterutrum uxores ducentibus uel nubentibus, sic permixte sunt nationes ut uix decerni possit hodie, de liberis loquor, quis Anglicus quis Normannus sit genere' ['nowadays when English and Normans live close together and marry and give in marriage to each other, the nations are so mixed that it can scarcely be decided (I mean in the case of freemen) who is of English birth and who of Norman']. Richard fitz Nigel, *Dialogus de Scaccario=The Course of the Exchequer*, ed. and trans. Charles Johnson et al. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 53. In a similar vein, Marjorie Chibnall states: 'The assimilation of the last wave of invaders in a multi-racial society took very little longer than the assimilation of the previous Danish invaders'. Marjorie Chibnall, *Anglo-Norman England, 1066–1166* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 208.

¹² Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, 359.

¹³ For the purposes of this thesis, I understand 'identity' to be the lens through which individuals classify themselves and others, which influences their experience of the world. Identity is highly subjective, constructed both through historical circumstance and, in the words of Ardis Butterfield, 'carefully cultivated perception', through stories, and through cultural forces. Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, ed. John B. Thompson, Gino Raymond, and Matthew Adamson (Cambridge: Polity, 1991), 221; Ardis Butterfield, *The Familiar Enemy: Chaucer, Language and Nation in the Hundred Years War* (Oxford: OUP, 2009), 5. For further discussion of identity in the Middle Ages, see R. R. Davies, 'The Peoples of Britain and Ireland 1100–1400: Identities', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th ser., 4 (1994): 1–20; John Watkins and Kathryn L. Reyerson, eds., *Mediterranean Identities in the Premodern Era: Entrepôts, Islands, and Empires* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014); Norman L. Jones and Daniel Woolf, eds., *Local Identities in Late Medieval and Early Modern England* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

centuries. In the western borderlands, Marcher lords continually fought and negotiated with Welsh princes as the former attempted to expand their lands into Welsh territory; those same Marcher lords helped Dairmait Mac Murchada battle Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair in Ireland in 1169. Northern England was simultaneously Scottish and English, although some parts were neither.¹⁴ Meanwhile, English knights and pilgrims ventured into the Continent and the Levant as *crucesignati*, penitents went on pilgrimage to Rome and beyond, and Anglo-Saxon exiles found themselves as part of the Byzantine Emperor's elite militia, the Varangian Guard.¹⁵ Stories and goods from around the world were imported to England and became an inextricable part of English culture.

How did these moments of cultural contact affect understandings of identity in twelfth to fourteenth-century literature? The texts explored here suggest, in their distinctive ways, that as English people come into contact with their neighbours the cultural friction elicited consolidates or alters existing identities, or forges new, intercultural ones. Peter McDonald asserts that 'all cultures exist interculturally'; 'since all cultures, including dominant ones, are less coherent and more mixed than we like to believe, or that the political pressures of a particular moment might require us to believe, the intercultural as an on-going, open-ended process is all-pervasive.'¹⁶ Although McDonald writes in reference to modern-day culture, his claims are no less pertinent to High Medieval England. Medieval interculturality finds its 'most pregnant textual examples' in areas that Robert Stein categorises as 'border territories and areas of shifting sovereignties': multilingual and international literatures are more common than

¹⁴ Rees Davies writes that 'beyond the rivers Ribble in the west and Tees in the east one still entered in the 1090s into an area which William Kapelle has called "the free zone", a land of regional supremacies, frontier outposts (of which Newcastle and Carlisle were the most striking and recent examples), raids and counter-raids, and deep uncertainties. Neither Northumbria nor Cumbria was inevitably a part of England'. R. R. Davies, *The First English Empire: Power and Identities in the British Isles 1093–1343* (Oxford: OUP, 2000), 55.

¹⁵ See Christopher Tyerman, *England and the Crusades* (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 1988), 14.

¹⁶ See McDonald, 'Thinking Interculturally', 372.

in these areas than in ‘hegemonic centres’.¹⁷ Rosalind Field notes that medieval texts often occlude English identity: ‘the English are invisible because they are *us*’.¹⁸ It is in situations of cultural contact that English identity becomes visible. Some scholars have argued that nationhood and nationalism are ‘dominant when the nation is perceived to be under threat from outside attack or influence’; national identity is that which differentiates the English from the French, the Scots, and the Welsh.¹⁹ I challenge the definitiveness of this assertion, however. External threats do promote a recalibration of identity at the point of contact, but this recalibration is not necessarily nationalistic: it is also local, regional, or international; often it is some or all of these simultaneously.

These identities have a broader implication for Englishness as well: England and English identity are defined by their borderlands, but it is in these interstices where geographical territories touch and cultural identities overlap that the limits of Englishness are also most vigorously challenged. These are areas of encounter and exchange ‘wherein identity and sovereignty are negotiated, imaginatively and discursively, in relation to the necessary other’.²⁰ If, as Turville-Petre asserts, ‘defining a nation necessarily involves exclusion’, investigating the boundaries between the included and the excluded reveals a fluidity and porousness that challenge any notion of English identity as fixed.²¹ The regions explored in this thesis are positioned as geographic centres or vertices in networks that span several cultures or countries; yet they are all, in their own ways, English.

¹⁷ Robert Stein, ‘Multilingualism’, in *Middle English*, ed. Paul Strohm (Oxford: OUP, 2007), 23–37, at 35.

¹⁸ Rosalind Field, ‘Children of Anarchy: Anglo-Norman Romance in the Twelfth Century’, in *Writers in the Reign of Henry II*, ed. Ruth Kennedy and Simon Meecham-Jones (New York: Palgrave, 2006), 249–62, at 257.

¹⁹ Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*, 4.

²⁰ Michael Uebel, *Ecstatic Transformation: On the Uses of Alterity in the Middle Ages* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 14.

²¹ Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*, 1.

In exploring the borders of Englishness, a picture of English identity emerges that is both local and cross-cultural, inclusive but primarily based in spatial and community ties. Because of the geographically disparate and culturally heterogeneous character of this Englishness, it becomes clear that there is no single, privileged definition of English identity; it would be more appropriate to speak of Englishnesses or English identities, unified in nomenclature but diverse in ontology. While many medieval texts recognise local differences within England, and several studies of medieval literature investigate one particular region in depth –especially in the later Middle Ages– there are few that examine the range and diversity of regional identities in High Medieval English literatures.²² Before turning to the texts that are the primary object of this thesis, it is important to lay some historical and theoretical groundwork on England and its regions, and the geographic identities that emerge from those spaces.

England and its Regions: Pre- and Post-Conquest

Although many medievalists have remonstrated with Benedict Anderson's definition of nationhood and nationalism, notably because he posits modernity as a precondition for the emergence of the nation, his famous description of the nation as an 'imagined community' has often been appropriated for medieval contexts.²³ Anderson argues that nations must be imagined because members will never know most of their compatriots,

²² See above, footnote 4.

²³ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983; repr. London and New York: Verso, 1991). See also Anthony Giddens, *The Nation-State and Violence* (Cambridge: Polity, 1985); Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (1974; repr. London: Verso, 2013); E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: CUP, 1992). Lesley Johnson has criticised Benedict Anderson's view, charging that Anderson misunderstands medieval culture as a time of homogeneity and pre-nationalist thinking. See 'Imagining Communities: Medieval and Modern', in *Concepts of National Identity in the Middle Ages*, ed. Simon Forde, Lesley Johnson and Alan V. Murray (Leeds: Leeds Studies in English, 1995), 1–19; Davies, 'Identities', 4. For a review of the discussions on nationhood and the Middle Ages, see Kathy Lavezzo, 'Introduction', in *Imagining a Medieval English Nation*, ed. Kathy Lavezzo (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), vii–xix.

but ‘in the minds of each lives the image of their communion’, dispensed through circulated texts and images.²⁴

A sense of national belonging pervaded late Anglo-Saxon England; members of the church, the aristocracy, and the country gentry who formed the basis of English local society were all considered ‘Angelcynn’. Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles* had given the country a shared myth, and unity was strengthened by the use and promotion of the English vernacular (even if dialects differed), a general system of taxation, and a centralised government. The country had a single coinage system and a common oath of allegiance to the king, who was called the King of the English.²⁵ Ethnically, however, England was made up of Danes and Celts as well as Anglo-Saxons, especially in the north and west of the country. King Edgar’s law codes of 962–63 call attention to this diverse makeup, addressing ‘eallum leodscipe, ægðer ge Anglum ge Denum ge Bryttum’ [‘all the nation, whether Englishmen, Danes or Britons’], signalling great complexity within the unity of the English state.²⁶ The period of Danish rule in England in the eleventh century highlighted this heterogeneity. It is nevertheless important to ‘remember that ethnic identities may be forged and made explicit in specific circumstances, and that they may also coincide with many other

²⁴ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6.

²⁵ See Sarah Foot, ‘The Making of *Angelcynn*: English Identity Before the Norman Conquest’, *TRHS* 6th ser., 6 (1996): 25–49; Patrick Wormald, ‘Germanic Power Structures: The Early English Experience’, in *Power and the Nation in European History*, ed. Len Scales and Oliver Zimmer (Cambridge: CUP, 2005), 105–24, at 118. See also Elaine Treharne, *Living Through Conquest* (Oxford: OUP, 2012), 49–50; M. T. Clanchy, *England and its Rulers 1066–1307*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 3; Frank Barlow, *The Feudal Kingdom of England 1042–1216*, 5th ed. (London and New York: Longman, 1999), 3; David Carpenter, *The Struggle for Mastery 1066–1284* (London: Penguin, 2003), 3; H. R. Loyn, *The Making of the English Nation from the Anglo-Saxons to Edward I* (London and New York: Thames and Hudson, 1991), 75; Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, 20–31.

²⁶ Felix Liebermann, ed., *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen* (Halle: M. Niemeyer, 1903–16), 1:210; translation in D. Whitelock, ed., ‘Edgar’s code issued at “Wihthordestan” (IV Edgar, 962–963)’, in *English Historical Documents c.500–1042* (London: Routledge, 1979), 439.

social, political, and regional identities'.²⁷ Susan Reynolds reminds us that while '[l]ocality, lordship, and law all offered opportunities for feelings of community [...], they did not always conflict with regnal loyalties'; the inhabitants of pre-Conquest England 'did not call themselves Anglo-Saxons (let alone Saxons), but English, and they called their kingdom England. It was not a hyphenated kingdom but one whose inhabitants felt themselves to be a single people'.²⁸ A sense of English unity could be established in spite of the kingdom's ethnic diversity. Although many Anglo-Saxons may have considered their country to be under foreign rule following the Danish Conquest of 1016, Cnut was 'particularly concerned to advocate ethnic unity between the English and the Danes', and his public persona was that of an English king.²⁹ Even amidst the political upheaval, social change, and ethnic diversity of the eleventh century, the idea of England and of Englishness appeared to loom large in the pre-Conquest imagination.³⁰

Yet while the idea of a unified England may have been prominent and propagated, definitions of Englishness inevitably varied throughout the kingdom. As Frank Barlow notes, 'behind the façade of an organized state were provincial distinctions of culture and fissile tendencies' which were as remarkable as England's political unity.³¹ The 'provincial distinctions' of the country's cultures, which are visible in its literatures, historical records, and political events, became particularly pronounced after the Norman Conquest.³² With the advent of Norman rule, it became clear that not all regions recognised the authority of their new lords, and in many cases local or cultural

²⁷ Dawn Hadley and Julian Richards, 'Introduction', in *Cultures in Contact: Scandinavian Settlement in England in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries*, ed. Dawn Hadley and Julian Richards (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 3–15, at 6.

²⁸ Susan Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe, 900–1300* (1984; repr. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 266.

²⁹ Treharne, *Living Through Conquest*, 14, 17.

³⁰ These royal acts and pronouncements may belie the experience of living and writing in England, however. Statements of unity would have made the king's power more robust –or, at least, appear so.

³¹ Barlow, *Feudal Kingdom*, 4.

³² Barlow, *Feudal Kingdom*, 4.

affiliations were at odds with regnal loyalties.³³ Barlow notes that after the Battle of Hastings, uprisings and revolts against William's rule were 'greater in the remote parts of the kingdom, traditionally anarchic, open to foreign intervention, and as yet unsettled by the Normans'.³⁴ Writing in the 1120s, William of Malmesbury characterises the Battle of Hastings as 'dies fatalis Angliae, funestum excidium dulcis patriae, pro nouorum dominorum commutatione. Iam enim pridem moribus Anglorum insueuerat, qui uarii admodum pro temporibus fuere' ['a day of destiny for England, a fatal disaster for our dear country as she exchanged old masters for new. Long since had it grown used the character of the English — though that changed greatly with the passage of time'].³⁵ The character of the English was not only temporally dynamic, but also geographically disparate in William's time: the men of northern England were vastly different from those of the south, and those who had absorbed strong Danish influences were often considerably different from those living on the Welsh border. Instead of grouping these peoples together under a common umbrella of Englishness, as Edgar had done in his law codes, William highlights the fundamental and irreconcilable differences in culture and character between the various regions of England, particularly dividing the north from the south. He claims that Northumbrians were said to be 'semper rebellionem deditus' ['always much given to rebellion'], and in particular those in Yorkshire spoke with an accent that could barely be understood by 'we' southerners; 'Quod propter uiciniam barbararum gentium et propter remotionem regum quondam Anglorum modo Normannorum contigit' ['This is the result of the barbarians being so near and the kings,

³³ This is discussed in greater detail below, 13–20.

³⁴ Barlow, *Feudal Kingdom*, 90.

³⁵ William of Malmesbury, *Gesta regum Anglorum*, ed. and trans. R. A. B. Mynors, Rodney Thomson, and Michael Winterbottom (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 1:iii.245.1. Hereafter referred to as *GRA*. Where relevant, texts by William of Malmesbury, Orderic Vitalis, Henry of Huntingdon, and John of Salisbury will cite volume number (where applicable), book number, chapter, and section in lieu of page number. All primary texts in editions with parallel modern English translations will use those translations unless otherwise stated.

once English, now Norman, so far away’].³⁶ The social patterns and administrative idiosyncrasies of various settlers were still deeply engrained in the cultural practices and political consciousnesses of England’s regions.³⁷ While the people of England might have all considered themselves English, they were, with regard to one another, ‘English with a difference’; this identity could denote a range of vastly divergent attitudes, beliefs, and customs.³⁸ John Moreland states: ‘People constructed their identities through a dialectic between past experience and current social, economic and (in particular) power relationships’.³⁹ Regardless of an awareness of and adherence to a centralised government, these ideas of unity will always be tempered and defined by lived experience: an individual’s conception of the country is inherently shaped by the community with which he or she interacts on a regular basis.

In his discussion of English identity in the Middle Ages, Rodney Hilton asks: ‘If the ethnic mix in medieval England was no obstacle to the (eventual?) Englishness of the English, can it be argued that the local or regional consciousness, from village community to county, prevented the English from feeling English, rather than, say, north country or East Anglian?’⁴⁰ One answer is that these categories are not mutually exclusive. Individuals can feel a concurrent sense of national and regional affiliation

³⁶ *GRA*, 1:iii.271.1, cf. *GRA*, 1:ii.177.1; William of Malmesbury, *Gesta pontificum Anglorum*, ed. and trans. Michael Winterbottom and Rodney Thomson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), 1:iii.99. Hereafter abbreviated as *GPA*. William’s depiction of York, corrupted by the influence of the Danes, contrasts with his vision of Canterbury, which is surrounded by ‘integro murorum ambitu’ [‘its unbroken girdle of walls’]; there is an implicit suggestion that the people of Canterbury, uninfluenced by outsiders, are seen as more English than those in York: ‘Gens urbana et rustica, plusquam ceteri Angli conscientiam adhuc antiquae nobilitatis spirans, et ad honorificentiam et hospitium cuiuslibet pronior, ad propulsandas iniurias acrior’ [‘The people in the city and outside it are more than other Englishmen still proudly aware of their long-established nobility, and this makes them the readier to pay honour to others and welcome them as guests, but also the fiercer in driving off those who might do them injury’]. *GPA*, 1:i.prol.2. For further discussion of William’s attitudes towards these two cities, see Daniel Gerrard, ‘William of Malmesbury and Civic Virtue’, in *Discovering William of Malmesbury*, ed. Rodney Thomson, Emily Dolmans, and Emily A. Winkler (forthcoming, Boydell & Brewer).

³⁷ Barlow, *Feudal Kingdom*, 4.

³⁸ Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, 271.

³⁹ Moreland, ‘Ethnicity, Power and the English’, 44.

⁴⁰ Rodney Hilton, ‘Were the English English?’ in *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity*, ed. Raphael Samuel (London: Routledge, 1989), 1:39–43, at 40.

without imagining a fragmented England or adopting a fragmented identity.⁴¹ David Carpenter concurs with this by claiming that ‘horizontal ties of nationality are perfectly capable of existing alongside other loyalties’, which included those of class, of gender, and of family, as well as ties to a region or a strong sense of local distinctiveness.⁴² National identity is often said to be stronger when faced with a real or imagined challenge or political threat; it is therefore easy to imagine that those residing on the borders of England might have had a stronger sense of their own geographical identity, whether regional or national, than people inhabiting England’s political heartlands. It is likely, however, that those at the country’s edges experienced an Englishness that was significantly different from that in the centre, due to the consistent external influence—whether peaceful or hostile—of the foreign cultures with which these regions had contact.⁴³

It is unsurprising, then, that the Battle of Hastings should provoke a variety of responses from different regions of England, and that those on the borders should ally with their neighbours rather than accept subjugation by the Normans. William successfully conquered the south of England within three months of 14 October, 1066 by garnering the support of the clergy. As William’s claim to the throne strengthened, support waned for Edgar Ætheling, grandson of Edmund Ironside and the closest

⁴¹ To this I would add that an individual can feel loyalty to two or more countries without diminishing his or her identification with either. Gerald of Wales, for instance, was famously half-English and half-Welsh. While he writes about the effect this had on how others perceived him, noting that ‘uterque populus me sibi tanquam alienum reputans et non suum semper oculo respexerit novercali’ [Both people think of me as a foreigner to them and not their own, always looking at me with a stepmother’s eye], there is no evidence to suggest that he *himself* felt less English or less Welsh than his compatriots in either territory. See Gerald of Wales, *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera*, J. S. Brewer, James F. Dimock, and George F. Warner (London: Longmans, Green, Longman and Roberts, 1861–91), 8:lviii. My translation.

⁴² Carpenter, *Struggle for Mastery*, 2.

⁴³ David Kaplan notes that this is normal for border regions, since they are zones of cultural overlap. Borderlands often have three different kinds of spatial identity available to them: identity based on the ‘state’ controlling the area, identity based on the nation that the inhabitants most identify with, and a borderland identity ‘generated from the occupance and symbolism of the borderland itself’. Kaplan, ‘Territorial Identities’, 37.

surviving blood relation to Edward the Confessor.⁴⁴ William of Malmesbury describes William the Conqueror's arrival in London, 'moxque cum gratulatione ciues omnes effusi obuiam uadunt. Prorupit omnibus portis unda salutantium' ['where all the citizens soon poured out to meet him with rejoicing. They burst out in waves from every gate to welcome him'].⁴⁵ The emphasis on 'ciues omnes', *all* citizens, draws attention to the degree of support William enjoyed in London. Similarly, upon William's coronation, Orderic Vitalis writes:

[D]um Adeldredus præsul alloqueretur Anglos, et Goisfredus Constantiniensis episcopus Normannos, an concederent Guillelmum regnare super se; et uniuersi consensum hilarem protestarentur una uoce non unius linguæ locutione

[When Archbishop Ealdred asked the English, and Geoffrey bishop of Coutances asked the Normans, if they would accept William as their king, all of them gladly shouted out with one voice if not in one language that they would].⁴⁶

Orderic's joyful, united crowd of Londoners, homogenous in their attitudes if not their origins, contrasts with those outside the English heartlands in Exeter, Hereford, Northumbria, Yorkshire, and the east, where revolts and rebellions against the Norman regime continued well into the 1070s. Inhabitants of these areas allied with the Danes, the Welsh, the Scots, or the Irish against William.⁴⁷ The E version of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, known as the Peterborough Chronicle, states that some hoped that the Danes,

⁴⁴ See Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, ed. and trans. Marjorie Chibnall (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968–80), 2:III.ii.155–66. Following the Conquest, William gave Edgar Ætheling land and treated him as a kinsman, but Edgar nevertheless rebelled, desiring to be crowned by Archbishop Ealdred of York in 1069. However, the archbishop, who had been willing to crown Edgar in 1066, now supported William. See Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest*, 32.

⁴⁵ *GRA*, 1:iii.247.1

⁴⁶ *EHOV*, 2:III.ii.157. Orderic displays ambivalence regarding the Norman Conquest, which may be a result of his own mixed heritage (his mother was English and his father was French), or due to events that took place during his life; he was educated in Normandy but spent his childhood in Shropshire, where there was sympathy for anti-Norman rebels, such as Eadric the Wild. See Clanchy, *England and its Rulers*, 29. For further discussion on Eadric, see Susan Reynolds, 'Eadric Silvaticus and the English Resistance', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 54 (1981): 102–5, at 102.

⁴⁷ *GRA*, 1:iii.254; Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, ed. and trans. Diana Greenway (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), vi.31–33; John of Worcester, *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, ed. and trans. Reginald Darlington, Patrick McGurk, and Jennifer Bray (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 3:4, s. a. 1067.

rather than help the English regain their patrimony, would simply re-conquer England in place of the Normans:

ƿa on ƿam ilcan geare com Swegn cyng of Denmarcan into Humbran, 7 ƿet landfolc comen him ongean 7 griðedon wið hine, wændon ƿet he sceolde ƿet land ofergan. ƿa comen into Elig Cristien ƿa densce biscop 7 Osbeorn eorl 7 ƿa densca huscarles mid heom, 7 ƿet englisce folc of eall ƿa feonlandes comen to heom, wendon ƿet hi sceoldon winnon eall ƿet land

[Then in the same year King Swein came from Denmark into the Humber, and the local people came to him and made peace with him—thought that he would conquer that land. Then Christian, the Danish bishop, came to Ely, and Jarl Osbern and the Danish housecarls with them. And the English people from all the Fenlands came to them—thought that they would win all that land].⁴⁸

Similarly, Orderic writes:

Amissa itaque libertate Angli uehementer ingemiscunt; et uicissim qualiter intolerabile iugum sibique hactenus insolitum excutiant subtiliter inquirunt. Igitur ad Suenum regem Danorum dirigunt, atque ut regnum Angliæ quod Suenus et Chunutus aui eius armis optinuerunt reposcat expetunt. Vltro in exilium aliqui profugiunt, quo extorres uel a potestate Normannorum sint liberi; uel opibus alienis aucti contra eos ad recidium certamen reuertantur

[And so the English groaned aloud for their lost liberty and plotted ceaselessly to find some way of shaking off a yoke that was so intolerable and unaccustomed. Some sent to Swein, king of Denmark, and urged him to lay claim to the kingdom of England which his ancestors Swein and Cnut had won by the sword. Others fled into voluntary exile so that they might either find in banishment freedom from the power of the Normans or secure foreign help and come back to fight a war of vengeance].⁴⁹

The people of England had been ruled by the Danes within living memory of the Norman Conquest, and many of them, particularly those in the former Danelaw, may have been ethnically Scandinavian. It is thus likely that they considered the Danes to be closer than the Normans to their idea of ‘Englishness’, and the prospect of Danish rule was perhaps

⁴⁸ Susan Irvine, ed., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle 7, MS E*, vol. 7 of *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2004), 88, s. a. 1070 (The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* will hereafter be referred to as *ASC*, followed by the version if relevant); translation in Michael Swanton, ed. and trans., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (London: J. M. Dent, 1996), 205.

⁴⁹ *EHOV*, 2:IV.ii.172. Many of these exiles were thought to have gone to Constantinople. Some became part of an elite fighting force known as the Varangian Guard. Indirect references to the Varangian Guard might be found in *Gui de Warewic*, discussed in Chapter Four.

more welcome than that of a continentally-oriented king.⁵⁰ Similarly, Eadric Silvaticus, a thegn in Hereford, enlisted the help of the Welsh kings Bleddyn and Rhiwallon to reclaim his unjustly seized lands from William fitz Osbern and Odo of Bayeaux. His men laid waste to Hereford ‘usque ad pontem amnis Lucge ... ingentemque predam reduxit’ [‘up to over the bridge of the river Lugg, and brought back great spoil’], allowing Welshmen to capture English goods and raze the land.⁵¹ This was presumably because he was more closely allied with the Welsh than with the Normans.⁵² William of Malmesbury details how Earls Edwin, Morcar, and Waltheof joined Malcolm Canmore, king of the Scots, and the Danish troops heading towards York, a refuge for the rebels. The Scots were particularly welcoming to English exiles, especially Edgar Ætheling, Malcolm’s brother-in-law. William writes that for Edgar’s sake, Malcolm ‘conterminas Angliae prouintias rapinis et incendiis infestabat, non quod aliquid ad regnum illi profuturum arbitraretur, sed ut Willelmi animum contristaret, qui Scotticis predis terras suas obnoxias indignaretur’ [‘ravaged the neighbouring provinces of England with robbery and arson, not that he thought it would forward Edgar’s hopes of becoming king, but to annoy William, and make him angry at the sight of his own lands exposed to Scottish forays’].⁵³ These Englishmen would rather unite with England’s neighbours, at the expense of their homeland and English property, than capitulate to William’s desires.

However, these Scottish incursions into England, as depicted by William of Malmesbury, are not viable threats to the Conqueror’s rule. Instead, Edgar’s allies are shown to destroy the very land that Edgar had hoped to rule, inevitably angering or even killing the Englishmen most likely to support his claim. William suggests that, although

⁵⁰ Further discussion of the Danish presence in England prior to 1066 will be discussed in Chapter Two.

⁵¹ John of Worcester, *Chronicle*, 3:4, s. a. 1067. This is similar to the historical account that Hereward gave the treasures of Peterborough to the Danes so that they did not fall into Norman hands. See Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest*, 48.

⁵² This phenomenon will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three in relation to *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*.

⁵³ *GRA*, 1:iii.249.1.

Malcolm acted for Edgar's sake, all hope for Edgar's rule was lost. At this stage, the most the Scots could have done to help the English cause was to become a nuisance to William. Events on the borderlands are seen as petty quarrels that have little or no impact on the fate of England; the centre views disputes on the periphery as inconsequential. As will be explored in this thesis, texts written in the edges of England position themselves as a centre, suggesting that what was understood as regionally or nationally significant varied considerably throughout England. A sense of regional autonomy, for instance, is apparent in William of Malmesbury's *Gesta regum Anglorum*, which states that Edwin and Morcar left Northumbria 'ex suo coniectantes ingenio numquam illuc Willelmum esse uenturum' ['supposing on the basis of their own capacities that William would never get so far'].⁵⁴ This suggests that William's coronation in London did not automatically translate into dominance over all England: the earls in the north were confident in their ability to defend their region, even if they could not expel the Normans from England entirely. Indeed, the Northumbrians had always been hostile to the idea of southern rule due to their former independence under the Danes. This 'situation was not changed by the Norman Conquest', notes D. M. Palliser.⁵⁵ In the case of Northumbria, the region provides a refuge when the dominant political forces are perceived to be unacceptable. This is not necessarily to say that England became politically or culturally fragmented after the Conquest, but merely that the regional or local identities that had existed alongside English identity were strengthened or became more important in this period.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ *GRA*, 1:iii.247.2. Cf. Geoffrey of Monmouth's description of the Saxons fleeing over the Humber to escape Aurelius. He writes: 'nam patria illa semper refugio eis patuerat' ['the region had always provided them with a refuge']. *Historia*, 162, 163.

⁵⁵ D. M. Palliser, 'Domesday Book and the "Harrying of the North"', *Northern History* 29 (1993): 1–23, at 3. It is even possible that William's Harrying of the North indicated that he did not consider the area a part of England, but rather a troublesome, threatening region that had to be ravaged, its native aristocracy destroyed, in order to be pacified. It could be seen as a second conquest.

⁵⁶ For further discussion on the relationship between English and local identities in the post-Conquest period, see Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, 261–73.

From other accounts of regional reactions to the Conquest, it becomes clear that, *mutatis mutandis*, other parts of England had similar ideas about their own regions. Because the focus of Chapter One is Ely, I will turn to texts from the Fens as examples. These will be *ASC E*, *The Battle of Maldon*, and the *Liber Eliensis*. *ASC E*, written in Peterborough, discusses the national events that took place throughout the Conquest period, but it is noteworthy that in the years following the Conquest the chronicle increasingly emphasises local events. The pre-Conquest years describe events in various parts of England and Britain: the years 1063 and 1064 alone detail events in Wales, Northumbria, Northampton, Nottingham, Derbyshire, and Lincolnshire. Conversely, after the Normans conquer England, the chronicle immediately draws attention to local events in Peterborough. It discusses the town's prosperity under Leofric, abbot of Peterborough, which dissipates after his death: 'þe wearð Gildene Burh to Wrecce Burh' ['Then "Golden Borough" became "Wretched Borough"'].⁵⁷ There is an increased focus on the *landfolc* and their support of Edgar Ætheling, and events in Peterborough or the Fens are mentioned every year between 1069 and 1072. While this may simply be due to a proliferation of noteworthy local events in this period, such as the arrival of Hereward's gang, or because, in practice, the disruption caused by the Conquest prevented news from other regions from reaching Peterborough, the contrast between the pre- and post-1066 periods suggests that there was increasing emphasis on local matters after the Conquest.⁵⁸ Susan Irvine comments that it is likely that these passages were added while the scribe was copying the annals from an exemplar in 1121, which supports the idea that regional

⁵⁷ *ASC E*, 87; Swanton, ed. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 199.

⁵⁸ Nicholas Brooks has argued that all of the *ASC* manuscripts derive from a 'common stock' of information deriving from the royal household. This may be why they 'betray no hint either of local regional loyalties or of interest in any one particular religious house'. Brooks suggests that the Peterborough Scribe continued to receive royal annals after the Norman Conquest. However, this increased focus on local activity after the Conquest may challenge this notion, or suggest that royal influence over the *ASC E* was weakened or disrupted, possibly because of the political upheavals of the post-Conquest period. See Nicholas Brooks, 'Why is the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* About Kings?' *Anglo-Saxon England* 39 (2010): 43–70, at 49–50.

activity was a greater preoccupation in the twelfth century than it was prior to the Conquest.⁵⁹

This distinction between pre- and post-Conquest identities might also be seen through an examination of the literary treatment of the Battle of Maldon. The extant fragments of the celebrated Old English text of the same name lionises Byrhtnoth, as the hero claims to be defender of ‘eþel þysne / Æþelredes eard, ealdres mines, / Folc and foldan’ [this homeland, Aethelred’s land, the lord of my people and territory/land] and ‘urne eard’ [our land] against the Danes.⁶⁰ The semantic parallels between ‘Æþelredes’ and ‘urne’ as qualifiers for ‘eard’ draw a connection between a king and his people as they share a homeland, a link consolidated by the juxtaposition of the quasi-homophonous ‘eþel’ and ‘Æþelredes’.⁶¹ Modern scholars cannot know what the lost sections of the poem may have revealed regarding the hero’s –or the poem’s own– affiliations with Ely, and the text does articulate the regional affiliations of the Mercians, Northumbrians, and East Saxons who fight for Byrhtnoth.⁶² Nevertheless, the rhetorical strategy deployed by Byrhtnoth in the extant text presents the idea, whether true or otherwise, that the men of these varied regions have come together in loyalty to their lord, and have united to counter the Danes and defend their homeland.⁶³

The *Liber Eliensis*, written c.1170 to commemorate the history of Ely, presents Byrhtnoth as a local hero. Rather than focusing on the disastrous battle, the *Liber* instead

⁵⁹ *ASC E*, xc. It is possible that these events were in living memory, so the scribe felt compelled to include them in his copy of the chronicle. Brooks suggests that the Peterborough Scribe copied the annals in eight stints between 1121 and 1131. See Brooks, ‘*Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*’, 58.

⁶⁰ D. Scragg, ed., *Battle of Maldon* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1981), lines 52–54, 58.

⁶¹ ‘Eþel’ has connotations of intimacy, belonging, and ancestral ties to the land. See Allen Frantzen, *Anglo-Saxon Keywords* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 133–34.

⁶² *Battle of Maldon*, 69, 217, 266.

⁶³ Renée R. Trilling writes that poems such as *The Battle of Maldon* can function ‘as propaganda to engender a national identity that recognizes the authority of a strong, centralized ruler and outlines a powerful but ambiguous national destiny’. Renée R. Trilling, *The Aesthetics of Nostalgia: Historical Representation in Old English Verse* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 173. See also James Campbell, *The Anglo-Saxon State* (London: Hambledon & London, 2000), 176–77; N. F. Blake, ‘The Battle of Maldon’, *Neophilologus* 49 (1965): 332–45; Levi Roach, *Aethelred: The Unready* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2016), 127–28.

tells of how the hero and his army dined at Ely the night before he died. In a telling display of local rivalry, the *Liber* makes it clear that the neighbouring abbey of Ramsey had turned Byrhtnoth's men away before they were welcomed to Ely. As a result of the friendship between the hero and the monks of Ely, Byrhtnoth's body is brought to Ely after the battle:

Abbas [Eliensis] vero audito belli eventu, cum quibusdam monachis ad locum pugnae profectus, corpus [Brithnodi] inventum ad hanc ecclesiam reportavit, et cum honore sepelivit; in loco autem capitis massam ceræ rotundam apposuit: quo signo diu postea in temporibus recognitus, honorifice inter alios est locatus. Fuit autem vir iste pius et strenuus diebus Edgari, Edwardi regis et martyris, et Ædelredi regum Anglorum, et mortuus est anno regni ipsius Ædelredi XIV.

[The abbot (of Ely), on hearing the outcome of the fighting, went with some monks to the battle-ground and found Byrhtnoth's body. He brought it back to the church and buried it with honour. And in place of the head he put a round lump of wax. Long afterwards, in (our own) times, he was recognized by this sign, and was honourably entombed among the others. But it was in the days of Edgar, Edward (king and martyr), and Æthelred, Kings of the English, that this pious and energetic man had his being, and he died in the fourteenth year of the reign of the same Æthelred].⁶⁴

While the *Liber* draws implicit connections between the hero and the *reges Anglorum*, it also roots the hero in a specific place; while Byrhtnoth is one of Anglo-Saxon England's greatest heroes, his final resting place—his body's posthumous *epel*—is in Ely. The story of Byrhtnoth and the Battle of Maldon is at once national and local. The Old English *Battle of Maldon* cites the skirmish as an event that unites those from all over England and portrays the hero as the king's representative, who defends the country against invaders. The post-Conquest *Liber*, on the other hand, appropriates it as a tale that lends glory to Ely; its treatment of the battle and its aftermath suggests that local matters are valued above national events.

⁶⁴ E. O. Blake, ed., *Liber Eliensis* (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1962), 182–83. Translation in Janet Fairweather, trans., *Liber Eliensis* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2005), 162–63.

Post-Conquest English Identity

In spite of the political and social fracturing of Englishness after the Norman Conquest, the idea of England remained strong in the collective imagination.⁶⁵ As it had been before the Conquest, this concept of Englishness was labile; over the course of the twelfth century, the Normans themselves adopted an English identity.⁶⁶ The constitutive elements that form the ‘image of ... communion’ in post-Conquest medieval England have been the topic of much scholarship. In his seminal monograph, *England the Nation*, Thorlac Turville-Petre avers that Englishness was largely defined by language.⁶⁷ Ideas of homeland play into this concept: the Anglo-Normans chose a version of history ‘based on homeland’ rather than ‘the alternative version emphasising race that Wace had offered them in his *Roman de Rou*, where he traced the Danish ancestry of the dukes of Normandy’.⁶⁸ Turville-Petre argues that the polemic of nationalism relies on exclusion, and this exclusion comes in the form of ethnic or racial tensions: in order to imagine the English nation, English writers and historians had to ignore the fact that the country was an amalgam of Celts, Romans, Germanic tribes, Danes, and Normans.⁶⁹

Approaching the question from a more historiographical standpoint, John Gillingham comes to a similar conclusion. Where previously the world had been divided into Christian and non-Christian groups, in the twelfth century England’s Celtic neighbours provided a culture against which the English could define their identity. This view, espoused by William of Malmesbury, rapidly took hold and became dominant in

⁶⁵ See Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, 268.

⁶⁶ See above, footnote 11.

⁶⁷ Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*, 11.

⁶⁸ Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*, 6.

⁶⁹ Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*, 97.

the thirteenth century.⁷⁰ The English defined themselves as civilised and chivalric, in opposition to Celtic ‘barbarity’.

Laura Ashe, meanwhile, accentuates the role played by the English people’s relationship to the land and the law. Ashe marks the years around the 1170s as an important time for English identity, when ideas of *Normanitas* began to give way to Englishness. In part this was because of the development of English Common Law, which was inherently tied to the land.⁷¹ The relationship between territory and English identity remains a large focus of her argument as she posits that the ‘transhistorical value of the land’, as it remains the same in spite of shifting signifiers, endows it with an imagined wholeness: ‘the permanence of the land, and the people’s bond with the land, is seen to function as a coding for their access to ideological truths’.⁷² She argues that the land of England is the ultimate object of loyalty and the standard against which all moral values are measured.⁷³

Patricia Ingham writes that ‘[t]he nation is always an illusion, a fantasy of wholeness’.⁷⁴ A shared identity relies on a perception or an image of sameness, even if it

⁷⁰ Gillingham, ‘Conquering the Barbarians’, 69–70; R. R. Davies, *Domination and Conquest: The Experience of Ireland, Scotland and Wales 1100–1300* (Cambridge: CUP, 1990), 3, 112–19.

⁷¹ Laura Ashe, *Fiction and History in England, 1066–1200* (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), 11–14. For further discussion of land tenure and the formation of common law, see George Garnett, *Conquered England: Kingship, Succession, and Tenure 1066–1166* (Oxford: OUP, 2007). For legal distinctions between the Normans and English in the post-Conquest period, see George Garnett, “‘Franci et Angli’: The Legal Distinctions Between Peoples After the Conquest”, *ANS* 8 (1986): 109–137.

⁷² Ashe, *Fiction and History*, 63–64.

⁷³ Ashe, *Fiction and History*, 119–20. Christopher Cannon, using *Laȝamon’s Brut* as his primary source, makes a similar case for the formation of English identity in relation to the land, its laws, and its ever-changing history. He argues that the law was understood to be intimately related to the land; ‘new provisions were not drafted but *discovered* in the land still and stable beneath the drafter’s feet, [...] law did not originate with people, but in the structure of the land itself’. See Christopher Cannon, *The Grounds of English Literature* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), 53–81, quotation at 74.

⁷⁴ Patricia Ingham, *Sovereign Fantasies: Arthurian Romance and the Making of Britain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 17. For additional studies of English nationhood in the High and Late Middle Ages, see Susan Crane, *Insular Romance: Politics, Faith, and Culture in Anglo-Norman and Middle English Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); Geraldine Heng, *Empire of Magic: Medieval Romance and the Politics of Cultural Fantasy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003); Kathy Lavezzo, *Angels on the Edge of the World: Geography, Literature, and English Community, 1000–1534* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 2006); Lavezzo, ‘Introduction’, vii–xix; Diane Speed, ‘The Construction of the Nation in Medieval English Romance’, in *Readings in Medieval English Romance* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1999), 135–57; Warren, *History on the Edge*.

does not exist. To imagine a ‘nation’, therefore, requires an act of forgetting, a collective amnesia, with regard to divisions within a culture or territory. To forge the ‘imagined community’, individual and regional differences must, to a degree, be subordinated to an overarching idea of national unity and homogeneity.

National stories and histories can be used to buttress this construction of unity and shared cultural identity, using the rhetoric of exclusion, generalisation, and simplification to impose a national consciousness upon a disparate and diverse population.⁷⁵ The texts highlighted in this thesis are often read as national or nationalistic texts, as ‘Matter of England’ romances (or their precursors), or as texts that present a history of the English.⁷⁶ I do not attempt to simplify the identities presented by categorising them as ‘national’ or otherwise; instead, I offer nuances and complexity within the geographic and cultural identities they present. History is narrative, and to understand the experiences and circumstances that underpin a nation’s historical narrative, it is important to read with an eye towards the currents that run below the more overt claims of national cohesion. For example, while the hero of *Gui de Warewic* is unquestionably a Christian and an English knight, what are the other characteristics the text puts forward to define his identity? How can the relationships between these

⁷⁵ Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*, 1, 97. This can be seen in accounts of the Battle of the Standard (1138), which depict the English and the Normans uniting to defeat Scottish forces. The resulting unit, as presented in Henry of Huntington’s *Historia Anglorum*, sees the group’s similarities overcoming its internal differences as all those on the English side, regardless of ethnicity, were united in political loyalty to the English king: ‘Tota namque gens Normannorum et Anglorum in una acie circum Standard conglobata persistebant immobiles’ [‘The whole Norman and English host stood its ground unmoved, in one dense formation round the Standard’]. The English were not unique in accomplishing this: there was a similar brokering of internal peace on the Scottish side, which was composed of Normans, Germans, Englishmen, Northumbrians, Cumbrians, inhabitants of Teviotdale and Lothian, Picts, and, of course, Scots. *Historia Anglorum*, x.8–9; Davies, *The First English Empire*, 61.

⁷⁶ See Rosalind Field, ‘The Curious History of the Matter of England’, in *Boundaries in Medieval Romance*, ed. Neil Cartlidge (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2008), 29–48, especially 33–38; Jane Zatta, ‘Anglo-Norman Literature in the Development of Middle English Literature’, in *Dictionary of Literary Biography: Old and Middle English*, ed. Jeffrey Heltermann and Jerome Mitchell (Detroit: Gale Research Inc., 1994), 146:472–78.

identities help us to understand the complexity of Englishness, and affect our reading of the text?

Michel de Certeau writes that the process of writing and understanding history—including national history—requires a ‘selection between what can be understood and what must be forgotten in order to obtain the representation of present intelligibility’.⁷⁷ Identities, histories, and regional cultures must ‘become unthinkable in order for a new identity to become thinkable’.⁷⁸ Similarly, Homi Bhabha argues that this process of forgetting allows a new conception of the collective self to be born: ‘Being obliged to forget becomes the basis for remembering the nation, peopling it anew, imagining the possibility of other contending and liberating forms of cultural identification’.⁷⁹ Michelle Warren discusses this idea in relation to the division of Britain by Brutus’s sons, a ‘founding wound’ that must be forgotten to figure the island of Britain as a unified whole—a forgetting that continually fails.⁸⁰ De Certeau adds that ‘whatever this new understanding of the past holds to be irrelevant—shards created by the selection of materials, remainders left aside by an explication—comes back, despite everything, on the edges of discourse or in its rifts and crannies: “resistances”, “survivals”, or delays discreetly perturb the pretty order of a line of “progress” or a system of interpretation’.⁸¹ This ‘return of the repressed’ is a testament to the cultural complexity that is suppressed when the nation is imagined into being.⁸² To fully understand the historical and cultural currents of the Middle Ages, it is important that, in the words of Carolyn Dinshaw (following Homi Bhabha and Walter Benjamin), we undergo a process of ‘restructuring

⁷⁷ Michel de Certeau, *Writing of History*, trans. Tom Conley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 4.

⁷⁸ De Certeau, *Writing of History*, 4.

⁷⁹ Homi Bhabha, ‘DissemiNation: time, narrative, and the margins of the modern nation’ in *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi K. Bhabha (New York: Routledge, 1990), 291–322, at 311.

⁸⁰ Warren, *History on the Edge*, 15.

⁸¹ De Certeau, *Writing of History*, 4.

⁸² De Certeau, *Writing of History*, 14.

tradition, discovering other moments, finding new kinds of time in which other voices can be heard in official national historical narratives'.⁸³ These moments are those that do not 'respect borders, positions, rules[;] The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite', according to Julia Kristeva, or those that Mikhail Bakhtin has termed the carnivalesque: the unstructured, the unofficial, uncensored, irrepressible.⁸⁴ By examining the inherent yet suppressed complexity of 'national' narratives, or the intrusive ideas of more local texts, a much fuller picture of Englishness is allowed to emerge.

England Unbound

In his introduction to *Cultural Diversity in the British Middle Ages*, Jeffrey Jerome Cohen writes that the aim of his edited volume is to address aspects of Britain's multiculturalism in order to 'discover moments when familiar and bounded space erupts with *infinita regna*, kingdoms without number'.⁸⁵ In principle, this project strives to find similar moments and spaces. However, one key difference is that I question whether England is a 'bounded space' at all. Fixed borders did not exist in the Middle Ages in the same way as they do today, especially on England's northern and western peripheries.⁸⁶ Even its eastern and southern reaches, girded by sea and topographically demarcated, were part of other networks of cultural exchange and encounter, notably with the Danes and the French, mediated through trade and travel. The places that determine whether

⁸³ Carolyn Dinshaw, *Getting Medieval: Sexualities and Communities, Pre- and Postmodern* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), 18.

⁸⁴ Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 4; Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, trans. Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1984). See also Thomas J. Farrell, 'Introduction: Bakhtin, Liminality, and Medieval Literature', in *Bakhtin and Medieval Voices*, ed. Thomas J. Farrell (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1995), 1–14.

⁸⁵ Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, 'Introduction: Infinite Realms', in *Cultural Diversity in the British Middle Ages: Archipelago, Island, England*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 1–16, at 8.

⁸⁶ Nora Berend, 'Medievalists and the Notion of the Frontier', *Medieval History Journal* 2 (1999): 55–72, at 66

England is a bounded space—that is, its boundaries—are revealed to be those areas where English identity is most likely to touch, slip into, or merge with another cultural identity. By examining the texts and literatures that emerge from these regions, or from moments of cultural slippage, an England comes into view that is *unbounded*; it spills over its coasts or ‘borders’ and lets others in; it is connected in multifarious ways to other parts of the world and is defined by those relationships.

This thesis envisages a border not as a precise geographic line or as a fixed boundary that separates two distinct peoples or cultures, but as an event or a liminal space unto itself. It is a process of cultural meeting, whether civil or hostile, which defines the dynamics between two groups. To illustrate the way that borders function, it may be helpful to draw on a symbolic example: the ancient ritual of ‘beating the bounds’, which provided a community with a method of mapping the limits of their parish.⁸⁷ Each year on Rogation Day, the members of the community would process around their territorial borders, stopping at landmarks—trees, ditches, hills, or streams—where the children present would undergo a variety of painful rites; they would be beaten with tree branches or thrown into the water, abused by the local landscape itself, so that these landmarks remained forever imprinted in their memories as the limits of their community’s territory.⁸⁸ This ritualistic mapping not only encouraged parishioners to develop a keen sense of community identity, tied directly to the geographic configurations of the land and the natural environment in which they lived, but also created a sense of ‘here’ and ‘us’ through a knowledge of where the limits of those

⁸⁷ For a history of parish boundaries, see Norman J. Pounds, *A History of the English Parish* (Cambridge: CUP, 2000). The origins of this folk ritual are unknown, but most parishes stopped the ceremony after official maps, such as the Ordnance Survey, were introduced. However, in recent years the act of walking a parish’s boundaries has experienced a revival. See Ben Smith’s account of ‘beating the bounds’ in Throwleigh Parish in *Beating the Bounds: Exploring Borders and Scale in Contemporary British Environmental Poetry* (unpublished Doctoral thesis, University of Exeter, 2012), 4–8. See also Michael Houseman, ‘Painful Places: Ritual Encounters with One’s Homelands’, *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 4, no. 3 (1998): 447–67.

⁸⁸ See Pounds, *The English Parish*, 69.

concepts could be found. Suffering, pain, and distress were the natural consequences of passing out of the bounds of one's own land and into the realm beyond home; borders were a place of trauma, a point beyond which members of the community no longer belonged. Michael Uebel writes that 'such rituals also dramatized the neutrality of the boundary itself, the place where the child was momentarily disoriented by being beaten or dunked. A boundary stream became a synecdoche for "the whole world," the region of the known while remaining itself, at least symbolically, ambiguous'.⁸⁹

Crucially, however, the border is also a space of meeting. Because parish boundaries were largely defined by the topography of the landscape, the landmarks used to define one parish were often shared with the neighbouring parish. A particular tree, for instance, could be the meeting point of several parishes. This meeting was not always in the abstract. Because the beating of the bounds was often conflated with Rogation Day rituals, and thus the perambulation would occur on a designated day, neighbouring parishes would often encounter one another. 'One can visualise the jeering and insults that would have been exchanged', Norman Pounds writes, 'leading ... to scuffles and on at least one recorded occasion, to a pitched battle in which banners and processional crosses were used as weapons'.⁹⁰ These moments of meeting are integral to the definition of identity. As De Certeau writes:

bodies can only be distinguished where the 'contacts' ('*touches*') of amorous or hostile struggles are inscribed on them. This is a paradox of the frontier: created by contacts, the points of difference between two bodies are their common points. Conjunction and disjunction are inseparable in them.⁹¹

This highlights the dual function of the border: it is both a divider and a bridge, a place of meeting and separation, of danger and opportunity. The edges of a child's mapped world

⁸⁹ Uebel, *Ecstatic Transformation*, 22.

⁹⁰ Pounds, *The English Parish*, 78.

⁹¹ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1984), 127.

signify the beyond and yet serve to keep the child within bounds. The river can be used to signify the edge of ‘here’ and the beginning of ‘there’ simultaneously. This curious space of the border, as a space of pain and danger, forbidding transgression and trespass into the unknown, is that which divides home from away, and yet also signals a threshold between these two spaces, the point at which home and away meet. Beating the bounds both solidifies and unravels the boundary between places.

Drawing on the idea of the border as a space of both connection and conflict, it is important to consider the implications this has for the creation of space and identity. Nora Berend remarks that frontier zones are, broadly speaking, ‘geographical and territorial boundaries, peripheral zones of a society or buffer-states between great powers; abstract, ideological frontiers may be religious, cultural, or linguistic’.⁹² The border is a concept that connotes a geographical space, a landscape, a region, but it also signifies a cultural phenomenon. Mary Louise Pratt defines a contact zone as a ‘social space where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination— such as colonialism and slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out across the globe today’.⁹³ This is important because it suggests that contact zones endure even after the initial moment of contact; they are in a state of ongoing negotiation. Although Pratt’s idea of the contact zone is imagined within a colonial dynamic, it can equally be applied to any situation that ‘shifts the center of gravity and point of view’ and focuses on the ‘co-presence’ of two interlocking narratives.⁹⁴ Thus, a borderland is a space that has a geographical meaning and a cultural one, and therefore must be analysed in both terms: through the creation and

⁹² Berend, ‘Medievalists’, 68.

⁹³ Marie Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 2008), 7.

⁹⁴ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes* 8.

experience of a space, and through the cultural identities present and emergent from that space.

Boundaries therefore provide not the outer limit of an area of critical enquiry, but a starting point. It is through an examination of borders that a place —England, in this case—can be understood fully. Doreen Massey writes that space is ‘constituted through interactions, from the immensity of the global to the intimately tiny’.⁹⁵ To enclose a place in boundaries is to do it an injustice, to see only a small part of it, out of context; ‘we need to look outwards from a location to discover all the networks, the histories, the relationships, and peoples who have passed in and out of a location, building it in materials, imaginings, and memory as a place.’⁹⁶ In attempting to understand England, we must eschew myopic studies of the ‘nation’ and reframe it as an interconnected, unrestricted space that houses an array of meanings, experiences, and identities. The edges of the country reveal spaces and circumstances where English identity can be articulated, or where it can disappear.

A paradox emerges from the borderlands: a borderland is defined by its condition as locale that delimits a particular space, a single, coherent geopolitical unit that carries with it its own identity. Yet by creating new, intercultural identities, the border simultaneously undermines the integrity of the identity it strives to contain. Thus the border zone takes on a double life, with the experience of the boundary contradicting its purpose. It is at the border that the limits of a country are defined, and yet it is in this space that the definition of the country is challenged and demands the most complexity. By embracing this twofold meaning, we can read texts from the borderlands as negotiating between upholding the hegemony of the dominant powers, and undermining

⁹⁵ Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage Publications, 2005), 9.

⁹⁶ Megan Cassidy-Welch, ‘Space and Place in Medieval Contexts’, *Parergon* 27, no. 2 (2010): 1–12, at 2.

it. They thus instantiate the border upon which they are situated, and contain its paradoxical nature.

The ideas expressed in this project can also be thought of in terms of unbounded culture. The mapping of a culture onto a place fails to acknowledge or account for cultural differences within a locality. “Multiculturalism” is both a feeble acknowledgement of the fact that cultures have lost their moorings in definite places and an attempt to subsume this plurality of cultures within the framework of a national identity.’⁹⁷ As Anne Phillips notes, ‘cultures are made of people’; ‘people and their ideas move. Trade, migration, the forcible removal of millions of people from one continent to another, and the more peaceful exchange of literatures and ideas (all along predating what is currently labelled as globalization)’ drive cultural contact.⁹⁸ Intermarriage, movement, warfare and trade were all central to medieval English life. A territorial space is neither effective at containing a culture, nor is it effective at keeping other ideas, norms, or behaviours from infringing on that culture. Crucially, this diversity within a space and a space’s inability to bind a culture to it does not negate or dilute its cultural integrity; English identity has the ability to expand to encompass a variety of meanings.

Much work has been undertaken to understand the identities born from cultural interactions, most notably by Bhabha, who claims that colonised peoples tackle their oppression through cultural hybridity—that is, a mixing between the two cultures to form a new culture—preventing the colonisers from eradicating or fully assimilating an indigenous culture.⁹⁹ This process affects colonisers as well as the colonised. Both

⁹⁷ Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, ‘Beyond “Culture”: Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference’, *Cultural Anthropology* 7, no. 1 (1992): 6–23, at 7.

⁹⁸ Anne Phillips, *Multiculturalism Without Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 33.

⁹⁹ Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004), 112–13. The idea of ‘hybridity’ has a fraught and troubling history. Originally a term used by botanists to describe the product of cross-breeding plants, it was used by the nineteenth-century right wing to express the crossing of people of different “races”. However, race is not a biological category. This thesis will use the term ‘hybridity’ to denote the process whereby two cultures intermingle to produce a coherent whole. For a further discussion

groups maintain distinctiveness, but begin to take on aspects or traces of the other, undermining the colonial culture's claims of authority or authenticity. Bhabha terms this point of cultural meeting a 'third space', a productive space where discourse becomes unshackled from colonial authority and where cultural differences become blurred.¹⁰⁰ The inhabitants of the border exist in a space that is '*neither the One ... nor the Other ... but something else besides* which contests the terms and territories of both'.¹⁰¹ The last part of this statement is, for the purposes of this thesis, the most important: hybridity is ultimately an impossibility because it undermines the differences between the categories it purports to combine. Robert Young articulates this succinctly: 'hybridity here becomes a third term which can never in fact *be* third because, as a monstrous inversion, a miscreated perversion of its progenitors, it exhausts the differences between them.'¹⁰² Although this will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Three, it applies to the project as a whole: in the post-Conquest texts discussed here, Englishness takes on so many different meanings, whether local or cross-cultural, that it is denied the monolithicism necessary for hybridity to come into being. As such, other kinds of geographic identities are prevalent in borderlands, ones that cannot simply be categorised as 'hybrid'.

Reading from the border is one way to restructure tradition and to rediscover the kinds of identities or texts that have been 'forgotten', or those that challenge readers by failing to offer any easy answers about identity in the High Middle Ages. It is on the

of the history of hybridity, see Robert Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture, and Race* (London: Routledge, 1995), especially 5–23.

¹⁰⁰ Gloria Anzaldúa, writing from her personal experience of life on the USA-Mexico border, offers a subjective account of what it means to exist in a marginal area: 'the lifeblood of two worlds merging to form a third country—a border culture. Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish *us* from *them*. ... A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. ... The prohibited and forbidden are its inhabitants. *Los atravesados* live here: the squint-eyed, the perverse, the queer, the troublesome, the mongrel, the mulato, the half-breed, the half dead; in short, those who cross over, pass over, or go through the confines of the "normal".' Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands: La Frontera: The new Mestiza*, 4th ed. (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2012), 25.

¹⁰¹ Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 28. Italics in the original.

¹⁰² Young, *Colonial Desire*, 22.

borders of England and of Englishness that both ideas—nation and nationality—begin to lose their meanings and adopt other significances as the boundaries that seek to define them ebb and flow, and as overlaps between territories and identities occur with greater frequency. As more people come to define themselves as English and this category becomes increasingly plural, it also becomes increasingly difficult to circumscribe. These ‘representational swerves and slippages, partial and competing and always irreconcilable narrations’ require us to question and challenge conceptions of the Englishness we may attribute to those in medieval England, and replace it with Englishnesses—a category that allows for multiple definitions of the same cultural identity.¹⁰³

Similarly, Paul Strohm, in his essay on ‘Postmodernism and History’, identifies the postmodern method of reading as one that seeks hidden, marginalised, or jettisoned alternatives to dominant histories, one that acknowledges the often-paradoxical multiplicity and complexity of the past. He argues that this kind of historiography is one

in which muffled or swaddled possibilities are not just glimpsed during brief forays into the depths ... but are, in effect, raised to the surface. They are instated *alongside* the privileged categorizations to which they are originally sacrificed. The effect of postmodernist historiography is not, then, finally, to probe the (exotic) depths but the restore the variegation, the fully contradictory variety, of the historical surface.¹⁰⁴

While, perhaps, the terming of this as *postmodern* historiography may be disconcerting to some historically sensitive scholars of the medieval period, it is not an entirely anachronistic approach. It does not seek to create complexity where there is none, but to embrace the contradictions and pluralities inherent within a culture, which are found in a pre- as well as post-Enlightenment world. Furthermore, the questions asked by this kind of reading are not without precedent in the texts of the time: even William of Malmesbury claims that he wished to find a middle ground between the Norman and

¹⁰³ Paul Strohm, *Theory and the Premodern Text* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 160.

¹⁰⁴ Strohm, *Theory*, 152–54, quotation at 153.

English accounts of William the Conqueror when recounting the Norman Conquest of England. He writes that the Normans praise William beyond all justification and that the English unreasonably hate him.

Ego autem, quia utriusque gentis sanguinem traho, dicendi tale
temperamentum seruabo: bene gesta, quantum cognoscere potui, sine fuco
palam efferam; perperam acta, quantum suffitiat scientiae, leuiter et quasi
transeunter attingam, ut nec mendax culpetur historia, nec illum nota inuram
censoria cuius cuncta pene, etsi non laudari, excusari certe possunt opera

[For my part, having the blood of both nations in my veins, I propose in my narrative to keep a middle path: his good deeds, so far as they have come within my knowledge, I will publish unadorned; his misdeeds I will touch on lightly and as it were in passing, so far as it is needed to make them known. Thus my history will not be accused of falsehood, nor shall I be passing sentence on a man whose actions even when they do not merit praise, at least almost always admit of excuse].¹⁰⁵

This candid description of William of Malmesbury's methods not only lends him authority and credibility, but also casts a harsh light on the choices made in the writing of history; it is, by nature, a culturally, socially, and politically biased process, underpinned by ideological drives and personal motivations. That William of Malmesbury claims to be impartial merely reveals the partisanship inherent in all works, whether they are histories or merely claim to be historically based. Not all writers are as forthcoming about the choices they have made. Rather, the communities, identities, and spaces ejected from narratives resurface in other ways: through monstrous representations, curious spatial practices, and inconsistencies.

Choice of Texts

As the *Liber Eliensis* judiciously notes, 'in breui velut repente facta plurimorum et tempora comprehendi non posse, nisi lectorem magis fasidiret et ingrueret' ['the actions and times of large numbers of people cannot be summarized briefly and succinctly

¹⁰⁵ *GRA*, 1:iii.pref.1.

without causing the reader very great disgust and annoyance’].¹⁰⁶ To avoid doing disservice to the inhabitants of medieval England, this project focuses on relatively small groups of people, taking a localised approach to England in order to understand how identity operates in the literature of this period.

I have chosen not to draw boundaries between historiography and romance, primarily because a solid division between genres did not exist in the period in question. While medieval writers may have understood the differences between the two modes of writing, they frequently intertwined with one another, and the distinctions between reality and fiction were particularly plastic.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, both often served a similar ideological purpose. As Stein notes, in England and France the two genres ‘grow out of the same cultural need and intend to do the same cultural work’.¹⁰⁸ That is, they are both interested in promoting the intelligibility of a secular world, motivated by secular priorities, regardless of how interwoven these may be with religious discourse. Although medieval writers were able to conceptualise the differences between *historia* and *fabula*, especially in terms of their rhetorical distinctions, the boundaries between the two were not as tightly guarded as they are today.¹⁰⁹ Romance reflects contemporary concerns and can function as a historical document, just as twelfth- and thirteenth-century historiography often impinges on the territory ascribed by modern scholars to romance. The story of Hereward occurs in Gaimar’s *Estoire des Engleis* and the *Gesta Herwardi*. The former claims to be a history of the English, while the latter is possibly the earliest extant romance, even though it is not francophone and therefore does not fulfil the

¹⁰⁶ *Liber Eliensis*, 2; Fairweather, 2.

¹⁰⁷ Nancy Partner, *Serious Entertainments: The Writing of History in Twelfth-Century England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 3–8, 183–93.

¹⁰⁸ Robert Stein, *Reality Fictions: Romance, History, and Governmental Authority, 1025–1180* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 2.

¹⁰⁹ For in-depth discussions on the relationship between history and romance, see D. H. Green, *The Beginnings of Medieval Romance: Fact and Fiction, 1150–1220* (Cambridge: CUP, 2002); Ashe, *Fiction and History*; Gabrielle M. Spiegel, *Romancing the Past: The Rise of Vernacular Prose Historiography in Thirteenth-Century France* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993).

original definition of romance. Similarly, the story of Haveloc is widely regarded as a romance, but many in the Middle Ages took it to be historical.¹¹⁰ *Fouke le Fitz Waryn* bridges the two genres by mixing elements from both and blending historically verifiable accounts of life in the Marches with episodes of dragon slaying, battles with demonic giants, and chess-playing churls. *Gui de Warewic* and *Boeve de Haumtone* may have been entirely fabricated, but they can shed light on contemporary concerns and events, especially the Crusades.

This thesis takes geography and subject matter, rather than date, as the primary criteria for the selection of texts. This is both due to the limited availability of texts that emerge from situations of cultural contact, and because many of the texts that come from these moments are difficult to date with confidence. *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*, explored in Chapter Three, is a prime example of this: the verse original was probably from the mid-thirteenth century, but the extant prose version dates to the first half of the fourteenth century.¹¹¹ The date range for this thesis is thus broad by necessity; it covers the period from the Norman Conquest to the beginning of the Hundred Years War. These two events bookend a period of fluctuating English identities; 1066 brought the fracturing of Anglo-Saxon England, and the Hundred Years War is often credited with prompting the formation of a sense of English unity.¹¹²

There are, of course, other texts that could have been explored in this project, or would have merited a more in-depth examination. Most notably, the *Vita Haroldi* and the *Romance of Horn*, both of which have been threaded through these chapters as

¹¹⁰ For more on this see below, 130 and 134.

¹¹¹ See Helen Fulton, 'Literature of the Welsh Gentry: Uses of the Vernacular in Medieval Wales', in *Vernacularity in England and Wales, c.1300–1550*, ed. Elisabeth Salter and Helen Wicker (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 199–223, at 220; Ralph Hanna, 'The Matter of Fulk: Romance and History in the Marches,' *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 110, no. 3 (2011): 337–58, at 354–57.

¹¹² See Sharon Kinoshita, *Medieval Boundaries: Rethinking Difference in Old French Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 3. For a study of Anglo-French cultural relations during the Hundred Years War, see Butterfield, *The Familiar Enemy*.

connectors, lack independent discussion. This is primarily because neither text has a definite geographic point of origin.¹¹³

Furthermore, a discussion of Anglo-Scottish identity is beyond the scope of this thesis, especially since it would have necessitated an analysis of Scotland's own internal ethnic differences and of its place in a much wider network of international relationships.¹¹⁴ The Scandinavians had a huge influence on Northern Scotland, while Scottish kings in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were seen to be, and saw themselves as, French in their manners, language, and culture.¹¹⁵ The Anglo-Scottish border was even less well defined than the Anglo-Welsh one in the twelfth century, and there was less clearly a 'Marcher' culture than there was a 'Northumbrian' or 'Cumbrian' one.¹¹⁶ While these regional identities would be fascinating to explore, it is difficult to find texts from these areas, and those that do exist—such as the *Awntyrs off Arthure*—emerged later in the Middle Ages.

¹¹³ Judith Weiss has postulated that *Horn* was written in Dublin for Henry II, and may have provided the kernel for a discussion of English identity in Ireland, along with the Kildare poems of London, British Library, MS Harley 913 and the *Song of Dermot and the Earl*. However, the evidence locating *Horn* to Ireland has not been entirely conclusive. See Judith Weiss, 'Thomas and the Earl: Literary and Historical Contexts for the *Romance of Horn*', in *Tradition and Transformation in Medieval Romance*, ed. Rosalind Field (Cambridge: DS Brewer, 1999), 1–13. The *Song of Dermot and the Earl* has been discussed at length a literary context in Ashe, *Fiction and History*, 159–204. For historical discussions of the English presence in Ireland, Marie Therese Flanagan, *Irish Society, Anglo-Norman Settlers, Angevin Kingship: Interactions in Ireland in the Late Twelfth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998) and Robin Frame's essays, 'Ireland after 1169: Barriers to Acculturation on an "English" Edge', in *Norman Expansion: Connections, Continuities, and Contrasts*, ed. Keith Stringer and Andrew Jotischky (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 115–41, and "'Les Engleis Néés en Irlande": The English Political Identity in Medieval Ireland', *TRHS* 6, no. 3 (1993): 83–103. See also James Muldoon, *Identity on the Medieval Irish Frontier* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003); Robin Frame, *Colonial Ireland, 1169–1369* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2012); James Lydon, 'The Middle Nation' in *The English in Medieval Ireland*, ed. James Lydon, (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy 1984), 1–26.

¹¹⁴ This region has been explored fruitfully in *The Anglo-Scottish Border and the Shaping of Identity, 1300–1600*, ed. Mark P. Bruce and Katherine H. Terrell (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) and Katherine H. Terrell, 'Subversive Histories: Strategies of Identity in Scottish Historiography', in *Cultural Diversity in the British Middle Ages*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 153–72. John Spence has also discussed this Anglo-Scottish identity in relation to Thomas Grey's *Scalacronica*, in *Reimagining History in Anglo-Norman Prose Chronicles* (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2013). For a discussion of later literature, see K. J. Kesselring, "'Berwick is Our England": Local and National Identities in an Elizabethan Border Town', in *Local Identities in Late Medieval and Early Modern England*, ed. Norman L. Jones and Daniel R. Woolf (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 92–112.

¹¹⁵ Clanchy, *England and its Rulers*, 171; Robert Bartlett, *England under the Norman and Angevin Kings* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 101.

¹¹⁶ See Bartlett, *Norman and Angevin Kings*, 82–83.

Aside from some references to, and brief discussions of, texts in other languages, especially Old and Middle English, the majority of texts discussed are in Anglo-Latin or Anglo-Norman. There are two reasons for this. The first is practical: surviving texts written in the post-Conquest period are overwhelmingly written in languages other than English. The romance of *Waldef* articulates the dynamics between anglophone and francophone literature in the post-Conquest period succinctly:

Ceste estoire ...
 Mult iert amee des Engleis,
 Des petites genz e des granz,
 Desqu'a la prise des Normanz.
 Quant li Norman la terre pristrent
 Les granz estoires puis remistrent
 Qui des Engleis estoient fetes,
 Qui des aucuns ierent treites,
 Pur la gent qui dunc diverserunt
 E les languages si changerunt.
 Puis i ad asez translatees,
 Qui mult sunt de plusurs amees,
 ... Ces gestes, qu'erent en engleis,
 Translatees sun en franceis ¹¹⁷

[This *estoire* ... was much loved by the English people, humble and great, until the Norman Conquest. When the Normans seized the land, the great *estories* that the English had made were displaced in favour of others because of the different population and linguistic change. ... These *gestes* which were in English are now translated into French] ¹¹⁸

Although the veracity of the claim that *Waldef* was translated from an English original is widely disputed (indeed, most scholars dismiss it entirely), this does not negate the sentiment expressed: literature in French was more popular amongst the new francophone elite than literature in English. ¹¹⁹ Two of the texts discussed in this thesis were—or claim to have been—translated from English into other languages. Geffrei Gaimar wrote his *Estoire des Engleis*, in part, by translating the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*

¹¹⁷ *Le Roman de Waldef*, ed. A. J. Holden (Cologne-Geneva: Fontation Martin Bodmer, 1984), 33–54.

¹¹⁸ Trans. in Rosalind Field, 'Waldef and the Matter of/with England', in *Medieval Insular Romance: Translation and Innovation*, ed. Judith Weiss, Jennifer Fellows, and Morgan Dickson (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2000), 25–40, at 33.

¹¹⁹ See Field, 'Waldef', 26.

into French for his Anglo-Norman patron. Similarly, the *Gesta Herwardi* cites Leofric the Deacon of Bourne's English account of Hereward's exploits as its source. The extant text claims that Leofric's version was translated into Latin and augmented with eyewitness accounts because too few of Ely's monks were adequately literate in English to fully understand the original: they are unable to extract information '[de] incognit[is] liter[is]' [from the unfamiliar/strange script].¹²⁰ This translation may have permitted both English and French monastic audiences in Ely to appreciate the text.¹²¹ Through their translations, these texts find new audiences.

The second reason for this linguistic choice is more critical to this study. As languages that transgressed political borders, French and Latin are more easily imagined as 'international' or intercultural languages. Ian Short regards Anglo-Norman literature as part of a larger body of francophone literature that spanned England and Europe, and hence cannot be regarded as nationally specific.¹²² Simon Gaunt writes: 'what were to become the dominant European languages and their literary traditions have often been viewed as coterminous with restrictive ideas of nation, or as an instrument of cultural imperialism or hegemony, but we tend to forget that a shared language may also instantiate a shared, supralocal identity.'¹²³ French was understood on both sides of the Channel as well as throughout continental Europe, French literature was very popular in Wales and Scotland, and francophone literary culture was booming in Flanders, Italy, and the eastern Mediterranean in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.¹²⁴ As such, the texts in

¹²⁰ S. H. Miller, ed., and W. D. Sweeting, trans., 'De Gestis Herwardi Saxonis', *Fenland notes and queries* 3 (1895): 7–72, at 8. My translation. This text will hereafter be referred to as *De Gestis* in the footnotes.

¹²¹ Hugh M. Thomas, 'The *Gesta Herwardi*, the English, and their Conquerors', *ANS* 21 (1998): 213–32, at 232.

¹²² Short, 'Language and Literature', 193, 206, 211–12.

¹²³ Simon Gaunt, 'French Literature Abroad: Towards an Alternative History of French Literature', *Interfaces* 1 (2015): 25–61, at 25–26.

¹²⁴ The 'Medieval Francophone Literary Culture Outside France' project has conducted research into manuscripts from these cultural centres. See, Medieval Francophone Literary Cultures, 'Medieval Francophone Literary Culture Outside France', Kings College London, University College London, and University of Cambridge, <http://www.medievalfrancophone.ac.uk/> (accessed 19 September, 2016).

this thesis do not only depict or reflect cultural contact: they are also available to be transported across borders and shared across cultures. This is evident in texts like *Boeve de Haumtone*, which was popular throughout Europe and was adapted by Welsh, Norse, French, Italian, Dutch, and Yiddish writers.¹²⁵

Chapter Breakdown

The first chapter of the thesis discusses the twelfth-century Anglo-Latin *Gesta Herwardi* and its depiction of the fracturing of English identity in the wake of the traumatic Norman Conquest. Examining the text's depiction of community, local stories, and the interaction between the English and the Normans, I argue that the *Gesta* mitigates the political and cultural upheaval of the Conquest by focusing on alternative, community-oriented nodal points around which the subjugated English might construct their identities. Specifically, the chapter focuses on Hereward's resistance to the Conquest and the construction of a Fenland identity in Ely.

Chapter Two sees the establishment of a regional history shared by the English, Danes, and Normans through Geffrei Gaimar's *Estoire des Engleis* and the Haveloc stories. In contrast to Chapter One, which discusses the primacy of the local at the expense of English identity, this chapter examines the interdependence of regionality and 'national' identity in Gaimar's history. I argue that by weaving together local stories from the two areas in which Gaimar was writing—Hampshire, which had been in the heartland of Wessex, and Lincolnshire, an area that retained an Anglo-Scandinavian identity into the twelfth century—the *Estoire des Engleis* not only reflects regional variation within England but also forges an inclusive English identity based on a shared regional mythology rather than ethnicity. By creating a text that connects region to nation

¹²⁵ *Boeve*'s lack of geographic fixity is further discussed in Chapter Four, 229–37.

through stories and histories, Gaimar creates a tangible and easily accessible gateway through which his Anglo-Norman patron could better understand English history and identity.

Focusing attention on the so-called ‘border story’ of *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*, Chapter Three investigates the textual establishment of a unique Marcher identity shared by the Welsh and the English. In turn, *Fouke* depicts its setting as the centre of a borderless Britain, the crucial hinge that unites England and Wales. Through this narrative process, the text simultaneously espouses the ideology of British political unity that Edward I used to justify his conquest of Wales and asserts a strong sense of regional importance and identity.

In order to gain a more thorough understanding of the unbounded nature of English identity, England must also be seen within a wider geographic context and as a part of a global network of religion, chivalry, travel, and trade. Taking *Gui de Warewic* and *Boeve de Haumtone* as primary case studies, the final chapter investigates how geographic identity is constructed outside England, and the forms that it takes. Narrating encounters between different religions or cultures, these texts loosen their ties to England as the protagonists come to identify more strongly with their own sense of foreignness or placelessness, both geographic and spiritual. *Gui* and *Boeve* offer their English audiences the opportunity to experience a sense of self-imposed exoticism, as they are encouraged to see their own country and their own identity from an external perspective. In these texts, England itself becomes a periphery and a part of a much larger whole. This chapter also briefly examines Thomas of Kent’s *Roman de toute chevalerie* and the Middle English *Richard Coer de Lyon*.

While critical theory—especially postcolonial theory—has informed this thesis, I have endeavoured to discuss medieval concepts of identity in terms that those in the High Middle Ages would have understood. I also engage with those who more directly

discuss cultural interactions in the literatures of the Middle Ages: Michelle Warren, Laura Ashe, Patricia Ingham, Sylvia Huot, Robert Bartlett, Sharon Kinoshita, and Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, among others.

Each chapter highlights a different form of cultural contact—conquest, migration, borderlands, and travel, respectively—and illustrates some of the shifting centres of English identity as the thesis broadens its view from a microcosmic perspective on a single locality, to a heterogeneous county, to a region that envisages a unified Britain, and finally to a macrocosmic understanding of England as a space of material and textual cultural contact and as a region on a global stage. Although each chapter is geographically distinct and thus these texts must be discussed on their own terms, a narrative nevertheless emerges. Taken together, they demonstrate that post-Conquest Englishness is constituted by a broad spectrum of diverse cultural identities, represented by a range of languages, customs, and geographic loyalties. These texts display a multinucleated society, and exhibit ‘the careful management of difference’ through a variety of strategies, from rebellions to assimilation or shifts in identity.¹²⁶ They are testament not only to the diverse identities present within England, but also to the unique ways particular regions conceive of and express their own identities. While ideas of collective or national identity are often said to be based on ideas of exclusion or defined in opposition to a foreign Other, these texts all ultimately treat their own version of English identity as inclusive or mutable, as something that is at once a central preoccupation and also unimportant in the face of experiential realities. As texts such as *Fouke* and *Boeve* show, in places where peoples of differing cultures meet and identities jostle together, ethnic differences are less important than shared values or social communalities. As places where people encounter one another, these regions are defined

¹²⁶ Huot, *Postcolonial Fictions*, 207.

by connection as well as antagonism. It is when Englishness is challenged or questioned that it can most readily be understood.

Chapter One

Coping with Conquest: Local Identity and the *Gesta Herwardi*

The decades following the Norman Conquest of England are often regarded as a time of intense national trauma.¹²⁷ Within months of the Battle of Hastings, the crown was firmly in Norman hands and the lands previously held by the English were redistributed amongst William the Conqueror's followers. Twelfth-century historian Orderic Vitalis describes the humiliation suffered by the English after their defeat:

Normannico fastu Angli opprimuntur; et præsidiis superbis qui regis monitus spernebant admodum iniuriabantur. Præfecti minores qui munitiones custodiebant; nobiles et mediocres indigenas iniustis exactionibus multisque contumeliis aggrauabant

[The English were groaning under the Norman yoke, and suffering oppressions from the proud lords who ignored the king's injunctions. The petty lords who were guarding the castles oppressed all the native inhabitants of high and low degree, and heaped shameful burdens on them].¹²⁸

Elisabeth van Houts argues that English writers suffered from the 'traumatic effects of shock' in response to the events that had recently befallen their country; they were too 'stunned' to write about the Conquest until well into the twelfth century. The *Gesta Herwardi*, written between 1109 and 1131 by a monk or clerk probably called Richard of Ely, is an exception to this assertion. It enacts an 'attempt to cope with the trauma of defeat' by means of epic narrative and through the depiction of heroic behaviour and 'honourable surrender'.¹²⁹ This chapter will show that the *Gesta* not only displays England's post-Conquest coping mechanisms through the repetition and remodelling of

¹²⁷ See Elisabeth van Houts, 'The Memory of 1066 in Written and Oral Traditions', *ANS* 19 (1997): 167–79; Van Houts, 'The Trauma of 1066', *History Today* 46, no. 10 (1996): 9–15; Michael Swanton, *Three Lives of the Last Englishmen* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1984), xiii; Treharne, *Living Through Conquest*, 91–93.

¹²⁸ *EHOV*, 2:IV.ii.171.

¹²⁹ Van Houts, 'Memory of 1066', 172–73. For a more complete discussion on the textual transmission of the *Gesta* and its possible dates, see Van Houts, 'Hereward and Flanders', *Anglo-Saxon England* 28 (1999): 201–23, at 202–4.

traumatic events, but also explores how individuals and communities adjust to political upheaval by recalibrating their identities. Robert Young observes that ‘fixity of identity is only sought in situations of instability and disruption, of conflict and change’; the *Gesta* exemplifies this by depicting its hero and his community retreating to a much more local sense of identity as a way of mitigating greater political changes sweeping over England.¹³⁰ The text also reveals the fragility of the eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon nation by presenting regions on the margins of England splintering off from the heartland after the Conquest, providing alternative, community-oriented nodal points around which the English people could construct their identities. Literary accounts of English resistance to the Norman Conquest, the *Gesta* chief among them, draw models of England vastly divergent from the unified nation under the late Anglo-Saxon kings discussed in the Introduction.¹³¹ They instead depict the Norman Conquest as the breaking point for the English state. In these texts, the country that emerges after the events of 1066 is fractured and fragmented, as the southwest, the Welsh Marches, Northumbria, Yorkshire, and the areas around East Anglia contest newly dominant political structures in England. The *Gesta* displays the post-Conquest embrace of regional identity as a way of coping with the trauma of the subjugation of Norman rule, and as a way of encouraging England’s new elite to remain responsible and respectful towards their subjects. This chapter will explore the consolidation of local identity in response to national upheaval by focusing on the *Gesta Herwardi*’s depiction of the effects of the Norman Conquest in the Fens. It will do so in four ways: first, by exploring how the story produces of a sense of place, especially in regard to Ely; secondly, by examining the text’s focus on community and local affairs; and then by discussing Hereward’s periods of exile and how specific aspects of the narrative structure contribute to the text’s production of English identity. Finally, it

¹³⁰ Young, *Colonial Desire*, 3.

¹³¹ See above, 8–20; Clanchy, *England and its Rulers*, 3; Carpenter, *Struggle for Mastery*, 3.

will briefly touch on the text's acknowledgement of cultural difference within Britain more generally, in order to show how a variety of local customs and regional identities are highlighted within the narrative. Ultimately, this discussion sheds light on how all geographic identities, even those tied to a politically unified—if culturally disparate—space like England, are filtered through local, experiential perspectives.

The English, the Normans, and the *Gesta Herwardi*

Local identity lies at the heart of the *Gesta Herwardi*. Most interpretations of the *Gesta* have read it as a response to English oppression under their new Norman rulers, but such readings have almost exclusively focused on the English as a united group occupying a uniform position throughout the country. Hugh Thomas argues that the text was written as an attempt to restore honour to the English after the humiliating loss of their country, and to counter anti-English sentiments that circulated in the twelfth century. Hereward's proto-chivalric heroism and military capabilities counterbalance and contradict the criticisms levelled against the English in this period. Henry of Huntingdon documents some of these opinions:

cum iam Domini iustam uoluntatem super Anglorum gentem Normanni complissent, nec iam uix aliquis princeps de progenie Anglorum esset in Anglia, sed omnes ad seruitutem et ad merorem redacti essent, ita etiam ut Anglicum uocari esset obprobrior

[when the Normans had fulfilled the just will of the Lord upon the English people, ... there was scarcely a noble of English descent in England, but all had been reduced to servitude and lamentation, and it was even disgraceful to be called English].¹³²

By depicting the English as 'worthy, civilized, and noble people capable of producing great chivalric heroes', the text espouses the idea that they 'should be treated honourably in their own country by the descendants of those who conquered them',

¹³² Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, vi.38.

thereby allowing both peoples to live together in peace and with mutual respect.¹³³ This argument has been most recently echoed by Dominique Battles, who claims that the *Gesta*, as an outlaw narrative, is preoccupied with righting political injustices and creating an ‘empowered Englishness’ through resistance.¹³⁴ Similarly, Rolf H. Bremmer suggests that the *Gesta* be placed among the Matter of England romances because it reflects an attempt to come to terms with the new political regime in England.¹³⁵ These interpretations, however, tacitly assume that Englishness is a monolithic identity that can be defended, and ignore the possible implications of regional and local geography on both the representations of Hereward’s actions and Richard of Ely’s motivation for composing—or translating, if we are to believe his prologue—the text.

Instead of highlighting a consistent or uniform national identity, Hereward’s rebellion against King William reflects the idea discussed above that not all of England’s provinces, especially those on the country’s margins, acknowledged the Battle of Hastings as a decisive Norman victory over England. This draws attention to the heterogeneous nature of the country and the fluidity of Englishness. The *Gesta* suggests that although all parts of England might be English, this does not imply a unity of ideology or political alliance. Because of this awareness of diversity, there is no suggestion that Hereward’s rebellion, which is positioned as the central axis of the text, is an attempt to expel the Normans from England in general; Hereward only strives to oust the Normans from Bourne and Ely. The text never questions William’s claim to the English throne, but rather questions the authority the crown has over local matters.

¹³³ Thomas, ‘The *Gesta Herwardi*’, 232. See also his monograph *The English and the Normans*.

¹³⁴ Dominique Battles, *Cultural Difference and Material Culture in Middle English Romance: Normans and Saxons* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 107–14 and 144.

¹³⁵ Rolf H. Bremmer, Jr., ‘The *Gesta Herewardi*: Transforming an Anglo-Saxon into an Englishman’, in *People and Texts: Relationships in Medieval Literature*, ed. Keith Busby and Thea Summerfield (Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi, 2007), 29–42, at 41.

Hereward's insurgence is motivated by the Normans' oppressive treatment of his family and neighbours; his actions are always impelled by local events. Hereward's eventual reinstatement to his former position at the end of the text, however, transforms the community into a simulacrum of pre-Conquest England; superficially, life is consistent and unchanged in spite of the shift in greater English political structures. For the community at Bourne, Hereward's repatriation negates the effects of the Conquest, and the text thus suggests that in moments of political crisis, when the entire political landscape of a nation undergoes change, regional and local affiliations become stronger. In order to cope with the trauma of political change, everyday life must be stabilised through the embrace of a more immediate community.

In his discussion of regional identity, Robert Barrett notes: 'Political crises may provide the centre with opportunities for the propagation of English identity, but they also give a region ... a chance to strengthen its own self-image.'¹³⁶ Because the *Gesta* pays little attention to the Norman invasion of England and instead focuses on the Norman invasion of Bourne and the siege of Ely, it is my contention that the text places its emphasis on the impact of the Conquest on a particular region, rather than explicitly on the nation as a whole. Instead of defending English identity, Hereward's actions serve to relocate power in Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire away from the central government, where it had been prior to the Conquest, to local authorities, the townspeople (Hereward's *vicini*), and the monks of Ely. The Fenlands are conquered on their own terms, in Ely, rather than in a remote battlefield in the south of England. Yet this interplay between region and *natio*, whereby England is composed of all the places within it, means that the Conquest cannot be fully complete without the Isle's

¹³⁶ Barrett, *Against All England*, 20. This is not to discount the importance of these political shifts on the creation of the nation, but merely to underline that regional identity and national identity can coexist with a variety of other identities, and that one identity need not be strengthened at the expense of another.

submission. In the *Gesta*, the region is given autonomy, yet simultaneously it takes on so much importance that it becomes synecdochal for the nation.

As a text primarily concerned with the defence of the region in opposition to central powers, the *Gesta*'s conclusion suggests that in order for England to be strong, regional and local needs must be taken into account. The author is unable to rewrite the outcome of the siege of Ely, and ultimately the depiction of the monks' surrender reinforces the Norman claim to England. Since even those who resist Norman rule capitulate to William's forces, Hereward's rebellion is politically futile; he does not succeed in expelling the Normans from the country or even in significantly damaging their hold on the Fenlands. In the *Gesta*, however, this is neither Hereward's aim nor his motivation, an idea that contrasts with the depiction of Hereward in Gaimar's *Estoire des Engleis*. Gaimar's account depicts Hereward dying at the hands of a treacherous band of Normans, with the narrator stating:

s'il oüst od lui tels trais,
mar i entrassent les Franceis,
e s'il ne fust issi oscis,
tuz les chasçat fors del païs

[Even if he had had three companions with him, the French would have been ill-advised to go in after him, and if he had not been killed in the way he was, Hereward would have been successful in expelling them all from the country].¹³⁷

Gaimar's treatment of Hereward will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two, but here it is important to note that the *Gesta* never touches on the national consequences of Hereward's actions in this way. Instead, in the *Gesta*, Hereward's objectives are shown to be personal and local. This is made explicit at the end of the text, when Hereward is given not only his father's estates but also a Norman wife in return for homage to William. In its closing section, the text states: '[C]um terris et possessionibus patris sui

¹³⁷ Geffrei Gaimar, *Estoire des Engleis: History of the English*, ed. and trans. Ian Short (Oxford: OUP, 2009), 5697–700.

multis postmodum vixit annis, regi Willelmo fideliter serviens ac devote compatriotis placens et amicis' ['And with his father's land and possessions he lived on for many years faithfully serving King William and devotedly reconciled to his compatriots and friends'].¹³⁸ This excerpt demonstrates the successful harmonisation and integration of Norman and English interests, simultaneously rectifying the injustices present at the beginning of the narrative: Hereward makes peace with his neighbours and restores honour to his family. While this type of conclusion would become common in later romances, it nevertheless reads as a poignant commentary on the relationship between nation and region. Reconciliation with the king is useless if one is at odds with the local people, just as community interests are often eclipsed by national concerns. Here the national and the local are yoked together in a single sentence, reliant upon one another for peace and stability. National and regional interests are aligned, and order is restored to England as it was prior to the Conquest.

Ely and the Regional Reasons for Writing

De Certeau remarks that it is the phenomenology of stories that defines the dynamic between place and space. Whereas a place is a locale, a configuration of elements in relation to one another which retain a degree of stability, a '*space is a practiced place*', wherein the dynamics of time and movement cause the interaction of those elements; a space is a place that has been acted upon, or has taken on a new meaning through human action.¹³⁹ Similarly, Yi-Fu Tuan focuses on the role of experience in how we understand a particular place and endow it with an identity. He draws on the example of Kronberg Castle in Denmark. Without context, the castle is merely a stone building, but as soon as

¹³⁸ *De Gestis*, 72; Translation in Swanton, trans., 'The Life of Hereward the Wake' in *Three Lives of the Last Englishmen*, 45–88, at 88, hereafter cited as *Hereward*.

¹³⁹ De Certeau, *Everyday Life*, 117–19. Italics in the original.

one realises that this is where Hamlet supposedly lived, the entire meaning of the place shifts: ‘Suddenly the walls and the ramparts speak a quite different language. The courtyard becomes an entire world’.¹⁴⁰ It is the story of Hereward that allows the island of Ely to become more than a place on a map; it becomes a storied space, where historical events live on and where an older incarnation of Englishness endures in the local imagination. As mentioned above, the story of Hereward is often presented or interpreted as a national story, in which a small band of rebels takes on the oppressive Normans in an attempt to restore England to the Anglo-Saxons, or to restore honour to the English. However, the evidence discussed in this section suggests that the *Gesta* was written by an Ely monk, Richard, in order to endow his place of residence with significance. The preface to the *Gesta* draws immediate attention to this focus on Ely:

Nonnullis apud nos scire desiderantibus opera magnifici Anglorum gentis
Herwardi et inclytorum ejus et auribus percipere magnanimitates illius ac gesta:
nuper nostrae parvitati vestra insinuavit fraternitas, interrogans si aliquid in illo
loco ubi degebat de tanto viro conscriptum aliquis reliquerit

[When some among us wanted to know about the deeds of the great Englishman Hereward and his famous men, and to hear with our ears his generous acts and exploits, your brethren eked out our sparse information by enquiring whether anyone had left anything in writing about such a man in the place where he used to live].¹⁴¹

This opening line, which presents its readers with the subject matter of the text that follows, highlights the local interest in the hero. The first words, ‘[n]onnullis apud nos’, ‘some among us’, create a sense of community.¹⁴² This community is directly linked to Hereward by their mutual investment in the ‘loco ubi degebat’ [‘the place where he used to live’].¹⁴³ The text positions geography as the crucial hinge that connects Hereward to the community writing about him; Hereward is only important in this text because of his

¹⁴⁰ Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 4.

¹⁴¹ *De Gestis*, 7; *Hereward*, 45.

¹⁴² ‘Apud’ can mean ‘among’, but it can also mean ‘in the country of’, extending the space encompassed by the statement. See *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*, s. v. ‘apud’.

¹⁴³ *De Gestis*, 7; *Hereward*, 45.

affiliation with the locale in which it was written, Ely.¹⁴⁴ This is further corroborated by the description of how oral accounts of Hereward's adventures were added to the text: 'subjungens etiam et ea quae a nostris audire contigerit, cum quibus conversatus est, ut insignis miles magnanimitier vivens' ['with the addition of things we happened to hear from our own people with whom he was familiar, living a distinguished life as a great warrior'].¹⁴⁵ Not only does this further the idea of collective action and the community of a place, but it grounds the actions of the text in eyewitness accounts, reifying the connection of the Ely community with this man. The idea of the eyewitness relies on a shared experience between the seer and what is seen, and is contingent on the congruity of time and place. By recounting the deeds of Hereward, Richard of Ely reflects his community's desire to know more about a purportedly brave and magnanimous individual who distinguished a particular locality from the rest of England, elevated the monks' home into a place of historical importance, and transformed the island into a space that became symbolic of England itself. This last point will be discussed in depth later in this chapter.

The depiction of Hereward as a hero of Ely stands in direct contrast to *ASC E*'s portrayal of the outlaw, undoubtedly because Hereward and his men burned Peterborough and sacked the abbey, stealing, among other things, the golden crown from the head of a statue of Christ. Although supportive accounts claim that he acted in the name of 'ðes mynstres holdscipe' ['loyalty to this minster'] to ensure that the abbey's treasures never fell into Norman hands, it is not surprising that the monks of

¹⁴⁴ The text appears to have been written for the benefit of a fellow member of Ely's monastery, probably Hervey, first bishop of Ely. This is evidenced by the mention of 'vestra ... fraternitas' ['your brethren']. *De Gestis*, 7; *Hereward*, 45. See Michael Swanton, 'From *Hereward the Wake*: Introduction', in *Robin Hood and Other Outlaw Tales*, ed. Stephen Knight, Thomas Ohlgren, and Thomas Kelly (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1997), 633–37.

¹⁴⁵ *De Gestis*, 7; *Hereward*, 46.

Peterborough were not well disposed toward Ely's hero.¹⁴⁶ *ASC E* mentions Hereward by name only once in the entry for 1070, referring to him and his 'genge' merely as notorious 'utlages' [outlaws] the remainder of the time, and lamenting their devastating actions. This account of Hereward merely accentuates his glorification in the *Gesta*, as well as the influence of location on the attitudes of those who wrote about him.

The act of transforming Ely from a cathedral town to a place laden with meaning through the events of the *Gesta* is furthered by claiming Hereward as the originator or initiator of a series of twelfth-century events and traditions. The text suggests that Hereward's story is even inscribed on the landscape of the Fens: during the siege the Normans build a causeway to Ely, which ends disastrously when most of William's men drown in the marshes. The voice of the twelfth-century narrator interrupts this account, claiming 'ex quibus isti usque in hodiernum diem multi adhuc de profundis illarum aquarum in armis putrefactis abstrahuntur. Quod nonnunquam ipsi vidimus' ['And to this day many of them are dragged out of the depths of those waters in rotting armour. I've sometimes seen this myself'].¹⁴⁷ The sudden temporal shift, bringing the 'rotting' bodies of the past into the extradiegetic present, is a startling moment that reflects the impact of history and past events on twelfth-century Ely. While the area had been subject to a variety of attacks and rebellions throughout the centuries prior to the *Gesta*'s composition, especially at the hands of the Danes, the text explicitly claims that these bodies belong to the Normans. Instead of addressing Ely's colourful past, the author overwrites these other moments in Ely's history and aggregates them all in a single event: the Norman siege of the island and Hereward's resistance to the invaders. Ely's wider history converges for the sake of Hereward's glorification, so that twelfth-

¹⁴⁶ *ASC E*, 89; Swanton, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 205–7.

¹⁴⁷ *De Gestis*, 45; *Hereward*, 70. Swanton's translation neglects to incorporate the plural subject of 'vidimus'. This would be more appropriately translated to 'We have sometimes seen this ourselves'.

century monks can claim to experience an aspect of Hereward's exploits and their island's most celebrated, if traumatic, moment. This morbid imposition of the past on the present landscape becomes physical evidence of a complex identity, as the layers of history are uncovered and pronounce themselves to the monks of Ely and to the audience.

This act of excavation echoes another moment in the text, in which another kind of rotting ('putrefactis') flesh is dredged up: in the prefatory letter, those interested in Hereward's story search 'in multis locis' ['in many places'], for details of his life, eventually finding 'pauca et dispersa folia, partim stillicidio putrefactis et abolitis et partim abscisione divisis' ['a few loose pages, partly rotten with damp and decayed and partly damaged by tearing'].¹⁴⁸ The past is located in the landscape, both textually and physically. Not only does the manuscript need to be pulled out of the archives, but the monks 'vix ex eo ... expressimus' ['with difficulty extracted from it'] some details of Hereward's life.¹⁴⁹ The reflection of the act of writing as an archaeological endeavour illuminates the genre of the text: local historical events form the backbone of the story, but given the paucity of evidence, 'semper majora expectantes et necdum penitus aliquid invenientes' ['always hoping for more but still finding nothing in full'], details have to be added, allowing the author to exercise use of his imagination.¹⁵⁰ This may explain the fanciful notes and supernatural elements encountered during Hereward's adventures. This idea of extraction, of the past resurfacing, is highly significant since it shows individuals interacting with the historical landscape, encountering corrupted time capsules that allow them a distorted glimpse into lives once lived. These are also so 'rotten' that the imagination is given space to fill in any lost information, allowing fantastical events to emerge and flourish. Because discoveries of both pages and bodies

¹⁴⁸ *De Gestis*, 7; *Hereward*, 45.

¹⁴⁹ *De Gestis*, 7; *Hereward*, 45.

¹⁵⁰ *De Gestis*, 8; *Hereward*, 45.

are material encounters, they require the physical presence of those involved; moreover, past and present are linked by geographical proximity. They exist concurrently, and thus the temporal gap between narrative events is effectively erased. The intrusion of the first-person narrator into both of these passages grounds the text firmly in one particular geographical locale. The sudden shift to first-person narration introduces an ‘I’ which is not universal, and describes an event that is shared by a limited group of people. In this passage, the verb ‘vidimus’ is tied to a particular locality and a particular group of people. The ‘present-day’ monks of Ely are connected to those of the past, and thus to Hereward, by their shared interaction with local surroundings.

This congruence of past and present facilitated through a mutual sense of place is furthered by the implication that Hereward instigated certain local customs at Ely that survived into the twelfth century: namely the tradition that knights in Ely were dubbed by monks. Hereward’s knighting ceremony, which reflects a preference for ‘Anglico more’ [‘the English tradition’] over the newly imported, French conventions for knighting men, is often cited as one of the most nostalgic or nationalistic moments in the text.¹⁵¹ However, this makes little sense when examining the text’s portrayal of this moment; it is more likely that Ely’s monks exploited the idea of Hereward to explain their use of an older practice. The *Gesta* recounts that Hereward wished to be knighted by a monk because ‘quomodo a Francigenis constitutum audierat, quod si quis a monacho vel a clerico seu ab aliquo infra sacros ordines constituto militem fieret non humilitatem inter milites haberi debere, sed quasi adulteratus eques et abortivus’ [‘he had heard that it had been ruled by the French that if anyone were knighted by a monk, cleric or any ordained minister, it ought not to be reckoned the equal of true knighthood, but invalid and

¹⁵¹ *De Gestis*, 36; *Hereward*, 64. See Thomas, ‘The English and their Conquerors’, 225 and Bremmer, ‘The *Gesta Herewardi*’, 39.

anachronistic’].¹⁵² Thomas reads this as a distinctly anti-Norman gesture, criticising the Norman idea that the English were barbarians prior to the Conquest. This action not only highlights the chivalric aspects of Hereward’s character and English customs, but also suggests that ‘their form of dubbing was superior to the French form’.¹⁵³ However, there is a local connection to this practice. As the text states, Hereward’s insistence on this older form of knighting spurred the formation of a local tradition:

Ex hoc enim consuetudo apud Elienses ortus est, quod si quis ibi miles fieret semper nudum ensem super altare inter magnam missam eodem die offerre deberet, et a monacho qui missam cantaret post evangelium sic accipi imposito nudo collo gladio cum benedictione, isto modo tironi tradens ensem eques sit factus emeriter. Mos enim hic in temporibus abbatum fuit.

[And hence a custom arose among those at Ely that if anyone there wished to be made a knight, he ought always to offer his naked sword upon the alter at high mass and the same day receive it back again after the gospel-reading from the monk who was singing mass, the sword being placed on his bare neck with a blessing; and by making over the sword to the recruit in that way, he was made a full knight. This was the custom of abbots in those times].¹⁵⁴

Joanna Huntington notes that ‘presumably something like this did happen’, since the Council of Westminster in 1102 stated that this ritual should no longer take place.¹⁵⁵ Yet by using Hereward’s story as an explanation for an already-existing custom, or perhaps for a practice that never existed in the first place, Richard of Ely performs two simultaneous tasks: he accentuates the importance of the island through its connection to the hero, and implicitly establishes Ely as a substitute for pre-Conquest England, as a place where Anglo-Saxon culture endures.

While the story of Hereward forms the core of the *Gesta*, the geographical entity of the island of Ely is nevertheless a powerful force in the text, since it provides a

¹⁵² *De Gestis*, 36; *Hereward*, 64.

¹⁵³ Thomas, ‘The English and their Conquerors’, 225.

¹⁵⁴ *De Gestis*, 37; *Hereward*, 64–65.

¹⁵⁵ Joanna Huntington, ‘“The Quality of His *Virtus* Proves Him a Perfect Man”: Hereward “the Wake” and the Representation of Lay Masculinity’, in *Religious Men and Masculine Identity in the Middle Ages*, ed. P. H. Cullum and Katherine J. Lewis (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2013), 77–93, at 89. See also D. Whitelock, et al. eds., *Councils and Synods, With Other Documents Relating to the English Church. I, A.D. 871–1204* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 676–77.

sanctuary for the English rebels. The text includes detailed physical descriptions of the island, a quality it shares with the much more explicitly localised *Liber Eliensis*. In the *Gesta*, Ely is painted as an exceptionally fecund and rich place, with such abundant natural resources that it is entirely self-sufficient. Upon his return from Ely to the Norman camp, the Norman knight Deda presents King William with a full description of the island:

arator manum ab aratro non avertat,¹⁵⁶ nec messoris dextra a messe vacillet, nec venator ibi venabula non observat, nec auceps avibus insidiare juxta ripas fluminum non desistat et in silvis, qui decore nimis in eadem insula et opulente pene omnibus animantibus sunt. Nam eo tempore quo aves aquaticæ pennas mutant et habitum, illuc sæpe aviculas captas afferre vidi multas, nonnunquam centum et aliquando ducentas et plus, et sæpissime non multum inferioris numeri ac etiam ex una aqua mille. Ex silvis namque quæ in insula sunt eo modo in uno anni tempore ardearum satis copia est, excepta habundantia ferarum et pecorum. Ex aquis vero quæ in circuitu insulæ sunt, omni genere piscium abundari illos non ambiguum est. Et amplius quid referam?

[The ploughman doesn't take his hand from the plough, the hunter doesn't neglect his hunting spears, nor does the fowler stop lying in wait for the birds by the banks of rivers and in woods, so those in the Isle are well and plentifully supplied with almost all living things. At the time when the water-fowl are moulting and changing their appearance, I've commonly seen trappers there bringing in lots of small birds: very often a hundred, sometimes two hundred or more, and occasionally not far off from a thousand from one stretch of water. Similarly from the woods that are in the Isle there is at one time of the year a good supply of heron, quite apart from the abundance of wild and domesticated animals. And certainly the waters which surround the Isle abound with all kinds of fish. What more need I say!]¹⁵⁷

Better suited to a preface or *descriptio*, such as those presented by Bede or Geoffrey of Monmouth, this description of the island occurs in the middle of the text. By placing this encomium of Ely mid-narrative, the author asserts his local knowledge and provides a statement regarding the importance of the region without making the text overtly and exclusively local. The *Gesta* maintains its focus on Hereward while simultaneously

¹⁵⁶ This is possibly a reference to Luke 9:62: 'ait ad illum Iesus nemo mittens manum suam in aratrum et aspiciens retro aptus est regno Dei' ['Jesus said to him: No man putting his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God'] (Vulgate and Douay-Rheims).

¹⁵⁷ *De Gestis*, 48–49; *Hereward*, 72–73.

celebrating Ely. The *Liber* presents an almost identical account of the island at the same point in its narrative:

Nec arator manum avertit ab aratro, nec venator ibi venabula abjecit, nec auceps aves decipiendo quiescit; sed suorum tirocinio tueri secure arbitrantur. Et quid amplius.

[the ploughman is not failing to put his hand to the plough, neither is the huntsman there abandoning his traps, nor is the bird-catcher taking a rest from snaring birds. Rather, they think they are being safely guarded by a militia of their own men. And what more am I to say?].¹⁵⁸

The *Liber* extends this section considerably, incorporating further details of the wildlife, topography, and customs of the island. However, the text also anticipates this description of the island's bounty by referring to it in the introduction of the text:

Sed ne auditorem nimis fastidiret de domesticis animantibus, de feris silvarum, de volucris, de piscibus multis et magnis, qui per circuitum, sepe capiuntur in aquis, que maria vocantur, quanta ibi copia sit, diceremus, in libro autem huius operis secundo, iuxta seriem, ubi legitur a Normannis insula fuisse subacta, singula memorantur. Et quid amplius?

[But, for fear that it would bore the listener excessively <if> we were to speak about the domestic animals, the wild beasts of the woods, the birds, the numerous and large fish which are frequently caught in the waters round about called meres, and saying what an abundance of them there are: these are referred to, each in turn, in the second book of the series, where we read that the island was conquered by the Normans. What more shall I say?].¹⁵⁹

The textual parallels between the *Gesta* and the *Liber* suggest that the *Liber*'s compiler drew on a version of the *Gesta* as a source, and recognised the importance of the earlier text's regional focus to the degree that he used it for the introduction to his history of Ely.

While these texts share little, especially from a standpoint of genre, the *Gesta* and the *Liber* both achieve a similar effect: they each place Ely at the centre of their narratives.

While the *Liber* achieves this inherently through its function as the chronicle of a particular place, the *Gesta*, as an embellished account of Hereward's heroic deeds, relies on textual undercurrents to guide its meanings and motivations. Although these include

¹⁵⁸ Blake, *Liber*, 231; Fairweather, *Liber*, 213.

¹⁵⁹ Blake, *Liber*, 2; Fairweather, *Liber*, 3.

an increased focus on chivalric behaviour and an emphasis on English martial skills in order to restore a sense of cultural or ethnic honour, the text also displays a strong pride of place and an increased focus on regional identity, rather than national identity, in the face of political and social change. Strohm writes that later medieval chronicles with a fantastical element

offer an abundance of information about the historically defined vantage point of the chroniclers themselves, about their own favoured interpretative models or schemes, and about the ways in which they wield them in support of a highly partial view of social experience.¹⁶⁰

This same view can be taken of the *Liber* and even of the *Gesta*, which, while not a chronicle, nevertheless uses historical events to further its narrative. Both texts establish the Fens as a prominent area within England, or indeed, as the most prominent part of England.

This link between England and Ely is consolidated by the notion that they are both situated on islands.¹⁶¹ The *Gesta* constantly draws attention to Ely's topographical situation by calling it 'insula Eliensi' or simply 'insula'. It is impregnable, cut off from the mainland by swamps and fens, and is only accessible by boat. Deda, the only Norman soldier who manages to reach Ely and as such is an agent of communication between the English and Normans, tells William it is 'ex aquis et palude munitissimam, omnique castello muris circumdato fortiozem' ['very well-fortified by waters and swamp, much stronger than any castle surrounded by walls'].¹⁶² Ely is fortress-like, a sanctuary where monks, knights, and outlaws dine alongside one another, and yet its only defences are

¹⁶⁰ Paul Strohm, *Hochon's Arrow: The Social Imagination of Fourteenth-Century Texts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 33.

¹⁶¹ Often medieval English texts engage in a 'topographical slippage' and conflate England with Britain, or suggest that England occupies the whole island. While the *Gesta* does not explicitly do so, it frequently highlights the idea that England, like Ely, is only accessible by boat. See Philip Schwyzer, *Literature, Nationalism and Memory in Early Modern England and Wales* (Cambridge: CUP, 2004), 4; Catherine A. M. Clarke, *Literary Landscapes and the Idea of England 700–1400* (Cambridge and New York: D. S. Brewer, 2006), 4–5. For examples of this in the *Gesta* see *De Gestis* 21, 42, and 48.

¹⁶² *De Gestis*, 49; *Hereward*, 73. Cf. 'aquis magnis et apludibus latis velut muro forti obsita' ['enclosed by large meres and wide marshlands, as if by a strong wall']. Blake *Liber*, 231; Fairweather, *Liber*, 213.

topographical features. Anthony Musson states: '[T]opography could serve to neutralise formal jurisdictional boundaries: the limits of a forest or another natural feature, where it straddled a county boundary, for example, might be recognised more readily and understood more easily by local people as forming a boundary than the actual one'.¹⁶³ As well as acting as a physical barrier between Ely and the rest of England, the swamps function as a symbolic barrier between the region and the nation, between the free and the subjected, between the old ways and the new. It is significant that Ely is not surrounded by walls: it is not enclosed, but it participates in its surroundings, visible yet inaccessible. The local simultaneously exists within and without England. It is contained within a larger geographic, social, and political sphere, and yet it is able to function autonomously. Catherine Clarke argues that in the post-Conquest period, several prominent Anglo-Saxon monasteries, namely Ely, Glastonbury, and Ramsey, were forced to 're-negotiate power systems and hierarchies and re-assert their claims to a place at the heart of notions of English identity, culture, and power'.¹⁶⁴ Textual descriptions of the local landscapes surrounding these monastic houses paint them as 'a mirror for the nation as a whole', especially due to their status as islands. The settings 'of these monastic houses are mythologised in chronicle and panegyric texts and celebrated as perfect pastoral landscapes'.¹⁶⁵ In her discussion of East Anglian Fenland texts, Clarke notes that often there was a direct parallel between 'the local island and the island nation of England'.¹⁶⁶ In the *Liber Eliensis*'s description of the island's etymology, the text states 'dicimus Ely anglice, id est <copia anguillarum, que in eisdem capiuntur paludibus, nomen>' ['We call it in English, "Elge", that is, it has taken its name "from the

¹⁶³ Anthony Musson, 'Introduction', in *Boundaries of the Law: Geography, Gender, and Jurisdiction in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Anthony Musson (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), 1–6, at 2.

¹⁶⁴ Clarke, *Literary Landscapes*, 5, 67.

¹⁶⁵ Clarke, *Literary Landscapes*, 67.

¹⁶⁶ Clarke, *Literary Landscapes*, 79.

abundance of eels which are caught in these same Fens”].¹⁶⁷ Clarke argues that the juxtaposition of ‘anglice’ and ‘anguillarum’ may be an early form of the *anguillae-angliae* pun, ‘which reinforces the status of Ely as a stronghold of Englishness’.¹⁶⁸

This connection between the two islands is perhaps paradoxical given the island’s jurisdictional liberties. Although England and Ely share many characteristics, their legal systems do not entirely overlap. These liberties are highlighted in the *Liber*: ‘Ab omnium namque iudicio et potestate insula admodum libera est, quo <neque episcopus neque alicuius exaction’s minister sine advocacione fratrum se intromittat vel rem sancte inquietare presumat>’ [‘The Isle is absolutely free from anyone’s jurisdiction and power, with the consequence that neither a bishop nor any tax-official may enter without the invitation of the monks, or may presume to disturb the property of the lady saint’].¹⁶⁹ Although there is no extant evidence that details precisely when Ely became a liberty, it is certain that it had been granted rights by the time of Edgar’s reign in the tenth century.¹⁷⁰ These rights were reinforced in a charter drawn up under Edward the Confessor, which gave Ely ‘omnimoda libertate quietavit’ [‘immunity with liberty of every kind’], including legal matters.¹⁷¹ In his examination of communities and liberties in medieval England, Keith Stringer observes that ‘owners of “royal liberties”, lay and ecclesiastical alike, naturally used the rituals, idioms and symbols of a semi-regal political ideologies: writs ran in their own names and not in the king’s name; they were

¹⁶⁷ Blake, *Liber*, 2; Fairweather, *Liber*, 3.

¹⁶⁸ Clarke, *Literary Landscapes*, 79. Another example of this pun is found in Thomas Bradwardine, ‘De memoria artificiale adquirenda’, ed. Mary Carruthers, *Journal of Medieval Latin* 2 (1992): 25–43, at 40.

¹⁶⁹ Blake, *Liber*, 4; Fairweather, *Liber*, 6.

¹⁷⁰ R. B. Pugh, ed., *The Victoria History of the County of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely* (London: University of London Institute of Historical Research, 2002), 4:4.

¹⁷¹ Blake, *Liber*, 161; Fairweather, *Liber*, 192. Edward grants Wulfric the abbacy and authority ‘in Hely on eallan þingan, binnan burgan 7 butan, toll 7 team infangenþeof, fihtwite 7 fyrdwite, hamsočne and grypbryce’ [in Ely and with all things pertaining to it, inside and outside the town, with *toll* (the right to take tolls on sales), and with *team* (the right to hold a court in matters relating to theft) and with *infangenþeof* (the right to try a thief caught on the land and to receive the profits), *fihtwite* (a fine related to fighting) and *fyrdwite* (a fine taken for neglect of military duties), *hamsočne* (forced entry or assault) and *grypbryce* (disrupting the peace)]. Blake, *Liber*, 164. My translation. For details relating to the legal terminology, see Fairweather, Introduction to *Liber*, xxxv–xxxvi.

issued out of their own chanceries and perhaps under liberty seals'. As such, these liberties often helped to mobilise and reify a sense of community among local inhabitants.¹⁷²

It is precisely owing to such liberties that a sense of strong local identity can be established, and that Ely is able to retain its cultural identity in spite of Norman dominion: the spirit of independence and resistance to oppressive authority is engrained within the island's legal code. There is little suggestion in the *Gesta* that the monks of Ely rebel because they resist foreign rule over England; rather, they summon insurgent noblemen to defend their island because they fear that a Frenchman will take control of the monastery and they will lose their freedom. Richard writes: 'monachi loci ... magis laborare maluerunt quam in servitutem redigi' ['the monks of that place risked endangering themselves rather than be reduced to servitude'], and so 'suum locum et insulam non insigniter de eis et aliis munierunt' ['put their place and the island in something of a state of defence'].¹⁷³ This passage implies that it is not the fact that the invaders are *alieni* that drives the monks to rebel, but rather the anticipation of poor treatment and loss of individual power that accompanies the arrival of the Normans. The *Gesta* describes monasteries around England subjected to the authority of foreign clerics, and the monks at Ely call Hereward to defend the Isle 'ipse rex quendam externum monachum super eos constituere voluerat, ex eis pro quibus jamdudum miserat de gente Franchorum monachis, ut in omnibus ecclesiis Anglorum decanos constitueret et præpositos' ['in particular because William intended to set a certain foreign monk over

¹⁷² Even as late as 1315 the communities of the county of Huntingdon and the Isle of Ely criticised the bishop of Ely for his 'lack of public spiritedness', evincing a local emphasis on community and the duty of authorities to uphold and defend collective identity. Although this focus on public good and community identity may have developed later, it suggests that the people of Ely had a strong connection to their town and their neighbours, possibly as a result of the areas liberties. See Keith Stringer, 'States, Liberties and Communities in Medieval Britain and Ireland (c.1100–1400)', in *Liberties and Identities in the Medieval British Isles*, ed. Michael Prestwich (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2008), 5–36, at 34.

¹⁷³ *De Gestis*, 48; *Hereward*, 72.

them—one of those monks for whom he had already sent from the French nation, to set as deans and priors in all the churches of the English’].¹⁷⁴ The text praises a mariner, Brunman, who had already acted against William’s command by intercepting the French clerics sailing to England and sending them back to Normandy in a sack tied to the prow of his ship, ‘sic cognatos ab externa dominatione tunc liberans’ [‘thus freeing the English monasteries from foreign domination for the time being’].¹⁷⁵ These passages express intense anxiety about the possibility, not of foreign rule over England, which is seen to be legitimate and irreversible, but of foreign rule over the local Church, depriving English abbots and priors of their authority and threatening the autonomy of Ely. It is thus the shifting power dynamic, rather than xenophobia, that prompts Richard of Ely to draw attention to the monks’ motivation in summoning a guardian. This is later emphasised in the events that prompt the peace between the monks of Ely and the Normans: the Normans begin to seize the Church’s lands on the mainland, and to regain possession of them, the monks secretly forge a truce with William.¹⁷⁶ This allows them to retain their agency and autonomy without continuing their rebellion.

In spite of the monks’ eventual capitulation to the Normans, during the majority of Hereward’s rebellion Ely becomes a symbolic locus for a nostalgic attempt to inhabit pre-Conquest England. This sense of local importance becomes so all-encompassing that the region consumes the nation; as a result, Ely becomes a symbolic stand-in for England as a whole. Its distinction from the rest of the country allows it to retain elements of Anglo-Saxon England in spite of the Norman Conquest. In the *Gesta*, the region becomes such a focus that the rest of the nation disappears, and all of England is seemingly concentrated within a very small area.

¹⁷⁴ *De Gestis*, 42; *Hereward*, 68.

¹⁷⁵ *De Gestis*, 48; *Hereward*, 72.

¹⁷⁶ *De Gestis*, 58.

The direct, physical involvement of the king in the siege of Ely accentuates this: William is present so often that it would be easy to forget that his court was not located near Ely in 1071. As such, the people of Ely hold out, not against the Normans in general, but directly against ‘regem Willelmum, qui Angliam bello obtinuerat’ [‘King William who had gained England in battle’].¹⁷⁷ The abbot Thurstan and his monks put the island in a state of defence ‘contra regem’ [‘against the king’].¹⁷⁸ Historically, however, the siege of Ely was concluded fairly quickly, and the king is unlikely to have been directly involved for a sustained period of time.¹⁷⁹ William’s presence imposes a sense of national importance to the siege, making it seem commensurate with the Battle of Hastings in its political import. The conquest of Ely is seen to be central to the conquest of England as a whole. Indeed, to the people of Ely it is the conquest of *their* England.

As Ely distances itself from the new Norman England, the island takes on the characteristics of pre-Conquest England. Ely becomes the focal point for the resistance against William, the last enclave of the English, drawing rebels from all over the country:

At Herwardus interdum discessit, et in Eliensi insula eadem die cum suis secessit, ubi nunc maxima cum veneratione ab abbate ejusdem loci et a monachis suscipitur, et a majoribus ejusdem insulæ veneratur, scilicet a quodam comite de Leycestre Adwino, et a fratre ipsius Morkere comes de Warwic, et ab alio comite Tosti nomine, qui ad eos in insula confugerant, a prædicto rege multis injuriis passi, a plurimus exactionibus angariati, cum nonnullis insignioribus patriæ ipsius, quos eadem causa illuc conduxerat et fuga

[And Hereward went away and that very day withdrew his men into the Isle of Ely, where he was now received with the greatest respect by the abbot and monks of the place. And he was honored by the important men in the Isle, that is to say by the former Earl of Leicester, Edwin, and his brother Morcar Earl of Warwick, and by another earl called Tostig, all of whom had fled to join those in the Isle having suffered many wrongs at the hands of the aforesaid king and

¹⁷⁷ *De Gestis*, 41; *Hereward*, 68.

¹⁷⁸ *De Gestis*, 41; *Hereward*, 68.

¹⁷⁹ Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, 249.

being harassed by many demands. Not a few of the country's distinguished men had fled and were led to the place for the same reason].¹⁸⁰

By gathering together England's most rebellious noblemen as well as the disinherited and the outlawed, Ely becomes a microcosm for Anglo-Saxon England, where the English are once again given agency and power, and where the Conquest must be re-enacted. Although the English are unable to reverse the historical tide, they are nevertheless given the opportunity to surrender their island honourably and wilfully, thus garnering respect from their Norman counterparts. In essence, the *Gesta's* Fens become a stage upon which the English can play out a fantasy, re-imagining the Conquest in a way that not only restores English honour, but also makes Ely the centre of England.

Community and Local Interest

While Hereward's relevance to Ely was, in all likelihood, an important reason for the text's composition, and the concern with local stories may reveal an increased focus on regional identity in the post-Conquest period, it is also possible to trace an internal shift in the dynamics between local and English identities in the text. This is especially apparent in the *Gesta's* depiction of the relationship between Hereward and the community at Bourne. I will now turn to Hereward's *enfance*, his marginality and the text's depiction of his relationship with his community. I will also discuss the identity of this community as it renegotiates its position relative to the English 'nation' as the text hurtles through one of England's most turbulent historical periods.

The authorial decision to include an account of Hereward's youth has been the subject of much scholarly debate. Elisabeth van Houts in particular examines the

¹⁸⁰ *De Gestis*, 44; *Hereward*, 79. There is some historical confusion about whether Edwin ever came to Ely. The *Liber Eliensis* places him there, possibly following the information presented in the *Gesta*, while the *ASC E* has him killed by his own men after Morcar's departure for Ely, and the *ASC D* sees him killed prior to Morcar's arrival at Ely. Orderic states that Edwin was killed after the fall of Ely and his brother's capture. Either way 'the arrival of Earl Morcar ... transformed Ely from a refuge for outlaws into a centre of potential rebellion'. Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest*, 51–53.

historical accuracy of Hereward's expedition in Scaldemariland and his status as an exile.¹⁸¹ Judith Weiss, meanwhile, compellingly compares Hereward's exploits in Ireland to the *Romance of Horn*, with the implication that Hereward's *enfance* bears 'all the hallmarks of having been added later', after the story was influenced by 'romance material above all the kind provided in *Horn*'.¹⁸² Both scholars, however, focus on his adventures during his exile rather than his activities in England prior to his departure, which are my present focus. The events in pre-Conquest England not only shape the audience's understanding of the textual depiction of Hereward's character and his rebellious nature, but also clearly show that the factors that cause Hereward's outlawry in the *Gesta* include his relationships with his family and neighbours.¹⁸³

Throughout the *Gesta*, Hereward is a rebel; however, his first act of defiance is not against the Normans, but against his English compatriots. This immediately displays the heterogeneity within England at even the most basic, local level. Hereward is set apart from those around him by his appearance, his strength, and his 'spectabilis forma ... oculisque magnis, dextro ab alio variante modicum glaucus' ['(remarkable) figure ... and

¹⁸¹ Van Houts, 'Hereward and Flanders', 201–23; Van Houts, 'L'exil dans l'espace anglo-normand', in *La Normandie et l'Angleterre au Moyen Âge*, ed. Pierre Bouet and Véronique Gazeau (Caen: Publications du CRAHM, 2003), 115–27, at 124–25.

¹⁸² Weiss, 'Thomas and the Earl', 9. The only extant manuscript containing the *Gesta* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, Peterborough Cathedral MS I, ff. 320–39) is from the thirteenth century, where the story is compiled with a collection of legal documents. This later redaction would allow the text to incorporate new material borrowed from romances.

¹⁸³ For a discussion of Hereward's rebellious nature, see Timothy Jones, 'Fighting Men, Fighting Monsters: Outlawry, Masculinity, and Identity in the *Gesta Herewardi*', in *Marvels, Monsters, and Miracles: Studies in the Medieval and Early Modern Imaginations*, ed. Timothy Jones, and David Sprunger (Kalamazoo: MIP, 2002), 183–201, at 185–89. Jones and Andy Orchard note that there may be a connection between the Scandinavian literary tradition, particularly *Grettis Saga*, and the *Gesta*. This might explain the focus on Hereward's character and familial relationships. Joost de Lange also makes the connection between the two traditions, stating that this 'is only natural, if we bear in mind that Hereward was born in Lincolnshire and that most of his adventures take place in East Anglia, a district which had been settled by a large body of Scandinavians only a hundred years before and whose inhabitants must still have possessed a wealth of Scandinavian lore'. Andy Orchard, 'Hereward and Grettir: Brothers from Another Mother?' in *New Norse Studies*, ed. Jeffrey Turco (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015), 7–59; Joost de Lange, 'The Relation and Development of English and Icelandic Outlaw-Traditions' (Doctoral Thesis, Rijks-Universiteit te Utrecht, 1935), 32. For more on the Scandinavian presence in the *Gesta* see C. R. Hart, *The Danelaw* (London: Hambledon Press, 1992), 636–40. A discussion of the Danelaw will follow in Chapter Two.

large gray eyes—the right one slightly different from the left’].¹⁸⁴ The beginning of the text constantly draws attention to Hereward’s relationship with the people in his immediate vicinity. As a youth, he is the scourge of his community, terrorising his fellow countrymen and causing unrest among the ‘provinciales’ [‘inhabitants of the locality’].¹⁸⁵ His parents, attempting to defend his actions, ‘cum amicis quotidie et vicinis decertantes’ [‘found themselves quarrelling with their friends and neighbours every day’] and ‘provinciales velut hostes et tyranni se pro illo agentes’ [‘the local inhabitants ... acted like enemies and tyrants because of him’].¹⁸⁶ In spite of his noble upbringing, Hereward is shown to have little respect for his family or his community; he sets himself apart from them.¹⁸⁷ Finally, having had his estates sacked at the hands of his son, Hereward’s father petitions King Edward to outlaw and exile the youth; he is declared too deviant for English society.¹⁸⁸

This introductory narrative and Hereward’s expulsion, grounded in Anglo-Saxon customs and laws, is vastly divergent from the fantastical events of Hereward’s exile. The events described in this early section of the text are plausible, lacking the romanticised chivalric elements of his adventures in Cornwall, Ireland, Flanders, and Scotland.¹⁸⁹ Instead of facing monstrous bears, the unwanted suitors of princesses, or the barbaric peoples of Scaldimariland, Hereward confronts his family and friends. While others praise him for his ‘ausibus et fortitudinum’ [‘deeds of courage and boldness’], his

¹⁸⁴ *De Gestis*, 9; *Hereward*, 46.

¹⁸⁵ *De Gestis*, 10; *Hereward*, 47.

¹⁸⁶ *De Gestis*, 10; *Hereward*, 47.

¹⁸⁷ Hereward’s nobility is cause for much debate: although the text remarks that he is of noble descent, historical evidence shows that his family probably did not own their land, but were merely tenants of Peterborough abbey. However, Barlow states ‘[t]here seem to have been no social stigma attached to holding land on lease’ and even Edmund Ironside held land owned by the monastery of Sherborne on loan. John Hayward, ‘Hereward the Outlaw’, *Journal of Medieval History* 14 (1988): 293–304, at 295; Barlow, *Feudal Kingdom*, 8.

¹⁸⁸ *De Gestis*, 11; *Hereward*, 47.

¹⁸⁹ The idea of chivalry in the eleventh century is anachronistic. However, to a twelfth-century writer it may have seemed an important to paint a pre-Conquest English hero in a more continental manner in order to make Hereward seem like ‘a proper hero in twelfth-century eyes’. Thomas, ‘The English and their Conquerors’, 221.

‘vicini’ exclude him from their community.¹⁹⁰ The text, however, passes judgement neither on Hereward nor on his family for these events: his only crime is that he disturbs the peace because he is too bold, strong, and violent to live amongst those who are physically inferior to him. By refraining from condemning the young Hereward for his antisocial actions, the text leaves open the possibility that the aggressive youth can be recuperated and reincorporated later, when the community needs him.

Such a reincorporation comes after the events of the Conquest, and yet it is not the Norman invasion that prompts Hereward’s return, but his desire to help the same friends he offended in his youth. Throughout his travels there is a repeated focus on Hereward’s yearning to return to England, not for any attachment to the country or because of a calling to defend the land from the Normans, but because of a lost sense of familial and communal belonging to a particular locality. In Ireland, the prince begs him to stay, but Hereward declares his unwillingness because ‘ad paternam domum ... et ad matrem viduam repedare voluit’ [‘he wished to return to his father’s household and his widowed mother’], to reclaim his inheritance.¹⁹¹ Delayed by a battle, he attempts to leave again because ‘Herwardus visitare parentes ac patrem et matrem animo valde accensus’ [‘Hereward was greatly kindled with the desire to visit his relations and (his father and mother)’].¹⁹² Similarly, his eventual return to England is because ‘visitare paternam domum et patriam volens, externorum ditioni nunc subjectam et moltorum exactionibus pene subversam, si forte ullo in loco aliqui amicorum vel propinquorum adhuc respirarent, ferre opem eis volens’ [‘he wished to visit his father’s house and his homeland, now subject to the rule of foreigners and almost ruined by the exactions of many men, wanting to help any friends or neighbours who might still be alive in the

¹⁹⁰ *De Gestis*, 10; *Hereward*, 47.

¹⁹¹ *De Gestis*, 15; *Hereward*, 50.

¹⁹² *De Gestis*, 21; *Hereward*, 54.

place’].¹⁹³ The text characterises his return and his rebellion as personal rather than patriotic. It suggests that he returns home only to help a particular group of people, not because of the nationwide oppression that the English suffer under the Normans. This reinforces the text’s emphasis on local and familial ties; it is possible that the author’s understanding of Englishness is not comprised of loyalty to the kingdom as an abstract entity, but to the very real bonds of family and friendship.

Given that he has already explicitly stated that Hereward’s father has died, it is not insignificant that the author refers to ‘parentes ac patrem et matrem’ in the second of the textual examples given above. The *Gesta*’s editors, W. D. Sweeting and S. H. Miller suggest that this is a mistake, and should be read as ‘patriam’, or native land.¹⁹⁴ Indeed, the text often conjoins ‘patre’, or ‘parentes’ with ‘patria’, such as in the incipit for chapter two, which states ‘quare a patre et patria expulsus est’ [why he was expelled/banished by his father and country].¹⁹⁵ This recurs later in the chapter: ‘Qua de re pater ejus a rege Eduardo impetravit, ut exul patria fieret, patefactis omnibus quæcunque in patrem et contra parentes vel quæ contra provinciales egerat’ [‘And so his father ensured that he was banished from his homeland by King Edward, disclosing everything that he had perpetrated against his parents and against the inhabitants of the locality’], and ‘in decimo octavo ætatis anno a patre et patria expulsus’ [‘(he was) driven away from his father and his native land when he was eighteen years old’].¹⁹⁶ Similarly, Hereward promises the men of Ely that he will fight for them ‘in defensionem patriæ et paternæ libertatis’ [‘in the defence of the homeland and their fathers’ liberties’].¹⁹⁷ This semantic pairing highlights the text’s preoccupation with family and homeland: *patria* is

¹⁹³ *De Gestis*, 32; *Hereward*, 61.

¹⁹⁴ *De Gestis*, 21.

¹⁹⁵ *De Gestis*, 9. Swanton does not provide translations for the incipits; this translation is my own.

¹⁹⁶ *De Gestis*, 10; *Hereward*, 47.

¹⁹⁷ *De Gestis*, 42; *Hereward*, 68.

accorded value because of its association with family. To help the country, Hereward must help his parents, and vice-versa.

This particular use of ‘patrem’, however, also evokes the notion of ‘paternam domum’, a phrase often cited in tandem with the notion of *patria* in the text: ‘Patria et paternam domum reversus’ [He returned to his homeland and his father’s house]; ‘visitare paternam domum et patriam volens’ [‘He wished to visit his father’s house and his homeland’]; ‘in patriam et ad hæreditatem paternam reversum’ [‘his return to his native land and his father’s inheritance’].¹⁹⁸ The juxtaposition of these terms elicits a more local, immediate interpretation of ‘home’ in addition to ‘homeland’. Biblical verses on exile, such as Genesis 24:7, also draw together notions of one’s native land and one’s father’s house:

Dominus Deus caeli qui tulit me de domo patris mei et de terra nativitatis meae qui locutus est mihi et iuravit dicens semini tuo dabo terram hanc ipse mittet angelum suum coram te et accipies inde uxorem filio meo.

[The Lord God of heaven, who took me out of my father’s house, and out of my native country, who spoke to me, and swore to me, saying: To thy seed will I give this land: he will send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take from thence a wife for my son].¹⁹⁹

Similarly, Genesis 12:1 and Psalm 44:11 read ‘dixit autem Dominus ad Abram egredere de terra tua et de cognatione tua et de domo patris tui in terram quam monstrabo tibi’ [‘And the Lord said to Abram: Go forth out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and out of thy father’s house, and come into the land which I shall shew thee’], and ‘audi filia et vide et inclina aurem tuam et obliviscere populum tuum et domum patris tui’ [‘Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline thy ear: and forget thy people and thy father’s house’].²⁰⁰ However, the meanings of exile in the *Gesta* and in these Bible verses stand in direct contrast to one another. As will be discussed further in Chapter Four, biblical

¹⁹⁸ *De Gestis*, 32 and 35; the first translation is my own, for the latter two see *Hereward*, 61 and 64.

¹⁹⁹ Genesis 24:7 (Vulgate and Douay-Rheims).

²⁰⁰ Genesis 12:1; Psalm 44:11 (Vulgate and Douay-Rheims).

exile is sacred, and departure from the *domo patris* is both positive and necessary, bringing the exiled figures closer to the kingdom of heaven by forsaking his or her worldly home. The *Gesta*, on the other hand, depicts Hereward continuously desiring the company of his parents and the comfort of his home, making him, unsurprisingly, a worldly figure. Unlike holy exiles, Hereward is unable to banish his ‘patrem et matrem’ from his memory. This does not condemn Hereward, but textually it is not an adequate reason for returning home; he requires a higher purpose. The *Vita Haroldi*, probably written a century after the *Gesta*, c. 1210, cites these latter Biblical passages that connect ‘domum patris’ to one’s native land and reflects on the relationship between exile and home:

Dicit igitur memoratus vir de sancto tunc peregrinante ita. Postmodum quia natalis soli semper dulcis esse solet inhabitatio: ad Angliam cujus antea rex extiterat concito properavit. Cum autem sapientum diffinitione tritum sit: quia infirmus est adhuc cui patria sua dulcis est, fortis vero jam, cum omne solum patria est. perfectus quoque cui omne solum exilium est, cui non pateat absurde dici virum ut ipse dicit senectute aridum, diuturnitate itineris utique religiosi confractum, natalis soli ut repatriaret dulcedine attractum? Dicente insuper Domino ad Abraham: *Ingredere de tera tua*, itemque in psalmo, *Obliviscere populum tuum et domum patris tui*. Quem etate minorem animi firmitate, et sanctitate meriti, inferiorem pariter et imbecillioem, tenere non potuit terre sue, populi sui, domusque paterne dulcedo aut memoria duceret jam vel attraheret in omnibus hiis quo proveccioem eo proculdubio et perfeccioem.

[This man speaks thus of the saint who was then on his pilgrimage: ‘Because it is always sweet to dwell on one’s native soil, he afterwards made all haste to England where formerly he had been king.’ Yet it is a commonplace definition among wise men that he to whom his fatherland is sweet is weak, but strong when every land is a fatherland—and perfect when all are a place of exile. So isn’t it evidently absurd that a man, as he himself says, withered with old age and broken down by the length of his journey, albeit a religious one, should be so attracted by the sweetness of his native soil so as to seek again a fatherland there? Besides, the Lord says to Abraham: ‘Get thee out of thy country’ (*Genesis* XII, 10), and again in the Psalm: ‘Forget thine own people and thy father’s house’ (*Psalms* XLV, 10). And if the sweetness or memory of his country, his people and his father’s house couldn’t hold him when younger in years, with less strength of mind and saintly merit, would it now lead or attract

him by all those things when the more he progressed and the more perfect he became?]²⁰¹

In her reading of this passage, Ashe argues that this focus on exile exempts Harold from being a figure of ‘Englishness; instead it sweeps away all nationalistic concerns in favour of conciliatory holiness’.²⁰² For the author of the *Vita Haroldi*, the desire for family and the desire for homeland, ‘terre sue, populi sui, domusque paterne’, are equated. This is also initially the case in the *Gesta*, but with each of Hereward’s failed attempts to return home the focus on the *patria* lessens. These are first motivated by the desire for property or for a wish to visit family, both of which are demonstrative of the sweetness of ‘natalis soli’; as such, access to his home is denied to him either by the promptings of the Irish king or by unruly weather. His final attempt is successful, however, but only because the text frames it as selfless act. His return is not a matter of comfort, nostalgia, or attachment to his homeland, but of local importance: he must help those who were once

²⁰¹ *Vita Haroldi*, 88–89. Translated by Michael Swanton in *Three Lives of the Last Englishmen*, 35–36. This passage is an almost verbatim repetition of a passage from Hugh of St. Victor’s *Didascalicon*, which states ‘perfectus vero, cui mundus totus exsilium est’ [He is perfect to whom the whole world is a place of exile]. This idea of eschewing a secular identity in favour of spiritual perfection is also found in Hugh’s commentaries in *In Ecclesiasten homiliae*, which state ‘Omnibus mundus exsilium est iis quibus coelum patria esse debuisset. ... Propterea ... ut videat homo non esse hic stabilem mansionem, et assuecat paulatim abstrahere animum, et solvere a vinculis terrenarum delectationum’ [‘All the world is a place of exile to those whose home country should be heaven. ... Therefore ... man may see that he has no stable home here in the world and may get used to gradually withdrawing his mind and freeing it from the chains of earthly pleasures’]. A connection between homeland and the kingdom of heaven can also be found in the works of St. Cyprian of Carthage, who writes: ‘Quis non peregre constitutus properaret in patriam regredi? Quis non, ad suos navigare festinans, ventum prosperum cupidius optaret, ut velociter caros liceret amplecti? Patriam nostram paradisum computemus; Parentes patriarchas habere jam coepimus. Quid non properamus et currimus, ut patriam nostram videre, ut parentes salutare possimus?’ [‘What man, after having been abroad, would not hasten to return to his native land? Who, when hurrying to sail to his family, would not more eagerly long for a favorable wind that he might more quickly embrace his dear ones? We account paradise our country, we have already begun to look upon the patriarchs as our parents. Why do we not hasten and run, so that we can see our country, so that we can greet our parents?’]. Hugh of St. Victor, *Hugonis de Sancto Victore: Didascalicon de studio legendi: A Critical Text*, ed. Charles Henry Buttner (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1939), 3:19, 69, and *Hugonis de S. Victore Canonici Regularis S. Victoris Parisiensis tum pietate, tum doctrina insignis opera omnia*. Patrologiae cursus completus. Series latina, ed. Jaques-Paul Migne (Paris: Garnier, 1879), 175:221C–D; Jerome Taylor, trans., *The Didascalicon of Hugh of St. Victor* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), 216 n.83. Saint Cyprian, ‘De mortalitate’, in *Opera genuina: Tractatus* (Leipsiz: B. Tauchnitz, 1839), 176–89, at 188; translation in Saint Cyprian, *Treatises*, ed. and trans. Roy J. Deferrari (New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1958), 220. For a discussion of the Hugh of St. Victor passages, see Bent Gebert, ‘The Greater the Distance, the Closer you Get: On Teleiopoetry’, in *Spatial Practices: Medieval/Modern*, ed. Markus Stock and Nicola Vöhringer (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2014), 63–86, at 64.

²⁰² Laura Ashe, ‘Harold Godwineson’, in *Heroes and Anti-Heroes in Medieval Romance*, ed. Neil Cartlidge (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2012), 59–80, at 80.

his neighbours. Where previously the term ‘*patria*’ had been interchangeable with, or connected to ‘*patrem*’ and ‘*paternam domum*’, the text ultimately uncouples these concepts. Once he regains his father’s house and restores justice to his people, the identity of the *patria*—or the nationality of its ruler—becomes irrelevant. While all lands may not be a place of exile to Hereward, especially given his reintegration into English society at the end of the narrative, his continually failed attempts to return home highlight the distinctions between home and homeland. These also suggest ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ reasons for wanting to return to his homeland and to reclaim his *domum patris*.

The text’s treatment of the community at Bourne indicates a strong focus on a unified local identity, implying a retreat to the region in times of collective, national trauma. Upon Hereward’s return to England, the people of Bourne are explicitly described in communal terms, as a single body functioning in unison; outside the village he finds ‘*patrem familias et vicinos valde mæstos omnique dolore plenos invenit*’ [‘the head of the household and his neighbours very gloomy, all full of grief’] for their recent tribulations at the hands of the Normans.²⁰³ All the townspeople share collective sentiments of grief and devastation. Furthermore, they act communally: when Hereward asks about the events of the previous day, ‘*responderunt*’ [‘they answered’].²⁰⁴ This use of the third person plural verb form before a long speech emphasises not only the trauma suffered by all members of the community, but also shows the community speaking as a unified group, with a single voice. This treatment of the local people continues throughout the passage: ‘*soporati omnes strata petivere*’ [‘they all retired to rest’]; ‘*obstupefacti mirabantur*’ [‘they were filled with astonishment’].²⁰⁵ The community functions as a cohesive body, with each member acting in solidarity with the others,

²⁰³ *De Gestis*, 32–33; *Hereward*, 62.

²⁰⁴ *De Gestis*, 33; *Hereward*, 62.

²⁰⁵ *De Gestis*, 33; *Hereward*, 62; *De Gestis*, 35; *Hereward*, 63.

collectively coping with the trauma of defeat. However, this unified response to Hereward highlights his status as an outsider; he alone acts individually while the rest of the locals grieve together. He behaves ‘quasi extraneus’, as though he were a stranger, a statement that implies that he is, rather, not an ‘extraneus’.²⁰⁶ It suggests simultaneous belonging and separation, familiarity and social distance. Hereward is an individual amongst a crowd, and yet the text subtly suggests that he belongs to that crowd.

Hereward’s relationship with his community, however, provides the impetus for his initial violent acts against the Normans: It is the community’s collective anguish and his own familial tragedies that prompt him to confront the invaders. Informing the unrecognised Hereward of the death of their lord’s son, Hereward’s brother, the community laments:

Heu! nobis miseris ex hoc, quoniam manus ulciscendi nobis non est! Utinam prædictus frater ejus Herwardus nunc ut sæpe audivimus vir magnificus nobiscum adesset, vere unusquisque ex ipsis, antequam luna deficeret et sol lucis suæ radios effunderet, sicut filius domini nostri morti subjacerent

[Alas, wretched men that we are, we have no power of vengeance! Would that his brother Hereward, a very great man so we’ve often heard, were here now; for then truly before the moon set and the sun sent forth its rays of light, every one of them would be lying dead like our lord’s son!].²⁰⁷

While the news of the Norman Conquest, which occurred while he was overseas, did not compel Hereward to fight, this speech does. He takes arms against the Normans as a pledge ‘pro fratris morte, potum arundinis et vina doloris’ [‘for his brother’s death with a draught of bitterness and wine of sorrow’].²⁰⁸ In picking up his brother’s head and kissing it before entering the house, Hereward solidifies the notion that he is undertaking these actions in for his family’s honour. Timothy Jones notes that ‘[w]hen Hereward returns to Bourne, it is the sight of Norman knights in his father’s house and his brother’s

²⁰⁶ *De Gestis*, 33; *Hereward*, 62.

²⁰⁷ *De Gestis*, 33; *Hereward*, 62.

²⁰⁸ *De Gestis*, 34; *Hereward*, 63.

body swinging from the gate that prompts his insurgence, not any abstract ideal of Anglo-Saxon patriotism'.²⁰⁹ The Conquest itself does not affect Hereward, but the consequences of the Conquest in Bourne and its effects on his family and friends provide incentive for rebellion.²¹⁰

Hereward's reclamation of his inheritance reflects his duty toward his community; to be a good lord, he must ensure that his people are not mistreated. As the 'præceptorem ... ac dominum' ['leader and lord'] of a group of well-armed and trained military men, Hereward not only has a familial duty to continue 'qui adhuc supererant, de suis inimicis juxta suas mansiones ultionem faciens' ['taking vengeance on those of his enemies in the neighborhood who still remained on their manors']; he also has a duty to save those in his protection from subjugation and oppression.²¹¹ As such, he must legally regain his patrimony. As John Hayward suggests, the Norman seizure of Hereward's family lands provided good reason to rebel. Historically, acceptance of his situation or a return to exile were options that 'were presumably unattractive to someone of Hereward's temperament', and '[i]t may be doubtful that the rising had the ultimate intention of driving the Normans out of England'.²¹² The text focuses instead on the immediate consequences of his actions: by being a nuisance to the king, Hereward is able to drive William to a bargain, exchanging peace in return for his father's lands.

²⁰⁹ Jones, 'Fighting Men', 201.

²¹⁰ John Hayward suggests that Hereward may have returned in 1068 or 1069, several years after the Norman Conquest. Hayward, 'Hereward the Outlaw', 296. It is possible that, historically, Hereward returned at a similar time, considering that the *ASC E* mentions him in 1070. See above, 51–52.

²¹¹ *De Gestis*, 35–36; *Hereward*, 64.

²¹² Hayward, 'Hereward the Outlaw', 301.

Hereward's Exile-and-Return

The discussion of Hereward's place in the community at Bourne is important because it highlights a key method of community formation in medieval texts: the hero's exile-and-return, whereby

[f]or a limited time the hero undergoes displacement from his home and the security of self-definition in relation to familiar circumstances. ... His eventual restoration at the end of that process marks a return to order for himself and his society, and usually for both an improved security based in an expectation of no worse than natural death, together with perpetuation of the dynasty and eternal salvation of the pious individual.²¹³

Narratively, Hereward's exile is paramount, since it removes him from England during the Norman invasion. It thus accounts for his failure to participate in the Battle of Hastings. While texts like *Gui de Warewic* and *Boeve de Haumtone*—discussed in Chapter Four—focus on exile as a way of making their heroes present in foreign countries, where they can build their knightly reputations by testing their mettle in distant courts, the *Gesta* uses exile as a way of ensuring its hero's absence from his homeland. Although he does perform valiant deeds abroad, Hereward is only able to develop his status as a hero because he is not implicated in the humiliating loss of his country to a foreign army. However, the Battle of Hastings is only implicit in the text; the *Gesta* displays an awareness and concern with national events, but also overrides them in favour of local affairs: protection of 'amicorum vel propinque' are more important than expelling the Normans.²¹⁴ Hereward's exile is thus narratively expedient, but also reinforces the text's focus on local affairs by almost completely eliding references to one of the most significant battles in English history.

²¹³ Speed, 'The Construction of the Nation', 146. Although exile-and-return is often associated with later romances, Ashe argues that it was a prominent motif in Anglo-Saxon literature too. Its appearance in the *Gesta* is therefore not surprising. See Ashe, "Exile-and-Return" and English Law: The Anglo-Saxon Inheritance of Insular Romance', *Literature Compass* 3, no. 3 (2006): 300–17.

²¹⁴ *De Gestis*, 32; *Hereward*, 61.

The trope of exile-and-return serves to define a community, and examining how it functions in a text can be a useful way to analyse geographic identities. The various communities that the text forges come into view by investigating the restoration of its hero. One might argue that Hereward's departure from and subsequent reintegration into society helps to redefine a post-Conquest sense of English identity by depicting an Anglo-Saxon nobleman being assimilated into the new Norman social order. The text's structure embodies the shift that would ideally take place within England as a whole as a result of the Norman invasion and settlement. By moving from being unequivocally English to inhabiting a liminal, universally foreign state through exile, Hereward personifies the alienation undoubtedly experienced by the English as their country was removed from their hands. By integrating into the new regime under William, Hereward exemplifies the process of acceptance and aggregation necessary for a peaceful, unified state to come into being.

While it is tempting to read Hereward's expulsion at the hands of an Anglo-Saxon monarch—Edward the Confessor—and his reacceptance by the Norman William as demonstrative of a political or social, if not 'ethnic', continuity between the two regimes, this seamless progression from Anglo-Saxon England to Anglo-Norman England is not supported by the text. Instead, the *Gesta* presents two separate instances of outlawry and exile, which define two different societies. This draws attention to the shifts in the structure and allegiances of the English community. The first of these instances creates a community at Bourne, as the text depicts Hereward's expulsion from and reintegration into an Anglo-Saxon society. The second of these creates an Anglo-Norman society, as the text recounts Hereward's departure following the murder of Frederick de Warenne. His exile ends with his reconciliation with William I. It is only at the text's conclusion, when William addresses the importance of local affairs, that a

peaceful, united community of the realm can be established. An examination of these periods of exile can shed light on the dynamics between the communities presented.

Hereward becomes a marginal figure *vis-à-vis* his community through his actions and his character.²¹⁵ The protagonist is introduced to readers with the phrase ‘Ex Anglorum gente multi robustissimi memorantur viri, et Herwardus Exul præclarissimus inter præclaros et insignis miles cum insignioribus habetur’ [‘Many very mighty men are recorded from among the English people, and the outlaw Hereward is reckoned the most distinguished of all—a notable warrior among the most notable’].²¹⁶ It is striking that here Hereward’s allegiance to England should be simultaneously reinforced and undermined; he is the greatest Englishman and yet he is also legally rendered nationless, explicitly called ‘Herwardus Exul’. Medieval outlaws were, as their name suggests, deprived of the protection afforded by the law to every member of the country; they could be killed with impunity.²¹⁷ As such, they were often driven into exile to escape judgement.²¹⁸ Laura Napran characterises exile as ‘enforced physical removal from a particular region, spiritual excommunication, or other sorts of social exclusion’.²¹⁹ Yet the circumstances of Hereward’s exile are such that his exclusion is ultimately a result of his own decisions and deliberate actions. ‘What is foreign is that which escapes from a place’, writes De Certeau.²²⁰ ‘Herwardus Exul’ is, from the very beginning of the narrative, defined as someone who does not belong, who is never able to find a ‘place’, whether physically or socially, until his final reconciliation with William. He is

²¹⁵ Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*, 1.

²¹⁶ *De Gestis*, 9; *Hereward*, 46.

²¹⁷ The term “outlaw” does not exist in Latin, and does not appear in the *Gesta*. The Peterborough Chronicle, however, called him and his gang ‘utlages’ in *ASC E*, 88.

²¹⁸ Anthony Musson notes that ‘outlawry (or waivery the female equivalent) itself was an admission of failure on the part of the judicial agencies to locate an individual and bring him/her to justice’. Musson, ‘Introduction’, 3.

²¹⁹ Laura Napran, ‘Introduction: Exile in Context’, in *Exile in the Middle Ages*, ed. Laura Napran and Elisabeth van Houts (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 1–9, at 1.

²²⁰ Michel De Certeau, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, trans. Brian Massumi (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), 70.

homeless, itinerating throughout Britain and Flanders and rejected by his own society. Regardless of where he goes, he is always ‘foreign’.²²¹ This exclusion prevents him from becoming a symbol for Anglo-Saxon primacy or an advocate for English sovereignty. Of the Englishmen in the first section of the text, Hereward is unique in his martial skills and bravery. A consideration of the young Hereward’s status as an exile and an outlaw for crimes against his countrymen substantially undercuts any reading of the text that is nationally oriented, or that advocates the superiority of the English people over the Normans. He is not a representative of the English, but rather a man so oppositional that society must jettison him and exclude his extremity from their own self-definition.

Events that take place in pre-Conquest England show regional and national interests in line with one another. While the heroes of other exile-and-return romances, such as Haveloc, Boeve, or Horn, are exiled from their homelands and deprived of their inheritances either by usurper kings or through the acts of violent invaders, Hereward is expelled from England not by a foreign, illegitimate, or unjust king, but by Edward the Confessor, who acts at the behest of Hereward’s vulnerable community and his sympathetic family. This banishment is justified in light of regional interests, indicating that, according to the text, regional and national interests were aligned and mutually beneficial prior to the Conquest. The ability to maintain the peace was central to Anglo-Saxon ideals of good rule, and so it is Hereward’s father’s civic obligation to inform the King of his son’s actions and Edward’s duty to banish him.²²²

However, it is also necessary to consider the violent undertones present in the depiction of Hereward’s reintegration into the English community. While Anglo-Saxon England had expelled him for his unbridled aggression, he is welcomed into post-

²²¹ The idea of foreignness will be further explored in relation to *Gui de Warewic* and *Boeve de Haumtone* in Chapter Four.

²²² See Patrick Wormald, *The Making of English Law: King Alfred to the Twelfth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 1:310, 319, 336–37.

Conquest England, not because he is reformed, but because his violent tendencies are now necessary for the local community to thrive. The community at Bourne, the ‘provinciales et vicini’ [‘neighbors and those living round’] and ‘vero patriæ et sui cognati’ [‘the inhabitants of the country and his kinfolk’], rejoice at his return out of desperation; when he massacres the Normans living in his father’s house, the townspeople do not condemn him for his violent acts but ‘ex facto obstupefacti mirabantur’ [‘were filled with astonishment at what was done’].²²³ They do, however, fear the ‘iras regis’ [‘the anger of the king’] when Hereward’s actions become known; where previously the king had been petitioned to defend the community against Hereward, in Anglo-Norman England, Hereward must defend the community against the king.²²⁴

It is only at the very end of the narrative that a monarch explicitly or officially pardons Hereward, yet he is accepted back into the community immediately after his return to England. While it is true that some kings stipulated that, upon their death, all exiles were to be absolved, this appears not have been the case under Edward the Confessor. As such, Hereward is barred from entering England until Harold Godwineson’s death, that is, until the Battle of Hastings.²²⁵ While the Conquest provides a motivation for Hereward to return home to defend his neighbours, the change in regime also means that he is legally permitted to re-enter the country. The England to which he returns is a vastly different country from the one he left, but the Conquest is only mentioned in one brief line, comparing the subjection of the English under the Normans to the Flemish defeat of the Scaldemarienses. The text makes it clear that Hereward has heard news of the Conquest; yet he does not help his compatriots until long after William

²²³ *De Gestis*, 35; *Hereward*, 63–64.

²²⁴ *De Gestis*, 35; *Hereward*, 64.

²²⁵ Van Houts, ‘L’exil’, 124.

has taken southern England. He is not portrayed as a patriot who has returned to England to defend it from the Normans, but as a man who is finally legally able to return home to see his family and protect his neighbours. Regardless of the reality or legality of his return, however, his moment of reintegration into the Bourne community comes after he expels the Normans from the area. The community rejoices at his return, the reasons for his exile forgotten and forgiven:

Concives vero patriæ et sui cognati comperto de eo ad eum confluebant, congratulantes et in patriam et ad hæreditatem paternam reversum, atque monentes interdum se cautius custodire, iras regis dum ista perciperet de eo pertimescentes

[But having heard about him, the inhabitants of the country and his kinsfolk flocked to him, congratulating him on his return to his native land and to his father's inheritance, and advising him to guard it carefully in the meantime, dreading the anger of the king when he came to learn of the affair].²²⁶

This moment of conviviality shows Hereward emerging from the external sphere back into the fold of Bourne society. He is no longer 'foreign' or 'extraneus' but restored to his community.

Now the townspeople consciously and actively support Hereward against the king, knowing that their actions are opposed to the Crown's wishes. The population of the whole area, 'vero patriæ', are aware of the inevitability of the king's wrath and while they fear it, they do not attempt to convince Hereward to leave England or relinquish his claim on his inheritance.²²⁷ Where previously the monarchy and regional powers were almost synonymous, as regional concerns were addressed through national actions, here it shows that regional desires are not reflected officially; Hereward remains a marginal figure, but he is marginal with respect to England as a whole, not to his community. King Edward's banishment is absolved by the community against which Hereward committed his initial acts of violence, while William must pardon Hereward for his crimes against

²²⁶ *De Gestis*, 35; *Hereward*, 64.

²²⁷ *De Gestis*, 35.

the Normans. This highlights the distinction between pre- and post-Conquest England, and implies a new dynamic between the region and nation in England after the arrival; while the country has changed, the local, Anglo-Saxon community remains the same.

It is at the moment that the Fenland community allies with Hereward and supports his rebellion that the former visibly breaks from the rest of England. Rather than re-assimilating with the rest of England, Hereward instead bestows his marginal identity upon the community. The community defects from the dominant political system in England and joins in his rebellion, and the men with whom he used to quarrel become his companions and his army: ‘xlix. fortissimos viros ex paterna hæreditate et cognatis ibi collocavit omni cum militaris armaturæ apparatu præditos et munitos’ [‘he lodged there forty-nine of the bravest men from his father’s estate and among his kinsfolk, equipped and defended with all necessary military accoutrements’].²²⁸ The trauma associated with the Norman arrival at Bourne mobilises the community to move away from the compliant stance adopted by the English heartlands; it prompts them to accentuate their difference from, and disapproval for, Norman rule.

With the community’s reacceptance of Hereward, and their shift in allegiance from the Crown to Hereward, from a central power to a local lord, comes the end of Hereward’s first exile. His second exile therefore occurs afterwards, ‘Reversus autem ad suos’ [‘Having returned to his own people’].²²⁹ It is after his attack on the Normans at Bourne and the death of Frederick that Hereward curiously returns to Flanders, ‘ut interim ista tepesceret’ [‘To allow the situation to cool down’].²³⁰ Van Houts suggests that Hereward leaves England rather than risking judicial penalties at the hands of the

²²⁸ *De Gestis*, 35; *Hereward*, 64.

²²⁹ *De Gestis*, 37; *Hereward*, 65.

²³⁰ *De Gestis*, 38; *Hereward*, 65.

Normans; it is only after a period of contemplation that he returns.²³¹ Hereward thus pre-emptively his own outlawry and goes into a self-imposed second exile, this time alienating himself from the Norman regime in England.²³² As a wanted man his return to England is risky, but necessary if Hereward is to achieve his aim of legally regaining his patrimony and protecting his *vicinos*. His legal status explains his flight to Ely, one of the last bastions of English resistance, because the island was outside the Crown's jurisdiction. The outlaws at Ely would also have been able to claim sanctuary within the monastery.

It is during his second exile that Hereward's rebellion takes place, highlighting the discontinuity between region and nation. Although he has crossed the Channel to return to England and has been reconciled with his community, he remains an outsider with regard to the 'nation' as a whole.²³³ Hereward spends most of his period of outlawry at Ely and in the Brunneswold forest, near Bourne. The landscape here is important. In her discussion of overseas exile in insular romance, Rosalind Field notes that often the rightful king must return from across the water to reclaim his kingdom. In some later outlaw narratives, such as *The Tale of Gamelyn*, the *Gest of Robyn Hode*, and parts of *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*, which often follow a similar exile-and-return pattern, the locus of exile is identified as the forest. Field remarks that '[t]he sea and the forest are equivalent symbols for separation, chance, and danger, but only the sea encompasses an island kingdom'.²³⁴ If a return from across the sea to an island kingdom implies that the island is a unified entity, then Hereward's return to the England while remaining in exile

²³¹ Van Houts, 'L'exil', 124–25.

²³² Crimes against the Normans in the years following the Conquest were so common that the government imposed a *murdrum* fine, whereby if an unknown man were found dead, the neighbouring villages would be liable to pay a fine unless the murdered man could be proved to be English, not Norman, thus dissuading the casual murder of Frenchman in post-Conquest England. See Bartlett, *Norman and Angevin Kings*, 1.

²³³ For a discussion of England as an island kingdom, see Rosalind Field, 'The King Over the Water: Exile-and-Return Revisited', in *Cultural Encounters in the Romance of Medieval England*, ed. Corinne Saunders (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2005), 41–54.

²³⁴ Field, 'King Over the Water', 49.

suggests that the kingdom is fractured, and the Fens exist on their own terms as a region apart from the nation. Although the union of the region and the nation at the end of the text implies that Hereward has completed a task that benefits both England and the Fens, it is clear that his rebellion was undertaken for the sake of his immediate community, rather than for some ideological or nostalgic incentive to return England to the English.

This is brought into relief during the brief mention of the revolt against William led by Ralph de Gael, earl of Norfolk, and Roger de Breteuil, earl of Hereford. In the *Gesta* it is used to explain the loss of some of Hereward's men:

Isto autem tempore, Radulfus comes cognominato Waer, clam coacto simul maximo exercitu in quosque de gente Anglorum ad nuptias suas invitaverat et vi eos secum sub sacramento et dolo tenere coegerat, unde totam terram a Norwico usque ad Tedford et ad Sudbiri devastans sibi subjugavit. Pro quo tres memorati comites et omnes majores natu qui in insula erant ad eum jam confugerant, quasi vindicaturus sibi regnum et patriam, relicto solo Herwardo cum suis ad custodiendam insulam.

[About this time Earl Ralph Guader, having secretly assembled a very large army, invited certain persons from among the English people to his wedding and by force and trickery compelled them to bind themselves to him by an oath. And he laid waste and subjected to himself the entire country between Norwich, Thetford, and Sudbury. Wherefore, thinking he was making a bid for the kingdom and nation, the three well-known earls and all those of high birth who were in the Isle now went off to join him, leaving Hereward and his men to guard the Isle alone].²³⁵

Although the wedding plot did not occur until 1075, four years after the siege of Ely, the choice to include a reference to this historical rebellion might be an effort to include other regional events in an attempt to contextualise Hereward's rebellion. It also constructs a continuous and coherent narrative of English resurgence in the years after the Conquest, regardless of chronological inaccuracies. Furthermore, it places Hereward's rebellion as the centre of a nationally important movement, lending historical authority to the text. However, the juxtaposition of the siege of Ely and the wedding plot merely accentuates the contrast between these two events. Given that the *Gesta* is a text

²³⁵ *De Gestis*, 58; *Hereward*, 51.

about revolt and rebellion against William, it is curious that there is not a great deal of sympathy for the earls' cause. Instead, Ralph and his co-conspirators are the perpetrators of a forceful and manipulative act, luring Hereward's men from their rightful cause—the defence of Ely—to a destructive and power-hungry bid for the throne. This is possibly because, as Thomas suggests, the *Gesta* is a constructive text, designed to promote understanding between the English and the Normans, an ethos clearly antithetical to Ralph's devastating and ill-fated plot, which famously resulted in the execution of Earl Waltheof.²³⁶ The wedding plot is, however, also an explicitly *national* event, designed to overthrow the king rather than defend the region. Hereward and his men are seen to remain stalwart in their task, resistant to the lure of national glory, unlike the other major players in the rebellion, Edwin, Morcar, and Tostig. By contrasting revolts of this nature with Hereward's rebellion, the text underscores its intensely local focus.

It is his second exile, for crimes against the Normans, which results in Hereward's concluding reconciliation with King William. The description of the second overseas exile, however, is comparatively shorter than the description of his first exile; while the first covers a long period of daring adventures and wars against barbarians, the second merely depicts him fighting, outnumbered, against a group of men who cease their attacks due to respect for his valour, and because there would be no honour in defeating him. The text states 'Quod factum tantum utriusque parti contulit gratiam, quatenus omnes antequam dissociarent pro veneratione tanti militis ad pacis donum converterent, honoratus est ab eis et de muneribus' ['This event resulted in such goodwill on both sides that, out of respect for such a knight, all those who were formerly at odds were reconciled; and they honored him with gifts'].²³⁷ The reconciliation between

²³⁶ Thomas, 'The English and their Conquerors', 219–21. For Orderic's account of the death of Waltheof, see *EHOV*, 2:IV.ii.265–69.

²³⁷ *De Gestis*, 39; *Hereward*, 66.

these two parties anticipates the peace between William and Hereward; in both situations the more powerful party respects Hereward's deeds, his bravery, and his skill. The peace that arises from these interactions is merely a by-product of Hereward's actions; there is no suggestion that brokering peace between two oppositional groups is his aim in fighting, but rather that he fights for his own honour. This inspires such respect that it creates peace.

The whole Bourne community moves from the margins to the centre once William produces a document addressed not solely to Hereward, but to 'provincialibus terram patris sui recipere debere et quiete possidere, ac deinceps pacem velle sectari, non stultitiam, si regis de cætero amicitiam optaret possidere' ['the men of the district stating that (Hereward) was to receive his father's estate and enjoy quiet possession of it; but if he wished to retain the king's friendship hereafter, he must henceforth be willing to pursue peace rather than folly'].²³⁸ This material exchange symbolically endows Hereward and his men with a legal status, accepting them as men of England who have a territorial claim. It is a transaction, however, which trades peace for land, and exchanges marginality for acceptance. It is the same transaction that Edward implicitly offers at the very beginning of the story, which the young Hereward declines when he forgoes his inheritance for the pursuit of adventure. Hereward accepts William's offer, however, because he offers him 'gratiam magis quam servitutem' ['favour rather than servitude'], allowing Hereward and his men to enjoy the king's 'friendship'; he has completed his task of ensuring his neighbours are not subject to harsh Norman rule.²³⁹ This contract tempers the effects of the Conquest upon the community and assuages the trauma of the invasions, allowing both the Normans and the English to live alongside one another peaceably.

²³⁸ *De Gestis*, 72; *Hereward*, 88.

²³⁹ *De Gestis*, 72; *Hereward*, 87.

The Awareness of Cultural Difference

Thomas's interpretation of the *Gesta* as a pro-English text is compelling in light of the text's glorification of Hereward as an Englishman and his frequent acts in defence of English honour. Rather than implying that the English are uniformly brave or noble, however, these narrative elements point toward the diversity of the English nation, in part because the English character can vary from region to region, or individual to individual. If Hereward were not so unusual and notable amongst the English, there would be no need to write about him. Thomas claims that one of the moments in which the *Gesta* seeks to address and redress the Anglo-Saxons' negative reputation occurs when the Norman jester imitates the English way of dancing by 'in medio domus incompositos quasi Angligenos figens saltus' ['performing antics in the middle of the hall meant in imitation of English dancing'], insulting 'English' customs.²⁴⁰ However, Hereward does not attack the Normans because they have slandered the English, but rather because the jester directs verbal abuse toward him. Indeed, the initial cause for upset in the hall is the jester's demand for one of Hereward's parents' belongings as payment for his provision of entertainment. The idea of imitating 'English' customs is pertinent, however, because the text continually draws attentions to the diversity of customs within England and the British Isles. Hereward displays his own region's customs during the Irish wedding when, after another jester irritates him by taunting him about a misunderstanding of Irish customs, Hereward takes the harp and proceeds to sing 'multipliciter cum ea canendo, et per discrimina vocum nunc solitarie et nunc tripliciter cum suis sociis more Girviorum cantavit' ['in different styles, now by himself, now in a trio with his friends in the manner of the Fenland people'].²⁴¹ This tripartite singing, Michael Swanton notes, is possibly akin to the 'close harmony said to be characteristic of the Anglo-Danish

²⁴⁰ *De Gestis*, 34; *Hereward*, 63. See Thomas, 'The *Gesta Herwardi*', 219.

²⁴¹ *De Gestis*, 19–20; *Hereward*, 53.

inhabitants of England' mentioned in the works of Gerald of Wales.²⁴² The text directly addresses the local tradition Hereward observes; it does not say that he sang in the manner of the 'English' people, in the way that the Normans imitate the 'Angligenos' style of dancing. The Normans fail to recognise the regional diversity present in England, and so it is possible that Hereward is not offended by their mockery of 'English' customs because they are not *his* customs. It is only when they begin to revile Hereward himself that he is unable to tolerate the Normans' presence. Thomas notes that 'Hereward's personal affairs and personal honor are carefully linked, here and in the poem as a whole, with those of the English people', but Hereward seems to be indifferent to the Norman mockery of the English.²⁴³

While the *Gesta* may be an attempt to promote peace between the English and Normans, the text subtly articulates the identity of those in a specific region, and accentuates the heterogeneity of England. Attention is not only devoted to the local traditions associated with the Fens: the text also describes the customs of other marginal areas. As Hereward journeys to the peripheries of the British Isles, through Scotland, Cornwall, Ireland, and then to Flanders, where a large number of English exiles lived, he encounters a wide variety of peoples who live very differently to himself.²⁴⁴ The possibility for misunderstanding or misreading local customs is present in the text. In Ireland, Hereward readily admits to his foreignness, which excuses him from the responsibility to uphold local customs.²⁴⁵ Nevertheless, the text draws attention to Hereward's negotiation of the wedding feast as he wends his way through the maze of local customs in order to achieve his aim of saving the Cornish princess from an unwanted marriage. The customs act as a form of code, which Hereward must read and

²⁴² Gerald of Wales, *Opera*, 4:189–90.

²⁴³ Thomas, 'The English and their Conquerors', 219.

²⁴⁴ Michael Swanton, 'The Deeds of Hereward: Introduction', in *Medieval Outlaws: Ten Tales in Modern English*, ed. Thomas H. Ohlgren (Stroud: Sutton, 1998), 12–18, at 17.

²⁴⁵ *De Gestis*, 18.

respond to accordingly. He sits at the far end of the table with his men, and takes the lowest seat. It is unclear whether this is a gesture of humility and deference towards his men or whether he is breaking customary seating arrangements in an attempt to gain the princess's attention. The princess, however, 'Quod factum ... et notam formam rimatur' ['observed this—and his distinguished figure—closely'], implying a sense of confusion that such a noble man should choose such a low position.²⁴⁶ In an attempt to ascertain his identity, she tests Hereward by offering him a dish in return for the promise that 'ne sponsum vel sponsam juvenculam in aliena patria exprobet, aut in caeteris nuptiis denotet' ['he may not disparage the bridegroom or the young bride in a foreign country or denounce them at another wedding'], knowing that any ordinary guest would accept it graciously.²⁴⁷ Hereward, however, instead, 'extendit manum et arripuit pateram, strictis amborum digitis quod sanguis sub unguibus effluxit' ['stretched out his hands and took the plate, clenching the fingers of both his hands until blood flowed from under the nails'].²⁴⁸ This sentence is ambiguous; Hereward's actions are unclear, and it is questionable whether he is damaging the plate or whether he is hurting the attendant, as Sweeting and Miller suggest in their translation.²⁴⁹ Nevertheless, in parsing out this scene, it is clear that the focus is on Hereward's brutal strength and power. The audience is given a very focused description of events, detailing the impact of Hereward's actions on his fingernails. The scene reflects the general attitude of the text, focusing exclusively on Hereward and his actions rather than on the larger context of events. There is a clear sense that Hereward is proving his identity and his purpose to the princess by rejecting local customs, yet he has no other option but to overtly refuse the dish; he would not be able to keep the promise to which he would be bound. In offending the court in such a

²⁴⁶ *De Gestis*, 18; *Hereward*, 52.

²⁴⁷ *De Gestis*, 18; *Hereward*, 52.

²⁴⁸ *De Gestis*, 18; *Hereward*, 52.

²⁴⁹ They translate this passage as 'laid hold of the dish and squeezed the fingers of both the attendant's hands so that the blood flowed out from his nails'. *De Gestis*, 18.

way, he continues to draw attention to himself and his immense strength, signalling the truth of his identity to the princess. The text then explicitly outlines the customs of the region, stating that after dinner it is the ‘mos provinciæ’ [‘practice of the province’] for the bride to offer a drink to the wedding guests.²⁵⁰ At the end of the feast, an attendant offers a cup to person who plays the harp, ‘quoniam præcipuus illis in locis jocus erat et novus’ [‘which is a particular and characteristic kind of entertainment in those parts’].²⁵¹ Like the dish, he cannot accept the cup the attending girl offers on account of his vow to not accept anything but ‘aliquid diu optatum’ [‘something they had long wanted’], a ring from the princess.²⁵² This is perceived as an insult, but it is the insult that allows the princess to approach Hereward and, recognising him and giving him a ring, to state that he should be excused on account of being a foreigner: ‘illum excusatum de reliquo, inscium consuetudinis, cum cæteris haberi præcipiens’ [‘directing that he should be excused this time since he was unfamiliar with their customs’].²⁵³ The text’s depiction of Hereward’s negotiation of these customs is artful: in spite of being a foreigner, he is aware of what is expected of him and instead deliberately rejects the wedding party’s rituals in order to draw attention to himself, to allow the bride to recognise him, and to draw her close enough to him for her to give him the ring, all the while maintaining his promise to the Irish prince. The shock that pervades the wedding party with regard to his inability to follow customs displays how deeply engrained the traditions are within their society, and yet the Cornish bride is able to excuse him, claiming that he is *inscius*, unknowing, of the province’s customs. This not only displays the strength of regional identity and accentuates Hereward’s perceived foreignness, but also fosters awareness that each region’s practices are distinctive.

²⁵⁰ *De Gestis*, 18; *Hereward*, 53.

²⁵¹ *De Gestis*, 19; *Hereward*, 53.

²⁵² *De Gestis*, 19; *Hereward*, 53. The section set in Ireland is particularly similar to *Horn*. For further discussion of the connections between these two texts, see Weiss, ‘Thomas and the Earl’.

²⁵³ *De Gestis*, 19; *Hereward*, 53.

It is not only the physical realities of the Fenland region that have a bearing on the text, but also the stories and folk-knowledge associated with the area. In describing the mystical journey of Hereward's men through the forest, the author clearly draws on phenomena associated with his surrounds. After restoring the treasure to Peterborough Abbey at the bidding of St. Peter in a dream,²⁵⁴ Hereward's men become lost in the woods: 'In qua via repente rectam callem perdidierunt errantes' ['On their journey they unexpectedly went astray, losing the right path'], and they find themselves following an enormous wolf.²⁵⁵ As they wander through the gloom 'subito candelæ ardentes et adhærentes lanceis omnium militum apparuerunt, quæ tamen non valde lucidæ sed velut illæ quæ vulgus appellant candelæ nympharum' ['suddenly there appeared burning lights clinging to the soldiers' lances—not very bright, but like those popularly called will-o-wisps'].²⁵⁶ These flashes of ghostly light are commonly found in swamps and marshlands, and it is significant that the text draws attention to their popular name, that which 'vulgus appellant'.²⁵⁷ By comparing the light to the will-o-wisp, with which the author presumes most members of his audience would be familiar, he assumes a local audience and also displays his own knowledge of the phenomena particular to that geographic location. The appearance of the wolf may also have local, East Anglian significance. Hayward suggests a parallel with the legend of St. Edmund, in which a huge wolf guards the saint's head until the English come to claim it, and the wolf subsequently follows the saint's companions. This legend 'was firmly established in the tenth century by Abbo of Fleury, who wrote a Latin life of St. Edmund based on an existing tradition

²⁵⁴ This is an event unique to the text, probably included in an effort to make Hereward a more palatable hero to those in the area around Peterborough, who typically saw him as a villain for stealing the abbey's treasures, as discussed above on pages 51–52.

²⁵⁵ *De Gestis*, 63; *Hereward*, 82.

²⁵⁶ *De Gestis*, 64; *Hereward*, 82–83.

²⁵⁷ There is also a possibility that the 'candelæ nympharum' are a form of St. Elmo's Fire rather than a will-o-wisp, given the way that the light clings to the lances rather than hovering over the swamp.

when at the Fenland abbey of Ramsey'.²⁵⁸ The author would certainly have been aware of the life of St. Edmund, and so it is possible that the author of the *Gesta* was drawing on local legend. Whether these supernatural elements in this episode owe more to regional folklore than to the workings of the author's imagination is impossible to ascertain, but both the wolf and the mysterious light that clings to the lances display an awareness of the local landscape and its idiosyncrasies, and possibly its stories.

* * *

It would have been dangerous for a monk of Ely, writing during the reign of Henry I, William the Conqueror's son, to glorify rebellion and advocate for English superiority at the expense of the Normans. The *Gesta Herwardi* manages to circumvent this risk by focusing exclusively on Hereward and his actions; it does not have overt political or social implications or aspirations other than those that would be palatable to all members of England, regardless of their ethnicity. The Normans are not universally vilified, just as Hereward himself is not a paragon of virtue. By focusing on Hereward's exile from both pre- and post-Conquest England, on local customs throughout Britain and Ireland, and on descriptions of the siege of Ely as a way of honourably reframing the Conquest, Richard of Ely deftly navigates the difficulty of writing about a heroic rebel without advocating for rebellion. Rather than leading a resistance to the Norman Conquest, Hereward's actions can be interpreted as a desperate attempt to take vengeance for personal injury and prevent the unjust subjugation of his local community, and the text is an attempt to cope with the trauma of the Conquest through a retreat to the region and its community, attempting to maintain consistency in the face of political turmoil. Hereward, while a notable Englishman, cannot be a figurehead for English identity because, as the text suggests, English identity is heterogeneous and inconsistent. Cultural practices vary from

²⁵⁸ Hayward, 'Hereward the Outlaw', 300.

region to region, and as such, inhabitants of the Ely are naturally drawn to celebrate the life of a man who once lived amongst them, and to write about an important period in the history of the town, evidence of which resurfaces both textually and physically. It is possible that the people of Ely did see Hereward as an English hero rather than simply a local hero, but this is determined by their perspective and by their experience. Hereward defended their idea of England, the England that they experience daily, their own 'imagined nation'.

Chapter Two

Lincolnshire, England, and the Danes in Gaimar's *Estoire des Engleis*

Regional writing is often concerned with the 'representation of difference' between the local and the national, the periphery and the centre.²⁵⁹ To create a narrative that is distinctively regional, cultural boundaries must be drawn between the spotlighted area and the remainder of the country: 'A regional identity then, is a sense of belonging, an awareness of similar traits among people living under similar conditions, or not coincidentally, of how their cultural patterns are distinctive in comparison to other regions or places.'²⁶⁰ While this sense of isolation or distinction from other regions—or from the country as a whole—may apply to the *Gesta Herwardi*, which as discussed earlier demonstrates a retreat to a more local imagining of England in the face of political turmoil, Geffrei Gaimar's *Estoire des Engleis* operates quite differently, even though its focus is unmistakably regional. Instead of highlighting the uniqueness of the areas in which he was writing, Hampshire and Lincolnshire, Gaimar appropriates local stories and uses them to construct his history of England. While the *Gesta* examines the impact of national political events on local communities, the *Estoire* in some ways operates inversely: it makes local stories nationally relevant by eliding distinctions between England and the individual regions that constitute it. Even when it purports to discuss England as a whole, the *Estoire* nevertheless mostly focuses on events in Lincolnshire, taking the region to be representative of the 'nation'.²⁶¹ Unlike an overtly regional text, such as the *Liber Eliensis*, the *Estoire* does not claim to be restricted or bounded by a

²⁵⁹ Stephanie Foote, *Regional Fictions* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001), 4. See also Paasi, 'Region and Place', 477.

²⁶⁰ Timothy R. Mahoney and Wendy J. Katz, 'Introduction: Regionalism and the Humanities: Decline or Revival?' in *Regionalism and the Humanities*, ed. Timothy R. Mahoney and Wendy J. Katz (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), ix–xxviii, at xi.

²⁶¹ The *Estoire* does display an awareness of the idea of England, which is particularly seen through the changed name from 'Bretaigne' to 'Engeland'. See Gaimar, *Estoire*, 23–34.

sense of place, and it does not focus on a single locality through time. Rather, it is concerned with the place of regional history in the greater context of England's past. In bringing together a range of sources from different regions, namely Hampshire (which had been in the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Wessex) and Lincolnshire (one of the boroughs of the former Danelaw), the text simultaneously constructs an English identity and a regional one. Yet these two identities are not independent of one another: regional consciousness is one of the primary contributors to the sense of Englishness that the text forges. Just as Hannah Arendt states that society is 'that curiously hybrid realm where private interests assume public significance', so too must the nation be composed of regional interests that become nationally important.²⁶² In weaving together stories from these two parts of England, Gaimar's text effectively becomes a contact zone. The text yokes together regional cultures, and also creates a space of textual contact between England and Denmark as the *Estoire* expresses the complex, intercultural identities that emerge from Lincolnshire's stories.

This chapter argues that Gaimar creates a notion of Englishness that is intimately connected with regional matters and local stories. In so doing, he constructs an identity that is accessible to all peoples living in the areas in which he was writing, regardless of whether they were ancestrally Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-Norman, or Anglo-Danish. By writing a book explicitly entitled 'l'Estoire des Engleis' ['the History of the English'], and by telling the stories of three peoples who all share a territorial affiliation with one of the areas in which Gaimar lived, he creates a universalising brand of Englishness that transcends ethnicity.²⁶³ This supports Stephanie Foote's idea that

²⁶² Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 35.

²⁶³ Gaimar, *Estoire*, A7. Short suggests that Gaimar may have been influenced by Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum* when choosing a title for his text. Both Gaimar and Henry were writing in Lincolnshire, and may have used similar, or identical, versions of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. See Short, Introduction to *Estoire*, xxxi–xxxii.

regional writing need not ‘depict internally homogenous regions’.²⁶⁴ By making familiar those who would likely have been cast as ‘foreign’ in other parts of England, namely the Danes, Gaimar’s text imaginatively constructs a common identity that has little to do with ethnic categories, and instead focuses on a shared connection with the land, its stories, and its society. Because intercultural contact lies at the heart of this thesis, this chapter will primarily focus on Gaimar’s representation of Lincolnshire and the text’s depiction of the Danes rather than the Hampshire-specific stories, which are important but less prevalent in the text. This chapter will first investigate the circumstances in which the *Estoire* was composed, before considering its depictions of local Lincolnshire stories, and particularly the Haveloc legend.

Contexts and Sources

Between 1135 and 1137, under the patronage of Constance fitz Gilbert, Gaimar undertook a project to write an ‘*Estoire des Engleis*’ to accompany his earlier *Estoire des Bretuns*, now lost. Together, these texts formed the first work of history in the French language.²⁶⁵ This was an important endeavour, providing a vernacular account of pre-Conquest English history accessible to the Anglo-Norman elite for whom Gaimar was writing.

Because of its ambiguous rhetoric, critics have often, with some success, sought unifying themes within the *Estoire* that give the text a purpose and make sense of the unusual attitudes it displays. Scholars have identified its colourful accounts of heroes and kings, presumably plucked from local tales and injected with elements of ‘precocious’

²⁶⁴ Foote, *Regional Fictions*, 13.

²⁶⁵ I accept Ian Short’s widely agreed-upon dating of the *Estoire des Engleis*, although Paul Dalton has argued for a reassessment of the text’s date of composition, positioning it after 1140. See Short, ‘Patrons and Polyglots’, 244, and Paul Dalton, ‘The Date of Geoffrey Gaimar’s *Estoire des Engleis*, the Connections of his Patrons, and the Politics of Stephen’s Reign’, *Chaucer Review* 48 (2007): 23–47, at 38. There are no extant copies of the *Estoire des Bretuns*, and in all four manuscripts, the *Estoire des Engleis* is preceded by Wace’s *Brut*.

romance, chivalry, and dialogue, as evidence of the secular, courtly milieu in which Gaimar was writing.²⁶⁶ As an embellished translation of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, the *Estoire* is widely considered to be a product of the twelfth-century Anglo-Norman aristocracy's attempt to come to terms with their position as a 'francophone social elite in a country with an old English past'.²⁶⁷ Henry I's marriage to the Anglo-Saxon Matilda, sister of Edgar Ætheling, represented the conjoining of the two cultures, and Stephen's wars against the Welsh and the Scots, especially at the Battle of the Standard, brought about a 'newly reemerging sense of English solidarity and identity' in which the Anglo-Normans could participate.²⁶⁸ While monastic writers such as William of Malmesbury may have developed a stronger sense of English national identity in opposition to the barbarian Other in the guises of the Danes, Norwegians, Welsh, and Scots, Gaimar's Englishness is largely an inclusive category, defined positively through commonalities between peoples and through association with the land.²⁶⁹ The textual projects that became prominent in the twelfth century envisioned 'nationhood and English identity [as] a succession of people sharing land and cultural patterns sustained over time'.²⁷⁰ Marjorie Chibnall writes that the Norman myth in which people are formed by their history rather than by their heritage 'becomes the determining vector of English national history'; for her, 'the process originally attributed to Rollo, of making one people out of many races, was already beginning again in a new setting'.²⁷¹ Moreover, by familiarising

²⁶⁶ A. R. Press, 'The Precocious Courtesy of Geoffrey Gaimar', in *Court and Poet: Selected Proceedings of the Third Congress of the International Courtly Literature Society*, ed. Glyn S. Burgess (Liverpool: F. Cairns, 1981), 267–76.

²⁶⁷ Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century*, 120.

²⁶⁸ Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century*, 99–100. See also Short, 'Tam Angli quam Franci', 159; Kirsten A. Fenton, *Gender, Nation, and Conquest in the World of William of Malmesbury* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2008), 87.

²⁶⁹ See also Gillingham, 'Conquering the Barbarians', 69.

²⁷⁰ Robert R. Edwards, 'Notes Toward the Angevin Uncanny: Walter Map's Marvels and the Unwriting of National History', in *Other Nations: The Hybridization of Medieval Insular Mythology and Identity*, ed. Wendy Marie Hoofnagle and Wolfram R. Keller (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2011), 87–107, at 87.

²⁷¹ Marjorie Chibnall, *The Normans* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 110.

themselves with the history of their adoptive country, recognising that the English were ‘chivalrous and courtly’, the Anglo-Normans began to see themselves as English, as the natural successors of the great English heroes and kings.²⁷² Gaimar’s description of William Rufus as a ‘rei gentil’ [‘noble king’] is not a far cry from his claim that Buern Bucecarle is ‘nobles e gentilz’ [‘generous hearted and of such nobility’] or that Hereward ‘gentement s’est contenuz’ [‘acted as a true noble should’].²⁷³ This, Thomas argues, endorses ‘ethnic reconciliation’ between the two peoples, an idea also espoused in the *Gesta Herwardi*.²⁷⁴ In this sense, Gaimar’s text has been understood to confer a sense of English identity upon its readers by eliciting a feeling of cultural recognition or continuity between the conquerors and the conquered. Furthermore, Gaimar’s *Estoire* helps to propagate an idea of England and Englishness that was open to all: ‘[It] was not a matter of blood, foundation-legends or even customs, but the acceptance of common rule and allegiance of a single king. It was, if you like, a civic ethnicity, that is a national identity’.²⁷⁵ By presenting a ‘national saga’, extending from the Germanic invasions to the reign of Henry I, in insular French to an Anglo-Norman audience, and nevertheless claiming it to be ‘l’Estoire des Engleis’, Gaimar not only appropriates English history and grants the Anglo-Normans access to it; he also offers the possibility that Englishness is a plural, mutable, and continually developing concept—one that is not contingent on ethnicity.²⁷⁶

There is, however, a potential problem with this narrative: there is no single, common history of England. Gaimar opens his *Estoire* with an account of Britain after the fall of Arthur. He describes how ‘dous reis out ja en Bretaine’ [‘there were already

²⁷² Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century*, 120.

²⁷³ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 6249, 2640, 5624. Gillingham notes that William II is described as ‘prodom e ... curteis’ [‘worthy and courtly’], which are the same words used to describe a humble English fisherman: ‘prodom e ... curteis’. Gaimar, *Estoire*, 5850, 5506. See Gillingham, *English in the Twelfth Century*, 242.

²⁷⁴ Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, 359.

²⁷⁵ Davies, ‘Nations and National Identities’, 575.

²⁷⁶ Davies, ‘Nations and National Identities’, 575; Gaimar, *Estoire*, A7.

two kings in Britain’]; Edelsi’s land contains ‘Nicole e Lindeseie, / dés Humbre desk’en Roteland / ert le païs en son comant’ [‘Lincoln and Lindsey ... the country he ruled over stretched from the Humber to Rutland’], as well as ‘la contree / ki ore est Nortfolc apelee’ [‘the country which is today called Norfolk’].²⁷⁷ Adelbriht, a Dane, meanwhile has earldoms in Denmark and ‘en Bretaigne aveit conquis / Caïr Cœl od le païs: de Colecestre tresk’en Hoiland / durout son regne en un tenant’ [‘in Britain he had seized control of Colchester and the country round it so that his territory stretched in an unbroken line from Colchester to Holland (in Lincolnshire)’].²⁷⁸ The wording of this excerpt is important: it states that these were two kings ‘en Bretaigne’ [‘in Britain’], rather than two kings *of* Britain—a situation that would later present itself in England under the co-reign of Edmund Ironside and Cnut—which implies that there may have been other kings ruling elsewhere in Britain. This implicit division of England into different kingdoms and regions from the very beginning of the narrative highlights the idea that English history is multifarious and complex. Henry Bainton notes that most of the scholarship on Gaimar’s text relies ‘on the assumption that the “English past”—either as an abstract concept or as the subject of a narrative—was a pre-existing, static, and unitary object just waiting to be absorbed by the new settlers’.²⁷⁹ Gaimar’s England is often fractured, with multiple kings, not all of whom were Britons or Anglo-Saxons, since England’s history carries within it the legacies of a variety of peoples and cultural regions. The text’s contradictions, compromises, and descriptions of repeated invasions highlight this plural history. Gaimar does not merely translate or directly relay an all-

²⁷⁷ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 43–54. While the text notes that Adelbriht holds his lands ‘en un tenant’ [‘in an unbroken line’], it does not mention this in relation to Edelsi; his lands may not have been contained within a single holding.

²⁷⁸ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 73–76. This would probably have incorporated the areas now known as Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, and south Lincolnshire.

²⁷⁹ Henry Bainton, ‘Translating the “English” Past: Cultural Identity in the *Estoire des Engleis*’, in *Language and Culture in Medieval Britain: The French of England c. 1100–c.1500*, ed. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne (York: York Medieval Press, 2009), 179–87, at 180.

encompassing history of the English—to do so would be almost impossible. Instead, we must assume that he consciously curates it, selecting events and episodes from a variety of oral and literary sources deemed to be most relevant to the text's purpose and audience. These decisions may give insight into the motives behind the text's composition.

While constructing an identity through history may not work on a larger scale, on a more immediate level, it is possible to provide an identity that is experiential and accessible. Rather than providing a gateway to Englishness for the Anglo-Norman elite, Gaimar's text reflects the movements of his patron, Constance fitz Gilbert. To compose the *Estoire*, Gaimar claims he used a Welsh book that he borrowed from Robert of Gloucester, via Walter Espec, as well as a volume he calls 'le bon livre dē Oxeford' ['the good book of Oxford'], and a now-lost northern recension of the *ASC* located in Washingborough.²⁸⁰ It is possible that this latter book refers to 'l'estorie de Wincestre' ['the Winchester History'] that he also mentions.²⁸¹ Partway through his endeavour, scholars have speculated, Gaimar moved from Hampshire, where Constance's family's estates were located, to Lincolnshire, heartland of her husband Ralph fitz Gilbert.²⁸² There is some evidence that after completing several sections of the narrative, Gaimar returned to the beginning of the text to insert several important episodes, namely the

²⁸⁰ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 6464. The 'Welsh book' is probably an early version of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae*.

²⁸¹ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 6467. Because the Northern recension of the *ASC* is now lost, it is impossible to know what was in Gaimar's source text and what was encountered at a later date. Gaimar makes it clear that the Winchester Chronicle he used had been a copy of a book of which 'li reis Elfred l'out en demaine' ['King Alfred had been the owner']. Gaimar, *Estoire*, 2335. Since it is generally accepted that many of the stories are, 'beyond reasonable doubt', of a Lincolnshire provenance, it is possible that they were in the *ASC*, but unlikely that they were in any of Gaimar's other source texts. Ian Short, Introduction to *Estoire des Engleis*, x. For a detailed account of Gaimar's sources, see Ian Short, 'Gaimar's Epilogue and Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Liber vetustissimus*', *Speculum* 69, no. 2 (1994): 323–43.

²⁸² See Alexander Bell, ed. *The Lai d'Haveloc and Gaimar's Haveloc Episode* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1925), 74–78; Dorothy Williamson, 'Ralf son of Gilbert and Ralf son of Ralf', *Lincolnshire Architectural and Archaeological Society: Reports and Papers* 5 (1953): 19–27; Brian J. Levy, 'The Image of the Viking in Anglo-Norman Literature' in *Scandinavia and Europe 800–1350: Contact, Conflict, and Coexistence*, ed. Jonathan Adams and Katherine Holman (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 269–88, at 273.

stories of Haveloc, Buern Bucecarle, King Edgar, and the confrontation between Edmund Ironside and Cnut.²⁸³ Other additions include the stories of King Edward the Martyr, St. Edmund, Hereward, and William Rufus, as well as shorter insertions regarding Walsing, Sigeberht, the Danish raids, St. Edmund, Cnut's encounter with the tide, Godwine's trial, and the Battle of Hastings.²⁸⁴ These additions are often thought to be evidence of Gaimar's awareness of the 'stylistic limitations' of the chronicle form he had inherited from the *ASC*, and are used to add texture and colour to an otherwise dry text. However, the regional affiliations of some of these episodes cannot be ignored.²⁸⁵ Many of these are local stories that Gaimar may have encountered after his move to Lincolnshire, and in turn several of these narrate the relationship between the English and the Danes, presumably in part due to the strong Anglo-Scandinavian identity that the region retained into the twelfth century.²⁸⁶ Because of these two geographical ties—to Hampshire and Lincolnshire—the *Estoire* is composed of both West Saxon history and legends from the area that had been called the Danelaw.²⁸⁷ In juxtaposing and melding the—often incompatible—stories, histories, cultures, and attitudes of at least two regions of England to create a composite image of the country and an 'Estoire des Engleis', Gaimar builds a narrative that is inconsistent, but also revelatory. From it, we can glean an understanding not only of the stories that were prevalent in Hampshire and Lincolnshire, but also of the broader dynamics between regions, ethnicities, and identities in twelfth-century England.

²⁸³ These episodes are thought to be some of the earliest examples of insular courtly romance. See Jane Zatta, 'Gender, Love and Sex as Political Theory? Romance in Geffrei Gaimar's Anglo-Norman Chronicle', *Mediaevalia* 21, no. 2 (1997): 249–80; Short, Introduction to *Estoire des Engleis*, xl.

²⁸⁴ Short, Introduction to *Estoire des Engleis*, xl.

²⁸⁵ Peter Damian-Grint, *New Historians of the Twelfth-Century Renaissance* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1999), 51.

²⁸⁶ See Short, Introduction to *Estoire*, ix.

²⁸⁷ Henry Bainton notes that rather than simply being a translation of the *ASC*, 'the *Estoire* is both aware of and cautious about the specifically West-Saxon ideology of the *Chronicle* and makes corresponding and canny use of it'. Bainton, 'Translating the "English" Past', 181.

The polyphonic, dynamic, and protean text born from these various sources implicitly reflects regional variation within England, while the Anglo-Danish stories also reveal Gaimar's English identity to be inclusive, fluid, and relevant to Gaimar's intended audience.²⁸⁸ In conveying a history of the English by drawing on regional stories, the *Estoire* creates an entryway through which its Anglo-Norman audience might access a sense of English identity. By gaining a sense of local history and the stories that emanate from a particular region, which supplement Gaimar's account of general English history, his intended audience was able to familiarise themselves with the parts of England's past that were most relevant to their surroundings in Lincolnshire. Charles Phythian-Adams writes that 'identities arise from real circumstances and are therefore incomprehensible without reference to those circumstances. ... Social space (or cultural identity) is tethered, however distantly, in real space to the realities of the relevant region of origin'.²⁸⁹ 'Real space', physical geography, geology, and landscape are all indisputably important in the formation of regional identity, yet this is more powerful when they are given meaning through memories and stories, whether personal or communal, real or invented. As discussed in the previous chapter, stories can translate this physical place into a symbolic space, where memory, history, and myth can live in the landscape.²⁹⁰ These stories do not claim to 'represent' a region and thus essentialise regional identity, but they are one of many elements that can incite a feeling of connection to a place.

Cultural geographer Anssi Paasi writes:

Narratives of regional identity lean on miscellaneous elements: ideas of nature, landscape, the built environment, culture/ethnicity, dialects, economic success/recession, periphery/centre relations, marginalization, stereotypic images of a people/community, both of 'us' and 'them', actual/invented histories, utopias and diverging arguments on the identification of people. These

²⁸⁸ For a discussion of the relationship between Gaimar and Constance fitz Gilbert, see Emma Bérat, 'The Patron and her Clerk: Multilingualism and Cultural Transition', *New Medieval Literatures* 12 (2010): 23–45.

²⁸⁹ Phythian-Adams, 'Agenda', 1–23.

²⁹⁰ See above, 49–51.

elements are used *contextually* in practices, rituals and discourses to construct narratives more or less closed, imagined identities.²⁹¹

As a text that draws on many of these elements, especially those of culture, ethnicity, history, community, and identification of peoples, the *Estoire* paints a picture of Lincolnshire and its cultural heritage. The area would likely have been initially unfamiliar to both Gaimar and his patron, and ‘Lincolnshire, still showing Anglo-Scandinavian influence and located on the periphery of the Anglo-Norman kingdom, would have been strikingly different to their previous home in the old Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Hampshire’.²⁹² As such, Constance fitz Gilbert may have been interested in the history and culture of the place where she took up residence following her marriage, as well as the Anglo-Saxon past of the country in which she was born.²⁹³ This draws attention to the idea that England is composed of a series of regions, and that one’s understanding of a country is necessarily bound to the places most familiar to an individual. The text anchors itself in an Englishness that it is possible to experience and in which one could participate, rather than one which is all-encompassing, abstract, and ultimately bears little resemblance to quotidian, lived experience.

The *Estoire*’s opening and its description of a divided Britain reinforce this idea. Although it is clear that Gaimar envisages England as a cohesive space, he almost immediately turns from a national perspective, documenting the influx of English to Britain and the shift in demographic, and hence political, dominance over the area now known as England, to a regional one. The description of Adelbriht and Edelsi’s kingdoms in the east of England—to the exclusion of other areas—immediately presents a map for the Haveloc episode that follows, and evokes a concrete sense of geography that remains relevant for the remainder of the narrative. In the text, this region is not only presented as

²⁹¹ Paasi, ‘Region and Place’, 477–80, quotation at 477.

²⁹² Bérat, ‘The Patron and her Clerk’, 31.

²⁹³ Bainton, ‘Translating the “English” Past’, 185.

a divided land, but also, to some degree, the only pertinent part of the country. Although other regions of England are frequently mentioned elsewhere in the narrative, especially in the sections derived from the *ASC*, Gaimar continually returns to Lincolnshire and the north and east of England as settings for his livelier episodes.²⁹⁴ Lincolnshire's regional history is presented as fundamental to the history of England, just as events in the rest of the country have an impact on regional affairs.

This example is not unique: many of the stories that Gaimar injects into his narrative as interpolations display a strong focus on the areas in which he was writing.²⁹⁵ Ian Short argues that 'while considerations of ethnicity and locality, which are among Gaimar's more constant preoccupations, are not always directly articulated in his narrative, a contemporary audience would presumably have had the necessary tacit knowledge to appreciate them'.²⁹⁶ Although a modern reader cannot inhabit the mind of Gaimar's audience, there is a great deal of evidence that points to Gaimar's concern with regional consciousness, particularly his treatment of the Danes, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

While Lincolnshire is the current focus, since it more clearly constituted a contact zone and space of cultural intermixing in the twelfth century, it is worth devoting some discussion to the other regions present in the *Estoire*. As already mentioned, the text offers a wealth of localised information pertaining to the south of England, particularly Hampshire. This includes the romance between Edgar and Ælfthryth, which

²⁹⁴ Further evidence of Gaimar's emphasis on the geography of the area comes in the form of an alteration, or perhaps an error: he claims that the Danes ravage Lindsey, rather than Lindisfarne, in the eighth century. Short's notes state that the *ASC* entry for the year 783 reads 'Lindisfarena', while Gaimar may have mistaken this for 'Lindiswara', suggesting that he may have been preoccupied with the local connections in his text. Short, notes to the text in *Estoire*, 383.

²⁹⁵ See Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England: c.500 to c.1307* (London: Routledge, 1996), 178. Laura Ashe also comments that the text has a 'pronounced interest in the local region and the Anglo-Danish past'. Laura Ashe, 'The Anomalous King of Conquered England', in *Every Inch a King: Comparative Studies on Kings and Kingship in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds*, ed. Lynette Mitchell and Charles Melville (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 173–94, at 178.

²⁹⁶ Short, Introduction to *Estoire*, xliv.

undoubtedly derives from a West Saxon source. The area may have influenced the text's depiction of William Rufus's death at in the New Forest, and compelled Gaimar to locate Æthelred's coronation ceremony at Winchester rather than Kingston, as it is in most versions of the *ASC*. Alexander Bell argues that 'these allusions are all of as definite a nature as those to Lincolnshire'.²⁹⁷

Furthermore, the *Estoire's* regional connections extend beyond Lincolnshire and Hampshire. While the Fitz Gilberts were actively engaged in local affairs toward the second half of the twelfth century, they also enjoyed connections throughout the country, and the *Estoire* may reflect some of their complex political ties.²⁹⁸ To compose his *Estoire des Bretuns*, Gaimar claims to have drawn from a book in the possession of Walter Espec in Helmsley, probably the *Historia regum Britanniae*:

Robert li quens de Gloūcestre
fist translater icele geste
solum les lives as Waleis
k'il aveient des bretons reis

[Robert earl of Gloucester had this historical narrative translated in accordance with the books belonging to the Welsh that they had in their possession on the subject of the kings of Britain].²⁹⁹

This comment establishes a relationship between the Fitz Gilberts and Robert of Gloucester, Henry I's illegitimate son, through Walter Espec, a powerful baron in Yorkshire. This movement of texts throughout England evidences the interconnections between the country's regions during the twelfth century. From this information 'a map of provincial communications between Gloucester, Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Kent' can be drawn, linking Gaimar indirectly to Henry I.³⁰⁰ This connection could have contributed to Gaimar's glorification of Henry I's reign towards the end of his narrative: 'li reis meillur

²⁹⁷ *Lai d'Haveloc*, 74.

²⁹⁸ Ralph fitz Gilbert founded an Augustinian priory at Markby, and was the benefactor of an Augustinian priory at Kirkstead. See Gransden, *Historical Writing*, 178.

²⁹⁹ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 6449–52.

³⁰⁰ Elizabeth Salter, *English and International: Studies in the Literature, Art, and Patronage of Medieval England*, ed. Derek Pearsall and Nicolette Zeeman (1988; repr. Cambridge: CUP, 2010), 24.

/ ki unkes fust ne jamés seit' ['the best king that ever was'].³⁰¹ This may also have been due to Constance's association with Adeliza of Louvain, Henry I's second wife, who commissioned a history by Gaimar's rival, David, of which Gaimar somewhat bitterly notes: 'Dame Custance en ad l'escrit, / en sa chambre sovent le lit' ['Lady Constance owns a written copy of it, which she often reads in her chamber'].³⁰²

Locating the *Estoire*

While the biographical details of Gaimar's patron can allow scholars to locate Gaimar in Lincolnshire with some confidence, Gaimar never explicitly situates himself geographically. He does, however, present some clues that hint at where the text was written. These lie primarily in Gaimar's description of the process of composing the *Estoire*, found in the longer epilogue of London, British Library, MS Royal 13 A xxi (Short's MS R). In this version, Gaimar states that during the course of his project he consulted 'l'estorie de Wincestre' held in Washingborough, a small village near Lincoln.³⁰³ Although it is unlikely that Gaimar would have composed his text in Washingborough, it can be assumed that he would not have had to travel far in order to use this source effectively.

The narrative proper also suggests that the text was composed in the north midlands. This is often achieved through the use of relative directions: the passage stating that Morcar, with his army, 'vait en Norhantonschire, / [e] cel conté trestot

³⁰¹ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 6504–5. Gaimar's praise of Henry's court is likely an attempt to provoke his patron to commission another book about the activities of Henry's court, 'Ore dit Gaimar k'il tressailli, / mes s'il uncore s'en volt pener, / des plus bels faiz pot vers trover' ['Gaimar now declares that he is not after all going to go into any of this here, though if he were willing to work hard at it, he could compose a verse account of the finest exploits (of Henry's court)']. Gaimar, *Estoire*, 6508–10.

³⁰² Gaimar, *Estoire*, 6495–96.

³⁰³ See Gaimar, *Estoire*, 6469. It is unclear how a copy of the *ASC* came to Washingborough. Short explains that in the period preceding the Conquest the town had been an important administrative seat with connections to Peterborough. It is possible that the manuscript's exemplar was deposited in Washingborough, and that this is the book that Gaimar consulted. See Short, 'Gaimar's Epilogue', 330–32.

praierent, / a Eve[r]wic l'aveir menerent' ['goes off to Northamptonshire ... and plunders the whole of the country, bringing the booty back to York'] suggests that the text's default position, as well as Morcar's, who was earl of Northumbria, is in the north part of England.³⁰⁴ While Short translates 'cel conté' to 'the country', it might be more fittingly translated as 'that country' or 'that county', suggesting a geographical, and possibly political, distance between the text's location and Northamptonshire. Helen M. Jewell, furthermore, has noted that in characterising Harold's defeat of the 'Daneis' ['Danes'] in 1066, Gaimar writes 'la gent del suth sembla grant glorie' ['it seemed a most glorious feat to the people of the south'].³⁰⁵ This not only suggests some measure of political or social difference between the peoples of northern and southern England, but also accords 'la gent del suth' a degree of alterity, suggesting an affinity with those in the north.

The localisation of the text, however, is most readily achieved through the inclusion of local stories, a feature that has been noted by many scholars. In his edition of the text, Short provides a list of references to local allusions in the *Estoire*, which he suggests is evidence of Gaimar's 'indulging in local audience-targeting'.³⁰⁶ This focus on the local is further evinced by the persistent presence of the Danes in the text: Antonia Gransden notes that Gaimar 'probably collected the legends from local oral traditions (the numerous stories concerning the Danes must have been of Danish origin)'.³⁰⁷ Similarly, Bainton remarks '[the] closer one looks indeed, the more one notices that, when Gaimar either narrates episodes not covered in the *Chronicle* or elaborates on those that are (so for well over half the work), Danes—and their relationship with either the English or the Britons—are almost always involved'.³⁰⁸ This gives further evidence of

³⁰⁴ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 5128–30.

³⁰⁵ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 5233–34; Helen M. Jewell, *The North-South Divide: The Origins of Northern Consciousness in England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), 188.

³⁰⁶ Short, Notes, 435–36; see also Introduction, xxix.

³⁰⁷ Gransden, *Historical Writing*, 179.

³⁰⁸ Bainton, 'Translating the "English" Past', 182.

the text's region of composition: The stories that are absent from the extant versions of the *ASC* are often those set in or unique to Lincolnshire. In adapting his source texts, Gaimar both replicates the traditional view of the Danes as a group who 'tuz tens funt mal quel part que turnent' ['(always caused) havoc wherever they went'], and adds lively anecdotes relating the stories of individual Danes in particular situations.³⁰⁹ These interpolations are likely stories that emerge from an Anglo-Scandinavian contact zone. Reading such anecdotes, the audience comes away with a more nuanced account of the cultural interactions that reflect the experiences of both those who had lived in Wessex and those who had been to the Danelaw. This does not correspond with one of Paasi's descriptions of regional literature, the 'stereotypic images of a people/community, both of "us" and "them"'; and it casts Gaimar's text as one with a regional focus but a broad outlook, as a text concerned with the place of the region in an intercultural sphere. This suggests that small-scale geographic areas can be more internationally minded than larger ones.³¹⁰

Danishness in Lincolnshire

The Danes are a nearly constant presence in Gaimar's text, not only in the stories of Haveloc, Buern Bucecarle, and King Cnut, but also in its depictions of Danish invasions and cultural influences on the Anglo-Saxons. Although they are often depicted as instruments of destruction, as 'felons' [traitors, criminals],³¹¹ they are also instruments of justice and reconciliation, as evidenced by Danish kings of England, Haveloc and Cnut. Even in the stories that appear to have originated in Wessex, Gaimar continues to include the Danes. In the story of King Edgar, Orgar and Ælfthryth are depicted playing chess,

³⁰⁹ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 2942.

³¹⁰ Paasi, 'Region and Place', 477.

³¹¹ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 2407.

‘un giu k’il aprist des Daneis’ [‘a game which he had learnt from the Danes’].³¹² The text refuses to categorically define the Danes as negative forces in England. Some scholars have even suggested that this reveals ‘pro-Danish sympathies’.³¹³ However, in light of the *Estoire*’s regional interests, the Danish presence in the text appears more salient; the regional stories of Lincolnshire necessarily include Danes or Danish elements because of the area’s demographic constitution.

To contextualise Gaimar’s *Estoire*, the Danish character of Lincolnshire must be understood. While the Danes were a historic enemy of Wessex, they were a strong presence in Lincolnshire in the centuries prior to the Norman Conquest, to the extent that the area remained ‘a cultural outlier of the Scandinavian world’ into the twelfth century.³¹⁴ Because Anglo-Saxon society was culturally diverse, providing a space where ‘immigrants could and did engage in their own distinctive cultural practices’, Anglo-Scandinavian culture thrived.³¹⁵ England rivalled Norway as the most productive site for the writing of Skaldic verse, indicating a strong Norse cultural tradition on the island.³¹⁶ This influence, however, went in both directions, and England plays an important role in several Old Norse texts, such as *Egil’s Saga*. It is often figured as a centre for commerce and industry, the ‘kallat gagnauðigast land af Vestrlöndum’ [‘most productive country in

³¹² Gaimar, *Estoire*, 3654. Jenny Adams claims that it is likely that chess moved from Asia to Europe through North Africa and the Iberian Peninsula. Chess was thought to provide individuals with a framework for understanding their roles in society and their relation to the dominant political system. While the king may be the most important piece in the set, the other pieces ‘have freedom of movement independent of the monarch and thus can affect the outcome of the game’. Chess thus serves as a potent symbol for a political order reliant on balance and cooperation. By claiming that it was learned from the Danes, the text might implicitly comment on their positive political influence. Jenny Adams, *Power Play: Literature and the Politics of Chess in the Late Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 2–7.

³¹³ Short, Introduction to *Estoire*, xliii.

³¹⁴ C. Phythian-Adams, ‘Environments and Identities: Landscape as Cultural Projection in the English Provincial Past’, in *Environments and Historical Change*, ed. Paul Slack (Oxford: OUP, 1999), 118–46, at 130.

³¹⁵ Judith Jesch, ‘Skaldic Verse in Scandinavian England’, *Vikings and the Danelaw: Select Papers from the Proceedings of the Thirteenth Viking Congress*, ed. James Graham-Campbell, Richard Hall, Judith Jesch and David Parsons (Oxford: Oxbow, 2001), 313–25, at 315.

³¹⁶ Jesch, ‘Skaldic Verse’, 314.

Western Europe’],³¹⁷ and a place where Norse heroes might prove their worth by serving ‘English kings in various ways, restoring exiled princes to the throne, organizing the land’s defences, killing malefactors, solving crimes, and rendering legal judgements’.³¹⁸ *Hrólfr’s saga kraka* even suggests that a Northman, Norðri, was the first ruler of Northumbria and endowed the area with his name. Hróarr, and subsequently Hróarr’s son, succeed Norðri’s rule in England. Elizabeth Rowe argues that ‘[t]his makes the Danish claim to Northumbria nearly as old as the realm itself’, a claim which is reminiscent of Gaimar’s depiction of Haveloc’s post-Arthurian reign over eastern England.³¹⁹

Although the scale of Scandinavian settlement in England is the subject of much debate, it is probable that a large percentage of the Danish invaders took up residence in Lincolnshire after the ninth century.³²⁰ The area would likely have seen a ‘persistence of a Scandinavian cultural substratum’ into the period when Gaimar was writing.³²¹ Domesday Book reveals that in the late eleventh century, over sixty per cent of Lincolnshire landowners had Danish names, and the area also had an unusually high number of sokemen: free men who may have been descendants of the Danes and who

³¹⁷ *Göngu-Hrólfr’s Saga*, trans. Paul Edwards and Hermann Pálsson (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1980), 122, quoted in Geraldine Barnes, ‘The Medieval Anglophile: England and its Rulers in Old Norse History and Saga’, *Parergon* 10, no. 2 (1992): 11–25, at 25.

³¹⁸ Elizabeth Ashman Rowe, ‘Helpful Danes and Pagan Irishmen: Saga Fantasies of the Viking Age in the British Isles’, *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia* 5 (2009): 1–21, at 7. Rowe notes that this is only true for the non-Viking-empire *fornaldarsögur*.

³¹⁹ Rowe, ‘Helpful Danes’, 9. Gaimar is the only author of the twelfth century to posit that the Danes were established in Britain before the Germanic migration. See Elizabeth Freeman, ‘Geffrei Gaimar, Vernacular Historiography, and the Assertion of Authority’, *Studies in Philology* 93 (1996): 188–206, especially 194.

³²⁰ See P. H. Sawyer, ‘Conquest and Colonization: Scandinavians in the Danelaw and in Normandy’, in *Proceedings of the Eighth Viking Congress*, ed. Hans Bekker-Nielsen, Peter Foote, and Olaf Olsen (Odense: Odense University Press, 1981), 123–31, especially 124; Simon Trafford, ‘Ethnicity, Migration Theory, and the Historiography of the Scandinavian Settlement of England’, in *Cultures in Contact*, 17–39; Dawn Hadley, *The Vikings in England: Settlement, Society, and Culture* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2006), 1; Shannon Lewis-Simpson, ‘Assimilation of Hybridization? A Study of Personal Names from the Danelaw’, in *Other Nations*, 13–43.

³²¹ Short, Introduction to the *Estoire*, ix; Bainton, ‘Translating the “English” Past’, 185.

arrived in 877.³²² The ‘Five Boroughs’ of Danish settlement, later known as the Danelaw—Lincoln, Derby, Leicester, Nottingham, and Stamford—were viewed as distinctive from the rest of England, and many historians believe that there was a degree of separatist sentiment in these areas.³²³ Although evidence relating to the Danelaw in the later Anglo-Saxon period is scant at best, and it is difficult to ascertain the dynamics between the West Saxons and those living in the north and east of England, there are a few mentions of the Danes in the historical record that suggest that they were an important presence prior to the Danish conquest of England in 1016—and not simply as plunderers or invaders. While some Danes had been increasingly engaged in raids along the English coast for decades, those who lived in England were nevertheless included within English law. King Edgar’s law code of c. 962–63, mentioned briefly in the introduction to this thesis, points to a degree of Danish legal exceptionality; it stipulated that ‘ic wille þæt woruldgeriht mid Denum standan be swa godum lagum, swa hy betste geceosan mægen’ [‘it is my will that secular rights be in force among the Danes according to as good laws as they can best decide on’].³²⁴ Niels Lund suggests that these special provisions were a reward for the support the northern magnates gave to Edgar as they withdrew their support for Edgar’s brother, Eadwig.³²⁵ These men saw Edgar’s need for support as an opportunity to further their own purposes in establishing autonomy for

³²² Kevin Leahy, ‘Detecting the Vikings in Lincolnshire’, *Current Archaeology* 190 (2004): 462–68, at 463. It is important to recognise, however, that the persistence of Danish names does not necessarily indicate that these families were Danish. There would undoubtedly have been a great deal of intermarriage between the Danes and the English, and it is possible that even Anglo-Saxons gave their children Danish names due to the influence of the Danish elite.

³²³ See Julian Richards, ‘Viking Settlement in England’, in *The Viking World*, ed. Stefan Brink and Neil Price (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 368–74; Dawn Hadley, ‘The Creation of the Danelaw’, in *The Viking World*, 375–78.

³²⁴ *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, 210. Translation in Whitelock, ed., ‘Edgar’s code’, 439. See also Wormald, *Making of English Law*, 1:126, 132–33.

³²⁵ Niels Lund, ‘King Edgar and the Danelaw’, *Medieval Scandinavia* 9 (1976): 181–95, at 182; Hadley, ‘The Creation of the Danelaw’, 376. Edgar justifies this degree of Anglo-Danish sovereignty by claiming that it is a reward for loyalty. Whitelock, ed., ‘Edgar’s Code’, 440. Patrick Wormald, however, points to a paradox in this idea: BL, Cotton MS Nero E.i, which houses the IV Edgar law code, is a Worcester manuscript, even though it concerns the Danelaw. It is possible that a copy was deposited in Worcester by an ealdorman of Mercia. See Wormald, *Making of English Law*, 184–85.

the Danelaw regions of England.³²⁶ Dawn Hadley postulates that these separate legal provisions for the Danes may have been issued in an attempt to ‘help him maintain a semblance of political unity both by recognizing regional legal traditions and by acknowledging the limitations of his authority’.³²⁷ Patrick Wormald suggests that this clause was probably not present in the edicts he issued to the rest of the kingdom, since the only manuscripts that house these law codes are from ‘the Worcester/York complex, that is from the centre or centres most concerned with Danelaw areas’.³²⁸ This provision is ethnic rather than territorial: it does not grant autonomy to a particular area, but rather to a particular group of people. Thus, it is possible that even though the legislature is directed at the Danelaw regions, this clause may have only applied to those who were ethnically Danish. Similarly, it may have also applied to Danes who lived in parts of England other than the Danelaw.³²⁹ Edgar’s attempts to make peace with the Danes were not universally welcomed. The *ASC D*, also from Worcester, comments on the death of Edgar:

³²⁶ Lund, ‘King Edgar’, 187. The term Danelaw is used to designate areas in the north and east of England settled by the Danes. The term *Dena lagu* was first used by Wulfstan II of York in c.1008 as a way to differentiate the legal system of the Danes from that of the West Saxons, but has since been conflated with a geographical concept. It is important to note, however, that there is no evidence that the Danelaw was a recognised, independent, or homogenous unit, or that it formed a political counterpart to Wessex or Mercia. Furthermore, there is little to suggest that there is anything innately Scandinavian about the *Dena lagu* aside from its name. However, the ethnic and legal separation between the Anglo-Saxons and the Anglo-Danes may have contributed to a sense of regional identity in the Five Boroughs. See Matthew Innes, ‘Danelaw Identities: Ethnicity, Regionalism, and Political Allegiance’, in *Cultures in Contact*, 65–88, at 77; Katherine Holman, ‘Defining the Danelaw’, in *Vikings and the Danelaw*, 1–13, at 7; Dawn Hadley, ‘Viking and Native: Re-thinking Identity in the Danelaw’, *Early Medieval Europe* 11 (2002): 45–70, at 47.

³²⁷ Hadley, ‘Viking and Native’, 48.

³²⁸ Wormald, *Making of English Law*, 1:126–27, 321–22, 328–29.

³²⁹ This idea of ‘personal law’ was prevalent in medieval Europe, and suggested that ‘a person’s nationality determines the type of law to which he or she is subject’. To specify that the Danes were able to determine their own laws may simply mean that they were not subject to English laws, which, prior to the development of English Common Law, were the exclusively reserved for those who were ethnically English. See John Hudson, *The Formation of English Common Law* (London: Longman, 1996), 17. For the relationship between ethnicity and law in medieval Europe, see Wormald, ‘The *Leges Barbarorum*: law and ethnicity in the post-Roman west’, in *Regna and Gentes*, ed. Hans-Werner Goetz, Jörg Jarnut, and Walter Pohl (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 21–53.

Ane misdæde he dyde þeah to swyðe, þæt he elðeodige unsida lufode, 7 heþene
 þeawas innan þysan lande gebrohte to fæste, 7 utlændisce hider in tihte, 7
 deriende leoda bespeon to þysan earde.³³⁰

[Yet he did one ill-deed too greatly: he loved evil foreign customs and brought
 too firmly heathen manners within this land, and attracted hither foreigners and
 enticed harmful people to this country].³³¹

This excerpt suggests that there may have been some animosity regarding the position of the Danes in England; it is possible that certain regions of England resented the conferral of privileges upon a group that had historically been enemies of the English.

These law codes are ambiguous, however, because it is unclear who would have been considered Danish at this stage in history. Robert Bartlett argues that customs, not heritage, distinguished ethnic groups. Language, laws, ‘dress, domestic rituals, dietary habits, hair-styles, and a host of other habitual practices’ differentiated communities, and these characteristics could change ‘not only from one generation to the next, but even within an individual lifetime’.³³² As such the term ‘Danes’ may not have directly signified those who were ethnically Danish; it may have been used as a catchall term for those living in the areas that had seen a significant Scandinavian influence. Indeed, many of the ‘Danes’ inhabiting the area were in fact from Northern Scandinavia or the Norse settlement of Dublin.³³³

In light of Edgar’s positive treatment of those living in areas of Danish settlement, and Gaimar’s simultaneous interest in Hampshire, it is perhaps unsurprising that Gaimar should claim that ‘Unc puis ke Artur s’ en fu alez / nen out un rei tel pöestez’ [‘Not since the disappearance of Arthur had a single king been so powerful’], and comment that Edgar ‘se penat de bein faire’ [‘took pains to do good’] and ‘Bones

³³⁰ G. P. Cubbin, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle 6 MS D*, vol. 6 of *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: a Collaborative Edition* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1996), 45, s.a 959.

³³¹ Whitelock, ed., *English Historical Documents*, 225.

³³² Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change, 950–1350* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 197–8.

³³³ Hadley, ‘The Creation of the Danelaw’, 376.

costumes alevat' ['established good customs'].³³⁴ It is unclear to which customs Gaimar is referring, but it is possible that histories from the Lincolnshire area may have cast Edgar more fondly because of his appreciation of the Danes. However, Gaimar also states that 'tuz ses veisins vers lui clinat: / par bel amur e par supplei' ['He made all his neighbours subject to him, and did so amicably and by humbly petitioning'],³³⁵ which seems to contradict the idea that the Danes in England were somewhat autonomous. Gaimar's claim that Edgar 'tint terre com emperere' ['He governed the country as if he were the ruler of an empire'] suggests, primarily, that he owed no allegiance to a superior power, but also that the land over which he ruled was made up of distinct provinces which may have retained some degree of individuality, even though Edgar exercised ultimate political authority over the country.³³⁶ To compare England to an empire at this stage of Gaimar's *Estoire* is to remind readers of the immense cultural differences between the country's various regions; it draws attention to the fact that only a few years prior to Edgar's reign, the north and east of England had been ruled by the Danes Olaf Sihtricson (who gained the epithet Cuaran) and Erik Bloodaxe. Although England was theoretically united under a single king, Edgar's laws and his 'bones costumes' acknowledge the various peoples present in the kingdom, and underline his awareness of the diversity of their customs and legal traditions.

The Anglo-Scandinavian milieu in which Gaimar was writing was unlikely to affect his, or the former residents of the Danelaw's, views of the Danish raiders of the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, however. While the attacks were launched through Anglo-Danish areas, this was probably due more to Swein's exploitation of the regions' existing political rivalries and their geographic distance from the heartlands of

³³⁴ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 3571–72, 3575, 3577. This is around the point that Gaimar stops relying on the *ASC* as his sole source. See Short, Notes, 401.

³³⁵ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 3578–79.

³³⁶ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 3566.

the English king than any ethnic sympathy for, or identification with, the Viking raiders.³³⁷ David Roffe posits that the Danish heritage of the area had less of an influence on the identity of those living in the region than might be expected. He writes: ‘The men of the Danelaw [probably] thought of themselves less as Danes than men of York, men of Lincoln, men of Nottingham.’ While the Danelaw retained a degree of Danish cultural identity and the Danish language was spoken and had an influence on the English dialect of the area, this was ‘but a veneer on a society that was still essentially English’.³³⁸ Because ethnic identity was, and is, primarily ‘a subjective process by which individuals and groups identified themselves and others within specific contexts, on the basis of a shared and subjective sense of common interests’, an English ethnic identity or a regional identity could easily become more dominant than an ancestral one.³³⁹ There is, however, a suggestion that Gaimar considers those descended from the Danes and with ties to Denmark to be Danish. He introduces Adelbriht as a ‘riches hom fu si ert Daneis’ [‘a powerful man and a Dane’], but later only states that he is ‘riche reis / ki ert del linage as Daneis’ [‘(a) powerful king of Danish extraction’].³⁴⁰ While it is not clear that Adelbriht is a native of Denmark, merely that he is of Danish lineage, he is nevertheless ‘Daneis’. These characteristics are, ostensibly, taken to be conterminous. This is important for our understanding of Gaimar’s view of ethnicity because it suggests that lineage may indeed have an impact on cultural identity. However, it is also possible that Gaimar included a mention of Adelbriht’s Danish ancestry to emphasise the role Denmark would play in the remainder of the Haveloc story; this example is revealing, but we cannot take it to be the final word on Gaimar’s understanding of ethnicity, nor on his definition of who is, and is not, Danish.

³³⁷ See Innes, ‘Danelaw Identities’, 74–77.

³³⁸ David Roffe, ‘The Danes and the Making of the Kingdom of England’, in *Nations in Medieval Britain*, ed. Tsurushima Hirokazu (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2010), 32–44, at 38–40.

³³⁹ Hadley, ‘Viking and Native’, 46.

³⁴⁰ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 48, 59–60.

Archaeological evidence suggests that the Danes in England were culturally different from their Scandinavian counterparts and their English compatriots. Katherine Holman writes:

There does seem a good deal of evidence for the emergence of a new Anglo-Scandinavian society and culture in northern and eastern England. Just as the law of the Danelaw was neither Scandinavian or English, so the stone sculptures produced there in the tenth and eleventh centuries, the artefacts found in archaeological excavations and the personal names used by the settlers all testify to something that was different from what had gone before but also, crucially, from what was found back in Scandinavia. ... There was both a regional and an ethnic dimension to the Danelaw—but the ethnicity in question is not Scandinavian, it is Anglo-Scandinavian.³⁴¹

It is important to consider the implications that this Anglo-Scandinavian culture had on the identities of those living in the Danelaw; even though they thought of themselves primarily as the men and women of York, Lincoln, or Nottingham, the Scandinavian influence on those regions and the identities associated with them may have been evident through artistic or literary output, local stories, or myths. However, it is important to recognise that a hybrid cultural identity would have been neither immediate nor all-pervasive, but would have instead developed ‘organically through a gradual process of interaction and renegotiation of identities’, both on an individual and a communal level.³⁴² As such, it would have differed in degree and detail throughout the Danelaw’s regions. Furthermore, it is impossible to ascertain whether those living in the Danelaw would have understood their, or their neighbours’, identities to be the result of several cultural inputs. Indeed, it is possible that this was not something they thought about or recognised at all.

³⁴¹ Katherine Holman, *The Northern Conquest: Vikings in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Signal, 2012), 186–87.

³⁴² Lewis-Simpson, ‘Assimilation or Hybridization?’ 15.

Gaimar's Danes

The *Estoire*, either as a result of this cultural dissociation between the Anglo-Danes and the Danes, or because of the devastating effects of the Danish raids on eastern England, offers little indication that the Danes' invasions were warranted or that they had an inherent right to rule England. In the majority of instances, Gaimar writes negatively about the Viking invaders, calling them 'felon Daneis' [treacherous/criminal/foul Danes] and lamenting their destruction of England's eastern coast: 'preierent tut l'orient' ['(they) plundered the whole of the eastern part of the country'].³⁴³ He continues to disparage the Danes even after he stops using the *ASC* as his primary source, suggesting that he was not merely echoing its views. While Cnut is initially seen as a peace-making king who rules justly, the *Estoire* nevertheless states that when his sons die 'Grant joie en firent li Engleis, / kar les Daneis vil les teneient, / soventefaiz les honisseient' ['This caused great rejoicing among the English, since the Danes had treated them little better than serfs and often humiliated them'].³⁴⁴ Although he was living in an Anglo-Danish environment, Gaimar approaches the Danes with a measure of suspicion. However, in incorporating stories that involve the Danes into his narrative, he often reflects the area in which he was writing. This was an area that was culturally mixed and whose history was just as Anglo-Danish as it was Anglo-Saxon, or even more so: according to the Haveloc legend, the area's Anglo-Danish history predated the Germanic seizure of Britain. Gaimar's Danish additions balance out the accounts of the Anglo-Saxons in the *ASC*, where the 'Danes were often regarded as evil outsiders' in order to better portray the history and legends of Lincolnshire.³⁴⁵

³⁴³ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 3123, 2562.

³⁴⁴ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 4766–68.

³⁴⁵ Bérat, 'The Patron and her Clerk', 32–33.

The story of Buern Bucecarle, one of Gaimar's interpolations, depicts the Danes as both honourable and destructive forces. The story provides an explanation for the arrival of the Danes in England, heralding them as instruments of justice as they take vengeance against King Osberht for his crime of raping Buern's wife.³⁴⁶ Buern's name suggests he might be of Anglo-Danish origin; William Sayers posits that it might reflect the Norse *Björn*.³⁴⁷ Moreover, in Gaimar's description of Buern, he writes 'miel dre vassal en terre n'out, / nē el regne dont il ert né / n'ert nus home mielz enparenté' ['there was no better or braver person in either the country or the kingdom where he was born, nor was there anyone who came of a better family than his'].³⁴⁸ The *Estoire* draws attention to Buern's foreignness as it differentiates between the country and 'el regne dont il ert né'. Similarly, because he turns to the Danes for help, his affiliation with them is implied. However, in spite of his possible Scandinavian heritage, he is celebrated as one of the most reasonable, sympathetic characters in the *Estoire* for his attitude towards his wife's traumatic experience. Ultimately, the Danes in the *Estoire* are judged not for their ancestry, but for their actions.

While it is possible that the inclusion of the Danes in this episode has—according to Short—'little significance beyond having been a feature of Gaimar's source, or part of the annalistic framework he took over from the *ASC*', this section has also been read as 'another example of pro-Danish sentiment in the post-conquest Danelaw'.³⁴⁹ While this episode primarily comments on poor kingship and the dangers of abandoning feudal responsibility rather than on the Danes, it nevertheless suggests, importantly, that the Danes were invited to England:

³⁴⁶ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 2687–722.

³⁴⁷ William Sayers, 'Ships and Sailors in Geiffrei Gaimar's *Estoire des Engleis*', *Modern Language Review* 98, no. 2 (2003): 299–310, at 305.

³⁴⁸ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 2642–44.

³⁴⁹ Short, Notes, 389. Herbert Pilch, *Orality and Literacy in Early Middle English* (Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1996), 246. Short dismisses this idea, stating that the episode 'has no visible pro-Danish political dimension'. Short, Notes, 389.

Cestui les out ainz assemblez
 e de Denemarche amenez
 pur la hunte de sa muller,
 dunt volentiers se volt venger

[Buern it was who had organized and brought the Danes over here from Denmark in the first place, such was his thirst for revenge for the shame inflicted on his wife].³⁵⁰

The blame for the Danes' arrival lies with Osberht, whose crime compels Buern to take such drastic measures. However, in summoning the Danes, Buern abandons any loyalty to England and instead values his family's honour over the safety of the country; although the Danes help Buern achieve his aim of revenging himself against Osberht, their presence in England quickly becomes a problem as they conquer all the land north of the Humber and 'tut le país unt exillé' ['laid waste to the entire region'].³⁵¹ A crime against the most local unit of society—a family—becomes nationally significant as the Danes overrun the whole country. Not only does this draw a connection between local events and national ones, and between private and public occurrences, but the appearance of the Danes and the presentation of a 'different cultural perspective redresses the *Chronicle's* West Saxon bias by intimating that the Viking attacks were at times a justified response to Saxon malevolence'.³⁵² Rather than allowing these cultures to come into contact purely antagonistically, it is more productive to think of this dynamic as one that undermines the status quo and questions concepts of a homogenous, static national history.³⁵³ This episode demonstrates the various forces—familial, regional, national, and international—that coalesce to create history, and challenges the simplistic notion that all Danes are 'felons'.³⁵⁴

³⁵⁰ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 2599–602.

³⁵¹ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 2833–34, 2868.

³⁵² Bérat, 'The Patron and her Clerk', 33.

³⁵³ See Wendy Marie Hoofnagle and Wolfram R. Keller, 'Hybridity, Mythology, and Nationhood: Introduction', in *Other Nations*, 1–11, at 3.

³⁵⁴ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 2407.

Intertextual elements also contribute towards a text that demonstrates cultural overlap with Scandinavia, and bears evidence of Scandinavian sources. The most striking of these is the description of Alfred Ætheling's gruesome death in Ely at the hands of Godwine's men.³⁵⁵

Iloc li funt les oilz crever,
entur un pel le funt aler,
le gros büel li eurent treit:
od agoilluns k'aveient feit
le firent tant entur aler
pur sa büele desramer
k'il ne pot mes ester en piez.
L'alme s'en vait, e cil sunt leez
ki en tel guise le murdrurent

[(In this place) they had his eyes put out. They made him walk round a stake, having first pulled out his large intestine. With goads that they had made they drove him round and round, in order to strip out his intestine until finally he could no longer stay on his feet. He gives up the ghost, and they congratulate themselves on having murdered him by this method].³⁵⁶

Bell points out that this description closely resembles an episode in *Njáls saga*, also found in *Brájn's saga*, which states 'úlfr hræða reist á hánum kviðinn ok leiddi hann um eik ok rakti svá ór hánum þarmana. Ok dó hann eigi fyrr, enn allir váru ór hánum raktir' ['Wolf the quarrelsome cut open his (Brodir's) belly and led him round and round the trunk of a tree and so wound his entrails out of him and he did not die until they were all drawn out of him'].³⁵⁷ Bell surmises that Gaimar heard the saga orally 'and it is at least noteworthy that it belongs to the same stream of tradition as that relating to Anlaf Sihtricson, in part the historical prototype of Haveloc'.³⁵⁸ While most sources agree that Alfred was blinded, the method of death that Gaimar describes is unusual. The *Estoire*

³⁵⁵ The text does not explicitly mention that these men are Danes, but it does state that Godwine is married to Cnut's daughter, that he recruits his army from London, 'ki as Daneis [lores] se tint' [which supported/was held by the Danes at that time], and that he flees to Denmark following Alfred's murder. Gaimar, *Estoire*, 4795–97, 4801–2, 4849–52.

³⁵⁶ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 4833–41.

³⁵⁷ Konráð Gíslason and Eiríkur Jónsson, eds., *Njála á kostnað Hins konunglega norræna forfræðaffelags* (Copenhagen: Thiele, 1875), 363. George Webbe Dasent, trans. *The Story of Burnt Njal or, Life in Iceland at the End of the Tenth Century* (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1861), ii.337.

³⁵⁸ Bell, Introduction to *Le Lai d'Haveloc*, 67.

not only describes his death: it also draws attention to the reactions of those who murdered him ‘cil sunt leez / ki en tel guise le murdrirent’.³⁵⁹ While it is likely that Gaimar was inspired by a saga that included this episode, it is also possible that he is suggesting that the Norsemen replicated this torturous practice because of a cultural association with the sagas.

Haveloc and Grimsby

Occupying 782 lines of the 6554-line verse history, the Haveloc episode is the most prominent and lengthy of the *Estoire*’s interpolations. Although it is unclear how Gaimar came upon this story, it was likely a local legend, possibly from a Scandinavian source, transmitted orally.³⁶⁰ Gaimar draws attention to this by citing his sources for the episode, stating of the English princess who becomes Haveloc’s bride ‘Sicom di[en]t l’antive gent, / [Argentille] n’out nul chevel parent / de par sun [pere] des Daneis’ [‘According to ancient testimony, she had no near relative on her father’s side amongst the Danes’].³⁶¹ Although Short translates ‘l’antive gent’ as ‘ancient testimony’, reflecting the implied meaning of the phrase, Gaimar explicitly states that it is the ‘gent’, the people, who have carried the story and passed on its details. By claiming that the story was passed down from the people of old, Gaimar ties the Haveloc story to the history of the land and its inhabitants. Furthermore, the text frequently returns to the idea of orality in the Haveloc story; Gaimar implores the audience: ‘Oiez ke fit cel felons reis’ [‘Just hear what this criminal king (Edelsi) did!’], ‘oiez purquei il le fesout’ [‘Listen to his reasons for doing

³⁵⁹ Not all sources agree that he was killed after he was blinded: *ASC* C and *ASC* D both suggest that he lived with the monks until he died. *ASC* E does not even mention Godwine’s acts against Alfred. The *GRA* also states that he has heard from ‘rumigeruli’ [‘rumour-mongers’] that Alfred went to live with the monks at Ely after his companions were beheaded. *GRA*, 1:ii.188.5.

³⁶⁰ Scott Kleinman, ‘The Legend of *Havelok the Dane* and the Historiography of East Anglia’, *Studies in Philology* 100, no. 3 (2003): 245–77, at 252. Ian Short, ‘Gaimar et les débuts de l’historiographie en langue française’, in *Chroniques nationales et chroniques universelles*, ed. Danielle Buchinger (Göppingen: Kümmerle Verlag, 1990), 155–63, at 159.

³⁶¹ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 95–97. My italics.

this’], and ‘Ore entendez k[ë] ele dit’ [‘Just listen to what she said’].³⁶² These references to the orality of the tale undoubtedly reflect the idea that the text would be recited or read aloud to an audience, but they occur more frequently in the interpolated episodes of the text than elsewhere.³⁶³ This may suggest that the oral elements were a feature of Gaimar’s source, whether transmitted in writing or by word of mouth.

The suggestion that the Haveloc story was transmitted orally bespeaks the strength of the collective memory of Lincolnshire’s inhabitants, and suggests that this story was important enough to retain and retell. By drawing attention to the tale’s orality, Gaimar augments the immediacy and proximity of the story; although it is set not long after the fall of Arthurian Britain, it is nevertheless a tale that bears all the hallmarks of having been updated and made relevant for a contemporary audience. For instance, it is clear that Haveloc and the Danes are Christian; in Denmark, Haveloc and Argentille escape an angry mob by finding sanctuary in ‘un mustur’, a monastery or church.³⁶⁴ This Christianity is later reiterated when, upon realising that Haveloc is the true heir to the Danish throne, Sigar exclaims ‘Deu seit löez!’ [‘God be praised!’].³⁶⁵ It is therefore surprising that Gaimar later states that the Danes were ‘päens’ [‘heathens’] until they converted to Christianity during the reign of King Alfred.³⁶⁶ These anachronisms serve to depict Haveloc as a divinely ordained king, and render a Danish king more palatable to a twelfth-century English audience.

³⁶² Gaimar, *Estoire*, 98, 156, 250.

³⁶³ Gaimar writes ‘Sempres oirez grant mirabile!’ [‘You are about to hear something truly incredible!’] and ‘Ore avint sicum vus o[r]ez’ [‘What happened next you will hear for yourselves’] during the Buern Bucecarle episode, and in the tale of Edgar and Ælfthryth he writes, ‘Oiez ke fist cel losenger!’ [‘Just hear what this deceitful liar did!’]. For most of the remainder of the narrative he states ‘ço est escriz’ [‘According to the written record’] and ‘ço lisom’ [‘we read (in the written record)’], suggesting a predominantly literary form of transmission for the more historical aspects of the *Estoire*. Gaimar, *Estoire*, 2578, 2701, 3677, 2050, 1564.

³⁶⁴ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 548. See *Anglo-Norman Dictionary*, s. v. ‘muster’.

³⁶⁵ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 721.

³⁶⁶ See Gaimar, *Estoire*, 3206–8.

The Haveloc story is often interpreted as an ‘attempt to integrate the Anglo-Scandinavian heritage of the East Midlands with a sense of national identity, influenced by an awareness of the role of Danish settlement played in the region’s early history’.³⁶⁷ Like the Buern Bucecarle story that occurs later in Gaimar’s text, it is an explanation of the Danish presence in England, and an episode that contributes toward a more complex understanding of the historical relationships between England and Denmark, and the English and the Danes, indicating that they could be bringers of justice as well as destruction.³⁶⁸ While critics have mostly focused on the thirteenth-century Middle English version of the story, *Havelok the Dane*, Gaimar’s Haveloc episode is nonetheless integral to our understanding of the Haveloc tradition; it also contributes toward a fuller appreciation of the *Estoire*. Unlike its Middle English counterpart, set in the Anglo-Saxon past, Gaimar places Haveloc’s story immediately after the fall of Arthur, as ‘Bretaigne perdi son nun’ [‘Britain lost its name’] and became increasingly known as England.³⁶⁹ Although Gaimar probably only included the Haveloc at the beginning of his *Estoire* because it was the only available or appropriate place for it, and it eases the shift from Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Historia* to the Anglo-Saxon history presented by the *ASC*, its presence nevertheless has implications for the remainder of the narrative.³⁷⁰

It introduces the Danes at a point in the history of England when the country’s identity is in flux, and it functions as an informal foundation narrative for the areas that would later come to be known as the Danelaw. By changing the name of Britain to England, and ‘transferring [the English’s] ethnonym to toponym,’ Gaimar highlights that England is defined by those who engage with the land, who have ties to the territory, a

³⁶⁷ Eleanor Parker, ‘Havelok and the Danes in England: History, Legend, and Romance’, *Review of English Studies* 67 (2016): 428–47, at 429.

³⁶⁸ Parker, ‘Havelok’, 429, 433.

³⁶⁹ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 34.

³⁷⁰ See Spence, *Reimagining History*, 83.

privilege that is not exclusive to the English, but open to the Danes as well.³⁷¹ The Danes are seen to be a part of this transition: ‘dous reis out ja en Bretaigne / quant Costentin ert chevetaigne’ [‘during the reign of Constantine ... there were already two kings in Britain’], suggesting that they too were present during the arrival of the English, and thus the formation of early English identity is inclusive of the Danes, as well as the Britons and Anglo-Saxons.³⁷²

In spite of the prominence given to the Danes in Gaimar’s narrative, Denmark is only ever discussed with regard to its relationship with England. This becomes even clearer when comparing Gaimar’s Havelok episode to *Havelok the Dane*. The Middle English text places both England and Denmark on equal footing, providing an explanation of Havelok’s childhood in Denmark early on in the narrative, just after describing Godrich’s treachery in England. It parallels Aethelwold’s commitment to justice and good rule with Birkabeyn’s. Similarly, the two countries are yoked together in Havelok’s dream, in which England and Denmark are enclosed within his regal arms, a feature absent from the *Estoire* and from the *Lai d’Havelok*, discussed below.³⁷³ This doubling of England and Denmark is reflected in Diane Speed’s argument that ‘Denmark functions as a kind of *Doppelgänger* to England, its nationness an echo and occasional amplification of England’s nationness’.³⁷⁴ By bringing these countries together in such a way, ‘Danish and English, rich and poor, are finally integrated into one nation of England’.³⁷⁵ The two countries, depicted as equals throughout the narrative, are finally merged. Gaimar’s text, on the other hand, only introduces events in Denmark when they

³⁷¹ Nick Webber, *The Evolution of Norman Identity, 911–1154* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2005), 7. Webber notes that the Burgundians and Franks also engaged in this process.

³⁷² Gaimar, *Estoire*, 43–44.

³⁷³ Madden, Frederic, and Walter W. Skeat, eds., *The Lay of Havelok the Dane*, Early English Text Society: Extra Series 4 (London: EETS, 1868), 1285–1312.

³⁷⁴ Speed, ‘Construction of the Nation’, 151.

³⁷⁵ Thorlac Turville-Petre, ‘Representations of the Danelaw in Middle English Literature’, in *Vikings and the Danelaw*, 345–55, at 354.

are relevant to events in Lindsey. The Danes are initially introduced in relation to British history:

Meis li Daneis mult les [nevoz Artur] häeient
 pur lur parenz ki morz estaient
 es batailles kē Artur fist
 contre Modret k'il puis oscist

[The Danes, however, felt great hatred for them (Arthur's kinsmen) because their relatives had died in the battles that Arthur had waged against Mordred, whom he subsequently killed].³⁷⁶

By highlighting the link between the Danes and Arthurian Britain, Gaimar draws the Danes into his history of England. Yet this is only in the context of regional history; the Danes are only mentioned to justify the introduction of Adelbriht, a Danish king in Britain. The text continues to privilege events in England; it is only in the context of Edelsi's treachery and Argentille's inheritance that Haveloc, or Cuaran, is introduced. Like Haveloc, the text's audience is ignorant of his true identity or the events of his childhood until he reaches maturity, with only the smallest hint that all is not as it seems: 'venuz esteit de gentil lit' ['the marriage bed from which he came was in fact a noble one'].³⁷⁷ While the Middle English *Havelok* forcefully asserts its dual roots in England and Denmark,³⁷⁸ Gaimar weaves a story that is much less nationally driven, instead focusing on the importance of justice. It appears to be only incidental that Haveloc and Argentille must voyage to Denmark, and the reclamation of Denmark is a mere by-product of the restoration of the English kingdoms to their rightful rulers.

Furthermore, Gaimar displays a lack of the requisite geographical knowledge to make reference to specific places in Denmark. Instead of naming the places Haveloc visits, the text categorises them: 'En Denemarche sunt arivé. / En la contree u ariverent /

³⁷⁶ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 37–40.

³⁷⁷ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 162.

³⁷⁸ The extent to which the Middle English text is invested in Denmark is another matter: it appears to serve as a mirroring device for England, rather than a distinctive place in its own right.

a une vile s'en alerent' ['They ... landed in Denmark. They made their way to a town in the region where they landed'].³⁷⁹ However, this vagueness also sheds light on Gaimar's conception of the relationship between region and nation in general. The interplay between 'Denemarche', 'la contree' and 'une vile', wherein each term is given its own semantic place although the latter two are positioned within the former, elucidates Gaimar's understanding of geographical relationships. In his imprecision, Gaimar reveals that the 'contree' is as important as the other two categories, even though his inclusion of the region is not absolutely necessary for his meaning to be conveyed. Nevertheless, if the description of Denmark holds a mirror up to the *Estoire's* idea of Britain, then this focus on the smaller unit of a region within a country can illuminate the text's conception of space, nation, and region in England.

Gaimar's Haveloc episode anticipates the regional focus of the rest of the *Estoire*. Although it does not explain how Adelbriht came to England or touch on Haveloc's descendants, it nevertheless articulates the birth of a hybrid Anglo-Scandinavian culture in the area, as the Briton Edelsi is displaced in favour of Haveloc and Argentille. The *Estoire* immediately draws attention to Lincolnshire as its centre, prioritising an ethnically inclusive regional identity, one based on affiliation with land rather than heritage. From the outset, the *Estoire* dismisses the idea that the 'Engleis' are a homogenous group. This episode thus extends its function and acts as the cornerstone for the rest of Gaimar's work; as the first story in the narrative, it lays the groundwork for the *Estoire* by introducing the primary themes of Gaimar's work, including a strong sense of regional identity and a focus on the contact between England and Denmark in eastern England, as well as ideas of good kingship and justice.

³⁷⁹ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 497–98.

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Gaimar displays knowledge of East Midlands geography in the Haveloc story. He frequently mentions place names, such as Lincoln, Lindsey, Holland, Thetford, and Grimsby. Together, Edelsi and Adelbriht would have reigned over land that was entirely contained within the Danelaw, and Lincolnshire would have been an important area as one of the regions where the two kingdoms met. It is in this local focus, however, that nation and region become conflated; the idea of Lincolnshire is often prioritised at the expense of the idea of England, suggesting that Lincolnshire functions as a metonym for the country. Recounting the story of his childhood journey from Denmark to Britain, Haveloc states that Grim, his guardian, ‘en Lindeseie volt aler’ [intended to go to Lindsey].³⁸⁰ The name of the region is used in preference to that of the island or the country. The text emphasises the importance of Lindsey in an international context as well as featuring it as a stand-in for Britain.

This localisation and interest in the smaller units that comprise a country becomes even more pronounced in the Haveloc legend’s treatment of the town of Grimsby. The *Lai d’Haveloc* was written in Lincolnshire between 1190 and 1220 and was either based on the *Estoire* or the two texts shared a source. It also distances Lincolnshire from the rest of the country; from his home in Grimsby, Grim tells the young Haveloc ‘Va t’en, bel fiz, en Engleterre, / Aprendre sens e avoir quere’ [‘Go to England, my dear son, to learn wisdom and seek your fortune’].³⁸¹ In her note on the line, Judith Weiss comments that ‘considering that Haveloc is only making a journey from north to central Lindsey, this direction sounds as if the *Lai*’s author was here rather vague

³⁸⁰ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 581. My translation. Short translates this as ‘his intention was to go to Lindsey’.

³⁸¹ *Lai d’Haveloc*, 175–76.

as to topography'.³⁸² However, there is also potentially a sense that the *Lai*'s author understood Grimsby as a space that was culturally distinct from the rest of England, and therefore outside England proper. By going 'en Engleterre' from Grimsby, the story adds an additional layer to the double exile-and-return pattern already available in Gaimar's version of the story; Haveloc is exiled from Denmark to Grimsby, and must leave Grimsby to seek his fortune in England, only to return with Argentille to discover his true identity. Grimsby becomes as an in-between space that acts as a gateway between England and Denmark through which Haveloc must pass in order to access his past and seek his future.³⁸³ In the *Lai*, the local and the national are severed from one another; while Grimsby may be geographically part of England, it is culturally distinct. This separation of national and local geographies contrasts with the *Estoire*, which draws on local perspectives to construct a nation. Gaimar's account reveals an understanding of the interrelationship between region and nation, which is carried through the *Estoire*.

In the *Estoire*, it is Grimsby that comes to embody the cultural overlap between England and Denmark. Although Grimsby is never explicitly described as external to Britain, it is seen as a place of exile. In Lincoln, Argentille tells her husband that 'miez nus vendreit estre exillez / entre aliens e enpairez / ke ci gisir en tel hontage' ['It would be better for us to be in exile amongst foreigners and the impoverished than to languish here in such shame'], and then suggests they go to his family.³⁸⁴ Even though Haveloc has never told Argentille where he is from, she assumes it must be a place that is foreign, a place of exile. Like the *Lai*'s depiction of the town, Gaimar's Grimsby can be read as a place that is beyond the borders of Edelsi's kingdom, even though it is geographically in Lindsey. While the *Lai* draws a distinction between Grimsby and England, the *Estoire*

³⁸² Judith Weiss, trans. *The Birth of Romance in England: Four Twelfth-Century Romances in the French of England* (Tempe, AZ: ACMRS, 2009), 158, n.12.

³⁸³ Bainton, 'Translating the "English" Past', 184.

³⁸⁴ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 303–5.

figures it as a paradoxical space that is simultaneously within and without Britain. The *Estoire*'s Grimsby is 'hinge point between two realms', or a threshold space where Haveloc learns of his true identity, his heritage, and his rightful inheritance; the town unlocks Denmark for Haveloc, but it also granted him access to Britain during his *enfance*.³⁸⁵ The village becomes a representative space for the whole Danelaw as a place where Denmark and Britain 'converge'.³⁸⁶ Bainton illustrates his thesis that Gaimar's text reflects a Danelaw, rather than West Saxon, perspective on the past through a discussion of Grimsby in the *Estoire*. He writes:

The presence in the work of such a wasteland, where affiliation to a nation or kingdom is so ambiguous, undermines the fixity of the notion of a subject's national or regnal alliance, and so puts into question the allegiance of the *Estoire* to the *Engleis* alone. Grimsby's inhabitants are 'inbetween subjects', 'always split between here and there and the self and the other.' While 'border zones' such as Grimsby have been seen as the place where identities are most hotly contested, in the *Estoire* Grimsby functions as a place where identities can slide and be refigured. It is through reference to Grimsby that the doubleness of Haveloc's own belonging and allegiance is revealed.³⁸⁷

As a 'border zone', Grimsby is symbolic of cultural contact and hybrid identities. It is the first place that can be classified as Anglo-Danish within the text, representative of the culture that became prevalent in Lincolnshire. Thus, it sets the tone for the remainder of Gaimar's narrative, which frequently grapples with the impact of the Danes on the English past.

It partly articulates this Anglo-Danish identity through the depiction of the town's foundation and the construction of its first building: a house.

En cest païs quant arivames,
nostre grant nef parmi trenchames,
car tute fu freite e malmise
quant la raïne fu oscise;
de nostre nef maison feïmes.
Par un batel ben guarisimes

³⁸⁵ Bainton, 'Translating the "English" Past', 184–85.

³⁸⁶ Bainton, 'Translating the "English" Past', 183.

³⁸⁷ Bainton, 'Translating the "English" Past', 184.

dunt nostre pere ala pescher

[When we landed in this country, we split our big ship right down the middle—it had been smashed and badly damaged when the queen lost her life. We constructed a house out of one part of the ship, while we were able to make our living out of the other, and this was the small boat our father used for fishing].³⁸⁸

Bainton writes that Grim's makeshift ship-house 'suggests transience; it lacks foundations and is out of place on the land'.³⁸⁹ However, it also serves to emphasise the cross-cultural nature of the area. Grimsby, as the landing place of the boat, becomes a locus of contact, the place where two spaces touch one another. The boat, as a symbol of crossing and exchange, of moving from one place to another, is dismantled. It becomes static, no longer a form of geographical mediation. Instead its materials are appropriated; the space of the boat is transformed into a fixed place.³⁹⁰ Gaimar uses the verb *trencher* to describe the division of the ship, a word with violent connotations of cutting, amputation, dismemberment, or slaughter.³⁹¹ Before building a life in Britain, Grim must destroy his already-battered boat and, by implication, sever his ties to Denmark; yet he uses these materials to create something wholly new and productive: a home and a livelihood. Grim's ship-house is an articulation of the compromise necessary for a borderland to function as a liminal space; it is neither of Denmark nor of Britain, but derived from both places. It is a fragment of Denmark in Britain, defined by its origin, its new location, and the physical and cultural space between the two kingdoms. Yet the destruction of the ship carries with it the impossibility of return or reversion; Grimsby has been indelibly changed by the arrival of Grim, and he has fixed the meaning of his now-defunct ship so that it can no longer perform its original role. He has frozen it in

³⁸⁸ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 437–43.

³⁸⁹ Bainton, 'Translating the "English" Past', 184.

³⁹⁰ Cf. De Certeau, *Everyday Life*, 127–28.

³⁹¹ See *AND*, s. v. *trencher*.

place. It is only when new ships, this time from Britain, are presented that the sea crossing between Britain and Denmark can be made once more.

This new fixity of place transforms Grimsby from a symbolic space of transience, rootlessness, and hybridity, to a place that has enough stability to be a point of origin. The first mention of Grimsby in the *Estoire* posits it as an originary point: “‘Amis, u est li ton linage?’ / ‘Dame,’ fet il, ‘a Grimesby’” [“‘Where’s your family, my love?’” “My lady,” he replies, “they’re in Grimsby”].³⁹² While Haveloc later learns that Grimsby is not his birthplace or his ancestral home, it nevertheless can be read as a place where identities can be made or discovered. Grim’s arrival in Britain marks the foundation of a new society. Hence, Bainton’s suggestion that Grim’s house is ‘out of place’ may be true initially, but over time Grimsby comes to be part of England’s landscape, and a place that would have undoubtedly been familiar to the *Estoire*’s Lincolnshire audience. The importance of this legend is Grimsby’s history can be seen on the town’s earliest seal, which dates to the early thirteenth century when the town was incorporated.³⁹³

Grimsby is even more prominent in the *Lai*, which has prompted Bell to claim that the text is ‘a very early example of civic propaganda’.³⁹⁴ The *Estoire* focuses on descriptions of Grim’s landing place in Britain, with particular attention drawn to the local fish of the area, displaying a detailed, encyclopaedic knowledge of the North Sea’s abundance of ‘turbuz, salmuns e mulüels, / graspeis, porpeis, e makerels’ [‘turbot,

³⁹² Gaimar, *Estoire*, 306–7.

³⁹³ Edward Gillett, *A History of Grimsby* (Oxford: OUP, 1970), 6. See also S. H. Rigby, *Medieval Grimsby* (Hull: University of Hull Press, 1993), 5. On the seal, Argentille is identified as ‘Goldebvrgh’, indicating that the seal derives from the same strand of the Havelok legend as *Havelok the Dane*. See Nancy Mason Bradbury, ‘The Traditional Origins of *Havelok the Dane*’, *Studies in Philology* 90, no. 2 (1993): 115–42, at 125.

³⁹⁴ *Lai d’Haveloc*, 28.

salmon, cod, grampus whale, porpoise, and mackerel’].³⁹⁵ The *Lai*, on the other hand, takes a more narrative approach, documenting the establishment of the town and the arrival of its inhabitants. This is in part possible due to the structure of the text; instead of revealing the history of Haveloc’s arrival in England through Kelloc so that both Haveloc and the audience discover Haveloc’s true identity simultaneously, the *Lai* relays the story from its beginning in Denmark, permitting the audience the privilege of knowing Haveloc’s identity before he does. This allows for a greater focus to be placed on the context and circumstances of Haveloc’s story. The *Lai* claims that prior to the arrival of Grim, the area around Grimsby was ‘une salvage cuntrée’ [‘a deserted region’],³⁹⁶ and it describes the process by which Grim’s settlement became a town:

A icel tens dunt jo vus di
 N’i ot unques hom habité
 Ne cel havene neient hanté.
 Il I dresca primes meisun,
 De lui ad Grimsbi a nun.
 ... Pescher ala si cum il sot
 [E] sel vendeit e acheatot
 Tant k’il fu ben iluec seuz
 E des païsanz coneuz.
 Plusurs a lui s’acompaignerent,
 Sur le havene se herbergerent,
 Pur sun nun k’il orent oï
 Le liu appellent Grimesbi

[At the time of which I tell you, no one lived there or frequented the harbour. Grim first raised a house there: Grimsby takes its name from him. ... He went fishing, as he knew how, and bought and sold salt until he was well known there and recognised by the country folk. Many joined together with him, taking up quarters at the harbour, and because of his name, which they had heard, they called the place Grimsby].³⁹⁷

Later, Haveloc reiterates this story, stating ‘Pus i ad tant gent herbergé / Ke vile est creue e marché’ [‘Then so many people came to live there that a town and a market grew

³⁹⁵ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 445–46. Elsewhere Gaimar displays a detailed knowledge of nautical terminology. See Sayers, ‘Ships and Sailors’, 299–310. For the importance of fish in medieval Grimsby, see Rigby, *Medieval Grimsby*, 10–12.

³⁹⁶ *Lai d’Haveloc*, 788; Weiss, *Birth of Romance*, 165. A more literal translation is ‘a wild country’.

³⁹⁷ *Lai d’Haveloc*, 128–44; Weiss, *Birth of Romance*, 157.

up’].³⁹⁸ It can be speculated that the Haveloc story in general may have been relevant to a Lincolnshire audience not only because it documents a legendary king of the region, but also because it contains within it the civic foundation myth for Grimsby, establishing it as a settlement and market town consisting of both Danes and Englishmen living together in peace. By stating that the English ‘lui s’acompaignerent’ [‘joined together with him’], the *Lai* fosters an attitude of fraternity and friendship between the British and the newcomers. Furthermore, Grim brings with him the customs and traditions of his native Denmark as he ‘pescher ala si cum il sot’ [‘went fishing, as he knew how’]. Through a combination of English and Danish traditions and peoples, the town is established.

It is clear from other evidence that Grimsby remained a very mixed society into the twelfth century. At the time that Gaimar was writing, Grimsby was one of the most important ports for trade between England and Scandinavia.³⁹⁹ The *Orkneyinga Saga* describes Grimsby was a bustling, lively port filled with merchants from the north. It tells of how, in 1120, Kali (who was to become the Earl of Orkney) met people from Norway, the Orkneys, Scotland, and the Hebrides while in Grimsby.⁴⁰⁰ The town also makes an appearance in a Skaldic poem about Kali’s trip back to Bergen:

Vér hǫfum vaðnar leirur
vikur fimm megingrimmar;
saurs vasa vant, es vôrum,
viðr, í Grímsbæ miðjum.
Nús, þats mós of mýrar
meginkátliga lôtum
branda elg á bylgjur
Björgynjar til dynja

[We have waded the mud-flats for fight mightily grim weeks; there was no lack there of muck when we were in the middle of Grimsby. Now it is the case that

³⁹⁸ *Lai d’Haveloc*, 793–94; Weiss, *Birth of Romance*, 165.

³⁹⁹ Rigby notes that this connection with Norway continued into the thirteenth century. Rigby, *Medieval Grimsby*, 8–10.

⁴⁰⁰ Paul Edwards and Hermann Pálsson, trans. *Orkneyinga Saga* (London: Penguin, 1978), 109. See also Rigby, *Medieval Grimsby*, 5; Holman, *Northern Conquest*, 202.

mightily merrily we cause the elk of the prow (ship) to boom on the waves to Bergen across the marshes of the gull (sea)].⁴⁰¹

While Kali and his men are Norwegians rather than Danes, there is nevertheless a strong Scandinavian presence in the town, to the extent that post-Conquest Grimsby has been described as a ‘kind of remoter suburb’ of Scandinavia.⁴⁰² While the *Estoire* does not relay the full story of the naming of Grimsby and the establishment of the town, the only non-Dane present in Grimsby is Algier, Kelloc’s husband, who is a merchant who travels between Denmark and England; it was clearly a vibrant port for those who wanted to travel to Scandinavia.⁴⁰³

The *Estoire*’s diminished emphasis on Grimsby may be a result of the town’s relative lack of importance in the wider context of English history. It is possible that a much more developed version of Grimsby’s founding legend existed externally to the Haveloc legends. The Grimsby seal depicts Grim dressed for battle, with a sword and shield, while no extant version of the Haveloc story shows Grim engaged in any form of armed combat. While Grim may have been depicted in such a manner because it glorifies the heroism of the town’s founder, it is also possible that this ‘points to a sterner, more significant legendary hero than the Grim we find in our versions of the Havelok-tale’.⁴⁰⁴ Grimsby’s foundation myth is therefore included within, but secondary to, the Haveloc legend in Gaimar’s text.⁴⁰⁵ Nevertheless, the allusion to the town in the *Estoire* does aid

⁴⁰¹ Judith Jesch, ed. and trans., ‘Rognvaldr jarl kali Kolsson: Lausavísur 2’, in *Poetry from the Kings’ Saga 2: from c.1035 to c.1300*, ed. Kari Ellen Gade (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), 577.

⁴⁰² Gillett, *Grimsby*, 8. Further evidence of this is that a house of Augustinian canons was founded in the twelfth century and dedicated to St. Olaf, king of Norway, in addition to St. Augustine. Henry II also gave Lincolnshire merchants the right to toll Norwegian traders, indicating the prominence of Anglo-Scandinavian trade in the period.

⁴⁰³ See Gaimar, *Estoire*, 459.

⁴⁰⁴ Bradbury, ‘Traditional Origins’, 125.

⁴⁰⁵ Robert of Gloucester held lands in Grimsby, so it is possible that the mythical account of Grimsby’s foundation was included because the Fitz Gilberts had an association with him. See Paul Dalton, ‘Geffrei Gaimar’s *Estoire des Engleis*, Peacemaking, and the “Twelfth-Century Revival of the English Nation”’, *Studies in Philology* 104, no. 4 (2007): 427–54, at 434.

in localising the Haveloc story and allows the story to become more contextually and geographically grounded, making it more familiar to a local audience.⁴⁰⁶

Haveloc and Cnut

The inclusion of the Haveloc episode in the *Estoire* has been read as a retroactive justification for the reign of Cnut in the eleventh century.⁴⁰⁷ John Gillingham argues that '[o]ne of Gaimar's recurring themes is the notion of an ancestral right which the Danish kings claimed to have to the throne of England. It was this theme that lay behind some of his more memorable episodes'.⁴⁰⁸ Similarly, Bainton notes that 'Gaimar does not let the *Engleis* of the *Estoire* forget that the Danes were settled in *Bretaine* long before they were'.⁴⁰⁹ The timeline for this justification, however, is a point of contention: Diane Speed, discussing the Middle English *Havelok*, argues that the story of a Danish king in England is only plausible in the post-Conquest period because of the precedent set by Cnut, while Short writes that it is possible that the oral Haveloc story was 'one of several Danelaw-inspired references which might well be intended cumulatively to legitimize Cnut's eventual accession'.⁴¹⁰ While Rauf de Boun's *Le Petit Bruit*, written in the early fourteenth century, draws bold, familial connections between Haveloc and Cnut, this link is never articulated in the *Estoire*.⁴¹¹ Furthermore, there is little evidence to suggest that Cnut's reign requires justification beyond his ability to take the throne and rule justly; the ethnic claim to England based on ancestral precedence has no power or sway unless it is

⁴⁰⁶ See Turville-Petre, 'Representations of the Danelaw', 350.

⁴⁰⁷ See Alexander Bell, 'Gaimar's Early "Danish" Kings', *PMLA* 65, no. 4 (1950): 601–40, at 622–30.

⁴⁰⁸ Gillingham, *English in the Twelfth Century*, 119.

⁴⁰⁹ Bainton, 'Translating the "English" Past', 181. See also Kleinman, 'Legend of Havelok', 263.

⁴¹⁰ Speed, 'Construction of the Nation', 156; Short, Notes, 358.

⁴¹¹ See Rauf de Boun, *Le Petit Bruit*, ed. Diana B. Tyson, ANTS Plain Texts Series 4 (London: ANTS, 1987), 15. Rauf de Boun's chronology is confused, however, and he states that Cnut is Haveloc's son, who ruled Denmark and came to England 'quant son pere Havelokes feut mort, si tint amedeux roialmez a graunt honour' [when his father Haveloc died, so he held both of the (countries) royally with great honour]. My translation.

acted upon successfully. Although Gaimar twice draws attention to the Danes' suggestion that their people's prior arrival in Britain grants them the right to rule the land, these claims never come to fruition, and therefore the relevance, or veracity, of the claim is never proven. During their confrontation, Cnut informs Edmund Ironside

bien sachez loi[n]gtenement
l'urent Daneis nostre parent:
prés de mil anz l'out Dane aince[i]s
ke unc i entrast Certiz li reis

[Our Danish ancestors, I'll have you know, have been ruling here for a very long time. Almost a thousand years before king Cerdic came to the throne, Danr was king].⁴¹²

This ancestral claim to the land, however, comes to nothing as Cnut offers to divide the kingdom with Edmund rather than test the strength of his claim through single combat, just as the earlier Danish claim to England based on the prior reigns of 'Ailbrith e Haveloc' ['Adelbriht and Haveloc'] is ultimately fruitless because the Danes fail to invade England and seize the land.⁴¹³ Gaimar comments on the futility of this ancestral claim, questioning whether anyone gives it value: 'Qui chald d'iço?' [What does this matter?].⁴¹⁴

Furthermore, to claim that the Haveloc story serves a particular political or cultural purpose, whether to justify Cnut's reign or to legitimise the presence of the Danes in England, is both to attribute too much significance to Gaimar's work and to insist that Gaimar was politically polemical, providing a mythical ancestor for the Danes at the expense of the English. Gaimar does not need to use the Haveloc episode to legitimise Cnut because Cnut was legitimised in his own right in the eleventh century, without a literary or legendary explanation. By virtue of being a good king who established and upheld the laws of England, Cnut's ethnicity or ancestry was ultimately

⁴¹² Gaimar, *Estoire*, 4315–18.

⁴¹³ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 2083.

⁴¹⁴ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 2087. My translation. Short translates this to 'But that is neither here nor there'.

unimportant in the question of his legitimacy.⁴¹⁵ However, the citation of Haveloc in the Danes' claim to England is significant in terms of the relationship between region and nation; although Haveloc is only a king 'dés Hoiland tresk'a Colecestre' ['from Holland to Colchester'],⁴¹⁶ the Danes claim that 'Bretaigne ert lur dreit herité' ['Britain was their rightful inheritance'],⁴¹⁷ suggesting that, according to the text, the regional story was understood to have greater significance to England and could have had consequences for the whole island, had the Danes successfully acted on their beliefs.

While Haveloc's precedence may not be justification for Cnut's actions within the narrative, Cnut's rule expands the importance of a regional tale so that it takes on a national significance by depicting Haveloc as a precursor to Cnut. Gaimar presents no explicit parallels between Cnut and Haveloc.⁴¹⁸ However, Cnut's citation of Danish precedence does evoke the audience's memory of Haveloc's reign, especially since Cnut's citation of King Danr's rule, quoted above, recalls an earlier mention of him in conjunction with Haveloc and Adelbriht: 'Li reis Danes tint le regnez, / ki de Denemarch[e] fu nez, / si fist Ailbrith e Haveloc / e plus en nomerent ovoc' ['King Danr, who was born in Denmark, had ruled the kingdom, as had Adelbriht and Haveloc, and they named others in addition who had done so'].⁴¹⁹ There are even some minor textual parallels between the two stories: Grim's escape from Denmark to Lindsey, 'en Lindeseie volt aler' ['His intention was to go to Lindsey'],⁴²⁰ is similar to the text's description of Cnut's arrival in England:

⁴¹⁵ See Ashe, 'The Anomalous King', 182. William of Malmesbury states this explicitly: 'iniuste quidem regnum ingressus sed magna ciuilitate et fortitudine uitam componens' ['There was no justice in his succession to the throne, but he arranged his life with great statesmanship and courage']. *GRA*, 1:ii.181.1.

⁴¹⁶ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 805.

⁴¹⁷ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 2086.

⁴¹⁸ There is a possibility that Gaimar had not yet encountered the Haveloc story at the point when he was writing about Cnut. The Haveloc story and the later reference to Haveloc as explanation for the Danish raids may have been added after this section of the *Estoire* had been written.

⁴¹⁹ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 2081–84.

⁴²⁰ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 581.

Cnuth revint od son navie,
 ariver volt en Lindeseie.
 Quant ot ke Edelret i estait,
 vers Tamise siglat tut dreit,
 en la buche de Frome entrat,
 tut cel païs a sei turnad

[Returning with his fleet, Cnut had the intention of landing in Lindsey, but on hearing that Æthelred was there, he sailed directly for the Thames. (Then from there) he entered the mouth of the River Frome, and the whole of that part of the country went over to him].⁴²¹

Both stories include a voyage from Denmark to Lindsey, but they diverge when approaching the island; while Grim stops and settles at Grimsby, Cnut instead takes Wessex. Cnut, however, expands the kingdom once held by Haveloc; Haveloc moves from being landless to ruling Lincolnshire, Lindsey, and Norfolk, as well as ruling Denmark as an overlord. After the division of land with Edmund Ironside, Cnut rules the lands north of the Thames and east of Watling Street, mimicking the boundaries of the lands ruled by Haveloc.⁴²² However, after Edmund's death Cnut absorbs his lands and claims all of England. Because the audience has already heard the story of a Dane who ruled over eastern England, it is less surprising to hear of a Dane who takes over the whole country. The text concretises the national significance of the Haveloc story by showing Cnut completing Haveloc's reign. The Haveloc story arguably functions, then, as a prelude to Cnut's reign, as a regional tale that is depicted as a nationally important episode in the text. *Havelok the Dane* takes the parallel between Havelok and Cnut a step further by allowing Havelok to rule all of England. The effect of this is to create a fictional pseudo-historical precedence for the Danes in England, which is justified and made plausible by the subsequent reign of Cnut.⁴²³ The Haveloc stories manipulate actual

⁴²¹ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 4183–88.

⁴²² See Gaimar, *Estoire*, 4367–88.

⁴²³ Speed, 'Construction of the Nation', 156.

historical events, using Cnut's rise to power to generate a story, or to reignite interest in an existing local legend set in the pre-English past.

Gaimar's inclusion of a local Lincolnshire legend that bears similarities to the reign of Cnut establishes Lincolnshire as one of the nodal points around which English history revolves, immediately articulating Anglo-Danish culture as the default English culture. The Haveloc story reflects the North Sea-oriented world of the East Midlands, and presents a lively account of a culture that had a strong regional identity that included those who were ethnically Danish and English.

Local Rebels: Hereward and Waltheof

Gaimar's regional interests in Lincolnshire do not only relate to Haveloc, Cnut, and the invading Danes: the regional stories he introduces into his history become more pronounced as the narrative progresses, and the implications they have for the whole country become increasingly prominent. These are especially relevant in the *Estoire's* depiction of the English resistance to the Norman Conquest, and in particular his attitude towards Hereward and Waltheof. While the *Estoire* focuses on these rebels, it does not mention other rebellions in England, such as that of Eadric Silvaticus, either because Gaimar did not have access to those stories or because they are less relevant to an audience primarily concerned with the history of the area in which they were living.

William of Malmesbury, Orderic Vitalis, John of Worcester, and Henry of Huntingdon all mention English resistance to the Norman Conquest, but the majority of these focus on events in Exeter and in York, and the exploits of Edwin and Morcar. Gaimar mentions these two earls, but primarily in reference to events that are significant to Lincolnshire. As Tostig and Copsi ravage the area around the Humber, Edwin 'od mult grant ost / en Lindeseie vint mult tost / puis lur defen[di]t cel païs' ['arriving quickly in

Lindsey with a large army, came to the defense of the region’].⁴²⁴ Similarly, their rebellion against William is condensed into a line about Morcar’s alliance with Siward Bearn and Æthelwine, and a brief mention that Morcar joined forces with Hereward, ‘un des meillurs del region’ [‘one of the most important figures in the region’].⁴²⁵ While Edwin had authority over almost one third of England, and together the brothers were allies with men from Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Northamptonshire, and Wales, in addition to men from Lincolnshire, Gaimar’s history mostly focuses on their actions in Lindsey.⁴²⁶ Yet like the Haveloc episode, these actions are framed in a way that presents them as nationally consequential. In a similar way, Gaimar’s depiction of Hereward also takes a regional story and expands its relevance to the whole of England. As discussed in the previous chapter, the siege of Ely was of little historical significance but its impact on the identity and community of the region was enormous. Gaimar suggests that the regional rebellion could have had disastrous consequences for the Normans ‘s’il ne fust issi oscis’ [‘if he had not been killed in the way he was’].⁴²⁷ Although the *Estoire* frames the Haveloc episode to make it seem as though the east of England is the only relevant part of the country, its depiction of Hereward’s resistance positions Lincolnshire within the wider context of England, but makes it appear as though it is the gravitational centre of the country. The events in the region are seen to have the potential to reverberate throughout England.

An account of the rebellion of Ralph de Gael and Roger de Breteuil follows shortly after the *Estoire*’s Hereward episode. Most twelfth-century histories focus on the wedding plot itself: Orderic Vitalis gives a detailed account of the speeches given at the

⁴²⁴ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 5177–79.

⁴²⁵ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 5470.

⁴²⁶ See *EHOV*, 2:IV.ii.182; Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, vi.26.

⁴²⁷ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 5697–700.

wedding, while William of Malmesbury focuses on the fate of Ralph de Gael. Gaimar, however, establishes Earl Waltheof as his focal point. The plot itself is hardly mentioned:

Ço fust si feit. Treis anz après
 Raül le conte de Wäers
 fust dechascé — il se forfist.
 Li reis Willame Wallief prist.
 Li quens Wallief e quens Roger
 Le rei voleient exiller

[This is how things turned out. Three years later (in 1075) Ralf de Waers, earl (of Norfolk), was found guilty of acting beyond the law and driven out of his lands. Waltheof (earl of Northumbria) and Roger earl (of Hereford) sought to overthrow William, and the king took Waltheof prisoner].⁴²⁸

The *Estoire* presents the smallest amount of detail necessary to discuss Waltheof's crime. Although most of the legends about Waltheof and the rebellion frame it in terms of a group of dispossessed and discontent Anglo-Saxon lords who rebel against the new Norman regime, the political motivation for the rebellion is almost entirely removed from Gaimar's account.⁴²⁹ However, unlike William of Malmesbury and Orderic Vitalis, both of whom were invited to Crowland by Geoffrey of Orleans to write their accounts, Gaimar does not exonerate Waltheof or claim that he was coerced into participating in the plot, nor does he allow Waltheof's actions to preclude his sanctity.⁴³⁰ Instead, Waltheof's political activities and his holiness both contribute towards the creation of a locally relevant myth. Carl Watkins argues that 'by the early twelfth century, Waltheof had become a depoliticised saint, memories of his political career having been occluded by time, and the abbots of Crowland being neither able nor desiring, to foster subversion'.⁴³¹ Gaimar reflects this in a particular way: rather than detailing the potentially controversial political situation that led to Waltheof's capture, the text instead focuses on him as a local hero and possibly a saint.

⁴²⁸ Gaimar, *Estoire*, 5719–26.

⁴²⁹ See Joanna Huntington, 'The Taming of the Laity: Writing Waltheof and Rebellion in the Twelfth Century', *ANS* 32 (2010): 79–95, at 82.

⁴³⁰ Carl Watkins, 'The Cult of Earl Waltheof at Crowland', *Hagiographica* 3 (1996): 95–111, at 101.

⁴³¹ Watkins, 'Cult', 111.

Pues en perdit Wallief la teste
 pur cel surdit, e a Wincestre
 long tens après fust defui
 sicum Deu plout e sa merci;
 moignes furent ki l'emporterent,
 a seint Gulac le presenterent
 en Crulande l'ensepelirent;
 le cors de lui tresbien cherirent.
 Puis est sovent el liu veüz
 ke Deus en fait mainte vertuz

[He was then executed (in 1076) for his part in the uprising. After some considerable time his body, as God in his mercy willed, was disinterred at Winchester. Some monks carried it off and, dedicating it to St Guthlac, reburied it at Crowland (in Lincolnshire), where it became the object of the monks' veneration. Subsequently God has been seen to perform many miracles in this place on numerous occasions].⁴³²

This saintliness appears to contradict the clear part that Waltheof played in the plot.

While William of Malmesbury suggests that the miracles performed at the tomb prove the injustice of Waltheof's death, Gaimar does not suggest that Waltheof was innocent of the crimes of which he was accused.⁴³³ Instead, Gaimar plainly writes that 'Li quens Wallief e quens Roger / Le rei voleient exille' and he is beheaded 'pur cel surdit'; there is little doubt in Waltheof's involvement. However, as we have seen from Gaimar's treatment of Hereward, Waltheof's guilt and his veneration are not mutually exclusive, possibly because he viewed the Anglo-Saxon rebellion against the Norman Conquest as justified, or possibly because the baronial rights that Gaimar endorses throughout his text often involve productive challenges to a king's authority.⁴³⁴ In his introduction to the text, Short argues that this account of Waltheof's death

might strike the modern reader as fairly neutral, even bald, but its subtext is full of allusion: here we have an English hero treacherously beheaded by a Norman conqueror, a saint whose cult is fostered by the same Lincolnshire monks of Crowland as guard the tomb of St. Guthlac, related by blood to the royal house

⁴³² Gaimar, *Estoire*, 5727–36.

⁴³³ *GPA*, 1:iv.183.

⁴³⁴ See Jane Zatta, 'Gaimar's Rebels: Outlaw Heroes and the Creation of Authority in Twelfth-Century England', *Essays in Medieval Studies* 16 (2000): 27–37. Alternatively, it could be that Gaimar is simply interested in any noble lords who have large numbers of followers, regardless of whether they rebel against authority.

of Mercia. Waltheof is an Insular aristocrat whose father Siward was a Dane. Among his allies, when he had rebelled in 1075, were, in addition to the contingent of Scandinavians, the Breton Ralph de Gael, who was also, through Ralph the Staller, a kinsman of Hereward of Bourne.⁴³⁵

The *Estoire* does not relate the story of Waltheof's head finishing the paternoster after it has been severed from his body, and instead of being unceremoniously thrown into a ditch, as in Orderic's account, Waltheof's body is buried at Winchester. Orderic's history states that Waltheof, together with Bartholomew the apostle and Saint Guthlac, appear to Abbot Geoffrey in a vision:

Apostolus uero ut uidebatur caput comitis corpori redintegratum accipiens dicebat, 'Acephalus non est'. Æcontra Guthlacus qui ad pedes stabat; respondit, 'Comes hic fuit'. Apostolus autem inceptum monadicon sic perfecit, 'At modo rex est'

[The apostle, so it seemed, perceiving that the earl's head was joined once more to the body said, 'Headless no more'. Guthlac who was standing at the foot of the coffin said in reply, 'That was earl heretofore', and the apostle completed the verse with the words 'Now is king evermore'].⁴³⁶

While images of bodies miraculously made whole are common in stories of decapitated saints, Robert Stein and Joanna Huntington have read this vision as a symbol of the English nation's unity in spite of the Conquest.⁴³⁷ However, Gaimar notably refrains from making such a patriotic statement with his account of Waltheof. Although Waltheof's lands were primarily in Northumbria, Gaimar paints him as a hero made important through his ties to Lincolnshire. This is at the expense of any nationalistic sentiments that the story may have carried with it. The local cult of Waltheof was rooted in anti-Norman sentiment, and its regional importance can be seen from the skaldic poem *Valþjófsflokkur*, written in Waltheof's honour.⁴³⁸ 'The fact that he employed a poet who composed in Old Norse suggests that Waltheof actively and consciously promoted

⁴³⁵ Short, Introduction to *Estoire*, xlv.

⁴³⁶ *EHOV*, 2:IV.ii.289.

⁴³⁷ See Stein, *Reality Fictions*, 103; Huntington, 'The Taming of the Laity', 82.

⁴³⁸ See Kari Ellen Gade, ed. 'Valþjófsflokkur' in *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas* 2, 382–84.

Scandinavian culture, presumably as an expression of opposition to the new Norman regime', or perhaps as an articulation of his Danish heritage.⁴³⁹ This Scandinavian aspect may have made him seem like a more apposite hero for Lincolnshire. Furthermore, Orderic's epitaph makes it clear that Waltheof's Lincolnshire connections existed during his life as well as after his death, particularly through an appreciation of the local landscape: '[C]uius eri gleba Crulandia gaudet aquosa; / Quam dum uiuebat, ualde reuerenter amabat' ['The marshy soil of Crowland which, while living, / He had so deeply loved, received his body'].⁴⁴⁰ While the *Gesta Herwardi* places Hereward's rebellion as the source of the wedding plot, making a local rebellion the centre of a nationally important event, Gaimar reverses this dynamic, taking a rebellion and condensing it to its regional importance. Significantly, Waltheof's body is moved from Hampshire to Lincolnshire, which was the same journey made by Gaimar, his patron, and even the *Estoire des Engleis* itself, and as such, the symbolism of Waltheof may have been particularly relevant to the *Estoire*'s intended audience.

* * *

While it is impossible to know exactly how Gaimar's twelfth-century readership identified with the land around them, or how they understood their landscape, society, community, and local history, the *Estoire*'s depiction of Lincolnshire can give scholars insight into the way the region was imagined in the 1130s.⁴⁴¹ J. G. A. Pocock writes that 'identity is an awareness of a shared membership', whether in the form of ethnicity, language, customs, foundation myths, or collective memory.⁴⁴² The *Estoire* confers upon its East Midland readers a sense of belonging and of community by binding the English,

⁴³⁹ Holman, *The Northern Conquest*, 188–89.

⁴⁴⁰ *EHOV*, 2:IV.ii.290.

⁴⁴¹ See Adrian Green and A. J. Pollard, 'Introduction: Identifying Regions', in *Regional Identities in North-East England, 1300–2000*, ed. Adrian Green and A. J. Pollard (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007), 1–25, especially 15.

⁴⁴² J. G. A. Pocock, 'Politics of Historiography', *Historical Research* 78, no. 19 (2005): 1–14, at 12.

Anglo-Normans, and Anglo-Danes together in a shared—if occasionally antagonistic—past, and a present that transcends past differences for the sake of a common familiarity with the region and its stories. Adrian Green and A. J. Pollard note that

finding regional identity in the past, in any region in England, is problematic. The region is elusive and it is protean. Whichever way we choose to look at it, it is unlikely to be all inclusive, all embracing or continuous. We have multiple social identities and look different ways, deal with different agencies and move in different directions according to the different aspects of our lives.⁴⁴³

Gaimar's text reflects this, and it is as inconsistent and as difficult to parse out as Green and Pollard suggest. Yet the *Estoire's* fascination with Lincolnshire and the Danes remains constantly below the surface of the narrative, when it is not being discussed explicitly. Gaimar does not claim to offer a regional identity, but by prioritising Lincolnshire in his construction of England, he implicitly does so. Throughout his narrative, which blends elements of both history and romance, Gaimar brings together Hampshire, Lincolnshire, England, and Denmark to offer a particular version of England; a mixture of West Saxon history and Anglo-Danish stories from the former Danelaw. Gaimar's vision of England is sourced from the regions that comprise his, and his patron's, experience of the country.

The *Estoire*, through its themes, content, and focus on regional stories, 'seems to have inspired a more localized movement of Anglo-Norman romance writing, one that offered tales set in familiar surroundings'.⁴⁴⁴ Although Gaimar is never explicit in the regional focus of his narrative, it nevertheless marks the beginning of a trend in Anglo-Norman narratives that grapple with issues of national and regional identities during a time when England and its inhabitants were beginning to reacquire a sense of belonging. The *Estoire*, through its depiction of intercultural identities and spaces, and its presentation of a heterogeneous England, opens up a space accessible by the Anglo-

⁴⁴³ Green and Pollard, 'Identifying Regions', 23.

⁴⁴⁴ Field, 'Children of Anarchy', 250–51.

Norman aristocracy for whom Gaimar was writing, as well as other denizens of the places in which—and about which—he was writing.

Chapter Three

Locating a Border: *Fouke le Fitz Waryn* and the March of Wales

The previous chapter saw Geffrei Gaimar's *Estoire des Engleis* as a gateway through which its patron, Constance fitz Gilbert, could simultaneously access an understanding of the histories and identities of Lincolnshire and England by presenting Lincolnshire as a synecdoche for England. This chapter will take these ideas one step further by exploring the way in which the Anglo-Norman prose romance, *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*, presents a regional perspective of England that asserts the uniqueness of the Shropshire Marches while challenging the viability of the political and cultural distinctions between England and Wales.⁴⁴⁵ For its audience, this engenders an understanding of Britain as a single unit. Much like the first two chapters of this thesis, this section will home in on a particular geographic locality. However, while *Fouke* shares many themes with the *Gesta Herwardi*, not least in its focus on outlawry and rebellion, it more closely resembles the *Estoire* in its approach to the construction of a regional identity that is at once local and cross-cultural, and that reflects or anticipates a political unity of two territories.

The medieval March of Wales was an unstable boundary, dividing two territories not with a borderline, but with land.⁴⁴⁶ The palatine earldoms of Shrewsbury, Chester, and Hereford created a buffer zone between England and Wales, and the Marches were an arena of frequent warfare, fluctuating lordships, and where people of different cultures, ethnicities, and political loyalties were forced into daily contact. This area was the consummate contact zone, reflecting the topography of the area as the

⁴⁴⁵ For the challenges related to the dating of the text, see above, 35.

⁴⁴⁶ See Cannon, *Grounds*, 145.

Welsh mountains and valleys undulate into the flatlands of England.⁴⁴⁷ The *Ancrene Wisse* characterises this area as ‘Englondes ende’, and Walter Map locates it as the place where the fantastical intrudes upon courtly life and mortal men meet supernatural brides.⁴⁴⁸ Map focuses on the offspring of these pairings, creating an image of Marcher society that is, by its very nature, a mixture of cultures and of peoples.⁴⁴⁹ *Fouke* depicts the flexibility of Marcher identity by narratively forging a strong regional identity that is at once intensely local and also transnational as it spans England and Wales. While the text develops this regional identity through the use of landscape, built environment, and foundation myths, it also creates an image of a unified, borderless Britain.⁴⁵⁰ Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Historia regum Britanniae* has been read both as an argument for the restoration of Welsh pride and also as a mythical paradigm for the political unity of Britain, and hence interpreted as justification for English sovereignty over *totam insulam*, the whole island.⁴⁵¹ Similarly, *Fouke*, by articulating a Marcher identity that connects, rather than divides, the English and the Welsh, implicitly reflects a claim for Anglo-Norman dominance over the ‘ydle enter’ [whole island].⁴⁵²

⁴⁴⁷ Topography was socially as well as a geographically important; often the Welsh lived in the highlands and the English lived in the lowlands such that the 198-metre contour line comprised ‘the boundary between Welshry and Englishry’. See R. R. Davies, *Lordship and Society in the March of Wales, 1282–1400* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 310.

⁴⁴⁸ Bella Millett, ed., *Ancrene Wisse: A Corrected Edition of the Text in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 402, with Variants from Other Manuscripts*, EETS 325 (Oxford: EETS, 2005), 1:4.1090–91; Walter Map, *De nugis curialium = The Courtier’s Trifles*, ed. and trans. M.R. James et al. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), ii.12–13.

⁴⁴⁹ Walter Map describes how a man sees his recently deceased wife dancing. Their subsequent offspring and descendants are called ‘filii mortue’ [‘sons of the dead mother’]. Map notes: ‘Incredibilis quidem et prodigialis iniuria nature, si non extarent certa uestigia ueritatis’ [‘This would be an incredibly and portentous breach of nature’s laws, did not trustworthy evidence of its truth exist’]. Walter Map, *De nugis curialium*, ii.13 and iv.8. See also Michael Faletra, *Wales and the Medieval Colonial Imagination: The Matters of Britain in the Twelfth Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 17.

⁴⁵⁰ Whether or not this vision of Britain includes Scotland is unclear. Aside from the events in the Scottish Marches and a reference to *Fouke*’s attempt to sail to Scotland, only to be blown off course, Scotland is conspicuously absent from the text; the text’s focus is on the relationship between England and Wales.

⁴⁵¹ For discussions of the *Historia*, see Faletra, *Wales*, 16 and 19–54; Ingham, *Sovereign Fantasies*; Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century*, 19–40; Michelle Warren, ‘Making Contact: Postcolonial Perspectives Through Geoffrey of Monmouth’s “Historia Regum Britanniae”’, *Arthuriana* 8, no. 4 (1998): 115–34.

⁴⁵² Ingham argues that while the *Historia* may have been used as an instrument of Norman hegemonic power, it also contributed towards the Welsh discourses of resistance and rebellion. See *Sovereign*

Although the text was almost certainly written in the Welsh Marches, it is a border story only insofar as it seeks to control the circumscription of geopolitical boundaries.⁴⁵³ Rather than reflecting the Marches' position as an Anglo-Norman frontier area at the time of the verse original's composition and envisaging it as the 'edge' of England or 'Englondes ende', *Fouke* imagines the Marches as a centre. The land's official status as a geographical borderland is eschewed as the narrative diegesis and its protagonist move seamlessly between Wales and England, textually laying claim to both territories in a manner that suggest the Marches themselves function as an important region in the centre of Britain.⁴⁵⁴ This perspective casts doubt on the categorisation of *Fouke* as a 'border story'.⁴⁵⁵ In order for Anglo-Norman Marcher narratives to be self-conscious border stories, they must implicitly adopt an Anglocentric viewpoint, understanding that the centre of England is located with the king. Yet *Fouke* resists this interpretation as it places the Marches, and specifically Whittington, as the axis around which the narrative revolves; the March is not depicted as a periphery. Furthermore, while historically the Marches may have constituted a geographical or official political border zone, *Fouke* suggests that the cultural and class boundaries between England and Wales were porous and protean. It paints an image of Britain that is not fractured but

Fantasies, 23, 39. For the quotation, see E. J. Hathaway, P. J. Ricketts, C. A. Robson, and A. D. Wilshire, eds, *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*, ANTS 26–28 (Oxford: ANTS, 1975), 6.32. This edition will hereafter be referred to as *Fouke*, and both page numbers and line numbers of the text will be cited. All translations of *Fouke* are my own.

⁴⁵³ The extant version of *Fouke* was copied by the same scribe as BL, MS Harley 2253, who was probably operating in Ludlow in the first half of the fourteenth century. See Carter Revard, 'Scribe and Provenance', *Studies in the Harley Manuscript: The Scribes, Contents, and Social Contexts of British Library MS Harley 2253*, ed. Susanna Fein (Kalamazoo: MIP, 2000), 21–109, especially 21–30. For the localisation of *Fouke*, see Janet Meisel, *Barons of the Welsh Frontier* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), 133–34; Roger Sherman Loomis, *Wales and the Arthurian Legend* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1956), 42.

⁴⁵⁴ It is important to note that for much of the period in question, Wales was not a unified country, but rather a conglomeration of principalities and regions. However, for the purposes of this chapter, the term 'Wales' will be used to denote the lands held by those who are depicted as Welsh, and the area that the text terms 'Gales'.

⁴⁵⁵ Ralph Hanna, for instance, calls it such in 'The Matter of Fulk', 345.

interconnected, and by placing the Marches as a textual centre, *Fouke* positions the March as the crucial hinge that brings the two territories together.

There are limitations to applying historical interpretations to *Fouke*, primarily because its textual tradition prevents it from being dated with confidence. The extant version of the text (London, British Library, MS Royal 12.C.xii, ff. 33–61) is in Anglo-Norman prose, and it was probably written between 1325 and 1340 in Ludlow.⁴⁵⁶ However, there is evidence that at least two other versions of the text existed. One was in Anglo-Norman verse, probably written in the second half of the thirteenth century for the Fitz Waryn family. This formed the basis for the later prose version, a connection visible from the traces of rhyme present in the extant text.⁴⁵⁷ A later version was written in alliterative Middle English verse. John Leland summarised parts of this English version in the sixteenth century, but it is likely that the text dated to the late fourteenth century.⁴⁵⁸ From the evidence that remains of these lost versions of *Fouke*, it appears that they displayed a significant amount of detail relating to the geography and politics of the Shropshire March, and they were probably written in that area.⁴⁵⁹ Since the Anglo-Norman verse text is lost, it is difficult to ascertain which parts of *Fouke* were in the verse original and which are unique to the prose version. When examining the probable dates of composition of the two Anglo-Norman texts, it emerges that they bookend the Edwardian conquest of Wales. The verse version was written while the Marcher lords were battling the Welsh princes for land, while the prose version was copied well after

⁴⁵⁶ Helen Fulton cites this broad date range, while Hanna argues that the text was written in the 1320s. See Fulton, 'Literature of the Welsh Gentry', 199–223, at 220, and Hanna, 'Matter of Fulk', 354–7.

⁴⁵⁷ See Hathaway et al. Introduction to *Fouke*, xix–xxi.

⁴⁵⁸ For Leland's summary, see John Leland, *Joannis Lelandi Antiquarii De rebus Britannicis collectanea* (Oxford: Sheldonian, 1715), 1:230–36. There is a general consensus that the verse original was composed after 1258, but it was based on earlier traditions. David Stephenson proposes a date of the mid-1260s in 'Fouke le Fitz Waryn and Llywelyn ap Gruffudd's Claim to Whittington', *Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society* 77 (2002): 26–31, at 29. The historical contexts of the text's versions and their responses to political crises are discussed in Hanna, 'Matter of Fulk', 355.

⁴⁵⁹ See Hanna, 'Matter of Fulk', 354–5.

Wales had been conquered and as the Marchers were beginning to lose their legal immunity from the King, who came to intervene more frequently in March matters.⁴⁶⁰ The extant text incorporates and resolves the ideological pulls that may have emerged from these events—the desire to justify English dominance over Wales through the elision of differences between England and Wales, and an assertion of a threatened regional identity through the glorification of an outlaw who rebels against an unjust and interfering king—by presenting the Marches as the keystone that joins England and Wales. Similarly, it depicts Fouke as a figure of importance not only to the Marches, but also to England and to Wales. This chapter will discuss the text’s creation of a regional identity by exploring how *Fouke* brings England and Wales together through mythology, spatial dynamics, and the discourse of conquest. The final section focuses on the hero’s treatment in Welsh poetry. While some of the text is set on the continent and in northern Africa as well as the British Isles, this chapter will primarily focus on the parts of *Fouke* set in Britain because they are most closely related to the text’s depiction of regional identity.⁴⁶¹

Boundaries and Borders

While the March is initially depicted as a site of ethnic tension between the English and the Welsh, the conflict at the centre of the text between Fouke and King John shifts this dynamic. The Marches become a stage where intranational political disputes are played out and where England’s provinces and its centre struggle for power and dominance. The narrative proper opens on a scene of destruction, as William the Conqueror and Owain

⁴⁶⁰ See Davies, *The First English Empire*, 26.

⁴⁶¹ The sections set outside Britain are important, both generically and textually: they establish *Fouke* as a romance and allow the protagonist to gain a chivalric reputation overseas. However, they also allow Britain to be seen from abroad. As Fouke constantly yearns to be home, the discrete parts of Britain become invisible and the only place that has any importance is Whittington. Although a full study of Fouke’s adventures abroad is beyond the scope of this thesis, a discussion of travel and exoticism in Anglo-Norman romances follows in Chapter Four.

Gwynedd clash with one another for the possession of the Marches. The two men are set against one another, both depicted as wise and valiant warriors. It is in this conflict zone that a society is formed:

En ycel temps Yweyn Goynez fust prince de Gales, e si fust valiaunt e bon guerreour, e le roy le dota mout le plus. Cesty Yweyn out guasté tote la marche, e tote fust voyde de Cestre tanqe al mont Gylebert. Le roy se apparilla mout richement, e vint ou grant ost en le countee de Saloburs, e trova tote les villes arses de Cestre desqe a Saloburs, quar le prince clama tote la marche pue la sue e aportenaunte a Powys.

Le prince se retret, quar yl ne osa atendre le roy. Le roy fust mout sages, e pensa qu'il dorreit les terres de la marche as plus vaylauntz chevalers de tut le ose pur ce qu'il devereint defendre la marche de le prince a lur profit e al honour lur seignour le roy⁴⁶²

[At that time Owain Gwynned was Prince of Wales, and he was a valiant and good warrior, and the king feared him all the more. This Owain had laid waste to the whole march, and all was empty from Chester to Mount Gilbert. The king dressed himself very richly and came with a great army to the county of Shrewsbury, and found all the towns burnt from Chester to Shrewsbury, because the prince claimed the whole march for his own and as belonging to Powys.

The prince retreated, because he did not dare to await the king. The king was very wise, and thought that he would give the lands of the march to the most valiant knights in his army so that they could defend the march against the prince to their own profit and to the honour of their lord the king].

This society, however, relies on the symbiosis of baronial profit and loyalty to the English king. It assumes that both the Crown and the barons work towards a common goal, presumably the defence of England against Welsh raiders and a simultaneous push further into Welsh territory. However, while William may be 'mout sages' [very wise], this dynamic collapses when John, a king who 'touz jours estes conteckaunt' [is always cantankerous/quarrelsome], infringes on Marcher liberties and makes loyalty to the King an untenable prospect for Fouke.⁴⁶³ Although the initial cause for opposition in the text is one of ethnicity, as the Anglo-Normans comprise one group while those allied with the Prince of Wales, Owain Gwynedd, are presented as antagonists, these categories shift as the text progresses. During Fouke's rebellion, which historically took place between

⁴⁶² *Fouke*, 3.14–26.

⁴⁶³ *Fouke*, 23.1, 24.26–32.

1201 and 1203, he severs his relationship with the King and allies with Llywelyn ap Iorwerth, Prince of Wales, just as John prioritises a claim by Welshman Meurig fitz Roger of Powys (Morys de Powys in the text) to Whittington over Fouke's.⁴⁶⁴ Ethnicity no longer determines political ties, and the threat to the text's protagonist comes not from beyond the border in Wales, but from within England itself.

Although the Marches historically embodied the division between England and Wales, there is some evidence to suggest that it also functioned as a space of legal reconciliation. The original issue of Magna Carta in 1215 articulates this in clause 56, which states:

Si nos disseisivimus vel elongavimus Walenses de terris vel libertatibus vel rebus aliis, sine legali iudicio parium suorum (in Anglia vel in Wallia) eis statim reddantur; et si contencio super hoc orta fuerit, tunc inde fiat in Marchia per iudicium parium suorum de tenementis Anglie secundum legem Anglie; de tenementis Wallie secundum legem Wallie; de tenementis Marchie secundum legem Marchie. Idem facient Walenses nobis et nostris

[If we have disseised or deprived Welshmen of lands, liberties or things without lawful judgement of their peers, in England or in Wales, they are to be returned to them at once; and if a dispute arises over this it shall be settled in the March by judgement of their peers; for tenements in England according to the law of England, for tenements in Wales according to the law of Wales, for tenements in the March according to the law of the March. The Welsh are to do the same to us and to ours].⁴⁶⁵

This clause, while vague as to which areas are understood to be the *marchia*, and what its laws are, gives us two important pieces of information about the Marches. The first is that the separate legal identity of the March and its set of laws—known as the Law of the March—were recognised as legitimate, if not formally codified or written down.⁴⁶⁶ This implicitly recognises the March as a territory unto itself, placed on equal legal footing

⁴⁶⁴ For the dates of Fouke's rebellion, see Hanna, 'Matter of Fulk', 339, 350.

⁴⁶⁵ Text and translation in J. C. Holt, *Magna Carta*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: CUP, 1992), 466–69.

⁴⁶⁶ See Brock W. Holden, 'The Making of the Middle March of Wales, 1066–1250', *Welsh History Review* 20 (2000): 207–26, at 225.

with England and Wales.⁴⁶⁷ Davies writes that ‘the law of the march enjoyed a separate identity, but an identity which was so elusive that no contemporary dared to define it or thought it worthwhile to do so’.⁴⁶⁸ Secondly, the Marches were seen as a neutral zone, albeit one primarily under England’s dominion, where justice could be carried out and tensions between the English and the Welsh diffused. This idealised image of the Marches as a space of legal resolution, ethnic conciliation, and justice is important in relation to *Fouke* because it makes the injustice of King John’s actions all the more striking.⁴⁶⁹ While the 1215 version of Magna Carta was almost immediately retracted, a similar passage was included in clause 38 of the 1216 issue. This disappeared from subsequent issues, but resurfaced in the Treaty of Aberconwy in 1277, and in 1291 a defendant exercised his right to be tried in the Marches rather than according to the common law of England.⁴⁷⁰ Although Magna Carta was signed only after Fouke’s rebellion, it is clear that the basic notion of a separate legal system for the Marches had already been established by the time the document was first issued, and that it had been formally recognised by the time *Fouke* was written. Given that the purpose of Magna Carta was to keep the king’s power in check, it is unsurprising that the historical Fouke fitz Waryn was one of the 1215 Magna Carta barons, and that he continued his resistance into Henry III’s reign.⁴⁷¹

Magdalena Naum suggests that this creation of an autonomous space, whether legal, political, or cultural, was not unusual in frontier zones:

⁴⁶⁷ R. R. Davies, ‘The Law of the March’, *Welsh History Review* 5 (1970–71): 1–30, at 2. This article contains a detailed discussion of the Law of the March.

⁴⁶⁸ Davies, ‘Law of the March’, 2.

⁴⁶⁹ This was, however, not the first time an English king had interfered in Marcher affairs: Henry I had used the support of the Marchers to attain an exceptional level of dominance in Wales, which was later undone by Stephen.

⁴⁷⁰ See J. D. Edwards, ed., *Littere Wallie* (Cardiff: University Press Board, 1940), 120; G. O. Sayles, ed., *Select Cases in the Court of King’s Bench Under Edward II* (London: B. Quaritch, 1938), 2:58. Cited in Davies, ‘The Law of the March’, 1.

⁴⁷¹ Hathaway et al. Introduction to *Fouke*, xxix.

Multiplicity of the relationships in the frontier is not the only characteristic of this shifting landscape. Frontiers can expand to become a separate political entity. ... [M]ost of the early frontiers, even if delineated, remained considerably fluid zones. Most of them were also places of manifold realities. Tensions and dynamics of conflict, control, and friendly relations were inscribed in these landscapes. These conditions create a type of life that might have differed considerably from that in the central areas.⁴⁷²

In the Welsh Marches, however, this oscillation between war and peace was not only characteristic of the interactions between those who identified as Welsh and those who identified as English, but also typifies the relationships between Marcher lords, who were granted licence to draw up treaties and engage in war with one another under the Law of the March.⁴⁷³ Because of these liberties and the resultant dynamics within the March, an array of alliances emerged, made according to practical concerns rather than compatriotism. This '[e]ver changing kaleidoscope of alliances and combinations ... make[s] nonsense of the conventional pictures of a simple Anglo-Welsh struggle'.⁴⁷⁴

Much postcolonial theory relies on Bhabha's interpretation of borderlands as a Third Space.⁴⁷⁵ Third Spaces serve as sites of interaction and tension, but through these dynamics they not only create communal identities, but also contribute toward the definition of a society.⁴⁷⁶ They are found in places where 'difference is neither One nor the Other but *something else besides, in-between*'.⁴⁷⁷ However, the complexity of Marcher identity ultimately undermines the discourse of opposition between English and Welsh identity; by opening up a space for a middle ground or for a mixed identity, the binary between the two categories is disrupted and the concept of 'national' identity is

⁴⁷² Magdalena Naum, 'Re-emerging Frontiers: Postcolonial Theory and Historical Archaeology of the Borderlands', *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 17 (2010): 101–31, at 102. This is also reflected in Berend, 'Medievalists', 61.

⁴⁷³ R. R. Davies, 'Kings, Lords, and Liberties in the March of Wales, 1066–1272', *TRHS*, 5th ser., 29 (1979): 41.

⁴⁷⁴ Glyn Roberts, 'Wales and England: Antipathy and Sympathy 1282–1485', *Welsh History Review* 1, no. 4 (1963): 375–96, at 377.

⁴⁷⁵ See above, page 30–31; Jonathan Rutherford, 'The Third Space: Interview with Homi Bhabha', in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990), 207–21.

⁴⁷⁶ Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 1–2.

⁴⁷⁷ Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 219.

revealed to be unstable and unfixed.⁴⁷⁸ Fredrik Barth supports this concept: while certain situations of cultural contact can emphasise cultural or ethnic boundaries between groups, ‘ethnic groups only persist as significant units if they imply marked difference in behaviour, i.e. persisting cultural differences’ or structures of interaction which allow the fixity of boundaries between peoples to be sustained, such as trade or antagonistic struggles.⁴⁷⁹

Bhabha, drawing on Heidegger, suggests that borderlands are where ‘*something begins its presencing* in a movement not dissimilar to the ambulant, ambivalent articulation of the beyond’.⁴⁸⁰ However, the depiction of such a space requires an external perspective. *Fouke* does not depict the Marches as a hybrid zone because this would involve recognising the inherent differences between the commingling cultures or ethnic groups. It is precisely because of cultural intermixing in the Marches that the fetishistic aspect of the ‘beyond’ is lost. The Welsh do not merely ‘ambl[e]’ through the Marches in *Fouke*. They are firmly present: not an unfamiliar, faceless entity that has begun to reveal itself, but a presence that has been in Britain for centuries. Historically, the Marches may have been a Third Space, but in *Fouke*, rather than figuring as an ‘articulation of the beyond’, they are a much more immediate articulation of the political situation of the time, a concentrated embodiment of cosmopolitanism and complex identity within medieval Britain.

Borderlands such as the Marches are traditionally seen as ‘a space of dialogue and remaking’, which opens up the possibility of ‘envisaging national, antinationalist, histories of the “people”’ and where ‘we will find those words with which we can speak

⁴⁷⁸ See Helen Fulton, ‘Class and Nation: Defining the English in Late-Medieval Welsh Poetry’, in *Authority and Subjugation in Writing of Medieval Wales*, ed. Ruth Kennedy and Simon Meecham-Jones (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 191–212, at 199.

⁴⁷⁹ Barth, Introduction to *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, 15.

⁴⁸⁰ Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 7. Italics in the original. Cf. Martin Heidegger, ‘Building, dwelling, thinking’, in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), 143–59, especially 154.

of Ourselves and Others’.⁴⁸¹ The Marches bridge England and Wales, providing a space where differences could play out and be reconciled. In his discussion of the relationships between men and giants in *Fouke*, Ralph Hanna remarks: ‘[B]order stories are always concerned with the belief that there is such a place, somewhere that is The Edge. One side, in such an account, should be Ours and the other Theirs’.⁴⁸² This division between ‘Ourselves’ and ‘Others’, ‘Ours’ and ‘Theirs’ relies on a consensus of who *we* are; it requires a degree of homogeneity in terms of identity. Both Bhabha and Hanna’s theories suggest that border stories see themselves as originating from the margins, adopting the dominant, hegemonic point of view rather than the subjective understanding that, for those living in the Marches, the centre is located on the border. Without a fixed, linear boundary between ‘here’ and ‘there’, there are no ‘side[s]’ to claim as ‘Ours’, and therefore no way to define one group against another.

Consistent with Naum’s claim and with historical reality, *Fouke* creates a March that is distinct from England, with its own law, politics, and customs. It does so not only through a representation of the idiosyncrasies of Marcher law, but also semantically: the word ‘marche’ is used 22 times throughout the text, 19 of which refer to the Welsh Marches. The other three instances relate to the Scottish Marches. This not only implies that borderlands are recognised, unique spaces in the text, but it also strikingly indicates *Fouke*’s preoccupation with borderlands in general.

By using the same word to describe both the Welsh and Scottish Marches, the text constructs the two spaces as mirrors of one another. In the Scottish Marches lives Piers de Bruvyle, a knight who

⁴⁸¹ Naum, ‘Re-emerging Frontiers’, 106; Homi Bhabha, ‘Cultural Diversity and Cultural Differences’, in *The Postcolonial Studies Reader*, ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2006), 155–57, at 157.

⁴⁸² Hanna, ‘Matter of Fulk’, 345.

soleit assembler tous les fitz de gentils homes de le pays qe volagous erent, e
 autre rybaudayle, e soleynt aler par le pays, e ocistrent e robberent lele gent,
 marchanz e autres. Cely Pieres, quant yl ou sa compaignie ala robber les gentz,
 se fesoit apele Fouke le fitz Waryn.⁴⁸³

[was wont to assemble all the sons of the gentlemen of the country who were
 wild, and other ribalds, and used to go through the country and kill and rob loyal
 people, merchants and others. This Piers, when he was going to rob people with
 his companions, had himself called Fouke fitz Waryn].

Piers, who obscures his true identity with a mask, is a poor reflection of Fouke. While both are liminal figures who engage in disguise and trickery, Piers's indiscriminate criminal acts provide a contrast to Fouke, who makes an ethical choice only to steal from those who work directly for King John. The presence of Piers as a faux-Fouke exorcises any anxieties concerning the morality of Fouke's outlawry by contrasting him with a truly contemptible figure. However, it is curious that both of these men emerge from the borders of England. While Piers and his 'volagous' [wild/dissolute/rakish] companions reveal an uneasiness about the infiltration of the chaotic, barbarous Other into England, Fouke's nobility and morality tempers any fears about negative cultural 'contamination' from Wales that might be experienced by the Anglo-Norman Marcher lords.⁴⁸⁴

The Making of the March

In *England the Nation*, Thorlac Turville-Petre argues that each region of England had an overwhelming desire 'to identify with the nation that confer[red] on it cultural significance, military and political power, a framework of legal rights, and international prestige'. Yet *Fouke* does not support this view, adopting the intensely regional perspective that Turville-Petre claims was becoming less common in English romances

⁴⁸³ *Fouke*, 30.37–31.3

⁴⁸⁴ For further discussion of cultural 'contamination', see Chapter Four, 236–37.

in the fourteenth century.⁴⁸⁵ It is an overtly Marcher narrative, probably written for an audience of Marcher lords which may have included the descendants of Fouke fitz Waryn III.⁴⁸⁶ *Fouke* opens in a manner typical of Insular romance, with a description of the rejuvenating effects of the spring and an invitation to ‘remenbrer des aventures e pruesses nos auncestres qe se penerent pur honour en leauté quere’ [remember the adventures and noble deeds of our ancestors who fought to seek honour in loyalty].⁴⁸⁷ In using the inclusive pronoun ‘nos’, the text both endorses a universal practice of remembering those who have come before, and also immediately evokes an atmosphere of communality. It suggests that Fouke and the other Marcher lords described in the text are important forebears to the text’s audience, either through descent or a shared community identity.

The text is geographically centred on the March, shifting its focus immediately from William I’s coronation in London to Owain Gwynedd’s destruction of ‘tote la marche, ... de Cestre tanqe al mont Gylebert’ [all the March, ... from Chester to Mount Gilbert].⁴⁸⁸ Through this rapid change in perspective, the text locates the beginning of the narrative in a particular historical moment and also places the March on a par with London; it is an important space in England, worthy of the King’s presence and not merely on the margins of the kingdom.

The beginning of *Fouke* borrows directly from Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Historia*, both in terms of structure and content. The prophecies in *Fouke* are analogous to Diana’s prophecy to Brutus, and the demon-giant Geomagog is a ‘deliberate steal’

⁴⁸⁵ Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*, 142. Turville-Petre examines the Auchinleck manuscript’s romances, particularly *Guy of Warwick*, copied around the same time as the prose *Fouke*. He argues that the manuscript is nationalistic in its outlook.

⁴⁸⁶ See Stephenson, ‘Fouke le Fitz Waryn’, 28. See also Max Lieberman, ‘The English and the Welsh in Fouke le Fitz Waryn’, *Thirteenth-Century England* 12 (2009): 1–11, at 3.

⁴⁸⁷ *Fouke*, 3.6–7.

⁴⁸⁸ *Fouke*, 3.12, 3.16–17

from Geoffrey's giant Gogmagog.⁴⁸⁹ *Fouke*'s retelling of the *Historia*'s account of Corineus's battle with the giant solidifies this link between the two texts. The *Historia* provides the backdrop against which *Fouke* is set, and hence it acts as a useful point of comparison to *Fouke*. Both texts open with descriptions of the lands in which their narratives take place; while the *Historia* does so explicitly through its *descriptio* of Britain and an idealised account of the fecundity and abundance of the island, *Fouke*'s description is embedded in the action of the narrative, and the land it describes is dangerous and dark, ravaged by wars between the Anglo-Saxons and the Britons. *Fouke*'s landscape is a passive space that is defined by those who act upon it, fight for it, and build on it. The text initially describes the Marches as an empty expanse that bears the scars of a ruinous past: the region is punctuated with burned towns and castles, and the land has been rendered waste, topographically realising the political situation of the area and accentuating the devastation that the political division of Britain has wrought upon the landscape. It is in the desolate Marches that the fracturing of Britain is most strongly felt, and the harried land embodies this rift. Yet it is also in this bleak landscape that Whittington is built. As a castle built in the waste, Whittington serves as a symbol for the reconnection of the two lands.⁴⁹⁰ The rebuilding of the March, transforming the wasteland into a space for a new society, suggests a fusion of England and Wales.

The March is clearly not *terra vacua*, but it is, in the words of Monika Otter, *gaainable tere*, territory that can be taken, which has the potential to be cultivated and

⁴⁸⁹ Hanna, 'Matter of Fulk', 340–41. For Diana's prophecy see *Historia*, 21. MS Royal 12.C.xii includes *An Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle*, which also tells the story of Corineus and Geomagog. This verse chronicle was written around the same time as the prose *Fouke*, and so would not have had an influence on the original text. For an edition of this text, see Ewald Zettel, ed., *An Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle*, EETS Original Series 196 (London: EETS, 1935).

⁴⁹⁰ Grim's ship-house similarly connects England and Denmark in the *Estoire des Engleis*, especially since Grimsby is also seen as a liminal space. See above, 128–30.

revitalised.⁴⁹¹ The destruction of the March provides a blank slate upon which the Norman conquerors can inscribe their identities and where Marcher lords can create their own society. The burnt towns and sterile lands of the past contrast to the fertility of the present, ‘quant les prees e les herbes reverdissent e chescune chose vivaunte recovre vertue, beauté e force, les mountz e les valey[e]s retentissent des douce chauntz des oseylouns’ [when the pastures and the grasses become green again and all living things recover their virtue, strength, and beauty, the mountains and the valleys resound with the sweet song of young birds].⁴⁹² This juxtaposition gestures towards the importance of the Marcher lords as those who have rescued the land from its barrenness and transformed it into an idyllic space, bursting with life and song.

The *Historia*’s aesthetic *descriptio* has been read as an attempt to conquer the land symbolically by claiming it as ‘insularum optima’ [‘the best of islands’], with an abundance of natural resources, lucrative trade, and a rich culture.⁴⁹³ *Fouke*’s description of the March, however, is not idealised. Surveying the lands of the March, King William sees only ruined villages, claimed by Owain Gwynedd for Powys. However, venturing further west and penetrating deeper into the land which ‘jadys fust a un Bretoun’ [formerly belonged to a Briton] the land becomes more rich and appealing. In crossing the Severn, the symbolic boundary between England and Wales, William ‘vist le pays entour bon e bel’ [saw that the land around was good and beautiful]; he gazes upon his surroundings with imperial desire.⁴⁹⁴ William exerts his power over the land by giving it

⁴⁹¹ Monika Otter, *Inventiones: Fiction and Referentiality in Twelfth-Century English Historical Writing* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 59–60; see also Faletra, *Wales*, 6.

⁴⁹² *Fouke*, 3.1–4.

⁴⁹³ *Historia*, 6, 7.

⁴⁹⁴ *Fouke*, 7.9 and 7.16–17. See Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*. Both Geoffrey of Monmouth and Gerald of Wales state that the Severn marks the historical division between Logria and Cambria. See Gerald of Wales, *Opera*, 6:219; *Historia*, 31. Tysilio, who adapted Geoffrey’s work into Welsh, reproduces this idea in *The Chronicle of the Kings of Britain*, trans. Peter Roberts (Lampeter: Llanerch, 2000), 33.

to his vassals. The area is not only claimed visually or politically, however, but also symbolically:

Ly roy apela Payn Peverel, e ly dona la Blaunche Launde e foreste, guastyne, chaces e tut le pays. E si aveit une mote enviroonee de marreis e de ewe, e la fyst Payn un tour bel e fort, e fust la mote apelee Wayburs, a si court une ryvere delees qe de Payn Peverel tint le noun, e si est apelee Peverel, mes pus fust apellee Pevereye.⁴⁹⁵

[The king named Payn Peverel and gave him the White Land and the forest, waste, chases, and the whole country. And there was a hill surrounded by a marsh and by water, and there Payn built a fair and strong tower, and the hill was called Waybury, and a river runs by it which took its name from Payn Peverel, and it was called Peverel, but later was called Perry].

Like Corineus, ‘de qy Cornewayle ad uncore le noun’ [from whom Cornwall still has its name], Payn etches his identity onto the landscape by naming it and building on it, making it inextricably bound to him.⁴⁹⁶ The Marches are architecturally, toponymically, and symbolically tied to the lords who settle there.

However, the text opens up a space for the Welsh as well as for the Anglo-Normans. While the Anglo-Normans settle and build in the Marches, constructing it as a physical place, in *Fouke* the Welsh figure as those who carry knowledge of local history and folklore. The text uses them to forge a sense of coherence between the British past and the Anglo-Norman present. While the Normans physically displace the Welsh in the March as Owain Gwynedd retreats before the arrival of William, the mythological basis for Marcher identity in the text is largely derived from the *Historia*, and therefore builds on the mythological history of the Britons, implicitly legitimising the precedence of the Welsh. The *Historia*, however, claims that the noble Britons have long since disappeared from Britain, replaced by their purportedly degenerate and eminently conquerable Welsh descendants, in order to justify the Anglo-Saxon and subsequent Norman dominance

⁴⁹⁵ *Fouke*, 7.23–8. This is a false etymology, and the River Perry in fact is a corruption of the Welsh name for the river, *Pefr* ‘radiant, bright’. See *Fouke*, 69.

⁴⁹⁶ *Fouke*, 4.25–6.

over the island. *Fouke*, on the other hand, resurrects the Britons' foundation myth and asserts their continued presence and enduring nobility.⁴⁹⁷ Although ethnic descriptors are rarely used in the text, one of the few exceptions to this is the reference to Maredudd ap Bleddyn as 'un Bretoun' [a Briton]. This suggests that in *Fouke* the Welsh are still seen as Britons, despite their lost dominion over Britain.⁴⁹⁸ *Fouke* does not erase, override, or denigrate the established history of the land to justify the Anglo-Norman presence, but uses it to its own ends. The first instance of direct speech in the text is attributed to another 'Bretoun', who reveals the history of the area around 'Chastiel Bran' [Castell Dinas Brân], relating its fraught history and the aftermath of Corineus's battle with the giant Geomagog.⁴⁹⁹ The Briton's narrative largely focuses on the connection between past and present. He explains that the castle 'fust jadys apellee chastiel Bran, mes ore est apelee la Vele Marche' [was once called Castell Dinas Brân, but now is called the Old March], and his story spans centuries as he moves from the arrival of Brutus and the Trojans to Bran fitz Donwal's restoration of the castle and its ultimate abandonment.⁵⁰⁰ This Welsh voice seems to speak for the land itself with intimate, first-hand knowledge of the history of the place. By attributing the story to a Briton, rather than simply to the text's anonymous (and presumably Anglo-Norman) narrator, the text establishes the precedence of the Welsh. Unlike the *Historia*, *Fouke* does not recount the Brutus myth from its Trojan beginning, suggesting it is an unimportant aspect to the story because it preceded Brutus's arrival in 'Britain', and is therefore divorced from the history of the

⁴⁹⁷ See *Historia*, 281. Furthermore, by the time *Fouke* was written the English had appropriated much of the *Historia*'s material. The Welsh also seized it, however, and incorporated into their literary tradition, as seen in the *Brut y Brenhinedd*, which is a collection of Welsh translations of Geoffrey's text. For an edition, see John J. Parry, ed., *Brut y Brenhinedd* (Cambridge: Medieval Academy of America, 1937).

⁴⁹⁸ *Fouke*, 7.9. The term 'galeys' [Welsh] is only used once in the text, in reference to the origin of an army. *Fouke*, 19.24. For further discussion of the presentations of Welsh characters in *Fouke*, see Lieberman, 'The English and the Welsh', 1–11.

⁴⁹⁹ *Fouke*, 4.21, 4.23. 'Chastiel Bran' is probably a corruption of Castell Dinas Brân, twelve miles from Oswestry in Flintshire. I have translated it accordingly. For a full discussion of Castell Dinas Brân, see Loomis, *Wales*, 42–49.

⁵⁰⁰ *Fouke*, 4.23–24.

land. The Briton's story makes his own presence more mysterious; he claims that no one dares to enter the Marches, and yet he roams the wasteland. His appearance is neither questioned nor explained, and his story is given full credence, confirmed by the words spoken by the devil inhabiting Geomagog, who relates the same story 'de mot en autre' [word for word].⁵⁰¹ The Briton and the devil both speak from the collective memory of the land. One could even go so far as to suggest that the Briton does not merely speak for the land, but *is* the land; he is an embodiment of Britain itself. Indeed, he is the only figure in Britain to be described solely by an ethnonym, and it is striking that this should be 'Bretoun' rather than 'Galeis', drawing a direct verbal connection between the Briton and Britain. He welcomes the Normans into the narrative, inviting them to take part in a history that has been dynamic for centuries and calling upon them to reconcile the present with the past. By defeating the devil, Payn does not erase the history of the Marches but establishes himself within it, engaging with the Welsh past rather than nullifying it. Instead of dismissing the story, William 's'enmervyla mout' [marvelled much] and Payn is so inspired that he feels compelled to participate in the events in a way that both legitimises the Anglo-Norman presence in the Marches and complements the Britons' past.⁵⁰²

Payn Peverel's exorcism of Geomagog has a dual function: it legitimises the presence of the Anglo-Normans in the March and acts as a regional foundation myth. Hannah Arendt argues that all chronological, historical narratives present an originary moment that serves to legitimate the narrative and support the contemporary political

⁵⁰¹ *Fouke*, 5.31. Although the attribution of this story to the devil may question rather than confirm the Briton's account, the rest of the devil's words are given credibility. His prophecy is fulfilled and later reiterated by Merlin. Since this prophecy was written *ex eventu*, it can be assumed that it was a decision on the part of the author to make it accurate. Therefore, the story about the past is also supposedly "true". See Lesley Coote, 'Prophecy, Genealogy, and History in Medieval English Political Discourse', in *Broken Lines: Genealogical Literature in Late-Medieval Britain and France*, ed. Raluca Radulescu and Edward Donald Kennedy (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), 27–44, at 38.

⁵⁰² *Fouke*, 5.5.

hierarchy.⁵⁰³ As such, this episode sets the tone, both socially and politically, for the remainder of the narrative. In the *Historia*, the giants are symbolic of the pre-British inhabitants of the island, and so Corineus's victory over Gogmagog paves the way for colonisation.⁵⁰⁴ Michael Faletra argues: 'Geoffrey's incapacity in the end to imagine any land as primevally empty reveals the utopian impossibility of any kind of foundation or settlement without the concomitant displacement or domination of another, previous group.'⁵⁰⁵ *Fouke* complicates this idea, however, because Geomagog is clearly not representative of the Welsh. The Briton who guides the Normans through the wasteland remarks the March is uninhabited due to Geomagog's presence, indicating that the 'indigenous' Welsh are absent from the episode.⁵⁰⁶ In re-enacting the battle between Corineus and the giant, Payn allows for the Anglo-Norman colonisation of the March without expelling the Welsh; he clears the land so that the Welsh, as well as the Anglo-Normans, can settle there.

Like the *Historia*, *Fouke* has been accused of enacting a process of displacement—not of a people, but of a myth. It has been suggested that by reviving Geomagog, the initial process of colonisation and civilisation can be read as incomplete, and *Fouke*'s Anglo-Normans are given space to replace the Britons' foundation myth with their own story of triumph and conquest.⁵⁰⁷ However, *Fouke* reads as more nuanced than this theory suggests, primarily because in the text's account it is clear that Corineus was successful in his task of killing the giant, stating 'si fust Geomagog neyé' [so

⁵⁰³ Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977), 120–23.

⁵⁰⁴ *Historia*, 72. For discussions on the symbolic association between giants and indigenous peoples, see Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, 'Monster Culture (Seven Theses)', in *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 3–25, especially 7, and Victor I. Scherb, 'Assimilating Giants: The Appropriation of Gog and Magog in Medieval and Early Modern England', *JMEMS* 32 (2002): 60–84, at 66.

⁵⁰⁵ Michael Faletra, 'Narrating the Matter of Britain: Geoffrey of Monmouth and the Norman Colonization of Wales', *The Chaucer Review* 35 (2000): 59–85, at 71.

⁵⁰⁶ *Fouke*, 4.23, 4.24.

⁵⁰⁷ See Timothy Jones, 'Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*, and National Mythology', *Studies in Philology* 91 (1994): 233–49, at 237–9.

Geomagog was drowned].⁵⁰⁸ Thus, Payn's battle is not with Geomagog himself, but rather with the devil or demon that inhabits him: he is 'le malfee en *semblance* Geomagog' [the demon with the *appearance* of Geomagog].⁵⁰⁹ These two battles appear similar but are fundamentally very different.⁵¹⁰ Payn's task is not to kill Geomagog, but to exorcise him so that his re-animated corpse can be deprived of the evil spirit that sustains it. The Anglo-Norman foundation myth of the Marches does not displace the Trojan founding of Britain or exclude the Welsh; instead it legitimises the settlement of both peoples by confirming Corineus's victory over Geomagog and depicting the Anglo-Norman triumph over the devil. The parallels between Corineus's and Payn's battles show the Anglo-Normans as the natural successors of the Britons, and *Fouke* engages with and extends, rather than replaces, the Britons' myth. As such, the text establishes Anglo-Norman dominance over the March, but also validates the presence of the Welsh.

This foundation myth serves to vindicate the Anglo-Norman settlement of the March but it also has wider implications for *Fouke*. Its introduction of supernatural elements into a section of the text that largely engages with historical discourse creates a mythological space that encompasses all of Britain. Merlin's prophecy at the end of the narrative states: 'En Bretagne le Graunde / Un lou vendra de la Blaunche Launde' [In Britain the Great a wolf will come from the White Land].⁵¹¹ The placement of the 'Blaunche Launde' within 'Bretaigne', rather than England, suggests that *Fouke*'s story and the land it describes have pan-Brittonic relevance, rather than simply regional

⁵⁰⁸ *Fouke*, 3.36.

⁵⁰⁹ *Fouke*, 5.19. My emphasis.

⁵¹⁰ This substitution of a devil for a giant may be a result of a Welsh influence on the text. Chris Grooms writes that in Welsh literature, the symbolism shifts 'in areas where indigenous lore has made way for a more Christianized portrayal of giants. In these tales, the Devil has replaced a giant as a local oppressor'. See Chris Grooms, *The Giants of Wales = Cewri Cymru* (Lewiston: E Mellen Press, 1993), 163.

⁵¹¹ *Fouke*, 60.1–2.

interest.⁵¹² Furthermore, this verse section makes a connection between Whittington and the Grail Castle:

en le temps le roy Arthur
 La Blaunche Launde fust appelee
 Qe ore est Blauncheville nomee;
 Quar en cel pays fust la chapele
 De Seint Austyn, que fust bele,
 Ou Kahuz le fitz Yweyn sounga
 Qu'il le chaundelabre embla
 ... Issi nous counte le Graal,
 Le lyvre de le seint vassal⁵¹³

[in the time of King Arthur, it was called the White Land, that which is now named Whittington; indeed in that land was the chapel of Saint Augustine, which was beautiful, where Cahus the son of Ywain dreamt that he stole the candelabra. ... This is told to us by the Graal, the book of the holy vessel].

Perlesvaus, also known as *Li hauz livres du Graal*, recounts the same tale of Cahus and claims that the Grail is kept in the chapel of Saint Augustine, in the White Forest in Wales.⁵¹⁴ *Fouke* opportunistically seizes this detail, drawing a connection between La Blaunche Launde and the White Forest. This connection is supported by Geomagog's statement that Saint Augustine converted all the pagans in Britain and he 'fist une chapele en son noun' [made a chapel in his name], where the giants kept their treasure.⁵¹⁵ Because the Grail is held within the chapel in the White Land, the discovery of which is bound up with ideas of chivalry and restored honour, *Fouke* uses *Perlesvaus* to augment the importance of Whittington, suggesting that it is not just another town, but a place of great spiritual, social, and mythological importance. The similarity in detail between these two texts suggests that either the *Fouke* author was familiar with *Perlesvaus* or one

⁵¹² The 'White Land' is located in various places throughout Arthurian legend. The Blanche Land or Blankenland is located in Brittany in Thomas's *Tristan* and in Cornwall in Beroul's *Tristan*. In the *Vulgate Lancelot*, Lancelot's grandfather rules 'la Blanche Terre qui marchist au reaume de la Terre Foreinne' [the White Land that borders on the kingdom of the Foreign Country]. Alexandre Micha, ed., *Lancelot: roman en prose du XIIIe siècle* (Geneva: Droz, 1978–83), 5:114–15. See *The Arthurian Name Dictionary*, ed. Christopher W. Bruce (New York and London: Garland, 1999), 495.

⁵¹³ *Fouke*, 60.12–30.

⁵¹⁴ Nigel Bryant, trans., *The High Book of the Grail: A Translation of the Thirteenth Century Romance of Perlesvaus*, revised ed. (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2007), 3–4. Hereafter referred to as *Perlesvaus*.

⁵¹⁵ *Fouke*, 6.13–14.

of its incarnations, or that they share a common source.⁵¹⁶ The former is more likely since a thirteenth-century manuscript of *Perlesvaus*, now Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Hatton 82, was owned by Brian fitz Alan, who was based in the Welsh Marches, possibly Oswestry, in the 1280s, even though his family's lands were in Yorkshire.⁵¹⁷ It is perhaps relevant that there is a faint cross in the right margin next to the manuscript section which introduces Cahus, 'Cahus auere non. 7 estoie filz Yuain la uotre'.⁵¹⁸ It is possible that a reader used it as a place marker to highlight an important passage in the text. The relevance of this verse section and its connection with *Perlesvaus* locates the Grail story in Whittington, making it a site of Arthurian significance.

The Geomagog episode also links Whittington with the Grail Castle through the Welsh literary tradition. It is generally accepted that 'Chastiel Bran' is, or refers to, Castell Dinas Brân, which was rebuilt before 1270 by Gruffudd ap Madog, but '[e]vidently in the middle of the thirteenth century [when the verse original was written] the hill-top was covered with the shattered walls of an older castle, of which we have no

⁵¹⁶ A further connection to *Perlesvaus* can be seen in the battle between Payn and Geomagog. Payn exorcises the giant by exposing him to the cross on his shield: 'vous m'avez vencu ne mie par force de vous meismes, eynz avez par vertue de la croys qe vous portez' [you have not defeated me by your own power, you have done it by virtue of the cross that you bear]. Roger Sherman Loomis suggests that this resembles the battle between Perlesvaus and the Knight of the Dragon since the hero is saved by his shield, which has Christ's blood sealed within it. This is consistent with Timothy Jones's suggestion that Geomagog's appearance is closer to that of a dragon than a giant. There is little evidence for this in the text, however, and a closer textual parallel can be found towards the end of *Perlesvaus*, when the demon knights in the Mad Castle are driven wild by the sight of the cross on Perlesvaus's shield, eventually destroying one another. Instead of defeating the knights through his strength, the mere presence of the cross brings about their destruction. Like the best knights of Arthurian romances, Payn becomes a channel for God's power, allowing him to simultaneously capture a castle and purge the land of evil, both with the blessing of the divine. *Fouke*, 5.27–9; *Perlesvaus*, 244; Loomis, *Wales*, 44; Jones, 'Geoffrey of Monmouth', 239.

⁵¹⁷ See Ceridwen Lloyd-Morgan, 'From Ynys Wydrin to Glasynbri: Glastonbury in Welsh Vernacular Tradition', in *Glastonbury Abbey in Arthurian Tradition*, ed. James P. Carley (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2001), 161–77, at 172. For the reception of Old French texts in Wales, see Ceridwen Lloyd-Morgan, 'Crossing the Borders: Literary Borrowing in Medieval Wales and England', in *Authority and Subjugation in Writing in Medieval Wales*, ed. Ruth Kennedy and Simon Meecham-Jones (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 159–173, and her doctoral thesis, 'A Study of *Y Seint Greal* in relation to *La Queste del Saint Graal* and *Perlesvaus*' (Doctoral thesis, St. Anne's College, University of Oxford, 1978).

⁵¹⁸ Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Hatton 82, f.5^v, column 2, ll.32–33. There are several crosses in the initial sections of this manuscript, although none of them appear to be in the same hand as this one.

historic record'.⁵¹⁹ *Fouke*'s 'Castle Bran' is said to have been owned by King Bran fitz Donwal, who was linked to Brennius from Geoffrey's *Historia*.⁵²⁰ Dinas Brân, however, refers to the legendary Welsh king Brân the Blessed, or Bendigeidfran,⁵²¹ the mythical proprietor of a magical cauldron discussed in the second Branch of the *Mabinogi*.⁵²² Most scholars of Arthurian literature agree that Brân was the Celtic prototype for Bron, the Fisher King, who appears in Robert de Boron's *Roman de l'estoire du Graal* and is the keeper of the Grail.⁵²³ The conflation of Brân and Bran either displays a lack of detailed knowledge about either character, or attempts to connect the *Historia*'s 'historical' character with the Brân of Welsh mythology, lending credence to the legends and solidifying's Whittington's association with the Grail Castle. The connection may also have been transmitted through the Vulgate cycle, particularly the *Prose Lancelot*, where the castle of King Brangoire is named the 'chastel de la Marche' [the castle of the March], a further connection to *Fouke*'s castle, which is sometimes named 'Le Vele Marche' [the Old March].⁵²⁴ Loomis remarks that Brangoire may be a corruption of the Welsh Brân Gawr, or Brân the Giant, further emphasising the relationship between the Welsh character and that of Arthurian legend, while linking Dinas Brân, or La Vele Marche/Whittington, to the Grail Castle.⁵²⁵ These connections to both Welsh and francophone Arthurian literature place the Marches, and particularly Whittington, at the

⁵¹⁹ Loomis, *Wales*, 42.

⁵²⁰ *Fouke*, 5.1.

⁵²¹ Although Brân the Blessed is the son of Llyr, not Donwal, his identity is linked to Castell Dinas Brân. 'Alternatively, it has been suggested that this place-name itself have given rise to the creation of the character of *Brân*, which subsequently drew to itself mythological traditions which were originally connected with other figures'. Rachel Bromwich, ed., *Trioedd Ynys Prydein: The Triads of the Isle of Britain*, 3rd ed. (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2006), 292.

⁵²² See Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones, trans., *The Mabinogion* (London: Everyman, 1989), 29; Juliette Wood, 'Notes and Comments: Bran and the Fisher King', *Folklore* 101 (1990): 121–22.

⁵²³ *Trioedd*, 292. Like the Fisher King, Brân suffers from a wound to the thigh and his head brings prosperity and abundance to those who carry it.

⁵²⁴ *Lancelot*, 2:176; *Fouke*, 4.24.

⁵²⁵ Loomis, *Wales*, 48.

centre of a pan-British tradition, and link England and Wales through their common mythology.

Fouke is part of a tradition that incorporates both English and Welsh texts and conventions, and cites a myth that harkens back to a time when Britain was whole. By constructing Whittington as the home of the Grail, the text directs the audience's attention away from the political and territorial conflict at the centre of the text, and weaves the story into a much larger fabric of transnational mythology. It is appropriate that the Grail Castle should be tucked away in the interstices between countries and traditions, belonging to both Wales and England, and, at the same time, to neither. By claiming the legend, the Marchers reorient the story, moving the Marches to the centre of the Arthurian landscape. This may have been merely a local attempt to heighten the importance of the Marches and its inhabitants, but it highlights the idea that the legend is flexible enough to be appropriated, thus lending an air of authority to the text and a powerful mythological significance to the place.

A Shared Society

Further to *Fouke*'s inclusive mythology, the text also ties together the English and Welsh gentries through a depiction of their common interests, shared characteristics, and similar backgrounds. In doing so, the text creates an aristocratic society that supersedes the ethnic differences between the two peoples and bypasses territorial boundaries when the need arises.⁵²⁶ Not all of the Marcher lords in *Fouke* are Anglo-Norman: the first lord of the Fitz Alan lordship in Oswestry, Maredudd ap Bleddyn, is identified as a 'Bretoun'.⁵²⁷

⁵²⁶ See Fulton, 'Class and Nation', 194.

⁵²⁷ Lisa Lampert-Weissig, *Medieval Literature and Postcolonial Studies* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 44; *Fouke*, 7.9; Lieberman, 'The English and the Welsh', 4.

This mixed society meant that political relationships spanned cultural divides.⁵²⁸ As Helen Fulton argues, social identity in fourteenth-century Wales must have been contingent on a combination of factors, including language, culture, class, and legal status, rather than simply one's origins or descent.⁵²⁹ It is this view of identity that is reflected in *Fouke*, where indications of ethnicity are almost entirely silenced when describing events that take place in the thirteenth-century Marches.⁵³⁰ Alliances within *Fouke* are based on common interests and mutual profit, regardless of ethnicity, and the text lauds those who are honourable and uphold their responsibilities towards their subjects.

The primary figure through which the text demonstrates this attitude is Llywelyn ap Iorwerth, who is portrayed as a noble, chivalrous individual. He refuses to break his promise to protect Fouke, despite Fouke's admission that he has killed Meurig, Llywelyn's kinsman, and does not capitulate to King John's demands when he insists on Fouke's return to England. Indeed, Llywelyn stands in direct contrast to King John, who is

home santz conscience, mavois, contrarious e hay de tote bone gent e lecherous, e, s'yl poeit oyr de nulle bele dame ou damoisele, femme ou fyle de counte ou de baron e d'autre, yl la voleyt a sa volenté aver, ou par promesse ou par don engyner, ou par force ravyr, e pur ce fust le plus hay

[a man without a conscience, wicked, quarrelsome, and loathed by all good people, and lecherous, and, if he was able to hear of any fair lady or maiden, the wife or daughter of a count or baron or other, he would desire to have her at his will, or deceive her by a promise or by a gift, or ravish her with force, and for this he was hated all the more].⁵³¹

⁵²⁸ See Roberts, 'Wales and England', 377. It is worth noting that John Leland's sixteenth-century summary of the Middle English version of the text draws more distinctions between the Welsh and the English. He highlights that 'Guarine warrid apun the Walsch men, and they on hym', and suggests that it was not Llywelyn, but Joan, Llywelyn's Anglo-Norman wife, who welcomes Fouke to Llywelyn's court. This creates a greater degree of ethnic hostility between the two peoples. This may be due to the language of the text, clearly intended for an English audience and therefore more vehement in its pro-English sentiments. See Leland, *De rebus Britannicis collectanea*, 1:231–35.

⁵²⁹ Fulton, 'Class and Nation', 194.

⁵³⁰ Lieberman, 'The English and the Welsh', 5.

⁵³¹ *Fouke*, 35.34–36.1.

Although his anger with Gwenwynwyn ap Owain Cyfeiliog causes Llywelyn to threaten to ‘destrure totes ces terres’ [destroy all his lands], he heeds Fouke’s sage council that ‘vous ne savez quant vous aurez mester a vos barouns’ [you do not know when you will have need for your barons].⁵³² Llywelyn’s respect towards and appreciation for his barons and their political function, contrasting with John’s complete disregard for them or their families, suggests that *Fouke*’s baronial audience might be encouraged to sympathise with the Welsh prince and acknowledge his noble conduct. The text’s distinct lack of loyalty towards the English Crown not only represents the unique situation of the Marches as a space that is simultaneously within and without England, but it also draws together Fouke and Llywelyn as individuals who share common values in the face of injustice.

This depiction of Llywelyn suggests that the text does not perceive any inherent differences between the Anglo-Norman lords and the Welsh princes and barons. However, this elision of difference may be due to a common class identity. The text links Llywelyn to both Fouke and the Angevin kings by marriage, creating a familial network that spans England, Wales, and the Marches. First he marries Joan, whom the text wrongly identifies as Henry II’s daughter (she was actually King John’s).⁵³³ Later,

Quant dame Johane, la femme Lowis, le prince de Walys, que fust la file le roy Henri de Engleterre, fust devyee, pur le grant renoun de prowess e de bounté que sire Fouke aveit, yl maunda a ly pur Eve, sa file, e il la graunta, e a grant honour e solempneté furent esposee

[When lady Joan, the wife of Llywelyn, the prince of Wales, who was the daughter of King Henry of England, was dead, for the great renown of prowess and bounty that Sir Fouke had, (Llywelyn) sent to him for Eve, his daughter, and (Fouke) granted her, and with great honour and solemnity they were married].⁵³⁴

⁵³² *Fouke*, 34.22.

⁵³³ See Lloyd-Morgan, ‘Crossing the Borders’, 162.

⁵³⁴ *Fouke*, 59.16–20. There is no historical record of this marriage in Welsh chronicles, but Stephenson points out that the rest of the details concerning Joan’s death, Llywelyn’s death, and the place of his burial, are accurate. See ‘Fouke le Fitz Waryn’, 27.

Llywelyn's marriage to Joan is symbolic of the territorial deal struck between Henry II and Iorwerth Drwyndwn, suggesting a measure of equality between the two men and acknowledging Llywelyn's noble lineage.⁵³⁵ The relationship between Fouke and Llywelyn through Eve is depicted as a marker of both men's honour, but in turn it also suggests that the two men are equals: Fouke may be a baron, but he is portrayed as having the status of a prince or king. This class identity is also accentuated through Fouke's upbringing in Henry II's court. The text states that Fouke was raised with 'les .iiii. fitz Henri le roi e mout amé de tous, estre de Johan' [the four sons of Henry the king, and was much beloved by all, except John].⁵³⁶ According to the text, Llywelyn was brought up in the same court: 'le prince e sire Fouke e ces freres furent norys ensemble en la court le roy Henri' [the prince and Sir Fouke and his brothers were brought up together in the court of King Henry].⁵³⁷ *Fouke's* accentuation of this common, courtly identity, in which not only members of different royal families were married to one another, but also raised together in spite of political differences, suggests that class identity transcends ethnicity or national identity. By placing Llywelyn in the same family as King John and Fouke, through both marriage and upbringing, the text articulates a tie between England and Wales, and also creates a symbolic microcosm of southern Britain at Henry II's court.⁵³⁸ It brings together the future King of England, the future Prince of Wales, and Fouke (whom the text depicts as the rightful lord of the Marches by the decree of King Richard) under the authority of Henry II, thus accentuating the unity of

⁵³⁵ Although Iorwerth Drwyndwn was the son of Owain Gwynedd, he was never a ruler in Gwynedd. For the possible misidentification of Iorwerth Goch as Iorwerth Drwyndwn, see Stephenson, 'Fouke le Fitz Waryn', 27.

⁵³⁶ *Fouke*, 22.30–31.

⁵³⁷ *Fouke*, 33.27–30.

⁵³⁸ It is also possible that Llywelyn is only seen as a chivalric individual because he was raised under the influence of the English.

the three geographical entities with which the text is primarily preoccupied.⁵³⁹ The text asserts a familial relationship between England, Wales, and the Marches, while implicitly claiming English dominance over the other territories.

This sense of affinity or sympathy for Welsh characters is not limited to Llywelyn, however. Characters that are explicitly depicted as Welsh are neither demonised nor vilified for their ethnic identities. Language, legal status, customs, and culture are some of the arbiters of identity. As Helen Fulton argues, ‘we have to move closer toward the post-structuralist view that identity, whether national, social, or personal, is a constant process of construction through discursive and cultural practices’.⁵⁴⁰ However, it is noteworthy that regardless of the constructed nature of these ethnic categories or an individual’s self-definition, ethnic identity is also a category that can be contested or imposed upon an individual or a group by others.⁵⁴¹ Ethnic differences between the Welsh and the English carried a great deal of meaning in the eleventh and twelfth centuries; John of Salisbury’s *Policraticus* claims that Harold Godwinson declared that any Welshman east of Offa’s Dyke who carried a weapon would lose his hand. The Welsh account of the life of St. Beuno similarly documents the belief that there was a holy tree, planted by St. Beuno, which had a branch that grew into the ground. If an Englishman walked between this branch and the tree’s trunk, he would die instantly, while a Welshman would not.⁵⁴² Exactly what defines these ethnic differences is not explained, although the story of St. Bueno implies that language may

⁵³⁹ *Fouke*, 23.24–25 states that King Richard ‘comanda tote la marche a la garde sire Fouke’ [commanded the whole march to the guardianship of Sir Fouke].

⁵⁴⁰ Fulton, ‘Class and Nation’, 194.

⁵⁴¹ See Bartlett, ‘Race and Ethnicity’, 40.

⁵⁴² John of Salisbury, *Policraticus: Of the Frivolities of Courtiers and the Footprints of Philosophers*, ed. and trans. Cary J. Nederman (Cambridge: CUP, 1990), VI.6; A. W. Wade-Evans and Scott Lloyd, eds., *Vitae Sanctorum Britanniae et Genealogiae*, new ed. (Cardiff: Welsh Academic Press, 2013), 17, 338. See also Davies, ‘Identities’, 16.

play a role in distinguishing the two peoples.⁵⁴³ In the twelfth century, Orderic Vitalis and William of Malmesbury seemed eager to paint their western neighbours in a barbarous light, implicitly constructing a group against which the English could forge their own national identity.⁵⁴⁴ However, *Fouke*, originally written a century later, depicts Welsh characters as civilised and chivalrous individuals who take active roles in the narrative. Instead of depicting those who identified as Welsh as an Other, members of the Welsh gentry are mentioned in the text as noble lords who are, at times, more honourable and just than their Anglo-Norman counterparts, as seen in the contrast between Llywelyn and John. Although the attitude of English settlers in colonial Wales was one of tolerant contempt, where ‘Englishmen were Englishmen; Welsh were Welshmen, *meri Wallici*’, this is never reflected in *Fouke*, despite the fact that the prose version was written after the English colonisation of Wales.⁵⁴⁵ When describing the events that take place within living memory, Max Lieberman notes, indications of nationality or ethnicity are almost entirely silenced.⁵⁴⁶ The identities of characters are never discussed, and their descent can only be inferred from names, such as ‘Morys de Powys’. However, this dynamic changes when *Fouke* arrives in France and ethnic epithets begin to emerge. Druz de Montbener, ‘un molt orgoilous Franceys’ [a very proud Frenchman], challenges *Fouke*, who is labelled ‘[un] chevaler englys’ [an English

⁵⁴³ Upon hearing an Englishmen on the other side of the Severn, Beuno calls to his disciples and states ‘Kenedyl y gwy angkyuyeith a gogleu vi y le[f] tu draw yr auon yn annoc y gwn a oresgynnant y lle hwnn ac a vyd eidunt, ac ae kynnhalyant dan eu maddyant’ [‘The nation of the man of strange speech, whose cry I heard the other side of the river inciting his dogs, will overcome this place, and it will be theirs, and they will keep it in their possession’]. *Vitae Sanctorum*, 17 and 338.

⁵⁴⁴ Orderic Vitalis writes: ‘Illi nimirum Angliam crudeliter inuaserunt, finitimosque populos bello impetierunt, et beluino more barbariem suam in eis exercuerunt. Nulli enim parcebant, sed iuuenes et senes pariter interficiebant, mulieres quoque pregnantes seu ense dissectis uisceribus enecabant’ [‘These men invaded England with the utmost brutality, made war on the peoples of the borders, and gave full rein to their barbarity, treating them with bestial cruelty. They spared no one, killing young and old alike, and even butchering pregnant women by savagely disembowelling them with their swords’]. *EHOV*, 6:XIII.v.111.

⁵⁴⁵ R. R. Davies, ‘Colonial Wales’, *Past and Present* 65 (1974): 3–23, at 13.

⁵⁴⁶ Lieberman, ‘The English and the Welsh’, 5.

knight].⁵⁴⁷ Lieberman points out that this Anglo-French tension ‘proves that [Fouke] and his brothers and companions were considered to be English, a point that cannot be completely taken for granted’.⁵⁴⁸ This is not surprising since the two centuries of contact between the English and Welsh prior to the Edwardian conquest yielded ‘extensive intermarriage, creating a complex, hybrid Cambro-Norman culture’.⁵⁴⁹ The Welsh-identified characters in the text are not the uncivilised barbarians depicted by William of Malmesbury, the bloodthirsty warriors of Orderic Vitalis, or the sexual deviants of Gerald of Wales’s *Descriptio Kambriæ*, but individuals evaluated by their adherence to honourable and noble behaviours.⁵⁵⁰ Instead of ethnicity, *Fouke* characterises individuals based on their actions and ethics. This signals that the Marches were a space of cultural intermixing where categorical definitions based on national belonging prove difficult to sustain.

The text frequently obscures the differences between characters who are ethnically Welsh and those who are Anglo-Norman or English. *Fouke*’s own adoption of aspects of Welsh culture, especially their military style, remains an important aspect of the text and provides a nexus between the English and the Welsh.⁵⁵¹ In his *Descriptio Kambriæ*, Gerald of Wales remarks that their geographical placement makes the Marchers the ideal social and military link between England and Wales. He suggests that while most of the Marchers are Anglo-Norman, their frequent contact with the Welsh means that they ‘mores gentis et modos agnoscunt’ [‘know the manners and habits of the local people’].⁵⁵² Furthermore, they are in a better position to conquer Wales because

⁵⁴⁷ *Fouke*, 40.10–11, 40.34.

⁵⁴⁸ Lieberman, ‘The English and the Welsh’, 5.

⁵⁴⁹ Lampert-Weissig, *Medieval Literature*, 44.

⁵⁵⁰ Gerald of Wales, *Opera*, 6:213–18.

⁵⁵¹ See Lieberman, ‘The English and the Welsh’, 1–11.

⁵⁵² Gerald of Wales, *Opera*, 6:219; Gerald of Wales, *The Journey Through Wales and The Description of Wales*, trans. by Lewis Thorpe (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978), 268. Lucian makes a similar observation, stating that the inhabitants of Chester are like the Welsh: ‘per longam transfusionem morum, maxima parte

their manner of fighting has adapted to the rugged Welsh landscape; unlike the heavily armed soldiers and cavalry used by the English, the Marchers are accustomed to fighting on rough ground and in forests, unburdened by armour.⁵⁵³ Rees Davies confirms this claim, arguing that English attempts to push further into Wales were thwarted by the mountainous terrain that made communication difficult and ‘[a]cute observers soon noted that French warfare (*Gallica militia*), with its emphasis on heavily armoured cavalry, was ill-suited to Welsh conditions.’ The Welsh customarily used the landscape to their advantage, and attacked using ‘guerrilla warfare in a mountainous, forested, and marshy country’.⁵⁵⁴ Instead of using the *Gallica militia* of his compatriots, Fouke mimics Welsh fighting techniques in his skirmishes against King John and his men. He captures John by leaping out of a thicket in the middle of the forest, and ambushes his men as they travel through the woods.⁵⁵⁵ He protects himself with just a habergeon, which is so discreet that he is able to use it ‘privément’ [secretly].⁵⁵⁶ His light armour and stealthy manner of fighting show that he takes advantage of his environment rather than considering it an impediment. While the historic Marchers would often have fought against Welsh opponents, they would have inevitably adopted their adversaries’ military tactics, realising that guerrilla warfare and the use of light infantry were more effective for pushing further into Wales than armed cavalry. While *Fouke*’s protagonist displays little interest in the conquest of Welsh territory, the text depicts him adopting the aspects of

consimiles’ [‘through the long exchange of customs, they are to a large extent similar’]. See Lucian, *Extracts From the MS. Liber Luciani: De Laude Cestrie, Written About the Year 1195 and Now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford*, ed. M. V. Taylor (Edinburgh and London: Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 1912), 65. Translated in Clarke, *Literary Landscapes*, 131.

⁵⁵³ John of Salisbury also draws attention to the inefficiency of heavy armour in the fight against the Welsh, and states that Harold’s men fought the Britons in light armour of hardened hides and light shields. See his *Policraticus*, vi.6.

⁵⁵⁴ R. R. Davies, *The Age of Conquest: Wales, 1063–1415* (Oxford: OUP, 2000), 92.

⁵⁵⁵ *Fouke*, 49.35.

⁵⁵⁶ *Fouke*, 44.33.

Welsh culture that give him an advantage in his fight against the King and in his pursuit to reclaim his patrimony.

This conjunction of Welsh and English culture is also reflected in the customs and legal elements depicted in the text.⁵⁵⁷ These create a strong sense of regional identity. One example of this comes in the form of the ‘jour[s] d’amour’ [love days], which were a legal prerogative of Marcher lords and were an opportunity for two opposing parties to come together and make peace; when ‘furent totes grevances redressez, e les parties acordeez, e devant les grantz seignours furent entrebaysez’ [all grievances were redressed, and the parties were in agreement, and in front of all the great lords they embraced one another].⁵⁵⁸ These love days are depicted twice in the text, and occur first between Henry II and Iorwerth Drwyndwn, who resolve land disputes in the Marches, and then between Sir Joce de Dynan and Walter de Lacy, who make peace after a bloody war. Not only do these acts of peacemaking and reconciliation construct the borderlands as a space that connects two territories rather than divides them, but through the description of a legal right granted to Marcher lords, the text positions itself firmly in the Marches and accentuates the idiosyncrasies of the region.

This legal exceptionality can also be brought to bear on the central dispute within the text: the claim to Whittington. Although the text clearly favours Fouke’s entitlement, especially given his descent from Payn Peverel, whose claim to La Blaunche Launde is said to be divinely sanctioned, the legality of Fouke’s claim is questionable. Hanna notes that ‘King John’s decision to award Whittington to Fulk FitzWarin’s rival claimant in 1201 may not have been at all misbegotten (but for the small problem of

⁵⁵⁷ Customs, or *consuetudines*, were often considered one of the four cardinal points of difference between ethnic groups, along with *natio* [nation], *lingua* [language], and *leges* [laws]. See Bartlett, ‘Race and Ethnicity’, 52.

⁵⁵⁸ *Fouke*, 14.8–10. Davies, ‘The Law of the March’, 2.

royal interference in local affairs of the March)'.⁵⁵⁹ As Hanna suggests, the text selectively chooses which historical details to present in order to justify the Fitz Warins' claim to Whittington.⁵⁶⁰ There may, however, be another explanation for Fouke's insistence that Whittington is rightfully his: 'at least one point of the presentation is to identify Fulk's claim to Whittington as not simply in accord with Marcher practice, but fully accordant with the legal requirements that should be respected by those Welsh claimants with whom he is contesting his title'.⁵⁶¹ In Welsh law, an individual was only legally entitled to inherit land if it had been held within a family for four generations.⁵⁶² Meurig does not fulfil this criterion: he receives the land from his father, who received it from Iorwerth Drwyndwn; his title to the land is never fully established in Welsh law. Fouke, on the other hand, had held Whittington for five generations, legitimising his claim to the land.⁵⁶³ Whether or not this claim was argued in this way historically is another matter; as Hanna notes, William Peverel's lordship in the area was disrupted when he supported Stephen during the Anarchy, and again in the 1140s when Madog ap Maredudd conquered Oswestry. His sons remained in power there after Madog left the area upon Henry II's accession to the English throne, but the Fitz Warins had some political presence there in the late twelfth century. As a result, the historical record 'may actually have offered resistance to a deserving young man's claims to a possibly lucrative lordship, and *Fouke* may be engaged in constructing an equally historical (which is not to say factually accurate) statement of a family case for antiquity and nobility'.⁵⁶⁴ If *Fouke*

⁵⁵⁹ Hanna, 'Matter of Fulk', 343.

⁵⁶⁰ Hanna, 'Matter of Fulk', 343–44.

⁵⁶¹ Hanna, 'Matter of Fulk', 342.

⁵⁶² See Davies, *Age of Conquest*, 58.

⁵⁶³ Payn Peverel gives the land to his son William, whose daughter marries Warin de Metz during the reign of Henry I. Whittington is then bequeathed to Fouke fitz Waryn I, and then to Fouke le Brun, his son and father of Fouke fitz Waryn III (the protagonist).

⁵⁶⁴ Hanna, 'Matter of Fulk', 343–44.

is engaged in this process, it is because it recognises the legitimacy of a Welsh custom in the region.

Beating the Bounds: A Borderless Britain

Just as the text brings together Welsh and Anglo-Norman peoples and customs, *Fouke* frequently blurs divisions between England and Wales, figuring the island of Britain as a single geopolitical unit. This is particularly achieved through its presentation of spatial and temporal dynamics. Geomagog's prophecy states:

Ly loup lerra boys e montz
En ewe meindra ou peschons
E tresnoera la mer;
Environera cet ydle enter.⁵⁶⁵

[The wolf shall leave the woods and mountains (and) stay in the water with the fish, and traverse the sea; he shall encircle this whole island].

These lines suggest that the boundary between places will be defined by Fouke's circumnavigation of Britain, bringing the various discrete fragments of the island together. By prioritising *topos* over *ethos*, the text imagines a unified Britain. Ever a lord of borders, Fouke's new stronghold moves from the woods and mountains, typical topographical boundary markers, to the water; he protects Britain from external powers rather than from rival powers within. The sea functions as a division between Britain and the rest of the world. Furthermore, while Fouke easily moves between Wales and England, his journey to the continent adopts a different mode, moving from a realm of history and folklore to a space of fully-fledged romance. In *Fouke*, Britain is not only geographically cohesive, but also generically coherent.⁵⁶⁶

⁵⁶⁵ *Fouke*, 6.29–33.

⁵⁶⁶ For discussions of *Fouke*'s genre and its relationship with geography, see Roger Pensom, 'Inside and Outside: Fact and Fiction in *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*', *Medium Aevum* 63 (1994): 53–60.

One might link this circumnavigation of Britain to the ritual of beating the bounds, described in the introduction to this thesis.⁵⁶⁷ By encircling the island, Fouke enacts a ritual of boundary definition that had been present in Europe since Roman times.⁵⁶⁸ This ritual is also evocative of God's bestowal of land upon Abraham in Genesis 13:14–17:

And the Lord said to Abram, after Lot was separated from him: Lift up thy eyes, and look from the place wherein thou now art, to the north and to the south, to the east and to the west. All the land which thou seest, I will give to thee. ... Arise and walk through the land in length, and in the breadth thereof: for I will give it to thee.⁵⁶⁹

Augustine interprets this passage as an instruction to Abraham to walk through the Holy Land. By seeing it with his eyes, he could claim the land.⁵⁷⁰ As with these biblical pronouncements, Fouke's circumnavigation of Britain allows him to trace a boundary, to understand the limits of the political unit, and to unify it with his gaze.

Although no formal, linear border existed between England and Wales at the time that the narrative's events take place or when the fourteenth-century version was written, the Marches acted as a dividing zone between England and *pura Wallia* in the early thirteenth century. While some Marcher texts 'loudly [affirm] the value of the boundary', *Fouke* emphasises the permeability of this boundary zone by disregarding the imaginary divisions between the two territories.⁵⁷¹ The text reflects the idea that the border between England and Wales is merely semiotic and, as Fulton notes, the 'authority of [its] meaning rests solely upon a hegemonic consensus regarding the status

⁵⁶⁷ See above, 26–28.

⁵⁶⁸ See Tuan, *Space and Place*, 166.

⁵⁶⁹ Genesis 13:14–17 (Douay-Rheims).

⁵⁷⁰ Saint Augustine, 'Quaestiones in Genesim XXVIII', in *Sancti Aurelii Augustini Quaestionum in Heptateuchum libri VII*, ed. J. Fraipont (Turnhout: Brepols, 1958), 11–12.

⁵⁷¹ Hanna, 'Matter of Fulk', 349.

of the place on each side of the border'.⁵⁷² Because Fouke lives in the borderlands, the boundary between the two countries is invisible. As such, the divisions and differences between the two territories are erased, and the 'ydle enter' comes into view, undivided by political borders.

Fouke further nullifies the political differences between England and Wales by showing local boundaries to be porous. Borders and barriers usually divide 'us' from 'them'; as soon as the ontological distinctions between those two categories are dismissed, the symbolic line between the two becomes irrelevant. Barriers are shown to be ineffective for sustained periods of time within the narrative, symbolising the futility of borders in general. Castle walls, normally the epitome of impenetrability, are frequently infiltrated or destroyed. The ruined Castell Dinas Brân was 'close jadys de hautz murs' [once enclosed by high walls], foreshadowing the destruction of the walls at Dynan Castle in the siege that follows Walter de Lacy's seizure of Ludlow.⁵⁷³ Similarly, Sir Arnaud, one of Walter de Lacy's men, infiltrates Dynan by climbing over the wall with the help of his mistress, Marion, who works for Joce de Dynan; he is invited into the castle by someone who lives there. The physical boundary serves no purpose once distinctions between peoples are dismissed, a notion that is carried through the rest of the text: boundaries and barriers are penetrable by those who reject the distinctions between the groups they were created to separate.⁵⁷⁴

⁵⁷² Helen Fulton, 'The Outside Within: Medieval Chester and North Wales as a Social Space', in *Mapping the Medieval City: Space, Place, and Identity in Chester c.1200–1600*, ed. Catherine A. M. Clarke (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2011), 149–68, at 151.

⁵⁷³ *Fouke*, 4.18.

⁵⁷⁴ Edward Said notes that this sort of activity is common to exiles: 'The exile knows that in a secular and contingent world, homes are always provisional. Borders and barriers, which enclose us within the safety of familiar territory, can also become prisons, and are often defended beyond reason or necessity. Exiles cross borders, break barriers of thought and experience.' Edward Said, 'Reflections on Exile', in *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures*, ed. Russell Ferguson, Martha Gever, Trinh T. Minh-ha, and Cornel West (Cambridge, MA and New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art and The MIT Press, 1990), 357–66, at 365.

Similarly, the barrier that Fouke and Gwenwynwyn erect against King John's men at Le Gué Gymele is symbolic of the divisions between England and Wales in the early thirteenth century. Yet it, too, is unable to keep the two armies apart. Fouke's knowledge of the local landscape offers him an advantage against his opponents; he knows that John must take the high road at Le Gué Gymele to access Fouke's base in Wales.⁵⁷⁵ A ditch and a barricade of pales block John's route, and while this barrier successfully blocks the English from entering Wales, it does not force Fouke and the Welsh to remain on their side. Instead, they improvise by using 'un privé chemyn qu'il avoyent fet' [a secret road that they had made] through the wilderness, flanking John's forces and weakening their position.⁵⁷⁶ By creating this road, Fouke manipulates his environment to suit his needs, disregarding established norms and ignoring institutionalised divisions. The tactical use of this unofficial, alternative route escapes the gaze of the King, and the space is used in a transgressive manner that serves to undermine John's authority and control. Fouke, in the words of De Certeau, 'make[s] use of the cracks that particular conjunctions open in the surveillance of the proprietary powers'.⁵⁷⁷ Although King John is not the 'proprietor' of Le Gué Gymele, the barrier symbolically stands in for an imaginary linear boundary between the two territories. Fouke's disregard for the division typifies his daily movement between England and Wales. Unlike those who scale, penetrate, or destroy castle walls to erase the divisions between inside and outside, Fouke does not move through the barricade but tactically uses the space available to him by going around it, making a new path between the two sides and dismissing conventional divisions.

⁵⁷⁵ Glanville Price notes that this high road is literal; he locates Le Gué Gymele at Fford Gam Elen, a road that 'reaches its highest points at Bwlch Maen Gwynedd (2288 ft), on the Merioneth-Denbigshire border'. See 'Le Gué Gymele' in "Fouke Fitz Warin", *The Modern Language Review* 56, no. 2 (1961): 220–22.

⁵⁷⁶ *Fouke*, 35.18.

⁵⁷⁷ De Certeau, *Everyday Life*, 37.

This use of an improvised road is not unique to Fouke's battle at Le Gué Gymele; rather it characterises his unconventional way of travelling more generally. Roads are normally understood as a way from one place to another, connecting cities or towns. They can also be seen as a way through space, carving an unobstructed route through wilderness, towns, walls, or over rivers. By following a road into a forest, for instance, travellers assume that their route will carry them through to the other side; a topographical feature that would otherwise be a barrier becomes passable. Fouke, however, rarely uses roads. His place is in the forest or on the water, within the boundary itself. He and his men live in the woods because 'apertement n'oserent pur ly roy' [they did not dare (to live) in the open because of the king'].⁵⁷⁸ Just as King John cannot see Fouke's use of the secret path at Le Gué Gymele, he is also blind to Fouke's subversive use of the forest. Fouke redefines the space, transforming it from the King's hunting ground to a space of opposition. Sylvia Huot remarks: 'Like an ethical mirror of political and economic management, the landscape reflects the society that it supports; and the most nightmarish image that a king can have, it would seem, is that of his forests run wild.'⁵⁷⁹ In *Fouke*, the forest is not anarchical but merely beyond the king's control. The text constructs the forest as a space where an alternative society can grow and develop, shunning the corruption of King John's court and embracing a natural, just way of life centred on honour, fraternity, and justice.⁵⁸⁰

The kinds of roads that Fouke uses also indicate his treatment of space. The 'haut chemyn', or high road, is mentioned five times in the text, but only once in reference to Fouke's journey.⁵⁸¹ At other times it is used to describe the road at Le Gué

⁵⁷⁸ *Fouke*, 26.28–29.

⁵⁷⁹ Huot, *Postcolonial Fictions*, 47.

⁵⁸⁰ This is reminiscent of the alternative English society established at Ely during Hereward's resistance to the Conquest. See 53–63.

⁵⁸¹ *Fouke*, 27.37.

Gymele or in reference to Joce de Dynan's travels through the Marches.⁵⁸² The other official road in the text is the 'real chemyn', or King's Road, which Fouke ultimately controls.⁵⁸³ The alternative words for roads are much more subversive and unofficial: Fouke uses a 'privé chemyn' [private road] twice, and often 'chemyn' is used to denote a path rather than a formal road.⁵⁸⁴ 'Une veye' and 'la voie' are also used, both of which imply a 'way',⁵⁸⁵ and Fouke's men often travel the road 'privément' [privately], such as when they secretly go to Windsor to intercept John.⁵⁸⁶ The other words for road imply movement over an obstacle, such as 'un pount' [a bridge], 'gué' [ford], 'passage' [passage], and 'causé' [causeway] over the marshlands, yet Fouke rarely uses these, possibly because these pathways are too conspicuous.⁵⁸⁷ This precise vocabulary highlights Fouke's subversive use of roads, rarely using them in a conventional sense, if at all. The variety of roads used emphasise the manifold ways of moving through barriers or boundaries, whether formally or in a more secretive manner.

Fouke often manipulates or controls the movements of others by obstructing the road. This can be most clearly seen when he intercepts a group of merchants travelling through the woods to deliver goods to the King. Fouke lives within an impenetrable, liminal area, and also acts as a barrier himself. Although he may not often use the roads, he controls them, eventually redirecting the King's Road so that it runs through his manor at Alleston. He does this to ensure that 'nul estraunge y dust passer, s'il n'avoit viaunde ou herbergage ou autre honour ou bien du suen' [no stranger might pass that did not receive meat or lodging or another honour or gift from him].⁵⁸⁸ Although this act of

⁵⁸² *Fouke*, 4.14, 21.21–22, 27.37, 35.8, 35.10.

⁵⁸³ *Fouke*, 59.36–37.

⁵⁸⁴ *Fouke*, 35.18, 35.28.

⁵⁸⁵ *Fouke*, 29.3, 48.29. Brian Hindle notes that 'way' was probably the most common word for a road in medieval place-names. See *Medieval Roads* (Aylesbury: Shire Publications, 1989), 9.

⁵⁸⁶ *Fouke*, 48.29.

⁵⁸⁷ See *Fouke*, 11.9, 35.15, 35.6, 35.23.

⁵⁸⁸ *Fouke*, 59.38–39.

manipulating the road is to the benefit of travellers, it nevertheless exemplifies Fouke's predilection for meeting everyone who uses the road, allowing his castle to be a stopping place where he can exercise power over the thoroughfare. This manipulation of pathways indicates that Fouke is a figure that negotiates where a boundary should be placed, judging who is to remain outside, who is given leave to pass through, and whether there should be a boundary at all. Fouke becomes an author of the road, causing travellers to tarry, prolonging their time on the road and allowing it to become a social space where narrative can take place. Valerie Allen characterises the road as a place of continual movement, 'of not stopping'.⁵⁸⁹ By altering routes, Fouke transforms the road from a constructed space of travel and forward movement to a more dynamic, non-linear space defined by interaction and exchange. The road shifts from a space of transience to a place where travellers stop and events unfold.⁵⁹⁰ The merchants return to King John, relaying the narrative of their route, just as a messenger tells the King's men that he met Fouke in the road and that the outlaw gave him twenty coins for a garland of roses.⁵⁹¹ Fouke's actions on the road allow him to control his environment and those within it, altering journey times and generating stories.

Through this eschewal of normative boundaries, both local and national, a picture emerges in which Fouke rejects institutional and physical limitations, moving through space in whichever way he wishes, and in whichever way is necessary. He refuses to adhere to circumscribed areas, instead changing the world and the landscape around him so that it conforms to his will. His outlawry is not restricted to a rejection of the King's laws but also signals a rebellion against the acceptance of limits more

⁵⁸⁹ Valerie Allen, 'Road', *postmedieval* 4, no. 1 (2013): 18–29, at 21.

⁵⁹⁰ Paul Zumthor briefly touches on this idea: he writes that each part of the road invites its user to stop and it carries a meaning that is original, or originary. The medieval road becomes a place where stories and journeys begin. See Paul Zumthor, *La mesure du monde: représentation de l'espace au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1993), 167–83, especially 173.

⁵⁹¹ *Fouke*, 27.35–28.14

generally, particularly in relation to place, space, and time. Through this free use of space, Fouke moves easily through England and Wales, as well as travelling to the Scottish Marches, and asserting his authority over much of Britain.⁵⁹² Fouke links these spaces together, both by travelling through them and by his circumnavigation of the island which outlines Britain as a discrete unit.⁵⁹³

Fouke and the Edwardian Conquest of Wales

While the text does not explicitly condone the Edwardian conquest of Wales, it implicitly justifies the conquest through the imagined fantasy of a unified island. *Fouke*'s opening lines idealise the extradiagetic present as they celebrate the vibrancy of the 'mountz e les valey[e]s' [mountains and valleys] that were only a distant dream to the pioneering Anglo-Normans who cast their eyes towards 'les mountz e les vals de Gales' [the mountains and valleys of Wales].⁵⁹⁴ It is possible that these two parallel lines, a mere forty-eight lines apart, suggest that the mountains of the fourteenth-century Marches are those that were once part of Wales. Although these lines were probably also present in the thirteenth-century verse original, written before the Edwardian conquest of Wales, they take on new meaning in light of the historical context of the prose *Fouke*; the idea of Britain as a single unit supports the Edwardian ideology of political domination over the whole island.⁵⁹⁵

The idea of conquest is present from the beginning of the narrative, as William comes to England and 'conquist a force tote la terre' [conquered all the land by force],

⁵⁹² See Hanna, 'Matter of Fulk', 341.

⁵⁹³ Zumthor notes that the sea brings with it the absence and the impossibility of a road or path. Zumthor, *La mesure du monde*, 174.

⁵⁹⁴ *Fouke*, 3.2, 4.17–18.

⁵⁹⁵ See Hathaway et al.'s notes for 3.1–12 on 62. They also notice a couplet rhyme for lines 4.21 on 65, which may suggest that this section is also related to the verse original.

but there is only one explicit reference to English territorial expansion into Wales.⁵⁹⁶ This singular instance occurs when King John promises Llywelyn ap Iorwerth that he will return ‘tou[te]s les terres qe ces ancestres aveient unqe prises de sa seignorye’ [all the lands that his ancestors had taken from his lordship] in exchange for Fouke’s body.⁵⁹⁷ That John is willing to bargain over a century’s worth of conquered land for the return of a single individual displays the King’s distinct lack of imperial ambition. This disregard for conquest is further suggested by John’s prioritisation of Meurig’s claim to Whittington over Fouke’s. In doing so, he disenfranchises one of the most powerful Anglo-Norman families of the time while giving land to a close kinsman of Llywelyn. This corroborates Davies’s claim that ‘the Norman conquest of Wales was rarely more than the sum of individual baronial enterprises’ rather than a nationalistic campaign.⁵⁹⁸ Janet Meisel notes that Whittington would have had enormous ‘potential value’, otherwise Fouke’s rebellion would not have justified the risk: ‘Since Whittington appears to have had no remarkable liberties, that potential value must surely have been the Welsh lands which lay to the west of Whittington.’⁵⁹⁹ Yet this motivation to claim Wales is absent from *Fouke*. The text does not explicitly comment on the conquest of Wales or draw attention to the encroachment of Marcher lords on Welsh territory, even though this would have undoubtedly been a very real concern for the historical individual upon whom the text is based.⁶⁰⁰ Instead, it reflects an ideology in which England and Wales are one, either because it anachronistically imposes the fourteenth-century ‘present’ onto

⁵⁹⁶ *Fouke*, 3.11.

⁵⁹⁷ *Fouke*, 39.19–20.

⁵⁹⁸ Davies, *Age of Conquest*, 87. See also Faletra, *Wales*, 4.

⁵⁹⁹ Meisel, *Barons of the Welsh Frontier*, 116.

⁶⁰⁰ While the text is loosely based on the circumstances of Fouke fitz Waryn III’s outlawry, the text deviates from history in some of its other accounts; Fouke I and Fouke II are combined under the name ‘Fouke le Brun’, for instance.

the early thirteenth-century past, or because it reflects a Marcher perspective on Britain—a Britain seen from within an area that is simultaneously part of England and Wales.⁶⁰¹

The idea of Britain as a unified whole is not unique to the *Historia* or to *Fouke*. The *Trioedd Ynys Prydain*, or the Triads of the Isle of Britain, a concentrated body of oral historical, hagiographical, and legendary material, ‘nostalgically constitute the island as a single unity, but only, it seems, at a time in the legendary past when the figures of legend—Arthur not least among them—made their mark’.⁶⁰² The *Trioedd* refer to Arthur’s courts in ‘Kymry, ... Ghernyw, / a Penrhyn Rhionydd yn y Gogled’ [‘Wales, ... Cornwall / and Penrhyn Rhionydd in the North’], yoking together disparate parts of Britain.⁶⁰³ While the *Historia* and the *Trioedd* idealise Britain’s past unity, *Fouke* implicitly presumes that there is a natural and enduring continuity between England and Wales, even though the majority of the narrative is set prior to Edward I’s conquest of Wales.

It may be more fitting to compare *Fouke* to another English, albeit non-literary, source: the Gough Map.⁶⁰⁴ While the map was made in 1360, there are suggestions that its exemplar dated to the late thirteenth century, possibly around 1280.⁶⁰⁵ Although there is a great deal of debate regarding the original purpose of the map, primarily because very little is known about it, it is often read as a representation of Edward I’s empire and

⁶⁰¹ See Faletra, *Wales*, 35.

⁶⁰² Faletra, *Wales*, 35. See also, Davies, *The First English Empire*, 44.

⁶⁰³ *Trioedd Ynys Prydein*, 223. Bromwich suggests that Penrhyn Rhionydd might be located in Galloway. The *Enweu Ynys Brydein* [‘The Names of the Island of Britain’], associated with the *Trioedd*, lists ‘Teir Ynys Prydein: Lloegyr a Chymry a’r Alban’ [‘Three Realms of Britain: England, Wales, and Scotland’] drawing them into a single unit. Notably the *Enweu* also states ‘Ac nyt oes dlyet y neb ar (yr) Ynys Honn, namyn y genedyl Gymry ehun, Gweddillyon y Brutannyeit, y ddeuth gynt o Gaer Droea’ [‘And no one has a right to this Island except only the nation of the Cymry, the remnant of the Britons, who came here formerly from Troy’]. *Trioedd Ynys Prydain*, 4, 246–7.

⁶⁰⁴ Images and commentary are available at King’s College London, ‘Linguistic Geographies: The Gough Map of Great Britain’, <http://www.goughmap.org>, accessed 24 September 2016.

⁶⁰⁵ The lack of detail in Scotland suggests that Scotland was not well known. If the map had been designed during the reign of Edward III, it is likely that Scotland would have been more detailed. See Nick Millea, ‘The Gough Map: Britain’s Oldest Road Map, or a Statement of Empire?’ in *The Art, Science, and Technology of Medieval Travel*, ed. Robert Odell Bork and Andrea Kann (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 143–57, at 151.

his claim to the whole island.⁶⁰⁶ Nick Millea and Daniel Birkholz both suggest that the lack of borders or boundaries on the map gives ‘the impression that the map represents an administratively discrete entity’, and thus implicitly supports Edward I’s ‘monarchy of the whole island’.⁶⁰⁷ Routes in red ink draw links between towns, with distances between places written in Roman numerals. These red route markers are more concentrated in England than in Wales, and they are even scarcer in Scotland. However, of the two routes in Wales, both are thought to relate to Edward I:

one [runs] along the north and west coasts from Chester to Cardigan, linking Edward I’s castles; the other route from London to St. David, [enters] Wales in the vicinity of Clyro. As this route progresses westwards it deviates from its expected course by avoiding Llandovery and instead following a mountain route used by Edward I in 1295.⁶⁰⁸

For Birkholz, the Gough Map is a *mappa regni*, a survey of empire, not unlike Domesday Book.⁶⁰⁹ Elizabeth Solopova notes that most of the map’s activity lies in south-eastern England and South Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, and so may have reflected the map’s initial context of the Anglo-Scottish wars and the status of York as a ‘second capital’ at this time. She writes: ‘As a map of one nation, it communicates the idea of territorial unity. At the same time, and perhaps not surprisingly, it contains references to regional conflict, evident most obviously in the importance given to York as the English kings’ base for conducting the war in Scotland.’⁶¹⁰ Keith Lilley and Christopher Lloyd similarly argue that the concentration of detail in certain areas betrays a spirit of Anglocentricism, and this hierarchy of place ‘might instead reflect the kingdom’s *disunity* and the continued presence of geopolitical tensions in fourteenth-century

⁶⁰⁶ See Millea, ‘The Gough Map’, 143–45.

⁶⁰⁷ Millea, ‘The Gough Map’, 153. See also Daniel Birkholz, *The King’s Two Maps: Cartography and Culture in Thirteenth-Century England* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 113.

⁶⁰⁸ Millea, ‘The Gough Map’, 148.

⁶⁰⁹ Birkholz, *The King’s Two Maps*, 118.

⁶¹⁰ Elizabeth Solopova, ‘The Making and Re-making of the Gough Map of Britain’, *Imago Mundi* 64, no.2 (2012): 155–68, at 163–64.

Britain'.⁶¹¹ As such, the map is simultaneously locally focused and representative of the Edwardian empire. *Fouke* embodies a similar tension between unity and regionality; in depicting Fouke encircling the island and bridging the gap between England and Wales through the Marches, the text implicitly draws Britain as a political and geographical unit. However, it also recognises that both Wales and the Marches may resist this English hegemony, and highlights the importance of maintaining a regional consciousness and identity.

Fouke lays claim to Ireland as well as Britain. While John does include Ireland when he lists the territories within his kingdom, 'je su roy, Engleterre gye, duc su d'Angoye e de Normaundye, e tote Yrland' est en ma seignorie' [I am king, I control England, I am duke of Anjou and of Normandy, and all of Ireland is in my domain],⁶¹² and it is listed in the islands around which Fouke sails during his travels, it is only after Fouke regains his patrimony that Ireland becomes a setting for the text's primary action.⁶¹³ As Ranulf of Chester's champion, Fouke confronts a giant knight 'que fust bien armé tot a pié, hidous, neir e orrible, plus long que nul autre de .xii. pies' [who was well armed from head to foot, hideous, black and horrible, taller than anyone else by twelve feet].⁶¹⁴ Fouke's battle with this Irish giant has obvious parallels with the fight between Payn and Geomagog, although in Fouke's battle there is a greater emphasis on the discourse of conquest, as the text states 'Eissi conquist le counte tous ces terres e chastiels en Irelaund e, quant avoit ileque demorree e restorré ces terres, pus retorna en Engleterre' [So conquered the count all his lands and castles in Ireland, and when he had

⁶¹¹ Keith Lilley and Christopher Lloyd, 'Mapping the Realm: A New Look at the Gough Map of Britain (c.1360)', *Imago Mundi* 61, no.1 (2009): 1–28, at 19.

⁶¹² *Fouke*, 34.30–31.

⁶¹³ For the islands around which Fouke sails, see *Fouke*, 45.17–19.

⁶¹⁴ *Fouke*, 58.22–24. I discuss fights with giants at greater length in Chapter Four, in reference to *Gui de Warewic* and *Boeve de Haumtone*. See below, 255–57.

remained there and restored his lands, he then returned to England].⁶¹⁵ This second battle also elevates Fouke's status through the distribution of the spoils of war. The dynamics of these two battles are not entirely analogous, however. After the battle against Geomagog, King William 'fist garder la mace [de Geomagog], e la monstra longement a plusours pur la merveille q'ele fust si graunde' [kept (Geomagog's) mace/club, and for a long time showed it to many people because it was so marvellously large].⁶¹⁶ In Fouke's battle in Ireland, however, it is Fouke who keeps the giant's weapon: 'emporta sa hasche a Blancheville' [(he) brought his axe to Whittington].⁶¹⁷ Fouke has symbolically conquered Ireland, and the text draws a parallel between Fouke and William the Conqueror, making his role analogous to that of a king.

Syr Ffwg in Wales

In this chapter so far, I have discussed the idea that the Anglo-Norman *Fouke* eradicates barriers between England and Wales. In order to fully appreciate the success of this strategy, it is important to investigate the story's treatment and interpretation in Wales.

The Welsh understanding of Fouke was largely positive, portraying him as a chivalric figure and an exemplar toward which the Welsh nobles should aspire. Fourteenth-century poets such as Iolo Goch and Dafydd ap Gwilym were writing for members of the new *uchelwyr* class, the rising Welsh gentry who 'took great pride in noble lineage' and yet were receptive to co-operation with the new Edwardian regime following the conquest of Wales.⁶¹⁸ In their praise-songs, the character of *Syr Ffwg* occasionally arises to venerate the successes and prowess of the poets' patrons: 'From the great success which attended him at tournaments, in that he always came off victorious,

⁶¹⁵ *Fouke*, 58.35–7. It is unclear here whether the subject of 'conquist' is the count or Fouke.

⁶¹⁶ *Fouke*, 7.5–7.

⁶¹⁷ *Fouke*, 58.34.

⁶¹⁸ Dafydd Johnston, Introduction to *Poems*, by Iolo Goch, ed. and trans. Dafydd Johnston (Llandysul: Gomer, 1993), xii.

the Welsh poets thought they could not honour their heroes more than by calling them *Syr Ffwg*.⁶¹⁹ The mid-fourteenth-century poet Dafydd ap Gwilym's 'Englynion i Ifor Hael', for instance, cites Fouke as the model of knightly prowess:

O wychder, fy nêr un arial — â Ffwg,
Morgannwg mawr gynnal,
Ofer dyn, fwriad anial,
Ofer deg wrth Ifor dal

[In splendour, my lord of the same spirit as Foulke,
Glamorgan's great support,
Any man is worthless, marvellous intent,
Ten are worthless compared to tall Ifor].⁶²⁰

In contrast to the un-heroic 'misberyng of scheld' Fouke demonstrates in Robert Mannyng's English treatment of the story, the Welsh incarnation of Fouke is the paragon of chivalry, largesse, and splendour, the only knight capable of comparison with the poem's noble patron.⁶²¹

Fouke is also frequently found in the company of other heroes in these poems, all of whom are compared to the poem's patron as a form of praise. Among these are Guy of Warwick and Bevis of Hampton, whose geographic universality will be discussed in the next chapter.⁶²² Guto'r Glyn, in the fifteenth century, writes:

Syr Ffwg y sy aer a phen,
Syr Gei ieuanc, Syr Gawen,
Syr Liwnel, os erlynynt,
Syr Libus Disgwynus gynt,
Syr Befus, lwyddiannus lw,
Siohannes, oes i hwnnw!

⁶¹⁹ *Gwaith Lewis Glyn Cothi*, ed. Walter Davies and John Jones (Oxford: Royal Cambrian Institution, 1837), 216 n. 5. In addition to the bards mentioned in this paper Dafydd Nanmor, Dafydd ab Edmwnd, Tudur Aled, and Huw Ceiriog, among others, also reference Fouke. A full list can be found in John Lloyd-Jones, ed. *Geirfa Barddoniaeth Gynnar Gymraeg* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1931), 504, updated by Rachel Bromwich in *Aspects of the Poetry of Dafydd ap Gwilym* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1986), 150–51. A more recent edition of Lewis Glyn Cothi's poems can be found in *Gwaith Lewis Glyn Cothi*, ed. Dafydd Johnston (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1995).

⁶²⁰ Text and Translation at Dafydd ap Gwilym, '12 - Englynion i Ifor Hael', Swansea University, <http://www.dafyddapgwilym.net/eng/3win.htm>, accessed 4 June 2013.

⁶²¹ Robert Mannyng of Brunne is one of the few English writers to mention Fouke. See *The Chronicle*, ed. Idelle Sullens (Binghampton, NY: SUNY Press, 1996), ii.8201–9.

⁶²² See below, 210–37.

[Sir Fulk heir and chief,
 young Sir Guy, Sir Gawain,
 Sir Lionel, if they hound,
 Sir Libius Disconius of old,
 Sir Bevis, prospering his vow,
 Johannes, a long life to him!].⁶²³

Similarly, Gruffudd ap Maredudd (fl. 1352–82) compares his patron, Owain Lawgoch, to eleven heroes, among whom he lists Achilles and Constantine alongside several Welsh characters. Fouke's name brings with it associations of martial prowess and romanticised outlawry.⁶²⁴ Like these more familiar, classical heroes, he is fully incorporated into the Welsh heroic vocabulary. Joshua Byron Smith notes that this was 'no mean feat for a man who was historically an Anglo-Norman Marcher lord'.⁶²⁵ However, it is possible that it is precisely because he was a Marcher lord that he received this treatment in the Welsh poetic tradition. As a character that clearly dismisses the boundaries between Welsh and English, it is only fitting that he should be acknowledged and lionised in the literatures of both Wales and England.⁶²⁶ Whether these traditions were independent or related is a matter for debate. That Fouke was celebrated in Wales, however, suggests that the ideologies of the narrative, reflected in the Anglo-Norman text, were successful.

Because these medieval Welsh poems are non-narrative, it is not possible to discern the details of the version of Fouke's story transmitted in Wales, and it is difficult to infer what the story would have been like from the information presented by the poets.

⁶²³ Text and translation at Guto'r Glyn, '80 – Moliant i Syr Siôn Bwrch ap Huw Bwrch o'r Dregrudd', ed. R. Iestyn Daniel, Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, <http://gutorglyn.net/gutorglyn/poem/?poem-selection=080>, accessed 9 January 2017, ll.35–40. Siôn Bwrch (Sir John Burgh), the poem's patron, was Anglo-Welsh and his primary residence was in Wattlesborough, Shropshire. It is possible that this connection to Shropshire may have prompted the allusion to Fouke. See the explanatory notes to the poem and the entry for 'Sir John Burgh ap Hugh Burgh, 1414–71' in the 'List of Patrons and Poets' <http://gutorglyn.net/gutorglyn/name-full/?n=ns07>, accessed 9 January 2017.

⁶²⁴ Erich Poppe, 'Beues of Hamtoun in Welsh Bardic Poetry', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 43 (2002): 49–57, at 50.

⁶²⁵ Joshua Byron Smith, 'Literary Encounters in the Anglo-Welsh Borderlands, 1138–1400' (Doctoral thesis, Northwestern University, 2011), 202–3.

⁶²⁶ This idea is later taken up in reference to *Boeve*, whose hero is so placeless that he is able to be appropriated by a variety of cultures. See 227–233.

There are a few glancing allusions to the story, however, such as in Iolo Goch's poem 'I Ieuan ab Einion o Chwilog', where he may allude to Fouke's redirection of the King's Highway. He refers to 'Llys Ffwg yn llawes y ffordd' ['Fulk's court by the side of the road'].⁶²⁷ In 'Cywydd y Llong', Iolo Goch describes a ship as 'Sarff oer megis march Syr Ffwg' ['cold serpent like Sir Fulk's horse'], figuratively alluding to Fouke's sea voyages.⁶²⁸ Guto'r Glyn also mentions the blindness Fouke suffers at the end of his life, writing

Dall ennyd â'i wayw llinon
Fu Ffwg oedd fwyaf ei ffon,
Ac ar ei farch gorfu wŷr
A bwrw pawb â'r iau pybyr

[Fulk was blind for a while with his ash spear
the greatest one with his staff,
and on his horse he conquered soldiers
and struck everyone with his mighty lance].⁶²⁹

This suggests that while the poems themselves would not have carried the tale, they do presume familiarity with both the character and the details of his legend, and suggest that versions of the story circulated in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Rachel Bromwich writes: 'It is difficult to explain the very numerous allusions to *Syr Ff(a)wg* by the poets of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries except on the supposition that a wealth of folklore had grown up concerning him before the end of the thirteenth century.'⁶³⁰ There was substantial interpenetration between French and Welsh literary culture, either directly or through England, and francophone romances enjoyed popularity in Wales.⁶³¹ Moreover, *Fouke's* primary audience was the landed gentry of the central Marches,

⁶²⁷ Iolo Goch, *Poems*, 3.41.

⁶²⁸ Iolo Goch, *Poems*, 33.50.

⁶²⁹ Guto'r Glyn, '51 – Diolch i Ddafydd ap Meurig Fychan ac Elen ferch Hywel o Nannau am farch', ed. Alaw Mai Edwards, Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, <http://gutorglyn.net/gutorglyn/poem/?poem-selection=051>, accessed 9 January 2017, ll. 45–48.

⁶³⁰ Bromwich, *Aspects*, 150–51.

⁶³¹ Ceridwen Lloyd-Morgan studies the relationship between these two cultures extensively. See 'Crossing the Borders', 160, and 'French Texts, Welsh Translators', in *The Medieval Translator II*, ed. Roger Ellis (London: Centre for Medieval Studies, 1991), 45–64, at 47.

which would undoubtedly have included those who identified as Welsh.⁶³² The presence of a sympathetic Anglo-Norman figure would have inevitably been welcome to an audience of Welsh nobles.

In addition to the Welsh gentry's predilection for French romances, *Fouke*'s popularity may be due to the spirit of rebellion ingrained within his tale, which could have resonated with the anti-English sentiment in the 1340s.⁶³³ Indeed, the *uchelwyr* class were keen to preserve the literary tradition and cultural practices of their ancestors, so it is noteworthy that *Fouke*'s name should be adopted into the poetic vocabulary so quickly. Fulton writes that '[i]t was not until the emergence of an English gentry around the March of Wales in the fifteenth century, whose cultural and class identity intersected with that of the Welsh *uchelwyr*, that we find an unambiguous willingness among Welsh writers to embrace the literary traditions of England'.⁶³⁴ Yet as *Fouke* demonstrates, this kind of Marcher literature existed much earlier, anticipating the cultural interpenetration of the two cultures through intermarriage and literary exchange.⁶³⁵ It is an anomaly in its time, taking into account Welsh culture, portraying Welsh noblemen in a positive light, and displaying a willingness to draw upon Welsh places and legends. The figurative eradication of the border between the two countries suggests a social and literary, in addition to geographical, proximity between the Marchers and the Britons.

* * *

Fouke is a difficult text to locate generically or date with precision. It functions as an ancestral romance and an account of the history of Whittington Castle, which is, in part, historically verifiable. It claims to be part of the Grail story and incorporates elements of

⁶³² Smith, 'Literary Encounters', 19.

⁶³³ This resentment 'manifested itself in an attack "by all Welshmen" on the burgesses of Rhuddlan at St. Asaph fair in May 1344'. Davies, 'Colonial Wales', 22.

⁶³⁴ Fulton, 'Literature of the Welsh Gentry', 222–23.

⁶³⁵ For a discussion of the Welsh literary influence on *Fouke*, especially in relation to the stories of the *Mabinogion* and *Peredur*, see Loomis, *Wales*, 44.

chansons de geste as well as Welsh mythology. There is no reliable way of distinguishing aspects of the text engendered in the thirteenth century from those that were incorporated after the conquest of Wales. However, its geographic location, in terms of setting, provenance, and focus, is unmistakeable, and the image of Britain that the text constructs is one that is distinctly centred on the Marches. *Fouke* inserts a highly localised story into a larger framework of national or international importance, allowing the Marchers, the implied audience of the text, to participate in stories that encompass all of Britain and parts of the continent. By drawing together diverse cultural elements, *Fouke* places the Marches on the literary and legendary map, and the fusion of these traditions yields a singular narrative that further dismantles the barrier between English, French, and Welsh literary modes and motifs, constructing a story that is intensely local and yet appealing to several different cultures. Yet it has a more immediate ideological strategy: as a geographical Janus, *Fouke*'s March looks towards England and Wales simultaneously, joining the two territories and visualising them as a single unit. Unlike other texts written in the same region, *Fouke* does not see the Marches as 'Englondes ende', but rather as a part of Britain, like England and Wales, under the political influence of the English king but with its own customs, laws, and identity. *Fouke*'s Marcher protagonist is a lord of the border, neither English nor Welsh, and through his circumnavigation of the whole island, he circumscribes the border of the country not between Chester and Hereford, but in the sea, bringing the fragmented island together to attempt to draw a unified whole, centred on his own region.

Chapter Four

England and the Exotic: Embracing Alterity in Anglo-Norman Romances

This thesis has thus far examined how cultural contact strengthens notions of local or regional identity in England, whether as a means of rejecting dominant political structures, fostering a more tangible English identity, or connecting a cross-cultural empire. English identity was also informed by cultures beyond the island of Britain, however, and Britain itself was widely perceived as a periphery, a border space between the known and the unknown worlds. This chapter investigates England's position in a medieval global context, as texts simultaneously assert England's interconnectedness with the rest of the world and embrace its location on a geographical 'edge', far from cultural and religious centres. As Kathy Lavezzo writes, 'the English were not simply self-conscious of their marginality during the Middle Ages; English writers and cartographers actively participated in the construction of England as a global borderland'.⁶³⁶ The texts discussed in this chapter participate in such a discourse: although they were written in England for English audiences, they imagine England as a place of exoticism and foreignness. They explore how cultural encounters outside Britain affect English identity, in part by drawing the English out of the west and into the east.

In one of his many attempts to infiltrate King John's court, *Fouke's* John de Rampaigne dresses himself as an Ethiopian minstrel. As part of his disguise, he 'se atyra molt richement, auxi bien come counte ou baroun' [dressed himself very richly, as well as a count or baron].⁶³⁷ Although the text does not explicitly state what he wears, it is implied that his clothes are similar to those 'de la outre' [from abroad] taken from the intercepted merchants earlier in the narrative who carry 'les plus riches draps, pelures,

⁶³⁶ Lavezzo, *Angels*, 7.

⁶³⁷ *Fouke*, 37.24–25.

especes e guans pur le corps le roy e la reygne d'Engleterre' [the finest fabrics, furs, spices and gloves for the body of the king and queen of England].⁶³⁸ The text establishes a connection between how an Ethiopian jongleur was imagined to dress and how the English elite actually dressed. Exotic clothes made of luxurious silks from distant lands, particularly from the Middle East and Asia, were popular throughout the Middle Ages among the English gentry. By wearing them, members of the elite, much like John de Rampaigne, could temporarily inhabit or perform a sense of foreignness. E. Jane Burns argues that sartorially English and French courtliness was enhanced by, or even defined by, an underlying sense of self-imposed exoticism.⁶³⁹ Similar impulses are visible in the literatures of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. English courtly settings, saturated with material objects, clothes, flavours, and stories from abroad, instantiate moments of cultural contact, ones the English elite were eager to embrace. These moments reveal a fascination with the outside world, and a desire to reconcile Englishness with cultural products from distant lands.

Caroline Walker Bynum argues that the years around 1200 were a 'period of proliferating wonders ... characterized not by an escape to alterity but by a resistance to the "otherness" recounted, a careful and strained effort to order it into categories'.⁶⁴⁰ This idea is often applied to the monsters and prodigies purported to be found at the edges of the world, but this resistance to alterity can also be found in insular romances as they depict their heroes travelling eastward to the continent, the Middle East, India, and

⁶³⁸ *Fouke*, 26.29–32.

⁶³⁹ Discussing the function of 'Saracen silk' in courtly literature, E. Jane Burns writes that 'in economic terms, it is the European west that has been fashioned by material goods crossing its borders. Indeed, in terms of luxury fabric, the east has already begun to define the west from within'. While Crusader narratives tend to pit the East against the West, 'courtly romances [...] often provide a much more nuanced view, fashioning literary lovers whose putatively western courtliness already contains a sartorial east within it'. E. Jane Burns, *Courtly Love Undressed: Reading through Clothes in Medieval French Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 197 and 184.

⁶⁴⁰ Caroline Walker Bynum, 'Miracles and Marvels: The Limits of Alterity', in *Vita Religiosa in Mittelalter*, ed. Franz J. Felten and Nikolas Jaspert (Berlin: Duncker and Humbolt, 1999), 799–817, at 801. See also her book *Metamorphosis and Identity* (New York: Zone Books, 2001).

Africa. This chapter will explore these ideas, first in relation to *Gui de Warewic* and *Boeve de Haumtone*, and then to Thomas of Kent's *Roman de toute chevalerie* and the Middle English *Richard Coer de Lyon*.⁶⁴¹ Like travel narratives, these texts provide their audiences with the opportunity to imaginatively venture into distant lands with the protagonists and textually savour the delights and dangers of foreign countries from the safety of home. They act as windows into an often inaccessible—and frequently fictitious—world.⁶⁴² However, they also go further. As Linda Lomperis notes, travel narratives also deserve to be read as 'documents of critical historical understanding in their own right, as documents, that is to say, which comment critically on the historical conditions out of which they emerged'.⁶⁴³ As such, these texts additionally reflect on England and English identity, both explicitly and implicitly (especially in the case of the *RTC*, which scarcely alludes to England). While travel narratives often construct foreign countries as a way to subtly critique socio-political conditions in England, the texts considered in this chapter provide a channel for audiences to textually experience the world. This affords them an external view of England from a geographic standpoint, inviting them to imagine how the country and its people might be seen from abroad, and allowing them to try on different cultural identities. These romances, particularly *Gui* and *Boeve*, offer their English readers a variety of cultural identities to inhabit as the protagonists display a mutable sense of geographic belonging, all the while remaining English heroes or heroes for England. Regardless of their fictitious nature, these texts

⁶⁴¹ Hereafter these will be referred to as *Gui*, *Boeve*, the *RTC*, and *Richard*, respectively.

⁶⁴² Helen Cooper notes that there were often 'practical difficulties of travel in the Middle Ages', and those who were afforded the opportunity to travel throughout England and into Europe 'were far outnumbered [...] by those whose horizons were limited by the nearest market town, or by the literal horizon seen from their own village'. *The English Romance in Time: Transforming Motifs from Geoffrey of Monmouth to the death of Shakespeare* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), 68. See also Rosamund Allen, 'Introduction', in *Eastward Bound: Travel and Travellers 1050–1550*, ed. Rosamund Allen (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 1–14.

⁶⁴³ Linda Lomperis, 'Medieval Travel Writing and the Question of Race', *JMEMS* 31, no. 1 (2001): 147–64, at 147.

offer up a fantastical image of England as an object of the foreign gaze. This chapter will especially focus on the foreign identities presented by these texts, as they create proximity between the English self and the foreign or exotic other, and disrupt the purported fixity of English identity. By populating England with exotic goods and peoples, as well as heroes who are venerated around the world, these texts negotiate England's identity in a wider context. They envisage England's place in relation to the rest of the world and fully embrace its relative foreignness while establishing a strong English identity—one that is both national and transnational. Yet by focusing on the diversity of the world and allowing audiences to delight in it, England is textually and geographically marginalised: it becomes a region on the edge of the world, a border, given value because of the heroes that emerge from there.

While *Gui* and *Boeve* imagine English heroes as the objects of strangers' gazes, each text takes its hero's foreignness in a different direction. The former uses it to enhance Gui's spiritual identity, while the latter depicts Boeve as an exoticised commodity, moving between England and Egypt, connecting the two regions. *Richard*, discussed at the end of the chapter, depicts Richard I as an emphatically English hero, and yet he adopts a characteristic generally associated with the monstrous peoples, and hence the Saracens: cannibalism.⁶⁴⁴ While the *RTC* does not explicitly discuss England, it is a text composed for an English audience and it presents the world as an object for textual consumption and makes the world and all its peoples a source of wonder. All these texts encourage their readers to broaden their perspectives and to view England as but one region in a wider geographical landscape, which forms networks of interaction

⁶⁴⁴ Robert Rouse, 'Crusaders', in *Heroes and Anti-Heroes in Medieval Romance*, ed. Neil Cartlidge (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2012), 173–84, at 175–76; Heather Blurton, *Cannibalism in High Medieval English Literature* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 105–9, and 114. For the connection between monstrous races, Saracens, and cannibalism, see Jacqueline de Weever, *Sheba's Daughters: Whitening and Demonizing the Saracen Woman in Medieval French Epic* (New York and London: Garland, 1998), 53–100, especially 65–69.

and exchange with other parts of the world. As such, this chapter extends some of the ideas discussed in previous chapters, widening the scope of the investigation to include a much larger, transnational, geographical space.

To provide context for this argument, I will briefly discuss some evidence of the cultural fascination with foreignness and exotic goods among the English and French gentry in the High Middle Ages. Returning to *Fouke* and John de Rampaigne's propensity for disguise, the love of foreign merchandise is especially visible as he poses as a Greek merchant recently arrived from 'Babiloyne, Alixandre e Ynde le Majour' [Babylon, Alexandria, and India Major]. To gain entry to King John's court, he claims to have 'un nef chargé de avoir de pois, riche dras, perys, chevaux, e autres richesses qe grantment purreint valer a ceste reigne' [a ship filled with bulk merchandise, splendid fabrics, pearls, horses, and other riches that might be of great value to this kingdom].⁶⁴⁵ The promise of these luxury goods from exotic lands is so enticing that the King immediately agrees to allow John to land his ship in England without further questions.

Foreign places, peoples, objects, and animals captured the imaginations of medieval writers such as Chrétien de Troyes, who peppers his Arthurian romances with references to exotic goods from around the world, such as fabrics from Constantinople, Thessaly, Alexandria, and Syria.⁶⁴⁶ Almeria, a centre for the production of prestigious silks that were 'exported throughout Christendom', is explicitly mentioned in *Cligès*, along with other ports of call on trade routes, such as Caesarea and Candia.⁶⁴⁷

Furthermore, bestiaries, lapidaries, maps, and narratives that depict life in distant lands, regardless of whether they were real, imagined, or forged (such as the *Letter of Prester*

⁶⁴⁵ *Fouke*, 56.21–24. 'Avoirdupois' is a system of weights used by merchants in the fourteenth century, and still endures as a unit of measurement. In this context it more likely refers to a particular valuable object or group of objects.

⁶⁴⁶ Chrétien de Troyes, 'Erec et Enide', in *Romans; suivis des Chansons*, ed. Michel Zink and Jean-Marie Fritz (Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 1994), 98, 2404, 2015.

⁶⁴⁷ 'Cligès' in *Romans*, 4682–83, 5989, 6250. See Sharon Kinoshita, 'Chrétien de Troyes's "Cligès" in the Medieval Mediterranean', *Arthuriana* 18, no. 3 (2008): 48–61, at 49–50.

John), attest to a fascination with the world that went beyond one's own experience, and transgressed the borders of the known. Keeping menageries had been fashionable since the time of Charlemagne, but expanded trade and travel routes meant that exotic animals were often brought from the East, a famous example of which is the elephant that Louis IX gave to Henry III in 1254.⁶⁴⁸ There was a notable hunger for flavours from foreign lands as nobles spiced their foods with cinnamon, ginger, pepper, and saffron.⁶⁴⁹ Trade, pilgrimages, and the Crusades brought news, tales, material goods, and cultural practices from countries as distant as Mongolia, and these infiltrated English texts and stories as well as the tastes of the social elite. The Crusades, especially, created or reflected a desire to incorporate foreign elements and foreign spaces into one's own sense of identity, or into England's sphere of influence. The foreign was alluring, either as a source of desire, or because it elicited a sense of alienation arising from the elision of the English self and the foreign other.

The English Hero

Gui de Warewic may not initially appear to be the ideal text through which to examine an embrace of foreignness, not least because the text has been said to display a 'rather ostentatious kind of Englishness'.⁶⁵⁰ However, the narrative's emphasis on spiritual exile and its subtle accounts of the hero's sliding geographic identity challenge England's centrality in a wider geographical context, and the position of one's earthly existence in the face of spiritual transcendence. Before exploring these latter two elements in the text,

⁶⁴⁸ See Natasha R. Hodgeson, 'Lions, Tigers, and Bears: Encounters with Wild Animals and Bestial Imagery in the Context of Crusading to the Latin East', *Viator* 44, no. 1 (2013): 65–94, at 68.

⁶⁴⁹ For a detailed discussion of the fascination with spices in medieval Europe, see Paul Freedman, *Out of the East: Spices in the Medieval Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

⁶⁵⁰ See Jennifer Fellows and Ivana Djordjević, 'Introduction', in *SBHLT*, 1–8, at 3. For a discussion of the Englishness of *Guy of Warwick*, see Rebecca Wilcox, 'Romancing the East: Greeks and Saracens in *Guy of Warwick*', in *Pulp Fictions of Medieval England: Essays in Popular Romance*, ed. Nicola McDonald (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 217–40.

it is vital to examine in more detail the English identity expressed in *Gui* to understand the connections it draws between hero and audience, and between Englishness and foreignness.

Although the Anglo-Norman *Gui* is not nearly as Anglocentric as its Middle English counterpart, *Guy of Warwick*, which explicitly claims that Guy fights ‘for to make Ingland fre’, *Gui*’s English identity is central to his reputation and identification abroad, and his Englishness is continually emphasised.⁶⁵¹ While the expression of national affiliation is less overt in the Anglo-Norman version, *Gui* nevertheless fulfils his role as defender of England against the Danes. This Englishness is crucial to *Gui*’s meaning: it endows England with a cultural significance that expands beyond Britain, and transforms the story into a mythical anchor that reifies its audience’s sense of belonging. Helen Cooper writes that *Gui* and *Boeve* were both written ‘to celebrate, or create, founding English heroes for two of the great medieval aristocratic dynasties, those of the Albini family of Arundel and of the earls of Warwick’.⁶⁵² If the text was indeed written as an account of a family’s—and eventually a nation’s—‘fictional forebear’, then its emphasis on English identity is one of the elements that made the text so successful.⁶⁵³ It allowed the audience to claim kinship with its protagonist, and to experience the world through his adventures.

Although this may have been written for a family from Warwick, the presentation of *Gui*’s local identity is more complicated than is his English identity. The text initially connects *Gui*’s identity to a particular town through an epithet, ‘Gui de Warewic fut apelé’ [‘He was called Gui of Warwick’], but as the text reaches its

⁶⁵¹ Alison Wiggins, ed., *Stanzaic Guy of Warwick* (Kalamazoo: MIP, 2004), 2969. See Sarah Gordon, ‘Translation and Cultural Transformation of a Hero: the Anglo-Norman and Middle English Romances of Guy of Warwick’, in *The Medieval Translator: Traduire au Moyen Âge*, ed. Olivier Bertrand and Jacqueline Jenkins (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 10:319–31.

⁶⁵² Cooper, *English Romance in Time*, 31. For additional discussion of the texts’ patrons, see Crane, *Insular Romance*, 16–17.

⁶⁵³ Crane, *Insular Romance*, 54

conclusion, named local places become spaces of anonymity where identity is obscured.⁶⁵⁴ The beginning of the text marks Warwick as a symbol for all that divides Gui from Felice. The differences between their relative social positions gives Felice, the lord of Warwick's daughter, a pretext to refuse Gui, who is merely the son of her father's seneschal. Gui laments Felice's unattainability as he stares out of his window, gazing towards her castle's tower:

Tur, fait il, tant estes bele!
 En vus maint ma damaisele
 Ki sa joie ore demeine;
 D'amur me dona mal estreine.
 Car fuisse a tere acraventee,
 E a la tere esparpeillee!
 Dunques verreie jo m'amie,
 Pur qui ai si dure vie!

['Tower, how beautiful you are!' he said. 'My lady, at the moment enjoying herself, lives in you. For love she rewarded me ill. Would you were demolished and strewn over the ground! Then I would see my beloved who's made my life so hard!']⁶⁵⁵

The tower, a physical embodiment of Felice's higher social status, especially as Felice enjoys a life of luxury within it while Gui suffers from a distance, comes to represent a textual tension surrounding Warwick: it is desired, but only for what it signifies and what it contains, not for its physical attributes or material value. There is little sense of place. It is Gui's desire that prompts his quest to secure Felice's love by becoming the best knight in the world. Yet already, through this momentary unveiling of Gui's emotional anguish, the destructive aspects of his love are visible; the tower he wishes destroyed anticipates the cities and abbeys he later claims to have razed on his adventures abroad. The turning point of the narrative occurs once he returns to Warwick after his continental knightly

⁶⁵⁴ A. Ewert, ed., *Gui de Warewic: roman du XIII^e siècle* (Paris: É. Champion, 1932), 129. For the purposes of this thesis, I will be using Ewert's edition of this text, which only represents the earlier redaction of the poem in BL, Add. MS 38662. As such, the claims made in this chapter will only reflect this version of *Gui*. Unless otherwise stated, all translations of *Gui* and *Boeve* will be from Judith Weiss, trans., *Boeve de Haumtone and Gui de Warewic: Two Anglo-Norman Romances* (Tempe, AZ: ACMRS, 2008). This volume will be referred to as 'Weiss'.

⁶⁵⁵ *Gui*, 427–34; Weiss, 101.

adventures and realises that ‘chivalry is not enough’; he must devote his life to God.⁶⁵⁶

This crisis of conscience occurs at the top of one of the towers he previously admired.

Rather than looking at it from afar, longingly, he looks out from the tower over his newly acquired land:

A une vespree, que bele esteit,
 Gui en une tur munta,
 En halt as estres se pua;
 Le pais environ ad esgardé
 E le ciel, qui tant ert esteillé,
 E le tens, qui ert serré e cler.
 Gui comence dunc a penser
 Cum Deus li out fait grant honur
 ... E cum il ert home de grant affaire
 E preisé en estrange terre,
 E que tanz homes aveit oscis,
 Turs e citez par force pris,
 E cum aveit sun cors pené
 Loinz en estrange regné
 Pur une femme qu’il tant amat,
 Pur qui tant mals duré ad;
 Mais unc pur sun criatur,
 Qui fait li ad si grant honur,
 Ne s’entremist de lui servir;
 Mais ore s’en voldra repentir

[On a beautiful evening, Gui climbed a tower and leant out of the high gallery. He looked at the country round about and at the sky, which was so full of stars, and at the clear, calm weather. Then Gui began to think about how God had done him great honour; ... he thought of how he was a man of influence, and renowned in foreign lands, and how he had killed so many men, captured towers and cities by force, and had exerted himself far off in strange realms, for the sake of a woman whom he loved so much and for whom he had borne so much suffering—but never for his Creator, who had done him such great honour, nor had he bothered to serve Him. But now he wanted to repent of this].⁶⁵⁷

Warwick has a dual purpose as the place where Gui twice becomes aware of his purpose and as the place from which he must divorce his identity. In order to go on his penitential journey he must surreptitiously leave the city and abandon all that he has gained: the lands he has won, his status, and his wife. While Warwick may initially provide a centre

⁶⁵⁶ Cooper, *English Romance in Time*, 32.

⁶⁵⁷ *Gui*, 7568–90; Weiss, 180.

for his identity, a place to which he longs to return because of the associations with love, courtliness, and achievement established at the beginning of the narrative, it ceases to hold meaning as soon as it is attained.⁶⁵⁸ He abandons all of Rualt's lands 'de chastels e de citez' ['of castles and of cities'] as soon as he receives them.⁶⁵⁹ The tower he observes from his window symbolises the object of his desire, yet as soon as he looks out from the tower to the world around him, his perspective, and his priorities, are shown to shift. It is striking that both of these moments occur in relation to a 'tur', a word that clearly denotes "tower" in this context, but it also can mean "turning", "movement" or "change". Warwick's tower facilitates a shift in identity as well as perspective.⁶⁶⁰

The conclusion of the text sees Gui returning to Warwick as a pilgrim, struggling to retain his anonymity; he becomes fearful when he is summoned to the court in case he is recognised. Just he must leave Winchester before revealing his identity to King Athelstan, he is only able to inform a boy of his name after he leaves Warwick. Although he claims to be 'de Warewic' at the beginning of the narrative, his identity is explicitly separated from Warwick by the end. The city is a consistent locus around which he must define his identity, either positively or negatively.

Gui's association with Warwick is often expressed in a passive voice. He tells a Saracen sultan 'Gui de Warewic sui apelé / En la terre u jo fu né' ['I am called Gui of Warwick in the land where I was born'].⁶⁶¹ While this localisation of his identity immediately draws attention to him as an English hero, the use of the passive voice suggests that his identity is one imposed upon him by others, rather than one that he defines himself.⁶⁶² The second half of this clause is especially important because it

⁶⁵⁸ For discussion of the relationship between place and meaning, see above, 49–51.

⁶⁵⁹ *Gui*, 7507; Weiss, 179.

⁶⁶⁰ *AND*, s. v. 'tur (2)'.

⁶⁶¹ *Gui*, 3943–44; Weiss, 139.

⁶⁶² Rosalind Field notes that Gui's initial lack of lordship over Warwick prevents it from becoming a defining aspect of his identity. See Rosalind Field, 'From *Gui* to *Guy*: The Fashioning of a Popular

underlines the idea that Gui's identity can be modified depending on his location and on the geographic identities of those with whom he comes into contact. It suggests that the figure of Gui is able to embody a multitude of identities.

This multivalent reading of geographic identity is not unique to Gui, however: the text also depicts other figures embodying several geographic affiliations. In Constantinople, Gui encounters 'un burgeis, / D'Engleterre né, un Engleis' [a citizen, born of England, an Englishman].⁶⁶³ The text attributes three different kinds of geographic affiliation to this individual: his citizenship, his birthplace, and his 'national' identity. By stating and differentiating all three, the text acknowledges that birthplace and identity are not necessarily always aligned with one another, and that one can be both English and a recognised member of a city in the Byzantine Empire.⁶⁶⁴ While there is an implicit connection between the unnamed man's birthplace and his identity, since both are joined in the same line, suggesting that birth in England makes one English, the text draws attention to all aspects of the man's identity, suggesting that the connection is neither obvious nor absolute.⁶⁶⁵ These three geographical aspects of his identity sit alongside one another without contradiction or redundancy, drawing attention to the potential plurality of geographic affiliation.⁶⁶⁶

Romance', in *Guy of Warwick: Icon and Ancestor*, ed. Alison Wiggins and Rosalind Field (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2007), 44–60, at 46.

⁶⁶³ *Gui*, 2983–84. My translation.

⁶⁶⁴ In the Byzantine Empire, citizenship was 'not the exclusive property of an ethnic or geographic group: all free men were citizens, so political rights were not the exclusive preserve of Greeks. Membership in the Byzantine élite was open to the other ethnic groups of the empire, and even to foreigners'. It is worth noting that this was also the case for English cities, particularly London, which often admitted foreigners as citizens, especially merchants, clerks, and bankers who had settled there. Brendan Osswald, 'Citizenship in Medieval Ionnina', in *Citizenship in Historical Perspective*, ed. Steven G. Ellis, Guðmundur Hálfðanarson and Ann Katherine Isaacs (Pisa: Pisa University Press, 2006), 97–105, at 98; Keechang Kim, *Aliens in Medieval Law: The Origins of Modern Citizenship* (2000; repr. Cambridge: CUP, 2004), 42–43.

⁶⁶⁵ The stipulation that he is both a 'burgeis' and 'Engleis' might also serve the more practical purpose of rhyme.

⁶⁶⁶ The text may draw attention to these facets of the man's identity to suggest that he is a member of the English colony in Constantinople or a member of the Varangian guard, Englishmen who fought for the Byzantine army. This group is alluded to later in the text when Gui leaves Constantinople: 'Mult par est pleint en la cité; / As Engleis ad fait mult grant honur, / Uncore i sunt il desqu'a cest jur / Enz en la tere mult dotez, / Pur leals tenuz e mult amez' ['He was much lamented in the city, for he had brought much

Field notes that in insular romances ‘[t]he home territory, which is virtually invisible, worn like an old garment while the hero lives there, becomes something lost and viewed with longing and possessiveness, to be regained, and increasingly to be named’.⁶⁶⁷ Although Gui does not fight to regain a lost kingdom, and he even rejects Athelstan’s offer of ‘De Engleterre tote la meité’ [‘half of England in its entirety’], his Englishness emerges when he is abroad.⁶⁶⁸ He often asserts his English identity, citing the place of his upbringing and dubbing, and suggesting it is the most essential part of his geographic affiliation:

Sire, fait Gui, ja l’orrez:
 Engleis sui, sacez de fi;
 En Engleterre, la fui nurri,
 E puis que fui primes adubé,
 En meinte terre ai conversé

[You should know for certain that I’m English; in England, that’s where I was brought up; and since I was first knighted, I have dwelt in many lands].⁶⁶⁹

Gui simultaneously develops knightly and Christian identities, but these aspects are frequently associated with his Englishness: ‘Crestien sui, ore le savez. / El regne d’Engleterre fu né, / La fui nurri e adubbé’ [‘Know that I am a Christian; I was born in the kingdom of England and there I was raised and knighted’].⁶⁷⁰ Gui’s country of origin situates him geographically within the greater context of Christendom; it explains his actions and attitudes, and allows others to identify him more easily. However, the text takes this further. When Amorant learns that the unknown knight he is fighting is English, he states ‘Kar plust ore a Tervagant / Que ço fust Gui le vaillant / Dunt la gent parolent tant!’ [‘Now, please Tervagant it could be Gui the valiant, whom people talk

honour to the English, who are still there to this day, much feared in the land, considered trustworthy and much loved’]. *Gui*, 4522–36; Weiss, 146.

⁶⁶⁷ Field, ‘The King Over the Water’, 48.

⁶⁶⁸ *Gui*, 11348; Weiss, 224. See Ivana Djordjević, ‘Saracens and Other Saxons: Using, Misusing, and Confusing Names in *Gui de Warewic* and *Guy of Warwick*’, in *The Exploitations of Medieval Romance*, ed. Laura Ashe, Ivana Djordjević, and Judith Weiss (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2010), 28–42, especially 33.

⁶⁶⁹ *Gui*, 8274–78; Weiss, 187.

⁶⁷⁰ *Gui*, 8592–94; Weiss, 191.

about so much!']'.⁶⁷¹ Gui's geographic origins, which reveal only one aspect of his identity, come to denote his whole character. Instead of depicting Gui as a representative of England, as Rebecca Wilcox asserts in her discussion of the corresponding passage in the Middle English *Guy*, any mention of England evokes the idea of Gui in the global imagination.⁶⁷² He is not the signifier, but the signified. Rather than a uniquely English icon, Gui can be interpreted as a figure that transcends his country. England's subordination to Gui consolidates his reputation as the best knight in the world, as those in the text value the English community solely because it is Gui's community.

Gui's Englishness, while often eliciting respect, also brings judgement upon him when he is abroad. King Triamor asks Gui, disguised as Jun: 'Es tu Engleis? ... Aver vus dei mult en despit' ['Are you English? ... I ought to hate you'].⁶⁷³ It emerges that this resentment towards the entire population of England once again results from its association with Gui, since Gui was responsible for the deaths of Triamor's brother and uncle. All Englishmen are implicated in Gui's actions. Yet Triamor also laments Gui's absence since his renowned military prowess would have also been a boon in the battle against the giant Amorant. England is a metonym for Gui and, at the same time, his entire homeland is held accountable for Gui's actions. Yet Triamor also emphasises the uniqueness of Gui's martial ability. The text alternates between portraying Gui as an Englishman, interchangeable in the collective imagination with his place of origin, and casting Gui as an individual, an unparalleled knight. It does however also display a degree of uneasiness around how Gui's actions inspire universal bias against the English: 'aver ... dei' expresses modality, an obligation or a necessity rather than a fact.⁶⁷⁴ The text asserts that Triamor has a duty to hate the English, and yet he does not fulfil this

⁶⁷¹ *Gui*, 8599–602; Weiss, 191.

⁶⁷² See Wilcox, 'Romancing the East', 231.

⁶⁷³ *Gui*, 8279–80; Weiss, 187–88.

⁶⁷⁴ See *AND*, s. v. deveir.

obligation; the two men ally with one another. This rift between duty and action suggests that there is also a tension between Gui's Englishness and his individual identity, and implies that the sense of mutual respect and camaraderie among great warriors counteracts any national or ethnic hostility. This latter notion can also be applied to the text's characterisation of Triamor and other 'Saracens': religious or cultural difference does not preclude political or military alliance, or even friendship.

'Sui d'etrange pais': The Foreign Hero

While references to England and Englishness reveal the place most closely associated with Gui's identity, the text also notes another aspect of the hero's geographic identity: his foreignness. His initial journey through the continent depicts Gui referring to his geographical identity in relative terms that are vague and yet revealing in their ambiguity. After believing that all of his companions have been killed in Lombardy, he responds to the abbot's question 'Qui estes vus' ['Who are you?'] with the claim 'Chevaler sui d'etrange pais' ['I am a knight from a foreign land'].⁶⁷⁵ The geographic identity he asserts here is unfixed and relative. Suddenly alone in an unknown country, Gui is shown to adapt his self-presentation to another's point of view. This is also evinced in his statement that 'en vostre curt ne sui pas coneu, / D'etranges terres sui ça venu / N'ai ici amis ne parenz' ['I am not known in your court; I have come here from foreign lands. Here I have neither friends nor relations'].⁶⁷⁶ These passages do not show Gui pinpointing where he is from, but rather stating that he is from somewhere else, somewhere that is *not here*. They suggest a negative self-definition that implies a constant sense of unbelonging and disorientation. Such statements do not negate his Englishness, but instead resituate England as a periphery, as somewhere that is absent

⁶⁷⁵ *Gui*, 1483, 1484; Weiss, 113.

⁶⁷⁶ *Gui*, 9961–63; Weiss, 207. Cf. Genesis 23:4, 'I am a stranger and sojourner among you'.

and unfamiliar to his listener within the narrative. Rather than destabilising Gui's identity, foreignness comes to define it.⁶⁷⁷

Crucially, these instances of self-declared foreignness also show Gui inhabiting the perspectives of those who live in non-English countries. Gui's declarations function in a similar way: at the beginning of the text, he moves from England into 'estrange regné', but these foreign lands become those in which he presents England as 'estrange'.⁶⁷⁸ Gui is shown to confront, and present, his own Otherness by imagining how others must perceive him, shifting from an English perspective to one that is external.⁶⁷⁹ This creates a sense of reciprocity as Gui situates himself simultaneously as subject and object of the gaze, and the boundaries between the two become blurred. To state 'sui d'estrange pais' is to position Gui as the subject of the sentence though the first person singular form 'sui', and the adoption of another's point of view by marking England, Gui's homeland, as 'estrange', a highly subjective term that denotes 'outside one's experience', strange, foreign, or marvellous.⁶⁸⁰ Martin Jay, discussing Jean-Paul Satre, writes that the unilateral relationship between 'being the subject and the object of the gaze, is in fact related to a fundamental struggle for power. For the one who casts the look is always the subject and the one who is targeted is always turned into an object ...

⁶⁷⁷ Gui's claim that he is 'estrange' could be interpreted as a tactic for survival, as a method for maintaining his anonymity. With his growing renown, his Englishness might betray his identity, as we have seen. Furthermore, Gui often asks those he meets where they are from, rather than asking for their names, signalling an overall preoccupation with geographic origins as determinants of identity. While Gui's claim that he is from a foreign or strange country is an honest one, it denies those he meets the opportunity to understand who he is. See *Gui*, 114, 128, 146, 152.

⁶⁷⁸ *Gui*, 1049.

⁶⁷⁹ For a prolonged discussion of this phenomenon in medieval literature, see Shirin Khanmohamadi, *In Light of Another's Word: European Ethnography in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013). This is also expressed through Boethius's idea that 'Hic ipse locus, quem tu exsilium vocas, incolentibus patria est' ['This very place which you call a land of exile is home to those who live here']. Boethius, *De consolatione philosophiae*, ed. Wilhelm Weinberger (Vienna: Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, 1934), 29–30. Translation in Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, trans. Richard Green, (Mineola, NY: Dover, 2002), 24.

⁶⁸⁰ See *AND*, s. v. 'estrange'.

[O]bjectification is the *telos* of the look.⁶⁸¹ Thus Gui's adoption of another's perspective creates a more equal power dynamic between the English protagonist and the non-English people he encounters. Shirin Khanmohamadi discusses this phenomenon, drawing on the account of William of Rubruck's mission to Mongolia in the 1250s. William's *Itinerarium* describes the experience of being seen as 'tamquam monstra', like monsters, in the eyes of the Mongolians.

William is thus describing himself as he is seen in the gaze of the other he has come to describe, a feat striking, even disorienting to modern and medieval audiences alike ... the latter who might well turn to ethnographic reports with an interest in hearing of the world's exotic and monstrous races, not to learn that they are themselves seen as monstrous by diverse, little-known others.⁶⁸²

Khanmohamadi writes that this instance 'records a disorienting, dynamic, and dialogic contest between viewing selves and viewed others, in a mode of representation that unsettles the boundary between cultural subjects and objects, knowers and known'. This does, however, allow William and his Franciscan retinue a greater sensitivity to the perspectives of others, which he is able to exploit in his task of conversion.⁶⁸³

Gui, too, uses his external position to his advantage. It is his status as a foreigner in a foreign land that enhances his chivalric identity. Throughout his knightly wanderings Gui continually displays the desire to return home, suggesting that his foreignness is not all-encompassing, as it is during his penitential quest. The text states 'Al duc ont dunc congié pris, / Repairer volent en lur pais' ['Then they took their leave of the duke, wishing to return to their own land'], 'En Engleterre voldra aler' ['he intended to go to England'], and 'Puis n'i voldra gueres sejourner, / En sun pais s'en volt aler' ['Then he had no wish to stay there any longer, but wanted to get back to his own land'].⁶⁸⁴

However, in spite of these compulsions, Gui fails to return to England until seven years

⁶⁸¹ Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993), 288.

⁶⁸² Khanmohamadi, *In Light of Another's Word*, 1.

⁶⁸³ Khanmohamadi, *In Light of Another's Word*, 59, 74.

⁶⁸⁴ *Gui*, 1614, 5067–68, 7135–36; Weiss, 114, 152, 174.

have passed. His ability to return home is not compromised by events outside his control, but rather because he is presented with the choice to undertake more quests and fight in more battles. His knightly identity dictates that he cannot return home, while his geographic affiliation pulls him back to England. The text stages a tension between these impulses. In order to complete Felice's command not to return until

en nul terre n'eussez per,
Ne tant preis   d'armes porter,
E de chevalerie seiez la flur,
E del mund tut le meillur

[no one is your equal in any land or as famous for bearing arms, or until you are the flower of chivalry and quite the best in the world],⁶⁸⁵

Gui must continuously prove himself abroad. He cannot be the best knight in the world and also spend his life in England, lest he lose his status and his reputation.

This perceived foreignness is also advantageous politically, especially when Gui is confronted by others who similarly wish to know their reputations abroad for the sake of vanity. Arriving at the court of Emperor Reiner, the emperor demands to know where Gui has been and asks: 'Di mei dunc, pelerin, par ta fei, / De Costentinoble que dient de mei' ['Then tell me, pilgrim, upon your word, what they say about me in Constantinople?'].⁶⁸⁶ Gui's response is less than favourable, claiming Reiner is widely known to have taken bad counsel from Duke Berard of Pavia:

[‘]Sire, fait il, ja le savez,
Quant vus savez le volez:
Mult dient de vus grant mal,
Que par le conseil d'un senescal
Le cunte Terri desherit   avez
E altres baruns od lui assez,
Dunt vus faites mult grant pecchez;
En estranges terres mult estes blamez,
Que par le conseil d'un losenger
Devez voz baruns desheriter,
Qui fel est e paltoner.’

⁶⁸⁵ *Gui*, 1073–76; Weiss, 108.

⁶⁸⁶ *Gui*, 9875–76; Weiss, 206.

E quant li dux s'oi si blamer,
 Des oilz comence a roiller,
 Plus est fier que leun ne sengler;
 Ja l'eust tost del poig feru,
 Se des baruns ne fust tenu

[‘My lord’, he said, ‘now you shall know, since you wish to know it. Many say bad things about you: that through the advice of a seneschal, you have disinherited Count Terri, and many other barons with him, which is a very great wrong. You are blamed severely in foreign lands for being in the habit of disinheriting your barons through the advice of a rogue, who is an evil-doer and a scoundrel.’ When the duke heard himself blamed in this way, he began to roll his eyes; he was fiercer than a lion or a boar. He would surely soon have struck Gui with his fist, had the lords not held him].⁶⁸⁷

A similar instance is found in the episode of *Fouke* discussed at the beginning of this chapter. King John asks John de Rampaigne, dressed as an Ethiopian minstrel, “‘Qoi dient yl en estrange regneez de moy?’” “Sire,” fet yl, “vous estes le plus renomee roy de tote la cristieneté, e pur vostre grant renoun vous su je venu vere.” ... Johan dist qu’il fust renomee plus pur mavesté qe bounté; mes le roy ne l’entendi point’ [‘What do they say about me in foreign countries?’ ‘Sire,’ he said, ‘you are the most renowned king in all of Christendom, and for this great renown I came to see you.’ ... John said that he was more renowned for wickedness than goodness, but the king did not listen to him].⁶⁸⁸

By depicting characters questioning how foreigners perceive them, these texts reveal a compulsion to understand the outside world and to situate one’s home and oneself within it. This not only implies that external opinions have some merit: it also exhibits a process of self-othering. By confronting the foreign, or those who have had contact with the foreign, King John and Emperor Reiner are depicted as figures who desire to imagine themselves as a topic of conversation abroad. This, in part, exemplifies the idea that identity is not entirely self-determined and can be both influenced by others

⁶⁸⁷ *Gui*, 9877–92; Weiss, 206.

⁶⁸⁸ *Fouke*, 37.35–38.1.

and bestowed upon an individual or a group.⁶⁸⁹ These rulers are implicitly forced to confront their own alterity in relation to individuals from distant lands. Both men, however, fail to respond to the criticisms levelled against them from abroad: while John de Rampaigne's statement regarding King John's infamy falls on deaf ears—'l'endendi point' implies a refusal to listen to John de Rampaigne's qualification rather than an inability to hear—Emperor Reiner does not respond to Gui's accusations, instead leaving Duke Berard to identify himself and express his outrage. Although both rulers wish to know their reputations abroad, they are unwilling to listen to criticism or truly acknowledge the worth of foreign opinion. It is implied that King John wishes to have his own ideal image of himself reflected back to him, and so he does not, or cannot, accept the whole truth. He rejects his Otherness, and assumes that the rest of the world holds the same ideas he has about himself, thus exemplifying both his foolishness and his ultimate inability to place himself in the larger political landscape of the known world.

Meanwhile, Gui and John de Rampaigne embody the foreign; they present themselves as the mouthpieces of those in 'estrange regneez'. While in reality they articulate their own opinions, they use their perceived alterity to their advantage. This is especially true in *Fouke*, since John de Rampaigne is performing a false foreignness, presenting an ethnic identity with which he does not normally associate. Gui, on the other hand, is foreign to the Emperor, and although he has visited Constantinople, he does not claim origins there. Instead, his contact with other countries grants him the authority to claim to speak on behalf of those who are foreign. These instances, broadly, enact a process of 'passing', a term which Linda Lomperis defines, on the most basic level, as 'the act of assuming a new or otherwise non-natural identity in such a way as to suggest to outside observers that this new identity is in no way feigned or fiction, but rather

⁶⁸⁹ See Bartlett, 'Race and Ethnicity', 40.

natural and true'.⁶⁹⁰ It is a cultural performance that appears so natural that it is invisible.⁶⁹¹ John de Rampaigne's performance as the Ethiopian minstrel deceives the King, but the text's audience is privy to the truth of the situation: he is merely mimicking the idea of foreignness by passing as a jester from abroad. It accentuates the idea that cultural identity is little more than a performance of the elements that are seen to be markers of difference, a collection of culturally constructed signifiers. 'Sunt touz les gentz de vostre terre de vostre colour?' [Are all the people of your country your colour?] asks King John, a question that 'assumes a familiarity on the part of the audience with race and colour difference', even if the King is shown to be ignorant of the outside world.⁶⁹² Both the foreign and the familiar are categories that rely on how one is perceived, and thus it is possible to bridge the gap between the two.

While the audience of *Fouke* understand that John de Rampaigne's foreignness is merely performed to deceive the King, *Gui*'s audience is forced to confront the protagonist's objectification—and his status as a foreigner—because this identity is not a deception. In the context of the narrative, his assertions that he is from 'un estrange pais' are true. While this is a fictional account, it nevertheless challenges readers in England to reconsider how they might be viewed in a similar situation. Gui's foreignness and Englishness are intertwined with one another, and thus this foreignness is transferred onto the text's English audience. The text presents an outlook that is implicitly English as it depicts Gui venturing into 'estrange' lands, places that would have likely been foreign to the text's audience as well as the English hero: 'Desore d'errer ne finera, / En Jerusalem si vendra / E en meinte estrange terre / U les sainz Deu purra requere' ['From then on he resolved he would not stop travelling; he would indeed come to Jerusalem and

⁶⁹⁰ Lomperis, 'Medieval Travel Writing', 153.

⁶⁹¹ For a full discussion of passing see Carole-Anne Tyler, 'Passing: Narcissism, Identity, and Difference', *Differences* 6 (1994): 212–48.

⁶⁹² *Fouke*, 37.33–34; Thomas Hahn, 'The Difference the Middle Ages Makes: Color and Race before the Modern World', *JMEMS* 31, no. 1 (2001): 1–38, at 16.

to many foreign lands, where he could seek God's saints'].⁶⁹³ Yet with the claim that Gui is from a strange land, readers are exposed to a double alienation. They are confronted with two opposing perspectives that the protagonist inhabits: that of Gui as an Englishman, as he moves through the world around him, unknown both to him and presumably to the romance's readers, and that of Gui as a foreigner, as he situates himself as the object of others' gaze, and sees himself from the perspective of those who are foreign to him. While travel narratives often function as a way of exposing readers to the world beyond the borders of their kingdom, this dual perspective in *Gui* challenges a unilateral understanding of the outside world by rendering the familiar foreign. Both land and hero are rendered mysterious, distant, and unknown. Owing to Gui's association with England, and this depiction of his identity as 'foreign', the multifocal perspective of the text reinforces his Englishness while nuancing it with an outsider's perspective. By making England unfamiliar, the text further emphasises themes of spiritual identity developed in the second half of the narrative diptych. His foreignness continues to be emphasised, but it takes on a different valence in the wake of his spiritual turn.

In spiritual terms, anywhere on earth is equally foreign to those who consider themselves citizens of God's kingdom; Gui's foreignness therefore has spiritual as well as political or geographic motivations and consequences. This idea of spiritual exile is reflected in the passage from the *Vita Haroldi* cited in Chapter One.⁶⁹⁴ In her exposition of the narrative of conversion in the *Vita*, Ashe draws attention to Harold's shift from a longing for England to a longing for God's kingdom.⁶⁹⁵ She draws fruitful connections between the *Vita* and *Gui* in terms of their heroes' conversions and subsequent changes—or lack of changes, in the case of Gui—to their actions and characters, but the texts are

⁶⁹³ *Gui*, 7733–36; Weiss, 181.

⁶⁹⁴ See above, 70–71.

⁶⁹⁵ *Vita Haroldi*, 38; Swanton, *Three Lives*, 15. See Ashe, 'Mutatio dexteræ Excelsi: Narratives of Transformation after the Conquest', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 110, no. 2 (2011): 141–72, at 157–61.

additionally connected through their protagonists' spiritual foreignness.⁶⁹⁶ As the *Vita* notes, exile is one of the central motifs of the Bible, both due to the recurrence of exile in the history of the Israelites, and in a metaphorical sense as a manifestation of mankind's separation from God. The nomadic existence of the Israelites is traditionally viewed as a moral lesson, which teaches them, among other things, to respect those who are unknown or foreign to them: 'peregrino molestus non eris scitis enim advenarum animas quia et ipsi peregrini fuistis in terra Aegypti' ['Thou shalt not molest a stranger, for you know the hearts of strangers: for you also were strangers in the land of Egypt'].⁶⁹⁷ This idea of being separated from one's homeland is also reflected spiritually following Adam and Eve's expulsion from Eden, and man's estrangement from God and banishment from the divine order. The Fall is necessary, however, in order to allow humanity to be saved through the coming of Christ. Jesus's claim that 'regnum meum non est de mundo hoc' ['My kingship is not of this world'] signals that one's place in the physical world is unimportant in relation to one's belonging in the spiritual realm.⁶⁹⁸ Molly Robinson Kelly suggests that exile is often a positive state because it

represents a reflection of the human condition rather than a painful exception to the normative human experience of belonging; in other words, to be human *is* to be exiled from God, who is our only place of true belonging. ... Exile is existential rather than accidental, a locus of deep metaphysical meaning.⁶⁹⁹

It is this positive view of spiritual exile that is reflected in the *Vita* and *Gui*, where Harold displays 'the powerful figure of the holy man who is very properly a

⁶⁹⁶ See Ashe, 'Mutatio', 161–69.

⁶⁹⁷ Exodus 23:9 (Vulgate and Douay-Rheims).

⁶⁹⁸ John 18:36 (Vulgate and Douay-Rheims). This idea is also raised in Boethius's *Consilatio Philosophiae*, in which Lady Philosophy states 'Sed tu quam procul a patria non quidem pulsus es, sed aberrasti ac. ... Si enim, cuius oriundo sis patriae reminiscare, non uti Atheniensium quondam multitudinis imperio regitur, sed εἰς κοίρανός ἐστιν, εἰς βασιλεὺς, qui frequentia civium non depulsione laetetur' ['You have not been driven out of your homeland; you have willingly wandered away. ... For if you can remember your true country you know that it is not, as Athens once was, ruled by many persons; rather "it has one ruler and one king", who rejoices in the presence of citizens, not in their expulsion']. Boethius, *De consolatione philosophiae*, 15; Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy*, 13.

⁶⁹⁹ Molly Robinson Kelly, *The Hero's Place: Medieval Literary Traditions of Space and Belonging* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2009), 30.

“stranger” to this world’, and Gui refuses to return to his secular life after his peregrinations, instead living in self-imposed exile by becoming a hermit.⁷⁰⁰ While both Gui and Harold have fought for their homelands and struggled for worldly gain, whether a kingdom or the love of a beautiful woman, both men ultimately denounce their secular identities and detach themselves from society through their eremitic lifestyles. These men are like ‘advena[e] ... in terra aliena’ [‘stranger(s) in a strange land’], a state that allows exiles to attain their true spiritual kingdom and achieve transcendence.⁷⁰¹ By eschewing an earthly existence, Gui becomes an outsider to English society and the family he struggled for so long to attain, while Harold lives in anonymity and political powerlessness.

The text’s increasing emphasis on Gui’s foreignness as he traverses the world on his penitential quest accentuates his isolation from both his geographical home and his spiritual one. Lisa Weston writes that ‘[a]ll saints are foreigners of a sort among other, less holy beings’, and while Gui, as a fictional figure, cannot be a saint, the poet goes to great lengths to suggest that he is saint-like: his corpse has a sweet odour, it has miraculous healing properties, and it has an inability to be moved (except by Terri). While he may not be foreign in a literal sense to the readers of *Gui*, he nevertheless embodies a similar distinction as he ‘straddle[s] the boundary between the human Same and the transcendent Other’.⁷⁰² This sense of exile is particularly poignant in Gui’s equation of God’s kingdom with his homeland, and the comparison of his pledge to God with feudal obligations:

⁷⁰⁰ Ashe, ‘Harold Godwineson’, 78.

⁷⁰¹ Exodus 2:22 (Vulgate and Douay-Rheims).

⁷⁰² Lisa Weston, ‘The Saracen and the Martyr: Embracing the Foreign in Hrotsvit’s *Pelagius*’, in *Meeting the Foreign in the Middle Ages*, ed. Albrecht Classen (New York: Routledge, 2002), 1–16, at 1. This view of the self as a stranger to the earthly world was common in the Middle Ages since most Christians saw themselves as exiles from paradise. See F. R. P. Akehurst and Stephanie Cain Van D’Elden, Preface to *The Stranger in Medieval Society* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), vii.

Verraiment servi un seignur
 Qui me fist ja grant honur,
 Par lui esteie mult honoré,
 Entre reis e princes mult amé;
 Par mesaventure puis li forfis,
 De la terre m'en alai e del pais,
 Ensemble od ço vois cum penant,
 Sa merci tut dis attendant;
 Quant serrai a lui acordé,
 Si m'en repeirerai el regné

[It's true, I served a lord who once did me great honour; through Him I was given great glory, and cherished in the company of kings and princes. Then through misfortune I did Him wrong. I left the country and the land and at the same time as this I travel like a penitent, constantly awaiting His mercy. When I am reconciled with Him, I will return to the kingdom].⁷⁰³

Once Gui is reconciled with God, he may be considered among those who are 'iam non ... hospites et advenae sed estis cives sanctorum et domestici Dei' ['strangers and foreigners no more, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God'].⁷⁰⁴ His foreignness is nullified once he returns to the only homeland that was believed to matter spiritually: the kingdom of heaven.

The translation of Gui's body at the end of the narrative from the woods near Warwick to Lorraine is strangely appropriate given the hero's consistent connotation of foreignness. His initial burial in the forest already indicates that he is an outsider to secular English society, but his disinterment and relocation indicates an even further externality. Weiss writes: 'It is very odd ... that England, having received the saintly body of its hero, is forced to relinquish it by a new and inconsistent turn in the story.'⁷⁰⁵ This section has often been read as a testament to the power of homosocial bonds and proof of the text's promotion of friendship over romantic love or national ties.⁷⁰⁶ It also

⁷⁰³ *Gui*, 8317–26; Weiss, 188.

⁷⁰⁴ Ephesians 2:19 (Vulgate and Douay-Rheims).

⁷⁰⁵ Judith Weiss, 'Gui de Warewic at Home and Abroad: A Hero for Europe', in *Guy of Warwick: Icon and Ancestor*, ed. Alison Wiggins and Rosalind Field (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2007), 1–11, at 9.

⁷⁰⁶ Judith Weiss, 'Mestre and Son; The Role of Sabaoth and Terri in *Boeve de Haumtone*', in *SBHLT*, 25–36, at 33. This section could also be a result of a poet attempting to prolong the story, without great thought to narrative coherence.

provides evidence of the romance's compulsion to continue and to move forward, as also demonstrated by *Gui*'s digression regarding the adventures of *Gui*'s son, Rainbrun. While Weiss has argued that 'the poet allowed his English hero to be re-absorbed into the place where he spends most of his time—the dangerous “abroad”', it is possible to extend this reading, since Weiss's idea relies on an idea of 'home' and 'abroad' as fixed categories.⁷⁰⁷ While *Gui*'s point of origin is England, and he often states that this is where he was born and raised, it does not necessarily follow that England is the geographic centre of his identity. Because of his foreignness throughout the text, it is possible to read *Gui*'s 'home' as not-England, or that he does not have a fixed home. Instead of depicting *Gui* reabsorbed into the 'dangerous “abroad”', the text's relocation of *Gui*'s final resting place reveals ambivalence about geographical affiliations. *Gui* is at home everywhere, and yet his home is nowhere; he continues to move even after death. *Gui*'s foreignness throughout his life and after his death accentuates his holiness. By having its hero remain perpetually and posthumously foreign, the text seemingly accentuates his lack of home on earth, and the fundamental lack of importance of such a concept. In death, *Gui* has become, in the words of Hugh of St. Victor, 'perfectus vero', a truly perfect person, for whom 'mundus totus exsilium est' ['the whole world is a place of exile'].⁷⁰⁸ Although the poet is clearly more interested in *Gui*'s military feats than his sanctity, *Gui*'s foreignness proves relevant in both a secular and a spiritual context. The poet casts his hero as the perfect knight *and* the perfect man; *Gui* is removed from England to accentuate his geographical foreignness as well as the irrelevance of place in the face of spiritual transcendence.

⁷⁰⁷ Weiss, 'Home and Abroad', 11.

⁷⁰⁸ Hugh of St. Victor, *Didascalicon de studio legendi*, 3:69; Taylor, trans., *Didascalicon of Hugh of St. Victor*, 216.

Decentralising England

This notion of homelessness or a sliding geographic identity is not unique to *Gui*, and is also present in *Boeve de Haumtone*. As we have seen in relation to the *Gesta Herwardi*, it is a commonplace to assign an exile-and-return structure to insular romance narratives.

This structure, however, is largely reductive and relies on a clear-cut division between, and definition of, home and away. As the stories of Haveloc and Hereward show, many insular narratives depict travel abroad and the reclamation of power or land, but the idea of ‘home’ or a centre that is implied in this structure is often complex.⁷⁰⁹ While *Horn* or *Fouke* may more straightforwardly display an exile-and-return pattern, *Boeve* and *Gui* challenge the structure because they fail to return permanently to English society.

Although *Gui* returns to England at the end of his adventures, he is never reintegrated into Warwick’s community or reunited with Felice. *Boeve* regains his English lands but gives them to his son, Miles, while the eponymous protagonist returns to the East and dies in Monbrant with his Saracen wife, Josiane.⁷¹⁰ Both *Boeve* and *Gui* do fulfil the latter part of Diane Speed’s definition, cited above, whereby heroes’ dynasties continue through their descendants.⁷¹¹ However, the heroes’ refusal to return to English society subverts the convention, and challenges any expectations the audiences may have had based on earlier romances such as *Horn*. *Gui*’s manipulation of this narrative pattern highlights the highly political assumptions that underlie the exile-and-return structure. While his chivalric adventure largely follows the pattern, it becomes unnecessary once his quest becomes religious. *Gui*’s spiritual exile can only be resolved through death, and the text’s unwillingness to allow *Gui* to return to his earthly home draws attention to the transcendent nature of his second quest. In the case of *Boeve*, which is more secular and

⁷⁰⁹ See above, 75–85 and 127.

⁷¹⁰ Monbrant is probably supposed to be in North Africa. See Melissa Furrow, ‘Ascopard’s Betrayal: A Narrative Problem’, in *SBHLT*, 145–60, at 147.

⁷¹¹ Quoted in full above, 75.

political in nature than *Gui*, the subversion of the convention calls into question the centrality of England; it also allows Boeve to exert his stabilising influence over foreign lands as well as in England, which is restored to order through Miles.

For the purposes of this thesis, examining the ways in which texts follow or diverge from the basic exile-and-return structure can reveal a great deal about the texts' conceptions of geography. It can also help readers to recognise the identities being attributed to the texts' heroes. 'Homeland' often refers to a place that has both public and private significance and is usually a point of origin for an individual, while 'home' refers to a much more personal concept that denotes where an individual feels that they belong. It is the place with which they choose to affiliate themselves.⁷¹² Kelly writes 'if home somehow holds the function of orienting us in the world, of giving us a meaningful centre from which to understand what we see, then home is vitally connected to how we make sense of things'.⁷¹³ While it is often problematic to assign sentiments of belonging or alienation to romance heroes, texts frequently go out of their way to express the desires of their protagonists to return home, or to their families.⁷¹⁴

This desire, however, is often merely theoretical in nature. As with *Gui*, whose knightly and religious identity depends on him being away from home, and Harold Godwinson, whose spiritual perfection, rather than nationalistic attachment, drives his compulsion to return to England, the practical and ideological implications of returning home are complex. At times, the return home can be one of the most important aspects of identity formation, as with *Fouke* or *Hereward*, whose return to find his family killed by

⁷¹² For discussions of home and belonging in the Middle Ages, see Kelly, *The Hero's Place*; Maryanne Kowaleski and P. J. P. Goldberg, eds. *Medieval Domesticity: Home, Housing, and Household in Medieval England* (Cambridge: CUP, 2008); Nicholas Howe, 'Introduction', in *Home and Homelessness in the Medieval and Renaissance World*, ed. Nicholas Howe (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004), 1–12. For more general discussions of the idea of home, see Mary Douglas, 'The Idea of a Home: A Kind of Space', *Social Research* 55, no. 1 (1991): 287–307.

⁷¹³ Kelly, *The Hero's Place*, 20–21.

⁷¹⁴ See the discussion of the *Gesta Herwardi* in Chapter One of this thesis. *Fouke le Fitz Waryn* displays a similar impulse as *Fouke* attempts to sail back to England.

the Normans becomes the primary reason for his rebellion and his defence of regional autonomy. In other cases, however, it can detract from the hero's ability to fulfil the quest that has given him fame. This can be seen in the *Roman de toute chevalerie*.⁷¹⁵ The *RTC* picks up on the idea of homelessness when Alexander is told by the prodigious tree of the sun that he will never return to Macedonia, 'N'a Grece dont vus estes emperere clamez, / Ne vus vostre mere ne vos sorrurs ne verrez, / Kar par vos destinees vus est çoe destinez' [Nor to Greece of which you were proclaimed emperor, you will not see your mother nor your sisters, indeed by your foreseen destinies this is fated].⁷¹⁶ The quest to reclaim a home is less pertinent in the Alexander romances; in the *Alexandreis*, for instance, Alexander is so eager for conquest that he neglects to cast his eyes on Macedonia for the last time:

Tanta sub inuicto bellandi corde uoluntas,
Tanta parentis erat obliuio, tanta sororum.
Solus ... declinat lumina terris
Effrenus Macedo. Qui cum Cilicum prius arua
Collibus eductis Asiam que emergere uidit,
Gaudet

[Such was the unchecked Macedonian's will
For warfare: he alone, forgetting both
mother and sisters, turns away his eyes
from Grecian soil, and rejoiced to see
the green Cilician fields and Asia's hills
rise out of the deep].⁷¹⁷

The *RTC* has no analogous episode: instead it implies that Alexander has a sense of attachment to his homeland and his family; he weeps when he hears that he will never

⁷¹⁵ The *RTC* will be explored in more depth on 235–49.

⁷¹⁶ Thomas of Kent, *Le roman d'Alexandre ou Le roman de toute chevalerie*, ed. Brian Foster and Ian Short and trans. Catherine Gaullier-Bougassas and Laurence Harf-Lancner (Paris: Champion, 2003), C3–C5. All translations of the *RTC* are my own.

⁷¹⁷ Gualterus de Castellione, *Alexandreis*, ed. M. L. Colker. Library of Latin Texts, Series A. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 376–80; translation in Walter de Châtillon, *The Alexandreis of Walter de Châtillon*, trans. David Townsend (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania press, 1996), 439–42. Townsend's translation is fairly loose, and the line numbers differ from the original text. This section of the *Alexandreis* has a rather moving description of the bittersweet experience of leaving home, as Alexander's men loosen their ships' anchors from the sands of their homeland, and sail off to Persia. They textually and figuratively unmoor themselves from the fixity of their homes while reflecting on the 'dulcoris' [sweetness] of their native land. *Alexandreis*, 349–86, at 366; Townsend, trans., *Alexandreis*, 410–49, at 429.

return. However, in order to maintain his status as a conqueror, Alexander must continue to take new land and defend his conquests against those who seek to claim them. The return home in insular narratives is said to signal a restoration of order and justice to a kingdom, but when the kingdom encompasses the world, Alexander's homeland becomes less significant. Furthermore, throughout the *RTC*, references to Alexander's home are placed in the context of his childhood. Darius mocks Alexander's youth, instructing him to 'Retorne en ton pais, ne va un pié avant, / Mes va a tes parenz qui me sunt enclinant' [Go back to your country, don't advance one more foot, but go to your parents who bow before me], just as later he instructs his men to 'menez [Alisandre] a Macedoigne, a sa mere renduz' [bring (Alexander) to Macedonia and return him to his mother].⁷¹⁸ Alexander's home is depicted as a place of regression, which is unbecoming for a man who believes that 'tot le mond m'ert pelote e joie a ma tristur' [all the world will be a toy ball that will bring me joy in my sadness].⁷¹⁹ To be a conqueror is to continually move forward, and to return home would not only risk the stability of Alexander's empire, but also challenge his identity as 'gouverneur' of the world.⁷²⁰ Alexander does not conquer the world for the glory of Macedonia, but because of his own pride and desire for power; consequently, the return home is unnecessary for the consolidation of his empire and the establishment of its centre.⁷²¹

Whereas in *Fouke* and *Horn* the hero's home and homeland are inherently interconnected, and the lands that they lose at the beginning of the text are those in which they settle at the end, texts such as *Boeve* and *Gui* demonstrate a shift in the idea of home which accompanies an ontological change in identity. Romances that function as quasi-

⁷¹⁸ *RTC*, 1397–98, 1528.

⁷¹⁹ *RTC*, 1499.

⁷²⁰ *RTC*, 1498.

⁷²¹ This stands in contrast to the Galfredian tradition of Arthur, whose conquest of Rome is an attempt to capture the glory of the Roman Empire and transfer it to Britain. However, it is this aspiration that is the cause of Arthur's fall; he cannot bring glory to a kingdom that is crumbling due to the king's absence.

travel narratives draw attention to the idea that geographic affiliation is unfixed, and not limited by place of birth. These heroes do not merely travel through the outside world in isolation: they interact with it, form attachments to it and those who live there; they claim territory and become rulers. This type of narrative suggests a fracturing within any discourse of difference between the self and other. Although both Fouke and Gui refuse to exert control over foreign lands, the former only does so because ‘yl n’est pas digne de receyvre de autruy doun qe les suens de dreit heritage ne puet tenir a reson’ [He is not worthy to receive the gift of another’s property, who cannot rightly hold that which is his of direct inheritance].⁷²² Boeve, similarly, cannot take another’s land before he regains his own rightful lordship. Yet comparing these texts is important, because doing so reveals a fundamental difference in attitudes towards ‘home’. Fouke seeks to regain his inheritance because, the text suggests, he has a deep attachment to Whittington. His quest is not to gain any land, but the land which has been in his family for generations and which was purportedly gained by the grace of God. Fouke’s reclamation of Whittington is inherently tied to ideas of restored justice. Boeve, meanwhile, has no real attachment to the land of which he is dispossessed. His family is, as Weiss puts it, ‘markedly dysfunctional’, and does not present a reason for him to return to England permanently.⁷²³ It is, however, the desire for justice which drives his quest to regain Hampton.

Both *Gui* and *Boeve* offer an additional difference to *Fouke* and *Horn*: their heroes visit the Holy Lands. This creates a dynamic between England and the East that draws on the ideas of spiritual identity discussed earlier in this chapter in relation to *Gui*. Because the Holy Land, and particularly Jerusalem, is cast as a terrestrial incarnation of God’s kingdom and thus a universal Christian homeland, conceptions of home in these

⁷²² *Fouke*, 41.29–31.

⁷²³ Weiss, Introduction to *Boeve de Haumtone and Gui de Warewic*, 6.

two narratives are rendered more complex. To an extent, both texts reflect the Crusades as their heroes venture into the Levant and other Eastern lands. Turville-Petre writes that the Middle English Guy ‘is portrayed as a crusader, a pilgrim as the crusaders were officially recognized as pilgrims, enduring hardships in *hethenesse* as a spiritual exercise’.⁷²⁴ However, *Gui* and *Boeve* do not exclusively depict the East as a site of *hethenesse*: in their travels they frequently meet other Christians, pilgrims, and old friends. The lands through which Gui and Boeve travel are portrayed as heterogeneous spaces shared by many kinds of people who have searched for, or found, a homeland in the East. Glenn Burger writes that the Crusader states were composed of a mix of ““foreign” European crusaders present for the limited duration of a given military action, members of the crusading orders (Hospitallers, Teutonic Knights, Templars) permanently based in the Middle East, and the knights drawn from the Christian states of Outremer’.⁷²⁵ While it was not common for eleventh- and twelfth-century Crusaders to remain in the East once they had finished their campaigns, especially since the personal acquisition of land was not the primary reason for the Crusades, ideas of homeland and conquest are inherently bound up in crusading ideology.⁷²⁶ By reconquering Christ’s physical homeland, symbolic of the spiritual home worthy Christians would find in Heaven, Crusaders could draw closer to God.⁷²⁷ It is the homeland shared by all Christians, regardless of their nation, for being the place most closely connected to the divine.⁷²⁸ Gui’s voyage to Jerusalem and his perpetual pilgrimage fashion him as a hero

⁷²⁴ Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*, 120.

⁷²⁵ Glenn Burger, ‘Cilician Armenian Métissage and Hetoum’s *La Fleur des Histories de la Terre d’Orient*’, in *The Postcolonial Middle Ages*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 67–83, at 79–80.

⁷²⁶ Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The First Crusaders, 1095–1131* (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), 19; Tyerman, *England and the Crusades*, 18.

⁷²⁷ See Suzanne Yeager, *Jerusalem in Medieval Narrative* (Cambridge: CUP, 2008), 1–4. This logic ignores Christ’s proclamation that his kingdom was not of this earth.

⁷²⁸ In *Richard*, Richard unleashes his ire upon Saladin when the latter tells him to go home. Akbari writes: ‘Richard is outraged at a suggestion that is so manifestly wrong for (in the view of the poem), his “own land” is precisely the Holy Land itself’. Akbari, ‘The Hunger for National Identity in *Richard Coeur de*

whose idea of homeland has shifted. In the second part of the narrative his desire to go home no longer signifies a return to England, but a voyage to God's heavenly kingdom on earth, before his final journey to a celestial homeland.⁷²⁹ Similarly, Boeve spends a great deal of time in the Holy Lands, and although the spiritual dimensions of his adventures are less explicit than in *Gui*, his exile in Egypt is poignant in a Judeo-Christian context as it reflects the exile and enslavement of the Israelites. Boeve's temporary lordship over Damascus following the defeat of Bradmund and his ultimate claim on Hermine's Egyptian kingdom and the geographically-vague Monbrant mark him as a figure who represents a crusading fantasy. This is especially visible in his destruction of the idols in Damascus, a city that failed to be captured in the ill-fated siege of 1148, which marked the end of the Second Crusade. Its description as 'la plus riche cité ke soit desuz ciel' ['the most splendid city under the sun'] reflects its double meaning as one of the most beautiful cities in the world and under heaven; it is physically and spiritually glorious.⁷³⁰ By destroying the idols he reflects the desire, at least in part, to rid spiritually important places of 'paens' ['pagans'].⁷³¹ This is again reiterated at the end of the narrative when Boeve comically converts the Damascan king: 'Hil prist un mace, si fiert Tervagant, / Ewe beneit gette l'eveske Morant: / Une ruge mastin s'ent torné fuant' ['He took a great club and struck Tervagant, and Bishop Morant threw holy water over him; a red dog came rushing out'].⁷³² This revelation inspires a hyperbolic mass baptism:

Lyon', in *Readings in Medieval Culture*, ed. Robert M. Stein and Sandra Pierson Prior (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 198–227, at 207.

⁷²⁹ That *Gui* spends relatively little time in Jerusalem and the poem devotes little attention to it suggests that the poem is still more interested in *Gui*'s martial identity than his spiritual one. For an exposition of *Gui*'s sustained status as a warrior following his decision to devote his life to God, see Ashe, 'Mutatio', 161–69.

⁷³⁰ Jean-Pierre Martin, ed., *Beuve de Hamptone: Chanson de geste anglo-normande de la fin du XII^e siècle* (Paris: Champion Classiques, 2014), 867. This edition is henceforth referred to as *Boeve*; Weiss, 40; *AND*, s. v. ciel.

⁷³¹ *Boeve*, 878; Weiss, 40.

⁷³² *Boeve*, 3665–67; Weiss, 92.

Ne fist unkes Deu clerc si bien lisant
 Ke vus set dire, tant est l'asemblé grant.
 Mult est merveye la grant baptesment.
 Bien les sermonne l'eveske Morant,
 Bien dure .IIII. moys ke ne fist fenant

[God never made a cleric so expert at reading aloud who could describe to you how big the gathering was: the great baptism was extraordinary, lasting a good four months before it ended. Bishop Morant exhorted them powerfully].⁷³³

This wondrous, miraculous conversion of the inhabitants of the East only serves to reinforce this crusading rhetoric. While Boeve spends little of the narrative seeking to regain Hampton, his time in the Holy Lands and his conversion of Muslims to Christianity suggest a reclamation of a different kind of homeland: one that relies on religious, rather than secular, priorities.⁷³⁴

In spite of these religious elements, *Boeve* is the most pertinent text through which to explore secular ideas of home, since his adventures are expanded after he regains Hampton, although this may have been a later addition.⁷³⁵ It is the contrast between Boeve's anticipated home and the land to which he returns that makes the text unique. Over the course of the text, as Boeve spends more and more time outside England, Boeve's geographic identity becomes more fluid. When Boeve first arrives in Hermine's court, Hermine says 'di moi dount tu es' ['tell me where you are from'], and Boeve responds straightforwardly and precisely: 'En Engleterre fu nee, / Fiz au counte Guion de Haumtone la cité' ['I was born in England, son of count Gui of the city of Hampton'].⁷³⁶ When the same question is asked several years later, using exactly the

⁷³³ *Boeve*, 3677–81; Weiss, 92. See n. 294 on Weiss, 92 for an explanation of Albert Stimming's inversion of lines 3680 and 3681. This may have been influenced by the Norse translation of the poem. See Christopher Sanders, *Bevens Saga* (Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi, 2001), 390.

⁷³⁴ There was, however, a rhetorical relationship between England and the Holy Land that was frequently deployed in English writing throughout the Middle Ages. Suzanne Yeager writes that late medieval 'English writings about travel to the holy city were part of a much larger project of constructing England in the image of Jerusalem and depicting its English citizens as the new Israelites. Through the use of crusade rhetoric and the Jerusalem relation, English writers fashioned a communal identity based on the Holy Land's ideal inhabitants: deserving heirs of sacred space, blessed by God'. Yeager, *Jerusalem*, 15–16.

⁷³⁵ See Weiss, Introduction to *Boeve de Haumtone and Gui de Warewic*, 8.

⁷³⁶ *Boeve*, 380, 386–87; Weiss, 32.

same words, Boeve responds with a list of the places he has been: ‘jeo ai esté a Nubie / E en Cartagie e en Clavie / E a l’Arbre Sek, en Barbarie / E a Macedoyne, par tut en Panie’ [‘I have been to Nubia and in Carthage and in Esclavia and at the Dry Tree, in Barbary and in Macedonia, throughout the heathen lands’].⁷³⁷ His identity is defined by his itinerary rather than his origins, and, like Gui, he frequently defines himself by his foreignness. He is always displaced, and his geographic identity is frequently unfixed, pointing elsewhere.⁷³⁸ He tells Josiane that he is a ‘povere chevaler de un autre regioun, / Jeo n’i vi unkes uncore mon fou ne ma meisoun’ [‘poor knight from another land; I’ve not yet seen my house or my land’].⁷³⁹ While the statement that he is from an ‘autre regioun’ is a relative one, and it is consistent in the context of Boeve’s location in Hermine’s kingdom, it nevertheless suggests that no matter where he is, he is always from elsewhere. Even when he returns to England, he is swiftly banished once more after his horse accidentally kills the king’s son: ‘jeo de le [terre] tot sui exilez’ [‘I am totally exiled from the land’].⁷⁴⁰ The homeland he desires is denied to him. Although he ultimately regains Hampton and even founds the lordship of Arundel, the conclusion of the text brings him back to the East. He is finally able to receive his family’s lands as well as acquire Yvori’s territory, and ‘his foreign kingdom of Monbrant has become “home”’.⁷⁴¹ While Boeve’s place of origin is England and he is overtly Christian, he is decidedly influenced by his Eastern upbringing. Boeve’s claim that he is from another

⁷³⁷ Boeve, 1519–22; Weiss, 54

⁷³⁸ This idea is also mentioned in Luke Sunderland’s article ‘Bueve d’Hantone/Bovo d’Antona: Exile, Translation and the History of the *Chanson de geste*’, in *Rethinking Medieval Translation: Ethics, Politics, Theory*, ed. Emma Campbell and Robert Mills (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2012), 226–42, especially 234–41. Sunderland compares Boeve’s homelessness with the text’s lack of fixed national identity, and hence its ability to be adapted and appropriated throughout Europe.

⁷³⁹ Boeve, 686–87; Weiss, 37.

⁷⁴⁰ Boeve, 2635; Weiss, 74.

⁷⁴¹ Weiss, Introduction to *Boeve de Haumtone* and *Gui de Warewic*, 6. Kristeva writes that this is a symptom of being a perpetual foreigner: ‘the foreigner ... does not give the same weight to “origins” as common sense does. ... His origin certainly haunts him, for better or for worse, but it is indeed *elsewhere* that he has set his hopes, that his struggle takes place, that his life holds together today. *Elsewhere* versus the origin, and even *nowhere* versus the roots’. Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, trans. Leon Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 29.

‘regioun’ is curious. It is likely that the text is merely being geographically vague, but the focus on England as a region rather than a country suggests that there is some sense of continuity between Egypt and England; they are both merely regions of a larger whole, and the divisions between them are not fixed, or not present at all. The text draws England and Egypt together, both geographically and culturally. Fellows and Djordjević highlight the lack of ‘nationalist baggage’ in the Anglo-Norman *Boeve* and state that it is not until the story is translated into English that Bevis becomes an English hero.⁷⁴² The text demonstrates a shifting and sliding geographic identity that is constantly in question, and is never settled, not even after the narrative reaches its conclusion.

While most exile-and-return narratives such as *Horn* place the geographic centres of their narratives in England, *Boeve*’s use of the structure is more akin to the Haveloc stories, where it becomes difficult to determine the location of the text’s—and the hero’s—centre, and to assess in which direction the exile-and-return pattern operates. A traditional interpretation of the narrative structure might be that Boeve is forced from England, spends his youth having adventures, and eventually returns to reclaim his heritage. His second expulsion after his horse kills Edgar’s son and his subsequent return to save Sabot’s son and to marry Miles to Edgar’s daughter provides a second instance of exile-and-return, much like *Gui*’s. However, it is also possible to read Boeve’s centre as located in Hermine’s kingdom in Egypt. His imprisonment, escape, journey through Europe and the Near East, and reclamation of his English lands therefore constitute his period of exile. Just as he must dethrone Emperor Doun and regain Hampton, so too must he take Hermine’s kingdom upon his eventual return east. Additionally, he captures the kingdom of Monbrant, and both of these Eastern kingdoms go to his son Gui. This

⁷⁴² Fellows and Djordjević, ‘Introduction’, 3.

interweaving exile-and-return structure, and the twinning of his sons and their respective realms, connect the East and the West and blur distinctions between them.

This ambiguity is furthered by moments of structural parallelism. The early parts of the narrative depict the Saracen world as a reversal of the Christian one, as each event that befalls Boeve's father, Gui, prior to Boeve's exile is counteracted by an event in Egypt.⁷⁴³ Boeve's mother devises a fake boar hunt as a plot to have her husband killed; as he is hunting the Emperor and his men ambush Gui and bring back his severed head. As a counterpart to this instance, in Egypt Boeve goes out to kill the real boar that plagues Hermine's kingdom and he brings back its head to the king as a trophy. Valérie Galent-Fasseur reads these two severed heads as parallels to one another, but it is more likely that the mere presence of the boar in the latter section reworks the former in a wish-fulfilling manner; when Gui and his men 'vinderent au bois, le sengler vont queraunt' ['came to the forest, they went looking for the boar'],⁷⁴⁴ he did not find it, but when Boeve 'vint a bois pur quere le sengler' ['came to the forest to seek the boar'],⁷⁴⁵ he came across it immediately. The fictional boar that ought to have been present in Gui's hunt presents itself to Boeve. Just as the text laments that Gui 'ne fust armé a son talent' ['was not armed to his liking'] when he is attacked, Boeve lacks the necessary weapons to defend himself, 'quida trere le braunc, / Mes il le eust oblié, ceo fu damage graunt, / La ou il tua le fort sengler' ['made to draw his sword, but unluckily he had left it behind when he killed the mighty boar'].⁷⁴⁶ While events in England end badly for Gui, in Egypt Boeve re-enacts and rectifies the circumstances of his father's death, emerging as a valiant warrior as he combats ten men with only the stub of a shattered lance. Egypt becomes a corrective mirror for England, taking past events and repeating them with a

⁷⁴³ See Valérie Galent-Fasseur, 'La tentation sarrasine de *Beuve de Hantone*', in *La chrétienté au péril sarrasin* (Aix-en-Provence: Publications de l'Université de Provence, 2000), 27–39, at 28.

⁷⁴⁴ *Boeve*, 143; Weiss, 27.

⁷⁴⁵ *Boeve*, 437; Weiss, 33.

⁷⁴⁶ *Boeve*, 175, 467–69; Weiss, 28, 34.

more favourable outcome; Egypt is an improved version of Boeve's home. The structural parallels between these sections are consolidated when both Gui and Boeve are confronted by men who want to kill them. While the Emperor's men call out to Gui, 'Venez, veillard, avaut! / Vos perderez la teste, par Deu ly tut pussaunt' ['Come on, old man! By God Almighty, you will lose your head'], the foresters who attack Boeve threaten 'Vus ne irrez avaut! / Vos perderez la teste, par Mahun li pussaunt!' ['You'll go no further. By Mahomet the mighty, you'll lose your head!'].⁷⁴⁷ The direct verbal parallel between these lines, contrasting 'venez ... avaut' with 'ne irrez avaut', and 'Deu ly tut pussaunt' with 'Mahun li pussaunt', forces a comparison between the Christian West and the Muslim East. While the text is overtly Christian in general, and even in these examples it favours the 'tut pussaunt' Christian God rather than the merely 'pussaunt' Mohammed, the syntactic parallels between these two sections give almost-equal footing to both religions.⁷⁴⁸ These sections invite readers to view the two regions as mirrors of one another, with Egypt reflecting and inverting events that occur in England. Yet by recreating the circumstances of Gui's death and replacing them with Boeve's success, the text depicts the Saracen lands as those where justice, order, and honour prevail over treachery and corruption, providing an alternative to the depiction of Christian England. Boeve, whose English birth and Saracen upbringing allow him to embody aspects of both cultures, functions as the meeting point between these two opposite, and yet uncannily similar, realms.

⁷⁴⁷ Boeve, 145–46, 465–66; Weiss, 27, 34.

⁷⁴⁸ In his commentary *On Lamentations*, William of Malmesbury highlights the relationship between the Abrahamic religions. He writes that Christians, Jews, and Muslims are all 'sects' that share a belief in God the Father, regardless if they disagree about God the Son. See *Willelmi Meldunensis monachi Liber super explanationem lamentationum ieremie prophetæ*, ed. Michael Winterbottom and Rodney Thomson (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 194. See also Rodney Thomson, *William of Malmesbury* (Cambridge: Boydell Press, 2003), 169; B. Z. Kedar, *Crusade and Mission: European Approaches toward the Muslims* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 87–88.

At first Egypt appears to be a utopia, providing a topsy-turvy world of wish fulfilment, where crimes in England are reversed and rectified. Slowly, however, the two realms converge. With Hermine's betrayal and Boeve's death sentence, it becomes clear that the Egyptian king is no more honourable than Boeve's mother and Emperor Doun. Galent-Fasseur writes that the parallels between the two realms continue, but rather than cancelling out one another they become doubles, with events in Egypt repeating and imitating those in England: 'Les deux univers, également décadents, sont devenus fidèles reflets l'un de l'autre' [The two universes, equally decadent, have become faithful reflections of one another].⁷⁴⁹ Through this pattern of inverting and then mirroring English actions in Egypt, *Boeve* simultaneously erases and solidifies the distinctions between the kingdoms. They are both flawed countries that require the restoration of justice and order typically brought by the return of the hero.

Through this narrative doubling, the exoticism of Egypt is diminished: no longer a utopia that serves to counterbalance the corruption in England, it figures instead as a kingdom that is ruled without clarity or justice. By bringing together these two countries, the text finds its centre between Egypt and England, making the East increasingly familiar while England is accorded a hint of the strange and the foreign. Turning the ethnographic mirror on England in a way that renders England foreign presents readers with the potentially destabilising notion that England, and the English, are not altogether different from those living in Egypt or other Muslim territories. It suggests that the land of one's birth is not the sole determinant of identity or morality. Hermine is just as noble as King Edgar, and both are guilty of the same crimes of unjustly expelling Boeve from their kingdoms. By defamiliarising the land in which the text was written and read, while exposing its readers to the East and its sympathetic and relatable inhabitants, the text

⁷⁴⁹ Galent-Fasseur, 'La tentation sarrasine', 31. My translation.

destabilises any notion of fixity in the dynamic between Christian and Muslim lands.

This dialogic relationship reveals an openness to alternative perspectives that reminds readers that England must be seen in the context of the rest of the world and that to others, England may have been as exotic as the East was to the English.

The Exotic Hero

The reciprocal relationship between England and Eastern lands is particularly visible through the exchange of merchandise. Generally speaking, due to its supposed proximity to earthly paradise and its extraordinary climate, the East was seen as a place of immense wealth and a source of material goods, such as gold, precious stones, and spices which came to the Christian world through trade and returning travellers, including pilgrims and Crusaders.⁷⁵⁰ *Boeve*, however, presents England as the source of commodities and merchandise: the text's hero is repeatedly sold at the beginning of the text, first by Sabot to merchants, and then to a ship of Saracens for 'Quater fez ... son pois de or' ['four times his weight in gold'], and finally to Hermine, king of Egypt.⁷⁵¹ While Eastern countries may be the source of rare and precious spices and gems, England is depicted as the source for potential heroes. *Boeve*'s status as a luxury object is augmented by the text's focus on his status as a 'serf' ['slave'], as a possession who is continually admired for his 'beuté' [beauty].⁷⁵² He is consumed through Josiane's gaze: 'la file le roi le prist a regarder: / Tel amour ad pris envers le bachelor' ['the king's daughter started to look at him; she felt such love for the young man'].⁷⁵³ As the possession that she must obtain lest she die (or so she claims), *Boeve* has value that is both aesthetic and ideal in nature as he

⁷⁵⁰ Paul Freedman, 'Locating the Exotic', in *Locating the Middle Ages: The Spaces and Places of Medieval Culture*, ed. Julian Weiss and Sarah Salih (London: King's College, 2012), 23. See also Suzanne Conklin Akbari, *Idols in the East: European Representations of Islam and the Orient, 1100–1450* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009), 3.

⁷⁵¹ *Boeve*, 359; Weiss, 32.

⁷⁵² *Boeve*, 415, 383; Weiss, 32, 33.

⁷⁵³ *Boeve*, 430–31; Weiss, 33.

exhibits both extraordinary beauty and knightly valour.⁷⁵⁴ This mercantile dynamic offers up an English hero-to-be as an object of the desirous Eastern gaze and as a piece of merchandise to be bought and sold for large sums of money; Boeve is presented to Hermine as an exotic commodity. Boeve's origins and his religion mark his alterity to the Egyptian court, yet his values and knightly nature allow him to be incorporated into this chivalric and seemingly utopian culture. Boeve's heroic nature is contingent upon his interaction with Saracens. As a space that might be seen as exotic, *Boeve's* England is a producer of valuable knights (or potential knights), which imagines a relationship between England and Egypt whereby each exoticises the other. *Boeve's* England and Egypt mutually define one another, and readers of *Boeve* are able to consume the East textually, while diageetically English heroes are possessed or imprisoned by Eastern rulers. Both Egypt and England are made subject and object simultaneously, and both are given value.

It has been argued that Boeve's interaction with a foreign realm 'contaminates' his English cultural identity. Robert Rouse claims that 'to encounter the Other physically is to enter what has been termed a "contact zone", and such proximity brings with it risks of external contamination of one's own culture'; although Boeve makes the East English through his claim to Hermine's kingdom and Monbrant, that Englishness is nevertheless tainted by his time abroad.⁷⁵⁵ This line of thinking, however, implies that English identity is in some way pure, homogenous, and stable, ideas this thesis has disputed. No exile-and-return hero is free from contact with the Other; it is the nature of the narrative pattern to ensure that the hero experiences lands beyond his own and learn from those whom he meets. He thus necessarily absorbs aspects of other cultures. Indeed, it is even

⁷⁵⁴ *Boeve*, 484. Many of the claims about Boeve's valour are ironic, as the text claims that he is 'Boefs li vaillant' ['Boeve the brave'] almost immediately after it states that he 'de plurer ne fine' ['never stopped weeping'] throughout his whole journey from England to Egypt. *Boeve*, 377, 365; Weiss, 32.

⁷⁵⁵ Rouse, 'For King and Country?' 117–18.

possible to argue that if scholars take ‘Matter of England’ exile-and-return heroes as the paragons of Englishness, then English identity is necessarily defined by ‘contamination’ from other cultures.

However, as Siobhain Bly Calkin notes, there may have been a historical reason for this fear: ‘One of the historical anxieties prompted by crusade and settlement in the East was the fear that western Christians involved in these activities might lose their sense of proper mores and become too similar to their Muslim opponents’.⁷⁵⁶ Crusaders were supposed to save the Holy Land from the influence of the Muslims, not to ‘visit the contagion of heathen pollution upon themselves’.⁷⁵⁷ Boeve’s ultimate settlement in the East may cause further anxiety regarding the condition of those who spent a great deal of time there before returning to England. It is possible to view Boeve’s settlement in the East as a necessity; he has been too influenced by his Eastern upbringing to properly settle into England as an Englishman. However, this implies that there is a difference between the English and the Saracens, one that *Boeve* actively rejects as the hero chooses his allies based on their values, and as England and Egypt are eventually twinned.

‘Strangeness Appealed’: The Medieval Fascination with the Exotic⁷⁵⁸

Through texts such as *Boeve* and *Gui*, readers are offered a vision of the exotic East, and inhabitants of England can imagine themselves to be objects of fascination to those abroad. This chapter will now turn its attention to understanding exoticism and its

⁷⁵⁶ Siobhain Bly Calkin, ‘The Anxieties of Encounter and Exchange: Christian Heroism in *Sir Beves of Hamton*’, *Florilegium* 21 (2004): 135–58, at 137. For a discussion of identity in Frankish settlements in the East, see Alan V. Murray, ‘Ethnic Identity in the Crusader States: The Frankish Race and the Settlement of Outremer’, in *Concepts of National Identity in the Middle Ages*, 59–73.

⁷⁵⁷ Geraldine Heng, ‘Cannibalism, the First Crusade, and the Genesis of Medieval Romance’, *Differences* 10 (1998): 98–174, at 107. There were similar concerns about the English in Wales and Ireland. The Statutes of Kilkenny in 1366 were an attempt to prevent the ‘degeneracy’ of the English in Ireland by preventing them from adopting Irish practices, such as the Irish manner of riding or dress, and discouraging intermarriage. For the Statutes, see H. F. Berry, ed., *Statutes and Ordinances and Acts of the Parliament of Ireland: King John to Henry V* (Dublin: Alexander Thom & Co., 1907), 430–31. For a discussion of English identity in Ireland, see Frame, ‘Les Engleis Néés en Irlande’, 83–103.

⁷⁵⁸ Bynum, *Metamorphosis*, 68.

relationship with the self, particularly through Thomas of Kent's *Roman de toute chevalerie*.

Paul Freedman distinguishes the exotic from general alterity by stating that 'the medieval exotic is, at least in part, alluring. It combines the beautiful or seductive with the frightening and disorienting'.⁷⁵⁹ While alterity can denote that which is external to or rejected from a community's identity or self-definition, the exotic is presented as something that has cultural value because of its difference and rarity, because it is intriguing and provokes a sense of wonder at the variation within the world. However, as with the spices and gems that were traded and desired as symbols of status and wealth, the exotic also has a commodity value. Freedman writes: 'The exotic is related to the marvellous, but has a more material, even commercial (if fabulous) significance'.⁷⁶⁰ While 'exotic' is a term often used in relation to luxury goods and sumptuous treasures from abroad, it can also be applied to texts' presentations of foreign peoples, especially when they are presented as objects of consumption.

The *RTC*, written in the late twelfth century, functions both as an account of Alexander the Great's exploits and as an encyclopaedic map of the world and its inhabitants. Like Fouke, who marks the edges of Britain by sailing around the island, Alexander maps the earth's boundaries by travelling to the eastern edge of the globe. By following Alexander on his insatiable quest to conquer the world, the text provides an account of the wonders of India and Ethiopia, and displays an interest in geography and cosmology. Although the *RTC*'s prologue is largely pessimistic in tone, it highlights the delights that enliven mankind's experience of the world, many of which are to be found within the work that it introduces. The text opens with a vision of the earth as a 'culvert e perillus' [base and dangerous] place, reflecting that 'vie d'ome est breve e le mond

⁷⁵⁹ Freedman, 'Locating the Exotic', 23.

⁷⁶⁰ Freedman, 'Locating the Exotic', 23.

lab[o]rus, / Deceivables a toz e a multz ennuius' [man's life is brief and the world is laborious, deceitful to all and very difficult].⁷⁶¹ Mankind is only saved from a meaningless terrestrial existence by the mercy of God. This opening immediately draws attention to the human condition, and its focus on life on earth implicitly reminds readers that it is only in heaven that one can find peace; it shares this sentiment with *Gui*. This moralising tone, however, shifts when Thomas states that because the earth is dark and dangerous, joy should be drawn from wherever it can be found. While Thomas brazenly uses this idea to justify his book, which he claims can offer its audience reprieve from earthly torments and therefore offers the next best thing to divine salvation, the idea of delight becomes increasingly important as Alexander is seen to take joy in the marvels he finds throughout the world. This image of the world as base by nature, yet with the potential to provide amusement, reminds readers that earthly things are mere distractions in the face of spiritual perfection. The world's value lies in its ability to provide entertainment and distraction, however fleeting. The *RTC* therefore functions as a guide to the exotic delights that the world has to offer, as well as a form of entertainment. Although the text's audience only learns of these marvels through Alexander rather than experiencing them directly, Thomas implies that the knowledge that such things exist should provide a small kernel of joy.⁷⁶² The text immediately reframes the 'regnes e ... iles hidus' [frightening/dreadful kingdoms and islands] as sources of pleasure and distraction from the suffering of the world.⁷⁶³ It categorises the exotic wonders of the East and the inhabitants of the world as things—they are often objectified—that inspire happiness and comfort, eliminating any potential fear or hostility toward the foreign that audiences may be tempted to harbour.

⁷⁶¹ *RTC*, 1, 5–6.

⁷⁶² See Suzanne Conklin Akbari, 'Alexander in the Orient: Bodies and Boundaries in the *Roman de toute chevalerie*', in *Postcolonial Approaches to the European Middle Ages: Translating Cultures*, ed. Ananya Jahanara Kabir and Deanne Williams (Cambridge: CUP, 2005), 105–26, at 112.

⁷⁶³ *RTC*, 28.

While many Alexander romances depict the hero conquering the world to seek power and assert his dominance, the *RTC* also describes Alexander's active search for marvels as he compiles an archive, or inventory, of wonders from each part of his empire.⁷⁶⁴ These range from sirens and giants to hybrids with dogs' heads, civilisations that live under the sea, people who have four eyes, those who live solely on the smell of wild apples, and the tribes of Gog and Magog. Alexander is seen to delight in these peoples and the prodigies of the world and actively seeks them out by asking those he encounters if 'vous savez / Nul[e] estrange merveille en ices regnez / Qe facent a mettre en mes autoritez' [you know of any strange marvel in this realm that can be put in my authoritative texts].⁷⁶⁵ By seeing and hearing about these marvels and peoples, Alexander transforms them into objects of consumption, curiosities that attest to the diversity of the world, and possessions that can be his: 'Alisandre li roys fu fiers e enperanz / Quant veit qe tuit icist fussent a ses comanz' [Alexander the king was proud and of enterprising spirit when he saw that all these people were at his command].⁷⁶⁶ This is clearly visible when he first comes to India, stating:

'Tiel realme ne fut,' ceo dit a ses privez,
'Si riche ne si bon, ne ja tant honorez.
Ja ne m'en partiray ainz qe ere roy coronez
E de Inde superior emperere clamez'

['There has never been a realm such as this', he said to his friends, 'So rich nor so good, nor so worthy. I will not leave before I am crowned king and declared supreme emperor of India'].⁷⁶⁷

He values the land because he views it as a space to be claimed, and the people that inhabit that land can be his subjects and possessions. While these prodigies are not explicitly objects of trade, the literary treatment of them as collector's items that can be

⁷⁶⁴ These are missing from Walter of Châtillon's *Alexandreis*, but are present in other English and continental sources, such as the Anglo-Saxon *Letter from Alexander to Aristotle*. These are later replicated in the Middle English *King Alisaunder*, which uses the *RTC* as a source.

⁷⁶⁵ *RTC*, 7025–27.

⁷⁶⁶ *RTC*, 4665–66.

⁷⁶⁷ *RTC*, 4413–16.

incorporated into Alexander's 'autoritez' points out that they—or the idea of them—have cultural value. When describing these beings, the text shifts from a narrative to a bestiary-like list or catalogue. They are rarely seen to interact with Alexander or participate in the narrative, and are merely in the text because they are curiosities that provoke wonder.⁷⁶⁸

Through the act of reading the *RTC*'s long lists of the myriad races and their characteristics and idiosyncrasies, the text's audiences are also encouraged to consume these peoples as objects of curiosity, celebrated for their difference and conquered through the text.⁷⁶⁹ The cultures and physical characteristics of these peoples are easily and succinctly reported, with descriptions often lasting no more than four lines. To consume, capture, or conquer a people and their land, however, is to include them within a known world. Alexander's territorial conquest, as well as his fascination with these monstrous races, incorporates them into his empire and makes them constitutive of his territories, moving them from an Other to part of the Alexandrian empire's self. Alexander absorbs groups previously external to him, and his delight in their strangeness is a result of their difference to him and his possession of them. Since these peoples contribute toward the definition of his empire geographically, culturally and taxonomically, the empire thus becomes monstrous in and of itself, sprawling and excessive as it yokes together disparate peoples and identities.

⁷⁶⁸ Augustine interpreted prodigies of nature as an expression of God's omnipotence, prompting audiences to feel awe in creation. Saint Augustine, *City of God Against the Pagans*, trans. Eva M. Sanford and William McAllen Green (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), 5:40–48. See also Allen 'Introduction', in *Eastward Bound*, 4. For further discussion on the nature of monsters, see John Block Friedman, *Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981).

⁷⁶⁹ Bynum notes that 'wonder collections' were not unusual in the Middle Ages, and natural marvels (such as ostrich eggs) often were kept in church treasuries. 'Relic cabinets and cabinets of novelties came to resemble each other in form, suggesting that an impulse to collect underlay both'. Bynum, *Metamorphosis*, 62.

Similarly, for readers, these peoples move from part of the unknown world to the known world. As they become part of Alexander's empire and his archive, the marvellous peoples of India and Ethiopia are capable of being known. In reading the text as a document of Alexander's conquests, the audience is made privy to the construction of his empire, an untenable conglomeration that ultimately fails because of Alexander's pride and his excesses. The presence of these marvels in the *RTC* increases its value as a textual space that incorporates myriad peoples and conveys information about them. By reading and learning about the exotic 'races', the text's audience could, like Alexander, know and, in a way, possess them. In this sense, the text too becomes monstrous. Part catalogue and part narrative, it incorporates aspects of romance, *chanson de geste*, and historical detail as it spans Europe, Africa, and Asia; it is itself a hybrid and a marvel that inspires delight. As Thomas notes in a self-aggrandising manner, the *RTC* has value because of the wonders and the knowledge that are contained within its pages. Much like bestiaries, which were prestigious items for their collation of knowledge and, often, their fantastical miniatures, the *RTC* may have been accorded value as a source of knowledge as well as entertainment.⁷⁷⁰ The text's affiliation with and descriptions of exotic peoples and objects give its readers access to the wonders that the world contains.

This idea that the text contains the world is presented in the second *laisse*, in which the narrative becomes a geographical, temporal, and cosmic map:

Ancienement ly sage mesurerent le monde,
 Cum le firmament torne e cum la terre est ronde.
 En trois la departirent sanz compas e desponde:
 L'une est Aufrike, Asye est la seconde,
 Europe est la tierce, de toz biens est feconde.
 Doze signes au ciel dont clarté nous abonde,
 Le curs des esteilles, cum la mer est parfonde,

⁷⁷⁰ See Hodgeson, 'Lions, Tigers, Bears', 69. Furthermore, two of the five extant manuscripts of the *RTC* are richly illustrated and would have been luxury objects. These two are Cambridge, Trinity College, O. 9. 34, and Paris, BnF fr. 24364. The one-page fragment in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Lat misc. b 17, f.140r has some decorations on some of its ascenders, but it lacks ornate illumination.

Des doze mois parlerent e del vent qe rebonde,
 De mars e d'averil e de may la plus monde,
 De jun e de junet ou Virgo se vergonde,
 De aust e de septembre qe sa veigne feconde,
 D'octobre e de novembre, decembre od la fonde,
 De genever, de feverer e de Aquarie od l'onde.
 Qui de ceo plus querat, querge qui ly l'esponde

[In the olden days, the sages measured the world, how the firmament turns and how the earth is round. In three they divided it without a compass or a ruler: One is Africa, Asia is the second, Europe is the third, rich with all good things. They spoke of the twelve celestial signs that give us light, the orbits of stars, the depth of the sea, the twelve months and the winds that reverberate, of March and April and of May the most pure, of June and July where Virgo shows her modesty, of August and of September which brings the vines to fruit, of October and of November, December with its sling,⁷⁷¹ of January and of February, and of Aquarius with water. Whoever seeks to know more of this, look elsewhere for answers].⁷⁷²

By setting the scene in this way, the *RTC* emphasises that it is not only a volume that is to be enjoyed for its story, but also an authoritative document that contains real information about the world, and even, to an extent, contains the world. The text has promised its readers ‘vers merveillus’ [marvellous verses],⁷⁷³ and this is immediately substantiated; through this description of the world and the stars, and the attention to the interplay of the heavens and earth through the months of the year, the text renders the world a wonder.⁷⁷⁴ Unlike the marvels of the East depicted later in the *RTC*, this remarkable world is familiar to the Anglo-Norman audience of the poem, but to describe

⁷⁷¹ The sling is a symbol of Sagittarius. See Thomas of Kent, *The Anglo-Norman Alexander* (Le Roman de Toute Chevalerie), ed. Brian Foster with Ian Short, ANTS 32–33 (London: ANTS, 1976), 2:85.

⁷⁷² *RTC*, 32–45.

⁷⁷³ *RTC*, 26.

⁷⁷⁴ This idea is also present in the Old English and Latin *Letter of Alexander to Aristotle*. The Old English text states: ‘Seo eorðe is to wundrienne hwæt heo ærest oþþe godra þinga cenne, oððe eft þara yfelra, þe heo þæm sceawigendum is æteowed. Hio is cennende þa fulcūpan wildeora 7 wæstmā 7 wegga oran, 7 wunderlice wyhta, þa þing eall þæm monnum þe hit geseoð 7 sceawigað wæron uneþe to gewitanne for þære missenlicnisse þara hiowa’ [‘The earth is a source of wonder first for the good things she brings forth, and then for the evil, through which she is revealed to observers. She is the producer of well-known beasts, and plants, and stones and metal-ore, and of wondrous creatures, all those things which are difficult to comprehend for those who look and observe because of the variety of their forms’]. Similarly, Ælfric, drawing on Augustinian ideas, discusses the ‘wundra’ of God in his creation of the world. Andy Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies: Studies of the Monsters in the Beowulf Manuscript* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1995), 226–27; Ælfric, *Homilies of the Anglo-Saxon church*, ed. Benjamin Thorpe (New York: Johnson, 1971), 184–86, 292, 304, cited in Bynum, *Metamorphosis*, 1:63.

it in this sprawling and all-encompassing way makes the familiar give way to the strange and the unknown. *Scientia* is anathema to *admiratio* since ‘the goal of *admiratio* was its own destruction: if wonder arose from the desire to seek causes it did not understand, wonder should lead to its own replacement’ by knowledge.⁷⁷⁵ However, in the *RTC* the world is not presented as a known object, in spite of the ancients’ attempts to measure it. The text creates a temporal distance between readers and ‘ly sage’ by claiming that they existed ‘ancienement’. The text itself acknowledges its own limits in knowledge: ‘Qui de ceo plus querat, querge qui ly l’esponde’. It creates space for wonder by presenting the world without explaining how or why it works, and without elaborating further. Thomas’s text cannot answer all of the questions it creates for its readers. Thus, those who do have knowledge and the ability to understand the world also inspire awe. The text’s emphasis on the ancients’ ability to measure the world without tools highlights the miraculousness of their feat, a different kind of marvel to the mysterious hybrids described later in the narrative, yet one that is no less amazing. Similarly, Nectanabus’s magical capacities and ability to read the future in the orbits of the stars and planets are not unlike the prophesying trees of the Sun and the Moon that Alexander encounters in the East. Yet it is the world itself that is the greatest wonder of all; it is not simply the marvels contained within the world that provoke amazement, ‘but a world that encompasses such staggering diversity’.⁷⁷⁶

The text facilitates a convergence of experiences and geographies as it offers up the world as an object of consumption. Describing the geography of India prior to the encyclopaedic listing of peoples and animals, the text states:

⁷⁷⁵ Bynum, *Metamorphosis*, 40.

⁷⁷⁶ Bynum, *Metamorphosis*, 68.

Ly eirs i est seinz, hom i vi en santez.
 N'i ad yver nul; deus foiz i est estez;
 Deus foiz i coilt l'en les fruiz, les vins e les blez.
 ... Ne vous esmerveillez de ceo qe ci oiez;
 Greindres sunt les merveilles qu'avant orrez

[the air there is salubrious and the people live there in health. There is no winter there; there are two summers there: twice a year they harvest the fruit, the vines, and the wheat there, ... Do not marvel at what you hear here; Greater still are the marvels that you will hear].⁷⁷⁷

Repeating 'i' [there] five times in the first part of the *laisse*, the text emphasises the distance between the implied audience and India. The text describes what it is like *over there*, situating itself far from the wonders it describes, and assuming its audience occupies a similar position. However, this is interrupted by 'ci' [here]. In this moment, the text performs a variety of geographical acrobatics: it draws attention to its own materiality, and in doing so figuratively transports its audience to the site of the marvels. '[C]i', therefore, relates to the physical text, the *here* of this space of the manuscript, as well as the geographic *here*, which can refer to both the location of the audience and the setting of the text. Yoking together the 'ci' of England and the 'ci' of India creates a momentary overlap between the two geographic spaces. However, it achieves this through the materiality of its medium. A. C. Spearing notes that proximal deictics (in his example, the Middle English 'her', here) 'must refer to a written text; here, on this page'.⁷⁷⁸ He cites Suzanne Fleischman, who writes 'the spatial metaphor comes into play only in conjunction with the institution of writing, i.e., with a discourse that unfolds across the space of the page and remains permanently accessible through the tangible, material artefact of the book'.⁷⁷⁹ Thus, the 'ci', rather than referring to a geographic location, points to the spatiality of the codex. Furthermore, Fleischmann also notes that in

⁷⁷⁷ *RTC*, 4618–26.

⁷⁷⁸ A. C. Spearing, *Textual Subjectivity: The Encoding of Subjectivity in Medieval Narratives and Lyrics* (Oxford: OUP, 2005), 39.

⁷⁷⁹ Suzanne Fleischman, 'Discourse as Space/Discourse as Time: Reflections on the Metalanguage of Spoken and Written Discourse', *Journal of Pragmatics* 16 (1991): 291–306, at 293.

French texts ‘ci’ also comes to replace ‘ore’ as the word for ‘now’ as ‘the predominant deictic traffic signal for marking the current position in a discourse’.⁷⁸⁰ Although this was more common in later romances, particularly in prose, the temporal quality of ‘ci’ in this context is clear from the use of the future tense in the following line; what the audience hears ‘ci’ contrasts with what they will hear later. This furthers the sense of immediacy: the wonders of the world are textually tied to the audience’s location through the space of the text. The effect of this is that it counteracts the ‘i’ so insisted upon in the first few lines by drawing attention to the idea that the entire world exists within the book itself, within the text. It concentrates the world into a single moment and a single place, one that travels with the text no matter how, when, or where it is read. Every encounter with the text is an instance of indirect cultural contact; yet it also materialises the encounter, making it capable of being possessed or consumed.

These lines also draw a connection between the audience and Alexander through the experience of wonder. Using the imperative mode in ‘ne vous esmerveillez’, the text entreats its readers to wait in anticipation for the marvels that are to come. It whets the appetite for subsequent parts of the narrative. Continuing to manipulate its audience, a few lines later the text states: ‘N’est mie merveille si li pople est granz’ [It is not at all surprising/marvellous if the people are great].⁷⁸¹ The text tells its readers what deserves to be wondered at and what is not worth their astonishment, and yet in doing so it subtly implies that these are descriptions that *do* elicit wonder. However, there are also phenomena that the text claims are worth *admiratio*, and the audience is allowed to synchronise their sense of wonder with Alexander’s as he is seen to react to the things he encounters: ‘De ceo se merveille le roy utre mesure’ [The king marvelled at this

⁷⁸⁰ Fleischman, ‘Discourse as Space’, 304.

⁷⁸¹ *RTC*, 4632.

(spectacle) beyond measure].⁷⁸² The text implicitly grants its audience permission to wonder at the marvels that impress Alexander, aligning readers' perspectives with the protagonist's.

The exoticism of the East is also presented through a process of defamiliarisation. While Alexander almost conquers the whole world, the west of Europe remains outside his purview: 'Ore n'i ad [a] dire si sul occident non, / Ou meinent ly Yreis, Espaniol e Breton' [From then on there only remained the West, where the Irish, Spanish, and Britons/Bretons lived].⁷⁸³ This creates a sense of distance between the world explored by Alexander and the regions more likely to have been familiar to the *RTC*'s English audience, and further emphasises England's peripherality in a global context. This defamiliarisation is also achieved rhetorically: it deploys narrative strategies typical of insular romance, such as the *reverdie*. In most French and insular romances and lyrics, a *reverdie* praises nature's rejuvenation in spring and contains references to generic trees and birds to create an atmosphere of reflection and joy.

Thomas, however, uses it to give his text a distinctly Eastern flavour:

Ceo fu al moys de may quant la rose est florie,
Ly olivers est vers e l'olive foillie.
Chante la chalendre e ly roissinols crie,
Donc sunt en grant pense ceaux qui amur lie

[It was the month of May when the rose is in bloom, the olive tree is covered in green leaves. The calander sings and the nightingale cries out, so those whom love binds are in profound reverie].⁷⁸⁴

Roses and olive trees both have clear connections to Greece and the Near East, and while a 'chalendre' is often translated as 'woodlark', it probably refers to a calander or calandra lark, common in Mediterranean countries.⁷⁸⁵ Readers would have undoubtedly been

⁷⁸² *RTC*, 4288.

⁷⁸³ *RTC*, 5949–50.

⁷⁸⁴ *RTC*, 1752–55.

⁷⁸⁵ Roses were brought to Europe from Persia and the Middle East by returning Crusaders. See Mia Touw, 'Roses in the Middle Ages', *Economic Botany* 36, no. 1 (1982): 71–83, at 73. See *AND*, s. v. 'chalandre'.

familiar with this literary convention, but the change in botanical detail both enlivens the scene and reminds audiences of the exotic setting of the story. It creates a sense of strange familiarity, as English narrative conventions are deployed in a remote setting at precisely the wrong moment: in the middle of a battle.⁷⁸⁶

Although Alexander is Macedonian, he is recast as an Insular hero. He is the paragon of largesse and chivalric behaviour. Brian Foster notes that he is ‘well-versed in the arts, and he is a good horseman and formidable warrior, though generous in victory’.⁷⁸⁷ Susan Crane also argues that the Anglo-Norman Alexander ‘is exemplary in the secular strengths of leadership and aggression rather than Christian virtues; in this he resembles the conquering Bevis and Richard of other insular romances’.⁷⁸⁸ He takes advice from his ‘barons’— ‘Barons, qe me conseillez?’ [Barons, what do you counsel me (to do)?]—an anachronism that displays a concern common to Anglo-Norman romance: the relationship between a king and his barons.⁷⁸⁹ Some critics have noted that Thomas of Kent’s depiction of Alexander is strikingly similar to that of a Crusader, especially since Darius, Alexander’s respected adversary, is depicted as the leader of ‘cent mil Sarazin’ [one hundred thousand Saracens].⁷⁹⁰ Emily Reiner notes that Alexander even has a sword that is compared to Durendal, sword of the Roland, refashioning him into a hero that

See also ‘Calandra Lark’, in *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Birds*, BirdLife International (London: Doring Kindersley, 2011), 409. There is also a reference to the both the nightingale and ‘chalandre’ in lines 96–97 of the satirical Anglo-Irish poem ‘The Land of Cokaygne’ (c. 1300), which draws on conventions of paradise to depict a world of sensual pleasure and debauchery—a reversal of monastic life. The calandra lark here is cited alongside spices, precious gems, and other birds, creating images of exoticism similar to those in the *RTC*. For an edition of the poem, see Angela M. Lucas, ed., *Anglo-Irish poems of the Middle Ages: The Kildare Poems* (Dublin: Columba Press, 1995). For a discussion of the poem and its contexts, see Richard J. Kelly, ‘Land of Cokagne: Contexts’, *Journal of Irish Studies* 16 (2001): 58–75.

⁷⁸⁶ In the notes to the text, Foster and Short write that ‘Though the Spring setting is not necessarily inapposite in an epic context [...] the mention of *ceux qui amur lie* 1755 does seem discordant’. *The Anglo-Norman Alexander*, 2:92.

⁷⁸⁷ *The Anglo-Norman Alexander*, 2:66.

⁷⁸⁸ Crane, *Insular Romance*, 109.

⁷⁸⁹ *RTC*, 1777. The relationship between baronial interests and Anglo-Norman romances is discussed at length in Crane, *Insular Romance*.

⁷⁹⁰ *RTC*, 1604. See Emily Reiner, ‘Meanings of Nationality in the Medieval Alexander Tradition’, in *Alexander the Great in the Middle Ages: Transcultural Perspectives*, ed. Markus Stock (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 30–50, at 43.

bears a similarity to those from England and France.⁷⁹¹ ‘Alexander as “crusader”’, Reiner writes, ‘would have made him seem appealingly familiar and similar to the audience of *Roman de toute chevalerie*’.⁷⁹²

Suzanne Conklin Akbari writes: ‘for the medieval reader of the romance, Alexander is a mediator between the familiar space of home and the exotic terrain abroad, as the reader sees the curiosities of the world—from the monstrous races of Ethiopia to the marvellous luxuries of India—through this eyes’.⁷⁹³ Yet this idea is complicated by the suggestion that Alexander is unlike any ordinary ruler, and his eyes are perhaps the most apt proof of this; like Hereward, who is said to have large eyes of different colours, Alexander has ‘gros oilz, vair le destre, / Cum leonine noir avoit le senestre’ [large eyes, the right one clear, the left one as black as a lion’s].⁷⁹⁴ David Williams remarks that Alexander’s differently coloured eyes are a reflection of the ancient tradition of the ‘evil eye’ that destroys whatever it sees. It represents the insatiable desire to possess all that falls within its gaze, and only in death can it be stopped. ‘This is precisely the role played by Alexander’s eyes in the saga; they signify his persistent yearning to see, to know, and to possess as his political ambition carries him from one military conquest to another’.⁷⁹⁵ This desire to claim everything that he sees can be read as a monstrous indulgence; Alexander is defined by excess as he strives to go further than Hercules and conquer the world.⁷⁹⁶ To see the world through Alexander’s eyes is therefore to see the world as a place ready to be conquered, to be

⁷⁹¹ *RTC*, 4150; Akbari, ‘Alexander in the Orient’, 114 n.11; Donald Maddox and Sara Sturm-Maddox, ‘Introduction: Alexander the Great in the French Middle Ages’ in *The Medieval French Alexander*, ed. Donald Maddox and Sara Sturm-Maddox (Albany: SUNY Press, 2002), 1–16, at 3.

⁷⁹² Reiner, ‘Meanings of Nationality’, 43–44.

⁷⁹³ See Akbari, ‘Alexander in the Orient’, 112.

⁷⁹⁴ *De Gestis*, 9; *RTC*, 449–50.

⁷⁹⁵ David Williams, *Deformed Discourse: The Function of the Monster in Mediaeval Thought and Literature* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press and McGill-Queens University Press, 1996), 232.

⁷⁹⁶ Andy Orchard discusses this in relation to Anglo-Saxon interpretations of the Alexander story, but it is no less true for the Anglo-Norman *RTC*. See Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, 154–69.

consumed visually and textually. Like Alexander, the reader is invited to view the world as an object of wonder and desire.

Like the world he explores, Alexander is a marvel. His birth is accompanied by ‘grant aventure’ [great wonders]:

Tote la terre croula, mer mua sa figure,
Le soleil sa clarté, la lune sa nature;
Fist esclaire e tonair[e] e vent a demesure;
Tenebre fu cel jur cum ceo fust nuit obscure

[The whole earth trembled, the sea changed its form, the sun its light and the moon its nature; Lightning and thunder and winds were unleashed; the day fell into shadows as though it were a dark night].⁷⁹⁷

Alexander himself is described as a ‘merveille’ [marvel] for provoking the earth in such a way, and his physical beauty is unparalleled.⁷⁹⁸ Similarly, his horse, Bucifal, a wild, man-eating beast with a horn protruding from his forehead, is described as ‘un merveillus cheval’ [a prodigious horse].⁷⁹⁹ The constant iteration of these ‘merveilles’ in Alexander’s life in Macedonia anticipate and parallel the ‘merveilles de Inde’ [marvels of India] and Ethiopia.⁸⁰⁰ A miraculous nature is not unusual among mythical heroes, but the common term used to describe Alexander, Bucifal, the wonders of the East, and the ‘vers merveillus’ of the text itself, draws them together and renders them ontologically similar.

Alexander’s simultaneous monstrosity and familiarity effectively elides the two categories, not unlike the foreign/English heroes in *Boeve* and *Gui*. While Alexander’s empire excludes England, the text’s Anglo-Norman audience nevertheless experiences the world through Alexander, creating a sense of familiarity with the hero. This is troubled by his encounters and associations with the wonders that would undoubtedly

⁷⁹⁷ *RTC*, 409, 410–13.

⁷⁹⁸ *RTC*, 418.

⁷⁹⁹ *RTC*, 459.

⁸⁰⁰ *RTC*, 5683.

have seemed alien to readers in England. If the narrative's events are filtered through Alexander's marvellous eyes and he is the figure through which the audience encounters the world, then they are placed in the position of the marvellous, the monstrous, or, like the readers of *Boeve* and *Gui*, the foreign. Simultaneously the wonderers and the objects of wonder, the English readers of the *RTC* are offered a paradoxically defamiliarising and self-important vision of themselves. Discussing the fourteenth-century *Roman de Perceforest*, which fantastically imagines that Alexander conquered Britain and is the ancestor of Arthur, Sylvia Huot draws on a postcolonial framework to explore a similar phenomenon:

Colonisers ... are disoriented by the experience of seeing themselves as 'other'. Far from 'civilisation', in a place where their normal expectations are constantly defied, they may attempt to live in an artificial metropolitan bubble. But the discourse of colonialism also appropriates that very sense of estrangement, that alienation from the self, and rewrites it as self-aggrandisement. The gaze of the colonised fixes the colonial foreigner as an object of difference, an intruder to be expelled, a curiosity to be examined. And it must therefore be contained by the more powerful gaze of the colonisers, certain of their superiority, and thus able to transform fear, hostility, even indifference into adoration, wonder, desire.⁸⁰¹

These texts position their heroes and, indirectly, their audiences as objects of fascination and curiosity. Boeve, Gui, Alexander, and, as we shall see below, Richard in *Richard Coer de Lyon*, are shown to be constantly in control of how others perceive them as they manipulate others' opinions. They turn their identities and their perceived identities to their advantage. Their power is enhanced by their objectification, and this filters through the text to the audience itself.

The Meanings of Monsters

These texts' depictions of monsters or monstrous beings shed light on how they envisage communities. While monstrous peoples in insular romances can carry a vast array of

⁸⁰¹ Huot, *Postcolonial Fictions*, 17.

meanings, they perform two primary functions in the romances explored here. Firstly, they serve as symbols of the most extreme versions of alterity and foreignness, as we see in the *RTC*. In this case they are purely objects to be enjoyed simply because they ‘exist’, according to the text.⁸⁰² In *Gui* and *Boeve*, however, monstrous peoples have a very different kind of meaning. In this second scenario they play an active role in the narrative, and in doing so, they contribute towards readers’ understandings of cultural and religious communities, and help to differentiate ‘insiders’ from ‘outsiders’.

In texts such as the *RTC*, monstrous beings are objectified. They are the incarnations of difference. In no way are they afforded the kind of dynamism or mutability of identity available to Englishmen in texts like *Gui* or *Boeve*. Maps, bestiaries, and texts that depict the ‘exotic’ world flatten time, creating a synchronic view of the East that remains forever in stasis, while English identity is seen to constantly evolve and shift, changing according to an individual’s location, absorbing those who have ties with the land, or, as this thesis has seen, recalibrating itself as a result of cultural interaction.⁸⁰³ The ‘monstrous’ peoples depicted in the *RTC* exist in isolation, with little or no contact with the outside world or with each other. Those depicted in the *RTC* are the same peoples described in the fourth-century legends of Alexander, Pliny’s *Historia naturalia* and Solinus’s *Collectanea rerum memorabilium*, as well as Anglo-Saxon accounts of the *Wonders of the East* and the fourteenth-century *Book of John Mandeville*. The exotic East never seems to change, even though England’s population and political circumstances undergo seismic shifts over the same period. This lack of

⁸⁰² Cohen notes that ‘through the body of the monster fantasies of aggression, domination, and inversion are allowed safe expression in a clearly delimited and permanently liminal space. Escapist delight gives way to horror only when the monster threatens to overstep these boundaries, to destroy or deconstruct the thin walls of category or culture’. ‘Monster Theory’, 17.

⁸⁰³ For discussions of the relationships between English identity and England, see Davies, ‘Nations and National Identities’, 567–79; Ashe, *Fiction and History*, especially 59–64; Edwards, ‘Notes Toward the Angevin Uncanny’, 87. For a general discussion of territorial conceptions of identity, see John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, 2nd ed. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 6.

nuance is unsurprising given the dearth of knowledge about these areas, and travel narratives are largely self-perpetuating, since they rely upon one another to construct their image of the world.⁸⁰⁴ Furthermore, while English identity may be primarily anchored in the land, which is inhabited by a wide variety of peoples so that even those descended from the Normans considered themselves English soon after the Conquest,⁸⁰⁵ the depictions of these monstrous peoples are rooted in their physical and cultural characteristics: their appearance; their diets; their social hierarchies. Although these characteristics are supposedly formed by the harshness of the climates in which they live, most of the monstrous peoples are not confined to a specific location. Instead, their locations tend to shift according to the needs of writers and cartographers.⁸⁰⁶ Lynn Ramey writes: ‘while medieval mapmakers located the monstrous races in the unexplored areas of the world, early modern mapmakers relocated these races to the New World, superimposing the physical and metaphorical senses of monstrous margins onto the newly discovered hemisphere’.⁸⁰⁷ This highlights the primary function of these peoples: they are the epitome of alterity, foreignness, and exoticism, and they serve as symbols for the unknown.⁸⁰⁸ Because of their symbolic nature, they cannot change or become more nuanced. Instead, they are replaced by more realistic accounts of the peoples who live in these foreign countries, and the fictional locations of the monstrous peoples must be moved as the areas they designate as dangerous or unknown become familiar.

⁸⁰⁴ Rudolf Simek, *Heaven and Earth in the Middle Ages: The Physical World Before Columbus*, trans. Angela Hall (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 1996), 62–63.

⁸⁰⁵ See Short, ‘Tam Angli quam Franci’, 153–75.

⁸⁰⁶ For the relationship between climate and character, see Hippocrates, *Airs, Waters, Places*, in *Hippocrates*, trans. W. H. S. Jones et al. (London: Heinemann, 1923), 24. This idea was widely circulated in the Middle Ages. For further discussions of this idea, see Bartlett, ‘Race and Ethnicity’, and Akbari, ‘The Diversity of Mankind in the Book of John Mandeville’, in *Eastward Bound*, 156–76.

⁸⁰⁷ Lynn Ramey, *Black Legacies: Race and the European Middle Ages* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2014), 102.

⁸⁰⁸ Cohen touches on this idea in his second thesis on monsters, in which he argues that monsters are always fragmentary, and always ‘escape’ due to their symbolic nature. See Cohen, ‘Monster Theory’, 4–6, 7–8.

An exception to this idea can be found in the monstrous individuals that reside on the edges of Britain, as described by Gerald of Wales. Thomas writes that descriptions of the monstrous beings encountered by Alexander are so unbelievable that he has difficulty describing them: ‘Fort est a translater; suffreite ay de romanz’ [It is difficult to translate; there are no words in French], which creates a linguistic as well as geographic distance between the fantastical and the familiar.⁸⁰⁹ Gerald of Wales, however, populates the peripheries of the British Isles with curious hybrids and monstrous individuals: a man with the head of an ox, bearded women, and werewolves, a theme also taken up in the *Lai de Melion*, largely set in Ireland.⁸¹⁰ Similarly, Walter Map’s *De Nugis Curialium* fills the Welsh Marches with phantom knights and noctivagant fairies.⁸¹¹ Although these are monstrous individuals rather than entire cultures, they nevertheless bear a resemblance to the wonders of India and Ethiopia, and present a similar taxonomic puzzle. Gerald draws an explicit geographic connection between the far east and the far west for their common lack of geographic centrality:

Sicut enim orientales plagæ propriis quibusdam et sibi innatis præeinent et præcellunt ostentis, sic et occidentales circumferentiæ suis naturæ miraculis illustrantur. Quoties quippe, tanquam seriis et veris fatigata negotiis, paululum secedit et excedit, remotis in partibus, quasi verecundis et occultis natura ludit excessibus

[Just as the countries of the East are remarkable and distinguished for certain prodigies peculiar and native to themselves, so the boundaries of the West are also made remarkable by their own wonders of (N)ature. For sometimes tired, as it were, of the true and serious, she draws aside and goes away, and in these remote parts indulges herself in these secret and hidden (excesses)].⁸¹²

These wonders of the British Isles are, however, situated in the known world, and are rooted in a particular place. This may be because they reveal an anxiety about cultural

⁸⁰⁹ *RTC*, 4662.

⁸¹⁰ See *Melion*, in E. Margaret Grimes, trans., *The Lais of Désiré, Graelent and Melion* (New York: Institute of French Studies, 2001), 102–22.

⁸¹¹ See above, 147.

⁸¹² Gerald of Wales, *Opera*, 5:20–21. Translation in Gerald of Wales, *The History and Topography of Ireland*, trans. John J. O’Meara, rev. ed. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982), 31.

intermixing, as experienced by Gerald, who described himself as half English and half Welsh, or the dangers of deviating from social or spiritual norms.⁸¹³ Just as there was anxiety about spending too much time in the East for fear of becoming too much like the ‘heathens’, there was a similar anxiety regarding those in Wales and Ireland.⁸¹⁴ Because hybrids are curiosities that are thought to serve as political or social warnings, they are necessarily close at hand as a reminder that ‘abnormal’ cultural or social behaviours will reveal themselves corporeally.

The second function of monstrous beings is still symbolic, but more nuanced; these beings become a mirror for the self as they help to define the borders of humanity and community. A. David Napier writes:

What is regularly neglected ... is the degree to which we actually need a concept of the strange. It is because we cannot know the incomparable that we need a less alien ‘other’ for self-definition; for, in alienating others, we, by extension, alienate the self. Strangers, in other words, are enough like us, and only enough unlike us, to be heuristically useful.⁸¹⁵

In *Gui*, for instance, the presence of monsters, paragons of strangeness, helps to define the boundaries between groups in a way that is often surprising. Gui fights against the Ethiopian giant Amorant on behalf of King Triamor, a Saracen. Gui comments on the monstrosity of Amorant, stating ‘Cist n’est pas home, ainz est diable’ [‘That’s not a man, that’s a devil’].⁸¹⁶ With his humanity in question, Amorant is defined by his alterity to both Gui and Triamor. Amorant’s monstrosity unites Gui, Triamor, and Jonas, who form an alliance in spite of their religious differences. The presence of embodied difference in

⁸¹³ Gerald’s own mixed heritage was a source of anxiety as he was denied the bishopric of St. David’s in 1176 due to his Welsh ancestry. See footnote 41 on page 13 above for Gerald’s statement regarding his sense of foreignness. For further details regarding the hybrids in Gerald of Wales’s works, see Tony Davenport, ‘Sex, Ghosts, and Dreams: Walter Map (1135?–1210?) and Gerald of Wales (1146–1223)’, in *Writers in the Reign of Henry II*, ed. Ruth Kennedy and Simon Meecham-Jones (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 133–50; Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, ‘Hybrids, Monsters, Borderlands: The Bodies of Gerald of Wales’, in *The Postcolonial Middle Ages*, 85–104.

⁸¹⁴ See above, footnote 757 on page 237. Cohen discusses monsters as a form of warning against cultural taboos in ‘Monster Culture’, 12–16.

⁸¹⁵ A. David Napier, *Foreign Bodies: Performance, Art, and Symbolic Anthropology* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996), 140. See also Cohen, ‘Monster Theory’, 12–16.

⁸¹⁶ *Gui*, 8444; Weiss, 189.

the form of Amorant helps to underline the commonalities between seemingly antagonistic individuals.⁸¹⁷ Similarly, Gui's battle against Colebrant, the Saracen who invades England with the Danes, is often read as a nation-building moment because it depicts England as a cohesive unit under King Athelstan, threatened by the Danes who lay claim to the country.⁸¹⁸ Colebrant poses a threat to all of England, and his nature as antagonist helps to reaffirm the English identity present in the text and the community that accompanies it.

Escopart, in *Boeve*, is similarly described as a 'malfé' ['demon'] and 'un deble ke vousist manger' ['a hungry devil'].⁸¹⁹ Like Amorant, he is described in the non-human terms common to monstrous Saracens in *chansons de geste*, marked by his size as well as his bestial characteristics.⁸²⁰

Already, then, he embodies differences that the other Saracens Boeve has dealt with tend not to display. ... Although Boeve moves through racially very mixed territory around the Mediterranean when he travels from Egypt to Damascus, from Damascus to Jerusalem, from Jerusalem to 'Monbrant', ... almost no one's skin colour or facial features are worthy of mention except Escopart's.⁸²¹

However, *Boeve* subverts the trope of the evil, monstrous Saracen giant. The text takes a symbol of alterity and absorbs him into the Christian community through baptism, even though it does not go as planned.⁸²² This reaffirms the notion that identity, even that of monsters, is sliding, and not restricted by the physical characteristics that are supposed to demonstrate an interior state.⁸²³ The incorporation of a monstrous giant into Boeve's company signals that all peoples have a capacity for salvation, and that one's ethnic background does not determine or prevent alliances. Contrary to the monstrous peoples

⁸¹⁷ See Cohen, 'Monster Theory', 6–7.

⁸¹⁸ Crane writes '*Gui de Warewic* brings us the first hero to defend all England against its enemies'. *Insular Romance*, 56.

⁸¹⁹ *Boeve*, 1921, 1977; Weiss, 61, 62.

⁸²⁰ Furrow, 'Ascopart's Betrayal', 147.

⁸²¹ Furrow, 'Ascopart's Betrayal', 147.

⁸²² This example challenges Cohen's fourth thesis on monsters, 'Monster Theory', 7–12.

⁸²³ See Friedman, *The Monstrous Races*, 89.

in the *RTC* who remain in isolated stasis, Escopart plays an active, comic, and occasionally heroic role in *Boeve*. He challenges the kinds of assumptions about monstrous peoples found in texts such as *Gui*. Escopart's role highlights the idea that *Boeve*'s communities are formed by common values, underlining that it is one's actions that determine one's value and place in *Boeve*'s society. Although Escopart's ultimate reversion to Yvori's service may undermine this idea by showing Escopart returning to a villainous role, there is no evidence to support the notion that Escopart's service to *Boeve* is depicted as disingenuous; his reversion is not explained and makes little sense, and Weiss contends it was a later addition.⁸²⁴ However, the very presence of Escopart as a non-antagonistic being who plays an active part in the narrative makes an implicit statement about the malleable nature of community. This forging of a heterogeneous community resembles the construction of kingdoms that are politically, but not ethnically, united, such as England after the Danish and Norman conquests.

Monsters and foreign peoples are often thought to present an ontological conundrum, destabilising the perception of what is normal or familiar.⁸²⁵ It has been argued that the textual presence of these marvels undermines perceived reality, questions humanity, and threatens to upset all forms of identity.⁸²⁶ However, when considering texts such as *Gui* and *Boeve*, where foreign peoples are not only deprived of their alterity but also incorporated into the hero's community, and where the heroes themselves identify as 'estranged', it becomes clear that the foreign was not a disruptive force in the formation of identity. Rather, being foreign could contribute towards an individual's identity, or it could be unimportant in the face of communalities.

⁸²⁴ Weiss, Introduction to *Boeve de Haumtone and Gui de Warewic*, 8.

⁸²⁵ Freedman, 'Locating the Exotic', 24–25.

⁸²⁶ See Bynum, *Metamorphosis*, 93.

As ancestral romances, *Gui* and *Boeve*'s depictions of foreignness may have been an important aspect of the identities of their readers. Both *Gui* and *Boeve* are cited as significant ancestors or founders of important Anglo-Norman dynasties: the Earls of Warwick and the Earls of Arundel respectively.⁸²⁷ It is possible that the fictional heroes' connections with the world outside England were a source of pride or delight for these families, and would have attested to their nobility and the longevity of their dynasties.⁸²⁸ In the case of *Boeve*, whose hero marries a Saracen princess, the text shows the best of two cultures intermarrying and merging; the earls of Arundel may have seen themselves as nobles from two countries rather than just one.⁸²⁹

This embrace of foreignness was not unusual. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries there was an increase in claims of descent from supernatural, demonic, or monstrous beings. The Bouillon family, for example, claimed association with the legend of the *Chevalier au Cygne*, while the Plantagenets were purported to descend from a *fée* who married the Count of Anjou. Gerald of Wales said that this *fée* was a woman 'formæ conspicuæ sed nationis ignotæ' ['of remarkable beauty, but of an unknown nation'], who refused to remain in church for the secret canon of the mass. One day, however, she was held back by soldiers and subsequently flew out of the window with two of her children. Gerald's claim that this woman was from a strange country only serves to amplify her

⁸²⁷ M. Dominica Legge, *Anglo-Norman Literature and its Background* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1963), 159 and 162, cited in Weiss, 3 and 12.

⁸²⁸ See the introduction to Jean d'Arras, *Melusine or, the Noble History of Lusignan*, ed. and trans. Donald Maddox and Sara Sturm-Maddox (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012), 3.

⁸²⁹ See Raluca Radulescu, 'Genealogy in Insular Romance', in *Broken Lines*, 7–25, at 14. Some Anglo-Norman prose chronicles from the fourteenth century, such as the *Mohun Chronicle*, also depict their patrons' ancestors as being from a different country. They trace their lineages back to those who came from Normandy in 1066. '[C]learly, a place among the companions of the Conqueror could enhance a noble family's history.' This would have disrupted the narrative of continuity between Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman rule. This emphasis on Norman lineage is all the more striking given that the Conquest occurred over two hundred years before these texts were written. The attention given to these families' Norman ancestries betrays a certain pride in their foreignness. *Fouke* also connects the Fitz Warin family to Norman ancestors. Spence, *Reimagining History*, 135.

foreignness and, by extension, her mysteriousness and power. Richard I took particular pleasure in his family's mythically demonic ancestry:

Istud autem rex Ricardus sæpe referre solebat, dicens non esse mirandum, si de genere tali et filii parentes et sese ad invicem fratres infestare non cessant; de diabolo namque eos omnes venisse et ad diabolum dicebat ituros esse

[King Richard was often accustomed to refer to this event; saying that it was no matter of wonder, if coming from such a race, sons should not cease to harass their parents, and brothers to quarrel amongst each other; for he knew that they had all come of the devil, and to the devil they would go].⁸³⁰

This demon or *fée* has often been associated with the legendary Mélusine, a story that was popular throughout Europe, and was particularly linked to the House of Lusignan.⁸³¹ Many medieval noble families took great pride in claiming Mélusine as an ancestor.⁸³²

The idea that Richard I took delight in his own demonic heritage is also depicted in the Middle English romance *Richard Coer de Lyon*, which touches on several of the themes presented in this chapter. Like *Boeve*, it elides English and Saracen identities; like *Gui*, it defines Englishness outside England; and it depicts a conqueror who is seen as a marvel and a monster, like Alexander.⁸³³ Richard, as a culmination of these various qualities, accentuates the foreignness and the monstrosity barely beneath the surface of English identity. As the Crusader King ventures closer to the religious centre of the world

⁸³⁰ Gerald of Wales, *Opera*, 8:301. Translation in Gerald of Wales, *Concerning the Instruction of Princes*, trans. Joseph Stevenson (Felinfach: J. M. F. Books, 1991), 98.

⁸³¹ See Gerald of Wales, *Opera*, 8:301 n.1. Jane H. M. Taylor, 'Melusine's Progeny: Patterns and Perplexities', in *Melusine of Lusignan: Founding Fiction in Late Medieval France*, ed. Donald Maddox and Sara Sturm-Maddox (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1996), 165–84, at 179. According to the story, once a week Mélusine must absent herself from her husband while her bottom half becomes serpentine. Predictably, her husband spies on her and, in anger, she transforms into a dragon and flies away. Jean d'Arras, *Melusine*, 2–3.

⁸³² For a discussion of the later Middle English *Melusine* and its relationship to genealogy, see Angela Florschuetz, *Marking Maternity in Middle English Romance: Mothers, Identity, and Contamination* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 159–63.

⁸³³ *Richard* originates in the thirteenth century but it was adapted and supplemented with new material into the fifteenth century. Editorial consensus regards the romance as having its roots in a thirteenth-century Anglo-Norman original, now lost. The *a* version, found in Cambridge, Gonville and Caius, MS 175/96 and BL, Add. MS 31042, as well as two printed editions by Wynkyn de Worde, dating from 1509 and 1528, contains the cannibalistic episode, accounts of Richard's demon mother, and other romance elements, while the *b* version (found, notably, in the Egerton and Auchinlek manuscripts) is more historical. For a full discussion of the textual tradition of *Richard*, see Peter Larkin, Introduction, *Richard Coer de Lyon* (Kalamazoo: MIP, 2015). See also Heng, *Empire of Magic*, 333 n.1; John Finlayson, "'Richard Coer de Lyon': Romance, History, or Something in Between?" *Studies in Philology* 87 (1990): 156–80, at 179.

in the Levant, he is increasingly depicted as a monstrous object of curiosity; the text does not attempt to justify his behaviour, but presents him as a figure of horror who is paradoxically worthy of celebration. This situates England as the source of monsters normally found on the edges of the world, embracing England's liminality as it sits on the border between the familiar and the unknown, between Europe and *ultima Thule*.

Although, as Akbari notes, Richard is presented as an 'aggressively English king' and the text makes frequent and insistent references to his English identity, the mythical story of his demonic heritage, recounted by Gerald above, is retold.⁸³⁴ In this version, however, the text explicitly identifies the demon in question, Cassodorien, as Richard's mother, and states that she is the daughter of the King of Antioch. Rather than being half-French, as he was historically, Richard is made to be half-Saracen, or half-demon. Alan Ambrisco suggests that the effacement of his continental connections makes Richard a more English king, especially in the context of the Hundred Years War and ongoing antagonism with the French, while Akbari notes that 'the replacement of Eleanor with Cassodorien, Aquitaine with Antioch, produces a Richard whose alien nature is not French, but Oriental'.⁸³⁵ Rather than making Richard a member of that familiar but hostile country across the Channel, he is transformed into a character of unbridled foreignness and emphatic Englishness.

Owing to this story, Richard is often referred to as a 'devyl' or 'qued'.⁸³⁶ On more than one occasion he is said to be 'a devyl and no man'.⁸³⁷ However, the text's initial equation of a Saracen woman with a supernatural demon in early passages suggests that every articulation of Richard's demonic nature is a reiteration of his foreignness. Furthermore, the claim that Richard is 'a devyl and no man' is similar to

⁸³⁴ Akbari, 'Hunger', 198.

⁸³⁵ Alan Ambrisco, 'Cannibalism and Cultural Encounters in *Richard Coeur de Lion*', *JMEMS* 29, no. 3 (1999): 499–528, at 499; Akbari, 'Hunger', 205.

⁸³⁶ *Richard*, 500, 522, 568, 1112, 2580, 2679, 3166, 3664, 4354, 6818, and 6935.

⁸³⁷ *Richard*, 500, 1112.

Gui's description of the giant Amorant cited above, 'cist n'est pas home, ainz est diable', which suggests that this kind of language is more commonly used in descriptions of Saracens.⁸³⁸ This is consolidated later in the narrative, following the notorious and wholly fictional account of Richard's anthropophagy—or cannibalism—outside Acre.⁸³⁹ Falling ill due to a lack of English food, Richard demands pork, but instead he is fed the flesh of a Saracen. The following day, fully recovered, Richard demands to see the head of the beast he had eaten the previous night. Upon being presented with a Saracen's head, the king laughs and declares 'what devyl is this?'⁸⁴⁰ The semantic connection between the cannibal King and his supper reminds readers of Richard's dual heritage; it creates a link between Richard and the Saracens against whom he battles in terms of both ethnicity and devilishness.

This link to a demonic heritage provides an excuse for Richard's cannibalism, but the text also suggests that Richard's monstrosity surpasses the supposed monstrosity of his opponents. This segment has been read in an almost benign manner: both Geraldine Heng and Nicola McDonald argue that it is a nation-building moment that reinforces the dominance of a Christian English identity through the consumption of a foreign body.⁸⁴¹ As Rouse points out, however, this 'minimizes the more problematic aspects of an English king engaging in cannibalism', which was typically a characteristic associated with the monstrous races, and ascribed to the Saracens.⁸⁴² However, Richard is the only person who engages in cannibalism in the text; while the Saracens may be associated with cannibalism in the medieval English imagination, they refuse to condone

⁸³⁸ Devils are also associated with Saracens in *Boeve*. See above, 256.

⁸³⁹ There is no evidence that any participants in the Third Crusade engaged in cannibalism, but such acts may have occurred in the First Crusade due to extreme hunger. See Akbari, 'Hunger', 211 and Blurton, *Cannibalism*, 114–18.

⁸⁴⁰ *Richard*, 3214–15.

⁸⁴¹ Heng, *Empire of Magic*, 137; Nicola McDonald, 'Eating People and the Alimentary Logic of *Richard Coeur de Lion*', in *Pulp Fictions of Medieval England*, ed. Nicola McDonald (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 124–50, at 143.

⁸⁴² Rouse, 'Crusaders', 175–76; Blurton, *Cannibalism*, 105–9, and 114.

Richard's actions, and are actively horrified by him. Heather Blurton posits that with this scene 'the English have replaced the Muslim threat ... on the international scene'.⁸⁴³ It goes further than this, however: the English have not merely replaced the Muslims, but have also come to adopt their symbolism, and superseded their supposed monstrosity.

As both Akbari and Lynn Shuttters note, cannibalism was often practiced in various cultures to incorporate the qualities and characteristics of the consumed person.⁸⁴⁴ This equation of food and identity is particularly visible in the episode when Richard eats the lion's heart; it not only becomes a part of his nominal identity, but also increases his valour, his animalistic qualities, and his violent nature. He and the English are frequently likened to 'lyouns' thereafter.⁸⁴⁵ With this precedent, the ingestion of a 'yonge and fat' Saracen not only cures Richard of his ailment, but specifically makes him 'hool and sounde', and restores—or even augments—his superlative martial prowess.⁸⁴⁶ Several critics have posited that the consumption of the Saracen body is reminiscent of the Eucharist, exorcising Richard of his demonic characteristics.⁸⁴⁷ However, the eating of a 'devyl', rather than the body of Christ, negates this idea and suggests instead that his new 'hool[ness]' is a fulfilment of his devilish nature. Saracen identity becomes integrated into Richard's identity; the two natures become one. Unlike the sartorially foreign identities discussed at the beginning of this chapter, which can be tried on or taken off like clothing, Richard's consumption of Saraceness is much more permanent. It becomes inextricably entwined with his own identity, not erased through consumption,

⁸⁴³ Blurton, *Cannibalism*, 131.

⁸⁴⁴ Akbari, 'Hunger', 207; Lynn Shuttters, 'Lion Hearts, Saracen Heads, Dog Tails: The Body of the Conqueror in *Richard Coeur de Lyon*', in *Masculinities and Femininities in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Frederick Kiefer (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 71–100, at 99.

⁸⁴⁵ *Richard*, 2194, 3610, 6842. See also Akbari, 'Hunger', 208.

⁸⁴⁶ *Richard*, 3088, 3118. For a discussion of food in *Richard*, see McDonald, 'Eating People'.

⁸⁴⁷ See Akbari, 'Hunger', 207; Yeager, *Jerusalem*, 56; McDonald, 'Eating People', 140. Blurton has argued that the refusal of Cassodorien to partake in the Eucharist, which expels her from the Christian and the English community, suggests that 'willingness to participate in eating a body—in this case the body of Christ—is the litmus test for belonging to the community'. Blurton, *Cannibalism*, 124.

but made increasingly visible as the ‘devyl’-like qualities of the Saracen are transferred to Richard and augment those he already possesses.⁸⁴⁸ In spite of frequent references to his piety and claims that he is ‘an aungyl and no man’, the romance, unsurprisingly, seems unable to reconcile Richard’s imagined cannibalism with his holiness.⁸⁴⁹

Richard becomes increasingly monstrous and demonic in his second act of cannibalism, as he serves Saracen heads to Saladin’s emissaries, complete with the names of the victims written on their foreheads.⁸⁵⁰ The Muslims in this scene are not full of anger or monstrous rage, but they demonstrate evidence of sadness and fear: ‘Therof they had all grame! / What they were whenne they seyen, / The teres ran out of here eyen’.⁸⁵¹ The text humanises them as they lament the loss of their companions:

Kyng Richard hys eyen on hem threwe,
 Hou they begunne to chaunge here hewe.
 Fore here frendes they syghed sore,
 That they hadde lost forevere more.
 Of here kynde blood they were.
 Thenne they myghte weel forbere
 For to pleye and for to leyghe!
 Non of hem wolde hys mes neyghe,
 Ne thereof eeten on morsel.⁸⁵²

With the Saracens given appropriate emotions in the circumstances, unlike the English who ‘lowgh’ upon serving Richard human flesh disguised as pork, Richard’s enthusiasm for his subsequent cannibalism is rendered even more monstrous.⁸⁵³ As Blurton notes, ‘part of the horror of the cannibalism is the Muslim response: it is horrible to be

⁸⁴⁸ Furthermore, Fulk D’Oilly is also described as a ‘pouke / that out of helle is jstole’, suggesting that Richard is not the only devilish Englishman. Richard also refers to his bewitched horse, gifted to him by Saladin, as a ‘deuyll’, creating a semantic link between the monstrous English, the alien Saracens, and a fiendish animal. *Richard*, 4354–55, 5590.

⁸⁴⁹ For the ambiguity regarding Richard’s character, see Ambrisco, ‘Cannibalism’, 510–11.

⁸⁵⁰ *Richard*, 3460.

⁸⁵¹ *Richard*, 3464–66.

⁸⁵² *Richard*, 3469–77. For an analogous depiction of horror on the part of the Muslims and Turks following Frankish cannibalism in accounts of the First Crusade, see Raymond d’Aguiliers, *Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem*, trans. John Hugh Hill and Laurita Lyttleton Hill (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1968), 81; see also Blurton, *Cannibalism*, 115.

⁸⁵³ *Richard*, 3114.

considered to be more inhuman than a pagan—worse to be considered inhuman *by* a pagan.⁸⁵⁴

The knyght that scholde the kyng serve,
 With a scharp knyf the hed gan kerve.
 Kyng Richard eet with herte good:
 The Sarezynes wenden he hadde be wood.
 Every man sat styлле and pokyd othir;
 They sayden, ‘This is the develys brothir
 That sles oure men and thus hem eetes!’⁸⁵⁵

While McDonald and Shutters have suggested that the Saracen’s disapproval of Richard’s actions ‘can be interpreted as an endorsement of Richard’s behavior, given that Saracens of the romance embody “the anti-types against whom the English Christian is measured”’, the Saracens’ emotional response to the scene makes them objects of the audiences’ empathy.⁸⁵⁶ McDonald argues that this scene ‘is certainly designed to shock Richard’s dinner companions (both Saracen guests and crusaders) and, with them, the romance audience’.⁸⁵⁷ The cannibalism, which was previously a joke in the text, suddenly becomes traumatic; the Saracens’ tears are evidence not only of the horror of the situation, but also of Richard’s sadism.⁸⁵⁸ The King’s inhumanity is revealed, and it only serves to humanise his enemies. This is emphasised when, upon their return, the emissaries recount the events to their sultan, reiterating not only their sorrow at their companions’ deaths, but also the image of Richard as a ‘wundyr’ and a ‘wood lyoun’ who gnaws on human flesh.⁸⁵⁹ By giving the ambassadors a chance to recount their own version of the story, Richard’s monstrosity is emphasised further. Because Richard is more barbarous than his Saracen enemies, community construction in the text is rendered

⁸⁵⁴ Blurton, *Cannibalism*, 115.

⁸⁵⁵ *Richard*, 3479–85.

⁸⁵⁶ Shutters, ‘Lion Hearts’, 98; McDonald, ‘Eating People’, 133.

⁸⁵⁷ McDonald, ‘Eating People’, 136.

⁸⁵⁸ For discussion of the function, and limits, of humour in *Richard*, see Lesley Coote, ‘Laughing at Monsters in *Richard Coeur de Lyon*’, in *Grant risee? The Medieval Comic Presence=La presence comique médiévale*, ed. Adrian Tudor and Alan Hindley (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 193–211.

⁸⁵⁹ *Richard*, 3606, 3610.

troubling. Audiences are encouraged to see the story from the perspectives of both the Saracens *and* the English, diminishing the formers' otherness while augmenting the latters'. The text creates a community joined together in mutual horror, uniting the romance audience and the Saracen emissaries, while distancing them from the laughing cannibal king.

Although Richard is the only person in the text to practice cannibalism, he intimidates the Saracens by claiming that anthropophagy is a characteristic of the English.

I you waraunt,
 Ther is no flesch so norysshaunt,
 Unto an Ynglyssche Crysten man,
 Partryk, plover, heroun, ne swan,
 Cow, ne oxe, scheep, ne swyn,
 As is the flessh of a Saryzyne!⁸⁶⁰

This has been read as a metaphor for the conquering power of the English, as they threaten to symbolically consume the Saracen lands.⁸⁶¹ It also suggests, however, that just as the English warrior become 'lyouns' like their leader, so too is the monstrosity shared amongst them. By generalising to such a degree, the audience of the text, presumably also 'Ynglyssche Crysten' men and women, are included within Richard's statement. This allows the monstrosity of the text to spill over into the real world, unsettling readers as they are presented with the possibility of their own potential cannibalism, and as the distances between England and the locations of the monstrous races presented in other texts are shortened, or erased entirely. That this monstrousness or devilishness is not limited to Richard is further emphasised by the frequent descriptions of the English as having tails.⁸⁶² Heng notes,

⁸⁶⁰ *Richard*, 3547–52.

⁸⁶¹ Akbari, 'Hunger', 214–20.

⁸⁶² The legend of the tailed English is attested in Wace's *Roman de Brut*, in which the non-Christian English who harass St. Augustine by pinning fish tails on his cloak are given tails as a sign of their

since only devils and beasts have tails, the incessant description, by their enemies, of Richard and all Englishmen as ‘taylarded’ (‘tailed ones’) makes the English over into devilish unbelievers and bestial animals ... truly an insult that cuts to the (tail)bone because it turns English crusaders into their avowed enemies—Muslims, Jews, heretics.⁸⁶³

This connection is taken even further: The English are called ‘tayled dogges’ by the King of France, and yet the English call to the Saracens, saying ‘Go home, dogges, with your tayle’.⁸⁶⁴ The verbal connection between the Saracens and English as tailed dogs establishes a similarity between the two peoples. Heng’s stipulation that they are called this ‘by their enemies’ is important because, like the instances of auto-exoticism or self-declared foreignness in *Gui* and *Boeve*, it situates the English as objects of others’ gazes; the text imagines that Saracens must speak of the English in the same terms as the English speak of their enemies. The construction of a community of the English as tailed cannibals creates an image of the English as one of those monstrous peoples found in the farthest reaches of the world, described in the *RTC*. The English in *Richard* are not merely foreign or exotic, as they are in *Gui* or *Boeve*, but a monstrous people living on the edge of the map.

Yet, as almost all critics of *Richard* agree, these monstrous qualities are presented as a positive aspect of Englishness. Like *Gui* and *Boeve*, *Richard* is insistently English, to an almost comical degree given his historical lack of interest in the country. That Englishness is constructed abroad by a cannibal king who is demonic in heritage, nature, and actions, and in a text that presents Saracen perspectives on events and on the English Crusaders, suggests that English identity can only be fully realised when a foreign perspective is present.⁸⁶⁵ England’s identity as a region on a global stage must be

deviance. See Wace, *Wace’s Roman de Brut*, trans. Judith Weiss (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1999), 13731–45.

⁸⁶³ Heng, *Empire*, 94–95.

⁸⁶⁴ *Richard*, 1830.

⁸⁶⁵ Ambrisco argues that this is primarily in relation to the French, who are ‘the most troublesome other’. See Ambrisco, ‘Cannibalism’, 518.

viewed in a wider context; against the backdrop of the Crusades, as English knights attempt to capture the centre of the world, it becomes clear that English identity is a border identity. Situated at the utmost periphery of the known world, England is imagined to be the home of the monstrous peoples, so powerful and foreign that they pose a very real threat to those who hold the centre. Like other borders, England absorbs aspects of the cultures with which it comes into contact, and this strengthens the identity of the region. Richard is able to be demonic and Christian, Saracen and English, all at the same time, and it is this heterogeneity, a simultaneous foreignness and familiarity, seen from a variety of perspectives, that comes to characterise English identity in the texts explored in this thesis.

* * *

Jeffrey Jerome Cohen uses Kristeva's idea of the abject in his theses on monsters. As an embodiment of alterity, '[t]he monster is difference made flesh come to dwell among us.' He writes that 'the monster is an incorporation of the Outside, the Beyond—all of those loci that are rhetorically placed as distant and distinct but originate Within'.⁸⁶⁶ By displacing all the negative aspects of the self onto a monster or a foreigner, identities can form, whether personal, national, cultural, economic, sexual, or psychological.⁸⁶⁷ The monster is thus an object of fascination, he argues, because it reveals an aspect of the self that has been hidden away, repressed, or lost. Yet, as Cohen himself admits, this hypothesis is 'breakable';⁸⁶⁸ by examining *Gui*, *Boeve*, the *RTC*, and *Richard* it becomes clear that the relationship between the self and the foreign is embraced as these texts' heroes identify themselves by their lack of cultural belonging or their own monstrosity. All of the works discussed in this chapter present the 'abroad' or the 'alien' in a positive

⁸⁶⁶ Cohen, 'Monster Culture', 7.

⁸⁶⁷ Cohen, 'Monster Culture' 19.

⁸⁶⁸ Cohen, 'Monster Culture', 4.

light and resist the alterity of those the heroes encounter, regardless of religion or apparent monstrosity. *Gui*, *Boeve*, and the *RTC* loosen the heroes' ties to their homelands as they come into increasing contact with foreign people, while *Richard*'s embrace of its protagonist's monstrous qualities strengthens an English identity that is exceptionally aware of England's place as a region on the edge of the world. Rather than serving to articulate a hidden internal darkness, the monsters in these texts represent a threat from the outside world. Yet by making the foreign known, the threat of the monstrous is neutralised or, in the case of *Richard*, embodied as England poses a threat to the rest of the world.

The loss, abandonment, or changeability of home in these texts simultaneously highlights a sense of anxiety regarding the place of one's home in an ever-expanding world, and also evinces the mutability of identity. The *RTC* reflects an English view of the world as a place that is not only filled with wonders, but is itself a wonder contained within the material text. The marvels described therein paradoxically document the unknown parts of the world while making them known to readers, presenting the foreign as a source of admiration and delight. Foreign peoples, in the form of monstrous cultures and also Alexander himself, are formidable and terrifying, but tales of them bring joy. This is a positive, productive view of foreignness shared with *Gui*, *Boeve*, and *Richard*. Through these encounters, the heroes'—and possibly the audience's—own alterity and foreignness is realised and embraced, articulating the fluidity of geographic belonging as distinctions between the self and that which is deemed to be different are blurred. 'The foreigner lives within us', writes Kristeva. 'By recognizing him within ourselves, we are spared detesting him. ... The foreigner comes in when the consciousness of my difference arises, and he disappears when we all acknowledge ourselves as foreigners'.⁸⁶⁹

⁸⁶⁹ Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, 1.

Similarly, these texts normalise the experience of not belonging, as the heroes form identities deriving from their foreignness rather than in spite of it. The ability to relate to foreign heroes in the text and encounter the exotic through the text ‘mult est delitus’ [is very delightful].⁸⁷⁰ That audiences took pleasure in the diversity of the world and even wished to participate in it reveals an attitude towards foreignness shared by texts such as *Fouke le Fitz Waryn* and Gaimar’s *Estoire des Engleis*. It raises the possibility that English identity is, in part, defined by its interactions and affinities with other cultures, as English heroes and audiences—for reasons that are social, political, or religious in nature—learn from, respect, empathise with, and delight in those who are different from them.

⁸⁷⁰ *RTC*, 13.

Conclusion

This project has sought to expose the ways in which cultural contact can shape depictions of identity in texts from High Medieval England. Interaction with a cultural Other is often understood to strengthen national sentiment, and is even associated with the construction of the nation. However, after examining texts that reflect moments or spaces of cultural interaction—whether geographic contact zones, situations of conflict, or instances of textual exposure to foreign peoples—I have concluded that these texts do not highlight a national identity, but instead focus on regional identities. The regions in question can vary in scale: they range from the smallest local unit to transnational communities. The *Gesta Herwardi* mitigates the social and political difficulties of the Norman Conquest by concentrating on Ely and the Fens, while the *Estoire des Engleis* embraces the diverse cultural climate of Lincolnshire, creating an English identity seen through a regional lens. *Fouke le Fitz Waryn* creates a Marcher identity that is both local and cross-cultural and this furthers the politically expedient ideology of British unity exploited by Edward I. The heroes in *Gui de Warewic*, *Boeve de Haumtone*, *Le Roman de toute chevalerie*, and *Richard Coer de Lyon* all present an English identity that is in some way marginalised, made foreign, or depicted as monstrous. Through complex mechanisms of wonder and exoticism, the identities in these texts are outward looking, as they locate England on the edge of an ever more connected world.

By focusing on regions that contain, and are contained within, England, the primary texts discussed in this thesis complicate English identity, highlighting its paradoxes and inherently imagined nature. Yet these contradictions do not negate the concept of Englishness. Rather, they suggest that Englishness is multivalent, with different meanings, nuances, and identitary strategies that depend on context, location, or ideology. These varied Englishnesses are defined by cultural contact, but not necessarily

in the oppositional sense that Turville-Petre and Gillingham describe; rather, they incorporate other cultures and often embrace ethnic difference. They also create new identities or enhance local, experiential understandings of space and community by recontextualising geographies and recalibrating boundaries.

These identities are important to understand because they can be ideologically, socially, or politically powerful. More than merely telling us how those in the Middle Ages saw themselves, imagined the spaces in which they lived, or envisaged their communities, an appreciation of English identities can provide a more thorough understanding of politics in this period. They can help scholars to better appreciate the dynamics between countries—whether peaceful or hostile—and within England itself. An awareness of England's geographical relationships and the identities associated with its regions can elicit new readings of texts and historical events. By spotlighting regional identities, the some literary accounts of the Norman Conquest can be re-read as a series of local conquests rather than one definitional event, while the English involvement in the Crusades can be reframed as a conflict between an island on the map's western periphery and the centre of the world.

Although this thesis has not offered a comprehensive study of the relationships between cultural contact and regional identities in England in the High Middle Ages, and the geographic complexity of English identities deserves further critical attention, this project has demonstrated that identities at the edges of England—and at the edges of Englishness—prove that English identity cannot be easily delimited. It is plural, unbounded, and mutable. As such, future scholarly studies that investigate English identities must stem from an awareness of the regional, local, cross-cultural, or wholly foreign aspects of literary Englishnesses. They must also display an appreciation for texts that strive to reinvent English identity or subtly tinge their depictions of national identity with other cultural influences; these are evidence of the intercultural undercurrents that

have always defined Englishness. By reading from the edges, looking both inwards toward England and outwards from England, the multivalent geographic identities housed within England and beyond its borders can come more fully into view.

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