FRANCOPHONE LITERARY PERCEPTIONS OF CELTIC SPACE IN BRITAIN, 1100-1300

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This thesis is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Preface

This thesis is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the preface and specified in the text.

It is not substantially the same as any work that has already been submitted before for any degree or other qualification except as declared in the preface and specified in the text.

It does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the History Degree Committee.

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Abstract

The twelfth and thirteenth centuries were a period characterised by Anglo-Norman political intervention, expansion, and settlement in Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. In this thesis, I argue that Francophone literary texts, previously neglected by historians, offer a new lens through which to explore the relationship between England and its neighbours in Britain during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Although select French texts such as Gaimar's *Estoire des Engleis* and *L'Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal* have garnered attention from historians, my thesis delves deeper into 'fictional' narratives, applying an ecocritical approach to closely examine the representation of the landscapes of Scotland, Ireland, and Wales in the texts. This provides a window both into contemporary Francophone knowledge of Celtic spaces, and into how they existed within the thought world of the Francophone elite.

The first section of this thesis, 'Geographical knowledge and localisation', examines how the narratives of *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*, the *Roman de Fergus*, and the *lais* of *Desiré* and *Melion* are embedded in local geographies, demonstrating precise knowledge of place names and topography. In 'Wilderness and adventure', I explore how the practical realities of Celtic geographies might interact with their imaginative resonance as spaces for adventures and encounters with the unknown in the *lai* of *Desiré*, the *Gesta Herewardi*, *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*, *Les Merveilles de Rigomer*, and *Sone de Nansay*. Finally, in 'Alternative visions of space', I examine how the *Roman de la Manekine* and the *Roman de Horn* present Celtic spaces in a different manner to those explored in the two previous sections, offering reimaginings of Ireland and Scotland that serve authorial aims and reflect the places and times of composition of the texts. My thesis clearly demonstrates the value of Francophone literary texts as windows into the mental world of the Francophone elite, and their knowledge, ideas, and anxieties. By concentrating on themes of landscape and geography, I use the language of the Francophone elite to explore how they thought about the Celtic spaces of Britain during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in a practical, political, and imaginative sense.

Francophone literary perceptions of Celtic space in Britain, 1100-1300

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Introduction

The core-periphery model?

The relationship between England and its closest neighbours – Scotland, Ireland, and Wales – has long interested historians, not least because of its continuing relevance for modern politics and society. The developments of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were crucial in defining these relationships. Following the Norman Conquest, the frontiers of England became spaces for expansion and colonisation. The Norman kings had inherited a claim to overlordship of Wales from their predecessors, a claim that was redefined after Harold Godwinson's successful campaign in 1063.[1] Faced with Welsh attacks on the border counties in the late 1060s, William the Conqueror responded by installing trusted lords into new earldoms in Herefordshire, Chester, and Shrewsbury.[2] These border commands, with their distinctive style of Marcher lordship, provided positions from which to launch attacks in a process of consolidation, expansion, and Welsh resistance that would characterise Anglo-Cambrian relations. Anglo-Norman involvement in Ireland came at the request of Diarmait Mac Murchada, who invited Richard Fitz Gilbert to assist him in the recovery of the kingdom of Leinster.[3] In October 1171, Henry II set sail for Ireland, receiving the formal submission of the Anglo-Norman lords in Ireland and most of the Irish kings. His overlordship of Ireland was confirmed by the Treaty of Windsor in 1175 and the title of Lord of Ireland was granted to his son John two years later, although this by no means signified a settled political environment.[4] Scotland, on the other hand, faced Anglo-Norman intervention in a different format, through the settlement in Scotland of numerous Norman, Breton, and Flemish families during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Yet this 'Anglo-Norman Era', as coined by Geoffrey Barrow, also saw the renegotiation of the status of the Scottish kingship, from William the Lion's formal submission to the king of England following the 1174 Treaty of Falaise to the assertion of a sovereign kingship in the inauguration of Alexander III.[5]

Historiographically, these developments are often framed through core-periphery models, which generally divide territories between developed centres of power and their less developed and less productive peripheries. Rees Davies explores the expansion of an 'English empire' through

[1] R. R. Davies, *The Age of Conquest: Wales 1063-1413* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 26–27.
[2] Davies, *The Age of Conquest*, p. 28.
[3] M. T. Flanagan, 'Strongbow, Henry II and Anglo-Norman Intervention in Ireland', in J. Muldoon, ed., *The North Atlantic Frontier of Medieval Europe: Vikings and Celts* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2009), pp. 195–202; J. F. Lydon, 'Ireland: politics, government and law', in S. H. Rigby, ed., *A Companion to Britain in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), pp. 338–341.
[4] See chapters 7 and 8 in M. T. Flanagan, *Irish Society, Anglo-Norman Settlers, Angevin Kingship: Interactions in Ireland in the Late Twelfth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), pp. 229-304.
[5] This was the title of Barrow's 1978 Ford Lectures in British History, now published as G. W. S. Barrow, *The Anglo-Norman Era in Scottish History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980); for the developing idea of Scottish sovereignty, see D. Broun, *Scottish Independence and the Idea of Britain from the Picts to Alexander III* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007).

military power, colonisation, and a process of 'Anglicisation', whereby English technologies and practices were exported and emulated by English or Anglicised communities.[6] In his influential work, *The Making of Europe*, Bartlett sets out a model of expansion through conquest and colonisation from core areas, classified by their higher population concentration and levels of economic activity, into peripheral areas. This involved a process of cultural homogenisation through the reproduction of practices and technologies, Bartlett's 'Europeanization of Europe'.[7]

A frequent corollary of these core-periphery models is the association of the colonising core with civility and productiveness, in contrast to the backwardness and barbarism of native practices. This is often due to the nature of the source base of the historian, which relies upon a historical record written largely by the hegemonic culture. As Davies notes, 'history is largely written on its terms and using its categories'.[8] In the case of Britain, the literary and documentary evidence produced by Anglo-Norman clerks and writers has shaped the way in which historians have thought about Scotland, Ireland, and Wales as a 'Celtic fringe'. Twelfth-century writers such as Gerald of Wales frequently refer to the barbaric and economically backwards way of life of the native inhabitants of Scotland, Ireland, and Wales.[9] These narratives of backwardness not only reflected and shaped medieval thinking but have persisted in modern historiography.[10]

The concept of a 'Celtic fringe' also elides the distinctions between the histories of each individual nation, suggesting one all-encompassing Celtic past. This idea of a pan-Celticism, born in an age of nationalism and romanticism, is loaded with assumptions and stereotypes of Celtic visionaries, connections to the Otherworld, and the supposed Celtic preference for oral traditions.[11] In modern popular culture, the term 'Celtic' is bound up with images of elaborate metalwork and interlaced design motifs, blue woad body paint on warriors, folk tales and folk music. As a term, therefore, 'Celtic' reveals more about the assumptions, interests, and ideas written onto the past by nineteenth-century antiquaries and historians and perpetuated in popular culture, than about the history of Scotland, Ireland, and Wales in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

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[6] R. R. Davies, *The First English Empire: Power and Identities in the British Isles 1093-1343* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).
[7] See Chapter 11, 'The Europeanization of Europe', R. Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change 950-1350* (London: Penguin, 2004), pp. 269–291.
[8] Davies, *The First English Empire*, p. 119.
[9] See Chapter VI, 'The Face of the Barbarian', R. Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales: a voice of the Middle Ages* (Stroud: The History Press, 2013), pp. 131–146.
[10] See W. R. Jones, 'England against the Celtic Fringe: A Study in Cultural Stereotypes', in J. Muldoon, ed., *The North Atlantic Frontier of Medieval Europe: Vikings and Celts* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2009), p. 373; In the Scottish context, see M. Hammond, 'Ethnicity and the Writing of Medieval Scottish History', *The Scottish History Review*, 85 (2006), pp. 1–27.
[11] P. Sims-Williams, 'Celtomania and Celtoscepticism', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies*, 36 (1998), pp. 8-9.

Why, therefore, have I chosen to use a term which, to quote Patrick Sims-Williams in his oft-referenced 1998 essay 'Celtomania and Celtoscepticism', has 'become a battleground'?[12] On the one hand, 'Celtic' serves as a term to refer to the geographical spaces of Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, areas that spoke, and in some cases, continue to speak Celtic languages such as Irish, Gaelic, and Welsh – although it appears that insular Celtic speakers did not call themselves 'Celtic' before the modern period.[13] Yet I also use the term 'Celtic' in a deliberately provocative sense, setting out to directly question the assumptions inherent in the idea of the 'Celtic fringe'. Did medieval writers and audiences think about Scotland, Ireland, and Wales as the peripheries of an Anglo-Norman or Anglo-Angevin empire? Are there commonalities in how Scotland, Ireland, and Wales were presented by twelfth- and thirteenth-century Francophone writers? My corpus of texts reveals no single 'Celtic fringe' to set against an Anglo-Norman core, nor does it always present Scotland, Ireland, and Wales as discrete political units. Instead, I explore the multiplicity of spaces that are represented across the texts, breaking down the Celtic monolith into a multitude of cores and peripheries. We experience a series of 're-centrings' across the texts, whereby descriptions of localised geographies and detailed landscapes transport us to different spaces across Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. In some cases, the Anglo-Norman protagonists of the texts – and simultaneously the audience - become outsiders, reversing and undermining the core-periphery model at the heart of the 'Celtic fringe'. The texts offer us a kaleidoscopic window into the different and shifting ideas about Scotland, Ireland, and Wales from the point of view of the Francophone writer.

This raises an important point about the nature of my sources. The texts in my corpus were produced and consumed by the Anglo-Norman elite, and thus primarily reveal how Scotland, Ireland, and Wales were perceived by their Anglo-Norman authors and audiences. They are, in the words of Davies, 'images created by contemporaries – and often perpetuated by reiteration – of the world *as they understood it*' (my emphasis).[14] This understanding might be rooted in different forms of knowledge such as first-hand experience, stories and hearsay, literary motifs, or biblical modes of thinking. By unravelling the different strands of authorial knowledge within contemporary textual sources, we might begin to understand how the spaces and people of the western British Isles were understood, how these ideas might have been perpetuated and reinforced, and ultimately how these ideas might have played a part in shaping the actions of the Anglo-Norman political elite.

[12] P. Sims-Williams, 'Celtomania and Celtoscepticism', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies*, 36 (1998), pp. 1-36.
[13] This is discussed by Simon Rodway in his article 'John Scottus Eriugena and *Celtic eloquentia'*, in S. Rodway, J. Rowland, and E. Poppe, eds., *Celts, Gaels, and Britons: Studies in Language and Literature from Antiquity to the Middle Ages in Honour of Patrick Sims-Williams* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2022), pp. 1-22.
[14] Davies, *The First English Empire*, p. 115.

From 'history' to 'fiction'

Historians have largely relied on the Latin writings of twelfth- and thirteenth-century historians and commentators to gain an insight into the thoughts and perceptions of the Anglo-Norman elite. John Gillingham, for example, uses the narratives of twelfth-century historians to examine England's relationship and attitudes towards Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, and crucially, the role that these might have played in the development of a self-assertive Englishness.[15] However, Latin was by no means the only language used in this multicultural and multilingual society. Anglo-Norman French was not only a language of literature and culture, but also 'the real, everyday language of royal, seigneurial, civic and commercial administration in twelfth-century Britain'.[16] Yet scholarship has long neglected the significance of French in England. In their 2004 article, Joceyln Wogan-Browne and Nicholas Watson emphasise the impact of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century narratives of the inevitable decline of Anglo-Norman French and the triumph of English in the fourteenth century.[17] These narratives tie in with the nationalising framework of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century scholarship, in which English scholars sought to construct pure English pedigrees for English literature, whilst French scholarship presented selectively appropriated works that could become part of the French canon of literature. In both these traditions, Anglo-Norman has been vilified, either seen to be invading English purity or treated as a degenerate form of French. It has therefore found little place in the national scholarship of either England or France.

Yet the multicultural and multilingual environment of England provided a fertile space for the development of Old French literature.[18] Susan Crane's *Insular Romance* did much to rehabilitate both Anglo-Norman and Middle English texts, arguing that the particular social, political, and religious structures of England resulted in a distinctly insular body of works, reflecting ideological concerns distinct from those shaping continental romance.[19] The increasing attention given to French literature produced in England has been much aided by Ruth Dean and Maureen Boulton's 1999 catalogue of Anglo-Norman literature, in addition to the more recent collection *Vernacular Literary Theory from*

[15] J. Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century: Imperialism, National Identity and Political Values* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2008).
[16] I. Short, 'Patrons and Polyglots: French Literature in Twelfth-Century England', in M. Chibnall, ed., *Anglo-Norman Studies XIV: Proceedings of the Battle Conference 1991* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1992), p. 242.
[17] See N. Watson and J. Wogan-Browne, 'The French of England: the *Compileison*, *Ancrene Wisse*, and the idea of Anglo-Norman', *Journal of Romance Studies*, 4 (2004), pp. 35–39 for a comprehensive overview of historiographical treatments of Anglo-Norman literature. See also J. Wogan-Browne, 'General Introduction: What's in a Name: the "French" of "England"', in J. Wogan-Browne and et al., eds., *Language and Culture in Medieval Britain: The French of England, c.1100-c.1500* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2009), pp. 1–13.
[18] Short, 'Patrons and Polyglots: French Literature in Twelfth-Century England', pp. 229–249; I. Short, 'Language and Literature', in C. Harper-Bill and E. van Houts, eds., *A Companion to the Anglo-Norman World* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2002), pp. 191–213.
[19] For an overview of this argument, see S. Crane, *Insular Romance: Politics, Faith, and Culture in Anglo-Norman and Middle English Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), pp. 1–12.

the French of Medieval England: Texts and Translations, c. 1120-1450.[20] These provide access to and demonstrate the extent of the corpus of Anglo-Norman literature. Scholarship is beginning to recognise the significance and potential of 'the French of England', to use Wogan-Browne's term, moving beyond nationalising narratives and emphasising the interrelations between French, English, and Latin texts. This should be seen in the context of wider developments in scholarship on medieval Francophony, which stress the role of French as a transnational and supralocal language.[21]

The recognition of the integral place of French in the complex, multilingual landscape of medieval England has encouraged the use of French texts to consider historical questions uncoupled from ideas of the French nation. Laura Ashe draws upon a selection of eleventh- and twelfth-century texts, largely written in the French vernacular, to consider how the Normans became English. 'National' identity is not inherently connected to the use of a 'national' language. Rather, Englishness for Ashe is rooted in the land of England itself.[22] Matthew Lampitt has explored the manner in which access to French-language culture might allow us to revise the peripheral status of the Welsh Marches. Involvement in French-language culture was not merely a matter of elite status within the British Isles but also a means of participation in wider pan-European networks.[23] Keith Busby has examined both the use of French in medieval Ireland and the representation of Ireland in medieval French literature. Busby's analysis of the portrayal of Ireland as a place of marvels, both before and after the arrival of Anglo-Norman colonists, deftly weaves geopolitical realities with literary imaginings, demonstrating how literary works might deepen our understanding of historical questions.[24]

These examples demonstrate the insights made possible when scholars draw upon French vernacular literature as a source base for investigating historical questions. Some French texts, particularly those that appear to be more historical in tone, have garnered attention from historians. Gaimar's *Estoire des Engleis*, for example, has received reappraisal from scholars such as John Gillingham and Paul Dalton, whilst historians have recognised the potential of *L'Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal* for studies of subjects such as chivalry and warfare.[25] Historians appear more

[20] R. J. Dean and M. B. M. Boulton, *Anglo-Norman Literature: A Guide to Texts and Manuscripts* (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1999); J. Wogan-Browne, T. Fenster, and D. W. Russell, eds., *Vernacular Literary Theory from the French of Medieval England: Texts and Translations, c.1120-c.1450* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2016).
[21] S. Gaunt, 'French Literature Abroad: Towards an Alternative History of French Literature', *Interfaces*, 1 (2015), pp. 25–61. See also the King's College London projects: Medieval Francophone Literary Culture Outside France (2011-2015) and The Values of French Language and Literature in the European Middle Ages (2015-2020).
[22] L. Ashe, *Fiction and History in England, 1066-1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007)
[23] M. Lampitt, 'Networking the March: The Literature of the Welsh Marches, c.1180-c.1410' (PhD, King's College London, 2019).
[24] K. Busby, *French in Medieval Ireland, Ireland in Medieval French: The Paradox of Two Worlds* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017).
[25] Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century*, pp. 233–258; P. Dalton, 'Geffrei Gaimar's *Estoire Des Engleis*, Peacemaking, and the "Twelfth-Century Revival of the English Nation"', *Studies in Philology*, 104

willing to engage with vernacular texts that appear to be in some way historical, such as histories, chronicles, and saints' lives. However, the distinction between what we call historical and fictional texts should be called into question. Romance texts were neither produced nor consumed in isolation from social and political circumstances. Social practices and behaviour could be both reflected in and influenced by literary texts, which, as Martin Aurell has shown, might be written and read by an increasingly literate secular elite.[26] David Crouch draws upon romance texts, alongside conduct literature such as Stephen of Fougères's *Livre des Manières*, to examine the development of chivalric and courtly ideology in the twelfth century.[27] Indeed, scholars have long recognised that romances offer a space where social anxieties and tensions might be explored, where one might 'reshape and meditate on the world'.[28]

Moreover, the nature of history writing was fundamentally similar to that of romance literature. History writing was an act of creation, which involved amplification, reinterpretation, and invention.[29] As Pierre Courroux emphasises, 'entre les faits et leur mise en récit se situe un vide conceptuel qui est celui de la fabrication du récit, de la *fictio*'.[30] Like *romanciers*, the writers of history also employed narrative methods. This sense of slippage is particularly clear in Courroux's study of mimesis in chronicle writing from the twelfth to the fifteenth century. Courroux explores the development of an 'effet de réel' that anchors the chronicle narrative in the external world through the use of markers such as places, names, and dates. Courroux suggests that fictional works recalled chronicles by manipulating this use of place names and people; *romanciers* adopted 'une coloration historique' by imitating historical style.[31] On the other hand, chroniclers might invent details, such as

(2007), pp. 427–454; L. Ashe, 'William Marshal, Lancelot, and Arthur: chivalry and kingship', in C. P. Lewis, ed., *Anglo-Norman Studies XXX: Proceedings of the Battle Conference 2007* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2008), pp. 19–40; R. W. Kaeuper, 'William Marshal, Lancelot, and the issue of chivalric identity', *Essays in Medieval Studies*, 22 (2005), pp. 1–19; J. Gillingham, 'War and chivalry in the *History of William the Marshal*', in *Anglo-Norman Warfare: Studies in Late Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman Military Organization and Warfare* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1992), pp. 251–263.

[26] M. Aurell, *The Lettered Knight: Knowledge and aristocratic behaviour in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries* (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2017); See also Ashe, 'William Marshal, Lancelot, and Arthur', pp. 19–40; E. Kennedy, 'The Knight as Reader of Arthurian Romance', in M. B. Shichtman and J. P. Carley, eds., *Culture and the King: The Social Implications of the Arthurian Legend* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), pp. 70–90. This undoubtedly invites a deeper methodological question concerning how historians engage with sources that have previously been considered to be the remit of other disciplines, such as art history and archaeology, which might similarly reflect and influence social practices and behaviour.

[27] D. B. Crouch, *The Chivalric Turn: Conduct and Hegemony in Europe before 1300* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

[28] Crane, *Insular Romance*, p. 11.

[29] P. Courroux, *L'Écriture de l'histoire dans les chroniques françaises (XIIe-XVe siècle)* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2016), p. 50; See also M. Otter, *Inventiones: Fiction and Referentiality in Twelfth-Century English Historical Writing* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

[30] Courroux, *L'Écriture de l'histoire*, p. 54.

[31] Courroux, *L'Écriture de l'histoire*, p. 773.

toponyms and dates, in order to sustain the 'effet de réel' and their authority as writers.[32] Historians, like poets, were not constrained by the real; reality could be remoulded to meet their needs.[33]

Whilst Courroux insists upon a distinction between historians and *romanciers* in their use of chronology and historical time,[34] I suggest that we instead emphasise the capacity of medieval writers to manipulate genre. Romance writers might use markers such as place names to establish a grounding in the real world, whilst chronicle writers might create narrative through invention and manipulation. By moving beyond the rigidity of modern generic categories, we can allow ourselves to be more open to the fluidity and slipperiness of the medieval text. This slipperiness can also be found in the ways that different types of text were experienced by audiences and readers in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Henry Bainton explores public performance of the written word, in what he terms 'literate sociability', emphasising the commonalities between recitation of documents, stories, and histories. The public staging of written documents was a fundamental aspect of their political effectiveness.[35] Crucially, 'what modernity might distinguish as epic, romance, history and documents could occupy a single social space.'[36] Just as the process of writing history and romance were inherently similar, so too was the experience of consuming them.

With this in mind, my study places vernacular literary texts at the forefront of historical enquiry. These texts were not written in isolation from their social, political, and geographical contexts. Rather, they are the products of these contexts, deliberately and indeed unconsciously shaped by their authors' knowledge, perceptions, ambitions, and anxieties.

Aims and questions

In this study, I draw upon vernacular French literature as a lens through which to explore contemporary understandings and perceptions of Celtic spaces across the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. I investigate how Scotland, Ireland, and Wales are represented in vernacular French literature, and what this might tell us about the mental world of the Francophone elite. How were these spaces represented? Why might they have been chosen as settings, and how did these settings function? How did geographical knowledge play into literary representations? What was the interplay with literary motifs, folklore, and Latin historical writing? How might literary representations of Scotland, Ireland, and Wales reflect and influence the contemporary social and

[32] Courroux, *L'Écriture de l'histoire*, p. 738, p. 775.
[33] Courroux, *L'Écriture de l'histoire*, p. 738.
[34] Courroux, *L'Écriture de l'histoire*, p. 746, p. 774.
[35] H. Bainton, 'Literate Sociability and Historical Writing in Later Twelfth-Century England', in D. Bates, ed., *Anglo-Norman Studies XXXIV: Proceedings of the Battle Conference 2011* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2012), p. 29.
[36] Bainton, 'Literate Sociability and Historical Writing', p. 26.

political anxieties of the Anglo-Norman and Anglo-Angevin elite?[37] I argue that vernacular literary sources offer complex insights into contemporary perceptions of place and people, enriching the understandings offered by more traditional 'historical' sources. By unpicking how the narratives and settings function in both a literary and historic sense, we begin to understand the preoccupations of the author and their intended audience.

Sources and methodology

My source base is centred on French texts written between c.1100 and c.1300. These are: *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*, the *Roman de Fergus*, *Desiré*, *Melion*, *Les Merveilles de Rigomer*, *Sone de Nansay*, the *Roman de la Manekine*, and the *Roman de Horn*. These were selected through a survey of several collections of French literature.[38] My main selection criterion was that each text should feature Scotland, Ireland, or Wales as a central aspect of their narrative. Cornwall features only briefly. This criterion ensured that there was sufficient material in each text for analysis of how Celtic spaces were represented and why, whilst also meaning that my texts were largely self-selecting. I have chosen to include texts surviving in both Anglo-Norman and continental French, to reflect the transnational nature of both Francophone literary culture and Anglo-Norman elite society. In each case, I explore where and when the author was writing. In addition, a Latin text dating to the early twelfth century, the *Gesta Herewardi*, provides an interesting point of comparison.

Due to the constraints of this study, it was not possible to examine all texts featuring Scotland, Ireland, or Wales. The *Tristan* legend, for example, is notably absent, despite the significant presence of Ireland and Cornwall. Likewise, I have chosen not to examine Wace's *Roman de Brut*, a vernacular pseudo-history of Britain, based largely on Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Brittaniae*. The length and extent of these textual traditions, and related scholarly work, precluded their inclusion in this study. The selection of texts studied here are generically wide-ranging, including romances, *lais*, and texts which blur the boundaries between genres. Although my source base is predominantly composed of French texts, I frequently refer to and make comparisons with texts written in Latin, as well as sources such as charters and rare examples of medieval maps. This is essential when attempting to understand these texts in a holistic manner that considers the social, political, and geographical contexts of their production and consumption.

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[37] In this study, I primarily use the term 'Anglo-Norman' to describe the elite social and political culture in England following the Norman Conquest. On occasion, I use the term Anglo-Angevin when the author of a text was clearly active following the succession of Henry II in 1154.

[38] Dean and Boulton, *Anglo-Norman Literature*; M. J. Donovan, *The Breton Lay: A Guide to Varieties* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969); B. Schmolke-Hasselman, *The evolution of Arthurian romance: The verse tradition from Chrétien to Froissart*, trans. M. Middleton and R. Middleton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); R. S. Loomis, *Arthurian literature in the Middle Ages : a collaborative history* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959).

How, then, does a historian go about studying the representation of Celtic spaces across French literature from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries? A close reading of texts is essential, examining the choice of language and descriptors used. By considering the author and intended audience of the text – where and when the author was writing from, and for whom –, we might gain an understanding of why a space was presented in a certain way. This is made more challenging, of course, by the fact that we do not know who wrote many of the texts in my corpus. If we are lucky, the author might identify himself as a Guillaume (*Roman de Fergus*) or a Thomas (*Roman de Horn*). Instead of attempting to identify the author as a specific individual, my approach focuses on the content of the texts themselves and what they might reveal. Did the author have first-hand knowledge of the featured geographies? Are other forms of knowledge, such as biblical modes of thinking or literary motifs, inscribed in the text? Was the author influenced by contemporary politics? Can we identify interactions with other texts, whether vernacular or Latin? These questions offer a starting point for thinking in a historical way about the literary representation of Scotland, Ireland, and Wales.

Visions of space: environmental history, ecocriticism, and the landscape

My research began with a close reading of each text in my corpus. In doing so, I was struck by the repeated references to geography and landscape. Geographical features such as mountains, heathlands, and trees were integral to the narratives of the texts. Geography and landscape were not simply passive settings, but instead appeared to actively shape the actions and character development of the protagonists. Through my readings of the texts, it became increasingly apparent that geography and landscape are central to studying literary representations of Celtic space in Britain. The significance given to geography and landscape was perhaps due to the fundamental geographical positioning of Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. Located on the edges of Anglo-Norman territory, they were close enough to allow for the possibility of first-hand experience but far enough away to be distant and unknown for many of the readers of my texts. Moreover, the geographical characteristics of these spaces were substantially different from areas of southern England, with pragmatic as well as imaginative implications.[39] They were therefore truly fertile spaces for creativity and could be represented in manifold different ways, each representation weaving together different strands of knowledge, assumptions, and strategies. I wished to unravel these different strands by asking *how* these spaces were represented in each text and *why*. In order to do this, I developed a framework of questions to ask of my texts:

[39] These are discussed in chapter 2.2, 'Ireland as a space of threat'.

Are the texts set in generalised or vague spaces, or are they precisely localised? Where might the knowledge of geographies and topographies come from? What might this mean for authorship and audience?

How is the land and its inhabitants represented? Is it populated? Is there human settlement? Are there geographical features such as rivers and mountains? Do these features serve to connect human settlements or to distance them?

How much attention is given to geographical features? Are geographical features described in great detail or passed over briefly? Are they beautiful and tranquil or threatening and dangerous? Is there a separation of 'nature' and 'culture'?

How do the physical settings of the texts function within the narrative? Do they pose physical challenges to the protagonist? Does the protagonist interact with the natural environment, or is it merely a backdrop for human activity?

These questions function as a lens through which we might explore how contemporary authors and audiences thought about Celtic spaces, and how literary representations might relate to first-hand experience and to other forms of knowledge. In doing so, I consider how Celtic spaces were imbued with meaning; how they became *places* in the imaginations of contemporary authors and audiences. Can we talk about a singular, coherent vision of Celtic space? What is the relationship between the imagined space and the real, physical landscape? It is essential to think about these questions in the context of Anglo-Norman expansion in Wales and Ireland and the complex relationship between the English king and the king of the Scots. How might literary representations reflect political preoccupations? How might changes in the environment, particularly increasing levels of cultivation and clearances, affect contemporary understandings of space?

With these questions formulated, I found my own thoughts aligning with the work of environmental historians and ecocritical scholars, whose thinking had emerged from the study of very different sources, times, and places. Thinking about history through the lens of the environment began to gain traction with the popular ecologist movements of the 1960s and 1970s.[40] With the realisation that humans were having a negative impact on the environment, scholars sought avenues for moral engagement. Historians could delve into the origins of particular problems, for example, or they could reveal past societies that had maintained a better relationship with their environment.[41] These avenues were not, however, wholly successful: 'the antidote for the present' could not simply

[40] For a survey of the development of environmental history, see A. W. Crosby, 'The Past and Present of Environmental History', *The American Historical Review*, 100:4 (1995), pp. 1177–1189, J. R. McNeill, 'Observations on the Nature and Culture of Environmental History', *History and Theory*, 42:4 (2003), pp. 5–43, S. Sörlin and P. Warde, 'Making the Environment Historical — An Introduction', in S. Sörlin and P. Warde, eds., *Nature's End: History and the Environment* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 1–19.
[41] McNeill, 'Observations on the Nature and Culture of Environmental History', p. 15.

be found in the past.[42] Despite this, environmental history continued, and continues, to take shape. Environmental historians are interested in the mutual relationship between humankind and the rest of nature. As McNeill so neatly explains:

> 'Environmental history pleads for recognition that nature not only exists, but changes. Moreover, it changes both of its own accord and on account of human actions, and in so doing changes the context in which human history unfolds.'[43]

Environmental history recognises that human actions occur 'within a network of relationships, processes, and systems that are as ecological as they are cultural'.[44] Human actions and experience cannot be extricated from the landscapes and environments that surround them. McNeill suggests three different kinds of environmental history: material, cultural or intellectual, and political. Material environmental history is concerned with changes to the physical and biological environment, and how these changes might have an impact on human societies. Cultural or intellectual environment history, on the other hand, is interested in literary and artistic representations of nature, and what these might tell us about the people who produced them. Notably, McNeill appears to be less convinced by this type of environmental history.[45] Finally, political environmental history focuses on the relationship between law and state policy and the natural world.[46] With the first of these categories in mind, the crossovers between environmental history and other disciplines - such as historical geography, ecology, and climate studies – become clear. Indeed, there has been a tendency for environmental history to be written be geographers, archaeologists, anthropologists, and ecologists, rather than by historians.[47] The history of the environment is often tied to the interpretation of scientific data surrounding environmental change, or to human responses to these changes.

Where, therefore, is the historian in this type of history? William Cronon, in his article 'A Place for Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative', provides a helpful insight into this question. Cronon examines how we, as historians, might produce meaning in environmental processes through narrative. Exploring two alternative narratives of the Dust Bowl during the 1930s, Cronon emphasises how 'Human interests and conflicts create values in nature'.[48] When we tell the story of

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[42] McNeill, 'Observations on the Nature and Culture of Environmental History', p. 16.
[43] McNeill, 'Observations on the Nature and Culture of Environmental History', p. 42.
[44] W. Cronon, 'A Place for Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative', *The Journal of American History*, 78:4 (1992), p. 1349.
[45] McNeill states that 'I think the cultural construction of nature just isn't all that important compared to what has happened and is happening to real nature, and how nature has affected and still affects us (there is some reality out there independent of our perception!).' This, however, seems to ignore the fact that by examining cultural constructions and representations of nature, we might learn something about how nature, and changes in nature, has affected us. McNeill, 'Observations on the Nature and Culture of Environmental History', p. 17.
[46] McNeill, 'Observations on the Nature and Culture of Environmental History', p. 6.
[47] Sörlin and Warde, 'Making the Environment Historical — An Introduction', p. 10.
[48] Cronon, 'A Place for Stories', p. 1369.

the environment and its changes, we are driven with the human in mind. Nevertheless, our narrative must make ecological sense:

> 'Even though environmental histories transform ecosystems into the scenes of human narratives, the biological and geological processes of the earth set fundamental limits to what constitutes a plausible narrative.'[49]

In this way, nature to some extent 'co-authors' our narratives.[50] Nature might shape the narrative, but it is our perceptions and understandings of nature that imbue it with meaning. Our work as historians, rather than simply as natural scientists, is therefore intimately tied to the cultural and intellectual form of environmental history maligned by McNeill. Our representations of nature, and the differing narratives through which we frame nature, reveal something about how we understand the world around us and its relationship to politics, culture, and society.

The same is undoubtedly true of historical writing from the past. Although a seemingly facile point, it is worth noting that medieval writers and their audiences lived within the non-human environment and had to physically navigate its landscapes and environmental changes. Nature could co-author, to use Cronon's term, their narratives, whether these narratives are deemed 'historical' or 'fictional' (a generic boundary that will be dismantled throughout this study). By considering representations of nature, the environment, and landscape in literature, we might gain an insight into contemporary relationships with the natural world. How does landscape shape narrative, and how does narrative shape landscape? These are resolutely historical questions, which think about how people in the past experienced and understood the world around them – and about how changes in the natural world, changes possibly caused by human action, might affect human behaviour and perceptions.

A strand of scholarship that does consider these questions is ecocriticism. Like environmental history, ecocriticism found its roots in the environmental crises of the 1960s and 1970s, which gave rise to a selection of scholarship interested in environmental approaches to literature.[51] Labelled as 'ecocriticism', a term thought to have been first coined by William Rueckert in his 1978 essay 'Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism', this scholarship broadly aims to consider the relationship between literature and the physical world.[52] Cheryll Glotfelty, in her introduction to *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, concisely outlines the principle of interconnectedness that underlies ecocriticism:

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[49] Cronon, 'A Place for Stories', pp. 1372–1373.
[50] Cronon, 'A Place for Stories', p. 1373.
[51] For an overview of the development of environmental literary studies, see C. Glotfelty, 'Introduction', in C. Glotfelty and H. Fromm, eds., *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology* (Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1996), pp. xv–xxxvii.
[52] Glotfelty, 'Introduction', p. xx.

> 'all ecological criticism shares the fundamental premise that human culture is connected to the physical world, affecting it and affected by it.'[53]

A frequent dimension of ecocritical work is the desire to return agency to the landscape, moving away from a human desire to control and order and instead giving a voice to nature.

Applying ecocritical concepts to medieval literature is challenging not least because, as Michael J. McDowell, applying Bahktin's theory of dialogics to landscape writing, observes, 'trees and stones and squirrels don't talk'.[54] This means that the world is not represented in its entirety, and not all points of view are represented. Any discussions or representations of landscape and the natural world are necessarily framed within human discourse and therefore human understanding. However, here perhaps lies the value of applying ideas of ecocriticism to the medieval text. By examining representations of landscape and geography within literature, we might access medieval understandings of the physical world around them. How did authors choose to talk about the physical landscape, and crucially, how did the physical landscape affect medieval imaginings of Celtic space? An ecocritical framework allows us to think about the interconnectedness of humanity and the surrounding physical landscape, both within and outside the textual world.

Of course, landscape has not been entirely absent from historical studies of literary sources. Leonie Hicks, in her chapter on 'The Landscape of Pilgrimage and Miracles in Norman Narrative Sources', considers the role of landscape in accounts of the miraculous. Hicks examines two accounts from Orderic Vitalis' *Ecclesiastical History* to show how landscape might be constructed as an active agent, whether a positive and helpful space or a hostile force that test one's faith.[55] Drawing on Wace's *Roman de Rou*, Hicks demonstrates how place and temporality might be used to create a sense of the unfamiliar but also to connect readers to particular locations. Crusade narratives such as the *Gesta Francorum* and the account of Ralph of Caen could be tied to liturgical and biblical markers in order to map 'sacred geography onto the contemporary landscape'.[56] Through her study, Hicks emphasises how chroniclers selected appropriate landscapes for their accounts to suit their purposes. In accounts of the miraculous, landscapes must be familiar enough to allow audiences to relate to the narrative but simultaneously allow for the unfamiliar or challenging, whilst crusade narratives might allude to biblical markers in the landscape in order to link the journey of the crusaders with the audience's readings of scripture.[57] For Hicks, therefore, landscape offers a lens through which we might think more deeply about how authors created a link between past and present, text and

[53] Glotfelty, 'Introduction', p. xix.
[54] M. J. McDowell, 'The Bakhtinian Road to Ecological Insight', in C. Glotfelty and H. Fromm, eds., *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology* (Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1996), p. 372.
[55] L. Hicks, 'The Landscape of Pilgrimage and Miracles in Norman Narrative Sources', in K. Hurlock and P. Oldfield, eds., *Crusading and Pilgrimage in the Norman World* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2015), pp. 180–183.
[56] Hicks, 'The Landscape of Pilgrimage and Miracles', p. 191.
[57] Hicks, 'The Landscape of Pilgrimage and Miracles', pp. 192–193.

audience, place and experience. Hicks's current interdisciplinary Leverhulme research project, 'Landscapes of the Normans: ways of seeing', further explores the role of landscape as an active participant that shaped history and historical narratives. The project investigates the place of landscape in Norman historical writing, exploring where and how ideas of landscape developed, and how these landscapes could be used to create narratives about the past. Like my study, 'Landscapes of the Normans' considers how representations of landscape were shaped by both practical experience and written traditions, but with a focus on Latin texts rather than French literature.

Catherine Clarke's monograph, *Literary Landscapes and the Idea of England, 700-1400,* explores the reworking of the *locus amoenus* across medieval Latin and vernacular texts and its association with ideas of England.[58] Through close textual analysis, Clarke demonstrates how the idyllic pastoral landscape of the *locus amoenus,* here associated particularly with motifs of enclosure, is appropriated and reworked in specific historical and cultural contexts. Perhaps most interesting is Clarke's analysis of texts from regional monastic houses. Clarke demonstrates how these texts are embedded in the topography of the local landscapes, transforming 'the realities of topography and monastic land management into allegories of spiritual cultivation and triumph, and a mirror for national mythologies of English place and destiny'.[59] The idyllic monastic island might 'function as metonym or emblem for the island nation, enacting and realising the mythic national destiny of cultivation and salvation'.[60] Here the realities of the landscape itself – an active agent - are crucial in shaping the construction of monastic institutional identity.

Carl Watkins, in his paper on 'Landscape and Belief in Anglo-Norman England', draws upon Simon Schama's idea of landscapes as 'constructs of imagination projected onto wood and water and rock'[61] in order to consider the inter-relationship between landscape and belief: how did beliefs give rise to particular textual representations of landscape, and how in turn might physical landscapes have played a part in shaping belief? [62] Watkins explores how the transformation of landscape by Cistercian monastic houses could function as an external expression of inner transformation, a 'tangible product of faith', but could also be subject to criticism by churchmen such as Walter Map and Gerald of Wales, who condemned the avarice and commercialisation of the cultivated Cistercian landscape.[63] Landscapes were not only inscribed with meaning, but also might be implicated in the formation of belief as narratives became fixed around particular landscape features.[64] As Watkins argues, the physical transformation of landscape, increasingly exploited and cultivated over the course

[58] C. Clarke, *Literary Landscapes and the Idea of England, 700-1400* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2006).
[59] Clarke, *Literary Landscapes and the Idea of England,* p. 68.
[60] Clarke, *Literary Landscapes and the Idea of England,* p. 89.
[61] S. Schama, *Landscape and memory* (London: Harper Collins, 1995), p. 61.
[62] C. S. Watkins, 'Landscape and Belief in Anglo-Norman England', in D. Bates, ed., *Anglo-Norman Studies XXXV: Proceedings of the Battle Conference 2012* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013), pp. 305–320.
[63] Watkins, 'Landscape and Belief', pp. 307–311.
[64] Watkins, 'Landscape and Belief', pp. 314–315.

of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, surely must have had a profound effect on the cultural imagination. We can perhaps see a disenchantment of the once 'enchanted' wild spaces of forests, moors, and marshlands, as the landscape grew to be described in increasingly rational and utilitarian language.[65] Through his study, Watkins shifts away from the idea of landscape as a passive surface onto which ideas are simply projected, instead demonstrating how we might consider landscape as an active agent in the shaping of belief.

The works of Hicks, Clarke, and Watkins serve as examples of how literary representations of landscape might be constructed to serve authorial purposes, but also of how physical landscapes might actively shape identities and beliefs. Alongside these approaches, we might also consider Rebecca Douglass' article 'Ecocriticism and Middle English Literature', in which Douglass draws upon the work of a number of scholars, notably several of the essays collected in *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, in order to formulate an ecocritique through which we might approach medieval literature.[66]

Space, landscape, and phenomenology

In my introduction thus far, I have used the terms 'space' and 'landscape' without probing into their meanings. Whilst I do not intend to engage deeply in a theoretical discussion, it will here be essential to expand upon what I mean by these two terms and how I propose to employ them. In *A Phenomenology of Landscape*, Christopher Tilley outlines two contrasting approaches to space.[67] Space, from the perspective of the 'new' geography and 'new' archaeology of the 1970s and 80s, is a neutral container for human activities. It is abstract, universal, and can be objectively measured. On the other hand, space has also been seen as a socially produced medium that is involved in human activity. Space, according to this perspective, is no longer neutral or meaningless:

> 'A centred and meaningful space involves specific sets of linkages between the physical space of the non-humanly created world, somatic states of the body, the mental space of cognition and representation and the space of movement, encounter and interaction between persons and between persons and the human and non-human environment.'[68]

Space is produced when humans interact with and experience the world. It is both about bodily sensation and about cognitive understanding, how we physically feel the world and how we think about it. It is how we move through the world, how we represent it, and how we remember it.

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[65] Watkins, 'Landscape and Belief', pp. 316–318.
[66] See R. M. Douglass, 'Ecocriticism and Middle English Literature', *Studies in Medievalism*, 10 (1998), pp. 136–163.
[67] C. Tilley, *A Phenomenology of Landscape* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1994), pp. 9–11.
[68] Tilley, *A Phenomenology of Landscape*, p. 10.

It is perhaps helpful to give an example here. Imagine, for a moment, that you are an Anglo-Norman knight travelling with your lord to Ireland. Perhaps you have heard things about Ireland from acquaintances already there, or from merchant traders who have sailed into the port of Dublin. You might be apprehensive about the people and their customs, and the marvellous occurrences that apparently take place there. Before even arriving there, your experience of the space of Ireland might be shaped by prior knowledge and assumptions. The journey to Ireland then plays its part. If the seas are rough, you might arrive feeling exhausted and seasick, in a land far from home. You might notice a change in the weather, the light, the ground conditions, the topography, and your body might feel tired as you traverse the terrain. The space of Ireland, then, is not neutral, but rather is fashioned through a rich amalgam of sensory and cognitive elements.

It is with this definition of space that my study is concerned. I am fundamentally interested in the phenomenological issue of how people, specifically the Francophone elite, experienced the world, specifically Celtic spaces, during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Space, in my conceptualisation, is not simply a neutral backdrop for human action but a participant that is both produced by and that produces human experience. This speaks to the ecocritical perspective discussed above, which centres the physical world of landscape and geography in shaping human activity and experience. Yet we might also ask, what is 'landscape'? When I write about the represented landscapes of Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, I am referring predominantly to the physical features of their geographies, topography, and terrain. Is it mountainous? Covered with forest? Depopulated or dotted with human settlements? Experiences of these landscapes were, on one level, tangible and produced through bodily sensations as humans moved through different terrain as part of travel, conflict, and settlement.

For my purposes, then, it seems that 'landscape' primarily refers to physical geography and terrain. Yet for scholars more broadly, this is not always the case. 'Landscape' is also a term that refers to a mode of representation, such as landscape paintings, that involves separation from the world. The landscape presents the world as an object that we observe as spectators rather participants, a view through which we structure our surroundings.[69] This objectification of the environment has been tied to shifts away from rural modes of life in Europe during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries.[70] It is also seen in the valorisation of wilderness landscapes in Australian and North American engagements with landscape – the desire to preserve a non-human natural wilderness through the National Parks movement, for example, which perpetuated the myth of the uninhabited,

[69] J. Malpas, 'Place and the Problem of Landscape', in J. Malpas, ed., *The Place of Landscape: Concepts, Contexts, Studies* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2011), pp. 5–6.
[70] Malpas, 'Place and the Problem of Landscape', p. 8.

pristine wilderness that removed all trace of its original indigenous inhabitants.[71] Here landscape and nature are distinct and separate from humanity.

However, landscape can also be about interaction and involvement with place. Jeff Malpas describes how 'Landscape is a representation of place, and as such, it is the re-presentation of a relatedness to place.'[72] Or, in the words of Tim Ingold, 'the landscape, in short, is not a totality that you or anyone else can look *at*, it is rather the world *in* which we stand in taking a point of view on our surroundings.'.[73] It is 'the world as it is known to those who dwell therein, who inhabit its places and journey along the paths connecting them.'[74] Landscape, then, shares many qualities with space. It is do with physical sensation and bodily experience, but also cognition, emotion, and understanding. It is about how we experience and interact with our surrounding, how we move through spaces and places, but also – crucially - how we represent them. As Christopher Tilley notes, 'To understand a landscape truly it must be felt, but to convey some of this feeling to others it has to be talked about, recounted, or written and depicted.'[75] What does this mean for my corpus of texts? I see the descriptions of Scotland, Ireland, and Wales in Old French literary texts as representations of landscape, of both the physical terrain and the author's relatedness to that terrain. They serve as an alternative body for the audience or reader of the text, who is in turn able to 'feel' the described landscape. All this is overlaid, or indeed underpinned, by narrative, plot, and authorial strategy.

One important corollary is that the spaces represented in these texts reflect each author's relatedness to Scotland, Ireland, or Wales, rather than the experiences and perspectives of indigenous voices. This relatedness may come through first-hand experience; indeed, in some instances, I will suggest that the use of precise place names and references does indicate personal familiarity with geography. In other cases, the author's relatedness to Celtic space might be founded primarily on stories and accounts related by others. Here interaction with other texts, both in Latin and the vernacular, might become increasingly significant. My study therefore offers a window into the perceptions, knowledge, and understanding of the Francophone authors of my corpus of texts. It is their vision of Scotland, Ireland, and Wales that is under scrutiny as I explore what the representation of landscape in these texts might tell us about contemporary perceptions of Celtic spaces.

[71] W. Cronon, 'The Trouble with Wilderness: Or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature', *Environmental History*, 1:1 (1996), p. 15.
[72] Malpas, 'Place and the Problem of Landscape', p. 7.
[73] T. Ingold, 'The Temporality of the Landscape', *World Archaeology*, 25:2 (1993), p. 171.
[74] Ingold, 'The Temporality of the Landscape', p. 156.
[75] Tilley, *A Phenomenology of Landscape*, p. 31.

Thesis structure

This study is divided into three parts, each focusing upon a particular representation of Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. Part 1, 'Geographical knowledge and localisation', examines four texts (*Fouke le Fitz Waryn*, *Les Merveilles de Rigomer*¸ and the *lais* of *Desiré* and *Melion*) that are embedded in local landscapes in Scotland and Wales, and their borderlands, as well as Ireland. These texts provide detailed descriptions of geography, as well as using place names and toponyms. I explore how representations within the texts might map onto real geographies, whether the texts demonstrate authorial knowledge of the setting at hand, and how this knowledge might be employed to serve authorial purposes. Real places might also be transformed to fit within the narrative schema, demonstrating that whilst landscape and geography might shape medieval imaginings of space, medieval authors also had the ability to manipulate ideas of geography for their own purposes. In the final chapter of this section, I suggest that we should be open to the possibility that the *lai*, a genre often thought of as folkloric and fairy tale-like, could also speak to specific geographies and political circumstances.

In the second part of my thesis, 'Wilderness and adventure', I examine three texts (*Desiré*, *Les Merveilles de Rigomer*, and the *Gesta Herewardi*) in which Scotland, Ireland, and Wales are characterised by wild, unpopulated, or distant landscapes. In these imaginings, Celtic spaces offer settings in which the unexpected, the marvellous, or the challenging can take place. I explore how this might relate to the tangible physical challenges of the landscapes of Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, as well as their associations with freedom from religious and feudal hierarchies. I also consider how a developing knowledge of different geographies, including travel and contacts with Iberia and North Africa, might result in changing perceptions of Celtic spaces in Britain in *Fouke le Fitz Waryn* and *Sone de Nansay*.

The final section of my thesis moves away from these two visions of space, which present Scotland, Ireland, and Wales either as wild and physically challenging settings for adventures, or as localised geographical spaces bound up with local political anxieties. Instead, I consider two texts (the *Roman de la Manekine* and the *Roman de Horn*) in which Ireland and Scotland appear very differently. Moving from landscape to court, these texts present Scotland and Ireland as idealised courtly spaces that appear to function through literary motifs rather than geographical realities. As I discuss, this might be for narrative purposes or it might instead be politically motivated, designed to present the Irish court in a positive light to ease contemporary political tensions.

Part 1: Geographical knowledge and localisation

In 1185, the royal clerk Gerald of Wales accompanied John, son of Henry II, to Ireland. In 1188, his travels also took him across Wales with Archbishop Baldwin in 1188 on an expedition to recruit fighters for the Third Crusade. These journeys inspired four works that had an enormous impact both in the medieval period, and as source material for historians: the *Topographia Hibernica*, the *Expugnatio Hibernica*, the *Itinerarium Cambriae*, and the *Descriptio Cambriae*. The large number of extant manuscripts is testament to their contemporary popularity, and Gerald himself describes his public recitation of the *Topographia Hibernica* at Oxford in 1188 or 1189.[76] Gerald's writings provided a conduit for first-hand knowledge of the geographies of Ireland and Wales, interspersed with folkloric tales, personal opinion, and ethnographic observations.

Gerald's travels in Ireland and Wales are reflective of broader contact throughout the British Isles during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. With invasion and settlement came increased knowledge of geography and place names, knowledge that might be transmitted to contacts in England and elsewhere. The following chapters consider how this geographical knowledge might have influenced vernacular literature. How and why might texts be grounded in real geographies, and what might this tell us about the text's author and intended audience? How might texts speak to contemporary social and political anxieties? And how might geographical detail and political resonance break down the generic boundaries between 'fiction' and 'history'?

1.1. Local landscape as territory

The Anglo-Norman romance *Fouke le Fitz Waryn* centres around a historically based dispute over the eponymous character's claims to land in the Welsh Marches, his time spent as an outlaw, and the eventual recovery of his lands. The issue of local territory, of the land itself, is at the heart of the narrative. In this chapter, I explore how geography and landscape are presented across the first section of the text, and how this serves to assert the legitimacy and longevity of both the Fitz Waryn family and Marcher lords more broadly.[77]

The subject matter, historical detail, and geographical localisation of the text have led scholars to suggest that *Fouke* should be considered an ancestral romance, likely written for the Fitz Waryn family.[78] However Sidney Painter, amongst others, has argued that inaccuracies in the text, such as

[76] L. Thorpe, 'Gerald of Wales: A public reading in Oxford in 1188 or 1189', *Neophilologus*, 62:3 (1978), pp. 455–458; For the manuscripts of Gerald's works, see C. Rooney, 'The manuscripts of the works of Gerald of Wales' (PhD, University of Cambridge, 2005), pp. 115–161.
[77] I use Fulk III when referring to the historical figure, and Fouke when referring to the character of the text.
[78] M. D. Legge, *Anglo-Norman Literature and Its Background* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 171.; T. Wright, trans., *The history of Fulk Fitz Warine, an outlawed baron in the reign of King John* (London: Warton Club, 1855), p. xv; L. Brandin, ed., *Fouke Fitz Warin : roman du XIVe siècle* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1930), p. iv.

the mistaken claim that the manor of Wantage was granted to Fulk III by a non-existent earl marshal Hugh, suggest that the author was not working for the Fitz Waryn family but was instead responding to public demand for the story of Fulk III.[79] Ralph Hanna instead suggests that the elisions and inaccuracies within the text, notably the suppression of the historical Fulk I and of any acts associated with King Henry I, are a feature of the 'interpretative shaping' of the text rather than evidence of a lack of knowledge.[80] I am inclined to agree with Hanna. In this chapter, I explore how the historical inaccuracies of the text are concerned with retelling and reframing Marcher history as a deliberate narrative strategy, designed to emphasise the legitimacy and longevity of the Fitz Waryn family and Marcher lordship more broadly. My analysis of *Fouke* offers a new perspective on the history of the Welsh Marches in the long post-Conquest period, with a focus on the Fitz Waryn family in history and legend.

From the outset, the text demonstrates the positive role of Marcher lords in transforming a landscape destroyed by the war. I examine how this landscape is presented in terms of territory and landholding, and how Marcher lords physically impose their presence on the landscape through castle-building. I focus on a castle with particular importance to the Fitz Waryn family, the castle of Dynan, which offers a clear example of how the narrative might retell history in order to emphasise the positive qualities of our protagonist's family. This strategic reframing of the past is shown to be at work more widely in the text, which redates land grants to the time of Conquest. I suggest that this is designed to emphasise the longevity and legitimacy both of the Fitz Waryn family and of Marcher lords more broadly. This is reinforced by a foundation myth, which establishes a legendary account of the Fitz Waryn family's origins.

The Welsh March

The historical context of the Welsh Marches during the late eleventh to thirteenth centuries is crucial to understanding how the text functions and why it places such great emphasis on landscape and landholding. The Welsh March was a highly politicised and shifting space, forming the frontier between England and Wales and characterised by conflict between Marcher lordships and native Welsh principalities. Marcher lords were feudal tenants of the English king but were afforded a great degree of autonomy, such as the ability to wage private war and settle disputes without the direct intervention of the king.[81] The constitutional origin of these Marcher liberties has been the subject of

[79] S. Painter, 'The Sources of Fouke Fitz Warin', *Modern Language Notes*, 50:1 (1935), pp. 14–15; See also J. Meisel, *Barons of the Welsh frontier: the Corbet, Pantulf and Fitz Warin families, 1066-1272* (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), pp. 133–134.
[80] R. Hanna, 'The Matter of Fulk: Romance and History in the Marches', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 110:3 (2011), pp. 342–344.
[81] See R.R. Davies, 'Kings, Lords and Liberties in the March of Wales, 1066-1272', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 29 (1979), pp. 41–61.

debate, seen either as the continuation of a regal lordship acquired when Norman lords usurped Welsh princes or as an incentive and reward for the military subjugation of the frontier area.[82]

The beginning of William the Conqueror's reign saw the continuity of the three surviving earls, Edwin, Morcar, and Waltheof, who appear to have retained their titles and some practical responsibilities.[83] William appointed additional earls in Northumbria, Gospatric and Copsig, both of whom had some kind of prior claim.[84] William fitz Osbern, Odo, bishop of Bayeux, and Ralph, were also appointed earls, possibly in direct succession to their pre-Conquest counterparts, Harold, Leofwine, and Gyrth, who had died at Hastings.[85] However, faced with uprisings in 1069 and 1070, William was required to rethink the role of earldoms, which were not suited to times of disorder. Instead, more flexible military arrangements were necessary, meaning local commanders and smaller areas of responsibility – with fewer men made earls.[86] There were, however, two earls within Mercia by the 1070s: Hugh d'Avranches at Chester and Roger de Montgomery at Shrewsbury.[87]

These creations appear to have been driven by military strategy, with a focus on containing the Welsh threat to English border counties.[88] Max Lieberman notes that many of the knights who were granted land by these earls could also be traced back to the Norman frontier, which perhaps provided the military experience required of those being placed on the Welsh border.[89] It is possible that 'the first Norman kings of England saw the Anglo-Welsh march as akin to that of Normandy, as presenting similar challenges and calling for similar measures.'[90]

It is in the context of these military challenges and the opportunities for advancement seized by the Normans that Rees Davies sees the development of Marcher liberties. Wales was a 'land of war', where the right to wage war was not a matter of any constitution but instead 'the primary rule of survival and the only sure means to lordship'.[91] The king of England seldom intervened in jurisdictional matters in the Welsh March, although he might arbitrate in cases or demand that a case be heard in his court.[92] It was in times of royal assertiveness, notably the 1240s and 1250s, that Marcher liberties were brought into focus.[93]

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[82] Davies, 'Kings, Lords and Liberties', pp. 42–43.
[83] C. P. Lewis, 'The early earls of Norman England', in M. Chibnall, ed., *Anglo-Norman Studies XIII: proceedings of the Battle Conference, 1990* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1991), p. 215.
[84] Lewis, 'The early earls of Norman England', p. 216.
[85] Lewis, 'The early earls of Norman England', pp. 216–218.
[86] Lewis, 'The early earls of Norman England', pp. 218–219.
[87] Lewis, 'The early earls of Norman England', p. 219.
[88] Davies, 'Kings, Lords and Liberties', p. 44.
[89] M. Lieberman, 'The medieval "marches" of Normandy and Wales', *English Historical Review*, 125:517 (2010), pp. 1367–1368.
[90] Lieberman, 'The medieval "marches" of Normandy and Wales', p. 1369.
[91] Davies, 'Kings, Lords and Liberties', p. 45.
[92] Davies, 'Kings, Lords and Liberties', p. 54.
[93] See Davies, 'Kings, Lords and Liberties', pp. 56–58.

Historical studies of the Welsh March, such as the work of Rees Davies and Max Lieberman, have drawn largely upon documentary sources such as rolls and charters, as well as chronicles and Domesday.[94] In this chapter, I suggest that our understanding of the Welsh March can be enhanced through an engagement with literary texts. *Fouke le Fitz Waryn* clearly taps into questions surrounding Marcher lordship, liberties, and relations with the king of England. Max Lieberman has used *Fouke* to explore attitudes towards the Welsh in the Marches.[95] My approach, on the other hand, is driven by geography and landscape rather than ethnicity. Whilst *Fouke* centres around the character of Fouke and his outlawry, it simultaneously explores broader ideas about landholding in the Marches. The narrative frames Fouke's claims to Whittington in a territorialised vision of the landscape, where landholding and the rights that go with it can be traced back to William the Conqueror. When King John fails to uphold Fouke's inheritance claims, he is acting against a historically and mythologically based claim to the land – and against the rights granted by William the Conqueror to the Marcher lords. This vision of Marcher lordship and rights reflects the concerns of the author and his contemporary audience, the text being written and consumed in the Shropshire area and at a time when Marcher rights were being defined and asserted. *Fouke* offers the historian a window into how Marcher lords saw their position and their relationship with the king, and how this might be framed in terms of landscape and territory.

The text

Fouke le Fitz Waryn was originally composed in verse during the second half of the thirteenth century, but it survives only in British Library, Royal 12.C.xii as an early fourteenth-century prose reworking.[96] Small portions of the original verse text are, however, preserved in the prose version.[97] In addition, there survives a sixteenth-century synopsis by the English antiquarian John Leland of a lost English verse romance version of *Fouke*. Leland continues the English work, which ends incomplete, by summarising a French verse version of the romance, which appears to be the same version drawn upon by the prose *remanieur* in the fourteenth century.[98]

The manuscript containing the prose version of the text, Royal 12.C.xii, can be linked to the Ludlow area through the scribe, who was also the compiler and copyist of British Library, Harley

[94] See, for example, M. Lieberman, *The Medieval March of Wales. The Creation and Perception of a Frontier, 1066-1283* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Davies, 'Kings, Lords and Liberties', pp. 41–61.
[95] M. Lieberman, 'The English and the Welsh in Fouke le Fitz Waryn', in *Thirteenth Century England, XII: Proceedings of the Gregynog Conference 2007* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2009), pp. 1–11.
[96] British Library, Royal 12.C.xii is digitised at http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Royal_MS_12_C_XII
[97] 'Introduction', E. J. Hathaway, P. T. Ricketts, C. A. Robson, and A. D. Wilshere, eds., *Fouke le Fitz Waryn* (Oxford: Blackwell for the Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1975), pp. xix–xx.
[98] 'Introduction', Hathaway et al., eds., *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*, pp. xxi–xxvi.

2253, fols. 49-140, and was likely a canon of Hereford.[99] This makes *Fouke le Fitz Waryn* a very particular case: the fourteenth-century copyist of the text was writing from the very Marches in which the text is set and it can be assumed, both from the availability of the copy in Ludlow and from the geographical and toponymical detail found within the text, that the thirteenth-century verse romance was also written from the Shropshire area. This suggests that *Fouke* was both written and copied from a position of local knowledge and interest, whereby the geography of Britain is recentred towards the Welsh Marches.

The narrative of *Fouke le Fitz Waryn* is grounded in real historical events, namely Fulk Fitz Waryn III's renunciation of the lordship of King John in 1201 after being deprived of the inheritance of Whittington in Shropshire. Fulk spent nearly three years in armed rebellion against King John, before eventually reaching an accord and obtaining his inheritance in Whittington. As is so often noted by scholars, *Fouke* combines this historical narrative with imaginative, even fantastical, material, crossing the generic boundaries between history, epic, and romance.[100] Matthew Lampitt has emphasised the diverse and up-to-date literary networks of the Marcher community, which reveal 'a Marcher community very much in touch with the wider literary world', notably through the activity of the Ludlow scribe himself, the copyist of Royal 12.C.xii.[101] In the context of these diverse and cosmopolitan literary networks, it does not seem surprising that the *Fouke* might tap into traditions of both history writing and more fantastical romance works.

Geographical setting is central to the movement between 'historical' material and fictional adventure in the text. When Fouke crosses the boundary of one physical, geographical space and the next, he also moves between different generic spaces. Roger Pensom has convincingly suggested that the structure of *Fouke* can be divided into three concentric circles.[102] The central of these circles is the geographical space of the March with its detailed toponymy and historical accuracy. Outside of this is the forest, the location for Fouke's outlawry, associated with folkloric themes. Fouke's adventures become even more fantastic when he is exiled and enters Pensom's third concentric shell, the world of marvellous adventures in foreign lands.

I will return to Fouke's periods of exile in a later chapter, 'The spaces of exile in the *Gesta Herewardi* and *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*', which will explore how Fouke goes beyond the Celtic space and how this might compare to other textual representations of exile. Here, I instead focus on the first of the concentric circles described by Pensom: the closely localised and historically detailed opening

[99] 'Introduction', Hathaway et al., eds., *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*, pp. xxxvii–xxxviii; For an extensive study of the Ludlow scribe, see Lampitt, 'Networking the March', pp. 57–68.
[100] See, for example, R. Pensom, 'Inside and Outside: Fact and Fiction in "Fouke le Fitz Waryn"', *Medium Ævum*, 63:1 (1994), p. 53; See also U. T. Holmes, 'The Adventures of Fouke Fitz Warin', in H. Bihler and A. Noyer-Weidner, eds., *Medium Aevum Romanicum: Festschrift für Hans Rheinfelder* (Munich: Max Hueber, 1963), p. 180.
[101] Lampitt, 'Networking the March', p. 68.
[102] Pensom, 'Inside and Outside', pp. 53–60.

section of the text. Although it remains unclear whether the text was written for the Fitz Waryn family themselves, it is evident that the author of the text did have largely detailed and accurate knowledge of the history and geography of the area, which he embellished with motifs drawn from romance and folklore traditions. In this chapter, I explore how the text uses close geographical localisation to present the land in territorial terms, where landscape is defined by landholding. I suggest that this territorialised vision of landscape, which traces landholding back to William the Conqueror and which simplifies claims to land, is constructed in order to provide a secure foundation for Fouke's inheritance claims. Through this retelling of the past, the narrative asserts the legitimate and longstanding position of the Fitz Waryn family as Marcher lords, emphasising their role and moral standing as defenders of the March. The legitimacy of the Fitz Waryn family is heightened through the foundation myth provided by the account of the expulsion of the possessed Geomagog. This vision of the past, which offers both a legal and a mythological foundation for the Fitz Waryn claim to Whittington, can also be seen to assert the role and liberties of Marcher lordship more broadly.

The transformation of the March

From the outset, the narrative of *Fouke le Fitz Waryn* is grounded in a detailed history of land possession in the March, demonstrating an interest in the natural world and human interactions with the landscape. The text begins with what seems like a traditional nature opening:

> 'En le temps de averyl e may, quant les prees e les herbes reverdissent e chescune chose vivaunte recovre virtue, beauté e force, les mountz e les valey[e]s retentissen des douce chauntz des oseylouns, e les cuers de chescune gent pur la beauté du temps e la sesone mountent en haut e s'enjolyvent' (p. 3, ll. 1-5)[103]
>
> 'In the months of April and May, when the meadows and the grass are green once more and every living thing recovers its strength, beauty and power, the hills and valleys resound to the sweet song of the birds, and each person's heart is uplifted and full of joy at the beauty of the time and the season.' (p. 132)

Here the landscape of the present is presented as an idyllic and natural space, full of joy and beauty. However, unlike the amorous reflections of lyric poetry, the author instead calls the audience of the text to remember the deeds of their ancestors.[104] As Emily Dolmans notes, the use of the inclusive pronoun 'nos' (p. 3, l. 6) creates a link between the audience and characters in the text, suggesting

[103] Quotations from Hathaway et al,, eds., *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*. Translation from G. S. Burgess, *Two Medieval Outlaws: Eustace the Monk and Fouke Fitz Waryn* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1997).
[104] Crane, *Insular Romance*, pp. 54–55.

either a line of descent or a shared community identity.[105] The text describes the arrival of William the Conqueror in England before it immediately recentres the geography of the text by shifting its focus from London to the Welsh Marches, where Owain Gwynedd has laid waste to the landscape.[106] When William arrives in the county of Shrewsbury, he finds only the burnt ruins of towns:

> '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 pur la sue e aportenaunte a Powys.' (p. 3, ll. 17-21)
>
> 'The king equipped himself very richly and came with a great army to the county of Shrewsbury, where he found all the towns from Chester to Shrewsbury burnt, for the Prince claimed the entire March as his own and as belonging to Powys.' (p. 132)

This creates a stark contrast with the landscape described in the opening lines of the text, suggesting the importance of the Marcher lords in transforming the ravaged landscape of the past into the idyllic space of the present.[107] It should be noted that William the Conqueror did not visit north or central Wales,[108] whilst the activities of Owain Gwynedd took place during the reign of Henry I rather than of William.[109] This inaccuracy perhaps reflects the limits of the collective memory. Nevertheless, William's physical presence in the Marches also gives the land grants, described below, a greater sense of legitimacy. Moreover, the description of destruction and conflict provides a direct context for the rights and responsibilities of Marcher lords to defend the land through castle-building and waging war. From the outset of the text, the landscape of the Welsh March is central to the assertion of Marcher liberties.

Landscape as territory

The opening section of the text is replete with detailed descriptions of place names and geographical features. The narrative is anchored through the local landscape, creating the 'effet de réel' described by Courroux as characteristic of vernacular chronicle writing.[110] Through its descriptions of land grants, the text establishes a clear territorial landscape, where the division of geography is based upon landholding. Indeed, physical geographical features are often integrated into the feudal framework of

[105] E. Dolmans, 'Locating the border: Britain and the Welsh Marches in Fouke le Fitz Waryn', *New Medieval Literatures*, 16 (2016), p. 114.
[106] Dolmans, 'Locating the border', p. 114.
[107] Dolmans, 'Locating the border', p. 115.
[108] William travelled to St David's in 1081, presumably in response to the recent battle at Mynydd Carn, to stabilise his relationship with the new 'dominant power in west and, to an extent, south Wales', Rhys ap Tewdwr. D. Bates, *William the Conqueror* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), pp. 430–432; Davies, *The Age of Conquest*, p. 33.
[109] Hathaway et al, eds., *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*, p. 63; Davies, *The Age of Conquest*, pp. 48–49.
[110] For a discussion of Courroux and mimesis, see 'Introduction', pp. 6-7.

landholding. Rivers feature as boundary points, marking the extent of a grant of land. For example, Henry I's grant to Joce is bounded by the River Corve: 'Le chastel de Dynan e tut le pays entour devers la ryvere de Corve ou tut l'onour dona a monsire Joce, sun chevaler' (p. 4, ll. 5-7, 'The castle of Dynan and the surrounding area towards the River Corve, along with all its fiefs, he gave to Sir Joce, his knight', p. 133). Similarly, William Peverel's grant of Morlas extends as far as the River Ceiriog: 'E si maria Eleyne al fitz Aleyn, e dona ou ly en marriage tote la terre de Morlas desqe Keyroc.' (p. 8, ll. 5-6, 'He married Helen to Fitz Alan and along with her in marriage he gave the entire land of Morlas as far as the River Ceiriog.'). Although, as will be shown below, the descriptions of land grants may not be historically accurate or verifiable through any documentary evidence, this opening section tells us something about how land was conceptualised by the author: as something to be described and portioned into territories, which might themselves draw upon the physical features of the landscape as boundary markers.

Physical markers of lordship

Throughout the descriptions of landholding in the Marches, there is a clear emphasis on the physical markers of Marcher lordship, such as castles, towers, and bridges, that are written onto the landscape. Notably, the land here is passive; it is a space that can be taken and shaped by those acting upon it.[111] The text describes the development of the town and castle of Dynan, now Ludlow, under the lordship of Joce de Dynan, and its position between River Teme and the River Corve. The text provides a description of the architectural features of the castle: 'Joce fist son chastiel de Dynan de tres baylles e le envyrona de double fossee, une dedens e une dehors' (p. 4, ll. 13-15, 'Joce constructed his castle at Dynan with three bailey-walls and surrounded it with a double moat, one inside and one outside.', p. 133). The site of the castle, between two rivers, in addition to the bailey-walls and double moat suggest its defensive military purpose. Interestingly, the text describes how Joce took the surname of Dynan after receiving the land grant: 'e d'en aprés retint le surnoun de Dynan e fust apelé par tut Joce de Dynan' (p. 4, ll. 7-8, 'who thereafter took the surname of Dynan and was everywhere called Joce de Dynan', p. 133). This is in line with Davies' observation that many lordships of the March assumed the name of their major castle.[112] In another example, the text describes how Alan Fitz Flaad, granted the castle of Oswestry and its fiefs by King William, later had the castle greatly enlarged (p. 7, ll. 11-15). Similarly, we are told how Payn Peverel built 'un tour bel e fort' (p. 7, ll. 25-26) in the Blaunche Lande, and his son William Peverel later built towers in the Blaunche Lande, Ellesmere, and on the River Ceiriog (p. 8, ll. 1-4).

[111] Dolmans, 'Locating the border', p. 114.
[112] Davies, 'Kings, Lords and Liberties', p. 48.

The prominence of castle-building in the text suggests a framework where Marcher lordship and castles go hand in hand. The importance of castles within the text is a reflection of the historical development of the March, where the castle played a key role in the ability of Marcher lords to dominate and exploit the countryside: it was 'the true unit of Norman penetration and domination of the March'.[113] These are not just physical symbols of Marcher power, but also important strategic and military foci in the landscape of the Marches.

Reframing Ludlow castle

The castle of Dynan, now Ludlow, plays a particularly important role in the opening section of the text. The author provides an account of the development of landholding in the Marches, describing how William granted land to his most valiant and loyal knights in order to defend the March. The text relates how Roger de Bellême was established as 'counte palays' (p. 3, l.8, 'earl palatine', p. 132) of Shrewbury.[114] Whilst mistakenly giving Roger the title 'de Bellême' rather than 'de Montgomery' ('de Bellême' being the title of Roger's son, Robert) – a common slippage in family history - the text gives an accurate account of Roger's establishment of Shrewsbury abbey and the succession of his sons, Robert and Arnulf, following his death.[115] Indeed, the text also accurately relates how Robert and Arnulf were disinherited by Henry I, suggesting that the rift was caused by the unpermitted completion of the castle of Bridgnorth.[116]

Following the removal of Robert and Arnulf, we are told that the king granted the castle of Dynan, supposedly constructed by Roger de Bellême and now called Ludlow, and its environs to his knight Sir Joce. The accuracy of this is less certain. The Anglo-Norman Text Society edition suggests that Ludlow castle was nothing to do with Roger de Montgomery but, being on Lacy estates, was more likely held by the Lacy family.[117] Following the death of Hugh de Lacy, who had succeeded to his brother Roger's lands after Roger's exile in 1096, Dynan appears to have been passed to Payn fitz John. Payn fitz John was married to Sybil, the daughter of Roger and Hugh de Lacy's sister.[118] A marriage contract was drawn up in 1137 with Miles of Gloucester, according to

[113] Davies, 'Kings, Lords and Liberties', p. 48.
[114] For a discussion of the uses of 'count' and 'earl' in England and Normandy, see Lewis, 'The early earls of Norman England'.
[115] The founding of the abbey of St Peter's at Shrewsbury in 1083 by Earl Roger is described by Orderic Vitalis and in Domesday. A foundation charter of Earl Roger, likely produced by the monks themselves during the reign of Stephen although largely correct in factual content, survives in the cartulary of Shrewsbury abbey. See *The Cartulary of Shrewsbury Abbey, Vol I.*, ed. U. Rees (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 1975), pp. x-xi and pp. 5-7.
[116] See note 3, Burgess, *Two Medieval Outlaws*, p. 184. Davies, *The Age of Conquest*, p. 35.
[117] Hathaway et al., eds., *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*, p. 65.
[118] For the following summary of the history of Ludlow Castle, see B. Copleston-Crow, 'From Foundation to the Anarchy', in R. Shoesmith and A. Johnson, eds., *Ludlow Castle: its history and buildings* (Almeley: Logaston Press, 2000), pp. 22–29.

which Payn's eldest daughter and heiress Cecily would marry Miles' son and heir Roger, and inherit Payn's rights and inheritances in the Lacy honour.[119] However, Payn died before the marriage occurred, and a rival claimant to the Ludlow lands appeared: Gilbert de Lacy, son of Roger de Lacy, who had forfeited his lands in 1096. Although King Stephen confirmed the marriage and inheritance plans, Gilbert seized Ludlow. Stephen's solution was a move against Gilbert by marrying Payn fitz John's widow, Sybil, to his knight Joce de Dynan, and granting to him the castle of Ludlow.[120]

This complicated history of rival claimants to the castle of Ludlow is notably absent from the narrative of *Fouke*. The text makes no reference to the de Lacy family until the description of the conflict between Joce de Dynan and Walter de Lacy, which appears to be based on the real conflict between Gilbert and Joce, and possibly also on an account of a siege of Ludlow castle by Hugh de Mortimer, described in the *Chronicle of Wigmore Abbey*.[121] Historically-speaking, both Gilbert de Lacy and Joce de Dynan had some claim to the castle of Dynan, whether through family or through marriage. However, the absence of the de Lacy family from the description of the original grant of Dynan to Roger de Bellême and then to Joce de Dynan removes any legitimate claim of the de Lacy family to the castle of Dynan. Moreover, Walter de Lacy's taking of the castle of Dynan is framed within an account of treachery. Whilst imprisoned at Dynan, Walter's knight, Sir Ernalt, seduces a maidservant who later unknowingly lets Ernalt and his men into the castle. After realising his betrayal, the maidservant kills Ernalt and throws herself from a window to her death. Military success for Walter is the result of deceit rather than honour. Indeed, Walter manages to imprison Joce and seize Dynan permanently only with the aid of Iowerth Drwyndwyn, who arrives with a large force of men, destroying and robbing the countryside – and dispossessing Fouke of Blancheville and Maelor. The text itself explicitly condemns Walter de Lacy's taking of the castle of Dynan: 'Ore avez oy coment sire Joce de Dynan, Sibille, la eyné, e Hawyse, le puisné, ces filles, furent desheritez de le chastel e l'onour de Dynan, qe sire Water de Lacy tient *a tort*' (p. 22, ll. 15-17, my emphasis, 'Now you have heard how Sir Joce de Dynan and his daughters, Sybille, the elder and Hawyse, the younger, were dispossessed of the castle and the honour of Dynan, which Walter de Lacy held *wrongfully*.', p. 149).

[119] Charter no. 21, *Ancient charters, royal and private, prior to A.D. 1200*, ed. J. H. Round, (London: Pipe Roll Society, 1888), pp. 35–38.
[120] Sybil's marriage to Joce is recorded in a charter in the cartulary of St Peter's Priory in Hereford, and transcribed by Copleston-Crow. Copleston-Crow, 'From Foundation to the Anarchy', p. 27.
[121] See Copleston-Crow, 'From Foundation to the Anarchy', pp. 32–33 and 'The Anglo-Norman Chronicle of Wigmore Abbey', eds. Dickinson and Ricketts, *Transactions of the Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club*, Vol. 39 (1967-9), pp. 428-31. One of at least five Mortimer family chronicles, the *Chronicle* referred to here survives in in the first five folios of Chicago University MS 224. It is a fourteenth-century French translation of an account of the founding of Wigmore abbey, originally written around 1200. C. J. Given-Wilson, 'Chronicles of the Mortimer family, c.1250-1450', in R. G. Eales and Shaun Tyas, eds., *Family and Dynasty in Late Medieval England: Proceedings of the 1997 Harlaxton Symposium* (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2003), pp. 68–71.

This divergence into the history and narrative surrounding the castle of Ludlow, or Dynan, may appear unnecessary – both in the text and in my study thereof. Why, then, is this account important? As has been demonstrated, *Fouke le Fitz Waryn* provides a retelling of the past whereby the de Lacy claim to Dynan castle is erased and Joce de Dynan's claim is simplified. It also sets up a clear distinction between Joce and Fouke le Brun, who are defenders of justice and custom, and Walter de Lacy, whose hold of Dynan is based upon treachery and results in the destruction of land and people. Renn suggests that the text was written to 'belittle the Lacys'.[122] To my mind, this seems to be missing the point. The episode here presents the Lacys in a bad light, not simply to deride them, but to serve as a foil for Joce and the Fitz Waryns – much like the later contrast with King John.[123] True, the inaccuracies of the episode may be the result of the limitations of memory. Yet the choice to reframe the past in this manner is deliberate and works within the broader strategies of the text to assert the positive qualities of the Fitz Waryn family.

A claim to landholding from the time of the Conquest

This strategic retelling of the past is also evident in the remainder of the opening section of *Fouke*. Returning to the time of the Conquest, the text describes other land grants made by William the Conqueror, including the grant of Oswestry to Alan Fitz Flaald (ancestor of the Fitz Alan family), Alberbury to Waryn de Metz, and the Blaunche Launde to Payn Peverel. Notably, these land grants cannot be historically dated to the reign of William the Conqueror. The Fitz Alan family were invested by Henry I rather than William, whilst the figures of Waryn de Metz and Payn Peverel are difficult to trace, as will be explored below. The text provides a new version of events whereby the framework of Marcher lordships can be traced back to the time of the Norman conquest, thus imbuing them with a sense of longevity and legitimacy.

The most important grant of land is undoubtedly that of the Blaunche Lande, granted to Payn Peverel by William following the defeat of Geomagog (which will be treated in more detail below). The Blaunche Lande, later known as Blancheville or Whittington, is the territory at the heart of the outlawry of Fouke, who in the text is a descendant of Payn Peverel. Payn Peverel has a son, William, who inherits his land and extends his territory. William holds a tournament to find a husband for his niece, Melette, who desires to marry a man based on his personal qualities rather than his wealth or lands: he must be 'bel, corteys e bien apris e le plus vaylant de son corps de tote la cristieneté' (p. 8, ll. 13-14, 'handsome, courtly, well-educated and the most valiant man in all Christendom', p. 136). It is Waryn de Metz, a knight born in Lorraine and holder of Alberbury, who proves himself at the

[122] D. Renn, '"Chastel de Dynan": the first phases of Ludlow', in J. R. Kenyon and R. Avent, eds., *Castles in Wales and the Marches: Essays in Honour of D. J. Cathcart King* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1987), p. 57.
[123] See this chapter, pp. 33-34.

tournament and wins the hand of Melette de la Blanchetour. They have a son, Fouke le Brun, who is sent to Joce de Dynan to be educated. Fouke le Brun marries Joce de Dynan's daughter, Hawyse, and it is their son Fouke who is the eponymous character of the romance.

This family history is only loosely based on the real history of the Fitz Waryn family, who cannot be traced with any certainty before the reign of Stephen.[124] Meisel notes that the figure of Waryn de Metz, who may be the 'Warin' appearing occasionally with the Peverel family in Henry I's reign, did not hold any lands in chief at the time of the Domesday Book.[125] The Fitz Waryns begin to appear in charters from the late 1130s onwards, and Fulk Fitz Waryn I was granted the manor of Alveston by Henry Plantagenet in 1149.[126] Fulk I appears to have been granted the castle of Whittington by the Peverel family. The castle is not mentioned in the Domesday survey, but was fortified by William Peverel in 1138 for the Empress Matilda.[127] Whittington was held by Roger de Powis and his heirs under Henry II, who does not seem to have upheld Fulk's claim.[128] His son, Fulk II, appears to have pressed his claim to Whittington, and by 1195 the Fitz Waryn claim to Whittington was recognised by a judgement in the Curia Regis – although Whittington was still in Powis hands when Fulk II died.[129] It is the attempts of his son, Fulk III, to take possession of Whittington that form the basis for the romance text. In 1200, Fulk paid £100 for possession of the castle, but King John rejected this fine in favour of 50 marks from Maurice de Powis,[130] whose right to Whittington was confirmed on 11th April 1200.[131] After Maurice's death a few months later, John granted Whittington to Maurice's sons, angering Fulk III and leading to his period of outlawry.[132] Fulk's eventual reconciliation with John is recorded in a full pardon on 11th November 1203,[133] and he finally obtained Whittington for a fine of 200 marks.[134]

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[124] Meisel, *Barons of the Welsh frontier*, p. 34.
[125] Meisel, *Barons of the Welsh frontier*, p. 34.
[126] *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum 1066-1154. III: Regesta Regia Stephani ac Mathildis Imperatricis ac Gaufridi et Henrici Ducum Normannorum 1135-1154*, eds. H. A. Cronne and R. H. C. Davis, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), p. 121. Meisel notes that Cronne and Davis have incorrectly identified the manor of 'Alceston' as Alcaston rather than Alveston. Meisel, *Barons of the Welsh frontier*, fn. 7, p. 34
[127] Meisel, *Barons of the Welsh frontier*, p. 88.
[128] Meisel, *Barons of the Welsh frontier*, p. 36.
[129] Meisel, *Barons of the Welsh frontier*, p. 36. *The Great Roll of the Pipe for the Seventh Year of the Reign of King Richard the First: Michaelmas 1195 (Pipe Roll 41)*, ed. D. M. Stenton (London: Pipe Roll Society, 1929), p. 246.
[130] Meisel, *Barons of the Welsh frontier*, p. 36; *Rotuli de Oblatis et Finibus in Turri Londinensi Asservati, Tempore Regis Johannis*, ed. T. D. Hardy (London: Record Commission, 1835), p. 58; *The Great Roll of the Pipe for the Second Year of the Reign of King John: Michaelmas 1200 (Pipe Roll 46)*, ed. D. M. Stenton (London: Pipe Roll Society, 1934), p. 175.
[131] Meisel, *Barons of the Welsh frontier*, p. 36; *Rotuli Chartarum in Turri Londinensi Asservati, A.D. 1199-1216*, ed. T. D. Hardy (London: Record Commission, 1837), p. 43.
[132] Meisel, *Barons of the Welsh frontier*, p. 36; *Rotuli Chartarum in Turri Londinensi Asservati, A.D. 1199-1216*, p. 74.
[133] Meisel, *Barons of the Welsh frontier*, p. 38; *Rotuli Litterarum Patentium in Turri Londinensi Asservati*, ed. T. D. Hardy (London: Record Commission, 1835), p. 10.
[134] Meisel, *Barons of the Welsh frontier*, p. 38; *Rotuli de Oblatis et Finibus in Turri Londinensi Asservati,*, p. 224.

The shaky basis for the Fitz Waryn claim to Whittington, grounded in dispute and certainly not dating back to the Conquest, provides a good explanation for the extensive establishment of Fouke's claim to Whittington in the text. *Fouke* offers a retelling of the past, whereby the Fitz Waryn claim to Whittington can be traced back to William the Conqueror. The text describes how 'Ly roy apela Payn Peverel, e ly dona la Blaunche Launde e forest, guastyne, chaces e tut le pays.' (p. 7, ll. 23-24, 'The king called Payn Peverel and gave him Blanche Lande with its forest, wastes, chases and the entire region.', p. 136). Here the listing of the land grant, to include the forest, wastes, and chases of the Blaunche Lande, perhaps recalls the language of a charter, which might specify the appurtenances given with a grant of land.

Notably, *Fouke le Fitz Waryn* is not the only text that makes a claim to landholding dating back to the Conquest. Attempts to trace landholding back to William the Conqueror can also be seen in legal proceedings during the twelfth and thirteenth century. It was likely well-established before 1200 that lay land claims based on seisin dating to before the Conquest would be excluded from court.[135] Indeed, a series of limitations barred claims to land which dated back to before a certain date. In 1237, legislation allowed individuals to make a claim based on the seisin of an ancestor in the reign of Henry II. The previous rule had allowed claims to be made to the time of Henry I's death, although claims based on seisin during the reign of Stephen were not allowed.[136] Later legislation, enacted in 1275, barred claims to land on the basis of seisin prior to the reign of Richard I.[137]

However, Paul Brand notes that whilst most claims to landholding were based on the recent seisin of the land concerned, there were a significant minority where the claim rested on seisin that dated much further back.[138] Indeed, a number of late-twelfth and thirteenth-century examples attempted to demonstrate 'how the property had first come into the possession of the family or house concerned'.[139] Notably, in seven cases heard between 1194 and 1219, 'lay claimants traced the beginning of their family's possession of the property concerned back to the time of the Norman Conquest'.[140] Although a more recent seisin might also have been claimed, their title to the property was rooted in the acquisition of land at the Conquest. As Brand suggests, this may have previously been the normal form of claim, demonstrating the root of the title in addition to subsequent possession and more recent seisin. It was the legislation imposing limitation periods that made this form of claim obsolete.[141] Nevertheless, neither claimants nor defendants seemed to be bound by 'the limit of legal

[135] P. Brand, '"Time Out of Mind": the Knowledge and Use of the Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century Past in Thirteenth-Century Litigation', in M. Chibnall, ed., *Anglo-Norman Studies XVI: Proceedings of the Battle Conference, 1993* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1994), p. 37.
[136] Brand, '"Time Out of Mind"', pp. 40–41.
[137] Brand, '"Time Out of Mind"', p. 39.
[138] Brand, '"Time Out of Mind"', p. 42.
[139] Brand, '"Time Out of Mind"', p. 43.
[140] Brand, '"Time Out of Mind"', p. 43.
[141] Brand, '"Time Out of Mind"', p. 43.

memory' that had been imposed by these legislation periods. Brand notes that thirteenth-century landholders, lawyers, and judges must have been aware that at the time of the Conquest, it was normal practice for land to be granted without written documentation. Collective and family memory here must have been important.[142]

It is in this legal context of landholding narratives that the vision of the past in *Fouke le Fitz Waryn* can be viewed. The text of *Fouke* provides an alternative means to assert both a familial claim to landholding, and the claims of Marcher lords more broadly. This speaks to a thought world in which both legal and literary narratives existed side by side, where the consumers of literary texts might also be involved in legal proceedings. Literary texts such as *Fouke* should not be seen in isolation from the social space in which they were created. This is particular true if we consider the way in which texts, whether literary, historical, or legal, might be performed. This idea of 'literate sociability', as termed by Henry Bainton, allows us to think about how different types of text might function alongside each other.[143]

Defenders of the March

I have hitherto shown how the narrative establishes a territorialised vision of the March, embedded in the local landscape, which states a longstanding Fitz Waryn claim to landholding. Yet the text does not simply list the land grants made by William. Rather, the narrative provides a justification for the establishment of the Marcher lords. Notably, William the Conqueror grants land to his knights 'pur ce qu'il devereynt defendre la marche de le prince a lur profit e al honour lur seignour le roy.' (p. 3, ll. 24-26, 'so that they could defend the Prince's March for their own benefit and for the honour of their lord, the king.', p. 132). Through this assertion of how and why the March was settled, the author frames the Marcher lords as the defenders of the land from the native Welsh prince, Owain Gwynedd, who is described to have ravaged the landscape. In this context, good Marcher lordship – and therefore good service to the king – is founded upon the ability to defend the land from the native Welsh. As will be shown below, Fouke and his predecessors clearly prove their service to the king through their repeated defence of the March. In this context, John's failure to uphold Fouke's inheritance rights appears even more reprehensible. This framing of land grants sets up a reciprocal relationship, and it is John who fails to uphold his end of the bargain.

The text describes how Blancheville, held by Waryn de Metz following his marriage to Melette, was attacked by Iorwerth, the son of Owain, Prince of Wales, who killed Waryn's men and

[142] Brand, '"Time Out of Mind"', p. 53.
[143] See Bainton, 'Literate Sociability and Historical Writing', pp. 37-54.

destroyed his lands (p. 10, ll. 9-11).[144] Waryn, however, successfully defeats Iorwerth in battle, forcing him the abandon the field and flee (p. 10, l. 12-14). In another attack by Iorwerth, this time in support of Walter de Lacy, Waryn's son Fouke bravely assists Joce de Dynan in the defence of the March. The text describes how Iorwerth 'se hasta vers la marche, ardy les vyles, robba lé gentz, e tant avoit grant gent qe le pays ne les purra contreester' (p. 19, ll. 25-27, 'made his way swiftly towards the March, burning the towns and robbing the people', p. 146). Although, as discussed above, this conflict is primarily a matter of disputed landholding, it is framed as a violent attack on the lands and people of the March. Joce and Fouke put up a courageous fight, defending themselves 'come leons' (p. 20, l. 11, 'like lions', p. 147). Their defence is however unsuccessful; Joce is captured and Fouke's lands are seized. Fouke requests the assistance of King Henry, who orders Walter de Lacy to release Joce. Moreover, the text describes how after this conflict King Henry 'apela Fouke, e ly fist conestable de tut son host, e ly comanda tote la force de sa terre, e qu'il presist gent assez, e qu'il alast en la marche, si enchasast Yervard Droyndon e son poer hors de [la] marche' (p. 21, ll. 27-30, 'King Henry summoned Fouke and made him constable of his entire army. He put him in command of all the forces in his land, telling him to take a large number of men and make his way to the March, from which he should drive out Iorwerth Drwyndwyn and his army.', p. 148). By attributing the office of constable to Fouke, the text clearly positions the Fitz Waryn family as defenders of the March, who are well trusted by the king and who clearly fulfil the role set by William the Conqueror at the beginning of the text.

The narrative thus suggests a close relationship between the English kings and the Fitz Waryn family. Fouke le Brun's son, the eponymous Fouke, is described to have been brought up with the sons of King Henry II. The text describes how King Richard cherished Fouke le Brun 'pur sa lealté' (p. 23, ll. 7-8, 'Because of his loyalty', p. 149), and how he entrusted the protection of the March to Fouke during his journey to the Holy Land (p. 23, ll. 23-25). The historical relationship between the Fitz Waryns and the kings of England was less clear cut. Meisel notes that although Fulk I was a trusted and valued servant of Henry II (receiving gifts, having debts pardoned, and responsible for provisioning Dover Castle), Fulk II had a much more distant relationship with the king, and there is no evidence of his presence at court except in connection with lawsuits.[145] *Fouke* attributes the decline of royal favour towards the Fitz Waryns to the personal failings of King John and his childhood grudge against the eponymous Fouke (who appears to be based on the historical Fulk III). The text describes a childhood episode in which John and Fouke were playing chess together. John struck Fouke with the chessboard, whereupon Fouke retaliated by kicking John in the chest. John, hitting his head upon the wall, fainted. After regaining consciousness, John promptly complained to

[144] It should be noted that this Iorwerth likely refers to Iorwerth Goch, son of Meredith ap Bleddyn, ruler of Powys. See Burgess, *Two Medieval Outlaws*, p. 186.
[145] Meisel, *Barons of the Welsh frontier*, p. 35.

his father who, instead of punishing Fouke, had John beaten (pp. 22-23). It is unlikely that this episode has a historical basis, but may instead be borrowed from *Les Quatre Fils Aymon*.[146] John himself was absent from court in his early childhood, sent to the monastery of Fontevraud, and he later joined the household of Ranulf de Glanville to complete his education.[147]

Nevertheless, John's later refusal to confirm Fouke's inheritance is largely attributed to this personal grudge. Despite his knowledge of Fouke's rightful claim to Whittington, he chooses to confirm the grant to Morys, the son of Roger de Powys:

> 'Le roy savoit bien qe sire Fouke avoit dreit a Blauncheville, e se remenbra de le coupe qe Fouke ly avoyt eynz done, e se pensa qu'il se vengereit par yleqe, e granta qe, quanqe Morys voleyt fere escrivre, yl le enselereyt' (p. 24, ll. 4-7).
>
> 'The king well knew that Sir Fouke had full claim to Blancheville, but he recalled the blow which Fouke had once given him. Thinking he could avenge himself in this way, he agreed to put his seal to whatever Morys should put into writing.' (p. 150)

The narrative makes it clear that King John violates custom because of a desire for personal vengeance. In addition, he is later characterised by his lack of conscience and predatory sexual behaviour:

> 'Le roy Jehan fust 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 ou d'autre, yl la voleit a sa volente aver, ou par promesse ou par don engyner, ou par force ravyr, e pur ce fust le plus hay.' (p. 35, ll. 34-8)
>
> 'King John was a man without a conscience, wicked, quarrelsome, hated by all good people and lecherous. If he ever heard of any beautiful maiden or lady, wife or daughter of an earl or a baron or anyone else, he wanted to have his way with her, either by tricking her with promises or gifts or by taking her by force. For this he was hated the most,' (p. 161)

It seems that King John's misrule goes beyond his failure to uphold Fouke's inheritance rights.[148] Indeed, Pensom demonstrates how 'the misrule of John makes a wilderness of the realm' whilst the forest, usually a marginal space, instead becomes 'the home of justice and law'.[149] It is Fouke, rather than King John, who represents justice, peace-making, and the avenging of wrongs.[150]

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[146] Hathaway et al., eds., *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*, p. xxxiii.
[147] S. Church, *King John: England, Magna Carta and the Making of a Tyrant* (Basingstoke and Oxford: Macmillan, 2015), pp. 4–12.
[148] See also my further discussion of King John at pp. 125-126.
[149] Pensom, 'Inside and Outside', p. 55.
[150] For an exploration of these themes across the text, see Pensom, 'Inside and Outside', pp. 55–58.

A foundation myth for the Fitz Waryns

The opening section of the text establishes a model of Marcher lordship that originates from grants dating back to William the Conqueror, providing an established and legitimate sense of landholding rights and liberties, and that asserts itself through military control, expressed and maintained through physical structures such as castles. Crucially, the text also provides a legitimising origin story that is specific to the Fitz Waryn family. The text deviates from its historical mode towards that of myth and legend as it recounts how, in the time of William the Conqueror, Payn Peverel expelled the Devil in the likeness of the giant Geomagog from 'chastiel Bran' (p. 4, l. 23). This foundation myth draws deliberately from Geoffrey of Monmouth's account of the defeat of the giant Geomagog by Brutus' brother, which makes Britain safe for habitation. Through this link, the text provides an 'interpretative account' of the Conquest, suggesting that it is comparable to the founding of a second Britain.[151] This account also acts as a foundation myth for Fouke and his family, a myth that is grounded both in the physical conquest of the Blaunche Launde and in the historical context of the Norman Conquest. As noted earlier, it is 'chastiel Bran', later known as the 'Blaunche Launde' (p. 6, ll. 6-7), that will become Blancheville, the land at the heart of Fouke's outlawry.

After Payn Peverel has defeated the evil spirit in Geomagog, the spirit issues a prophecy, according to which the wolf - the eponymous Fouke - will, after a period of exile, overcome the leopard – King John – with his cunning and return to the Blaunche Launde (p. 6, ll. 19-36). This prophecy clearly foretells the events of Fouke's life and, combined with the Geomagog episode, situates the hero within an almost mythological framework. Notably, this is fundamentally tied to the physical land itself. Following this episode, the text returns swiftly to a description of land distribution by William the Conqueror, including his grant of the region of the Blaunche Launde to Payn Peverel. The text combines the legendary foundation myth of the defeat of Geomagog with the evocation of a legal framework of landholding to provide a dual authenticity for Fouke's claim to Whittington.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored how the strategic representation of geography and landscape in *Fouke* asserts the legitimacy and longevity of both the Fitz Waryn family and the Marcher lords more broadly. The detailed descriptions of land grants in the Marches establish a space that is constructed through territorial divisions, which themselves draw upon physical geographical features. The land is envisioned as a space to be claimed and controlled by humans, a passive space that can be split into

[151] Hanna, 'The Matter of Fulk', p. 341.

territorial divisions. Human control over geographical space is asserted through physical symbols of lordship, such as castles and bridges. Through its precise references to names, places, and events, the text creates an 'effet de réel' that blurs the boundaries between history writing and fiction.

Fouke provides a foundation for Fouke's inheritance claims, rooted both in a mythical origin legend and a legal claim to landholding from the time of the Conquest. The text emphasises the role of Fouke and his family as defenders of the March, who fulfil the duty set by William the Conqueror in his original grants of land. In this context, King John's failure to uphold Fouke's claim to Whittington appears completely contemptable, legally and morally. At another level, *Fouke* also offers a broader understanding of lordship in the Welsh Marches. By contrasting the idyllic natural setting of the present with the ravaged landscape of the past, the text clearly asserts the role of the Marcher lords in the positive transformation of the Marches. *Fouke* offers a retelling of Conquest history, which asserts the longevity and legitimacy of Marcher lordships by redating land grants to the time of the Conquest. The representation of landscape within the text speaks to local political concerns.

1.2. Strategic reimaginings of geography

My geographical focus now shifts from the Welsh Marches to the kingdom of the Scots, viewed through the lens of the thirteenth-century *Roman de Fergus*. Like *Fouke*, *Fergus* is deeply embedded in local geographies, providing extensive references to place names and geographical features. Indeed, Roy Owen, who has provided an extensive survey of the geographical references in the text and their real-world equivalents, suggests that Fergus's journey across Scotland 'reads like the route of a modern coach tour'.[152] Again like *Fouke*, geography and setting in the text are not simple mirrors of the real world, but are strategically represented for contemporary political as well as narrative purposes.

In this chapter, I suggest that *Fergus* offers a vision of Scottish geography that demonstrates authorial knowledge whilst simultaneously reimagining particular places and landscapes for specific purposes. I examine how Fergus's identity is established through regional characteristics, which draw upon contemporary depictions of Galloway as backwards and barbaric. The text presents a tripartite division between Galloway, Scotland proper, and Lothian, whereby physical geographical features shape the mental division of space. This echoes other contemporary texts, reflecting the crossovers - emphasised repeatedly in this study - between romances and other forms of writing. Moving beyond an identification of local place names and topographies, I explore how geography and setting functions within the narrative. I suggest that the author transforms real locations to fit the narrative,

[152] D. D. R. Owen, *William the Lion: Kingship and Culture, 1143-1214* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1997), p. 123.

reducing their real world political, religious, or administrative importance. Scotland, from the perspective of *Fergus*, lacks sophistication, rulership, and infrastructure, and must be integrated into the world of the Arthurian court.

Scotland and the struggle for sovereignty

In order to interpret the representation of geography within the text, it is important to understand the position of the kingdom of the Scots during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, a period punctuated by moments of tension between the king of England and the king of the Scots. The reign of David I, who was brought up in the English court and came to the Scottish kingship in 1124, saw the influx of a new generation of aristocratic settlers from England, Flanders, and Brittany. This 'Anglo-Norman Era', as coined by Geoffrey Barrow, was hugely influenced by the social, legal, and political culture of Anglo-Norman England.[153] The narrative of an imported Anglo-Norman feudalism has been the subject of much critique, not least by Susan Reynolds who has called into question the presupposition that there was a pre-existing and coherent feudal system to import.[154] Nevertheless, there was a significant development in how elite power was conceptualised in terms of territory during the twelfth century, even if this was not the direct result of Anglo-Norman settlement under David I.[155] As such, the ability to give away land to followers was crucial to maintaining support. However, the extent of the kingdom of the Scots, and Scottish claims to territory, were regularly contested, and could become implicated in the broader negotiation of the relationship between the Scottish and English kings.

This relationship was close but frequently fraught. David I had been brought up in the court of the English king, and generations of Scottish kings were knighted by their English counterparts. Malcolm IV was knighted by Henry II in 1159 at Périgueux, William the Lion's brother David by Henry II in 1170 at Windsor, the future Alexander II by King John in 1212 in London, and Alexander III by Henry III in 1251 at York.[156] Being knighted by the powerful ruler of England undoubtedly offered entry, in the words of Rees Davies, into 'an exhilarating international world of aristocratic

[153] As noted above, this was the title of Barrow's 1978 Ford Lectures in British History, now published as Barrow, *The Anglo-Norman Era in Scottish History*. See also G. W. S. Barrow, *Scotland and its Neighbours in the Middle Ages* (London: Hambledon, 1992), pp. 52–54; G. W. S. Barrow, *The Kingdom of the Scots* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), pp. 250–274.
[154] S. Reynolds, 'Fiefs and Vassals in Scotland: a View from Outside', *Scottish Historical Review*, 82:214 (2003), pp. 176–193.
[155] Matthew Hammond has shown that charters were rarely issued to lay beneficiaries during the reign of David I. M. Hammond, 'The Adoption and Routinization of Scottish Royal Charter Production for Lay Beneficiaries, 1124-1195', in D. Bates, ed., *Anglo-Norman Studies XXXVI: Proceedings of the Battle Conference 2013* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2014), pp. 91–115; A. J. Taylor, *The Shape of the State in Medieval Scotland, 1124-1290* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 176–188.
[156] R. R. Davies, *Domination and Conquest: The experience of Ireland, Scotland and Wales, 1100-1300* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 51.

fellowship and customs.'[157] Yet it also placed the Scottish kings in a position of inferiority and subjection to the kings of England. This became increasingly problematic with burgeoning ideas of jurisdictional primacy in the thirteenth century, according to which 'those who held the same office were independent of each other's jurisdiction.'[158]

However, this idea came under threat during the reign of King William the Lion, whose capture at the Battle of Alnwick in 1174 placed him under the direct control of King Henry II. William was held in Falaise, where he had little choice but to agree to a treaty in which he swore fealty to Henry II as his liege lord: 'Willelmus rex Scottorum devenit homo ligius domini regis contra omnem hominem de Scocia et de omnibus aliis terris suis, et fidelitatem ei fecit ut ligio domino suo sicut alii homines sui facere solent.'[159] In 1186, William married Henry II's choice of bride, his kinswoman Ermengarde de Beaumont, at festivities paid for by the English king and celebrated by the archbishop of Canterbury in the royal chapel at Woodstock. As Rees Davies notes, 'Marriage was woven into a strategy of subjection, however honourable.'[160] William was unable to compete with Henry II's wealth and military power, and he may have been have been content with being a client king.[161] Although the 1189 Quitclaim of Canterbury ended the subjugation enforced by the Treaty of Falaise, 'the Treaty of Falaise itself did not vanish into obscurity, but haunted Scottish claims to independence for centuries to come.'[162]

The issue of Scottish independence from English overlordship was also tied up with matters of the church, specifically whether Scottish bishops should be under the authority of the archbishop of York.[163] The papal bull *Cum universi*, usually dated to 1192 and reissued in Honorius III's 1218 confirmation, established Scotland as the 'special daughter' of the papacy, meaning that Scottish bishops were answerable only to the pope in Rome.[164] Yet despite this special relationship with the papacy, Scottish kings did not have the rights of coronation and unction. In 1221, King Alexander II sent a direct request to Pope Honorius for coronation, but this was refused and said to be a matter for

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[157] Davies, *Domination and Conquest*, p. 51.
[158] D. Broun, 'Rethinking Scottish Origins', in S. Boardman and S. Foran, eds., *Barbour's Bruce and its Cultural Contexts: Politics, Chivalry and Literature in Late Medieval Scotland* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Breewer, 2015), p. 183.
[159] 'William, king of Scots, has become the liegeman of the king against all men, for Scotland, and for all his other lands, and has sworn fealty to him as his liege lord in like manner as his other men are accustomed to do to him.' 'Treaty of Falaise', *Anglo-Scottish Relations, 1174-1328: Some Selected Documents*, ed. E. L. G. Stones (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), pp. 2–11.
[160] Davies, *Domination and Conquest*, p. 53.
[161] Based on his analysis of charter diplomatic during the reign of William the Lion, including the failure to use the first person plural and lack of regnal year, Dauvit Broun has suggested that the Scottish royal chapel 'were ready to accept that, in this respect at least, the king of Scots would appear a notch lower than the king of England' (p.197). Broun, *Scottish Independence*, pp. 194–199.
[162] Broun, *Scottish Independence*, p. 108.
[163] Broun, *Scottish Independence*, pp. 101–124.
[164] Glasgow gained formal recognition of its independence from York in 1175. Broun, *Scottish Independence*, pp. 124–157.

the king of England, to whom Alexander was subject.[165] Petitions during the reign of King Alexander III, both by his minority government and by Alexander himself in 1259, were similarly unsuccessful.[166] These repeated attempts to obtain coronation and unction were a clear indication of how the Scottish kings saw themselves during the thirteenth century: as equal in status to other Christian kings. The account of Alexander III's inauguration in 1249, as described in *Gesta Annalia* I, emphasises the dignity of the Scottish kingship through the creation of an alternative ceremony in the absence of coronation and unction.[167] Seated upon the Stone of Scone, Alexander is consecrated as king by the bishop of St Andrews. Garments are strewn under Alexander's feet by his nobles, and a genealogy is recited by a highland Scot. The legitimacy of Alexander's divinely ordained rule was similarly stressed by his small seal of minority, which shows the enthroned Alexander with a sword resting across his legs in his right hand and a sceptre in his left. Rather than being a warning to Alexander against the harsh realities of politics,[168] the legend, ESTO PRVDENS VT SERPENS ET SIMPLEX SICVT COLVMBA, can instead be read 'as a prominent, public reclamation of the positive link between innocence and childhood within the context of royal authority.'[169]

This brief summary has barely touched the surface of the Scottish kingship during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. What it has done, though, is demonstrated the complexity of the relationship between the English and Scottish kings, which was characterised both by their closeness and by tension over territory, jurisdiction, and status. As the thirteenth century progressed, independence from English overlordship became increasingly important to a Scottish kingship that wished to assert its sovereign status.

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[165] Broun, *Scottish Independence*, p. 203.
[166] A. J. Taylor, 'Historical writing in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Scotland: the Dunfermline compilation', *Historical Research*, 83:220 (2010), pp. 247–248. On the minority government of Alexander III, see E. J. Ward, *Royal Childhood and Child Kingship: Boy Kings in England, Scotland, France and Germany, c. 1050–1262* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), pp. 225–228.
[167] Broun, *Scottish Independence*, p. 175. *Gesta Annalia*, previously attributed to John of Fordun, has been shown by Broun to contain two distinct chronicles, *Gesta Annalia* I and II, which are attached to Fordun's fourteenth-century *Chronica Gentis Scotorum*. *Gesta Annalia* I, which contains the account of Alexander III's inauguration ceremony, gives a history of St Margaret's royal ancestors and her descendants up to 1285. This is part of an earlier work, 'proto-Fordun', developed by a synthesist in the 1280s from the work of Richard Vairement. See D. Broun, 'A New Look at Gesta Annalia Attributed to John of Fordun', in B. E. Crawford, ed., *Church, Chronicle and Learning in Medieval and Renaissance Scotland: essays presented to Donald Watt on the occasion of the completion of the publication of Bower's Scotichronicon* (Edinburgh: Mercat, 1999), pp. 9–30; Broun, *Scottish Independence*, pp. 215–268.
[168] G. G. Simpson, 'Kingship in miniature: a seal of minority of Alexander III, 1249-1257.', in A. Grant and K. J. Stringer, eds., *Medieval Scotland: Crown, Lordship and Community: Essays Presented to G.W.S. Barrow.* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), p. 137.
[169] Ward, *Royal Childhood and Child Kingship*, p. 271.

The text

In this chapter, I suggest that the renegotiation of the status of the Scottish kingship provides an important context for the *Roman de Fergus*. Likely composed during the first quarter of the thirteenth century, during the reign of William the Lion (1165-1214) or Alexander II (1214-49), the text survives in two thirteenth-century continental manuscript copies: Chantilly, Musée Condé MS 472, and Paris: BNF fr. 1553.[170] MS 472 dates to the middle of the thirteenth century, copied within a generation of *Fergus*'s composition, and contains a collection of romances treating Arthurian themes, including the works of Chrétien de Troyes and the only known copies of *Les Merveilles de Rigomer*, *Hunbaut*, and *Le bel inconnu*.[171] The language has been characterised as Picard, rather than Anglo-Norman. BNF fr. 1553 is an extensive and varied collection of over fifty different texts, including *lais*, romances, *fabliaux*, and religious texts.[172] An inscription at the end of the *Roman de la Violette* dates the manuscript to 1285. Again, the manuscript can be localised to the Picard region. The *Roman de Fergus* was also translated into Middle Dutch as the *Roman van Ferguut*, which survives in the mid-fourteenth century manuscript Leiden: Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, MS Letterkunde, codex 191.

The author of *Fergus* names himself as 'Guillaumes li clers' (l. 7004), and Roy Owen has suggested that this Guillaume can be identified as William Malveisin, the educated and well-travelled clerk of King William the Lion.[173] My study of the text calls into question Owen's idea of authorship from within the household of a Scottish king, which does not seem likely given its representation of Scottish geography and locations. Although demonstrating a clear knowledge of Scottish place names and geographical features, the author appears to deliberately transform politically, religiously, and symbolically charged sites in order to diminish the status of the Scottish kingdom, which is ultimately subsumed into the Arthurian empire. I suggest that this might be best understood in the context of King John's loss of lands on the continent, and his reassertion of overlordship of Scotland in the first decade of the thirteenth century.

The story commences at Arthur's court in Cardigan, from whence Arthur and his knights set off to hunt the white stag in the Forest of Gorriende by Carlisle. We then follow the hunt to the Forest of Jedburgh and into the Forest of Glasgow, until the knights reach Galloway. It is here that we are

[170] References to Chrétien de Troyes's *Conte du Graal* give the text a *terminus a quo* of 1191. Its *terminus antequem* is given by *Huon de Bordeaux*, a *chanson de geste* that borrows from *Fergus* and may be dated to the 1260s. See D. F. Johnson and G. H. M. Claassens, eds., *Dutch Romances: Ferguut* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2000), p. 6.
[171] For a description of the manuscript, see K. Busby, T. Nixon, A. Stones, L. Waters, eds., *Les Manuscrits de Chrétien de Troyes, Vol. II* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1993), pp. 39–41.
[172] For a description of the manuscript, see 'Notices des manuscrits du département des Manuscrits et de la bibliothèque de l'Arsenal établies par la section romane de l'Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes', http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb41449833g (accessed 21/4/2023)
[173] Owen, *William the Lion*, pp. 130–153.

introduced to the protagonist, Fergus. After meeting the knights of King Arthur, Fergus travels to the court in Carlisle, where he is armed, knighted, and taunted by Kay into going on a quest to defeat the Black Knight and find the horn. Fergus sets off on his quest to the Black Mountain, stopping off at Liddel Castle, where he meets his future love interest, Galiene. After successfully defeating the Black Knight and gaining the horn, Fergus returns to Liddel to find that Galiene has disappeared. Eventually a dwarf reveals that Fergus must obtain the splendid shield from Dunnottar in order to regain Galiene. Fergus sets off and crosses into Scotland proper at Queensferry. He goes ashore at Dunfermline and, after a period of dislocation, reaches Dunnottar where he defeats the hag and gains the splendid shield. He then returns via Queensferry, intending to travel to Roxburgh, where Galiene – now ruler of Lothian – is being besieged. After taking the wrong road, Fergus arrives at Melrose Mountain, where he defeats a giant and frees two maidens. Fergus, incognito, then assists in the fight against Galiene's besiegers, finally forcing them to abandon the siege by winning a judicial combat. Fergus then demonstrates his military prowess once again at Arthur's tournament in Jedburgh, eventually revealing his identity. He and Galiene marry and are granted land and riches by King Arthur.

Regional geographies and local knowledge

Fergus's travels across the kingdom of the Scots are extensive, and his journeys across challenging landscapes are often integral to his character development into a noble knight. His identity at the outset of the text, however, is established through the description of his home in Galloway and its inhabitants. Moral qualities and characteristics are linked to geographical origin. The narrative follows the knights of King Arthur in their hunt for the white stag, until they reach the region of Galloway. Galloway is described as:

> 'Une terre d'avoir molte riche,
>
> Mais cil de païs sont molt niche,
>
> Que ja n'enterront en mostier;
>
> Pas ne lor calt de Diu proier,
>
> Tant sont niches et bestïaus.' (ll. 195-199)[174]
>
> 'a richly endowed land. But the folk who live there are very ignorant, for they will never enter a church: they are so stupid and bestial that they are not concerned with praying to God.'

[174] All quotations taken from *The Romance of Fergus*, ed. W. Frescoln (Philadelphia: W. H. Allen, 1983); Translations taken from *Fergus of Galloway: Knight of King Arthur*, trans. D. D. R. Owen (London: J. M. Dent, 1991).

Through the linking of the end words 'riche/niche' (ll. 195 and 196), the richness and fertility of the land is contrasted with the moral and intellectual deficiencies of its inhabitants, who are presented as ignorant and ungodly. This appears to reflect contemporary ideas of the inhabitants of Galloway, who are repeatedly presented as lacking in moral standards and requiring the aid of monastic reformers.[175] Notably, the language used by Guillaume le Clerc appears to directly echo the words of Walter Daniel, a monk from Rievaulx writing c.1170, who in his *Life of Aelred of Rievaulx* describes Galloway as 'a wild country where the inhabitants are like beasts, and it is altogether barbarous. Truth there has nowhere to lay her head, and "from the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no wisdom it." For neither faith nor true hope nor loyal charity for long lasts in it.'[176] Of course, in Walter Daniel's account, Rievaulx's daughter-house Dundrennan and the pacifying figure of Ailred help to bring peace and tranquillity to the conflict-wracked Galloway.[177]

In *Fergus*, the inhabitants of Galloway are characterised as 'country bumpkin' types, identified by their regional dress and with little knowledge of the social *mores* of courtly society. Fergus wears the shaggy jerkin and rawhide shoes of a Galwegian ploughboy (ll. 340-342) and carries the customary club in his hand (ll. 384-389). Here regional identity is coupled with social status: Fergus's father may be wealthy and have a noble wife, but he is still a peasant farmer and has not schooled his son in the chivalric and civilising behaviour of courtly society. This results in moments of humour: for example, when the knights of King Arthur arrive in Galloway, two ploughboys (one of whom is our protagonist, Fergus) believe that they are going to be captured (ll. 357-368). Of course, the knights pass by with no interest at all in the two peasants; the misplaced fear of the ploughboys is laughable to an audience aware of aristocratic and chivalric behaviour. This humour continues as Fergus, realising that the knights are not interested in attacking them, approaches a squire at the rear of the company and proclaims that he wishes to join King Arthur's company of knights and serve as counsellor at Arthur's court (ll. 418-423). Scotland in *Fergus* is a place of parody, where the 'threatening wildness' of Scotland and the Scots is '"tamed" through humor'.[178]

Fergus's regional identity and *vilain* status provide the basis for his initial identity, which we will see transformed over the course of the romance. In this manner, Galloway functions as an alternative for Wales in Chrétien de Troyes' twelfth-century *Conte du Graal*, in which Perceval's initial foolishness is conflated with his Welshness: 'the Welsh are all by nature more stupid than the

[175] K. J. Stringer, 'Reform monasticism and Celtic Scotland: Galloway, c. 1140 - c. 1240', in E. J. Cowan and R. A. McDonald, eds., *Alba: Celtic Scotland in the Middle Ages* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2000), pp. 127–165.
[176] *The Life of Aelred of Rievaulx by Walter Daniel*, trans. F. M. Powicke (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1994), p. 124. Also quoted in Stringer, 'Reform monasticism and Celtic Scotland', p. 132.
[177] K. J. Stringer, 'Galloway and the abbeys of Rievaulx and Dundrennan', *Transactions of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society*, 55 (1980), p. 176.
[178] K. Gravdal, *Vilain and courtois : transgressive parody in French literature of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), p. 25.

beasts in pasture; and so is this one – just like a beast!'[179] Fergus is set up as a new Perceval figure, transposed into a Scottish setting.[180] Indeed, Galloway arguably provided a very suitable replacement for Wales. Like Wales, Galloway existed on the fringes of royal jurisdiction, ruled over by independent lords. One of these kings was Fergus of Galloway, whom some scholars have attempted to identify as the model for the eponymous Fergus of the romance. The historical Fergus was active in the south-west Scotland during the middle of the twelfth century, first appearing as a charter witness in 1136, and may have been married in c.1120 to an illegitimate daughter of Henry I.[181] Fergus's origins are unclear, and he has been viewed 'either as an upstart who carved a position for himself in a region where Scottish authority was weak and remote, or as a protégé of the kings of Scots, established as a dependable vassal in a territory that was subject to infiltration by Norman adventurers'.[182] Fergus expanded his territory into western Galloway, and his daughter was married to Óláfr of Mann, creating an alliance across the western maritime zone.[183] Stability was not to last, however, and the 1150s saw the murder of Óláfr and an revival of violence and volatility, often rooted in familial conflict. Fergus himself was defeated in 1160 as a result of an invasion by the Scottish king Mael Coluim.[184]

Scholars have suggested that the *Roman de Fergus* was written as an 'ancestral romance' for Alan of Galloway, the great-grandson of the historical Fergus.[185] This argument has been convincingly critiqued by Joan Greenberg and Richard Oram, who argue that the negative depiction of Somerled, Fergus's father, and the emphasis on Fergus's peasant origins make it unlikely that the author was writing to compliment a patron such as Alan of Galloway.[186] Nevertheless, the name Fergus surely did have a political resonance, even if the text was not written with a genealogical purpose in mind. Indeed, it is perhaps the case that Guillaume le Clerc chose to name his hero Fergus in order to subtly mock the real historical Fergus and his successors. One of the many thorns in the side of King of the Scots, Galloway presented numerous military and political challenges to the

[179] Chrétien de Troyes, *Perceval, the story of the grail*, trans. N. Bryant (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1982), p. 4.
[180] This idea is frequently reinforced through other parodic references to the Perceval story, such as Fergus's rusty armour which humorously parallels the armour obtained by Perceval from the Vermilion Knight. See T. Hunt, 'The Roman de Fergus: Parody or Pastiche?', in R. Purdie and N. Royan, eds., *The Scots and medieval Arthurian legend* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2005), pp. 55–70.
[181] R. D. Oram, *The Lordship of Galloway* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2000), pp. 60–61; R. D. Oram, 'A Family Business? Colonisation and Settlement in Twelfth- and Thirteenth-Century Galloway', *Scottish Historical Review*, 72:194 (1993), pp. 115–116; For the illegitimate children of Henry I, see K. Thompson, 'Affairs of State: the illegitimate children of Henry I', *Journal of Medieval History*, 29:2 (2003), pp. 129–151.
[182] Oram, *The Lordship of Galloway*, pp. 51–52.
[183] Oram, *The Lordship of Galloway*, p. 69.
[184] Oram, *The Lordship of Galloway*, p. 80.
[185] For an outline of Ernst Martin's thesis, see Schmolke-Hasselman, *The evolution of Arthurian romance*, p. 344; See also Mary Dominica Legge, 'Some Notes on the Roman de Fergus', *Transactions of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society*, 27 (1949 1948), pp. 163–172.
[186] R. D. Oram, 'Fergus, Galloway and the Scots', in R. D. Oram and G. Stell, eds., *Galloway: Land and Lordship* (Edinburgh: Scottish Society for Northern Studies, 1991), p. 120; J. Greenberg, 'Guillaume le Clerc and Alan of Galloway', *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, 66 (1951), pp. 524–533.

Canmore dynasty.[187] In the text, however, Galloway is transformed from a place of military and political threat into a laughable setting, characterised by its backwardness, ignorance, and rustic regional markers.

A tripartite division

The clear distinction between the region of Galloway and the rest of the kingdom of the Scots appears to be part of a tripartite division between Galloway, Fergus's rustic home region; Scotland proper, where Fergus proves himself by gaining the splendid shield; and Lothian, the site of military and chivalric activity. Whilst Galloway is largely distinguished by its social differences, the separation of Lothian and Scotland proper is constructed through their physical separation. After having been instructed by a dwarf to find the splendid shield in Dunnottar, Fergus travels to Queensferry where he crosses the Firth of Forth, the geographical boundary between Lothian and Scotland proper:

> 'Au matin del castiel s'en ist
>
> Et vint au port desor la mer
>
> Que jo ai oï apieler
>
> De pluissors le Port la Roïne.
>
> Iluecques Lodïen define,
>
> Et Eschoche est de l'autre part;
>
> La mers ces deus terres depart.' (ll. 3934-3940)
>
> 'In the morning he left that fortress and came to the port by the sea which I have heard many people call Queensferry. That is where Lothian ends; and beyond lies Scotland, with the sea separating these two lands.'

This image of a sea separating the two lands of Lothian and Scotland proper appears to parallel contemporary perceptions of the division created by the Firth of Forth. The topographical tract *De situ Albanie* (c.1184) describes how the Firth of Forth 'regna Scottorum et Anglorum diuidit'.[188] We could also compare this to the depiction of Scotland in Matthew Paris' map of Britain (London: British Library, Cotton MS Claudius D VI) , in which the landmass north of the Forth is depicted as an island, connected to the rest of Britain only by Stirling Bridge. Here Scotland is labelled as

[187] See, for example, R. D. Oram, *Domination and Lordship: Scotland, 1070-1230* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), pp. 115–151; R. A. McDonald, 'Rebels without a cause? The relations of Fergus of Galloway and Somerled of Argyll with the Scottish kings, 1153-1164', in E. J. Cowan and R. A. McDonald, eds., *Alba: Celtic Scotland in the Middle Ages* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2000), pp. 166–186.
[188] *De situ Albanie*, in D. Howlett, ed. and trans., *Caledonian Craftsmanship* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), pp. 32–34.

'Scocia ultra marina', beyond the sea. A very similar image is also found in a map accompanying two of Gerald of Wales' works on Ireland in Dublin: National Library of Ireland, MS 700. Scotland is only connected to England by a thin isthmus, being otherwise separated by the 'Mare Scotic[um]'.[189] As will be shown in a later chapter, we see a similar conception of space in the thirteenth-century *lai Desiré*, in which Calatir is described as being 'Outre la mer qui tant est grande' (l. 10, 'Beyond the broad expanse of ocean.').[190] This also appears to map onto a legal enactment of William I, based on an earlier assize of David I, which deals with the bringing of warrantors by those accused of theft.[191] As Dauvit Broun notes, it is striking that although people could be summoned from across 'Scotland', no guarantors were expected to cross the Forth in order to vouch for disputed goods. Instead, cases involving people south of the Forth should be met at the crossing point of Stirling Bridge.[192]

Indeed, the Firth of Forth and the surrounding boggy terrain was a very real physical barrier, passable by land at only a few crossing points. It was easier to cross by boat at Queensferry or Earlsferry – surely helping to firmly cement the idea of Scotland as an island in the contemporary imagination.[193] On his quest for the splendid shield, Fergus takes a barge from Queensferry across the Firth of Forth. Having been attacked by treacherous boatmen on the barge, Fergus promptly wounds them all and is left to steer the boat himself. This is described in vivid detail, using specific nautical terms and perhaps suggesting that the author had experienced a similar journey:

> 'Fergus le governal saissist,
>
> Si governe la nef corant.
>
> Li vens grans saus le va chaçant,
>
> Qui hurte as cordes et as tres.' (ll. 4046-4049)
>
> 'Fergus seizes the tiller and steers the drifting boat. The wind, lashing the rigging and the masts, sends it scudding along.'

[189] For an examination of the map in MS 700, see T. O'Loughlin, 'An Early Thirteenth-Century Map in Dublin: A Window into the World of Giraldus Cambrensis', *Imago Mundi*, 51 (1999), pp. 24–39.
[190] Throughout this thesis, quotations and translations of *Desiré* are taken from *French Arthurian Literature IV: Eleven Old French Narrative Lays*, eds. and trans. G. S. Burgess and L. C. Brook (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2007).
[191] For the development of the assize from an original assize of David I and a translation of the text, see A. J. Taylor, '"Leges Scocie" and the lawcodes of David I, William the Lion and Alexander II', *Scottish Historical Review*, 88:226 (2009), pp. 223–226, 280–281; Taylor, *The Shape of the State*, p. 144.
[192] Broun, 'Rethinking Scottish Origins', pp. 163–190.
[193] See Broun, *Scottish Independence*, p. 54; and D. Broun, 'Southern Scotland as Part of the Scottish Kingdom: The Evidence of the Earliest Charters', in N. McGuigan and A. Woolf, eds., *The Battle of Carham: A Thousand Years On* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2018), pp. 35–36.

Transformation and reimagining

The narrative clearly demonstrates authorial knowledge of local place names and topographies, which echo other textual and visual representations of Scottish geography and landscape. However, in some cases, real places are reimagined and their political, religious, or administrative roles diminished. This is particularly clear in Fergus's travels beyond the Firth of Forth into Scotland proper. After crossing at Queensferry, Fergus makes land at Dunfermline where there appears to be little but a 'castiel sarrasin' (l. 4051). Owen interprets this adjective as meaning outlandish rather than pagan, which he suggests might reflect the state of disrepair of the royal burgh of Dunfermline during the reign of William the Lion.[194] Although Dunfermline may have declined as an administrative centre in the 1190s, it was still the site of an important abbey church that functioned as a royal mausoleum, the burial site of Alexander I (1107-24), David I (1124-53), and Malcolm IV (1153-65). William the Lion (1165-1214) and his son, Alexander II (1214-49) were instead buried at Arbroath and Melrose respectively.[195] The significance of Dunfermline would be reaffirmed by the 1249 canonisation of Queen Margaret, founder of the monastic community at Dunfermline, and the translation of her remains to a new tomb in the abbey in 1250.[196] Dunfermline was also the place of composition of the Dunfermline compilation, written between 1249 and 1285, which may have been designed as a piece of political propaganda in support of Scottish petitions for coronation and unction.[197]

The historical Dunfermline was clearly a significant royal and religious site, which only increased in importance during the thirteenth century through its involvement in the promotion of the Scottish kingship. In *Fergus*, however, it is transformed for narrative effect, suggesting Scotland to be a place of isolation and desolation. This would seem an unlikely choice for an author based in the court of the Scottish king, for why would an author presumably wanting to garner favour with the Scottish king present Dunfermline in a negative light? This raises questions about Owen's identification of the author as William Malveisin. After passing Dunfermline, Fergus continues into Scotland proper, riding for over two months without learning anything about the tower or the splendid shield:

> 'Par Escoche va cevauçant
>
> La u fortune le demainne.
>
> Deus mois aveuc une semaine
>
> A chevauchié par la contree;

[194] Owen, *William the Lion*, p. 127.
[195] S. I. Boardman, 'Dunfermline as a royal mausoleum', in R. Fawcett, ed., *Royal Dunfermline* (Edinburgh: Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 2005), pp. 141–143.
[196] Boardman, 'Dunfermline as a royal mausoleum', p. 143.
[197] Taylor, 'Historical writing in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Scotland', pp. 228–252.

C'onques n'en oï renommee

Ne de l'escu ne de la tor' (ll. 4056-4061)

'He goes riding through Scotland as Fortune leads him. He rode about that region for two months and a week without ever hearing any report of either the shield or the tower'

Scotland proper appears to be virtually depopulated and lacking in human settlements. This sense of wilderness and isolation is heightened through the description of Dunnottar, the location of the splendid shield and a substitute for the Grail Castle.[198] When the dwarf tells Fergus about Dunnottar, he describes how 'Cele tors siet sor un rocier,/ Se li bat la mers environ' (ll. 3856-3857, 'That tower is perched on a rock, round which beats the sea.'). Fergus must cross a causeway to reach the tower, defeating the hag who stands in his way (ll. 4093-4203). This description of Dunnottar emphasises its geographical position, providing a dramatic setting for Fergus's most important challenge but also giving an accurate description of the historical position of Dunnottar Castle. Like with Dunfermline, however, the author appears to have been selective in his representation of Dunnottar. Dunnotar was indeed situated on a rocky outcrop surrounded by the sea, an impregnable position for a castle. Yet it was by no means desolate or isolated. As early as the third or fourth century, the nearby sea stack of Dunnicaer was the site of an important Pictish fort.[199] Dunnottar itself held an importance administrative position in the Mearns as the place where warrants were returnable during the reign of William the Lion.[200] Again the author appears to have drawn upon a location of political and administrative importance, but removed it from its contemporary significance and instead given it a narrative purpose.

This is again the case when Fergus, after having successfully obtained the shield and returned across the Firth of Forth from Scotland proper, takes a wrong turning on his way to Roxburgh and finds himself at Melrose Mountain, home to the fortress of the Dunnottar hag's giant husband. Owen suggests that this stage of the journey demonstrates a knowledge of the king's highway towards Roxburgh, which bypassed Melrose; Fergus's arrival at Melrose could therefore only be explained by him taking a wrong turning.[201] Melrose Mountain has been identified as the Eildon Hills, an impressive triple peak overlooking Melrose with views across the countryside. As Owen suggests, it is not farfetched to suppose that Fergus would have been able to see Roxburgh and the surrounding

[198] Owen notes how Gawain rides across a causeway into the sea to reach the Grail Castle, which gives off a brilliant light. Owen, *Fergus of Galloway*, p. 121.
[199] G. Noble, N. Evans, D. Hamilton, C. MacIver, E. Masson-Maclean, and J. O'Driscoll, 'Dunnicaer, Aberdeenshire, Scotland: a Roman Iron Age promontory fort beyond the frontier', *Archaeological Journal*, 177:2 (2020), pp. 256–338. Many thanks to Dr Lisa Collinson for drawing my attention to the recent archaeological excavations.
[200] See 850615, Archaeology Notes at http://canmore.org.uk/event/850615 (accessed 15/20/2020)
[201] Owen, *William the Lion*, p. 128.

countryside from a fortress on the top of the Eildon Hills.[202] This feeds into the picture of an author with a fair knowledge of Scotland and its geography.

Yet interestingly, the narrative again makes no mention of the contemporary political or religious significance of Melrose, home to an important Cistercian abbey founded by King David in 1136. Melrose grew in numbers and wealth throughout the twelfth century, and the abbots of Melrose played a significant role in royal councils and diplomatic missions.[203] In 1182, Abbot Ernald, for example, travelled to Rome on behalf of William the Lion with Bishop Joscelin and Obsert, abbot of Kelso, to discuss matters including English overlordship and the freedom of the Scottish church.[204] Melrose received significant noble patronage and was the chosen burial place of Philip de Valognes, the royal chamberlain, as well as members of the Avenel and Balliol families, amongst others.[205] Indeed, William the Lion's son, Alexander II, was buried at Melrose on his death in 1249.[206] In *Fergus*, however, the religious importance of Melrose is removed, placing the geographical location in a purely secular and chivalric framework.

After Fergus has defeated the giant at Melrose Mountain and freed the maidens who had been held captive there, he rides on towards Roxburgh where he, incognito, attacks and eventually defeats the besiegers in judicial combat, killing the enemy king's nephew, Arthofilaus. Owen suggests that this episode is filled with references to events contemporary to William the Lion, spanning the reigns of the English kings Henry II, Richard I, and John.[207] For example, the defence of Lothian by single combat echoes a proposition made by William the Lion to Henry II, to take his side against the Young King if he returned Northumberland to him. William's claim to Northumberland, according to Jordan de Fantosme, would be upheld in single combat.[208] Owen suggests that Galiene's refusal to leave the castle of Roxburgh echoes Queen Eleanor's refusal to leave the keep of Mirabeau castle, which was under attack by Arthur of Brittany and his French supporters. The choice of the name 'Arthofilaus' for Galiene's attacker, according to Owen, is surely a nod to the real Arthur of Brittany.[209]

These suggestions, whilst appealing, remain speculation. Single combat was a common motif in Old French romance, and we cannot be certain that the author of *Fergus* was referring to specific events. They might also make more sense if we consider that the text might have been written from an Angevin rather than Scottish perspective. The choice of Roxburgh as the site of Galiene's besiegement was certainly not neutral, and surely resonated with audiences both due to its importance

[202] Owen, *William the Lion*, p. 128.
[203] R. Fawcett and R. D. Oram, *Melrose Abbey* (Stroud: Tempus Publishing: 2004), pp. 20–24.
[204] Fawcett and Oram, *Melrose Abbey*, p. 24.
[205] Fawcett and Oram, *Melrose Abbey*, p. 26.
[206] Fawcett and Oram, *Melrose Abbey*, p. 29.
[207] See Owen, *William the Lion*, pp. 148–150.
[208] *Jordan Fantosme's Chronicle*, trans. R. C. Johnston (Edinburgh, 2018), pp. 24–27; Owen, *William the Lion*, p. 148.
[209] Owen, *William the Lion*, pp. 149–150.

as a commercial hub and to its recent political past. Roxburgh was an important royal burgh, a hub of communications and international trading centre.[210] It was also the site of one of the principal mints in Scotland under William I and Alexander II.[211] However, the narrative draws the audience away from Roxburgh as a real burgh, a place of commercial and economic activity. The focus is instead upon Roxburgh as a cadre for military activity, perhaps reminding audiences of its turbulent political past. Roxburgh was one of the castles ordered to be delivered to Henry II as part of the humiliating 1174 Treaty of Falaise, before being restored to William by Richard through the 1189 Quitclaim of Canterbury.[212]

In his use of setting, the author of *Fergus* demonstrates a clear knowledge of place names and topography. Yet the treatment of locations such as Dunfermline, Melrose, and Dunnottar suggests a deliberate transformation, whereby their political, religious, or administrative importance is diminished. They become desolate and empty, the homes of hags and giants, rather than centres of religious memory or administrative hubs. Political structure is absent, and there is no king of the Scots to be seen. This narrative strategy could be purely concerned with the creation of an effective setting for the text. Yet I also think we should consider the possibility that the reimagining of Scotland in the text was politically-influenced, designed to diminish the status of the Scottish kingship at a time when ideas about jurisdictional primacy were beginning to develop. This makes it more likely that the text was written by an author outside of the Scottish court and possibly in the interest of the Angevin kings of England.

An Arthurian realm?

One final element can be added to this reading of the text, and this relates to the role of the Arthurian court. Initially an outsider who exemplifies Galwegian otherness, Fergus loses his independent customs and identity as he is welcomed into Arthur's fold and obtains a wife and lands. Through the remaking of Fergus's identity, the text presents both the assimilation of Galloway into the rest of Scotland, and the assimilation of Scotland into the Arthurian imperialist project.[213] This again calls into question the idea of an author in the household of a Scottish patron for, as Michael Wenthe suggests, 'few contemporary Scottish readers of the romance, if there were any, are likely to have welcomed the suggestion that their land would be subject to the dominance of a king to the south.'[214]

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[210] See C. Martin and R. D. Oram, 'Medieval Roxburgh: a preliminary assessment of the burgh and its locality', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 137 (2007), pp. 357–404.
[211] I. H. Stewart, 'Scottish mints', in R. A. G. Carson, ed., *Mints, Dies and Currency: Essays Dedicated to the Memory of Albert Baldwin* (London: Methuen, 1971), p. 172.
[212] 'Treaty of Falaise', *Anglo-Scottish Relations, 1174-1328*, pp. 2–11.
[213] M. Wenthe, 'Mapping Scottish Identity in the Roman de Fergus', *LATCH*, 5 (2012), pp. 28–53.
[214] Wenthe, 'Mapping Scottish Identity', p. 50.

Could Arthur be a stand-in for the king of the Scots who, from his heartland in Lothian, offered the rulership required to transform Scotland proper and integrate it into a courtly and cosmopolitan world? I think this interpretation is unlikely given the representation of locations such as Dunfermline and Melrose, which denigrate the status of the Scottish kingdom and therefore make it doubtful that the text was written by someone in the household of William the Lion. Instead, it would make more sense for *Fergus* to have been written by someone who wished to assert Angevin overlordship over Scotland through its metonymical integration into the Arthurian realm.

With this in mind, I wonder if a context for the composition of *Fergus* might be found in King John's loss of his continental territories in the early years of the thirteenth century.[215] The fall of Normandy to the French King Philip was a major blow for the English kingship, and John's repeated attempts to recover Normandy came at great financial cost and baronial discontent. Yet it also refocused his energies within Britain.[216] In 1209, following rumours that William the Lion was planning to marry one of his daughters to King Philip of France, John marched northwards and received an oath of fealty from William's son, the future Alexander II.[217] John imposed the Treaty of Norham on the Scottish king, the terms of which survives in a letter copied in a cartulary of St Augustine's abbey in Canterbury. According to the treaty, William's daughters were to be handed into John's custody, to be married to John's son and another English noble.[218] William was also to pay £10,000 to John.[219]

My reading of *Fergus* lines up with a historical context in which the Angevin king of England wished to assert his dominance over Scotland, particularly following his loss of lands on the continent. I am not suggesting that *Fergus* was necessarily politically-motivated, but rather that it sheds light on a historical context during which the status of the Scottish kingship was at stake. By representing Scotland as a depopulated and ungoverned region, the author of *Fergus* made the Scottish kingdom ripe for incorporation into the Arthurian – read Angevin – realm.

[215] For an account of this, see Church, *King John*, pp. 93–136.
[216] 'After 1204, John had one overriding ambition: to recover his lost continental empire. Yet his involvement in Britain was of an unparalleled intensity, partly because he was now confined there. Like Henry and Richard, he was determined to neutralize any threat from Scotland and also, far more actively than they, to increase his lands and revenues in Ireland and Wales.' D. A. Carpenter, *The Struggle for Mastery: Britain, 1066-1284* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 277.
[217] Church, *King John*, p. 176; Carpenter, *The Struggle for Mastery*, p. 277.
[218] King John's letter is transcribed and translated in D. A. Carpenter, *Magna Carta* (London: Penguin, 2015), pp. 473–475.
[219] Carpenter, *The Struggle for Mastery*, p. 277.

Conclusion

The *Roman de Fergus* is clearly embedded within the real landscape of Scotland, demonstrating authorial knowledge of place names and geographical features. The separation of Galloway, Lothian, and Scotland proper can be seen to reflect real contemporary political divisions and perceptions of space, blurring the boundaries between the fictional narrative and the geographical and historical context in which it was written. The geographical localisation of the narrative has been used by Roy Owen to suggest that the text was written by somebody in the court of William the Lion, possibly William Malveisin.

In this chapter, I have examined the representation of geography in *Fergus* to offer an alternative reading. I have demonstrated how the author draws upon settings that held great religious, economic, or political significance to the Scottish kingdom, transforming them to function within the narrative and diminishing the governmental, religious, and symbolic authority of the Scottish kingship. Scotland itself is subsumed into the Arthurian empire through Fergus's integration into the Arthurian court. This representation of Scotland makes it unlikely that the text was composed by an author writing from the household of the Scottish king, but rather from a perspective that saw Scotland as subject to the Angevin kings. The 1209 Treaty of Norham, a clear reassertion of English overlordship over Scotland, offers a possible historical reference point.

1.3. Known geographies in the *lais*

The previous two chapters have explored the close geographical localisation of two romance texts, demonstrating how setting might be grounded in authorial knowledge whilst also speaking to contemporary political concerns. This chapter develops this study by turning to a specific form of narrative, the *lai*. A short-form narrative often characterised by its elements of the *merveilleux*, the *lai* has seldom been taken seriously by historians as a historical source. In this chapter, I examine two *lais*, *Desiré* and *Melion*, using geographical setting as a framework through which to consider the texts and what they might reveal to the historian. I draw on possible textual references to Falkirk and its saltpans in *Desiré* to propose an alternative identification of Calatir, suggesting that the text imprints the typical motifs of the fairy mistress narrative onto a precise local geography. With this in mind, I offer a possible context for the composition of *Desiré* as a reframing of a marriage between a Scottish heiress and an Anglo-Norman settler. Likewise, the *lai* of *Melion* demonstrates unexpected levels of realism, such as incidental details and nautical terminology, as well as references to Anglo-Norman settlement in Dublin and the landscape of the Wicklow mountains. My study of both *Desiré* and *Melion* suggests that we should be open to idea that the *lai* could speak to specific geographies and political circumstances for a Francophone audience in England and northern France, notably in the context of Anglo-Norman settlement in Celtic spaces.

The lai as a historical source

Before examining *Desiré* and *Melion* more closely, it is important to understand the characteristics of the *lai* as a genre and how it has been considered by historians. Almost synonymous with this generic form is the name 'Marie de France', the unidentified female author thought to have written the twelve *lais* preserved together in London: British Library, Harley 978.[220] In addition to the *lais* of 'Marie de France', there survive a number of anonymous Breton *lais* in manuscripts from the thirteenth century and beyond.[221] The later development of the genre saw the incorporation of other short narratives 'which essentially drop the Breton element from the definition, along with the kind of *merveilleux* and supernatural which characterizes it', as well as the development of the later lyric *lai*.[222] The idea of the *lai* as a static and clearly defined genre is therefore problematic; we should admit the 'elasticity' of medieval genres, to use the words of Keith Busby.[223] Nevertheless, the Breton *lai* does appear to have certain distinguishing characteristics. It is a short narrative form, defined by its ability to say much in a few words.[224] Breton *lais* also often share narrative motifs, notably the central theme of the meeting between a human and a supernatural being. Elements of the Breton *lais* frequently appear to be influenced by Celtic literary traditions and more universal legends.[225] The geographical framing of the *lais* is generally imprecise, with watery and forest settings often providing the setting for an encounter with the *merveilleux*.

With these thematic elements in mind, we might echo Amy Remensynder's question: 'Whatever is the historian to do with the magical worlds Marie de France… depicted with such artistry in the second half of the twelfth century?'[226] How can the historian use *lais* as a historical source? Like the other romance texts discussed in this study, *lais* can be read as a narrative space

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[220] There is an extensive literature on the question of Marie's identity, and whether we should indeed consider her to be the author of the multiple works ascribed to her. See, for example, J. Wogan-Browne, 'Recovery and Loss: Women's Writing around Marie de France', in K. Kerby-Fulton, K. Bugyis, and J. Van Engen, eds., *Women Intellectuals and Leaders in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2020), pp. 169–189; R. H. Bloch, *The Anonymous Marie de France* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2003), pp. 1–24.

[221] The anonymous *lais* are published in Tobin's 1976 work, the introduction of which provides a discussion of the manuscripts, potential source material, and themes. See *Les lais anonymes des XIIe et XIIIe siècles : édition critique de quelques lais Bretons*, ed. P. M. O'H. Tobin, (Geneva: Droz, 1976); A bibliographic study of twenty narrative *lais* is provided in G. S. Burgess, *The Old French Narrative Lay: An Analytical Bibliography* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1995).

[222] K. Busby, 'Narrative genres', in S. Gaunt and S. Kay, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval French Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 150–151.

[223] Busby, 'Narrative genres', pp. 149–151.

[224] See D. Kelly, 'Brevity as emphasis in the narrative lay: the long and the short of it', in J. Blacker and J. H. M. Taylor, eds., *Court and Cloister: Studies in the Short Narrative in Honor of Glyn S. Burgess* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval & Renaissance Studies, 2018), pp. 1–16.

[225] See the discussion in Tobin, *Les lais anonymes des XIIe et XIIIe siècles*, pp. 21–72.

[226] A. G. Remensnyder, 'Between history and literature: Chrétien de Troyes's Lancelot and Marie de France's Lais', in J. Glenn, ed., *The Middle Ages in Texts and Texture: Reflections on Medieval Sources* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), p. 203.

where historical anxieties are explored, and socio-political circumstances mirrored. Sharon Kinoshita has, for example, discussed how *lais* of *Yonec* and *Milun* offer two visions of colonial encounters in South Wales. Kinoshita explores how, in *Yonec*, the *mal-mariée*'s affair with a *merveilleux* bird-knight and the birth of an illegitimate son, who eventually kills his mother's wicked husband, can be read as 'an allegory of native resistance to colonial rule' and the oppressiveness of feudal lineage politics.[227] *Milun*, on the other hand, 'proposes a new Cambro-Norman society that functions as a chivalric meritocracy', through the marital union of the Welsh knight Milun, his lady, and their now legitimate son.[228] Susan Crane's study of the *Lai d'Haveloc* considers the specific circumstances of landholding in England.[229] However, despite this, it seems like there has been an even greater reluctance to engage with *lais* as historical material than with other romance texts, possibly due to their brevity and *merveilleux* elements. In Glyn Burgess's analytical bibliography of twenty narrative *lais*, scholarly studies are often centred around the following themes: the etymology of the term *lai* and its origins as a genre,[230] Celtic motifs and the role of the merveilleux,[231] and the relationship of the Breton *lais* with Old Norse texts.[232] Studies of love and marriage do allow for a more historical treatment of the *lais* and their socio-political context.[233] Nevertheless, scholarship on *lais* tends to be the work of literary scholars who are more interested in the internal dynamics of the text and genre than those of the world outside it.

This chapter develops a thread running through this study: the idea that historians should pay closer attention to literary texts written in the French vernacular, including the specific genre of the *lai*. By using landscape and geography as entry points, I consider how two *lais*, *Desiré* and *Melion*, interact with their historical contexts.

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[227] S. Kinoshita, *Medieval Boundaries: Rethinking Difference in Old French Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), pp. 106-107.
[228] Kinoshita, *Medieval Boundaries*, p. 132.
[229] See 'Havelok's Heritage', in Crane, *Insular Romance*, pp. 40–52
[230] eg. L. Fleuriot, 'Les lais bretons', in J. Balcou and Y. Le Gallo, eds., *Histoire littéraire et culturelle de la Bretagne: Tome 1: Héritage celtique et captation française des origines à la fin des États.* (Genève, Paris: Champion, Slatkine, 1987), pp. 131–138; L. Foulet, 'Marie de France et les Lais bretons', *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie*, 29 (1905), pp. 19–56, 293–322.
[231] eg. R. Bromwich, 'Celtic dynastic themes and the Breton lays', *Etudes celtiques*, 9:2 (1961), pp. 439–474; T. P. Cross, 'The Celtic elements in the lays of "Lanval" and "Graelent"', *Modern philology*, 12 (1915), pp. 1–60; P. M. O'H. Tobin, 'L'Elément breton et les lais anonymes', in *Mélanges de langue et de littérature françaises du Moyen Age offerts à Charles Foulon, II* (Liège : Association des Romanistes de l'Université de Liège, 1980), pp. 277–286.
[232] eg. P. Skårup, 'Les Strengleikar et les lais qu'ils traduisent.', in *Les relations littéraires Franco-Scandinaves au Moyen Age: Actes du Colloque de Liège (avril 1972).* (Paris: Société d'édition Les Belles Letrres, 1975), pp. 97–115.
[233] eg. H. Harrington, 'Marriage and Love in the Narrative Lay in French (12th and 13th Centuries): A Historical and Literary Study' (MPhil, University of London, 1988); M. Guillet-Rydell, 'Nature et rôle du mariage dans les lais anonymes bretons', *Romania*, 96:381 (1975), pp. 91–104.

The lai in and on Scotland

Desiré is an anonymous *lai* presumed to have been composed no later than the thirteenth century.[234] It survives in two manuscript copies, one of which is Paris: BNF nouv. acq. fr. 1104, where it sits alongside a collection of 24 other lais entitled the *lais de Breteigne*. This manuscript dates to around the end of the thirteenth century and is localised to the Ile-de-France. The text also survives in Cologny: Bibliotheca Bodmeriana, Bodmer 82, a thirteenth-century copy produced in England and possibly originally belonging to the Benedictine convent of Wilton Abbey in Wiltshire.[235] I will turn to the possible significance of possession by Wilton Abbey in a later chapter.[236] These two manuscripts, BNF nouv. acq. fr. 1104 and Bodmer 82, suggest a circulation of the text around Northern France and England.

Whether the *lai* of *Desiré* circulated into Scotland, the setting of the text, cannot be determined but should necessarily not be ruled out.[237] French was undoubtedly spoken in Scotland during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and Scotland was not isolated from continental literary culture. Until around 1180, the address clauses of royal charters often included the address *francis et anglis et scottis*, whilst Barrow identifies a scribe of William the Lion who rendered the personal names of witnesses in the French vernacular form.[238] Connections between clerical and monastic centres in the Scottish kingdom with those in England and on the continent offered a conduit for knowledge and learning, and many scholars were trained in England or on the Continent. Cross-border landholding was also common, particularly in the Anglo-Scottish borders, where landholders frequently held land in the far north of England and in southern Scotland.[239] This was an area characterised by connection rather than separation: 'Rather than being divided by the political boundary, aristocratic society on both sides of the Border was becoming more and more extensively connected.'[240] Keith Stringer's study of the Normanville family, who held in Scotland, England, and

[234] E. M. Grimes, ed., *The Lays of Desiré, Graelent and Melion: Edition of the Texts with an Introduction* (New York: Institute of French Studies, 1928), p. 1.
[235] Bodmer 82 is digitised at http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/fr/list/one/fmb/cb-0082, BNF nouv.acq.fr.1104 is digitised at https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b105326322 (accessed 17/2/2020).
[236] See 'The marvellous and resistance to authority, p. 85.
[237] See Owen, *William the Lion*, pp. 20-31, for examples of the permeation of French literature and culture into the Scottish court.
[238] R. Sharpe, 'People and languages in eleventh- and twelfth-century Britain and Ireland: reading the charter evidence', in D. Broun, ed., *The Reality Behind Charter Diplomatic in Anglo-Norman Britain* (Glasgow: University of Glasgow, 2011), p. 74; G. W. S. Barrow, ed., *Regesta Regum Scottorum : II : Acts of William I King of Scots 1165-1214.* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1971), p. 88.
[239] K. J. Stringer, 'Identities in Thirteenth-Century England: Frontier Society in the Far North', in C. Bjorn, A. Grant, and K. J. Stringer, *Social and Political Identities in Western Europe* (Copenhagen: Academic Press, 1994), p. 42.
[240] Stringer, 'Identities in Thirteenth-Century England', p. 45.

Normandy, emphasises the transnational nature of the lifestyles, activities, and allegiances of medieval lords.[241]

Material culture also suggests the influence of French literary traditions in Scotland. A gold brooch found in Carriden, Falkirk, is engraved with the legend JE SUI ICI EN LU DE AMI, and on the reverse, OR ME NE UBLIE NI DEU, whilst a thirteenth-century mirror case found in Perth is inscribed with the names of Tristan, Iseult, and Mark.[242] In this context, the circulation of *Desiré* in Scotland does not seem unlikely. The *lai* of *Desiré* is also found in the Strengleikar collection, a collection of Norse translations of Old French lais commissioned by Hákon Hákonarson of Norway, which has been dated to around 1226 to 1263.[243] *Desiré* must, therefore, have been composed early enough to have been included in this collection.

The story of *Desiré* begins in Calatir, in Scotland, where a vassal of the king and his wife are unable to have a child. They partake in a pilgrimage to Saint-Gilles in Provence. Saint-Gilles was a well-known place of pilgrimage, particularly popular with women who wished to become pregnant. The *Gesta principum Polonorum*, the earliest extant chronicle of the history of Poland composed in the early twelfth century,[244] describes how the childless Wladislav Herman and Judith of Bohemia sent an envoy to Saint-Gilles with rich gifts and an image of a golden boy. The envoy returned to find Judith pregnant with a male child, Boleslow III (1102-1138).[245] Interestingly, the couple in *Desiré* present a silver rather than gold statue ('Une ymage tote d'argent', l. 43) at the altar of Saint-Gilles, although this seems to be just as effective at producing pregnancy, for the wife falls pregnant when they return home.

Their son is named Desiré, and he grows up to be an esteemed knight, participating in tournaments across Normandy and Brittany. He later returns to Calatir and rides out towards a hermit's chapel in the Blanche Lande, coming across a beautiful maiden who takes him to her mistress. This fairy mistress accepts his offer of love service and gives Desiré a ring, warning him that he must not lose it or he will risk losing her love. Desiré sees his mistress frequently and, unknown to him, she bears him a son and a daughter. Desiré goes abroad with the king, but returns to

[241] K. J. Stringer, 'Gentry Lives in Three Realms: A View from the Anglo-Scottish Borders and Upper Normandy (c. 1170-c. 1350)', in S. Boardman and D. Ditchburn, *Kingship, Lordship and Sanctity in Medieval Britain: Essays in Honour of Alexander Grant* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2022), pp. 101-159.
[242] S. D. Campbell, 'The language of objects: material culture in medieval Scotland', in M. Hammond, ed., 'The language of objects: material culture in medieval Scotland', *New Perspectives on Medieval Scotland, 1093-1286* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013), p. 186; On the Perth mirror-case, see Owen, *William the Lion*, pp. 188–192.
[243] Burgess and Brook, eds., 'Desiré', p. 11.
[244] *Gesta Principum Polonorum: The Deeds of the Princes of the Poles*, trans. P. W. Knoll and F. Schaer (Hungary: Central European University Press, 2003), p. xxxi.
[245] E. van Houts, 'The writing of history and family traditions through the eyes of men and women: the Gesta principum Polonorum', in K. Stopka, ed., *Gallus Anonymous and His Chronicle in the Context of Twelfth-century Historiography from the Perspective of the Latest Research* (Krakow: Polish Academy of Arts and Science, 2010), pp. 201–202.

Calatir to seek his mistress. As he heads out into the Blanche Lande, he visits the hermit and confesses his sins, including his affair with his mistress. Desiré then notices that his ring is missing, and when he rides to meet with his mistress, she does not appear. Desiré pleads that he meant no wrong in telling the hermit of their affair and, cursing the hermit, returns to Calatir where he greatly laments the loss of his mistress. After a year, Desiré's mistress appears to him and, willing to forgive him, attends mass with Desiré. Desiré eventually meets his son, who is armed by the king, and his daughter, who marries the king. Desiré and his mistress are also married and return together to her lands.

Locating Calatir

The *lai* of *Desiré* begins with both a temporal and geographical localisation. The narrator describes how he is retelling a *lai* composed in remembrance of the eponymous Desiré by Desiré's contemporaries:

> 'M'entente ai mise et ma cure
>
> En raconteur une avenutre
>
> Don't cil qui a ce tens vesquirent
>
> Por remembrance .I. lai en firent:
>
> Ce est le lay du Desirré' (ll. 1-5)
>
> 'I have devoted my effort and attention/ To relating an adventure/ From which those alive at the time/ Composed a lay for remembrance:/ This is the lay of the Desired One'.

This frames the narrative as a form of social memory, imbuing the tale with a sense of authenticity: the *lai* was originally composed by those who had lived and possibly knew Desiré. The narrative is clearly situated in the past, although not the distant past of Arthurian legend. Indeed, the geographical setting of the narrative is described in the present tense: 'En Escoce a une contree,/ Qui Calatir est apelee,' (ll. 7-8, 'In Scotland there is a region/ Which is called Calder'). This suggests that the geographical setting is not a legendary or mythical location, but instead continues to exist and hold meaning in the present.

In their 2007 edition, Burgess and Brook identify 'Calatir' as Calder, located to the west of Edinburgh in the region of Lothian.[246] However, no real evidence is provided for this assumption and, based on the name and the literary evidence, it seems more likely that 'Calatir' is in fact Callendar

[246] Burgess and Brook, *French Arthurian Literature IV,* p. 12.

(Calatria), an area on the southern edge of the Firth of Forth.[247] In the text, 'Calatir' is described as being 'Encoste de la Blanche Lande' (l. 9, 'Near the Blanche Lande'). A 'Blanche Lande' does feature within several other romance texts including both the Béroul and Thomas *Tristan*s and *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*.[248] However, there is evidence to link the Blanche Lande of *Desiré* to its specific location in the area of Callendar. The term 'Blankelande' appears in a charter of David I (1140 x 1152), granting to Newbattle Abbey 'unam salinam in *Blankelande*'.[249] Geoffrey Barrow suggests that the term 'Blankelande' was used by French speakers to refer to the land beside the Firth of Forth where saltpans developed. The inner Forth estuary between the Carse of Callendar and the Carse of Stirling was evidently an important area for the production of salt, providing the necessary sleeching sites and fuel reserves.[250] The specific reference to the 'Blanche Lande' in *Desiré* suggests that the choice of setting was based upon authorial knowledge of the local topography and industry.

This is confirmed by a reference to the 'veire chapele' in line 11 of the text, which has previously been edited as the 'noire chapele'. Notes to the edition of Burgess and Brook suggest that although never specifically mentioned in the narrative, the 'black chapel' presumably refers to the chapel of the hermit.[251] However, a different reading can be supplied by Cologny: Fondation Martin Bodmer, Cod. Bodmer 82, f.7v, which appears to read 'veire' rather than 'noire'.[252] From the second half of the twelfth century, Falkirk in Callendar is referred to by Latin sources as *Varia Capella*, which Wilhelm Nicolaisen suggests to be a version of the new English translation of the Gaelic *Egglesbreth, Faw Kirk*. This Latin version appears to have had a French variant, *Veire Chapelle*, which is recorded in Norman writs from the early fourteenth century.[253] In the context of the previous references to 'Calatir' and the 'Blanche Lande', which situate the narrative in the geographical area of Calatria, the reference to the 'veire chapele' likely refers to the location of Falkirk. The setting of the text therefore appears to be closely localised and geographically coherent. This is unusual compared to other lais, which tend to use more generic settings, less precise and often with Arthurian significance. Indeed, the setting of 'Calatir' does not appear in any other Old French romance text.

[247] Many thanks to Dr Simon Taylor and Dr Alice Taylor for their help in the identification of Calatir and the Blanche Lande. See S. Taylor with G. Márkus, *The Place-Names of Fife, Volume 5, Discussion, Glossaries, Texts (with Addenda and Corrigenda of Volumes 1-4)* (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2012).
[248] For a full list, see L. F. Flutre, *Table des noms propres avec toutes leurs variantes figurant dans les romans du Moyen-Age écrits en français ou en provençal et actuellement publiés ou analysés* (Poitiers: Centre d'études supérieures de civilisation médiévale, 1962), p. 208.
[249] G. W. S. Barrow, ed., *The charters of King David I : the written acts of David I King of Scots, 1124-53 and of his son Henry Earl of Northumberland, 1139-52* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1999), p. 101.
[250] For a study of salt production in medieval Scotland and the charter evidence, see R. D. Oram, 'The Sea-salt Industry in Medieval Scotland', *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History*, 3:9 (2012), pp. 209–232.
[251] Burgess and Brook, eds., 'Desiré', p. 80.
[252] Cod. Bodmer 82 is digitised at https://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/fmb/cb-0082/7v/0/Sequence-831 (accessed 29/09/2020).
[253] W. F. Nicolaisen, 'The Origin of the Place-name Falkirk', *Calatria*, 7 (1994), p. 69. Many thanks to Ian Scott, editor of *Calatria*, for his assistance and thoughts on this.

The unusual setting suggests that the author had specific knowledge of the area, perhaps adapting a more generic fairy mistress *lai* to suit a particular audience.

The description of 'Calatir' in the text also appears to echo other contemporary descriptions of Scotland. 'Calatir' is described as being physically separate, 'Outre la mer qui tant est grande' (l. 10, 'Beyond the broad expanse of ocean.'). The 'mer' referred to here could be the North Sea, suggesting that the text was written from Northern France. However, we should also allow for the possibility that the author is writing from north of the Firth of Forth, and is looking southwards to 'Calatir'. The 'mer' could therefore be referring to the body of water of the Forth itself, which divides Scotland from the rest of Britain – an idea that also appears in other sources from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. As discussed in the previous chapter, the thirteenth-century *Roman de Fergus* describes Scotland proper as being separated from Lothian by a body of water: 'La mers ces deus terres depart' (l. 3940), a description echoed in both textual and visual form.[254] The description of 'Calatir' and the 'Blanche Lande' as being beyond the sea therefore appears to tap into a frame of reference in which Scotland proper is almost an island, thus emphasising a sense of distance and separation. However, in *Desiré* it is not Scotland proper that is distant, but southern Scotland. This may be suggestive of the author's location. Barrow notes 'a shift in the centre of gravity' during the reign of William the Lion, with royal activity centred in the north-eastern part of the kingdom in Gowrie, Angus, and Mearns.[255] A clerk writing from William's household in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century would therefore likely have spent time north of the Firth of Forth, making them a good candidate for authorship. We could even postulate a figure such as William Malveisin, the educated bishop of St Andrews whom Owen proposes as the author of the *Roman de Fergus*.[256] Any attempt to identity the author of *Desiré*, or indeed *Fergus*, is speculation – but we can suggest that the author of *Desiré* may have been writing from north of the Firth of Forth, with knowledge both of southern Scotland and of the literary traditions of the *lai* as a genre.[257]

A fairy tale retelling?

As we have seen, the setting of *Desiré*, positioned on the geographical boundary of the Firth of Forth and described through a frame of reference in which Scotland proper is physically distanced by a Scottish sea, creates a sense of distance and liminality. This is heightened when Desiré crosses from Calatir into the Blanche Lande, the location for his meeting with both the hermit and the fairy mistress. Desiré leaves for the Blanche Lande with no companions, distancing himself from the

[254] See 'Strategic reimaginings of geography', pp. 43-45.
[255] Barrow, ed., *Acts of William I*, p. 5.
[256] See 'Legend: Fergus of Galloway' in Owen, *William the Lion*, pp. 114–53.
[257] The text's relationship to other *lais*, including the use of the fairy mistress motif, is discussed in 'The marvellous and resistance to authority', pp. 75-77.

human and inhabited space of the town: 'Sanz compaingnon s'en est issuz,/ Vers la Blanche Lande est venuz' (ll. 117-118, Unaccompanied, he departed,/ Making his way towards the Blanche Lande.'). The Blanche Lande itself appears to be largely depopulated and lacking in manmade structures, with the exception of the hermitage and the fairy mistress's castle (the geographical location of which remains unclear). Notably, the Blanche Lande is described through images of nature: the white blossom of the trees (l. 119), the bird song (l. 120), the forest (l. 124). In a later chapter, I will suggest that the power and agency of the fairy mistress is associated with the natural space in which she appears, a space resistant to human intervention.[258] This wild and natural space is a common element of the fairy mistress motif, which can be found in other lais such as *Lanval*, *Guingamor*, and *Graelent*, but also in the Latin writings of Walter Map. The real geographical space of Callendar and its saltpans, a productive industrial area and the site of monastic lands, appears to have been transformed to meet the expected qualities of a fairy mistress narrative.

This raises the question of why an author writing from north of the Forth might have chosen Falkirk and its environs as a setting for the text. It is tempting to suggest that the narrative of *Desiré* is a retelling, in a fictionalised fashion, of a marriage between a Scottish heiress and an Anglo-Norman settler. The twelfth and thirteenth centuries saw the migration and settlement of numerous Norman, Breton, and Flemish families in Scotland, in what Geoffrey Barrow coined the 'Anglo-Norman Era'.[259] Scotland became 'a land of opportunity' for sons awaiting or simply lacking an inheritance.[260] Desiré's marriage to the fairy mistress, and his return to her lands, perhaps reflects this period of settlement and land grants. Callendar itself appears to have been under the control of the thanes of Callendar, whose names suggest a Scottish rather than Anglo-Norman origin.[261] The function and status of thanes has been the subject of debate in Scottish historiography, seen either as administrative officials acting on behalf of the king or as heads of local kin-groups. By the early thirteenth century, the meaning of 'thane' appeared to have expanded to include thanes holding their land directly from the king, and designating an almost equivalent position to other secular lords.[262]

However, a piece of evidence does exist that may offer a context for *Desiré*. In a charter dating to c.1185x1189 and confirmed by King William the Lion, Ragnall Prat of Tyndale grants the land of Muiravonside to Richard de Maleville, in marriage to his daughter Margaret.[263] The Maleville family

[258] See 'The marvellous and resistance to authority', pp. 85-88.
[259] As noted previously, this was the title of Barrow's 1978 Ford Lectures in British History, now published as Barrow, *The Anglo-Norman Era in Scottish History*.
[260] Barrow, *The Anglo-Norman Era in Scottish History*, p. 7.
[261] For references to the thanes of Callendar, see 70, A. Grant, 'Thanes and Thanages [in Scotland], from the eleventh to the fourteenth centuries', in A. Grant and K. Stringer, eds., *Medieval Scotland: crown, lordship and community* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), p. 81.
[262] For a discussion of the function and status of thanes in Scotland, see Taylor, *The Shape of the State*, pp. 27–33, 61–66.
[263] Document 3/384/4 (*Melvilles*, no. 4), People of Medieval Scotland Database, www.poms.ac.uk/record/source/5754/ (accessed 2/9/2022).

appear to have originated in Normandy and settled in England and then Scotland following the Norman Conquest.[264] Richard's grandfather, Galfrid de Malevelle, occupied the office of sheriff of Edinburgh and was later a justiciar in the reign of William the Lion.[265] Richard himself appears to have been a close follower of William the Lion, accompanying him to England in 1174.[266] His marriage to Margaret brought him the land of Muiravonside, close to Falkirk, and which appears to have had some form of castle.[267]

Could the *lai* of *Desiré* be a retelling of the marriage of Richard and Margaret, influenced by the traditions of the Breton *lai*? Desiré's travels with the king echo those of Richard, whilst the descriptions of the fairy mistress's lands and castle could be a reference to the lands gained through Richard's marriage to Margaret. If the *lai* of *Desiré* was indeed written by a clerk in court of William the Lion, it would be easy to imagine that they had met Richard de Maleville and used the fairy mistress motif as a frame to retell his story. Indeed, William Malveisin, Owen's proposed author of the *Roman de Fergus*, appears as a witness of a royal charter granting Richard lands in Liberton and Leadburn.[268] If we postulate an author writing from the household of William the Lion about the marriage of Richard de Maleville, this gives the text a more precise dating to sometime between the last decade of the twelfth century and the end of William's reign in 1214.

Any attempt to tie the story of *Desiré* to particular historical circumstances is, of course, speculation. However, my study of the geographical setting of the text, and its possible localisation to the Falkirk area, offers a potential context for its composition. *Desiré* provides a lens through which to explore how Anglo-Norman settlers thought about the opportunities offered by marriage and settlement in southern Scotland, whilst simultaneously demonstrating how literary genres such as the *lai* might be adopted to retell historical events. Further discussion of the context and possible signification of *Desiré* is the focus of a later chapter in this thesis.

[264] W. Fraser, *The Melvilles, Earls of Melville, and the Leslies, Earls of Leven, Vol I: Memoirs [With plates, including portraits and facsimiles, and genealogical tables.]* (Edinburgh, 1890), pp. 1–2.
[265] Fraser, *The Melvilles*, pp. 3–6.
[266] Fraser, *The Melvilles*, p. 9.
[267] Although only a motte survives, in 1723 Johnstone noted the existence of 'an old fortification… called Castlehill near to the house of Compstone where there are a great many vaults'. https://canmore.org.uk/site/47819/castlehill, https://collections.falkirk.gov.uk/objects/144716/sites-and-monument-record-castlehill-muiravonside-smr-323 (both accessed 2/9/2022).
[268] Document 1/6/242 (RRS, ii, no. 268), People of Medieval Scotland Database, www.poms.ac.uk/record/source/767/ (accessed 2/9/2022).

The localisation of Melion

Melion, an anonymous lai broadly dated to between 1170 and 1267, can be studied through a similar geographical lens.[269] Surviving in only one thirteenth-century manuscript, Paris: Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal 3516, *Melion* has clear parallels with other werewolf tales such as Marie de France's *Bisclavret*, written in the 1160s or 1170s.[270] Yet the use of geographical setting in *Melion* is distinct, making for a valuable comparison with *Desiré*. Following the work of Neil Cartlidge, I suggest that the text is embedded in real Irish geographies, transforming Ireland into a tangible place rather than an exotic space of the *merveilleux*.[271]

With this in mind, the historical context of Anglo-Norman settlement in Ireland, and Dublin in particular, is crucial. In 1170, Richard fitz Gilbert arrived in Ireland to provide military assistance to Diarmait mac Murchada in his attempts to regain the kingship of Leinster.[272] They successfully took control of Leinster, along with the towns of Waterford and Dublin. On Diarmait mac Murchada's death in 1171, Ruairi Ua Conchobuir challenged Strongbow for the lordship of Dublin.[273] Strongbow managed to retain control of Dublin after a long siege, and his activities in Ireland evidently concerned Henry II.[274] Strongbow's arrival in Ireland and his subsequent defence of Dublin are described in the anonymous verse chronicle *La geste des engleis en Yrlande*, which was likely composed in the last decade of the twelfth century.[275] Henry II travelled to Ireland in 1171, where he received the formal submission of his Anglo-Norman lords and several Irish kings, with the notable exception of Ruairi Ua Conchobuir.[276] Dublin was taken into the hands of the king of England, and in 1192 Henry's son John, as lord of Ireland, granted a charter of liberties to Dublin.[277] As a royal city,

[269] A second manuscript dating to the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century, Turin, L. iv. 33, was destroyed in the fire of 1904. For details of the manuscript tradition, see Tobin, ed., *Les lais anonymes des XIIe et XIIIe siècles*, pp. 289–292; Burgess, Brook, and Hopkins, *French Arthurian Literature IV*, p. 416.
[270] For a discussion of other werewolf tales, see Burgess, Brook, and Hopkins, *French Arthurian Literature IV*, pp. 417–421.
[271] N. Cartlidge, 'The Werewolf of Wicklow: Shapeshifting and Colonial Identity in the *Lai de Melion'*, in N. Perkins, ed., *Medieval Romance and Material Culture* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2015), pp. 75–90.
[272] Flanagan, 'Strongbow, Henry II and Anglo-Norman Intervention in Ireland', pp. 195–202; Lydon, 'Ireland: politics, government and law', pp. 338–341; John Gillingham argues that we should use the term 'English' rather than 'Anglo-Norman'. See the discussion in 'The English Invasion of Ireland', Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century*, pp. 151–160; See also M. T. Flanagan, 'Strategies of distinction: defining nations in medieval Ireland', in H. Tsurushima, ed., *Nations in Medieval Britain* (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2010), pp. 104–120.
[273] Flanagan, *Irish Society*, p. 119.
[274] Flanagan, *Irish Society*, p. 168.
[275] See *The deeds of the Normans in Ireland: La geste des engleis en Yrlande : a new edition of the chronicle formerly known as The Song of Dermot and the Earl*, ed. E. Mullally (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), pp. 91–124.
[276] Flanagan, *Irish Society*, pp. 199–228.
[277] S. Duffy, 'Town and Crown: The Kings of England and their City of Dublin', in M. Prestwich, R. Britnell, and R. Frame, eds., *Thirteenth Century England X: Proceedings of the Durham Conference 2003* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2005), p. 96.

Dublin was to be under the protection of its new lord, and clear provisions were made to ensure that the city was fortified.[278]

This historical context – the Anglo-Norman lordship of Dublin and the military conflict surrounding it – offer a frame through which to consider the *lai* of Melion. The story of *Melion* proceeds as follows. Melion, a noble and courteous knight at King Arthur's court, makes a vow that he will never love a woman who had loved or even spoken to another man. This results in the resentment of all the ladies at court, and Melion becomes so depressed that he loses all interest in seeking adventures or bearing arms. King Arthur, in an attempt to raise his spirits, gives Melion a castle in fief, situated on the coast amongst forests and woods. Whilst hunting in the forest, Melion meets a beautiful maiden who has come from Ireland, where her father is king, to profess her love for Melion. They marry and live happily, having two sons. Some years later, Melion and his wife are in the forest hunting, when they come across a large stag. Melion's wife proclaims that if she does not eat meat from the stag, she will die. In order to catch the stag, Melion transforms himself into a wolf using a magic ring. However, unknown to Melion, his wife takes the ring, preventing him from resuming his human form, and sets off to Dublin with her squire. When Melion returns with the desired venison, he discovers his wife's treachery and pursues her to Ireland, where he lives in the forests as the leader of a pack of wolves, wreaking a violent war of vengeance against his wife and the people of Ireland. The king of Ireland, determined to destroy this pack, kills them all except Melion, who begs for mercy at the feet of King Arthur, who has journeyed to Ireland to make peace. King Arthur is touched by this and declares Melion to be under his protection. At a banquet, Melion attacks his wife's squire, who is forced by King Arthur to tell the truth about his crime. Melion's wife gives the magic ring back to Arthur, allowing Melion to recover his human form and return to court with King Arthur.

Evocations of the marvellous

The text begins with what appears to be a vague and generalised setting at the Arthurian court.[279] There is no use of place names or mention of geographical features, and there is also a lack of temporal precision, with the narrative set simply 'Al tans que rois Artus regnoit', (l. 1, 'At the time when King Arthur reigned').[280] The castle given to Melion by the king has a similarly imprecise setting. It is situated 'sor cele mer' (l. 55, 'on the coast'), and surrounded by woods, rivers, and forests. Given Melion's later journey to Ireland, it seems likely that the author envisions the estate to

[278] Duffy, 'Town and Crown', p. 101.
[279] Cartlidge, 'The Werewolf of Wicklow', p. 75.
[280] All quotations, both Old French and English translation, taken from *Melion* in *French Arthurian Literature IV: Eleven Old French Narrative Lays*, eds. and trans. G. S. Burgess, L. C. Brook, and A. Hopkins (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2007).

be in Wales, where numerous Norman lords were established following the Conquest. It is in this natural setting, 'En la lande, qu'est verde et bele' (l. 83, 'In this heath, which was green and pleasant'), that Melion meets his future wife, a beautiful but mysterious lady who is dressed in rich fabrics but travelling alone. The sudden appearance of the lady, combined with the use of setting, clearly evokes the idea of the fairy mistress. Here we might make a direct comparison with *Desiré*, in which the protagonist also meets a mysterious lady in a verdant natural setting. As already noted, this setting is frequently tied to meetings with marvellous beings, notably the fairy mistress figure. The apparently marvellous nature of Melion's meeting with the maiden is heightened when she proclaims that she has never loved another man but him: 'Onques home fors vos n'amai,/ Ne jamais plus n'en amerai' (ll. 111-112, 'I have never loved a man other than you/ Nor shall I ever love another.'). She therefore fulfils the criteria of his vow to never love a maiden 'Que nul autre home eüst amé,/ Ne qui de nul eüst parlé' (ll. 21-22, 'Who had loved any other man/ Or even had spoken of any.'). As Cartlidge notes, 'her arrival seems so marvellously opportune as to be almost implicitly magical'.[281] Here we again find echoes of another fairy mistress encounter. In *Lanval*, the fairy mistress also tells the protagonist that, having come in search of him from afar, she loves him above all others.[282]

The evocation of the marvellous in *Melion* is heightened when the lady introduces herself. She has come from Ireland, a space intimately associated with the marvellous and the exotic.[283] Notably, this is the first mention of a specific place name. Here another comparison can be made with the thirteenth-century *Les Merveilles de Rigomer*, in which a mysterious maiden from Ireland appears to the knights of King Arthur, inviting them to come to Ireland and discover the marvels of Rigomer:

> 'Ja porroit on ici trouver
>
> En Irelande sor cele mer
>
> Tant tres vaillant aventure,
>
> Que tant con cieus et terre dure,
>
> N'en a tante biele avenue,
>
> Que la, dont jou sui ci venue.' (ll. 85-90)
>
> 'Great and daring adventures which will last even as long as the very sky and earth await you over the sea in Ireland! There are no other adventures of comparable beauty like them in the land I have come from.' (p. 4)

[281] Cartlidge, 'The Werewolf of Wicklow', p. 76.
[282] For parallels with other fairy mistress narratives, see Cartlidge, 'The Werewolf of Wicklow', p. 78.
[283] See also 'Ireland as a space of threat', pp. 96-97.

Geographical knowledge of Dublin and its environs

In *Les Merveilles de Rigomer*, Ireland proves to be a place of enchantment, even if the text does also display a detailed level of geographical knowledge. Yet in *Melion*, the evocation of Ireland and its marvels is promptly turned on its head. The maiden is no fairy mistress, but the daughter of the king of Ireland. Rather than offering riches and pleasure to Melion, she betrays him by returning to Ireland and leaving him unable to return to human form. With the maiden's return to Ireland, we see a shift in the representation of setting as Ireland becomes a physical and tangible place, rather than functioning through the evocation of the exotic and the marvellous.

The description of the lady's return to Ireland is practical rather than magical. The text describes how the lady finds a ship at the harbour ready to take her to the maritime city of Dublin:

> 'Al havene vint, nef i trova;
>
> As mariniers tantost parla
>
> Qui l'ont mené a Duveline,
>
> Une cité sor la marine,
>
> Qui son pere ert, le roi d'Yrlande;' (ll. 195-199)
>
> 'She went to the harbour, found a ship/ And soon spoke to the crew/ Who transported her to Dublin,/ A maritime city,/ Which belonged to her father, the king of Ireland;'

Awareness of the city of Dublin is not surprising. Dublin was an important trade hub prior to and following the Anglo-Norman invasion, with well-established links to western England and Wales.[284] Under the control of Strongbow after the death of Diarmait mac Murchada in 1171, Dublin became a royal city following Henry II's arrival. Links between Dublin and Bristol were particularly strong, and in 1171-2 Henry II issued a charter that afforded privileges, liberties, and customs to Bristolians who settled in Dublin.[285] In 1174, a second charter granted Dubliners freedom from tolls and customs for their goods throughout England, Normandy, Wales, and Ireland.[286] As noted above, Dublin features heavily in the anonymous verse chronicle, *La geste des Engleis en Yrlande*, likely composed in the 1190s, which describes Strongbow's arrival in Ireland in 1170.[287] Authorial knowledge of

[284] R. Frame, *Colonial Ireland: 1169-1369* (Dublin: Helicon, 1981), p. 4; J. R. Maddicott, 'Trade, Industry and the Wealth of King Alfred', *Past & Present*, 123 (1989), pp. 3–51; N. Brady, 'Dublin's maritime setting and the archaeology of its medieval harbours', in J. Bradley, A. J. Fletcher, and A. Simms, eds., *Dublin in the Medieval World: Studies in Honour of Howard B. Clarke* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2009), pp. 295–296.
[285] Duffy, 'Town and Crown', p. 100.
[286] Duffy, 'Town and Crown', p. 103.
[287] See, for example, Diarmait and Strongbow's attack on Dublin (ll.1568-1717). *The deeds of the Normans in Ireland*, ed. Mullally.

Dublin could therefore have been gained through first-hand travel, communication via trade links, or through consumption of written material.

The space inhabited by Melion on his arrival in Ireland also indicates a level of geographical knowledge of Ireland, and the area around Dublin in particular. The text describes how Melion travels so far 'par la forest,/ Par montaignes et par dessert' (ll. 267-268, ' through the forest,/ Through the mountains and the wasteland'), that he is joined by ten wolves. Cartlidge suggests that the reference to the 'bois reont' (l. 291, 'round wood') reflects a specific piece of geographical knowledge, referring to the village of Roundwood, about twenty-five miles south of Dublin, the landscape of which appears to map onto the setting described in the text.[288] The surrounding 'grant campaigne' (l. 286, 'open countryside') could be interpreted as the moorland at the edge of the Wicklow Mountains. Another moment of geographical specificity and realism is provided when King Arthur arrives in Ireland, and is forced by the wind to another port 'A .II. lieues de la cité' ('Two leagues from the city'). Cartlidge suggests that this refers to the port of Dalkey, about six miles to the south, whilst the 'grant castel' (l. 367, 'great castle') is likely a reference to the prehistoric stone fort (or *dún*) from which the name of the modern port, Dún Laoghaire, is derived.[289]

The practicalities of travel

The level of geographical detail provided in the text suggests authorial knowledge of Dublin and its environs, whilst also imbuing it with a sense of realism that troubles the boundaries between *Melion*'s fictional story and the narratives of vernacular chronicles. In addition to its geographical specificity, the narrative of *Melion* is also peppered with incidental details describing the practicalities of travel. Melion himself waits until nightfall before stowing away on a ship that was about to set sail for Ireland. Here the text provides a surprisingly extensive account of the voyage to Ireland, describing how the crew 'sachierent amont lor voiles;/ Al ciel corent et as estoiles' (ll. 233-234, 'They hoisted up the sails/ And steered by the sky and the stars'), before arriving into the harbour where Melion leaps out onto the shingle. The description of the practicalities of travel clearly establishes Ireland as a real and tangible location.[290] Yet it also reveals an author who is aware of what navigation by boat entails, demonstrating how authorial knowledge and experience seeps into the literary text. The *Roman de Fergus* demonstrates a similar awareness of nautical terminology when describing Fergus's journey across the Firth of Forth.[291] The later description of Melion recognising the heraldic elements fixed to the side of Arthur's boat (ll. 351-360) is detailed and specific, suggesting an author aware of the practice of attaching shields to the side of boats to prevent waves washing over. As Hopkins notes,

[288] Cartlidge, 'The Werewolf of Wicklow', pp. 83–84.
[289] Cartlidge, 'The Werewolf of Wicklow', p. 85.
[290] Cartlidge, 'The Werewolf of Wicklow', p. 80.
[291] See 'Strategic reimaginings of geography', p. 45.

here the practice is reframed to emphasise Melion the wolf's 'complete, and human, understanding of the emblems and their meaning.'[292]

On arriving in Ireland, Melion's activities are described in similarly practical terms. He climbs a mountain to gain a good vantage point of 'ses anemis' (l. 248, 'his enemies'), before eating the meat brought with him from England.[293] The description of Melion's exhaustion and hunger after the sea voyage gives the text a sense of realism that is perhaps suggestive of first-hand experience (ll. 249-252). Travel over the Irish Sea could be particularly rough, and Gerald of Wales notes the tempestuous nature of the currents.[294] Like Melion, King Arthur also suffers from his journey over the sea: 'Molt s'est traveilliés et penés/ Car la nef li ot fait grant mal' (ll. 372-373, 'He was very tired and suffering/ For the ship made him very ill').

The wolf and the Anglo-Normans in Ireland

The level of geographical and incidental detail in *Melion* imbues the text with a sense of realism, embedding it in practical experience, the physical world, and the local landscape of Dublin. The connection with Ireland is also heightened through the figure of the wolf Melion himself. On his arrival in Ireland, Melion commences 'sa guerre' (l. 256, 'his war') against the people that have wronged him. He kills large quantities of livestock before joining a band of wolves who ravage the countryside and attack its inhabitants. The image of the predatory wolf is rooted in biblical tradition and was frequently used as a metaphor for violent and rapacious behaviour, as well as being used to describe outlaws.[295] As Matthieu Boyd suggests, the image of the band of wolves ravaging the countryside likely also reflects the influence of the Irish concept of *díberg*, an activity performed by bands of young warriors (the *fían*) who roved the land.[296] Members of the *fían*, the *fénnidi*, were often presented through terms related to wolves, including personal names and expressions such as *fáel fulla* ('wolf of vagrancy'). Ireland itself was often associated with werewolves in texts such as Gerald of Wales' *Topographia Hibernia* and the poem *De Mirabilibus Hibernie*, although it is interesting to note that lycanthropy in *Melion* originates in Britain rather than Ireland.[297]

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[292] Burgess, Brook, and Hopkins, *French Arthurian Literature IV*, p. 424.
[293] This is presumably the piece of meat taken from the stag that Melion had caught for his wife.
[294] Gerald of Wales, *The History and Topography of Ireland*, trans. J. J. O'Meara (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press,1982), p. 58.
[295] E. van Houts, 'Gervase of Canterbury and Flanders', in L. Cleaver, ed., *Gervase of Canterbury* [forthcoming]
[296] M. Boyd, 'Melion and the wolves of Ireland', *Neophilologus: An International Journal of Modern and Mediaeval Language and Literature*, 93:4 (2009), pp. 555–570; See also C. E. Karkov, 'Tales of the ancients: colonial werewolves and the mapping of postcolonial Ireland', in P. Ingham and M. R. Warren, eds., *Postcolonial moves: medieval through modern* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 99–100.
[297] For a discussion of Irish werewolves, see E. Boyle, 'On the Wonders of Ireland: Translation and Adaptation', in E. Boyle and D. Hayden, eds., *Authorities and Adaptations: The Reworking and Transmission of Textual Sources in Medieval Ireland* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 2014), pp. 248–251.

The attacks by Melion and the wolves might also serve as a 'metaphor for the threat posed by the Irish to the Anglo-Norman community'.[298] The Anglo-Norman takeover of Dublin was far from peaceful, and in 1171 Strongbow was faced with almost two months of attacks by Ruairi Ua Conchobuir, who had refused to recognise Strongbow as lord of Leinster.[299] Yet we cannot characterise the conflict in the simple terms of Anglo-Norman versus Irish. Strongbow's activities, and those of other Anglo-Norman lords, were woven into a far more complex web of both Irish and Angevin power dynamics. From King Henry II's point of view, the Irish acquisitions of lords such as Strongbow and later Hugh de Lacy were a major concern.[300] The complexity of the political situation, with no simple distinction between Anglo-Norman and Irish, appears to be reflected in *Melion*. It is Melion, rather than the native Irish, who poses a threat to the safety and stability of the community of Dublin.[301] The distinctions between Anglo-Norman and Irish, civilised and barbaric, are unstable, leading the audience to question what it means to be invader or invaded.

The resolution of the narrative appears to be more clear-cut. It is King Arthur, rather than the king of Ireland, who brings about the restoration of truth and justice. Ireland in *Melion* requires the intervention of an outsider. This resonates with the historical situation in Ireland in 1170, when an outsider – Strongbow – was required to provide military assistance in the recovery of the kingdom of Leinster by Diarmait mac Murchada. Yet crucially Strongbow was also obliged to recognise the overlordship of Henry II, who arrived in Ireland in 1171. Boyd speculates that Melion may represent 'a Cambro-Norman lord who ran amuck in Ireland, and had to be brought back within the fold and returned to Britain', or more specifically, to be punished in England.[302] With this in mind, *Melion* perhaps uses the figure of Arthur to metaphorically assert the predominance of the English king's overlordship over both Ireland and his lords there. One final thing should be noted. The restoration of justice in *Melion* is not concerned with the behaviour of Melion and the wolves who laid waste to the Irish countryside, but rather with the treachery of Melion's Irish wife.[303] By shifting the blame from Melion, the author perhaps seeks to subtly reframe Anglo-Norman military activity in Ireland.

[298] Cartlidge, 'The Werewolf of Wicklow', p. 82.
[299] Flanagan, *Irish Society*, pp. 167–168.
[300] Flanagan, *Irish Society*, pp. 121 and 264.
[301] Cartlidge, 'The Werewolf of Wicklow', p. 88.
[302] Boyd, 'Melion and the wolves of Ireland'.
[303] For a discussion of the misogynistic moral of the text, and comparisons with *Bisclavret*, see A. Hopkins, '*Bisclavret* to *Biclarel* via *Melion* and *Bisclaret*: the development of a misogynous *lai'*, in B. K. Altmann and C. W. Carroll, eds., *The Court Reconvenes: Courtly Literature Across the Disciplines* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2003), pp. 317–323. There is also an interesting comparison to make with the representation of Irish women in *Les Merveilles de Rigomer*. See 'Ireland as a space of threat', pp. 101-103.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the settings of two *lais*, *Desiré* and *Melion*, to demonstrate how these texts might hold value as a historical, rather than simply literary, source. Far from being generic or purely fantastical, the *lais* of *Desiré* and *Melion* both appear to be tied to precise geographical locations. *Desiré* and *Melion* clearly did not function in isolation from the social, geographical, and political worlds in which they took place. Yet these spaces appear very differently in each text. Whilst *Desiré* transforms the productive landscape of Callendar into a space for the *merveilleux*, the *lai* of *Melion* offers a tangible and matter-of-fact imagining of Ireland – a far cry from the exotic and marvellous vision of other writers. Unlike other versions of the werewolf tale, *Melion* demonstrates specific knowledge of the geography around Dublin, tying the story to particular historical and political circumstances. This allows audiences to think through and questions ideas about savagery and invasion, whilst simultaneously asserting the primacy of the Arthurian – read Anglo-Norman – king over both the native Irish and the Anglo-Norman lords in Ireland.

As a genre, the *lai* is therefore far more complex than scholars often assume. Setting and landscape are manipulated to suit the needs of each author and each text, drawing upon or reshaping geographical knowledge. Both *Desiré* and *Melion* offer windows into moments and spaces of Anglo-Norman settlement in Scotland and Ireland, but windows that are framed very differently. Whilst Scotland in *Desiré* offers the possibility of desire and reward, Ireland in *Melion* is a space of conflict, which can only be resolved through the justice of an external authority.

Geographical knowledge and localisation – reflections

The past three chapters have discussed romance texts, including *lais*, that are closely localised, embedded within local geographies and featuring specific landscapes and place names. This localisation is often linked to authorship, indicative of where the author was writing from and suggestive of a familiarity with the area represented. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the author simply depicts the setting in a realistic manner. In all of the texts considered here, setting is employed strategically, represented in a deliberate fashion to suit how the author wants the setting to function and what the author wants the audience to think. Notably, the Celtic setting is not merely the uncivilised and unproductive space of twelfth- and thirteenth-century historians and commentators. Instead, these texts offer a more nuanced perspective that demonstrates how the realities of geographical spaces might be amplified or reimagined to function alongside literary motifs and to explore the contemporary anxieties of the Anglo-Norman and Anglo-Angevin elite.

Part 2: Wilderness and adventure

In this section of the thesis, my focus shifts towards the question of how Scotland, Ireland, and Wales existed within the imagination of the Francophone elite, specifically how they resonated as imagined spaces of wilderness and adventure. Wilderness was undoubtedly an important mode of thought throughout the medieval period. Eremitical movements were inspired and shaped by patristic writings and the idea of the biblical wilderness. Wilderness was also significant for Cistercian monastics, who deliberately sought out wild spaces. Cistercian monastic histories frequently drew upon the image of a biblical wilderness, associated with physical and moral danger, and characterised by solitude. The *Exordium parvum* describes the location of Cîteaux, the original house of the Cistercian order, as being 'inhabited only by wild beasts, and unaccustomed to the approach of men because of the tangle of trees and thorns', whilst the *Exordium cistercii* calls it 'a place of horror and vast wilderness'.[304] Indeed, the regulations for the process of foundation specified that new houses should be situated 'not in cities, nor in castles nor in vills, but in places far from those where people gather'.[305] Insular foundations, such as Rievaulx and Fountains, certainly followed this tradition (even if their isolation was, in fact, only relative). William of Newburgh describes how the Rye valley was 'a place of terror and solitary waste' before being settled by the monks of Rievaulx, whilst the foundation history of Kirkstall Abbey describes how the monks came to 'a place covered with woods and uncultivated, a place almost destitute of good things except timber and stone and a pleasant valley with the water of a river which flowed down the centre'.[306] Crucially, the monks of these Cistercian abbeys transformed these wild landscapes through manual work. This physical labour was seen as a necessary part of human existence, and the cultivation of the landscape as a reflection of the interior progress of their souls.[307] The landscape became implicated in the work of inner transformation.[308]

As will be discussed below, this sense of transformation is also present in romance texts, where the taming of the wild landscape facilities character development, away from the security and constraints of court and civilised society. By overcoming the physical challenges posed by a wild landscape – overgrown forests to traverse, mountains to climb – a protagonist might demonstrate his physical prowess, his courage and strength, whilst simultaneously taming the wilderness around him. This might be infused with colonising undertones, whereby the wild landscape is presented as a blank

[304] Quoted in M. G. Newman, *The boundaries of charity: Cistercian culture and ecclesiastical reform, 1098-1180* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), p. 69.
[305] 'non in civitatibus, nec in castellis aut in villis, sed in locis a frequentia populi semotis', *Exordium parvum*, cited in J. Burton, *The Monastic Order in Yorkshire, 1069-1215* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 98.
[306] Burton, *The Monastic Order in Yorkshire, 1069-1215*, p. 100., *Fundacio Abbathie de Kyrkestall*, online at https://www.thoresby.org.uk/content/kirkstall.php#:~:text=The%20Foundation%20of%20Kirkstall%20Abbey%20a%2015th%20Century%20Manuscript&text=called%20Henry%20de%20Lacy%3B%20it,and%20Mother%22of%20God%2C%20Mary (accessed 26/7/2023)
[307] Newman, *The boundaries of charity*, p. 94.
[308] Watkins, 'Landscape and Belief', p. 307.

slate to be transformed and inscribed with new meaning. Yet wild landscapes were not simply imagined spaces based on biblical tradition and colonising world views. The real physical features of Scotland, Ireland, and Wales to some degree shaped their textual representation.

In this section of the thesis, I examine four texts in which Scotland, Ireland, and Wales are characterised by wild, unpopulated, or distant landscapes that might allow freedom from religious and feudal hierarchies. In these imaginings, Celtic spaces offer settings in which the unexpected, the marvellous, or the challenging can take place, in some cases drawing upon a legendary or folkloric reputation. Yet their representation is also tied to the realities and practicalities of their physical landscapes, and the extent of the authorial knowledge thereof.

2.1. The marvellous and resistance to authority

In the previous chapter, 'Known geographies in the *lais*', I demonstrated the close geographical localisation of *Desiré* and offered a possible context for its composition. *Desiré*, I suggested, offers a window into contact between the native Scottish elite and Anglo-Norman incomers. In this chapter, I explore how the geographical setting of *Desiré* is intertwined with the figure of the fairy mistress. A common literary motif, the fairy mistress could be ambiguous and unnervingly close to the demonic. In *Desiré*, the morality of the protagonist's relationship with his fairy mistress is brought to the forefront through his confession to a local hermit. I examine the nature of this confession and its consequences, suggesting that the text establishes the fairy mistress as an alternative figure of moral authority, who might challenge the restrictions of an increasingly regulated church. This is tied to the geographical setting of the text, both as an imagined wilderness space and as a place that offered historical resistance to English ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

Church reform in the British Isles

My reading of *Desiré* in this chapter examines the role of the fairy mistress, exploring how her potential to challenge the authority of the church might be tied to Celtic spaces. In order to do so, it is important to understand the historical developments of the church in the British Isles during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, which saw increasing regulation of the clergy in an attempt to raise standards.[309] In England, the old system of large minsters serving a wide area was replaced by a

[309] For discussions of the development of the Church, the parish system, and pastoral care, see for example: S. Hamilton, 'Rites of passage and pastoral care', in J. Crick and E. van Houts, eds., *A Social History of England, 900-1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 290–308; D. Lepine, 'England: Church and Clergy', in S. H. Rigby, ed., *A Companion to Britain in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing), 2003), pp. 359–380; C. S. Watkins, 'Religion and Belief', in J. Crick and E. van Houts, eds., *A Social History of England, 900-1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 265–289.

comprehensive system of local parish churches, which was largely complete by 1200. Estimates based on taxation records suggest that by 1291, there were around 9500 parishes in England, with most people living within a mile or so of their local church.[310] The physical presence of the church and its proximity to the majority of society was coupled with an attempt to strengthen the provisions of the church through the regulation of the clergy. Synods were used from the twelfth century to deal with a variety of liturgical, disciplinary, and legal matters.[311] This attempt to regulate the clergy is seen most clearly in the canons of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, which outlined how clerics should behave and gave instructions for correcting abuses and reforming morals through annual provincial synods.[312] Cathedral churches, and other large churches with the means, were also instructed to appoint a master to teach gratis clerics and poor students.[313]

The weight of ecclesiastical reform and regulation fell on the shoulders of the clergy rather than the laity, who were expected to have only a minimal amount of knowledge.[314] However, in addition to the emphasis on providing a structure to facilitate clerical correction, Lateran IV did set out expectations for lay participation in the church. The laity were expected to pay tithes to their parish church. This was not a new payment; however, Lateran IV was the first general council to explicitly link the full payment of the tithe to the learning and quality of the local priest being supported.[315] Many tithes had fallen into lay hands during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, but previous Lateran councils (1139 and 1179) had attempted to bring them back into church control - with general success in England.[316] Furthermore, all members of the faithful – once old enough - were obligated to confess their sins at least once a year to their own parish priest and to receive the Eucharist at least at Easter.[317] This created an obligation for both the laity and the clergy, the latter requiring instruction in eliciting confessions and recognising sin.[318]

Major changes also took place in Wales during the twelfth century, with the establishment of clearly defined dioceses subject to the authority of the archbishop of Canterbury, and the creation of parishes.[319] However, the efficacy of twelfth- and thirteenth-century bishops in promoting an agenda of church reform is questionable. Churchmen such as John of Salisbury (d. 1180), Gerald of Wales

[310] Lepine, 'England: Church and Clergy', p. 361.
[311] Lepine, 'England: Church and Clergy', p. 362.
[312] See for example Canons VI, XIV, XV, XVI, XII, *Canons of the Fourth Lateran Council, 1215*, accessed at the Fordham Medieval Sourcebook, taken from H. Schroeder, *Disciplinary Decrees of the General Councils: Text, Translation and Commentary* (St Louis: B. Herder, 1937)
[313] See Canon XI, *Canons of the Fourth Lateran Council, 1215*
[314] For a thorough discussion of church expectations of the laity, see N. Tanner and S. Watson, 'Least of the laity: the minimum requirements for a medieval Christian', *Journal of Medieval History*, 32:4 (2006), pp. 395–423.
[315] Tanner and Watson, 'Least of the laity', p. 414.
[316] Tanner and Watson, 'Least of the laity', p. 414.
[317] Canon XXI, *Canons of the Fourth Lateran Council, 1215*.
[318] Tanner and Watson, 'Least of the laity', p. 407.
[319] H. Pryce, 'Wales: Religion and Piety', in S. H. Rigby, ed., *A Companion to Britain in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), p. 412.

(d. c.1223), and Archbishop John Pecham (d. 1292) severely critiqued the performance of the Welsh clergy, who were often presented within a colonialist rhetoric of barbarism and vice.[320] Vacancies and absences of bishops, often the result of poverty, clearly prevented effective reform, whilst the entrenched practice of hereditary succession to benefices made it more difficult to present clergy to livings.[321] The Welsh lawbooks, the earliest surviving versions of which date to the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries, suggest that native Welsh ecclesiastical institutions enjoyed a privileged form of land tenure, whilst marriage was not acknowledged as being under the jurisdiction of the church.[322] Native practices and ideas were resilient to the structural developments of the diocese and parish.

Ireland saw a similar restructuring in the twelfth century with the 1111 synod of Rathbreasail, which divided Ireland into twelve suffragan sees, each subject to two metropolitan provinces.[323] The extent of successful implementation is not clear, and it was not until the 1152 national synod of Kells that the diocesan network was reordered and ratified.[324] Moral reform was a similarly lengthy process, urged by archbishops Lanfranc and Anselm of Canterbury but with little attempt made to impose these reforms until the 1101 synod of Cashel, which promoted clerical celibacy, church exemption from secular taxation, and the prohibition of sexual relations with close relatives.[325] Without a formal diocesan network, these measures would be difficult to enforce; however, even following the 1152 national synod, concerns about sexual vice and simony remained. The 1155 papal bull *Laudabiliter* invited Henry II to march into Ireland and correct its vices, whilst Pope Alexander III's 1172 letter to the Irish bishops refer to reports of the vice and barbarism of the Irish race.[326] Anne Duggan argues that the papal bull, which survives only in the work of Gerald of Wales, was substantially altered by Gerald in order to provide justification for English authority over Ireland.[327] Nevertheless, it seems likely that Gerald was drawing upon common views of Irish vice. The arrival of the English in Ireland did result in the establishment of parish churches in the south and east and a system of church courts. However, Gaelic regions faced financial hardship and difficulties in imposing canonical standards in terms of clerical celibacy, hereditary succession, and sexual practices.[328]

In Ireland and Wales, structural problems, poverty, and the survival of embedded practices appear to have prevented an effective system of complete reform. It should be noted that

[320] Pryce, 'Wales: Religion and Piety', p. 413.
[321] Pryce, 'Wales: Religion and Piety', pp. 413–414.
[322] Pryce, 'Wales: Religion and Piety', p. 415.
[323] H. A. Jefferies, 'Ireland: Religion and Piety', in S. H. Rigby, ed., *A Companion to Britain in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), p. 432.
[324] Jefferies, 'Ireland: Religion and Piety', p. 434.
[325] Jefferies, 'Ireland: Religion and Piety', p. 432.
[326] Jefferies, 'Ireland: Religion and Piety', pp. 433–434.
[327] See A. Duggan, 'The Making of a Myth: Giraldus Cambrensis, Laudabiliter, and Henry II's Lordship of Ireland', *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History*, 4 (2007), pp. 249–312.
[328] Jefferies, 'Ireland: Religion and Piety', p. 436.

contemporary descriptions of the church in both Ireland and Wales are tied up with the rhetoric of colonisation. Although their accuracy may therefore be questioned, these descriptions – just like my Francophone corpus of texts - give an insight into how these areas might have been perceived by churchmen and the Anglo-Norman elite.

The situation in Scotland was exceptional due to its independence from English jurisdiction. The twelfth century saw the establishment in Scotland of eleven sees with defined boundaries. Yet there was no archbishop holding metropolitan authority over his fellow bishops - despite unsuccessful attempts made from the English archbishop on York from 1072 onwards to gain authority over the Scottish bishops, and Scottish counter-attempts to elevate the bishop of St Andrews to a formalised position of authority. Consequently, by 1192 Scotland was recognised by papal bull as the 'special daughter' of the Roman see, with no intermediary.[329] The dioceses of Scotland were divided into parochial units, the result both of codified canon law and David I's instruction that all parishioners should pay an annual 'teind' to their parish priest, which was to be enforced by royal sheriffs.[330] Scotland remained in touch with wider European developments through visits by papal legates – although only with royal permission – and through attendance by representations at general councils from at least the Third Lateran Council of 1179 onwards. However, the lack of a metropolitan archbishop with the power to call a provincial council posed problems for effecting reform, leading to the 1225 papal mandate allowing a group of Scottish bishops to call an annual provincial council with a rotating chairmanship.[331]

The fairy mistress and sexual morality

Difficult to enforce and tied up with political rhetoric and ambitions, ecclesiastical reform in the British Isles during the twelfth and thirteenth century was not a simple process. As we will see throughout this chapter, the narrative of *Desiré* clearly speaks to this historical context of church reform and resistance to English ecclesiastical jurisdiction. The previous chapter briefly summarises the plot of *Desiré,* but it is worth considering in more detail here. Desiré is the much longed-for son of noble parents in Calatir, Scotland, who, unable to conceive, make a pilgrimage to Saint-Gilles in Provence in the hope that they will be granted the birth of a child. The lady falls pregnant with a son, Desiré, who when old enough is sent to serve the king. He learns chivalric activities and takes part in tournaments across Normandy and Brittany, finally returning home when summoned by the king. On his return to Calatir to see his mother, Desiré heads into the Blanche Lande, intending to visit a hermitage that he used to visit with his father. On his way, he comes across a beautiful maiden who

[329] D. E. R. Watt, 'Scotland: Religion and Piety', in S. H. Rigby, ed., *A Companion to Britain in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), p. 397.
[330] Watt, 'Scotland: Religion and Piety', p. 398.
[331] Watt, 'Scotland: Religion and Piety', pp. 401–402.

resists his advances and promises to take him to her mistress, a far superior lady who will be able to give him gold and silver:

> ‘Je sui ja une damoisele,
>
> El siecle n’a nule plus bele;
>
> Je la vos ferai ja veoir.
>
> Se vos estes de tel pooir,
>
> Gardez que ne vos eschap mie,
>
> Por nule rien que je vos die.
>
> Se de li estes bien amez,
>
> Por nïent seriez esgarez.
>
> Assez avrez or et argent
>
> Tot a vostre commandement.’ (ll. 155-164)
>
> ‘I am the servant of a maiden,/ In all the world there is none more beautiful;/ I shall let you see her shortly;/ If you are capable of it,/ Make sure she does not escape from you,/ No matter what I tell you./ If you are well loved by her,/ You will not go astray for any reason./ You will have an abundance of gold and silver/ Entirely at your disposal.’

Desiré follows the girl to her mistress, who is reclined on a bed of beautiful and costly fabric. She is described through the beauty of her physical features, a marker of her marvellous nature, which are emphasised through the repeated adjective: her ‘beles mains’ (‘beautiful hands’), ‘biaus braz’ (beautiful arms), ‘biaus costez’ (attractive body), and ‘biaus cheveus’ (beautiful hair) (ll. 189-191). In her beauty and love, she is greater than the goddess Venus:

> ‘Venus, la déesse d’amor,
>
> N’ot tel biauté, ne tel amor,
>
> Comme ceste a que ci veez.’ (ll. 197-199)
>
> ‘Venus, the goddess of love,/ Did not have such beauty, or such love/ As the maiden has whom you can now see.’

The idea that a lady must be marvellous because she is so beautiful can also be found in Walter Map’s *De nugis curialium*, in which Map describes the beauty of Eadric Wild’s fairy bride: ‘A great proof of her fairy nature was the beauty of the woman, the like of which had never been seen or heard of’. [332] I

[332] See Walter Map, *De Nugis Curialium: Courtiers’ Trifles*, ed. and trans. M. R. James, M.R, rev. C. N. L. Brooke and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), pp. 157-159.

will return to Walter Map in the following paragraphs. The lady flees when she sees Desiré, but he pursues her and offers her his love and service. She accepts, and the Blanche Lande serves as the location for their frequent amorous meetings. However, these are disrupted when Desiré confesses their affair to the hermit. The fairy mistress is angered and disappears, but eventually forgives Desiré. After a series of episodes in which Desiré learns that he has a son with the fairy mistress and is taken to her castle by a rascally dwarf, Desiré's fairy mistress brings their son and also their daughter to court. At the demand of the fairy mistress, their son is dubbed and their daughter is married to the king. Desiré and his mistress are also married and return to her lands.

The motif of the fairy mistress is common across literary texts and is often believed to have Celtic roots, although tracing specific sources has proved difficult to scholars and is beyond the remit of this study.[333] *Desiré* is one of four surviving *lais* - *Desiré*, *Graelent*, *Guingamor*, and Marie de France's *Lanval* - with a common narrative thread whereby a mortal knight becomes enamoured of a supernatural woman. In each of these tales, the fairy mistress imposes some form of taboo on the knight: he must not speak of their love to anyone else (*Graelent* and *Lanval*), commit an evil act (*Desiré*), or consume any food or drink when returning to the real world (*Guingamor*). The motif of the fairy mistress who imposes a taboo on her mortal lover is also central to Walter Map's accounts of Gwestin Gwestiog and Eadric Wild.[334]

Here it is worth adding a brief note on Walter Map, whose writings provide an important but not exact parallel across this chapter. Walter Map was a secular clerk who spent time in the service of King Henry II and later became archdeacon of Oxford.[335] His Latin work, *De nugis curialium*, was likely written in the early 1180s with some later additions and survives in a single manuscript in the Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 8851.[336] It is very difficult to classify *De nugis curialium*, which is part-satire on the court and religious orders, part-*exempla*, and part-entertainment. The text contains a range of tales that veer between the serious and the humorous, the edifying and the entertaining. Map's writings embellish and falsify, sitting between 'history' and 'romance' and reflecting 'the notion of history as literature – edifying and true, but also intended to amuse'.[337] As such, *De nugis curialium* is particularly interesting for my study, which draws out the slippages between literary and

[333] See, for example, C. P. Donagher, 'Socializing the sorceress: the fairy mistress theme in *Lanval*, *Le Bel Inconnu*, and *Partonopeu de Blois*', *Essays in Medieval Studies*, 4 (1987), p. 69; C. Larrington, 'The fairy mistress in medieval literary fantasy', in C. Sullivan and B. White, eds., *Writing and Fantasy* (London: Longman, 1999), p. 35. Although scholars often allude to the Celtic roots of the motif of the fairy mistress, Aisling Byrne emphasises that positing a line of transmission between romance texts and Celtic-language material is problematic; she instead suggests the benefits of engaging with Irish treatments of the fairy mistress motif in order to consider how genre might influence the way that a motif is used. See A. Byrne, 'Fairy lovers: sexuality, order and narrative in medieval romance', in A. Hopkins, R. A. Rouse, and C.J. Rushton, eds., *Sexual Culture in the Literature of Medieval Britain* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2014), pp. 99–110.
[334] See Dist. ii cc.11 and 12, *De Nugis Curialium*, pp. 149–159.
[335] For a summary of Map's career, see *De Nugis Curialium*, pp. xiii–xix.
[336] *De Nugis Curialium*, pp. xxvi–xxxi.
[337] *De Nugis Curialium*, p. xli.

historical writing. I will return to Walter Map later in this chapter for further comparison with his work, notably his representation of the fairy mistress figure and her connection with Celtic landscapes.

The fairy mistress permeates the boundaries of genre and language, problematising the idea of a distinct separation between writings in Latin and the vernacular. The commonality of the motif suggests its popularity, and it seems likely that medieval audiences enjoyed hearing stories of amorous encounters with supernatural women. Yet the prevalence of the motif does not mean that it was universally condoned. Extramarital relations and the decision to act on sexual impulses were condemned as a canonical offense by the early decretists of the twelfth century and canonists of the thirteenth century.[338] Even sex within marriage was deemed to be sinful, but necessary for procreation. Peter Abelard, in his *Ethics* written in the 1130s, was one of the few theologians who argued that marital sex could not be a sin; like eating, marital sex was essential and any pleasure that derived from it was unavoidable, and therefore not sinful.[339]

Coupled with these concerns about sexual morality was the fear that a lover might in fact be a demon in human form, sent to test the faithful through sexual temptation. *Incubi* and *succubi* could even have intercourse with humans. These demonic figures were understood by theologians to be acting a moral framework according to a divine schema, acting by divine permission to test, tempt, and punish human sin.[340] Fairy mistresses could arguably fall into this category, as supernatural beings that tempted human men through their sexual allure.

However, this clear conception of sexual morality and the dangers of the marvellous is largely absent from the *lais* of *Graelent*, *Guingamor*, and *Lanval*, with the narrative voice providing no clear moral framework or didactic message. This is perhaps to be expected from the genre; the treatment of sexual relations in romance texts suggests that adultery and nonmarital sex were accepted practice amongst the aristocracy.[341] Indeed, the possibility that the fairy mistress was in some sense demonic, or at the very least otherworldly, may have added to the erotic appeal of the stories. Similarly in Walter Map's tales of Gwestin Gwestiniog and Eadric Wild, although the fairy bride is an ambiguous figure, she is never portrayed as demonic; indeed, Map emphasises the religiosity of Alnoth, the son of Eadric Wild and his fairy bride.[342]

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[338] J. Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp. 301–302 and pp. 380–381.
[339] E. van Houts, *Married Life in the Middle Ages, 900-1300* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 190.
[340] C. S. Watkins, *History and the Supernatural in Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 55–61.
[341] For a detailed overview of male extramarital sexual relations, see R. M. Karras, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe: Doing Unto Others* (London: Routledge, 2017), pp. 168–209.
[342] For a discussion of Walter Map and Welsh fairy brides, see M. A. Faletra, *Wales and the Medieval Colonial Imagination: The Matters of Britain in the Twelfth Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 79–83.

Confession, contrition, and the remission of sin

The issue of morality is, however, brought to the forefront in *Desiré* by the confession given by the eponymous character. Granted, there is still no clear sense of moral judgement from the author. Although the hermit gives penance to Desiré after his confession, he does not explicitly condemn Desiré's relationship with the fairy mistress or clearly explain the reasons for Desiré's penance. Indeed, the problematic nature of the relationship appears to be resolved at the end of the text, with Desiré's marriage to the fairy mistress and the integration of their children into courtly society. Yet although the narrative voice provides no explicit moral framework, it nonetheless explores the way in which Desiré navigates the two conflicting authorities of religion, represented by the hermit, and the marvellous, represented by the fairy mistress.

Desiré initially journeys into the Blanche Lande with the intention of visiting the 'sainz hom' (l. 126) of the hermitage, whom he used to visit with his father. However, this original intention is diverted by the appearance of the maiden who takes Desiré to see her beautiful mistress. The religious purpose of Desiré's journey is clearly replaced by the attractions of a marvellous being. The marvellous appears to have a greater hold over Desiré than the religious. Indeed, the marvellous often appears to function as a form of alternative authority, manifesting itself in similar ways to religion. Sara Sturm-Maddox emphasises the similarities between the Christian and the merveilleux otherworld, both of which proscribe commandments for mortal conduct, which may result in reward or punishment.[343] In *Desiré*, the fairy mistress takes on this position of authority through the giving of a ring, symbolic of Desiré's faithfulness and good behaviour. If Desiré strays or behaves improperly, he will lose the ring and thus lose her forever (ll. 231-244).

Yet Desiré fails to heed this warning. Returning from a trip with the king, he heads into the Blanche Lande and visits the hermitage in order to confess his sins – including his relationship with the fairy mistress:

> 'Ses pechiez li a descoverz
>
> Dont il estoit seürs et cerz.
>
> De s'amie li regehi
>
> Comme ele vint primes a li;

Faletra suggests that the disassociation of the fairy brides with the demonic 'heightens their ability both to stand as potent symbols of the dangers of the overextension of Anglo-Norman power' in Wales (p. 83).

[343] S. Sturm-Maddox, 'Configuring alterity: rewriting the fairy other', in D. Kelly, ed., *The Medieval Opus: Imitation, Rewriting, and Transmission in the French Tradition* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996), p. 126.

Le hermites le conseilla,

Sa penitance li donna.' (ll. 323-328)

'He revealed to him those of his sins/ Of which he was sure and certain./ He confessed to him about his beloved,/ About how she first came to him./ The hermit gave him advice/ And imposed a penance on him.'

Desiré's confession to the hermit should be seen in the context of the increasing presence of the church in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, which, as discussed above, saw an emphasis on the raising of standards through the increasing regulation of the clergy. The increasing preoccupation with instruction and participation in the church, and the specific context of the prescribed act of confession, provides a clear historical background for its inclusion in the *lai*. Desiré does not, however, confess to his own parish priest, as required by Canon XXII of the Fourth Lateran Council, but to a hermit in the Blanche Lande. This is perhaps for practical reasons. As John Baldwin points out, it was not necessarily feasible for the knights-errant of romance literature to return to their parish priest on a regular basis.[344] The hermit, distanced from society and often conveniently en route for the knight, plays a stock role in late twelfth- and thirteenth-century romances as a confessor and giver of penance.[345] Indeed, Tom Licence explores the importance of the hermit as an authoritative figure in the eradication of sin in England in the twelfth century, forcing people to confront and remedy their sinful behaviour through advice, confession, and prayer.[346] The possibility of confession to monks and hermits was discussed in the numerous debates of Peter the Chanter's (d.1197) school in Paris, in addition to in the synodical statutes following Lateran IV.[347] Desiré's confession to a hermit rather than a priest is, therefore, in the tradition of other romance texts and appears to reflect social practice, both before and after the Fourth Lateran Council.

If Desiré's confession to a hermit is unproblematic, the same cannot be said for his motivations and subsequent behaviour, which does not appear to align with canonical and theological ideas of confession. When Desiré visits the hermitage to give his confession, he is on his way to amuse himself ('esbanoier', l. 306) in the Blanche Lande, where he usually meets his fairy mistress. His principal purpose is to visit his mistress, presumably for amorous pleasure; the fact that he passes the hermitage and has the opportunity to confess is simply an added bonus. Desiré's visit to the hermitage is therefore not primarily motivated by religious devotion but is instead an act of convenience.

[344] J. W. Baldwin, 'From the Ordeal to the Confession: In Search of Lay Religion in Early Thirteenth-Century France', in P. Biller and A. J. Minnis, eds., *Handling Sin: Confession in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 1998), p. 203.
[345] T. Licence, *Hermits and Recluses in English Society, 950-1200* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 152.
[346] Licence, *Hermits and Recluses in English Society*, pp. 150–172.
[347] Baldwin, 'From the Ordeal to the Confession', p. 203.

Indeed, Desiré's act of confession lacks an element seen as fundamental to the remission of sin: contrition. Desiré himself demonstrates no sense of shame or self-awareness, and never voices any concerns either about the moral propriety of his affair or about the possibility that the fairy mistress is allied with the demonic. Although the importance of contrition as part of the confession process dates to at least as far back as the Carolingian era, manuals of the twelfth century saw an increased focus on contrition rather than on penances prescribed by canon law.[348] For example, in the anonymous tract *De vera et falsa penitentia*, wrongly attributed to St Augustine of Hippo but actually written in the twelfth-century, it is described how God forgives sins when one is truly contrite and ashamed – although true contrition does imply the intention to confess, undertake penances, and avoid future sin.[349] The importance of contrition is also stressed in *A Tract on Hearing Confessions*, one of many instructional manuals intended to assist priests in their pastoral duties and which was inserted into statutes compiled by Bishop Alexander Stavensby for his diocese of Coventry and Lichfield (c.1224-37). The manual suggests that when hearing a confession, the priest first ask the penitent 'whether he is sorry that he sinned, because without contrition of the heart sin can never be remitted.'[350] Desiré's confession fails to meet up to these standards yet he still obtains absolution from the hermit, thus calling into question the integrity of the sacrament and undermining the authority of the representative of the church. The hermit does not ensure that Desiré is truly contrite – perhaps increased regulation and instruction of the hermit is indeed necessary here.

An alternative moral authority

Nevertheless, through the act of confession, Desiré's relationship with the fairy mistress is transformed into a sinful act for which penance must be done. The fairy mistress becomes the figure of sin; Desiré cannot follow the instruction of the hermit whilst also engaging a relationship with the fairy mistress. Religious authority and the marvellous appear to be incompatible. Yet it is paradoxically the fairy mistress's anger and refusal to appear to Desiré - his confession having contravened her commandments (the taboo) - that prevents him from sinning again. She embodies both sin and moral authority; her absence provides effective moral enforcement where the church does not.

[348] W. H. Campbell, *The Landscape of Pastoral Care in 13th-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), p. 148.
[349] Campbell, *The Landscape of Pastoral Care*, pp. 148–149.
[350] *A Tract on Hearing Confessions* in *Medieval Popular Religion 1000-1500: A Reader*, trans. J. Shinners (Ontario: University of Toronto Press, 2009), p. 19

When Desiré realises the consequences of his confession, physically demonstrated by the disappearance of a ring given to him by the fairy mistress, he explicitly undermines the role of confession through a vehement verbal attack:

> ‘Durement maudit l’ermitage,
>
> Et l’ermite tout ensement
>
> Remaudit il assez sovent
>
> Et le cheval qui l’i porta,
>
> Et soi quant onques i parla;’ (ll. 368-372)
>
> ‘And he roundly cursed the hermitage,/ And likewise the hermit himself/ He cursed repeatedly,/ And the horse which carried him there,/ And himself for ever having spoken to him;’

The sense of accumulation, as Desiré curses the hermitage, the hermit, himself, and even the horse that carried him there, creates a moment of humour, eroding the sanctity of the sacrament of confession. The narrative describes how Desiré prays that the hermitage and the hermit might be consumed by the fires of hell (ll. 378-379).[351] The juxtaposition of the Christian act of prayer with a desire for irreligious destruction emphasises the tension between the moral authorities that hold sway over Desiré.

For Desiré, however, the choice between religion and his relationship is not difficult; he has already offered to ignore the penance proscribed by the hermit and instead follow the bidding of his fairy mistress:

> ‘Ce que li hermites me dit,
>
> Et les junes que il aprist,
>
> A vostre plaisir les lairai,
>
> Et vos commandemenz ferai.’ (ll. 361-364)
>
> ‘What the hermit told me/ And the fasting in which he instructed me,/ At your pleasure I shall abandon them/ And do your bidding.’

The fairy mistress can directly take the place of religious authority, assuming the role of confessor and imposing her own penance (l. 360). When the fairy mistress finally reappears to Desiré, she chastises him for treating their relationship as if it were a sin. By making his confession about her to the

[351] The fierceness of this attack has led the text’s most recent editors to question whether it could have been written by a cleric. Burgess and Brook, *French Arthurian Literature IV*, p. 35.

hermit, he effectively made the decision to never see her again – for what would be the point of confessing if one did not intend to give up the sin?:

> ‘Quant tu confession queroies,
>
> Bien sai que de moi partiroies.
>
> Que li pechiez vaut au gehir,
>
> Qui ne se puet mie partir?’ (ll. 425-428)
>
> ‘When you sought out confession,/ I well knew that you would be losing me./ What use is it to confess a sin/ If one cannot abandon it?’

It is again the fairy mistress, the supposed figure of sin, who emphasises the qualities of a true confession. It is she, rather than Desiré, who suggests the possible reasons for his confession, declaring that she has never been married nor engaged, and neither has Desiré (ll. 421-424) - their relationship therefore is not adulterous. She offers an alternative view of morality, whereby a relationship that does not harm any other party is not damaging to society, and therefore should not be considered a sin.[352]

Significantly, the lady also directly addresses the concern that she might be allied with the demonic. She emphasises that she did not enchant him, nor is she an evil creature:

> ‘Souventes foiz as tu douté
>
> Que je t’eüsse enfantosmé;
>
> N’aies tu ja de ce regart,
>
> Ne sui mie de male part.’ (ll. 429-432)
>
> ‘You have often feared/ That I had bewitched you./ Do not be concerned about this,/ I am not of evil origin.’

Desiré’s confession was therefore unnecessary according to the fairy mistress’s moral framework; their relationship is neither sinful on the basis of sexual morality or demonic enchantment. The fairy mistress is willing to forgive Desiré through her love for him and prove that she is not allied to the demonic by attending mass and eating consecrated bread:[353]

> ‘Quant vos irez jusqu’au mostier
>
> La messe oïr et Dieu proier,

[352] Burgess and Brook, *French Arthurian Literature IV*, p. 36.
[353] The notion of forgiveness is noticeably absent from Walter Map’s accounts of Gwestin Gwestiniog and Eadric Wild, whose fairy brides disappear once the taboo has broken.

Delez vos me verrez ester

Et le pain beneoit user.' (ll. 433-436)

'When you go to church,/ To hear mass and pray to God,/ You will see me standing beside you/ And partaking of the blessed bread.'

This recalls a scene in *Yonec*, a lai thought to have been composed by a 'Marie de France' in the latter half of the twelfth century (possibly working in the court of Henry II in England). In *Yonec*, a lady who has been imprisoned by her jealous husband is visited by a magical hawk who transforms into a knight. She agrees to accept his love and service, on the condition that he is Christian. The knight, Muldumarec, assures her of his belief in God and suggests that she call her chaplain so that he might assume her form and prove his faith by taking the sacrament:

'La semblance de vus prendrai:

le cors Damedeu recevrai,

ma creance us dirai tute.

Ja de ceo ne serez en dute!' (ll. 165-168)[354]

'I will take on your form; I will receive the body of our Lord, and say my whole Creed. You will no longer be in doubt of this!'

The knight's ability to metamorphose into a bird is clearly a matter of concern for the lady, possibly due to its connotations of the demonic – although the form taken, the hawk, is intimately connected with chivalric society's love of the hunt. The Christianising response provides a means by which the marvellous being might simultaneously remain an otherworldly figure and be brought into the framework of a Christian courtly society. Yet it also acts as a form of acceptance and legitimation of sexual fornication; in both *Desiré* and *Yonec*, it is participation in the mass that enables a sexual relationship between the mortal and the marvellous figure.

The examples of *Desiré* and *Yonec* appear to interact with stories found in early thirteenth-century Latin chronicles, in which ladies feign piety by attending church but flee before the sacrament.[355] For example, in Gervase of Tilbury's *Otia Imperialia*, written in the earlier thirteenth century, Gervase gives an account of a lady in Arles who repeatedly left the church before the consecration. Her husband eventually forced her to remain, but she was carried off by a diabolical spirit and never seen again.[356] In a similar account, Walter Map describes how a man named Henno came across a beautiful maiden who claimed to have been shipwrecked, along with her maid. They were married,

[354] Quotation from Lais de Marie de France, ed. K. Warnke, trans. L. Harf-Lancner (Paris: Lettres Gothiques, 2019), English translation my own.
[355] Sturm-Maddox, 'Configuring alterity', p. 127.
[356] *Gervase of Tilbury: Otia Imperialia: Recreation for an Emperor*, ed. and trans. S. E. Banks and J. W. Binns (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), p. 665.

but his mother noticed that the lady always left the church before the consecration of the Lord's body and blood. Henno's mother watched the lady's chamber and discovered that she would enter a bath, turn into a dragon, then resume human form - a process then repeated by her maid. A priest was sent for and the two were sprinkled with holy water, whereupon they disappeared through the roof.[357]

In these Latin accounts, it is not possible for the figures of the marvellous to maintain a relationship with the mortal man. Their demonic nature is revealed, and they are removed from Christian earthly society. In *Desiré* and *Yonec*, however, it is explicitly emphasised that the magical knight and the fairy mistress are not allied with the demonic. As we have seen, they offer to receive the sacrament, and prove their Christian faith. The narratives of *Yonec* and *Desiré* therefore allow for a marvellous that may be unknown and otherworldly, but that is not necessarily associated with the diabolical forces. Instead, it uses participation in Christian sacraments as a form of legitimation for an alternative moral framework in which fornication is acceptable. The *lai*, written in Old French, appears to offer a flexibility that is not evident in the Latin text.

Indeed, the narrative of *Desiré* is situated in an apparently Christianising framework: the text begins with a Christian pilgrimage to Saint-Gilles and finishes with Christian rites of dubbing and marriage. These are regulated forms of Christian life, located within defined social spaces: a place of pilgrimage, the court, and the church. However, we might question who really controls the apparent resolution of the text: the church or the fairy mistress? The fairy mistress comes to court, where she requests that the king knights her son and arranges for her daughter to be married. Moreover, she also demands that she be married to Desiré so that she may take him back to her lands with her, and so that he will never again seek penance or pardon for their relationship:

> 'Mon ami me fai espouser,
>
> Car je l'en voil o moi mener;
>
> Loiaument seron assemblé,
>
> O moi vivra tout son aé.
>
> Ja n'i querra(i) confession,
>
> Ne penitance, ne pardon.' (ll. 777-782)
>
> 'Marry me to my beloved/ Because I want to take him away with me./ We shall be together legitimately;/ He will spend his whole life with me./ He will never again seek confession,/ Or penance or pardon.'

This could, on the one hand, be interpreted as an attempt to legitimise their relationship through the Christian marriage ceremony; their relationship will be faithful, consensual, and legitimate. Yet more

[357] *De Nugis Curialium*, pp. 344-349.

explicitly, the fairy mistress wants to marry Desiré so that he will never seek (*querra*) confession or penance again – through marriage, she ensures that her authority over her husband supplants that of religion. This final scene of the narrative appears to rebalance the different authorities that structure Desiré's life: the authority and power of the king is emphasised through his role in the knighting of Desiré's son and his say in the marriage of Desiré's daughter, and Desiré and the fairy mistress' relationship is reframed through Christian marriage. However, the agency of the fairy mistress continues to permeate this apparent resolution. It is the fairy mistress who makes the demands and confirms her position of authority through the Christian rites of dubbing and marriage.

We might again compare this to *Yonec*, in which the resolution of the text comes with the killing of the lady's jealous husband in an abbey on the feast of St Aaron, which was celebrated at Caerleon.[358] Here the Christian space, both physical and temporal, becomes the site of a killing which appears to legitimate the adulterous affair between the lady and the magical knight. As in *Desiré*, the text – through the presence of the marvellous - creates its own form of morality where Christian ritual and space might be manipulated in order to provide a resolution that may not be possible in the Latin text or the real world.

The gendered nature of *Desiré*, which asserts the authority of a female figure – the fairy mistress – is particularly interesting given the survival of the manuscript copy, Cologny: Bibliotheca Bodmeriana, Bodmer 82, at the Benedictine convent of Wilton Abbey in Wiltshire. This suggests a possible female religious audience for *Desiré*, who may have been interested in the idea of an alternative female moral authority.

A space for the marvellous

Central to the establishment of an alternative moral authority is the setting of the *lai* in Calatir in Scotland. In general terms, the fairy mistress motif and her ability to challenge social order appears to be closely linked to ideas of Celtic space. Both *Graelent* and *Guingamor* are situated in a mythical or historical 'Bretaingne':

> 'En Bretaingne ot .I. roi jadis,
>
> La terre tint et le païs;' (ll. 5-6, *Guingamor*)[359]
>
> 'There once lived a king in Brittany,/ Who ruled the land and the country;'

[358] Gerald of Wales mentions Aaron, a man of noble birth who was martyred in Caerleon and had church named after him. Book I, Chapter 5 in Gerald of Wales, *The Journey Through Wales and the Description of Wales*, trans. L. Thorpe (London: Penguin, 2004), p. 115.
[359] All quotations and translations of *Guingamor* are taken from Burgess and Brook, *French Arthurian Literature IV*, pp. 161-193.

‘Li rois qui Bretaingne tenoit

Vers ses voisins grant guerre avoit;’ (ll. 15-16, *Graelent*)[360]

‘The king who ruled Brittany,/ Was waging a great war with his neighbours;’

Unsurprisingly, the setting is not described in any geographical sense. ‘Bretaingne’ is a common setting for romance texts, closely tied with the Arthurian tradition and presumably requiring little comment for the author or audience.[361] *Lanval* similarly draws upon a commonly used setting located within the Arthurian tradition. The *lai* describes how King Arthur is staying in Carlisle to combat the Scots and the Picts, who had been pillaging the land of Logres (ll. 5-10). Carlisle features frequently in romance texts as a royal residence of Arthur, whilst the threat of the barbaric Scots and Picts add a layer of otherness to the setting.[362]

Unlike these more generic settings, *Desiré* has the unusual geographic location of Calatir in Scotland. As I argue in the previous chapter, the setting of ‘Calatir’ can be identified as Calatria, located beside the Firth of Forth, and presented as physically separate: ‘Outre la mer qui tant est grande’ (l. 10, ‘Beyond the broad expanse of ocean.’). This imagining of Scotland as being separated by a sea is echoed in other textual and visual sources, suggesting that the text is situated through an existing frame of reference – a frame which emphasises the physical liminality of the setting.[363] The setting of the text is also precisely localised, referring to real topographical markers such as the salt pans of the Falkirk area and the church of Falkirk, and suggesting that the author had some knowledge of the area and its industry.[364] *Desiré* is therefore simultaneously presented through an intertextual imagining as remote and separate, and through its grounding in a real location.

The remoteness of the setting is heightened as Desiré crosses into the Blanche Lande, a mysterious space which has both otherworldly and religious significance: it is here that Desiré meets his fairy mistress, but also where he confesses to the hermit. The Blanche Lande is largely depopulated and lacks civilisation; there is no form of habitation except for the hermitage and the mysterious castle of the fairy mistress. It is a natural space, initially described through images of springtime; birds are singing and the trees are in blossom: ‘Les arbres voit blans et floriz,/ Des oiselez

[360] All quotations and translations of *Graelent* are taken from Burgess and Brook, *French Arthurian Literature IV*, pp. 375-409.
[361] For an extensive list of references to a ‘Bretagne’ - whether referring to Brittany or Great Britain - see Flutre, *Table des noms propres*, p. 211.
[362] For an extensive list of references to ‘Cardoeil’ (Carlisle), see Flutre, *Table des noms propres*, p. 217.
[363] References to Scotland proper being separated by a sea are found in the *Roman de Fergus*, *De situ Albanie*, Matthew Paris’ map of Britain (London: British Library, Cotton MS Claudius D VI), and a map accompanying two of Gerald of Wales’ works on Ireland in Dublin: National Library of Ireland, MS 700. See discussion in ‘Strategic imaginings of geography’, pp. 43-45.
[364] See above, pp. 55-58.

oï les criz.' (ll. 119-120, 'He saw the trees, white and in flower,/ And heard the cries of the birds.'). This situates the scene within the realm of troubadour lyric poetry, which frequently begins with an idyllic nature opening in which the flowers are in bloom and the birds are singing, thus suggesting the amorous character of the story.[365] This romantic scene, however, contrasts with Desiré's original intention for his journey to the Blanche Lande: to visit the 'sainz hon' (holy man) (l. 126) of the hermitage – perhaps prefiguring the underlying tension between Desiré's romantic liaison with the fairy mistress and his religious confession. In the Blanche Lande, Desiré is taken to the fairy mistress by a maiden coming from a spring (ll. 141-142), the presence of water indicating the marvellous nature of the encounter.

Desiré's meeting with the fairy mistress shares many similarities to those in the other four *lais* discussed above. In each of these, the narrative begins by setting up the protagonist within the civilised world of court, emphasising their noble bearing, their chivalric prowess, and their relationship with the king. The protagonist then leaves this world to enter a landscape that is physically distanced from court and that is described through elements of the natural world such as dense forests, plains, and sources of water. It is here that the mortal knight meets the supernatural maiden.[366]

The close link between the fairy mistress figure and her setting, the natural and uninhabited Celtic space, also maps onto representations found in Latin texts. Here we again turn to *De nugis curialium*, in which Walter Map provides two accounts of fairy mistresses in Wales, both of which take place in natural and isolated settings. In one account, Map describes how Gwestin Gwestiniog, who lived by the lake of Brycheiniog, repeatedly saw groups of women dancing in his fields at night-time. When he followed them, they plunged into the lake. Gwestin Gwestiniog eventually managed to capture one of the ladies and marry her, whereupon she warned him that she would serve him devotedly until he stuck her with his bridle – a taboo which was broken by Gwestiniog.[367] In a subsequent account, Map tells the story of Eadric Wild, who, returning from hunting, came upon a building on the edge of a forest. There he saw a number of beautiful ladies dancing, and seized one of them. Despite her resistance, Eadric Wild eventually gained her obedience – until he should reproach her about her sisters or the wood. After many years, the taboo was broken and the lady disappeared.[368] Both these accounts open with an emphasis on the natural environment in which they take place, situated beyond civilisation and beside a forest or lake. The fairy mistress, her agency and her power, is intimately associated with the Welsh landscape itself.[369]

[365] See, for example, Arnaut Daniel's *Autet e bas entre'ls prum fuelhs.*
[366] See, for example, *Lanval* ll.43-45, *Guingamor* ll. 356-360, *Graelent* ll. 204-206.
[367] See Dist. ii, c.11, *De Nugis Curialium*, pp. 149–155.
[368] See Dist. ii, c.12, *De Nugis Curialium*, pp. 155–159.
[369] Faletra, *Wales and the Medieval Colonial Imagination*, p. 80.

In all these texts, both Latin and French, the fairy mistress is tied to uninhabited and natural settings within the Celtic spaces of 'Bretaingne', Wales, and Scotland. These imagined spaces are central to the fairy mistress motif and her ability to exert power and agency. Moreover, these are locations which offered real resistance to English ecclesiastical jurisdiction – particularly interesting when viewing Desiré's confession and the exploration of moral authority in the context of the development of the church in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Notably, attempts to reform church structure, regulate the clergy, and improve lay behaviour, were faced with complications in Scotland, Wales, and Ireland. These were less regulated spaces, which might be seen to allow a broader range of moral practices owing to the limited influence of English ecclesiastical jurisdiction. By choosing to locate *Desiré* in Scotland, the possibility of resistance to an established church authority might become more tangible. The setting of *Desiré* can therefore be seen to function both through agency of the fairy mistress, embedded in the natural and uninhabited landscape associated with the motif, but also through the historical reality of the limits to English ecclesiastical jurisdiction in Scotland.

Conclusion

The fairy mistress in *Desiré* is undoubtedly a challenging figure. She is the subject of Desiré's confession, and the figure who leads him into the sin of fornication – with the added risk that she might be allied with the demonic. However, she is also the enforcer of morality, upholding theological ideas of true confession by emphasising that a confessed sin should not be repeated. This contradiction, in addition to Desiré's willingness to abandon the hermit's advice and penance in favour of his relationship with the fairy mistress, destabilises the position of religious authority. The representative of religion, the hermit – himself a figure separated from the church organisation – fails both in his responsibility to ensure the authenticity of Desiré's confession and in his attempt to impose penance. When placed in the context of the increasing emphasis on clerical correction and lay participation in the basic tenets of the faith, the failure of the hermit appears to undermine the efficacy of the church and perhaps reflect a sense of dissatisfaction with church reform.

The fairy mistress takes on a position of moral authority, offering an alternative framework for morality in which a nonmarital sexual relationship is acceptable. In both *Desiré* and *Yonec*, the figures of the marvellous participate in the mass, proving that they are not allied with the demonic and allowing the continuation of their relationships with a mortal. The apparent resolution of *Desiré* is challenged by the dominance of the fairy mistress, whose demands are met and enacted through the Christian rites of marriage and dubbing. The fairy mistress provides a female source of authority who might challenge the regulation of behaviour by the church, offering a more flexible vision of morality.

This resistance to and undermining of the authority of the church through the figure of the fairy mistress can be linked to the setting of the text. As demonstrated across other *lais* and in the

writings of Walter Map, the fairy mistress – and her agency and power - is intimately connected with the natural and isolated settings of Celtic space. Viewing the Celtic setting as a space of resistance to church regulation holds even greater significance if considered in the context of the difficulties of church reform in Scotland, Ireland, and Wales.

2.2. Ireland as a space of threat

The previous chapter explored how the historical context of church reform might collide with the physical and imaginative landscape of the Blanche Lande, which in the *lai* of *Desiré* is characterised as the setting for pleasure and freedom from external jurisdiction. This chapter continues to explore the notion of the wild and resistant Celtic landscape through a close reading of *Les Merveilles de Rigomer*, a thirteenth-century romance text, which clearly speaks to the historical backdrop of Anglo-Norman intervention in Ireland. This historical context, established in chapter 1.3, reveals a complex political situation.[370] English involvement in Ireland was from the outset linked to the internal politics of the Irish kingships, but tensions developed more broadly between the native Irish, the English lords, and the English king. Ireland, like the Welsh March, offered a space where land and power might be acquired at a distance from royal control.

This chapter seeks to explore how Ireland was perceived and understood by contemporaries in England and northern France through the lens of *Les Merveilles de Rigomer*. The text narrates Lancelot's quest to the enchanted location of Rigomer, his capture, and his subsequent rescue by Gawain and the knights of King Arthur. Although Rigomer itself appears to be a fictional setting, the text is unique in its description of the internal geography of Ireland. As will be discussed below, scholars have suggested that the use of place names, in conjunction with the characterisation of particular regions, demonstrates an understanding of the contemporary geopolitics of medieval Ireland. In this chapter, I explore how the representation of Ireland and its geographies might reflect contemporary ideas about Ireland as a space of both threat and reward, offering an insight into Anglo-Norman motivations for travelling to Ireland. Ireland in the text is characterised by challenging landscapes, which serve as active agents in the adventures faced by the protagonist. I examine the parallels between the literary descriptions of Irish landscapes with the practical historical experience of Anglo-Norman invaders. The representation of Ireland and its marvels in *Les Merveilles de Rigomer* is also gendered, offering a vision of women as deceitful and dangerous. It is only through the intervention of the knights of Britain that order might be restored and the enchantments ended through the messianic figure of Gawain. In this way, I propose that the text offers a reimagining of the Anglo-Norman intervention in Ireland, framed as liberation rather than invasion.

[370] See chapter 1.3, 'Known geographies in the *lais*', pp. 64-67.

The text

Les Merveilles de Rigomer survives in a single manuscript, Chantilly, Musée Condé MS 472, thought to have been copied during the middle of the thirteenth century in northern France or Flanders.[371] The language is characterised as Picard or Picard-Walloon, localised to the region of Hainaut.[372] As well as several Chrétien texts, MS 472 also contains other texts that suggest an interest in Britain and its geographical spaces – particularly those at the frontiers of England. The *Roman de Fergus*, for example, demonstrates a clear knowledge of Scottish geography,[373] whilst *Hunbaut* narrates the journey of Gawain and Hunbaut to the King of the Isles. It does not seem too farfetched to suggest that the compiler had an interest in the spaces and geographies of Britain and its frontiers, which may provide a context for the copying of *Les Merveilles de Rigomer* in the Chantilly manuscript. A portion of the text, known as the Turin fragment, previously survived in a late fourteenth-century manuscript, Turin, L. iv. 33, which was destroyed by fire in 1904.[374]

The text attributes the narrative to an unknown 'Jehan' (l. 1), although it is uncertain whether this refers to the author or his source material.[375] Dating of the text has varied. Vesce, positing a link between *Rigomer* and the works of Gerald of Wales, suggests that the text must have been composed after Gerald's *Topographia* c.1187.[376] More recent studies of *Les Merveilles de Rigomer* have generally placed it in the second half of the thirteenth century, although the dating of the Chantilly manuscript would suggest a *terminus ad quem* of the mid-thirteenth century.[377]

The plot of *Les Merveilles de Rigomer* can be summarised as follows. An unknown Irish maiden arrives at the court of King Arthur, where she proceeds to criticise the idleness of the knights and urges them to seek out her mistress at Rigomer in Ireland, where they will find riches and maidens galore. Lancelot, intrigued by the prospect of Rigomer's enchantments, sets out to Ireland where he encounters numerous challenges. Despite repeated warnings about its dangers and enchantments, Lancelot eventually reaches Rigomer where he is imprisoned and enslaved. The text then follows the

[371] For a description of the manuscript, see K. Busby, T. Nixon, A. Stones, L. Waters, eds., *Les Manuscrits de Chrétien de Troyes, Vol. II* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1993), pp. 39–41.
[372] K. Busby, T. Nixon, A. Stones, L. Waters, eds., *Les Manuscrits de Chrétien de Troyes*, p. 41.
[373] See chapter 1.2, 'Strategic reimaginings of geography'.
[374] F. Carapezza, 'Le fragment de Turin de Rigomer. Nouvelles perspectives', *Romania*, 119:473-474 (2001), p. 79.
[375] See discussion in *The Marvels of Rigomer (Les Mervelles de Rigomer)*, trans. T. Vesce, (New York & London: Garland Publishing, 1988), pp. xiii–xiv; All line references to *Les mervelles de Rigomer : altfranzösischer Artusroman des XIII. Jahrhunderts*, ed. W. Foerster (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1908).
[376] *The Marvels of Rigomer*, trans. Vesce, pp. xiv–xv.
[377] *Le Meraviglie de Rigomer (Les Merveilles de Rigomer): Tradizione manoscritta e tradizione narrative*, trans. M. Lecco (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2013), p. 39; E. Mullally, 'The Irish Topography of Two Arthurian Romances: *Durmart le Gallois* and *Les Merveilles de Rigomer*', in H. B. Clarke and J. R. S. Philips, eds., *Ireland, England, and the Continent in the Middle Ages and Beyond* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2006), p. 89; Busby, *French in Medieval Ireland*, p. 276.

journey of Gawain and a group of sixty Arthurian knights who, after various episodic adventures, eventually reach Rigomer and face a large battle against various monstrous groups. Gawain is finally received as the prophesised chosen one who is able to end the enchantments of Rigomer, rescuing Lancelot and promising to find a husband for the lady of Rigomer. This prompts the next episode of the narrative, which is followed by the fragmentary tale of Quintefeulle. These later episodes will not be explored in this chapter as they do not take place in Ireland.[378]

Place names, people, and authorial knowledge

A large portion of the opening section of the text is devoted to Lancelot's travels in search of the mysterious Rigomer in Ireland. Lancelot's journey takes him from the court of King Arthur in Caerleon through the marches of 'Bretaingne et Engleterre et Wales/ Et Escoce et Iestrewales' (ll. 383-384) to Cornwall, before he eventually crosses 'un braç de mer' (l. 407) to reach Ireland. In Ireland, Lancelot travels extensively, with each place distinguished by episodic adventures. Lancelot begins his journey in 'ceste terre Demedij' (l. 661) which reaches 'Jusqu'es marces de Brefeni' (l. 662), before heading to *Conart* then *Tüesmomme* and *Dessemomme*. He then travels to *Corque*, before finally reaching Rigomer.

The location - and existence even - of Rigomer itself are unknown. Its name perhaps derives from its position on a 'roche desor mer' (l. 6882). Evelyn Mullally also postulates a connection with early French saints named Rigomer, although none of these appear to have any explicit connection with Ireland.[379] Matthieu Boyd speculates extensively on the origins of the place-name Rigomer, and suggests that a link may be possible through the sixth-century saint Rigomer associated with Childebert I who, according to a *vita*,

> 'convinced the local people to demolish a temple dedicated to Mars, and to build a church in its place; this was the origin of the town of Mamers. Since the enchantments of Rigomer have pagan and heretical associations, this would be the aspect of the saint acknowledged by naming the Irish kingdom after him: its name would mean that the site was "pre-approved" for the overthrow of its enchantments, in imitation of Rigomer's accomplishment. If this is what was intended, then Jehan, or someone else involved in the composition of the text, probably had Poitevin connections.'[380]

[378] For a detailed summary of the narrative, see Appendix, M. Boyd, 'The Source of Enchantment: *The Marvels of Rigomer* (*Les Mervelles de Rigomer*) and the Evolution of Celtic Influence on Medieval Francophone Storytelling' (PhD, Harvard University, 2011), pp. 221–305.
[379] Mullally, 'The Irish Topography of Two Arthurian Romances', pp. 94–95.
[380] Boyd, 'The Source of Enchantment', p. 157.

This hagiographical connection is tenuous, and perhaps more likely is the suggestion that Rigomer stems from Reencaheragh, the site of a medieval promontory fort overlooking a channel, 'a good candidate for the "Strait of Rigomer" which is referred to often in the text'.[381]

Although Rigomer cannot be identified with any certainty, a significant number of locations in the text can be identified as real sites in Ireland. Lancelot effectively circumnavigates the internal geography of Ireland to reach Rigomer, which appears to be located somewhere near to Cork. The reader is able to trace Lancelot's journey through Ireland through real rather than imagined places. As Mullally notes, *Medii* is similar to the *Media* used by Gerald of Wales for the modern English Meath, in the east of Ireland.[382] *Brefeni* is Breifne, a territory to the north of Meath that does appear to be mentioned in any other contemporary text produced outside Ireland.[383] The land of *Conart* is Connacht, in the west, whilst *Tüesmomme* and *Dessemomme* can be identified as Thomond and Desmond respectively, both in the south-west.[384] With the exception of Cork (*Corque*) in the south west, these locations can be conveniently mapped onto James Lydon's map of Ireland.[385] I have added Cork for reference:

[381] Boyd, 'The Source of Enchantment', p. 159.
[382] Mullally, 'The Irish Topography of Two Arthurian Romances', p. 98.
[383] Mullally, 'The Irish Topography of Two Arthurian Romances', p. 99.
[384] Mullally, 'The Irish Topography of Two Arthurian Romances', pp. 100–101.
[385] See Figure 1 and Map 17.1, Lydon, 'Ireland: politics, government and law', p. 337.



Map 17.1 Ireland: politics and government.

Figure 1: Map taken from J. F. Lydon, 'Ireland: Politics, Government and Law.', A Companion to Britain in the Later Middle Ages, (Oxford, 2003), pp. 337, with the location of Cork added here.

As Mullally notes, the text demonstrates a unique knowledge of Ireland's internal topography that contrasts significantly with another thirteenth-century romance, *Durmart le Gallois*. *Durmart* is also set in Ireland, but there 'is not the slightest indication that the author perceives Ireland as a real place with a different language and different customs. It is all the uniform fantasy world of Arthurian romance'.[386] Similarly, *Les Merveilles de Rigomer* shows a far more extensive knowledge of the internal geography of Ireland than *Melion*, the anonymous *lai* examined in a previous chapter, which is centred solely on Dublin and its environs.[387]

Moreover, the author of *Les Merveilles de Rigomer* establishes clear distinctions between different regions in Ireland: we have a mixed impression of Meath, a largely negative impression of Breifne and Thomond, and a largely positive impression of Connacht, Desmond, and Cork.[388] When Lancelot arrives in Ireland, he finds himself in Meath, where he stripped of his arms and horse by Savari and his band of brigands before aiding the ruler of Meath. Lancelot is then welcomed by

[386] Mullally, 'The Irish Topography of Two Arthurian Romances', pp. 90 and 97.
[387] See chapter 1.3, 'Known geographies in the *lais*', pp. 64-65.
[388] Boyd, 'The Source of Enchantment', pp. 162–163.

various hospitable nobles in Breifne but is forced to fight Maudins li Gardingniers, who learns that Lancelot has killed his kin. Lancelot also faces adventures in the wild forests, such as encountering a bestial hermit and defeating wild cats surrounding a bier. Breifne is characterised as a region of danger and lawlessness, and placed in clear contrast to Connacht, which is praised for its wide roads and hospitable people (ll. 2368-2380). Lancelot himself faces no troubles during his journey through Connacht, where he is treated courteously and meets two noble knights who are suffering from the enchantments of Rigomer. Once he enters Thomond, however, Lancelot again faces numerous threats. Thomond is explicitly described as:

> 'Une terre, ço est la soume,
>
> Qui mout ert plaine de rapine,
>
> De larrons et de sauvecine,
>
> Et de mauvaise gent puplee.' (ll. 3148-3151)
>
> 'a land full of robbery, rapine, and savagery, and inhabited by a bad sort of people' (p. 70)

Lancelot's adventures, including a five-day battle with a knight and an attack on a house by thieves, prove this to be the case. Lancelot then rescues the daughter of the king of Desmond who has been abducted, but in a case of mistaken identity must defeat the knights of the king. Lancelot is finally gratefully received by the king and queen in Cork.

This representation of the different regions appears to reflect the contemporary geopolitics of medieval Ireland. As Busby suggests, the characteristics of these regions can be explained as 'une representation mimétique de l'expérience vécue par les conquérants'.[389] Regions that resisted the Anglo-Normans are represented in a generally negative way, in contrast to areas that were more easily subjugated.[390] This is suggestive of an author who had an awareness not only of Irish place names and narrative traditions, but also of the politics of conquest as viewed through an Anglo-Angevin lens. A final piece of evidence for an authorial knowledge of Ireland is found in the exclamation of 'Sainte Bride' (l. 946). Saint Brigid was a venerated Irish saint about whom several *vitae* were composed, the earliest dating to the seventh or eighth century. Brigid appears in Gerald of Wales's *Topographia*, which describes the miraculous fire of Brigid in Kildare that never goes out.[391]

[389] K. Busby, 'Merlin, Barnagoys, l'Irlande, et les débuts du monde arthurien', in N. Koble and P. Moran, eds., *Jeunesse et genèse du royaume arthurien: Les Suites romanesques du Merlin en prose* (Orléans: Paradigme, 2007), p. 148.
[390] Busby, 'Merlin, Barnagoys, l'Irlande, et les débuts du monde arthurien', pp. 148–149; Boyd, 'The Source of Enchantment', pp. 161–166.
[391] Gerald of Wales, *The History and Topography of Ireland*, pp. 81–82.

Why then does *Les Merveilles de Rigomer* embed itself within real geographies, and where did its author gain their knowledge of Ireland? We might assume that the author drew upon the accounts given by Gerald in his *Topographia*, as suggested by Vesce in his translation of the text.[392] However, the parallels between the two texts are limited. As Matthieu Boyd notes, Gerald's geographical descriptions, which do not mention Breifne and which emphasize Limerick and the River Shannon, are not followed closely in *Les Merveilles de Rigomer*.[393] Indeed, as noted above, Breifne does not seem to appear in any other text of the period from outside Ireland. In the twelfth-century verse chronicle *La geste des Engleis en yrlande*, Breifne is called by its alternative name, Tír Briúin.[394] Moreover, *Les Merveilles de Rigomer* does not appear to draw upon any of the Irish marvels described by Gerald, instead reflecting access to Irish narrative traditions and an alternative source of geographical knowledge.[395] It is possible that the 'Jehan' mentioned in the text was 'an Anglo-Norman with a relatively accurate knowledge of Ireland and its narrative traditions', whose writings were used as source material by the continental French copyist of the extant *Rigomer*.[396] Aside from the name 'Jehan', the author of the text must remain unknown, although we have established that he had good knowledge of Irish geography and politics. He also had an awareness of Irish narrative traditions, which are integrated into the world of Arthurian literature.

Why go to Ireland?

The Ireland presented in *Les Merveilles de Rigomer* is based to some degree on knowledge of real place names, geography, and politics. Moreover, I suggest that it offers a unique window through which to examine the motivations for travelling to Ireland, as perceived retrospectively by the thirteenth-century author of the text. Ireland, both historically and in the text, offers the possibility of material reward as well as the opportunity to prove oneself. In *Les Merveilles de Rigomer*, Ireland is initially conjured up through the words of the unknown Irish maiden. It offers fame, wealth, honour, and beautiful ladies:

> 'Alés a li, ele vos mande,
>
> Qui pris et los volra avoir
>
> Et biele amie et grant avoir
>
> Et deduit des plus bieles dames

[392] *The Marvels of Rigomer*, trans. Vesce p. xiv.
[393] Boyd, 'The Source of Enchantment', p. 180.
[394] Mullally, 'The Irish Topography of Two Arthurian Romances', p. 99.
[395] Boyd, 'The Source of Enchantment', p. 180 The possibility of Irish source material is discussed extensively in Chapter 5, 'Celtic Material in Rigomer', pp.112-160.
[396] Boyd, 'The Source of Enchantment', p. 123.

> Qui soient en tous les roiaumes,
>
> C'on puist trover tres Orient
>
> Desci as isles d'Ocident.' (ll. 94-100)
>
> 'she invites any and all who desire fame and honour, winsome maids and great wealth, and the favors of the most desirable ladies that may be found in any kingdom from the Western Isles to the Orient.' (pp. 4-5)

Ireland certainly did offer the possibility of marriage, land, and wealth to the Anglo-Normans who came to assist Diarmait Mac Murchada. Vesce raises the possibility that *Rigomer* was written 'to reflect the feats of the island's new lords (led historically by Strongbow) who were transformed in the romance into the knights of Arthur'.[397] In his *Expugnatio Hibernica*, Gerald describes how, in return for helping Diarmait to recover his territories, Strongbow would be given Diarmait's eldest daughter in marriage along with 'succession to his kingdom'.[398] Similarly, Robert fitz Stephen and Maurice fitz Gerald would be granted 'the town of Wexford, with two adjoining cantreds of land, to be held in fee' for their assistance.[399] Later, whilst besieged in Dublin, Maurice addresses Strongbow and the other commanders, noting their motivations for coming to Ireland: 'We did not come into the remote part of the world for our pleasure, and to enjoy repose, but to try our fortunes and prove our valour at the risk of our lives'.[400] Like in *Les Merveilles de Rigomer*, the historical Anglo-Norman presence in Ireland is driven by the prospects of land, wealth, and the opportunity to prove one's courage.

Reputation and danger

The appeal of Ireland, both historically and in the text, also appears to be tied up with its reputation. The English presence in Ireland offered a conduit for knowledge of Irish geography, people, and customs, exemplified through Gerald of Wales' *Topographia hibernica*. Gerald had himself visited Ireland in 1183 before returning with John in 1185, when he appears to have travelled from Waterford to Dublin.[401] His writings on Ireland, although infused with fantastical material, demonstrate a level of first-hand knowledge. Surviving in forty-seven manuscript copies, the *Topographia* was clearly popular in Gerald's lifetime and beyond.[402] This first-hand geographical knowledge built upon and augmented Ireland's existing reputation as a place of marvels, promulgated through widely circulated texts such as the late eight-century *Navigatio sancti Brendani* and the twelfth-century *Tractatus de*

[397] *The Marvels of Rigomer*, trans. Vesce, p. xiv.
[398] Gerald of Wales, *The Conquest of Ireland*, ed. T. Wright and trans. T. Forester (Cambridge, Ontario: In Parentheses Publications, 2001), p. 13.
[399] Gerald of Wales, *The Conquest of Ireland*, p. 14.
[400] Gerald of Wales, *The Conquest of Ireland*, p. 31.
[401] Introduction, *The History and Topography of Ireland*, pp. 12–14.
[402] Rooney, 'The manuscripts of the works of Gerald of Wales', p. 7.

Purgatorio sancti Patricii, both of which were also transmitted as vernacular translations. Monastic settings in Ireland played an important role in the preservation and transmission of the *mirabilia hibernica*.[403] This reputation as a place of marvels was clearly linked to Ireland's geographical position. Depicted as a marginal place by authors such as Gildas and Bede, Ireland was 'connected conceptually to other marginal regions', particularly the East.[404] Indeed, Gerald of Wales makes a direct comparison between Ireland and the East:

> '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 also are made remarkable by their own wonders of nature.'[405]

It is difficult to establish how this reputation as a place of wonders and marvels factored into Anglo-Norman settlement in Ireland, given the political and military focus of surviving accounts such as *La geste des Engleis en yrlande* and Gerald of Wales's *Expugnatio Hibernica*. *Les Merveilles de Rigomer*, however, gives an insight into the importance of curiosity, boredom, and a desire for adventure and the unknown. The literary text reveals drivers of human behaviour that might otherwise remain intangible to the historian.

In *Les Merveilles de Rigomer*, it is the reputation of Rigomer and Lancelot's curiosity that drive the narrative. Lancelot is explicitly warned about the perils that he might face in Ireland:

> 'Biax dous amis,
>
> Vos avés grant fais entrepris.
>
> En Irlande a maint grant peril.' (ll. 399-401)
>
> 'Fair, good friend, you have undertaken a great quest for there are many perils to be had in Ireland!' (p. 11)

This contrasts with the marches of 'Bretaingne et Engleterre et Wales/ Et Escocë et Iestrewales' (ll. 383-384), where Lancelot does not experience any 'Aventure qui lui desplaise,/ Ne rien dont il soit a mal aise' (ll. 389-390, 'unpleasant adventure, or anything else for that matter, that disturbed him in any way.' (p. 11)), but is instead treated courteously by all whom he encounters. The term 'Bretaingne' in this context likely refers to the island of Britain rather than continental Brittany, as there is no reference to Lancelot crossing the Channel. I will return later to the idea of Britain, its

[403] For a detailed exploration of Irish marvels, see chapter 3, 'Mirabilia Hibernica: The Wondrous Isle', in Busby, *French in Medieval Ireland*, pp. 191–264.
[404] A. S. Mittman, 'The other close at hand: Gerald of Wales and the "Marvels of the West"', in B. Bildhauer and R. Mills, eds., *The Monstrous Middle Ages* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003), p. 97.
[405] Gerald of Wales, *The History and Topography of Ireland*, p. 31.

relation to England, and how this might relate to the representation of the Arthurian knight and the reframing of colonisation in the text.

In Boyd's words, '*Bretagne* is boring… [it] is familiar, tame, civilized, inert'.[406] Lancelot must travel to Ireland, and to Rigomer in particular to find danger and adventure. Lancelot and the other knights of King Arthur receive numerous and repeated warnings from the inhabitants of Ireland about the dangers of Rigomer.[407] If they go to Rigomer, they will be killed, wounded, or enslaved:

> 'Nus vaillans chevaliers cortois
>
> Ne doit aler a Rigomer.
>
> Onques nul n'en pot retorner,
>
> Que il ne fust mors u navrés
>
> Ou pris u par armes oltrés.' (ll. 7578-7582)
>
> 'Valiant and courteous knights should never go to Rigomer since none can ever return from there without being mortally wounded, or taken prisoner by being defeated at arms.' (p. 165)

Lancelot even sees proof of these dangers when he meets knights suffering from wounds received at Rigomer. Whilst travelling through a forest, Lancelot comes across a knight named Brios de Montescon who was wounded at Rigomer and now lies on a litter groaning from the pain of his wounds (ll. 1233-1378). Later, Lancelot is welcomed at a castle on the border between Connacht and Breifne. The lord of the castle, Torplains de Grine Plaigne, was wounded at Rigomer and, because of its enchantments, he must receive a foreign knight – in this case, Lancelot - at the castle on the anniversary of his wounding or he will die within a month (ll. 2643-2982).[408] At Lancelot's next lodgings, a knight knocks on the door and asks for hospitality. The knight had lost an eye at Rigomer but carries it with him in case the enchantments of Rigomer can be undone (ll. 3059-3144). Yet these warnings fail to dampen Lancelot's fervour. Indeed, Lancelot's interest in Rigomer appears to increase every time he hears more about it:

> 'Quant Lanselos ot le visconte,
>
> Qui de Rigomer li aconte
>
> Les mervelles et les engiens,
>
> Or li samble, ço soit grans biens,

[406] Boyd, 'The Source of Enchantment', p. 114.
[407] For example, see ll. 1093-1104, ll. 1278-1282, ll. 2157-2161, ll. 8160-8172.
[408] The lords encountered by Lancelot and the other Arthurian knights in Ireland appear to have French rather than Irish names. This will be discussed in more depth below.

Quant il a la parole öie.

…

Car qui en ait joie ne ire,

Or mais savra bien demander

Le droit chemin vers Rigomer

Et pense bien que aluec sunt

Li plus des mervelles del mont. (ll. 1129-1133, 1138-1142)[409]

'As Lancelot listened to the viscount recount all these wonders and enchantments of Rigomer, it seemed good to him to hear about all these strange things…. It did not matter who would or would not like it but he would now press even harder to discover the road he should take to get to Rigomer, for he was convinced that only there could the most marvellous things in the world be found' (p. 27)

Unlike many other romance texts, Lancelot's quest to Rigomer is securely focused on place rather than on a desire to gain the favour of the lady of Rigomer or to obtain a particular object. Lancelot's curiosity is persistent, as emphasised by his extensive questioning of Baudris of Antiufais, a knight who has offered lodging to Lancelot:

'Or me dites, se vos saves,

Biax ostes, si nel me celés,

Quels est li terre et li päis,

Coument est Rigomers assis,

Quels est li sire et quels la gens?

Est li päis entor mout gens?

A i encore bien loig de ci?' (ll. 1465-1471)

'So now please tell me all you know about it, good host, without concealing anything from me: what is that place and land, and how is Rigomer situated, and who is its Lord, and what kind of people reside there? Are there many people thereabouts? And do I have still a long way to go before getting there from here?' (p. 34)

Lancelot's desire to see Rigomer and its unknown marvels drives him on, despite its well-demonstrated dangers. Indeed, as Grossel notes, this curiosity might be considered the most potent enchantment of Rigomer.[410] It is his curiosity that ultimately leads to Lancelot's imprisonment at

[409] See also ll. 2975-2982, ll. 3113-3115, ll. 3131-3132, ll. 4605-4609.

[410] 'On en vient à se demander si le pire enchantement de Rigomer ne serait pas cette curiosité essentielle, ce vertige de la connaissance qui pousse les aventureux jusqu'aux lands interdites.' M. G. Grossel, 'Entre féerie et magie: La Merveille dans Rigomer.', in *Le monde des fées dans la culture medieval: IIème Congrès au Mont Saint-Michel (Mont Saint-Michel, 31. octobre - 1er novembre 1994)* (Greifswald: Reineke-Verlag, 1994), p. 86.

Rigomer and the battle waged by the knights of King Arthur, both of which will be discussed further later in this chapter.

The marvels of Rigomer

The possibility of adventure, honour, and wealth, combined with Ireland's reputation as a place of marvels, makes it an appealing destination for Lancelot in *Les Merveilles de Rigomer* and perhaps also for Strongbow and the other lords who historically travelled to Ireland. However, the potential rewards of Ireland are intertwined with danger, and the negative consequences of Rigomer's enchantments appear to permeate throughout Ireland. Whilst searching for Lancelot, the knights of King Arthur repeatedly meet characters who have been wounded at Rigomer and continue to suffer from its enchantments. One of the episodic adventures faced by the group of Arthurian knights as they attempt to find Lancelot recounts how Cligés comes across a knight lying down and covered with fine cloth. The knight is wounded, and the lance shaft remains in his wound. In removing the shaft, Cligés awakens the knight who explains that he was defeated at Rigomer but fairies cast a spell whereby as long as the lance shaft remained in his body, he would experience delight:

> 'Adonc me revint a moi li fee,
>
> Si me redona destinee:
>
> Tant comme el cor ai le tronçon,
>
> Si sui en joie sans tençon.' (ll. 9417-9420)
>
> 'Afterwards, the fairies came to me again and cast another spell for me: as long as I carried the shaft in my body, I would know exquisite delight and be in peace.' (p. 203)

Whilst in this state of bliss, the knight dreams of being at the court of Morgain le Fee where he had won a tournament. This martial success provides an even greater pleasure than amorous relations (ll. 9317-9322). However, once the shaft is removed, the knight is greatly angered and attempts to kill Cligés. He becomes a sort of 'chevalier vampire' who has skin as hard as iron and is almost impossible to kill.[411] In another episode, Engrevain discovers a strange and marvellous opening underneath a mountain, in which ladies and knights are enjoying music and festivities:

> 'Ils esgardent, si lor fu vis
>
> Que il virent .i. parëis
>
> Et tot le plus glorious estre,

[411] Grossel, 'Entre féerie et magie', pp. 92–93.

Qui en cest siècle pëust estre.

Dames i ot et chevaliers

Et pucieles et escuiers

Et demenoient mout grant joie,

Que je ne sai c'on forçor voie.' (ll. 8275-8282)

> 'The more the knights outside kept on staring at it, the more they realized that they were looking at a paradise, the most glorious place to be found anywhere in the world. Ladies and knights, maidens and squires were all having a fine high time inside there.' (p. 179)

As Boyd notes, this 'corresponds in every respect to the classic Irish conception of the *síd*', an Otherworld often represented as being underground.[412] It is in this mountain opening that Engrevain discovers and rescues the wife of Robert of Sotain Herbert, who has been carried off by a violent storm.

These strange occurrences, albeit offering pleasure, are clearly underwritten with danger. This is nowhere clearer than in Rigomer itself which, if entered unarmed, offers the most splendid rewards. Knights can enjoy pleasure with beautiful ladies, spend time hunting, or play games of chess and backgammon. If they wish to fence or joust, they will easily be able to find a partner (ll. 4785-4802). All these pleasurable activities are possible with no responsibilities or obligations to a lord or king. Yet Rigomer is also the source of danger, culminating in Lancelot's enslavement and his perilous rescue by Gawain and his fellow knights. Here Rigomer serves as a synecdoche for Ireland, offering both danger and reward in their most heightened forms.

A gendered danger

The dangers found in Rigomer are frequently associated with female characters who deceive and ensnare Lancelot. When Lancelot eventually reaches Rigomer, he defeats the White Knight, the Knight of Triple Arms, and manages to overcome the dragon that guards the bridge to the castle. However, when Lancelot crosses the bridge, he is met by a beautiful maiden who gives him a new horse, armour, and shield. When he touches the lance, he is enchanted and forgets how to fight. The knights of the Fosse Gobienne are easily able to defeat him and take him prisoner. Another maiden then gives him a ring, supposedly as a token of love from her mistress. Yet again Lancelot is deceived. The ring puts Lancelot under an enchantment that makes him lose his memory and behave

[412] Boyd, 'The Source of Enchantment', p. 141.

like a beast. He is put to work in the kitchens, where numerous knights are forced to carry out menial tasks such as cutting wood, preparing food, and weaving (ll. 6327-6374).

By removing their military function, the enchantments of Rigomer emasculate the imprisoned knights. This enslavement could also be a reference to continuing practices of slavery by the Irish, a distinctively barbaric practice in the eyes of twelfth-century writers. For Gerald of Wales, 'the English invasion of Ireland was God's punishment on the Irish for their involvement in the monstrous crime of slavery'.[413] The specific reference to a magic ring also has literary parallels. We might draw a comparison with the anonymous *lai* of *Melion*, in which the eponymous protagonist is trapped in a wolf form due to the theft of his magic ring by his Irish wife. In both *Melion* and *Les Merveilles de Rigomer*, the male protagonist is deceived by a maiden who appears trustworthy and the ring, symbolically exchanged as a token of love, enacts their deceit. The misogynistic message of *Melion* is explicit, with the protagonist declaring that:

> 'Ja ne faldra
>
> Que de tot sa feme kerra,
>
> Qu'en la fin ne soit malbaillis;
>
> Ne doit pas croire tos ses dis' (ll. 587-590)
>
> 'It will never fail to happen/ That he who believes his wife completely/ Will be ruined in the end;/ He should not believe all she says',

The idea of trust and deceitful language is at the forefront here and also in *Les Merveilles de Rigomer*, which explicitly emphasises the deceitful behaviour of the maidens. The first maiden is described as being 'plus…bele que seraine' (l. 6135, 'more beautiful than a siren' (p. 135)), immediately warning the audience of her potential danger.[414] Her beautiful appearance contrasts with her false heart (l. 6141), and she is labelled as a 'mauvaise crestïene' (l. 6194). She is a seductress, whose treacherous behaviour exonerates Lancelot from the shame of the situation that follows. Similarly, the text emphasises the lies of the second maiden:

> 'Tant li dist mençoignes et voir

[413] Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century*, p. 47.

[414] The dangers posed by mythological sirens were described by Isidore of Seville in Book XI of his Etymologies: '30. People imagine three Sirens who were part maidens, part birds, having wings and talons; one of them would make music with her voice, the second with a flute, and the third with a lyre. They would draw sailors, enticed by the song, into shipwreck. 31. In truth, however, they were harlots, who, because they would seduce passers-by into destitution, were imagined as bringing shipwreck upon them. They were said to have had wings and talons because sexual desire both flies and wounds. They are said to have lived among the waves because the waves gave birth to Venus.' *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, eds. and trans. S. A. Barney, W. J. Lewis, J. A. Beach, and O. Berghof (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 245. Sirens were also depicted in medieval bestiaries such as the late twelfth- or early thirteenth-century manuscript Harley MS 4751, f.47v (British Library).

> Por lui sousprendre et decevoir,
>
> Que Lanselos ne set que dire,
>
> Ou otroier ou escondire.' (ll. 6311-6314)
>
> 'Thus did she mix and weave the truth and lies together and so deceived and tricked him that Lancelot did not know what to say, or agree to, or conceal…' (p. 138)

Here ideas of truth and belief are interwoven with those of lies and deceit, emphasising how language and appearance can be deceiving. Indeed, it is the discourse of the unknown Irish maiden that first encourages Lancelot to seek out Rigomer. Her words, which emphasise the rewards of Ireland but fail to warn Lancelot of the dangers that he might face, are the catalyst for all his adventures and misfortunes.

Other episodes within the text, clearly written from a male perspective, also highlight the untrustworthy nature of women. When Gawain is captured by the knight Gaudionés, Gaudionés asks the ladies to remove his arms and armour, knowing that the courteous Gawain would not defend himself against them (ll. 7371-7374). By submitting to them, Gawain unwittingly allows himself to be taken prisoner by Gaudionés and is unable to protect himself. The lady of Rigomer herself is an ambiguous figure, described as beautiful but also 'Qui seit assés de mavais gius' (ll. 1479-1481, 'who knows more than enough malicious turns' (p. 35)). It is unclear to what extent she is a victim of or an accessory to the enchantments of Rigomer.[415] Nevertheless, these enchantments are undoubtedly gendered, created by 'une fee qui ot ire' (l. 6906, 'a fairy who was angry' (p. 151)) and enacted by the maidens mentioned above.

Wild and challenging landscapes

As we have seen, Ireland – and Rigomer in particular – hold an irresistible draw for Lancelot. The text offers a possible window into how Ireland was perceived as a place of adventure and opportunity for Anglo-Norman knights in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Ireland in the text is simultaneously a place of danger, where knights risk being wounded, enslaved, or killed, often as a result of the enchantments of Rigomer and the deceitful maidens that reside there. However, as will be explored below, the dangers of Ireland are also linked to the practicalities of landscape and geography, which actively resist the incursions of the Arthurian knights. I suggest that we can again draw parallels with the historical experiences of Anglo-Norman invaders and settlers in the 1170s, who were faced with new environmental conditions that posed very real difficulties. The knights of King Arthur, unlike the

[415] Grossel, 'Entre féerie et magie', p. 86.

native Irish, are not able to manipulate the landscape around them, which is interwoven with the enchantments of Rigomer.

Lancelot's first experience of Ireland presents it as a 'päis amer' (l. 408), a space of wilderness with limited human settlement and vast forests:

> 'Lanselos entra en Irlande,
>
> La terre estoit estraigne et grande,
>
> Et les foriés grans et plenires,
>
> Li marescoi et les bruieres;
>
> Et les viles sont si lontaines,
>
> C'on va de l'une a l'autres a paines.' (ll. 409-414)[416]
>
> 'Lancelot thus entered Ireland: a strange, large land with broad and deep forests, marshes, and heaths. Its towns were so far distant from one another that one travelled between them with difficulty.' (pp. 11-12)

This clearly contrasts with the hospitable landscape that Lancelot left behind in Britain and introduces the Ireland that will be experienced over the course of Lancelot's adventures. This initial description notes the great distance between towns in Ireland. During his journeys through Ireland, Lancelot often spends lengthy periods of time without any human contact. The text repeatedly emphasises how Lancelot and the other knights of King Arthur wander without finding any town or shelter:

> 'Mais malement fu avoiés,
>
> Car toute jor est forvoiés,
>
> C'ainc borc ne vile ne trova.' (l. 2077)
>
> 'But he was very badly escorted, for he went astray the whole day without finding any hamlet or town.' (p. 47)

Although Lancelot and the other knights eventually stumble across castles that dot the landscape, the limited nature of human settlement in Ireland causes practical problems for knights who require food and shelter.

Moreover, Ireland lacks the road systems necessary for easy transportation. The knights of King Arthur frequently find themselves in difficulty because of the scarce and overgrown paths through the landscape. When following Gaudionés to his castle, Fors Graviers, Gawain finds himself in the middle of a forest where he is unable to find 'voie ne cariere,/ Ne n'i font trace ne polriere' (ll.

[416] See also ll. 3456-3457, ll. 8010-8015, ll. 8589-8592.

7297-7298, ‘path or wagon road there nor any of the tracks left behind in the kicked up dust’ (p. 159)). The woods rise high around him, filled with sharp thorns and rocks. The location of the castle is itself unclear, described only through the surrounding landscape with no mention of region. When the other knights attempt to track Gawain, they are unable to find him because the hard and rocky ground leaves no trace of hoof prints (ll. 7447-7450). Later, Engrevain has similar difficulties travelling through the landscape, which is so wild that ‘il ne puet plus lonc aler/ Ne voie ne sentier trover’ (ll. 8229-8230, ‘he was blocked and could not find any sort of path… because of the wild terrain’ (p. 178)). As well as its practical consequences, the presence or lack of roads plays into how we experience and think about a space. As Richard Oram suggests, 'The presence of a road subtly alters perceptions of the land it traverses; it is no longer a trackless wilderness, untamed and perilous, but a modified commodity to be consumed at leisure as we pass through it in air-conditioned comfort'.[417] The difficulties faced by the Arthurian knights when they travel through the landscape of Ireland therefore play an important role in shaping how Ireland is constructed in the text as an untamed wilderness.

The lack of adequate road systems is also remarked upon by Gerald in the *Expugnatio Hibernica*, in which Gerald criticises the Anglo-Norman failure to make their mark upon the Irish landscape:

> ‘it comes to pass that nothing has been done to strengthen our position in the island; there are no inroads into the enemy’s country, no great number of fortresses erected, no felling of trees, and clearing and widening the roads through the woods, commonly called “bad passes,” for the greater ease and security of convoys…In the meantime this was the state of the island; all the roads were impracticable, all communications cut off; no security anywhere from the broad axes of the Irish; new reports daily of fresh losses by the English.’[418]

Gerald’s account could, of course, be a rhetorical construction designed to present Ireland as a ‘trackless wilderness’ lacking in roads, rather than an accurate depiction of the difficulties posed by the Irish landscape. Nevertheless, the idea of Ireland as a space that is difficult to traverse clearly resonated with the Francophone elite, and the representation of Ireland in *Les Merveilles de Rigomer* may be reflective of the practical experiences of Anglo-Norman knights in Ireland.

In *Les Merveilles de Rigomer*, it is often when the knights lose their way and stray into the wild spaces of Ireland that they encounter adventures and danger. Adventures appear to be connected to the landscape, particularly the vast forests that stretch across Ireland and that are also described by

[417] R. D. Oram, ‘Trackless, impenetrable and underdeveloped? Roads, colonization and environmental transformation in the Anglo-Scottish border zone, c. 1100 to c. 1300’, in V. Allen and R. Evans, eds., *Roadworks: Medieval Britain, Medieval Roads* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), p. 303.
[418] Gerald of Wales, *The Conquest of Ireland*, p. 79.

Gerald in his *Topographia*.[419] Ireland in *Les Merveilles de Rigomer* is described as a 'terre le sauvaige' (l. 1461, 'wild land' (p. 34)), which is 'plaine de boscaige' (l. 1462, 'full of forests' (p. 34)). Ideas of wildness are intimately tied to forests through the rhyme (*sauvaige*/*boscaige*). These forests are frequently coupled with adjectives that emphasise their size and abundance; they are 'large' (l. 1841), 'follie' (l. 2286), 'grande' (ll. 3153), and 'haut' (l. 9118). Another use of rhyme (*bosquilose*/*pirillose*) links these forest spaces with the dangers that they contain:

> 'Qu'ëustes vos ça oltre a faire
>
> En nostre terre bosquilose,
>
> Qui sauvage est et pirillose?' (ll. 7724-7726)
>
> 'what were you doing around here in our wild and perilous woods?' (p. 168)

Coping with wildness

The landscape is overgrown and irrepressible; Ireland is under the control of the natural world, and its marvellous contingent, rather than humanity. Yet whilst the knights of King Arthur struggle against the wild landscape, the inhabitants of Ireland are able to manipulate it to their own ends. Lancelot's first encounter in Ireland is with Savari and the brigand knights of Ruiste Valee. The text describes how Savari's castle was built 'Entre le mont et la valee' (l. 439, 'between the mountain peak and the valley.' (p. 12)), making it impenetrable and perfect for ravaging the surrounding countryside. Later, Gawain follows Gaudionés through the difficult terrain to his castle, Fors Graviers, which is only accessible via a narrow bridge crossing a marshland (ll. 7304-7350). The landscape again provides the perfect defence. Similarly, the castle of the giants encountered by Gaudins is situated 'sour une roche ens es foriés' (l. 8910, 'on a cliff in the forest' (p. 192)). Like Ruiste Valee, this positioning in the landscape allows the giants to lay waste to the surrounding lands with no threat of opposition.[420] Watery landscapes are also manipulated by the inhabitants of Ireland, who plan to overpower the knights of King Arthur and throw them into 'une eve rade et troblee' (l. 9741, 'the swiftly churning river' (p. 209)). Rigomer itself is situated in a strategic position on 'une roche desor mer' (l. 6882, 'a rocky cliff that juts up from the sea' (p. 150)), surrounded by water that protects it from any attack (ll. 6880-6886, ll. 2869-2879). As well as providing a natural defence, this watery boundary also offers a means of receiving supplies (l. 4989-4990). The inhabitants of Rigomer fear neither attack nor siege.

Unlike the knights of King Arthur, the native Irish are able to take advantage of the landscapes surrounding them, exploiting the strategic benefits of mountainous and watery

[419] Gerald of Wales, *The History and Topography of Ireland*, p. 34.
[420] Ireland is frequently associated with giants, which are often present in romance texts. For example, see the discussion of Waldef and Gui de Warewic in chapter 4, Busby, *French in Medieval Ireland*, pp. 265–328.

environments. This is clearly reminiscent of Gerald of Wales' comments on the Irish in the *Topographia Hibernica*, in which he notes that 'the people of Ireland have no use for castles. Woods are their forts and swamps are their trenches'.[421] Albeit a derisory comment, Gerald is clearly emphasising how the Irish are able to make use of these spaces in a way not possible to the Anglo-Normans.[422] Indeed, the *Expugnatio Hibernica* does offer examples of the native Irish making use of the landscape around them. Diarmait Mac Murchada, under attack by Ruairi Ua Conchobuir, is described retreating 'to a position not far from Ferns, which was surrounded by thick woods and steep mountains, with waters and bogs, which made it naturally very inaccessible.'[423] Diarmait's knowledge of the natural strengths of the landscape is here complemented by the military expertise of Robert Fitz-Stephen, who directs the men to fell trees and dig trenches in order to strengthen their defence. The incoming Anglo-Normans must use the expertise of someone who knows and understands the landscape. Later, a number of native Irish who are 'lurking at the entrance of the woods' attempt to drive off cattle taken by Raymond, commander of Strongbow's troops. When pursued by Meyler, 'the Irish rushed out of the wood, and severely wounding his companion, cut him to pieces with their broad-axes'.[424] The cover offered by the thickly wooded landscape serves both as protection and as the perfect place from which to pose an attack. The continuing association of the Irish with the natural landscapes of Ireland is clear in a 1297 statute which distinguishes 'the 'lands of peace' from places where the Irish could be found 'confiding in the thickness of the woods and the depth of the adjacent bogs.''[425]

In their ability to make use of the wild landscapes around them, the Irish are closely linked to the Welsh in the eyes of Gerald of Wales. In the *Expugnatio Hibernica*, Gerald compares warfare in France with warfare in Ireland and Wales. Whilst France offers open plains, Ireland and Wales are characterised by their mountainous terrain, marshes, and dense forests, which make it very difficult to fight in heavy armour on horseback.[426] Gerald makes similar statements in the *Descriptio Cambriae*, which emphasises the differences between the tactics of Anglo-Norman and Welsh fighters. Whilst the Anglo-Normans are used to fighting on level and open ground in heavy armour, the Welsh are much more adept at moving through the mountainous and wooded landscape. The country of Wales

[421] Gerald of Wales, *The History and Topography of Ireland*, p. 119.
[422] Gerald's attitude towards the Irish was underpinned by his criticisms of the state of religion, as well as a perception of the Irish as barbarians who were characterised by a pastoral way of life. See Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales*, pp. 38–44, 131–146.
[423] Gerald of Wales, *The Conquest of Ireland*, p. 18.
[424] Gerald of Wales, *The Conquest of Ireland*, p. 48.
[425] J. H. Andrews, 'The geographical element in Irish history', in D. Ó Cróinín, ed., *A New History of Ireland, 1: Prehistoric and Early Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 13; citing Henry FitzPatrick Berry, *Statutes and ordinances, and acts of the Parliament of Ireland.: King John to Henry V.* (Dublin, 1907), p. 209.
[426] Gerald of Wales, *The Conquest of Ireland*, p. 81.

is itself 'so inaccessible and so well protected' that the people of Wales, according to Gerald, could never be fully conquered.[427]

Extreme weather

The wildness of the landscape in *Les Merveilles de Rigomer* is also associated with meteorological conditions in Ireland, which are often depicted as extreme and dangerous. Robert of Sotain Herbert, mentioned above, describes how his wife was carried away by a 'grant tempieste' (l. 8100, 'furious storm' (p. 175)), which, like a whirlwind, uprooted trees and killed beasts across the forest. Neither Robert nor his peers could resist the strength of the storm, and Robert's wife was swept away by the wind. Here the weather is an active agent of the dangers posed by Ireland. This is again the case in Rigomer itself. During the battle for Rigomer, the knights of King Arthur face numerous opponents including the Irish inhabitants of Rigomer and an assortment of monstrous races that begin to get the better of them.[428]

Yet the most powerful and dangerous of the opponents in Rigomer is the extreme weather that torments them and eventually forces them to retreat. They are buffeted by rain, snow, and wind in such a terrible storm that 'Or dïent que ço fu dïaules' (l. 10056, 'they exclaimed then that it was the devil' (p. 215)). The heath turns red and the clouds blacken (ll. 10048-10050). The otherwise courageous knights are taken with 'tres grande freor' (l. 10064). Later, the knights are again battered by such heavy rain, snow, and wind that the heath is flooded, as if a return to 'el delouge' (l. 13752). It is both freezing cold and scorching hot, and the knights are forced to flee the heath. The extreme nature of these environmental conditions appears to be due to the enchantments of Rigomer, the weather summoned by a horn that sounds out across the lands (ll. 10038-10042). It is tempting to suggest that the references to the devil and the flood are here used to frame the enchantments of Rigomer in a biblical manner, reinforcing Gawain's position as a messianic figure. The weather in Rigomer is undoubtedly more extreme than that described by Gerald of Wales who, although noting that Ireland frequently suffers from 'a plentiful supply of rain' and a wind that is 'more frequent and violent than any other',[429] otherwise depicts Ireland as 'the most temperate of all countries.'[430]

[427] Gerald of Wales, *The Journey Through Wales*, p. 269.
[428] For a discussion of these 'international' monsters, see Boyd, 'The Source of Enchantment', pp. 180–186.
[429] Gerald of Wales, *The History and Topography of Ireland*, pp. 35, 53.
[430] Gerald of Wales, *The History and Topography of Ireland*, p. 53.

Justice and the end of enchantments

As we have seen, Ireland in *Les Merveilles de Rigomer* is characterised by its potential for reward and danger. These dangers stem from the enchantments of Rigomer within Ireland, but also from the landscape of Ireland itself and from the limited presence of a centralised authority. In Breifne and Thomond in particular there is nobody to uphold justice or to protect the rights of the vulnerable, which allows for greater freedom but also greater threat. Brigand knights act solely for personal gain, rather than according to a chivalric code of conduct. However, when Lancelot arrives in Ireland, he serves as the upholder of order and the defender of the vulnerable. Lancelot defeats the wicked knight Savari, rescuing Flor Desiree, the daughter of the viscount of Pavengai. He then acts as the champion of a widow whose nephew is attempting to seize her dowry. Here there does appear to be a system of justice which will be carried out by 'li provos le roi' (l. 1591), yet it is Lancelot who defends 'la dame qui estoit fie' (l. 1617). Later, he rescues the kidnapped daughter of the king of Desmond. In each of these cases, Lancelot's reputation precedes him. On hearing his name, knights exclaim their joy at meeting Lancelot and their instinct to surrender to him (see, for example, ll. 1446-1451, ll. 1766-1773, ll. 2216-2230, ll. 3790-3792).

Indeed, the idea itself of being a knight from Britain has social currency, and Britain itself has a reputation for courageous knights and good counsel. Britain was a potent mythological and political idea throughout the medieval period, which could represent a vision of unity and imperial overlordship.[431] In my reading of *Les Merveilles de Rigomer*, Britain can be equated with England, and the court of King Arthur with that of the Angevin kings of England. The text's repeated references to the positive qualities of Britain and the Arthurian court are therefore flattering to the Angevin court. The king of Desmond tells Lancelot how he himself visited Britain and King Arthur, where he received 'si bon consel' (l. 4512, 'such good advice' (p. 101)) that he was able to gain the kingship and submission of the people of Desmond. In another example, the knights of King Arthur defeat and reconcile two knights who had been waging war against each other over disputed land. As Boyd notes, they are compelled to literally 'kiss and make up' (see ll. 7556-7563).[432] When the knights of King Arthur reach the Unarmed Knight near Rigomer, he asks them where they are from and welcomes them based on their origins:

> 'Bien soit venue tel compaigne!
>
> Nos savons bien, vëu l'avomes,
>
> Mout i a de Bretons preudomes.' (ll. 9880-9882)

[431] For a discussion of the idea of Britain, see Davies, *The First English Empire*, pp. 35–53.
[432] Boyd, 'The Source of Enchantment', p. 174.

> ‘A band of knights like this one is certainly welcome indeed! We have known and seen proof of the many brave men there are among the British.’ (l. 212)

Notably, the knights of King Arthur are repeatedly referred to as ‘Breton’ throughout the battle for Rigomer (see, for example, l. 10071, l. 10086, l. 10096). Being from Britain is associated with being on the side of right, in opposition to the Irish knights and monstrous races that come to defend the enchantments of Rigomer.

This can be clearly linked to contemporary ideas about the need for Anglo-Norman intervention in Ireland. As discussed above, there were considerable concerns about sexual vice and simony in Ireland throughout the twelfth century, and these were used as a justification for Anglo-Norman invasion.[433] The failures of the native Irish were also economic. Twelfth-century writers frequently noted the failure of the Irish to make productive use of their fertile land, making them ‘ripe for new management’.[434] The supposed sexual immorality, backwardness, and lawlessness of the native Irish put them in need of new lords.[435] Notably, however, not all of the inhabitants of Ireland are depicted as bad or, crucially, as *other* in *Les Merveilles de Rigomer*. Lancelot and the other knights are frequently offered hospitality from noble lords who appear to have French rather than Irish names, thus eliding the cultural and linguistic differences between the inhabitants of Ireland and the knights of King Arthur. Even their enemies appear to relate to them ‘on an equal footing – that is, as knights’.[436] Nor is there any difficulty in communicating. The text does not therefore create a clear distinction between the inhabitants of Ireland and the Arthurian knights based on ethnicity or language.

Moreover, there appears to be no condemnation of the frequent sexual relations outside of marriage that are enjoyed in Ireland in the text. Throughout his journey, Lancelot encounters knights in the midst of amorous relations. The lack of authority in Breifne and Thomond means a prevalence of thieves and brigands, but it also offers pleasure with few consequences, particularly thanks to the landscape of Ireland, which itself offers privacy for sexual encounters. Whilst riding through Breifne, Lancelot comes across the aforementioned Baudris of Antiufais and his lady, who have ridden into the woods in order to amuse themselves together (ll. 1389-1394). In Thomond, Lancelot wanders through a forest until he stumbles upon a pavilion in which a knight and his lady are kissing and embracing (ll. 3155-3161). Here we are reminded of the *lai* of *Desiré*, in which the Blanche Lande provides the setting for the protagonist’s amorous relations with his fairy mistress.[437] If Lancelot intervenes, it is to not to condemn sexual deviancy but to mediate homosocial relations - because another man has asked

[433] See chapter 2.1, ‘The marvellous and resistance to authority’, p. 72.
[434] Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales*, p. 132.
[435] For the development of ideas of the ‘barbarian’, see ‘The Face of the Barbarian’ in Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales*, pp. 131–146.
[436] Boyd, ‘The Source of Enchantment’, p. 153.
[437] See chapter 2.1, ‘The marvellous and resistance to authority, pp. 84-87.

him to (as in the case of Flor Desiree) or because Lancelot takes issue with how he is treated by the other man (as in the Thomond example above).[438] Indeed, the knights of King Arthur also engage in carnal relations with maidens in Ireland. Lancelot himself leaves a maiden pregnant (ll. 4581-4586), whilst Sagremor is moved by a maiden's beauty to engage in sexual intercourse with her, despite her initial objections (ll. 7838-7982).

Les Merveilles de Rigomer does not, therefore, present a simple imagining of an Ireland that needs civilising by the Anglo-Normans. Whilst the text emphasises the dangers to be found in Ireland and hints at the unjust behaviour of some, the greater threat is to be found in the enchantments of Rigomer. Ireland is, as Boyd suggests, pre-colonised, under the control of the enchantments of Rigomer.[439] If we take Boyd's point one step further, we can see Gawain as the de-coloniser of the Irish. This places the knights of Britain – or their analogues, the Anglo-Normans – as defenders rather than aggressors. The invasion of Ireland is framed not as an attempt to colonise, but as an attempt to free the inhabitants of Ireland from their existing yoke – a rhetorical strategy that serves to justify colonisation. This idea is paralleled in Gerald's *Expugnatio*. Addressing his followers, Robert Fitz-Stephen states that: 'We are not come as pirates or freebooters, but to reinstate this illustrious, generous, and liberal prince [Mac Murchada] in his own territories, of which he has been despoiled by the treason of his followers. We have compassion on the distressed, we succour the oppressed, we restore the destitute to his country and his inheritance'.[440]

However, it is not a simple case of Lancelot or indeed the other knights of Britain upholding justice and ending the enchantments of Rigomer. Only Gawain is the chosen one, and only he can fulfil the prophecy and free Rigomer from its enchantments thus ending the imprisonment of the knights held there and healing the wounded.[441] In *Les Merveilles de Rigomer*, the prophetic role of Gawain, the chosen one, imbues his quest with a messianic quality. He is the saviour of Ireland, who frees the imprisoned and heals the wounded. Once the enchantments have been broken, Gawain does not marry the lady of Rigomer, as we might expect. Instead, he takes on the paternalistic role of finding her a high-status husband, and she is married to Midomidas, the son of King Lot of Galloway.[442] Gawain is a liberator, protector, and effectively stands in for King Arthur as an overlord. The representation of Ireland in the text therefore offers an alternative imagining of the

[438] The concept of homosociality has been discussed by scholars across fields including literature, history, and queer theory. Eve Sedgwick's influential work discusses the way in which male-male relationships might be mediated through women. E. K. Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015); Ailes argues that the language of male friendship 'forms part of the public affirmation of masculine identity, an identity realized in the context of a man's relationship with other men' (p.214). M. J. Ailes, 'The Medieval Male Couple and the Language of Homosociality', in D. Hadley, ed., *Masculinity in Medieval Europe* (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 214–237.
[439] Boyd, 'The Source of Enchantment', p. 154.
[440] Gerald of Wales, *The Conquest of Ireland*, p. 20.
[441] For a discussion of the significance of Gawain in MS 472, see L. J. Walters, 'Parody and Moral Allegory in Chantilly MS 472', *Modern Language Notes*, 113:4 (1998), pp. 937–950.
[442] Boyd, 'The Source of Enchantment', p. 175.

Anglo-Norman invasion, which explores the rewards and dangers to be found in Ireland whilst reframing Anglo-Norman intervention as liberation and the fulfilment of prophecy.

Conclusion

Les Merveilles de Rigomer clearly demonstrates a knowledge of the regions, place names, and geopolitics of Ireland. Like many of the other texts discussed in this thesis, it is embedded in a real geographical landscape, blurring the boundaries between the fictional text and historical writing. Unlike the other texts in my corpus that feature Ireland, such as *Melion* and the *Roman de Horn*, the geographical reference points in *Les Merveilles de Rigomer* are wide ranging and extensive, stretching far beyond Dublin.[443] The author of *Les Merveilles de Rigomer* was clearly knowledgeable about the geopolitics of Ireland, which are synthesised with Arthurian literary motifs.

In the text, Ireland is characterised as a place of both reward and threat, which promises riches and beautiful women, but which is also rife with thieves and brigands. Rigomer itself offers heightened pleasures, yet its enchantments result in the wounding, imprisonment, and death of any knight who refuses to set down their arms. I have suggested that this characterisation of Ireland reflects contemporary attitudes towards Ireland, from the perspective of the Francophone elite and in the context of Anglo-Norman invasion and settlement. Ireland offers opportunities for land and wealth, but it is also dangerous. By approaching the text in terms of landscape and geography, I have shown the parallels between the fictional experiences of the characters of the text and the historical experiences of Anglo-Norman knights in Ireland. Landscape appears to be central to how Ireland was imagined and experienced by the Francophone elite. The dense woods, mountains, and lack of paths and towns make travel across Ireland difficult for both the Anglo-Norman knights and their Arthurian counterparts. The inhabitants of Ireland, however, are not reliant on castles and towns and are able to make strategic use of the landscape, which offers protection and allows them to mount unseen attacks.

In *Les Merveilles de Rigomer*, the challenges faced by the Arthurian knights are heightened by the enchantments connected to the site of Rigomer, which cause extreme weather and summon monstrous races. Lancelot's imprisonment, however, is the result of female deceit, echoing the misogynistic tone demonstrated in other texts such as *Melion*. One knight, Gawain, is able to overcome the enchantments of Rigomer, freeing the Irish inhabitants from the yoke of oppression. Through the fictional representation of Arthurian knights in Ireland, the text reframes the historical Anglo-Norman knight as a liberator rather than a coloniser. *Les Merveilles de Rigomer* thus offers a

[443] *Melion* and *Horn* are discussed in chapters 1.3 and 3.2 respectively.

fresh insight into how the invasion and settlement of Ireland might have been re-imagined and justified by the Francophone elite in the thirteenth century.

As a final note, we might consider the return of Lancelot at the end of the text. When he returns to court, Lancelot is dishevelled and unrecognisable, with ragged clothes and a mossy bird's nest of hair.[444] Despite Gawain overcoming the enchantments of Rigomer, Ireland is never fully tamed, and prolonged exposure has an effect on British knights.[445] The landscape continues to assert itself on the bodies of the knights that spend time there - perhaps a commentary on those Anglo-Norman lords who settled in Ireland.

2.3. The spaces of exile in the *Gesta Herewardi* and *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*[446]

The previous two chapters have examined texts in which the protagonist actively seeks out wild Celtic spaces for their potential rewards and despite their dangers. In this chapter, I turn towards two texts – the *Gesta Herewardi* and *Fouke le Fitz Waryn* - in which the protagonists are forced to leave their homes. I explore how Celtic spaces function as geographical settings for their exile, how this differs between the two texts, and how this might relate to when and where the texts were composed. The *Gesta Herewardi* and *Fouke le Fitz Waryn* are frequently mentioned in the same breath by historians and literary scholars due to their similarities. Both texts are based on the lives of real historical figures, Fulk III and Hereward the Wake, who each spent time in opposition to their king; both texts offer accounts of the exile of the dispossessed protagonists; both texts blend their historical narratives with fantastic episodes, featuring motifs that echo romance and Scandinavian literary traditions.

Yet despite their parallels, the *Gesta Herewardi* and *Fouke le Fitz Waryn* were composed in very different times and spaces: the Latin *Gesta* is thought to have been written in Ely between 1109 and 1131, and the original French verse text of *Fouke* in the Shropshire area during the second half of the thirteenth century.[447] The *Gesta* and *Fouke* are, therefore, ideally placed for comparison, offering an insight into how similar subject matters might be treated differently as a result of the socio-political and geographical circumstances in which they were written. Here it is worth noting that the *Gesta* is written in Latin rather than French, meaning that it is not necessarily an obvious choice for a study focused on French literary texts. However, its similarities to *Fouke* in terms of narrative, its

[444] See I. Arsenau, 'Lancelot échevelé: la parodie dans *Les Merveilles de Rigomer'*, in C. Connochie-Bourgne, ed., *La chevelure dans la littérature et l'art du Moyen Âge : actes du 28e Colloque du CUER MA, 20, 21 et 22 février 2003* (Aix-en-Provence: Publications de l'Université de Provence, 2004), pp. 9–21.
[445] Boyd, 'The Source of Enchantment', p. 177.
[446] A version of this chapter is published as 'The Spaces of Exile in the *Gesta Herewardi* and *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*', in S. D. Church, ed., *Anglo-Norman Studies XLV: Proceedings of the Battle Conference 2022* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2023), pp. 19-33.
[447] E. van Houts, 'Hereward and Flanders', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 28 (1999), p. 202; Burgess, *Two Medieval Outlaws*, pp. 127–129.

references to Celtic spaces, and its blurring of historical and fantastic material make it an interesting and important point of comparison, particularly given its early date of composition.

The two texts have generated similar types of scholarship including attempts to identify historical material in the text,[448] studies of ethnicity and the nation,[449] and explorations of youth and development.[450] Scholars have tended to discuss the *Gesta* and *Fouke* in the context of outlawry, emphasising their generic similarities or discussing their place in the development of the Robin Hood character and legend.[451] In this chapter, I consider the texts outside of this teleologically-minded outlawry framework, shifting the focus onto the representation of exile and the geographical spaces in which it takes place.

Exile, a state of absence from one's home or country, can be discussed in multiple contexts in the medieval period.[452] During the eleventh and twelfth centuries, political exile in the Anglo-Norman world was predominantly a temporary form of banishment, designed to allow a period of appeasement and reflection for the parties involved.[453] Sovereigns used exile to punish their subjects for going against their will through crimes such as murder or treason. Exile could be a voluntary choice, a preventative measure taken to avoid facing the anger and punitive measures of the sovereign. Yet exile was also a symbolic state that might describe the emotional hardship felt by an individual when obliged or voluntarily choosing to leave their home and family, whether for marriage, education, or work. The motif of exile also had a potent place in literary tradition throughout the medieval

[448] eg. van Houts, 'Hereward and Flanders', pp. 201–223; P. Dalton, 'The outlaw Hereward "the Wake": his companions and enemies', in J. C. Appleby and P. Dalton, eds., *Outlaws in Medieval and Early Modern England: Crime, Government and Society, c. 1066 - c. 1600* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 7–36; Painter, 'The Sources of Fouke Fitz Warin', pp. 13–15.
[449] eg. H. Thomas, 'The Gesta Herwardi, the English and their conquerors', in C. Harper-Bill, ed., *Anglo-Norman Studies XXI: Proceedings of the Battle Conference 1998* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1999), pp. 212–232.
[450] eg. J. Huntington, '"The quality of his virtus proved him a perfect man": Hereward "the Wake" and the representation of lay masculinity', in P. H. Cullum and K. J. Lewis, eds., *Religious Men and Masculine Identity in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013), pp. 77–93; T. Jones, 'Fighting Men, Fighting Monsters: Outlawry, Masculinity, and Identity in the Gesta Herewardi', in T. Jones and D. Springer, eds., *Marvels, Monsters, and Miracles: Studies in the Medieval and Early Modern Imaginations* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2002), pp. 187–206.
[451] See, for example M. Keen, *The outlaws of medieval legend* (rev. ed. London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 9–38; S. Knight, *Robin Hood: a complete study of the English outlaw* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), p. 39; Pensom, 'Inside and Outside', p. 53; T. Ohlgren, *Medieval Outlaws: Twelve Tales in Modern English Translation* (Indiana: Parlor Press, 2005), p. xv.
[452] For an examination of the multiple contexts and understandings of exile, see L. Napran and E. van Houts, eds., *Exile in the Middle Ages: selected proceedings from the International Medieval Congress, University of Leeds, 8-11 July 2002* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004).
[453] For this and the below, see E. van Houts, 'L'exil dans l'espace anglo-normand', in P. Bouet and V. Gazeau, eds., *La Normandie et l'Angleterre au Moyen Age. Colloque de Cerisy-la-Salle (4-7 octobre 2001). Actes* (Caen: Publications du CRAHM, 2003), pp. 118–121.

period.[454] Indeed, exile-and-return is a theme frequently identified in insular romance texts, distinct from the chivalric quests of their continental counterparts.[455]

The two texts considered here, however, are remarkable in the fact that their narratives are based upon the real historical exile of the protagonists, corroborated by documentary sources. Yet despite their historical basis, the texts provide elaborated accounts in which a deliberately framed exile is transformed into a period of challenges that serve to prove the protagonist's courage and skill. The geographical settings of these episodes are therefore intentional authorial choices, particularly important given the centrality of geography to the concept of exile, which necessitates the transition from one geography (home) to another (the land of exile). In this chapter, I consider the representation of exile and its geographical settings. The framing of exile, either as punishment for confrontational behaviour or as a result of failed lordship, is shown to be integral to how exile functions within the developing narrative. Central to this is the movement between geographical spaces and what these spaces evoked for contemporary audiences. I examine the varying levels of geographical detail within the texts and what this might reveal about authorial knowledge of Celtic spaces as well as authorial narrative strategies. By interrogating the relationship between contemporary knowledge and perceptions of geographical spaces, and their representation in the texts, I explore why particular locations resonated as spaces for exile and what this can tell us about the social and political contexts in which the texts were written. I postulate that the notion of the exilic space changed over the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, reflecting an expansion of geographical horizons from the perspective of the Anglo-Norman and Anglo-Angevin elite.

The texts

The Latin *Gesta Herewardi* survives in one thirteenth-century manuscript containing a collection of Peterborough Abbey charters and legal documents, known as the *Register of Robert of Swaffham* (Cambridge University Library, Peterborough, Chapter Library I, 320r-339r).[456] It is thought to have

[454] See, for example, R. Hexter, 'Ovid and the Medieval Exilic Imaginary', in J. Gaertner, ed., *Writing Exile: the Discourse of Displacement in Greco-Roman Antiquity and Beyond: The Discourse of Displacement in Greco-Roman Antiquity and Beyond* (Boston: Brill, 2006), pp. 209–236; S. Hanaphy, 'Ovidian Exile in the Letters of Peter of Blois (ca. 1135–1212)', *Viator*, 40:1 (2009), pp. 93–106.

[455] For an overview of the exile-and-return cluster of insular texts, see R. Field, 'The King Over the Water: Exile-and-Return Revisited', in C. Saunders, ed., *Cultural Encounters in the Romance of Medieval England* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2005), pp. 41–53; See also D. Speed, 'The Construction of the Nation in Medieval English Romance', in C. M. Meale, ed., *Readings in Medieval English Romance* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1994), p. 146; L. Worth, '"Exile-and-Return" in Medieval Vernacular Texts of England and Spain c.1170-1250' (DPhil, University of Oxford, 2015); On the insular hero, see L. Ashe, '"Exile-and-return" and English law: the Anglo-Saxon inheritance of insular romance', *Literature Compass*, 3:3 (2006), pp. 300–317.

[456] *De Gestis Herwardi: Le gesta di Ervardo*, ed. and trans. A. Meneghetti (Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2013), p. 66; *Three Lives of the Last Englishmen*, trans. M. Swanton (New York: Garland Publishing, 1984), p. xxv; For a description of the MS, see Geoffrei Gaimar, *Lestorie des Engles solum la translacion Maistre Geoffrei Gaimar: Volume 1: Text*, eds. T. Hardy and C. Martin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. xlvii–liii; *The*

been written by Richard, a monk of Ely, sometime between 1109 and 1131, drawing upon a now lost Old English life of Hereward supplemented with oral recollections from Hereward's companions. The compiler of the twelfth-century *Liber Eliensis,* which was composed by a monk of Ely and appears to draw upon a version of the *Gesta* as source material, mentions a book about Hereward, compiled by the venerable brother Richard. This book is assumed to be the *Gesta Herewardi*, and the author Richard of Ely.[457] The *Gesta* centres around the life of Hereward, from his youth until his eventual reconciliation with William the Conqueror. The historical figure of Hereward appears briefly in the D version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and in the Domesday book, as well as in a number of twelfth-century historical works.[458] His legendary reputation was likely established, however, by the trio of texts the *Gesta Herewardi*, Gaimar's *Estoire des Engleis*, and the *Liber Eliensis*.[459] Although elements of the *Gesta* are corroborated by other historical sources, the first section of Hereward's exile, which describes his adventures in Northumbria, Cornwall, and Ireland, does not appear elsewhere. This section has considerable overlaps with Old French romance literature such as *Horn* and the *Tristan* legend, whilst elements of these passages have also been likened to Old Norse and Icelandic sagas.[460] It seems likely, therefore, that these episodes are fictional.[461] Indeed, *Liber Eliensis* suggests that the *Gesta* contains 'things which are beyond belief'.[462] This raises the question of why these apparently fictional adventure episodes are added, and why the author chose to use the settings of Northumbria, Cornwall, and Ireland.

Fouke le Fitz Waryn, like the *Gesta*, centres around an exiled protagonist who is deprived of his inheritance and who spends time in opposition to King John. *Fouke*, however, was composed over a century later than the *Gesta* and is written in Anglo-Norman French rather than Latin. As discussed in chapter 1.1, the manuscript tradition of *Fouke* is complex.[463] Surviving only in an early fourteenth-century prose reworking (Royal 12 C. XII),[464] *Fouke* is thought to have been originally composed in verse during the latter half of the thirteenth century.[465] *Fouke* is set in the Welsh Marches and based

Cartularies and Registers of Peterborough Abbey (Northampton: Northamptonshire Record Society, 1978), ed. J. Martin, pp. 7–12.

[457] See van Houts, 'Hereward and Flanders', pp. 202–203; *De Gestis Herwardi*, pp. 52–61.

[458] For an overview of these references, see Dalton, 'The outlaw Hereward "the Wake"', pp. 8–9.

[459] See Dalton, 'The outlaw Hereward "the Wake"', pp. 10–13.

[460] See *De Gestis Herwardi*, ed. and trans. Meneghetti, pp. 23–33; J. Weiss, 'Thomas and the earl: literary and historical contexts for the Romance of Horn', in R. Field, ed., *Tradition and Transformation in Medieval Romance* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1999), pp. 1–13; Jones, 'Fighting Men', pp. 187–206. We might suggest that the *Gesta* contains proto-romance material, raising interesting questions about shifting registers.

[461] Here I use the term 'fictional' to indicate that these passages do not appear to be based upon historically documented events, but have instead been imaginatively conceived by the author. Whether this term had meaning for a medieval audience can be questioned given the interplay between 'history' and 'fiction' in medieval texts. On this subject, see for example Ashe, 'William Marshal, Lancelot, and Arthur', pp. 19–40; Kennedy, 'The Knight as Reader of Arthurian Romance', pp. 70–90.

[462] *Liber Eliensis: A History of the Isle of Ely from the Seventh Century to the Twelfth, compiled by a Monk of Ely in the Twelfth Century*, trans. J. Fairweather (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2005), p. 222.

[463] See chapter 1.1, 'Local landscape as territory', p. 22.

[464] Hathaway et al., eds., *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*, p. xxxvii.

[465] Hathaway et al., eds., *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*, p. xxi.

upon the historical figure of Fulk III, who spent nearly three years in rebellion against King John after being deprived of the inheritance of Whittington in Shropshire.[466] Whilst the opening section of the text contains a fairly accurate description of historic landholding in the Marches embedded in local geography, Fouke's exile designates a shift in both setting and genre as he experiences fantastic adventures in foreign lands.[467] The following questions again arise: why does the author add these fantastic adventures, and why do they take place in spaces like Iberia and Barbary?

The framing of exile

In both texts, the protagonists face exile as a result of political banishment, the consequence of conflict with their lord. However, these relationships and conflicts are distinct in each text, establishing two different framings of exile that are instrumental to how exile functions within the narratives. The *Gesta* introduces Hereward as the son of Leofric of Bourne, nephew of Earl Ralph the Staller, and Eadgyth, the great-great-niece of Duke Oslac.[468] Both Huntington and Jones note the text's unusual interest in Hereward's youth and maturation.[469] Unlike in Gaimar's *Estoire des Engleis*, where Hereward is from the outset presented as, in Huntington's words, a 'fully-formed and fully effective man', the *Gesta* provides a lengthy introduction to Hereward's qualities as a youth and to his adventures before his defence of Ely.[470] Jones suggests that this interest in Hereward's youth can be compared to Old Norse and Icelandic outlaw narrative traditions, whilst we might also draw parallels with the quests of later romance tradition.[471]

From his youth, Hereward is strong, bold, agile, and courageous, as well as being remarkably liberal with his own and his father's possessions. However, these positive characteristics are often taken to excess. The text describes how Hereward provokes fights, creating conflict throughout the local community and causing a rift between his parents and their neighbours. As a result, Hereward is sent away by his father Leofric, yet continues to give away his father's possessions to his own supporters as well as taking provisions from his father's estates. Jones emphasises the generational nature of Hereward's exile, suggesting that the conflict is located within a familial rather than social or political relationship. Lacking the material resources to support a band of men, Hereward must

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[466] For an overview of documentary references to the Fitz Warin family, see Meisel, *Barons of the Welsh frontier*, pp. 34–36.
[467] Roger Pensom suggests that the structure of Fouke can be divided into three concentric circles (the Marches, the forest, and foreign wanderings), each demarcating a clear shift in style and subject matter. Pensom, 'Inside and Outside', pp. 53–60.
[468] Although a Leofric does appear in Domesday as a predecessor of Oger the Breton, it is not possible to verify his connection to Hereward. Hereward's parentage is perhaps a deliberate attempt to create a more exalted lineage for the protagonist. D. Roffe, 'Hereward the Wake and the Barony of Bourne: A Reassessment of a Fenland Legend', *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*, 29 (1994), p. 8.
[469] See Huntington, '"The quality of his virtus"', p. 85; and Jones, 'Fighting Men', p. 185.
[470] Huntington, '"The quality of his virtus"', pp. 84–85.
[471] Jones, 'Fighting Men', pp. 186–187.

'usurp the economic power of his father in order to define himself as mature and masculine.'[472] The conflict does not, however, remain within the family. Hereward's behaviour causes tension within the local community and affects resource distribution. Hereward's father requests that Hereward be banished, telling King Edward of Hereward's actions against both his parents and the local inhabitants (I, p. 80).[473] At the age of eighteen, Hereward is exiled on royal orders and leaves home as a result of his confrontational behaviour.[474] The text clearly establishes Hereward's character flaws; he is unable to restrain himself and acts with little thought of the social consequences.

In *Fouke*, exile is more clearly the result of a failure of lordship; King John, rather than Fouke, is in the wrong. As described in chapter 1.1 of this thesis, Fouke is exiled from his lands in Shropshire as a result of John's refusal to uphold his inheritance of Whittington. The text sets up a close relationship between Fouke II and King Henry, describing how the young Fouke was brought up with King Henry's sons. On one occasion, the text tells us, John and Fouke were playing chess together, but John struck Fouke with the chessboard. Fouke retaliated by kicking John in the chest, who hit his head and fainted. After regaining consciousness, John complained to his father who, instead of punishing Fouke, had John beaten. As noted previously, it is unlikely that this episode has a historical basis.[475]

Nevertheless, the text attributes John's refusal to confirm Fouke's inheritance to this personal grudge. Despite his knowledge of Fouke's rightful claim to Whittington, he chooses to confirm the grant to Morys, the son of Roger de Powys. In response, Fouke renounces the lordship of King John, emphasising John's failure to uphold his rights and respect common law. After renouncing John's lordship, Fouke and his brothers arm themselves and flee but are pursued by twenty-five knights sent by the king to kill them. Fouke and his companions defeat the knights and leave for Brittany. King John, in the meantime, seizes Fouke's lands in England and inflicts 'grant damage' (p. 25, l. 21, 'great damage', p.152) on his entire family.[476] This seizure of lands seems to be in line with the surviving documentary evidence, which records that by 9th April 1201, the historical Fulk III's lands in Shropshire were in the hands of the crown.[477] Here begins Fouke's period of outlawry, which is characterised in the text by its forest settings and folkloric motifs.[478] Although little direct evidence survives of the historical Fulk's activities, there exist a number of references to his rebellion against

[472] Jones, 'Fighting Men', pp. 188–190.
[473] Throughout this study, references to the Latin text are from *De Gestis Herwardi*, ed. and trans. Meneghetti; English translations are provided from *Three Lives of the Last Englishmen*, trans. Swanton.
[474] For the purposes of this study, I treat outlawry and exile as comparable. Elisabeth van Houts notes the difficulties in distinguishing outlawry and exile in an English context. See van Houts, 'L'exil dans l'espace anglo-normand', pp. 118–119.
[475] See chapter 1.1, 'Local landscape as territory', pp. 33-34.
[476] References to the French text are from Hathaway et al., eds., *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*; English translations are provided from Burgess, *Two Medieval Outlaws*.
[477] *The Memoranda Roll for the Michaelmas Term of the First Year of the Reign of King John (1199-1200)*, ed. H. G. Richardson (London: Pipe Roll Society, 1943), p. 93.; Burgess, *Two Medieval Outlaws*, p. 100.
[478] This is Roger Pensom's middle shell in his schema of the text. See Pensom, 'Inside and Outside', pp. 54–55.

King John. Roger of Howden states that John left Hubert de Burgh and one hundred knights to guard the Welsh March when he departed for Normandy in June 1201, most likely as a response to Fulk's rebellion.[479] In an episode echoed by *Fouke Fitz Waryn*, William of Newburgh's *Historia rerum anglicarum* describes how Fulk and his companions were besieged in Stanley Abbey by men belonging to the sheriff of Wiltshire.[480] We can also find references to Fulk's companions. Eustace de Kivilly was pardoned by King John in April 1202 for his actions whilst associated with Fulk, whilst the Shropshire Assize Role of 1203 refers to Gilbert de Duure, another associate of Fulk who was outlawed and accused of stealing hounds.[481]

The geographical spaces of exile

In both *Fouke* and the *Gesta*, the protagonists' banishment appears to be corroborated by documentary evidence. Yet these historical bones are fleshed out by the authors through a fictional framing that establishes the protagonist and the tensions at the heart of the text. Whilst Hereward's behaviour serves as the catalyst for his exile, it is the failure of King John's lordship that forces Fouke to leave. As will be discussed below, these themes are developed and amplified as the protagonists' fictional adventures in exile unfold.

The notion of geography, and movement between different geographical spaces, is central to these developing narratives: the protagonist must travel elsewhere both as a result of exile and in order to experience adventure. In this section, I consider the choices of exilic setting, how these are represented within the two texts, and what this might tell us about their social, historical, and geographical contexts. As shown below, the degree of localisation shifts as the protagonists are distanced from their home lands. The authors of *Fouke* and the *Gesta* provide detailed descriptions of their local territories, demonstrating their geographical knowledge whilst simultaneously using setting in a strategic way to assert the legitimacy of particular rights and lordships. In contrast, the vague evocations of exilic spaces suggest the ability of these settings to conjure images of the unknown, where challenges and adventures might take place. This might reflect a lack of authorial knowledge about these spaces, or an intentional lack of details in order to evoke the unknown. There are also clear differences between the spaces of exile in the *Gesta* and *Fouke*, suggesting a changing imagining of exilic space that reflects developing knowledge and perceptions of geography over the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. By exploring the representation of the geographical

[479] Roger of Howden, *Chronica Magistri Rogeri de Houedene*, ed. W. Stubbs (London: Longman and Co., 1871), IV, p. 163. Meisel, *Barons of the Welsh frontier*, p. 38; Burgess, *Two Medieval Outlaws*, p. 100.
[480] *Chronicles of the reigns of Stephen, Henry II, and Richard I*, II, ed. R. Howlett (London: Longman and Co., 1885), pp. 506–507. Burgess, *Two Medieval Outlaws*, p. 100.
[481] *Rotuli Litterarum Patentium in Turri Londinensi Asservati*, p. 10. *Pleas Before the King or His Justices*, ed. D. Stenton (London: Seldon Society, 1967), III, p. 78.; Meisel, *Barons of the Welsh frontier*, p. 38.

settings of exile, we can consider how they function within the narrative and how they resonated for contemporary audiences.

Exile in Britain

When Hereward is outlawed, he is invited to the household of his godfather, Gilbert of Gent, in Northumbria. The historical Gilbert was a younger son of Ralph of Aalst or Alost, and Gisela, daughter of Frederick of Luxembourg, and a first cousin once removed of Matilda of Flanders, the wife of William the Conqueror.[482] He received large grants of land in England following the Conquest, and married the daughter of one of William the Conqueror's magnates, Hugh II of Montfort-sur-Risle. Paul Dalton points to the proximity of some of Gilbert's English estates to Bourne and Hereward's lands, as well as Hereward's links to Flanders, to suggest a link between Hereward and Gilbert.[483] Indeed, we should be open to the possibility that Gilbert was present in England prior to the Conquest. It is possible that younger sons of Flemish aristocratic families gained a foothold in England prior to the Conquest, either by assisting the English king or by lending support to the Flemish monasteries of Saint-Riquier or St Peter's, both of which held lands in England.[484] Even if Gilbert did not hold land in Northumbria prior to the Conquest, the chronological error may perhaps not be a problem for a twelfth-century audience who associated Gilbert with the extensive post-Conquest landholdings recorded in Domesday. This included land as far north as Yorkshire, which may explain a link between Gilbert and Northumbria.[485] This Yorkshire connection was maintained with Gilbert's son Walter, who continued to hold lands in Yorkshire and founded the Augustinian Bridlington Priory around 1113.[486]

Hereward's exile to his godfather's household in Northumbria therefore offers a plausible – if perhaps fictional – scenario, both in terms of Gilbert's connection to Northumbria and Hereward's choice of location. When forced to leave their native soil, exiles from England tended to travel to neighbouring lands, such as Scotland and Wales, with others finding refuge in Ireland and Flanders.[487] It made sense to travel to a place in which one might already have connections and that was close enough to keep tabs on the situation in one's homeland. In Hereward's case, Northumbria provides both a fairly close location and one that offered a support network in the form of his godfather, Gilbert

[482] For this and the below, see van Houts, 'Hereward and Flanders', p. 216.
[483] Dalton, 'The outlaw Hereward "the Wake"', pp. 16–17.
[484] See Appendix 2, *The Warenne (Hyde) Chronicle*, eds. E. van Houts and R. Love (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2013), p. 106.
[485] 'Gilbert 23', Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England, http://www.pase.ac.uk (accessed 24/09/2021).
[486] P. Dalton, 'Gant, Gilbert de, earl of Lincoln (c. 1123–1155/6), magnate', *ODNB* (2008); 'Gant Fee', in *Early Yorkshire Charters: Being a Collection of Documents Anterior to the Thirteenth Century Made from the Public Records, Monastic Chartularies, Roger Dodsworth's Manuscripts and Other Available Sources*, 2, ed. W. Farrer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 427–504.
[487] van Houts, 'L'exil dans l'espace anglo-normand', p. 119.

of Gent. An area repeatedly subject to incursions from the king of the Scots as well as the "harrying of the North", Northumbria perhaps also evoked a sense of danger and the unknown to contemporary audiences, making it a perfect location for Hereward to encounter challenges.[488] It is here that Hereward defeats an escaped bear, demonstrating his military ability and protecting the women of Gilbert's household. This is no normal bear, however. It is gigantic and monstrous, the offspring of a notorious Norwegian bear who had reputedly raped a girl and fathered Beorn, King of Norway (II, p.80). The ancestral hybridity of the bear combined with the threat of sexual transgression shifts the narrative from a historical to a more fantastical mode, and perhaps reflects the influence of Scandinavian literary traditions.[489] Hereward manages to drive his sword through the bear before it reaches Gilbert's chamber, where the women of the household have fled. Notably, the text gives no description of Hereward's journey to Northumbria, nor any references to place names or landscapes in Northumbria. The focus remains on Hereward and his actions.

In Northumbria, the knights of the household become increasingly jealous of Hereward, who earns great thanks from Gilbert of Ghent but refuses the offer of knighthood, desiring a better test of his strength and courage. The other knights attempt to kill Hereward with a javelin, and he is forced to flee Northumbria. He travels to Cornwall, before leaving in secret to Ireland. Like in the Northumbria episode, the text provides no description of the journeys to Cornwall and Ireland, nor any sense of their geography or place names. Rather than being inscribed into the local landscape, Hereward's challenges here again evoke Scandinavian and romance literary traditions.[490] They are again centred upon Hereward's actions rather than the landscapes of Cornwall and Ireland. Hereward defeats the wicked Ulcus Ferreus in Cornwall, the berserk-like suitor to the daughter of the prince, once more making an enemy of the household in Cornwall who believe that he has killed their toughest warrior by trickery.[491] Hereward provokes the fight after being slighted by Ulcus Ferreus, who claims that nobody is his equal and ridicules the English nation for their lack of military prowess. In both Northumbria and Cornwall, Hereward's actions are at least partially motivated by self-regard, with little concern for their social repercussions. His fight with Ulcus is provoked by his anger at being slighted, whilst his refusal of knighthood in Northumbria – and the social ties that it entails – appears arrogant. Through his behaviour and display of strength, Hereward disrupts existing hierarchies and appears unable to navigate the social sphere of the household, just like in his youth.[492]

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[488] For an overview of the history of Northumbria in the tenth and eleventh centuries, see W. Aird, 'Northumbria', in P. Stafford, ed., *A Companion to the Early Middle Ages* (Chichester: Blackwell, 2009), pp. 303–321.
[489] Jones, 'Fighting Men', p. 191.
[490] There is a particularly striking parallel with the *Roman de Horn* during a scene in which Hereward disguises himself to save a Cornish princess from an unwanted marriage. For the links between the two texts, see Weiss, 'Thomas and the earl', pp. 9-13.
[491] Jones notes the similarities between this episode and the berserk suitors in medieval Scandinavian literature. Jones, 'Fighting Men', pp. 194–196.
[492] *De Gestis Herwardi*, ed. and trans. Meneghetti, p. 26, Jones, 'Fighting Men', p. 193.

The situation changes, however, once Hereward reaches Ireland, where he assists the king of Ireland in battle against the Duke of Munster. Hereward successfully leads the forces, killing the enemy leader, and gaining a reputation for his military prowess. Rather than provoking jealousy or antipathy, Hereward's deeds encourage men and sons of the leading families to come to him '…cum eo armis et liberalitatibus instruendi' (IV, p. 88, 'to be instructed in arms and noble arts', p. 51). Hereward, with the king's son and a band of men, then spends a year subduing anyone opposed to the king. Here, as in other passages of the text, Hereward is effectively a mercenary; he provides military service in return for payment in food, lodging, and later in ships to return to England. The term mercenary is difficult to define, as most serving soldiers were paid by the twelfth century.[493] In the Gesta, the transaction is not simply financial. It is also social; the king's later offer of an estate and marriage to one of his nieces would cement Hereward's position in an elite social circle with links to the king.

The lack of geographical specificity is notable when Hereward assists the king of Ireland in subduing any opposition, with the text using generalised terms such as 'in circuito' (IV, p. 88, 'in the neighbourhood' (p. 51)) and 'omnem locum et terram regi adversariam' (IV, p. 88, 'the entire area around about that was opposed to the king' (p. 51)) rather than localised place names. Although the text mentions the Duke of Munster and gives an impression of political instability, the author does not appear to be aware that Ireland was divided into multiple kingdoms. Ireland's place in the narrative does not appear to be founded upon personal familiarity, but instead offers a plausible setting for military activity through which Hereward develops his leadership skills and gains a reputation for his military prowess. The circumstances of exile and the necessity of serving another lord thus provide the opportunity for Hereward to develop his leadership skills, which are again demonstrated in Flanders and come to fruition in his resistance against Norman oppressors in England.

If we compare these episodes with those in Flanders and Ely, we notice a clear contrast in the degree of geographic detail and localisation. When Hereward leaves Ireland, the text provides the first reference to his journey, noting that Hereward was driven by 'tempestate ventorum' (VI, p. 96, 'tempestuous winds' (p. 54)) to Orkney and then carried 'per turbinem' (VI, p. 96, 'by a hurricane' (p. 54)) to Flanders, where he assists the count of Flanders in an expedition to Scaldemariland. These references to meteorological conditions perhaps reflect a knowledge of seafaring around the British Isles. We might also make a comparison with the description of maritime travel in the *lai* of *Melion*.[494] Elisabeth van Houts has convincingly argued for the historical veracity of the Flanders sections of the text citing, for example, a parallel account of the expedition to Scaldemariland that can be found in the Vita S. Willibrordi.[495] Meneghetti suggests that the author of the *Gesta* had access to

[493] J. France, 'Introduction', in J. France, ed., *Mercenaries and Paid Men: The Mercenary Identity in the Middle Ages* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), p. 7.
[494] See chapter 1.3, 'Known geographies in the *lais*', pp. 65-66.
[495] See van Houts, 'Hereward and Flanders', pp. 201-223.

Flemish texts, which provided the precise chronology of events of the Scaldemariland episode.[496] Even if Hereward himself was not involved, it appears that a historical event lies behind this section of the narrative, thus ending Hereward's fictional adventures. Unsurprisingly, once Hereward reaches Flanders, there is a clear increase in the use of place names. The text makes reference to St. Bertin and St. Omer, locations with strong ties to England in the mid-eleventh century,[497] as well to St Valery-sur-Somme and Frisia. Flanders was a principal trading partner for the export of goods such as wool and grain, and the abbey of Ely and its dependants itself had large numbers of sheep – around 14,400 by 1086.[498] Flanders was also a place of refuge for exiles from England during the eleventh-century struggles for the English kingship.[499]

This sense of geographical localisation increases further when Hereward returns to England and takes on the role of defender of Ely. The text tells the story of how one of Hereward's men got the name of 'The Heron' during an incident at Wroxham Bridge (*pontem de Wrokesham*, XX, p. 124), as well as making reference to places such as Aldreth (*Alrehethe*, XXVI, p. 146), Cottenham (*Cotingelade*, XXVI, p. 146), Bottisham (*Angerhale*, XXVII, p. 150), and Witchford (*Wycheforde*, XXVII, p. 152). In addition to references to specific local place names, the text also demonstrates a knowledge of the geographical features of Ely and the surrounding marshy area.[500] For example, the text describes how the king 'omnem suum ad Alrehede ammonui ex(er)citum, minus aquis et palude precingitur: tamen latitude ibi iiii^{or} stadiorum extenditur.' (XXII, p. 130, 'moved his whole army to Aldreth where the surrounding water and swamp was narrower, the breadth there extending only four furlongs.' (p. 69)). The specificity of this passage, including units of measurements, suggests a detailed knowledge of the local geography. Deda's description of the Isle of Ely reads almost like a tourist brochure, praising not only Hereward and his men, but also the abundance of wildlife and resources (XXIII, p. 138).[501] His praise of Ely does not seem out of place amongst other literary representations of local landscapes produced by monastic houses during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, which 'celebrate their sites as island *loci amoeni* set in watery, wilderness contexts.'[502] We

[496] *De Gestis Herwardi*, ed. and trans. Meneghetti, p. 43.
[497] van Houts, 'Hereward and Flanders', p. 213.
[498] E. Oksanen, 'Economic Relations Between East Anglia and Flanders in the Anglo-Norman Period', in D.Bates and R. Liddiard, eds., *East Anglia and its North Sea World in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013), p. 180.
[499] P. Grierson, 'The Relations between England and Flanders before the Norman Conquest', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 23 (1941), pp. 95–96.
[500] References to the marshy fenlands might recall another representation of the fens, as the home of Grendel in *Beowulf*. In the *Gesta Herewardi*, however, this inaccessible landscape is transformed into a strategically beneficial and productive space for the Isle of Ely. For an interesting examination of the fen landscape, see C. Abram, 'At home in the fens with the Grendelkin', in D. Remein and E. Weaver, eds., *Dating Beowulf: Studies in intimacy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019), pp. 120–144.
[501] For Hugh Thomas, Deda's praise of Hereward and his followers functions as part of the wider project of the text, defending English military prowess against charges of inferiority. By emphasising the success and nobility of Hereward and his men, as well as ridiculing the Norman invaders, the text represents the English as cultural equals to the new regime. See Thomas, 'The Gesta Herwardi, the English and their conquerors', pp. 212-232.
[502] Clarke, *Literary Landscapes and the Idea of England*, p. 68.

might suggest that this forms part of a self-conscious project to defend the rights and increase the status of Ely under its first bishop, Hervey (1109-1131), who also instigated the translation from Old English to Latin of Bishop Aethelwold's book of grants to Ely.[503] By installing a bishop at Ely, King Henry I transformed the monastery of Ely into a monastic cathedral. A royal charter, issued at Nottingham on 17th October 1109, established the new see.[504] The *Gesta* emphasises the qualities of the local landscape at the same time as offering a legendary defence of Ely's rights through the character of Hereward.

There is a clear difference between the descriptions of geography in Northumbria, Cornwall, and Ireland, and those in Flanders and Ely. The Flanders and Ely episodes demonstrate a familiarity with the geographical spaces in which they take place, likely owing to the personal knowledge of Richard of Ely and that contained in his source material. On the other hand, the episodes in Northumbria, Cornwall, and Ireland receive little geographical description or use of place names, suggesting a lack of first-hand knowledge. This shift in geographical specificity is paralleled by a generic shift towards romance and epic. It therefore seems likely that these episodes were additions to an existing Life of Hereward, perhaps the Old English Life mentioned by Richard of Ely – certainly possible considering his process of composition, which involved the compilation of information from both a damaged manuscript containing an Old English life of Hereward and from the oral recollections of two of Hereward's companion.[505] Of course, the survival of only one manuscript copy makes it difficult to say for certain when these additions were made. So where did these episodes come from? Judith Weiss has suggested that the episodes in Cornwall and Ireland are rooted in a pre-existing Horn 'kernel' story, written at the end of the eleventh or early twelfth century and 'influenced by the stories of the numerous English, Welsh and Norman dissidents who, deprived of power in Britain, travelled to Ireland looking for help.'[506] This seems plausible, although it does not account for the episode in Northumbria. I suggest that the Northumbria episode, with its degree of credibility, was perhaps added by Richard in order to successfully integrate the 'kernel' Horn story within the Hereward narrative.

[503] E. van Houts, 'Historical Writing', in C. Harper-Bill and E. van Houts, eds., *A companion to the Anglo-Norman world* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2003), p. 110. In this context, the survival of the *Gesta* alongside documents such as royal charters and grants to the abbey in the *Register of Robert of Swaffham* is significant and requires a closer examination.
[504] *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum 1066-1154: Regesta Henrici Primi*, eds. C. Johnson and H. A. Cronne, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), II, pp. 87–88; S. Keynes, 'Ely Abbey, 672-1109', in P. Meadows and N. Ramsay, eds., *A History of Ely Cathedral* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2003), p. 52.
[505] This is described in the prologue to the text.
[506] Weiss, 'Thomas and the earl', p. 8.

Exile beyond the sea

In *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*¸ there is a similar distinction between the geographically detailed settings in the Welsh Marches and those further afield. As shown in a chapter 1.1, the opening section of the text is replete with references to landscape and geography, offering a territorialised vision of landscape.[507] The text describes how the landscape is divided into holdings, which are themselves frequently defined by physical geographical features. Rivers feature as boundary points, marking the extent of a grant of land. For example, Henry I's grant to Joce is bounded by the River Corve (p. 4, ll. 5-7), whilst William Peverel's grant of Morlas extends as far as the River Ceiriog (p. 8, ll. 5-6). The landscape is inscribed with physical markers of Marcher lordship, such as castles, towers, and bridges. The geographical detail in this first section of the text provides a background for Fouke's claims to Whittington.

However, as we have seen, King John fails to uphold Fouke's claims to Whittington and Fouke, after renouncing John's lordship, is forced to flee. At first, Fouke and his men remain close to England and, like Hereward, often travel to places where Fouke already has connections. This perhaps reflects the realities of the historical exile of Fulk III, to which, as noted earlier, we do have some documentary references. The editors of *Fouke* note the dense concentration of toponyms from north Shropshire and Powys, demonstrating the author's familiarity with the geographical space of the Welsh Marches.[508] This section of the text is also characterised by movement, emphasising Fouke's mastery and manipulation of the landscape. Fouke rarely uses roads, instead drawing upon the boundary spaces of forests and water to travel easily through Britain.[509] Throughout this period, the text emphasises Fouke's sense of morality.[510] Fouke ensures that his actions harm only the king,[511] and directly upholds justice by killing the brigand Peter de Brubille, who had been assuming Fouke's identity and robbing people in the March of Scotland. By contrast, King John is characterised by his lack of conscience and predatory sexual behaviour,[512] a characterisation echoed by the posthumous accounts of Roger of Wendover and Matthew Paris, which vehemently denounce King John's behaviour. In Paris' mid-thirteenth-century *Chronica Majora*, a messenger to the emir of Morocco describes John as 'a tyrant rather than a king, a destroyer rather than a governor…he had violated the daughters and sisters of his nobles'.[513] Even before John's death, a significant proportion of the population certainly saw John's reign as a misrule by 1212, characterised by persistent taxation and the spiritual privation of the interdict – all in an unsuccessful attempt to recover his lands on the

[507] See chapter 1.1, 'Local landscape as territory', p. 25.
[508] Hathaway et al., eds., *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*, pp. xxx–xxxi.
[509] See Dolmans, 'Locating the border', pp. 128–130.
[510] This aligns with Laura Ashe's model of exile-and-return, in which 'it is the world around the protagonist that must be corrected, and the potential exists for the hero himself to be represented in a state of unchanging perfection.' Ashe, '"Exile-and-return" and English law', p. 142.
[511] This is explicitly stated in the text (p. 27, ll. 26-27 and p. 30, ll. 29-31).
[512] Pensom, 'Inside and Outside', p. 55.
[513] Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, ii, p.559-564, quoted in Church, *King John*, p. xxv.

continent.[514] The depiction of King John in *Fouke* clearly taps into these attitudes in order to emphasise the legitimacy of Fouke's claims and the rights of the Marcher lords, which are reinforced through Fouke's mastery of the landscape.

Fouke also spends time tourneying in France where he receives an offer of lands from King Philip Augustus, before sailing along the English coast until the wind drives them to a strange island off Orkney. There does not appear to be any documentary record of the historical Fulk's adventures abroad, and the fantastical themes suggest that it is a fictional addition to the text. Fouke's adventures abroad in the text are characterised by a loss of control of direction; it is the wind and weather that dictate where Fouke travels. Fouke's journeys take him beyond the frontiers of the British Isles to lands such as Norway and Denmark, encountering strange beasts and severe weather conditions. The references to place names and ocean voyages emphasise the extent of Fouke's travels and his physical separation from his homeland, but there is little in the way of detailed geographical description. Ireland features briefly in this 'commonplace romance listing of countries on the northern periphery', and Keith Busby suggests that it remains 'a land of marvels and monsters'.[515] However, I would suggest that by emphasising the removal of poisonous beasts from Ireland by St Patrick, the text instead breaks down the association of Ireland with the marvellous. Fouke must go elsewhere to find dangerous beasts and adventure.

A storm carries Fouke's ship to Carthage in the kingdom of Iberia, presumably Cartagena in Spain, rather than ancient Carthage of North Africa.[516] Fouke's adventures here, including the defeat of a dragon, again reinforce the idea of Fouke as the heroic upholder of justice, serving as a 'metaphorical restatement of the central value system of the text'.[517] The 'grant mont en la mer' (p. 46, l. 22, 'great mountain at sea', p. 170), home to the dragon, could perhaps identified as the Isla Grosa, a volcanic island located off the coast of La Manga near Cartagena. An islet close to Isla Grosa, known as El Farallón, was the site of numerous shipwrecks, finds from which are currently displayed in the National Museum of Underwater Archaeology in Cartagena. Stories about this navigational hazard and the Isla Grosa perhaps spread amongst sailors and merchants, eventually reaching the author of *Fouke*. Although speculative, this offers a way of thinking about how geographical knowledge was shared.

Fouke is then carried by the wind to Barbary, in North Africa, where we again see Fouke as representative of justice and moral rectitude. The King of Barbary is seeking to marry the daughter of the Duke of Carthage, but her refusal has led to war. Fouke agrees to undertake single combat on

[514] Church, *King John*, pp. 206–207.
[515] Busby, *French in Medieval Ireland*, p. 318
[516] Burgess, *Two Medieval Outlaws*, p. 117.
[517] Pensom, 'Inside and Outside', p. 58.

condition that the king converts to Christianity.[518] The fight ensues until Fouke discovers that he is fighting his own brother, at which point the battle is abandoned, the king and his household are baptised, and the king marries the maiden. Fouke here serves as the upholder of Christian morality, made possible through his journey to a distant land with associations of religious difference.

Expanding horizons

The physical distance of these settings from Fouke's lands, in addition to the descriptions of travel, contrast with Hereward's exile in the *Gesta*. Whilst Hereward remains within the British archipelago until his arrival in Flanders, Fouke travels more far afield. The imagined space of exile has changed, shifting from the frontiers of England to Iberia and North Africa. How can we explain these divergences in the representation of exilic spaces? On one level, the need for Fouke to leave Britain may be a practical reflection of increased royal control; it would simply not be realistic for him to remain in Ireland or Cornwall without facing challenge from the English king. At a deeper level, this signals a shift in the imagination. Spaces within the British Isles, such as Ireland, were too close, too well-known, and too connected to provide an adequate sense of the adventurous unknown. Anglo-Norman settlement from the 1170s created closer links between Ireland and the elite in England, whilst the writings of authors such as Gerald of Wales spread knowledge about the landscapes and peoples of Ireland and Wales. Catherine Rooney's study of the numerous manuscripts of the works of Gerald of Wales demonstrates their popularity.[519] As discussed in a previous chapter, the thirteenth-century romance *Les Merveilles de Rigomer* demonstrates specific knowledge of medieval Ireland, its geography, and its communities.[520] In these texts, Ireland undoubtedly retains associations with marvels - yet there is also an awareness of the real Ireland, its geography, and its politics.[521]

Spaces in Britain that had previously been on the frontiers of the Anglo-Norman empire now held a different place in the mental world of the elite; greater adventure was to be found elsewhere. In *Fouke*, this 'elsewhere' is Iberia and North Africa. Why, therefore, were these spaces chosen? I suggest that the choice of Iberia and North Africa is indicative both of a desire to look outside Britain for adventure and the unknown, and of the growing prominence of Iberia and North Africa in the mental world of the Francophone elite. Authorial knowledge of Iberia, although limited to a simplified vision of landholding from a single ruler, was perhaps gained through trading links. The Iberian peninsula, the setting for Fouke's defeat of the dragon, served as 'a gateway between Christian

[518] The motif of religious conversion features frequently in *chansons de geste*, although it is often the female Saracen princess who converts to Christianity. For the motif of the Saracen princess and its heterogeneous representations, see Kinoshita, *Medieval Boundaries*, pp. 46–73.
[519] Rooney, 'The manuscripts of the works of Gerald of Wales', pp. 115–161.
[520] See 'Ireland as a space of threat' and Busby, *French in Medieval Ireland*, pp. 276–286.
[521] Keith Busby, 'Merlin, Barnagoys, l'Irlande, et les débuts du monde arthurien', p. 145; for a detailed exploration of the 'Two Irelands', see Busby, *French in Medieval Ireland*, pp. 265–328

and Muslim worlds', a strategically important location in Mediterranean trade networks due to its position on the routes of both Christian and Muslim shipping routes.[522] Although there is a lack of evidence for the eleventh century, a growth of documentation in the twelfth century demonstrates trade between Muslim Spain and Europe, and Italy in particular. There are also mentions of boats travelling to Muslim Spain from Arles and Montpellier.[523] Commercial links between Iberia and England are less clear, although the *Mabinogion* makes reference to cordoban leather shoes, suggesting that knowledge of goods from Iberia reached as far as Wales.[524]

Aside from exchange through commercial routes, interest in Iberia also reflects religious and political developments, which directly placed Anglo-Norman crusaders in the Iberian world. Crusaders from Scotland and England participated in the conquest of Lisbon (1147),[525] whilst a number of crusaders from the British Isles appear to have settled in Tortosa following the 1148 siege.[526] Although the Second Crusade is unlikely to have directly influenced the writing of *Fouke* at least a century later, it does provide a context for Anglo-Norman knowledge of Iberia. Fouke's defeat of the dragon could speculatively be interpreted as a symbolic representation of the Christianisation of Muslim Spain. The dragon frequently signifies the Devil in biblical and bestiary tradition, and the slaying of a dragon could serve as an allegorical depiction of the Devil overcome. The legend of Saint George, for example, includes similar elements to *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*, including the rescue of the king's daughter and the conversion of pagan peoples.[527] Indeed, the thirteenth century saw further Christian expansion into Muslim Spain, reducing Muslim control to the kingdom of Granada, in vassalage to Castile.[528] This included the capture of Cartagena in 1245 by a Castilian fleet and army, led by the infante Alfonso, son of King Ferdinand III of Castile.[529] Notably, Alfonso's half-sister Eleanor of Castile was married to the future Edward I of England in 1254, which created a direct link between the two geographical spaces and provided a conduit for political and cultural exchange.[530]

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[522] O. R. Constable, *Trade and Traders in Muslim Spain: The commercial realignment of the Iberian peninsula, 900-1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 1–3, 16.
[523] Constable, *Trade and Traders in Muslim Spain*, pp. 42–44.
[524] Constable, *Trade and Traders in Muslim Spain*, p. 218.
[525] M. Bennett, 'Military aspects of the conquest of Lisbon, 1147', in J. Phillips and M. Hoch, eds., *The Second Crusade: Scope and consequences* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), p. 73.
[526] N. Jaspert, 'Capta est Dertosa, clavis Christianorum: Tortosa and the crusades', in J. Phillips and M. Hoch, eds., *The Second Crusade: Scope and consequences* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), p. 98; L. Villegas Aristizabal, 'Anglo-Norman intervention in the conquest and settlement of Tortosa, 1148-1180', *Crusades*, 8 (2009), pp. 69–80.
[527] See T. Honegger, *Introducing the Medieval Dragon* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2019), pp. 37–47.
[528] J. F. O'Callaghan, *Reconquest and Crusade in Medieval Spain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), pp. 21–22, 99; H. Salvador Martínez, *Alfonso X, the Learned: a biography*, trans. O. Cisneros (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2010), pp. 88–94.
[529] Salvador Martínez, *Alfonso X, the Learned*, p. 91.
[530] See discussion in R. Walker, 'Leonor of England and Eleanor of Castile: Anglo-Iberian marriage and cultural exchange in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries', in M. Bullón-Fernández, ed., *England and Iberia in the Middle Ages, 12th-15th Century: Cultural, Literary, and Political Exchanges* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 67–87; J. C. Parsons, 'Of queens, courts, and books: reflections on the literary patronage of thirteenth-

The inclusion of Iberia as a setting in *Fouke* likely indicates its contemporary prominence in the mental world of the elite, perhaps resulting from the direct influence of Eleanor of Castile.

Fouke's later adventures in Tunis, 'e[n] la terre de Barbarie' (p. 53, ll. 19-20, 'in the land of Barbary' (p. 176)), also reflect a broadening awareness of spaces beyond Britain and Europe. Tunis was an important centre of power of the Almohad Empire and then the Hafsid caliphs, the 'Axis of the Middle Sea', which had resisted invasion from Italians and Normans during the twelfth century.[531] Tunis was also an important hub for trade across the Mediterranean and welcomed Christian merchants from southern Europe,[532] as well as a failed crusade by Louis IX of France in 1270.[533] The fictional Fouke succeeds where historical attempts have failed and persuades the king of Barbary to convert to Christianity. Whether this passage is a deliberate comment on political events is unclear, particularly given the uncertain dating of the original text and the knowledge that would be required from both the author of *Fouke* and its intended audience. What the passages in Iberia and Tunis do suggest, however, is an interest in geographical spaces beyond Britain and an understanding of their potential as spaces for adventure and profit. References to conversion indicate an awareness of political and religious tensions, whilst the possible reference to Isla Grosa hints at specific geographical knowledge gained through mercantile travel. Further research might allow us to uncover more explicit connections between the author and audience of *Fouke,* and its settings in Iberia and North Africa.

Conclusion

The *Gesta Herewardi* and *Fouke le Fitz Waryn* offer similar narratives of political exile, based upon real historical events. However, exile functions very differently in each text. In the *Gesta,* we witness Hereward's development into a competent and admired leader, with the requisite skills and experience to defend Ely in the years following the Norman Conquest of England, leading to his eventual reconciliation with the new ruler. Fouke's adventures abroad serve rather to emphasise the shortcomings of King John in contrast to Fouke's heroism and justice. The narrative role of exile in both texts is, I argue, tied up with how the geographical settings existed in the mental world of the author and contemporary audience. In both texts, there is a clear contrast between the closely localised settings of Shropshire and Ely, and the vague geographical descriptions of exile settings. In *Fouke*, the territorialised vision of the March serves to emphasise Fouke's inheritance claims and the landholding rights of the Marcher lords, whilst the deliberately constructed image of Ely in the *Gesta*

century Plantagenet queens.', in J. McCash, ed., *The Cultural Patronage of Medieval Women* (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1996), pp. 175–201.

[531] A. J. Fromherz, *The Near West: Medieval North Africa, Latin Europe and the Mediterranean in the Second Axial Age* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), pp. 109–110.

[532] A. Atmore and R. Oliver, *Medieval Africa, 1250–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 35.

[533] M. Lower, *The Tunis Crusade of 1270: A Mediterranean History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 106–107.

can be viewed as part of a broader attempt to assert the rights and status of the possessions of the monks of Ely that had so recently been turned into monastic cathedral. In both texts, close localisation is also indicative of the geographical centring of the text and its place of composition, demonstrating the author's and audience's familiarity with the local area. The spaces of exile, by contrast, lack detailed description and represent the unknown.

However, despite their similarities, the *Gesta* and *Fouke* offer very different visions of exilic space. In the *Gesta*, Hereward's adventures take place in Ireland and Cornwall, possibly drawing upon an existing 'kernel' story of Horn and integrated into the Hereward narrative through an episode in Northumbria. These settings must have been plausible for the author and contemporary audience, but also offered a sense of adventure and the unknown. If we fast forward to *Fouke*, it is clear that the mental world has changed. In the thirteenth century, it seems that settings within Britain no longer provided the adventure and threat required by the protagonist of a text such as *Fouke*, owing to the expansion of Anglo-Norman settlement and the circulation of texts such as Gerald of Wales's *Topographica Hibernica*. To evoke a sense of the unknown, Fouke's adventures must take place beyond Britain, in settings that demonstrate contemporary interests and contacts on the frontiers of Europe. We might ask whether this reflects a broader phenomenon. Do we see a faltering of literary interest in Arthurian material and the 'Matter of Britain', and a turn towards themes and settings further afield? Does this coincide with the rise of travel writing and ethnography? What might this tell us about how people thought about the world around them? I will return to these questions, and the possible insights of future research, in the conclusion.

2.4. Exile in *Sone de Nansay*

Before I draw this section to a close, I wish to turn briefly towards another text, the thirteenth-century romance *Sone de Nansay*. Like in *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*, *Hereward the Wake*, and the *Roman de la Manekine*, which I will discuss below in chapter 3.1, Scotland and Ireland in *Sone de Nansay* serve as spaces of exile for the protagonist. Yet this exile is not the result of political conflict but is instead a voluntary decision taken by Sone in an attempt to move on from his unrequited love for Yde. In this short chapter, I wish to draw out a few select points of comparison with the *Gesta Herewardi* and *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*, notably in the representation of the court in Scotland and Ireland, how these spaces function as settings for the protagonist's mercenary activity, and how the representation of exilic spaces in *Sone de Nansay* might map onto my proposed expansion of horizons during the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. I suggest that in *Sone de Nansay*, it is Norway rather than Scotland or Ireland that holds interest for the author. Through descriptions of Norwegian customs and landscape, the author presents Norway as an unfamiliar place of difference, imbued with a sense of religious and legendary significance through its links with the holy grail. Scotland and

Ireland, on the other hand, are hostile and uncivilised, but mundanely so. I postulate that, like in *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*, this is indicative of Francophone interest in spaces beyond Britain and northern France. This is combined with the possibility that the author of *Sone de Nansay* had first-hand knowledge of Norway.

The text

Sone de Nansay survives in only one manuscript copy, LI.13, at the national library of Turin. The manuscript likely dates from the first half of the fourteenth century, but was seriously damaged during the 1904 fire.[534] The author of the text is unknown, although in the Prologue, he names himself as Branque, the clerk of the Dame de Beyrouth, chatelaine de Chypre, who has been charged with the task of writing a history of her ancestors. According to Claude Lachet, the author – who praises the count of Brabant, established to be the grandfather of Sone - is likely from Brabant.[535] The author also rues the transfer of relics from Nivelles to Ghent, suggesting that he may be from Nivelles. More generally, the author shows himself to be a clerk with good knowledge of literature, canon law, history, and geography.[536] The text has generally been dated to the second half of the thirteenth century; Lachet suggests a more precise dating to between 1265/7 and 1280.[537] *Sone de Nansay* is an enormously lengthy text of over 21,000 lines, meaning that it could easily be the focus of an entire thesis rather than a short chapter (as demonstrated by Lachet). It is the subject of very little scholarly attention, particularly in the Anglophone world, so I have provided a brief plot summary below.[538]

Sone is the youngest son of the now deceased Henri and Ydone; he is beautiful, talented, and eager to learn. Sone falls passionately in love with Yde, the sister of the knight Eudes, but is tormented by the pain of his emotions and is unable to speak to her coherently. Sone decides to enter into the service of the count of Saintois, where he is well-loved and courteous, demonstrating his military prowess and loyalty in a tournament at Chalon-sur-Saône. However, Sone continues to think about Yde and, despite the count and the count's daughter's supplications, professes his love for her but is twice rejected – first laughed at and later accused of deceit and disloyalty by Yde.

Sone, wishing to forget Yde, leaves the court and travels through England to Scotland, where the queen invites him to court. However, the rest of the court are jealous and unwelcoming, so Sone takes his leave and stays with a bourgeois who reveals that the king of Ireland, assisted by the king of

[534] For a description of the manuscript, see C. Lachet, *Sone de Nansay et le roman d'aventures en vers au XIII^e^ siècle* (Geneva: Editions Slatkine, 1992), pp. 18-25 and *Sone de Nansay*¸ ed. C. Lachet (Paris: Honoré Champion Éditeur, 2014), pp. 16-22.
[535] *Sone de Nansay*¸ ed. Lachet, p. 65.
[536] *Sone de Nansay*¸ ed. Lachet, pp. 65-67.
[537] Lachet, *Sone de Nansay et le roman d'aventures en vers*, p. 61; *Sone de Nansay*¸ ed. Lachet, p. 75.
[538] For a more detailed summary of the plot, see Lachet, *Sone de Nansay et le roman d'aventures en vers*, pp. 79-133 and *Sone de Nansay*¸ ed. Lachet, pp. 81-103.

Scotland, is preparing to attack Norway. Sone decides to leave this inhospitable country and arrives in Norway, where he is treated with courtesy by the royal family despite the disagreeable habits of some of the Norwegians. At the request of the king, queen, and their daughter, Sone enters service as a mercenary to the king of Norway. The king of Scotland assembles his troops, who embark in Ireland with the badly equipped Irish army. In preparation, the king of Norway fortifies cities, ensures the support of his barons, and prepares his army. They carry out a surprise attack and, despite many losses on both sides, Sone kills the king of Ireland and the Irish are defeated.

The king of Norway receives a messenger from the Scots, suggesting that they resolve the conflict through single combat. If the champion of the king of Norway wins, the king of Scotland will submit to him and will never be at war with him again. This suggestion is accepted, and Sone is set to fight against the giant Aligos. Sone is taken to the fortress of Galoche to be placed under divine protection, where he confesses and is absolved, and the abbot performs the mass and gives a long sermon tracing the history of Joseph of Arimathea, the castle, and its holy relics. They then return to Saint-Joseph, where Sone is sent a sword used by Joseph of Arimathea, is dubbed, and finally defeats Aligos, taking his head back to the king of Scotland who withdraws.

Sone is still in love with Yde, but is now the object of Odée's affections, the daughter of the king of Norway. Despite the king's offer of land, Sone decides to return home. However, as he boards the boat, Odée faints in his arms and they are both carried away by a storm. The boat arrives in Ireland where Sone is accused of killing the king of Ireland out of treachery and faces a judiciary duel. He is victorious and, despite the queen's attempts to seduce him, leaves with Odée. However, they are both injured whilst overcoming a plot to abduct Odée and steal their riches, and spend time recovering at Saint-Joseph where Sone remains faithful to Yde despite Odée's attentions.

Sone finally returns to Nansay, but Yde is still jealous and accuses him of dishonesty. Sone decides to forget her, and is victorious at a tournament at Châlons-sur-Marne and a round table. Sone receives a messenger informing him of the death of the king of Norway, and is reminded of Odée's love and the possibilities offered by marriage to her. He again demonstrates his military prowess at a tournament at Montargis, and intervenes with the king for the restitution of the goods of Godefrois of Souvrain-Mesnil, who had been ruined by the royal bailiff. Sone receives messengers from Norway including Papegai, a harpist and singer, who pleads the cause of Odée. The king judges that Odée should have her love, and Sone returns to Norway where he and Odée are married, anointed, and crowned. Sone travels throughout his kingdom, receiving homage from his vassals.

One day, the Master Templar, whom Sone had met in Ireland, arrives at Saint-Joseph with a boy, the son of Sone and the queen of Ireland, who is furious about Sone's marriage and is persecuting the Templars. Odée decides to raise the child as her own, and has another three sons. The pope orders Sone to come to defend the Holy Church and succeed as Holy Emperor. Before

leaving, Sone's son Houdiant is dubbed and made king, receiving oaths of loyalty from his barons. Sone and Odée leave for Rome, where Sone is made Holy Emperor and leads the fight against the Saracens. Sone is victorious and receives a triumphal welcome in Rome for his services to Christianity. His sons inherit his exceptional qualities and each succeeds to a high position: Milon becomes pope, Henry king of Jerusalem, Margon king of Sicily, and Houdiant king of Norway. Sone chooses his nephew Henri, who refuses to right his brother for the title, to be successor as Holy Emperor. Sone is absolved and dies, followed by his wife, and they are buried together in front of the altar at Saint-Pierre. The brothers crown Henri and return to their own countries.

Inhospitality at the Scottish and Irish courts

As noted above, *Sone de Nansay* is an extremely lengthy text. This chapter will therefore focus upon Sone's initial period of exile in Scotland, Norway, and Ireland. Sone travels to Scotland as a form of self-imposed exile in the aim of forgetting Yde. After crossing the sea, he passes through England and travels to Scotland at Berwick (ll. 2915-2924).[539] There is little description of his journey either in terms of geography or physical experience, and the author does not appear to have any first-hand knowledge of Scotland. The reference to Berwick is unsurprising given its economic and political significance. Berwick was the leading royal burgh in Scotland during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and an important trading port for goods such as corn, salt, and wine, as well as cloth from Flanders.[540] Trade was not only carried out by merchants but also directly by monastic exporters, many religious houses holding properties in Berwick.[541] Berwick also had political significance, changing hands several times during the medieval period. The castle of Berwick was one of the sites delivered to Henry II in the 1174 Treaty of Falaise, following William the Lion's capture and submission, to be later sold back to William by Richard I. When Sone arrives in Scotland, he stays in a place called 'Liendlousiel' (l. 2925).[542] Charles-Victor Langlois has suggested that this refers to Galashiels on the Tweed, a river that was previously known at the Lindeen.[543] Peter Rickard, on the other hand, thinks that 'Liendlousiel' is most likely Linlithgow.[544] This appears to be the only reference to 'Liendlousiel' in a romance text, making it an intriguing detail.[545]

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[539] All quotations and line references are from *Sone de Nansay*¸ ed. Lachet.
[540] See W. B. Stevenson, 'The Monastic Presence: Berwick in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries', in M. Lynch, M. Spearman, and G. Stell, eds., *The Scottish Medieval Town* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd, 1988), p. 99; and A. A. M. Duncan, *Scotland: The Making of the Kingdom* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1975), pp. 506–510.
[541] See Stevenson, 'The Monastic Presence', pp. 99-115.
[542] Quotations taken from *Sone de Nansay*¸ ed. Lachet.
[543] C. V. Langlois, *La vie en France au moyen âge* (Paris, 1926), p. 296, cited in Flutre, *Table des noms propres*, p. 260 and *Sone de Nansay*¸ ed. Lachet, p. 868.
[544] P. Rickard, *Britain in Medieval French Literature 1100-1500*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), p. 206.
[545] Flutre, *Table des noms propres*, p. 260.

Apart from the references to Berwick and 'Liendlousiel', the focus is squarely on the behaviour and customs of the Scottish court, notably their lack of hospitality towards Sone. Admired for his beauty, Sone and his horse are invited to court by the queen. He appears almost like an 'angeles du chiel' (l. 2955, 'angel from heaven' (my translation)). However, he receives no welcome or honour from the rest of the court (l. 3013), and they do not say a word to him when he takes his leave (l. 3017). In addition to this lack of welcome, the Scottish court is also characterised by its unsophisticated food and drink, eating vegetable broth and drinking large quantities of beer (ll. 3019-3028). The Scottish court appears uncourtly and uncivilised in the most mundane of ways. Scotland in *Sone de Nansay* might be an unknown place of exile, but it is not a place of adventure or opportunity, nor are there any elements of the *merveilleux* here.

Ireland is treated in a similar manner. It is first mentioned to Sone by a burgher in Scotland, who reveals that the king of Ireland is planning to attack Norway with the support of the king of Scotland. Like in several other texts in my corpus, we are here presented with a vision of Ireland as a single political unit under a single king, 'Li rois d'Irlande' (l. 3063). This simplifies the complexity of Irish multiple kingships and Anglo-Norman overlordship, and perhaps suggests that the author had a limited knowledge of Irish politics.[546]

Sone does not choose to travel to Ireland, but is carried there by a violent storm ('Une grans tourmente' (l. 5830)) on his departure from Norway. Here the text does provide some vivid description of the physical experiences of maritime travel:

> 'Trois jours a li tourmens duré,
>
> Qu'il n'ont dormi ne repose
>
> Ne qu'il n'ont beüt ne mangié,' (ll. 5841-5843)
>
> 'The storm lasted for three days,/ So that they did not sleep or rest/ Nor drink or eat,' (my translation)

Like in *Melion*, the author appears to have had some experience of travel over the sea.[547] After three days, the boat finally arrives at a port in the city of Alixandre in Ireland (ll. 5846-5848). The reference to 'Alixandre' is intriguing, suggestive of Alexandria in Egypt. I have not yet been able to determine whether the author is referring to a real port of 'Alixandre' in medieval Ireland. It is tempting to make a link with the Alexandra Basin in Dublin, although this would be a mistake as the Alexandra Basin was christened by Princess Alexandra on her visit in 1885 – several hundred years too late. On his arrival in Ireland, Sone faces the hostility of the Irish, who are angry that he has killed the Irish king and accuse him of treachery. Sone argues that he was simply doing his duty as a

[546] See also Ireland in the *Roman de Horn*, p. 165.
[547] See chapter 1.3, 'Known geographies in the *lais*', pp. 65-66.

mercenary in service to the king of Norway and, after hiding in the abbey of the Templars, proves his innocence in a judiciary combat, before later facing the attentions of the Irish queen. There was a Templar presence in Ireland from the late twelfth century, and their principal house appears to have been at Clontarf in Dublin.[548]

The descriptions of both Scotland and Ireland lack a sense of geographical precision, and there is very little mention of landscape or place names. The author does not appear to be aware of local geographies, politics, or customs, and Scotland and Ireland are not home to marvellous occurrences, as in texts such as *Desiré* or *Les Merveilles de Rigomer*. Indeed, the Scottish and Irish settings appear to be less important than how Sone is treated there – with hostility and mistrust.

A military alliance between Scotland and Ireland

Perhaps the most important role played by Scotland and Ireland is as a military threat to Norway. Whilst staying with a burgher after taking leave of the Scottish court, Sone learns that the king of Ireland is preparing to attack Norway with the support of the king of Scotland (ll. 3057-3076). Offended by the lack of hospitality by the Scottish court, Sone leaves Scotland and travels by boat to Norway, where he enters the service of the king of Norway as a mercenary. This recalls the *Gesta Herewardi*, in which Hereward provides military service to both the king of Ireland and the count of Flanders. These texts speak to a historical context where paid military service was common, particularly for knights in exile.[549] The Scottish and Irish attack on Norway may also allude to the historical conflict between Scotland and Norway over contested territories in the western isles.[550] Alexander II of Scotland repeatedly attempted to acquire the isles from Håkon IV of Norway during the 1240s, and this policy was heightened under Alexander III in an attempt to extend Scottish sovereignty throughout western Scotland. In 1263, Håkon led an expedition to the isles and then southwards towards the Firth of Clyde, before finally being defeated by stormy weather and Scottish forces on the Ayrshire coast, near Largs.[551] This historical conflict may therefore serve as inspiration for the conflict between Scotland, Ireland, and Norway in *Sone de Nansay*, although it is interesting that the text reverses the outcome of the conflict. It is Norway, rather than Scotland, that is successful in battle.

In *Sone de Nansay*, the Scottish and Irish soldiers are badly equipped and characterised by their lack of armour: 'Gens furent mout mal atournee' (l. 3472, 'The men were very badly equipped' (my translation)). These descriptions recall Gerald of Wales' accounts of Irish and Welsh fighters,

[548] E. Lord, *The Knights Templar in Britain* (Harlow: Pearson, 2004), pp. 179-180.
[549] For a discussion of paid military service, see E. Oksanen, 'Knights, Mercenaries and Paid Soldiers: Military Identities in the Anglo-Norman *Regum*', in D. Crouch and J. Deploige, eds., *Knighthood and Society in the High Middle Ages* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2020), pp. 71-93.
[550] *Sone de Nansay*¸ ed. Lachet, p. 72.
[551] G. W. S. Barrow, *Kingship and Unity: Scotland 1000-1306* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1989), pp. 115-119.

whose lack of mounted warriors and lightweight armour makes them adept at moving through mountainous and wooded landscapes.[552] However, in *Sone de Nansay*, their lack of armour makes the Scottish and Irish soldiers easy targets for the Norwegians, for their exposed bodies make them vulnerable to attack. The knight Jofroi, who is sent by the king of Norway to scout out their adversaries, observes that 'Gent ont a mout peu de defois./ Ils ont les cors tous descouviers.' (ll. 3610-3611, 'The men have very little defence./ Their bodies are all exposed.' (my translation)).

Jofroi suggests that the Norwegian army launches a surprise attack whilst their enemies are eating. Despite the initial success of this surprise attack, a long and terrible battle ensues, which results in losses on both sides including the deaths of the king of Norway's sons. Nevertheless, the Irish are defeated, and the Scottish army propose a fight of single combat in which Sone successfully defeats Aligos, a huge Saxon knight (ll. 4244-4246). This recalls Hereward's fight against the wicked Ulcus Ferreus in the *Gesta Herewardi*. The defeat of a gigantic enemy is a clear demonstration of the protagonist's courage and military ability.

In *Sone de Nansay*, Scotland and Ireland are largely presented as unappealing, hostile, and militarily backwards spaces. They are not the settings for marvellous encounters, quests, or adventures. They do not promise wealth, pleasure, or freedom, unlike Ireland in *Les Merveilles de Rigomer* or the Blanche Lande in the *lai* of *Desiré*. They certainly do not seem to offer what Sone is looking for. Instead, he leaves and travels to Norway. Here we might make a comparison with *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*. By the time that these two texts were composed in the second half of the thirteenth century, Scotland and Ireland perhaps do not provide an adequate sense of the unknown. In *Fouke*, an alternative elsewhere is found in Iberia and North Africa. In *Sone de Nansay*, it is Norway that provides a suitable setting.

Norway as an alternative elsewhere

Scotland and Ireland principally feature as military threats. Norway, on the other hand, appears to hold greater interest for the author of *Sone de Nansay*. After learning of the Irish and Scottish plans to attack Norway, Sone decides to leave Scotland and travel to Norway. Here the author gives a sense of Sone's maritime voyage, the boat carried by the wind in its sails until they reach Norway (ll. 3182-3186). They arrive at 'une chité forte et grant' (l. 3188, 'a strong and great city', my translation), and Sone is courteously welcomed by the king. The city is not named at the stage, although the text later refers to two place names: Trase, where the king is staying (l. 3495), and Saint Joseph, 'un port de mer' (l. 3511, 'a sea port' (my translation)). I have thus far not been able to identify Trase or Saint Joseph, but it would be interesting to discover whether these were real historical places in Norway.

[552] Gerald of Wales, *The Conquest of Ireland*, p. 81.

Sone attends a great banquet held by the king, during which they spend a lengthy period eating, drinking, and promising death to their Scottish and Irish enemies (ll. 2363-3302). This passage is, according to Kristoffer Nyrop, 'l'image plus ou moins fidèle d'un *heistrenging*', an Old Norse oath-swearing.[553] Sone looks on in surprise at their practices and behaviour, to which he is not accustomed: 'Sones qui n'avoit ce usé/ Les a a mierveille esgardé.' (ll. 3289-3290).[554] The text also describes a custom whereby the princess kneels in front of Sone with a large drinking goblet (ll. 3303-3348). She drinks from the goblet, which is then passed around the guests. Once the goblet is empty, she gives each of the participants a sword and a lance. Sone is again surprised by this custom, which must be explained to him. For Nyrop, the detailed description of the banquet and of the unusual customs suggest that the author of the text had himself attended a banquet similar to that which is described.[555] Whether or not this is the case, the emphasis on Sone's surprise at and lack of familiarity with Norwegian social customs present Norway as an unknown and unfamiliar space.

This is reinforced by the depiction of the Norwegian landscape, which is characterised by its diverse geographical features. In preparation for single combat against Aligos, the king of Norway takes Sone to the castle of Galoche. They travel through Norway, experiencing many different landscapes (ll. 4283-4284, ll. 4307-4310). There are repeated references to mountains (l. 4285, l. 4288, l. 4299, l. 4308, l. 4311, l. 4316) and forests (l. 3671, l. 4467, l. 4472, l. 4488), and also to the animals which reside there, including moose and wolverine.[556] This description of Norway's landscape and wildlife creates an image of Norway as a wild and sparsely populated space. For Nyrop, these realistic descriptions form a persuasive case that the author of the text had indeed visited Norway:

> 'Nous soutenons pour notre compte, en nous fondant sur les recherches précédentes, que les aventures arrivées à Sone en Norvège ont été décrites par un homme qui avait voyagé dans le pays et qui s'est servi, pour la description de scènes certaines, de souvenirs personnels. Il a dû assister à un festin de guerriers où il a vu des coutumes qui lui ont paru bien étranges et dont il n'a saisi qu'à demi le sens; il a dû faire un voyage à l'intérieur du pays pour visiter un cloître situé au fond d'un fiord ; il y a vu des animaux curieux, dont l'un est très certainenient l'élan et les deux autres, probablement le glouton et le grand plongeon. Ces trois animaux vivaient et vivent encore dans l'Europe septentrionale ; dans quel pays si ce n'est dans la Scandinavie a-t-il pu les voir tous les trois ?'[557]

[553] K. Nyrop, '*Sone de Nansai* et la Norvège', Romania 35:140 (1906), p. 558.
[554] Lachet suggests that Sone gradually becomes accustomed to the Norwegian customs, eventually learning to adapt to their ways of living. See Lachet, *Sone de Nansay et le roman d'aventures en vers*, pp. 530-34.
[555] Nyrop, '*Sone de Nansai* et la Norvège', p. 560.
[556] Nyrop, '*Sone de Nansai* et la Norvège', pp. 563-567.
[557] Nyrop, '*Sone de Nansai* et la Norvège', p. 555-569.

> 'We contend, based upon the preceding information, that the adventures that happen to Sone in Norway were described by a man who had travelled in the country and who drew, for the description of certain scenes, on personal memories. He must have attended a banquet of warriors where he saw customs that seemed very strange to him, and of which he only half understood; he must have made a trip to the interior of the country to visit a monastery situated at the back of a fjord; there he saw strange animals, of which one was certainly the moose and the two others, probably the wolverine and the Great Northern Diver. These three animals lived and still live in Northern Europe; in which country if not in Scandinavia could he have seen all three?' (my translation)

It is perhaps through personal knowledge of Norway, therefore, that the author of *Sone de Nansay* was able to present it as a space of difference, emphasising the unfamiliar customs of Norwegian society and the diversity of Norwegian landscapes. Like for the author of *Les Merveilles de Rigomer*, the practical experience of a foreign landscape could enrich the description of setting. The possibility that the author of *Sone de Nansay* had visited Norway is not impossible. There were strong cultural and intellectual links between France and Norway during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[558] French-style Gothic architecture, for example, became prevalent in Scandinavia, particularly for cathedrals and abbey churches, whilst devotional objects were imported from France. Vernacular literature, including several *chansons de geste*, were translated from French for a Norwegian audience, and Scandinavian students attended the University of Paris. Connections were also established through the networks of monasteries in Scandinavia, including the Cistercian Lysekloster in Bergen, which was founded in 1146.

In addition to offering vivid descriptions of the Norwegian landscape, this section of the text also features an intriguing digression on the subject of Joseph of Arimathea and the Grail legend. At Galoche, the abbot gives a long sermon tracing the life of Joseph of Arimathea and his connection to the castle, before producing relics including a piece of the true cross, the holy Grail, and the holy lance. Joseph of Arimathea and the Grail had by the end of the twelfth century become integrated into the Arthurian tradition thanks largely to the romance works of Robert de Boron, written in the 1190s.[559] In his *Joseph d'Arimathie*, Boron describes how Joseph collects the blood of Christ in a vessel that had been used at the Last Supper, and that will later be found by a chosen knight. Joseph also establishes a Grail table with a *siège périlleux*, a seat in which it is dangerous for anyone except the chosen knight to sit. In the second text, *Merlin*, the Grail table and the table at the Last Supper correspond to the Arthurian Round Table. It is Perceval, in the third romance, who finds the Grail and unites Arthurian chivalry with Christian spirituality. The third continuation of Chrétien de Troyes' *Graal*, written between 1214 and 1227, also refers to the Grail as a vessel used by Joseph of Arimathea to collect Christ's blood, suggesting the influence of Robert de Boron.

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[558] See 'Cultural Universalism' in K. Salonen and K. Villads Jenson, *Scandinavia in the Middle Ages 900-150: Between Two Oceans* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2023), pp. 202-226.
[559] For this and the below, see E. D. Kennedy, 'The Grail and French Arthurian Romance', in H. Fulton, ed., *A Companion to Arthurian Literature* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), pp. 204-205.

By weaving this legendary tradition into the narrative of *Sone de Nansay*, the author gives Norway a powerful mythical and religious resonance. This enhances the idea of Norway as an unknown and unfamiliar but also significant location. We might here make another comparison to *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*, which similarly adds an element of legend to the origin story of the Fitz Waryns, augmenting the otherwise territorially based depiction of landholding in the Welsh Marches.

Conclusion

Sone de Nansay is undoubtedly a text that deserves greater attention from scholars. In this brief chapter, I have explored how Scotland and Ireland function as spaces for the self-imposed exile of the protagonist, Sone. In the text, Scotland and Ireland are not precisely described geographies. The author does not appear to have had a great deal of knowledge about their place names and landscapes, nor do these play an active role in shaping the narrative. Nevertheless, there are some elements of the text that suggest authorial awareness of contemporary politics and ideas about Scotland and Ireland. The Scottish and Irish battle against Norway in *Sone de Nansay* may be alluding to the historical conflict surrounding the western isles, notably the Battle of Largs, whilst the representation of the Scottish and Irish forces as lacking armour does recall the descriptions of Welsh and Irish forces by Gerald of Wales. Importantly, however, Scotland and Ireland do not serve as a space for the *merveilleux*. They are hostile spaces – but mundanely so. Scotland in particular is characterised by the inhospitable behaviour of its inhabitants and their uncivilised customs.

Norway, on the other hand, features more prominently in the text as an unfamiliar place of difference. The text emphasises Sone's surprise at the customs of the Norwegian court, and the audience travels through the diverse Norwegian landscape with Sone. This suggests authorial knowledge of Norway, again demonstrating how the literary text might be embedded within real geographies and experiences. Norway is also tied to the legendary tradition of the Holy Grail, imbuing it with a sense of religious and mythical significance. In this way, *Sone de Nansay* brings together social, geographical, and legendary characteristics to present Norway as an unfamiliar and unknown space. The choice of Norway as Sone's chosen space of exile is, I suggest, reflective of the expanding geographical horizons of the Francophone elite. It is also perhaps indicative of first-hand authorial knowledge of Norway.

Wilderness and adventure – reflections

The past four chapters have shown how authors might draw upon ideas of wild spaces as the imagined settings for adventure, where the normal rules of society might not apply. In each of the texts considered here, wildness, landscape, and the natural world is key. Adventures take place away from the court and its society, in settings that emphasise the physical features of the landscape – whether

mountains, seas, or moorlands. In both *Les Merveilles de Rigomer* and the *lai* of *Desiré*, we see examples of gendered settings where marvellous female beings resist social norms or challenge male protagonists. The literary text, and the wild and distanced landscapes within it, provides spaces where contemporary anxieties surrounding ecclesiastical jurisdiction, settlement, lordship, and gender might be explored.

Imagined ideas of wilderness also intersect with geographical knowledge and practical experience, as demonstrated in *Les Merveilles de Rigomer*, where the landscape of Ireland actively challenges the knights of King Arthur in ways that parallel the experiences of Anglo-Norman knights in Ireland. Literary texts could be reflective of the presence or absence of geographical knowledge. My comparison of exile in the *Gesta Herewardi* and *Fouke le Fitz Waryn* offers an insight into how the place and time of composition might determine how landscape and geography are presented within the literary text, as well as how geographical knowledge might have shifted over time. *Sone de Nansay* offers an additional perspective on how Scotland and Ireland might serve inadequately as spaces for exile. Here Norway, a space with contemporary political resonance and unfamiliar customs and landscapes, offers an alternative elsewhere for the protagonist.

Part 3: Alternative visions of space

Up to this point, my thesis has focused upon two interwoven visions of Celtic space: as a wild and physically challenging setting for adventures, and as a localised geographical space. The texts often demonstrate a familiarity with local place names and geographical features, employed strategically to function within the narrative and enmeshed with literary motifs and imaginations. Geographical realities could be amplified to emphasise wild landscapes and geographical features, offering spaces distant from court and society. However, this was not the sole vision of Celtic space. In the following two chapters, I examine two texts – the *Roman de la Manekine* and the *Roman de Horn* - that treat Scotland and Ireland very differently. In doing so, my focus moves away from landscape and geography and instead shifts towards the world of the court, as I explore how Scotland and Ireland might be constructed through courtly and chivalric ideals rather than geographical realities. Yet although there are clear similarities in how the two texts present Scotland and Ireland, I suggest that there are two very different authorial strategies at work.

3.1. Courtly ideals in the Scottish kingdom

In this chapter, I again turn towards the theme of exile. The thirteenth-century text, the *Roman de la Manekine*, was written from outside Britain, but Scotland features heavily as a setting for the exile of its female protagonist, Joy. Whilst some scholars suggest that the descriptions of Scotland indicate first-hand authorial knowledge of place names and topography, I suggest that the representation of

Scotland in the text was based upon second-hand accounts from merchants, clergy, or travellers rather than authorial experience. Indeed, Scotland is presented through courtly ideals rather than geographical realism. It is civilised in both socio-cultural and political terms. This, I argue, has a narrative purpose, establishing Joy rather than Scotland as a representative of the unknown and heightening her displacement from Hungarian royalty to the position of an outsider. What is at stake here is distinct from texts such as *Fouke le Fitz Waryn* and the *Gesta Herewardi*. The *Roman de la Manekine* is not engaged in territorial disputes or internal British politics – or, indeed, in the perception of spaces within Britain – but in the construction of character in an almost hagiographical text. This text therefore offers a different perspective to the other texts in my corpus, demonstrating the multiplicity of representations and purposes of Celtic spaces in French literature, and allowing us to explore how these representations might be related to the contexts of composition and consumption of the texts.

The text

The *Roman de la Manekine* survives only in a single thirteenth-century manuscript copy, Paris: BNF fr. 1588. The text is a hagiographical romance, which appears to draw upon motifs found in the *Vita duorum Offarum*.[560] Although the author introduces himself in the first line of the text as 'Phelippes de Remi', authorship is not certain. We know that the *Roman de la Manekine*, along with a number of other poetic texts including the verse romance *Jehan et Blonde* and the legal text, the *Coutumes de Beauvaisis*, were written by a Philippe from the Oise region of northern France. However, there existed two such Philippes, Philippe de Remy and his son, also named Philippe, who were both engaged in administrative and political affairs. Nineteenth-century scholars such as H.-L. Bordier and Hermann Suchier credited a single author, the son, with the entire corpus of work.[561] This was challenged, however, by Victor Zeidler in 1894 and more recently by Bernard Gicquel, who both suggested that *Jehan et Blonde* was one of the sources for Rudolf von Ems' *Wilhlem von Orlens* - with the implication that *Jehan et Blonde* must have been composed before 1242, and therefore could not have been written by the younger Philippe.[562]

This notwithstanding, scholars have been slow to separate the careers and works of the two Philippes. Irene Gnarra, in her 1988 edition of the text, argues that passages within the *Roman de la Manekine* suggest the son to be the author of the text, although she does not elaborate on why.[563]

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[560] *Philippe de Remi's La Manekine: Text, Translation, Commentary*, ed. and trans. I. Gnarra (New York: Garland Publishing, 1988), pp. xxi–xxiii.
[561] *Philippe de Remi, Le Roman de la Manekine*, ed. and trans. B. N. Sargent-Baur (Amsterdam, Atlanta: Rodopi, 1999), p. 70; *Philippe de Remi's La Manekine*, ed. and trans. Gnarra, p. xvi.
[562] *Philippe de Remi, Le Roman de la Manekine*, ed. and trans. Sargent-Baur, p. 70; *Philippe de Remi's La Manekine*, ed. and trans. Gnarra, pp. xvi–xvii.
[563] *Philippe de Remi's La Manekine*, ed. and trans. Gnarra, pp. xvii–xviii.

Carol Harvey gives the *Roman de la Manekine* a date of composition of 1230-40, yet also agrees with Bordier's suggestion that the author was personally familiar with England and Scotland, having spent time there as a young man – despite the fact that Bordier's suggestion was based on an identification of the author as Philippe de Beaumanoir, the son, writing in 1270-1280.[564]

Scholarship regarding the authorship of the *Roman de la Manekine* is, therefore, complicated and uncertain. I am inclined to agree with Barbara Sargent-Baur who, in her 1999 edition of the text, promotes a separation of the two Philippes, postulating the father as the author of the poetic works and the son as the author of the *Coutumes de Beauvaisis*. An important piece of evidence to support this suggestion is the names given within the works themselves. The name Philippe de Remy appears in several of the poetic works, including *la Manekine* and *Jehan et Blonde*, whilst the author of the *Coutumes* (internally dated to 1283 and therefore undoubtedly by the son) instead signs himself 'Phelippes de Beaumanoir'.[565] If the son styled himself as Philippe de Beaumanoir, why would he choose to use the appellation "de Remy" instead? It seems more likely that the father, who didn't acquire the title "Sire de Beaumanoir" until 1255, was the author of the poetic works and styled himself as Philippe de Remy. Sargent-Baur makes a case for a date of composition in the 1230s for *la Manekine*¸ on the grounds of literary tradition (*la Manekine* being written in verse rather than prose) and codicological evidence, which suggests that Philippe de Remy was composing poetry in the 1230s.[566]

The story of *la Manekine* commences with the birth of Joy and the death of her mother, the queen of Hungary, who convinces her husband, the king, that he must only remarry if he is able to find someone who resembles her completely.[567] Unfortunately no suitable lady can be found, with the exception of the king's daughter. Initially resistant to the idea, the king finds himself falling in love with Joy and plans the wedding for Christmas Day. However, to prevent the marriage from occurring, Joy cuts off her own hand and is sentenced to be burnt at the stake. Luckily the seneschal and provost take pity on her, casting her out to sea in a boat with no sail and no mast. Joy implores God to deliver her to a safe harbour, lengthily relating the story of salvation through Christ, thus framing her deliverance within a Christian narrative. Her boat is directed by God, and rapidly crosses the sea for eight days, until on the ninth she arrives at Berwick, in Scotland.

Joy is granted refuge and taken to the court of the king of Scotland, where they fall in love and marry, despite Joy's identity remaining a mystery. The king leaves for France to participate in tournaments, leaving his now pregnant wife in Scotland. Joy gives birth to a son, but due to a series

[564] C. J. Harvey, 'Time and space in "La Manekine"', in S. G. Heller and M. Reichert, eds., *Essays on the poetic and legal writings of Philippe de Remy* (Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 2001), pp. 81–82.
[565] *Philippe de Remi, Le Roman de la Manekine*, ed. and trans. Sargent-Baur, p. 71.
[566] *Philippe de Remi, Le Roman de la Manekine*, ed. and trans. Sargent-Baur, pp. 89–91.
[567] The significance of the Hungarian setting will be discussed further below.

of miscommunications created by the king's jealous mother, Joy and her son are ordered to be burnt to death. The king's men take pity on her and she is again cast adrift at sea, although mannequins of the queen and her son are burnt in pretence. Joy eventually arrives in Rome, where she and her son are cared for by a wealthy senator. Meanwhile, the king of Scotland returns home where he learns of the miscommunications caused by his mother, whom he imprisons in a tower. The king and his men set off to find his wife and child, and search for 7 years before arriving in Rome, where he is offered accommodation at the senator's house and is finally reunited with Joy. Joy's father, the king of Hungary, also arrives in Rome to confess his sins to the pope. During his confession at the Maundy Thursday service, he and Joy are reconciled, and the king of Scotland finally learns the true identity of his wife. Joy's severed hand is discovered in a well by the clerics, and miraculously reattached by the pope. After the Easter celebrations, the two kings, Joy, and her son leave Rome for Hungary, which the king of Hungary imparts to the king of Scotland. They then head to Armenia, the kingdom inherited by Joy's mother, before finally returning to Scotland.

From Hungary to Scotland

In the *Roman de la Manekine*, Scotland serves as the location for Joy's displacement from Hungary. Before thinking about Scotland in detail, it is worth considering the choice of Hungary as Joy's place of origin. There were lively contacts between Hungary and France during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, from French nobles living in Hungary to institutional links via Cistercian monasteries.[568] Hungary had a particular resonance in the 1230s owing to the canonisation of Elizabeth of Hungary in 1235. Elizabeth was the daughter of András II of Hungary and widow of Louis of Thuringia. After her husband's death in 1227, Elizabeth lived a chaste and pious life, and founded a Franciscan hospital for lepers.[569] Aspects of her life, including her Hungarian origins, her charity and piety, and her experience of being outcast from court, have clear parallels in the character of Joy.[570] The life of Elizabeth circulated in both Latin and vernacular versions, including Rutebeuf's verse *Vie de saint Élysabel*. Whilst we cannot be certain that Philippe de Remi knew of Elizabeth, the presence of Hungary and the similarities between Elizabeth and Joy suggest an influence on the text and support the dating of the text to the 1230s, perhaps following Elizabeth's canonisation in 1235.

Hungary, however, features only briefly in *la Manekine* in comparison to Scotland, which is the location for Joy's exile from the Hungarian court. Previous scholars have held the geographical

[568] For an examination of the contacts between France and Hungary, see A. Györkös and G. Kiss, eds., *'M'en anei en ongria': relations franco-hongroises au Moyen Age II* (Debrecen, 2017). Many thanks to Nora Berend for directing me towards this publication.
[569] N. Berend, P. Urbańczyk, and P. Wiszewski, *Central Europe in the High Middle Ages: Bohemia, Hungary and Poland, c.900–c.1300* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 360.
[570] *Philippe de Remi's La Manekine*, ed. and trans. Gnarra, pp. xxvii–xxviii; *Philippe de Remi, Le Roman de la Manekine*, ed. and trans. Sargent-Baur, p. 108.

descriptions of Scotland to be evidence of Philippe de Remy's personal familiarity with England and Scotland, who perhaps spent time as a young man in a noble household in England.[571] This suggestion could apply whether we take the father or the son to be the author of the text. Whilst the descriptions of England in *Jehan et Blonde*, another work attributed to Philippe de Remy, do suggest that the author may have travelled in England, the evidence for Scotland is less convincing. As will be evidenced below, the descriptions of Scotland within the text are by no means extensive, and geographical realism is less important than narrative strategy.

Joy is cast out from Hungary in a boat with no mast and no sails. Unlike in *Melion*, there is little description of the practical or physical experiences of maritime travel. Indeed, the text fails to mention the fact that Hungary itself had no sea borders, although Croatia was under the control of the king of Hungary as an associated kingdom from the late eleventh century.[572] Nevertheless, a boat would have had to travel through the Mediterranean via the Atlantic Coast to the North Sea and Berwick – a journey far longer than Joy's eight days at sea (arriving at Berwick on the ninth). Realism is not important to the representation of Joy's voyage to Berwick. Instead, the entirety of Joy's journey is subsumed within a monologue in which Joy implores God to deliver her to a safe harbour, lengthily relating the story of salvation through Christ and framing her deliverance within a Christian narrative. In her long monologue (ll. 1084-1160), Joy prays to God and describes salvation through the incarnation. Joy puts herself into God's hands, and God hears her prayer:

> 'Diex, que sa proïre entendi,
>
> Ne la vaut pas mettre en obli;
>
> Ains a sa nef si avoïe
>
> C'une saiëté descocie,
>
> Qui fust traite d'un arc d'aubour
>
> N'alast mie de tel vigour
>
> Comme sa nef fist, jour et nuit.' (ll. 1161-1167)[573]

[571] Bordier postulates that Philippe de Beaumanoir, the son, may have visited England and Scotland in the retinue of Simon de Montfort. H. L. Bordier, *Philippe de Remi, sire de Beaumanoir : jurisconsulte et poète national du Beauvaisis, 1246-1296* (Genève: Slatkine Reprints, 1980), pp. 28–32; Shepherd agrees that the detailed and accurate portrayal of Scottish geography gives credence to the theory that Philippe spent time in Britain. M. Shepherd, *Tradition and re-creation in thirteenth century Romance: 'La Manekine' and 'Jehan et Blonde' by Philippe de Rémi* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1990), pp. 51–56; See also Harvey, 'Time and space in "La Manekine"', pp. 81–82.

[572] A. Bárány, 'The Expansions of the Kingdom of Hungary in the Middle Ages (1000-1490), in N. Berend, ed., *The Expansion of Central Europe in the Middle Ages* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2012), pp. 344-347. See also Map 6 in Magocsi, P. R., *Historical Atlas of East Central Europe* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1993), p. 17.

[573] All references and quotations taken from *Philippe de Remi's La Manekine*, ed. and trans. Gnarra.

> 'God, who heard her prayer,/ Did not wish to forget her;/ Thus, He directed her oat in a such a way,/ That a flying arrow,/ Which was shot from a wooden bow/ Would not travel as fast/ As her boat did, day and night.'

Joy is clearly a very different type of protagonist to those of the other texts in this study. She is not a knight searching for adventure in foreign lands, but a lone female exiled from her home and family. Here we may draw a parallel with Fouke and Hereward, who are also forced to leave their homes in exile. However, Joy's fate is in the hands of God, rather than the wind and weather.[574] Her crossing to Scotland serves to emphasise her faith and piety, thus promoting the hagiographical nature of the text. Joy's voyages, according to Carol Harvey, 'serve not only to chart the stages of an initiation romance or quest for identity, they also indicate the presence of the divine in human lives; their function goes beyond the symbolic to provide the key to the religious meaning of the text.'[575] We will return to Joy's piety and the religious elements of the text later in the chapter.

Scotland in *la Manekine* is beyond the physical boundary of the vast sea, distanced from Joy's home country of Hungary. Yet Scotland is not presented within the same frame of reference noted in other texts such as the *Roman de Fergus* and *Desiré*, whereby Scotland proper is separated from England and Lothian by a body of water.[576] Instead, Scotland is described as being just beyond England: 'par devers Engletere' (l. 1170). It is identified by its proximity to England and first encountered through the port of Berwick, situated on the border between Scotland and England. Here we find a similarity with *Sone de Nansay*, in which Sone travels to Scotland via Berwick.[577] As noted above, Berwick was an important royal burgh during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as well as a trading port and place of political significance. The resonance of Berwick, both economic and political, perhaps explains its choice as the location for Joy's arrival in Scotland: it would presumably be a widely known location that audiences might recognise. A basic knowledge of Berwick and its existence as a trading port could easily be gained through contact with merchants or travellers, without requiring first-hand experience. Indeed, the descriptions of Berwick in the text fit with a generic image of a trading port where voyages begin and end, rather than providing a precise description of the royal burgh itself.

After her arrival in Berwick, Joy is taken to Dundee where the King keeps his court, surrounded by his kinship group and noblemen (ll. 1241-1248). Like Berwick, Dundee was an important seaport, and could have been known by someone with little first-hand knowledge of Scotland. Notably, the narrative makes no reference to the crossing of the Firth of Forth or the River Tay on the journey from Berwick to Dundee which, according to the text, is done on horseback (ll.

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[574] On *Fouke*, see chapter 2.3, 'The spaces of exile in the *Gesta Herewardi* and *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*, p. 125.
[575] Harvey, 'Time and space in "La Manekine"', p. 87.
[576] See chapter 1.2, 'Strategic representations of geography', pp. 44-45 and chapter 1.3, 'Known geographies in the *lais*', p. 58.
[577] See chapter 2.4, 'Exile in *Sone de Nansay*', p. 132.

1239-2141) rather than by sea along the coast northwards.[578] As explored earlier, the Firth of Forth was an important physical and conceptual barrier in imaginings of Scotland, separating Scotland proper from southern parts of the kingdom.[579] Its absence from the narrative suggests that the text's author, Philippe, had not himself travelled within Scotland.

This can be compared to the detailed descriptions of the routes taken through France by the King and his messenger, which clearly list the towns passed through on route (see, for example, ll. 2657-2664 and ll. 3169-3193). Philippe de Remy's knowledge of France appears to have surpassed his knowledge of Scotland, as we might expect from a man who held important administrative roles in the north of France. This was presumably also the case for the audience of the text. It is perhaps in this light that we can make sense of the choice of Scotland as a setting. For an audience situated in northern France or Picardy, the place names of Berwick and Dundee may have been recognisable, but without being too familiar, giving the author the freedom to construct Scotland in whatever way he saw fit – and in a manner which suited his narrative purposes, as demonstrated below.

Scotland as a political space

Scotland in the *Roman de la Manekine* is not characterised by detailed geographical description, and landscape features such as mountains and forests do not play an active role in the narrative. This clearly contrasts with previous texts studied in this thesis, notably *Les Merveilles de Rigomer*, in which the landscape of Ireland is described in detail and poses a significant challenge to the Arthurian knights.[580] In the *Roman de la Manekine*, the world of the court – its political structure and its social *mores* – plays a far more important role in the depiction of the Scottish kingdom. In the text, Scotland is presented as a coherent political space, a single land ruled over by a single figure of authority, 'Qui Rois est de tout cet païs' (l. 1217, 'Who is the king of all this country'). This clearly contrasts with the vision of Scotland presented in the *Roman de Fergus*¸ which is depopulated and appears to lack a formal structure of society beyond the Arthurian court.[581] In *la Manekine*, the King is able to delegate responsibility to his Provost and Seneschal. It is the Provost who first greets Joy at Berwick, and who accompanies her to the king of Scotland in Dundee. The Provost, who appears to be a figure of local authority in Berwick, is described as watching over the people of Berwick to prevent conflict:

> 'Avoec auls estoit li Prevos,
>
> Pour çou que il ne fuissent tant os,

[578] *Philippe de Remi, Le Roman de la Manekine*, ed. and trans. Sargent-Baur, p. 109.
[579] See chapter 1.2, 'Strategic reimaginings of geography', pp. 44-45.
[580] See chapter 2.2, 'Ireland as a space of threat, pp. 102-105.
[581] See chapter 1.2, 'Strategic reimaginings of geography', pp. 46-49.

Que il entr'aus eüst mellee.' (ll. 1179-1181)

'With them was the Provost,/ So they wouldn't get out of hand,/ If there was a conflict among them.'

This role seems to be in line with the historical position of the provost, or grieve, as the judicial officer of a burgh.[582] The Seneschal, on the other hand, is a trusted steward to the king:

'Li Rois un Seneskal avoit,

Chevalier, en qui il savoit

Tant de bien que e[n l]ui se fie

Plus qu'en homme qui soi ten vie.' (ll. 2541-2544)

'The King had a Seneschal,/ A knight, about whom he knew/ So many good things that he had more faith in him/ Than in any other man alive.'

The Seneschal, along with two other knights, is given the responsibility of remaining with Joy and looking after her whilst the king is tourneying on the continent.

We also see the king maintaining social and political relations by dining with his noblemen (ll. 1247-1248). Scottish society more broadly speaking seems to be instilled with a hierarchical social structure, as can be seen in the description of those arriving at court for the Pentecost feast:

'Qui dont veïst dames venir,

Chevaliers par les mains tenir?

De d[u]s, de contes, de barons

Emplirent tous les pavillons.' (ll. 2187-2190)

'Who among you saw the ladies arriving,/ Whom the knights were leading by the hand?/ Dukes, counts, barons/ Filled all the pavilions.'

This description emphasises the elite levels of society present at court for the Pentecost feast, including dukes, counts, and barons, and their wives. The specifically Scottish terminology of the earl (*mormaer*) and the thane (*toísech*) is notably absent here,[583] although this is perhaps due to the French language of the text rather than a deliberate choice or lack of knowledge. Nevertheless, this aligns the Scottish court with broader ideals of courtly society rather than a specifically indigenous culture. The

[582] The *Statuta Regis Alexandri*, a legal compilation of the statues of Alexander II, shows the grieve of the vill to be involved in procedures for the punishment of theft. Taylor, *The Shape of the State*, p. 141.
[583] For a discussion of the earl and the thane in medieval Scotland, see 'The Early Scottish State?' in Taylor, *The Shape of the State*, pp. 25-83.

sense of difference between Celtic spaces and their Anglo-Norman/Anglo-Angevin or continental counterparts – so evident in other texts in my corpus – is here diminished.

Interestingly, the text also hints at a Scottish claim to overlordship over the other Celtic spaces of Ireland and Cornwall. When the king of Scotland proposes marriage to Joy, he declares that the lands of Ireland and Cornwall will be hers:

> 'Tous li païs qui environne
>
> Escoce – Yrlande, Cornouaille –
>
> Sera vostre, sans nule faille.' (ll. 1944-1946)
>
> 'All the lands that border/ Scotland – Ireland, Cornwall –/ Will belong to you, without fail.'

The king of Scotland has Joy's coronation announced throughout Scotland, Ireland, and Cornwall:

> 'Parmi toute Escoce tramist,
>
> En Cornouaille et en Irlande;' (ll. 2086-2087)
>
> 'He had it announced throughout Scotland/ And in Cornwall and in Ireland;'

Later, the king of Scotland is described as king 'd'Escoce et d'Illande' (l. 5839). These brief allusions to Scottish lordship over Cornwall and Ireland are an intriguing element of the text, particularly given the contemporary English claims of overlordship over Ireland. Could these be evoking the Irish origins of the Scottish kingship? Dauvit Broun has demonstrated the emergence in the thirteenth century of an idea of Scotland as a united kingdom of Picts and Scots, architected by Cinaed mac Ailpín.[584] This vision highlighted the Irish roots of the Scottish kingship as a means of bolstering its status.[585] It is possible that, in presenting the king of Scotland ruling over both Scotland and Ireland, Philippe de Remy is alluding to this understanding of the Scottish past. In doing so, he emphasises the prestige of the Scottish kingship and makes the king of Scotland a very suitable partner for our protagonist, Joy.

Courtly society in Scotland

The status of the Scottish kingship in the text is also augmented through Scotland's participation in courtly and chivalric culture. When Joy arrives at Berwick, emphasis is placed on the civilised and courteous welcome provided by the Provost and the King. Notably, the Provost is described as an

[584] D. Broun, 'Britain and the beginnings of Scotland', *Journal of the British Academy*, 4 (2015), p. 108.
[585] For Broun's earlier work on this, see *The Irish Identity of the Kingdom of the Scots in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1999).

expert in languages (l. 1200), welcoming Joy courteously and wisely, and with no apparent language barrier. As Sargent-Baur notes, the author appears to be unconcerned with linguistic matters: characters across Hungary, Scotland, France, and Rome are all able to converse with no difficulty.[586] This is not, however, completely unrealistic. French, or *romans*, functioned as a *lingua franca* across much of the West, creating a supralocal literary network. It is presumably in French, therefore, that communication takes place. Indeed, the text describes how the Scottish seneschal 'savoit romans et latin/ Tant que il seut mout bien escrire;' (ll. 2994-2995, 'had learned both Latin and French/ So well that he knew how to write very well;'), whilst we also learn that the king of Scotland himself 'savoit bien lire romans;' (l. 3208, 'knew how to read French;'). French evidently was spoken in Scotland by the ruling aristocracy and by immigrants from places such as Picardy and Flanders.[587] By drawing attention to the seneschal and the king's ability to read French, the text emphasises the participation of Scotland in this supralocal literary network and cosmopolitan courtly culture.

Scotland's participation in courtly society is clear when the court assembles at Dundee for the Pentecost feast, which is framed through a nature opening. The Scottish court is therefore situated within the typical idyllic setting so often used in troubadour lyric poetry:

> 'Ce fu en la douce saison
>
> Que li roussignol ont raison
>
> De chanter pour le tans joli,
>
> Qui il pré sont vert et flouri
>
> Et li vergié cargié de fruit;' (ll. 2153-2157)
>
> 'It was in the sweet season/ When the nightingales are right/ To sing about the fine weather,/ When the fields are green and in bloom/ And the orchards laden with fruit;'

Birds are singing, the flowers are in bloom, and the orchards are full of fruit. The abundance of the natural world is echoed by descriptions of the rich food offered to guests (ll. 2184-2186, ll. 2283-2290) and of the manifold types of music played (ll. 2292-2300). The text here clearly evokes the lavish celebrations that might be held to mark important moments in the liturgical calendar, and which could incur heavy expenditure.[588] This sense of abundance, and the costs involved, emphasises the wealth and prosperity of the Scottish court.

The person of the king himself is also imbued with courtly qualities: he is 'plains de grant bonté' (l. 1280, 'full of great goodness') and his courting of Joy is enacted through the playing of courtly

[586] *Philippe de Remi, Le Roman de la Manekine*, ed. and trans. Sargent-Baur, p. 107.
[587] Owen, *William the Lion*, p. 115.
[588] M. Vale, *The Princely Court: Medieval Courts and Culture in North-West Europe, 1270-1380* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 32–33.

games including chess and tables (ll. 1383-1390).[589] His amorous feelings for Joy are also clearly situated within a wider discourse of courtly love, particularly the motif of suffering for love. In a lengthy detour (ll. 1391-1490), the narrator uses the motif of an arrow to describe how the lover is struck by love, which enters through the eyes. The lover is wounded by love, which provokes feelings of heat and coldness. In this manner, the king suffers out of love, as if bound by chains. These motifs are typical of romance literature, and clearly situate the king's amorous desire within a wider literary discourse.[590] In addition to his courtly behaviour, the king also demonstrates the qualities required of a chivalric knight. He travels to take part in tournaments, where he demonstrates his martial ability and his magnanimity (ll. 2892-2900). Outside of their military function, tournaments were an important part of aristocratic society, an opportunity to demonstrate one's wealth and hospitality and to network amongst the princes, barons, and knights who followed the tournament circuit.[591] Of course, it is the king's absence whilst tourneying that leaves Joy vulnerable to his mother's scheming, and ultimately being cast out to sea for a second time. Nevertheless, the king's participation in tournaments builds into his representation as a chivalric knight. He is the very image of a handsome, noble, and generous chivalric leader – a personification of the Scotland represented in the text.

Joy as outsider

I have shown how Scotland in *la Manekine* is constructed through courtly and chivalric ideals rather than geographical realism. It is a coherent political space ruled over by a respected king, who participates in the cosmopolitan world of tournaments and embodies the ideals of the courtly and chivalric knight. It is also a wealthy and prosperous realm, demonstrated through the rich and lavish celebrations held at Pentecost. Scotland is integrated into a transnational elite courtly culture, and its geography and landscape have little role in the narrative. This is very different from the representation of Scotland in the *Roman de Fergus*, where Scotland, I have suggested, is deliberately refashioned in order to diminish its status.[592] The representation of Scotland, Ireland, and Wales in the other texts of my corpus often appears to speak to contemporary political concerns and social or religious anxieties, particularly in the context of Anglo-Norman or Anglo-Angevin colonial expansion and rhetoric.

[589] For a discussion of courtly games, see Vale, *The Princely Court*, pp. 170–179.
[590] For examples of these motifs, see the following passages: Jakemés, *Le roman du châtelain de Coucy et de la dame de Fayel*, trans. G. Gaullier-Bougassas (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2009), ll. 17–20, 303–308; Chrétien de Troyes, *Le Chevalier au Lion ou Le Roman d'Yvain*, trans. D. F. Hult (Paris: Lettres Gothiques, 1994), ll. 1366–1381.
[591] Crouch, *The Chivalric Turn*, p. 126.
[592] See 'Strategic reimaginings of geography'.

In *la Manekine*, however, this does not appear to be the case. Instead, the representation of Scotland as a space that is civilised in both socio-cultural and political terms has a narrative purpose.[593] Joy's first encounter with Scotland is as the unknown and distant site of her dislocation from Hungary; the audience might expect Scotland, a place of exile, to be a hostile or foreign location. However, once Joy arrives at Berwick, these expectations are subverted. Scotland is described through its geographical closeness to England, its participation in courtly activities, and its political structure. It is Joy, rather than Scotland, who comes to represent the unknown and who may be considered a threat to social order. The representation of Scotland through courtly ideals therefore has a clear narrative purpose. It subverts audience expectations of the unknown place of exile, heightening Joy's displacement from a position of royalty to that of the outsider. This shifts the focus onto Joy's unknown identity, and the possible threat that she poses to Scottish society. Scotland provides a middle ground between the threatening unknown of Hungary, where incest and mutilation is possible, and the well-trodden areas of northern France.

When Joy arrives in Berwick, she refuses to reveal her name or origins to the Provost despite his repeated questioning: 'Assés tout le jour l'en enquist;/ Mais ele onques riens ne l'en dist;' (ll. 1231-1232, 'All day he asked her persistently about it;/ but never did she say anything about it to him;'). Nor will she reveal her identity to the king, who gives her the name of 'Menekine' (l. 1340). This refusal to provide her identity or origins displaces Joy from her position as the daughter of the king of Hungary. She now lacks a public identity; she is an outsider, an unknown and potentially threatening figure. Concerns over Joy's identity are expressed on multiple occasions by the king (ll. 1547-1552), his mother (ll. 2056-2061), and the people of Scotland (ll. 2093-2096). These concerns are arguably legitimate: the king's marriage to Joy places an unknown and physically impaired outsider in the heart of the Scottish court, with the potential to exert political influence and disrupt existing networks of power. It is only through her beauty and courtly demeanour that Joy is able to win over the people of Scotland. She is courteous and wise (l. 2099), beautiful in appearance (l. 2337), and generous and pious (ll. 2426-2437). Her noble identity, although deliberately concealed, is inscribed into her physical appearance and social behaviour.

Joy's piety and religious conviction form a particularly important aspect of her character, which is stressed by the narrative voice itself. Joy is described as having the heart of a saint ('Cele qui corage saint a.', l. 2462), and the text describes her pious activities:

> 'Mout par demaine saint vie;
>
> Ele honneroit Dieu et Sa Mere;

[593] See L. Bailey, 'Identity and the Scottish setting in the Roman de Fergus and the Roman de la Manekine' (MA, King's College London, 2018) for an earlier version of this argument.

Mout volentiers au moustier ere;

Ses heures, son sautier lisoit.' (ll. 2434-2437)

'And she chose to lead a pious life;/ She honoured God and His Mother;/ And quit willingly also spent time in the chapel/ Reading her Book of the Hours and her Psalter.'

Whilst Joy is not canonised in the *Roman de la Manekine*, her actions present a 'living saintliness' where she 'becomes saintly by virtue of both her actions and the story in which she is cast.'[594] This emphasis on Joy's life is paralleled in Rutebeuf's focus on the life – rather than the death - of Elizabeth in the *Vie de saint Élysabel*.[595] In *la Manekine*, Joy's piety and religious conviction is also emphasised through the narrative structure of the text. As noted earlier, Joy's maritime voyages highlight the presence of the divine in human life, as Joy repeatedly places herself in the hands of God and the Virgin Mary (ll. 1084-1160, ll. 4601-4738). The events of the narrative are also framed by the major moments of the Christian liturgical calendar. Joy is twice threatened with being burned at the stake and then cast out to sea at Lent, whilst it is at Easter that her son is conceived and her hand miraculously reattached. Joy's struggles take place during sombre periods in the Christian calendar, whilst Easter is a time of celebration and renewal.[596] The miraculous reattachment of Joy's hand, which takes place in Rome during the Easter mass, is a significant moment of symbolism in this hagiographical-like text. Joy does not die, but instead regains bodily integrity and the restoration of her family and their union with God. The description of her hand, sweet-smelling and found in the reliquary-like stomach of a sturgeon, recalls the typical motifs of hagiographical writing.[597]

Despite being an outsider, Joy is ultimately a conventional figure whose appearance and behaviour align with the social and cultural ideals of the Anglo-Angevin court. Her resistance to the patriarchal authority of her father highlights *his* transgression rather than any on her account, and the initial threat that she poses as an outsider to the Scottish court is subdued thanks to her courtly demeanour, beauty, and piety. With all this in mind, Joy is a very different figure to the other women that have featured in texts of my corpus, in which they are represented as challenging existing authorities (the fairy mistress in *Desiré*), as deceitful and treacherous (*Melion* and *Les Merveilles de Rigomer*), or as requiring the assistance of a chivalric knight (*Le Roman de Fergus*). This makes sense if we think about the purpose of the narrative, which is not engaged in contemporary social or

[594] D. Wrisley, 'Narrating and Performing the Saintly in Romance: Philippe de Remi's *La Manekine*', in S. G. Heller and M. Reichert, eds., *Essays on the poetic and legal writings of Philippe de Remy* (Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 2001), p. 99.
[595] Wrisley, 'Narrating and Performing the Saintly in Romance', p. 99.
[596] J. Dufournet and M. Castellani, 'Temps liturgique et temps folklorique dans la Manekine de Philippe de Beaumanoir', in *Le nombre du temps en hommage à Paul Zumthor* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1988), p. 68; Harvey, 'Time and space in "La Manekine"', pp. 76–78.
[597] Wrisley, 'Narrating and Performing the Saintly in Romance', p. 114.

political concerns in Britain, but instead seeks to promote Christian piety through the quasi-hagiographical figure of Joy.

Conclusion

The representation of Scotland in the *Roman de la Manekine* clearly differs from the other texts in my corpus. Landscape and geography play far less of a role both in shaping the narrative and in constructing a vision of Scotland, which is instead centred around court and society. I have proposed that this representation of Scotland is suggestive of an author who was based in northern France and who did not have a good first-hand knowledge of Scotland. Instead, Philippe de Remy constructs a Scotland that is clearly integrated into broader ideals of courtly society and chivalric culture. This elides any sense of difference between Scotland and the rest of the Francophone west, in contrast to the other texts in my corpus which frequently emphasise the distance and difference between Celtic spaces and the Anglo-Norman/Anglo-Angevin world.

Rather than speaking to contemporary political concerns, the representation of Scotland in *la Manekine* has a clear narrative purpose, highlighting Joy's displacement and her position as an outsider. It is through her behaviour, noble standing, and piety that she is able to win over the Scottish court. The representation of Scotland in the text therefore plays into the development of Joy's character as she becomes an almost hagiographical figure. This is an integral element of the Christian morality than runs through *la Manekine*.

3.2. Ireland as a celebrated realm

Throughout this thesis, Ireland has regularly appeared as a space of threat, characterised both by its wild and depopulated landscape and by its *merveilleux* happenings. In this chapter, I examine a text that treats Ireland very differently, demonstrating the flexibility of the romance genre and its capacity to strategically use narrative and setting in response to contemporary social and political anxieties. Unlike the *Roman de la Manekine*, in which the representation of Scotland is largely tied up with questions of narrative and character, the *Roman de Horn* constructs a positive vision of Ireland that is shaped by contemporary political concerns.

Horn is an Anglo-Norman romance thought to have been written c.1172. Ireland takes a prominent place in the geographical framing of the text. It is the location of the protagonist Horn's exile from Brittany, where he demonstrates his skill at both courtly and military activities as well as his loyalty to his lady Rigmel and to the Christian faith. This is not the only text in my corpus in which Ireland features as a space of exile or character development. In the *Gesta Herewardi*, for

example, Ireland offers the opportunity for military activity and Hereward's development into a leader. In *Les Merveilles de Rigomer*, Ireland is characterised by its wild, unnavigable landscape and its strange enchantments. Yet as we will see, the Ireland described in the *Roman de Horn* is something entirely different. Like Scotland in the *Roman de la Manekine*, Ireland is presented as a civilised and courtly kingdom. In this chapter, I follow suggestions that this representation of Ireland can be seen in the context of the relations between Henry II and Richard Fitz Gilbert (or Strongbow) in the early 1170s. The text asserts the possibility of a courtly and civilised Ireland, which blends Anglo-Norman ideals with Gaelic Irish practices. The coherence and integrity of the kingdom of Ireland is maintained through the establishment of a successor from outside Ireland, who marries the daughter of the Irish king. *Horn* has clear resonances of historical events, which are transformed to present a narrative that might meet the approval of both Henry II and its possible patron, Strongbow.

As discussed in chapters 1.3 and 2.2, the last three decades of the twelfth century saw Anglo-Norman (or English) intervention in Ireland on a grand scale.[598] I have previously outlined the political circumstances in Ireland, but it is here important to highlight the relationships between Henry II and his lords in Ireland. As will be explored below, these relationships offer a context and lens through which to examine the narrative of *Horn*. Richard Fitz Gilbert, often known as Strongbow, had arrived in Ireland in 1170 to provide military assistance to Diarmait Mac Murchada. In exchange, he was offered marriage to Muc Murchada's daughter, Aoife, and succession to the kingdom of Leinster after Mac Murchada's death. This must have been appealing to Strongbow, who had suffered the consequences of his loyalty to King Stephen, forfeiting his lands of Orbec and Bienfaite in Normandy as well as the earldom of Pembroke.[599] Henry II was clearly unnerved by Strongbow's activities in Ireland, closing the ports to Ireland and threatening to seize the estates of those who had gone to Ireland without his permission and did not return by Easter 1171.[600] Strongbow succeeded Mac Murchada on his death in May 1171, but failed to receive recognition from Ruairi Ua Conchobuir, the high-king of Ireland. Negotiation with Henry II was therefore necessary, and in 1171, according to Gerald of Wales, Strongbow agreed to 'surrender to him [Henry II] Dublin, the capital of the kingdom, and the adjacent cantreds, with the towns on the sea coast, and all the fortresses; holding the rest of his conquests to him and his heirs of the king and his heirs.'[601] In order to ensure Strongbow's submission in practice, Henry set sail for Ireland in October 1171.

As Judith Weiss suggests, Henry II's sojourn in Ireland provides a likely context for the performance of the *Roman de Horn*, which may have served to entertain Henry, Strongbow, and their

[598] See chapter 1.3, 'Known geographies in the *lais*', and chapter 2.2, 'Ireland as a space of threat'; on the 'Englishness' of the invaders, see Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century*.
[599] Flanagan, 'Strongbow, Henry II and Anglo-Norman Intervention in Ireland', pp. 196–197.
[600] Flanagan, 'Strongbow, Henry II and Anglo-Norman Intervention in Ireland', p. 200.
[601] Gerald of Wales, *The Conquest of Ireland*, p. 34.

companions at the Christmas feast in Dublin in 1171-2.[602] Gerald of Wales describes how princes from across Ireland came to Dublin for the feast, and were 'much astonished at the sumptuousness of his entertainments and the splendour of his household.'[603] This would certainly be an occasion at which the public performance of a text such as *Horn* could be envisaged. Weiss proposes that the author of *Horn*, perhaps a member of Strongbow's household, drew upon his knowledge of Ireland to update an existing kernel story in which the protagonist is exiled to Ireland and assists the Irish king.[604] In this chapter, I develop this idea through a close engagement with the representation of the Irish setting in *Horn* to suggest that the political context of the 1170s, particularly the tension between Henry II and Strongbow, offers a lens through which to approach the Anglo-Norman *Roman de Horn*.

The text survives in three thirteenth-century manuscript copies: "O" (Oxford: Bodleian Library, MS Douce 132), "C" (Cambridge: University Library, MS Ff.6.17), and "H" (London: British Library, MS Harleian 527). Fragments of the text are found in two other manuscripts, Cambridge: University Library MSS Addit. 4407 and 4470.[605] The Horn story also survives in two later English versions, the thirteenth-century *King Horn* and the fourteenth-century *Horn Childe*, as well as a later French version, *Ponthus et la Belle Sidoyne*.[606] The *Roman de Horn* was written by a 'Mestre Thomas' (l.3),[607] a well-educated clerk whose biblical and legal knowledge is clearly demonstrated in the text.[608] Thomas's depictions of royal households, banquets, and customs indicate that he spent time at royal and baronial courts, whilst his descriptions of harp-playing suggest that he himself was a trained musician.[609]

The plot of *Horn* follows a cyclical structure of exile and return. The eponymous Horn, son of Aalof, King of Suddene (likely South Devon),[610] is cast out to sea by the pagan King Rodmund. Horn lands in Brittany, where he is brought up in the court of King Hunlaf. Horn is highly esteemed and attracts the attention of Hunlaf's daughter, Rigmel, who professes her love for him. Horn, fearing Hunlaf's anger, refuses to accept her favour and expresses his desire to first prove himself. The opportunity arises with the arrival of two kings from Africa, brothers of Rodmund, who threaten to attack Brittany unless they receive tribute and religious conversion from Hunlaf. Horn leads his men

[602] Weiss, 'Thomas and the earl', p. 4.
[603] Gerald of Wales, *Conquest of Ireland*, p. 36.
[604] Weiss, 'Thomas and the earl', pp. 11–13.
[605] *The Birth of Romance in England: Four Twelfth-Century Romances in the French of England*, ed. J. Weiss (Arizona: Arizona Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2009), p. 10; For a description of the manuscripts, see *The Romance of Horn By Thomas, Vol I*, ed. M. Pope (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1955), pp. ix–xii.
[606] *The Birth of Romance*, ed. Weiss, p. 5.
[607] References to *The Romance of Horn By Thomas, Vol. I.*, ed. Pope.
[608] *The Romance of Horn By Thomas, Vol. II, Descriptive introduction, explicative notes and glossary revised and completed by T.B.W. Reid*, ed. M. Pope (Oxford: Blackwell, 1964), p. 1; *The Birth of Romance in England*, ed. Weiss, p. 10.
[609] *The Romance of Horn By Thomas, Vol. II.*, ed. Pope, pp. 2–3; *The Birth of Romance in England*, ed. Weiss, p. 10.
[610] *The Romance of Horn By Thomas, Vol. II*, p. 4.

in a fierce battle against these Saracens,[611] successfully defeating them and finally accepting Rigmel's love. However, one of Horn's peers, Wikele, slanders Horn to Hunlaf, claiming that Horn has had carnal relations with Rigmel and that Horn intends to take the kingdom from Hunlaf. Hunlaf demands that Horn swears an oath to deny the claim, but Horn refuses, preferring trial by combat. Horn is dismissed and leaves for Ireland, first exchanging rings and promising to return to Rigmel within seven years.

On his arrival in Westir (Ireland), Horn conceals his identity (henceforth calling himself Gudmod), and is courteously received and retained by Egfer, the younger son of King Gudreche. Horn takes part in the courtly activities of the Irish royal household, including hunting, chess, and harp-playing. Gudreche's daughter Lenburc professes her love for Horn, but Horn remains faithful to Rigmel. After a lengthy period of peace, two further princes from Africa, again brothers of Rodmund, arrive and demand tribute and conversion. In an extended battle scene, the Saracens are defeated but both of King Gudreche's sons are killed. Now without a male heir, Gudreche plans to give his daughter and kingdom to Horn. However, the son of Hunlaf's former seneschal Hardré, Herland, arrives, telling Horn about the state of affairs since Horn left for Ireland: Wikele is now seneschal, Herland has been driven away, and Rigmel is to marry the King of Fenenie. Horn returns to Brittany, disguising himself as a pilgrim, and joins the poor at the marriage feast. He eventually reveals himself to Rigmel by placing the ring that she had given him into a drinking horn. At Horn's suggestion, Rigmel encourages Modin, the King of Fenenie, to start a customary joust. Horn gathers his men, captures Modin, and plans to besiege the city. Hunlaf sends messengers to offer peace terms: Horn may enter the city, marry Rigmel, and take Modin as his vassal.

After pardoning Wikele, Horn travels back to Suddene where he meets Hardré, his father's seneschal. Horn defeats Rodmund, who had killed Horn's father King Aalof, and seizes back the land of Suddene. Horn is also reunited with his mother, who had been living in hiding since the death of Aalof. However, Horn has a dream in which Wikele, the imposter seneschal, tries to drown Rigmel. At this sign he returns to Brittany, where Wikele has been spending the king's treasure, building his own castle, and taking knights into service in order to seize and marry Rigmel. Wikele's brother tells Hunlaf of Wikele's treachery, warning that he will besiege the city unless given Rigmel as his wife. Hunlaf sets up a truce with Wikele; if Horn does not arrive within two weeks, Hunlaf will surrender the city and hand over his daughter. Horn does not arrive in time, and Wikele marries Rigmel. On hearing the news from Wikele's brother, Horn and his men disguise themselves as minstrels, enter the great hall, and take vengeance on Wikele and his men. A celebratory feast continues, and Horn tells the king about his deeds over the years. Horn takes Modin to Ireland to marry Lenburc, before

[611] In the text, these lords and their companions are interchangeably referred to African ('d'Aufrike' (l. 1328)), being pagan peoples ('la gent de paenisme' (l. 1648)), or Saracens ('cele gent sarazine' (l. 1658)).

returning to Brittany to be reunited with Rigmel. They father a son, Hadermod, whose story Thomas leaves to his own son to tell.

Ireland as a connected space

In *Les Merveilles de Rigomer*, Lancelot is frequently warned not to travel to Ireland, and Rigomer in particular, because of the dangers that lie there.[612] In *Horn*, on the other hand, Ireland has a very positive reputation. In the text, Ireland is known as 'Westir', which the text claims to be its name 'al tens d'auntiquitez' (l.2131), and which recalls the Norse name (*Vestr*) for the British Isles and Ireland.[613] It is a renowned kingdom, ruled over by a powerful king. From a historical perspective, the text provides little sense of the politics of twelfth-century Ireland, which was fragmented into multiple kingdoms with an overarching high king.[614] Ireland in *Horn* is instead presented as a single coherent kingdom, ruled over by a powerful king who has two noble sons and who is known to treat knights well. Rather than reflecting a lack of knowledge, I suggest that this is a deliberate depiction in line with the broader strategies of the text, as will be shown below. When forced to leave Hunlaf's household, Horn's choice to go to Ireland appears to be based on its positive reputation:

> 'En Westir veut aler, ki est regne preisez –
>
> Yrlaunde out si a nun al tens d'auntiquitez:
>
> La maint un riche rei Godrechë iert nomez.
>
> Dous fiz out francs e pruz de grant nobilitez:
>
> Chevaliers aiment mut e d'içoe sunt loez.' (ll. 2130-2134) [615]
>
> 'He chose to go to Westir, a celebrated realm – this was Ireland's name in the old days. There dwelt a mighty king, Gudreche by name. He had two brave and noble sons, of great renown: they greatly prized knights and for that were acclaimed.' (p. 83)

This description is amplified when it is repeated almost word for word by the steersman on the boat that Horn boards:

> 'En Westir vuil aler, ki est regne loé.
>
> La maint un riche rei; Gudrechë est nomé.

[612] See chapter 2.2, 'Ireland as a space of threat', pp. 95-99.
[613] *The Birth of Romance in England*, ed. Weiss, p. 9.
[614] This is vividly described in lines 2189-2190 of the near-contemporary text, *La geste des engleis en Yrlande*: 'En Yrland erent reis plusur[s]/ Cum alures erent les cunturs' ('In Ireland kings were as numerous/ as earls were elsewhere'). *The deeds of the Normans in Ireland*, ed. Mullally, p. 109.
[615] English translations from *The Birth of Romance in England*, ed. Weiss.

> Dous fiz ad chevaliers du mut grant largeté:
>
> Chevaliers ki la vunt, bien i sunt soudéé.' (ll. 2145-2148)
>
> 'I want to go to Westir, a renowned kingdom. There dwells a mighty king, Gudreche by name. He has two sons, knights of great liberality. Knights who go there are well paid.' (p. 83)

Ireland's positive qualities are also echoed by Rollac, a Saracen messenger sent by the second set of brothers of Rodmund on their arrival at the Irish port. Rollac travels directly to Dublin and demands that the king of Ireland pay tribute for his realm, which is 'riche e manant' (l. 3003, 'rich and prosperous' (p. 99)). Ireland is preceded by its reputation, and knowledge of Ireland appears to spread from Brittany to Africa.

This is perhaps unsurprising, as Ireland in the text is a space connected to other kingdoms. When Horn arrives, he is hosted by a man named Malgis, whom the text describes as being 'nez de Paris' (l. 2285, 'born in Paris' (p. 86)). Although perhaps simply a convenient rhyme, this gives the impression of Ireland as a cosmopolitan space. Later, King Gudreche describes how he has been to Suddene and knew Horn's father, King Aalof (ll. 2361-2368). Ireland is connected to other kingdoms both through the possibility of travel and through the king's personal relationships with other rulers. Ireland is also linked to other geographical areas through trade. The boat that carries Horn to Ireland is laden with wares to trade, and the port of Ireland is well-established and welcoming. Horn and the sailors have an easy journey across the sea, carried by a good wind and guided by the north star. This is a vastly different description of sea travel to that found in *Melion,* in which the rough sea causes sea-sickness.[616] In *Horn*, a large rock marks the entrance to the port, which is protected from the wind. Indeed, the text states that 'Ja nef k'i enterra de ored n'avra mal' (l. 2177, 'No ship ever entering it is ever damaged by the wind', p. 84). Judith Weiss notes that the harbour of Dublin was indeed sheltered and 'perfect for beaching ships', whilst the surrounding area, known as the Staine, took its name from a large standing stone erected by the Vikings.[617] The large rock described in *Horn* perhaps refers to this standing stone, thus suggesting a degree of local knowledge.[618]

However, this local knowledge does not appear to extend much beyond Dublin and its port. Indeed in *Horn,* Ireland consists of little else. As such, travel within Ireland is vastly different from that described in *Rigomer* and in the writings of Gerald of Wales.[619] When Horn arrives in Ireland, he disembarks and soon crosses paths with the king's sons, Egfer and Guffer. Their journey to the court is easy and direct: 'A itant s'en revont par le plein del païs/ A la cite tut dreit u li reis iert, joïs;' (ll.

[616] See chapter 1.3, 'Known geographies in the *lais*' pp. 65-66.
[617] Weiss, 'Thomas and the earl', p. 5; E. Curtis, 'Norse Dublin', *Dublin Historical Record,* 4:3 (1942), p. 100.
[618] Dominica Legge also suggests that Horn likely landed at the Steyne, although she is sceptical about the possibility that the author had himself visited Ireland. M. D. Legge, 'The Romance of Horn. Vol. II by Thomas, Mildred K. Pope and T. B. W. Reid', *The Modern Language Review*, 61:2 (1966), p. 310.
[619] See chapter 2.2, 'Ireland as a space of threat', pp. 102-105.

2281-2282) (‘Thereupon they returned in good spirits over the flat country straight to the city, where the king was.’, p. 86). Later, the text describes the Saracen Rollac’s journey along a metalled road from the port to the city of Dublin: ‘Cist s’en vet chevauchant tut le feré chemin,/ A la cité tut dreit, ki ad nun Diuelin’ (ll. 2936-2937) (‘Rollac went riding along the cobbled [metalled] road straight to the city called Dublin’, p. 97). Legge notes that metalled roads were commonplace in Ireland because of the marshy ground, and the excavation of an early medieval metalled roadway at Chancery Lane, Dublin, does suggest that metalled roads were found in this area.[620] The roadway at Chancery Lane in Dublin was surfaced with closely-set stones of up to 0.3m in diameter, which were laid directly onto the subsoil. At the side of the road, a gully provided drainage.[621] The reference to the ‘feré chemin’ again appears to indicate a degree of local knowledge by the author, whilst also suggesting that Ireland is a space where paths and roads facilitate travel. This contrasts with Ireland in *Rigomer*, and in the writings of Gerald of Wales, in which, as discussed in a previous chapter, we are frequently told of the lack of paths and the difficulties of traversing the wild terrain. Ireland in *Horn*, on the other hand, is not wild and perilous, but is instead imagined through its connectivity.

Aside from the descriptions of the port of Dublin, it is only during the battle scenes that the text mentions the geography and landscape of Ireland. However, these often appear to be generic rather than specific. For example, the text describes how the armies met ‘E de val e de munt e de bois e de mer’ (l. 3273) (‘[from] valley, mountain, forest, and sea’, p. 103). Rather than providing the exact geographical origins of the men, the listing of woods, mountains, valleys, and sea emphasises the extent of the battle. Similarly, the description of the valley, woods, and hillsides echoing with the sound of the battle blows does not set the events within a precise geographical setting, but instead accentuates the ferocity of the fighting between Egfer and Herebrant:

> ‘Egfer e Herebrand se cumbatent par mal,
>
> Des cops ke s’entredonent retentissent li val
>
> E les bois environ e des munz li costal.’ (ll. 3365-3367)
>
> ‘Egfer and Herebrant fought fiercely, the valley, surrounding woods and hillsides resounding with the blows they exchanged.’ (p. 105)

Nevertheless, there are some elements that suggest a more precise imagining of the battle settings. Indeed, Judith Weiss suggests that the details of the Saracen attacks recall the sieges of Dublin in 1171.[622] Like Haskulv and John le Devé in the *Song of Dermot and the Earl*, known in its most recent edition as *The Deeds of the Normans in Ireland* and dated to the late twelfth century, the

[620] Legge, ‘The Romance of Horn’, p. 310; C. Walsh, ‘An early medieval roadway at Chancery Lane: from Duibhlinn to Áth Cliath?’, in S. Duffy, ed., *Medieval Dublin, IX: Proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin Symposium, 2007* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2009), pp. 9–37.
[621] Walsh, ‘An early medieval roadway at Chancery Lane’, p. 15.
[622] Weiss, ‘Thomas and the earl’, p. 6.

Saracen invaders land at the port and pitch their tents on the marshy shore.[623] After their defeat, both the fictional invaders and those of 1171 are described fleeing towards their ships before being cut off and drowned. Both Haskulv and the Saracen Rollac are beheaded. These parallels suggest an author aware of the specific events of 1171, and of the geographical landscapes in which they took place.

To summarise, in terms of geography and landscape, the representation of Ireland in *Horn* is vastly different from the wild and untraversable Celtic settings found in texts such as *Rigomer* or in the descriptions of Gerald of Wales. Whilst the descriptions of Irish geography do appear to reflect some local knowledge, this is limited to Dublin and its environs. The author appears to be deliberately ignorant of the difficulties of travelling through the Irish landscape, instead emphasising Ireland as a connected space, both internally and through wider networks of trade.

Representation of the court

Likewise, Irish society in *Horn* is far from barbaric or backwards. From the outset, Irish society is characterised by its prosperity and nobility. When Horn arrives at the port of Dublin, the boat is met by noble ladies dressed in fine silk (ll. 2181-2182). As noted above, Horn meets King Gudreche's sons soon after arriving in Ireland. They are engaged in elite leisure activity, hunting and hawking with their retainers. Notably, they are courteous in their behaviour towards Horn. Egfer offers Horn 'bons destriers, beles arms de pris,/ Bones sabelines, peliçons vers e gris' (ll. 2271-2273) ('good horses, fine and valuable weapons, beautiful sables, grey and white furred robes', p. 85) in return for his service, demonstrating good and generous lordship. Here leisure appears to precede military service, setting the tone for the description of the Irish court that follows. King Gudreche is similarly courteous towards Horn, welcoming him and instructing his sons to honour Horn. Gudreche's wife and daughters are beautiful and noble, and are integrated into court life. As Rosalind Field notes, the text offers a remarkable portrait of good-humoured family interactions.[624] Descriptions of the Irish court repeatedly emphasise its wealth and prosperity. We have already noted the fine clothing of the ladies and the magnanimity of the king's sons. In another episode, Gudreche's daughter Lenburc sends a messenger to Horn in an attempt to secure his love. She presents him with an engraved cup made of African gold, and later offers him horses, weapons, and gold. Although these gifts are rejected by Horn, they serve to emphasise the richness of the court in Ireland. They also hint at authorial knowledge of the importance of African gold from regions such as Bambuk and Bouré in the sub-Sahara.[625] This depiction of Irish society and its elite activities conforms to literary ideals of the

[623] For a discussion of the author and dating of the text, see *The deeds of the Normans in Ireland*, ed. Mullally, pp. 27–37.
[624] R. Field, 'Courtly culture and emotional intelligence in the Romance of Horn', in N. Perkins, ed., *Medieval Romance and Material Culture* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2015), p. 31.
[625] Atmore and Oliver, *Medieval Africa*, p. 63.

courtly and chivalric life, and is more reflective of Anglo-Norman elite society in Ireland than indigenous Gaelic Irish society.

Yet the text also appears to demonstrate a level of knowledge of Gaelic practices, particularly in its descriptions of leisure activities. One episode describes how, following the Pentecost feast, the young men began to compete in throwing stones. Naturally our protagonist is able to throw the stone farthest, defeating the boastful Eglaf and defending the honour of his lord Egfer. Later, the text describes the skilled harp playing of the household, which is only surpassed by Horn's playing. These detailed passages have been used to suggest that the author was himself a skilled musician:[626]

> 'Lors prent la harpe a sei, qu'il la veut atemprer.
>
> Deus! ki dunc l'esgardast cum la sout manïer,
>
> Cum ces cordes tuchout, cum les feseit trembler,
>
> Asquantes feiz chanter asquantes organer,
>
> De l'armonie del ciel li poüst remembrer!' (ll. 2830-2834)
>
> 'Then he took the harp, for he wanted to tune it. Lord, whoever then watched his knowledgeable handling of it, how he touched the strings and made them vibrate, sometimes causing them to sing and at other times join in harmonies, would have been reminded of the harmony of heaven!' (p. 95)

The descriptions of stone throwing and harp playing in the Irish court recall Gerald of Wales's comments about the Irish people. Gerald describes how the Irish 'seem to me to be incomparably more skilled' at playing musical instruments, notably the harp, than any others.[627] Gerald also notes the Irish skill at throwing stones, a detail that is also mentioned in many early Irish texts.[628] The early dating of the *Roman de Horn*, suggested to be c.1170, precludes the possibility that the author was simply drawing upon Gerald's writings and instead supports the idea that 'Mestre Thomas' himself had first-hand knowledge of Ireland and its indigenous practices.

The text therefore blends the ideals of Anglo-Norman elite society with indigenous practices and activities, offering a vision of Ireland that harmoniously unites Anglo-Norman and Gaelic Irish society. Irish society is characterised by its civilised and courtly activities, and its generous treatment of knights that are retained there.

[626] Legge, 'The Romance of Horn', p. 2.
[627] Gerald of Wales, *The History and Topography of Ireland*, pp. 103–104.
[628] Gerald of Wales, *The History and Topography of Ireland*, p. 101; Weiss, 'Thomas and the earl', p. 5.

Conflict and Christianity

Indeed, the peace and prosperity of Ireland is such that Horn is frustrated by the lack of military activity:

> ‘Or sacez veirement tiel vie ad ennuiée
>
> A Gudmod le vaillant od chierë honuréé,
>
> Kar li reis sa guerre ot par tut apaéé
>
> E la triwe prise out qui trop aveit durée.’ (ll. 2529-2532)
>
> ‘Now you must know that such a life irked the brave Gudmod with his noble bearing. For the king had brought his wars to a peaceful end and made a truce, which had lasted a long while.’ (p. 90)

Nevertheless, when faced with an attack by the Saracens, the Irish have a strong and well-organised fighting force with Horn as their leader. Horn is able to organise the men into seven groups, all intent on destroying the Saracen forces:

> ‘Ses eschieles depart cum cil ki iert bien sage:
>
> Set en fait mut vallanz ki tut sunt d’un corage
>
> De paiens damager, de faire lur utrage:’ (ll. 3243-3244)
>
> ‘Gudmod divided his squadrons like a wise man: he formed seven brave groups, all intent on harming the infidels and bringing them to grief.’ (p. 103)

Through its description of the Irish response to the Saracen invaders, the text clearly emphasises the Christian belief of the Irish court. After the arrival of Rollac at court, who demands that they pay tribute and convert to the Saracen religion, the king’s sons both declare their willingness to defend their Christian faith by force of arms:

> ‘Ambdui li fiz le rei si.n ont offert lur gant
>
> Pur defendre lur lei; si se sunt puroffrant
>
> Qu(e)amdui se cumbatront al sorquidé tirant,
>
> Qu’il ne deivent guerpir la lei u sunt crëant,
>
> Ne qu’il ne deivent pas true estre rendant.’ (ll. 3011-3015)
>
> ‘Both the king’s sons threw down their gloves to defend their religion. They proffered themselves to the insolent prince to maintain by force of arms that they should not abandon the creed they held, nor should they render tribute.’ (p. 99)

The Irish resistance to the invaders is clearly motivated by loyalty to the Christian faith, as well as by a desire to protect the kingdom from the obligations towards a Saracen lord. The text directly opposes the Christian Irish warriors with the Saracen foe, creating a clear dichotomy that echoes the Christian-Saracen conflict in *chansons de geste* such as the *Chanson de Roland*, as well as contemporary crusading ideologies.[629] In this way, we are presented with a simplified and positive version of Christianity that contrasts with contemporary Anglo-Norman criticisms of Christian practices in Ireland. As discussed in chapter 2.1, the Irish church in the eleventh century was structurally very different from the rest of western Christendom.[630] Large numbers of bishops, residing in *monasteria* under the supervision of a superior or *airchinnech*, oversaw a church structured around small kingdoms rather than dioceses.[631] Following the Norman Conquest, archbishops Lanfranc and Anselm of Canterbury urged a process of reform in Ireland, demonstrating concern over issues ranging from episcopal consecration to the administration of baptism. Moral reform was also necessary, and the twelfth century saw repeated attempts at the synods of Cashel (1101) and Kells (1152) to impose clerical celibacy and prohibit sexual relations with close relatives.[632] The 1155 papal bull *Laudabiliter* invited Henry II to march into Ireland and correct its vices, whilst Pope Alexander III's 1172 letter to the Irish bishops refers to reports of the vice and barbarism of the Irish race.[633]

Yet vice and barbarism are entirely absent from Irish society in *Horn*. The text taps into a popular contemporary motif – the Christian-Saracen opposition - in order to present an idealised vision of Christianity in Ireland. Moreover, the text describes how 'li nostre sunt pruz, aduré guerreier' (l. 3270) ('And our men were brave, hardened warriors', p. 103), emphasising the experience and courage of the Irish men. Notably, by referring to them as 'li nostre', Thomas creates a sense of community between the warriors and the readers of the text, who are joined in their shared opposition to the Saracen foe. Through the descriptions of the Christian faith of the courageous Irish warriors, the text presents an Ireland that is infused with the ideology of the Anglo-Norman elite world.

The response to the deaths of Irish warriors, and the king's sons in particular, is also framed through Christian belief. The text describes how the dead are carried to 'al muster Saint Moris' (l. 3548) ('to the abbey of St. Maurice', p. 108), and vigil is kept until morning. This is perhaps the same abbey described earlier in the text, where the king hears the archbishop Markier perform mass (ll.

[629] See also pp. 126-129.
[630] See chapter 2.1, 'The marvellous and resistance to authority', pp. 70-73.
[631] Jefferies, 'Ireland: Religion and Piety', p. 430.
[632] Jefferies, 'Ireland: Religion and Piety', pp. 432–433.
[633] Jefferies, 'Ireland: Religion and Piety', pp. 433–435. As noted above, Anne Duggan argues that the papal bull, which survives only in the work of Gerald of Wales, was substantially altered by Gerald in order to provide justification for English authority over Ireland. Nevertheless, it seems likely that Gerald was drawing upon contemporary views of Irish vice. See Duggan, 'The Making of a Myth', pp. 249-312.

2558-2559). It is unclear if these are references to a real abbey in Dublin; we might speculate that it is a distortion of St. Mary's, an abbey founded from Savigny in 1139 and that later submitted to Cistercian rule.[634] A list made by William Ashbourne, an English abbot of the monastery in the early fourteenth century, does record a 'Mauricius' as an early abbot of St Mary's.[635] Perhaps this is the 'Moris' to which the text refers? *Horn* also makes reference to another church in Dublin, described as 'l'iglise real -/ Çoe iert arcevesquié' (ll. 3556-3557) ('the royal and metropolitan church', p. 109). This likely refers to Christ Church cathedral, and suggests that the author was aware that Dublin had an archbishopric, an archbishop having been appointed to Dublin at the 1152 synod of Kells.[636] It is here that a service is held for the king's sons, and where they are buried.

As Field emphasises, the deaths of Guffer and Egfer are intensely affecting, providing an alternative perception of warfare that highlights the grief of Horn and the family.[637] Again, the emphasis on the Christian belief of the Irish court differs significantly from other contemporary writings about Ireland, which are characterised by their depiction of the indigenous Gaelic Irish as barbarous and sinful.[638] Following the death of the king's sons, Gudreche recognises that he is too old to protect and defend the kingdom from future attacks, and offers his kingdom and his daughter in marriage to Horn. In doing so, he demonstrates a desire to maintain political stability within the realm. He also asserts the coherence of the kingdom as a single and undivided entity that can be passed on and inherited; again, the difference between the textual representation of the kingdom of Ireland and the historical multiplicity of kingships is Ireland is clear. With this in mind, the depiction of Irish succession in *Horn* can be seen as a strategic re-envisioning of what Ireland could be under the overlordship of Henry II.

Strongbow and Henry II

My study of the Irish setting in the *Roman de Horn* reveals an Ireland centred around Dublin and its port, and characterised by the courtly, Christian behaviour of its inhabitants, who seem more similar to the Anglo-Norman than Gaelic Irish elite. The text presents Ireland as a coherent and undivided kingdom that can be passed down and inherited, offering a new vision of the Irish kingship that is very different to the realities of twelfth-century Irish politics. Yet the text also infuses this depiction with what might be first-hand knowledge of indigenous activities, such as stone-throwing and harp-

[634] A. Gwynn, 'The Origins of St. Mary's Abbey, Dublin', *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 79 (1949), pp. 111–112.
[635] Gwynn, 'The Origins of St. Mary's Abbey, Dublin', p. 123; *Chartularies of St Mary's Abbey, Dublin: With the Register of its House at Dunbrody, and Annals of Ireland*, ed. J. T. Gilbert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 1, p. 379.
[636] Jefferies, 'Ireland: Religion and Piety', p. 433.
[637] Field, 'Courtly culture and emotional intelligence', pp. 35–37.
[638] See Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales*, pp. 139–141. See also my discussion of the church in Ireland, p. 72.

playing. Moreover, the author appears to have some geographical knowledge of the area, although this does not appear to extend beyond Dublin. Ireland in *Horn* therefore appears to be the product of a deliberate blending of authorial knowledge and imagination, which allows the audience to envision an Ireland that is united, Christian, and courtly. The text rehabilitates the indigenous Gaelic Irish elite by combining their activities with the ideals of the Anglo-Norman elite.

This representation of Ireland makes sense in the context of the tensions between Henry II and Strongbow in the early 1170s. *Horn* offers a vision of a peaceful and prosperous kingdom, which is able to resist attack thanks to the assistance of a heroic knight who has arrived from elsewhere. Our first instinct is that Horn represents Strongbow himself, the possible patron of *Horn*. The flattering portrayal of the heroic protagonist would certainly appeal to a patron of the text. However, the narrative parallels with historical events is limited. Unlike Strongbow, Horn leaves Ireland and refuses the offer of marriage, instead ensuring the security of Ireland through the marriage of Lenburc to Modin, king of Fenenie, and Gudreche's other daughter Sudborc to Haderof, Horn's childhood friend and the son of his father's seneschal. In this conclusion, Rosalind Field finds echoes of the relationship between Henry and Strongbow in Ireland, in a manner that is complimentary to them both. We see Henry in the final picture of Horn, who establishes himself 'at the centre of a network of realms, bound together by feudal ties, marriages, and a sense of the iron fist beneath the damask glove.' [639] For his part, Strongbow is envisioned as the 'trusted lieutenant married to a native princess', to whom the kingdom of Ireland is entrusted by Horn. [640]

My study of the text, and its representation of the Irish setting and court, supports this idea of a text designed to be complimentary to both Strongbow and Henry II. The text presents an optimistic vision of Ireland that resolves the tensions between Strongbow and Henry. Strongbow's marriage to Aoife is reframed as something established by and approved by Henry. Through its vision of a peaceful and prosperous kingdom, the text serves to alleviate Henry II's concerns about Strongbow's activities in Ireland.

Conclusion

Like the *Roman de la Manekine*, *Horn* offers a very different representation of Celtic space to that found in texts such as *Les Merveilles de Rigomer* and the *Roman de Fergus*. Rather than being characterised by its wild, depopulated, and unnavigable landscapes, Ireland is represented as a civilised and courtly space centred around Dublin. It is connected to other realms and known by its reputation as a celebrated and prosperous realm. Through this representation, the text rehabilitates

[639] Field, 'Courtly culture and emotional intelligence', p. 39.
[640] Field, 'Courtly culture and emotional intelligence', p. 39.

Ireland and transforms it into a space where peaceful rule in the hands of a trusted lord is possible. *Horn* offers a clear example of how setting can be reshaped according to the needs and aims of the author. Whereas *Les Merveilles de Rigomer* provides a retelling of colonial invasion, the *Roman de Horn* facilitates a reimagining of how Anglo-Norman society can exist in Ireland in a prosperous and stable manner.

Alternative visions of space – reflections

The *Roman de la Manekine* and the *Roman de Horn* present two visions of Celtic space that differ from those found in Parts 1 and 2 of my study. Unlike the texts in Part 1, Scotland and Ireland are not depicted through geographically precise or detailed descriptions. The authors of the texts do not appear to have had extensive or detailed knowledge of the geography or topography of their Celtic settings, and landscape does not play a crucial role in their narratives. Nor do they present Scotland or Ireland as wilderness spaces that promise threat and adventure, as in the colonising vision of *Les Merveilles de Rigomer*¸ or that offer freedom from external authorities, as in the *lai* of *Desiré*. Scotland and Ireland are instead constructed through courtly and chivalric ideals, which I have argued serve two different authorial strategies. In the *Roman de la Manekine*, both Joy's journey to Scotland and the representation thereof play into the construction and development of her character, emphasising her nobility and piety. Setting is about narrative and character rather than contemporary political and social concerns in Britain. On the other hand, whilst Ireland in the *Roman de Horn* is similarly constructed through the ideals of courtly society, I have suggested that this representation has a clear political purpose: to rehabilitate Ireland in the context of Anglo-Norman invasion and settlement in the early 1170s.

By bringing these two texts into the broader picture of my study, I have demonstrated how literary texts might offer a variety of different responses to the landscapes and geographies of Celtic spaces – responses that might serve narrative purposes and speak to social and political circumstances outside the text. As historians, we therefore need to be ready to think about these literary texts in a flexible manner rather than through a simple historicist approach.

Conclusion

My thesis has explored the representation of Celtic space in Britain across a range of Francophone literary texts composed throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Central to this is the idea that landscape and geography shape and influence human actions, ideas, and experiences. Literary texts, I argue, offer a window into contemporary knowledge and understandings of Celtic geographies, in both a practical and imaginative sense. My study is divided into three sections, each of which focuses

on a different quality or function of Francophone literary representations of Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. In the first section, 'Geographical knowledge and localisation', I examine texts that are embedded in local geographies, demonstrating precise knowledge of place names and topography. In 'Wilderness and adventure', I explore how the practical realities of Celtic geographies might interact with their imaginative resonance as spaces for adventures and encounters with the unknown. Finally, in 'Alternative visions of space', I examine texts that present Celtic spaces in a different manner to those explored in the two previous sections, often as a result of their place and time of composition.

My study sets out to re-examine the relationship between England and its neighbours during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. This was a period characterised by Anglo-Norman political intervention, expansion, and settlement in Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. Whilst modern historians have tended to privilege the Latin writings of medieval historians and commentators as well as documentary sources, I instead draw upon a source base of vernacular French literary texts, notably romances and *lais*. French was an integral language in the multilingual environment of the Anglo-Norman world and beyond, both in terms of literature and administration, yet historians have been slow to engage with apparently 'fictional' romance texts. However, the sharp distinction between 'fictional' literary texts and history writing is collapsed when we recognise their similar techniques of composition through narrative and invention. For the medieval author, genre was a fluid category that could be manipulated. Likewise, the circulation of the written word through public performance, or 'literate sociability', blurred the boundaries between documents, stories, and histories.[641]

My thesis therefore emphasises the interactions between vernacular French literary texts, Latin writings, and their social, political, and geographical contexts. These texts were not produced and consumed in isolation from these contexts; social practices, ideas, knowledge, and anxieties could be reflected in and influenced by literary texts. When taken seriously as a historical source, literary texts such as romances therefore offer a unique insight into the social, political, and mental world of their authors and audiences or readers. In this way, my corpus of nine texts provides a window into twelfth- and thirteenth-century knowledge and imaginings of Celtic space in Britain, framed through the perspectives of their Anglo-Norman elite authors and audiences.

Previous scholarship on the 'First English Empire', such as the works of the historians John Gillingham and Rees Davies, has often centred upon people and the dichotomies of civilised versus barbaric, core versus periphery, in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Britain. Applying a new methodology, my work instead asks us to engage more closely with ideas of geography and landscape as a lens through which to engage with my corpus of texts and to explore the relationship between England and its neighbours in Britain during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. This approach emerged independently from but in alignment with the work of ecocritical scholars, who emphasise

[641] Bainton, 'Literate Sociability and Historical Writing', p. 26.

the central role of geography and environment in shaping human activity and experience, and with the landscape theories of archaeologists and anthropologists such as Christopher Tilley and Tim Ingold. At its heart, my research is centred around the phenomenological question of how people, specifically the Francophone elite, experienced the world during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in Britain and continental Europe. I argue that space is not a neutral backdrop for human activity, but instead is produced through human interactions with the world – both through bodily sensation and through cognitive understanding. We might therefore speak about multiple *spaces* across Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, each dependent on who is experiencing it and how. In this study, I focus upon the Celtic spaces produced by the Francophone elite as they wrote and consumed my corpus of texts.

Landscape here plays a fundamental role. On one level, landscape refers to physical geography and terrain. In the case of my study, this is the physical landscape of Scotland, Ireland, and Wales in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Is it mountainous? Covered with forest? Navigable via paths? Yet landscape is also about one's relatedness to terrain, to how it is experienced and how it is represented. With this in mind, I suggest that the Francophone literary texts studied in this thesis serve as an alternative 'body' through which the reader or audience might 'feel' a described landscape as experienced, both physically and cognitively, by the author. As such, the Celtic spaces represented in these texts are reflections of the author's perspective and relatedness to them, rather than of indigenous voices of those who lived under Anglo-Norman occupation.

This allows a new approach to thinking about the relationship between 'core' and 'periphery' in the British Isles between 1100 and 1300. The scholarship of historians such as Rees Davies has challenged core-periphery models, aiming to recentre the so-called fringes by bringing the history of Wales, Ireland, and Scotland to the forefront as part of wider European history.[642] My work breaks down the monolithic idea of the 'Celtic fringe' by exploring the multitude of different imaginings present in my corpus of texts. Rather than studying indigenous voices, I study the voices of outsiders and newcomers to Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, who were writing from a position of power and describing spaces that were subject to Anglo-Norman exploitation and oppression. I closely examine representations of geography and landscape in my corpus of texts as a lens through which to think about what the Francophone elite knew about Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, and what kind of knowledge this was. Some of these Francophone authors may have experienced these geographies first-hand, travelling with the households of Anglo-Norman lords settling in Ireland, Wales, and Scotland. Others may have gained a different form of knowledge of these spaces through stories and descriptions picked up elsewhere, via political networks of family and trading contacts or through

[642] See, for example, R.R. Davies, 'Kinsmen, neighbours and communities in Wales and the Western British Isles, c.1100-c.1400', in P. Stafford, J. Nelson, and J. Martindale, eds., *Law, Laity and Solidarities: Essays in Honour of Susan Reynolds* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), pp. 172–187; See also R. Frame, *The Political Development of the British Isles, 1100-1400* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

other textual material. As we have seen, literary descriptions of Celtic spaces might also be based on reputation and imagination rather than on direct experience, reflecting the assumptions and imaginings of those writing from outside of Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. For example, although *Les Merveilles de Rigomer* does demonstrate geographical knowledge of Ireland, it also draws upon Ireland's existing reputation as a place of marvels.

My close reading of these vernacular French texts therefore yields an insight into contemporary knowledge of Celtic spaces on the part of Anglo-Norman settlers but also into how they existed within the thought world of the Francophone elite. Many of my texts follow the journey of a male protagonist as he ventures into Celtic spaces, which physically distance and actively challenge the protagonist. By examining the literary representations of these spaces through the frame of landscape and geography, I provide a new approach through which the historian might explore the complex political relations within the British Isles during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. This allows an insight into how Celtic spaces existed for the Francophone elite in both a tangible and an imaginative sense, revealing multiple different imaginings that break down the idea of a homogenous 'Celtic fringe'.

The structure of my thesis, which focuses on individual case studies grouped into themes, facilitates close reading of each individual text. I do, however, recognise the limitations of this structure, which makes it difficult to draw overarching comparisons across the different case studies. Similarly, the constraints of a PhD thesis have meant that I have not considered the manuscript traditions of each text in any depth. Patterns of circulation and transmission may help me in future work to draw conclusions about the popularity and spread of ideas and assumptions about Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. There are also numerous other texts, including the vast Arthurian tradition as well as works like *Ipomedon*, which could be included in future research. By putting my case studies in the context of other Francophone literature, I will be able to consider how common or unusual particular representations were across a much broader source base. How many surviving texts, for example, demonstrate topographical awareness of Scotland, Ireland, and Wales?

Despite these inevitable limitations, my study of these Francophone texts demonstrates that the spaces in Britain beyond England occupied a significant position in the elite Francophone mind. At one level, this was practical and political. Texts such as *Fouke le Fitz Waryn* and *Les Merveilles de Rigomer*, both thought to have been written during the thirteenth century, reveal a strong concern with landholding and colonial expansion. Central to this was the practical issue of how Anglo-Norman knights might move through space. This is evidenced by the frequent literary descriptions of travel on horse, by boat, and on foot, which offer to the historian an insight into the challenges that might face the Anglo-Norman knight when travelling through a new landscape, and how these historical challenges might play into the literary imagination. Representations of Celtic spaces might

be reflective of authorial knowledge of real geographies, demonstrating a level of localisation that is indicative of the intended audience of the text. For example, for the author and presumably audience of *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*, the Welsh March was not an unknown space; the locations featured in the text played a tangible role in the political as well as geographical landscape of Marcher society. Their strategic representation in the text, intertwined with origin legend and a retelling of landholding history, is inseparable from local political concerns, viewed from the perspective of the Marcher lords.

In a similar vein, *Les Merveilles de Rigomer* is tied to a precise geography as Lancelot circumnavigates Ireland, travelling through Breifne, Connacht, Thomond, Desmond, and Cork before finally reaching the marvellous land of Rigomer. The difficulties experienced by the Arthurian knights as they travel through the landscape of the literary text echo those described by Gerald of Wales in both the *Expugnatio* and the *Topographia Hibernica*, Latin texts written for a similar audience. These references to the practicalities of travel therefore root the otherwise fantastical text of *Rigomer* in a sense of geographical reality, whilst also demonstrating how French literary texts might interact with Latin writings. Through their grounding in the real, texts such as *Fouke* and *Rigomer* break down the artificially constructed boundaries between 'fiction' and 'history', inviting a shift in how we view literary texts in relation to 'historical' material. Just like the writings of Gerald of Wales, texts such as *Rigomer* have something to tell the historian about how Celtic landscapes were experienced, traversed, and talked about.

At another level, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales resonated as imaginative spaces at the frontiers of Anglo-Norman knowledge and society in Britain. They were spaces of opportunity and possibility for the Francophone elite, both practically and imaginatively, where identities might be negotiated, and anxieties explored – often through the use of geographical setting. An author might choose to transform or amplify a setting for narrative purposes or to make a political point. For example, I have argued that the Scottish setting in the *Roman de Fergus* transforms sites of religious and political significance in order to reduce the Scottish kingdom to a place of parodic humour. Here we can see how the settings of literary texts might be intimately bound up with the contemporary political and religious anxieties of the Francophone elite, such as the burgeoning idea of Scottish sovereignty. Similarly, whilst *Les Merveilles de Rigomer* is dotted with references to real places and lordships in Ireland, these are woven into an imagined landscape of *merveilleux* and threatening encounters, perhaps reflecting contemporary anxieties concerning conflict between Anglo-Norman settlers and native Irish princelings. The tensions surrounding the 'English Empire' are played out in the landscapes of Celtic space.

The threat and possibility of Celtic spaces in Francophone literary texts is, in some cases, bound up with gender. For example, female characters might be associated with resistance to Anglo-Norman authority in Celtic spaces. In *Desiré*, the text reworks gendered contemporary fears

surrounding the demonic to suggest a space in which a fairy mistress might hold greater moral authority than a male hermit. The historical difficulties of church reform in Celtic spaces, notably the resistance of the Scottish church to English ecclesiastical jurisdiction, is here reflected through the figure of the fairy mistress. Moreover, female characters often represent both the dangers and the opportunities posed by colonial expansion. Historically, women were points of contact between the settler and the settled, often through marriage and sexual relations. By paying attention to the representation of women in the texts, the historian gains an insight into the frictions and anxieties that might surface through colonial contact. In *Les Merveilles de Rigomer*, for example, it is a maiden who invites the knights of King Arthur to seek out the reaches and rewards of Rigomer and its lady, whilst it is also a maiden who enchants and enslaves Lancelot. Similarly, in *Melion* it is the Irish princess who betrays Melion and leaves him unable to reassume human form. Here the dangers of Celtic spaces are intertwined with misogynistic ideas about female deceitfulness.

Comparing the texts studied here invites an additional, and more speculative, historical observation: as time moves on, the geographical horizon of the protagonist's world of action moves further away. In the *Gesta Herewardi* and the *Roman de Horn*, written at the book ends of the twelfth century, the narrative is centred on the protagonist acting in and around the insular world of Britain. Move forwards to the middle of the thirteenth century and, whilst the protagonist remains an individual, the world has got bigger. *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*, for example, describes voyages to Tunis and Barbary, whilst the *Roman de la Manekine* moves from Hungary, to Scotland, to Rome. This does not necessarily mean that geographical knowledge was more precise. The author of *la Manekine* certainly knew more about northern France than about Scotland. Yet it does allow us to speculate a change in the sense of positioning on the part of the Francophone author writing in Britain or northern France, whereby Scotland, Ireland, and Wales are set on a much broader stage, both inside and outside the texts. Celtic spaces were not the only *elsewheres* available to thirteenth-century Francophone authors, perhaps as a result of increased levels of contact between the Anglo-Norman world, the East, and the Iberian Peninsula, ideas of which gradually seeped into the Francophone elite imagination. In *Sone de Nansay*, it is Norway that serves as an alternative space of difference. Emily Dolmans has noted a similar shift in the position of England across a number of romances and histories from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries: 'England, as an intercultural space, becomes more entwined with the rest of the world as time progresses, and these later romances imagine their protagonists becoming increasingly involved in international affairs.'[643] This changing perception of the British insular world in relation to broader geographies merits further investigation. The 'fictional' literary text might help the modern historian to understand how Francophone elite in Britain and continental Europe understood their geographical position in relation to the wider world.

[643] E. Dolmans, *Writing Regional Identities in Medieval England: From the Gesta Herewardi to Richard Coer de Lyon* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2020), p. 25.

In summary, my close reading of vernacular French literary texts across two centuries reveals the complexities of Francophone knowledge and perceptions of Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. I have stressed the interplay between French and Latin writings, although further research would be required to fully establish the similarities and differences between contemporary French and Latin representations of Celtic space. Some texts in my corpus, such as *Les Merveilles de Rigomer* and *Le Roman de Fergus*, do treat Celtic spaces as peripheries. Areas in Scotland, Ireland, and Wales are presented as spaces beyond the normal social order, spaces that are wild, depopulated, and potentially threatening. In large part, this is tied to the physical challenges posed by their terrains, but it also surfaces through female characters who serve as points of contact between the protagonist knights and the indigenous populations. In the narrative, Celtic spaces offer opportunities for the character development of the protagonist knight and the freedom to resist established authorities at home and abroad. Yet Scotland, Ireland, and Wales could also be known spaces, with narratives that were grounded in real geographical locations and made references to specific place-names. Whether presented as wild or courtly, Celtic spaces clearly held a presence in the mental world of the Francophone elite. Literary sources offer a vision of Celtic space that is far more nuanced than a simple civilised-barbaric dichotomy, dismantling the monolithic idea of the 'Celtic fringe' and enriching our historical understanding of the British archipelago in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The texts considered here interweave literary motifs with authorial knowledge to explore the contemporary anxieties of the Anglo-Norman elite. The geographical spaces of Scotland, Ireland, and Wales existed both in reality and in the mental world of the elite; literary texts offer an insight into how the two might coalesce. My study of Francophone literary texts has demonstrated their potential as historical sources, providing a unique window into how the Anglo-Norman elite thought about the Celtic spaces of Britain during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

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