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Translating Arthur : the Historia regum Britanniae of Geoffrey of Monmouth and Roman de Brut of Wace

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TRANSLATING ARTHUR: THE *HISTORIA REGUM BRITANNIAE* OF
GEOFFREY OF MONMOUTH AND *ROMAN DE BRUT* OF WACE

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
of the Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of English

by

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DEDICATION

For everyone who made this dissertation possible.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	vi
ABSTRACT.....	vii
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. OCCIDENTALLY FOREIGN: LOCATING THE OTHERS OF THE BRITISH ISLES IN THE <i>HISTORIA REGUM BRITANNIAE</i>	11
3. ANNA AND THE KINGS: LOCATING MARRIAGE ALLIANCES IN THE <i>HISTORIA REGUM BRITANNIAE</i>	44
4. LOCATING THE GREEKS IN THE MATTER OF BRITAIN	75
5. FROM WEST TO EAST: LOCATING THE ORIENT IN THE MATTER OF BRITAIN	96
6. CONCLUSION.....	129
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	136
VITA.....	141

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

HrB Historia regum Britanniae

Roman Roman de Brut

ABSTRACT

This dissertation primarily focuses on re-presentations of the foreign others in the twelfth-century chronicles *Historia regum Britanniae* of Geoffrey of Monmouth and *Roman de Brut* of Wace of the Isle of Jersey. Geoffrey and Wace, I argue, deploy a number of strategies in their narratives regarding the Matter of Britain that mainly though not wholly work to reinforce hegemonic versions of history through dehumanizing and demonizing the others that inhabit their narratives. The strategies that Geoffrey and Wace deploy towards the inhabitants of their narratives, I contend, operate within a framework that both celebrates and defends the Normans' pretensions to empire and subjugates the others whom they encounter in their desire to bring their ambitious plans to fruition. I position this framework in the colonial discourses that circulated in the texts being produced by the ecclesiastical communities of the twelfth century. I argue that these discourses point to a specific type of colonialism that flourished during the twelfth century that on the one hand facilitated the Normans' pretensions to empire on multiple fronts and on the other hand expressed ambivalence towards some of the more brutal methods that the Normans employed to seize power, land and resources.

1. INTRODUCTION

The primary aim of this dissertation is to explore some of the ways that the twelfth-century chroniclers Geoffrey of Monmouth and the Wace of the Isle of Jersey re-present the other in the *Historia regum Britanniae* and *Roman de Brut*. Geoffrey and Wace, I will argue, deploy a number of strategies in their narratives regarding the Matter of Britain that mainly though not wholly work to reinforce hegemonic versions of history through dehumanizing and demonizing the others that inhabit their narratives. The strategies that Geoffrey and Wace deploy towards the inhabitants of their narratives, I contend, operate within a framework that both celebrates and defends the Normans' pretensions to empire and subjugates the others whom they encounter in their desire to bring their ambitious plans to fruition. In making this argument, I build upon studies by scholars like N.J. Higham, Michelle Warren, R.R. Davies, John Le Patourel, and others who investigate the various colonial discourses that circulated in the texts being produced by the ecclesiastical communities of western Europe going back to the Roman occupation of the British Isles down to the Norman conquests of Britain, parts of Southern Europe, and areas in and around the Mediterranean. In addition, I also draw upon the work of Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak and Tejaswini, each of whom explores the many colonial practices developed during the age of imperialism. In some cases, I borrow some of the useful terminology and theoretical models these scholars have articulated to map out the ways that colonial discourses circulated in the Matter of Britain. On the other hand, these studies also help to delineate the differences between the kinds of colonial discourses that were produced during the medieval periods and those produced from the seventeenth century onwards. Taken together, these studies point to a kind of colonialism that flourished during the twelfth century that on the one hand facilitated the Normans' pretensions to empire on multiple fronts and on the other hand

expressed ambivalence towards some of the more brutal methods that the Normans employed to seize power, land and resources.

In order to understand the ways that the colonial discourses of the twelfth century facilitated the Norman conquests of the British Isles, parts of Southern Europe and North Africa and beyond, a brief discussion of who the Normans were and what led them to believe they had a right to conquer and subjugate marginalized cultures under their rule is in order. Yet defining the Normans as a race or culture is no easy matter. Even the chroniclers of the twelfth century who took a vested interest in writing about secular events had difficulty in pinning down what exactly was meant by Norman. The Benedictine monk and writer of *Historia Ecclesiastica* Orderic Vitalis, for instance, somewhat vaguely associates them with the Nordic regions. More important to Orderic than where the Normans come from is their boldness of character and what that meant for the peoples whom the Normans encountered: they were “men of the North,” Orderic explains, “whose bold roughness had proved as deadly to their softer neighbours as the bitter wind to young flowers.”¹ Despite the vagueness and use of colorful metaphor in his description, Orderic does give us a few pieces of information worth elaborating upon. As a people, the Normans were loosely organized groups of raiders who first attacked the coastal regions of the Isles and north-western Europe beginning about 789 and eventually established settlements for themselves in places like Dublin and Neustria.² The latter, which eventually came to be known as Normandy after the Norsemen who established themselves there, was settled by Rollo. Rollo, who was probably the son of a Norwegian earl, led an assortment of Danes on raids on the coasts of Scotland, Ireland and France.³ After leading an unsuccessful siege on Chartres in 911, Rollo persuaded King Charles III (nick-named ‘the Simple’) to grant him the Roman city of Rouen, its parish, and some of the surrounding area.⁴

What is perhaps most remarkable about Orderic's description of the Normans as well as what we know of them from Rollo's skillful negotiations with King Charles to acquire Rouen is that they point to a people who can be identified not so much in terms of a single ethnic or even religious identity as in terms of their exploits. Indeed, the stories that the Normans told among themselves about their origins had more to do with their mythological ancestor's achievements than they did with where they came from. Two of the figures that held a preeminent place in tales of the Normans' deeds were Hastein Lodbrok and Bjorn Ironside, Viking chieftains of the ninth century. One of the favorite past times of the Norman Count of Sicily Roger was to hear the story of Hastein's legendary expedition to the Mediterranean recounted. On Roger's love for these sorts of tales, Geoffrey of Malaterra would write that the "the desire for fame lifts men above the level of brute beasts, and so justifies the recording of great deeds."⁵ Moreover, the aggressive way of life to which the Normans had accustomed themselves meant that few women accompanied them on expeditions. This in turn led the Normans to take an aggressive attitude towards marriage. On this point, Marjorie Chibnall rightly comments that the Normans adroitly used intermarrying with the peoples whom they came into contact in order to build up their power base: "Their legitimate marriages," Chibnall writes, "helped them to form alliances and strengthened their frontiers; the children of all their unions held most of the positions of dignity and power, including those in the Church."⁶

The Norman's aggressive nature and their love of warfare does much to give the modern scholar a good if incomplete picture of the kind of people they were. Importantly, the emphasis that the Normans placed both on achieving and telling stories of their deeds makes its way into the chronicles of their supporters and their detractors. Above all, Chibnall argues, the Normans were chiefly remembered for their deeds on the battle field: "Warfare has been aptly called the

national industry of the Normans, and it was as fighting men that they were most praised by their fellow-countrymen and remembered, with admiration as well as hatred, by their enemies.”⁷ This emphasis on the Normans’ martial skills also partly accounts for the difficulties chroniclers like Geoffrey of Malaterra have in identifying the Normans in terms of their ethnic makeup. Yet it may be with some irony that their supporters appear to downplay the importance of the precise ethnic identity or identities of the Normans themselves. As will be seen at various points in this dissertation, most notably in chapter 3, Norman attitudes towards the ethnicity of those with whom they intermarry has some bearing on how the foreign is re-presented in the Matter of Britain.

Much as is the case with pinning down who the Normans were as a people, investigating the intersection between Norman history and the colonial discourses that circulated in the *HRB* and *Roman* can be a tricky proposition. To the good, studies that examine the Norman period of literature through a postcolonial lens can provide fresh and sometimes startling insights on how the extant literature frequently aligned with Norman interests in conquest and domination. In *History on the Edge*, for instance, Michelle Warren provides us with a thought-provoking study that frames the production of literary materials during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in terms of how chroniclers like Geoffrey of Monmouth interested in the history of Britain responded to pressures exerted by the onset of the Norman penetration of the Isles. “The histories of Britain that include Arthur,” Warren asserts, “narrate the long history of insular colonialism in reaction to various contemporary pressures.”⁸ N.J. Higham similarly positions the cult of Arthur that arose in the twelfth century among the peoples of the Isles as a response to the trauma that the Normans inflicted there: “The result was arguably a reinforcement of belief in a folk Arthur as a protective force, as met with by the canons of Laon in Cornwall and Devon early

in the twelfth century.”⁹ Though he primarily concerns himself with Arthurian materials prior to the Norman Conquest, Higham persuasively argues that Geoffrey’s *Historia regum Britanniae* facilitated the historicization of Norman rule post Conquest:

In particular, it provided the new Anglo-Norman kings with a predecessor of heroic size, a great pan-British king in a long line of monarchs capable of countering contemporary pressures for decentralization, as had occurred in France, and reinforcing claims of political superiority over Celtic lands.¹⁰

Studies like Higham’s and Warren’s indicate that bringing the various paths the Normans took on the road to conquest and domination to bear upon the production of literary materials about Arthur by chroniclers like Geoffrey can effectively open up new avenues of inquiry for studying the literature of the period. The relative scarcity of studies like these about Arthur’s position in the chronicle tradition also point to the need for continuing investigations of the literature along these lines.

At the same time, however, locating the Matter of Britain within the framework of the various means the Normans employed in order to dominate and subjugate the peoples who had a claim to the land that the Normans wished to exploit for their own benefit poses a great number of challenges. For one thing, while the notions of conquest, domination and colonialism help to describe the same processes that aided the Normans in their desire to expand their empire—indeed these terms sometimes intersect with another—they nonetheless do not mean the same thing in all contexts, whether with respect to one another or as stand-alone terms. The Normans could dominate a people, for instance, without the need to resort to military conquest of the land. Such was the case regarding the way that the Normans dominated Scotland at the end of the eleventh century through to the mid-twelfth when Geoffrey was busy composing the *HrB*. On this score, R.R. Davies comments that “Scotland’s history between 1097 and 1135 showed clearly that effective political tutelage could be achieved without military confrontation, let alone

conquest.”¹¹ Likewise, although Davies’ comment here implies that conquest frequently describes the use of brute force against the peoples that the Normans encountered, this was not the only means by which the Normans achieved the conquest of land and resources. Davies and John Le Patourel, for example, each point to the establishment of a borough at Rhuddlan in North Wales in 1086 by Norman settlers as an example of peaceful conquest.¹² Difficulties that crop up in pinning down the meaning of these terms that describe the Norman’s process of seizing control of land and resources, I argue, in part reflects the challenges that studying the intersection of history and postcolonial theory can present to the scholar interested in excavating the literature of the twelfth century for what it can tell us about the impact the Normans had on the period.

In addition, although colonization in particular has always been principally about the acquisition of land and wealth by hegemonic powers like the Normans at the expense of the cultures that already occupied the land, colonization and the similar processes of conquest and domination have not played out in precisely the same way across the globe. This partly has to do with specific historical circumstances that shaped the paths to colonization, conquest, and domination that hegemonies like the Normans were to take. With the respect to the British Isles, conquest was sometimes precipitated by the invitation of the native inhabitants. Such was the case with the Norman penetration of Ireland during the reign of Henry II.¹³ In other cases, the Normans and the chroniclers who celebrated their achievements were able to build upon the received knowledge inherited from the Roman occupation of Wales. Gerald de Barri’s harsh condemnations of the Irish amply illustrates how domination could proceed in this fashion.¹⁴

And what is perhaps most remarkable about how these processes played out across the world stage during this period is the very different way that hegemonies like the one that the

Normans established approached subjugating the occidental peoples of the British Isles and those of the Orient. Indeed, although scholars of the colonialism that was part and parcel of the age of imperialism have been able to effectively articulate a theory about the subjugation of the East—Edward Said's ground breaking *Orientalism* played a critical role in the formation of this theoretical framework—no such formal critical methodology exists for discussing the colonization of the British Isles and Europe. This is not to say that I believe the formal articulation of such a theory is warranted. In my view, the proximity of the Normans to the occidental peoples they subjugated necessitated that they take very different paths to subjugating those peoples under their rule from the much more systematic way that the West as a whole was able to colonize and dominate the Orient.

As the above discussion indicates, precisely defining some of the terms that have to do with the kind of colonialism that was practiced by the Normans in the twelfth century is ultimately not possible. Nonetheless, it is important to at least provide a working definition of what that colonialism is, with the understanding that its precise meaning cannot be wholly articulated. What I chiefly mean by the kind of colonialism the Normans practiced then is, firstly, the aggressive attitude they took towards expanding their power base, both in terms of land and resources, by whatever means were available to them. These means could be military action but also extended to the aggressive policies they adopted towards their neighbors, including intermarrying, acquiring lands when brokering peace treaties as was the case with Rollo, and peacefully settling in foreign lands. Secondly, this colonialism comprises a discourse or set of discourses that the Normans disseminated about the foreign others they encountered. These discourses circulated on multiple fronts. In some instances, they celebrated and defended Norman achievements. In other instances, they re-presented and contained the foreign others

whom the Normans met in a variety of ways. The two major themes along these lines that I will discuss in this dissertation are re-presentations of the occidental peoples of the Isles as barbarians who deserved to be subjugated and re-presentations of the Orient as pagans who threatened to corrupt the whole of the Christian West. These celebrations of the Normans' exploits and re-presentations of the foreign others of the East and West circulate in the literary materials that were produced about the Normans by their supporters in the ecclesiastical communities of the twelfth century. And they work in tandem to produce a Norman version of history that dominates both the Matter of Britain in the *HrB* and *Roman* and on a broader scale the chronicles that were produced throughout the period. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, these discourses do not always express the power relations that existed between the Normans and the peoples they sought to subjugate in absolute terms. Rather, they sometimes contest and condemn Norman attitudes towards conquest and domination. Likewise, they sometimes preserve a sense of the identity of the foreign or express an anxiety towards or even an admiration for foreign cultures.

What this dissertation does then, is examine some of the ways that Geoffrey and Wace represent and contain the others of the British Isles as well as of the East as they narrate their stories about the Matter of Britain for a decidedly Norman audience. These others mainly include the Welsh, the Scottish, and the Irish in the British Isles; the Greeks; on the subcontinent the Africans and Moors; and in the Near East the Iranian Medes. These dominating frameworks that Geoffrey and Wace deploy about the others who inhabit their texts, I argue, largely though not exclusively work alongside a colonial discourse or discourses designed to subjugate or otherwise dominate the foreigners whom they encounter in their desire to acquire land and resources for themselves. In chapter 2, *Occidentally Foreign: Locating the Others of the British*

Isles in the *Historia regum Britanniae*, I firstly argue that Geoffrey deploys a number of terms that dehumanize and demonize the Scots, Picts, Irish, and Welsh peoples who inhabit his narrative in order to justify the violence that Geoffrey's pseudo-historical and fictitious rulers of Britain inflict upon them. In addition, I locate the terms that Geoffrey deploys alongside a set of constructs that the Normans developed towards the Isles' inhabitants. I contrast these constructs to the kind of colonial discourses that the imperial powers of the eighteenth century onwards developed towards the Orient. In chapter 3, *Anna and the Kings: Locating Marriage Alliances in the Matter of Britain*, I discuss how Geoffrey, on the one hand, successfully adapts the strategy of the politically arranged marriage that the Normans utilized in order to conquer and dominate the Isles and how, on the other hand, Geoffrey, much like the Normans themselves, expresses anxiety regarding the threat that bringing foreign blood into Arthur's kin group poses to his narrative. Chapter 4, *Locating the Greeks in the Matter of Britain*, explores the role that received knowledge about the Greeks in western literature plays in Geoffrey's and Wace's portrayal of the Greeks in the Trojan episode of the narratives. In particular, I focus on the relationship that Geoffrey and Wace express regarding the Trojan leader Brutus and the Greek prisoner and betrayer of his people Analectus. Drawing upon received knowledge, I argue, allows Geoffrey and Wace to make a range of uncritical assumptions about the kind of people the Greeks are, a rhetorical strategy that Geoffrey and Wace use to justify the violence that the Trojans inflict upon the Greeks. Chapter 5, *From West to East: Locating the Orient in the Matter of Britain*, chiefly investigates the successes that Wace and Geoffrey had in re-presenting the Africans and Moors of their narratives as irreligious, greedy, and barbarous, as well as how these successes work alongside the Normans efforts to expand their territories beyond Europe. Finally, I conclude with a discussion of what Geoffrey's and Wace's re-presentations of the foreign

teaches us about the intersection of history and the colonial discourses that circulated in the Matter of Britain as well as the genre of chronicle writing that dominated the literary landscape of the twelfth century.

Notes

¹ Qtd. in Marjorie Chibnall, *The Normans*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 4.

² Marjorie Chibnall, *The Normans*, 4, 10-11.

³ Marjorie Chibnall, *The Normans*, 11-12.

⁴ Marjorie Chibnall, *The Normans*, 12.

⁵ Qtd. in Marjorie Chibnall, *The Normans*, 17.

⁶ Marjorie Chibnall, *The Normans*, 20.

⁷ Marjorie Chibnall, *The Normans*, 24.

⁸ Michelle R. Warren, *History on the Edge: Excalibur and the Borders of Britain, 1100-1300* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), xi.

⁹ N.J. Higham, *King Arthur: Myth Making and History* (London, Routledge, 2002), 220.

¹⁰ N.J. Higham, *King Arthur: Myth Making*, 223.

¹¹ R.R. Davies, *Domination and Conquest: The Experience of Ireland, Scotland and Wales 1100-1300* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 6.

¹² R.R. Davies, *Domination and Conquest*, 10; John Le Patourel, *The Norman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 66.

¹³ See chapter 2, 23, 27.

¹⁴ See especially chapter 2, 24.

2. OCCIDENTALLY FOREIGN: LOCATING THE OTHERS OF THE BRITISH ISLES IN THE *HISTORIA REGUM BRITANNIAE*

In this chapter, I will firstly investigate some of the words, phrases, and images that Geoffrey deploys throughout his re-telling of the Matter of Britain in the *Historia regum Britanniae* that dehumanize and demonize the Scots, Picts, Irish, English, and Welsh peoples who inhabit his narrative in order to justify the violence that Geoffrey's pseudo-historical and fictitious rulers of Britain inflict upon them. In addition, I will explore some of the ways that Geoffrey treats these foreign others living within and at the borders of the realm of Britain as cultural resources to be exploited by rulers like Arthur who seek to penetrate, conquer, and dominate the Isles and beyond. The specific terms that Geoffrey deploys and the ways that he exploits the foreign to serve the interests of the rulers of Britain, I will argue, work alongside what I will call throughout this dissertation an ambivalent colonial rhetoric, a range of policies, rituals, customs, attitudes, practices, and so on that the Normans had begun to actively shape and develop towards the various ethnic and polyethnic groups living within and near to those parts of the British Isles that the Normans sought to occupy. The Normans developed this discourse, I will argue, as part of their efforts to both re-present the occidental foreigners they encountered as races subject to their rule and, in so doing, to justify not only their desire to rule but also their belief that they had a right to rule. Thus, as a clerk who in some respects sought to capitalize on the growing interest in the Matter of Britain among the Normans, Geoffrey produces a literary work that, in dehumanizing, demonizing, and exploiting the occidental foreigners who inhabit his narrative, reinforces the kind of colonial discourse that the Normans had begun to put into practice. I will first attend to discussing some of the language that Geoffrey deploys throughout the *HrB*.

Geoffrey relies on a good number of stock phrases, descriptors and so on to dehumanize and demonize the occidental foreigners whom the rulers of Britain of his narrative encounter as they attempt, according to Geoffrey, to restore Britain to its former glory as well as to control large portions of the Isles, the Nordic lands, and the various territories of Gaul. Geoffrey calls them, among other things, barbarians, pagans, heathens, betrayers, traitors, invaders, and aggressors. In one of the most memorable scenes of the *HrB*, Geoffrey, who lifts the passage from Gildas' *De Excidio Britanniae*, provides an excerpt from a letter the Britons allegedly sent to one Agicius, consul for Rome. In brief, the Britons request aid against the Scots, Picts, Norwegians, and Danes who, Geoffrey narrates, have been waiting for the right moment to strike: “Nos mare ad barbaros, barbari ad mare repellunt” (“The sea drives us towards the barbarians, and the barbarians drive us to the sea.”; VI.iii).¹ Later, when the English arrive in their long ships—Geoffrey refers to them as the Saxons until the closing moments of the *HrB* when they take control of Britain—and strike a deal with the Welsh tyrant Vortigern to drive off his enemies in exchange for lands, Geoffrey off-handedly works this one-word description of them as barbarians into his narrative: “Paruerunt ilico barbari et federe confirmato in curia ipsius remanserunt” (“The barbarians immediately obeyed and, having confirmed the alliance, remained at court”; VI.x). Nor does Geoffrey simply use the term *barbari* in what has sometimes been seen as the neutral register of foreigner.² Rather, Geoffrey frequently represents the occidental foreigners who threaten and, in the case of the Saxons, contest British supremacy as cowardly, inept on the battlefield, wretched in their unbelief, greedy, cunning, disloyal, untrustworthy, degenerate, unstable, and the like. For instance, in narrating the scene in which Vortigern schemes to wrest the British crown from the weak puppet king Constans, Geoffrey invents that the Welsh tyrant cleverly incites the Picts to assassinate Constans after

plying them with food and drink. Vortigern can manipulate the Picts into carrying out his wishes, Geoffrey informs us, because the scheming tyrant *knows* that the Picts are just the sort of rowdy, unscrupulous bunch whom he can bribe to do his bidding: “Ecce occulta occulti amici proditio! Non enim id laudabat ut salus inde proueniret Constanti set quia *sciebat* Pictos gentem esse instabilem et ad omne scelus paratam” (“Behold the hidden treason of a secret friendship. For Vortigern recommended this not in order to ensure Constans’ well-being but because he *knew* the Picts to be an unstable people prepared to commit any evil deed”; VI.viii). Indeed, the way that Geoffrey frames Vortigern’s knowledge of the Picts here allows his readership to take this kind of comment on their character at face value. In an admittedly much different context, Gayatri Spivak discusses what she calls received dogma.³ For Spivak, received dogma is the replication of “sets of historically determined and determining notions, presuppositions, and practices.”⁴ These historically determined constructs, Spivak argues, displace actual knowledge about the histories and traditions of a people. In much the same way, I would argue, in framing the behavior of the Picts in terms of what Vortigern knows to be true about them as a people, Geoffrey displaces what the Picts know about themselves with a Norman re-presentation of them.

Geoffrey re-presents the other foreigners who inhabit his narrative no less harshly. Geoffrey treats the Irish in particular rather harshly. On this point, J.S.P. Tatlock observes that the Irish, along with whomever they lend aid, invariably lose each military conflict in which they are engaged.⁵ Geoffrey’s narrative certainly appears to bear Tatlock’s assertion out. For instance, the Irish do not put up much of a fight when Uther Pendragon and his men attempt to acquire the magical ring of Stonehenge and bring it back to Britain to commemorate the infamous night of the long knives. To be sure, Geoffrey pays homage to the Irish King

Gillomanus as he is setting up the scene: “Ea tempestate regnabat in Hybernia Gillomanus, iuuenis mire probitatis” (“At that time Gillomanus, a young man of remarkable goodness, reigned in Ireland”; VIII.xii). But the battle between the Irish and British ends rather predictably. Geoffrey does not think the fight rates more than two or three short sentences in which Uther arranges his men and then makes quick work of the huge fighting force Gillomanus has raised to oppose him: “Uther igitur, ut uidit ipsos ad preliandum paratos, festinato agmine in eos irruit. Nec mora preualuerunt Britones Hyberniensibusque laceratis ac interfectis Gillomanium in fugam propulerunt” (“Therefore Uther, who saw the Irish forming a battle line, hurriedly lined up his army and charged. Without delay the British prevailed. Having cut down or outright killed the Irish, they impelled Gillomanus to flee”; VIII.xii). Arthur likewise faces off against the Irish on several occasions, with much the same results. In one of these scenes, Arthur is making the Scots and Picts pay for having besieged the town of Alclud in Southwestern Scotland where he had left his ailing kinsmen Hoel the King of Brittany, when the Irish, this time led by King Gilmaurius, show up to render military assistance. Arthur, we are told, has his enemies surrounded when Gilmaurius intervenes. Geoffrey spends as little time describing the outcome of the conflict here as he does narrating Uther’s battle for the right to wrest Stonehenge from the Irish: “Pretermisssa itaque obsidione cepit Arturus arma uertere in Hibernienses quos sine pietate laceratos coegit domum refretare. Potitus ilico uictoria uacauit iterum uastare gentem Scotorum atque Pictorum” (“And so having left the siege, Arthur turned his army against the Irish. He tore them to pieces without pity and forced them to return home. Having thus obtained the victory, Arthur was free to again devastate the people of the Scots and Picts”; IX.vi).

A few things should be clear from the brief examples I have thus far provided regarding Geoffrey's treatment of the occidental foreigners who inhabit his text as he narrates the story of the British people. In the first place, Geoffrey does not write very much about these foreign others. Rather, when he describes them at all, he distills his descriptions down to a few key words or phrases. In the case of the Picts, Geoffrey draws upon an assumed knowledge of the kind of people they are. This assumed knowledge allows Geoffrey to use the Picts to advance his narrative; which is to say that, as the author of his admittedly fictitious account of history, Geoffrey assumes a position of authority from which he can re-present the Picts as a shifty people all too easily persuaded to murder the king. Although the terrain is altogether different, the relationship that Geoffrey expresses here between himself and the Picts resembles the kind of relationship Edward Said describes between the English gubernatorial and administrative classes in Egypt and the Egyptian people they ruled over during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. That relationship, Said rightly argues, largely rested on the assumption that the English *knew* the Egyptians. That assumption in turn, in the minds of the English, gave them the right to dominate Egypt: "To have such knowledge of such a thing," Said states, "is to dominate it, to have authority over it."⁶ In much the same way, I would argue, the knowledge that Geoffrey purports to have of the Picts gives him the right to dominate them in terms of the way he re-presents them in his narrative.

Much the same can be said for the kinds of assumptions Geoffrey makes that allow him to narrate the two brief scenarios in which the British forces under Uther's and Arthur's respective commands dominate the Irish on the battlefield. For the most part, this comes down to British military supremacy. Whether he consciously does so or no, in both scenes Geoffrey hones in on verbal forms of lacerate to describe what the British do to the Irish. Uther's men,

Geoffrey reports, lacerate (“lacerates”) Gillomanus’ warriors. Geoffrey ups the ante when the Irish meet Arthur’s army, who lacerate them without pity (“sine pietate lacerates”). That the British inflict such devastating attacks on the opposition in these scenes thus illustrates their absolute supremacy over the Irish. And what is perhaps most striking here is that, because he inserts the idea of British superiority into his narrative, Geoffrey need not justify the fact that, in each scenario, it is the British who are the aggressors. In the case of the engagement between Uther’s men and Gillomanus’, Geoffrey reports that Uther orders his men to charge as the Irish are still arranging themselves. Indeed the whole impetus for the encounter proceeds, it turns out, from the desire of Uther’s elder brother and the King of the Britons Ambrosius Aurelius to acquire Stonehenge and bring it back to Britain. That Geoffrey sets the stage for the campaign on the shaky grounds that Aurelius desires to acquire the magical ring in order to commemorate the assassination of the British nobles by the Saxons on the night of the long knives and yet chooses not to directly involve the British king in the dirty business of fighting the Irish says a great deal about the kind of strong ruler Geoffrey wished to see sit the throne. Geoffrey’s idea of a strong ruler, I would argue, largely rests on the idea that he or she had the right and authority to act aggressively towards their foreign neighbors, who, as Uther’s successful campaign against the Irish demonstrates, were militarily ineffective and incapable of defending their lands. Not surprisingly, then, Arthur, like his father Uther before him, does not wait for the Irish to attack but instead temporarily lifts his siege of the Scots and Picts so that he may bring the full might of his army to bear against his enemies. Moreover, much like his father aggressively sails to Ireland and fights the occidental ‘foreigners’ on their own turf, so too Arthur has aggressively marched into Scotland, re-taking the town of Alclud on the way, when the Irish arrive to assist the Scots and Picts, much to their detriment and to Arthur’s glory for defeating them so easily.

In short, much like he uses the assumption that the Picts are an unstable people in order to advance his narrative, in these two scenes the Irish are for Geoffrey not so much a people as a plot element to be acted upon and dominated by the clearly superior British forces.

That Geoffrey portrays the British in such a positive light may be somewhat ironic, given that he is at least partly responding to re-presentations of the British by his predecessors as militarily weak, culturally backward, and morally bankrupt. On this point, William Leckie argues that Geoffrey intended to offer his readership an alternative to the frequently less than favorable descriptions of the British by earlier chroniclers on both sides of the channel:

There is every reason to believe that Geoffrey intended his account as a counterbalance to the meager, often unflattering data available on the Britons in earlier sources. His handling of the Roman period is a case in point. The *Historia* offers a British perspective on events which Bede and Continental authorities recount from the conquerors' point of view.⁷

Though Leckie's argument here works to a point, at the same time Geoffrey can only counter the sparse and frequently unsympathetic characterizations of the Britons that he finds in the likes of Bede, Gildas and others, firstly, by making them out to be an aggressive conquering force. Going along with this, Geoffrey must also re-present the Picts, Irish, and other occidental foreigners whom the Britons encounter in the same unflattering light that Bede, Gildas, and others re-presented the Britons. In this context, Geoffrey repeats the same kind of narrative that conquerors always write, one which conveniently shows that the conquerors have the right to rule, dominate, and exploit the peoples at the borders of their realms because of the many virtues the conquerors possess. And by the same token, it conveniently shows that the peoples at the borders, who all exhibit the same aberrant and abhorrent qualities, deserve to be dominated, subjugated, and exploited. The ironic direction that Geoffrey's narrative takes in re-presenting the foreign in very much the same way that the Britons had been re-presented by his predecessors seems especially relevant concerning the Picts, for whom very little data has been

recovered. They are generally thought to have lived in the vicinity of the Caledonian Woods north of the Firth of Forth in present day Scotland.⁸ In addition, a smattering of material concerning personal and place names, inscriptions, art, and their custom of passing on the kingship of their people through the maternal line distinguishes them from the various other ethnic groups of Britain.⁹ What the Picts called themselves remains a mystery. Accounts from the first century refer to them as the Caledonians, with the more widely accepted Latin designation Pict supplanting it sometime afterwards.¹⁰ The latter presumably derives from their practice of painting or tattooing themselves. In any event, at least part of the meager information Geoffrey had gleaned about the Picts came from Bede, who, unsurprisingly, describes them in Book I of his *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, along with the Irish, as a savage race.¹¹ In Book II, Bede off-handedly mentions that the English King Oswy conquers the Irish and Picts living in the northern regions of Britain.¹² In repeating the kinds of re-presentations found in Bede and elsewhere, Geoffrey thus reinforces the largely negative picture of the Picts (and the Irish, for that matter) that has been formulated about them and designates them as a subject race. Indeed, the fact that what little material we have concerning the Picts chiefly comes to us via narratives which describe either their subjugation by the English or, in the case of the *HrB*, their fictitious subjugation by the Britons, very much makes them akin to what Gayatri Spivak famously calls the subaltern, a people who cannot speak for themselves but rather must always be reconstituted and thought of in the language of the colonizer.¹³

What the preceding exploration of the terms Geoffrey uses to describe the Picts as well as the Irish points towards, in my view, is a practice in which he re-presents the occidental others of his narrative as a more or less homogenous group possessing predictable and knowable characteristics. The relative lack of data available to Geoffrey on the historical events he

nonetheless re-tells throughout the *HrB* enables him to re-tell it from a position of strength and authority. The authoritative position Geoffrey assumes in a sense brings the foreign into being for Geoffrey and for his readership. Said usefully calls this phenomena in which those in a position of power reconstitute the other via a range of words and phrases that shows them to be universally inferior to their masters “dominating frameworks” that re-present and contain the other.¹⁴ Tejaswini Niranjana similarly calls this practice of reproducing the other through a set of overarching concepts that justifies the hegemony’s right to dominate them “strategies of containment.”¹⁵ These strategies of containment, Niranjana asserts, both reinforce hegemonic versions—one might almost argue *the* version—of the other as inferior and obfuscate the violence that the hegemony inflicts upon them.¹⁶ Crucially for Niranjana, this practice not infrequently reproduces the other in such a manner that it begs to be dominated.¹⁷

Though Niranjana is discussing the specific range of overarching concepts that the English used to justify colonization of India, instances in which Geoffrey justifies dominating the occidental foreigners of his narrative because they ask for it can also be found in his re-telling of the Matter of Britain. At the end of the same passage in which he narrates the story of Arthur’s triumphant attack on the hapless Irish who altogether unsuccessfully attempt to provide the Scots and Picts succor, Geoffrey reports, firstly, that Arthur treats the latter two groups with unparalleled cruelty and secondly, that, thoroughly beaten and dejected, they contritely grovel before Arthur and ask him to spare them: “Mox ut presentiam supra contrita gente haberet. Satis etenim periculi intulerat nec opus erat perpaucos qui remanserant usque ad unum delere. Sineret illos portiunculam habere patrie perpetue seruitutis iugum ultro gestaturos.”

As soon as they were in his presence, they humbly fell upon their knees. For having sufficiently proven himself, they inferred, there was no need to annihilate the few who remained to a man. He should permit them to have a small portion of land, since they were going to bear the yoke of perpetual servitude. (IX.vi)

The scene as Geoffrey describes it, with the Scots and Picts prostrating themselves before Arthur and asking for land upon which they can become his servants, thus re-presents them in such a fashion that they quite literally beg to become a subject race or races. Indeed, no sooner have the Scots and Picts performed these acts of subjugation on themselves than Arthur, Geoffrey writes, adopts the manner of a wise and benevolent ruler and takes pity on them: “commouit eum pietas in lacrimas sanctorumque uirorum petitioni adquiescens ueniam donauit” (“their dutiful conduct moved him to tears and, being pleased with the beseeching of these ordained men, Arthur granted them his favor”; IX.vi). Geoffrey quite forgets that, only a few sentences earlier, Arthur had been, to repeat his verb choice, devastating (“uastare”) the Scots and Picts, to say nothing of his merciless attack on the Irish. Nor is it clear as he narrates their petition to become Arthur’s servants that Geoffrey distinguishes between the Scots and Picts. Though we should avoid taking Geoffrey’s syntax too literally when rendering his medieval Latin into modern English, his use of the singular verb forms “haberet” and “intulerat” with respect to the Scots and Picts at least suggests that he may be reducing them to a single group rather than treating them as two distinctive races with their own traditions and histories. The former reading would certainly accord with narratives that show the other to be universally the same and therefore deserving to be subjugated.

On a not unrelated note, Geoffrey also re-presents a good number of the some thirty kingdoms of which Arthur eventually becomes overlord such that they willingly subjugate themselves to his rule rather than face the prospect of his taking their lands by force. Among the kings who bow down to Arthur’s might are the King of Gotland in the Baltic Sea and, much closer to home from Arthur’s point of view, the King of the Orkneys. These two kings come to court promising tribute, Geoffrey invents, at the mere rumor of Arthur’s military strength: “Exin

diulgato per ceteras insulas rumore quod nulla prouincia ei resistere poterat, Doldavius rex Godlandie et Gunvasius rex Orcadam ultro uenere promissoque uectigali subiectionem fecerunt.”

Thereafter, a rumor having become common throughout the remaining islands that no province was able to resist him, Doldavius King of Gotland and Gunvasius King of the Orkneys, having voluntarily come and having promised tribute, made themselves Arthur’s subjects. (IX.x).

That Geoffrey lumps the King of Gotland in with the King of the Orkneys in this sentence seems odd. In terms of geography, the North Sea and all of the Nordic lands lay between the two. Indeed, whether by *Gotlandie* Geoffrey means Götaland in south Sweden or the island of Gotland in the Baltic Sea is open for debate. On this point, Tatlock argues for the latter as “a main nucleus for the trade of Russia and the Orient with Northwest Europe.”¹⁸ Tatlock’s conjecture deserves consideration, as Geoffrey’s very short story concerning how Gotland becomes part of Arthur’s empire quite succinctly elides any notion of the island kingdom’s history prior to becoming subject to Arthur’s rule and renders it a cultural resource that Arthur can exploit. And regardless of which locale Geoffrey has in mind for *Gotlandie*, one possible reading of why he brings both it and the Orkneys under Arthur’s control in one sweeping sentence, in my view, is the tendency of the kind of narrative Geoffrey is writing to homogenize the foreign as subject races. In sum, while the way that Geoffrey re-presents the occidental foreigners of his narrative may not be on the same par that Niranjana discusses regarding the systematic way that the English re-present the peoples of the subcontinent, the relationship he expresses between the fictitious rulers of Britain and the occidental foreigners nonetheless bears the hallmarks of a discourse that re-presents and contains the outliers of the Occidental world.

In my introductory remarks to this chapter, I put forward the supposition that Geoffrey’s re-telling of the Matter of Britain works alongside an ambivalent colonial rhetoric that the

Normans had begun to practice on the so-called foreigners living within and at the borders of their expanding empire. In order to best understand the terminology I am using here, I must first discuss what I do not mean. Firstly, I do not mean that with the Norman Conquest of Britain we are seeing the first stirrings of a rhetorical practice that accompanies colonization. Rather, the practice of re-presenting and containing the other in tandem with more obvious and tangible aspects of colonialism goes back at least as far as the beginnings of the Roman imperium and may well go back even farther. As far as the influence that Rome had on how we think of colonization goes, Anita Loomba points out that the definition for *colony* in the OED, which ultimately derives from the *colonia* that the Romans formed on so-called foreign land, performs the colonizing process by emptying the term of any trace of the violence that accompanies the colonial encounter: “there is no hint that the ‘new locality,’” Loomba argues, “may not be so ‘new’ and that the process of ‘forming a community’ might be somewhat unfair.”¹⁹ From its beginnings, then, colonialism does not simply involve the acquisition and control of land and everything in it but also extends to deploying a discourse or framework that seeks to dominate and control the other. Thus, while I see the discourse that the Normans brought to bear on the peoples that they encountered as colonial in that it accompanies from the onset their attempts to seize and control land, at the same time I do not wish to overwrite the long history of colonization that preceded Norman imperialism. To briefly return to the discussion of Rome, the fact that during the second century CE the Roman Imperium extended from the western shores of Gaul to Armenia in the East should dispel any notions that Norman pretensions to empire were anything new. Indeed, chroniclers like Dudo of St. Quentin and William of Jumiègue who sought to narrate and celebrate the history of Norman rule modeled the story of the founding of their kingdoms on the story of the founding of Rome.

Likewise, I also do not mean by this colonial rhetoric that the Normans are the first to practice such a discourse on the peoples of the British Isles. That, too, can be traced to imperial Rome. Just as the two campaigns Julius Caesar launched in 55 and 54 BCE respectively inaugurated the idea of bringing the British Isles under Roman control—a sequence of events, it should be noted, that led to more than 400 years of Roman rule there—so too the Romans helped inaugurate the rhetoric that re-presented Britain as a remote back water on the fringes of the known world. Caesar himself refers to the inhabitants on at least two occasions as barbarians, a description that takes on a negative tone considering his matter-of-fact comment that the “Britons” are somewhat awed by the appearance of his warships offshore.²⁰ Likewise, in what may be best described as a colonial gaze, Caesar draws attention to the inhabitants’ practice of painting their skin blue for war: “omnes vero se Britanni vitro inficiunt, quod caeruleum efficit colorem, atque hoc horridiores sunt in pugna aspect” (“Indeed all the Britons dye themselves with the woad plant, which effects a blue color, and this gives them a more horrible aspect in battle”; *De Bellum Gallicum* V.xiv). What is perhaps most remarkable about Caesar’s statement regarding the native people’s peculiar practice is that it allows him to lump all the “Britanni” together into one category. All Britons, Caesar reports, can be recognized by the fact that they paint themselves when going into battle. Any other social, cultural, historical distinctions between the various peoples of Britain need not be considered. This kind of description effectively shows how, from its onset, imperial Rome disseminated a rhetoric designed to represent and contain the Isles’ inhabitants. The thread of the kind of discourse that Caesar practices on Britain and the neighboring islands would find its way into the work of Tacitus, Cicero, Horace, Seneca, and Virgil, to name some of the more prominent Roman thinkers writing around the same time that Caesar set his sights on conquering Britain.²¹

Though postcolonial scholars tend to view the Isles in the context of the eighteenth and nineteenth century imperial England—and with good reason—the effects that the Roman occupation had on Britain, both in terms of the more obviously violent means through which the occupation was achieved and of the rhetoric that the Romans deployed, should not be lightly dismissed. On this point, N.J. Higham calls attention to the re-presentation of Britain and its inhabitants as uncivilized and deserving harsh ‘corrective’ treatment:

The Brittunculi writing tablet from Vindolanda implies that other groups within the Empire assumed that ‘nasty little Britons’ should be regularly flogged by Roman (or Batavian) officers...Likewise, ‘Britain’ was on occasion used within the rhetoric of the imperial court to signify ‘the ends of the earth’, where civilization was in doubt.²²

Nor were these re-presentations of degenerate ‘Britons’ lost on the chroniclers of British history. The idea that Britain had become a land of morally bankrupt peoples in the absence of Roman rule haunts Gildas’ *De Excidio Britanniae*.²³ Even Geoffrey, who typically casts the British in a favorable light throughout his narrative, cannot wholly dismiss the influence Roman discourse had on the perception of the Britons as culturally backward, militarily weak, and the like. In a particularly vivid scene that sets the stage for the final confrontation between Arthur’s forces and the armies of Rome led by the procurator Lucius Hiberius, an incensed Gawain reacts violently to the suggestion by the Roman commander’s nephew that the Britons are all talk: “interfuit Gaius Quintillianus eiusdem nepos qui dicebat Britones magis iactantia atque minis abundare quam audacia et probitate ualere. Iratus ilico Galgwainus euaginato ense quo accinctus erat irruit in eum et eiusdem capite amputate ad equos cum sociis digreditur.”

That one’s nephew Gaius Quintillianus who stood between declared that the Britons were better at boasting and making numerous threats than showing their courage and worth. Enraged, Gawain immediately drew the sword he had girded, rushed at him, cut off his head, and made for his horse with his companions. (X.iv)

That Geoffrey has Gawain react so aggressively to Gaius' insult in this scene speaks to the continuing effects that Roman re-presentations of the British had on their collective psyche. For to have Gawain draw his sword and silence Gaius—and yet the insult is already out there—is in a certain sense to narrate the story within a framework that dominates and contains Britain and everything in it from a Roman point of view.

The kind of insult Gaius hurls at Gawain here, an insult that calls into question the character of all 'Britons' everywhere, was common-place by the time Gildas composed his *De Excidio*. N.J. Higham notes that the venerable Bede continues the diatribe that he finds in his predecessor Gildas against the Britons as both a degenerate and military incompetent people: "By this point...the Britons were being positioned by Bede, very largely via development of the material offered him by Gildas, as an unmartial race whose position within divine providence had been placed in jeopardy by their own moral shortcomings."²⁴ Just ten years prior to Geoffrey's penning the *HrB*, William of Malmesbury would deride the Britons for spreading fictitious accounts regarding Arthur rather than reporting true tales: "This is that Arthur, of whom the Britons fondly tell fables even to the present day; a man worthy to be celebrated, not by idle fictions, but in authentic history."²⁵ The frequent descriptions that we find in Gildas, Bede, William and elsewhere that characterize the British as braggarts incapable of backing up their boasts on the battle field are hardly accidental. Rather, they speak to the continued production of literary materials that denigrated the British, as well as the other peoples of the Isles, that went hand-in-hand with the work of colonization that the Romans began there and that was carried on in different ways by the Saxons, Danes, and Normans. Regarding the latter's attempts to colonize large sections of the Isles, R.R. Davies argues that the Normans began the work of categorizing the Welsh and Irish as barbarous from the onset:

The concept of the barbarian and the categories it implied were already in place by the time Wales was invaded and long before the invasion of Ireland was planned. These categories and concepts justified the invasions, while the invasions in turn confirmed the categories and concepts.²⁶

Although the Normans are therefore neither the first race to adopt a colonial rhetoric in general nor the first to do so towards the various peoples of the British Isles, I nonetheless think calling their rhetorical practice colonial makes sense for a few reasons. In the first place, and as I mentioned towards the beginning of this discussion, the strategy of deploying a colonial discourse that re-presents and contains the colonized frequently accompanies the colonizer's attempts to seize and control land from the onset. Davies demonstrates that there is good reason to believe such is the case with respect to the Norman's attempts to conquer and dominate Ireland and Wales. Although the Normans did not aggressively pursue annexing Ireland until the latter part of the twelfth century—their invasion of Ireland begins when, at the request of Dermot Macmurrough the King of Leinster, Robert fitz Stephen landed in South Wexford in the spring of 1169, with Richard de Clare the Strongbow arriving with a much bigger force the following year—the Normans arguably had already begun to deploy this colonial rhetoric about the time Geoffrey composed the *HrB*.²⁷ Geoffrey's predecessor William of Malmesbury for one would write of the Irish and their land that “from poverty, or rather from the ignorance of the cultivators, the soil, unproductive of every good, engenders, without the cities a rustic, filthy swarm of natives.”²⁸ William, of course, distinguishes between the rustic Irish and their English and French counterparts: “but the English and French,” William writes, “inhabit the cities in a greater degree of civilization, through their mercantile traffic.”²⁹ Gerald de Barri (aka Gerald of Wales) echoes William's sentiments regarding the Irish in his *Topographica Hibernica*, completed about 1188. Although he greatly admired the Irish for their musical skill and judges them to be well made—he grudgingly chalks the latter up to nature's best efforts in fashioning

such a lowly people—Gerald has much to say about the state of their beards, their lack of fashion sense, their rudeness in living only on animal products and remaining stuck in a pre-agricultural state, and their lack of skill at producing textiles and other mercantile items.³⁰ All of these faults, Gerald concludes, can be traced to their barbarism: “This people, then, is truly barbarous, being not only barbarous in their dress but suffering their hair and beards to grow enormously in an uncouth manner.”³¹ Indeed, much like in the case of Britain being occasionally re-presented as the ends of earth, Gerald attributes the backwardness of the Irish to the remoteness of their land:

As these people inhabit a country so remote from the rest of the world and lying at its furthest extremity, forming as it were, another world, and are thus excluded from civilized nations, they learn nothing and practice nothing, but the barbarism in which they are born and bred sticks to them like a second nature. Whatever gifts they possess are excellent, in whatever requires industry they are worthless.³²

Gerald’s denunciation of Ireland for its remoteness seems laughable not only for his suggestion that the mannerisms of its inhabitants are otherworldly but also when we take into consideration the island’s close proximity to Wales and the whole of Greater and Lesser Britain. At the same time, however, that Gerald’s remarks regarding the lack of industriousness and entrepreneurial know-how among the Irish aligns so closely with William’s opinions some fifty years prior amply demonstrates how quickly colonial rhetoric became a part of the literary landscape during Norman expansion into the Isles. I cannot stress enough that the deployment of this kind of language against a people like the Irish in order to re-present and contain them frequently works alongside the other, more obvious tools in the colonizer’s toolbox. Indeed, Gerald did not content himself to merely denigrate the peoples of the Isles like the Irish but also on occasion suggested the means that the Normans would eventually take to conquer and dominate. Davies points to Gerald’s thoughts on enacting a trade embargo against the Welsh as a policy the Normans would successfully institute:

When [Gerald] drew up his blueprint for the conquest of Wales one of his recommendations was the establishment of an embargo on the import into Wales of iron, cloth, salt and corn. Kings of thirteenth-century England certainly tried to impose such economic blockades, whether against Scotland in 1244 or Wales in 1277, while their lieutenants likewise soon recognized that economic strangleholds can quickly lead to political surrender.³³

That Gerald is equally comfortable deploying rhetoric that contains and dominates the Irish and charting one of the paths the Normans would take to dominate the Welsh and Scottish strongly suggests that colonial discourse frequently accompanies colonization rather than follows it.

In addition to the preceding discussion which, in my view, points towards a rhetoric that was cultivated simultaneously along with the various Norman invasions of the Isles, this discourse can be thought of as different from other kinds of colonial rhetoric in that the means of producing literary materials that reinforced the Norman's worldview had not attained to the level that the English, French, Dutch and other colonial powers from the sixteenth century onwards were able to achieve with respect to the Orient. Part of this has to do with the relative ease with which the West was able to contain and re-present the East. Though I do not wish to oversimplify the matter, the very real remoteness of the East, in contrast to Gerald's dubious claim that the Irish were separated from the rest of the civilized West, allowed an array of western historians, philologists, anthropologists, travel writers, and so on to produce their colonial fantasies about the Orient and everything in it with impunity. Given the long distances that separated the East from the West, Orientals were hardly in a position to contest the narratives that their Occidental counterparts were busy producing for a decidedly Western audience. The relative inability of Orientals to subvert western ideas about the Orient was even true during the medieval period. For instance, in his *Historia Langobardorum Beneventanorum* (*The History of the Lombards of Benevento*) the monk Erchembert characterizes the Eastern armies who come to Sicily as a swarm of bees bent on destroying everything around them: "circa

haec tempora gens Agarenorum a Babilonia et Africa ad instar examen apum manu cum valida egrediens, Sicilam properavit, omnia circumquaque devastans” (“About this time, the Agareni came from Babylon and Africa like a swarm of bees [but] with a powerful hand. They hastened to Sicily, devastating everything around”; 11). Nor is the image of the swarming Islamic hordes that Erchembert conjures for his audience an isolated example. The venerable Bede likens the Saracens invading Gaul in 729 CE to a blight upon the land: “Quo tempore gravissima Sarracenorum lues Gallias misera clade vastabat...” (“At this time a grievous plague of Saracens ravaged Gaul with miserable destruction...”; *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Book V, 23). Said sums up the deep seated fears the West felt regarding the East thusly: “Not for nothing did Islam come to symbolize terror, devastation...For Europe, Islam was a lasting trauma.”³⁴

This is not to say that re-presentations of occidental peoples in the literary materials of the medieval period did not produce comparable results, judging by the similarities between William’s and Gerald’s descriptions of the Irish. Nonetheless, in contrast to the rapid colonization of the East at the height of imperialism—the English, for instance, had either direct indirect control of nearly the whole of India within fifty years of the fall of Tipu Sultan in 1799—Norman expansion into the British Isles proceeded at a relatively slower pace. And unlike the much more systematic methods the English used to seize control of the subcontinent, the Normans approached conquering the Isles in a sort of patchwork fashion according to circumstances. R.R. Davies points out, for instance, that the Normans were rather reluctant to use decisive force to take control of Wales, a policy which drew out Norman expansion into Welsh territory for some two-hundred years.³⁵ Likewise, Dermot Macmurrough provided the impetus for Norman expansion into Ireland when he requested the aid of Robert fitz Stephen, Maurice fitz Gerald, and Strongbow the Earl of Pembroke. In the case of Scotland, the Normans

frequently exerted political pressure on the Scottish kings to get what they wanted. On this score, Davies observes that Henry II used the occasions on which he met with Malcolm IV to express his position of authority over his neighbor to the North:

The Scottish king was required or invited...to appear before Henry II at Chester, to surrender Scottish pretensions to lands south of the rivers Esk and Tweed, to accompany the English king on one of his French campaigns, to hand over hostages to him and to attend the coronation of his son.³⁶

The leisurely speed at which the Normans pushed into the Isles, as well as the sometimes less direct routes they took to achieve their desires, allowed the native inhabitants to preserve a sense of their cultural heritage in spite of the Normans' attempts to contain and re-present them. The Irish and Welsh in particular had some measure of success in conserving and adapting their literary and legal traditions to those that Norman settlers brought with them from Europe.³⁷ The ability of the Welsh and Irish to conserve a remnant of their history, I would argue, can be partly explained by their geographic closeness to Normandy. The Normans' awareness of their closeness to their 'barbarous' neighbors, I contend, made the task of subjugating them much more difficult to pull off. Put another way, the proximity of the Welsh, Scots, and Irish to the Normans as part of the West put them in a much better position to contest Norman representations of them and Norman versions of history.

Beyond the relatively less direct routes to domination that the Normans took as a result, in my view, of their proximity to the Isles and their inability to treat the native inhabitants as other to the same degree as the West was able to re-present and contain the East, the specific historical circumstances of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as well as the means available to the Normans, made mobilizing the resources at their disposal to dominate the Isles a much less efficient process. One place where this lack of superiority is especially clear is in the Normans' ability to disseminate their rhetoric about the peoples of the Isles. And this lack of an advantage

in propagating their discourse about the Isles' inhabitants can be understood not just in contrast to the ability of the English, French, and Dutch to produce literary materials that re-presented and contained the Orient on a massive scale during the eighteenth to twentieth centuries but also, more importantly, in comparison to the ability of the Welsh, Irish, and Scots to produce literary materials about themselves during the medieval period. The *HrB* itself proves instructive on this point. Some forty-eight copies of Geoffrey's text are known to have been in circulation during the twelfth century, making it, by all accounts, one of the most popular works of the century.³⁸ Yet the success Geoffrey's text enjoyed during the twelfth century hardly compares to those of say Kipling's *Kim* or Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, arguably two of the most influential works produced in a Western tradition that has largely narrated the histories of India and Africa through a decidedly Western lens. No doubt advances in print technology played a critical factor in disseminating Kipling's and Conrad's works throughout the English empire. Equally important to consider is the fundamental shift in thought about who should have access to cultural materials that took place in the some six-hundred years that separate the medieval period from the age of imperialism. By the time that the likes of Kipling and Conrad were busy producing their texts about their experiences in India and Africa, all levels of Western society, from the upper echelons to the lowest, could likely claim some amount of 'knowledge' about the sub and dark continents, whether through their level of education or other public means of accessing information that were now available to nearly everyone. In contrast, in Geoffrey's day access to knowledge, especially in terms of the written word, was largely limited to the higher stratifications of the nobility, to the royal families and those of their household who could read, and, most importantly for the present importantly, to the church.

Admittedly, time and space demand that I give a less than complete picture of who did and who didn't have access to information during the twelfth century, if obtaining a full and accurate account of that terrain is at all possible. For one thing, given the high rates of illiteracy throughout the middle ages, a great deal of information was disseminated orally. Among the native populations of the Isles, stories about Arthur were often passed by word of mouth. Approximately twenty years prior to Geoffrey's beginning work on the *HrB*, Herman of Tournai would report that the folk of Cornwall believed Arthur was still alive and that he would deliver them from their oppressors.³⁹ Additionally, although the university system had not attained to the level of development that it would reach in the age of enlightenment and imperialism, its beginnings not long after Geoffrey composed the *HrB*—the University of Paris would be founded approximately 1160, with Oxford following suit soon afterwards—suggest that the shift in thought on who should and should not have access to knowledge had begun.⁴⁰

The oral spread of information and the beginnings of the university system—and these are not the only two factors to consider—complicate the present discussion regarding how knowledge was disseminated during the twelfth century to a considerable degree. Be that as it may, the body of knowledge that had already been and continued to be produced during the Norman occupation of the Isles, at least as far as the production of written knowledge goes, was largely concentrated in the various abbeys, monasteries, and other ecclesiastical establishments that dotted the landscape on both sides of the channel. While the Normans had nominal control of some of these important centers of learning, including those at Durham, Glastonbury, and Peterborough in Greater Britain and at Bayeux, Bec, Caen, Evreux, Fécamp, Jumièges, and Rouen on the continent, the ecclesiastical orders had some amount of autonomy in choosing what subjects to write about and remained somewhat detached from secular affairs, particularly

at the beginning of the twelfth century. Thus, Margaret Gibson asserts that, prior to 1136 when Theobald became its Abbot, the monks of Bec mainly concerned themselves with producing learned treatises on truth and reason and, beyond the notation of dates, showed little to no interest in discussing historical topics.⁴¹

These two precipitating factors go a long way towards demonstrating how, in my view, the colonial rhetoric that the Normans cultivated and propagated throughout their territories can be thought of as ambivalent when contrasted to the level of efficient dissemination of knowledge about the Orient that the English, French, Dutch, and other colonial powers of the age of imperialism were able to achieve. From a pragmatic point of view, information could be destroyed or otherwise lost for any number of natural and manmade causes. On the latter front, relatively well-to-do religious communities like those at Hy, Lindisfarne, and Kells frequently drew the attention of Viking raiders from the late eighth century onwards. Fire, too, could present a serious problem. Some though not the whole of the collection at Glastonbury was lost during the great fire there in 1184 that gutted the majority of its monastic buildings. The loss of the written word during manmade and natural events like these was probably felt all the more keenly by the ecclesiastical community in cases where a few or only a single copy of a particular work was known to exist. The Book of Kells, one of the most celebrated works of the Middle Ages, was nearly lost on a number of occasions due to Viking incursions at Hy, where it is thought to have been begun, and at Kells, where it was eventually housed around 1007.⁴² Indeed, the gaps in the history of the production and migration of the Book of Kells chart the loss of information that was a feature of the time period.

Beyond the potential for natural disasters and manmade violence to slow the spread of hegemonic versions of history during the period—and the attacks on Hy, Lindisfarne, and Kells

indicate that the peoples of the Isles also had problems preserving their histories and traditions in writing—we must also consider the impact that the concentration of written knowledge in the hands of a relatively small percentage of the literate classes had on the dissemination of the rhetoric that the Normans produced in order to celebrate and defend their colonial enterprises. Though the masses had some opportunity to hear a piece of literature read aloud, access to the written word was naturally restricted to those who could read. During the twelfth century, these were overwhelmingly though not exclusively members of the religious community. Henry II's famed ability to read without moving his lips attests to the high level of illiteracy even among the royalty of the period. In my view, the high level of literacy among the members of the church in comparison to the rest of the population, and the control over the spread of information it afforded them, presented the Normans a double-edged sword with respect to their quest to conquer and dominate the peoples of the Isles by any means they could. On the one hand, as the new patrons of the church in much of the Isles, the Normans were in a position to reform and reorganize its structure to its benefit. John Le Patourel, for instance, observes that the Normans replaced the abbots and bishops of the Isles with men possessed of the same military and aggressive mindset that enabled them to conquer dominate large portions of the Isles:

They were drawn mainly from the military aristocracy that was growing up in Normandy or from the ducal family itself; they shared the assumptions and the instincts of that class and represent, indeed, one of the means by which it kept a hand on the property of the Church.⁴³

Moreover, Le Patourel argues, the Normanization of the church in the Isles resulted in the marginalization of native Church martyrs, Saints, and so on as well as the kind of shift in interest towards secular topics that Margaret Gibson alludes to her in her discussion of the monks of Bec.⁴⁴ Thus, to a great extent the concentration of knowledge at the various religious centers throughout the Isles played into the hands of the Norman ruling classes and allowed them to

consolidate their rhetoric about the peoples there whom the Normans sought to conquer and dominate. And by the same token, this arrangement ensured that, relatively speaking, the native inhabitants had fewer opportunities to tell their side of the story.

Read through the lens of these dominating frameworks, the shift in interest among the clergy of Bec and elsewhere, for that matter, to chronicle secular events does not appear coincidental. Likewise, the Normans' ability to consolidate information through their reorganization and control of the church can help to explain the remarkable similarities in language that churchmen like William of Malmesbury, William of Newburgh, Gerald de Barri, and even Geoffrey used to re-present and contain the Isles' inhabitants. Not that a writer of say Gerald's caliber was always consciously aware that his harsh condemnations of the Irish for the length of their beards, their flouting of church doctrine on marriage, and other social practices primarily reinforced the kind of colonial discourse that the Normans cultivated. Rather, chroniclers like Gerald were at least partly espousing the precepts of a church that had long held the peoples of the Isles in disdain for what it perceived as their degeneracy. On this score, R.R. Davies argues that the church did much to fix the stereotypes about the Irish and Welsh that the Normans would seize upon long before they took an interest in the Isles: "they are part of the legacy of an academic-clerical society...which was becoming increasingly dogmatic and intolerant of deviations from its standards."⁴⁵ Additionally, chroniclers were partly motivated to write their secular histories by the prospect of advancing their positions within the church hierarchy. This certainly appears to be the case with Geoffrey. Michael Curley, for instance, argues that Geoffrey may have written the four extant dedications to the *HrB* in an effort to curry the favor of the party that could most help him to climb the social ladder: "the dedications...reveal Geoffrey's doggedness in seeking patronage where he could find it. The dedicatees were some

of the principal players among the Anglo-Norman aristocracy of the civil dispute over succession to the throne of England following the death of Henry I.”⁴⁶ Peter Korrel similarly concludes that Geoffrey may have wished to capitalize on the popularity of the Welsh stories regarding Arthur in order to move up the social ladder.⁴⁷ At the same time, however, the success of a work like the *HrB* attests to the ability of chroniclers like Geoffrey to cater to their Norman audience’s tastes and sensibilities, including those related to their desire to conquer and dominate. Indeed, despite that some of Geoffrey’s contemporaries like Henry of Huntingdon criticized him for including the Matter of Britain in his history, the fact that Bec could already count the *HrB* among its holdings in 1139 indicates that the contents were very much to the Normans’ liking.⁴⁸

On the opposing side of the two-edged sword, the restriction of those who had the ability to write to the members of the ecclesiastical community also necessarily meant that, in contrast to the class of historians, philologists, anthropologists, travel writers, novelists, and so on that were able to spread hegemonic versions of history during the age of imperialism, the Normans had to rely on a relatively small number of people to produce literary materials that reinforced their view of the Isles and everything in it. Though, as has already been seen, the Normans tweaked the organization of the church to suit their own interests, this did not wholly guarantee that this already limited pool of writers always treated subjects that had to do with or aligned with the Normans’ interests in conquest and domination. Even the chroniclers who both actively celebrated and defended the Normanization of the Isles and re-presented the native inhabitants in a less than favorable light might express some ambivalence with regards to the violence that accompanied the Norman penetration of the Isles. William of Malmesbury for one, expressed his dismay at the transformation of the Isles into a place which was “the habitation of strangers and the domination of foreigners” as well as towards “the newcomers who devour its riches and

entrails.”⁴⁹ Even among the Normans themselves, historians like Orderic Vitalis strongly disapproved of the brute force that enterprising men like the fitz Osberns and Montgomeries sometimes wielded to obtain their desires.⁵⁰ And of course the clergymen of Ireland and Wales had some success expressing the trauma that their people suffered at the hands of the Normans and other invading forces. Such was the case in both the late eleventh century poem composed by the Welsh scholar-cleric Rhigyfarch as well as the Irish *Leabhar Gabhála* (*The Book of Invasions*), also compiled during the eleventh century.⁵¹ Though the work of chroniclers like William of Malmesbury, William of Newburgh, Henry of Huntingdon, Gerald de Barri, and even Geoffrey dominated the literary landscape of the period (and, for that matter, academic discussions regarding the extant literature written about the Norman occupation of the Isles), the production of texts like Rhigyfarch’s poem and the *Leabhar Gabhála* indicates that in a limited sense the peoples of the Isles were able to contest Norman versions of history. Thus, on the one hand the church played a critical role in disseminating information during the twelfth century, a situation which benefited the Normans and which they took advantage of, whether through placing their own men in key positions, through reorganizing the diocese, or through other means. On the other hand, the relative stranglehold the church had on the flow of information could also work against Norman pretensions to conquer and dominate, especially when the church expressed its abhorrence to the violent methods the Normans inflicted upon Irish and Welsh.

In my view, the preceding discussion of the relatively slow pace at which Norman colonization of the Isles proceeded, the sometimes indirect routes they took on the road to conquest and domination, and the production of written materials by an ecclesiastical community that had begun to take a marked interest in secular affairs (and not always a favorable one) can

help locate the words, phrases and images that Geoffrey used to describe the occidental foreigners inhabiting his text within a discourse largely designed to dehumanize and demonize them. As the observations of scholars like Higham, Davies, Gibson, and Le Patourel make clear, the development of this colonial rhetoric did not take place over night. Its foundations arguably can be traced to the colonial rhetoric that imperial Rome deployed during its occupation of the Isles, given Gerald's description of Ireland as lying at the furthest ends of earth and similar representations of Britain found in the likes of Horace.⁵² Likewise, the relatively small number of prominent clergymen roughly contemporary with Geoffrey who were producing materials that chronicled Norman achievements would seem to corroborate Gibson's contention that the ecclesiastical community's interest in recording secular history was still a relatively new phenomenon in the late 1130s.

Moreover, although the chroniclers of the period did much to reinforce the asymmetrical power relations between the Normans and those they subjugated under their rule, they also frequently reacted with horror to the wide-spread devastation that resulted from the Normans' appetite for conquest. Even Geoffrey, who mostly celebrates Arthur's fictitious achievements, expressed a certain amount of pessimism in bringing Arthur's empire to a violent end, ostensibly through the civil discord caused by Modred's lust for power. Not a few scholars have read the climactic struggle between Arthur and Modred that Geoffrey narrates in the *HrB* through the lens of the anarchy that resulted when Stephen laid his claim to the throne over Henry's chosen heiress Matilda. Neil Thomas, for instance, argues that Geoffrey's narration of Modred's treachery may represent Geoffrey's way of warning Stephen and Matilda that their quarrel had considerably disrupted England's political situation: "If so," Thomas writes, "then we ought properly to read the work as a plea for unity under unbroken royal rule—a non-controversial

moral lesson from which *any* ruler of these isles might have drawn strength.”⁵³ Siân Echard similarly contextualizes the end of Arthur’s rule in terms of the uncertainty that the anarchy elicited for Geoffrey:

The humanism of the twelfth century was not always, for Geoffrey at least, particularly confident or serene, and the good kings of whom Arthur is a supreme representative offer less refuge than one might hope; Geoffrey’s own experience of the Anarchy under King Stephen may have had something to do with the pessimism which colors his exploration of the role of kings in history.⁵⁴

To Echard’s commentary in particular on the impact that the anarchy had on Geoffrey’s text I would add that the pessimism and uncertainty Geoffrey expresses at the end of the Arthurian portion of his history aligns with the despair that a poet like Rhigyfarch expresses at the coming of the Normans to Wales.⁵⁵ Thus, the conquest and domination of the Isles produced significant trauma even among those like Geoffrey who wrote a version of history that expressed the power relations between the Normans and those they subjugated from a hegemonic point of view. In summation then, despite the pressure that the Normans exerted to re-present and contain the occidental foreigners occupying the land they wished to annex—and we should not underestimate how considerable that pressure was—a certain amount of writing was produced that counterpoints their view of history. Counterpoints in the narratives of the chroniclers who supported the Normans in particular points to a less than straight forward colonial discourse deployed by the Normans that in some respects responds to each of the occidental cultures they encountered rather than assert a version of history that treated all occidentals everywhere as the same.

The relationship that the Normans express between themselves and those they sought to conquer and dominate by various means goes a long way towards explaining the way that Geoffrey frequently treats the foreign others who inhabit his narratives. Although Geoffrey can at times express ambivalence regarding the violent means by which conquest was often achieved,

he nonetheless largely uses the Irish, Welsh, Picts, and other occidental foreigners whom he inserts into his narrative as resources to be exploited by Arthur and the other rulers of Britain. Geoffrey accomplishes this by deploying key words, phrases, and images that dehumanize and demonize these foreign others. These re-presentations of the occidentally foreign peoples of the *HrB* frequently align with the kind of discourse the Church was busy producing about the foreign throughout the twelfth century. As a clerk who in some respects sought to capitalize on the place that the Matter of Britain held in the imagination of the Normans, Geoffrey's treatment of the various ethnic and polyethnic groups with whom he populates his narrative does not appear accidental. Although the issue is almost never straightforward, in my view the re-presentations disseminated by the Church that Geoffrey builds upon in his narrative largely serve to reinforce a Norman version of history and to facilitate conquest.

Notes

¹ Unless otherwise stated, all translations and mistakes throughout this dissertation are mine. For passages cited from the *HrB*, I have followed Neil Wright's critical edition, which he based on Bern, Burgerbibliothek MS. 568. I should also note that Thorpe's translation is based on Camb. Univ. Libr. MS. 1706.

² Michelle Warren, for one, argues that the meaning of "barbarous" is in flux during the twelfth century, moving from "*foreigner* at the beginning to degraded culture by the end." Warren may or may not be implying that "barbarous" still occupies a neutral register when Geoffrey pens the *HrB* in the late 1130s. See Michelle R. Warren, *History on the Edge: Excalibur and the Borders of Britain 1100-1300* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 50.

³ See, for instance, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Reading the World: Literary Studies in the Eighties," *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (London: Methuen, 1987), 97.

⁴ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Reading the World," 97.

⁵ J.S.P. Tatlock, *The Legendary History of Britain: Geoffrey of Monmouth's Historia Regum Britanniae and its Early Vernacular Versions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1950), 78-9.

⁶ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1994), 32.

⁷ William R. Leckie, *The passage of Dominion: Geoffrey of Monmouth and the Periodization of Insular History in the Twelfth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 27.

⁸ P.H. Sawyer, *From Roman Britain to Norman England*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 1998), 57.

⁹ P.H. Sawyer, *Roman Britain to Norman England*, 57.

¹⁰ P.H. Sawyer, *Roman Britain to Norman England*, 57.

¹¹ See Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, Book I, 12.

¹² See Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book II, 5.

¹³ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak," *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, Eds. (Champaign, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 271-313.

¹⁴ Edward Said, *Orientalism*, 40.

¹⁵ Tejaswini Niranjana, *Siting Translation: History, Post-Structuralism, and the Colonial Context* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 2.

¹⁶ Tejaswini Niranjana, *Siting Translation*, 2.

¹⁷ Tejaswini Niranjana, *Siting Translation*, 2.

¹⁸ J.S.P. Tatlock, *Legendary History*, 107.

¹⁹ Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (London: Routledge, 1998), 2. Also see "colony, n," OED Online, 2013, Oxford University Press, Web, 25 July 2013.

²⁰ See *De Bellum Gallicum* IV.xxiv and IV.xxv respectively.

²¹ Tacitus, *Agricola*, VIII, XXX, XXXII; Cicero, *Letters to Quintus*, II.13.2; Horace, *Odes*, I.35.29, III.4.33, IV.14.47; Seneca, *Apocolocyntosis*, XII; Virgil, *Eclogues*, I.66.

²² N.J. Higham, *King Arthur: Myth Making and History* (London, Routledge, 2002), 40.

²³ For an in-depth analysis of Gildas' condemnation of the Britons, see N.J. Higham, *Myth Making*, 45-60.

²⁴ N.J. Higham, *Myth Making*, 100.

²⁵ William of Malmesbury, *The History of the Kings of England, and of His Own Times*, trans. John Sharpe, The Church Histories of England vol. III, part I (London: Seeleys, 1854), Book I, 8, p. 11.

²⁶ R.R. Davies, *Domination and Conquest: The Experience of Ireland, Scotland and Wales 1100-1300* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 23.

²⁷ On the coming of the fitz Stephen and the Strongbow to Ireland, see Goddard Henry Orpen, *Ireland Under the Normans 1169-1216*, Volume 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 145-219.

²⁸ William of Malmesbury, *The History of the Kings of England*, Book V, 409, p. 352.

²⁹ William of Malmesbury, *The History of the Kings of England*, Book V, 409, p. 352.

³⁰ Goddard Henry Orpen, *Ireland Under the Normans*, 133-36.

³¹ Gerald de Barri, *Topographica Hibernica*, Book III, Chapter 10.

³² Gerald de Barri, *Topographica Hibernica*, Book III, Chapter 10.

³³ R.R. Davies, *Domination and Conquest*, 9.

³⁴ Edward Said, *Orientalism*, 59.

³⁵ R.R. Davies, *Domination and Conquest*, 23-24.

³⁶ R.R. Davies, *Domination and Conquest*, 75-76.

³⁷ R.R. Davies, *Domination and Conquest*, 19.

³⁸ For the number of manuscripts of the *HrB* in circulation during the twelfth century, see Lewis Thorpe, trans., *The History of the Kings of Britain* (London, Penguin Books, 1966), 28. Julia Crick gives a much fuller list of texts but, unfortunately, does not break these up by date. See Julia C. Crick, *The Historia regum Britannie of Geoffrey of Monmouth III: A Summary of Catalogue of the Manuscripts* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: D.S. Brewer, 1989).

³⁹ Michael J. Curley, *Geoffrey of Monmouth* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1994), 52. See also N.J. Higham, *Myth Making*, 90, 220.

⁴⁰ Though not an officially recognized university until somewhere around 1167, schools had been set up at Oxford in 1096. Geoffrey himself signed seven charters related to Oxford and its vicinity between 1129 and 1151. Geoffrey, who styles himself ‘magister’ in several of these charters, has long thought to have been a teacher or secular canon attached to the school’s in the Oxford area. See J.S.P. Tatlock, *Legendary History*, 441-42.

⁴¹ Margaret Gibson, “History of Bec in the Twelfth Century,” *The Writing of History in the Middle Ages: Essays Presented to Richard William Southern*, Eds. R.H.C. Davis & J.M. Wallace Hadrill (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 168-70.

⁴² For a discussion that argues for Hy as the provenance for the work that eventually came to be known as The Book of Kells, see for instance, Paul Meyvaert, “The Book of Kells and Iona,” *The Art Bulletin* 71 (1989), 6-19.

⁴³ John Le Patourel, *The Norman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 301.

⁴⁴ John Le Patourel, *The Norman Empire*, 66, 251.

⁴⁵ R.R. Davies, *Domination and Conquest*, 23.

⁴⁶ Michael J. Curley, *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, 9.

⁴⁷ Peter Korrel, *An Arthurian Triangle: A Study of the Origin, Development and Characterization of Arthur, Guinevere and Modred* (Leiden: Brill, 1984), 104-05, 110.

⁴⁸ Henry had been travelling in the entourage of Theobald of Canterbury to Rome in 1139 when they stopped at Bec where Henry was amazed to find a copy of the *HrB*. Generally thought to have been completed in 1138, the *HrB*'s propagation occurred relatively rapidly. For a brief account of Henry's thoughts on the text, see J.S.P. Tatlock, *Legendary History*, n.3, 433. See 434 for Tatlock's discussion of the terminus a quo for the *HrB*'s publication.

⁴⁹ Qtd. In R.R. Davies, *Domination and Conquest*, 26.

⁵⁰ R.R. Davies, *Domination and Conquest*, 26.

⁵¹ R.R. Davies, *Domination and Conquest*, 2, 27.

⁵² See n.24 above.

⁵³ Neil Thomas, “Arthurian Evidences: The Historicity and Historicisation of King Arthur,” *Durham University Journal* 87 (1995), 386.

⁵⁴ Siân Echard, *Arthurian Narrative in the Latin Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 27.

⁵⁵ Rihgyfarch writes, “Why have the blind fates not let us die?...O [Wales] you are afflicted and dying.” Qtd. In Davies, *Domination and Conquest*, 27.

3. ANNA AND THE KINGS: LOCATING MARRIAGE ALLIANCES IN THE MATTER OF BRITAIN

In chapter 2, I argued that Geoffrey of Monmouth deploys a series of words and that, in working alongside attempts by the Normans to subjugate the British Isles and everything in it, dehumanize and demonize the occidental peoples with whom he populates his telling of the Matter of Britain. A large part of that argument hinged on locating the language Geoffrey uses to re-present and contain the Irish, Scots, and Picts within what can perhaps be best described as an ambivalent colonial rhetoric that the Normans cultivated in order to subjugate the occidental foreigners they encountered in the Isles. Although the Normans took rather sophisticated steps to consolidate the hold they had over the Isles and everything in it, and although their success in implementing a discourse that expressed their absolute power over the peoples whom they subjugated was far reaching, the limited means available to them to promote their version of history produced less than straightforward results. These inconsistencies are particularly noticeable among the small number of chroniclers and story tellers roughly contemporary with Geoffrey who, on the one hand eagerly celebrated the Normans' view of themselves as industrious, enterprising, agriculturally sophisticated, and civilized; and who on the other hand vividly portrayed some of the trauma that the subjugated suffered as a result of Norman expansion into the Isles.

Perhaps as a result of the negative view the ecclesiastical community frequently took regarding their appetite for violence and military aggression, the Normans did not always employ such brutal methods on the road to conquest and domination. Rather, they sometimes took advantage of political circumstances. These situations could be of immediate benefit, as in cases where the Normans were able to replace the abbots and bishops of the church with their own men and thereby solidify their ownership of the Church's resources. Or these more subtle means

by which the Normans attempted to seize power might take one or several generations to bear fruit. No doubt in some cases these political manoeuvres came to nothing. And much like in the case of aggressive military campaigns into foreign territory, these political machinations might have unintended consequences which the Normans and the chroniclers of their version of history were not wholly prepared to confront. One such strategy the Normans utilized that proved both a benefit and a source of worry was the politically arranged marriage. In this chapter, I look at the ambivalence Geoffrey expresses between Arthur's Britons and the peoples they subjugate along ethnic lines under their rule through the lens of Geoffrey's reliance on the political marriage between Arthur's sister Anna and Loth the Duke of Lothian. Just as the Normans relied on arranged marriages to establish claims to lands not yet wholly subsidiary to their rule, so too Geoffrey relies on the marriage he arranges between Arthur's sister and Loth in order to justify the British King's expansion into Scotland in the Isles and into Norway and Denmark on the continent. And much like the marriage alliances that the Normans arranged between themselves and those they wished to dominate produced in the Norman ruling classes a certain amount of anxiety that they could no longer claim to be wholly Norman, so too Geoffrey expresses a certain amount of fear that Arthur's bloodline had become polluted as a result of tweaking political circumstances in Arthur's favor through marriage. Geoffrey reacts to the conundrum he has created by skillfully manipulating Arthur's family tree in order to advance the British King's career by violently writing Anna, Loth, and their children out of his narrative.

Good evidence exists to suggest that the Normans did not rely on violent methods alone to expand their holdings in the Isles but rather adopted multiple tactics towards that end. In some cases, relatively peaceful settlement of land preceded brute force. Moreover, the Normans sometimes began their penetration of the Isles at the invitation of native populations. As

discussed in chapter 2, such was the case with the coming of the Normans to Ireland at the request of Dermot Macmurrough. Likewise, William's initial invasion of Saxon lands was precipitated in part by the invitation of the royal family. On this point, John Le Patourel observes that Edward the Confessor's nephew Ralph the 'Timid' enlisted the aid of two Normans, Richard son of Scrob and Osbern 'Pentecost,' to help him build several castles on English soil.¹ In much the same way, political marriages could be the catalyst that inaugurated Norman expansion. Regardless of the weakness of his position, the Conqueror himself at least partly relied on his descent from Edward through the maternal line to press his claim to the English throne. So too, Henry I's marriage to Edith the sister of King Edgar I solidified the relationship between Normandy and Scotland and precipitated the English settlement of Lothian, Tweeddale, Clydesdale, and north Ayrshire in the Scottish lowlands.² Nor did only the alliances that the Norman kings forged in the Isles inaugurate expansion. Rather, the Normans turned politically arranged marriages to their benefit at all levels of society. Arnulf Montgomery's marriage to Lafracoth the daughter of the King of Munster Muirheartach Ua Briain about the turn of the twelfth century helped the Normans to establish a foothold in Ireland that would pay big dividends decades later when Henry II ascended the English throne. On this score, R.R. Davies rightly asserts that the Normans were also playing the long game when it came to forging relationships with the occidental peoples of the Isles through politically arranged marriages: "Down on their luck in 1101-2," writes Davies, the Montgomeries "turned...to the Irish for a marriage alliance, calculating no doubt today's necessity might turn out to be tomorrow's opportunity and that the marriage bed is one of the easiest, cheapest, and most comfortable routes to domination."³ Indeed, although Arnulf could not have foreseen just how beneficial the marriage would prove to be for the Normans under Henry II's rule, the fact that he sent his

constable Gerald fitz Walter to Ireland to secure Lafracothe's hand strongly indicates that he saw the marriage as an opportunity to increase his standing within the Norman aristocracy. Thus the marriages of Henry I, Arnulf and, at least from his point of view, the Conqueror's Aunt Emma into key families indicate that the marriage bed strengthened the Normans' position in the Isles and, when opportunities presented themselves, helped them to expand their territories and enrich their coffers.

On the flip side of the route to domination that such political maneuverings frequently afforded them, marriage alliances also complicated the Normans' view of themselves along ethnic lines. For if the marriage bed provided enterprising Normans like Arnulf of Montgomery with readymade justification to dominate the English, Welsh, Irish and Scottish, the offspring of these alliances and the inheritors of the fortunes that politically arranged marriages made possible could hardly be said to be purely Norman themselves. Nor were the progeny of these marriage alliances always keen to admit their hybrid status. Despite the staggering sums of wealth that were accrued at Winchester and Rouen as a result of the Conquest,⁴ those who could claim Norman descent looked upon the inhabitants of the British Isles who could not with scorn. To return to a point I raised in chapter 2, William of Malmesbury re-presented the Irish and Welsh as economically, technologically, and culturally primitive.⁵ That William portrayed the English as superior to the Irish in no way simplifies matters. Rather, it foregrounds the position of the English as a people subject to Henry I's rule. William himself is of English and Norman heritage and may be highlighting his pedigree in this passage.⁶ On a broader scale, the Conqueror had all but replaced the Dano-Saxon nobility and distributed the lands in his possession to an assortment of Normans, Bretons, and Flemings by 1086.⁷ Though, as Davies rightly observes, Englishmen constituted the bulk of Norman forces who invaded Wales and

Ireland and settled in those lands throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, there is little doubt that they did so in the service of Norman lords.⁸

Unlike William, who proudly declared his heritage, Geoffrey declines to comment, a move which may indicate some anxiety about his parentage. Geoffrey's reluctance to discuss the matter, however, has not stopped scholars from speculating about his ethnicity. R.H. Fletcher, for instance, rather nonchalantly asserted that "Undoubtedly Geoffrey by race was a Welshman."⁹ For J.S.P. Tatlock, Geoffrey's overflowing praise of the Bretons throughout the *HrB* stemmed from his racial sympathies and deep patriotic feelings towards his continental ancestors.¹⁰ Michael J. Curley would return to this subject more than forty years later. Although he is unwilling to take a firm stance on Geoffrey's ethnicity, Curley does not dismiss out of hand Tatlock's conjecture that Geoffrey had blood ties in Brittany.¹¹ More recently, Michelle R. Warren has called these traditional views of Geoffrey's ethnic background into question. Noting the difficulties in ascertaining the ethnic makeup of the inhabitants of Monmouthshire in the wake of the newly formed Anglo-Norman Empire, Warren writes that "the interactive and often improvised identifications at work in a colonial border culture like twelfth-century Monmouthshire impede the deduction of ethnicity from politics or blood relationships."¹² Warren's very correct view notwithstanding, investigations into Geoffrey's ethnicity seem understandable if wrongheaded. For the purposes of this discussion, having an accurate map of Geoffrey's ethnic heritage might shed some light on why Geoffrey reacts so violently to the marriage alliance he invents between Arthur's sister Anna and Loth the Duke of Lothian. The possibility that Geoffrey may have expressed a certain amount of fear from a personal standpoint would be quite revealing.

Regardless of Geoffrey's ethnicity, he seems all too aware of the complications that arise from marrying across cultural boundaries. Among the many disastrous consequences that Geoffrey enumerates when the Welsh tyrant Vortigern marries Renwein, the Saxon daughter of Hengist, perhaps the most important is Geoffrey's insistence that lines between the Christian Britons and pagan Saxons have been effaced: "Iam nesciebatur quis paganus esset, quis christianus, quia pagani filias et consanguineas eorum sibi associauerant" ("Now who was a pagan and who was a Christian was unknown, because the pagans had joined themselves with their daughters and female relations"; VI.xiii). Nor is Geoffrey ignorant of the negative stereotyping of the Welsh at this point in history. Echoing the description of Gerald de Barri of his homeland as "regio barbara" [foreign territory], Geoffrey describes the people of Wales in the closing moments of the *HrB* as barbarous: "Barbariae etiam irrepente iam non uocabantur Britones sed Gualenses, uocabulum siue a Gualone duce eorum siue a Galaes regina siue a barbarie trahentes" ("And now these unrepentant barbarians were not called Bretons but Welsh, this word deriving either from their Duke Gualo, or from their Queen Gualaes, or from their foreignness"; XII.xix). Michelle Warren usefully articulates how on the one hand marrying outside the kin group allowed the Normans to acquire and maintain land for future generations and how on the other hand this same strategy threatened to erode the Normans' sense of ethnic identity. In Warren's view, Geoffrey's treatment of marriage alliances in the *HrB* accurately reflects the Normans' fear that, for all its immediate or long term benefits, a policy of exogamy could also lead to disunion and the corruption of traits like loyalty to the family that were 'naturally' a part of a pure blooded Norman ethnic makeup: "In a structure of vertical lineage and primogeniture, anxiety about lineage runs high; this widespread twelfth-century anxiety

permeates the *Historia*. Exogamy...can extend land holdings, but it also destabilizes allegiance within the group.”¹³

Geoffrey may have had cause to worry that a policy of exogamy might destabilize the household, given that the Norman heirs to the throne frequently fought among themselves when it came to matters of succession. Although in theory succession among the Normans passed from father to son, this pattern was not always strictly followed. Christopher Snyder asserts, for example, that, while instances of this scenario are rare, brothers could share the kingship.¹⁴ The Conqueror’s decision not only to disinherit Robert in favor of William Rufus but also to partition his holdings in England and Normandy between his two sons was an irregular move on both sides of the channel.¹⁵ Geoffrey himself began writing the *HrB* under the circumstances created by Henry I’s death and the so-called anarchy that arose as a result of the dispute between Matilda and Stephen for the crown.¹⁶ Indeed, the disputes for the English throne that began with the Conqueror and recurred among his descendants, even after Geoffrey’s death in 1155,¹⁷ demonstrate that, in spite of attempts to consolidate land holdings under a tradition of dynastic rule, succession was frequently resolved through violence. Nor does this unsettling fact appear to have escaped the notice of other writers of Arthurian literature during the twelfth century. Commenting on the *Roman de Brut* of Wace, Warren writes that rightful inheritance “proceeds from strength, not from immutable law or ethnic heritage; even Arthur succeeds through strength rather than through morality or ethnicity.”¹⁸

Although Warren rightly points out that narratives which insist upon Norman superiority, either through claims of better breeding or a superior sense of morality, do not tell the whole story or even an accurate one, they do tell the story that dominated the literary landscape. The unkind portrayal of the Conqueror’s English rival Harold Godwinson woven into the Bayeux

Tapestry springs to mind. As I discussed in chapter 2, the multiple strategies and policies that the Normans adopted in their quest to acquire land and resources included deploying a colonial rhetoric that both exalted their rule and simultaneously dehumanized and demonized their opponents. Manufacturing a tradition that both celebrated Norman supremacy and at the same time denounced the assumed inferiority of the occidental others that inhabited the Isles was a highly successful strategy, if the largely negative stereotypes about Irish and Welsh mannerisms and customs that chroniclers like William of Malmesbury repeated in their narratives are any indication. Yet in a real sense, the Normans' insistence on a rhetoric that pitted their group identity against the identities of those they sought to subjugate under their rule limited the kinds of responses that the chroniclers of the Norman version of history could express in cases where questions regarding ethnic purity arose. Such ultimately unanswerable questions, I argue, inform how on the one hand Geoffrey narrates Merlin's prophecy to Uther Pendragon that Arthur's sister will produce a dynasty of heirs to the throne and how on the other hand Geoffrey violently obliterates Anna and her progeny from Arthur's family tree. I now turn to this subject.

Geoffrey's description of Anna in the *HrB* has hitherto been largely overlooked by scholars. One reason for critics' lack of interest could be the relatively insignificant amount of ink Geoffrey expends to describe Anna. Another may be that Geoffrey does not seem to be clear on who Anna is. He only mentions her twice by name. The first instance comes as Geoffrey is smoothing over the somewhat messy results of Uther's deceitful seduction of Ygerna. With Gorlois the Duke of Cornwall out of the way and Uther free to take the Duke's Ygerna for his own, Geoffrey reports that the couple have a boy and a girl: "Fuit autem nomen filii Arturus, filie uero Anna" ("The son was named Arthur, the daughter Anna"; VIII.xx). In the second of these passages, Geoffrey tells us that Uther rewards Loth of Lodonesia for his martial skills by giving

him Anna's hand in marriage: "Erat autem ille consul Leis, miles strenuissimus, sapientia et etate matures. Probitate ergo ipsius acclamante dederat ei rex Annam filiam suam regnique sui curam dum infirmitati subiaceret" ("That man was a seasoned leader, a most vigorous soldier, mature both in wisdom and manhood. Thus approving of that man's worthiness, the king gave [Loth] his daughter Anna and put the kingdom under his care while he was subjected to infirmity"; VIII.xxi).

Admittedly, Geoffrey does not give us much to go on in these two brief descriptions of Anna. But what does stand out is that, in the second passage, Geoffrey describes Anna in terms of the exchange value she represents to Uther and Loth as the king's unwed child. That Geoffrey describes Anna in this manner is hardly surprising if deplorable to the modern scholar. Perhaps more importantly, Geoffrey specifically mentions that Uthur gives Anna to Loth because the latter has proved his worth as a soldier and leader. True, Geoffrey frames Loth's worth to Uther in terms of the latter's ability to defend the kingdom against its enemies. At the same time, however, that Geoffrey narrates a scenario here in which the king marries his daughter to a man valued for his martial abilities is highly suggestive of the kinds of marriage alliances the Normans were brokering in order to expand their territory. This indeed proves to be the case later on in Geoffrey's narrative when Arthur both pushes into Scotland and annexes Norway and Denmark to his quickly expanding empire.

Apart from her previous two short appearances in the text, Geoffrey briefly refers to Anna, although not by name, in at least two other places and possibly three. The first of these is Merlin's prophecy to Uther. This point is explored in greater detail below. For the time being, it should suffice to note that Merlin reveals to Uther that he will father a son and a daughter. Presumably, the daughter in question is Anna, given that Geoffrey names Uther's children as he

is wrapping up the episode of Uther's seduction of Ygerna at Tintagel. Likewise, Anna's identity can be inferred in the second passage from the fact that Geoffrey states the unnamed woman is Loth's wife. However, confusingly enough, the text here appears to state that Anna is the sister of Aurelius Ambrosius: "Loth autem qui tempore Aurelii Ambrosii sororem ipsius duxerat, ex qua Gwalguanum et Modredum genuerat, ad consulatum Lodonesie ceterarumque conprouinciarum que ei pertinebant reduxit" ("And to Loth, who in the time of Aurelius Ambrosius drew that King's sister to himself, from whom were born Gawain and Modred, [Arthur] restored the governance of Lothian and the other nearby provinces which belonged to it"; IX.ix).¹⁹ Yet Geoffrey does appear to treat Anna here in much the same way as he does elsewhere in terms of her exchange value. Indeed, Geoffrey's insinuation that Loth wins the hand of the king's sister subtly hints at the Duke's enterprising spirit, a trait that was much valued and admired among the Normans and goes a long way towards capturing the Normans' appetite for conquest. Moreover, Geoffrey underscores here some justification for one of Arthur's military campaigns, as he is merely restoring lands to Loth.

The identity of the woman Geoffrey describes in the final passage is even less clear. In brief, Geoffrey remarks that King Hoel of Brittany is the son of Arthur's sister and Budicius, the previous king there: "filius sororis Arturi ex Budocio rege Armoricanorum Britonum generates..." ("the son of Arthur's sister born from Budicius the King of the Armorican Britons..."; IX.ii).²⁰ Speculating that Anna had relations with Budicius either before or during her marriage to Loth is tempting, but Anna's relative age when she would have conceived Hoel rules this scenario out.²¹ At the same time, however, much like in the preceding cases involving Loth, Geoffrey once again reserves the hand of the unwed daughter or sister, depending on the passage, for a marriage to a prominent person outside of the kin group. In this context, the

confusion that Geoffrey appears to generate regarding the king's unwed daughter or sister in each of these scenarios may obfuscate the fact that Geoffrey consistently treats them as politically arranged marriages. Thus, the passages in question may not point to cases of mistaken identity so much as they bring to light Geoffrey's inability to decide which marriage alliance provides his fictitious British kings with the best opportunities to justify expansion and / or military aggression. Nor are these two possible readings of these passages necessarily mutually exclusive. Rather, Geoffrey may also be expressing some of the discomfort in terms of the corruption of the blood line that marriage alliances elicited among the Normans in their constant quest to conquer and dominate. Geoffrey does eventually settle on a marriage alliance between Loth and Anna, or at least that is how scholars have read the way that the narrative plays out, but the possible match between Anna or another sister and Hoel indicates that Geoffrey at least entertained the idea of an alliance between the Britons of the Isles and the Bretons of the continent, perhaps because the latter presumably had a much closer genealogical connection to Arthur than the men to the north.

Geoffrey reveals the role he has in mind for Anna, a role which largely centers on her marriage to Loth and her potential to bear children who will inaugurate a dynasty of British rule, in the well-known passage concerning Merlin's prophecy to Uther Pendragon. The passage marks a transitional period in the fortunes of the kings of Britain. Having fallen ill at Winchester, King Aurelius Ambrosius is poisoned by one Eopa, a Saxon assassin who gains entry to the court by posing as a monk skilled in healing. At the time of Aurelius' death, a fiery star appears. Its beams reach from the Irish Sea to Gaul. Merlin, who has accompanied Uther to Menevia in Southwestern Wales to aid him against the Saxons and Irish entrenched there, explains the significance of this celestial event to his lord. Bemoaning Aurelius' death, Merlin

prophesizes, firstly, that Uther will succeed to the throne of the entire island; secondly, that Uther will have two children, both of whom will play an important part in British history. As previously mentioned, the two children are Arthur and Anna. Although Geoffrey only writes two short sentences on Anna here, he declares that her descendants will rule Britain in succession: “Alter uero radius significant filiam. Cuius filii & nepotes regnum Britannie succedenter habebunt” (“But the other beam signifies your daughter. Her sons and grandsons will hold the kingship of Britain one after the other”; VIII.xv).

Scholars who have examined the passage regarding the Merlin’s prophecy have typically focused on the role it plays in establishing Arthur as one of Britain’s greatest kings. On this score, Michael J. Curley writes that Merlin’s prophecy helps to lay the foundations for “[a] Golden Age of British sovereignty under Arthur.”²² In Curley’s view, Geoffrey needed to make a bit of fanfare regarding Arthur’s birth: “Some extraordinary display was required in the narrative itself to foreshadow the coming of Arthur.”²³ Curley’s analysis of the passage is not wrong. Yet what is perhaps most remarkable is that scholars like Curley overlook, firstly, how the foreshadowing of Arthur’s birth also foreshadows the expansion of Arthur’s kingdom. It is no mere whim on Geoffrey’s part that one of the fiery stars’ two tails can be seen extending towards the Irish Sea. Curley may be right that the portentous meteor ushers in a Golden Age for the Britons, but that epoch is chiefly marked by British aggression against their neighbors. In the second place, in focusing on what Merlin’s prophecy has to say about Arthur’s future, Curley also overlooks the role that Geoffrey at least initially assigns to Anna. Geoffrey largely defines that role here in terms of her ability to produce heirs to the throne. And of course in the context of the Normans’ desire to expand their holdings that Geoffrey taps into in his narrative, Anna’s potential as a progenitor of future ‘legitimate’ heirs also brings her potential as a woman whom

the kings of Britain could marry off in order to solidify one relationship or another into the mix. What Geoffrey's inclusion of Anna in Merlin's prophecy points to then, in my view, is the potential to expand, maintain, and consolidate British rule of its empire. Thus, the story that Geoffrey tells here regarding Merlin's prophecy to Uther indicates that marriage alliances went hand with empire building.

Although Geoffrey initially had grand plans for Anna's role in procuring the future of a fictitious British empire through her ability both to conceive and to marry, events in the *HrB* play out quite differently. Not only do Anna's progeny not found a dynasty of successive kings and queens of Britain, they all suffer violent ends; either while defending Arthur, as is the case with Gawain; by Arthur's own hand, as happens to Modred when he usurps the throne; or by the hand of Arthur's chosen heir Constantine, as befalls Modred's two unnamed sons. In my view, the violence that Geoffrey inflicts upon Anna's offspring can best be explained as a result of the unease he feels for deciding to have Arthur marry her off to Loth. Although the alliance that Geoffrey establishes between Loth and Anna initially pays dividends for his narrative, it also introduces ethnic impurities into Arthur's bloodline. A closer look at the passages in which Geoffrey discusses Loth is thus warranted.

Much like in the case of Anna, Geoffrey does not provide his readers with a lot of detail regarding Loth's background. Geoffrey does however associate Loth with Lothian, a region in the Scottish lowlands initially outside of Arthur's direct control.²⁴ Although Geoffrey does not definitively categorize Loth as Scottish or Pictish, we can surmise that the Duke belongs to one or the other ethnic group; if not on the basis of the geographic location of his own dukedom or on the basis of his name—the latter is clearly a shortening of Lothian—then on the grounds that his brothers Auguselus and Urian rule the Scots and men of Moray respectively.²⁵ Even

supposing that Loth has some British blood, a possibility not supported by the text, he cannot be of purely British descent. At the very least, Loth's ethnic makeup is questionable, although this initially works to Geoffrey's advantage. In the first case, the relationship that he creates between Arthur and Loth through the latter's marriage to Anna gives him some justification to grant back to the three brothers their hereditary lands. Geoffrey adds this detail after he tells us that Arthur has annexed those lands on the pretext that the Scots and Picts first besieged his kinsman Hoel at Alclud in the vicinity of present day Dumbarton. Thus, Geoffrey retroactively justifies Arthur's expansion into Scotland while consolidating rule over Lothian, Moray, and the territory under Urian's leadership under Arthur's direct control.

On the surface, Arthur's lordship over the lands north of the Humber appears all the more secure through Loth's marriage to Anna. Geoffrey certainly calls attention to the marital connection between them at this point in his narrative. Doing so illustrates the critical role that marriage alliances can play in this genre: it allows Geoffrey to construe Arthur's military conquest of the lands north of his kingdom and the merciless slaughter he inflicts upon the Scots, Picts and Irish as the restoration of the inheritance of a close relation to the king. Yet Geoffrey only provides the details regarding Loth's hereditary rights, as well as those of his brothers, after Arthur has ruthlessly exterminated his neighbors to the north. As such, the presumed tradition of rightful inheritance Geoffrey draws upon to bolster Arthur's claims to lordship of his newly acquired lands cannot be viewed solely from a British perspective. Rather, by emphasizing the three brothers' rights to rule the Scots, the people of Moray, and Lothian, Geoffrey also emphasizes their status as foreigners who have been subsumed within the orbit of Arthur's empire. Their foreignness is perhaps mostly clearly marked by the violent circumstances which put Arthur in a position to help them win back their territories. Arthur has barely finished killing

off Scots by the thousands when he restores to Augustus the rulership over those people. Not surprisingly, then, the foundations upon which Geoffrey's argument for military expansion rest appear shaky. Geoffrey may be able to make a case for Arthur's actions by appealing to his readers' understanding of Arthur's relationship to Loth and, by proxy, to his two brothers, but he also invites his readers to view his narrative from a perspective other than Arthur's. The fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Scottish chroniclers John of Fordun, John Major and Hector Boece took this route and argued that Gawain and Modred are passed over when Arthur gains the throne.²⁶

Despite the potential danger of ethnic mixing that Loth's marriage to Anna represents for the future of Arthur's house, Geoffrey relies upon the marriage alliance a second time. Just a few pages after he narrates Arthur's restoration of the northern lands to the three brothers, Geoffrey reveals that Loth is the nephew of Sichelm the King of Norway. What this revelation implies regarding Loth's already vaguely defined ethnic origins is unclear. Whether Loth traces the Norwegian element in his ethnic makeup through his father or through his mother has some bearing on Loth's claim to the dukedom of Lothian, albeit this is an issue Geoffrey does not address. A similar problem arises with Loth's claim to the more prestigious Norwegian throne. Geoffrey is likely aware on some level of the conundrum he has created by further manipulating Loth's blood line. The Conquest and its messy results provided at least one example of the consequences ethnic tinkering might have, since William relied on his descent from his great Aunt Emma,²⁷ as well as his claim that Edward the Confessor named him his successor, in order to challenge Harold Godwinson and Harald Hardrada for the English crown. Though William was ultimately victorious, Godwinson and Hardrada rejected William's claim to say the least. Perhaps ironically, William's own foreignness played as much a part in the bloodshed at

Hastings and its aftermath as did his desire to possess the land. As N.J. Higham puts it, William's "famed illegitimacy and his foreignness both counted against him and neither his careful wooing of support at Rome nor his hiring of French mercenaries can hide the weakness of his case."²⁸ Moreover, William only acknowledged his tenuous connection to the English king Æthelræd, as his great nephew by marriage, insofar as it aided his claim. William did not waste much time in replacing the nobility that made up the court with men from the continent.

An exact correlation between William's messy yet successful path to the throne of England and the events in Geoffrey's text that lead to Loth's rulership of Norway under Arthur cannot be established. Yet there are parallels between these two scenarios that illustrate how the Normans utilized the relationships they forged through politically arranged marriages to justify military aggression and how military conquest turns out to be the means by which such justification is validated. To begin, Loth's lineal relationship to Sichelm is in the same vein as William's to the Confessor. In addition, just as William maintained that Edward chose him to succeed to the kingship, Geoffrey comments that Sichelm names Loth as his successor.²⁹ The objection may be raised that the naming of the king's or queen's successor(s) was commonplace enough by Geoffrey's time that providing this detail is not unusual. Beginning with William, the Norman kings followed this practice, though, as has been seen, the results were not always straightforward. However, in much the same way that William's claim points to his position as a foreigner, the specific textual circumstances under which Geoffrey mentions Loth's claim to the Norwegian throne mark his foreignness. The results of each scenario are on a par with one another. The English preferred Harold Godwinson to William. The latter only won the kingship after his victory at Hastings. In the *HrB*, the Norwegians favor a certain Riculf over Loth. The latter becomes king only after, with Arthur's overwhelming support, Riculf and his men are

killed, the cities of Norway are burned, and the rural population is scattered.³⁰ Politically arranged marriages and the legal claims that arose where their offspring were concerned frequently favored the Normans over those they sought to subjugate under their rule. In much the same way, Loth's claim to the Norwegian throne favors Arthur over Riculf and his supporters. Such disputes were often settled with brute force.

Perhaps the biggest difference between William and Loth is the role they play in the bloodshed that results from their respective claims. At no point does Geoffrey hint that Loth takes part in the killing spree that occurs throughout Norway, or that Loth wishes to be raised to the kingship. Rather Arthur desires to make Loth a king and consequently dispatches his fleet to the Norwegian coast line. Likewise, the Norwegians refuse to accept Loth as their king on the grounds that they feel they have the manpower to resist Arthur. When Arthur makes his landing, it is he whom Riculf and his men must face. Finally, as if to remove all doubt of Arthur's supremacy, Geoffrey states that Arthur subdues the men of Norway—he tacks on the men of Denmark for good measure—, installs Loth as king, and then moves on to begin a campaign in Gaul. Thus, as is the case with respect to how Geoffrey could use Anna's value as an unwed relation of the king to best aid the kings of Britain in their quest to carve out an empire for themselves as well as to advance his narrative, so too Geoffrey uses Loth to expand Arthur's rule in the Nordic regions, to add to Arthur's military achievements, and to extol Arthur's generosity. At the same time, however, Geoffrey's orchestration of this military coup through a relatively minor character like Loth effectively illustrates how the Normans could tweak political circumstances to satisfy their desire to acquire more wealth while ignoring the impact this strategy might have on ethnic relations both within and without their immediate kin group.

The same elements in Loth's ethnic makeup that enable Geoffrey to expand Arthur's lordship, first into the Scottish territories and later to the continent, play a crucial part in Geoffrey's overwriting Merlin's prophecy by eliminating each of Anna's descendants. This reliance upon and simultaneous fear of foreign blood to advance Arthur's interests in expanding and maintaining his empire is perhaps most fully realized when Geoffrey narrates Modred's betrayal at the end of the Arthurian section of the *HrB*. To be sure, Geoffrey attempts to frame Modred's actions as those of a traitor to his uncle, king and liege lord, which not only divide the country but also lead to the disastrous battle at Camblan. Tellingly, Geoffrey notes that Modred enlists the aid of the Saxons, promising their chieftain Chelric the land that his predecessors had possessed in Kent: "...partem illam insule que a flumine Humbri usque ad Scotiam porrigebatur et quicquid in Cantia tempore Uortegirni Horsus et Hengistus possederant" ("that part of the island which extended from the River Humber to Scotland and that one which Horsa and Hengist had possessed in Kent in Vortigern's day"; XI.i). As if to put beyond doubt the lengths to which Modred will go to possess Arthur's realm, Geoffrey adds that he enlists the aid of the Scots, Picts, and Irish: "Associauerat quoque sibi Scotos, Pictos, Hibernenses quoscumque callebat habuisse suum auunculum odio" ("He united the Scots, Picts, Irish and whoever was known to have harbored hatred for his uncle"; XI.i). Geoffrey's reasons for aligning Modred with these ethnic groups seem clear: he has gone to some trouble throughout the *HrB* to portray them as faithless pagans bent on deceit and murder.³¹ If placing the crown upon his own head is not enough to prove Modred's guilt, his culpability is manifest through his willingness to have dealings with these peoples as well as to give them lands in Arthur's possession.

Modred's willingness to associate with Saxons, Scots, Picts and Irishmen underscores Geoffrey's attraction to and repulsion from the foreign elements in Modred's ethnic composition.

Although a legitimate claimant to the throne, at least until he usurps it, Modred is neither wholly British nor wholly Scottish, nor indeed wholly Norwegian. In a certain though admittedly hypothetical sense then, to allow Modred to succeed Arthur would be to introduce multiple impurities into the royal bloodline. Worse still, with perhaps no clear sense of his own ethnic identity, Modred would cede land to foreign interests. Foreign interests, Geoffrey implies, with neither any strong notion of morality nor of loyalty. Yet the ethnic undercurrents that have carried Geoffrey's narrative forward reveal a more complicated geography than casting Modred in the role of usurping traitor allows. Curiously, Geoffrey does not openly discuss Modred's pedigree, either at this crucial point when the non-British elements he has inherited from his father would appear to count against him, or elsewhere. The reader must instead recall the few hints Geoffrey provides in his brief descriptions of Loth in order to piece Modred's ethnic heritage together. For the most part, Geoffrey refers to Modred in terms of his relationship to Arthur.³² In and of itself, privileging Modred's position within Arthur's bloodline over his parentage may not seem all that odd. As the way that he expresses Anna's relationship to Arthur indicates, Geoffrey frequently treats the important personages that inhabit his narrative in terms of what they can and cannot do to help Arthur expand his control over the land and its assets. Geoffrey treats Modred's father Loth in this fashion during Arthur's conquest of Norway. Additionally, despite exceptions to the rule and difficulties in determining which model Geoffrey is following in each instance where succession is concerned, emphasizing Modred's descent from Arthur appears to establish the former's claim to the throne. At the same time, however, avoiding Modred's paternity and all of its ethnic implications that bear upon, not only his worthiness to rule after Arthur but also his treacherous actions, suggests not so much a lack of

skill in narration on Geoffrey's part as a problem inherent in dealing with Modred's foreignness in purely positive or negative terms.

Moreover, despite the pains Geoffrey takes to describe Modred and the faceless rabble of Saxons, Scots, Picts and Irish he enlists to aid his cause as untrustworthy because they are foreign, several key figures with either non-British or less clearly defined ethnic backgrounds do prove loyal to Arthur. Gawain, who is among the numerous casualties between Arthur's and Modred's forces at Richborough, is an obvious example. So, too, is Loth's brother Auguselus, the King of Albany.³³ Auguselus in particular ranks high in Arthur's favor. He is one of the four kings who escort Arthur to the palace at Cærlleon for the crowning ceremony. Soon after, when Roman dignitaries arrive with a letter of demands, Geoffrey devotes an entire passage to Auguselus' speech exhorting Arthur's gathered nobles to fight the arrayed legions of Rome rather than send tribute. Auguselus ends his exhortation by pledging 2000 knights and an unspecified number of footmen to the war effort.³⁴ Auguselus' loyalty to Arthur, then, seems unquestionable. More to the point, the Scottish king's actions bring Geoffrey's ambivalent responses to the foreign nobility he has relied upon to expand and maintain Arthur's dominion over the British Isles and parts of Europe to the fore.

Geoffrey's indecisive treatment of the loyalty of Arthur's foreign lords reflects the kind of dilemma along ethnic lines that the Normans created for themselves by dominating the peoples of the British Isles, whether via marriage alliances or oaths of fealty. The problem Geoffrey has introduced into his narrative by manipulating Loth's ethnic traits is thus systemic and has consequences regarding Arthur's bloodline that are not easily resolved. From this standpoint, Gawain's and Modred's divided allegiance toward their uncle may stem from a lack of liminal space to accommodate their hybridity. Still less space seems available for Loth who,

as both Duke of Lothian and King of Norway, is the leader of two alien groups. Whether Loth's ethnic background or his high rank cause Geoffrey the greatest discomfort remains murky. Regardless, Loth drops out of the *HrB* altogether. He is last mentioned during the Battle of Saussy, at which Arthur and his coalition of men from throughout his empire defeat the Roman imperial army. That Loth makes his final appearance in the *HrB* here, as one of the commanding officers who takes part in the battle but not at the moment victory is achieved, effectively demonstrates how Geoffrey relies on the foreign in order to narrate Arthur's triumphs and yet must immediately discard it for fear that his narrative has become polluted. When Lucius Hiberius lies dead and the Roman forces scatter in terror, Geoffrey declares Arthur's victory a British victory over Roman oppression: "cum et ueteres eorum priscis temporibus auos istorum inuisis inquietationibus infestassent; et isti tunc libertatem quam illi eisdem demere affectabant tueri instarent, abnegantes tributum quod ab ipsis iniuste exigebatur."

Just as in ancient times their soldiers had disquieted the ancestors of the Britons with their hostile disturbances, so now the Britons, refusing the tribute which was unjustly demanded of them, eagerly devoted themselves to securing the freedom which the Romans were striving to take from them. (X.xii)

Although arguing that Geoffrey envisions Arthur's victory purely in terms of Britons versus Romans would be an oversimplification—he does pause to mourn some of the honored dead, among them Bedevere of Neustria and Holdin the Duke of Ruteni³⁵—the emphasis he places on Roman tyranny of the Britons specifically nonetheless tends to overwrite the intricate heritage with which he inscribes characters like Loth. Whether he does so consciously or not, perhaps because a royal pedigree appears to lend Loth more credibility, Geoffrey glosses over Loth's Scottish roots in this chapter and describes him simply as "Loth rex Norguegenisum" ("King of the Norwegians"; X.vi).³⁶ This move at once weakens the familial connection between Loth and

Arthur that Geoffrey took such pains to establish earlier in the *HrB* and draws attention to Loth's foreignness.

Nor does the emphasis that Geoffrey places on real or imagined British tradition affect only polyethnic figures like Loth, Gawain and Modred, though effacement of cultural difference is perhaps most easily discerned through these figures. One last look at Arthur's vengeful campaign against Modred should suffice to illustrate this point.

From the outset, Geoffrey attempts to frame the climactic fight between Arthur's and Modred's forces as one in which the various peoples of the Isles are defending their birthright against foreign invaders. When Arthur breaks camp and heads for home, Geoffrey makes sure his readers know that Arthur brings with him only men native to the Isles: "confestim cum insulanicis tantummodo regibus eorumque exercitibus Britanniam remeavit" ("without delay he returned to Britain with only the island kings and their soldiers"; XI.i). Then, as the final battle at Camlan is about to begin, Arthur exhorts his men to destroy the insurgents who have aligned themselves with his nephew. Geoffrey's descriptions of these people are not kind. Modred brought them to the island, Geoffrey warns, "from foreign parts to steal their lands from them."³⁷ Moreover, Modred's forces, barbarous as they are, are no match for the stalwart veterans that comprise Arthur's army: "Dicit etiam diuersos diuersorum regnorum barbaros inbelles atque belli usus ignaros esse et nullatenus ipsis, uirtuosis uiris et pluribus debellationibus usis, resistere posse si audacter inuadere et uiriliter decertare affectarent" ("Moreover, he said that, having been courageous men seasoned in many battles, they would be able to resist these diverse, unwarlike barbarians of various countries, wholly ignorant of the practice of war, if they strove to boldly attack and to fight manfully"; XI.ii). That Geoffrey resorts to describing the insurgents as barbarians ironically foreshadows the closing moments of the *HrB* in which, with some unease,

he explains that the people of Wales may have initially been called Welsh because they are barbarous.

Geoffrey's word choice in describing both Modred's allies and the Welsh casts his fear of the foreign in sharp relief. Regarding the latter group, Michelle Warren argues that Geoffrey is silently translating English "wylisc" as "barbarie."³⁸ Moreover, Warren continues, the meaning of "barbarous" is in flux during the twelfth century, moving from "*foreigner* at the beginning to degraded culture by the end."³⁹ Geoffrey's description of the troops under Modred's banner as barbarians from foreign parts bent on stealing the native islanders' lands may be no less problematic. In the first case, referring to Modred's troops both as barbarous and foreign in this passage doubly marks them as such. An argument could be made that Geoffrey does so for stylistic effect as he indirectly reports Arthur's speech, but that does not necessarily negate the impact this double emphasis has on how Geoffrey's readers perceive these men. Secondly, despite Geoffrey's insistence that Arthur's troops comprise only natives of the Isles, it turns out that foreigners fill his ranks after all. Once again providing a list of the war dead, Geoffrey refers to at least two foreigners who die in support of Arthur: Olbriect, King of Norway and Aschil, King of Denmark.⁴⁰ In addition, Geoffrey points out that not only Britons fell while fighting for Arthur: "multis militibus suorum tam Britonum quam ceterarum gentium quas secum adduxerant" ("[On Arthur's side fell] many of their soldiers, some of them Britons, others of the peoples whom they had led with them"; XI.ii).

The provenance of the unnamed thousands who die defending Britain is naturally less easy to sort out than that of Aschil and Olbriect. However, despite Geoffrey's assertions to the contrary, imagining that Arthur calls upon foreign allies to help him deal with the insurgency is not so farfetched. Arthur has already relied upon foreign men on numerous occasions, most

notably during his campaign against Rome. Such practices were all too common among the Normans themselves. R.R. Davies observes, for example, that when Henry I attempted to annex Wales to his holdings in 1114, he enlisted military aid from Alexander I of Scotland.⁴¹ Even granting that the veteran force of warriors Arthur fields at Camblan consists entirely of islanders—a supposition Olbriect's and Aschil's presence in the conflict makes suspect—Geoffrey's insistence that the Irish, Scots and Picts who swell Modred's ranks are barbarous foreigners filled with greed points to a contradiction in the text that cannot be explained away as the simple result of Modred's lust for power resulting in civil discord. Rather, while in one instance calling attention to the danger that the foreign represents for the people of Britain, and simultaneously glossing over the foreign elements he ascribes to large portions of the Isles' inhabitants in the next, Geoffrey rehearses a history of Britain in which the people are already divided along ethnic lines. This is even true of the Saxons who, at least historically if not in Geoffrey's imagined history, settled significant patches of land over the course of a century or more and married into British families. Adopting similar reasoning, Warren comments that "the mixing of blood and religion" which, in Geoffrey's version of events, the Welsh tyrant Vortigern's marriage to the Saxon princess Renwein inaugurates, "distills the boundaries of Briton identity, and facilitates Saxon colonization as miscegenation."⁴²

Geoffrey's reliance on and fear of foreign ethnicities, especially individuals with polyethnic backgrounds, dooms Anna's descendants. Ironically, in killing off Arthur's closest kindred, Geoffrey seems to have little choice but to pass the crown to Arthur's cousin Constantine, whose ethnicity is virtually unknown. All we are told concerning Constantine's heritage is that his father is Cador, the Duke of Cornwall.⁴³ Even if we concede that Cador and his son may be partially Breton, Geoffrey has treated Cornwall as a separate province since the

time of Brutus and Corineus, each of whom, Geoffrey invents, give their names to the kingdoms they found.⁴⁴ Much like Scotland, Ireland and Wales, then, Cornwall appears to be a region at once part of and not part of Geoffrey's imaginary Britain in terms of ethnicity. Moreover, the irony in passing the crown from Arthur's family to one with dubious ethnic origins may be doubly problematic, as Geoffrey glosses over the possibility that Anna is still alive. At least Geoffrey does not give us any indication that Anna is deceased. Whether or not Geoffrey skips over Anna because she is a woman remains unclear. Geoffrey does place women on the throne on at least two occasions: Cordelia, daughter of Lear; and Marcia, wife of Guithelin; which suggests that Geoffrey may have had other reasons not to do likewise in Anna's case.

Read against a historical framework in which the Normans sought to dominate the political landscape through marriage alliances while ignoring the ramifications such alliances had on an individual's ethnic status, Geoffrey's treatment of Anna and her descendants becomes clear if unsettling to the modern reader. Whether he is critiquing Norman practices or no, Geoffrey presents his readership with a view of Britain and the continent that in some respects is obsessed with ethnic purity. Nor is the *HrB* concerned only with the ethnicity of the peoples of the British Isles and Europe. Although beyond the scope of this chapter, Geoffrey's fears also extend to Africa, as is evidenced by his accounts of the troops that comprise the Roman legions under Lucius Hiberius, as well as of the Saxon conquest of Britain, which is achieved with the aid of King Gormund and his "innumerabilibus Affricanorum militibus" ("countless African soldiers"; XI.x). Geoffrey also informs the reader a few chapters earlier that Gormund, who has already conquered Ireland, is enticed by the Saxons to come to Britain "cum centum sexaginta milibus Affricanorum" ("with one hundred sixty thousand Africans"; XI.viii). Though Geoffrey

may be describing the African army as innumerable in XI.x for dramatic effect, his word choice nonetheless gives Gormund's troops the appearance of a hoard of faceless others.

In sum, Geoffrey's use of the marriage alliance between Anna and Loth on the one hand largely aligns with Norman attitudes towards exploiting the foreign to seize land and resources at a later date and the other hand expresses the deep seated fears that such political maneuverings engendered among the Normans. In the imagination of the Normans, the foreign posed a threat to ethnic purity. Marriage alliances could serve to bring these fears into sharp relief. So too, then, the marriage alliance Geoffrey creates between Anna and Loth exposes the threat that the foreign other poses to his narrative. Unable to fully deal with the consequences of tinkering with Arthur's family tree, Geoffrey decides to write Anna, Loth, and her descendants out of his narrative. Yet perhaps an even bigger issue Geoffrey's reliance on and fear of the foreign raises is where he himself fits into the ethnic picture he shapes for his readership. Given the tendency for nearly all ethnicities and polyethnicities to be construed as foreign at one point or another in the *HrB*, we cannot rule out the possibility that Geoffrey is Saxon, Norman, Breton, Irish, Pictish or Scottish, a combination of any and all of the above, or another ethnicity or admixture of ethnic groups that hitherto have not been considered. For all we know, Geoffrey could be part Flemish. He could be Norwegian.

Notes

¹ John Le Patourel, *The Norman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 22.

² R.R. Davies, *Domination and Conquest: The Experience of Ireland, Scotland and Wales 1100-1300* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 13-14.

³ R.R. Davies, *Domination and Conquest*, 5.

⁴ John Le Patourel, *The Norman Empire*, 150-54.

⁵ See n.31 to Chapter 2.

⁶ William tells us that “the blood of each people flows in my veins.” See *The History of the Kings of England, and of His Own Times*, trans. John Sharpe, The Church Histories of England vol. III, part I (London: Seeleys, 1854), preface to Book III, 217.

⁷ John Le Patourel, *The Norman Empire*, 31-32, 259; Davies, *Domination and Conquest*, 11.

⁸ R.R. Davies, *Domination and Conquest*, 12-16.

⁹ R.H. Fletcher, *The Arthurian Material in the Chronicles*, 2nd edn. (New York: Burt Franklin, 1973), 44.

¹⁰ J.S.P. Tatlock, *The Legendary History of Britain: Geoffrey of Monmouth's Historia Regum Britanniae and its Early Vernacular Versions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1950), 396-98, 427, 430. See also Tatlock's comments on the ancient book Geoffrey claims to have used to translate the *HrB* into Latin. Tatlock asserts that *ex Britannia* can only refer to Brittany, which again, in his view, shows Geoffrey's preference for the continental Bretons over their islander counterparts (422-23).

¹¹ Michael J. Curley, *Geoffrey of Monmouth* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1994), 2, 105, 124. Curley's comments on 124 regarding possibly veiled allusions in the *Vita Merlini* to the eminence of Breton scholars in the twelfth century is particularly thought provoking, though it must be noted that one-to-one correlations between Geoffrey's fictitious account of Taliesin and Gildas and the historical figures Bernard of Chartres and his brother Thierry must be viewed with caution.

¹² Michelle R. Warren, *History on the Edge: Excalibur and the Borders of Britain 1100-1300* (University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 25.

¹³ Michelle R. Warren, *History on the Edge*, 44.

¹⁴ Christopher A. Snyder, *An Age of Tyrants: Britain and the Britons A.D. 400-600* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 85-87. Regarding the development of hereditary succession in the royal family under the Normans and Angevins in connection with the development of feudalism on the continent and in the British Isles, see also John Le Patourel, *The Norman Empire*, 106-114; 179-91. Similarly, see John Hudson, *Land, Law, and Lordship in Anglo-Norman England*, Oxford Historical Monographs (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), 65-66 for a discussion of the development of hereditary succession at the baronial level, as well as the right of the lord to grant an inheritance to another party after a tenant's death.

¹⁵ See John Le Patourel, *The Norman Empire*, 184. Additionally see 52-53, where Le Patourel attributes the ability of King Ecgbert of Wessex and his descendants to maintain their hold on lands and resources in England to impartible succession; and 56-57 for a discussion of partible succession among the Welsh. See also Richard Barber, *Henry Plantagenet* (New York, Barnes & Noble Books, 1964), 25. Barber rightly comments that “the English monarchy retained vestiges of the Saxon elective system.” Each of these points demonstrates differences along ethnic lines in how the ruling families in the British Isles handled succession that make

determining Geoffrey's allegiance and which model of succession he is following in the *HrB* difficult if not impossible.

¹⁶ Henry's heir apparent, William Ætheling, died on 25 November 1120 while attempting to cross the channel in the White Ship. Henry reputedly married Adeliza of Leuven—his first wife Matilda (christened Edith) of Scotland died in 1118—in the hope that Adeliza would bear him a son. When the union failed to produce any children, male or otherwise, Henry named his daughter Matilda from his first marriage as his successor. Although Henry's barons had sworn to accept Matilda as their queen, they ended up backing Henry's nephew Stephen of Blois. One reason why the barons chose to support Stephen over Matilda may have been the latter's exogamous marriage to Geoffrey of Anjou. On the one hand, Henry's intention may have been to bring Anjou under Norman control through Matilda's offspring with Geoffrey, a scenario that arguably came to pass when the former king's grandson Henry Plantagenet ascended the English throne. At the same time, however, Anjou remained an enemy of Normandy throughout the Anarchy and for much of Stephen's reign. For an account of the problem over succession that resulted on the death of William Ætheling, see John Le Patourel, *The Norman Empire*, 89-92. Although Le Patourel points to the "struggle between the counts of Anjou and the dukes of Normandy, immediately for control of the intervening comté of Maine but ultimately for the predominance that that would bring to the successful party" as an important factor in the dispute between Matilda and Stephen over the throne, he also observes that "beside this was the even older rivalry between the counts of Anjou and the counts of Blois, who had been building up their 'empires' in competition with one another in the Loire Valley and the marches of Brittany" (91-2). Likewise, Richard Barber argues that the Angevins, like the Normans, often used marriage alliances to expand their land holdings: "The counts of Anjou were masters at this game, and often secured the richest of all prizes: the sole heiress. Such was Matilda of England, Henry's mother; such was to be Eleanor of Aquitaine, his wife" (Richard Barber, *Henry Plantagenet*, 11). Although Le Patourel and Barber take an Angevin view of the circumstances of Stephen's and Matilda's dispute, they nonetheless demonstrate that the practice of marrying outside the kin group among the Normans, Angevins and other groups interested in acquiring land and wealth created situations that must have complicated how the aristocracy would have reacted to Henry's naming Matilda his successor.

¹⁷ Geoffrey is among the clergy who sign the peace treaty between Henry, then Count of Anjou and Maine and Duke of Normandy, and King Stephen at Westminster on 16 February 1152 (Michael J. Curley, *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, 5). Although this event occurs approximately 15 years after Geoffrey completes the *HrB*, disputes over succession in England cannot have escaped his notice.

¹⁸ Michelle R. Warren, *History on the Edge*, 152. See also John Le Patourel, *The Norman Empire*, 112-13 on William and Henry II relying on threats and military conflict to secure their claims to the throne.

¹⁹ In point of fact, Neil Wright states that he has corrected "uxorem" ("wife") in the MS to "sororem" ("sister") (Neil Wright, *The Historia regum Britanniae of Geoffrey of Monmouth*, Vol. 1 (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1984,) n.2, 106). This emendation seems to introduce a separate problem, since 'ipsius' could refer to either Aurelius Ambrosius or to the subject of

“reduxit;” namely, Arthur. Hypothetically speaking, Arthur could have had an unnamed half-sister through Uther’s union with another unidentified woman. This sister would have to have been born about the same time as or before Arthur, since Loth would have either married her or been betrothed to her in the time of Aurelius Ambrosius, who dies before Arthur is conceived. By the same token, this scenario relies on conjecture rather than on evidence in the text itself. In either event, this woman could not be Anna, since Geoffrey explicitly states that she is the daughter of Uther and Ygernna.

²⁰ Lewis Thorpe and Madeleine Blaess assert that Geoffrey mistakenly identifies the unnamed woman as Arthur’s sister here instead of the sister of Ambrosius Aurelius (Geoffrey of Monmouth, *History of the Kings of Britain*, trans. Lewis Thorpe (London, Penguin Books, 1966), n.l., 214; Madeleine Blaess, “Arthur’s Sisters,” *Bulletin Bibliographique de la Societé Internationale Arthurienne* 8 (1956), 69-77).

²¹ Although Geoffrey never mentions Anna’s age, he provides enough clues that make her conception of Hoel impossible. Geoffrey writes, for instance, that Arthur is “xv annorum iuuenis” (“young at 15 years of age”; IX.i) on his succession day. In addition, Blaess asserts that Arthur can be at most 20 years old when he sends for Hoel’s aid (Madeleine Blaess, “Arthur’s Sisters,” 71). Geoffrey himself does not provide a clear time line between these points, but Arthur may be even younger than Blaess allows. In any case, for Hoel to be both the ruler of Brittany and a man of fighting age, Anna would have to be considerably older than Arthur when Hoel is conceived. This, too, is impossible, since Arthur is conceived the night Uther, disguised as Duke Gorlois, seduces Ygernna, this (presumably) being the first time Uther and Ygernna are together (VIII.xix). Even supposing that Arthur and Anna are twins, going by Blaess’ reasoning, Anna would be five when Hoel is conceived. Another possibility Blaess does not consider, however, is that Geoffrey is referring to an unnamed half-sister, as in the hypothetical scenario briefly discussed above. Yet this possibility introduces more problems than it solves, since it tempts the reader to speculate as to whether the two unnamed half-sisters are in fact the same person, who would had to have had relations with Budicius and then Loth (not impossible if Budicius died prematurely, but unlikely and not supported in the text) or even vice versa (which would imply an affair, also not discussed in the text), or if Arthur has two older, unnamed half-sisters in addition to Anna.

²² Michael J. Curley, *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, 43.

²³ Michael J. Curley, *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, 43.

²⁴ A region in present day Scotland stretching from the Fourth of Firth on the eastern coast to the Lammermuir Hills to the west and encompassing the capital at Edinburgh and its immediate vicinity. For the purposes of Geoffrey’s narrative, the border of the kingdom of *Loegria*, the largest of the three traditional kingdoms into which Greater Britain is divided and over which Arthur rules, ends at Hadrian’s Wall.

²⁵ “Erant autem ibi tres fatres regali prosapia orti, Loth uideliect atque Urianus necnon et Anguselus [sic], qui antequam Saxones preualissent principatum illarum partium habuerant. Hos igitur ut ceteros paternos iure donare uolens redddit Anguselo [sic] regiam potestatem Scotorum

fratemque suum Urianum scepro Murefensium insigniuit” (“There were three brothers born from royal stock, namely Loth and Urians and also Auguselus, who had lived in those parts before the Saxons had prevailed. Thus wishing to grant them their hereditary rights, as he had done for others, [Arthur] gave back to Auguselus the royal authority of the Scots, and he distinguished his brother Urians with the scepter of the men of Moray”; IX.ix).

²⁶ Nicola Royan, “‘Na les Vailyeant than Ony Uthir Princis of Britane’: Representations of Arthur in Scotland 1480-1540,” *Scottish Studies Review* 3 (2002), 12.

²⁷ William’s claim to the throne of England in part through the maternal line is well attested. See, for example, David C. Douglas, *William the Conqueror: The Norman Impact on England* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1964), 160-61 or, more recently, Harriet Harvey Wood, *The Battle of Hastings: The Fall of Anglo-Saxon England* (London: Atlantic Books, 2008), 6, 32, 37.

²⁸ N.J. Higham, *The Norman Conquest* (Thrupp, Stroud, Gloucester: Sutton Publishing, Ltd., 1998), 2.

²⁹ “Erat autem Loth nepos Silhelmi regis Norguegensium qui ea tempestate defunctus regnum suum eidem destinauerat” (“And Loth was the nephew of Silchelm the king of Norway who having died at that time had willed the kingship to him”; IX.xi). Lewis Thorpe translates this as “Loth was the nephew of Sichelme the King of Norway, who had just died and left him the kingship in his will,” but the sense that Silchelm specifically had his wishes put down in writing is not present in the Bern MS. See Lewis Thorpe, trans., *The History of the Kings of Britain* (London, Penguin Books, 1966), 223.

³⁰ “Et cum multum cruoris in utraque parte diffusum esset, preualuerunt tandem Britones factoque impetu Riculfum cum multis peremerunt. Uictoria igitur potiti ciuitates accumulate flamma inuaserunt dispersisque pagensibus seucie indulgere non cessauerunt donec totam Norguesiam necnon et Daciam dominio Arturi summiserunt” (“Much blood had been spilled on either of the two sides. At length the Britons prevailed. Having made their move to rush forward, they killed Riculf, with many men. Victory thus assured, they invested the cities, having copiously set fires, and dispersed the population. They did not cease to indulge their ferocity until all Norway and also Denmark submitted to Arthur”; IX.xi).

³¹ Geoffrey provides several examples of Saxon and Pictish treachery, including the assassination of Constantine by a nameless Pict, the poisoning of Aurelius Ambrosius by the Saxon spy Eopa, and the legendary slaying of the British nobles on the night of the long knives. See Geoffrey, *HrB.*, VI.v, VIII.xiv, VI.xvi respectively.

³² Geoffrey, *HrB.*, IX.ix, X.ii, X.xiii, XI.ii.

³³ “Auguselus etenim rex Albanie et Gwalgwainus nepos regis cum innumerabilibus aliis in die illa corruerunt.” (“For indeed Auguselus the King of Albany and Gawain the king’s nephew, with innumerable others, fell that day”; XI.i).

³⁴ Geoffrey tells us that Auguseus offers Arthur some “duobus milibus armatorum militum” (“two thousand armed knights”; IX.xviii) as well as an indeterminate number of foot soldiers.

³⁵ Geoffrey, *HrB*, X.xiii.

³⁶ Loth presumably dies in the battle, since Geoffrey names Olbricht as Norway’s king in his narration of the Battle of Camblan.

³⁷ Thorpe, whose translation I have chosen to cite here, takes “honores” to mean land. This is in keeping with the feudal custom of granting land to a nobleman as part of his honor. Moreover, Modred has specifically promised land to Chelric in the preceding passage and promises his men here “possessiones eis si ad triumphandum perstarent” (“the possessions of those others if [his men] pave the way to triumph”; XI.ii). Though Geoffrey’s meaning in this passage is debatable, given the focus on land and possessions here and in other places in the *HrB*, Thorpe’s translation of “honores” as land seems valid. See Lewis Thorpe, trans., *The History of the Kings of Britain*, (London: Penguin Books, 1966), 258.

³⁸ Michelle R. Warren, *History on the Edge*, 50.

³⁹ Michelle R. Warren, *History on the Edge*, 50.

⁴⁰ “[Corruerunt] in parte autem Arturi Olbericus rex Noruegie, Aschillus rex Dacie...” (“And on Arthur’s side fell Olbrict King of Norway, Aschil, King of Denmark...”; XI.ii). That Geoffrey both neglects to mention Loth’s death, presumably at the battle of Saussy, and names Olbrict as King of the Norwegians here, may speak to Geoffrey’s aversion to dealing with Loth’s foreignness. Geoffrey provides no details about Olbrict whatsoever, as if to mask any intimate connection to Arthur on the same scale as Loth’s via his marriage to Anna.

⁴¹ R.R. Davies, *Domination and Conquest*, 57.

⁴² Michelle R. Warren, *History on the Edge*, 47.

⁴³ “Constantino cognate suo et filio Cadoris ducis Cornubie diadema Britannie concessit” (“He yielded the diadem of Britain to Constantine his cousin and the son of Cador the Duke of Cornwall”; XI.ii). Following earlier scholarship, Madaleine Blaess assumes that Cador is the son of Gorlois and Ygerna (Madaleine Blaess, “Arthur’s Sisters,” 70-71), which would seem to shed some light on Constantine’s relationship to Arthur. But Geoffrey does not explicitly state Cador’s parentage.

⁴⁴ Geoffrey, *HrB*, I.xvi.

4. LOCATING THE GREEKS IN THE MATTER OF BRITAIN

In chapter 3, I argued that Geoffrey strategically uses the marriage alliance he creates between Arthur's sister Anna and Loth the Duke of Lothian in order to justify Arthur's conquest of the northern parts of Britain as well the Nordic territories of Norway and Denmark. Geoffrey's use of the marriage alliance in this fashion, I contended, aligned with the way that the Norman ruling classes frequently used the marriage bed to cement relationships between themselves and foreign others, all with an eye towards expanding their holdings. At the same time, however, Geoffrey, much like the Normans themselves, also expresses a certain amount of fear that the alliance Arthur forges through marrying his sister to Loth will corrupt the British King's bloodline. Geoffrey's solution to the dilemma he creates is to violently obliterate Anna, Loth and their descendants from Arthur's family tree.

In this chapter, I explore some of the negative stereotypes that Geoffrey and his successor Wace, composer of the *Roman de Brut*, deploy to re-present the Greeks in the Trojan episode of their respective narratives. In particular, I will focus on Geoffrey's and Wace's portrayal of the Greek soldier Analectus as a traitor. Geoffrey and Wace, I argue, build upon received knowledge about the Greeks that circulated throughout the West prior to and during the medieval period. Geoffrey and Wace use this received knowledge in order to justify the violence that the Trojan hero Brutus and his troops inflict upon the Greeks. Likewise, the received knowledge Geoffrey and Wace draw upon obfuscates the fact that Brutus must teach Analectus how to betray his people.

The Fall of Troy of course holds a preeminent place in the literary tradition of the West. As everyone knows, the story of Ilium's ruin hinges on the Greeks tricking the Trojans into taking the wooden horse they have constructed into the city. Once inside Troy's walls, the

Greeks, led by Odysseus, leap out of the horse and attack, thereby ending their ten-year long vendetta against the Trojans for Alexandros' (aka Paris) abduction of Helen. Yet what is perhaps most remarkable about this story is that at least two versions of it exist. The first and eldest of these comes to us from Homer. Though Homer spends relatively little time discussing the horse itself, he generally praises Odysseus for coming up with the stratagem and the Greeks for bringing about Troy's destruction. Following a good deal of revel-making at the court of the Phaeacian King Alcinous, Odysseus asks the blind bard Demodocus to recount the story of his triumph: "Now, come, change your theme, and sing of the making of the Wooden Horse, that Epeius fashioned with Athena's help, that noble Odysseus contrived to have dragged inside the citadel, filled by cunning with warriors, who then sacked Troy."¹ The second version of the story is the one that Virgil tells in the *Aeneid*. Virgil is far less kind to the Greeks for having brought about the destruction of Troy than Homer. In contrast to the words of praise that Homer puts into Odysseus' mouth, Virgil has the Trojan priest and seer Laocoön rhetorically ask the unhappy citizens of Ilium why they were foolish enough to trust the Greeks: "Do you think any Greek's gifts free of treachery? Is that Ulysses's reputation?"² It is Virgil's version of the story that most of us are familiar with. And what is perhaps most familiar about Virgil's telling of the story is his framing of the Greeks as treacherous. Indeed, the idiom to beware Greeks bearing gifts still has some currency today when one wants to issue a warning or to question a particular person's or institution's motives and overall trustworthiness.

Just as is the case today, the version of the fall of Troy that Virgil told in the *Aeneid* was widely known throughout the medieval period. Geoffrey likely drew upon passages from the *Aeneid* to narrate parts of the Trojan episode in the *HrB*. J.S.P. Tatlock, for instance, argues that Geoffrey conflated lines from Books I and VII of the *Aeneid* in order to compose the staves that

the apparition of goddess Diana speaks to Brutus.³ Michael J. Curley likewise sees a strong correlation between Diana's prediction to Brutus that the whole of the earth will be under his descendant's sway and the one that Aeneas hears at the altar of Apollo that all shores will be subject to his progeny's rule.⁴ And the summary Wace provides of Aeneas' wanderings in the opening lines of the *Roman* suggests that he sifted through Virgil's Latin epic in order to expand upon what he read in Geoffrey. Wace informs us, for instance, that Aeneas takes twenty ships with him when he flees Troy: "Ke de parenz, ke de maisnees, / Ke d'aveir out vint nés chargiees" ("With relations, with members of his house, and with possessions he loaded twenty ships"; Ll. 19-20). This matches the number of ships Aeneas tells Dido he initially set out with; only seven remain to him when he reaches Libya.⁵

Nor are Geoffrey and Wace the only writers interested in the Matter of Britain who make reference to Troy. Layamon, for one, who heavily relies on Wace in his translation of the Arthurian narrative, conjures the image of Troy's fall towards the beginning of his hybrid Old-to-Middle English *Brut*: "Þa Grickes hefde Troye mid teone bi-wone. / & þ~ lond iwest & þa leoden of—sfawen" ("The Greeks had won Troy with deceit and laid waste the land and slew the people"; Ll. 72-5). So too, the anonymous Gawain-poet vividly describes Troy's smoldering ruins in the opening lines of the late thirteenth- to early fourteenth-century *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*: "Sithen the sege and the assaut watz sessed at Troye / The borgh brittened and brent to brondez and askez..." ("Since the siege and assault at Troy was ceased, the town destroyed and burned to brands and ashes..."; Ll. 1-2). And on the continental side of the channel, Chrétien de Troyes alludes to the Trojan War in his late-twelfth century *Cliges*. Though Chrétien generally treats the Greek people favorably—for example he chalks Clige's uncle the Emperor's reneging on his oath never to marry up to the wicked council of his barons⁶—he

cannot forbear taking the Trojan's side. As Cliges advises his lover Fenice to come away with him to Arthur's court to escape her marriage to his uncle, Cliges tells her, "there will be greater joy over your coming, over you and me, than the joyous welcome Helen received when Paris brought her to Troy."⁷

The popularity that Virgil's account of the Trojan War attained both during the twelfth century and throughout the medieval period as a whole has often been linked to a renewed interest in antiquity. Regarding the Norman chroniclers of the twelfth century in particular, Robert Hanning argues that the popularity of the story represents a "European intellectual aggressiveness" that was marked by a great fascination with the political and literary achievements of the classical past.⁸ Geoffrey's declaration that the stately palace at Caerleon where Arthur holds his plenary court "Romam imitaretur" ("resembled Rome"; IX.xii) bears such a reading out. So too does Diana's prophecy to Brutus that Britain will become a new Troy for his heirs: "Hic fiet natis altera Troia tuis" ("This will be for your descendants another Troy"; I.xi). Indeed, Geoffrey is not the first chronicler to promote the idea that his people could claim an ancient ancestry, either directly through Aeneas or other famous survivors of the Trojan War. The practice goes back at least as far as the so called *Chronicle of Fredegar*, a mid-seventh century text which narrates the supposed founding of a new Troy by the mythical Francion on the banks of the Rhine. Similarly, the *Liber Historiae Francorum* (ca. 727) makes a case for Frankish descent from Trojan stock, this time through Priam and Antenor. In addition, several Norman texts lay claim to a Trojan heritage, including *Historia Normannorum* (ca. 1015) by Dudo of St. Quentin and *Gesta Normannorum Ducum* (ca. 1059) by William of Jumiège. And in the insular tradition, the legend of Brutus appears in *Historia Anglorum* by Henry of Huntingdon, who put out five editions of his chronicle between 1129 and 1154, as well as in at least two

surviving manuscripts of the anonymous *Historia Brittonum*.⁹ Yet what is perhaps most striking about the references to the fall of Troy that crop up in narratives dealing with the Matter of Britain is their almost universal framing of the story in apocalyptic terms. In my view, this framing of the story tends to favor Virgil's re-presentation of the Greeks as having triumphed through treachery. Layamon in particular makes sure to mention that the destruction of Troy and decimation of its people is achieved through deception. In linking the Matter of Britain to the Fall of Troy, then, writers like Geoffrey and Wace as well as their successors draw upon the fund of received knowledge about Troy. And that archival material displaces a tradition begun by Homer that celebrates the nobility and ingenuity of the Greeks for coming up with a plan to win their ten-year long feud with one that demonizes and dehumanizes them for their deceitfulness.

Much of the image of deceitfulness that Geoffrey and Wace express regarding the Greeks is bound up in the character of Analectus, a Greek soldier whom the legendary Brutus captures and coerces to betray his people. Brutus captures Analectus at a critical moment in the narrative. The Greeks, under the direction of their king Pandrasus, have laid siege to the town of Sparatin, where Brutus has garrisoned six hundred of his warriors. Realizing that he doesn't have the manpower to face Pandrasus' forces on the battlefield, Brutus decides to launch a sneak attack on the Greek encampment in the middle of the night. To pull this clever ruse off, however, Brutus believes he will need to lure the Greek sentinels keeping watch into a trap, at which point the Trojan leader has Analectus brought before him in chains. Taking his sword from his scabbard, Brutus threatens to kill Analectus, along with his lord and the Greek's king's brother Antigonus, whom Brutus (presumably) captured at the same as Analectus, unless the foot soldier agrees to do Brutus' dirty work. The Trojan leader then instructs the prisoner to pretend that he and Antigonus have managed to escape but that his lord, still bound in chains, could not make it to

the encampment. Analectus, Brutus' coachman, should lead the sentinels to a prearranged clearing where he has allegedly hidden his lord. Needless to say, Analectus swears to carry out Brutus' plan in exchange for his and his master Antigonus' lives. Although he encounters a bit of difficulty convincing the sentinels of his sincerity, Analectus ultimately succeeds in leading them to where Brutus and his men lay in wait. The Trojans make short work of the guards, and Analectus quietly drops out of the narrative.

To date, few scholars have discussed the exchange between Brutus and Analectus in either the *HrB* or *Roman*. Remarkably, those who do so typically reinforce the image of the treacherous Greek that Virgil establishes in the *Aeneid* and that gets repeated in the literature of the medieval period. In his brief analysis of the scene, J.S.P. Tatlock conjectures that Geoffrey may have taken the name for Analectus from Analectus II, the antipope about the time Geoffrey penned the *HrB*. Strikingly, in making this comparison Tatlock hones in on Analectus' treachery: "what fitter name for a traitor," Tatlock rhetorically asks, "than an antipope's who had been personally unpopular and notorious in England?"¹⁰ Though Robert Hanning does a somewhat better job and observes that Analectus' actions allow the Trojans to escape their plight and eventually found a new realm in the British Isles, he too puts the blame squarely on the Greek prisoner's shoulders and states that Analectus "betrays his nation."¹¹ In her excellent *History on the Edge*, Michelle Warren draws an important distinction between the way that Brutus gets Analectus to go along with his plan in the *HrB* and in the hybrid Old-to-Middle-English *Brut*—in the latter Brutus lays his naked sword across Analectus' neck—but she too lets the matter rest, a move which implies that Analectus is at fault for allowing Brutus to force him into submission.¹²

Geoffrey's and Wace's portrayal of Analectus and his fellow Greeks point to a range of negative stereotypes that they draw upon to re-present the Trojan's opponents. Beyond the idea that they are inherently untrustworthy, Geoffrey also goes out of his way to characterize Analectus and his fellow Greeks as cowardly as well as undisciplined in the heat of battle. For starters, Analectus turns squeamish when Brutus draws his sword: "Analectus igitur uiso gladio qui inter hec uerba morti sue imminabat continuo perterritus iureiurando promisit sese preceptum illum executurum" ("Therefore, Analectus, terrified at having seen the gladius which continually threatened him with death as Brutus was speaking, swore that he would carry out this command"; I.viii). To be sure, Geoffrey does not provide us with any clues as to what function Analectus performs in Antigonus' service, so that we cannot know with any certainty that he has any battlefield experience. At the same time, however, Geoffrey consistently portrays the Greek warriors whom Brutus and his men encounter as both unseasoned and ill-prepared to engage the Trojans. The two surprise attacks that Brutus launches against Pandrasus' men in the course of the Trojan episode of Geoffrey's narrative send the suddenly panic-stricken Greeks scurrying to save themselves. In the first of these two exchanges, Brutus, who has gotten wind that the Greeks are on the move, sallies forth from Sparatinum with a sizeable army, thereby taking the poorly organized Greeks by surprise. As though to stress the utter ineptitude of the men under Pandrasus' command, Geoffrey adds that the Greeks do not even carry any military equipment with them: "Audito namque aduentu ipsius sese in predicto oppido preterita proxima nocte immiserat ut in ipsos inermes et sine ordine ituros inopinam irruptionem faceret" ("For having heard of the approach of those men, Brutus had sent his men into the aforementioned fortified town the previous night in order to break upon those who were unarmed and marching without order"; I.v). Ill-prepared as they are for such a clever ambush, Geoffrey reports, the mostly

unequipped Greek forces make a run for it: “Greci confestim stupefacti in omnes partes dilabuntur” (“The Greeks, suddenly stupefied, scattered in all directions”; I.v). The second surprise attack, of course, involves the sneak attack on Pandrasus’ siege camp. As the Trojan leader and his warriors are mercilessly hacking the still half-asleep Greeks to bits, Geoffrey informs us that the Greeks, who are once again unarmed, scatter like sheep among wolves “Discurrunt etiam sine armis inter armatos quo impetus eos ducebat” (“Now they ran without arms to and fro between the armed men wherever the assault led them”; I.ix).

Wace changes the details of the two ambushes somewhat; though for all that, his representation of the Greeks as incompetent and inexperienced fighters is no less effective. In the first encounter, Wace provides the additional detail that Pandrasus himself takes flight rather than face Brutus’ wrath, a decision that causes the rest of the army to route: “Li reis meïmes s’en fūī / e tute l’ost se departī.” (“The king himself turned and ran, and the whole host dispersed”; Ll. 287-88).¹³ Likewise, in his account of the surprise attack on the Greek encampment outside Sparatin, Wace gives Pandrasus’ men little chance to defend themselves, as bad luck follows them everywhere they turn: “De tutes parz trovoent mal” (“misfortune found them on all sides”; Ll. 483). Nor does Wace hold back in his descriptions of the slaughter that Brutus’ men inflict upon the Greeks. Rather Wace describes the ensuing carnage with apparent relish as Pandrasus’ men lose their limbs, have their entrails disemboweled, and have their skulls shattered:

Out par les très maint cop doné,
Main puin, maint braz, main pié copé,
Espandue mainte cervele
E perciee mainte büele.

(“many a blow was given on all sides: many a fist, many an arm, many a foot severed; many brains spilled out; and many bowels torn open”; Ll. 469-72). Yet it should be pointed out that neither Geoffrey nor Wace base their descriptions of the Greek warriors of antiquity on anything resembling reality. Depictions of the class of Greek citizen-soldiers known as *hoplites* date to the seventh-century BCE.¹⁴ By the fifth-century BCE, Greek warriors on land and sea had developed such a reputation for their skill that they had begun to hire out their services to foreign city states. Regarding the Greek mercenaries who served in the various fleets of the Archaic Period, Matthew Trundle observes that even the mercenary citizens of Athens rated highly among captains looking to fill out their ranks: “good evidence illustrates that offers of higher pay by individual ship commanders led to competition in hiring skilled and experienced seamen even from within the Athenian citizen body as early as the late fifth century.”¹⁵ Tracey Rihll sounds a similar note on the overall popularity of Greek mercenaries, due in no small part to their fearsome reputation and experience in warfare:

Greek military supremacy is obvious from the extent of their conquests and their popularity as mercenaries. Their general inability to establish and hold settlements in areas controlled by more advanced cultures (such as Assyria, Phoenicia, Egypt, and Carthage) was probably a function of the disparity in organization and numbers, rather than in the military ability each individual could bring to bear; for Greeks were at the same time engaged as mercenaries by these and other peoples.¹⁶

To be clear, the siege of Sparatin occurs considerably earlier than the Archaic Period in Greek history.¹⁷ This would seem to indicate that the Greeks had not yet evolved into the formidable fighting force that Trundle and Rihll describe in their respective studies of classical warfare. At the same time, however, Wace—and Geoffrey, for that matter—have no problem updating the military technology that both sides wield throughout their accounts of the siege. In this context, the received knowledge that Geoffrey and Wace draw upon justifies the wholesale slaughter of the Greeks. Moreover, it arguably displaces the history of the Greeks as a formidable fighting

force with one that reinforces the Virgilian version of events that many of the kingdoms of Europe seized upon to highlight their exceptional place in history.

Of course the kind of re-presentations of the Greeks that the received knowledge Geoffrey and Wace draw upon stands in sharp contrast to the way that they portray the Trojans. Whereas Geoffrey and Wace tend to treat the Greeks homogeneously, they go out of their way to highlight the Trojan's cleverness and ingenuity. This is certainly true with respect to the way that Wace characterizes Brutus. For if Brutus possesses the cunning and guile necessary to defeat Pandrasus' superior numbers, so too does Odysseus for devising the strategy that ultimately leads the Greeks to victory at Troy. Yet Wace clearly favors these kinds of tactics only as long as they serve the Trojans. On the one hand, Wace admiringly speaks of Brutus' cleverness in coming up with a strategy that takes Pandrasus and his men by surprise: "Boisdie e engine deit l'en faire / Pur destrure sun adversaire" ("One must use trickery and ingenuity in order to destroy one's adversary"; Ll. 363-64). On the other hand, Wace skips over the Trojan Horse and begins his narrative with the city already destroyed and Aeneas and the survivors at sea. That Wace leaves this part of the story out may not be a simple matter of starting his narrative after the sack of Troy has already taken place for brevity's sake. Rather, in my view, it speaks to the Norman *maistre's* unwillingness to admit both that the Greeks are capable strategists and that the Trojans are vulnerable to a determined attack.

Nor do Geoffrey and Wace merely highlight Brutus' ingenuity in order to contrast the Trojan's superiority to the Greeks. Rather, these kinds of characterizations fit within a much broader framework in which the chroniclers of the twelfth century sought to highlight the intellectual achievements of the West. And these achievements frequently justified the seizure of land and resources. Geoffrey seizes upon this imperative in his characterization of Merlin as not

just a seer but also a man of great learning and wisdom. For example, when approached by Uther Pendragon's men to ask him for an appropriate way to commemorate the deaths of the British nobleman whom the Saxon villain Hengist massacred on the infamous night of the long knives, Merlin conceives of the seemingly impossible feat to remove the giants' ring from Mount Killarus in Ireland to Salisbury plain. Further, Merlin alone possesses the knowledge to carry out the Herculean task. Merlin has a good laugh at the expense of Uther's warriors, who unsuccessfully attempt to dismantle the ring through brute strength, before intervening: "Merlinus in risum suasque machinationes confecit. Denique, cum queque necessaria apposuisset, leuius quam credi potest lapides deposuit" ("Merlin burst out laughing. Then, when he had arranged all the necessary equipment, he dismantled the stones more easily than could be believed"; VIII.xii). Thus, Merlin's resourcefulness justifies taking the stones from king Gillamianus and the Irish, who, through their impetuosity, forfeit their right to maintain the ring. Seeing the Irish spoiling for a fight, Geoffrey reports, Uther quickly lines up his men and gives the order to charge. The British win the field with little difficulty and gather round to admire the ring: "exegerunt Killaraum montem lapidumque structuram adepti gauisus sunt et admirati" ("When they came to the stone structure on Mount Killarus, they were filled with joy and wonder"; VIII.xii). As such, Merlin's cleverness justifies the violence that the British inflict upon the Irish in order to obtain their desire. No sooner do the British admiringly gaze upon the marvelous stones than they forget their participation in the merciless butchering of the Irish.

Geoffrey deploys similar strategies that redound to Brutus' superior knowledge in a few well-chosen places in the Trojan episode of his narrative. Just as he attributes the impossible task of moving the giants' ring from Mount Killarus to Salisbury Plains to Merlin's ingenuity, Geoffrey intimates at several points that the Trojan's surprise attack on the Greek siege camp is

entirely due to Brutus' cleverness. Geoffrey twice calls Brutus' scheme to trick the guards an ingenious plan. The first of these occurs when the idea to storm the Greek encampment miraculously comes to Brutus as he is thinking of a way to make do with an inferior amount of men. Geoffrey repeats the idea a few lines later when Brutus forces Analectus to choose between betraying his people and an end to his existence. Here, Brutus flatly demands that Analectus do his bidding: "Tu uero callide negotium huiusmodi agens." ("You must truly carry out this ingenious plan"; I.vii). In addition, as if to remove all doubt of Brutus' inventiveness, Pandrasus sings the Trojan leader's praises, albeit reluctantly, in the aftermath of the sneak attack on the siege camp. Bound and brought before his captors to beg for his life, Pandrasus rhetorically asks who other than Brutus could have pulled such a feat off: "Quis cum illis regi Grecorum resisteret aut cum tam paucis tantam armatorum copiam prelio prouocaret initoque congressu regem eorum uinctum duceret" ("Who else could have resisted the king of the Greeks or with so few could have summoned forth to battle such an abundance of armed warriors and led their king in chains in the first engagement?"; I.xi). Pandrasus fares little better in the *Roman*. Here, the Greek reluctantly capitulates to the Trojans' demands that he give them liberty to depart Greece as well as ships, provisions, and his daughter Innogen, whom Brutus would take as his wife. Pandrasus sounds particularly sore about this last point, and not without good reason:

Ma fille avrez, n'en pus faire el,

Mais a mun enimi mortel,

A cruel home e a felun,

La durrai, u jo voille u nun.

(“You shall have my daughter. I can’t do anything else. But I give her, whether I wish to or not, to my mortal enemy, a cruel man and a felon”; Ll. 577-80).

The words that Geoffrey and Wace each make Pandrasus speak in this scene effectively illustrate the position the other must frequently occupy in narratives that celebrate and defend conquest. The words that Geoffrey puts in Pandrasus’ mouth in particular prove peculiar, as they serve several purposes. In the first place, that Pandrasus heaps accolades upon Brutus in spite of himself for the latter’s ingenuity at once validates the Trojans’ victory over the Greeks and glosses over the fact that Brutus prevails through trickery and deceit. Indeed, Pandrasus stands in awe of Brutus’ seeming ability to conjure an abundance of armed warriors out of thin air. In addition, Pandrasus construes Brutus’ reputed cleverness as one of the many attributes handed down to him by his noble ancestors. In Geoffrey’s version of the scene, Pandrasus almost sounds pleased to give his daughter to a man with Brutus’ pedigree: “Solatium habere uideor quod filiam meam tante probitatis adolescenti daturus sum. Quem ex genere Priami at Anchisi creatum et nobilitas que in ipso pullulat et fama nobis cognita declarat” (“I take solace seeing that I am to give my daughter to a grown man of such worth. The nobility that sprouts in him and his reputation, which is known to us, declares him to have been sprung from the race of Priam and Anchises”; l.xi). Upon first reading, the Pandrasus of the *Roman* does not appear to have quite as high an opinion of Brutus, given that the enslaved Greek king refers to his captor as a cruel and wicked man. Yet here, too, Pandrasus calls attention to Brutus’ heritage, albeit he does not name any of the latter’s ancestors. At any rate, no sooner does Pandrasus condemn Brutus for his cruelty and wickedness than he acknowledges the Trojan’s noble birth: “Mais alques me confortera / Ke gentilz hom e pruz l’avra” (“But it somewhat comforts me that a noble and virtuous man will have her”; Ll. 581-82). The Greek king’s ambivalent description of his

mortal enemy thus speaks to Wace's unwillingness to entirely condemn the victorious figures of his narrative.

As previously stated, Analectus does not cut an impressive figure in the *HrB*, especially when compared to Brutus. Rather than unflinchingly face the possibility of dying at Brutus' hand, Geoffrey intimates, Analectus chooses to betray his people. Analectus' actions are hardly more praiseworthy in Wace's treatment of the Trojan episode. The Norman *maistre* sets the Greek prisoner up to betray his people from the get go. Having seized the unhappy captive by the hair in one hand while waving his sword about in the other, Brutus harshly addresses Analectus: "D'ocire le fist grant semblant. / 'Mal culvert,' fist il, 'ja murras'" ("[Brutus] made a great show of killing him. 'Wicked ass,' he said, 'now you will die'"; Ll. 375-76). Calling Analectus wicked in particular demonstrates how Wace re-presents Analectus as other in this scene. In effect, Analectus appears guilty for turning traitor before he has even performed the deed. To be sure, the situation Analectus finds himself in is not as straight-forward as Brutus' less than complimentary soubriquet for him would suggest, given that, in agreeing to betray his fellow Greeks, Analectus would not only be saving his own skin but also the life of his lord and brother of King Pandrasus Antigonus. Nonetheless, Analectus chooses to go along with Brutus' scheme and, in the *Roman*, takes on the nickname his captor gives him, a plot twist that both Geoffrey and Wace take every advantage of in their re-presentations of the treacherous Greek as their respective narratives unfold. In the *HrB*, the sentinels keeping watch over the siege camp do not immediately trust Analectus, though Geoffrey offers his readers conflicting information as to why the guards should suspect their countrymen. On the one hand, the mere sight of Analectus causes the guards to question his motives for approaching the encampment and his trustworthiness: "Querunt quoque adventus ipsius causam utrum ad prodendum exercitum

aduenisset” (“They asked him the reason he had come and whether he had come to betray the army”; I.viii). On the other hand, Geoffrey adds that the sentries may have misgivings because they do not initially recognize Analectus: “superuenit unus qui eum agnouerat et salutato eo indicauit sociis quis esset” (“One appeared who recognized Analectus and, having greeted him told his companions who he was”; I.viii). In addition, questioning Analectus does not seem out of character for sentinels presumably keeping a close watch on their encampment. Nonetheless, in making the guards specifically ask Analectus if he means to betray them, Geoffrey insinuates that Greeks are inherently untrustworthy. As if to underscore the point, Analectus protests his innocence “Non equidem ingentem proditor mee gentis uenio” (“Truly I have not come to betray my people”; I.viii).

Curiously, Wace renders the exchange between Analectus and the camp guards quite differently. Having followed Brutus’ instructions and explained that he has left the still-chained Antigonus close by and come for aid, the sentries take Analectus at his word: “Cil quiderent ke veir deist, / E ki quidast ke il mentist” (“Those men imagined that he told the truth, and who would have imagined that he was lying?”; Ll. 429-30). On the surface, these changes look like one of those moments that have led some scholars to believe that Wace humanizes the characters that inhabit his narrative where Geoffrey does not. On this score, Judith Weiss asserts that Wace has a soft spot for the victims who are caught in the cross-fire of the constant political maneuverings and military campaigns that provide the backbone of his chronicle: “he has a particular sympathy for victims,” Weiss writes, “whether on the battlefield or off it, and a keen understanding of human interaction, to which he gives vent whenever the pace of the chronicle slows sufficiently to give him scope.”¹⁸ To be sure, I do not wish to gainsay Weiss’s remarks on the flavor of emotion that Wace sometimes adds to his narrative. For instance, Weiss’s brief

analysis of the sadness and guilt-ridden thoughts with which Wace imbues Guenivere for having committed adultery with Modret bears this kind of reading of the sentries' response to Analectus out.¹⁹ At the same time, however, in the context of the soubriquet that Brutus assigns Analectus, as well as the many other instances throughout the Trojan episode in which Wace hammers down the idea that Greeks are untrustworthy, unskilled, undisciplined and generally inferior when compared to their Trojan counterparts, the sentinels also come off looking rather naïve for blindly taking Analectus at his word. Much later, as the now victorious Trojans are deciding whether they should accept Pandrasus' offer to give them a third of his lands to live on in peace or to depart from Greece, one Membritius warns the exiles not to trust the Greeks to keep the peace: "Ja, dit l'on, cui mal faiz nel creire; / Jamais ne crerai lur manaie" ("An evil-doer can never be trusted. I will never believe in their mercy"; Ll. 538-39). So, too, in the *HrB*, Geoffrey conjures the spectre of Greek treachery in Membritius' address to his countrymen: "Quibusque etiam nugis incitati uindictam sumere nitentur" ("They will be roused by every trifle, and they will make every effort to take vengeance"; I.x). And what is perhaps most remarkable about Geoffrey's rendering of this scene is that he deploys this image of the Greeks waiting for the right opportunity to strike in order to justify the plundering of the Greek king's resources. Having sufficiently raised the Trojan's suspicions, Membritius advises that they ask Pandrasus to give them ships, grain, silver, and gold, as well as to allow Brutus to take his daughter Innogen to be his wife: "Laudo igitur ut petatis ab illo filliam suam primogentiam quam Innogen uocant ad opus ducis nostril et cum ea aurm at argentums, naues et frumentum et quodcunque itineri uestro necessarium erit" ("I therefore encourage you to petition for that one's first daughter, who is called Innogen, for our leader's labor, along with gold and silver, ships and grain, whatever else will be necessary on your journey."; I.x).

Yet these images that Geoffrey and Wace draw throughout their respective accounts of the Trojan episode, on the one hand of the cunning Brutus who comes up with the ingenious plan to deceive the Greeks, and on the other hand of the treacherous Greek biding his time for the right moment to show his or her true colors, do not quite add up. To begin, both Geoffrey and Wace move from condemning Analectus' actions to questioning an entire culture's character. Outside of Membritius speech regarding the trustworthiness of the Greeks, a speech which divides the two groups along ethnic lines, we have little reason to believe that Pandrasus and his men will go back on their word. Even Analectus, who in Geoffrey's version of events first swears to do as Brutus commands in exchange for his and his lord's life, makes good on his oath. Perhaps aware of this unsettling possibility, Wace modifies the scene so that Brutus also swears to release the prisoners if Analectus will play the role of betrayer:

Analectus ad graanté

Ço que Brutus ad purparlé,

E Brutus li jure e afie

A clamer quite, membre e vie.

("Analectus consented to what Brutus plotted, and Brutus swore and affirmed his promise to free him, life and limb"; Ll. 399-402). Wace's use of the phrase "clamer quite" here proves noteworthy, as it hints at a couple of different ways to read the line, each of which is bound up in legal terminology. The more straight-forward reading of the two is that Brutus has sworn to give Analectus his liberty.²⁰ More intriguingly, Wace may be suggesting that Brutus relinquishes his hold over Analectus, who, as a prisoner of war with no legal standing of his own, for all intents and purposes could be considered the Trojan leader's property. Though the phrase 'membre e vie' tends to favor the first reading under consideration, the idea that Brutus considers Analectus

his property would not be out of line with instances in the Arthurian section of the *Roman* in which Wace uses terminology that clearly delineates the weapons and pieces of armor in the British king's treasuries as not just the gear of war but also as his possessions.²¹ Regardless, Brutus unquestionably enters into a legal contract with Analectus here, whereby both parties would be expected to faithfully carry out their part of the terms.

In calling attention to Brutus' pledge to release Analectus here, I do not wish to propose that Analectus does not betray his countrymen. At the same time, however, Brutus contractually obligates himself to free Analectus should the latter keep his end of the bargain. As such, we should not take the oath Brutus swears to Analectus lightly. The promise Brutus makes to Analectus, I would argue, complicates how we read Analectus' actions, as well as his ability to carry out Brutus' instructions, to a considerable degree. Firstly, entering into this legal arrangement raises Brutus' expectation that Analectus will be true to his word. The blind faith that Brutus must therefore put in Analectus to follow his instructions is plainly at odds with the images of the untrustworthy Greek that Wace has strategically deployed throughout his narrative, not the least of which Membritius' declaration that evil-doers like the Greeks can never be trusted. Moreover, for all his posturing and the less-than-complimentary soubriquet he hurls at his prisoner, in relying solely on Analectus to do his dirty work for him, Brutus tacitly admits that the Greeks possess a certain amount of cunning. Geoffrey states as much in his version of the events when Brutus demands that Analectus carry out his ingenious plan for him or face the deadly consequences. Even Wace, who deletes this exchange in his translation of the story, cannot completely hide the fact that Analectus demonstrates a certain amount of resourcefulness on Brutus' behalf.

Further, if Analectus proves to be the treacherous Greek that Wace has taken such care to re-present to his audience, so too does Brutus in spite of Wace's obvious bias towards the Trojan leader and the exiles he seeks to liberate. The fact that Brutus teaches Analectus what to do necessarily implies that the Trojan leader has some experience in deceiving people. To be sure, Brutus' plan comes off so flawlessly that it may not be going too far to say that he has mastered the art of treachery. Secondly, Analectus agrees to do as Brutus bids him with the expectation that Brutus will set both him and his lord Antigonus free. Yet, whether Wace consciously does so or no, in narrating the exchange of oaths between Brutus and Analectus, the Norman *maistre* neglects to include Antigonus in the terms of the agreement. Regardless of Wace's intentions, Antigonus' absence from the terms of the contract highlights the asymmetrical relationship between the Trojan leader and his Greek prisoner. This is not to say that the incongruities scattered throughout the *HrB* and *Roman* like the one briefly sketched in the preceding example wholly undermine the image of the treacherous Greek that circulated throughout the Anglo-Norman period. At the same time, however, the oddities strewn throughout their narratives that show Analectus to possess some of the same traits as Brutus, both for good and for ill, indicate that the inherently treacherous nature that Wace and Geoffrey work so hard to affix to the Greeks is entirely provisional.

In conclusion, the images that Geoffrey and Wace deploy about Analectus and the Greeks in the Trojan episode of their respective narratives can best be understood as part of a received knowledge or literary archive of words, phrases, and images about the Greeks that can be traced back to the *Aeneid* and which continued to be circulated and produced during the medieval period among western writers. This fund of words, phrases, and images largely re-presented the Greeks as cowardly, poor warriors, and above all traitorous. As is often true of how re-

presenting the other serves to justify the conquest or domination of a foreign people, the representations of the Greeks that have been handed down to Geoffrey and Wace and refined over time serve to validate the harsh treatment of the Greeks in the Matter of Britain.

Notes

¹ Homer, *Odyssey*, Book VIII.

² Virgil, *Aeneid*, Book II.

³ J.S.P. Tatlock, *The Legendary History of Britain: Geoffrey of Monmouth's Historia Regum Britanniae and its Early Vernacular Versions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1950), 261. Tatlock goes as far as to argue that Geoffrey capably imitates Virgil's versification style in these eight lines, as well as the six he provides for Brutus' supplication to Diana before she appears to him in a vision.

⁴ Michael J. Curley, *Geoffrey of Monmouth* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1994), 17.

⁵ *Aeneid*, Book I.

⁶ See David Staines, trans., "Cliges," *The Complete Romances of Chrétien de Troyes* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 119.

⁷ David Staines, *The Complete Romances*, 151.

⁸ Robert W. Hanning, *The Vision of History in Early Britain* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), 127.

⁹ For a brief account of these versions of the *Historia Brittonum*, known as MSS MNZ and MS H respectively, see Robert W. Hanning, *The Vision of History*, 103-04.

¹⁰ J.S.P. Tatlock, *Legendary History*, 117, 435.

¹¹ Robert W. Hanning, *The Vision of History*, 143.

¹² Michelle R. Warren, *History on the Edge: Excalibur and the Borders of Britain 1100-1300* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 97, 229.

¹³ Passages cited from the *Roman de Brut* are taken from Judith Weiss's critical edition. See Judith Weiss, trans., *Wace's Roman de Brut: A History of the British*, Exeter Medieval English Texts and Studies (Exeter University Press, 1999). As with translations of passages from the *HrB*, unless otherwise stated, all translations and mistakes of passages from the *Roman* our mine.

¹⁴ The Chigi Vase, which depicts one of the most famous illustrations of the hoplite, dates to roughly the mid-seventh century BCE. See for example Matthew Trundle, *Greek Mercenaries: From the late Archaic Period to Alexander the Great* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 11.

¹⁵ Matthew Trundle, *Greek Mercenaries*, 12.

¹⁶ Tracey Rihll, “The origin and establishment of ancient Greek slavery,” *Serfdom and Slavery: Studies in Legal Bondage*, ed. M. Bush (New York: Longman, 1996), 90.

¹⁷ Lewis Thorpe puts Brutus’ reign as the first king of Britain around 1115 BCE, a not unreasonable estimate considering that Brutus is several generations removed from Aeneas. See Lewis Thorpe, trans., *The History of the Kings of Britain*, trans. Lewis Thorpe (London: Penguin Books, 1966), 286.

¹⁸ Judith Weiss, *Wace’s Roman de Brut*, XXII.

¹⁹ Judith Weiss, *Wace’s Roman de Brut*, XIX-XX.

²⁰ See, for instance, the entries for *quite* and *quiteclamer* in Alan Hindley, et. al., *Old French-English Dictionary* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 509.

²¹ Wace, *Roman de Brut*, Ll. 10599.

5. FROM WEST TO EAST: LOCATING THE ORIENT IN THE MATTER OF BRITAIN

One of the points I spent a good deal of time discussing in chapter 2 had to do with the kind of colonial discourse that developed during the twelfth century. Although that discourse largely favored the Normans in their pretensions to conquer and dominate large portions of the Isles, it also expressed a good amount of ambivalence towards the peoples whom the Normans sought to subjugate under their rule. A big reason for this ambivalence in my view had to do with the key role that the Church played in the development of this discourse. On the one hand, beginning in about the 1130s, or about the time that Geoffrey of Monmouth was writing the *HrB*, the ecclesiastical community began to take a vested interest in chronicling the events of secular history. This interest in secular events largely favored a Norman worldview, as the Church both celebrated Norman achievements and re-presented the peoples whom the Normans conquered and dominated as barbarous, uncivilized, unfit to rule themselves, and so on. Moreover, the Normans took advantage of the situation by reorganizing the Church hierarchy in the Isles and by appointing to key positions within the Church clergyman who saw the Normans as the rightful rulers of the Isles. On the other hand, chroniclers like William of Malmesbury and Orderic Vitalis also expressed a certain amount of distaste and sometimes outright abhorrence towards the violence that all-too-frequently accompanied Norman pretensions to empire. Likewise these ecclesiastical writers were not always sure of what to make of the Normans' willingness to deal with foreigners in order to make inroads into the Isles and maximize their access to land and resources. In some cases, even the Norman's most ardent supporters like William expressed their fear that the methods the Normans employed to get what they wanted would invite greed and corruption. Yet, for all that, there is little doubt that William, Henry of Huntingdon, Gerald de Barri and others saw the Normans as the rightful rulers of the Isles and deployed words, phrases and images about the peoples whom the Normans conquered and

dominated that justified their subjugation. These other peoples were, in the Church's view, barbarous, uncivilized and, above all, in need of the Church's correction. To my mind, whatever ambivalence the Church may have expressed regarding the methods the Normans employed on the paths they took to conquer and dominate, in the main it treated the peoples with whom the Normans came into contact with scorn. And this less-than-favorable view of these others goes a long way towards explaining the kind of language that Geoffrey deploys in the *HrB* to describe the relationship between Arthur and the other fictitious rulers of his narrative and the peoples whom they encounter.

In this chapter, I wish to explore more fully how some of the Church's attitudes and policies towards the other, especially its view that marginalized peoples needed the Church's correction, is expressed in Geoffrey's text and that of his successor, the *Roman de Brut* of Wace. As the self-appointed arbiter of questions of morality, the Church increasingly saw it as its duty throughout the twelfth century to point out the moral deficiencies of any peoples whom it set its gaze upon and to prescribe corrective action. These peoples of course comprised the various ethnic and religious identities of the West. More importantly for the purposes of this chapter, the conflict between the Normans and Muslim peoples for control of parts of Southern Europe, most notably Sicily, which offered both sides access to trade routes throughout the Mediterranean and beyond, increasingly brought the ethnic and religious identities of Africa and the Eastern world into the Church's immediate line of site. The 'problem' that the spread of Islam posed to the Church's authority on spiritual matters would reach a head with the inauguration of the Crusades by Pope Urban II. These differing views that the ecclesiastical community took of the other, sometimes expressed as a fear of foreign aggression, in other cases as a fascination with Eastern cultural customs and beliefs, still in others as a scourge that needed to be eradicated to preserve

Christendom, come out in a number of different ways in Geoffrey's and Wace's respective narratives. In some instances, one or the other chronicler appears to be fascinated by the cultural artifacts that are brought to the West as a result of contact with the East. One example I will look at along these lines is Geoffrey's insinuation that the mystical stones of Stonehenge were initially brought to the British Isles from Africa. In other cases, Geoffrey and Wace reinforce the Church's view that the moral deficiencies of the foreign frequently had a corrupting influence on the integrity of the British Isles. Geoffrey and Wace for instance see the proliferation of names for London over time as a byproduct of repeated incursions into the British Isles by foreign invaders. On a not unrelated note, Wace mentions the downfall of the kingdom of Britain at the hands of the African King Gormund at the very moment that the Island's legendary founder Brutus establishes his realm, a move that foreshadows the threat that East constantly posed to a stable Western identity. Finally, Geoffrey and Wace each go to some lengths to re-present the Muslim Africans and Arabs who fight under the banner of Rome against Arthur's western forces as irreligious, filled with a lust for power and wealth, and morally depraved. These representations of Eastern peoples largely coincide with the Church's efforts to dominate the Oriental world as morally deficient. And this moralizing imperative that Geoffrey and Wace express in their respective narratives reinforces the Normans' view of the Orient as they made inroads into Muslim controlled territories in Southern Europe, Northern Africa and, with the inauguration of the Crusades by the Church, The Holy Land.

Geoffrey and Wace recite the story of how London got its name at the moment that Britain's legendary founder Brutus establishes his kingdom. Geoffrey first tells us that Brutus named his capital Troia Nova and that it held that name for a goodly span before it was corrupted: "Condidit itaque ciuitatem ibidem eamque Troiam Nouam uocauit. Ex hoc nomine

multis postmodum temporibus appellata tandem per corruptionem uocabuli Trinouantum dicta fuit” (“And so Brutus founded his city in that place and called it Troia Nova. For many ages afterwards it was called by this name, until through a corruption of the word it was named Trinovantum”; I.xvii). Geoffrey then goes on to report that the city’s name was changed to Cærlud after King Lud, but he does not go any further than that, preferring, he says, to leave the matter to Gildas his predecessor.¹ Wace, however, does elaborate, telling us that the city was first called Troie Nove, then Kaerlu, afterwards Lodoin, still later Londene by the English, and finally Lundres.² Wace concludes his story in much the same way as Geoffrey begins his, by calling attention to the fact that the names of many places in the land have changed over time. In particular, Wace points out, it is foreigner aggressors who have wrought these changes in the land’s etymological history:

Par plusurs granz destruiemenz

Que fait alienes genz...

Sunt les viles, sunt les contrees

Tutes or autrement nomees

Que lie anceisor ne momerent.

(“Through many great destructions that alien races wrought, all the cities and all the countries now have other names than their ancestors gave them”; Ll. 1239-45).

The story that both Geoffrey and Wace tell of the founding of London as Troia Nova and how its name changed over time has been something of an intellectual curiosity. Most scholars have outright ignored Wace and concentrated their efforts on analyzing Geoffrey’s version of events. Even so, critics have had little to say on the subject as it pertains to the Matter of Britain. J.S.P. Tatlock and Michael Curley spend just enough time on the passage to observe that

Geoffrey gives London its Roman name Troia Nova in order to establish a connection between Britain and antiquity.³ Robert Hanning rightly remarks that in rehearsing the various names London is said to have had from its founding to the twelfth century Geoffrey offers a succinct analysis of the occupation of Britain by different nations.⁴ But Hanning does not feel the passage rates more than a brief footnote. Michelle Warren comes nearest the mark in positioning both Geoffrey's and Wace's handling of the story in a colonial context. Regarding the former, Warren comments that the various etymologies Geoffrey gives for the city's name reflect how foreign incursions into the Isles disrupt his historicization of events: "This kind of translation," Warren asserts, "crosses the historiographical boundary of the *Historia* itself, and disturbs history with multiple chronologies."⁵ As for Wace's version of the story, Warren argues that Geoffrey's successor gives a rather dispassionate account of the passage of dominion over the Isles from one conquering force to the next: "Wace does not judge this succession of foreign conquests or the onomastic interventions that coincide with the arrival of new conquerors. Since the land does not signify an immutable cultural identity, names identify ownership and dominion neutrally."⁶

Although I do not wish to wholly gainsay Warren's smart analysis of the respective passages in both the *HrB* and *Roman*—Warren's comment that the painful facts of conquest fracture the linear trajectory of Geoffrey's narrative is especially welcome—in my view Wace's description of the foreign conquerors who have changed the proper names of the Isle's cities and regions does not occupy an entirely neutral register. Or that is not the only way to read the passage. For one thing, and not unlike how Geoffrey casts his gaze back to a time before the name of Troia Nova was uncorrupted with a bit of nostalgia, Wace appears to linger if only for a moment on the ancestral names of the Isle's settlements at the end of his account. At the very

least, Wace's need to point out that Britain's towns no longer have the names they once did points to a past that is largely unrecoverable. Although he tells us that the alleged original name Troia Nove can be found in Trinovant, Wace nonetheless follows his predecessor Geoffrey and styles these linguistic changes a corruption:

Pur ses anceisors remembrer
La fist Troie Nove apeller;
Puis ala li nuns corumpant,
Si l'apela l'om Trinovant;
Mais qui le nom garde, si trove
Que Trinovant est Troie Nove,
Que bien pert par corruptiun
Faitte la compositiun.

("In order to remember his ancestors, he had it named Troie Nove; then the name became corrupted, so that men called it Trinovant; but he who pay attention to the name will find that Trinovant is Troie Nove, which is apparent by the corruption done to the composition"; Ll. 1224-30). Indeed, Wace refers to these onomastic interventions as a corruption three times in the span of twelve lines, a move which suggests he is more than a little preoccupied with recovering London's corrupted linguistic past.⁷

In the second place, Wace specifically tells us that foreign peoples have forced these destructive changes on both the land and their etymological histories. With respect to the land itself, these are neither isolated nor small changes that can be quickly remedied. Rather they are "plusurs granz destruiemenz" ("many grand destructions") that have been wrought upon the landscape. Wace may not be merely dramatizing what he knows about history here, though just

who he means by foreign peoples in this passage is suspect. But he undoubtedly had heard accounts of and saw the remnants of the damage that could result from siege warfare. Wace spends some time in the uncompleted *Roman de Rou*, for instance, describing the dispute between King Henry I and his brother Robert Curthose the Duke of Normandy that led to the siege of Caen. At one point, Wace pauses to describe the trench that Robert had dug at Caen as a line of defense against his brother the king.⁸ There is also some reason to believe that Wace visited Southampton and the southwest of England sometime just prior to completing the *Roman*.⁹ Though we should of course be cautious in speculating on Wace's travels, a visit to Bath is not outside the realm of possibility. Judith Weiss, for instance, points out that Wace knows enough of the topography in the southwest to change his account of the Battle of Bath between Arthur and the Saxons so that the latter retreat over the River Teign rather than, as Geoffrey tells it, have them withdraw to Thanet in the southeast.¹⁰ If Wace indeed traveled from Southampton to Bath, we would likely have traveled through parts of Wiltshire, a region especially hard hit by the constant fighting between King Stephen and his sister Matilda for control of the English throne in the 1140s. Even if Wace did not cross the channel, he could have easily heard accounts of the devastation from had travelers he met. At any rate, Wace frequently refers to the destruction that foreigners cause in their lust for conquest. In his account of the reign of Brutus' son King Locrinus, for instance, Wace twice alleges that the fictitious King of the Huns, Humber, wantonly destroyed the lands in his greed for wealth. The first of these two instances tells us a great deal about Wace's view of the foreign:

Humber, ki ert reis des Humuz,
Uns hoem forment par mer cremuz,
Kes les illes alout guastant

E les rivages tuz robant,
En Escoce a un port torna
E od Albanac se mella
Pur la terre que il robout

(“Humber, who was king of the Huns, a man greatly feared on the sea, who kept ravaging the islands and pillaging all the shores, turned towards a port in Scotland and fought against Albanac for the land that he was robbing”; Ll. 1293-96).

In my view, violent intrusions like these into Wace’s narrative express a certain amount of anxiety towards foreign aggression. Warren may be right that the identity of the dominant culture is not immutable in the *Roman*, but he does not always view change or the potential for change as the natural unfolding of history. Indeed, Wace adds this description of Humber as a pillager of the land, among other things, to what he find in the *HrB*.¹¹ In this context, for Wace foreign aggression has the potential to wreak havoc on the land. In much the same way, I would argue, the corruption of the names of the town and regions of the land at the hands of foreigners intrude upon Wace’s narrative.

When taken together, Wace’s lingering on the ancestral names of settlements in the Isles at the moment they corrupt his narrative, as well as the attention he pays to the foreign aggressors who not only destroy the land but also corrupt Britain’s linguistic past, aligns with the kind of messy translation Warren asserts disturbs the *HrB*. For Wace and Geoffrey, the corruption of language that follows in the wake of foreign aggression has the potential to destabilize the integrity of their respective narratives. The proliferation of different names for the same towns and regions in the Isles in both the *HrB* and *Roman* perform the proliferation of different versions of history. Nor is the potential for the corruption of cultural identity confined

only to foreign aggressors from the West like Humber who are within relative striking distance of the Isles. Rather, Geoffrey and Wace each look upon the peoples of the East with anxiety if not outright suspicion at various points in their respective narratives. The fictional coming of the African King Gormund to the Isles presents one such example. Gormund's invasion inaugurates the downfall of British rule and the passage of dominion over the Isles to the Saxons. As briefly mentioned towards the end of chapter 3, Geoffrey re-presents the Africans who come to the Isles with their leader Gormund as an innumerable horde. Geoffrey directly blames Gormund for the widespread destruction that occurs across Britain: "infaustus tyrannus cum innumerabilibus Africanorum militibus totam fere insulam uastauit" ("This tyrant of ill omen with his innumerable troops of Africa laid waste nearly all the island"; XI.x). So too Wace, who somewhat colorfully adds that the devastation Gormund causes can still be seen:

Encor i perent les ruines
E les deserz e les guastines
Que Gurmund fist en plusurs lieux
Pur tolir as Bretuns lur fieus.

("The ruins and deserts and wastes that Gurmunt made in several places in order to seize the Briton's fiefs still appear"; Ll. 13631-34). Importantly, Wace makes sure to link the atrocities Gormund commits to the seizure of land. Not unlike Geoffrey, then, Wace re-presents Africa through the actions of Gormund and his African soldiers as a corrupting influence that threatens both to destroy the realm of Britain and to pollute his narrative. Indeed, Gormund first intrudes upon Wace's story at the precise moment that Brutus founds his realm in exile. For Wace, this disturbance in his narrative prefigures the kinds of changes to the names of places that foreign aggression brings about:

La parole e li nuns dura
Tant que Gormund i ariva;
Gormund en chaça les Bretuns
Si la livra a uns Saissuns.

(“The language and the names endured until Gormund arrived there. Gormund chased the Bretons from there and so delivered it to the Saxons”; Ll. 1193-96). In linking Africa to the changeover from the British language to the language of the Saxons, then, Wace demonstrates how the East threatens to destabilize the cultural identity of the Britons from the kingdom’s inception.

Wace’s re-presentation of Africa as a corrupting influence on Britain at the moment of its mythical inception speaks to a growing fascination with and fear of Muslim Africa and the Orient throughout the western world during the twelfth century. Muslim Arabs arrived in North Africa sometime in the seventh century and spent the next hundred years establishing and consolidating their power base there. The North African coastline would thus become a tenuous boundary between Christendom in the West and the Muslim world in the East. On this point, Norman Bennett writes that Islam done much to make Africa part of the Eastern world: “Africa was henceforth starkly separated from Europe by a Muslim belt of territory stretching from the Atlantic shore of Morocco to the Red Sea coast of Egypt.”¹² By the eighth century, Muslims had also made significant inroads into the Iberian Peninsula. In addition, they had begun to launch attacks on Calabria in Southern Italy and Sicily. Although the conquest of the whole of Sicily would take some five decades to complete, Muslim forces successfully seized control of Palermo in 830.¹³ The foothold that the Arabs established in Southern Europe would result in a strong connection between the Islamic peoples living there and those of Africa that would endure up

until the advent of the early modern period.¹⁴ Control of Sicily also proved of strategic importance to the Berbers, Zirids, Aghlabids, and Fatimids that comprised the Muslim presence there from the ninth to eleventh centuries, both as a commercial center for trade throughout the Mediterranean and as a staging area for naval attacks on Southern Italy and mainland Greece.¹⁵ Enterprising Normans like Bohemund of Taranto also saw the strategic value Sicily offered whoever had control of it. Indeed, the Norman Conquest of Sicily preceded William's attack on Saxon controlled Britain by a few years and may even have offered the Conqueror a model for how to best make crossing from Normandy to English soil. On this point, Georgios Theotokis observes that, despite the distances that separated them, the Normans of Southern Italy maintained connections with their counterparts in the North and that this could account for similarities in the design of ships that William used to ferry his invasion army across the channel.¹⁶ I would argue that the maintenance of relations between the Normans in Normandy and in Southern Europe can also help explain similarities in beliefs and attitudes among the Normans of the northern and southern European theaters towards conquest.

Unsurprisingly, the Normans of Sicily and their supporters were keen to cast their achievements in Southern Europe in a positive light. Chroniclers such as Amatus of Monte Cassino, William of Apulia and Gaufredus Malaterra frequently saw the Normans successes that the Normans had against fellow Christians and Muslims alike as combination of divine providence, good fortune and above all the many virtues they possessed. Chief among these is the Norman virtue of bold action. Along these lines, Ovidio Capitani argues that the medieval concepts of divine providence and Fortune are intimately bound up with the notion of *strenuitas* or industriousness in Gaufredus Malterra's portrayal of the Normans: "providential help," Capitani asserts, "takes the form of action by the Norman warriors and their chiefs...The special

significance of Norman *strenuitas* cannot be understood unless it is viewed in combination with the almost mystical sense of Fortune.”¹⁷ It is chiefly this ability to get things done, either through decisive military action or aggressive policy making, that chroniclers like Gaufredus deploy to justify Norman expansion. Nor are the Normans of Sicily alone in possessing these kinds of qualities. Rather, they are the birthright of the Norman race as a whole. Importantly, the chroniclers of Norman history do not merely construe these virtues as the means by which the Normans were able to acquire land and resources. Rather, they are also the means by which peace is maintained. On this point, Capitani observes that Dudo of St. Quentin imbues the Normans of Normandy as well as of Sicily with these qualities: “Dudo of St. Quentin maintained that *pax et tranquillitas* were achieved by the Normans of Normandy through their victorious combat and by the able policies of Roger II in Sicily.”¹⁸ Peace can thus only be established, the chroniclers of events in the western world seem to say, by those like the Normans who act boldly. And of course bold action likewise justifies Norman expansion.

At the same time that chroniclers like Gaufredus and Dudo are celebrating and defending Norman achievements in Sicily, the West is also producing a body of literature about the East. Though, as the above discussion suggests, Europeans like Bohemund of Taranto and Roger II of Sicily had ventured into Eastern lands and had some contact with its peoples and cultures, the ideas and images being produced about the Orient were often the product of the Western world’s imagination. Texts like the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and *Wonders of the East* frequently sought to draw a distinction between the East and West along religious lines. On this point, Heide Estes remarks that the *Wonders of the East* served not so much to give its Anglo-Saxon readership an accurate representation of the Orient as it did to juxtapose the Eastern other against geographically locate them in a decidedly Christian context: “Old English texts that refer to ‘the

East,” Estes argues, “have more to do with Anglo-Saxon preoccupations with locating themselves geographically and temporally in Christian Europe than with historical realities.”¹⁹ Moreover, these literary materials re-presented the East at best as strange, at worst as demonic. As noted in chapter 2, writers like Bede and Erchembert characterize Islam as a swarm bent on destroying Christendom. According to Estes, much of literary materials produced during the Old English period that deals with the subject of the East re-presents it as “at once monstrous, marvelous and mysterious.”²⁰ Even prior to the Crusades then, the literature being produced did much to reinforce Western fantasies about Islam. For the West, images of the Muslim world were both a delight and a terror.

The violent encounter with Islam that resulted from Pope Urban II’s call for the First Crusade of course did little to improve the Christian West’s view of the Muslim East. Rather the reverse. Joshua Birk, for instance, rightly argues that French writers like Raymond of Aguilers, Fulcher of Chartres, and Peter Tudebode who had journeyed to the Holy Land tended to uniformly re-present the whole of Islam as pagan, heretical, and the like.

For these early historians, the crusaders’ opponents are ‘pagans.’ They depict the Muslim enemies as venerating idols of ‘Machomet,’ the prophet Muhammad, alongside those of classical Roman gods like Apollo and Mars. The Muslim enemies in these accounts are also conflated with those ancient pagans who had persecuted the early Christian community.²¹

And what is perhaps most remarkable about these accounts of the Muslim ‘pagans’ and ‘persecutors’ of Christendom is how they manage to reconfigure the First Crusade as a defense of the Christian world against the scourge of Islam rather than as an attack on the Holy Land. The message that Pope Urban II promulgated among his Christian followers was that in calling for a crusade he hoped to push back the Muslim tide that was sweeping across the Christian West. Such was Urban’s message in a letter he wrote to the monks at Vallombrosa in 1096, in which he exhorted the soldiers who took up the Christian banner “to restrain the savagery of the

Saracens.”²² The message that Urban inaugurated of crusading to defend Christendom against the Muslim East would be repeated over the course of the crusades, as would the re-presentation of Islam as a corrupting influence that had to be eradicated at any cost. Along these lines, Norman Housely notes that “one of the strongest rhetorical themes deployed by popes and preachers alike was that Muslim occupation of the holy places constituted pollution.”²³ Not that Islam was deceived by these kinds of re-presentations. Muslim chroniclers like Ali ibn Tahir al-Sulami and Ibn al-Athir saw the crusades as part of a broader series of attempts by the west to conquer and dominate Islamic Spain, Sicily, North Africa and Syria.²⁴

Likewise, the Byzantine writer Anna Comnena observed that men like Bohemund of Taranto took advantage of the call to crusade in order to seize the cities of the Holy Land and their riches.²⁵ Even western writers who largely supported Norman attitudes and beliefs regarding the Muslim world sometimes expressed their discomfort with the violence that accompanied the crusades. Orderic Vitalis, for one, condemned Bohemund’s expedition of 1107-1108 to Byzantine Illyria.²⁶ For all that, though, the western version of crusading history that Urban inaugurated and was deployed among his followers throughout Europe remained largely intact. And it was a version of history that, through re-presenting Islam as irreligious, corrupt, and so on, facilitated the Norman conquest of much of the territories bordering the Mediterranean. Although the Islamic and Byzantine chroniclers contest this version of history to an extent, they do little to change how the Normans saw the Oriental world. As we shall see, Geoffrey’s and Wace’s responses to the literary materials being produced about the East frequently serve to reinforce attitudes and beliefs towards Islam.

Geoffrey and Wace each express the relationship between the Christian West and the Islamic East in a number of different ways. In admittedly rare instances, they look upon the

Muslim world with wonder. Geoffrey's and Wace's description of Stonehenge is one such example. The stones that make up the ring, Geoffrey tells us, were brought to Ireland by giants from Africa. Geoffrey has Merlin tell Uther the story of this marvelous event: "Gigantes olim asportauerunt eos ex ultimis finibus Affrice et posuerunt in Hibernia dum eam inhabitarent" ("Of old giants carried them from the most distant reaches of Africa and set them in Ireland while they inhabited that land"; VIII:xi). The stones also possess magical properties: "Erat autem causa ut balnea infra ipsos conficerent, cum infirmitate grauarentur. Lauabant namque lapides et infra balnea diffundebant unde egroti curabantur" ("Their reason was that they would prepare baths beneath the stones when they were burdened with infirmity. For they would wash the stones and run water into baths beneath them in which the sick were cured."); VIII.xi). Wace follows Geoffrey's account fairly closely:

D'Aufrice furent aporrees,
La furent primes compasses;
Gaiant de la les aportherent;
En Irlande les aloerent...
Les genz les soleient laver
E de l'eue les bainz temprer.
Cil ki esteient engroté
E d'alcune enferté grevé,
Des laveüres bainz feseient,
Bainoent sei si guarisseint.

They were carried from Africa, where they first were placed in a circle. Giants carried them from there and placed them in Ireland...The people used to wash them and mixed their baths with the water. Those who were sick and afflicted

with any infirmity made baths with the cleansing waters, bathed themselves and were thus cured. (Ll. 8065-76)

Geoffrey's and Wace's respective descriptions of the giants' ring—we do not learn that this is Stonehenge until after Arthur's reign has ended—align with the kind of fantastical descriptions of the Orient that permeated the literature produced about the Orient in Old English. In the first place, we learn very little about Africa in either passage; certainly nothing historically accurate. Moreover, Geoffrey at least frames his story as part of the distant past. Beginning his story with a nod to an Africa that is both temporally and geographically remote thus separates the Dark Continent from the West in space and time. Likewise, Geoffrey's and Wace's references both to giants and the healing properties of the stones they bring with them to Ireland conjure for their western audience an image of Africa that is at once monstrous and mythical. Indeed, neither Geoffrey nor Wace tell us why the giants brought the stones to Ireland in the first place, a lack of information that points both to the chroniclers' unease with the image of Africa they have conjured and the role such an image plays in their respective narratives. This image of Africa, an image that is distilled down to folkloric elements, largely serves to justify the seizure of the stones by the Britons, who, at Merlin's suggestion, forcibly take them from the Irish. In mastering the stones, the Britons thus master and dominate Africa.

By the same logic, in narrating this story of mastery over African monsters and magic, Geoffrey and Wace each master Africa at the level of language. In this context the story of Stonehenge in the *HrB* and *Roman* narrates the colonization of Africa by the west. And this hegemonic version of history would become stronger over time. This is even true with respect to the Matter of Britain. Michelle Warren, for instance, persuasively argues that Layamon and the redactors of his *Brut* master the stones by making them part of English rather than African history:

Layamon thus severs the stones from one branch of colonial history (the giants') and attaches them vaguely to another (the English). Since the Otho redactor excises the reference to Africa, the Ring appears even more strongly always already *here*. When Merlin installs the stones, both redactors possess these ancient objects as English by naming them "Stanhenge" in the present tense.²⁷

Neither Geoffrey nor Wace goes quite as far as Layamon and his redactors to possess these ancient artifacts. Yet in providing as few details as possible about the giants and how the stones came to be part of the Irish landscape, they do sever the stones from African history. In this sense, I would argue, the giants' ring is always already part of the Matter of Britain. At any rate, in narrating their respective stories about Stonehenge's mysterious past connection to Africa, Geoffrey and Wace each show themselves to be curious about the Orient. And that interest may perhaps be best understood as ambivalent, given that the image of Africa they re-present to their readers is one that is both mystical and monstrous. Yet what is perhaps remarkable about the whole affair is how Geoffrey and Wace each use these kinds of fantastical images of Africa in order to exploit it.

As I began to hash out towards the beginning of this chapter, Geoffrey and Wace express also a good deal of anxiety about foreign aggression. For many of the chroniclers of the twelfth century, the foreign other, and especially those of the East, came to be seen as a corrupting influence on Western identity. One of the chief ways that Geoffrey and Wace express their fears about foreign aggression is through distilling the other down to a simple religious construct. As Birk argues about French writers who personally participated in the crusades, Geoffrey and Wace often re-present foreign aggressors to their readership as pagans, heathens, and so on. Wace, for example, not infrequently links the devastation that occurs in the Isles to the heathen Saxons with whom he populates his narrative. In his largely expanded upon account of Arthur's conquest of Scotland, Wace has the peasants who beg for Arthur's mercy explain that they have already suffered enough at the hands of the Saxon pagans:

Li Saissun esteient paien
E nus erium crestien,
De tan nus unt il plus grevez
E plus laidement demenez.

(“The Saxons were pagans and we were Christian. For that they harassed us all the more and treated us all the more wickedly”; Ll. 9505-08). Nor is this unflattering description of the Saxons as heathens bent on rudely demeaning a Christian nation of Scots who are helpless to defend themselves an isolated example. Towards the conclusion of the *Roman*, in one of the more colorful instances in which he makes his personal feelings known, Wace exclaims that the Saxons deserve God’s punishment for rebelling against the British king Vortipor: “Deus confunde tute lur geste” (“God confound all their race!”; Ll. 13348).

The objection could be raised that that I am putting too fine a point on Wace’s calling the Saxon’s ‘paien’ in the preceding short examples. The argument could be put forward, for instance, that by describing the Saxons as pagans, Wace is adhering to historical fact. If we go by the rough timeframe that Geoffrey gives us for Arthur’s reign, which Wace seems to follow, the Saxons—at least those who had settled in the British Isles—would not yet have embraced Christianity to any great extent. Yet there are a number of problems with this line of reasoning. For starters, the idea that the Scots themselves had become Christians by this time is debatable. Although Saint Columba is said to have begun mission work at Iona on Scotland’s west coast around 563, he appears not to have had much success converting the Picts. Saint Ninian may have fared better among the Southern Picts, and may have arrived far earlier than Saint Columba, but details regarding Ninian’s work remain sketchy. In any case, neither Ninian nor Columba traveled the width and breadth of Scotland during their time there and certainly did not convert

every person they met upon their travels. In addition, Wace invents the exchange between the Scots and Arthur, a move which makes his intentions in construing the Scots as Christian and the Saxons as pagans suspect. Beyond this problem regarding the evangelization of the peoples inhabiting Scotland, Wace either retains a number of anachronisms from the *HrB* or inserts new ones—with one eye towards the past and the other towards the future—that suggest he is playing fast and loose with the *idea* of paganism throughout the *Roman* to suit his Norman-centric agenda. For instance, Wace retains Geoffrey’s rhetoric regarding Arthur’s right to conquer Rome because a Sibylline prophecy foretells that he will be one of three British kings who does so:

“Tu iés li tiers ki Rome avras
E Rome a force conquerras;
En tei sera la prophecie
Que Sibille dist acomplie.”

(“You are the third who will possess Rome and conquer Rome by force. In you the prophecy that the Sybil spoke will be accomplished”; Ll. 10935-39).²⁸ To be sure, the image of the Sybil had been subsumed as part of Christian tradition well before the medieval period. Yet that a Christian writer like Wace on the one hand has no problem using a tradition that was once considered pagan to justify Arthur’s actions towards Rome, and on the other hand re-presents the Saxons as still clinging to pagan beliefs, strikes me as peculiar. In this regard, the Romans are guilty of enlisting pagans to aid them in their struggle to wrest control of Gaul from Arthur and his Christian allies. Wace makes this point repeatedly. In one of the more memorable instances, Wace has Hyregas, the nephew of Bedoer, call upon his comrades to destroy the heathens and those who fight alongside them. The last few lines of this speech are particularly revealing.

“La gent kis en Deu n’ad creance
Ne ki en Deu nen ad fiance
Unt amené en cest païs
Pur nus ocire noz amis;
Alum ocire les paens
E ensement les cristïens
Ki as paens se sunt justé
Pur destruire cristienté.”

(“They have brought to this land people who have no belief in God, those who have no trust in God, in order to kill us and our friends. Let’s go kill the heathens and likewise the Christians who have joined the heathens in order to destroy Christianity”; Ll. 12713-20). In short, Hryeglas declares that the Romans and their pagan allies would destroy Christianity itself.

The preceding lines represent a significant departure from Geoffrey’s account of the same scene, as he neither provides Hyrelgas’ speech nor makes any reference to pagans or Christians.²⁹ The question then becomes why Wace makes such a dramatic change. One reason, I would argue, is to denounce as illegitimate the historical facts of Rome’s conquest of what would later become Frankish-controlled territories. With the addition of Hryeglas’ clarion call to take up arms, by extension Arthur’s motives for fighting can be presented as a desire to defend Christianity against an imperium bent on expanding its territories at any cost, even going so far as to call upon aid from allegedly pagan nations under its control. The motive Wace supplies Arthur with here thus recalls Urban’s message that the scourge of Islam that threatened to corrupt Christendom must be eradicated. And in much the same way that the defense of Christendom obscured the offensive nature of the crusades, Hyrelgas’ speech

here obfuscates Arthur's own desires to add Rome to his already considerable holdings in the British Isles and on the continent.³⁰ For Wace, then, the threat that the pagan forces fighting for Rome presents to the Christian West thus justifies Arthur's attempt to conquer Rome and with it one of the key centers of Southern Europe.

More damaging still is the way that Wace recasts the validity of Rome's claim over Gaul and the British Isles by manipulating the history of the peoples with whom they have allied themselves. Wace achieves this effect in this scene primarily through the figure of Bedoer's slayer, king Boccus of Media. Wace says very little about Boccus or the Medes. He notes at the beginning of the passage under investigation that Boccus was a powerful and wealthy heathen: "paens esteit, / Mult esteit pruz, grant gent aveit" ("[Boccus] was a pagan. He was very brave. He had many men"; Ll. 12619-20). To be sure, Wace's terse description of Boccus is ambivalent. Despite being a pagan, Wace allows that Boccus is very brave. Yet Wace writes nothing substantial here about whom Boccus and the Medes are, where they come from, what specific religion they practice, and what part they have to play in the *Roman*. Rather, we are expected to take at face value Wace's assertion that Boccus and, by extension, the Medes are pagan and, so Wace implies, one of many kingdoms subordinate to Rome. Neither of these points, however, turns out to be true. To begin, Rome never conquered the Medes, an ancient people from Iran who captured a significant portion of the near East; nor did the Romans establish any sort of alliance with these people. Even if Rome had done so, the possibility that the Medes would have come to Lucius' aid is ruled out by the fact that Astyages, their last historical monarch, ruled from 589-549 BCE; in other words about a millennium prior to the events Wace is describing.

Similarly, Wace's terse statements regarding the Medes' religious beliefs do not bear up to scrutiny. Like many Iranian peoples from antiquity, the Medes practiced Zoroastrianism, which, with its emphasis on the supreme creator Ahura Mazda, is arguably a monotheistic religion. Moreover, Islam had all but supplanted Zoroastrianism as the predominant religion in Iran from the seventh century onwards. Even Wace's reference to Boccus as king of Media appears to be inaccurate. J.S.P. Tatlock posits that Geoffrey takes Boccus from Bocchus I, the ruler of Mauretiana from approximately 110-106 BCE who betrayed his son-in-law Jugurtha to the Romans.³¹ If true, then at best Wace naively copies Geoffrey. Whether the latter made a mistake or deliberately manipulated historical 'fact' cannot be determined with any degree of certainty. At worst, Wace is fully cognizant of the underlying consequences of repeating Geoffrey's version of events but chooses to retain this simplified view of Boccus' faith as pagan anyway. And this despite Wace's assertion at the beginning of the *Roman* that he is giving his readers a truthful account of the Arthurian narrative:

Ki vult oïr e vult saveir
De rei en rei e d'eir en eir...
Ki Engleterre primes tindrent...
Maistre Wace l'ad translate
Ki en conte la verité.

("He who wishes to hear and who wishes to know about king after king and about heir after heir who first held England Master Wace has translated it and recounts it truthfully"; Ll. 1-10). In much the same way that Heide Estes' analysis of Anglo-Saxon texts about the East suggests, Wace's may not be principally concerned with giving an accurate account of Boccus' and the medieval Media so much as he is with positioning Arthur and his Britons as part of Christian

Europe. At the same time, however, Wace's insistence that he is giving an accurate account of the Matter of Britain from the outset of his narrative works to re-present and contain the East in such a way that justifies Arthur's domination of the pagans fighting for Rome and, by extension, Arthur's military campaign against what was, from the point of view of Wace's Western readership, Muslim-controlled portions of Southern Europe.

In much the same way that Wace and Geoffrey draw upon received knowledge that was disseminated throughout the medieval period about the Greeks—a topic which I addressed in chapter 4—there is good reason to believe that Wace and Geoffrey, for that matter, are drawing upon received knowledge in the extant literature about the East. As stated towards the beginning of this chapter, the practice of portraying the Orient as at once exotic, grotesque, morally bankrupt, bestial, demonic, and so on goes back at least as far as Bede. Geoffrey and Wace would have had been familiar with some of the literary materials that had been produced and continued to be produced about the Oriental world. J.S.P. Tatlock points out, for instance, that Cassiodorus, Jordanes, Isidore, Bede, Paulus Diaconus, Landolfus Sagax, Anastasius and Frechulph of Lisieux all took a marked interest in the Byzantine Empire and its doings in the near East.³² Of these, Geoffrey certainly drew upon Bede to write the *HrB* and possibly upon Isidore of Seville.³³ Moreover, 'knowledge' about the East that was brought back to the British Isles and Normandy as a result of the first and second crusades would have reached Geoffrey and Wace in one way or another. Regarding the former, Tatlock comments that Geoffrey had connections—albeit indirectly—to Stephen of Blois and Robert of Normandy, each of whom participated in the conquest of Jerusalem.³⁴ Geoffrey also knew something of the *Gesta Regum* by William of Malmesbury and the *Historia Anglorum* by Henry of Huntingdon, both of which, Tatlock observes, devote significant space to the first crusade.³⁵ Geoffrey himself perfunctorily

describes the royal personages that Lucius summons to aid him against Arthur—and Geoffrey lumps Mustensar King of the Africans and Ali Fatima the King of Spain in with this group—as oriental kings.³⁶

As for Wace, his *La Vie de sainte Marguerite*, which he likely composed at Caen, as well as the dedication of a chapel to Saint Margaret of Antioch at Bayeux Cathedral where he held his canonry, strongly suggests that Wace had read contemporary literature on the first crusade.³⁷ In addition, Wace may have drawn upon William's *De Gestis Regum* and Henry's *Historia* when composing his translation of the Arthurian narrative.³⁸ Further, though twelfth-century library records for the Abbaye aux Hommes at Caen have been lost, those that survive from the Norman monasteries at Bec, Saint-Evroult, Evreux, Fécamp Saint-Wandrille of Fonteney and from the cathedral library at Rouen raise the possibility that Wace had access to Isidore and a number of contemporary as well as classical writers and translators who devoted space to describing the near East from a western point of view.³⁹ In any event, Wace echoes Geoffrey's summary of the various nobles who answer Lucius Hibernius' summons to Rome. Yet, importantly, Wace adds that King Mustenfar hails from Africa and brings with him an unspecified number of Moors and Africans who carry their king's vast treasuries with them:

Mustenfar ki Alfrike tint
Qui luin maneit e de luin vint,
Affricans amena e Mors
E porter fist sez granz tresors.

(“Mustenfar, who held Africa, who dwelt far away and came from afar, brought Africans and Moors, and made them carry his great treasure”; Ll. 11109-12).

Each of the details Wace provides here about Mustenfar and his soldiers are on a par with the way that he describes Boccus and the Medes. Wace borrows Mustenfar, an Arabic name, from Geoffrey, who in turn may be referring to Abû Tamîm Ma'add al-Mustansir, the eighth Fatimite Caliph of Egypt from 1036-1094 CE and who is named in several texts roughly contemporary with the *HrB*.⁴⁰ What locale Wace's Mustenfar hails from cannot be determined from the scant information the Norman maistre provides (and Geoffrey does not clear the matter up either). Cairo, the seat of the historical al-Mustansir's Egyptian holdings, is as good a guess as any. No less problematic is ascertaining Mustenfar's and his people's religious practice(s). On the one hand, Mustenfar employs Moors in his army. Although the term has no clear ethnic or religious value, Moor has often been used to refer to Muslims, a practice that continues today.⁴¹ That Geoffrey and Wace would deploy the word in this fashion remains a distinct possibility. On the other hand, Wace also states that Mustenfar keeps Africans in his employ. Despite that 'Affricans' potentially carries even less linguistic information with respect to ethnicity, geography or religion than 'Mors,' especially from a modern perspective, Wace may be once again raising the specter of paganism and all of the grotesque, morally bankrupt, bestial, and demonic connotations that the chroniclers, historians, and romancers of the twelfth century attached to it. Wace certainly associates Africa with paganism at other places in the *Roman*, as is evidenced by his portrayal of Gormund. Indeed, Gormund becomes a corrupting influence on the Christian West towards the end of Wace's narrative. As he narrates the passage of dominion over Great Britain to the Saxons, Wace adds that one Ysembard, the disinherited nephew of king Louis of France, betrays his people and joins forces. In Wace's telling of the story, Ysembard's decision to ally himself with Gormund leads to his renouncing the Christian faith: "Ysembard a

Gurmunt parla; / Sis hum devint, Deu renea” (“Ysembard spoke to Gurmunt; became his man, and renounced God”; Ll. 13525-26).

If, as in the case of Mustenfar, Wace also means by Africans a people that practices paganism, then, at best the Arab king leads a people divided along religious lines. And such religious divisiveness can only serve here to undermine Mustenfar’s rule and, by extension, Rome’s claim to the contested Gaulish territories that Arthur subdued. In the first case, Mustenfar, along with his African and Moorish warriors, as well as the various other kings, princes, knights and foot soldiers who swell the ranks of Lucius’ Roman coalition, compare unfavorably from a Norman perspective to the peoples who fight alongside Arthur: peoples who are (ostensibly) Christian to a man. Nor does Wace appear to be presenting a complicated picture of the religions of Africa in this scene. Rather, by re-presenting the peoples under Mustenfar’s rule as either potentially pagan or Moorish (read in this context Muslim), Wace chokes off the possibility of an Africa comprised of the religious beliefs of multiple peoples, each with their own histories and traditions. Judaism in Africa dates to antiquity to name just one other religion. Moreover, as in the case of his mistreatment of the pagan Medes, Wace’s use of the umbrella term Moor overwrites the distinctions between the Sunni, Suffi, and other sects of Islam that spread throughout the subcontinent during the medieval period.

The one-word descriptions that Wace deploys to describe the peoples of Africa illuminate the way that he re-presents marginalized groups throughout the *Roman*. These descriptions draw upon stock, narrowly defined images of the so-called Islamic Moors and (presumably) pagan Africans that Wace reports serve Mustenfar. These stock images in turn were shaped in part by Norman chroniclers, historians, and romancers following the first and second crusades but also more broadly by a host of medieval writers, translators, and other artisans firmly entrenched in

western tradition. In drawing upon these images, then, Wace conjures very specific versions of the African subjects he names that are based upon—but hardly in line with—their religious practices, creating what Tejaswini Naranjana calls “coherent and transparent texts and subjects.”⁴² These coherent, transparent versions of the African subjects that Wace conjures do several things. To begin with the notion of transparency, they not only stand in for the ‘original’ African subject they represent; rather, they are thought of and re-presented both as though they *were* the original and as if they render the original in true or accurate terms. In the second place, these versions or re-presentations allow Wace’s readership to make a range of assumptions about the African peoples whom they replace that justifies dominating them, whether in terms of the story of Arthur’s exploits, or, perhaps more insidiously, in terms of the example that the story sets for the Normans and like-minded ruling classes who desired to dominate. To be clear, neither Wace nor Geoffrey list the conquest of any portion of Africa among Arthur’s numerous achievements. Nonetheless, by mentioning the ‘granz tresors’ that Mustenfar brings upon the backs of his Moorish and African soldiers to Gaul, Wace hints at the great riches to be won in the subcontinent by those Europeans willing to fight for them. Whether or not the limited successes the Normans had in capturing parts of North Africa influenced Wace’s decision to add this material about Mustenfar and the peoples under his rulership is debatable. In any case, the Normans certainly found the prospect of dominating parts of Africa and controlling its vast resources appealing. Indeed the Norman penetration of Southern Italy and Sicily suggests that Wace’s re-presentation of Africa can be understood as part of a broader movement begun in which the West would conquer Muslim controlled areas of the Mediterranean. As such, the Normans themselves could wholly justify their desires to dominate and control on the basis of the kind of re-presentations that we find in the *Roman* and elsewhere of the Moorish and pagan

Africans as a collective group whose greed and questionable religious practices would lead to the destruction of western civilization. Wace's fictional account of the pillaging of the British countryside at the hands of the coalition of African and Saxon pagans led by King Gormund towards the end of the *Roman* amply demonstrates the point. Although the British do not overcome Gormund and his forces in this scene but rather are forced into permanent exile, the way that Wace describes the latter as wantonly robbing the British of their possessions very much reinforces the idea that both the Saxons and Africans are immoral, greedy, and so on and therefore peoples to be conquered.

In my view, these re-presentations of the pagan Medes and Africans, as well as the Moorish peoples of Africa in the Matter of Britain, tend to fix them in static images that Geoffrey and Wace exploit to great effect. In not completely dissimilar way, in *Siting Translation* Tejaswini Niranjana articulates how translation can work alongside the multiple discursive strategies deployed by the west in order to locate non-Western cultures at fixed point in time:

Translation participates—across a range of discourses—in the fixing of colonized cultures, making them seem static and unchanging rather than historically constructed. Translation functions as a transparent presentation of something that already exists, although the ‘original’ is actually brought into being through translation.⁴³

Although the scope of Niranjana's discussion of how translation participates in the colonizing process appears to differ somewhat from how Wace re-presents the near East in the *Roman*—Arthur does not colonize any part of Africa or Iran—many if not all of the same strategies that Niranjana articulates come into play. Arthur's Christian forces certainly dominate the Romans and their client kingdoms on the battlefield. And, as the losers in this scenario, Wace brings the pagans and Muslims into being as avaricious, godless, and filled with an insatiable lust to conquer and to destroy. Moreover, as previously noted, Wace may be hinting at the eventual

conquest of North Africa by the Normans. That Wace does not go into great detail on this may have something to do with his not wanting to draw attention to the series of revolts that led to the Norman's ousting from the subcontinent. At any rate, Wace at least connects Arthur to the possibility of conquering Africa when he mentions Mustenfar's 'granz tresors.' Perhaps most importantly, Wace, like Geoffrey before him, makes the Medes and the peoples under Mustenfar's rule wholly subsidiary to Rome and its decidedly Western interests. As such, both chroniclers do not merely make these near Eastern regions into Roman colonies. Rather, Geoffrey and Wace re-present them such that these territories exist and are thought of exclusively as western colonies. And the fact that Wace hints at the riches Arthur could win from Mustenfar all too clearly indicates that very little would change if Arthur set his sights on the subcontinent after defeating Lucius Hibernius and capturing Rome.

The re-presentations of the Medes, Moors, and pagan Africans I have focused on in this chapter are by no means the only examples of the strategies that Wace and Geoffrey bring to bear upon the peoples that populate their narratives in order to narrate a story that celebrates Norman exceptionalism. As discussed at various points in this dissertation, most notably in chapter 2, they likewise re-present the Welsh and Irish as barbarous and inferior warriors despite the latter's complicated ethnic history as a result of the Norman invasion and settlement of the large portions of Wales and Ireland. And these stock images that Wace and Geoffrey bring to bear on the foreign other do not only work to fix the conquering hegemony's view of the other in their respective narratives. Rather, the stereotypes also work to occlude the not infrequently violent, temperamental, boastful, and cruel behavior of a conqueror like Arthur who, in many respects, symbolizes the attitudes and thoughts of the rulers of the medieval West.

To quickly sum up this chapter, while Geoffrey and Wace express a certain amount of ambivalence regarding the Muslim East, in the main they deploy a number of words, phrases and stock images that re-present it as irreligious, corrupt, and so on. Geoffrey and Wace take these re-presentations of the Orient from the message that the Church inaugurated and disseminated about Islam as well as the body of literature that was being produced by chroniclers writing about Southern Europe and the Holy Land that reinforced the Church's point of view. These re-presentations largely though not exclusively facilitated the Norman conquests of Spain, Southern Italy, Sicily, North Africa, and Syria. In much the same way that the Church facilitated these conquests, I would argue, Geoffrey and Wace each facilitate the conquest and domination of the Eastern peoples fighting under the banner of Rome by Arthur and his arrayed western forces.

Notes

¹ Geoffrey, *HrB*, I.xvii.

² Wace, *Roman de Brut*, Ll. 1224-38.

³ J.S.P. Tatlock, *The Legendary History of Britain: Geoffrey of Monmouth's Historia Regum Britanniae and its Early Vernacular Versions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1950), 30; Michael J. Curley, *Geoffrey of Monmouth* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1994), 15.

⁴ Robert Hanning, *The Vision of History in Early Britain: From Gildas to Geoffrey of Monmouth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), n. 222, 245.

⁵ Michelle R. Warren, *History on the Edge: Excalibur and the Borders of Britain 1100-1300* (University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 50.

⁶ Warren, *History on the Edge*, 156.

⁷ See Wace, *Roman de Brut*, Ll. 1225, 1229, cited in text, and Ll. 1236.

⁸ Wace, *Roman de Rou*, Ll. 10,937-943. Henry razed Bayeux to the ground, an act which prompted Caen to surrender. See also Urban Tigner Holmes, Jr., "Norman Literature and Wace," *Medieval Secular Literature*, Ed. William Matthews, ULCA Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies Contributions I (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965), 58. It should be noted that the text of Holmes' article mistakenly lists the date for Henry's siege of Caen as 1135.

⁹ See, for instance, J.S.P. Tatlock, *Legendary History*, 464, 469 and Urban Tigner Holmes, “Norman Literature and Wace,” 59.

¹⁰ Judith Weiss, *Wace's Roman de Brut A History of the British: Text and Translation*, Exeter Medieval English Texts and Studies (Devon: University of Exeter Press, 2002), XX. Weiss also argues that as Wace “has some knowledge of Dorset, he decides that Loclin’s daughter will be called Abren (*HRB*: Habren), and that the river called after, Avren [=Avon] (rather than the *HRB*’s Sabrina=Severn), which, he tells us, flows into the sea at Christchurch.” (XX).

¹¹ In point of fact, Geoffrey says very little about Humber other than that he lands in Scotland, kills its ruler Albanactus, and forces the dead king’s people to flee to Loclinus. See Geoffrey, *HrB*, II.i.

¹² Norman R. Bennett, *Africa and Europe: From Roman Times to National Independence* (London: Africana Publishing Co., 1984), 22.

¹³ Georgios Theotokis, “The Norman Invasion of Sicily, 1061-1072: Numbers and Military Tactics,” *War in History* 17 (2010), 385.

¹⁴ Norman R. Bennett, *Africa and Europe*, 22.

¹⁵ Georgios Theotokis, “Invasion of Sicily,” 385-86.

¹⁶ Georgios Theotokis, “Invasion of Sicily,” 391-92.

¹⁷ Ovidio Capitani, “Specific Motivations and Continuing Themes in the Norman Chronicles of Southern Italy: Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries,” *The Normans in Sicily and Southern Italy: Lincei Lectures 1974* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 10.

¹⁸ Ovidio Capitani, “Norman Chronicles of Southern Italy,” 17-18.

¹⁹ Heide Estes, “Wonders and Wisdom: Anglo-Saxons and the East,” *English Studies* 91 (2010), 371.

²⁰ Heide Estes, “Wonders and Wisdom,” 360.

²¹ Joshua C. Birk, “The Betrayal of Antioch: Narratives of Conversion and Conquest during the First Crusade,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 41 (2011), 466.

²² Qtd. In Norman Housely, *Contesting the Crusades* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 86.

²³ Norman Housely, *Contesting the Crusades*, 88.

²⁴ See for instance, Paul E. Chevedden, “The Islamic View and the Christian View of the Crusades: A New Synthesis,” *History* 93 (2008), 184-86.

²⁵ Norman Housely, *Contesting the Crusades*, 76-77.

²⁶ Norman Housely, *Contesting the Crusades*, 76.

²⁷ Michelle R. Warren, *History on the Edge*, 92.

²⁸ Compare to Geoffrey, *HrB*, IX.xvii: “en uaticinia Sibille que ueris tetantur ex Britannico genere tertio nasciturum qui Romanum obtinebit imperium” (“in the Sybilline prophecies that testify in verse that for the third time one from British stock will be born who will possess the empire of Rome”).

²⁹ See Geoffrey, *HrB*, X.x.

³⁰ See, for instance, the latter part of Arthur’s lengthy speech in response to Rome’s demands that Britain once again send tribute: Wace, *Roman de Brut*, Ll. 10851-10904.

³¹ J.S.P. Tatlock, “Certain Contemporaneous Matters in Geoffrey of Monmouth,” *Speculum* 6 (1931), 211. Regrettably, Tatlock does not offer any details to back up his assertion that Geoffrey may have Bocchus I of Mauretiana in mind. As such, we cannot rule out the possibility that Geoffrey bases his Bocchus on Bocchus II or someone else entirely. Yet Tatlock’s argument generally fits the circumstances given that, unlike Media, Mauretiana did become a Roman province in 33 BCE.

³² J.S.P. Tatlock, “Certain Contemporaneous Matters,” 214.

³³ Michael J. Curley, who notes that Geoffrey drew upon Isidore’s *Island of the Fortunate Women* to describe the Fortunate Island in the *Vita Merlini*, argues that Geoffrey may have been referring to the same place as the Island of Avalon in the closing moments of Arthur’s part in the *HrB*. See Michael J. Curley, *Geoffrey of Monmouth* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1994), 118.

³⁴ Tatlock, “Certain Contemporaneous Matters,” 210.

³⁵ Tatlock, “Certain Contemporaneous Matters,” 211.

³⁶ Geoffrey, *HrB*, X.i: “Lucius igitur Hiberius [sic] agnita sententia huius responsi iussu senatus orientalibus edixit regibus ut parato exercitu secum ad subiugandaum Britanniam uenirent” (“Therefore, when the meaning of this response was made known, Lucius Hiberius, by order of the senate, declared that the kings of the orient come at once in order to prepare an army to subdue Britannia with him”).

³⁷ Wace lived at Caen for 35 years prior to moving to nearby Bayeux. To be clear, Wace did not receive his prebend at Bayeux cathedral until several years after he completed the *Roman*. Nonetheless, Wace had Norman patrons at both Caen and Bayeux who showed interest in the crusades and the near East. For more information on Wace’s time in Caen, see Urban Tigner Holmes, “Norman Literature and Wace,” 57-9. On the dedication of a chapel at Bayeux Cathedral to Saint Margaret, see Urban Tigner Holmes, “Norman Literature and Wace,” 59.

³⁸ See Judith Weiss, *Wace’s Roman de Brut*, XVIII. Maddeningly, Weiss does not provide any evidence that Wace actually read William or Henry. The matter is certainly open for debate. Tatlock writes regarding Wace’s sources, for instance, that “There may be a little use of

‘Nennius’; also William of Malmesbury’s two *Gesta*, and of Gaimar, but all this information may have reached Wace by hearsay” (J.S.P. Tatlock, *Legendary History*, 468).

³⁹ See Urban Tigner Holmes, “Norman Literature and Wace,” 52-3.

⁴⁰ For a brief discussion of the name and the possibility that Geoffrey is referring to the historical Abû Tamîm Ma’add al-Mustansir, see J.S.P. Tatlock, “Certain Contemporaneous Matters,” 206. For a brief discussion of the Caliph’s place in western literature roughly contemporary with the *HrB*, see J.S.P. Tatlock, “Certain Contemporaneous Matters,” 209-210.

⁴¹ See, for instance, J.S.P. Tatlock, “Certain Contemporaneous Matters,” 207.

⁴² Tejaswini Niranjana, *Siting Translation: History, Post-Structuralism, and the Colonial Context* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 3.

⁴³ Tejaswini Niranjana, *Siting Translation*, 3.

8. CONCLUSION

Throughout this dissertation, I have argued that, in telling the story of the Matter of Britain in the *Historia regum Britanniae* and *Roman de Brut*, Geoffrey of Monmouth and Wace deploy an array of words, phrases and images as a part of a strategy to re-present and contain the ‘foreign others’ with whom they have populated their respective narratives. The re-presentations I have focused on cover a range of ethnic, multiethnic and religious identities. In the main these various ethnic and religious identities are concentrated in areas with which the Normans for whom Geoffrey and Wace in part wrote their chronicles had direct or indirect contact throughout the twelfth century. That contact was largely a result of Norman expansion into portions of the British Isles, Southern Europe, North Africa and, during the crusades, the Holy Land. In my view, the kinds of re-presentations that Geoffrey and Wace deploy against these foreign peoples reveal a number of things about the nature of the Matter of Britain and the genre of chronicle writing in the twelfth century as a whole.

In the first place, the language that Geoffrey and Wace deploy to re-present the foreign others in their stories neither developed overnight nor in a vacuum. In some cases, the discourses that circulate in Geoffrey’s and Wace’s texts were shaped and reshaped over the course of decades. In others, these rhetorical practices were defined and refined for centuries. And these discursive fields sometimes overlapped one another. With respect to the peoples of the British Isles, for instance, the kind of language that Geoffrey uses to dehumanize and demonize the Welsh, Irish, and Scots is at once the product of a colonial discourse practiced over the course of four-hundred years of Roman rule there as well as of the discursive strategies that the reorganized Norman Church disseminated about these peoples in the roughly seventy years following William’s successful Conquest of Anglo-Saxon controlled lands. Though the Normans brought their own ideas, attitudes, customs and policies to bear upon the peoples of the

Isles whom the sought to subjugate under their rule, in some respects these rhetorical practices align remarkably well with the discourse that Caesar helped inaugurate when he first invaded the Isles in 55 BCE. Moreover, the much of the colonial discourse that the Romans mobilized in order to justify their right to rule the peoples of Britain makes its way into the early chronicles of Bede and Gildas. Bede's and Gildas' characterization of the Britons and Irish in turn gets passed onto the next generation of chroniclers—the usual suspects here are William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon, among others—and eventually reaches Geoffrey of Monmouth. Much the same can be said of the stock words, phrases, and images about the Greeks that gain widespread currency in the twelfth century as a result of the popularization of Vergil's version of the Fall of Troy in the *Aeneid*. So too, large portions of the Muslim Orient is re-imagined as at once monstrous, corrupt, and so on as a result of the production of literary materials from *The Wonders of the East*, to Pope Urban II's call for the First Crusade, to the stories that Norman chroniclers told of the west's exploits following the successful capture of areas extending from Spain to the Holy Land. Each of these examples demonstrates how the discourses that Geoffrey and Wace work into their narratives that re-present foreign and religious identities could be received by successive generations of writers, thereby reinforcing hegemonic versions of history.

Secondly, in many respects the colonial discourses that circulate in the *HrB* and *Roman* largely served to facilitate Norman expansion on multiple fronts extending from their bases of operations in Normandy and Southern Europe. As has been seen, the Church played a central role in the dissemination of 'knowledge' about marginalized groups of peoples in the eastern and western theaters of Norman expansion. The results are never straightforward. For one thing, although western chroniclers affiliated with the more prominent ecclesiastical communities during the twelfth century took a marked interest in celebrating the Normans' achievements

beginning about the time that Geoffrey composes the *HrB*, they also express to varying degrees their dislike of the more brutal routes to conquest and domination that the Normans were prepared to take. In addition, although the Normans did much to reorganize the Church in England in particular to their advantage, they did not have absolute control over the body of literary materials that the Church busied itself producing during the twelfth century. The relative autonomy that the Church as a whole enjoyed allowed a small number of chroniclers, writers and poets to contest Norman versions of history. So, too, eastern writers like Ali ibn Tahir al-Sulami, Ibn al-Athir, and Anna Comnena questioned and in some instances outright condemned the motives of the Norman crusaders cutting a bloody swath across Muslim controlled areas of Southern Europe, the coast of North Africa, and the Holy Lands. Perhaps most importantly, even their most ardent supporters were not always prepared to deal with the sometimes messy consequences that resulted from some of the routes to conquest and domination that the Normans took. The appreciation for Irish culture that Gerald de Barri expressed following his contact with that people in the wake of Norman expansion into Ireland illustrates the point nicely. This, of course, did not prevent Gerald from harshly condemning the Irish for, in his view, their many barbarous practices. Re-presentations of the foreign like those with which Gerald inscribes the Irish re-produce the other such that they beg to be dominated. Though it would be going too far to argue that the Church was always conscious of the ramifications these re-presentations of the other would have on the historical events of the twelfth century—Gerald’s condemnation of the Irish is not on a par with say Pope Urban II’s call to rid Christian west of the Muslim scourge that had seized control of Jerusalem—the discourse that the Church disseminated nonetheless frequently played into Norman hands during the twelfth century.

Some of these ambivalent expressions of the power relations between the Normans and the peoples they sought to subjugate under their rule across the world stage also make their way into the Matter of Britain. For instance, although Geoffrey and Wace lay much of the blame for the passage of dominion over the Isles from the Britons to the Saxons on the shoulders of the African King Gormund, they also make brief references to Africa in their account of the history of Stonehenge that show a marked if colonizing interest in the Dark Continent. With respect to the Normans themselves, although Wace never outright condemns them for the wide spread devastation that they wrought on the land during the anarchy, he nonetheless repeatedly calls attention to the destruction of the Isles that resulted from foreign aggression. Yet, much as is the case with the admiration Gerald shows towards the Irish, these ambivalent expressions about the others of the west and east that crop up in the *HrB* and *Roman* do not stop Geoffrey or Wace from treating them as cultural resources to be exploited in order to advance their narratives. Regarding the re-presentation of Africa as a continent that is at once magical and monstrous, Geoffrey and Wace utilize the magical healing properties with which they imbue the stones of the giants' ring in order to justify their seizure by Uther Pendragon and the Britons. In a not dissimilar fashion, Geoffrey and Wace re-present the Irish, Welsh, Scots and Picts as uncivilized peoples who need—indeed desire—the correction of the Church. They take an even more extreme view of the various heathen peoples who either aggressively attack the Isles or pose a threat to Christendom. Along these lines, the Muslim foreigners fighting under the imperial banners of Rome in the conflict between Arthur and Lucius Hiberius are re-presented as a scourge that threatens the whole of Christendom. This simplified view of the Muslim Orient at once justifies Arthur's claim on the Gaulish territories on the continent and invalidates Rome's claims to the same lands. Thus the multiple discursive strategies that Geoffrey and Wace deploy

which on the one hand celebrate and defend the conquests of rulers like Arthur and on the other hand dehumanize and demonize the foreign other work in tandem to produce a version of history that largely catered to a Norman world view. Indeed, the great success that Geoffrey's and Wace's texts enjoyed among the Normans speaks to their ability to skillfully utilize the colonial discourses that were being shaped and reshaped by the Church and all those who took an interest in the Normans' achievements during the twelfth century.

In a broader context, the language that Geoffrey and Wace use in order to re-present the foreign in the Matter of Britain may appear to provide a rather simplistic view of the various ethnic, polyethnic and religious identities with whom the Normans came into contact in their desire to carve out an empire for themselves. Indeed, one of problems that scholars like Said have pointed out with all colonial discourses is that they tend to limit the way a dominant culture like say the English was able to view the peoples of the subcontinent that they dominated from the sixteenth through to the mid-twentieth century. Another way of putting this would be to argue that colonial discourses create binary relationships between the hegemonic culture and the cultures whom they subject to their rule.

But such a view, although useful, also overlooks a great deal of how the colonizing process operates over time. Said of course does not stop here in his critique of the way that the West constructed the Orient. Rather, in a very real sense, the kinds of terms that colonizing cultures used to describe the others that they encountered and colonized describe a relationship in which the hegemony expresses its absolute authority over the peoples it subjugates. Over time, these dominating frameworks can have the effect of almost entirely displacing the histories and traditions of a marginalized culture with a hegemonic version of them. And what is perhaps most remarkable in my view about the effect that these dominating frameworks had on the

literary tradition of the Matter of Britain in the West as a whole, let alone with respect to that of the twelfth century, is that, with perhaps the exception of scholars who have taken an interest in such matters, these dominating frameworks largely remain hidden in plain sight. The Matter of Britain remains a popular subject in undergraduate survey courses that explore the western literary tradition for its rich descriptions of medieval life, for its deep connections to romance in the traditional sense of that word, and for its decidedly folkloric and mythological elements, among other features of the genre. Yet I would argue that few students would stop to think without prompting from their instructor about what, for instance, the opening lines to *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* tell us about the marginalized position that the Greeks held in Arthurian tradition. This lack of rigorous inquiry into the re-presentation of the other may be even more pronounced with respect to the rare appearances in the literature of a people like the Picts or of the Africans, Moors, and other peoples of the East. Indeed, Geoffrey's and Wace's use of the term Africans to describe the continent and everything in it attests to the way that colonial discourses can be easily inserted into their texts and yet for the most part slip under the radar.

Of course, as is frequently the case in the relationship that colonial discourses express between the colonizer and colonized, Geoffrey's reliance on the foreign in particular to advance his narrative produced unexpected results. On the one hand, Geoffrey uses the marriage alliance he arranges between Anna and Loth to great effect, as it justifies the expansion of Arthur's empire in not just one but two instances. On the other hand, Geoffrey, much like the Normans, expresses a good deal of anxiety about the threat that tinkering with Arthur's blood line posed to the maintenance of the kingdoms under Arthur's rule. Geoffrey's anxiety about ethnic purity goes a long way towards explaining why he has trouble deciding whether to marry Anna to Loth or to Hoel to the point that he keeps both options in his narrative. Geoffrey's inability to decide

here speaks to his awareness that by relying on the foreign to advance his narrative he is in a sense admitting to the important part that the foreign plays in his production of the Matter of Britain.

In this context, the fact that Geoffrey and Wace feel compelled to deploy strategies like these implies a fear of and need to re-present and contain the foreign upon which they have built the colonial aspects of their narratives. For to narrate and even historicize the Matter of Britain in is in a very real sense to encounter the other, to engage the other on his or her own turf, regardless of how hard Geoffrey and Wace try to re-present and contain those encounters in their respective narratives. Thus, just as their attempts to dehumanize, demonize and exploit the foreign reveals the asymmetrical power relations that played out on the discursive landscape of Arthurian tradition in the twelfth-century, those attempts also reveal that those relationships have been largely historically determined by the Church, the Normans themselves, and those who were in position to control and shape the production of literary materials about the Other.

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