

# **Fictionalising the Past: Thirteenth-Century Re-imaginings of Recent Historical Individuals**

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## **Abstract**

The high medieval period saw the creation of numerous texts that straddled the borderline between history and fiction. A particularly striking group of texts in this context, which, surprisingly, have never been studied together, is that written in the aftermath of King John's reign concerning individuals who had been active in England and Northern France in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. These are: the *History of William Marshal*, the *Romance of Fouke Fitz Waryn*, the *Romance of Richard Coeur de Lion*, and the *Story of Eustace the Monk*. The lives of four very different men - a knight, an outlaw, a king and a mercenary - were all re-imagined in the course of the thirteenth century and within living memory of their actual lives and deeds. The following thesis identifies certain events in the lives of these men that both encouraged the development of fictional identities and shaped the form those identities were to take. It also demonstrates that the cultural trauma experienced as a result of the events of John's reign allowed individuals of the recent past to be plausibly described in terms more often used for those some centuries hence. Fictionalised history will be shown to be a valuable source for both the relationship between historical and fictional literature in the Middle Ages, and popular attitudes to the past in so far as John's reign can be perceived as a moment identified as one of cultural change.

**Fictionalising the Past:  
Thirteenth-Century Re-imaginings of Recent  
Historical Individuals**

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## Abbreviations

- Amb. *The History of the Holy War: Ambroise's 'Estoire de la Guerne Sainte'*, Marianne Ailes (trans) (Woodbridge, 2003).
- EtM *Li Romans de Witasse le Moine: Roman du treizième siècle*, Denis Joseph Conlon (ed) (Chapel Hill, 1972).
- FFW *Fouke Le Fitz Waryn*, Hathaway, E.J. et al (eds), Anglo-Norman Text Society 26-28 (Oxford, 1975).
- GdW *Gui de Warewic: roman du XIIIe siècle*, Alfred Ewert (ed), Les Classiques Français du Moyen Age, 2 vols, 74-5 (Paris, 1932-3)
- HWM *History of William Marshal*, Holden, A.J. (ed), S. Gregory (trans), D. Crouch (notes), Anglo-Norman Text Society Occasional Publications Series 4-6 (London, 2002, 2004, 2006).
- Itin. *Chronicle of the Third Crusade: A Translation of the 'Itinerarium Peregrinorum et Gesta Regis Ricardi'*, Helen J. Nicholson (trans) (Aldershot, 1997).
- RCL A,D,E,L *An Edition of the Middle English Romance: Richard Coeur de Lion*, Philida M.T.A. Schellekens, vol.1 (of 2) unpubl. PhD Thesis, University of Durham, 1989.
- RCL C *Der Mittelenglische Versroman über Richard Löwenherz*, Karl Brunner (ed) (Vienna, 1913).
- Reims. *Récits d'un Ménestrel de Reims au Treizième Siècle*, Joseph Noel de Wailly (Paris, 1887, reprinted 2008)

## **Declaration**

Some parts of chapters four and five of this thesis were originally submitted by me as part of the dissertation 'Richard Coeur de Lion: The Transformation of a Historical Figure into a Literary Character' for the degree of Masters in Medieval and Renaissance Studies at Durham University, 2007.

## **Copyright Notice**

*The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published without the author's prior written consent and information derived from it should be acknowledged.*

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Judith Dunthorne has had infinite patience with me in the years since and done far more than her fair share of washing up. To both of you, I can not thank you enough and will be forever grateful.

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Finally, a big thanks to William Marshal, Richard I, Fouke Fitz Waryn and Eustace the Monk for living lives which were so interesting that spending several years studying them over seven centuries later was a reasonable way to spend my time. Without them, and the men who wrote about them, this thesis would quite literally not have been possible. I end with a quotation that I feel sums up both the attitude of those thirteenth-century authors and much of this thesis:

*“Where I come from we believe all sorts of things that aren’t true...  
...we call it history.”*

*Wicked, the Musical*  
Stephen Schwartz

## Introduction

J wole rede romaunce non  
Off Perthenope, ne of Ypomadon,  
Off Alisaunder, ne of Charlemayn,  
Off Arthour, ne off Sere Gawayn,  
Nor off Sere Launcelet-de-Lake,  
Off Beffs, ne Gy, ne Sere Vrrake,  
Ne off Ury, ne of Octauyan,  
Ne off Hector, the stronge man,  
Off Jason, ne off Hercules,  
Ne off Eneas, ne off Achylles.  
I were neuere, par ma fay,  
þat in þe tyme off here day,  
Dede ony off hem so douzty dede  
Off strong batayle *and* gret wyzthede,  
As ded Kyng Richard, saun fayle,  
At Jaffe in þat batayle<sup>1</sup>

In the preceding quotation the author of the *Romance of Richard Coeur de Lion* provides a long list of heroes, covering individuals from classical mythology and *chansons de geste* to the romances of Arthur and his knights, as well as English knightly paragons such as Guy of Warwick. However, none of these fictional characters is seen to measure up to the actions of the historical King Richard (1157-99). Such heroic comparisons are not, in themselves, an unusual feature of medieval accounts of historical individuals. A similar comparison concerning Richard at Jaffa was made by Ambroise in his late twelfth-century account of the Third Crusade (1189-92), but the *Romance* goes

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<sup>1</sup> *Der Mittlenglische Versroman über Richard Löwenherz*, Karl Brunner (ed) (Vienna, 1913), C 6725-42. There are other heroes of literature to whom Richard I is compared in the *Romance of Richard Coeur de Lion*; a shorter hero list in the introduction includes Roland, Oliver and Turpin, alongside Alexander, Charlemagne, Arthur, Gwain, Hector, and Achilles who are mentioned above, C 11-19.



further.<sup>2</sup> In the *Romance* Richard I is not only compared to the great heroes of medieval romance, his whole life is depicted in similar terms; he fights a lion single handed and unarmed, owns magic rings, receives angelic visitations, and is able to sever a harbour's defensive chain with a single blow of his axe. Entirely fictional episodes are combined with the historical events so thoroughly that the resultant text can not be seen as predominantly either history or fiction. It is both. In the pages of the *Romance* a historical king becomes a fictionalised character, his exploits truly on a level with those of the literary heroes to whom he is compared.

Some blurring of fact with apparently fantastic elements and invented details was characteristic of medieval accounts of the past, so attempting to make too clear a distinction between the genres of literature and history in the Middle Ages is to some extent anachronistic.<sup>3</sup> Neither genre was systematised and defined in the way that subjects like rhetoric, theology and law were and neither formed part of the university curriculum, so each practitioner was free to approach his task in the way he preferred. Instead of fact and fiction being seen as polar opposites the majority of texts fell somewhere between the two. The quantity of medieval texts that straddle the borderland between literature and history, what has been called a medieval fashion for pseudo-history, has been commented on repeatedly over the years, for example by Grace Frank, Antonia Gransden and Peter Damian-Grint.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, the broader implications of this phenomenon for modern understanding of medieval concepts of the past and historiography have been under explored.

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<sup>2</sup> 'Never, even at Rancevaux [the battle in the *Song of Roland*], did any man, young or old, Saracen or Christian, conduct himself so well.' Ambroise, *The History of the Holy War*, Marianne Ailes and Malcolm Barber (eds), Marianne Ailes (trans), 2 vols (Woodbridge, 2003), p. 180. Ambroise provides one of the most widely used western accounts of the Third Crusade and will be considered in more detail in chapter 5; it was composed sometime between Richard's release from captivity in 1194 and his death in 1199. Richard himself appears in a similar list in the *Laud Troy Book 11-16* as one of a number of favourable comparisons for the hero, Dieter Mehl, *The Middle English Romances of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (London, 1968), p.16.

<sup>3</sup> Medieval understandings of the nature of history and fiction, as well how to identify them, will be discussed in detail in chapter 1.

<sup>4</sup> Grace Frank, 'Historical Elements in the Chansons de Geste', *Speculum*, 14 (1939), p.214; Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England c.550 to c.1307* (London, 1974), p.221; Peter Damian-Grint, *The New Historians of the Twelfth-Century Renaissance* (Woodbridge, 1999), p.177.

There have been a number of modern studies of medieval narrative genres and how they can incorporate both historical and fictional elements.<sup>5</sup> The late eleventh and twelfth centuries in particular have received considerable attention from scholars such as Monika Otter, Laura Ashe and Robert Stein.<sup>6</sup> This period has received high levels of interest because it covers the rise of the romance genre alongside an upsurge in historical writing and the composition of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain*, a largely accepted history that formed the inspiration for some of the Middle Age's greatest fictions. That there is an ongoing tendency to use overlapping genres can be seen in the work of Paul Strohm which is focused on later medieval England. In a series of articles Strohm comments on the distinctions and overlap between literary genres, including discussion over which terms denoted some form of truthful or historical content, and a detailed analysis on truth claims in the literature of the later fourteenth century justifying such actions as rebellion and usurpation.<sup>7</sup>

In the context of the time period to be covered by this thesis, the thirteenth century, the most important study of the romancification of history, that is introducing romance style elements to accounts of the past, is that by Gabrielle Spiegel.<sup>8</sup> She established that vernacular prose historiography in

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<sup>5</sup> A well constructed and clear outline of different medieval narrative genres, including didactic, history, comedy, dream and tragedy, is provided by Tony Davenport, *Medieval Narrative: An Introduction* (Oxford, 2004).

<sup>6</sup> Monika Otter examined fictionality in Latin texts, arguing that it was not simply with the rise of the vernacular that fiction came to the fore and in fact concerns over the nature of historical truth led authors of history to deliberately include fictional allegories describing the difficulties with uncovering it; *Inventiones: Fiction and Referentiality in Twelfth Century English Historical Writing* (Chapel Hill, 1996). Robert Stein used the simultaneous rise of romance and historical writing in the twelfth century to argue that both types of literature served the same overlapping purpose, exploring and defining the new attitudes and roles that were the result of royal attempts in England and France to centralize power, which in turn explains the similarities in their style; *Reality Fictions: Romance, History, and Governmental Authority, 1025-1180* (Notre Dame, In., 2006). Laura Ashe focused primarily on the rise of narratives concerning nationalism in the context of Anglo-Norman identity moving towards an English identity focused around the land of England, arguing that they developed in a way that was distinct from the rest of Europe; *Fiction and History in England, 1066-1200* (Cambridge, 2007).

<sup>7</sup> Paul Strohm, 'Storie, Spelle, Geste, Romaunce, Tragedie: Generic Distinctions in the Middle English Troy Narrative', *Speculum*, 46 (1971), pp348-59; Paul Strohm, 'The Origin and Meaning of Middle English *Romaunce*', *Genre*, 10 (1977), pp.1-28; Paul Strohm, 'Middle English Narrative Genres', *Genre*, 13 (1980), pp.379-88; Paul Strohm, *Hochon's Arrow: Social Imagination of Fourteenth-Century Texts* (Princeton, NJ, 1992). Strohm's other work on the reign of Richard II and the Lancastrian usurpation also includes discussions of the shaping of chronicles and other narrative sources for political ends but focuses more on physical symbolism, *England's Empty Throne: Usurpation and the Language of Legitimation 1399-1422* (Notre Dame, 2006).

<sup>8</sup> Gabrielle M. Spiegel, *Romancing the Past: The Rise of Vernacular Prose Historiography in Thirteenth-Century France* (Oxford, 1993). Attempts to define medieval 'romance' in

France, which had previously been seen as royalist, was in fact encouraged and patronised by nobles as part of a wider cultural attempt to assert their authority against the centralising influence of the Capetian monarchy.<sup>9</sup> However, Spiegel's examples are very different from the *Romance of Richard Coeur de Lion*. They are far closer the genre of history, with their authors deliberately disassociating themselves from the more literary *chansons de geste* by dismissing verse as synonymous with lies and choosing to write instead in prose.<sup>10</sup> Spiegel's sources do not fit historical events into a heroic mould and style as the *Romance* does but rather transform the literary components into historical style. More literary texts have not received a similar level of attention.

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comparison to other types of narrative such as epic or *chanson de geste*, as well as subdivide it into categories, was an ongoing concern of many twentieth-century scholars from Dorothy Everett, 'A characterisation of the English Medieval romances', *Essays and Studies*, 15 (1929), pp.98-121, reprinted in D. Everett, *Essays on Middle English Literature*, P.M. Kean (ed), (Oxford, 1955), pp.1-22, to Strohm, 'Middle English Narrative Genres', pp.379-88 among others. However, more recent commentators are increasingly sceptical. Many texts can be seen to conform to a number of different categories and medieval authors did not themselves use terms consistently: see for example Ardis Butterfield's argument that the works which can most easily be seen to conform to genre boundaries are actually parodies of that genre, 'Medieval genres and modern genre theory', *Paragraph*, 13 (1990), pp.184-201, p.186. As Davenport pointed out 'genre-labeling is...associated with approximation: it is a tool of convenience, with a provisional quality about it, rather than part of a precise system'; Davenport, *Medieval Narrative* (2004), p.24. The difficulties with genre classification are more fully outlined in Keith Busby, 'Narrative Genres' in Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval French Literature* (Cambridge, 2008), pp.139-52. This move towards an acceptance of more fluid boundaries between categories has not stopped scholars discussing which genre any individual text can be seen as belonging to, for example Marianne J. Ailes, 'The Anglo-Norman *Boeve de Haumtone* as a *chanson de geste*' in Jennifer Fellows and Ivana Djordjević, *Sir Bevis of Hampton in Literary Tradition*, Studies in Medieval Romance (Cambridge, 2008), pp.9-24. In Spiegel's sources the past is 'romanced' in the sense that it is retold and shaped with the intention of providing a specific message, one that can then be used in the present.

<sup>9</sup> Spiegel, *Romancing the Past* (1993), p.54.

<sup>10</sup> Spiegel, *Romancing the Past* (1993), p.55. Verse as a valid form for historical accounts was under attack throughout the period covered by this thesis in part due to the rediscovery of Aristotle's *Poetics* and its famous claim that all poets lie which was available in Latin from the mid thirteenth century, but it was still a well used working medium; J.A. Burrow, *Medieval Writers and their Work: Middle English Literature 1100-1500* (Oxford, 1982), p.14-9. The term 'prose' appears for the first time in the thirteenth century, derived from a word meaning natural and straightforward and so implying truth but before that 'an expanding body of literate laymen nurtured a growing suspicion of poetized history'; Spiegel, *Romancing the Past* (1993), pp.12, 57. In this context it is interesting that all of the key texts to be examined in this thesis were originally composed in verse but as Peter Ainsworth pointed out 'whilst prose steadily gained ground from around 1220, verse still was being used – and continued to be used for a long time to come – for the writing of rhyming chronicles of a biographical nature'; Ainsworth, 'Contemporary and 'Eyewitness' History', Deborah Mauskopt Deliyannis (ed), *Historiography in the Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2003), p.263. As such the use of verse rather than prose for accounts of the lives of historical individuals, regardless of the level of fiction incorporated, was simply the norm for the period, not a deliberate choice indicating that the text would be in any way less truthful.

If the *Romance of Richard Coeur de Lion* is taken as a representative of what might be termed fictionalised histories, that is, accounts of recent historical figures that have nevertheless received similar treatment to romance or legendary heroes of the distant or imagined past, then it takes a particularly uncertain place within the complex web of interrelating genres:

- Is it history made exciting and memorable by the addition of fantastic episodes?
- Fiction claiming increased status by purporting to tell the truth?
- An attempt to make a political point in entertaining terms?
- Or simply an extreme but inevitable manifestation of the blurring of genres?

The last seems unlikely as the way in which the author of the *Romance* used fact and fiction suggests a deliberate attempt to combine the two, rather than an unconscious overlap of ideas. The other questions, however, remain valid. That the *Romance* appears both in manuscripts surrounded by romances and within historical texts might suggest on the one hand that contemporaries saw both its historical and fictional aspects as important.<sup>11</sup> Within one manuscript that includes the *Romance*, the *Short Metrical Chronicle* is expanded in Richard's reign to include whole passages quoted directly from it.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, the juxtaposition of the *Romance* with both historical and romance material in different codicological contexts, might equally suggest an uncertainty amongst contemporaries as to what role it should be given.

The place of texts as strongly fictionalised as the *Romance of Richard Coeur de Lion* has been equally uncertain within modern scholarship. They are usually placed alongside more straightforwardly fictional texts and analysed as such. For example, Dieter Mehl categorises the *Romance* as a 'novel in verse' alongside *Sir Beues of Hamtoun*, *Guy of Warwick*, *Kyng Alisaunder*, *Arthour and*

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<sup>11</sup> Philida M.T.A. Schellekens, *Richard Coeur de Lion* (Ph.D: Durham, 1989), pp.6,15.

<sup>12</sup> This is MS Arundel 58, College of Arms, ff.252-75, *An Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle*, E. Zettle (ed), Early English Text Society, v. 196 (Oxford, 1935, reprinted New York: Kraus, 1971), p.xcvi. A similar thing is done in MS Harley 4690, British Library, ff.106-115 (H) which includes only two items, a *Brut* and the *Romance*, 'with *Richard* included as a supplement to the chronicle', Gisela Guddat-Figge, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Middle English Romances* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1976), pp.205-6.

*Merlin*, and *William of Palerne*.<sup>13</sup> However, the historical content of texts describing the events of the recent past, as opposed to the centuries old tales of Alexander, makes a purely literary reading inappropriate since the authors were restricted structurally by the events they were describing. Similarly, attempts to use fictionalised histories as historical sources, for example by Janet Meisel in her study *Barons of the Welsh Frontier*, are restricted by the tendency of their authors to embroider extensively even those elements which can be confirmed from other sources.<sup>14</sup> The consequence has traditionally been that fictionalised accounts of the past are criticised both for a lack of literary style and a lack of historical accuracy.<sup>15</sup> However, attempting to judge texts such as the *Romance* by the standards of either history or literature is as limiting as trying to categorise it as one or the other.

As a result of the confusion over how to categorise them, romances about the recent past have tended to be studied in isolation and are compared to either chronicle or purely literary sources relating to the specifics of their narrative. They have not been studied as a group. This thesis will fill the gap by exploring the broader patterns that emerge by comparing fictionalisations of the past to each other, rather than to ‘accurate’ history or the literary models by which they were shaped. Key questions include;

- What kinds of people were considered suitable targets for fictionalisation?
- What aspects of their lives were ignored or expanded?

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<sup>13</sup> Mehl, *Middle English Romances* (1968), pp.207-51. Mehl argues that the *Romance* ‘is no more ‘historical’ than *Kyng Alisaunder* and *Arthur and Merlin*’ since ‘it is hardly apparent any more that the work was originally, it seems, based on a chronicle. For the author, Richard is a romance-hero just like all the others’, he is not treated any differently as a result of temporal proximity to the events described.

<sup>14</sup> Janet Meisel, *Barons of the Welsh Frontier: The Corbet, Pantulf, and Fitz Warin Families, 1066-1272* (London, 1980). Meisel acknowledges the difficulties with using the *Romance of Fouke Fitz Warin* as a source of historical information but maintains that it is still valuable for the hints it can give about subjects that do not appear in ‘more conventional sources’, pp132-4.

<sup>15</sup> For example Mehl referred to Richard’s author’s ‘simple and unambitious use of convention’ while Meisel criticizes that of the Fouke romance as having a style and perception that was decidedly crude; Mehl, *The Middle English Romances* (1968), p.246; Meisel, *Barons of the Welsh Frontier* (1980), p.134. In addition the Anglo-Norman Text Society editors of the *Romance of Fouke Fitz Warin* state that ‘The Historian is bound to criticize *FFW*, both for its distortions of twelfth-century history, and for its almost complete suppression of the later years of Fouke’s life’, E.J. Hathaway, P.T. Ricketts, C.A. Robson and A.D. Wilshere (eds), *Fouke Le Fitz Waryn*, Anglo-Norman Text Society 26-28 (Oxford, 1975), p.xxviii.

- What factors influenced the way their characterisation developed?

From a methodological point of view, the testing of fictionality against historical reality will be key. Where a real, that is recorded incident, can be compared to its fictionalised counterpart reliable conclusions can be drawn about the process of fictionalization. Where there is no alternative evidence it is only possible to extrapolate based on narrative style or the similarities between episodes and those in other types of literature. By bringing together a group of fictionalised texts in this way it is possible to see patterns emerging that are not evident when they are classified alongside works with the same subject matter but different style.

One particularly striking and coherent group of texts that provide fictionalised accounts of verifiable, recent historical figures can be found within a thirteenth-century Anglo-French context. This group consists of the *History of William Marshal*, the *Romance of Fouke Fitz Waryn*, the *Story of Eustace the Monk* and the *Romance of Richard Coeur de Lion*. These four individuals and the fictionalised accounts of their lives make a coherent group because although the accounts are very different in terms of length, style and language they all describe approximately the same time and place.<sup>16</sup> Richard, William, Fouke and Eustace were all active in both England and northern France in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries and there is considerable overlap in secondary characters between the four accounts; in fact Fouke is the only one of the central characters not to appear in one or more of the other texts.

That a cluster of fictionalised historical romances should exist in the vicinity of England is not surprising given the broader literary context. As commented on by Rosalind Field '[r]omance in England appears at its most characteristic in those works which claim to derive from the history of England.'<sup>17</sup> She refers to the Anglo-Norman pseudo-historical romances as the 'Matter of England', in contrast to the Matter of Britain (the Arthurian cycle),

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<sup>16</sup> The *Romance of Richard Coeur de Lion* is between 2,000 and 7,000 lines long, depending on the version, and in Middle English, the *Romance of Fouke Fitz Waryn* is Anglo-Norman and slightly over 2,000 lines long in the surviving prose. Both the *Story of Eustace the Monk* and the *History of William Marshal* are written in Old French but the *Story* is 2,300 lines and the *History* nearly 20,000.

<sup>17</sup> Rosalind Field, 'Romance as History, history as romance', in Mills, Fellows and Meale (eds), *Romance in Medieval England* (Cambridge, 1991), p.163.

and includes the *Romance of Fouke Fitz Waryn* within the group; the others being the stories of Horn, Havelok, Guy, Bevis and Waldef all of which purport to describe historical individuals but are purely fictional. Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain*, which was to become an accepted part of British history for several centuries, was followed by similarly fantastic histories such as Wace's *Roman de Brut* and Layamon's *Brut* (c.1215).<sup>18</sup> Therefore, historicised fiction and fictionalised history had a particularly prominent place in the literature of thirteenth-century England. What is unusual about the group of texts to be discussed in this thesis is how closely the production of fictionalised accounts followed from the individual's death. The *Romance of Richard Coeur de Lion* was by far the most delayed of the four and even in that case there is evidence for stories that appear in the romance being current only fifty years after his death.

The earliest in the series of works to be scrutinised is that describing the life of William Marshal (1147-1219). William was born the landless younger son of a nobleman but by the end of his life had become one of the richest and most powerful barons in England. This position was gained through military successes in wars and tournaments, and being granted an heiress of considerable standing as a wife.<sup>19</sup> He was able to establish a formidable reputation serving in the courts of four kings; the Young King Henry (1155-83), Henry II (1133-89), Richard I, and John (1166-1216), before being appointed regent for the child king Henry III (1207-72). The 20,000 line *History* recounting his life was commissioned by his son not long after his death and, despite being composed by a professional versifier, is the least fictionalised of the four main texts. It purports to provide an accurate account of his entire life from when he was a young child up to his death and is the first known vernacular biography in the medieval west.<sup>20</sup> There are, nevertheless, sufficient overlaps with more obviously fictional literature to

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<sup>18</sup> Wace re-wrote Geoffrey's account of British history, including the Trojan origins and Arthurian material, in Anglo-Norman for a Norman Audience sometime between 1150 and 1155, this then formed the basis for Layamon's c.1215 Middle English version of the stories. Wace, *Roman de Brut, A History of the British: Text and Translation*, Judith Weiss (ed & trans) (Exeter, 1999); G.L. Brook & R.F. Leslie (eds), *Layamon's Brut*, Early English Text Society Original Series, 2 vols (London, 1963 & 1978).

<sup>19</sup> William married Isabel de Clare (c.1172-1220), daughter and only surviving child of Richard de Clare, Earl of Pembroke, in 1189 when she was 17 and he was 43.

<sup>20</sup> The author makes a number of claims for accuracy, for example 'Si me couvent grant peine metre, E grant estudie a grant cure, A dire la verité pure. [I must put great effort, diligence and care, into telling the full truth.]', *HWM* 9634-6

make the *History of William Marshal* an instructive example. The first half of the text in particular contains a number of romance motifs and the many detailed accounts of tournaments drew inspiration from the works of Chretien de Troyes (as will be demonstrated below). However, it is in William's consistent characterisation as the perfect knight throughout the whole text, not just the more romanticised sections, that the relationship between the life of the historical William Marshal and that of his fictionalised counterpart becomes most intriguing.

Fouke Fitz Waryn (c.1160-1258), by contrast, was a far less important person historically. There are, as a consequence, far fewer surviving sources which describe his life, making testing the fictionality of his romance difficult. He was a baron of the Welsh marches who spent a short period as an outlaw in the early thirteenth century and was a member of the baronial party during the First Barons' War (1215-17) but otherwise does not impinge significantly upon the historical record. Although the *Romance of Fouke Fitz Waryn* has traditionally been classified among the ancestral romances there is no evidence to suggest that it was produced by or for Fouke's successors.<sup>21</sup> The *Romance* is a highly romancified account of Fouke's life as an outlaw in which he protests against the withholding of his inheritance. These protests are preceded by a lengthy justification of his actions in the form of an account of the activities of his family from the Norman Conquest onwards, to demonstrate the unassailable right through which Fouke's claims to the inheritance were made. In the *Romance* Fouke is characterised variously as a good outlaw, an exile and a chivalric hero; he is presented in an unambiguously positive light as an inherently loyal and law abiding subject forced into outlawry by an unscrupulous monarch, with no mention of his later opposition to the crown in the Barons' War.

The *Romance of Richard Coeur de Lion* is unique in the extent of the fictionalisation it creates for an individual whose historical actions are so well attested, especially given the fact that the *Romance* was composed less than a

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<sup>21</sup> The model of the 'ancestral romance' was developed by Dominica Legge in *Anglo-Norman Literature and its Background* (Oxford, 1963) but has been weakened considerably by demonstrations that there is too little evidence to connect the composition of the texts identified as such to either the family in question or to specific occasions. The most notable criticism of the model appears in Susan Dannenbaum, 'Anglo-Norman Romances of English Heroes: 'Ancestral Romance'?', *Romance Philology*, 35 (1981-2), pp.601-8



century after the death of its hero. Even some of its more fictional episodes, such as Richard's single combat with Saladin (c.1138-93), were recognisable within only fifty years of Richard's death.<sup>22</sup> In addition, the fact that Richard was a king and involved in one of the most celebrated crusades means that he appears regularly in sources from chronicles to charters and accounts all over Europe. As a result his actions can be established in far greater detail than is normal for the majority of people from the late twelfth century, even amongst the higher ranks of society. Although there are many other examples of historical individuals being transformed into fictional characters in romances, epics and sagas produced throughout the European Middle Ages and beyond, there are few where so much comparative material is available recounting the historical experiences of the individual.<sup>23</sup> As such Richard provides vital clues to how individual stories developed and how an individual's broader reputation could shape the way they were presented.

The last text to be considered is the *Story of Eustace the Monk*. Eustace (c.1170-1217), is the only one of the four individuals at the heart of this thesis not to have been an Englishman, although he did spend some years as a sea captain in the employ of King John. He appears in the historical record more regularly than Fouke, but less so than the other two key individuals. This presence is principally because he was actively involved in the wars between England and France that were ongoing for much of John's reign. Like Fouke he spent some time as an outlaw, in the vicinity of Boulogne, but he was also a pirate who worked first for John then switched allegiance to Philip Augustus of France and his son, the future Louis VIII.<sup>24</sup> He died as captain of Louis' fleet at

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<sup>22</sup> R.S. Loomis, 'Richard Coeur de Lion and the Pas Saladin in Medieval Art', *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, 30 (1915), p.514.

<sup>23</sup> The four key texts of this thesis were by no means the only examples of fictionalised history produced in the thirteenth century, for example the well known Spanish *Poema de mio Cid* written c.1207 used a famous figure from 1089-92 as its hero; Davenport, *Medieval Narrative* (2004), p.120. Other European examples include: the Irish *Song of Dermot and the Earl*, c.1190-1220s; numerous Icelandic Sagas including *Nijal's Saga*, c.1280, and *Laxdaela Saga*, c.1245; and the French *Raoul de Cambrai*, c.1200. As stated by Joseph Stevenson in his introduction to the story of Fouke Fitz Warin in the Rolls Series, 'there is scarcely a nation' in the Middle Ages that does not furnish an example of a narrative that, while based in fact, possesses a 'large and ambitious superstructure of fable'; Joseph Stevenson (ed), *Chronicon Anglicanum*, Rolls Series, 66 (1875), p.xxi.

<sup>24</sup> Although the term 'pirate' is never used in the *Story* and it has unhelpful associations with the jolly-roger etc there is no obvious alternative term to use. Privateer would be a possibility but that term refers to an Early-Modern phenomenon. To clarify, Eustace was the commander of ships that were given to him by the kings he worked for and he used them for their benefit but he also

the Battle of Sandwich (1217). Like its hero, the *Story of Eustace the Monk* is French rather than English and it provides a very different characterisation of its hero than the other key texts. One that is far less favourable. Richard, William and Fouke are all presented in a more or less positive light with the majority of the literary motifs used coming from romance or *chansons de geste*. The *Story* shows Eustace as a dangerous and devilish individual, compelling due to his unfailing ability to outwit those around him but a man to be feared rather than emulated. The differences between the characterisations of Eustace and Fouke, both of which texts focus on their hero's status as outlaw, are particularly useful for examining the factors which may have influenced the extent and nature of their fictionalisation.

It is the person of King John and the events of his reign that tie all of these individuals together. John appears as a character in every one of the key texts, with a remarkably consistent characterisation, and in each is influential in determining the course of the narrative.<sup>25</sup> The wars with France leading up to the loss of Normandy (1204) and the subsequent conflict within England which resulted in the First Barons' War provide a backdrop to the events of three of the texts, and ironically even the *Romance of Richard Coeur de Lion* is influenced by these events because of the knowledge that he will be the last English king to rule over large territories in France. Given the prominence of John and his reign in the group of texts to be considered it is worth noting that in addition to overlaps in personal and key events between the four texts, they were all written within two periods, the mid 1220s to early 1230s and c.1260-80s. These two periods are notable for the fact that the same issues that were key to John's reign were repeatedly brought to the fore during that time: England's status as a separate entity from the rest of Europe, especially France, and debate about the relationship between the king and the law. These are also themes that are prominent in the texts to be discussed.

From John's reign onwards England and France were beginning to be seen as something approaching national units. The development of national

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used them in unlawful and self-enriching ways. For example, the description of Eustace's capture and robbing of 200 marks from a valuable ship, *ETM* 2126-35, is purely for profit as there was no military advantage to be gained.

<sup>25</sup> Richard is forced to return from the crusade as a result of John's treachery in England, both Fouke and Eustace end their times as outlaws as a result of making agreements with John, and William spent much of his life and approximately a third of the *History* working for John.

identification was a complex process that did not happen all at once; cultural and political change evolved only gradually.<sup>26</sup> Continued warfare with France, attempting to re-establish Angevin control over French territories throughout the period, helped to preserve a sense of difference through enmity but despite considerable time, effort and money such efforts remained unsuccessful.<sup>27</sup> So English kings and their subjects became administratively and financially focused on England in a way that had not been the case when they held extensive French properties. However, a sense of community tied instinctively to 'England' was vocalised, and perhaps encouraged, most strongly by the hostility to the prominent position of groups identified as 'aliens' at Henry III's court. The perceived favouritism towards Poitevin and Savoyard figures prominent in Henry's council was a key factor in the outbreak of the Second Barons' War (1264-7), which falls within the second period of composition.<sup>28</sup>

The relationship between the king and the law is the more complex of the two themes. The civil war at the end of John's reign, the First Barons War, had a continuing impact on English politics in the form of the Magna Carta which was seen as a hugely significant step in placing legal limitations on the king.<sup>29</sup> In the

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<sup>26</sup> See especially Thorlac Turville-Petre, *England the Nation: Language, Literature, and National Identity, 1290-1340*, (Oxford: 1996), which explores early examples of English nationalism as it appears in historical and particularly English language sources. For example he describes how Matthew Paris 'repeatedly criticized [Henry] for his preoccupation with his Angevin inheritance and his favouritism towards his Poitevin and Savoyard relatives', p.3.

<sup>27</sup> According to the Treaty of Paris (1259) which eventually ended English/French warfare over the old Angevin Empire Henry III was only able to retain the title Duke of Aquitaine and control over Gascony and parts of Aquitaine. It was also established that these lands were held as a vassal of Louis IX. The most famous, and still influential, study of the impact of England's loss of its continental holding is F.M. Powicke's seminal *The Loss of Normandy, 1189-1204: Studies in the History of the Angevin Empire* (Manchester, 1913, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1961). Modern studies have been made by Daniel Power, 'The end of Angevin Normandy: the revolt at Alençon (1203)', *Historical Research* (2001), pp. 444-64, and 'King John and the Norman Aristocracy', *King John: New Interpretations*, S.D. Church (ed) (Woodbridge, 1999), pp.117-36. The practical impact of the loss of a large proportion of the resources that had been available to earlier monarchs has also been pointed out by Nick Barratt, 'Counting the Cost: The Financial Implications of the Loss of Normandy', *Thirteenth Century England X*, Michael Prestwich, Richard Britniss & Robin Frame (eds) (Woodbridge, 2005), pp.31-40.

<sup>28</sup> Although Simon de Montfort, the individual most readily identified with the cause of the English barons, was himself originally from France, one of the demands of the Second Barons' War was that the king should take advice from the nobility of his own kingdom and favour them above foreigners. Prominent work on this period has been done by David Carpenter in *The reign of Henry III* (London, 1996) and J. R. Maddicott in *Simon de Montfort* (Cambridge, 1994). On earlier designations of non-English born magnates influential in English political life as 'alien' which covers the first period of composition see Nicholas Vincent, *Peter des Roches: An Alien in English Politics, 1205-1238* (Cambridge, 1996).

<sup>29</sup> On the developing role and perceptions of the Magna Carta see Ralph V. Turner, *Magna Carta Through The Ages* (Harlow, 2003).

context of John's reign, as an unsuccessful attempt at preventing civil war and concerned primarily with the specific financial concerns of a small group of individuals, Magna Carta does not seem important but nevertheless it became so.<sup>30</sup> Perceptions, no matter how inaccurate, have an important place within the world of ideals. As Kathryn Faulkner says 'the value [Magna Carta] held in the popular imagination was far greater than the sum of its parts', and the repeated calls for it to be reissued show that there was a widespread desire for the freedoms and rights that it was perceived to grant.<sup>31</sup> Harding has demonstrated that '[b]uilding on Roger of Wendover's misunderstandings, Mathew [Paris] ran together King John's Magna Carta and King Henry's reissues of 1217 and 1225 (different in important respects) in such a way as to create the myth of an unending struggle for the liberties of 1215 against an irreconcilable government.'<sup>32</sup> By the mid thirteenth century, the time of the Second Barons War and the second period of composition, the events of John's reign had taken on a significance that they had not had at the time.

It is worth noting that although there was a continuing interest in the place of the King within the law throughout the thirteenth century there was not a unified movement for reform at any one time, let alone over the several decades that are covered by this thesis. The base of support for reformers in 1264-5 covered the Welsh Marches and much of England as well as extending to individuals in Scotland, France, Gascony and amongst the Anglo-Irish political

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<sup>30</sup> Looking at the charter itself the over-riding theme is indeed that the king should rule according to the law. For example, chapters thirty and thirty-one prevented the king taking goods without the owner's consent and thirty-nine ensures that no free man be prosecuted except by the 'law of the land'. Much of Magna Carta focuses on the limits of feudal dues, especially in situations of inheritance; it was these concerns which opened the document and they continued throughout. For example in chapter 37 which concerns crown wardship, A.E. Dick Howard, *Magna Carta: Text and Commentary* (Charlottesville, 1964), pp.34-52. However, chapter sixty-one demonstrates that the desired political framework being put forward was not feudal. This clause set up a committee of twenty-five barons to oversee the charter's keeping that had the authority to punish the king 'by capture of Our castles, lands, and possessions and by all other possible means' if he or his officers should fail to uphold it. This created an authority above the king within his kingdom, an idea that was to have practical implications later in the century following Henry III's capture at the Battle of Lewes in 1264.

<sup>31</sup> Kathryn Faulkner, 'The Knights in the Magna Carta Civil War', *Thirteenth Century England VIII*, Michael Prestwich, Richard Britnell & Robin Frame (eds) (Woodbridge, 2001), p.10.

<sup>32</sup> Alan Harding, *England in the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1993), p.6. The date of the Magna Carta's passage into law in a slightly modified form, 1225 on the attainment of Henry III's majority, is particularly significant as it falls within the first period of composition.

communities, but that does not mean that they all had the same aims.<sup>33</sup> There were widespread calls for reform but no consistency of demands for what those reforms should be.<sup>34</sup> In the Second Barons' War especially there were a multiplicity of proceedings and proposals that claimed to offer a solution to the conflict but were unacceptable to many on both sides.<sup>35</sup> The two main issues at stake, Englishness and kingship, remained consistent throughout the two periods of composition but the specific points of contention and the ways in which they were articulated varied widely, the significance of which for the research questions to be addressed in this thesis shall be discussed shortly.<sup>36</sup>

One final element that connects the production of all four main texts is that the first period of composition, the mid 1220s, saw Henry III reach his majority and the accessions of both Louis VIII (1187-1226) and Louis IX (1214-70) in France, and the later fell around the accession of Edward I (1239-1307) in 1272. Therefore, all the texts were written around times of authority shifting from old to new regimes. Although Henry had been crowned in 1216 on John's death and again in 1220 at the Pope's insistence, his early rule was as a child with England in the hands of two regents, William Marshal up to 1219 and then Hubert de Burgh until 1227. The 1220s as a whole saw a gradual increase in his personal influence over his kingdom. Meanwhile in France, the accession of Louis VIII, followed so closely by his death and the regency of his wife on behalf of Louis IX, created a period of uncertainty following the stability of the forty-three year reign of Philip Augustus (1165-1223). A similar situation exists for the later period; Edward was influential in the later years of his father's reign which were marred by unrest in the form of rebellion and civil war. There was also a period of two years after his father's death before Edward took over personal control of his kingdom because he had been away on crusade at the time of death. As well as changes in ruler there is a pattern of regencies for young and

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<sup>33</sup> Robin Frame, 'Ireland and the Barons' Wars', *Thirteenth Century England I*, P.R. Coss & S.D. Lloyd (eds) (Woodbridge, 1985), p.164.

<sup>34</sup> Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort* (1994), p.367.

<sup>35</sup> For example the *Dictum of Kenilworth* was an offer made by the royalists to the besieged garrison and was initially unpopular with both sides. The *Dictum* and many other sets of objectives are detailed in R.E. Treharne & I.J. Sanders (eds), *Documents of the Baronial Movement of Reform and Rebellion 1258-1267* (Oxford, 1973).

<sup>36</sup> It is not political and cultural continuity or change that is of interest but the nature and process of fictionalization. The above outline of themes explains the historical circumstances in which that process took place, and as such will be referred to repeatedly, but is not an indicator of the direction the rest of the argument will take.

absent monarchs that increases the similarities of the two periods even further and helped to highlight the issue of what exactly the role of the king was.<sup>37</sup>

The similarities in the context of composition are important because an immediate issue when looking at a narrative account of any individual or event, regardless of genre, is how the circumstances at the time of writing have impacted on the way they have been portrayed. In the case of fictionalised history we might expect to see a correlation between the changes made by the author to historical facts and events at the time of writing in order to make a political point. However, as Susan Dannenbaum pointed out in her consideration of the value of the idea of ‘ancestral romance’, the idea of linking composition of romances glorifying a heroic ancestor to a family crisis is unconvincing simply ‘because of the abundance of possible crises available.’<sup>38</sup> All of the ‘ancestral romances’, including the *Romance of Fouke Fitz Waryn*, have been connected with a number of possible occasions, a circular argument in which the text’s composition is dated to the event and then the connection between text and event is proven by reference to how closely they are dated. Of the texts to be considered in detail in this thesis only the *History of William Marshal* can be dated with any degree of precision, the others are only estimates to within a couple of decades; a time span that is virtually useless for identifying a particular political context that influenced fictionalisation. This inability to connect a text directly to events makes it impossible to argue that certain contemporary circumstances influenced the way in which an individual was fictionalised; they can not be seen as immediate, political commentaries or satires.

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<sup>37</sup> It is worth remembering through all these discussions of similarity that England was not unique in the thirteenth century in bringing these issues to the fore. More detail on the specific circumstances in France will be given in the chapter on Eustace the Monk but Europe as a whole was undergoing an evolution in political culture that increasingly emphasised the duty of a monarch towards his subjects. For example, in 1222 King Andrew II of Hungary passed the Golden Bull which established the necessity for the king to obey the law and granted his nobility the right to disobey him if he didn’t; Miklos Molnar, *A Concise History of Hungary* (Cambridge, 2001). Emperor Frederick II’s 1232 *Statutum in favorem principum* referred to similar concerns as it granted the princes of the various territories within the Holy Roman Empire the right to a say in all imperial legislation; David Abulafia, *Frederick II: A Medieval Emperor*, (London, 1988). A comparison between England, France and Germany led Susan Reynolds to conclude that although England is different in having more records available to study the countries look otherwise quite similar; Reynolds, ‘How Different was England?’, *Thirteenth Century England VII*, Michael Prestwich, Richard Britnell and Robin Frame (eds) (Woodbridge, 1999), pp.1-16 at p.12.

<sup>38</sup> Dannenbaum, ‘Anglo-Norman Romances’, p.603.

It is the difficulty with dating and, therefore, tying a text's interests to specific events, that makes the similarities between the two periods of composition so important. As Dannenbaum herself argued, the lack of specific dating is not necessarily a failing. Rather than the 'ancestral' romances being a response by individual families to individual situations the multiplicity of events that have been identified as providing potential impetus for composition indicate 'that these works respond to certain pervasive qualities of English feudalism of the time.'<sup>39</sup> As was shown above, all of the key texts were produced at times when there was a focus on what constituted England and Englishness, as well as both practical and theoretical concerns over rulership and the place of the king in relation to the law. Therefore, by considering those issues the key texts can be seen as forming part of a broader discussion rather than merely being responses to short term circumstances. As Rosalind Field argued, looking for the social and political context of a text can lead to the danger 'that literature may be explained away as propaganda, in our suspicious determination to uncover motives.'<sup>40</sup> Consequently, there are certain benefits to being unable to focus too strongly on the context at the time of writing, one of which is that it focuses attention back towards the original facts being fictionalised.

Although it does not appear that any of the key texts were hugely popular given the limited number of manuscripts that survive, with the possible exception of the *Romance of Richard Coeur de Lion*, there is evidence that at least three versions of each of them existed at some point, proving that they all had some measure of circulation.<sup>41</sup> For a text to be copied and distributed it must have had relevance that went beyond its initial time and place of authorship, and that relevance would not come from any political posturing by the author but from the story itself. Something in the historical lives and characters of Richard, William, Fouke and Eustace made them interesting to audiences in the decades

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<sup>39</sup> Dannenbaum, 'Anglo-Norman Romances', p.603.

<sup>40</sup> Field, 'Romance as History, history as romance', p.166.

<sup>41</sup> The manuscript survival of each text will be considered in the relevant chapters but briefly; both the *History of William Marshal* and the *Story of Eustace the Monk* survive in only one manuscript but there are references to copies that have not survived in library catalogues; the *Romance of Fouke Fitz Waryn* again only survives in one copy but it is a re-working of an earlier version and a partial summary of two other slightly different versions recorded in the Early Modern period survives; finally the *Romance of Richard Coeur de Lion* appears to have been far more popular than the other three, surviving in seven manuscripts, all unrelated to each other, and a number of fragments.

and centuries after their deaths, and made their appearance in the grander and more fantastical world of fiction believable. Therefore, throughout the following chapters focus will remain on the individual whose life is being described, not the author who wrote about him. What was it about the heroes' lives that made them suitable candidates for fiction? How far from reality did authors have to go to create their characterisation? What do the fictional elements add to the historical narrative that already existed? The men being fictionalised were not simply manipulated into dramatic scenarios as propaganda pieces but lived lives that were considered worth writing about, and the texts that resulted had impact far beyond their initial context. As a group these fictionalised histories have the potential to illuminate the border-land between medieval ideas of history and fiction, the nature of popular perceptions of the past and the development of certain literary motifs.

The following thesis is divided into six chapters that can be further divided to form three groups; background, the practicalities of fictionalisation, and the limitations imposed on fictionalisation by the facts. The first chapter stands alone and expands on the issue mentioned above, namely that medieval genres were not neatly separated into fact and fiction, history and literature. It discusses in detail the theoretical context of the relationship between history and fiction in the thirteenth century. In particular it considers the nature of history as described by a variety of contemporary theoreticians and historians, including John of Garland, William of Newburgh and Ambroise, as well as modern scholarship on the subject. An attempt is also made to establish how both history and fiction might be identified in practice in a text given the difficulties involved simply in defining them. This chapter provides a background for the detailed examination of texts that follows, allowing future chapters to make reference to various theories and definitions without the need to discuss them in detail.

The second section encompasses chapters two, three and four, each focusing on one of the three main texts which were composed in England. Chapter two builds on the theory discussed in the previous chapter by looking at the *History of William Marshal*. It considers the extent to which the *History* can be seen as fiction, in the process establishing what exactly fictionalisation consists of. Claiming, and often delivering, accuracy but with a close relationship to concepts of chivalry and the literary motif of the perfect knight, this is a text



truly on the edge between genres. It demonstrates that the relationship between history and fiction goes both ways: fiction can influence history just as much as history influences fiction.

Chapter three uses the *Romance of Fouke Fitz Waryn* to illustrate that, although history and fiction were considered to be entirely separate by medieval historians and theorists, there were advantages to combining them in a single text. The manipulation both of the historical circumstances being described and the available literary models could create a powerful image that neither was capable of alone. The fourth chapter uses the extensive source material available about the historical life of Richard I to consider the process by which fictionalisation took place. The gradual development of some episodes through chronicles into the *Romance of Richard Coeur de Lion* and the varying versions of the *Romance* itself show how stories could become attached to a famous figure and in the process encourage even further fictionalisation to take place.

The final two chapters explore how the historical facts may have restricted the possibilities available for fictionalisation. Chapter five focuses again on Richard I but instead of comparing the *Romance of Richard Coeur de Lion* to chronicle accounts of his life it provides a comparison with alternative fictionalised characterisations. Richard appears in numerous literary works throughout Europe, especially the *History of William Marshal* and the French *Chronicle of Reims*, with a remarkably similar characterisation, suggesting that it was his historical characteristics and abilities that shaped his fictionalisation rather than the motivations of the later authors who created it. Finally, the characterisation of Eustace in the *Story of Eustace the Monk* is considered, a significantly different individual to those in the other key texts. In spite of the many similarities between Eustace and Fouke in narrative structure, there are vast differences in style, and a comparison between them demonstrates that even those parts of a person's life that were not considered worthy of fictionalisation could influence the form that fictionalisation took. These two chapters together will also demonstrate that there were certain kinds of events, for example outlawry, which provided authors with narrative gaps into which fiction could suitably be inserted without the text as a whole losing probability. If an individual had such an event in his life it made it more likely that fictionalisation would develop into full blown fiction.

## The Definition and Identification of ‘History’ and ‘Fiction’

The first issue that must be tackled, before a discussion of the key texts can take place, is what exactly was understood to be ‘history’ and ‘fiction’ in the thirteenth century, when the texts on which this thesis is built were being written. Without entering the broader, and continual, question of the nature and idea of history, it is worth noting that medieval historical writing, whether chronicle, *Life*, or romance, frequently has been held up as somehow antithetical to a notion of historical truth, or true history. For example, in the 1930s Floyd S. Lear famously contrasted the statement made by classical historian Polybius that, ‘if history is deprived of the truth, we are left with nothing but an idle, unprofitable tale,’ with the level of accuracy in the work of medieval author Gregory of Tours.<sup>42</sup> The contrast between the classical ideal and medieval reality led Lear to conclude that there had been a dramatic decline in the quality of historical writing in the intervening centuries and lament ‘the circumstances that have caused history, thus, to dissolve into a dream’.<sup>43</sup> This critical view of medieval historiography was espoused well into the later twentieth century. For example Southern argued that during the Middle Ages historical thought was restricted by a tendency to systematisation with ‘the presumption that time and place and historical circumstances could be ignored in the search for the truth about the nature of man and the universe.’<sup>44</sup>

However, the following discussion will demonstrate that far from taking a fluid approach to the past, the Middle Ages had a definite sense that truthful history and made up fictions were, and should be kept, separate. In the Middle Ages historians in the prologues to their work, and theorists discussing literary form, made clear distinctions, even if, at times, they are not the same ones that would be made by a modern reader. The following chapter will fall into three

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<sup>42</sup> Polybius, *The Rise of the Roman Empire*, Ian Scott-Kilvert (trans) (London, 1979), I.14.

<sup>43</sup> Lear does not question whether Polybius lived up to his own ideals any more than Gregory did; Floyd S. Lear, ‘The Medieval Attitude Toward History’, *Rice Institute Pamphlets*, 20 (1933), pp.162-4.

<sup>44</sup> R.W. Southern, ‘Aspects of the European Tradition of Historical Writing. 2. Hugh of St Victor and the Idea of Historical Development’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, fifth Series, 21 (1971), p.163.

parts; beginning by examining the various ways in which historians of the period viewed and justified their own task in comparison to fiction, before moving onto the definitions provided by medieval theorists. Modern scholarship on the theory and practice of medieval historical and fictional writing, especially that of Antonia Gransden, Suzanne Fleischman, Peter Damian-Grint and Dennis Green, will then be compared to the medieval ideas in order to establish a set of identifying features for both types of literature that can be taken forward for use in the following chapters without danger of anachronism.

The most explicit discussion of the difference between history and fiction to appear in the Middle Ages is the famous criticism of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain*, written c.1136, by William of Newburgh in his own late twelfth-century *History*.<sup>45</sup> The *History of the Kings* is best known for its insertion of King Arthur and his knights into the timeline of British history and as such has a strong connection to romancified views of the past. However, William's attack was highly unusual and nothing like it appears elsewhere. Arthur was an accepted historical figure, an assumption that William himself did not deny. In fact the 'discovery' of the grave of Arthur and Guenivere at Glastonbury in 1198, approximately the same time as William was writing, shows how complete the conviction of his historicity was.<sup>46</sup> It is interesting therefore that William chose to spend several pages disproving Geoffrey's account and the ways in which he does so are illuminating.

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<sup>45</sup> This specific date of writing was argued by Acton Griscom, 'The Date of Composition of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia*' *Speculum*, 1 (1926). J.S.P. Tatlock was unwilling to be quite so specific but demonstrated that composition did take place in the mid 1130s; 'Contemporaneous matters in Geoffrey of Monmouth', *Speculum*, 6 (1931), pp.206-24, at pp.221-3; *The Legendary History of Britain: Geoffrey of Monmouth's Historia regum Britanniae and its earlier vernacular versions* (Berkeley, 1950), pp.117, 435. More recent scholars accept this dating, for example Michael D Reeve (ed) and Neil Write (trans), *Geoffrey of Monmouth: The History of the Kings of Britain*, Arthurian Studies, LXIX (Woodbridge, 2007). Surprisingly, although William's criticism of Geoffrey is well known and is commented on by many scholars, it has received no detailed analysis. Antonia Gransden is illustrative of the tendency to comment without providing detail. In her monumental, two volume, study of historical writing in England she dedicates less than three pages to William's 'remarkable passage' on Geoffrey, and only to illustrate that William himself 'had mastered the principles of historical criticism'; Gransden, *Historical Writing in England c.550 to c.1307* (London, 1974), pp.263-5; the second volume is *Historical Writing in England c.1307 to the early sixteenth century* (London, 1982). Geoffrey of Monmouth and the vision of early British history that he created will be of interest again in chapter three as it was an inspiration for the author of the *Romance of Fouke Fitz Waryn*.

<sup>46</sup> Gerald of Wales provides two accounts of this event, one in his *Liber de Principis instructione* and the other in the *Speculum Ecclesiae*; J.S. Brewer (ed), *Giraldi Cambrensis opera, Vol.IV, Speculum Ecclesiae*, Rolls Series, 21 (1873), pp. 47-51; George F. Warner (ed), *Giraldi Cambrensis opera, Vol.VIII, De Principis Instructione Liber*, Rolls Series, 21 (1891), pp. 126-29.

William's criticisms were predominantly levelled at the categorization of the work as history; arguing instead that it was fable. He claims that Geoffrey:

‘pro eo quod fabulas de Arturo, ex priscis Britonum figmentis sumptas et ex proprio auctas, per superductum Latini sermonis colorem honesto historiae nomine palliavit’

‘cloaked the fabulous exploits of Arthur, drawn from the old fictions of the Britons and with additions of his own, in the honourable name of history through the lustre of the Latin language.’<sup>47</sup>

William attacks the general unlikelihood of Geoffrey's account, especially the excessive and widespread military victories all over Europe. When compared to the genuine military successes of Julius Caesar and Alexander the Great they cannot be believed.<sup>48</sup> Geoffrey is repeatedly referred to as a *fabulator*, a fabler, rather than a historian. By describing Geoffrey in this way, William denies his work the dignity of *honestum nomen historiae*, which can be reserved only for true accounts.

In fact William clearly feels that the lack of truth in Geoffrey's pseudo-history is dangerous and is at pains to disprove it using other, authoritatively historical, sources and inform his audience of the truth:

‘Nam qui rerum gestarum veritatem non didicit, fabularum vanitatem indiscrete admittit.’

‘For only one who has not learnt the truth of history indiscreetly believes the absurdity of fable.’<sup>49</sup>

Bede is used to outline the genuine sequence of events in England after the Roman withdrawal and this is shown to be incompatible with Geoffrey's

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<sup>47</sup> William of Newburgh, *Historia Rerum Anglicarum*, in *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I. Vol. I*, Richard Howlett (ed), Rolls Series, 82 (1884-9), p.12.

<sup>48</sup> William of Newburgh, pp.16-7.

<sup>49</sup> William of Newburgh, p.13.

account.<sup>50</sup> More specifically, when after a number of foreign victories Geoffrey has Arthur return to Britain for a great celebration attended by archbishops of London, Carleon and York, William points out that this can not be true because the first archbishops in Britain were created by Augustine at a later date.<sup>51</sup> The overall probability of Geoffrey's account is also questioned as Arthur is said to have conquered more kingdoms than exist in the world. In fact William's overall attitude to Geoffrey can be seen when he scornfully comments:

‘An alium orbem somniat infinita regna habentem, in quo ea contigerunt, quae supra memoravit?’

‘Does he dream of another world possessing countless kingdoms, in which the circumstances he has related took place?’<sup>52</sup>

It is not for telling stories of Arthur that Geoffrey is to be criticized but for claiming that they actually took place, subverting the Latin historical style for his own ends. For Newburgh, history had a dignity and status of its own while fiction was only fit for an undiscerning audience and had to attempt to usurp the authority of other modes.

The other important accusation that William levels at Geoffrey is that he is biased. A comparison is made with Gildas, the early British historian used by Bede, whose style is coarse and unpolished, but whose impartiality is strong because:

‘nec veretus, ut verum non taceat, Brito de Britonibus scribere, quod nec in bello fortes fuerint, nec in pace fideles.’

‘there can be no suspicion that the truth is disguised, when a Briton, writing of Britons, declares that they were neither courageous in war nor faithful in peace.’<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> William of Newburgh, pp.13-4.

<sup>51</sup> William of Newburgh, p.16.

<sup>52</sup> William of Newburgh, p.17.

<sup>53</sup> William of Newburgh, p.11.

Rather than adopting this virtuous approach Geoffrey of Monmouth wrote:

‘sive effrenata mentiendi libidine, sive etiam gratia placendi Britonibus’ ‘[a]t contra quidem nostris temporibus, pro expiandis his Britonum maculis’

‘either through an unchecked propensity to falsehood, or a desire to please the Britons’, ‘for the purpose of washing out those stains from the character of the Britons’.<sup>54</sup>

It is highly unlikely that this was Geoffrey’s intended aim as there would be little to be gained from flattering a marginal group and, indeed, the work was dedicated to two English aristocrats, however it is interesting that impartiality is such an important aspect of William’s argument.<sup>55</sup> Bias is being presented as resulting in fiction, lies; impartiality by contrast is a guarantee of truth and accuracy which are the hallmarks of history.

William’s attack on Geoffrey shows that truth and probability are the most important criteria for history and that truth should be told even when it is contrary to one’s own desires. However, as mentioned above William’s protracted discussion of what makes a work history is unique so it needs to be tested against comments made by other authors. One technique that has been frequently used is to look at what was written in the introductions to works, however, the use of prologues in this way is somewhat contentious. Firstly, useful comments on history and fiction only appear in introductions to histories; they are therefore very one sided. In addition, although there were some distinctive features, historical prologues had much in common with the prologues to other types of literary texts which grew out of the classical tradition, making them highly formulaic. Antonia Gransden, the person who has made the most extensive study of this body of source material, has identified a number of features that appear in virtually every historical prologue: a dedication to a patron, a declaration of modesty, a declaration of the aims both to provide accurate and unbiased truth and to preserve the memory of good and bad

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<sup>54</sup> William of Newburgh, p.11, 14.

<sup>55</sup> Gordon Hall Gerould, ‘King Arthur and Politics’, *Speculum*, 2 (1927), p.37-8.

conduct; there may also be a mention of previous historians and a discussion of the problems of writing contemporary history.<sup>56</sup>

The strong conventions governing the content of prologues has led to them being dismissed as valueless for understanding the genuine motivations of historians by scholars such as D.W.T. Vessey and Jeanette Beer.<sup>57</sup> However, as Gransden argues, ‘there is no reason to assume that an author did not believe at least most of what he wrote’; conventions help to shape ideas and even within those conventions the choice of which aspects to emphasise and which previous historians to mention is the author’s own.<sup>58</sup> It does appear that medieval historians saw prologues as having a purpose. The vast variations in the use of prologues, from none at all in some works to a total of seven throughout William of Malmesbury’s *History of the Kings*, argues that they were used by authors who had a point they wanted to make but ensures a bias in favour of the views of those authors who cared enough about the subject to provide a detailed discussion.

The main problem with using prologues to judge thirteenth-century ideas of history is that we have very few to work from. The twelfth century saw large numbers of new chronicles being written, however by the thirteenth century most authors simply added continuations to an older work to bring it up to date; an interesting fact in itself given the theoreticians’ dismissal of contemporary accounts from the category of history. These continuations seldom have individual prologues and even when interpolations are added throughout the original text, as in the case of Matthew Paris, little or no change is made to the original prologue.<sup>59</sup> This may well suggest that the original prologues were still felt to express sufficiently the aims and ideas of the new author but the lack of specifically thirteenth-century statements about history does impose limitations.

Another important difficulty with this group of source materials is that since the prologue grew out of the classical tradition it appears far more

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<sup>56</sup> Antonia Gransden, *Legends, Traditions and History in Medieval England* (London, 1992), pp.125-6.

<sup>57</sup> D.W.T. Vessey, ‘William of Tyre and the art of historiography’, *Medieval Studies*, XXXV (1973), pp.440-5; Jeanette Beer, *Narrative Conventions of Truth in the Middle Ages*, *Études de philologie et d’histoire*, XXXVIII (Geneva, 1981).

<sup>58</sup> Gransden, *Legends, Traditions and History*, p.129.

<sup>59</sup> Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, Henry Richards Luard (ed), Rolls Series, 57, 3 vols. (1874), vol.1, p.xxxiv.

prominently in prose Latin works than in the vernacular; the prologue was an opportunity for authors to show off their rhetorical skills and knowledge. Vernacular verse histories like those of Jordan Fantosme or Ambroise have either very short prologues or none at all and these are more similar in style to the semi-historical and predominantly vernacular verse texts that will form the focus of this thesis.<sup>60</sup> Therefore, the ideals of history being expressed are those of a clerical, educated elite writing in a style very different from the authors of more popular works; they are likely to be far more oriented by Christian models of the past and more concerned with the difference between different literary modes than the less educated laymen. However, although the conclusions which can be reached about thirteenth-century views of history and fiction using these sources are limited, the role that different literary styles were perceived to play within the cultural situation can help us understand what authors felt their works to be achieving.

The concept of variations in status that William's attack on Geoffrey above demonstrates is particularly illuminating as it illustrates how literary styles were perceived. Authentic history is better than fiction so if fiction masquerades as history it is able to increase its own status. As an historian it is not surprising that Newburgh would value his task above others but an awareness of different ranks of literary types does seem to have existed, and history was not at the top. History was portrayed as intellectually inferior to work such as theology and philosophy. William himself talks of history as easy and unsuitable for those busy with monastic service but useful to fill the time of an invalid.<sup>61</sup> As Gransden argues, history was seen as a useful and enjoyable but not overly strenuous task, a rational study that would rescue the author from the dangers of idleness.<sup>62</sup> That history was seen as enjoyable is backed up when, in the prologue to the fourth book of his *History of the Kings*, William of Malmesbury states that he had intended to stop writing sooner but:

rurus solitus amor studiorum aurem uellit et manum iniecit

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<sup>60</sup> Jordan Fantosme's *Chronicle*, RC Johnston (ed & trans) (Oxford, 1981); Ambroise, *The History of the Holy War*, Marianne Ailes and Malcolm Barber (eds), Marianne Ailes (trans) (Woodbridge, 2003).

<sup>61</sup> William of Newburgh, p.3.

<sup>62</sup> Gransden, *Legends, Traditions and History* (1992), pp.133-4.



‘my old love of study plucked me by the ear and laid its hand on my shoulder’<sup>63</sup>

This suggests that he actively preferred writing history to doing other tasks.

The status of history came from its practical purpose; authors had a conviction that history needed to be written down, that events needed to be remembered for future generations. In the early twelfth century the main aim had been to remedy the dearth in historical writing since the death of Bede, an aim stated most famously by William of Malmesbury but also in other works such as the *Chronicle of Melrose*.<sup>64</sup> As the twelfth century progressed this earlier gap was filled and concern moved to preventing such a situation being repeated. William of Newburgh stated that in his own time:

‘nostris autem temporibus tanta et tam memorabilia contigerunt, ut modernorum negligentia culpanda merito censeatur, si literarum monumentis ad memoriam sempiternam mandata non fuerint.’

‘events so great and memorable have occurred, that, if they be not transmitted to lasting memory by written documents, the negligence of the moderns must be deservedly blamed’<sup>65</sup>

Although he was not sure whether someone else had already undertaken the task he was compelled to ensure that it was done. William of Malmesbury was unique in his ambition to combine both aims; writing a history of the years since Bede but also preserving the memory of his own times.<sup>66</sup> What unites all the authors who provide a prologue is the belief that the events they are telling are significant, that they deserve to be widely known; as well as the examples above, Ambrose tells ‘a story that should be told’ and for Robert de Mont his subject is

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<sup>63</sup> William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum; The History of the English Kings*, R.A.B. Mynors (ed and trans), completed by R.M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford, 1998), p.540.

<sup>64</sup> Malmesbury, *History of the Kings*, p.14; *Chronicle of Melrose*, Joseph Stevenson (trans), *The Church Historians of England*, vol.IV, pt.I (London, 1856), p.79.

<sup>65</sup> William of Newburgh, p.18.

<sup>66</sup> Malmesbury, *History of the Kings*, pp.14,540.

‘worthy of the knowledge and imitation of posterity’.<sup>67</sup> The conviction that history needed to be studied explains why William saw Geoffrey’s attempt to give fiction historical status as dangerous; it reduced history’s value by corrupting the information it provided. Therefore, in the hierarchy of styles, fable, or fiction, suffered not because it was entertaining but because it did not temper its entertainment with useful content.

In order to prove the value of their work authors were keen to demonstrate its truth and thus separate it from fiction by assuring the reader that the information they provide had come from a reliable source. The type of source most trusted was a personal eye-witness account. For example, the author of the *Itinerarium Peregrinorum* claims credit for his own work because it is not only an eyewitness account but one written during the events being described:

Noverit nos in castris fuisse cum scripsimus; et bellicose strepitus  
tranquillæ meditationis otium non admississe.

‘we wrote this while we were in the military camp, where the battle’s  
roar does not allow leisure for peaceful thought.’<sup>68</sup>

However, a historian could not always be present at every important event so a suitable second best to personal eye-witness history was for an author to collect eye-witness accounts from a number of trustworthy individuals who may or may not be named. William of Malmesbury was one who made use of both techniques:

Sciat me nichil de retro actis preter coherentiam annorum pro uero  
pacisci;...Quicquid uero de recentioribus aetatibus apposui, uel ipse  
uidi uel a uiris fide dignis audiui

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<sup>67</sup> Amb. p.29; Robert de Monte, *History of King Henry the First*, Joseph Stevenson (trans), *The Church Historians of England*, vol.V, pt.I (London, 1858), p.3.

<sup>68</sup> This claim is unlikely to be true; Itin, pp.6-12, 22. William Stubbs (ed), *Itinerium Peregrinorum et Gesta Regis Ricardi*, in *Chronicles and Memorials of the Reign of Richard I*, Rolls Series, 38 (1864), vol.1, p.4.

‘I guarantee the truth of nothing in past times except the sequence of events... But whatsoever I have added out of recent history, I have either myself seen, or heard from men who can be trusted.’<sup>69</sup>

The restriction to recent events, imposed on authors by the preference for personal accounts, led Richard Vaughan to the generalisation that ‘[w]hat the medieval chronicler concentrated on was the describing of the events of his own lifetime; he was more of a reporter, a journalist, than a historian.’<sup>70</sup>

However, not all authors accepted the restriction thus imposed. Where the events an author wished to describe were too long past one other source could compare to an eye-witness in terms of reliability; the Authority, *auctoritas*, the most admired of which in terms of English history was Bede.<sup>71</sup> This left a chronological gap between Bede and contemporaries within which there was no completely authoritative source that a writer could draw on to prove that his work was not fiction, and consequently others had no way to prove that it was. The most revealing statement about attitudes to the work of comparatively recent past historians concerns Sigebert of Gembloux, a late eleventh- and early twelfth-century scholar whose *Chronicon sive Chronographia* was well known throughout medieval Europe.<sup>72</sup> Robert de Monte clearly admired Sigebert considerably - he states that he prefers Sigebert over all modern authors - however he was prepared to insert extra information into that history. In contrast, he states that it would be ‘unbecoming’ to act in this way towards ‘the writings of men of such recognised authority’ as Eusebius and Jerome.<sup>73</sup> No matter how admirable, modern historians did not have the weight either of eye-witness accounts or acknowledged authorities.<sup>74</sup> Therefore, authors had greater freedom

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<sup>69</sup> Malmesbury, *History of the Kings*, p.16

<sup>70</sup> Richard Vaughan (ed & trans), *Chronicles of Mathew Paris: Monastic Life in the Thirteenth Century* (Gloucester, 1984), p.5.

<sup>71</sup> As discussed by Jan M. Ziolkowski, reference to Authorities was a way to justify new works in a time that had the greatest respect for scholars of the past; Ziolkowski, ‘Cultures of Authority in the Long Twelfth Century’, *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 108 (2009), pp.421-48 at p.438.

<sup>72</sup> The popularity of Sigebert’s *Chronicle* can be deduced by the fact it survives in eighty manuscripts; Mireille Chazan, *L’Empire et L’Histoire Universelle de Sigebert de Gembloux à Jean de Saint-Victor* (Paris, 1999), p.24.

<sup>73</sup> Robert de Monte, *History of King Henry the First*, p.678.

<sup>74</sup> One thirteenth-century exception to this rule was Mathew Paris who seems to have received the status of Authority. The monk who acted as his scribe at the end of his life saw Paris as so great a predecessor that the new author did not deserve to have his name mentioned and in a separate

to diverge from their sources when those sources dealt with the events outside living memory but still from the recent past. William of Newburgh was able to disprove Geoffrey's account of Arthur's reign because he contradicted Bede. Comparison with a lesser authority would not have been as damning.

However, even if the work of previous, non-authoritative, historians was subject to revision, if an author wanted to claim the status of history, it was necessary to demonstrate that a serious attempt had been made to discover the truth. Prologues suggest that historical writers saw the diligent seeking out of facts as important; for example William of Malmesbury describes how he 'studiously sought for chronicles far and near' while Gervase of Canterbury talks of 'searching after truth in the midst of uncertainty'.<sup>75</sup> Although this is one of the conventions of the historical prologue the very persistence of diligence as an ideal is striking. The modesty clause that appears in most prologues, which excuses the author for any deficiencies, often ends with a statement of their desire to receive honour from posterity for industry if on no other count.

As has been shown, medieval historians had an understanding of their work as distinct from fiction based on the usefulness of its subject matter and the truthfulness with which it was recounted; the latter verified either through the use of *auctoritas*, trustworthy eye-witnesses, or diligent research. However, what benefit would the reader expect to gain from reading a text with *honestum nomen historiae* rather than a version interspersed with fable? For medieval Christian historians this value was largely didactic, to teach the audience moral lessons.<sup>76</sup> History's didactic purpose had two aspects; firstly it was seen as serving the moral function of providing examples of both good and bad conduct, and of how God rewarded or punished its practitioners, leading the reader or listener to adjust his own behaviour accordingly. For example Gerald of Wales used the increasing misfortunes of Henry II's reign to show God moving from gentle

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mid thirteenth-century chronicle a monk at Ramsey advised his readers to consult Paris for Henry III's reign. Vaughan (ed & trans), *Chronicles of Mathew Paris*, p.3.

<sup>75</sup> Malmesbury, *History of the Kings*, p.150; Gervase of Canterbury, *The History of the Archbishops of Canterbury*, Joseph Stevenson (trans), *The Church Historians of England*, vol.V, pt.I (London, 1858), p.295.

<sup>76</sup> History's instructive purpose is well known so the following discussion will provide simply an overview of the argument used for it.

persuasion to justice and punishment of a sinner.<sup>77</sup> Similarly Ambroise argued that the True Cross was lost to the Christians as a result of their sin:

Mais por Deu qui velt a sei traire  
Son poeple qu'il aveit rarent  
Quil serveit lores de nient

'through God, who wished to bring to Himself his people whom He had redeemed and who at that time served Him not at all.'<sup>78</sup>

The corollary to this argument of course was that to misrepresent the past by writing an untrue account of it was to misrepresent the will of God and consequently mislead the audience as to correct moral behaviour.<sup>79</sup>

Secondly, knowledge of the past was seen as a useful and necessary tool for the present; a view that appears in William of Newburgh's comment quoted above that only someone without knowledge of true history will be taken in by fable.<sup>80</sup> In making this point William was following a tradition that went back to Augustine who, having given an account of the misfortunes of pagan Rome to demonstrate the advantages that have come from the conversion to Christianity, claimed that:

Atque hoc apud vilgus confirmare nituntur, clades quibus per certa intervalla locum et temporum genus humanum oportet affligi, causa accidere nominus christiani, quod contra deos suos ingenti fama et praeclarissima celebritate per cuneta diffunditur.

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<sup>77</sup> Gerald of Wales, *De instructione principum*, p.136.

<sup>78</sup> Amb. p.1 (lines 32-4). A very similar statement is made in the *Itinerarium Peregrinorum*, p.23.

<sup>79</sup> Placing a moral value on history was not new to the High Middle Ages. For Bede, through history the attentive hearer is 'spurred on to imitate the good', '*ad imitandum bonum auditor sollicitus instigatur*'; Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, Bertram Colgrave & R.A.B. Myons (ed & trans) (Oxford, 1969), pp.2-3. This type of value for history was not even a purely Christian concept; Plutarch stated that the purpose of his *Lives* was the moral education of the reader through example. Plutarch, *Pericles*, in *Greek Lives*, Robin Waterfield (trans) (Oxford, 1998), 1-2.

<sup>80</sup> William of Newburgh, p.13.

‘[t]hose among our adversaries who are learned in the liberal arts and who love history are very well aware of these facts. They pretend not to know them, however, in order to arouse the greatest hostility in the untutored mob.’<sup>81</sup>

History was intended not only for the imitation of posterity but also for its knowledge: it prevented one being taken in by those who sought to distort the past for their own ends. Without a true and accurate knowledge of the past people would lack suitable examples and could therefore be deceived into foolish or even heretical beliefs and behaviour.

Beyond the conclusions that can be drawn from the prologues that historians wrote for their works, another medieval body of source material that discusses the nature of history and its relationship to fiction is the definitions of *historia* and *fictae* provided in books of rhetoric. Such definitions provide a useful counterpoint to the prologue literature because while the prologues provide the views of historians and what they were setting out to achieve, theoreticians were looking in from outside and classifying the resultant texts.<sup>82</sup> In addition, style and rhetoric were important elements of medieval education and, as such, books on these subjects were common and known even to those with lower levels of education. Thus the definitions provided by the theoreticians were more widely known than were the works of the historians discussed above, including among educated individuals writing in other genres, such as fiction. What emerges is a broad consensus among medieval scholars with some interesting divergences.

The series of definitions most quoted throughout the whole of the Middle Ages, and so extremely influential even though it was composed long before the texts that are to be analysed in this thesis, was that written in the sixth century by Isidore of Seville in his *Etymologiarum sive originum*.<sup>83</sup> Isidore was Bishop of Seville from 600 to 636 but it was for his scholarship that he was predominantly

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<sup>81</sup> Augustine, *City of God*, II, 3, Jaques-Paul Migne (ed), *Patrologia Latina*, 221 vols (Paris, 1845), vol.41, cols 13-804 at 49. The translation is by R.W. Dyson (trans), *The City of God Against the Pagans* (Cambridge, 1998).

<sup>82</sup> The limitations to historical prologues have already been mentioned above and those of the theoreticians will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

<sup>83</sup> Gabrielle M. Spiegel, ‘Forging the Past: The Language of Historical Truth in the Middle Ages’, *History Teacher*, 17 (1984), p.268.

known, as indicated by his designation as the most learned man of his age by the Council of Toledo in 655.<sup>84</sup> The *Etymologiae* was by far his most famous work, and has been described as ‘perhaps the single most influential book of the Latin Middle Ages’.<sup>85</sup> That there are over 1000 extant manuscripts over several centuries, second only in number to the Bible, suggests that the view of history which it sets out must have been widely known and therefore influential in the development of historical method.<sup>86</sup> It was upon this model that future definitions were based so it is a necessary starting point for comparison.

In this text, history is defined in a way we can easily recognise and sympathise with today as a true and factual account of past events:

‘Historia est narratio rei gestae, per quam ea, quae in peraeeterito facta sunt, dinoscuntur’

‘Nam historiae sunt res verae quae factae sunt.’

‘History is a narrative of a deed done. Through it, things done in the past are known.’

‘Histories are true things which happened.’<sup>87</sup>

By comparison two other types of literature, drama (or *argumentum*) and fable, are closer to our ideas of fiction:

‘argumenta sunt quae etsi facta non sunt, fieri tamen possunt; fabulae vero sunt quae nec factae sunt nec fieri possunt, quia contra naturam sunt.’

‘dramas are things which, even if they were not done, could have happened; fables were neither done, nor could possibly be done, since they are contrary to nature.’<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> *Isidore of Seville's 'Etymologies': the complete English Translation of Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum Sive Originum Libri XX*, Priscilla Throop (trans) (Charlotte, Vermont, 2005), vol.1, p.xi.

<sup>85</sup> A.H. Merrills, *History and Geography in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2005), p.170.

<sup>86</sup> Throop, *Isidore of Seville's 'Etymologies'*, p.xii.

<sup>87</sup> Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi, *Etymologiarum Sive Originum Libri XX*, W.M. Lindsay (ed) (Oxford, 1911), I.41.3,44.5 (translations are based on those by Throop)

It is particularly interesting that the word *fictae* is not used at all in these definitions while *factae* appears three times.

Isidore instead emphasised the contrast between history and fables, and it is in the chapter on fable that the only uses of the word *fictae* appear.<sup>89</sup> Fictional works are deemed to be a subdivision of the genre of fable, identified by their purpose:

‘Fabulas poetae quasdam delectandi causa finxerunt, quasdam ad naturam rerum, nonnullas ad mores hominum inter pretati sunt. Delectandi causa fictas...quas vulgo dicunt.’

‘Poets have created some fables for the sake of delight, while others interpret the nature of things or the ways of humans. Those for the sake of delight...are commonly called *fictae*.’<sup>90</sup>

For Isidore, fiction is not a term that contrasted directly with fact; though that remains an important aspect of fables as a group, which are defined as being only contrived by speech rather than from things that were done.<sup>91</sup> Instead, by defining fiction as that which only has the function of entertainment, Isidore creates a concept of fiction as something lacking in ‘truth’. Fables can still reflect truth, even if they do not describe real events, through their capacity to represent aspects of human life and nature in a fantastic context.

However, Isidore’s use of *fictae* as part of more general discussion appears to suggest that the modern definition is being used:

‘ut per narrationem fictam ad id quod agitur verax significatio referatur.’

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<sup>88</sup> *Etymologies*, I.44.5.

<sup>89</sup> *Etymologies*, I.40.3, 6.

<sup>90</sup> *Etymologies*, I.40.3

<sup>91</sup> *Etymologies*, I.40.1.



‘by a fictitious narration, the true significance of the thing intended may be reached.’<sup>92</sup>

In this example *fictae* has the opposite associations to those above; it is being used to mean ‘something that never really happened. Contrasting with ‘fact’ rather than ‘truth’, it is actually able to relate ‘truth’. The word ‘fiction’ here is synonymous with ‘fable’ in the first example. Isidore’s definition of the word *fictae* contrasts with his own use of it, highlighting the problems associated with attempting to produce too specific a categorisation.

If we look again at the contrasting definitions of history, drama and fable quoted above, the issue of *fictae*’s absence may perhaps be explained by these problems of definition. Instead, history is described as both *verae* and *factae*, drama is not *factae*, and fable is neither (which appears to contrast with his earlier definition of fable, again proving the complex nature of this problem). Rather than using the problematic word *fictae* a simple negative allows for a far more precise explanation of meaning. However, the predominant contrast remains that between history and a genre that can be seen as synonymous with fiction.

Attempting to explore Isidore’s contrast between history and drama is far more difficult than the contrast between history and fable because the single phrase quoted above is his only mention of drama; it is given no context or purpose, simply a statement that it relates what never happened but could have happened. The definition of drama as something which is not fact highlights the distinction that, for Isidore, history must be both factually accurate and true. The word *verae* is noticeable by its absence in Isidore’s phrase about drama; it is seen as necessary for history and absent from fable but plays no part in the definition of the third category. Does this mean that drama, while not factual, can potentially represent truth but need not do so? If that is so, then how does drama without truth differ from fable? It seems logical that even though the word is not mentioned Isidore saw drama as true, which is backed up by his insistence that drama could have happened; it therefore represents the true nature of the world. Isidore’s representation of drama as a genre which relates the possible and true

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<sup>92</sup> *Etymologies*, I.40.6.

rather than the facts is far closer to the way many modern scholars describe medieval understandings of history than is his own definition of *historia*; a higher truth can be allowed to supersede fact without the resultant work being seen as becoming fiction.<sup>93</sup>

In addition to providing the definition of history discussed above, Isidore made a distinction between *historia* and *annales*; he himself also wrote a chronicle, another type of historical text which he does not discuss, though we cannot be certain he wrote the title by which it is currently known.<sup>94</sup> The distinction he provides is of limited value as he makes contradictory statements:

‘Quaequae enim digna memoriae domi militiaeque, mari ac terrae per annos in commentariis acta sunt, ab anniversariis gestis annales nominaverunt.’

‘Any acts worthy of memory at home and in the military, on land and sea are put down in *commentarii*, note books. They are named *annales* from the yearly occurrences.’<sup>95</sup>

‘Historia autem multorum annorum vel temporum est, cuius diligentia annui commentarii in libris delati sunt. Inter historiam autem et annales hoc interest, quod historia est eorum temporum quae vidimus, annales vero sunt eorum annorum quos aetas nostra non novit.’

‘History is a work of many years or eras, diligently transferred from annual commentaries into books. The difference between history and annals is that history is about times which we see, and annals are about years unfamiliar to our age.’<sup>96</sup>

*Annales* are both accounts of the distant past and year by year descriptions of events. However, although the terminology is problematic, Isidore gives

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<sup>93</sup> This point will be discussed in detail later, along with how modern medievalists and theoreticians have defined and identified history and fiction during the period.

<sup>94</sup> *Etymologies*, I.43.4; Merrills, *History and Geography in Late Antiquity*, p.173.

<sup>95</sup> *Etymologies*, I.44.3.

<sup>96</sup> *Etymologies*, I.44.4.

different names to accounts depending on how they are arranged and whether they describe contemporary or distant events. Different compositional and structural styles are seen as distinct types of writing.

The three fold division of literature popularised by Isidore was repeated throughout the Middle Ages, though the term ‘drama’ was usually replaced by the other word he used ‘argumentum’.<sup>97</sup> Two adaptations of the model were produced during the thirteenth century. The first, by Geoffrey of Vinsauf, appears in his *Documentum de modo et arte dictandi et versificandi*, a prose expansion of his earlier *Poetria nova*, one of the most influential textbooks of the later Middle Ages, which was written shortly after 1203.<sup>98</sup> The other is by John of Garland in his *Parisiana Poetria* which was written c.1220 while he was working at the University of Paris, with some later revisions.<sup>99</sup> Word for word similarities in some places led Traugott Lawler to conclude that Garland knew Vinsauf’s earlier work.<sup>100</sup> Both were probably composed before any of the main texts to be examined in this thesis but they provide the most contemporary set of definitions available. The similarities and differences between these two sets of definitions and those of Isidore show that, although structurally very little had changed in the theory, by the thirteenth century scholars had developed a slightly different approach to the concepts of *historia* and *fictae*.

Vinsauf’s definitions on this topic are generally slightly shorter than Garland’s; he only provides a brief outline without further explanation. For him:

‘Fabula est que nec vera nec verisimilia continet’

‘Historia est res gesta ab etatis nostre memoria remota...Sub historia multa sunt carmina, vt ephitalamicum, idest carmina nupciale quale cecinerunt antique in honorem sponsi et sponse.’

‘Argumentum tercium genus est, et res est ficta non vera sed verisimilis, vt in eglogis et comediis.’

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<sup>97</sup> Peter Ainsworth, ‘Legendary History: *Historia* and *Fabula*’, in Deborah Mauskopt Deliyannis (ed), *Historiography in the Middle Ages* (Brill, 2003), p.389.

<sup>98</sup> Martin Camargo, ‘*Tria sunt*: The Long and the Short of Geoffrey of Vinsauf’s *Documentum de modo et artedictandi et versificandi*’, *Speculum*, 74 (1999), pp.935; John of Garland, *Parisiana Poetria*, Traugott Lawler (ed & trans) (London, 1974), p.327.

<sup>99</sup> John of Garland, *Parisiana Poetria*, p.xv.

<sup>100</sup> John of Garland, *Parisiana Poetria*, p.327.

‘A Fable contains events neither true nor probable’

‘A History reports events from periods long before our age’s memory...Under the category of history are many types of verse, such as *epithalamicum*, which are verses for a wedding that were sung in times past in honour of the bride and groom.’

‘An *Argumentum* is the third type, and that is a fictitious event which is not true but probable, as in pastoral poems and comedies.’<sup>101</sup>

At first sight the definition of history as an account of events long past seems unexceptional but there are a number of points that mark it as a substantial move away from Isidore. In particular that the category of history is now defined purely by the nature of its subject matter rather than truth or fact, and that fable and *argumentum* are defined by comparison to *vera* and *verisimilia* rather than *factae*, a term which has disappeared altogether. Although the implication is that if fable has neither *vera* nor *verisimilia* and *argumentum* has only *verisimilia* then the third category must have both, we are not told so specifically.

Instead we are told that history recounts events from the distant past, which would exclude any kind of eyewitness account or yearly annal from the category, regardless of their truth or accuracy. Here Vinsauf directly contradicts Isidore who argues that:

Apud verteres enim nemo conscribat historiam, nisi is qui interfuisset, et ea quae conscribenda essent vidisset. Melius enim oculis quae fiunt deprehendimus, quam quae auditione colligimus.

‘Among the ancients, no one wrote history unless he had been present and had seen the things which had to be written down. We perceive what has been done with our eyes better than we understand through hearing.’<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> The *Documentum* has never been edited in full but the relevant sections are included in Appendix 2 of John of Garland, *Parisiana Poetria*, pp.331-2, my translation.

<sup>102</sup> *Etymologies*, I.41.1.

This was not true for either biblical or classical history but suggests that Isidore, like the authors of historical prologues, saw eye-witness accounts as the most valid. It could be argued that Vinsauf was writing later than the twelfth-century historians quoted above and therefore presents a view more contemporary to the key texts of this thesis, however, as mentioned above virtually all thirteenth-century histories were continuations and therefore dealt with contemporary events.<sup>103</sup> In fact it seems as if thirteenth-century authors were working with the earlier theory even more strongly than those of the twelfth century, who often composed accounts covering several centuries.

Garland copies parts of Vinsauf's definition word for word, especially the problematic description of *historia*:

'Fabula est que nec res ueras nec uerisimiles continet; unde si contingit narrationem esse fabulosam, ne sit uiciosa, mentiri debemus probabiliter'

'Hystoria est res gesta ab etatis nostre memoria remota'

'Argumentum est res ficta que temen fieri potuit, ut contingit in comediis.'

'A Fable contains events that are untrue, and do not pretend to be true; it follows that avoiding vice in fabulous narratives means lying with probability'

'A History reports an event which has taken place long before the memory of our age'

'An *Argumentum* is a fictitious event which nevertheless could have happened, as is the case in comedies.'<sup>104</sup>

Garland also takes on Vinsauf's statement that there are a number of categories that fall within history without including terms like annal or chronicle which might be expected. As well as the reference to *epithalamicum* quoted above, Vinsauf provides a collection of literary styles that he deems to be histories,

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<sup>103</sup> see p. 31 above.

<sup>104</sup> John of Garland, *Parisiana Poetria*, 5.317-24. Lawler translates 'argumentum' as 'realistic fiction', however due to the problematic nature of the term 'fiction' in this discussion I will retain 'argumentum' in the English translations for clarity.

which differ greatly both from modern expectations and his own definition, including elegies, satire, tragedy and *bucolicum* (poems about cowherding). Garland extends the collection even further under a series of sub divisions; but he makes no more attempt than Vinsauf to justify the discrepancy between his definition of history as a category and the content of the styles he claims falls within it.

In fact, as with Isidore's inconsistent use of the word *fictae*, Garland does not use the word *hystoria* in the way he himself defines it at any other point in his book. Lawler attempted to resolve the problem of Garland's different usages of *historia* by suggesting a deliberate change in meaning between the noun and the adjective.<sup>105</sup> *Hystoria* means 'history' as it is strictly defined while *historicum* means 'historical narrative' and is used to describe texts with an historical, naturalistic and factual aspect without implying that they are themselves histories. However, while this distinction is valid when comparing the definition of history to the subdivisions subsumed within it, which are specifically referred to as *historicum*, the usage in an earlier section appears to be much broader.

Near the beginning of Garland's work *ystoria* is used in a way that Lawler himself argues can be translated most readily simply as 'narrative' or 'expository':

'alia ystorialis, qua utitur ecclesia, et tragedi et comedi aliquando, et alii nonnulli philosophi'

'another [type of prose] is narrative, used by the Church and by writers of tragedies and comedies sometimes, and by various other learned men.'<sup>106</sup>

*Ystorialis* here can not have the same meaning as in the three part division previously quoted because here comedies can be *ystorialis* whereas they are specified to be *argumentum* above. For the same reason it can not even mean

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<sup>105</sup> John of Garland, *Parisiana Poetria*, pp.254-5.

<sup>106</sup> John of Garland, *Parisiana Poetria*, 1.51-2.

‘historical’ because, as Lawler himself points out, comedy is not naturalistic as one of the characters is a spirit and so can only exist in a supernatural world.<sup>107</sup>

However, Lawler’s idea of a classification of an ‘historical’ style of literature does gain credence in a completely different section of the *Parisiana Poetria*; when Garland discusses the art of amplifying material with reference to tragedy and comedy. Comedy has returned to being a different type of literature to *hystoria* as it has five fixed parts, unlike tragedy and *hystoria* which have none:

Notandum autem quod partes hystorie non sunt certe et determinate, quia per uoluntatem hystoriographi et secundum ipsa gesta distinguitur hystoria.’

‘It should be noted, however, that there are no definite, fixed parts for a narrative, since a narrative takes its shape from the narrator’s intention and from the events themselves.’<sup>108</sup>

*Hystoria* is here being used in a way that falls between ‘narrative’ and ‘accounts of the distant past’; it is far closer to Isidore’s definition of history as an account of deeds done. From this usage we can deduce a definition of ‘history’ as a narrative of real events which is forced into a particular shape without reference to idealised literary styles by the true sequence of those events, but interestingly Garland acknowledges that the narrator’s intention selects which real events to include.

So although Garland at first appears to provide a simple restatement of Vinsauf’s short definition of the term *historia*, when the way he uses the word is considered, four possible meanings emerge: an account of events long past; any text which discusses an aspect of real life; any narrative; and an account of any real events. There is overlap between those meanings but the first, the one that comes from the definition he provides, is the most restricted and the last, which is only implied and appears elsewhere in the text, is the closest to the model inherited from Isidore but with an acknowledgment of the role the author plays in

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<sup>107</sup> John of Garland, *Parisiana Poetria*, p.254.

<sup>108</sup> John of Garland, *Parisiana Poetria*, 4.475-7.

shaping historical narrative. Thirteenth-century theorists were continuing to develop earlier ideas about the nature of history but their definitions remained problematic due to inconsistency.

Beyond *historia*, there are other aspects of Vinsauf and Garland's language in their discussions of the three part categorisation that are worthy of mention. As noted briefly above, the term *factae*, which Isidore used as a staple of his definitions, is overlooked by the thirteenth-century theorists, perhaps suggesting that they were dismissing of accuracy as a criterion in the same way as some modern scholars.<sup>109</sup> They still use *vera*, but instead of making a distinction between 'fact' and 'truth', it is now between 'truth' and *verisimila*, the appearance of truth or probability. However, the word *vera* seems to have shifted in meaning from Isidore's usage, where history was described as an account of 'true [*vera*] things which happened [*factae*]', implying that accounts of things which had never happened could still be *vera*.<sup>110</sup> The thirteenth-century theorists use *vera* in the way that Isidore used *factae*, to mean things that actually happened; highlighting the fact that it is not simply the definition of *historia* but the meaning of all the elements of the discussion that are subject to change.

However, possibly the single greatest departure from the earlier model is Vinsauf and Garland's classification of *argumentum* as *fictae*. For Isidore *fictae* had been simply a subdivision of fable; as defined it was the simplest possible class of literature, pure entertainment without even an allegorical connection to the true nature of the world. Even where he used the word outside of his definition, in a way that implied it could occasionally show a form of truth, it was still within discussion on fable. However, by the thirteenth century the word *fictae* appears to have a broader usage, to the extent that *argumentum* is described as a *fictae* with specific attributes, one which has the appearance of truth. *Fictae* in this context is the larger category that can then be subdivided into texts with the appearance of truth, *argumenta*, and those that are purely fantastic, *fabula*. Here we can see implied a suggestion of an alternative approach to the traditional three part division of literary types; a two part categorisation where history is placed in opposition to fiction.

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<sup>109</sup> One such scholar who shall be discussed later is Suzane Fleischman, 'On the Representation of History and Fiction in the Middle Ages', *History and Theory*, 22 (1983).

<sup>110</sup> *Etymologies*, I.43.5.



In the thirteenth century, earlier medieval theories were still in use but with slight alterations. In theory the selection of texts that constituted ‘history’ had shrunk to include only those that dealt with the distant past, excluding the recent past and eye-witness accounts from the category, and the category of ‘fiction’ had expanded to include works that had the appearance of truth, but therein lies the problem: they are only theories. In practice even those who provided the definitions were unable to confine their own use of the terms so it is impractical to expect authors and audiences to have done so. In addition, Isidore’s definition of history appears surrounded by grammatical terminology in a work with a very broad spectrum of interest. The *Etymologiae* is, as its title suggests, a collection of definitions and etymologies for a broad selection of words, which are divided into twenty books ranging in theme from medicine, to the Church, to war and games. The section discussing history appears at the end of book one, which discusses Grammar. Even in the thirteenth-century examples, in which the books are more specific, the sections discussing history and fiction are very short, leading Burrow to conclude that ‘the distinction between fiction and fact...appears to have played a relatively modest part in their typology of texts.’<sup>111</sup> Garland was aiming to produce a manual of style. The definition of history appears only in an aside during a far more protracted discussion of the second of three types of discourse; he was concerned with eloquence rather than content. Similarly, Vinsauf only included his definition in the longer version of the *Documentum*, not the short one or the far more popular verse *Poetria nova*, so he clearly did not see it as an important part of his work.

So, although both medieval historians and theorists believed there was a difference between history and fiction in terms of both content and purpose, relatively little attention was paid to the distinction in comparison to other stylistic issues, and there was no single consensus over how to differentiate the two. While both groups of authors accept that history is a true account of real events and fiction is not, there are a number of differences, for example over the categorisation of eye-witness accounts. What is particularly interesting is that throughout the historical prologues the terms used are *historia* and *fabula*; neither *fictae* nor *argumentum* appear. The focus is on truth, *vera*, which was an

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<sup>111</sup> J. A. Burrow, *Medieval Writers and their Works; Middle English Literature 1100-1500* (Oxford, 1982), p.14.

attribute of *argumentum* for Isidore but not Garland of Vinsauf as it appears to have changed meaning. This makes establishing how the ideas of the historians quoted above compare to the theorists problematic as we can not be certain which meaning they were employing. It is possible that *argumentum* was a purely theoretical construct that was of no interest outside scholarly discussion of rhetorical style but the emphasis on seeking out facts makes it seem likely that it was as undesirable an appellation for a medieval historian as *fabula*, especially given its designation as fiction by thirteenth-century theorists.

What none of this takes into account however is whether historians practised what they preached. If authors wanted to convince their audience that their account of the past would be accurate and based on thorough research using authoritative sources it simply indicates the ideal, not necessarily the reality. That work with such attributes would be granted higher status provides a ready explanation for why authors might want to claim an accuracy that was not the case. In fact it appears that that is what Monmouth succeeded in doing. His *History of the Kings*, which was supposedly based on an ancient and authoritative book, was able to find a place within the broader historical tradition, especially in the various versions of the *Brut*. The *fabula* so derided by Newburgh became an accepted part of history and as such were indistinguishable from it; Chris Given-Wilson referred to the *History of the Kings* as ‘the standard account of early British history, the past in which everyone could (and wanted to) believe’.<sup>112</sup> That the events Monmouth described are now known to be fiction, and appear in some medieval works as such, does not mean they should always be read as fiction if the author believed himself to be writing history.

However, that such an extreme subversion of the ideal was able to pass into accepted history virtually without comment suggests that the same thing may have occurred in other cases. As shall be seen in chapter five concerning Richard the Lionheart, when the circumstances surrounding his death were uncertain, a detailed story of buried treasure emerged to explain it which had no basis in fact.<sup>113</sup> Beyond that, Monmouth’s conceit of a rediscovered ancient book was not unique and was a way to get around accusations of fictionality as the new author

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<sup>112</sup> Chris Given-Wilson, *Chronicles: The Writing of History in Medieval England* (London, 2004), p.4.

<sup>113</sup> John Gillingham, ‘The Unromantic Death of Richard I’, *Speculum*, 54 (1979), pp.18-41.

was claiming to only be a translator who could not be held responsible for the accuracy of another text. Nelson saw these convenient ‘discoveries’ of ancient works and the willingness to forge documents in support of an argument as demonstrating that ‘the accepted decencies forbade an author, not to make up stories, but to admit that he had’.<sup>114</sup> He argued that, far from growing out of a respect for authority, these practices suggest the reverse; authors who truly respected their sources would follow them closely.

All histories were works of literature and some of the differences between the ideal and the reality were due to history’s classical literary heritage which emphasised its role as rhetoric. Reading any medieval chronicle will furnish examples of speeches written in the first person and other rhetorical flourishes that are unlikely to be exactly accurate but add drama and were seen as falling within the author’s right to recount the probable; a speech had really been made so the author extrapolated what had probably been said. If the audience accepted these flourishes as markers of literary quality rather than expecting them to be accurate, can they be seen as detracting from the overall accuracy of the work? The concern expressed by Newburgh and Augustine above was that fictionalised history might deceive its audience; if no deception took place because certain things were not expected to be accurate the danger would be removed.

Fortunately a body of modern scholarship exists concerning the nature of medieval history to assist in establishing the definitions that will be most helpful in the following chapters.<sup>115</sup> Firstly, however, it must be remembered that the difference between history and fiction is not, and has never been, absolute. As stated by M.T. Clanchy, ‘the history we read and write is an artificial construct and not immutable truth,’ while J.A. Burrow warns that ‘[o]ne should not expect

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<sup>114</sup> William Nelson, *Fact or Fiction: The Dilemma of the Renaissance Storyteller* (Cambridge, Mas, 1973), p.27.

<sup>115</sup> The quantity of overlapping theories and sets of definitions preclude an examination of all possible modern theories, especially as many of them are unhelpful in the context of this thesis. For example Burrow rejects the distinction between fact and fiction entirely in favour of dividing narratives by the criteria of ‘scope’ and ‘scales’: the breadth of material the text is intended to cover, which can be broken down further into general histories, individual lives and tales of specific events; and the degree of detail given. Burrow, *Medieval Writers and their Work*, pp.68-75. The following discussion will confine itself to the work of those scholars which have been particularly helpful.

texts in any period to fall into two clearly defined categories'.<sup>116</sup> This problem was explored extensively by post-modern theorists such as Hayden White, who pointed out that since real events do not intrinsically form stories, they undergo 'emplotment' at the hands of historians using the same techniques found in the writing of a novel or play.<sup>117</sup> Although White accepted that historical events differ from fictional ones he argued that they are not opposites.<sup>118</sup> Authorial bias and the criteria by which an author selects which events to include in his narrative are inevitably going to impact on the account produced, so a truly impartial version of history can never be written regardless of period. For example, Clanchy argues that both Stubbs and Powicke were so committed to English nationalism that their works are comparable to medieval Christian histories in their determination to demonstrate a higher truth.<sup>119</sup>

Given the impossibility of ever completely separating fact and fiction in a narrative account it would be unrealistic to expect medieval writers to have done so. Nevertheless, as is to be expected given that narratives of all genres comprise the sources for the majority of research within medieval studies, modern definitions have been primarily focused on the question of accuracy. Scholars with both historical and literary backgrounds seeking to establish how their source can be used try first to establish if they are dealing with an account of what really happened or one that has been invented. This focus purely on factual accuracy is what led to the negative portrayals of medieval history writing mentioned in the introduction to this chapter. A more nuanced approach was suggested by Antonia Gransden who argued that a distinction existed in the Middle Ages between 'truth' and the mere facts of history, which excused inaccuracies: 'The author had to prove that what he believed to be true was correct...[i]n the interests of such truths an author was justified in omitting discordant facts and filling gaps in knowledge with convenient probabilities.'<sup>120</sup> The higher truth she was referring to was the church's view of history in which the task of historiography was to discover and expound the divine plan; a process

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<sup>116</sup> M.T. Clanchy, 'Inventing Thirteenth-Century England: Stubbs, Tout, Powicke – Now What?', *Thirteenth Century England V*, P.R. Coss and S.D. Lloyd (eds) (Woodbridge, 1995), p.1; Burrow, *Medieval Writers and their Works*, p.12.

<sup>117</sup> Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (London, 1978), pp.83-4.

<sup>118</sup> White, *Tropics of Discourse*, pp.121-2.

<sup>119</sup> Clanchy, 'Inventing Thirteenth-Century England', p.1.

<sup>120</sup> Gransden, *Legends, Traditions and History*, p.128.

described by Collingwood as causing authors to ‘look for the essence of history outside of history itself, by looking away from man’s actions in order to detect the plan of God...the actual detail of human actions became for them relatively unimportant’.<sup>121</sup> The picture of medieval history that appears in this model is that of a branch of theology with little similarity to our modern understandings of the term ‘history’.

Gransden’s conclusion is initially supported by the difficulties, in translating the word ‘truth’, *vera*, in terms of historical writing in the thirteenth century, which were mentioned above. For Isidore it was entirely possible for a text to have *vera* without containing *factae*. However, the thirteenth-century theorists see *vera* as referring to things that actually happened which implies that they would have disagreed with Gransden’s approach. It is true that the historians themselves may still have been working within the older definition but comments in the prologue concerning the extent of their research combine with the truth claims to imply that it was the facts of history that historians wanted to impart to their audience. In addition, as pointed out by Gransden herself, it is important not to simply dismiss the claims of medieval authors to factual accuracy; such claims are often supported by plenty of evidence of assiduity in the pursuit of information.<sup>122</sup> The acceptance of prophecy and miracles that appears in medieval scholarship can often appear to a modern reader as fictional but they were seen as factual at the time. Medieval understandings of what constituted a believable fact were different from our own, as may have been their understanding of the word ‘truth’, but attempting to describe the truth was still a vital attribute of history. Therefore, although factual accuracy remains an important indicator of the category a text can be placed within, there are others that must be taken into consideration.

Suzanne Fleischman identified six factors for distinguishing history from fiction; authenticity (factual accuracy), intent (whether the author was trying to write history or fiction), reception (the way in which the text was viewed by its audience and posterity), social function (e.g. commemoration, glorification, edification), narrative syntax (the nature and extent of the connection between

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<sup>121</sup> R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, Jan Van Der Dussen (ed) (Oxford, 1946, 1993 imprint), p.55.

<sup>122</sup> Gransden, *Legends, Traditions and History*, p.129.

episodes) and narrator involvement (the way in which a text's internal narrator reflects on that text).<sup>123</sup> Fleischman agreed with Gransden and Collingwood, that in the medieval period the facts of history were subordinate to a higher truth, and was also heavily influenced by postmodernist theory, especially Hayden White, which led her to dismiss authenticity as a useful criterion for discovering history because it is impossible to identify uninterpreted 'facts'.<sup>124</sup> Instead, Fleischman suggested that the truth element of history was what was willingly believed rather than what was authentically factual.<sup>125</sup> Since the vast majority of accurate historical material was confined to monasteries, for many people legends were the only historical narrative available. As such, Fleischman argued that, although there was a concept of history distinct from fiction, belonging to a widely accepted tradition was in itself evidence of historicity.

Fleischman's approach to the identification of history and fiction goes a long way towards developing a new standard for defining medieval historiography by asking whether an account is fictional rather than whether it is factual. This distinction is important given the convention of claiming truth and accuracy which may not have existed in order to claim a higher status. Therefore, in many situations the problem is not whether a work can be identified as historical but instead how to confirm that a work was fictional. Where there are no alternative sources describing an event which an author claims to be true it is impossible for scholars to test the reliability of those claims and, therefore, whether the account can be accepted as historical. In these circumstances scholars have to turn to other criteria for judging and it is here that Fleischman's other identifying criteria come to the fore. The focus is not on whether events unfolded as described but whether the author and audience would have believed that they did.

None of Fleischman's remaining criteria is any more foolproof than authenticity for establishing a text's fictionality alone. For example, the social functions of history and fiction were not distinct and both could fulfil a number of roles.<sup>126</sup> However, a number of indicators in conjunction can be helpful, especially narrator syntax and intent. The first of these in particular ties in well

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<sup>123</sup> Fleischman, 'On the Representation of History and Fiction', pp.278-310.

<sup>124</sup> Fleischman, 'On the Representation of History and Fiction', p.281.

<sup>125</sup> Fleischman, 'On the Representation of History and Fiction', pp.289,305.

<sup>126</sup> Fleischman, 'On the Representation of History and Fiction', p.283-91.

with medieval ideas. As seen above Garland made a distinction based on the author's capacity to structure the narrative; in history the author must follow the order of events whereas in other types of literature the author can shape events to follow a pleasing pattern.<sup>127</sup> The way a narrative was arranged was referred to as *dispositio* and the more coherent and unified this structure the more likely it is to be fiction. Therefore, using narrative syntax as a categorisation, a year by year *annal* can be identified as history because it is structured purely as a list of unconnected events while in romance 'causality and "focus" (the foregrounding and backgrounding of events) are expressed through explicit narrative subordination'.<sup>128</sup>

Although Fleischman herself placed very little emphasis on intent as a means of identification it can be helpful in the context of this thesis, in particular with regards to the use of recognisably fictional motifs and individuals. The use of such features informs the members of the audience that they are entering a world that is outside reality, thus defending the author from accusations of lying with intent to deceive and implying intent to construct fiction.<sup>129</sup> There is of course some difficulty in identifying what would be automatically recognised as fictional, the only certainty on that front being that stories of talking animals such as appear in Aesop's fables were seen as such.<sup>130</sup> Arthurian material for example is much more problematic since the acceptance that Arthur had been a historical individual does not mean that all the stories of him and his court were accorded the same level of acceptance. It is the attitude to the material that is important.

As Damian-Grint pointed out, the attitude of a text to the wonders and miracles that have in the past been seen as inaccurate distractions from the historical content can in fact indicate the level of accuracy that can be expected elsewhere. Both history and fiction claim their reports of wonders as truthful accounts but in history they are unusual and their possible meanings are discussed, showing that the author is working within a world that normally conforms to the audience's experience of reality. By contrast, in fiction they are

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<sup>127</sup> John of Garland, *Parisiana Poetria*, 4.475-7.

<sup>128</sup> Fleischman, 'On the Representation of History and Fiction', p.292.

<sup>129</sup> D.H. Green, *The Beginning of Medieval Romance: Fact and Fiction, 1150-1220* (Cambridge, 2002), p.7.

<sup>130</sup> That is the one type of literature described as *factae* by Isidore and since the fables are contrary to the rules of nature they lack *verisimilia*, making them fictions by thirteenth-century terms as well.

portrayed as normal, or even expected, occurrences thus pushing the narrative into a more generally fictive world.<sup>131</sup> The attitude and narrative style of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings* implies an intent to be accepted as believable so it must be defined as history even though much of its content is untrue, especially as it was accepted as historical at the time except by William of Newburgh. However, as Dennis Green argues, in many contexts the use of recognisably Arthurian names is an 'interfictive' reference to imply that the author is working within that fictional world.<sup>132</sup> Where an author appears to be deliberately making reference to fiction, not simply for comparison but as a part of the central narrative, it implies that he may have been intending to write fiction himself.

Although differentiating history and fiction by seeking to identify the latter rather than the former is extremely useful, the absence of authenticity in Fleichman's model is a flaw. If medieval authors saw truth as a vital attribute of history it should not be overlooked in modern studies. Consequently, Peter Damian-Grint adapted Flieschman's six part identifying structure to restore authenticity to a prominent role while maintaining the comparison with fiction rather than fact. For Damian-Grint, rather than referring to factual accuracy, authenticity is fidelity to sources and 'can be a reliable indicator of whether the author is engaged in writing history or fiction.'<sup>133</sup> To fill in gaps in the source material is still history but to use them as a framework for the author's own story and set of characters is fiction. Identifications as history or fiction through authenticity can thus be tied to intent: an author who deliberately goes against his source of facts is not intending to write the truth, and so is not writing history but fiction.

The final point that needs to be made was of particular importance to Dennis Green: 'rhetorical theory distinguishes between history and fiction [but] historical details may still be included in fictional works', and indeed the reverse is also true.<sup>134</sup> This is not a possibility that appears to have occurred to medieval authors. Neither the historians nor the theorists discuss how such a text would be

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<sup>131</sup> Green, *The Beginning of Medieval Romance*, p.86.

<sup>132</sup> Green, *The Beginning of Medieval Romance*, p.57.

<sup>133</sup> Peter Damian-Grint, *The New Historians of the Twelfth-Century Renaissance* (Woodbridge, 1999), p.85.

<sup>134</sup> Green, *The Beginning of Medieval Romance*, pp.5, 88-9.



viewed, though presumably it is the dominant genre that would take precedence. In the context of this thesis it is an important point, however, because it means that simply because some elements of a text can be identified through accuracy or style as either history or fiction it does not mean that the whole of the work can be seen in the same way. The text as a whole must be looked at along side the elements within it to establish the extent to which it can be seen as either fiction rather than history with a few fanciful elements, or history rather than fiction backed up by a few memorable facts. Even within a single text, let alone the whole corpus of medieval literature about the past, there can be no assumptions made about consistent levels of accuracy.

The place of history and fiction within medieval written culture was not static but subject to a confusing variety of definitions and subdivisions that failed to encompass the way the two were used in practice. What remained consistent however was that the distinction between them was seen as important, largely because of the greater status given to *honestum nomen historiae*, as a result of its truthful content and therefore its ability to instruct as well as to entertain. The deliberate attempts to claim fiction as history add to the difficulties both of defining the two types of literature and identifying them within a given text. A number of modern scholars have attempted to provide ways of navigating the mass of literature that has some claim to being either historical or fictional, with Suzanne Flieschman, Peter Damian-Grint and Dennis Green being particularly helpful. However, the nature of the material makes it impossible to establish clear distinctions between genres because, in spite of attempts by historians to claim otherwise, the lack of attention paid by medieval education to historical study meant that such distinctions did not exist at the time, and indeed the two can never be seen as entirely separate. As a result no single set of criteria can be provided against which the key texts will be analysed in the following chapters; each text will be examined on its own terms and referred back to the models with which it can most helpfully be identified.

## **Fictionalisation without Fiction:**

### ***History of William Marshal***

As was shown in the previous chapter, the relationship between history and fiction in the thirteenth century was extremely complex; there was considerable flexibility available to authors in how they wanted to approach the border between genres. The *History of William Marshal* provides an example that is far closer to the historical side of the spectrum than the other key texts to be discussed in this thesis. It is as much verse-chronicle as idealised series of *exempla* and contains a huge amount of information that has been useful to historians with various interests and mined accordingly. However, in spite of its differences from the more fictional romances that will be looked at later, the *History* is a useful illustration of the ways in which history and fiction interacted with one another. Aspects of the historical William's life were key to the developing models of chivalry in fiction, which in turn influenced the way in which William's literary character was portrayed. In addition, the broad time period covered by the *History* provides an account of the historical context in which the events of all the other texts took place; as such it includes representations of individuals important in sources that will be discussed in later chapters, especially King John.

After an initial overview of the *History* and its manuscript, the following chapter will fall into three sections. First an exploration of William's characterisation in the *History*, in particular his presentation as the ideal knight, and how it related to the historical events of William's life. A comparison will then be made with another example of an ideal knight composed in the early thirteenth century, Gui from the Anglo-Norman *Gui de Warewic*, who has been seen as a model for William's characterisation while also possibly being partially inspired by the events of his life. The last section will examine how the author interacts with the theories discussed in the last chapter, using some for his own purposes while ignoring others. It will be suggested that the author's aim was not to write fiction, as was the case with the author of *Gui*, but an account that would be accepted as history by its audience. It was this historical purpose which

caused the differences between William's portrayal and that of other ideal knights.

The *History of William Marshal* was composed within only seven years of its subject's death in 1219.<sup>135</sup> There has been some debate over the precise date of authorship although the proposal by the original editor, Paul Meyer, of a *terminus* of 1226, with earlier parts being continuously edited and revised over several years, has been generally accepted.<sup>136</sup> Crouch has put forward an amendment placing the original commissioning of the work in 1224 just before William Marshal II, the son of the eponymous hero, departed for Ireland for two years on the basis that the emphasis on the elder Marshal's rights to control Caerleon would then fit in with his son's activities.<sup>137</sup> Even assuming Crouch is correct that no work was done before 1224, the speed with which the *History* was commissioned is striking, a maximum of five years after William's death.<sup>138</sup>

For a vernacular, literary text there is an unusual amount of information available concerning authorship. It was commissioned by William Marshal II and the project appears to have been given support by Sir John of Earley who was first squire, then friend, to the elder Marshal.<sup>139</sup> Sir John is credited with giving shape to the material and it is assumed that he was an important source for much of the information it provides although that is never explicitly stated in the text. It is known that the younger Marshal turned to a professional writer when commissioning the work as the author of the *History* tells us that he composed verses for a living.<sup>140</sup> However, although the author states that he was named Johans and his home area can be deduced as the region of Touraine or Anjou from his use of continental rather than insular French, he can not be identified with any other known medieval author. It has also been suggested, by Crouch, that his status as a professional versifier makes it unlikely that the author was a

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<sup>135</sup> A new, and much anticipated, dual text edition and translation of the *History* has recently been produced; *History of William Marshal*, A.J. Holden (ed), S. Gregory (trans), D. Crouch (notes), Anglo-Norman Text Society Occasional Publications Series 4-6 (London; Anglo-Norman Text Society, 2002, 2004, 2006). This is the first full English translation to be published and provides extensive notes on both the text and previous scholarship. All quotations and translations used are from this edition.

<sup>136</sup> ANTS, *History of William Marshal*, III, p.23

<sup>137</sup> ANTS, *History of William Marshal*, III, p.24.

<sup>138</sup> The level of precision in the dating of the *History* is even more striking when compared to the other key texts which have ranges of possible composition that extend over one or two decades.

<sup>139</sup> *HWM* 19185-92; ANTS, *History of William Marshal*, III, p.3.

<sup>140</sup> *HWM* 11101; ANTS, *History of William Marshal*, I, p.v.

cleric, so it is probable that we are seeing a lay person's view of both history and chivalry.<sup>141</sup>

There is only one surviving manuscript; New York Pierpont Morgan Library M888 (formerly Phillips 25155) from the mid thirteenth century, suggesting that it was not widely known.<sup>142</sup> However, there are two reasons to suppose that there must have been some degree of circulation: the manuscript scribe cannot be identified with the author because he uses Anglo-Norman by comparison to the author's characteristic West-French language; and there are catalogue references to further manuscripts of the text which have not survived at St Augustine's Canterbury, Westminster Abbey and the Library of Thomas Duke of Gloucester at Pleshey in Essex, as well as a further uncertain identification at Bordesley Abbey.<sup>143</sup> So a minimum of three or four manuscripts existed at one time with quite a large geographical spread. The *History* is the only text in the surviving manuscript and is largely undecorated; there are blue and red lettrines throughout, a large illuminated initial at the start and a red ink dragon on f.65 which does not seem to be an illustration for the text as it occurs in the vicinity of an account of King Richard receiving letters on crusade about Prince John's treachery.<sup>144</sup> The surviving text is imperfect and contains numerous lacunae and defective readings but there are no missing sections or interpolations; what survives is substantially the same as that which was originally written.<sup>145</sup>

Scholarly attitudes towards the *History* have altered substantially over the last century with its historicity coming increasingly under attack and growing attention given to its literary character. The Anglo-Norman Text Society editors make this point on the first page:

‘it [the *History*] is an invaluable primary source for the period in question and provides much material not recorded elsewhere.

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<sup>141</sup> David Crouch, *William Marshal: Knighthood, War and Chivalry, 1147-1219* (Harlow 1990, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed 2002), p.1. This view is backed up by the fact that the author does not seem to have had access to any part of the twelfth-century chronicle tradition, suggesting he did not have the contacts to recommend volumes or make them available to him, which would be unlikely for a clerical author, ANTS, *History of William Marshal*, III, p.35.

<sup>142</sup> ANTS, *History of William Marshal*, I, p.v and III, p.10.

<sup>143</sup> ANTS, *History of William Marshal*, III, pp.11, 21-2.

<sup>144</sup> ANTS, *History of William Marshal*, III, p.10.

<sup>145</sup> ANTS, *History of William Marshal*, III, p.11.

However, its assertions cannot be accepted uncritically, as has hitherto usually been the case.<sup>146</sup>

Painter in particular accepted the historicity of elements, such as William being smuggled medical supplies in a loaf of bread by a noblewoman while he was in captivity, without any mention of the similarity to literary romance episodes.<sup>147</sup> This greater caution concerning the *History*'s accuracy has led to it being used in different ways. Richard Kaeuper argued that precise accuracy was not necessary because it shows the mentality of a knight which need not be entirely realistic, and Laura Ashe referred to it as 'one of the most important sources for the flourishing culture of chivalry, an ideology which exerted its force in literature and history alike.'<sup>148</sup> It is therefore, increasingly being used to examine attitudes and culture rather than facts.

A brief overview of the narrative is necessary at this point to facilitate the subsequent analysis. However, since the *History of William Marshal* is 19,215 lines long, far longer than any of the other texts to be examined in this thesis, any attempt to give even a heavily abridged summary would be impractical. Consequently, the following outline provides only a chronology of events in order to give some context and an idea of how much space within the text is given to each section. The *History* opens with a seven hundred line account of William's birth and childhood during the civil war of Stephen's reign before he is sent to French relatives as a young man.<sup>149</sup> After an undistinguished eight years as a squire that are brushed over quickly, he becomes a knight and over the following thousand lines acquires a good martial reputation in war and tournaments that leads to his appointment as a guardian and tutor to Henry II's son, the Young King Henry.<sup>150</sup> For the following six thousand lines William gives distinguished service to the Young King, in spite of a period when he was out of favour.<sup>151</sup> These earlier years of William's life, up until the age of about

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<sup>146</sup> ANTS, *History of William Marshal*, I, p.v.

<sup>147</sup> Sidney Painter, *William Marshal: Knight Errant, Baron, and Regent of England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1933), p.27.

<sup>148</sup> Richard Kaeuper, 'William Marshal, Lancelot, and the Issue of Chivalric Identity', *Essays in Medieval Studies*, 22 (2005), p.8; Laura Ashe, 'William Marshal, Lancelot, and Arthur: Chivalry and Kingship', *Anglo Norman Studies XXX*, C.P. Lewis (ed) (Woodbridge, 2008), p.20.

<sup>149</sup> *HWM* 23-754

<sup>150</sup> William a squire *HWM* 771-818, joins the Young King *HWM* 1,935-48.

<sup>151</sup> William is out of favour *HWM* 5,407-6,554.

40, take up approximately a third of the *History* but have provided the focus for most modern scholarship. In particular attention has been directed at William's participation in tournaments during these years, primarily during his time at the Young King's court.

After the Young King's death, and at his instigation, William briefly goes on crusade to Jerusalem.<sup>152</sup> When he returns two years later he joins the court of Henry II to whom he remained loyal throughout the wars with his sons that followed, then to Richard I and King John in their wars with France.<sup>153</sup> During John's reign William suffers a long period out of favour and his focus turns from France to Ireland, covering approximately one and a half thousand lines, before becoming reconciled and supporting John against the barons in the civil war at the end of that reign.<sup>154</sup> On Henry III's accession at line 15,229 William is appointed regent and actively takes part in the continuing civil war to its successful completion, whereupon he falls ill and realises his death approaches.<sup>155</sup> The last one and a half thousand lines of the *History* recount his preparations, discussions with his family and provision for the kingdom before he dies, whereupon he is buried with appropriate honour.<sup>156</sup>

Since the *History* is a biography the whole text is shaped around its central character and the justification for its existence lies in the value and excitement of that character's life, affecting the way he could be presented. William is not portrayed as a flawless individual; some attempt at balance is indicated by a number of instances that were not entirely favourable to William, such as a youthful reputation for sleep and gluttony.<sup>157</sup> There is also a tendency towards a kind of bawdy trickery that shows the Marshal as willing to profit from deceit, for example when he and some companions who are fleeing from an opposing army tell the town they arrive in that they have been sent as defenders and are granted free food and lodging as well as many gifts as a result.<sup>158</sup> These

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<sup>152</sup> The Young King dies at *HWM* 6,880-1.

<sup>153</sup> Henry retains William at *HWM* 7,308, Henry II dies *HWM* 9,084-112 then Richard is king until John is crowned *HWM* 11,943. John's French wars lasted from the beginning of his reign up to *HWM* 13,302.

<sup>154</sup> William was out of favour for the later part of the French wars *HWM* 13,077-280 and then for a more extensive period a short time later *HWM* 13,350-14,526.

<sup>155</sup> William even takes up arms again at this late stage in his life *HWM* 16,593-750.

<sup>156</sup> Becomes ill *HWM* 17,882 and dies 18,979.

<sup>157</sup> *HWM* 772-82.

<sup>158</sup> *HWM* 12295-404.

less positive episodes led Crouch to believe that ‘[t]he author is a reliable witness to the qualities, positive and negative, of his subject’.<sup>159</sup> Nevertheless, as will be discussed in more detail later, the main aim of the *History* was undoubtedly to present its central character in the best possible light.

William’s historical promotion from landless younger son of a minor noble to regent of England was dramatic enough to make his life both memorable and enviable and the method that he used, distinction in tournaments followed by marriage to a wealthy heiress, was the dream of all historical landless knights; known as *povre home* or *bachelor*. Indeed, many Arthurian heroes started their lives as *povre home*, including Lancelot, and received their later rank as a result of their innate quality being recognised and promoted.<sup>160</sup> William’s historical life proved that the ideal, the dream, the fantasy of romantic chivalric knighthood could be realised in practice. Therefore, it is not surprising that William is characterised throughout the *History* as a knight; even at the end of his life he was not portrayed as the ideal courtier or the ideal magnate, both of which functions he fulfilled in life, not even as the ideal general commanding others. He was always the active chivalrous hero.<sup>161</sup> In the *History* William’s dramatic rise is presented as entirely a consequence of his knightly qualities; he was the ideal knight and reaped the just reward of his perfection. How this characterisation interacted with the historical William’s life and broader literary presentations of knighthood demonstrates how unusual and complex the *History’s* place within thirteenth-century fictionalised history is.

There has been considerable scholarly debate over the years about exactly what model of the ideal knight was evident in the *History*, but the most striking point is that being a knight in the *History* is not a Christian role. There is no

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<sup>159</sup> ANTS, *History of William Marshal*, III, p.41; although ‘reliable’ may be too strong a term it seems likely that the qualities particularly emphasised in the characterisation are at least indicative of those of the historical William. The reliability of the *History* as an accurate account will be discussed at length later but it is worth remembering throughout that characterizations in the *History* may well have been drawn from the historical strengths and weaknesses in the people described.

<sup>160</sup> Elspeth Kennedy, ‘The Quest for Identity and the Importance of Lineage in Thirteenth-Century French Prose Romance’ in Christopher Harper-Bill and Ruth Harvey (eds), *The Ideals and Practice of Medieval Knighthood II* (Woodbridge, 1988), pp.78-80.

<sup>161</sup> Crouch argues that far from being simply a feudal knight the historical William’s success was due to being ‘one of the greatest practitioners of courtliness of his age’, sophisticated and devious, able to defy John because the court was so riddled with his friends that no magnate would assist the king against him. His surviving charters also show an able businessman but the *History’s* author was equally uninterested in using that talent in his characterization. *William Marshal*, pp7-8.

mention of the knight of Christ, '*miles christi*', the knight who fought, not for personal gain, but for the glory of God. It was an idea that was particularly influential during the crusades where victory over pagans could be seen as a direct victory for God. Since the *History* actually covers the Third Crusade some reference to these ideas would be natural, however, the account of the crusade takes up only twenty-seven lines; it is essentially an interlude in a narrative about the Chancellor's wrongdoing.<sup>162</sup> Only the journey to Acre by the French and English kings is described; not the battles, successes, or failures in the Holy Land. Given the absence of '*milites christi*' on crusade, it is not surprising that the other wars that permeate the text are equally lacking in religious motivation or justification. The *History's* secular approach is particularly unusual given that the typical ideal knight of romance had a religious aspect even outside of crusade. Guy of Warwick and Lancelot are particularly well known examples; Gui in his repentance and decision to have a second set of adventures fighting for God rather than Felice, and Lancelot in the quest for the Holy Grail. Even the knighting ceremonies that are described in the *History*, those of William Marshal, the young King and Henry III, are for political purposes and have no religious trappings.<sup>163</sup> The type of chivalry being described and celebrated in the *History* is not influenced by religious ideals.<sup>164</sup>

There remains the issue of the extent to which the *History* represents a practical view of knighthood in the twelfth century or one that has been influenced by the conventions of chivalric romance. Much of the debate has come down to the relative value given by the *History* to 'practical' and

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<sup>162</sup> *HWM* 9789-816.

<sup>163</sup> Although some church knightings did take place historically, these court knightings were by far the most usual, so the *History* may simply be following historical fact in its use of that model, but it is interesting to note that religious ceremonies were the more common type in works of literature, so by not using that model the author was making a conscious choice to go against his literary style, Robert Ackerman, 'The Knighting Ceremonies in the Middle English Romances', *Speculum*, 19 (1944), pp.292, 295-6.

<sup>164</sup> This lack of interest in religious matters continues throughout the whole work. Even though John's reign saw a protracted series of disagreements and negotiations with the papacy, culminating in the Pope's support for John against the barons, the only reference to them in the *History* is a three line statement that an interdict was passed. There is mention that the interdict caused great upheaval but with no examples and no explanation; it appears to be used as a means to date the events of William's life rather than being part of the narrative itself. Even the church is not seen in a spiritual light, the papacy is described in very pejorative terms as valuing 'Saint Gold and Saint Silver' above the law while other religious figures, such as bishops and cardinals, are mentioned only where they have military or political power; it is their temporal rather than spiritual role that matters. *HWM* 13938-40, 11358-72.



‘theoretical’ models of military activity which tend to be seen as mutually exclusive; i.e. war versus tournament. Both Keen and Gransden felt that the focus and interest of the text were in the tournaments, with Gransden describing the whole work as belonging ‘to the artificial world of the knights errant’.<sup>165</sup> Even Duby, who describes William’s actions as taking place in the ‘theatre of war’, pays much more attention to the tournaments.<sup>166</sup> However, Gillingham demonstrated that war is given far more space and can consequently be seen as more central to the *History* and therefore William’s characterisation; while 8350 lines are about war only 3150 are dedicated to tournaments.<sup>167</sup> Not only does war take up more space but descriptions of it are also spread throughout the whole text, the only notable exception being the run up to the Marshal’s death. By comparison, the vast majority of tournaments occur within a single 2500 line section, the removal of which would make very little difference to the overall narrative, showing their relative unimportance.<sup>168</sup>

However, there are substantial overlaps in the *History*’s depictions of the two types of military activity. Where typical romance motifs appear they lack their usual romance meaning. The motif of a lady sending a token to the hero as the best knight at the tournament is turned upside down; the knight she sends it to declares himself unworthy and all the barons decide to award the gift to William.<sup>169</sup> The prize is gained through the common decision of a group of men rather than as a natural right from a woman. In addition, William quite literally makes his fortune as well as his reputation through victory in both tournaments and war; in both contexts he captures horses, their gear, and knights for ransom.<sup>170</sup> That financial gain is an admirable outcome of military activity is

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<sup>165</sup> Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (London: Yale University Press, 1984), pp.20-1; Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England c.550 to c.1307* (London, 1974), p.345.

<sup>166</sup> Georges Duby, *William Marshal: The Flower of Chivalry* (London, 1986), p.56.

<sup>167</sup> Gillingham, ‘War and Chivalry in the *History of William Marshal*’ in P.R. Coss and S.D.

Lloyd (eds), *Thirteenth Century England II* (Woodbridge,1988), p.3.

<sup>168</sup> *HWM* c.2470- 5050.

<sup>169</sup> *HWM* 3041-160.

<sup>170</sup> At his first tournament William gained four and a half war horses plus hacks, palfries, pack-horses and harnesses, *HWM* 1367-72. However, the account of his capture of 103 knights in a single season while companion to Sir Roger de Jouy suggests that it was Sir Roger who sought to exploit William’s abilities in his greed, in part excusing William himself from a similar charge. *HWM* 3381-8.

indicated when after his first battle William is mocked by more experienced knights for not having profited in victory.<sup>171</sup>

In fact, the *History* does not see any tension between chivalry and the practicalities of war at all.<sup>172</sup> Chivalric virtues are greatly admired throughout the *History*, with the Young King being praised as the home of chivalry and Richard I ensuring victory for his cause by charging like a lion into battle.<sup>173</sup> However, Gillingham notes that alongside these uncomplicated examples events such as William's advice to pretend to disband the army but then secretly reform and ravage French lands are described as *molt corteis*, showing that such apparently underhand tactics were still seen as chivalrous warfare and could therefore be described as comparable to great feats of arms.<sup>174</sup> Recent commentators such as Laura Ashe have argued that 'the culture of chivalry [was] an ideology which exerted its force in literature and history alike', suggesting that trying to separate the theoretical from the practical is futile as they both influenced each other.<sup>175</sup> The model of an ideal knight did not change significantly depending on circumstances; it was only the way in which an individual was seated within that model that was altered depending on the particular virtues that an author wished to emphasise. Consequently the following discussion will explore how William's characterisation compares to the most widespread ideals of chivalry.

The standard set of virtues expected of knights in the thirteenth century, as listed by Keen, consist of *prouesse*, *loyauté*, *largesse*, *courtoisie*, and *franchise* (the bearing that comes from good birth and virtue).<sup>176</sup> The *History* itself specifically mentions four of these virtues as being associated with

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<sup>171</sup> *HWM* 1135-62.

<sup>172</sup> Gillingham, 'War and Chivalry', p.12.

<sup>173</sup> *HWM* 6941-3, 10988-11009.

<sup>174</sup> Gillingham, 'War and Chivalry', p.6.

<sup>175</sup> Ashe, 'William Marshal, Lancelot and Arthur', p.20.

<sup>176</sup> Keen, *Chivalry*, p.2. The Books of Chivalry that give the most detailed contemporary accounts of medieval ideals of chivalry were all produced after the *History*, however, these virtues appear as early as the mid twelfth-century in the romances of Chrétien de Troyes and remain largely consistent throughout the whole medieval period. Knightly virtues and broader ideals of chivalry have been a popular area of scholarly research. Much work has been done by Keen both in *Chivalry* and the later collection of essays *Nobles, Knights and Men-at-Arms in the Middle Ages* (London, 1996). Other important contributions have been made by Richard Kaeuper in *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe* (Oxford, 1999) who demonstrated the negative impact of the ideal and Richard Barber whose *The Knight and Chivalry* (Woodbridge, 1974) was reissued and updated in 1995. In addition numerous articles touch on the subject, see especially the series of publications based on the Strawberry Hill conferences *The Ideals and Practice of Medieval Knighthood* and *Medieval Knighthood* (Woodbridge, 1986-1995).

chivalry; prowess, nobility, generosity and largesse, showing that its author was broadly working within the traditional framework.<sup>177</sup> In its concern to portray William as the perfect chivalrous knight the *History* demonstrates that he was the supreme possessor of all these qualities. However, its depictions of three of them are particularly valuable for showing the varying ways in which William's characterisation shaped the text.

Demonstrations of the first of these virtues, prowess, are ubiquitous in the *History*; the battles and tournaments that form the majority of its narrative all present him as the bravest and most skilled fighter and strategist. His ability is recognised by all the kings, lords and knights which whom he comes into contact, even those that he fights against. From his very first military engagement where his skill and prowess, *proësse*, inspired the army to fight as if it were twice as strong; through his winning of tournaments and courting by French magnates when he was out of favour with the Young King; to unhorsing that greatest of medieval warriors, Richard I, when he was at war with his father; and eventually the Battle of Lincoln at the end of his life, William's military ability was constantly reiterated.<sup>178</sup>

This martial ability is based in historical fact since William made his reputation through his actions in war and at tournaments rather than as a courtier; although his fortune was not made in war so much as by marriage.<sup>179</sup> The way in which William is presented in the *History* as universally victorious, and the consistency with which he is the one to suggest successful tactics or make the decisive charge, are exaggerated in line with the adulatory purpose, but *prouesse* was not a characteristic that had to be invented. It was undoubtedly his reputation as a warrior that caused William's literary characterisation as a knight rather than any of his other historical roles and the choice of roles encouraged the author to use the French literary style of romance epic for his work, a style which was devoted largely to feats of arms. The literary style in turn then influenced the

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<sup>177</sup> HWM 4315-6.

<sup>178</sup> HWM 932, 3064-160, 6150-81, 8833-49, 16119-17040.

<sup>179</sup> As Crouch pointed out, the granting of the heiress of Pembroke to William on Richard I's accession caused a substantial shift in his position. Previously he had been valued as a soldier but did not have any judicial or administrative roles and had received comparatively little financial reward for his services. David Crouch, 'Strategies of Lordship in Angevin England and the Career of William Marshal', in *The Ideals and Practice of Medieval Knighthood II: Papers from the third Strawberry Hill conference 1986*, Christopher Harper-Bill & Ruth Harvey (eds) (Woodbridge, 1988), pp.1-25.

way in which broader events were described. On the subject of William's prowess therefore, historical events were both shaped by the literary aspect of the *History* and had their descriptions shaped by it.

Largesse is a far less significant theme in the *History* than prowess but it is illustrative of the author's approach to the model of which he was making use.<sup>180</sup> As a young man William was so poor that he was forced to sell his own cloak to buy a low quality pack-horse and had to borrow a mount from his lord in order to attend a tournament; consequently he did not have the resources to exercise generosity.<sup>181</sup> However, by the time he had risen to become companion to the Young King there are occasional examples of William demonstrating this virtue; one such being at a tournament where a young singer asks in song for a horse and the Marshal goes straight out and captures one for him, then at the end of the same tournament gives away all that he has earned that day.<sup>182</sup> It is interesting to note that on the occasions in which the Marshal uses trickery to gain money he tends to share the benefit with others whereas more honourably gained wealth, from tournament victories for example, is kept.<sup>183</sup> Even at the end of his life when he is a wealthy magnate there is very little mention of his giving money away.

Overall William's possession of the virtue of largesse gains only cursory mention in the *History*; it appears primarily as a token gesture in episodes that are either heavily influenced by the romance genre or could otherwise be seen as presenting William in an unfavourable light. Largesse is simply an expected attribute of the ideal knight that must be included in order to justify William's

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<sup>180</sup> It is not William but the Young King who is most praised by the *History* for largesse. The virtue proved difficult to exercise in practice however as it left him financially vulnerable, he could not live within his means and the Marshal had to underwrite his debts, *HWM* 5060-94. Laura Ash commented on the fact that the difficulty of balancing the chivalric ideal of largesse against reality was particularly problematic for rulers as they were at the top of the chain and so received no largesse themselves, whereas other nobles both gave and received under the system allowing them to balance their finances more easily, 'William Marshal, Lancelot, and Arthur', pp.29-30.

<sup>181</sup> *HWM* 1174-1200, 1220-1332.

<sup>182</sup> However, this episode is far more influenced by romance conventions than the majority of the *History* and the first part in particular is more about William's ability to capture a horse so quickly that no one realised he had left the dancing than it is about his generosity. *HWM* 3488-520, 3558-62.

<sup>183</sup> For example, the previously mentioned incident where he and companions pretend they are there to defend a town when they are really escaping from a superior force, and when he takes money from an usurious monk by threatening violence, disguising the fact he is unarmed, and uses it to pay his companions' debts. *HWM* 12295-404, 6677-852.

presentation as such; it is not an intrinsic aspect of his characterisation in the *History*. The portrayal of *largesse* shows that the author was selective about which virtues he chose to emphasise, that not all attributes of the ideal knight were treated equally, and that he clearly did not feel that demonstrating *largesse* was particularly important to William's reputation.

Therefore it is significant that, while the *History* revels in its hero's undoubted possession of *prouesse* and is largely uninterested in his *largesse*, there is a concerted effort to prove his possession of the virtue of *loyauté*. The *History* repeatedly emphasises that the swearing of fealty to an overlord was not an act that William took lightly, as can be seen in his refusal to perform fealty to Richard for land he already held from John and his moral dilemma over fealty to King Philip of France for his continental holdings.<sup>184</sup> It is this loyalty that leads to him being seen as trustworthy, even in the face of hostility from his lord. For example John chooses to leave William to defend England during his period out of favour in spite of stated concerns about treachery with Philip of France because he was known to be 'a very loyal man', *molt liel*.<sup>185</sup> The *History* even claims that William had such a strong reputation for loyalty that mention of him as one of the members of a purported conspiracy was enough for Richard I to be able to tell that the reports were untrue; it was inconceivable that he could be disloyal.<sup>186</sup> In fact, it could be argued that loyalty, rather than valiant military action, is the main theme of the *History*.

The *History's* characterisation of William as loyal was not an automatic result of the events of his life in the way that depictions of his prowess were. Rather, the desire to prove William's loyalty supplies a number of situations in which events can be shown to have been adjusted to suit the author's aims. One such authorial twisting of events concerns the Marshal's fall from favour under the Young King Henry.<sup>187</sup> The *History* claims that William was accused of *lèse majesté* and adultery with the Queen, with the focus on the latter as it is that against which William defends himself.<sup>188</sup> However, historically the charge of *lèse majesté*, of seeking his own advantage above that of his lord, is far more

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<sup>184</sup> *HWM* 10305-24, 12956-66, and 13136-54.

<sup>185</sup> *HWM* 13290.

<sup>186</sup> *HWM* 9843-58.

<sup>187</sup> *HWM* 5095-484.

<sup>188</sup> *HWM* 5221-44.

likely and the *History* is sensitive to it; making a preemptive defence. William is shown to fight for the king's glory at any tournament where the king is present rather than his own, constantly defending Henry and presenting him with prisoners and horses.<sup>189</sup> Only when William is unaccompanied does he seek to increase his own reputation.<sup>190</sup> Thematically, it is the necessity of demonstrating the falsity of a *lèse majesté* charge that justifies the inclusion of the long tournament section within the narrative structure of the text.

In addition, the behaviour of William during his absence from the Young King's court is presented as unwaveringly loyal to the man to whom he swore fealty, even though that man has unjustly accused and exiled him. William returns to fight for the king at a tournament when he is needed and turns down several lucrative offers from other lords, choosing to go on pilgrimage instead.<sup>191</sup> When the Young King hears about the offers he is impressed by the loyalty William has shown.<sup>192</sup> However, far from turning down all offers, it is known that he accepted a substantial fee from Count Philip of Flanders.<sup>193</sup> So the author appears to have been either overlooking known facts or inventing events to fill a gap in order to back up his characterisation. William's status at this point in the text is reasserted by an episode in which he supplies the Count of Saint-Pol with a horse for a tournament, inverting the events of his own first tournament when he was so poor he needed to borrow a horse, showing that even without the King's support he was a valuable ally.<sup>194</sup> The whole episode of William's estrangement is portrayed in such a way that it increases, rather than decreases his prestige. It is the Young King whose reputation is damaged for dishonouring such a loyal and valuable supporter.<sup>195</sup>

There are certain aspects of the *History's* account of William's period out of favour that bring romances forcibly to mind, especially the circumstances

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<sup>189</sup> In fact the *History* goes so far as to claim that the Marshal was the one responsible for the king's reputation, *HWM* 3634. Other examples of William's selflessness include *HWM* 2560-2 (promises to devote himself to king), 2815-9 (all king's other men run off but not William), 4935-70 (saves the king).

<sup>190</sup> As in the tournaments at Pleures and Joigni, *HWM* 2875-3164, 3427-562.

<sup>191</sup> *HWM* 5497-506, 6150-81.

<sup>192</sup> *HWM* 6260-84.

<sup>193</sup> ANTS, *History of William Marshal*, III, p.100.

<sup>194</sup> *HWM* 6031-43.

<sup>195</sup> *HWM* 5448.

surrounding the adultery charge which are strongly reminiscent of Lancelot.<sup>196</sup> In spite of such references, it is difficult to judge how far this episode constitutes fictionalisation since it takes place early in the *History* where there is very little alternative evidence. The specific detail of William turning down offers can be disproved but the overall outline of events and the nature of the charges against William may reflect reality. For example, although the overlooked charge of *lèse majesté* was probably more important, Crouch argued that the adultery charge must have been made as well or it would not be defended against.<sup>197</sup> It was simply the importance given to it in the *History* that was inspired by contemporary romance; it was a familiar motif that could provide a convenient distraction.<sup>198</sup> By focusing on the charge of adultery the *History* made the more difficult charge appear less important; to the extent that a number of modern scholars have completely overlooked it.<sup>199</sup> Whether the *History's* account of William's fall and time out of favour could be considered fiction or not, it undoubtedly twisted events in order to characterise William as consistently loyal during a time in his life when his historical actions were particularly vulnerable to charges of disloyalty.

However, the most interesting aspect of *loyauté* in the *History* is the nature and extent of William's loyalty to King John. John was a problematic figure due to his extremely negative reputation, and particularly so during Henry III's minority and early rule, so in order to be presented in a positive light William had to be disassociated from him as much as possible. As Crouch pointed out '[s]uch was King John's posthumous reputation that the Marshal had to be depicted as leader of the moral opposition to the man who had lost

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<sup>196</sup> *HWM* 5760-814; as with William, according to the *Vulgate Cycle* which was also written in the early thirteenth century, when a faction at court wished to displace Lancelot in the king's favour, accusations of adultery were made. Lancelot attempted to disprove the charge by offering to demonstrate his innocence through single combat, but the offer was refused and although Lancelot lost favour it was the reputation of the king which was damaged. The parallels between William and Lancelot in these episodes have been discussed by Ashe in 'William Marshal, Lancelot, and Arthur' p.31 and Kaeuper, 'William Marshal, Lancelot and the Issue of Chivalric Identity', p.14.

<sup>197</sup> Crouch, *William Marshal*, p.48. However, Crouch has since pointed out that while out of favour William went to the French court where the Young King's wife was resident and that '[h]ad such a charge ever been made, a visit to the French court would have been a dangerous gamble.', *ANTS, History of William Marshal*, III, p.102

<sup>198</sup> Being accused, rightly or wrongly, of adultery was a common risk for romance heroes: as well as Lancelot, examples include Tristan and Guy of Warwick.

<sup>199</sup> For example Painter, *William Marshal*, p.46.

Normandy and nearly lost England.’<sup>200</sup> There are three particular situations in which the historical relationship between the two men and William’s characterisation as consistently loyal come into conflict. Firstly, during the period of Richard I’s crusade and captivity. Historically William was one of four co-justiciars left in charge of the country by Richard and when problems emerged between the justiciars and the chancellor, Longchamp, Prince John was on the justiciars’ side.<sup>201</sup> It was not until Richard had been captured and John conspired with Philip Augustus to claim the English throne that the justiciars moved against him and then only with reluctance; it was not until February 1194 when Richard’s return was imminent that they acted against the Prince.<sup>202</sup> In fact William’s elder brother was an associate of Prince John during his conspiracy and died just as Richard returned, from wounds probably received fighting for John.<sup>203</sup> The *History* navigates the complex loyalties of this period by carefully distancing John from the coalition of William, the good barons, and the Queen Mother during conflict with the chancellor and implying that the solution to the problems with Longchamp also neutralised John’s influence when in fact he continued to be extremely powerful. This section also provides a reminder to the audience of William’s unimpeachable reputation by means of Richard’s ability to

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<sup>200</sup> ANTS, *History of William Marshal*, III, p.39.

<sup>201</sup> For details of Richard’s provision for the kingdom while on crusade see Ralph V. Turner & R. Heiser, *The Reign of Richard Lionheart: Ruler of the Angevin Empire, 1189-99* (London, 2000), pp.72-109 and F.J. West, *The Justiciarship in England 1066-1232* (Cambridge, UP, 1966), p.66-73. Longchamp was unpopular less than a year after Richard’s departure. His three-fold role as justiciar, chancellor and papal legate made him unusually powerful for a man of comparatively low birth and he was seen as taking on kingly behaviours to which he was not entitled. William of Newburgh described the way he was seen: ‘The laity found him more than a king, the clergy more than Pope, and both an intolerable tyrant’, William of Newburgh, *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I*, vol. I. *Historia Rerum Anglicarum*, Richard Howlett (ed), Rolls Series, 82 (1884), p.333.

<sup>202</sup> When Philip returned from the Third Crusade he made early overtures towards John which were thwarted by Eleanor of Aquitaine who threatened to confiscate John’s lands if he went to France, *The Chronicle of Richard of Devizes of the Time of King Richard the First*, John T. Appleby (ed and trans) (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1963), pp.433-5. However, when Richard didn’t return from Crusade as expected, John began to claim that he was dead and John himself was now king; the news that Richard was a captive in Germany was enough to encourage John to swear fealty to Philip in exchange for support in acquiring England. Although an army was raised by Eleanor and the justiciars, by now including Longchamp again, there seems to have been a policy of stalling John rather than actively seeking to overcome him; Crouch, *William Marshal*, pp.79-80; W. Lewis Warren, *King John*, (London, 1991), pp.44-5. For events in England and France during Richard’s captivity and their long term significance see also F.M. Powicke, *The Loss of Normandy* (Manchester, 1960 2<sup>nd</sup> edition), pp.91-9; and Turner & Heiser, *The Reign of Richard Lionheart*, pp.110-40.

<sup>203</sup> Crouch, *William Marshal*, p.81.



identify Longchamp's accusations of treachery as false through the mention of William as one of the traitors.

Secondly, when John became King the problems faced by the *History's* author increased, since it was impossible to disassociate William completely from the lord that he consistently worked for and was rewarded by. The solution arrived at was to emphasise William's loyalty to the institution of the English crown regardless of the qualities, positive or negative, of the person wearing it. The value of loyalty to the institution rather than the person had already been seen at the start of Richard's reign when Richard was pleased by William's loyalty to his father Henry II even though it had meant the two men had been on opposite sides during Richard's rebellion.<sup>204</sup> In the *History* John is characterised as proud, arrogant and cruel, a man who does not keep his promises, follow good advice, or respect the virtue of his subject's female relatives.<sup>205</sup> Nevertheless, because John is the rightful King, William is praised for supporting him against the rival claims of Arthur at the start of the reign and Prince Louis of France and the barons at the end of the reign during the First Barons' War. The message is that William's loyalty to his king is admirable even, or possibly especially, where it is potentially damaging to his own interest; as it must be with a man like John who 'kept his loyal supporters at arms length', *que ses prosdommes teneit loing*.<sup>206</sup>

The discussion that takes place between William and the archbishop of Reims on hearing of Richard's death about who should become the new king makes the point overtly that William's loyalty is to the rightful king rather than his own best interest. William argues for John's claim over Arthur's because:

Ma conscience e mon saveir  
Le me mostre al plus procein eir  
Qui seit de la terre son père  
E autresi de la son frere.

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<sup>204</sup> It is likely that this event is based on historical fact since on his accession Richard advanced the men who had stayed loyal to his father and treated those who hadn't with contempt. Roger of Hoveden, *Gesta Henrici Secundi*, Stubbs (ed), vol.II, pp.72-3.

<sup>205</sup> These qualities are mentioned various times but specific examples appear at *HWM*, 12498, 12512, 12605.

<sup>206</sup> *HWM* 14481.

to the best of my knowledge and belief  
he seems to be the nearest in line  
to claim the land of his father  
as well as that of his brother.<sup>207</sup>

He maintains this view even after it is pointed out to him that having John as king is likely to be damaging to him. In fact, as Crouch pointed out, historically William would have had no reason to believe that he would be damaged by John's rule and actually received large grants on his accession.<sup>208</sup> So the episode serves the dual purpose of emphasising William's loyalty to the rightful king of England and distancing him from the unpopular John.

Finally, there is William's long period out of favour when he turned his attention from the concerns of King John in France to his own holdings in Ireland. Unsurprisingly the *History* argues that William was entirely in the right during this conflict, acting as he had been instructed but betrayed by John's fickle and vindictive nature. However, William's actions following the Battle of Sandwich when, as regent, he gave Prince Louis of France generous peace terms, was seen in later years as demonstrating that William had had a pro-French approach to diplomacy that was seen as treachery and added posthumous support to John's concern that William had loyalty to the other monarch.<sup>209</sup> The arguments used to defend William against the pro-French charge appear to be the official Marshal family position on accusations of treachery made after his death because in 1220 his son had used the same argument to clear his father's name and five years later the issue was still alive.<sup>210</sup> The fact that a justification for William's actions was required in the years after his death demonstrates that, far from being recognised historically as the ideal loyal knight, he had a less than perfect reputation in this regard that anyone attempting to glorify him would have to address.

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<sup>207</sup> *HWM* 11893-6.

<sup>208</sup> Crouch, *William Marshal*, pp.85-6.

<sup>209</sup> Matthew Paris, who was writing some years after the *History*, recorded that William was known to be a traitor because Philip was confident his son would be safe as long as William was in charge and repeated a 1241 episode in which Henry III told Walter Marshal that it was known his father had been a traitor for not capturing Louis; *Chronica Maiora*, III.25-6, IV.157. The *History* says that Philip had completely the opposite view, with William in charge Louis would have no hope; *HWM* 17085-108.

<sup>210</sup> ANTS, *History of William Marshal*, III, p.149.

The above examples have shown that the *History* brings forward a variety of evidence to demonstrate that William was a perfect knight with an abundance of all the qualities necessary for that role, but that not all the knightly qualities were treated in the same way. The relative emphasis placed on the various virtues is particularly of interest with regards to the relationship between the historical facts of William's life and the extent of fictionalisation within his literary characterisation. While historically accurate prowess is prominent and described in a fictional and heroic style, historically questionable loyalty unsurprisingly led to a twisting of events in order to fulfil the work's adulatory purpose and therefore resulted in a greater movement away from the facts. However, there is another layer of complexity to the *History's* place in the border land of history and fiction; his life may have influenced the development of the very literary models that in turn influenced the way he was portrayed.

As Larry Benson demonstrated, the period in which William was active was significant for the development of the romance model of knighthood.<sup>211</sup> The tournaments that William attended as a young man were probably the real life models for Chrétien's descriptions of such events in his Arthurian romances since Chrétien was living and writing at the court of the Count Philip while Philip was taking part in them.<sup>212</sup> As such these events formed the *exempla* for all future literary accounts of tournaments, including those in the *History*. In addition it was the cultural context of courts such as those of Count Philip and the Young King that encouraged the idea that tournaments were central to the development of a knightly reputation; before then tournaments had been generally discouraged by those in authority and it was through crusading that the ideal knight of the *chanson de geste* demonstrated his prowess.<sup>213</sup> Beyond the events through which William lived, his life may have had a more specific impact on the romance genre. As the most visible beneficiary of the model of knighthood in which an unknown is able to rise to wealth and power by increasing his chivalric reputation it is possible that William was a historical inspiration for heroes that were truly fictional.

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<sup>211</sup> Larry D. Benson, 'The tournament in the romances of Chrétien de Troyes & *L'Histoire de Guillaume Le Maréchal*', in *Chivalric Literature : Essays on relations between literature and life in the latter Middle Ages*, Larry D. Benson & John Leyerle (eds), *Studies in Medieval Culture*, XIV (Kalamazoo, MI; Medieval Institute Publications, 1980), pp.1-24, 147-52.

<sup>212</sup> Benson, 'The tournament in the romances of Chrétien de Troyes', p.7.

<sup>213</sup> Benson, 'The tournament in the romances of Chrétien de Troyes', pp.4-6, 19.

One literary ideal knight who has been specifically linked to William is Gui of Warwick, the central character of popular Anglo-Norman romance in the early thirteenth century. The story of *Gui de Warewic* is generally known today through the later Middle English translations, *Guy of Warwick*, but there are more medieval manuscript survivals of the Anglo-Norman *Gui*, demonstrating that that version was well known.<sup>214</sup> Gui, or Guy, was as famous in the Middle Ages as Arthur; he consistently appeared in medieval lists of romance heroes as one of the greatest knights to have ever lived.<sup>215</sup> The account of his life was an original composition that was nevertheless heavily influenced by motifs in earlier insular romances such as those of Waldef, Horn and Havelok, as well as Arthurian literature, *chansons de geste*, and hagiography; it was entirely fictional. The identity of the author of *Gui* is unknown but he seems to have been familiar with the area around Warwick so the text may well have been composed near to where its central character was supposed to have lived, a location that was only about thirty miles from Gloucester, where we know that the author of the *History* spent some time researching his work.<sup>216</sup>

The manuscript was originally edited by Alfred Ewert in 1933 who believed it to be a response to the marriage of the 5<sup>th</sup> Earl of Warwick to Margery d'Oilly, composed by a monk under the patronage of the d'Oilly family, and he dated it to 1232-42.<sup>217</sup> However, Ewert's date has been shown to be too late because the scribe of the earliest manuscript is the same as the one for the *Pseudo-Turpin* which can be firmly dated to between 1206 and 1214.<sup>218</sup> *Gui* was almost certainly written sometime in the first quarter of the thirteenth century. It was suggested by Emma Mason that *Gui*'s composition actually took place at the very beginning of that period, by 1205, because that was the year in which Margery died; a dating which has been supported by Judith Weiss on the grounds

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<sup>214</sup> Rosalind Field, 'From *Gui* to *Guy*; The Fashioning of a Popular Romance', Alison Wiggins and Rosalind Field (eds), *Guy of Warwick: Icon and Ancestor* (Cambridge, 2007), p.44.

<sup>215</sup> In fact, according to Lin Yiu, Guy was in the top three most cited romance heroes in the Middle English corpus, the other two were Bevis and Charlemagne. 'Middle English Romance as Prototype Genre', *Chaucer Review*, 40 (2006), p.342.

<sup>216</sup> The author made use of MS Trinity College Dublin 503 which was composed and remained in Gloucester Abbey throughout the Middle Ages. Crouch, 'Writing a Biography in the Thirteenth Century: The Construction and Composition of the 'History of William Marshal'', David Bates, Julia Crick & Sarah Hamilton (eds), *Writing Medieval Biography: Essays in Honour of Frank Barlow* (Woodbridge, 2006), p.229.

<sup>217</sup> Alfred Ewert, *Gui de Warewic: roman du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Les Classiques Français du Moyen Age, 2 vols, 74-5 (Paris, 1932) vol.1, pp.v-vii.

<sup>218</sup> Jeanne Wathelet-Willem, *Resurches sur la Chanson de Guillaume* (Madison, 1975), pp.42-6.

of the lack of any mention of the 1204 Fourth Crusade and sack of Constantinople.<sup>219</sup> Such an early date has recently been challenged once more by Carol Harding based on revisions made to the Warwick and d'Oilly family trees by Rosie Bevan, but even her slightly later assessment of 1205-15 places *Gui* well before the *History*'s mid 1220s composition.<sup>220</sup> *Gui*'s popularity, location and date combine to make it virtually impossible for the author of the *History* to have been unfamiliar with it when he was writing.

Therefore, *Gui de Warewic* might be expected to have influenced the way in which the *History*'s author characterised his own ideal, knightly hero. Indeed, as the *History* was for some time seen as an ancestral romance, designed to enhance the reputation of the Marshal family through the reflected glory of their ancestor, it has been suggested by Crouch that it might be a direct response to *Gui de Warewic*, giving neighbouring noble families competing perfect knightly ancestors.<sup>221</sup> However, the relationship between *Gui* and William Marshal is potentially far more complicated. It was suggested, by Dominica Legge, that William may have been the historical inspiration for *Gui*, or rather that 'Guy could be an idealized William Marshal'.<sup>222</sup> This suggestion has been largely ignored by scholars and even a basic comparison of the two lives shows so many differences that it seems unlikely that the author of *Gui* made any conscious

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<sup>219</sup> Emma Mason, 'Legends of the Beauchamps' Ancestors: The Use of Baronial Propaganda in Medieval England', *Journal of Medieval History*, 10 (1984), pp.30-31; Judith Weiss (trans), *Boeve De Haumton and Gui De Warewic: Two Anglo-Norman Romances*, French of England Translation Series, 3 (Tempe, Arizona, 2008), p.14.

<sup>220</sup> Carol E. Harding, 'Dating *Gui de Warewic*: A Re-evaluation', *Notes and Queries*, 56:3 (2009), pp.333-5; Rosie Bevan, 'A Realignment of the 12th and 13th Century Pedigree of the Earls of Warwick – Complete Peerage Correction', *Foundations*, 1.3 (2004), pp.194-7.

<sup>221</sup> Crouch, *William Marshal*, p.11. The model of the 'ancestral romance' was developed by Dominica Legge in *Anglo-Norman Literature and its Background* but it has been weakened considerably by demonstrations that there is too little evidence to connect the composition of the texts identified as such to either the family in question or specific occasions when that family's reputation needed bolstering. Although the *History* is one of the very few examples where there is evidence of such a connection, the doubt concerning the model as a whole and the extent to which the text can be seen as history rather than romance means that the term has fallen out of favour. The most notable criticism of the model appears in Susan Dannenbaum, 'Anglo-Norman Romances of English Heroes: 'Ancestral Romance'?', *Romance Philology*, 35 (1981-2), pp.601-8.

<sup>222</sup> Legge was writing before the date of composition of *Gui* had been reassessed backwards, which makes her suggestion less likely, as it was written before William died or became regent. *Gui* was one of the heroes used by Legge in her model of the ancestral romance but as with her other examples more recent commentators, in particular Susan Crane, have questioned that there was any direct connection to the family because there is no praise for a patron and no mention of the current earls. Legge, *Anglo-Norman Literature*, p.170; Dannenbaum, 'Anglo-Norman Romances', pp.601-8.

attempt to use William as a model. Certainly Gui can not be seen as a fictionalised version of William.

However certain similarities in the course that their lives take are interesting: provincial beginnings are overcome through the attainment of chivalric glory, leading to a courtly wife who brings with her the title of Earl and the hero eventually gains national importance by saving England from invasion by foreign troops. Of the events selected by Robert A. Rouse to summarise Guy's 'extraordinary' life, 'even by the often outrageous standards of medieval romance', only vanquishing Saracens and eventual death as a hermit do not also apply to William in the *History*.<sup>223</sup> In fact even the vanquishing of Saracens formed a part of William's historical life since he spent some time on pilgrimage in the Holy Land fighting. That this outline is a romance cliché is undoubtedly true but it does not negate the possibility that William's life influenced the development of that cliché. The similarities in narrative outline and potential for mutual influence make the differences between the characterisations of these two ideal knights particularly interesting.

Although both Gui and William are described as 'the greatest knight in the world' and show considerable prowess in their many great battles, the other virtues focused upon in the two texts are different. Unlike William, Gui is not loyal to any single cause, country or king. While he does not switch sides once he has selected one, and can not therefore be seen as disloyal, the peripatetic nature of his adventures does not allow for consistency. He is loyal only for as long as he is needed then moves on to a different location and different loyalty, a far cry from William's consistent service to the king of England, regardless of his own interests or who that king may be.

Similarly, the importance of largesse differs considerably between the two texts. As has already been noted, largesse is a virtue largely overlooked in William's characterisation, but at the start it is central to Gui's. The first thing we are told about Gui when he is introduced, appearing before any mention of martial ability, is that he:

Del suena tuz voleit doner;

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<sup>223</sup> Robert Allen Rouse, 'An Exemplary Life: Guy of Warwick as Medieval Culture-Hero', Wiggins & Field (eds), *Guy of Warwick: Icon and Ancestor* (2007), p.94.

...

N'out si petit en la maison  
Que de lui n'eust riche dun ;

Wanted to give what he had to everyone... There was no one so humble in the household who did not receive a rich gift from him.<sup>224</sup>

Evidence of his generosity appears again after his reputation has become established:

N'I ad chevalier mesaisé,  
Ne prison qui seit esgaré,  
Que voille del suen demander,  
Que ne lui face mult tost doner ;

There was no poverty-stricken knight or forsaken prisoner who might ask him for something of his to whom he did not very quickly give it.<sup>225</sup>

However there is a lack of specific examples of what he has given and to whom.

The different attitude towards the virtues of loyalty and generosity in *Gui* points to a fundamental difference between the two characters. William made his reputation and fortune through his knightly prowess, Gui only made his reputation, he already had a fortune. Gui is able to be generous because he has the resources available. By contrast to William's first tournament when he had to borrow a horse, Gui's first tournament sees him lodging:

Od le plus riche hom de la cité;  
Cunreier se fait mult richement:  
Asez aveit or e argent.

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<sup>224</sup> *GdW* 120, 133-4.

<sup>225</sup> *GdW* 1539-42.

with the richest man in the city, and had himself most splendidly equipped, for he had enough gold and silver.<sup>226</sup>

Both men can be seen as taking on the romance role of ‘unknown knights’ to the extent that they do not have a reputation and are immediately recognised as the best, but only William is a *povre hom* seeking material benefit from military activity.

The difference in their initial financial circumstances also explains their different attitudes to loyalty. From the start Gui is a leader of men, inspiring loyalty rather than giving it. He has followers accompanying him and is treated as an equal by Dukes and lords (although Felice clearly sees a difference in their status). Gui’s independent wealth means that he is not subject to the whims of another for security, he is able to travel at will and in doing so removes himself geographically from the influence of his natural feudal lord, the king of England. None of the rulers that he interacts with can automatically claim service from him because he holds no land from them and owes them no favours, and since he is independently wealthy they can not hope to employ him. William does not have the same freedom. He is dependent on his overlord financially and, apart from his brief sojourn in the Holy Land, is acting within the territory owned or claimed by his king. Even the wealth he gains through marriage does not make him independent because he must swear fealty for the land.<sup>227</sup> As such William’s loyalty is a necessary component of his success, to be lauded and admired.

The different financial situations are also indicative of a broader difference in literary modes between the two texts. The practicalities of financing his expeditions are never a concern for Gui. Even when he loses all his companions and belongings in an ambush he is immediately given more by the king of Apulia.<sup>228</sup> While William is not poor after his first few tournaments there remains an awareness in the text of the financial consequences of various situations, from concerns over the Young King’s credit and how it affected

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<sup>226</sup> *GdW* 736-8.

<sup>227</sup> The repeated problems in the *History* concerning William’s swearing of fealty to various lords for different pieces of land emphasises that wealth came with loyalty as the price. The main example is the conflict over William’s homage to Philip for his French holdings and consequent refusal to fight against him which led to his time out of favour but another important example is the debate over whether William owed Richard as well as John fealty for his Irish holdings.

<sup>228</sup> *GdW* 1229-514.



William, to a mention of the expenses associated with negotiating with the Papacy.<sup>229</sup> As was discussed by Ashe, the romance model of largesse worked for fictional characters such as Arthur because they could continually give wealth away without having to replenish it.<sup>230</sup> Attempts to live up to the model by individuals such as the Young King were doomed to failure because they did not have endless funds but had to bow to economic realities. In the romance world of *Gui* money appears simply as decoration, its excess signaling wealth and importance, but there is no sense of its value because there is never any possibility of it running out. The *History*'s implication that maintaining financial solvency is a greater sign of worth than is largesse demonstrates that William is living in a different world, one far closer to historical reality.

The fact that the characterisation of William as an ideal knight in the *History* is restricted by historical considerations leads the discussion naturally on to a consideration of exactly how far the *History* as a whole can be seen as history rather than fiction in medieval terms, drawing on the conclusions reached in the last chapter. As was mentioned above, recent scholarship has placed increasing emphasis on its literary nature and downplayed its factual side. There are very good reasons for suspicion of inaccuracy; the text is in French verse and stylistically similar to the French romance-epics and *chansons de geste*. Given that we know the author was a professional versifier it seems likely that some elements of these popular styles found their way into this text. It is also the earliest known vernacular biography so the form had not yet fully developed, and there was a very definite laudatory purpose which meant that a rounded view of the Marshal's life was never intended. Possible comparisons are to Gerald of Wales' 1193 Latin life of Geoffrey Plantagenet, or even the Poem of the Cid which is a vernacular life of a layman, although with respect to the latter, John Gillingham sees it as far too fictionalised to be considered a genuine biography.<sup>231</sup> The literary antecedents of the *History* are therefore not ones to immediately inspire trust.

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<sup>229</sup> *HWM* 5060-94, 11,358-72.

<sup>230</sup> Ashe, 'William Marshal, Lancelot, and Arthur', pp.29-30.

<sup>231</sup> Crouch, *William Marshal*, p.4; Gillingham, 'War and Chivalry', p.1. Gillingham's dismissal of the *Poem* as a genuine biography on the basis of fictional elements is an example of a historian assuming that accuracy was a desirable attribute for a medieval account of an individual's life. Such an attitude is anachronistic given that the genre he is denying the *Poem* membership of was in its infancy and all of the comparable contemporary texts include fictional elements. The value

However, the author himself is keen to distinguish his work from that of romances and demonstrate that the account he provides is accurate and well researched, and therefore a truly historical account of events. His introduction makes it clear that he is following the view of history endorsed by the chroniclers, that recounting recent events is a useful task which benefits posterity, and consequently accepts that history as a whole and this text in particular have an instructive purpose. He claims that he is writing about a worthy topic, a *bone matyre*, and has a suitable subject for it:

Ma matire est del plus prodome  
Kui unkes fust a nostre tens.

my tale is of the worthiest man  
who ever lived in our times.<sup>232</sup>

In addition, he also accepts that there is a certain literary style associated with this kind of task. The author of such a valuable subject must of necessity write in such a fashion:

Ke reisun a ses diz s'acort,  
K'en n'i truisse riens ke reprendre;

that his words have the ring of common sense,  
with nothing in them to invite censure;<sup>233</sup>

Failure to do so will encourage the ignorant to deny the truth of the good things being described and so prevent the necessary lessons being taken from the example of the Marshal's life. However, the word *reisun*, translated above as common sense, parallels the idea of *verisimilia*, probability, from the theoretical discussions of the three part categorisation of literature, in that it does not necessarily preclude the recounting of likely sounding but inaccurate events.

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of fiction within historical narrative and how they could work together to their mutual benefit will be discussed in chapter three.

<sup>232</sup> *HWM* 1, 16-17.

<sup>233</sup> *HWM* 6-7.

Regardless of the above wording it is claimed at numerous points in the *History* that the author's focus is on truth, *vera*, rather than simply *verisimilia* or *reisun*. For example, near the start of Richard's reign, he says:

Si me couvent grant peine metre  
E grant estudie a grant cure  
A dire la verité pure

I must put great effort,  
diligence and care  
into telling the full truth.<sup>234</sup>

Only seventy lines later, after detailing the provisions Richard made for the government of the country while he was on crusade, he implies that he has done so to a higher standard than some others:

Issi fu, que que nulls vos die

Whatever anyone else might tell you, that is how matters were  
arranged.<sup>235</sup>

He also falls within Damian-Grint's understanding of acceptable medieval historical practice by claiming adherence to his source material when he says:

Mais si cum ge la truis escrit  
La m'estuet dire mot a mot.

as I find it in my written source  
so I should relate it word for word.<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>234</sup> *HWM* 9634-6.

<sup>235</sup> *HWM* 9709.

<sup>236</sup> *HWM* 4930-1.

These are only three examples of a trend to emphasise truth and accuracy that permeates the entire work.

Alongside the role of the Marshal as a worthy historical exemplar there is an emphasis on entertainment; anyone who listens to the story attentively ‘shall find their joy and delight in it’, [*e*] *kui de cuer l’escuterunt*.<sup>237</sup> Many of the author’s frequent asides throughout the text describe his concern not to bore his audience by repetition, diversions from the main theme or excessive length.<sup>238</sup> However, the anticipated enjoyment of the audience is not the valueless entertainment of fiction. His concern:

Que ge dot qu’il tort a annui  
A genz qui sunt hastis d’oïr,  
Ne ne si sevent esjoïr  
De grant ovre ne ne l’entendent  
Mais tost passer oltre tendent.

is that I fear I may weary  
those people who are impatient to hear more,  
who do not know how to derive pleasure  
from a great exploit, or to understand it,  
but are inclined to move on quickly.<sup>239</sup>

Thus anyone who fails to be entertained has failed to understand the value of what they are hearing. According to its author, the *History* should be enjoyed exactly because the events it describes are a genuine example of greatness; an attitude that would have been equally acceptable to the chroniclers discussed in the previous chapter.

With both its instructive value and its function as entertainment riding on its connection to real events, it is no surprise that the author of the *History* spent some time reassuring the audience that he was following acceptable procedure and recounting events without enhancement. To back up his claims to accuracy

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<sup>237</sup> *HWM* 22.

<sup>238</sup> For instance *HWM* 1512.

<sup>239</sup> *HWM* 4452-6.

the author used a wide variety of rhetorical techniques. Sometimes he simply pre-empts accusations by providing reassurance that his account is true, such as when he says that ‘these are no exaggerated words of mine’, (*Ce ne sunt pas moz de value*), when the Marshal appears to do the impossible by four times repulsing an enemy attack.<sup>240</sup> However, other techniques, including references to previous authorities and statements of limitations, bear substantial similarities to those used by chroniclers.

The first and most widespread of these techniques to be considered is the repeated references to sources of various kinds, one of which was quoted above. There are a total of forty four references to written sources throughout the text, an average of one every 438 lines, not a particularly high proportion but enough that the continued repetition makes a strong impression. Although, as Crouch pointed out, ‘[s]uch conventional and almost invariably spurious affirmations occur widely in Medieval French poems which manifestly did not derive from written sources, nor would the audiences have taken them at their face value’, they can not be immediately dismissed either.<sup>241</sup> The author’s need to prove the extent of the Marshal’s tournament victories provides the best example:

Wigainz, li clers de la quisine  
 E autres, c’est verité fine,  
 Proverent par escrit, sanz esme,  
 Qu’entre Pentecoste e Quaresme  
 Pristrent chevalers cent e treis

Wigant, the clerk of the kitchen,  
 and others too, it is the very truth,  
 gave proof in writing, without any guessing,  
 that between Lent and Whitsuntide  
 they took a hundred and three knights prisoner.<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>240</sup> *HWM* 1049.

<sup>241</sup> ANTS, *History of William Marshal*, III, p.5. Ziolkowski similarly argues that ‘the long twelfth century teems with pseudonymous texts and pseudosources’; Jan M. Ziolkowski, ‘Cultures of Authority in the Long Twelfth Century’, *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 108 (2009), p.439.

<sup>242</sup> *HWM* 3417-21.

This statement follows immediately upon the author's claim to rely for information only on what was recorded by clerks at court, rather than unsubstantiated rumour, showing that he did have access to the kind of evidence that he was claiming to be using. Apart from a single reference to a prophecy of Merlin from the *Brut* chronicle, Wigant's records are the only occasion when a written source is specifically named. It is illuminating but unique.

However, a lack of detail about the source should not be taken to mean a lack of source. On at least one occasion an unspecified written source, *escrit*, is called upon which must have existed; the detailed list of attendants at a tournament at Lagny-sur-Marne which includes over eighty names and some information about each.<sup>243</sup> Given that this is one of the occasions when the author expresses a concern that he might bore his audience it seems unlikely that such a comprehensive list would have been invented even if it could have been, so the author must have basing his account on a pre-existing source. Clerk Wigant and the tournament account are the main two of only a small number of cases where a written source is called upon that can be substantiated, but the fact that some can means that we can not simply dismiss such claims as conventional platitudes.<sup>244</sup>

In addition to written sources, the author also calls on the authority of eye-witness history in the same ways as chroniclers, by asserting direct personal knowledge of events and by calling upon the word of other people who were there. Some of the assertions of personal knowledge are highly dubious. For example, during the war between the Young King Henry and his father Henry II the author precedes his explanation of the King of France's actions with the statement:

E bien seümes e veïmes

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<sup>243</sup> *HWM* 4481-749. The author claims to have named eighty knights but there are actually eighty-six.

<sup>244</sup> *HWM* 12896; ANTS, *History of William Marshal*, III, p34. Various other sources can be identified or have their existence deduced but they do not necessarily coincide with the occasions in which the author calls on an *escrit* for authority. More consideration will be given to exactly what written sources were available to the author later in this chapter in the discussion on whether the author's claims to accuracy were justified.

And we knew full well, and saw with our own eyes<sup>245</sup>

This war took place over fifty years before the *History* was written, making it unlikely that the author can have been of an age to remember even if he had been present. Even more concerning is the claim following his description of the Marshal's physical features as a young man that:

Quer bien les vi e bien m'en membre

I can tell you this because I saw them, and remember them well<sup>246</sup>

William was quite long lived, dying at the age of seventy five, so his youthful appearance was probably no longer within living memory. As shown in the previous chapter, personal eyewitness accounts were given the highest status as evidence by chroniclers and the author of the *History* seems on occasion to have unjustifiably tried to claim that status for himself.

Where eyewitness testimony of other people is called up it is very rare that the author will name the person involved, which is interesting given that the good character of an eyewitness was important for the status of his testimony. Sir John Earley has been generally assumed to provide the majority of such material, especially for the Marshal's later career in England, and the text's commissioner, the younger Marshal, may also have provided reminiscences and passed on stories that his father told of his youth.<sup>247</sup> Why the author chose not to draw more strongly on the reputations of these respectable and knowledgeable witnesses to back up his claims to accuracy is unknowable. It can not be that too close a connection to the subject might imply bias and so inaccuracy, leading to their

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<sup>245</sup> *HWM* 2271.

<sup>246</sup> *HWM* 720. The difficulty with believing this particular statement was used by Crouch to cast doubt on whether the author's own reminiscences were a source, ANTS, *History of William Marshal*, III, p.5.

<sup>247</sup> There are a few exceptions to the rule that individuals are not named. For example, after one battle in which William captured various knights who then managed to escape Sir John is called on as witness to the fact that they had been taken in the first place. *HWM* 8692-6. That versions of William Marshal's own recollections repeated by his family and friends as a form of oral tradition form the basis of the early part of the text is the main argument in favour of its basis in fact, although Crouch points out that this type of tradition did not necessarily promote accuracy by comparison to oral reminiscences designed to be recorded, Crouch, 'Writing a Biography in the Thirteenth Century', pp.230-33.

involvement being deliberately suppressed, since both men are mentioned at the end as contributing to the work financially.<sup>248</sup> The impression left by the repeated references to both oral and written sources is more of a concern for the appearance of accuracy than the proof of it. The *History* does not provide the periodic specifics of quoted documents or named eyewitnesses that dot many chronicles; simply to claim to have sources and provide a few vague examples was enough.

Alongside references to source material the author uses a number of other techniques to back up his claims to accuracy, mostly based around the rhetorical technique of ‘occupatio’, that is defending against an argument before an opponent is able to make it. Even his stated concern not to bore the audience contributes towards creating the desired impression by explaining the reasoning behind a lack of information that might otherwise be questioned. For example when he asks:

Qui vos voil plus ennuier

but why should I bore you with further details?<sup>249</sup>

Such statements imply that he has far more information available to him than he has chosen to recount. He is knowledgeable on his subject, not simply repeating everything that he hears but being selective in his choice of material. More important however are the occasions when he explains that he is not providing a piece of information because he does not know it.

Allusions to the unavailability of information take a number of forms. They can refer to very specific situations, for example, on one occasion when the Marshal took only a single companion to a tournament and the author comments that:

Ne sai qui fu, nel me dist nus.

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<sup>248</sup> The last few lines of the text record the people influential in producing it. The young Marshal is praised for his determination in ensuring the work was completed regardless of expense and Sir John is said to have given shape to the material and put ‘his heart soul and wealth into the enterprise’, *cuer e pensee e aveir/ I a mis*. *HWM* 19177-92.

<sup>249</sup> *HWM* 1512



I do not know who he was, for nobody told me.<sup>250</sup>

There are also cases where information on a whole episode is missing, such as when the author is unable to provide an account of William's actions during the two years he spent in Palestine fulfilling the Young King's deathbed request to take his cross to Jerusalem.

Ne vos ai dit fors la some,  
Kar ge nes vi, ne ge n'i fui,  
Ne ge ne puis trover nului  
Qui la meité m'en sace dire,  
Kar trop est fort la matire.

I have only given you a summary of them [William's actions],  
since I was not there and did not witness them,  
nor can I find anyone  
who can tell me the half of them,  
for the subject matter is a very weighty one.<sup>251</sup>

Such a lack of available information apparently exists even though, the author assures the audience, the feats of arms William performed in the Holy Land were so great they are still spoken of.<sup>252</sup>

More broadly, the task of providing a true account of the Marshal's life is itself so huge that it provides its own problems. The author excuses himself any omissions by arguing that the limitations in information are inherent in the subject matter; not a result of his own, or even his sources' failings:

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<sup>250</sup> *HWM* 2896.

<sup>251</sup> *HWM* 7284-8. This comment makes the additional point that only reliable sources of information, personal eye-witness accounts by the author and other suitable individuals, are of interest so where none exists there must automatically be gaps in the narrative. On this subject it is interesting to note, following Benson, that '[i]t seems almost too convenient that William's most romantic exploits should have taken place at tournaments he attended without his usual companions, beyond the view of eyewitnesses'; Benson, 'The tournament in the romances of Chrétien de Troyes', p.23.

<sup>252</sup> *HWM* 7275-83.

Forte est a conter ceste estoire,  
Kar nulls n'ai si bone memorie  
El munt qui tote la deïst,  
Por peine que il meist,  
Non dis, s'il l'avoient enpris,  
Les beals faiz dunt monta en pris,  
Li Mareschal; ce ne puet estre,  
Ne ge ne m'en faiz mie mestre,  
Fors d'itant com ge ai apris;

This tale is a difficult one to tell,  
for nobody in the world has such a good memory  
that he could tell it all,  
however much trouble he took;  
not even ten men could have performed the task of recounting  
all the fine exploits by which  
the Marshal increased his reputation; that could never be;  
nor do I claim to be an expert in such matters,  
except for what I have learnt.<sup>253</sup>

A similar statement, that nobody else would be able to overcome the difficulties in scale in a way better than the author has done, appears only thirteen hundred lines later, and even the seemingly exhaustive tournament section is stated to be incomplete because:

L'om les savreit a molt grant peine,  
Quer pres de chascune quinzene  
Torneieut l'om de place en place,  
Por ce ne cuit que nuls les sace.

it would be very difficult to know about them all,

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<sup>253</sup> *HWM* 3165-73. Statements such as these are of course, to some extent, formulaic and an aid to structuring such a long and episodic narrative, but the choice of which formulas to use, and how often, remains with the author so they still provide an insight into the way he wanted his work to be perceived.

for almost every fortnight  
tournaments were held from place to place;  
that is why I think nobody could know about them all.<sup>254</sup>

These statements argue that the life of a man as worthy as William Marshal is such that some episodes must remain unknown simply because there is too much for anyone, no matter how skilled or knowledgeable, to include. By acknowledging both his limitations and lack of knowledge the author implies that everything he has written is accurate, it hasn't been invented to fill a gap.

With all the above techniques being used by the author to portray the *History* as an accurate history rather than fiction it is particularly critical to establish how true his claims were. Were they simply platitudes of his chosen literary style or a genuine reflection of his methods? However, answering this question is not easy. It is probable that the majority of the author's sources were oral and anecdotal in nature, so it is impossible to tell how closely the author followed them. Other types of documentary sources, such as charters, are unable to provide the kind of detailed accounts that would be needed to make a full comparison. The *History* was writing the account of the life of one man, while the chronicles and documents with which it can be compared all have more general concerns, so they are unlikely to record the actions of a single man within their descriptions of events. Therefore even when external confirmation exists it does not prove that the account given by the *History* is true.

A good example is the *History*'s account of William's involvement in the battle of Lincoln against Prince Louis and the baronial party in 1217.<sup>255</sup> King John had died the previous year leaving William Marshal as regent with the task of resolving the civil war and establishing control over the country on the behalf of the child king Henry III. In the intervening months the city of Lincoln had been taken by Louis' forces but the castle garrison was still holding out and William led a relief army on behalf of the king. Victory at Lincoln, along with the two naval battles of Dover and Sandwich, ended the First Barons' War making it a significant event in William's regency. There is a detailed account of the battle by Roger of Wendover who confirms the detail mentioned in the

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<sup>254</sup> *HWM* 4443-50, 4972-6.

<sup>255</sup> *HWM* 16119-17040.

*History* that a royalist from within the city was sent out to the royalist army with details of a postern gate that would be open for the regent's men to enter during the attack.<sup>256</sup>

The importance of the Battle of Lincoln and some of the more specific circumstances related to it in the *History* can, therefore, be confirmed. However, in the *History* William is described as being so eager that he rode forward before he was fully armed, defeated a young knight and rallied the entire army; all at the age of seventy.<sup>257</sup> No such events are recorded elsewhere. In fact William is not mentioned at all in Wendover's account of the battle except as one in a list of the army's commanders at the beginning and telling the king the outcome at the end. However, a lack of evidence does not prove anything so it does not necessarily follow that such an event did not occur. It is not unlikely that a chronicler would have felt it unnecessary to recount a story of personal heroism that was not integral to victory, so a lack of evidence does not prove anything. Crouch was happy to accept the account, saying that as he was an old man William 'may have felt he had something to prove'.<sup>258</sup>

Nevertheless, there is reason to doubt the *History*'s account of William's central role. For Wendover the most important individuals at the battle are the papal legate Walo, who gave a motivational speech before the battle, and the mercenary captain Falcasius, who led a division of crossbowmen into the castle through the postern gate.<sup>259</sup> In the *History* it is the Marshal who makes the speeches and he and his son are integral to victory. More significantly the accounts in the two versions of the death of the Count of Perche, the French leader of the baronial army, have significant differences. Wendover described how the Count was attacked by a large number of men who called on him to surrender, but he refused and claimed all the English were traitors to their king,

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<sup>256</sup> *HWM* 16423-32; Roger of Wendover, *Flores Historiarum*, H.R. Luard (ed), 3 vols (Rolls Series, 1890), II, p.215. Other similarities are the disparity in the size of the armies with the French/baronial army being larger than the king's, and an account of the French decision to defend the city rather than riding out to battle being a result of viewing the size of the army that approached them. The size of the royalist army is particularly consistent between the two accounts with Wendover giving it as 400 knights and 250 crossbowmen and the *History* 405 knights and 317 crossbowmen.

<sup>257</sup> *HWM* 16591-624, 16676-96.

<sup>258</sup> Crouch, *William Marshal*, p.132.

<sup>259</sup> It should not be supposed that Wendover was producing a significantly less biased account than the *History*. He is generally more interested in the religious aspect of events so his presentation of Walo as the central figure based on his excommunication of the opposing army is unsurprising.

whereupon an unnamed knight struck him in the eye, piercing his brain and killing him instantly.<sup>260</sup> The *History* names the knight involved, Sir Reginald Croc, but has the Count fight on apparently unhurt until he is captured by the Marshal. He then hits the Marshal three times over the head with his sword hard enough to dent a helmet, and suddenly dies to the great surprise and consternation of everyone around.<sup>261</sup> Quite apart from the unlikelihood of a man who has had a sword thrust through his eye being able to continue to fight, it seems unlikely that if one of the army's commanders had been so closely involved in an event that was central to the royalist victory, and to which Wendover devotes considerable attention, the chronicler would not have mentioned it. The Battle of Lincoln was the Marshal's last great battle so the author of the *History* twisted events slightly in line with his overall concern to portray William as the ideal knight by giving him an appropriate send off. It was fictionalised but not to the extent that it became fiction.<sup>262</sup>

In spite of the problems posed by a lack of comparative sources, and the consequent danger of fictional elements creeping into episodes that can otherwise be confirmed, some conclusions can be reached.<sup>263</sup> The author clearly did make use of documentary evidence when constructing the *History*; some specific sources have been identified, a few of which have been mentioned already. It seems likely that the author had access to the Marshal family archives and that is where he found the list of attendees at the Lagny tournament and clerk Wigant's record.<sup>264</sup> Although this family archive has not survived so we can not see how closely the sources were followed, some of the documents he seems to have had access to survive elsewhere, allowing a limited comparison. The similarities between the *History*'s account of the peace agreement between Philip Augustus

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<sup>260</sup> Roger of Wendover, *Flores Historiarum*, p.218.

<sup>261</sup> HWM 16723- 68.

<sup>262</sup> In this episode William demonstrates that he is still the ideal knight that he had been as a younger man, he has not been spoilt by success, which is consistent with literary portrayals of knighthood. One of the issues to face the knights of romance was that once a reputation had been won it must be maintained through continued effort, past success must not lead to complacency. Kennedy, 'The Quest for Identity', p.75.

<sup>263</sup> Most of the following section is based on the work of David Crouch who, over the course of several books and articles, has provided a detailed analysis of the sources available to the *History*'s author and how he used them. See especially his volume of notes on the text ANTS, *History of William Marshal*, III; Crouch, *William Marshal* and Crouch, 'Writing a Biography in the Thirteenth Century'.

<sup>264</sup> Crouch posits that this archive was held at Chepstow castle, the base from which the younger Marshal traveled to and from Ireland, and that the *History*'s author may have lived there while undertaking his task. ANTS, *History of William Marshal*, III, p.36.

and William Marshal and the record of it that survives in the National Archives of France suggest the author had access to, and followed closely, the Marshal's own copy.<sup>265</sup> Two other examples are the king's demand that the Marshal provide his younger son as a hostage and an accusation that the Marshal was sheltering William de Briouze, a traitor to the king.<sup>266</sup> In both cases Crouch argues that the strong parallels to surviving records mean the author was quoting from documents he had in front of him, which suggest that the author's claims of a strict adherence to sources was not simply a rhetorical device but a true representation of his research practice.<sup>267</sup>

However, not all sources that can be identified show that the author was living up to his ideals. The numerous chronicles of the twelfth century do not seem to have been accessible to the *History's* author but on the one occasion in which a chronicle source can be identified it has been heavily adapted. Very early in the *History*, during the account of the civil war of Stephen's reign, there is a story about William Marshal's father escaping from Winchester as companion to the Empress Matilda and then saving her by sending her on ahead while he held off the king's men at Wherwell, losing an eye and nearly burning to death in the process.<sup>268</sup> This story presents John Marshal as a loyal, self-sacrificing knight whose wise council and heroic actions were the sole reasons for his Queen's escape. He is characterised, in fact, in a very similar way to his son. The story is a fabrication however; a conflation of two episodes that appear next to each other in a continuation to Florence of Worcester, designed to create an appropriate family background for the *History's* hero. Although one of the episodes cited, the burning of Wherwell Abbey, does name a John who was the Empress's supporter and who could possibly be identified with William's father, the story as it appears in the *History* is a fictionalisation.<sup>269</sup>

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<sup>265</sup> HWM 12896; ANTS, *History of William Marshal*, III, p.34.

<sup>266</sup> HWM 13376, 14205-10.

<sup>267</sup> ANTS, *History of William Marshal*, III, p.34.

<sup>268</sup> HWM 167-272.

<sup>269</sup> *The Chronicle of John of Worcester, vol. 3, The Annales From 1067 to 1140 with the Gloucester Interpolations and the Continuation to 1141*, P. McGurk (ed & trans) (Oxford, 1998), pp300-3. Rather than John actively assisting in the Queen's escape then sending her on ahead and making a heroic stand to prevent her enemies catching up with her as the *History* describes, it is implied in the continuation that John was simply one of a number of supporters who fled from Winchester after the city fell. The episode of the burning of the nunnery at Wherwell is mentioned in a couple of other sources, especially John of Hexham who refers to John fitz Gilbert (William's father) being one of the commanders of a group of 200 knights who attempted to lift

This inconsistent approach to sources parallels a broader inconsistency regarding accuracy. There is a clear division in the text between the earlier and later sections. As a whole, the general outline of events given by the *History* is correct; William's family and upbringing, his service in royal households, and the military and political conflicts of his long life appear in the correct order and without major omissions. However, the verifiable accuracy of the *History* increases significantly after 1186 when William returns from the east.<sup>270</sup> It was at this point, when he joined the household of Henry II at the age of forty, that he took on the wardship of his squire and future companion John de Earley, suggesting that much of this increased accuracy can be credited to the personal memories of one man.<sup>271</sup> Therefore, the first third of the text, which has attracted the most scholarship, is the part with the least demonstrable historical value.

As well as the author having more reliable information for the later sections, the shift in verifiable accuracy is due to a lack of early sources against which the *History's* account can now be tested. The opening part of the *History*, the section describing William's childhood and actions as a young man, is far less open to analysis of accuracy than the latter section at the courts of Henry II, Richard and John. William was not yet important enough to appear in other sources and even where events appear to be confirmed there are difficulties over identification. For example, the possible historical basis for the account of William's first battle has undergone a huge number of revisions. It was identified by Painter as taking place in 1167 during the invasion by Louis VII of France and the Count of Boulogne.<sup>272</sup> Duby thought it actually took place in 1173 and was moved back in time chronologically within the *History* to 1167 so that William would have a suitably significant entry into knighthood.<sup>273</sup> However, Duby's theory was dismissed by Gillingham on the basis that in 1173 William Marshal was part of the Young King's army in revolt against Henry II and would therefore have been on the opposite side, restoring the 1167 date.<sup>274</sup> Most

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the blockade on Winchester and were subsequently chased to Wherwell. However there are problems reconciling the date of this event with that of the burning of the nunnery. John of Hexham, *Historia ad quintum et vicesimum annum continuata*, Thomas Arnold (ed), *Symeonis monachi opera omnia*, Rolls Series, 75 (London, 1882-5), vol.2, p.310.

<sup>270</sup> From around *HWM* 7350.

<sup>271</sup> Crouch, *William Marshal*, p.11.

<sup>272</sup> Painter, *William Marshal*, pp.19-20

<sup>273</sup> Duby, *William Marshal*, p.6.

<sup>274</sup> Gillingham, 'War and Chivalry', p.2.

recently, Crouch suggested the poet was actually referring to a slightly earlier battle in 1166 during Henry II's campaign against the counts of Ponthieu, Flanders and Boulogne.<sup>275</sup> What emerges most readily from this debate is the impossibility of making a firm identification.

However, there seems to be not just a change in what we are able to test but a shift towards increased accuracy in the second half more generally. Of the identifiable sources mentioned above, the documents that seem to have been followed closely all refer to the later half of the Marshal's life, while the story that has been substantially altered belongs in the early section. In addition, it is particularly noteworthy, given the importance of style in identifying fiction, that there is a stylistic shift; the early part of the *History* contains a greater proportion of episodes reminiscent of romance than the later sections which deal with the ongoing wars with France and the First Barron's War. Romance-like episodes include William's narrow escapes from death as a child hostage, and a noble lady smuggling medical supplies to him in a loaf of bread when he had been captured, as well as the regularity with which William is shown attending and winning tournaments.

William's constant receipt of prizes and acclamation at the multitude of tournaments described by the *History* is a familiar trope from many of the Arthurian romances and makes the long tournament section during the Young King's reign particularly problematic; even though, as shown above, it is one of the few areas where written source material can be identified. Crouch tentatively suggested that in addition to the previously mentioned sources the many specific details of location given indicate that a 'Tournament List' commissioned by the Young King to record his achievements may have existed within the Marshal family archive and provided a historical basis for this section.<sup>276</sup> However, in spite of the increased historical credentials such a list would suggest, Crouch still saw the tournaments as the most suspect part of the *History* due to their use of romance style motifs.<sup>277</sup> Ashe on the other hand saw no need to dismiss the tournaments as inaccurate simply because William always wins, since the author says himself that he is only selecting examples from the many available and it is

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<sup>275</sup> Crouch, *William Marshal*, p.32

<sup>276</sup> ANTS, *History of William Marshal*, III, pp.36-7.

<sup>277</sup> Crouch makes a specific comparison with Chretien de Troyes' *Erec and Enide* as well as Guy of Warwick, *William Marshal*, p.11.



unsurprising that he would select those that show his subject in the most favourable light.<sup>278</sup>

Interestingly it is in the early, potentially unreliable section, that the majority of the forty four references to written sources mentioned above appear. There are sixteen such references during the roughly 2500 line tournament section and only two during the whole of John's war with France and William Marshal's subsequent period out of favour in Ireland, which cover over twice the number of lines. One way of looking at this disparity would be to dismiss the references to sources as a conventional technique to bolster the status of obviously fictional episodes, as is often the case in travel narratives, which Davenport suggests place the most emphasis on authenticity when telling the biggest lies.<sup>279</sup> However, there is another consideration; that the early section describes events that were outside living memory, so the author would have been relying on written sources far more often than in the later section describing war and disfavour. The increased accuracy of the *History* in the period after John de Earley became acquainted with the Marshal and the fact that he is mentioned as a participant in several events during that later period show he was able to provide oral reminiscences.<sup>280</sup> The references to written sources are, therefore, most prevalent in the part of the text we would expect such sources to have been most useful.

Given all of the examples above, any kind of general statement about accuracy and the extent of the author's adherence to source material in the *History* is impractical. Each episode must be judged on its own merits. What can be said however is that in spite of certain specific inaccuracies and romance style episodes there is sufficient evidence that the author both had access to and used reliable oral and written sources to shape and colour his account of the Marshal's life that it can not be regarded as fiction. Nevertheless, the *History* still defies a straightforward categorisation as history in spite of what the author would have

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<sup>278</sup> Ashe, 'William Marshal, Lancelot, and Arthur', p.21.

<sup>279</sup> Tony Davenport, *Medieval Narrative: An Introduction* (Oxford, 2004), p.183.

<sup>280</sup> For example, John de Earley was in Ireland protecting the William's interests while the latter returned to court at King John's request and is depicted giving William a subtle warning about the unrest on his return. It is likely therefore that much of the information concerning events in Ireland given in the *History* came directly from de Earley himself who was an active participant. As well as being an eye-witness, he would have been fully aware of the complexities of the situation. *HWM*, 13958-60.

us believe. Among all the justifications and claims to accuracy the author also makes a rather illuminating comment with regards to the practicalities of truth telling:

Car ne fait pas a consenter  
Mensonge en chose si seüe,  
Qui tant est oï e veüe;

lies are not to be condoned  
in a matter which is so well known,  
so widely heard about and witnessed.<sup>281</sup>

The observation implies that lies might be acceptable where the truth is not widely known, for example in the early years of the Marshal's life that were out of living memory. This quotation also recalls to mind the statement in the introduction that an author of a good subject should ensure:

Ke reisun a ses diz s'acort,  
K'en n'i truisse riens ke reprendre;

that his words have the ring of common sense,  
with nothing in them to invite censure,<sup>282</sup>

As was implied by the way the author used his sources, what was most important to him was that his account be believed; the appearance of accuracy rather than the fact or proof of it, *verisimilia* not *vera*. He strove for accuracy where possible and made full use of the factual resources available to him, but felt it acceptable to twist events occasionally to make them conform more closely to the story he wanted to tell. Therefore, although he wanted to claim the status of history and made considerable effort to do so, by thirteenth-century definitions the author was actually writing *argumentum*.

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<sup>281</sup> HWM 16410-12.

<sup>282</sup> HWM 6-7.

The place the *History* takes between history and fiction, as a partially fictionalised but still believable account, one that was shaped by historical facts and did not use them simply as a narrative framework, was a product of the particular circumstances in which it was produced. It was commissioned by the son of its hero, with both the financial and practical assistance of his close friend, and for the interest of his extended family in order to preserve the memory of the Marshal's great achievements and honour.<sup>283</sup> Such a background to composition means that the *History* was never intended to be a dispassionate, factual analysis of its subject's life. The author was not simply recounting the events of William's life but doing so for specific reasons and with a prospective audience that had prior knowledge of the people and events described, was hardly unbiased and did not need to be persuaded of his subject's importance. As previously mentioned, this is the only text to be discussed that had an identifiable connection with the family of the subject; a connection that impacted both on the author's aims and on the amount of factual information to which he had access.

As was shown in the previous chapter, intent and purpose are central to how a text can be viewed and in the case of the *History* the author's intent at times forced him to compromise his stated concern for accuracy.<sup>284</sup> Historically, William lived the dream life for a medieval knight. He rose from being a landless younger son to the most important man in the country via the route prescribed in the romances; through success in tournament and war, then being rewarded for martial prowess with marriage to an heiress. He may in fact have helped inspire the formation of that model within romance literature, but having done so the author of his biography was then restricted by other aspects of that ideal. The desire to present William as an ideal knight led to the insertion into the *History* of fictional, romance style episodes that included motifs such as courtly romance and largesse; vital attributes of romance heroes like Gui of Warwick but not practical for a genuine historical personage who needed to make a living within real world economic constraints. However, it was when it came to the knightly virtue of loyalty that the author's intent led to the greatest fictionalization. Not through the inclusion of fantastic or unbelievable episodes but by a consistent

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<sup>283</sup> HWM 19165-210.

<sup>284</sup> Fleischman, 'On the Representation of History and Fiction in the Middle Ages', *History and Theory*, 22 (1983), pp.281-2.

minor shaping of circumstances to create a dramatic but subtle shift away from reality. The William of the *History* is not the William of history; he is an idealized knight devoutly loyal to his King even while being victimized by him. The need to protect William against charges of disloyalty and treachery that were made after his death resulted in a characterization that emphasised that aspect of his life above all others.

The *History of William Marshal* is not fiction. It presents a deliberate characterisation of its hero which led to a number of fictionalised elements, but for the most part these are only minor adjustments to the facts. The facts shape the text rather than simply providing a background for literary embellishments. In this respect the *History* is very different from the other three key texts in this thesis which can be described as *fictae*. The unusual circumstances under which the *History* was written meant that its subject's life was fictionalised to make a particular, identifiable point, and it was done within a very short time of his death. Consequently, in order for that point to be believable and, therefore, useful, it was necessary for the author to claim for his work the *honestum nomen historiae*, the status of fact. Given the level of previous knowledge that could be assumed of the audience, and the accurate information readily available to him, gratuitous inaccuracy was not an option. The result is a truly unique text that holds a position between the categories of history and fiction that is unlike any other.

## The interdependence of history and fiction:

### *Romance of Fouke Fitz Waryn*<sup>285</sup>

The *Romance of Fouke Fitz Waryn* provides a very different approach to the borderland between history and fiction from the *History of William Marshal*.<sup>286</sup> It contains a number of long narrative sections that are so fantastic and obviously inspired by the contemporary romance genre that they are immediately identifiable as fiction in a medieval as well as a modern sense.<sup>287</sup> However it also contains a large amount of historical information, focused particularly in the first third of the text. As such it has been described by Jannet Meisel as containing a ‘strange combination of the commonplace and the bizarre’; a view which was echoed by David Ross who saw it as ‘a strange production’.<sup>288</sup> The following chapter will demonstrate that, far from being a random amalgamation of fact and fiction, the *Romance* combines the two elements in such a way that they are complementary rather than conflicting. An initial examination of the extent of historical accuracy in the *Romance* will be followed by the question of the author’s intent, demonstrating that although even the most historically accurate sections of the *Romance* contain considerable fictionalisation the historical context surrounding the fiction remains vital to the overall work. Finally, it will be shown that regardless of accuracy all sections of the *Romance* focus on similar themes to produce a coherent exploration of good leadership and nobility that relies on both history and fiction to be successful.

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<sup>285</sup> Parts of this and the following chapters were previously published in Kathryn Bedford, ‘Fouke Fitz Waryn: Outlaw or Chivalric Hero?’ in *British Outlaws of Literature and History: Essays on Medieval and Early Modern Figures from Robin Hood to Twm Shon Catty*, Alexander L. Kaufman (ed) (Jefferson, NC, 2011), pp.97-113.

<sup>286</sup> There are a number of variations in spelling of Fouke’s name in use among academics. The option selected for use in this thesis is that used by the most recent translator, Glyn Burgess, except in quotations that use an alternative. Such alternatives include Fulk instead of Fouke and Warin instead of Waryn, as well as the inclusion of ‘le’ between the given name and patronymic.

<sup>287</sup> Examples of such narratives include slaying a dragon and a variation on the motif of an unmanned ship carrying the hero that is able to sail safely into port; a similar ship appears in Marie de France’s late twelfth-century, Anglo-Norman lai *Guigemar*, Edward J. Gallagher (ed & trans), *The Lays of Marie de France: Translated, with Introduction and Commentary* (Indianapolis, 2010), pp.4-15. These elements deliberately place the narrative outside the ‘real’ world recognizable to the reader and as such demonstrate a lack of *verisimilia*.

<sup>288</sup> Janet Meisel, *Barons of the Welsh Frontier: The Corbet, Pantulf, and Fitz Warin Families, 1066-1272* (London, 1980), p.132; David J. A. Ross, ‘Where did Payn Peverell defeat the Devil? The topography of an episode in *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*’, in *Studies in Medieval French Language and Literature Presented to Brian Woledge in Honour of his 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday*, Sally Burch North (ed) (Geneva, 1988), p.135.

Fouke's story is the key text that has suffered most for being forced into either a historical or fictional category, in spite of the fact that as far back as 1935 Painter pointed out that '[f]ew medieval literary productions are as difficult to classify as *Fouke Fitz Warin*'.<sup>289</sup> The traditional approach has been to attempt to establish which sections of the text are accurate in order to mine it for historical information.<sup>290</sup> This has led scholars to judge it terms that may not be entirely suitable for a text of this type; for example the Anglo-Norman Text Society editors comment that '[t]he historian is bound to criticise *FFW*, both for its distortions of twelfth-century history, and for its almost complete suppression of the later years of Fouke's life', while the most recent translator maintains that 'although it can be condemned for its occasional inaccuracies, the *Romance* is an important source not only for the history of the Fitz Waryns as a family but for the history of the Welsh Marches in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries'.<sup>291</sup> Both of these statements imply that historical accuracy is desirable and, indeed, preferred. Although, in recent decades its literary aspects have also been increasingly acknowledged and analysed, by scholars such as Maurice Keen, the romance's historicity remains at the heart of the discussion.<sup>292</sup>

Of particular importance to the following chapter is the methodology of Roger Pensom.<sup>293</sup> Pensom rejects the common image of the story as chaotic, what David Ross describes as 'a curious mixture of frequently misrepresented fact with elements of folklore and episodes of conventional adventure romance', instead seeing these three elements as forming part of an organized structure.<sup>294</sup> He describes the story as taking place within three shells, each with its own style

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<sup>289</sup> Sidney Painter, 'The Sources of Fouke Fitz Warin', *Modern Language Notes*, 50 (1935), p.13. Part of the reason that the *Romance* has been so often criticised for inaccuracy is the fact that comparatively little information about Fouke's life exists elsewhere, in comparison to William Marshal and Richard I in particular. As a result the *Romance* has received considerable attention from historians looking to mine it for what it can tell us about him and the politics of the Welsh Marches who then become frustrated by its fictional elements. The *Romance of Richard Coeur de Lion* for example is never expected to provide historical detail because that can be found elsewhere, so it is read in a different way.

<sup>290</sup> For example Meisel, *Barons of the Welsh Frontier*.

<sup>291</sup> E.J. Hathaway, *et al* (eds), *Fouke Le Fitz Waryn*, Anglo-Norman Text Society 26-28 (Oxford, 1975), p.xxviii. This is the best edition of the text and will be used for all references. The best translation, as well as extensive historical notes, can be found in Glyn Burgess, *Two Medieval Outlaws: Eustace the Monk and Fouke Fitz Waryn* (Cambridge, 1997, 2009), pp.91-2.

<sup>292</sup> Maurice Keen, *The Outlaws of Medieval Legend* (London, 1961, 2000 revised ed.).

<sup>293</sup> Roger Pensom, 'Inside and outside: fact and fiction in Fouke le Fitz Waryn', *Medium Ævum*, 63 (1994), pp.53-60.

<sup>294</sup> Ross, 'Where did Payn Peverell defeat the Devil?', p.135.

and subject matter, whose boundaries correspond with geographical areas: the centre is around Shropshire and contains historical, political and geographical information; moving outwards Fouke then comes to the forest where the story takes on the characteristics of outlaw folktale; then finally at the furthest extreme, travel overseas brings the fantastic stories of high romance.<sup>295</sup> This allows the historical material to take place in a context that recognisably has *verisimilia* while the obviously fictional elements are elsewhere, in locations and circumstances with which the audience would be personally unfamiliar. Each of these shells emphasises the same themes using different techniques.

The *Romance* survives in a single Anglo-Norman prose redaction of the early fourteenth century which is heavily based on a late thirteenth-century Anglo-Norman verse original.<sup>296</sup> Dating of the original verse is problematic and has caused much debate; Wright suggested that it was written sometime between 1256 and 1264 and Brandid cited philological reasons to accept a date c.1260, but more recent commentators like Burgess believe this to be too early and prefer a late thirteenth-century date of composition.<sup>297</sup> The surviving manuscript dates from between 1325 and 1340 but the earlier end is more likely and it has been suggested that the prose was composed before 1314.<sup>298</sup> Even while accepting a mid to late-thirteenth century date of composition it is clear that Fouke's fictionalisation took place within only three or four decades of his death in 1258.

The fictionalisation also took place within Fouke's own locality. Brandid confirmed the suspicion that the text was composed near to where the Fitz Waryn family lived, in the area of the South-West Midlands and especially Shropshire,

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<sup>295</sup> Pensom, 'Inside and outside', p.54.

<sup>296</sup> Burgess, *Two Medieval Outlaws*, p.91. This is the only one of the key texts to be written in prose rather than verse, which might open up issues concerning the perceptions of prose equating with truth/history and verse with lies/fiction that were seen in Spiegel's work on French historiography; Gabrielle M Spiegel, *Romancing the Past: The Rise of Vernacular Prose Historiography in Thirteenth-Century France* (Oxford, 1993). However, the prose appears to have deviated very little from the verse original so little can be made from this point. The level of fiction in the surviving prose demonstrates that the change in literary style was not part of an attempt to suggest that the resultant text was any more true than the verse version had been, it probably simply reflects the changing tastes in literature between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries which were moving increasingly towards the prose romance. There was a cultural time-lag which meant that the French move towards writing prose romances like the *Vulgate Cycle* in the thirteenth century did not reach England until some time later; J.A. Burrow, *Medieval Writers and Their Work: Middle English Literature 1000-1500* (Oxford, 1982), p.9.

<sup>297</sup> Brandid, 'Nouvelles Recherches sur Fouke Fitz Warin', *Romania*, 55 (1929), pp.32-3, 38-9; *Two Medieval Outlaws*, p.127.

<sup>298</sup> *Two Medieval Outlaws*, p.129.

using the accuracy of geographical knowledge of that area.<sup>299</sup> However, his conclusions have been narrowed even further by Meisel who noted the extremely detailed knowledge of Ludlow displayed in the text and suggested that the author had a personal connection with that town, a prominent location in the early part of the story and the home of Fouke's mother, but was not necessarily a native of the place.<sup>300</sup> The copyist of the extant manuscript also had connections to Ludlow, probably having lived there at some point; he has been identified as a canon of Hereford who accompanied Adam de Orleton, bishop of Hereford, when he became bishop of Worcester in 1327.<sup>301</sup> So, rather than Whittington which is the focus of the story, Ludlow seems to be the focus point for composition. This is a region with close connections to the Fitz Waryn family and in which they would have been well known.

Although only the later prose version of the story survives, two prophecies at the beginning and end of the manuscript preserve the original verse and it is possible to reconstruct further sections which were included more or less unchanged in the prose.<sup>302</sup> Consequently, it is possible to discuss the textual history of the work in some detail. In addition a sixteenth-century synopsis by John Leland of a Middle English version survives, which contains excerpts from another French verse text. It is, therefore, possible to draw comparisons between four different redactions of the story.<sup>303</sup> Since Leland gives no information about the date of the manuscript he was using it is impossible to tell whether the English or French version was the earliest but the level of similarity between them suggests that, although they had different sources, they do not illustrate distinct traditions.<sup>304</sup> Details change but the audience did not receive a substantially different fictionalised image of Fouke depending on the language in which it heard the story. It is interesting however that the story was popular enough to have been translated.

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<sup>299</sup> Brandid, 'Nouvelles Recherches', pp.40-3.

<sup>300</sup> Meisel, *Barons of the Welsh Frontier*, p.134.

<sup>301</sup> *Two Medieval Outlaws*, p.129-30.

<sup>302</sup> *Fouke Le Fitz Waryn*, p.xix-xx.

<sup>303</sup> *Joannis Lelandi antiquarii de rebus britannicis collectanea*, Thomas Hearne (ed), (Farnborough, Hantsl, 1970), vol.1, pp.230-7; Brandid, 'Nouvelles Recherches', pp.34-8 demonstrates that there are sufficient variations in detail to conclude that none of these versions was identical with each other.

<sup>304</sup> Brandid, 'Nouvelles Recherches', pp.37.



The first issue that must be addressed concerning the *Romance* is the extent to which it can be seen as fiction. Therefore attention will now turn to its content; its narrative, structure, and level of accuracy.<sup>305</sup> The *Romance* opens with a fairly detailed family history of the Fitz Waryns from the time of the Norman Conquest to the birth of the hero, which comprises nearly a third of the *Romance*. This first section contains a number of inaccuracies, most notably the compression of the hero's father and grandfather into a single individual, Fouke I, but it is here that the majority of the 'historical' detail in the *Romance* is found and, consequently, where most scholarly attention has been focused.<sup>306</sup>

The opening anecdote is the first of the fantastic tales that appear throughout the story, that of Payne Peverell's defeat of the devil in the form of a giant.<sup>307</sup> According to this story, during the confusion of the Norman Conquest Owain Gwynedd, Prince of Wales, sought to claim all the Welsh Marches as his own but when King William approached the prince fled, leaving the lands free to be granted to the most valiant knights in William's army. However, a certain 'very large town, formerly enclosed within high walls, which was completely gutted and laid waste' aroused the King's curiosity.<sup>308</sup> On hearing that a giant that lived in the area before Brutus came to Britain had been possessed by an evil spirit and set to guard the place, Payne Peverell, a cousin of the king, decided to spend the night there to test the marvel.<sup>309</sup> Payne was victorious over the giant by means of prayer and the cross on his shield. The devil/giant then prophesied that Payne's heirs would own that land and that one of them would be renowned for his power and carry out certain exploits. After hearing Payne's story King William granted the area of Whittington (or Blanchland as it is named in the *Romance*) to Payne and his heirs.

This short story is an example of a fictional story that has been given historical context through the inclusion of a specific time and place and the addition of certain recognizable names. The geographical details are sufficiently

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<sup>305</sup> Much of the following discussion, especially with regards to accuracy, is reliant on the Anglo-Norman Text Society editors and Glyn Burgess who both provided extensive introductory material to accompany their edition and translation of the text. The work of Jannet Meisel has also been particularly useful.

<sup>306</sup> For a list of the main inaccuracies see Brandid, 'Nouvelles Recherches', p.23.

<sup>307</sup> The whole story can be found *FFW*, pp.5.5-7.7.

<sup>308</sup> '*une ville mout large, close jadyz de hautz murz, que tote fust arse e gastee*'; *FFW*, p.4.18-9.

<sup>309</sup> The story told here is a version of the myth that Britain was founded by the Trojan hero Brutus after fleeing the fall of Troy which appears in Geoffrey of Monmouth, 1.21.

precise that David Ross is able to identify the iron-age fort known as Old Oswestry near Wat's Dyke as the location of the town.<sup>310</sup> However the history is much less precise: William never visited that area; Owain Gwynedd ruled between 1137 and 1170, not in 1066; and Payne was important under Henry I rather than William.<sup>311</sup> What is interesting is that although none of these examples was historically accurate in the context of the story, they were pulled from some basis of historical knowledge. The Norman Conquest brought legal and tenural changes that provided a cut off point from which to date events.<sup>312</sup> By placing Payne and his family's claims to land at this early point the prestige of both was increased.<sup>313</sup> The use of the name Owain Gwynedd, who fought against Henry II, suggests the possibility that the author wanted a recognizable figure associated with Welsh wars against the crown.<sup>314</sup> In this episode circumstances and individuals from the past were grafted together and placed in the immediate aftermath of the Conquest, an event that was readily identifiable to even a less educated audience.

The importance of having that initial date becomes more apparent in the next section, where the succeeding generations are outlined. Without other dates of significant stature after the Conquest, with which events can be associated, the described chronology becomes problematic. Although there is much in this section that can be corroborated, as will be shown below, there is little concept of time passing; attempts by modern scholars to attach dates to events in the story

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<sup>310</sup> Ross, 'Where did Payn Peverell defeat the Devil?', pp.138-40.

<sup>311</sup> Brandid, 'Nouvelles Recherches', p.23. Gerald of Wales's (Geraldus Cambrensis) late twelfth-century *The Journey Through Wales* and *The Description of Wales* are good contemporary sources for Wales in this period. They were most recently translated by L. Thorp (London, 1978) using the edition by James Dimock, *Geraldi Cambrensis opera, Vol. VI. Itinerarium Kambriae et Descriptio Kambriae*, Rolls Series, 21 (London, 1868). For modern scholarship on Wales and its Marches see the work of R.R. Davies, especially his *Age of Conquest: Wales, 1063-1415* (Oxford, 1987, 2000); *Lordship and Society in the March of Wales 1282-1400* (Oxford, 1978); and *Domination and Conquest: The Experience of Ireland, Scotland and Wales 1100-1300* (Cambridge, 2006). Another important modern historian on medieval Wales is Huw Pryce who, alongside a number of more general works on Welsh history, wrote 'R. Allen Brown Memorial Lecture: The Normans in Welsh History', in C. P. Lewis (ed.), *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 30 (Woodbridge, 2008), pp.1-18.

<sup>312</sup> Ralph V. Turner, *Magna Carta Through the Ages* (Harlow, 2003), p.9.

<sup>313</sup> E.A. Francis, 'The Background to 'Fulk FitzWarin'', *Studies in Medieval French* (Oxford, 1961), p.325.

<sup>314</sup> For an account of Owain Gwynedd's relationship with Henry II see Davies, *Age of Conquest*, p.51-3. Other scholarship on Owain and this period includes David Crouch, 'The March and the Welsh Kings', *The Anarchy of King Stephen's Reign*. Edmund King (ed) (Oxford, 1994), pp. 255-289; Huw Pryce, 'Owain Gwynedd and Louis VII: the Franco-Welsh diplomacy of the first prince of Wales', *Welsh History Review*, 19 (1998), pp.1-28; John Hosler, 'Henry II's military campaigns in Wales, 1157-1165', *Journal of Medieval Military History*, 2 (2004), pp.53-71.

often create ludicrous situations, such as Waryn de Metz living an active military life for nearly a century.<sup>315</sup> The style of narrative that the *Romance* employs during this section does not allow for the kind of specific dating that appears in *Chronicles* and *Annals*. Instead it relies on a concrete starting date as a foundation for the episodic story to build upon. The Conquest at the story's opening allows the author to create a historical milieu in which his characters can act; the inclusion of a recognizably factual event implies to the audience that those which follow after it are also true. By calling on the authority of history at the very start, and just before one of the more obviously fictional episodes, the author makes a clear statement that he intends to combine the two styles.

The *Romance* is no more accurate for the remainder of the time before Fouke was born. It recounts that after his death Payne was succeeded by his nephew William who was himself succeeded by two nieces, Helen and Melette.<sup>316</sup> Melette was so beautiful that she was widely desired but turned down all offers. Eventually, she agreed to marry the best knight in the land, prompting a tournament to win her hand and the land of Blanchland. The tournament was won by Waryn de Metz, a cousin of the Duke of Brittany. Their son, Fouke the elder, the father of the eponymous hero, was sent to a local knight, Sir Joce de Dynan, to be raised.<sup>317</sup> However, Fouke's childhood was anything but quiet. Joce was in the middle of a war with his neighbour, Sir Walter de Lacy, over Ludlow Castle and Fouke became embroiled in the conflict.

When Fouke was eighteen he was instrumental in rescuing Sir Joce and capturing Sir Walter and his ally Sir Ernalt de Lyls in battle. Sir Ernalt claimed to fall in love with Marion de la Bruere, a lady in the castle, who helped the two to escape but he then used her to trick entry to the castle when the defenders were away and capture it.<sup>318</sup> Marion was so overcome that she killed her lover and committed suicide by jumping from a tower window. Eventually, with the castle captured and Sir Joce injured, Fouke went to King Henry seeking an end to the conflict and Henry agreed to aid them. Although Ludlow was returned and Fouke

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<sup>315</sup> *Fouke Le Fitz Waryn*, p.xxviii.

<sup>316</sup> This is one of the occasions when the surviving prose and Leland's summary are slightly different; Leland has the two heiresses as daughters rather than nieces. Both versions are equally inaccurate.

<sup>317</sup> *FFW*, pp.7.34-10.21.

<sup>318</sup> *FFW*, pp.12.20-17.28.

was made captain of the king's army, Whittington, which had been captured, was never returned to him so Henry gave him Alveston instead.<sup>319</sup>

In fact William was succeeded by four sisters rather than two nieces and, although we cannot be certain whom they married, even if one of them did marry Waryn, it was before William held land in Shropshire.<sup>320</sup> Indeed it is difficult to establish the existence of a Waryn de Metz at all; the closest that can be found is a 'Warin' who occasionally appears on charters with the Peverells during the reign of Henry I.<sup>321</sup> The first identifiable member of the fitz Waryn family to appear in the historical record is Roger fitz Waryn in a charter dating between 1139 and 1144. He had a younger brother called Fouke who appears to have succeeded him and who is normally referred to in scholarship as Fouke I.<sup>322</sup> In the *Romance* Fouke I is conflated with his son Fouke II to create a single individual; in reality it was Fouke II who knew Joce de Dynan and married his daughter Hawyse and his father who was close to the king, having the responsibility for arming and provisioning Dover Castle rather than being captain of the army.<sup>323</sup>

In spite of these errors in detail, however, the general outline of the *Romance* is reasonably accurate; from the connection of the Fitz Waryns to both the Peverell and Dynan families to the fact that William was succeeded by co-heiresses. The historical difficulty comes from a lack of concern for precise chronology between the Conquest and the hero's birth; important events of the family's past are compressed together so that the story remains fast paced and easy to understand. It appears that Joce was a follower of the empress Matilda and was granted Ludlow as a result of that loyalty, making it likely that conflict

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<sup>319</sup> *FFW*, pp.20.30-22.8.

<sup>320</sup> *Fouke Le Fitz Waryn*, p.70. By the time William was granted his Shropshire property the only identifiable Waryn is known to have been already married and with grown children because his sons were appearing attesting deeds.

<sup>321</sup> R.W. Eyton, *Antiquities of Shropshire*, 2:4.

<sup>322</sup> Meisel placed the earliest date of this charter as 1136, *Barons of the Welsh Frontier*, p.34, however her date was corrected slightly by Burgess in *Two Medieval Outlaws*, p.94. Burgess pointed out that Hamo Peverel, whose death was a cause of the charter being drawn up, did not die until 1139. Fouke I appears in the record only a short time later, on a charter of 1145, where he is stated to be Roger's brother, but there were also two other fitz Waryns active in this period, William and Geoffrey, who may or may not also have been their siblings.

<sup>323</sup> Pipe Roll 6 *Henry II*, p.54. Other marks of the favour in which Henry II held Fouke I include that he was granted relief of three debts and given a gift of forty marks. It seems likely that this closeness was a result of Fouke having supported Matilda during the civil war of Stephen's reign. By contrast the financial stability which Fouke II gained through his marriage to Hawyse meant that he did not have to court royal favour as his father had done; *Two Medieval Outlaws*, p.95-6

with the Lacy family took place between 1143 and 1148, but certainly before 1163, much earlier than the *Romance* indicates.<sup>324</sup> By giving the suggestion that the conflict over Ludlow took place during the reign of Henry II, only shortly before Fouke III was born, the author is saved from having to explain what happened in between and also makes the loss of Whittington a recent event, easily memorable for both characters and audience.

It is only after all the above events, approximately a third of the way into the *Romance*, that the younger Fouke, the eponymous hero of the work, is born.<sup>325</sup> He is said to have grown up at court with the young princes and it was there that the source of his conflict with King John was to be found, in a child's game of chess.<sup>326</sup> When John became king he remembered this quarrel and deliberately denied Fouke's right to the area of Whittington in revenge. As a result Fouke and all his brothers retracted their oaths of allegiance to John and became outlaws.<sup>327</sup> There follows the main body of the story, which will be discussed below, in which Fouke travels widely. Eventually John restores Whittington to Fouke, the outlaws are pardoned and brought back within the bonds of society, and it is explained how all of this was foretold in one of Merlin's prophecies.<sup>328</sup> Other than a brief trip to Ireland where Fouke battles with a giant, balancing the opening episode with Payne Peverel, the only information given about the last fifty five years of his life is that in old age he regretted the violence of his youth and was granted penance by God in the form of seven years' blindness before he died.<sup>329</sup>

Fouke and his brothers were indeed outlawed and then pardoned a few years later but the *Romance* itself gives the only existing explanation for the split, resulting in considerable scholarly debate over the accuracy of this point. Painter

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<sup>324</sup> *Fouke Le Fitz Waryn*, pp.x-xii; *Two Medieval Outlaws*, p.186.

<sup>325</sup> *FFW*, p.22.24.

<sup>326</sup> *FFW*, pp.22.32-23.5.

<sup>327</sup> *FFW*, pp.23.28-24.33.

<sup>328</sup> The way in which prophecies are used in the *Romance* is quite complicated and will be looked at in detail later. However, it is worth calling attention to the fact that the only external source to which the author of the *Romance* refers is that epitome of the overlap between history and fiction, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, and it is to one of the more controversial sections within it, in England if not on the continent; Julia Crick, 'Geoffrey of Monmouth, prophesy and history', *Journal of Medieval History*, 18 (1992), p.358. William of Newburgh was particularly critical of the Merlin prophecies, complaining that since Merlin was supposedly fathered by a demon their devilish origins made them unreliable. Nevertheless he accepted that Geoffrey had not invented them but copied them from Welsh sources making them among the more authentic aspects of the *History*.

<sup>329</sup> *FFW*, p.59.5-35.

was unconvinced by the claim to Whittington as an explanation, citing the fact that there is no evidence that the Fitz Waryns had ever held it, Henry II had already granted it to someone else, and the family held Alveston for twenty five years before the *Romance* says they were given it.<sup>330</sup> However, Meisel gives more credence to the *Romance*'s account arguing that the dates have simply been confused.<sup>331</sup> If the whole sequence is pushed back to the end of Stephen's reign, with Whittington being lost and Alveston granted in its place at that point, then events fit. Since, as shown above, the Dynan/Lacy conflict over Ludlow has been dated to that period anyway, her conclusion appears valid.

While there is no clear evidence for the cause of the outlawry it is true that Whittington was a point of contention. Fouke II's claim to the land was recognised in 1195 in court but he never received it and the claim was still outstanding when Fouke III inherited in 1198.<sup>332</sup> On John's accession Fouke offered £100 for possession of Whittington, as the *Romance* says, but John instead chose to confirm Morys de Powys in exchange for only fifty marks.<sup>333</sup> In his confirmation charter, John explains his actions by saying that it is in thanks for the help Morys' father and uncle gave to Henry II.<sup>334</sup> In spite of this, Meisel was willing to accept some truth in the chess game story, arguing that some personal animosity from their childhood would be 'entirely consistent' with John's behaviour.<sup>335</sup> However, it is difficult to see how such an animosity could have developed when, as Meisel herself demonstrates, the children did not have anything like the close association that the *Romance* suggests; Fouke II and his family had very little connection with the court.<sup>336</sup>

Finally, the short section at the end of the *Romance* describing the last years of Fouke's life is largely accurate, if given a disproportionately small amount of space, although some specifics can be disproved. For example it is

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<sup>330</sup> Painter, *The Reign of King John*, p.49.

<sup>331</sup> Meisel, *Barons of the Welsh Frontier*, p.135-6.

<sup>332</sup> Pipe Roll 7 *Richard I*, p.246. Whittington was not the only piece of land that Fouke II felt he was entitled to but did not have control of. Since Hawyse was not the sole heiress of her father but had a sister there was conflict over which parts of Sir Jose's lands should go to each. Conflict over the manor of Stanton in Wiltshire must have begun well before its first appearance in the legal record in 1190 and dragged on well after his death into John's reign; Meisel, *Barons of the Welsh Frontier*, pp.36, 94-7.

<sup>333</sup> Pipe Roll 2 *John*, p.175.

<sup>334</sup> *Rotuli chartarum*, Thomas Hardy (ed) (London, 1831), p.43.

<sup>335</sup> Meisel, *Barons of the Welsh Frontier*, p.135.

<sup>336</sup> Meisel, *Barons of the Welsh Frontier*, p.35.

impossible that Fouke's pardon was granted at Westminster, as the *Romance* claims, since John was in Normandy at the time.<sup>337</sup> There is even some circumstantial evidence that he may have gone blind in the final years of his life; Fouke did not die until he was nearing a hundred years old so some loss of sight might be expected. In addition he retired from public life and his sons took over all administrative roles several years before he died, which implies that he was no longer able to witness documents himself for some reason.<sup>338</sup> So the last section, like the first, is based around historical events and contains a reasonable level of accuracy. The historical sections mirror each other and provide balance to the narrative, implying a deliberate shaping of the text's structure which revolves around levels of fictionality.

However, one circumstance surrounding the final section of the *Romance* is particularly striking; it overlooks Fouke's historical association with the Barons' War and Magna Carta entirely. For several years after his outlawry, and again under Henry III, Fouke was loyal to the crown but between 1215 and 1218 he joined the Barons in revolt.<sup>339</sup> This omission from the *Romance's* account of Fouke's life is interesting given both the ongoing resonance of the Magna Carta and the fact that the Barons were aiming to ensure that the king respected his subjects' rights, which was also Fouke's character's aim in the *Romance*. Rather than portray Fouke as consistently concerned with preventing royal tyranny, the author of the *Romance* chose to give the impression that resistance to royal authority was confined solely to one episode in his life, his time as an outlaw.

Although the above mentioned sections have dominated much of the debate on the *Romance*, especially by historians, it is important to remember that the outlaw story forms the dramatic centre of the work. Therefore it is to that section that attention will now turn. Unlike fictionalization in the first and last sections which largely takes the form of twisting facts into a simpler narrative,

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<sup>337</sup> The inaccuracy of this one detail will be returned to later because it highlights the fact that Fouke's political activities are portrayed in the *Romance* as a personal conflict between two men; Fouke and John. Elements that can be confirmed include the fact that Fouke and his men were all pardoned and Fouke was given Wittington, as well as the fact that he spent some time in Ireland. *Two Medieval Outlaws*, pp.102-4.

<sup>338</sup> *Two Medieval Outlaws*, p.107. Fouke's last recorded public act was as an arbiter for Henry III in a dispute over a truce with Wales, to which role he was appointed in 1245 when he was already around eighty-five years old.

<sup>339</sup> Roger of Wendover went so far as to list Fouke Fitz Waryn as one of the chief promoters of the 'pestilence' of Magna Carta. *The Flowers of History*, J.A. Giles (trans) Rolls Series, 84 (1849), vol.2, p.305.

with fantastic episodes interspersed, the balance between fact and fiction in this central outlaw narrative is weighted far more towards easily recognisable fictions. The influence of romance literature on the content of a number of episodes is particularly striking. As well as including fantastic elements, structurally the account of Fouke's period as an outlaw is highly episodic and, unlike the earlier sections, ranges geographically all over the country and further a field. Thus, as was mentioned above, the fictional section of the *Romance* takes place in a different world both physically and stylistically, a point that will be returned to again later.

The following three paragraph synopsis of the *Romance's* account of Fouke's outlawry aims to give the most important stories, ones which will be used for analysis later, and a sense of the structure of the narrative. Fouke is portrayed spending much of the early part of his outlawry with his companions in the forests of Shropshire battling Morys, the man who had been granted Whittington. When Morys asked John for help he was sent one hundred knights to assist in attempts to capture the group.<sup>340</sup> A number of short episodes are unconcerned with Morys but finally Fouke was able to kill him by having his companion John de Rampaigne convince him that Fouke had been killed in Scotland while fighting a band of bandits that had been using his name so that Morys would let his guard down.<sup>341</sup> Alongside the conflict with Morys Fouke also married Matilda de Caus during this period; a rich widow whose brother-in-law feared John's intentions towards her and for the sake of protection asked Fouke to marry her. The family moved to Wales under the protection of the prince, Llewellyn, where Fouke took an active part in ending conflict between Llewellyn and his subject, Gwenwynwyn.<sup>342</sup> Eventually King John was able to put sufficient pressure on Llewellyn to make it necessary for Fouke to leave, whereupon he left Britain and made his way to France and the court of Philip Augustus.<sup>343</sup>

Fouke was welcomed in France but John again demanded that he be removed. Instead, Philip offered Fouke a permanent place at court and rich lands to support himself, but Fouke felt he was not worthy of new lands if he could not

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<sup>340</sup> *FFW*, pp.25.34-26.20.

<sup>341</sup> *FFW*, pp.32.11-33.25.

<sup>342</sup> *FFW*, p.30.6-31.

<sup>343</sup> *FFW*, pp.33.26-37.7, 39.15-40.3.



claim his inheritance.<sup>344</sup> Fouke continued his foreign travels with the sailor Mador de Monte de Russie. They were blown off course to an island beyond Orkney where they were challenged to play chess by a group of peasants and ended up rescuing the princess of Orkney; they then journeyed to Sweden and faced vicious and fantastic beasts, before finding themselves in Spain by the deserted castle of the Duke of Carthage.<sup>345</sup> Fouke rescued the duke's daughter and killed the dragon that had been terrorising the area but had to decline the princess's hand in marriage because he already had a wife.

The company returned to England and Fouke was able to capture John by disguising himself as a charcoal burner. Although John promised to return Whittington he reneged on his word and instead sent first a knight and then an army after the band. One of Fouke's brothers was captured and Fouke himself wounded before they were able to escape back to sea.<sup>346</sup> They arrived at a deserted island where everyone went ashore except the wounded Fouke, there was a storm and the ship floated away until it arrived, unharmed, in the land of Barbary. Fouke proved himself well in arms and was made welcome by the king who was at war with the princess Fouke had rescued from the dragon, whom the king wanted to marry. Fouke agreed to be the King's champion on being promised that the King and court would convert to Christianity if he won. It transpired that he was fighting one of his brothers and the king and princess agreed to a Christian marriage.<sup>347</sup> Fouke returned home, rescued his other brother, and captured John again; this time John kept his promise, the outlaws were pardoned and their lands returned.<sup>348</sup>

In spite of its numerous obviously fictional elements, the section summarised above is not a complete invention. As with the first and last sections there are a number of details in it that can be confirmed. There is a reference in a continuation of William of Newburgh to Fouke and his band taking refuge in

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<sup>344</sup> *FFW*, pp.40.4-41-31.

<sup>345</sup> *FFW*, pp.43.6-46.20. Carthage itself is in northern Africa, on the coast of Lake Tunis, opposite Sicily rather than in Spain. The *Romance* however is at pains to explain that the Duke of Carthage holds lands on the Iberian peninsula from the King of Iberia. Given that the *Romance* also describes Brittany, Norway, Denmark and Sweden as islands it appears that the author either had no knowledge of, or no interest in, accurate geography outside of England. He was simply using the names of places he had heard of.

<sup>346</sup> *FFW*, pp.49.3-52.33.

<sup>347</sup> *FFW*, pp.53.18-56.3.

<sup>348</sup> *FFW*, pp.56.8-57.35.

Stanley Abbey which probably formed the basis of one of the short stories near the beginning of the *Romance*'s account of the outlawry.<sup>349</sup> The account of events in Wales coincides with what is known of the politics of the period except that there is no evidence that Fouke was there.<sup>350</sup> There is also a possibility that Fouke spent some time at sea because in 1202-3 a ship owned by him was captured by royal officials.<sup>351</sup> Painter suggested that the *Romance* may even be correct in having Fouke kill Morys because there was a very short interval between Morys being confirmed in possession of Whittington and his sons inheriting it so he must have died suddenly.<sup>352</sup> He also pointed out that those sons were also mentioned in 1201 in connection with hunting outlaws and Fouke was the only significant outlaw threat in the area at the time so they could have been pursuing him for personal reasons.<sup>353</sup> Painter's evidence is thin and entirely circumstantial but the early outlaw period has another suggestive feature in the story of the one hundred knights granted for use against Fouke by John. It is possible that the fictional episode developed out of the hundred knights given to Hubert de Burgh as custodian of the Welsh Marches since Fouke was a major threat in the area in real life as well as romance.<sup>354</sup> However, this short list of historical references may not be exhaustive; there are very few alternative sources of evidence for Fouke's activities at this time so it is possible that other elements are based in fact.

The lack of alternative sources against which fictionality can be tested means that analysis of the central section is restricted to examining the extent of *verisimilia* rather than *vera*. A particularly suitable example of the presence of *verisimilia* is that of the Scottish group using Fouke's name as a cover. There is no supporting evidence for this story in any other source, but using an outlaw's name to cover other misdeeds can be seen to have happened to Fouke in at least

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<sup>349</sup> William of Newburgh, *Historia rerum anglicarum*, Richard Howlett (ed), *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I*, II, pp.506-7.

<sup>350</sup> David Walker, *Medieval Wales* (Cambridge, 1990), p.97. Llywelyn and Gwenwynwyn came into conflict in 1202 which was within Fouke's period of outlawry. Given the very short amount of time Fouke spent as an outlaw and the *Romance* author's usual lack of concern for precise dating, the accuracy of this date suggests that historically Fouke may well have had some role in these events, even if it was not as central a one as the *Romance* implies.

<sup>351</sup> Pipe Roll 6 *John*, p.218. On its own this evidence is insufficient to demonstrate that Fouke himself took up seafaring as he had a number of people working for him and there is no implication that Fouke was on the captured ship, but it is suggestive.

<sup>352</sup> Painter, *The Reign of King John* (Baltimore, 1949), p.50;

<sup>353</sup> *Rotuli chartarum*, p.74; Pipe Roll 3 *John*, p.277.

<sup>354</sup> Meisel, *Barons of the Welsh Frontier*, p.38.

one case. A record of one Richard Wigun accusing William of High Ercall of sheltering Fouke appears in the plea roll of King John, however the court felt the claim was untrue and was used as a means of attempting to pressure William into accepting Richard's claim to some land.<sup>355</sup> So, although the Scottish story itself cannot be proved to have been based on historical circumstances, it should not be seen as necessarily entirely fictional in a medieval sense because the premise is plausible.

It is also important to point out that the fictionalisation in the central section is not completely different from that in the more historical parts; the same techniques are used just to a greater extent. For example, there are some incidents which show the same truncating of temporally disparate events into a short time span that appeared in the first section of the text. Again, this technique is used especially on family history; namely the death of Fouke's mother Hawyse and his marriage. In the *Romance* Fouke learns of his mother's death on returning from Brittany very shortly after becoming an outlaw, although in fact she lived for at least twenty years longer than this and last appears in the historical record in 1226.<sup>356</sup> Fouke's marriage is also placed very early in the narrative. Marriage to Matilda, widow of Theobald Walter, was granted to Fouke by John in 1207 in exchange for 1200 marks and two palfreys, five or six years later than the *Romance* suggests.<sup>357</sup> Since there is a fairly lengthy section in the *Romance* detailing her sufferings and hardships during her husband's outlawry, this cannot simply be a mistake; a considerable amount of inventiveness was involved. However, the fact that the *Romance* uses Fouke's historical wife in its entirely fictional account of her time during Fouke's outlawry, rather than invent everything, shows that even here the historical facts are given some weight. Therefore, the altering of these historical dates must have some purpose within the story, and it is to the question of purpose that we will now turn.

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<sup>355</sup> Doris Mary Stenton (ed), *Pleas Before the King or his Justices* (London, 1966), III, p.82.

<sup>356</sup> *Fouke Le Fitz Waryn*, p.xxxii.

<sup>357</sup> Pipe Roll 9 *John*, p.110. Far from being a rushed marriage intended to save Matilda from John's lustful clutches, historically it was undertaken with John's support. That John should be seen as a threat to a woman's virtue is a perfectly accurate concern however. Roger of Wendover states that 'there were at this time [1212] in the kingdom of England many nobles whose wives and daughters the king had violated in the indignation of their husbands and fathers', *The Flowers of History*, vol.2, p.259.

It must be remembered that, although we cannot be exactly sure how alike the surviving text was to the original verse, all four versions for which we have evidence are extremely similar. Since Leland abbreviated the most fantastic episodes considerably we cannot be certain that those sections were entirely alike, but it seems that all the versions in circulation had essentially the same basic pattern and balance of historical to fictional episodes.<sup>358</sup> This suggests that the original version was consciously constructed by a single author with a single intent. To return to Suzanne Fleischman's criteria for establishing the nature of an individual text, authorial intent is extremely important.<sup>359</sup> Whether the author intended the text to be history or fiction substantially alters how it can be analysed. With *Fouke Fitz Waryn*, establishing what the intent was is more problematic than it was for the *History of William Marshal* because there is no evidence concerning the circumstances in which it was written. However, the place and purpose of individual sections can help to illuminate the issue.

The relationship between the elements of history and fiction has caused great confusion for most scholars who have studied the *Romance*. For example, Maurice Keen was unable to reconcile his ideas of the place of fantastic tales within Fouke's overall story, claiming both that 'his outlawry and his long struggle with John are only the background theme lending its unconnected incidents some shadow of continuity', and that the 'voyages to distant lands were no more, really than colourful interludes in the tale of Fouke's long battle with the tyrant who was reigning in his native land.'<sup>360</sup> As stated in the introduction to this chapter Painter acknowledged the difficulties with classification, but he still concluded that in spite of the many inaccuracies and imaginative interludes there is so much historical content in the *Romance* that it must be 'a compilation of legends rather than a work of pure imagination'.<sup>361</sup> His views become particularly significant in this context where he argues as a consequence that the legends must have been current in Fouke's native area along with some public demand for his story. Therefore, according to Painter 'one may in the pages of *Fouke Fitz Warin* study the nature and accuracy of popular historical tradition in

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<sup>358</sup> Brandid, 'Nouvelles Recherches', pp.33-7; *Fouke Le Fitz Waryn*, pp.xx-xxiii.

<sup>359</sup> Suzanne Fleischman, 'On the Representation of History and Fiction in the Middle Ages', *History and Theory*, 22 (1983), pp.281-2.

<sup>360</sup> Keen, *Outlaws of Medieval Legend*, pp.39, 43.

<sup>361</sup> Painter, 'The Sources of *Fouke Fitz Warin*', p.13.

the late thirteenth century.’<sup>362</sup> For Painter the imaginative material was part of the popular understanding of Fouke, as much a part of the ‘historical tradition’ as was its factual content. This part of Painter’s work on Fouke has received less attention than his study of the *Romance*’s accuracy but it was taken up by Pensom, inspiring him to see the text as an organised structure.

Although the *Romance* can appear disjointed and episodic at first, in a broader European context it is not as unusual a structure as is sometimes supposed. Icelandic sagas, for example, commonly consist of a historical opening followed by a longer and more fantastic central story, and the three great outlaw-sagas, *Gisli-saga*, *Hörðr-saga* and *Grettir-saga*, all include introductory sections showing ancestors.<sup>363</sup> Catherine Rock identified the *Romance* as a three-part romance based on ‘an underlying double structure with numerous parallels and reversals’, i.e. there are three chronological sections with structural balance being provided by a pattern of ‘out and back’ journeys and episodes that mirror each other.<sup>364</sup> According to medieval and modern definitions, the fact that such a recognizable literary structure can be seen in the *Romance* implies a fictional intent in the author but the way in which the author used his historical material within that structure implies that he would not have accepted such a straightforward categorisation.

The two prophecies and the sections that surround them are good examples. The prophecies are among the more obvious aspects of the double structure identified by Rock because they appear at the beginning and end of the work, balancing each other, and are highlighted by the fact that they are the only elements written in verse. They have also been largely ignored in scholarly analysis. Burgess and the ANTS editors mention them only as a demonstration of the verse structure of the original thirteenth-century text; and in his translation Thomas Kelly adds simply that ‘both prophecies were either inspired by or

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<sup>362</sup> Painter, ‘The Sources of Fouke Fitz Warin’, p.15.

<sup>363</sup> J. de Lange, *The Relation and Development of English and Icelandic Outlaw-Traditions* (Haarlem, 1935). Other types of saga are similarly structured; the similarity between Fouke and *Njál’s Saga* in particular has been pointed out by the ANTS editors and other family sagas, such as *Laxdæla Saga*, use several generations of a family’s past to establish the eventual hero’s rightful possession of land central to the more fantastic part of the text. *Fouke Le Fitz Waryn*, p.xxxvii ; *Laxdæla Saga*, Magnus Magnusson & Herman Pálsson (trans) (Harmondsworth, 1969), pp.9-10.

<sup>364</sup> Catherine A. Rock, ‘Fouke le Fitz Waryn and King John: Rebellion and Reconciliation’, *British Outlaws of Literature and History*, Kaufman (ed) (2011), pp.69, 74-7.

derived from the *Libellus Merlini* (c.1135) of Geoffrey of Monmouth, even though the first prophecy makes no mention of Merlin at all.<sup>365</sup> To modern eyes prophecies are among the more fanciful aspects of medieval historiography and they are consequently overlooked but they were highly respected at the time.<sup>366</sup>

The *Prophecies of Merlin* was among the most popular parts of Geoffrey's output and Merlin 'seems generally to have enhanced, not detracted from, Geoffrey's respectability as a historian'.<sup>367</sup> In fact between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries Merlin's 'status as a prophet equaled that of Bede, Edward the Confessor, or the Sibyl...he was occasionally placed among the biblical prophets (Daniel, Ezechiel, Isaiah, or David).<sup>368</sup> So calling on prophecies, especially those by Merlin, was a way of claiming historical validity. However, in the context of the *Romance* it has not been possible to identify any prophecy attributed to Merlin as the basis of those that appear in this text; they appear to be an invention by the author. It is also interesting that in the later of the two prophecies, the one specifically attributed to Merlin, John is identified as 'the leopard' when it was generally accepted that John was Merlin's lynx.<sup>369</sup> The

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<sup>365</sup> *Two Medieval Outlaws*, notes pp.185, 192; *ANTS*, pp.xix; Thomas E. Kelly, 'Fouke fitz Waryn' in Ohlgren, *Medieval Outlaws, Ten Tales in Modern English*, note p.310.

<sup>366</sup> For scholarship on medieval attitudes to prophecy as a historical medium see the seminal studies by Rupert Taylor, *The Political Prophecy in England* (New York, 1911) and R.W. Southern, 'Aspects of the European Tradition of Historical Writing: 3. History as Prophecy', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5<sup>th</sup> series, 22 (1972), pp.159-180; as well as more recent work with regards to Merlin by Crick, 'Geoffrey of Monmouth, prophecy and history' pp.357-71; Karen R. Moranski, 'The *Prophetie Merlini*, Animal Symbolism, and the Development of Political Prophecy in Late Medieval England and Scotland', *Arthuriana*, 8 (1998), pp.58-68; and Jean Blacker (ed), 'Anglo-Norman Verse Prophecies of Merlin', *Arthuriana*, 15 (2005), pp.1-125.

<sup>367</sup> The prophecies and their interpretations were quoted by chroniclers including Matthew Paris, Thomas Walsingham, Roger of Hoveden, Benedict of Peterborough and Adam of Usk; Taylor, *The Political Prophecy in England*, p.89. Crick, 'Geoffrey of Monmouth, prophecy and history', pp.358-9.

<sup>368</sup> *The Prophetia Merlini of Geoffrey of Monmouth: A Fifteenth-Century English Commentary*, Caroline D. Eckhardt (ed), *Speculum Anniversary Monographs*, 8 (Cambridge, MA, 1982), pp.9-10.

<sup>369</sup> A number of the animal figures in Geoffrey's prophecies had common identifications in the Middle Ages, for example Henry I was seen to be the Lion of Justice. That John and the Lynx were identified in such a way can be seen in an unpublished thirteenth-century commentary on the prophecies. The quotation 'because of the Lynx Normandy will lose both its isles and be deprived of its former dignity' is glossed 'concerning the king who made himself the pope's vassal and returned to him 700 pounds per year', a reference to John's settlement of the interdict; Crick, 'Geoffrey of Monmouth, prophecy and history' (1992), pp.367-8. Taylor referred to various unspecified chroniclers who saw the loss of Normandy by John as fulfilling this prophecy as well, *The Political Prophecy in England*, p.50. Ironically the word 'lynx' in this prophecy has been argued to be a medieval misreading of 'light' by Michael Faletra so it may not have been intended to refer to a person at all; Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, Michael A. Faletra (ed & trans) (Peterborough Ont, 2008), p.134.

author was using a recognizable and authoritative way of claiming historical validity but without following accurately the source to which he was referring.

The episodes that surround the *Prophecies* show a similar combination of fictional and historical intent. They take on parts of the Brutus legend told by Geoffrey of Monmouth and Arthurian content from the romance *Perlesvaus* but adapt them to new circumstances.<sup>370</sup> As D.H. Green has argued, the acceptance of the historicity of Arthur does not imply that all stories told about him were believed; in fact Green suggests that the use of familiar Arthurian names could be an indication to the audience that the story was taking place within that fictive world.<sup>371</sup> Also, by making changes from the source material used, if Geoffrey was assumed to be a factual source, the author moved into the concept of fiction defined by Damian-Grint.<sup>372</sup> However, Timothy Jones argued that the Payne Peverell story was an attempt to create a Norman myth to override the British one; claiming that '[t]he presence of this background...is just as important for the defense of Fouke's actions as the later characterisation of his outlawry, for the author has not only understood his rebellion in terms of feudal values, but also its place in history.'<sup>373</sup> Fouke is not portrayed simply as an individual taking part in an isolated but exciting series of events, he is part of the ongoing history of Britain and as such his actions are a result of the past and will have consequences for the future.

The constant overlapping of styles suggests that the author's intent was not to write either history or fiction, but to construct a text that was both historical and fictional. This is not the same as Green's point that historical facts can appear in fiction without it becoming any less fictional.<sup>374</sup> Both are vital parts of the *Romance* with neither taking a subservient role. Therefore, rather than try to establish which was most important, I would suggest that both aspects of Fouke's story need to be studied together in order to understand the text as a

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<sup>370</sup> *Two Medieval Outlaws*, pp.185, 192. The Trojan origins of British history described by Geoffrey generally receive less attention than does his Arthurian material but it was for the character of Brutus that both Wace and Layamon named their own adaptations of Geoffrey's version of British history.

<sup>371</sup> D.H. Green, *The Beginnings Medieval Romance* (Cambridge, 2002), pp.24, 57.

<sup>372</sup> Peter Damian-Grint, *New Historians of the Twelfth-Century Renaissance* (Woodbridge, 1999), p.85.

<sup>373</sup> Timothy Jones, 'Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Fouke le Fitz Wayn*, and National Mythology', *Studies in Philology*, 91 (1994), pp.234-5, 237.

<sup>374</sup> See the discussion in chapter one p.56-7.

whole. The ‘historical’ elements need to be re-examined in this light to explore what impact the changes in chronology and genealogy have on the narrative drive of the story; how exactly the past has been fictionalised and what impact that has on Fouke’s characterisation.

As was the case with the *History of William Marshal*, one very prominent and wide ranging result of the changes made to historical chronology is to emphasize the outlawry as a personal conflict between Fouke and John, who are seen as well matched foes.<sup>375</sup> As already noted, the *Romance*’s account of the pardon cannot be accurate because John was not in the country at the time, but Meisel points out that the same is true for almost the whole period between 1200 and 1203.<sup>376</sup> The opening of the thirteenth century was difficult for the English crown, which was facing considerable opposition in its French territories from Philip Augustus, and John spent most of his time there until the loss of Normandy in 1204.<sup>377</sup> Consequently the regular interactions between king and outlaw cannot have taken place as described.

In part this personal connection is simply a traditional aspect of outlaw narratives. John is the equivalent of the Sheriff of Nottingham in the Robin Hood legends; his constant tricking by Fouke and increasing frustration characterize him as the figure of fun from comedy or farce.<sup>378</sup> It is important that the hero has a villain to overcome in order to measure his success so John’s presence in the country could simply be a form of artistic license in order to aid the narrative flow. However, a number of the alterations to historical events earlier in the story serve to mark Fouke, ‘a very minor personage’, as a suitable opponent for a King.<sup>379</sup> At the very beginning of the *Romance* the family’s founder, Payne Peverell, is stated to be a cousin of William I and this family connection is reasserted when Fouke the elder goes to Henry II for help in the war with the

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<sup>375</sup> See Glyn Burgess, ‘Fouke Fitz Waryn III and King John: Good Outlaw and Bad King’, in *Bandit Territories*, Helen Philips (ed) (Cardif, 2008), pp.73-98.

<sup>376</sup> *Two Medieval Outlaws*, p.103; Meisel, *Barons of the Welsh Frontier*, p.36.

<sup>377</sup> The events of this period have already been considered in the Introduction to this thesis but to repeat, the most important discussion appears in Powicke’s seminal *The Loss of Normandy* (Manchester, 1913) as well as modern studies by Daniel Power, ‘The end of Angevin Normandy: the revolt at Alençon (1203)’, *Historical Research*, (2001), pp. 444-464, and ‘King John and the Norman Aristocracy’, *King John: New Interpretations*, S.D. Church (ed) (Woodbridge, 1999), pp.117-36.

<sup>378</sup> *Two Medieval Outlaws*, p.123.

<sup>379</sup> Painter, *The Reign of King John*, p.49.



Lacys.<sup>380</sup> In fact Henry II mentions the relationship at once while Fouke appears to be unaware, implying that the royal family is more interested in their relationship than are the Fitz Waryns, within the context of the *Romance*.

The significance of the two children being brought up together can hardly be underestimated. It implies that they had the same education and training, another form of equality, and the comments on their childhood actions show that Fouke was superior by talent if not by birth.<sup>381</sup> When they argue it is Fouke who the king assumes is in the right. The fact that the game they argued over was chess is also significant; it was a staple of knightly culture and appears in a number of romances, including that of Richard I which will be discussed in the next chapter. Ability at chess was one of the skills expected of a knight and it appears in stories about Tristan, Lancelot and Alexander as young men, signaling their worth.<sup>382</sup> Consequently the fact that Fouke is able to beat John at chess demonstrates his superior ability as a knight. The relationship between the two characters is that of equals in birth and education, rather than lord and subject, allowing them to be judged by the same criteria. An important theme of the *Romance* that plays out through this relationship is the proper use of authority.

John is portrayed as the quintessential bad ruler. He is vindictive, greedy, violent and lecherous, thinking of himself rather than of the welfare of those over whom he rules. According to the many medieval manuals on princely behaviour a good king can be recognised by establishing the rule of peace for the common good, achieved through the practice of justice using power, clemency and wisdom.<sup>383</sup> John's failure in this respect is repeatedly stated throughout the *Romance*, starting with Fouke's formal renunciation of fealty; 'you fail me both

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<sup>380</sup> *FFW*, pp.5.5-6, 21.3-4.

<sup>381</sup> *FFW*, pp.22.40-23.2.

<sup>382</sup> Richard Eales, 'The Games of Chess: An Aspect of Medieval Knightly Culture', Christopher Harper-Bill and Ruth Harvey (eds), *The Ideals and Practices of Medieval Knighthood* (Woodbridge, 1986), pp.12-3, 23-4..

<sup>383</sup> Bernard Guenée, *States and Rulers in Later Medieval Europe* (Oxford, 1985), pp.70-1. There was a wide literature on princely behaviour, especially in the thirteenth century with the beginning of the 'mirrors for princes' genre in Capetian France. For more detail on this genre and broader ideals of rulership in the thirteenth century see also Jean-Philippe Genet (ed), *Four English Political Tracts of the Later Middle Ages* (London, 1977), pp.xii-xiii; M.S. Kempshall, *The Common Good in Late Medieval Political Thought* (Oxford, 1999); and Charles F. Briggs, *Giles of Rome's 'De Regimine Principum': Reading and Writing Politics at Court and University* (Cambridge, 1999). One example of the genre particularly worth noting due to its both temporal and geographic proximity to the writing of the *Romance* is that by Gerald of Wales, *De instructione principum* in James Dimock (ed), *Geraldus Cambrensis opera, Vol.VIII.*, Rolls Series, 21 (1891).

in rights and in common law. He was never a good king who denied justice to his free-born tenants in his court.’<sup>384</sup> Llewellyn, John’s fellow ruler, states that John is incapable of peace and the narrator calls him ‘a man without a conscience, wicked, quarrelsome, hated by all good people and lecherous’.<sup>385</sup> By contrast, Fouke represents good lordship. He treats women honourably; seeks counsel from the wise men around him, especially Mador the sailor and John de Rampaigne; aids any of his men who need help; and resolves conflicts. In Wales especially Fouke is the law bringer even though he is outside the law and he focuses his violence only on those who have done him wrong; ‘neither Fouke nor any of his men ever attempted to harm anyone other than the king and his knights.’<sup>386</sup> The inaccurately early marriage to Matilda shows the contrast especially well; her brother-in-law chooses the righteous outlaw to protect her from the lecherous king.

As well as presenting Fouke and John as personal combatants, the changes in family history also serve to portray the outlaw Fouke as a representative of justice, especially by emphasizing the family’s traditional loyalty to the crown. In fact there is no evidence that the family had received any noticeable degree of royal favour since the time of Fouke’s grandfather. Fouke’s father’s lack of respect for royal authority can be shown by the fact that he was fined for forest-trespass in 1176, and Fouke himself acted against the king during the First Barons’ War.<sup>387</sup> The *Romance* is able to negate these inconvenient facts by compressing two historical generations into Fouke the elder, who can then be portrayed both as close to the king and the inheritor of important lands through Hawyse, and by ignoring problematic periods later in the hero’s life. Even though the events of the Barons’ War could be seen as an extension of Fouke’s righteous campaign against royal injustice their inclusion would risk the danger of suggesting that Fouke was simply an unruly and rebellious man, willing to oppose the king on any excuse.<sup>388</sup> The facts of history are altered and

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<sup>384</sup> *FFW*, p.24.29-31.

<sup>385</sup> *FFW*, p.35.34-5.

<sup>386</sup> *FFW*, p.27.26-7.

<sup>387</sup> Eyton, *Antiquities of Shropshire*, 11:37-8.

<sup>388</sup> Such an assumption about the historical Fouke was suggested by Burgess: ‘[i]t may be that Fouke III was a natural rebel’, *Two Medieval Outlaws*, p.105. The reasons behind choosing to use Fouke’s time as an outlaw rather than his association with the more respectable Magna Carta to demonstrate the value of good lordship and legality will appear in chapter four.

fictionalised but within certain constraints. The intent is to show the family's past in a certain light but that past remains important. Fouke is being placed in a historical context in which his outlawry is the only occasion when any member of his family opposed royal authority, and that was due to crimes on the part of the king.

Although changes in detail of the kind described above are only on the borderline of fictionality, potentially a result of a desire to tell the 'higher truth', the inclusion of a number of romance style stories among the historical material in this section backs up the suggestion that something more is going on in this text than simply inaccurate history or fiction with a few recognizable elements. Payne Peverell's fight with the devil, the tournament for Melette's hand, and the betrayal of Marion de la Bruere are all entertaining stories but they also have a serious purpose within the narrative; they recount moments vital for the family's fortune that affect landholding.<sup>389</sup> However, there are also examples of romance motifs such as Fouke the elder's youthful attempts at chivalry in rusty armour on a packhorse, a familiar image from romances such as Chrétien de Troyes' *The Story of the Grail*, that have no such historical purpose.<sup>390</sup> These moments partially argue against Pensom's idea, discussed above, that the geographical centre of the story is associated with a historical narrative. Pensom accepts that even at its most historical the *Romance* is quasi-history, and therefore that such interpolations are not out of place, but their presence here emphasizes yet again that fiction is an essential part of even most the historical elements of the *Romance*.<sup>391</sup>

Nevertheless, it is from here that the ideas of Roger Pensom come particularly to the fore. If the *Romance* is a coherent unity with a single intent we must explore how the sections fit together in order to understand how history and fiction relate to each other. If the two are truly interdependent, as was suggested above, then the most fantastic episodes must be connected to history just as history is connected to fantasy. The outlaw section as a whole must also form a coherent unit rather than being the collection of entertaining episodes that it initially appears. Some connections can be made easily. For example the story of

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<sup>389</sup> *FFW*, pp.5.5-7.7, 8.8-10.4, 14.30-17.28.

<sup>390</sup> Chrétien de Troyes, *Arthurien Romances*, William W. Kibler (trans) (London, 1991), pp.381-494.

<sup>391</sup> Pensom, 'Inside and outside', pp.57-9.

violent peasants who inexplicably dress in rich clothes and invite Fouke to play chess forcibly brings to mind the childhood episode with John.<sup>392</sup> However, there must be more than simply similarities in story elements such as chess games or chivalric tournaments, although these do help us make comparisons. There must also be coherence between the broader moral and political themes of the different sections.

Pensom's concept of 'thematic recall' suggests that each of the romance stories ties into themes that already exist in both the 'historical' and 'folkloric' parts of the story, creating a form of typology with the romantic figures reminding the audience of certain characters that have already appeared.<sup>393</sup> In order to examine this idea the three main romance episodes will be considered in order, and their themes explored in comparison with earlier episodes. The first such story is that mentioned above with the peasants, when en route to Scotland, Fouke's band are blown of course and after three days arrive at a beautiful but sparsely populated island where they are invited by a local peasant to join him for food.<sup>394</sup> Six fierce peasants then appear who dress in fine clothes and challenge Fouke and his companions to play chess; each companion loses but Fouke refuses to play instead cutting off three of the men's heads.<sup>395</sup> When all the peasants are dead an old woman is found in the next room trying to summon help with a horn while other rooms contain a group of seven beautiful, kidnapped maidens, including the daughter of the king of Orkney, and a huge quantity of treasure.<sup>396</sup> Fouke takes the maidens and the treasure back to his ship then blows the old woman's horn; he and his companions kill all of the two hundred thieves who answer its call.<sup>397</sup>

Pensom argued that fantastic elements immediately encourage a metaphorical reading and there are certainly a number of features of this story that mark it out as fantastic, for example the treasure, the fact it takes place in an

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<sup>392</sup> This was one of the mirroring episodes discussed by Rock. In both episodes violent actions on Fouke's part might appear to be over reactions, since he knocks the child John unconscious and kills the peasants who are not yet shown to have done anything more damning than require him to play a game, but it is shown afterwards that those he acts against are more generally villainous and deserving of such punishment. Rock, 'Fouke le Fitz Waryn and King John', pp.76-7.

<sup>393</sup> Pensom, 'Inside and outside', pp.56-7.

<sup>394</sup> *FFW*, p.43.17-20.

<sup>395</sup> *FFW*, pp.43.30-44.8

<sup>396</sup> *FFW*, p.44.9-32.

<sup>397</sup> *FFW*, pp.44.36-45.7.

unknown land, and the presence of a princess to be rescued. Once the decision to look at this story typologically has been made it becomes a very clear example of thematic connection between history and fiction. It becomes a continuation of the theme of Fouke's conflict with John; the peasants represent John as uncouth men who dress in finery, steal both wealth and women, and play chess.<sup>398</sup> The element of rescuing maidens particularly strengthens the connection in the *Romance* where Fouke had recently married Matilda to protect her from John's advances.<sup>399</sup> The story also emphasises the difference between the outlaw Fouke and those who are truly outside the law. The peasants are thieves, kidnappers and rapists who amass finery purely for their own ends; this contrast demonstrates that in spite of his legal status Fouke is the law-bringer. As in Wales, here it is only the outlaw who is able to restore stability, though in this context stability is achieved through force of arms rather than negotiation. Thus the themes of a Fouke/John personal conflict and Fouke's righteousness, that were seen in the way in which historical facts were fictionalised in the first section, are again present in the more fictional section.

The second and third romance episodes are connected but distinct in both theme and location within the romance. As in the first example, in both of these Fouke's arrival at the location is unplanned, having been blown off course by storms. One storm lasting two weeks takes his ship to Carthage, in Iberia, where the land is deserted, the people having fled from a dragon that terrorised the country and carried off the princess. Fouke, following his usual pattern, decides to remedy the situation and, with a single companion, climbs the mountain to the dragon's lair. Putting their faith in God they enter and find the princess, then kill the dragon on its return. Again, a large quantity of treasure is discovered, which Fouke takes back to his ship before restoring the princess to her grateful father.<sup>400</sup>

As in the story of the peasants, we have Fouke rescuing a princess from a tyrant who steals and oppresses the land; the dragon, like the peasants, represents John. Pensom also suggests here a further connection to John since it recalls the story of Fouke stealing cloth from the king's merchants on the basis that he has

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<sup>398</sup> Pensom, 'Inside and outside', p.56.

<sup>399</sup> *FFW*, p.30.13-20.

<sup>400</sup> *FFW*, pp.46.29-48.6.

only a single companion with him.<sup>401</sup> The later connection appears rather tenuous as there are otherwise very few thematic links between the stories, but the connection between John and the dragon is easier to justify. Unlike with the maiden of Orkney, in this case the rescued princess is offered to Fouke as a bride in the traditional fairytale manner and Fouke refuses because he already has a wife.<sup>402</sup> The reference at this point to Fouke's marriage reminds us again of the circumstances in which it took place; Matilda was rescued from John just as the princess was rescued from the dragon. In conjunction with such similar events in the story of the peasants, and with the two stories appearing very close together, Fouke's place as protector of women is particularly emphasised.

However, this is not the first time that fantastic creatures appear in the story. Immediately before his arrival in Carthage Fouke is said to have travelled around the 'seven islands of the ocean'; Brittany, Ireland, Gothland, Norway, Denmark, Orkney and Sweden, as well as going so far north that the sea turned to ice and it was impossible to go further.<sup>403</sup> Apart from the dubious categorisation of some of these locations as islands, which emphasises the fact that here the author is talking of lands unknown, this short section is important because in Sweden Fouke comes across creatures which have certain similarities to dragons. They are called '*venymouse*' rather than '*dragoun*' but they share certain attributes; in particular beards, the ability to fly, and the fact that the author is unable to supply a single description of their appearance because they are so unusual.<sup>404</sup>

In terms of narrative, the similarities between this episode and the events in Carthage are as striking as those between Carthage and England. Again the land is deserted apart from the beasts and Fouke kills a fantastic flying monster that attacks him. The theme of rescue is not present but instead there is a connection with religion; the beasts are in Sweden because St Patrick drove them out of Ireland and held them there through the power of God.<sup>405</sup> Religion is important in Carthage because it is twice stated that Fouke overcame fear as a result of trust in God, first when he chastises Mador for not wanting to go after

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<sup>401</sup> Pensom, 'Inside and outside', p.56.

<sup>402</sup> *FFW*, p.48.17-9.

<sup>403</sup> *FFW*, p.45.17-9.

<sup>404</sup> *FFW*, p.45.27-9.

<sup>405</sup> *FFW*, p.45.29-30.

the dragon and then on the mountainside itself.<sup>406</sup> Fouke appears almost as a latter day St Patrick who, with God's help, is able to dispose of such foul creatures permanently. The thematic idea of Fouke as a Christian warrior seems to be of at least equal importance to any typological references to other, earlier parts of the story; a conclusion that is only strengthened by the third episode to be considered.

After returning to England where he engages in activities typical for a literary outlaw and takes part in a pitched battle against some of John's men, Fouke again takes to the sea and arrives at a small uninhabited island off the coast of Spain where his companions go ashore. Fouke sleeps on the boat alone but wind snaps the ropes and, again, a storm drives Fouke from his intended course, this time to the land of Barbary which is peopled by Saracens. The Saracen king sends a messenger to find out about the marvelous galley that has arrived in his land and Fouke punches the man who wakes him so that he falls overboard. One hundred knights are sent to attack the ship, which Fouke defends, but he eventually surrenders on condition that he will be well treated. Having lied to the king's sister about why he was on the ship alone, Fouke is told that the king wishes to marry the Spanish princess whom he rescued, and is even told a brief version of the dragon story. The princess turned the king down and they are now at war. Fouke refuses to fight for a Saracen against Christians but agrees to act as the king's champion on the condition that the king converts. After a long single combat it is discovered that Fouke is fighting one of his own brothers who had been rescued from the island by the princess; the Saracen king and his court convert, and the king and the princess marry on the advice of Fouke and his brothers.<sup>407</sup>

Parallels can be drawn, as with the other two stories, with events described in England; the hundred knights who attack Fouke's ship correspond exactly to the hundred knights John sends in search of Fouke, and the princess could be seen as being rescued again, this time from an unsuitable match. However, in this example Pensom's arguments that the story is an allegory for

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<sup>406</sup> Jones, 'Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*, and National Mythology', pp.247-8; *FFW*, p.46.23-8, 35-6.

<sup>407</sup> *FFW*, pp.55.6-56.3.

the conflict with John are more problematic.<sup>408</sup> While the episode can be seen to some extent as a discourse on proper government in that a solution is eventually achieved through negotiation rather than war, the only connection between the Saracen King and John is his royalty and one hundred knights; religion appears to be a far more significant theme. Although the Saracen's attempts to force the princess into marriage parallel with John, his conversion is all that is required to make him worthy of regard. Unlike the peasants or the dragon there is nothing inherently bad about his character.

Religion does not immediately appear to be a theme carried through from earlier historical sections which focused strongly on martial chivalry, but it does bring to mind both the opening and closing stories of the *Romance*.<sup>409</sup> Payne Peverell's battle is heavily religious in theme; the giant specifically tells him '[y]ou have conquered me, not by your own force but by the power of the cross which you are carrying'.<sup>410</sup> Payne prefigures Fouke; the giant Geomagog, unlike in the *Brut* tradition, breathes fire like the dragon and Payne represents the overturning of a British myth in favour of a Norman one while Fouke defies a king who favours the British (Welshmen) over a Norman of Payne's family.<sup>411</sup> When Fouke is older he becomes concerned about the sinfulness of the violence in his life and first founds a priory called the New Abbey, then later is granted penance by God in a miracle where he goes blind.<sup>412</sup> Being granted penance in life lessens its necessity after death but more particularly it means that Fouke had divine actions directly affect his life. In short, he was deemed worthy of a miracle.

The founding of the New Abbey is interesting because the English version disagrees with all of the French ones by placing its founding considerably earlier, claiming it was founded by Waryn during the border

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<sup>408</sup> Pensom, 'Inside and outside', p.57.

<sup>409</sup> See chapter two, pp.63-7 for more information on the virtues and varieties of chivalry.

<sup>410</sup> *FFW*, p.5.27-9.

<sup>411</sup> Jones, 'Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Fouke le Fitz Wayn*, and National Mythology', p.249. It is also worth noting that the 'Norman Myth' Jones argues was being created in the Payne story does not only imply that the Normans have completed the civilization of Britain started by Brutus, but that they have also completed its christianisation started by Augustine. In this context the connection to St Patrick mentioned above takes on additional meaning: Payne completed Augustine's work in England while his descendant completed Patrick's work with poisonous beasts. Far from being purely religious the connection draws Fouke back into historical context as a member of a family that is instrumental in bringing justice and civilization.

<sup>412</sup> *FFW*, p.59.10, 25-35.



warfare with the Lacys.<sup>413</sup> That version has a number of family members buried there before Fouke, for example Waryn de Metz and Fouke I, making it the traditional family burial place rather than a new development.<sup>414</sup> The Anglo-Norman Text Society editors are ambiguous about whether it is accurate, arguing that Fouke could have rebuilt over the original site but the implication of the two redactions is contradictory.<sup>415</sup> It would be interesting to know which language's story the other is based upon and therefore which language changed the placing of this significant event. The placing near the end, however, particularly emphasizes the religious theme.

The ending, when combined with the religious themes within the later romance episodes, suggests that Fouke as a character moves from a military to a religious exemplar. Although he has moral and military superiority over John from the beginning of the conflict it is not until he has fought on behalf of Christianity that he is able to achieve his goal of regaining Whittington for his family. This religious transformation from military roots is purely thematic and not directly referred to in the *Romance*; however it is a common theme in medieval literature. The two literary heroes referred to in the last chapter, Guy of Warwick and Sir Lancelot, are prime examples.<sup>416</sup> The development of this theme may have been an attempt to place Fouke within a traditional narrative framework that would imply fiction but is another example of the 'historical' and 'fictional' sections of the *Romance* working together to a common end.

Aside from Christianity towards the end of the story, the theme that comes out of all sections of the *Romance* most strongly is authority, especially royal authority, and its limitations. John is not a bad king because he denies his vassal lands in favour of a non-Norman but because he does so unlawfully. The argument of the *Romance* is that the abuse of royal authority by John has damaged the kingdom to the extent that the only way to stay within the law is to

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<sup>413</sup> *Johannis Lelandi Antiquarii*, p.231.

<sup>414</sup> *Johannis Lelandi Antiquarii*, pp.233-4.

<sup>415</sup> *Fouke Le Fitz Waryn*, p.xxvi.

<sup>416</sup> The structure of the *Romance of Gui de Warwick* and its Middle English translations is two part: in the first he fights for earthly glory and Felice's hand in marriage but he then undergoes a conversion and spends the second half fighting for God; Gui converts at line 7565 out of 12926. In the thirteenth-century French *Vulgate Cycle*, Lancelot is originally shown fighting for Guinevere and the preservation of Arthur's kingdom before the move to a religious motivation takes over in the search for the Grail; *Lancelot-Grail: The Old French Arthurian Vulgate and Post-Vulgate in Translation*, Norris J. Lacy (ed) (London, 1993-6).

reject that authority and become an outlaw; ‘our author has drawn for us an exemplum of loyalty, not to kings, but to family, God, and a national myth.’<sup>417</sup> So it is the fact of Fouke’s outlawry that allows the main thematic drive of the *Romance* to be articulated most strongly.

Two historical rulers besides John are shown, Llewellyn of Wales and Philip of France. Llewellyn is not an ideal prince. The *Romance* states that in his conflict with Gwenwynwyn Llewellyn is in the wrong.<sup>418</sup> However, he is able to restore stability by listening to the wise counsel of Fouke. Philip by contrast appears to be a good king and immediately recognises Fouke’s worth and refuses to harm him simply on John’s say so. In the romance style episodes the same theme of authority is drawn on a larger scale, making them more obvious. The peasants and the dragon are bad because they have usurped authority from those who should rightfully have it, the peasants by making demands of men with a higher social standing and the dragon by driving the Duke from his castle; both are perversions of the natural order that must be removed. Since both remind the audience of John, the same allegations are made of him.

There are other, more subtle, illustrations of the theme throughout the story. Philip’s offer of land to Fouke allows what is almost a backhanded attack on John when Fouke refuses, because ‘he who cannot rightfully hold his own inheritance is not worthy to receive a gift of lands from another.’<sup>419</sup> John himself lost Normandy, and with it a large portion of his inheritance to Philip the year after Fouke was pardoned. The forced murder of his men by the leader of the Scottish gang can also be read as a demonstration that a leader sacrificing his men for his own benefit, as the *Romance* claims John did to Fouke, will fail. By contrast Fouke organises rescues for all of his dependants who are captured as well as for anyone else he meets who requires help.

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<sup>417</sup> Jones, ‘Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Fouke le Fitz Wayn*, and National Mythology’, p.249.

<sup>418</sup> *FFW*, p.34.15-6. Historically Llywelyn was indeed the aggressor. For Llewelyn’s rule see especially the work of David Stephenson, ‘The Politics of Powys Wenwynwyn in the Thirteenth Century’, *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies*, 7 (1984), pp.39-61; ‘*Fouke le Fitz Waryn* and Llywelyn ap Gruffydds claim to Whittington’, *Shropshire History and Archaeology: Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society*, 77 (2002), pp.26-31; and ‘From Llywelyn ap Gruffudd to Edward I: expansionist rulers and Welsh society in thirteenth-century Gwynedd’, *The Impact of Edwardian Castles in Wales: The Proceedings of a Conference held at Bangor University, 7-9 September 2007*. Diane M. Williams & John R. Kenyon (eds) (Oxford, 2010), pp.9-15.

<sup>419</sup> *FFW*, p.41.29-31.

The central theme of authority and its proper use within the law holds the narrative of the *Romance* together, for throughout this complex and varied text it pervades all types of narrative and can be seen in all of the major stories as well as many of the shorter ones. Although other themes, especially religion, take over in some areas and the nature of the discussion on authority changes at times, sometimes focusing particularly on rights to land or feudal duties, it is possible to see a single continuous flow with stories in different styles simply exploring the theme in new ways. Therefore, the conflicting statements of Maurice Keen mentioned above need not be as contradictory as they seem. '[H]is outlawry and his long struggle with John' is indeed a 'background theme lending its unconnected incidents some shadow of continuity', and 'voyages to distant lands' are 'colourful interludes in the tale of Fouke's long battle with the tyrant who was reigning in his native land', but the derogatory tone these statements imply towards the respective sections of text are inappropriate.<sup>420</sup>

For the author of the *Romance of Fouke Fitz Waryn* the inclusion of both historical and fictional material was crucial to his intent. As such it is anachronistic to attempt to categorise the *Romance* as one or the other as has traditionally been attempted. Fouke's status as a identifiable historical figure, his historical outlawry, and the historical context of loyalty and landholding are the backbone of the story; they provide a narrative structure and justification for writing that are important for instilling the work with meaning.<sup>421</sup> However, fiction also has a central and important place within the whole, providing excitement, interest and simplified versions of the themes that could be more easily understood; the amount of space given to it alone illustrating its importance. The fanciful stories need the history to give them meaning and context while the historical sections turn to fiction in order to ensure they will be heard and remembered. The choice to produce a fictionalised history rather than an accurate one was made deliberately and with particular benefits in mind.

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<sup>420</sup> Keen, *Outlaws of Medieval Legend*, pp.39, 43.

<sup>421</sup> As with chronicle historians and the author of the *History of William Marshal*, the author of the *Romance* calls on the past as useful for teaching good values to the present: 'one should recollect the adventures and the brave deeds of our ancestors, who strove to seek honour in loyalty, and one should speak of such things as could be profitable for many people', *donque deit home remembrer des aventures e pruesses nos auncestres que se penerent pur honour en leauté quere, e de teles choses parler qe a plusours purra valer*; FFW p.3.6-8.

## **The process of fictionalisation:** ***Romance of Richard Coeur de Lion***

The last of the three key texts composed in England, the *Romance of Richard Coeur de Lion*, is different from the other two in that it is a composite work produced over a number of years, not the result of a single authorial intent. Nevertheless, as will be shown, although not all episodes in the *Romance* have the same relationship between history and fiction, the *Romance* as a whole can be seen as fictional. What is particularly interesting about this text, however, is the fact that it describes the life of a king rather than a member of the nobility and consequently there are significant quantities of alternative narrative accounts against which it can be tested. Unlike the *History of William Marshal* and the *Romance of Fouke Fitz Waryn*, with Richard it is possible to trace the process of fictionalisation through multiple versions of the same story until they appear in fully fictional form in the *Romance*. The following chapter will therefore consider the issues that surround the process of fictionalising the history of an individual, first between the different versions of the *Romance* and then extending into the broader chronicle tradition. It will be demonstrated that a number of different fictionalised presentations of Richard existed in the decades immediately following his death and that the author of the original, core text of the *Romance* was selective in repeating only those that tied into his desired characterisation, that of the ideal crusading king.

The natural starting point for debate is the *Romance*'s textual history, especially its date. This is especially important since the version published, and therefore discussed in most scholarship, is probably the latest.<sup>422</sup> Not all episodes necessarily portray perceptions of Richard in the century following his death as has sometimes been believed, for example by Robert Chapman.<sup>423</sup> Dating, as with

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<sup>422</sup> The only edition currently published is that by Karl Brunner, *Der mittelenglische Versroman über Richard Löwenherz*, Wiener Beiträge zur englischen Philologie, 72 (Vienna, 1913). However, an unpublished PhD thesis by Philida Schellekens provides editions of four other manuscripts and it is to her work that much of the following discussion of textual history is indebted; *An Edition of the Middle English Romance: Richard Coeur de Lion* (Durham, 1989), vol.2, p.59.

<sup>423</sup> Chapman believed that the story concerning Richard's mother that appears at the beginning of Brunner's edition was composed only about fifty years after his historical mother, Eleanor of Aquitaine, died in 1204, 'A Note on the Demon Queen Eleanor', *Modern Language Notes*, 70

most medieval romances, is problematic because although there are seven surviving manuscripts none is the original. The earliest surviving text is Auchinleck, Advocates 19.2.1, National Library of Scotland (L), which dates from 1330 to 1340; it is incomplete, and is also the shortest, but it still contains a number of lines which appear to be additions to an earlier core text.<sup>424</sup> References within the *Romance* indicate that it must have been written after 1250, especially the inclusion of the names of the Earl of Artays, William Congespée and the Earl of Richmond, who were associated with Louis IX's crusade in 1249.<sup>425</sup> Therefore, the *Romance* must have been composed between the mid thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. Linguistic evidence narrows this further, suggesting an original composition in the mid to late thirteenth century.<sup>426</sup>

All the manuscripts other than L are fifteenth century; Arundel 58, College of Arms (A); Douce 228, Bodleian Library (D); Egerton 2862, British Library (E); Gonville and Caius College 175/96, Cambridge (C); BM Harley 4690, British Library (H); BM Additional 31042, British Library (B).<sup>427</sup> There is also one fragment and two sixteenth-century versions printed by Wynkyn de Worde.<sup>428</sup> Although of later provenance, these manuscripts are extremely important, providing over five thousand extra lines of text and supplying elements that have been lost from L through damage, though many of them are damaged also. Not all these manuscripts contain the same version of the romance however. There appears to have been two versions, one short and the other long, in circulation.<sup>429</sup> More generally the relationships between the various

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(1955), p.393. However, this episode appears to be a later interpolation and it can not be dated so it may have been written over a century later than the original version of the *Romance*.

<sup>424</sup> Schellekens, pp.6,26. Exactly what sections of the surviving versions constitute this original, core text will be discussed below.

<sup>425</sup> Schellekens, pp. 71-2.

<sup>426</sup> Schellekens used the presence of Kentish dialect to indicate the earliest sections of the *Romance* and based her dating on that, p.32, 39.

<sup>427</sup> Brunner used manuscript C as the basis of his edition because it is the longest and most complete version, though he did include variant sections from other manuscripts where they existed in the notes. By contrast, Schellekens focussed on the shorter versions that appear in manuscripts L, A, D and E. Given the wide selection of editions thus available the choice has been made that for general comments about the text the line numbers from L will be used for preference as it is the earliest; however it is missing a bifolia so when it has lines missing the more complete A will be used to avoid confusion. For non-core text C will be used as it is the most comprehensive version available.

<sup>428</sup> Schellekens, pp.3, 25.

<sup>429</sup> These two versions are referred to as the A and B redactions with B being approximately 1200 lines shorter than A which includes a fantastic opening section describing Richard's birth and a

manuscripts are extremely complex. None of the versions is a direct source for any other and no two are copied from one source, therefore there must originally have been a considerably larger number in circulation.<sup>430</sup>

Given the large number of significantly different versions of the *Romance* that exist, our next task is to identify what sections constitute the core thirteenth-century text. It has been thought that the core text of the *Romance* is a translation of an earlier Anglo-Norman poem as was the case with *Kyng Alisaunder*, another long romance written in Kent at the end of the thirteenth century.<sup>431</sup> Loomis made an identification of the core text in 1915 based on that assumption, and consequently used similarities to French grammar and word use as his criteria for identification.<sup>432</sup> However, Schellekens has demonstrated that there is no evidence that any such earlier poem existed.<sup>433</sup> Further doubts are raised by the fact that the *Romance* also claims authority from ‘þe Latyn’ and since the two texts with most in common with the *Romance* are Ambroise’s French verse chronicle of the Third Crusade and the Latin *Itinerarium Peregrinorum* it is easy to explain references to those languages without assuming that the *Romance* is a translation.<sup>434</sup> Schellekens has instead used the predominance of Kentish dialect to identify lines 1-34, 733-2410, 2807-2950, 3085-3154, 3807-4146 and 4309-4378 as core text, with a few minor exceptions and reservations.<sup>435</sup> However, the

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tournament at the start of his reign; John Finlayson, ‘Richard, Coer de Lyon: Romance, History or Something in Between?’, *Studies in Philology*, 87 (1990), p.160.

<sup>430</sup> Schellekens, p.26.

<sup>431</sup> Dieter Mehl, *The Middle English Romances of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (London, 1968), pp.227, 243.

<sup>432</sup> R.S. Loomis, ‘Richard Coeur de Lion and the Pas Saladin in Medieval Art’, *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, 30 (1915), p.510.

<sup>433</sup> There is no mention of an Old-French version in any contemporary source and Schellekens was able to identify very little evidence of linguistic influence, p.73. All of the key texts in this thesis appear in medieval library catalogues even though the others had far more limited circulations than the *Romance*. Therefore, a French version of Richard’s fictionalisation would be expected to appear in such sources too if it had existed given the popularity of the Middle-English version.

<sup>434</sup> RCL A.2171. Ambroise has already been mentioned in both the introduction and chapter one of this thesis. The full text of his chronicle and a translation can be found in Marianne Ailes & Malcome Barber (eds), Marianne Ailes (trans) *The History of the Holy War: Ambroise’s ‘Estoire de la Guerre Sainte’*, 2 vols (Woodbridge, 2003). The later part of the *Itinearrium* is based on Ambroise but some additional information is included that could be from eyewitness testimony by the author, Richard de Templo; William Stubbs, *Chronicles and Memorials of the Reign of Richard I. Vol.1, Itinerarium Peregrinorum et Gesta Regis Ricardi*, Rolls Series,38 (London, 1864); recently translated as *Chronicle of the Third Crusade: A Translation of the ‘Itinerarium Peregrinorum et Gesta Regis Ricardi’*, Helen J. Nicholson (trans) (Aldershot, 1997).

<sup>435</sup> Schellekens p.32; see the Appendix for comparative line numbers in C. There is an overall unity of style within these sections when they are read in isolation from the rest of the *Romance* that helps to confirm them as belonging to a single variation.

situation is more complex than this as at 4309 Richard is portrayed worrying about news that the core text has not shown him being sent and the end line, 4378, is half-way through an attack on a caravan. Certain sections of the core text, especially the original ending, must therefore have been so completely rewritten that they can no longer be identified. It is important to remember when analysing the text that the entire original poem has not survived.

The situation with regards to dating is further complicated by the fact that not all stories about Richard current in the thirteenth century appear in the core text. Artistic images demonstrate that at least some of the stories that appear only in the interpolations were known much earlier. The single combat between Richard and Saladin was to appear in a mural in Clarendon palace commissioned in 1250, probably before the *Romance* was written.<sup>436</sup> The Chertsey Tiles, created c.1270-80, also contain an image of this event as well as Richard's fight with a lion.<sup>437</sup> The core text remains the most important part of the *Romance* for this thesis and its examination of the fictionalisation of individuals of the recent past but it would be inappropriate to ignore the interpolated material entirely as it preserves some fictionalised stories that were clearly known in the relevant period even if they had not yet been written down.

The following table provides a summary of the stories that appear in the *Romance* and indicates which of the manuscripts they appear in, and whether they are part of the core text:

Summary	C	L	A	D	E	Core T.
Prologue	* <sup>438</sup>	*				*
English King [Henry II] agrees to marry an eastern princess who flies out the church roof when forced to remain in Mass.	*					
Richard becomes king and takes part in a tournament to select two companions to join	*		/ <sup>439</sup>	*		

<sup>436</sup> Loomis, 'Richard Coeur de Lion and the Pas Saladin', p.514.

<sup>437</sup> Loomis, 'Richard Coeur de Lion and the Pas Saladin', pp.514-15, 520.

<sup>438</sup> \* - this complete section is in the manuscript.

<sup>439</sup> / - part of this section exists but the rest has been lost through damage.

him on pilgrimage to the holy land.						
Richard captured on the way home and held to ransom. During the captivity he kills his captor's son in a game of pluck buffet, seduces the daughter, and fights with a lion.	*		*	*		
A crusade is announced, Richard and his nobles swear to go.	*	*				*
The daughter Richard seduced persuades her father to return the ransom money.	*					
En route to the Holy Land Richard is betrayed by the King of France in Sicily leading to a battle.	*	/	*	*	/	*
Richard marries Beringer who was brought there by his mother.			*	*	*	*
Richard captures Cyprus, defeats a Saracen ship, and personally cuts the chain defending the harbour at Acre from attack.	*	/	*	*	/	*
On arrival in Acre the events of the Crusade so far are related to Richard. He falls ill.	*	*				*
Richard and Philip of France argue over a game of chess and Philip returns to Europe			*	*		
Richard craves pork and is fed roasted Saracen when none can be found; he immediately gets better. Acre is captured and Richard then feeds Saracen heads to some of Saladin's messengers.	*				/	
An angel instructs Richard to kill all the hostages from Acre and continue with the crusade.	*	*				*
The crusaders split their army so the French attack Taburette and Archane while the English attack Sudan Turry, Orglyous and Ebedy; it is necessary to retake the French towns.	*					
Crusaders journey down the sea coast with	*		*	*	*	



battles at Cayphas, Arsour, and Nynyue.						
Battle of Arsour and death of Jakes de Nys	*	*	*	*	*	*
Approach Jerusalem but decide that it will be necessary to capture Babylon first.		*				*
Attack on Babylon during which Richard and Saladin take part in a single combat while riding demon steeds.	*				*	
The French return to Europe.	*				*	
The remaining crusaders attack Jaffe after which Richard argues with the Duke of Austria. There are further battles at Darcyn castle and Gatris.	*					
Richard hears of problems with Prince John in England and considers leaving the East but there is a large battle with Saladin's forces.	*					
Further concern about John and the crusaders defend Jaffe.	*		*	*	*	
Richard returns to England.	*					
Richard dies while attacking castle Gaillard.			*			

Given the *Romance's* nature as a composite text, where the *Romance's* understanding of Richard's character and actions derives is as hard to establish as its date. Different authors will have had access to different sources.<sup>440</sup> Of the two sources mentioned above as having most in common with the *Romance* the *Itinerarium Peregrinorum* can be shown to have had influence because the *Romance* repeats its mistake that Richard was crowned at Winchester.<sup>441</sup> However, in both Ambroise and the *Itinerarium* the Saracen dromond that Richard battles on his way to the Holy land is filled with snakes, a fact that is not mentioned in the *Romance*, making it unlikely that either source was used at first

<sup>440</sup> A total of ten separate authors have been identified for different sections of the *Romance*, including the one who wrote the core text, but there may have been more; Schellekens, p.32.

<sup>441</sup> *RCL* L.765-8; Schellekens, p.74; *Itin.* p.386. The crowning at Winchester appears at the end of the *Itinerarium* and in fact probably refers to a ceremonial re-crowning that took place on Richard's return from captivity rather than his actual coronation which had taken place years earlier at Westminster, *Itin.* p.144.

hand; such a dramatic image would surely have been used by the author of the core text had he been aware of it.<sup>442</sup> Other identifiable sources for the core text are Roger of Hoveden and Richard of Devizes both of which appear to have provided inspiration for the *Romance*'s account of events during Richard's journey to Acre.<sup>443</sup> Of the interpolations only a few are sufficiently similar to other accounts to suggest they were used as a source; in particular the account of Richard's death that appears in A relies on the version by Ralph of Diceto.<sup>444</sup> A number of different accounts of the events of Richard's reign seem to have been available to the various authors but none is followed closely; an indicator of deliberate fictionalisation using Damian-Grint's model.

With the above information in mind, discussion will now turn to the nature of the fictionalised Richard as he appears in the *Romance*. As was the case with William Marshal's fictionalisation, much of the *Romance* revolves around military activity and demonstrations of its hero's possession of prowess. Richard is repeatedly shown as an active and successful participant in all military engagements. He is, for example, the first to enter the defeated Sicilian city, in Cyprus he uses his axe to kill many Greeks, and at the siege of Acre it is his return to health and joining of the battle that causes Saladin to flee.<sup>445</sup> However, the main concern of the *Romance* was to present Richard as a crusader rather than simply a successful warrior. The whole poem concentrates on the crusade, ignoring the many battles he took part in both before he became king and after he returned from the crusade.<sup>446</sup> In his characterisation as a crusader, Richard has a religious identity as well as a military one. He has a direct link to heavenly guidance, receiving both angelic visitations and miraculous healing. This serves to present Richard's actions as incontrovertibly good and so defend any of his actions that might otherwise receive criticism. For example it is on an angel's advice that he kills several hundred hostages that were taken at Acre in order to

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<sup>442</sup> *RCL A*.1645-782; Schellekens, p.110; Itin. p.199; Amb. p.64.

<sup>443</sup> Schellekens, p.75. Hoveden in particular will be examined later with regards to his influence on the *Romance*'s account of events in Sicily and Cyprus.

<sup>444</sup> It is from Ralph that A gets the date of Richard's death and the name of his killer. Schellekens was able to identify possible sources for the cannibal episode and the single combat with Saladin, p.75.

<sup>445</sup> *RCL L*.1047, 1368-73, 2231-65.

<sup>446</sup> A fact that is not weakened by knowing that the ending has been lost. Only version A gives any account of events after the crusade, and that is simply a short account of Richard's death, so it is likely that the lost sections ended with his decision to return home.

continue with the crusade.<sup>447</sup> As a representative of the Christian faith his actions were subject to scrutiny but through heavenly intervention the author does not allow that his hero can be less than perfect.

The other main difference between William and Richard's characterisations is that William was portrayed as the ideal knight whereas Richard is a ruler and leader of men. Richard's first act in the poem is to call all his barons to a great feast, demonstrating his power and authority over others; it is only after this that he takes the cross.<sup>448</sup> The grandeur of his arrival at Acre causes both Saracens and Christians to watch in wonder, and his status is emphasised by the fact that he is immediately greeted by the king of France and 'mani an emperour'.<sup>449</sup> Where he is not victorious alone it is his 'English' that are a deciding factor. Richard is never simply a crusader, he is a crusade leader. In all three of these ways, as warrior, Christian, and leader, the presentation of Richard's character remains consistent throughout the core text.

While the entire core text is devoted to the crusade the interpolated material adds well over a thousand lines of non-crusade material, most of which refers to his capture and imprisonment. These sections have a different characterisation to the core-text because, as John Gillingham pointed out, they primarily portray Richard as a heroic individual rather than a heroic king.<sup>450</sup> His personal strength and bravery is emphasised by his ability to kill both the Duke's son in a game of pluck buffet and his fight with the lion.<sup>451</sup> However, in the *Romance* the events of Richard's life are rearranged and he is captured whilst returning from a separate pilgrimage to the Holy Land, before the crusade. By changing the order the crusade appears more successful; the triumph at Jaffa is not negated by ignoble imprisonment afterwards. So even those sections of the poem that are not about the crusade serve to emphasise that it was Richard's crusading which made him a hero.

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<sup>447</sup> *RCL A*. 2878-80, 2232-4. The killing of hostages appears to have been an act that Richard was criticised for historically, or at least that was a sensitive subject. All pro-Richard accounts of the Crusade are at pains to demonstrate that Richard had no choice since Saladin had broken his side of the peace agreement by not returning the True Cross and that he was not alone in his actions but followed the advice of other crusade leaders. For example *Itin*. p.231.

<sup>448</sup> *RCL L*.765-74.

<sup>449</sup> *RCL L*.1835-52.

<sup>450</sup> John Gillingham, *Richard I*, Yale English Monarchs Series (Yale, 1999), p.254

<sup>451</sup> *RCL C*.740-1119.

As a whole the interpolated stories are considerably less uniform than the core text and generally contain more romance and folk-tale elements; such as magic rings, mysterious and highly ornamented boats, and elaborate descriptions of the setting for a feast.<sup>452</sup> This is true of those stories that can be demonstrated to have appeared in the thirteenth century as well as those that may have only been written later. The *coeur de lion* story for example, which was dated to c.1270-80 above, has Richard kill a Lion with his bare hands, then take out its heart and eat it raw.<sup>453</sup> As well as having strong associations with the biblical stories of Samson and Daniel, lions are a popular animal in romance appearing, for example, in *The Knight with the Lion*.<sup>454</sup> Fights with dangerous beasts are a common feature in the romance hero's series of trials, for example Fouke's battle with the dragon and other venomous beasts to which reference has already been made. Therefore, this episode moves Richard away from the crusading model of knighthood towards the romance one.<sup>455</sup>

Since the single combat with Saladin is a more complex story, containing a number of separate narrative elements that may not necessarily all have appeared at once, it is impossible to say exactly what the thirteenth-century version consisted of. In the *Romance* it takes place at a fictitious siege of Babylon and involves an angelic visitation, which warns Richard that Saladin intends to use necromancy to produce a horse he will give to Richard in order to ensure his defeat, as well as the actual single combat itself. The 1250 painting of the combat that was mentioned earlier has not survived so there is no way of telling whether the additional elements had already become a part of the story at that early date. However, Loomis was able to show that by the time of the creation of the Chertsey Tiles in the 1270s the idea of the treacherous gift had combined with that of unhorsing Saladin.<sup>456</sup> It is not certain that the fantastic and magical elements had appeared by the time of the images, but the themes of trickery and its undoing, and the chivalric ideal of a single combat between knights being used to decide the outcome of a war, had. These themes

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<sup>452</sup> *RCL C.1639-46, 62-72, 3444.*

<sup>453</sup> *RCL C. 1002-118.*

<sup>454</sup> Judges 14.5-6; Daniel 6.16-23; Chrétien de Troyes, *Yvain, le chevalier au lion* (Paris, 1993). The best translation is that by Tony Hunt (trans), *Yvain: Le chevalier au lion* (London, 1986).

<sup>455</sup> See chapter two pp.63-7 for a discussion of different models of medieval knighthood and chapter three pp.125-6 for discussion of the episode in which Fouke fights a dragon.

<sup>456</sup> Loomis, 'Richard Coeur de Lion and the Pas Saladin', p.518.

demonstrate that the world these characters inhabit is one of romance that could be recognised by a medieval audience as fictional.

The majority of the non-core text elements about which there is no information available to help with dating have similarly romancified overtones, especially the three day tournament that Richard uses to find himself suitable knightly companions.<sup>457</sup> The chivalry here is more idealised than in the core text, where violence appears in large battles in which the hero kills dozens of nameless soldiers, rather than as a test of skill between two knights. There is, however, one noticeable exception to the rule that interpolations contain romance-like, idealised violence. After manuscripts A and D have Philip of France return home, there is an interpolation in C in which the French army is still present separate from the English one and the two armies each attack a series of towns. When they regroup, Richard discovers that Philip has accepted tribute for surrender from his towns rather than overcoming them.<sup>458</sup> Richard convinces Philip to attack his towns again and swears that he will not sit to eat or drink until they are taken; eventually all the ‘men, children, and wyues’ are slain.<sup>459</sup> The wholesale slaughter being advocated in this story appears at odds with the rest of the interpolations and cannot be paralleled in the core-text, but it must be remembered that the individuals being killed here are Saracens who have refused to convert to Christianity; they do not have the same rights as Christian or knightly opponents.

The apparent difference in intent between the author of the core-text and those of the interpolations, as indicated by their different narrative styles, may explain why the author of the core-text chose not to include all the stories of Richard circulating in the thirteenth century in his account. It appears that there were two different versions of Richard’s character available; a first in which he was a crusading warrior leading Christian warfare in the east, and a second in which he was a valiant knight undergoing a series of adventures that tested his

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<sup>457</sup> *RCL D.35-227*. This is one of the episodes that appears in only the longer A redaction of the *Romance*.

<sup>458</sup> *RCL C.3820-4803*.

<sup>459</sup> *RCL C.4750-2, 4756*. This is also a substantially different model of warfare to those in the *History of William Marshal* that portray a more ‘realistic’ and therefore non-chivalric ideal in which trickery and deceit are acceptable ways to win. The *Romance* does not imply that Richard feels the French have been insufficiently clever or come up with better ways to win, he simply believes that the only way to overcome a Saracen stronghold successfully is through bloodshed rather than negotiation.

strength and skill. The single combat with Saladin appears to straddle both types, and could therefore have been suitable for inclusion in a text that was using the first characterisation, but if the more fantastic elements did exist from an early date that might explain why it was left out. The narrative style and choice to recount only the less romance-like stories concerning Richard suggest that the author of the core text may have wanted Richard's portrayal in the *Romance* to be plausible. To provide an account with *verisimilia* that, like those of William and Fouke, could be used as a precedent to be emulated. In which case, the immediate question arises of how historically accurate is Richard's presentation in the core text. Was there any attempt to include *vera* as well as *verisimilia*?

As will be discussed below, the representation of Richard that appears in contemporary sources is not always straightforwardly historical but already influenced by a process of mythmaking. However, Richard's status means that there are huge numbers of sources available for comparison and the facts of his life can be determined to a reasonable degree of accuracy.<sup>460</sup> In terms of the broad historical framework of the core text there is a considerable level of accuracy. Richard is shown travelling to the east via the correct route, except in a single interpolation in version C, and there were indeed political disagreements in Sicily and Cyprus that led to military engagements. The account of the siege of Acre that the *Romance* gives is also reasonably correct with the exception that it states that the German emperor, Frederick Barbarossa (1122-90), was at the siege and died there rather than en route as was actually the case.<sup>461</sup> Other crusade sources, including Ambroise and the *Itinerarium*, include corroborative details such as a Saracen dromond being captured by Richard's forces, and it is indisputable that Richard stayed in the east after Philip had returned to France.

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<sup>460</sup> As well as the crusading sources, Ambroise and the *Itinerarium Peregrinorum* mentioned above, there are a large number of chronicles that cover the period which will be described in detail below. For recent scholarly accounts of Richard and his reign see John Gillingham, *Richard Coeur de Lion: Kingship, Chivalry and War in the Twelfth Century* (London, 1994); Gillingham, *Richard I* (1999); and Nigel Saul, *The Three Richards: Richard I, Richard II and Richard III* (London, 2005).

<sup>461</sup> *RCL L.1907*. A detailed account of Barbarossa's involvement in the crusade and his eventual death appear in the *Itinerarium Peregrinorum*; Itin. 49-68. The early part of Barbarossa's life was described in Otto of Freising and his continuator Ragewin, *The Deeds of Frederick Barbarossa*, C.C. Mierow (trans) (New York, 1966), but both of these men had died more than ten years before the crusade began. Modern studies include those by Marcel Pacaut, *Frédéric Barberousse* (Paris, 1967) [translated by A.J. Pomerans, *Frederick Barbarossa* (London, 1970)] and Peter Munz, *Frederick Barbarossa: a Study in Medieval Politics* (London, 1969).

More precise details tend to be both harder to confirm and generally less accurate, but there is still a good level of consistency with other sources. There are in fact sufficient similarities that it could be argued that all the author is doing is decorating and extending his material rather than creating a characterisation of his own. Of particular interest is the account of the conflict in Sicily en route to the Holy Land. It is well documented that Richard argued with King Tancred regarding his sister's dowry and used military force as a result of continual conflict between his men and the Greek inhabitants of Messina; King Philip of France agreed to support the Greeks after battle had already been joined.<sup>462</sup> The main difference in the *Romance* is that this episode has a more obviously anti-French bias. Philip deliberately works Richard harm by sending a letter to Tancred saying that Richard will attack his lands, and it is both the Greeks and the French who attack the English crusaders.<sup>463</sup> The same anti-French theme re-emerges in the account of Cyprus where, again, the French attack with the Greeks even though they were not involved at all in that conflict in reality.<sup>464</sup> The suggestion is that, but for French perfidy, the situation could have been resolved amicably.

However, the letter sent by Philip to Tancred while in Sicily is particularly revealing. It may have been inspired by the letter Ambroise claims Philip sent after the capture of Messina contradicting Richard's messengers and causing 'great discord', so even here there is evidence that the author was not simply creating stories.<sup>465</sup> What the author did alter was the placing of the letter within the narrative, thus strongly increasing its significance. Only about a dozen lines after the two kings are portrayed swearing to be brothers in the Holy Land Philip is presented deliberately deciding to betray Richard.<sup>466</sup> Tancred's son then defends Richard against Philip's accusations by emphasising his status as a pilgrim.<sup>467</sup> Not only does Philip's treachery serve to justify Richard in any future

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<sup>462</sup> Amb.37-46; *Itin.*, pp.158-68.

<sup>463</sup> *RCL L.795-800*, 889. This is one of the occasions where Schellekens identified a specific source as having been used by the author. Philip's presence in Messina while Richard was campaigning outside had previously appeared in Richard of Devizes; Schellekens, p.75; *The Chronicle of Richard of Devizes of the Time of King Richard the First*, Appleby (ed) (London, 1963), p.16.

<sup>464</sup> *RCL L.1212-15*.

<sup>465</sup> Amb., p.44.

<sup>466</sup> *RCL L.781-800*.

<sup>467</sup> *RCL L.818*.

dealings with his brother monarch but the specific crime of damaging a pilgrim provides a link to Richard's capture while still a pilgrim returning from crusade and Philip attacking Richard's lands before he had returned home. These later events are not mentioned in the core text and appear before the crusade in the interpolations but the memory of them gives added meaning to this episode of the *Romance*, and suggests that the author may have been expecting his audience to be able to place his story within a historical context. So, in spite of the inaccuracies in this section, the author was making use of the source material available to him and placing the action in a broader historical framework, so it is difficult to classify the section as truly fictional in medieval terms.

However, the account of the capture of Cyprus provides an example which suggests that at times more than a simple reorganisation and reemphasis is taking place in the core text.<sup>468</sup> Richard's capture of the kingdom of Cyprus in only a few weeks was one of his major military successes and brought significant benefits to the crusading army as its previous ruler had been refusing to support the Christians at Acre and it was a strategically important supply base.<sup>469</sup> In the *Romance* significant changes are made to these events and a number of stock romance motifs are included, such as the king hearing news whilst playing chess.<sup>470</sup> Very early in its account the *Romance* has the emperor throw a knife at one of Richard's messengers in anger at the message they brought and have his steward's nose cut off for daring to suggest that his actions could be contrary to his own interests.<sup>471</sup> As a result of this the steward supplies Richard with men, access, and the emperor's daughter, allowing him to win easily in a matter of days rather than weeks.<sup>472</sup> This account of events appears to be inspired by the *Annals* of Roger of Hoveden which describe the emperor dining with a noble who advised him to make peace and becoming so angry he 'struck at him with a

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<sup>468</sup> RCL L.1212-633.

<sup>469</sup> Amb., p.50; *Itin.*, p.192, 202.

<sup>470</sup> RCL L.1334-9. The popularity of chess in romance literature was mentioned in chapter three and it appears again later in the *Romance of Richard Coeur de Lion* as the reason behind Philip leaving the Holy Land, an episode which shares the combative theme that Eales saw in Fouke and John's game; Richard Eales, 'The Games of Chess: An Aspect of Medieval Knightly Culture', in Christopher Harper-Bill and Ruth Harvey (eds), *The Ideals and Practices of Medieval Knighthood* (Woodbridge, 1986), p.30; RCL A.236-7. In this first example however it is not the game of chess itself that is important, it is the news which arrives during the game and very similar episodes occur in a number of other romances; Stith Thompson, *Motif Index of Folk Literature* (Copenhagen, 1955), vol.5, p.143.

<sup>471</sup> RCL L.1267-9, 1305.

<sup>472</sup> RCL L.1321-31.



knife which he was holding in his hand, and cut off the nose of the person who had given him this advice'.<sup>473</sup> The noble then became an adherent of Richard. In this story we can see a minor character from the source material being expanded, given a specific title and made into a central character in a way which completely alters the overall events.

The adjustments to the account of events on Cyprus also highlights a theme that runs consistently throughout the *Romance*, that of Richard's relationship to other rulers. Having the steward assist Richard's victory removes a competitor for glory. Historically, a decisive event in ensuring the emperor's surrender was the capture of his daughter. However, it was King Guy of Jerusalem who achieved this rather than Richard as it appears in the *Romance*.<sup>474</sup> By removing Guy entirely and presenting Philip and the Cyprian emperor as devious and malicious, Richard is left as the only good Christian monarch in the *Romance*, and he is a specifically English monarch. The repetition of the description of Richard and his followers as tailed, an epithet for Englishmen, highlights the fact that the fictional Richard is not the ruler of an empire covering much of France but the king of a single country, England – an identification which will become particularly important later.<sup>475</sup>

Another example of a higher level of fictionalisation within the core text is the story of Richard breaking the great chain defending Acre harbour with a single blow from his axe.<sup>476</sup> Although there was a chain across the entrance to the inner harbour at Acre, its importance for defensive purposes is not mentioned in historical sources and neither is there any mention of it being broken by Richard, or anyone else.<sup>477</sup> Fact, or at least *verisimilia*, is being used as the basis of a fictional story to portray Richard as a warrior hero. It would therefore appear that, although the author of the *Romance* based his account on material already available rather than pure invention and aimed to maintain *verisimilia* within the stories by not including obviously fictional elements, the level of freedom he allowed himself with his sources was significant enough to suggest that he was

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<sup>473</sup> *Annals of Roger de Hoveden*, vol.2, p.204.

<sup>474</sup> *Amb.* P.59; *Itin.*, 193.

<sup>475</sup> For example *RCL L.894*, 948, 1273-4; for an explanation of this description see Bradford B. Broughton, *The Legends of King Richard I Coeur de Lion: a study of sources and variations to the year 1600* (The Hague, 1966), pp.94-7.

<sup>476</sup> *RCL L.1792-1826*.

<sup>477</sup> For the location of the chain see Map 2 in *Itin.*, p.72.

not aiming to write *vera*. As was the case for the author of the *Romance of Fouke Fitz Waryn*, fiction was just as important to the author of the core text of the *Romance of Richard Coeur de Lion* as was the historical content and context of his work.

It was only with the addition of the fantastic interpolations that Richard's characterisation moved into areas that were unambiguously fictional. These sections correspond exactly to Damian-Grint's identification of fiction; the historical events were being used as a framework for the author's own story.<sup>478</sup> Historical events from Richard's life were used but rearranged so that his captivity in Germany took place before the crusade and Richard's captor was changed from the Duke of Austria to Modred, a name with obvious Arthurian overtones. In fact the historical circumstance of captivity is reduced entirely to a series of fictional stories, only the outline of capture and eventual ransom remains. The additional material that appears only in the long A redaction moves the text entirely into fiction because it does not even have a framework that is based in history.<sup>479</sup> Overall, the fictionalisation of Richard that appears in the interpolations is one that would not be out of place alongside Lancelot and Gawain in the Arthurian cycle. There is intent to claim historical status as there was for the core text.

Having examined the characterisation of Richard within the *Romance of Richard Coeur de Lion* and its relationship to fiction, attention will now move to its place within an ongoing process of fictionalisation. Although stories in the *Romance* go beyond minor adjustment that back up a perceived 'truth' to become fiction, its portrayal of Richard is not isolated; it builds on the tendency to associate Richard with the unusual which already existed. Although chronicles were written with the intent to produce historically accurate and informative

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<sup>478</sup> Peter Damian-Grint, *The New Historians of the Twelfth-Century Renaissance: Inventing Vernacular Authority* (Woodbridge, 1999), p.85.

<sup>479</sup> Some claim could be made that there is a historical framework to the demon mother story because, as will be looked at later, although it was not told about Richard's mother it was a legend that was associated with both sides of his family; Chapman, 'Demon Queen Eleanor', pp.395-6; also studied by Frank McMinn Chambers, 'Some Legends Concerning Eleanor of Aquitaine', *Speculum*, 16 (1941), pp.459-468. However, including this episode necessitates the exclusion of a very short but accurate reference which appears in the other manuscripts describing how Richard's historical mother, Eleanor of Aquitaine, brought Richard's future wife to Cyprus so they could be married and two other references to his historical wife; *RCL L.1162-75*, 1182-9, 1623-30; an account of this event appears in *Itin.* p.173. Therefore, the author of this interpolation actively chose to remove a historical element from the *Romance* and replace it with fiction.

accounts of events, some of the earliest legends surrounding Richard are represented in them. Even some of the seemingly most outrageous portrayals of Richard in the *Romance* have contemporary parallels in history, for example the Roast Saracen episode which is not in the core text. In this story, which appears only in manuscripts C and E, Richard eats a Saracen believing it to be pork and when he finds out the truth declares it will solve all the army's food problems.<sup>480</sup> In his examination of the legends surrounding Richard, Bradford Broughton thought that the episode was inspired by stories of Peter the Hermit on the First Crusade which had been transferred to Richard.<sup>481</sup> However, Richard of Devizes has Safadin repeat a rumour that Richard ate his enemies alive.<sup>482</sup> The inaccuracy of this section of Devizes' chronicle makes it unlikely that such a rumour was current in the east but nevertheless an association between Richard and cannibalism had been made during his lifetime. Given the presence of such unlikely stories in the historical tradition the following discussion will examine how Richard's portrayal developed in the period before the *Romance* was composed.

As mentioned above, chronicles are not always as straightforwardly historical as they sometimes seem, so those that cover the relevant years must first have their own level of fictionality and bias considered. Probably the most influential of the chronicles composed during Richard's lifetime is Ambroise's History of the Holy War, written sometime between 1194 and 1199.<sup>483</sup> This eyewitness account covers the period of the Third Crusade and is heavily influenced by the romance tradition; it takes the form of an Old French poem and Richard appears throughout as a hero of chivalry. The other important chronicles written during Richard's life were those of Richard of Devizes, Abbot Coggeshall and Roger of Hoveden. Of these Richard of Devizes also has a somewhat flamboyant style that is not always convincing. He wrote a history of the period 1189 to 1192, unusual among monastic chronicles of the time because

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<sup>480</sup> RCL C.3071-3226.

<sup>481</sup> Broughton, *Legends of King Richard*, pp.108-9. A similar statement about Saracens as a suitable food source for the army when it lacked provisions was made by Peter in the *Chanson d'Antioch* which was composed c.1180, however in that instance the army objected. The most recent edition of the *Chanson* is Jan A. Nelson (ed), *La Chanson d'Antioch*, The Old French Crusade Cycle, 4 (Alabama, 2003).

<sup>482</sup> *Chronicle of Richard of Devizes*, p.77.

<sup>483</sup> Amb., p.3.

of its satirical outlook.<sup>484</sup> Probably written in 1192-1193 but definitely by 1198, it is original and independent but was little known as no contemporary author mentions it.<sup>485</sup> Though Coggeshall's chronicle extends well beyond Richard's reign the first part, which is very favourable towards him, was written in 1195 and was not significantly altered.<sup>486</sup> Hoveden has been seen as one of the best sources of facts for the reign because of his detail and inclusion by quotation of other documents, but is characterised by an obvious religious perspective.<sup>487</sup> He was a royal clerk under Henry II and was with Richard at Acre but returned to England after the siege, and thus provides an account of events heavily reliant on the royal archives.<sup>488</sup>

A number of Richard's contemporaries also wrote histories of his life in the years following his death. The second part of Coggeshall's account of Richard was written around 1201, as was the chronicle of William of Newburgh.<sup>489</sup> The later section of Coggeshall's chronicle is less favourable towards Richard than the first; he was critical of Richard's financial exactions once the crusade no longer provided a valid reason. Similarly, in Newburgh Richard appears as a flawed hero. Another later contemporary source is the *Itinerarium Peregrinorum et Gesta Regis Ricardi*, a composite work compiled by prior Richard de Templo sometime between 1216 and 1220.<sup>490</sup> The first book is an earlier composition possibly written by a crusader during the siege of Acre and expanded by de Templo to include events after the arrival of the kings of England and France.<sup>491</sup> The later books are so heavily influenced by Ambroise that it was for a time seen simply as a Latin translation of the French account, but a number of other sources are used as well, and it is possible that de Templo was on the crusade himself so some information may be first hand.<sup>492</sup>

All of these sources were written by Richard's subjects and are, with the exception of the later Coggeshall, biased in his favour. Because of this, and a

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<sup>484</sup> Richard of Devizes, *Time of King Richard the First*, p.xi.

<sup>485</sup> Richard of Devizes, *Time of King Richard the First*, pp.xiv, xvii-xviii

<sup>486</sup> D.D. Carpenter, 'Abbot Ralph of Coggeshall's Account of the Last Years of King Richard and the First Years of King John', *English Historical Review* (1998), p.1215.

<sup>487</sup> Gillingham, *Richard I*, pp.330-31.

<sup>488</sup> Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England c.550 to c.1307* (London, 1974), p.226.

<sup>489</sup> Carpenter, 'Abbot Ralph of Coggeshall', p.1211; Nancy F. Partner, *Serious Entertainments: The Writing of History in Twelfth-Century England* (Chicago, 1977), p.55.

<sup>490</sup> *Itin.*, p.11.

<sup>491</sup> *Itin.*, pp.6-10.

<sup>492</sup> *Itin.*, pp.12-13.

tendency to criticise him heavily in non-Angevin sources, Gillingham suggests that Muslim historians may be the most detached judges of Richard's character.<sup>493</sup> Therefore, a useful comparison is *The Rare and Excellent History of Saladin* written by Bahā' al-Dīn Ibn Shaddad sometime between 1198 and 1216.<sup>494</sup> As a confidant of Saladin and Judge of the Army during the Third Crusade Bahā' al-Dīn can be used to test the accuracy of western sources, but he is by no means infallible; for example, like the *Romance* he claims that the German Emperor was at Acre.<sup>495</sup> It must also be remembered that his portrayal of Richard will be affected by his own bias towards Saladin.

Of the available sources Ambroise, the *Itinerarium Peregrinorum* and Richard of Devizes are the most heavily influenced by literary tradition, including as they do long sections of first person dialogue. The section in Devizes on the end of the crusade is particularly fanciful and unlike any other source; the truce with Saladin is made while Richard is ill and unaware of events, and he only reluctantly agrees to accept it, preferring instead to fight on even without an army.<sup>496</sup> This portrayal of Richard seems to be the result of faulty information elaborated upon in a traditional romance style rather than a deliberate attempt to rewrite events. Devizes appears to have had three sources for the crusade and his information on the later part is highly distorted throughout.<sup>497</sup>

A good example of the use of ideas from romance in the other two sources is the story of the Saracen dromond Richard attacked on his way from Cyprus to Acre which was mentioned briefly at the start of this chapter. Ambroise and the *Itinerarium* report that Richard was personally involved in the attack and the ship was carrying poisonous snakes to be used against the crusaders at Acre. According to Bahā' al-Dīn the ship was not attacked until after Richard arrived at Acre.<sup>498</sup> The *Itinerarium* is simply repeating information from its source, Ambroise, and the confusion over the order of events can easily be explained as a minor error on his part, or for that matter by Bahā' al-Dīn, but the

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<sup>493</sup> Gillingham, *Richard I*, p.15.

<sup>494</sup> Bahā' al-Dīn, *The Rare and Excellent History of Saladin*, D.S. Richards (trans) (Aldershot, 2001), p.7.

<sup>495</sup> Bahā' al-Dīn, *History of Saladin*, pp.128-9.

<sup>496</sup> Richard of Devizes, *Time of King Richard the First*, pp.74-83.

<sup>497</sup> Richard of Devizes, *Time of King Richard the First*, p.xvii.

<sup>498</sup> Amb., pp.63-4; *Itin.*, p.197-8; Bahā' al-Dīn, *History of Saladin*, p.151.

language used to describe Richard's actions and the mention of snakes suggests that there were attempts to heighten the excitement of the story.<sup>499</sup> The tendency in Devizes, Ambroise and the *Itinerarium* to make the story more entertaining by minor adjustments and the use of romance literary styles limited their possession of *factae* and implies these texts were not always intended to be *vera*; they were taking the first steps in a process of fictionalisation.

Although the above three sources portray Richard most obviously in a potentially fictionalised light they are not alone in doing so, as the story of his death illustrates well. Richard died at Châlus-Chabrol in Limousin where he was waging a campaign against the local nobility who were rebelling against him, but immediately the story grew up that treasure had been found in the area and that Richard had attacked the castle when it was withheld from him.<sup>500</sup> It is the latter version that appears in Roger of Hoveden and Coggeshall, sources which are normally considered to be factually reliable.<sup>501</sup> What is particularly interesting about the death legend is the way in which reality has been altered. In Hoveden's version of the story Richard is struck in the arm by an arrow, 'inflicting an incurable wound', and immediately leads a successful assault on the castle and has all the inhabitants hanged except the man who wounded him.<sup>502</sup> Aware of his approaching death Richard asks the man why he harmed him and is told that Richard had previously killed the man's father and brothers. Richard immediately pardons him and gives him a gift of one hundred shillings.<sup>503</sup> It is not simply that an explanation is provided for Richard's death in a minor battle, an entire story has grown up including the creation of new characters and motivations. The story is not particularly favourable to Richard; resisting rebellion was a far more worthy motive than the greed implied in a treasure hunt, so it is unlikely that the story was created to provide the king with a glorious

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<sup>499</sup> Unlike in the *Romance* where Richard himself boards the Saracen dromond and is personally influential in its capture, in Ambroise Richard commands the action from his own ship. Yet he still has the opportunity to fight. Once the Saracens have been defeated and jumped into the water in an attempt to escape, he 'struck fierce blows, killing and bringing death'; Amb., pp.62-4.

<sup>500</sup> The legends surrounding Richard's death and how they developed, as well as what really happened, were explored in detail by John Gillingham and it is upon that analysis that this paragraph is based, 'The Unromantic Death of Richard I', *Speculum*, 54 (1979), pp.18-41.

<sup>501</sup> Roger of Hoveden, *Chronica magistri Rogeri de Houedene*, William Stubbs (ed), Rolls Series, 51, 4 vols (1868-71), vol.2, pp.452-4; Ralph of Coggeshall, *Radulphi de Coggeshall Chronicon Anglicanum*, Joseph Stevenson (ed), Rolls Series, 66 (1875), pp.89-98.

<sup>502</sup> *Annals of Roger de Hoveden*, vol.2, pp.452-3.

<sup>503</sup> *Annals of Roger de Hoveden*, vol.2, pp.453-4.

death as was suggested by Broughton.<sup>504</sup> This story demonstrates that there was a general willingness to accept the fantastic of Richard; where the true facts were unknown Richard was a monarch about whom a story of buried treasure did not seem unlikely.

Attempting to trace developments in Richard's image into the next two generations, who were the ones to produce the *Romance*, presents certain difficulties. This is because of the thirteenth-century tendency simply to take over an earlier chronicle and continue it rather than combine a number of sources into a new account. For example, the relevant section of Matthew Paris's *Chronica majora* consists of a word for word retelling of Roger of Wendover's *Flores Historiarum* with only a few short additions giving more detail of the relationship between Richard and Leopold of Austria.<sup>505</sup> Paris's *Chronica* does not portray later thirteenth-century views of Richard beyond suggesting that no change had occurred great enough to warrant Paris rewriting his source.

However, there are a few chronicles which can be used to explore later views of Richard. The *Old French Continuation* of William of Tyre is a continuation of William's *History of the Deeds Done Beyond the Sea* that covers the period of the Third Crusade; it was written between 1240 and 1250 by a western European settler in the East.<sup>506</sup> There are also brief mentions of Richard in Joinville's *Life of Saint Louis*, completed in 1309.<sup>507</sup> However, since both of these accounts were written by non-Angevins they are not direct comparisons with the earlier examples. Wendover himself can also be seen as a later source; although he was a younger contemporary of Richard, he wrote between 1231 and 1236, late enough that he may reflect the views of the next generation rather than contemporaries.<sup>508</sup> Of particular interest in Wendover's account is the story of a vision of Richard's ascension to heaven granted to the Bishop of Rochester in 1232.<sup>509</sup> The date is significant; Richard was in purgatory for only 33 years, the

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<sup>504</sup> Broughton, *Legends of King Richard I*, pp.136-7.

<sup>505</sup> Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, Henry Richards Luard (ed), Rolls Series, 57, 3 vols (1874), vol.2, pp.ix,xlii.

<sup>506</sup> Peter W. Edbury (trans), *The Conquest of Jerusalem and the Third Crusade, Sources in Translation* (Aldershot, 1996), pp.3, 7.

<sup>507</sup> Joinville, *The Life of Saint Louis*, in M.R.B. Shaw (trans), *Chronicles of the Crusades* (London, 1963).

<sup>508</sup> Roger of Wendover, *Flores Historiarum*, Henry G. Hewlett (ed), Rolls series, 84 (1889), vol.3, p.x.

<sup>509</sup> Roger of Wendover, *Flores Historiarum*, vol.3, pp.21-2.

length of time Christ spent on earth. Later material had the ability to add such new elements to Richard's legend while retaining *verisimilia* but the historical intent of these sources kept their authors from exploiting such freedom to a significant extent. Nevertheless, the following two examples will demonstrate that, intentionally or not, some changes were made to aspects of Richard's life.

During his crusade Richard made two marches on Jerusalem but turned back both times without attacking the city. Michael Markowski argued that Richard's failure even to attempt to enter Jerusalem made him a bad leader in the eyes of contemporaries since the recapture of the city was the stated objective of the crusade.<sup>510</sup> He suggested that it was attempts to overcome the resulting criticism of Richard which led to the development of a myth in which he had been prevented from attacking by the French to salve his reputation. Although Markowski's argument is almost deliberately inflammatory, it is certainly true that such a story developed and it is interesting to see how it appears in different sources.

In both Ambroise and the *Itinerarium Peregrinorum* Richard argues against the attack, preferring to focus military attention elsewhere.<sup>511</sup> The *Itinerarium Peregrinorum* is far more sympathetic to this decision than its source; it is the rabble that wishes to attack while the wise do not.<sup>512</sup> It is in those texts which were at one further remove from events, contemporaries who were not eyewitnesses, that the myth-making is first seen. Devizes, Hoveden and Coggeshall all claim that Richard wanted to attack Jerusalem but was prevented by the French.<sup>513</sup> The story becomes even more hostile to the French in the later Joinville and *Continuation to William of Tyre* where the French refuse to attack 'for no other reason than because [they] did not wish it to be said that the English had taken Jerusalem'.<sup>514</sup> It is particularly interesting that Joinville, a French

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<sup>510</sup> Markowski is extremely vehement in his criticism of Richard going so far as to say that 'Saladin had his greatest ally in the Lionheart' because by contemporary standards 'any good crusade leader should have done what the army expected, what the pope and crusade preachers expected, and what Saladin expected: make the attempt to enter the city.' Michael Markowski, 'Richard Lionheart: Bad king, bad crusader?', *Journal of Medieval History*, 23 (1997), pp.353-61.

<sup>511</sup> Amb., pp.135-7, 168; *Itin.*, p.344.

<sup>512</sup> *Itin.*, p.280.

<sup>513</sup> Richard of Devizes, *Time of King Richard the First*, p.53; Annals of Roger de Hoveden, vol.2, p.262; Ralph of Coggeshall, *Chronicon Anglicanum*, pp.38-40.

<sup>514</sup> Joinville, *Life of Saint Louis*, p.304; *Old French Continuation of William of Tyre*, in Edbury, *The Conquest of Jerusalem*, p.111.



source, should have accepted such a pro-Ricardian story.<sup>515</sup> This example shows a clear development from eyewitness sources that have Richard personally choose not to attack Jerusalem, through contemporaries, to later sources in which Richard is portrayed as being betrayed by his allies on the verge of a successful completion of the crusade.

The second example of a story which developed over time provides an interesting contrast because it appears to have no basis in fact. The original version is entirely plausible and lacking in any noticeable fictional style or intent; according to the *Itinerarium Peregrinorum* Saladin's brother Safadin sent Richard a gift of two horses at the battle of Jaffa because the Christians had very few horses with them.<sup>516</sup> According to Bahā' al-Dīn such exchanges of gifts were quite usual, giving both sides the opportunity to gain intelligence on the opposing army.<sup>517</sup> However, this particular episode cannot have taken place because Bahā' al-Dīn states that Safadin was ill and not at the battle.<sup>518</sup> It is in the *Continuation* that this apparently simple transaction develops into fiction. It becomes a deliberate attempt on Safadin's part to damage Richard by sending him a restive horse; Richard spots the trick and sends it back, so Safadin sends a second one in its stead which Richard uses only after it has had all its teeth pulled out.<sup>519</sup>

In both the above cases the story as it emerges by the end of the thirteenth century is entirely inaccurate. However, in the first case at least, because of the small changes made by each individual chronicler, it is unlikely that contemporaries would have perceived it as fiction.<sup>520</sup> The examples demonstrate that stories about Richard were becoming increasingly fictionalised, but

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<sup>515</sup> Joinville's use of this myth was a case of Richard's reputation being used to defend the hero of Joinville's own work, Louis IX. Louis' crusades were aimed at Egypt rather than Jerusalem and this is justified by the fact that even Richard had not captured the city. It was, as Joinville records, 'felt that if he, who was the greatest of all Christian monarchs, went on pilgrimage to Jerusalem without delivering the city from God's enemies, then all the other kings and pilgrims coming after him would rest content with doing no more than he had done'. Joinville contributed to Richard's myth in order to glorify Louis IX (Philip Augustus's grandson), not Richard himself; Joinville, *Life of Saint Louis*, p.304.

<sup>516</sup> *Itin.*, p.364.

<sup>517</sup> Bahā' al-Dīn, *History of Saladin*, p.156.

<sup>518</sup> Bahā' al-Dīn, *History of Saladin*, p.219.

<sup>519</sup> *Old French Continuation*, in Edbury, *The Conquest of Jerusalem*, p.118.

<sup>520</sup> The changes made by the author of the *Continuation* are more likely to be considered fiction. Although there is no fantastic or impossible element, and therefore it does not lack *verisimilia*, the motif of trickery overcome by the hero's observation and intelligence has been grafted onto an otherwise uninteresting event. This invention implies an intent to alter source material that goes beyond what would be acceptable for history.

gradually and without conscious intent to turn Richard into a fictional character. These developments could, however, provide a basis for a more complete fictionalisation at a later date. The story of the two horses appears to have been the inspiration for the fictional demon steed story, for example, since both contain a Saracen apparently providing Richard with a horse as a gift but in fact doing so with the intention that it should cause him to lose the next battle.<sup>521</sup> By the later thirteenth-century chronicles Richard's image was on the verge of becoming fiction.

However, a very different portrayal to the one above occurs in a manuscript of the *Itinerarium Peregrinorum* which contains a number of extra sections, one of which includes a description of Richard's character, dating from the late thirteenth century.<sup>522</sup> Nicholson suggests that this description 'reflects the growing legend of Richard I as an idealised monarch' but the features chosen for inclusion bear little resemblance to other portrayals of him.<sup>523</sup> Instead, Richard is praised for his ability to judge character, his relationship with the clergy, and the innovations he made regarding the marketing of cloth and grain and the mechanisms for dealing with disputes between Jews and Christians.<sup>524</sup> This source shows no tendency to move towards an increased fictionalisation of Richard's life, it simply demonstrates that he was viewed as an admirable king for a number of different reasons. So just as the *Romance* author's selection of episodes for inclusion demonstrated that there were two romancified images of Richard in circulation, as crusade leader and as knight, this source indicates that perceptions of Richard were not restricted to his role as warrior. He was also put forward as an ideal ruler in an administrative sense.

Richard was a monarch about whom contemporaries were willing to believe a lot. Authors used literary devices and conventions to add excitement to their accounts of his life, but they also embellished stories and even invented them where they lacked information. That such stories could be accepted as plausible by chroniclers is illustrative of the way in which Richard was perceived. Successive authors adjusted the stories to better conform to their own understanding of the truth, adding to his reputation, but there was no intent to

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<sup>521</sup> This connection was initially suggested by Broughton, *Legends of King Richard I*, p.101.

<sup>522</sup> *Itin.*, pp.11-12.

<sup>523</sup> *Itin.*, p.12.

<sup>524</sup> *Itin.*, pp.387-90.

totally recreate the past which would be required for fiction. However, the willingness to make changes to the source material in a way which made Richard appear better, or more heroic, existed. Contemporary and thirteenth-century chroniclers were beginning to move Richard from the realms of historical reality into fiction.

Although the *Romance* could appear to be a natural culmination of the gradual move towards fiction that appears in the chronicles, in fact its place in this ongoing process is not straightforward. The *Romance* does not simply take on the aspects of Richard's life that had begun to be fictionalised in the chronicles. Apart from the connection between Safadin's supposed gift of horses and the demon steed story, which itself only refers to an interpolation rather than the core text, there are comparatively few occasions where a progressive link can be seen. The main example concerns what was one of Richard's most controversial acts. After the siege of Acre the Christians took the inhabitants of the city hostage and an agreement was negotiated with Saladin that they would be freed on receipt of a ransom and the True Cross. However, the negotiations dragged on and eventually Richard had all the hostages killed to allow the crusade to continue.<sup>525</sup> The attempts to excuse this act in chronicles demonstrate how damaging it was to Richard's reputation. Saladin is portrayed as breaking the agreement and Ambroise adds that Saladin was deliberately delaying without concern for the hostages in the hope of using the Cross, which he repeatedly put on display in his camp, in future dealings.<sup>526</sup> The *Itinerarium Peregrinorum* makes the same claims that Saladin had easy access to the Cross but overlooked the hostages in favour of keeping it, but also has Richard consult with all the other Christian leaders, making them share responsibility for the action.<sup>527</sup> Given this concern for defending Richard in the historical literature it is hardly surprising that the *Romance* has an angel order the prisoners to be killed.<sup>528</sup> Divine instruction absolves all blame, making the act a positive sign of Richard's faith.

What is surprising about this episode, however, is the fictionalisation that has taken place with regard to Saladin. Although both Ambroise and the

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<sup>525</sup> Amb., pp.104-8; *Itin.*, pp.219-31.

<sup>526</sup> Amb., p.107.

<sup>527</sup> *Itin.*, pp.229-31.

<sup>528</sup> *RCL A.2879-80.*

*Itinerarium Peregrinorum* state that Saladin had the True Cross in his camp, a fact confirmed by Bahā' al-Dīn so it can not be simply another example of western sources placing Saladin in the wrong, in the *Romance* Saladin cannot find it and tries to save the prisoners by sending more treasure instead.<sup>529</sup> Saladin's concern for his hostage subjects is a direct contradiction to the image presented by Ambroise. The *Romance* author has placed an entirely new slant on the story that demonstrates he has a very different intent behind his fictionalisation. He is not simply protecting his central character from criticism; he is also setting up a relationship of equals between Richard and his antagonist in the same way that the *Romance of Fouke Fitz Waryn* did between Fouke and John. When compared to the *Romance of Richard Coeur de Lion's* attitude to other Christian monarchs this sympathetic view of Saladin is particularly striking. To the *Romance* author Saladin is Richard's counterpart, a worthy opponent for his hero who must therefore conform to chivalric conventions; the true villains are those who should be on Richard's side but that work against him.

Alongside such ambiguous examples of the *Romance* taking on and developing stories that began in the chronicles, the lack of connection between the two traditions can be seen in a number of significant cases where such development has not taken place. The story of Richard's death is a case in point. In only one manuscript does the story appear at all and it is so perfunctory that it can only be seen as a postscript and not an integral part of Richard's characterisation. Since Richard's death was one of the most developed of the fictionalised stories to appear in chronicles it could be expected that it would have been taken on in the core text, or at least in a more common interpolation, especially as one of the chronicles it appears in was Roger of Hoveden's, which the account of events on Cyprus makes clear was known to the author. The absence of Richard's death from the core text therefore highlights that the author was only interested in Richard as a crusader; it was not his life or his reign that was being fictionalised but simply his crusade.

The more common interpolations are almost equally unconnected to the stories that appear in chronicles, with the exception of the demon steed and demon mother stories which have already been discussed. In fact, a significant

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<sup>529</sup> Amb., p.107; *Itin.*, p.229; Bahā' al-Dīn, *History of Saladin*, p.163; RCL A.2843-62.

number of the interpolations are concerned with Richard's captivity in Germany, an event that is ignored or glossed over in virtually all the chronicle accounts of his reign. Captivity in the *Romance* (including the romance style stories of Richard's game of pluck buffet, seduction of his captor's daughter, and fight with a lion) is surrounded by a second layer of fictional stories that are made necessary by the reordering of history to place his captivity before the crusade. The three day tournament provides him with suitable companions to take with him on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and it is on the return from this first trip, rather than the later crusade, that he is captured.<sup>530</sup> Then after he has been ransomed out of captivity and is en route for the crusade Richard returns to his captor to collect the daughter he seduced, and receives a refund of the ransom money and two magic rings.<sup>531</sup> This cycle of stories contains the most fantastic and romancified elements of the *Romance*; beyond the central element of captivity they have no basis in fact whatsoever, and are not prefigured in any other source. If they form part of a broader re-evaluation surrounding the character of Richard it is not one that is prefigured in the chronicles.

The *Romance of Richard Coeur de Lion* embodies the completion of Richard's transition from history into fiction but is not the culmination of a single or inevitable process. A popular and widespread story, it demonstrates that within a century of his death Richard belonged alongside the romance heroes of King Arthur's court in the popular imagination, building on the willingness to accept Richard doing the fantastic which had already developed in chronicle sources. The alterations that the *Romance* makes to the historical events are wide-ranging and varied but certain general themes are particularly important for the fictional Richard: his relationship with other rulers, especially Philip of France; his position as king of England; his crusading; and his personal heroism. Of these it was his crusading that inspired the earliest fictionalised elements, for

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<sup>530</sup> *RCL C.272-714*. This tournament only takes place in the A redaction of the *Romance* and is probably the episode that is the most dependent on romance motifs. Over the course of a three day tournament Richard fights disguised in different symbolic armour each day. Similar events take place in a number of romances with even the colours of armor worn being the same, the most prominent and earliest examples are Hue de Roteland's *Ipomedon* and Chretien de Troyes's *Cliges* (four days with the addition of green armor). The seminal study of this model of tournaments in literature by Jessie Laidlay Weston has been reprinted several times, most recently, *The Three Days' Tournament: A Study in Romance and Folklore* (New York, 1902, reprinted Whitefish MT, 2009).

<sup>531</sup> *RCL C.1423-652*.

example the snakes that Ambroise places on the Saracen dromond Richard captures, as well as the first work with fictional intent, the core text of the *Romance*, which still aimed to contain a degree of historical *verisimilia*.

The process through which Richard went to become a truly fictionalised character can be seen because of his prominence in other sources and the length of time between his death and the composition of the *Romance*, well over fifty years. Neither William Marshal nor Fouke Fitz Waryn provided anything like the same quantity of alternative narrative sources for comparison. Accounts of their lives were also written much sooner after their deaths, within ten years later for William and about twenty for Fouke. However, since the *Romance of Fouke Fitz Waryn* describes events fifty years before its hero's death, and the most fictional elements of the *History* were similarly in William's early life, the temporal distance between historical events and fictionalised portrayals is broadly similar. Therefore, it seems likely that William and Fouke underwent a similar process to Richard but that it simply cannot be seen in the surviving evidence.

What the previous three chapters have demonstrated is that fictionalisation was not a uniform phenomenon. Not all individuals who were fictionalised received the same treatment. They were not all characterised using the same literary models and even within a particular life certain events and circumstances required more fictionalisation than others in order to allow the desired characterisation to be achieved. Also, the use of fiction in these texts was not always the undesirable intrusion that both medieval and some modern historians have suggested.<sup>532</sup> It could be used to back up the message that the author wished his audience to receive, by altering inconvenient facts but also by emphasising the desired themes in new ways. However, the historical circumstances on which a fictional or fictionalised account was based remained fundamental. It was history that formed both the narrative and didactic core of the work, shaping its structure and providing the desired message. Consequently the next two chapters will move away from an exploration of fictionalisation itself in order to consider what it was about certain historical individuals and their lives that provided the impetus for fictionalisation and how the truth restricted the form that their fictionalisation was able to take.

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<sup>532</sup> See above pp.27-36, 51-7.

## Character and Characterisation:

### Richard I a Contested Hero

As has already been shown in chapter four, the fictionalisation of Richard I was not a single, uniform process. The author of the core text of the *Romance of Richard Coeur de Lion* had a choice of characterisations in pre-existing fictionalised stories upon which he could base his own version of Richard's life. Yet in spite of the variety of ways in which Richard appeared in popular memory, both the author of the core text and the majority of chroniclers chose to portray him in very similar fashion: as a crusade hero. This similarity is not surprising when the fact is recalled that the majority of the sources discussed in the preceding chapter, especially those which devote most detail to their subject such as the *Itinerarium Peregrinorum*, were principally interested in showing the Third Crusade and its most influential leader in a positive light. Sources with similar intents, unsurprisingly, had similar characterisations. However, the sources discussed in the previous chapter were not the only ones in which Richard I appeared in fictionalised form. A number of other references to Richard exist in a variety of historical and literary texts. Most such references are extremely short but two are long enough to provide comparisons of interest and importance; the *History of William Marshal* and the *Chronicle of Reims*, both of which had the intent to glorify someone other than Richard. Analysis of these alternative characterisations will suggest that the strength and extent of Richard's reputation limited the ways in which he could be portrayed. It will also be argued that it was Richard as a historical personage, his own abilities, interests and the events of his life, that had the most impact on the shape that his reputation took.

After the *Romance*, the *Chronicle of Reims* provides the most fictionalised characterisation of Richard extant from the thirteenth century, and it is one which sheds considerable light on why Richard's broader fictionalised characterisation took the form it did.<sup>533</sup> The *Chronicle* ends in 1260 and is

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<sup>533</sup> The *Chronicle* has been edited twice under slightly different names, both of which were completed in the nineteenth century; Joseph Noel de Wailly (ed), *Récits d'un Ménestrel de Reims au Treizième Siècle*, (1987); M. Louis Paris (ed), *Chronique de Reims* (1837). There has also been one translation; *The Chronicle of Reims*, in Edward Noble Stone (trans), *Three Old French Chronicles of the Crusades*, University of Washington Publications in the Social Sciences, 10 (Seattle, Wash, 1939).

assumed to have been written in that year; a conclusion reached from the fact that it ends suddenly during that year and had apparently been intended to continue on a year by year basis.<sup>534</sup> Even if it was begun a few years before 1260, the *Chronicle* was produced within the probable period of composition of the *Romance*, so the two texts are particularly well suited for comparison. As is indicated by the name, the *Chronicle* was produced at Reims in north eastern France and its style implies that it was intended to be perceived as historical. Its status as chronicle is supported by the fact that it covers a broad chronological and geographical spectrum rather than just the life of a single individual; the section covering Richard's life takes up less than a third of the text and he does not appear in all of it.<sup>535</sup> However, like the other texts explored in this thesis, it takes the bulk of its narrative from genuinely historical events then alters them significantly so that they become fiction.<sup>536</sup> What makes the *Chronicle* particularly interesting in the context of this thesis is that it adopts a completely different characterisation of Richard to that of the crusade leader portrayed in the *Romance*. Since the two texts were produced at around the same time but with opposite images of Richard, the *Romance* and the *Chronicle* can be seen to some extent as competitors for Richard's reputation.

The *Chronicle's* focus is immediately obvious from its opening statement:

Depuis celle eure que Godefrois de Bouillon et la baronnie  
de france orent conquise Antioche et Jerusalem...n'orent  
crestien victoire d'Acre qui su reconquise ou tans Solehadin  
et ou tans le roi Philipe...et de Coustantinoble

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<sup>534</sup> The *Chronicle* appears to have been quite popular judging by its manuscript survival. A total of eleven manuscripts have been studied by Donald Tappan in 'The manuscripts of the *Récits d'un ménestrel de Reims*', *Symposium: Quarterly Journal in Modern Foreign Literature*, 25 (1971), pp.70-78 and 'An eleventh MS of the *Récits d'un ménestrel de Reims*', *Romance Notes*, 24 (1983), pp.71-75. More recently Danielle Quéreul argued for the inclusion of a twelfth manuscript, MS. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, 432 among the corpus, 'La *Chronique d'un Ménestrel de Reims* (MS 432)', Nigel Wilkins (ed), *Les Manuscrits français de la bibliothèque Parker: Parker Library Corpus Christi College Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1993), pp.39-68.

<sup>535</sup> His life appears on *Reims*, pp. 7-71 out of pp.1-247.

<sup>536</sup> For a detailed analysis of which elements within the *Chronicle* are fact and which are fiction see Marie-Geneviève Grossel, 'Entre désinvolture et imposture? *Les récits d'un ménestrel de Reims*', *Bien Dire et Bien Apprendre: Revue de médiévistique*, 23 (2005), pp.225-237.



‘After that time when Godfrey of Bouillon and the barony of France had conquered Antioch and Jerusalem...the Christians won no victory over the Saracens in the land of Syria save only that of Acre, which was conquered again in the time of Saladin and in the time of King Philip,...and that of Constantinople’.<sup>537</sup>

Regardless of a lack of success, it is the crusades that are to form the background and structure of the work. Dating by reference to the French ruler in a work written within France is to be expected, so the lack of mention of Richard here does not indicate any undue bias against him, but, rather, an overall impression of a predominant interest in the importance of France is created. Such an impression is entirely accurate. Although the *Chronicle* ranges throughout Europe and covers more than a century, it is the concerns of France and its kings, especially in the east, that dominate the text. The statement that the capture of Acre was not just the most important, but in fact the only victory of the Third Crusade is illustrative of this dominance of French interests; other successes, such as the victory at Jaffa where the French were not present, are overlooked.

Within the long chronological span of the *Chronicle* Philip is presented as the hero, both as a crusader and more generally as an ideal king. There are considerable overlaps between the *Romance* and the *Chronicle* in the techniques they use to credit their hero with the leadership of, and success in, the crusade. In this section of the *Chronicle* Richard is Philip’s competitor for glory just as Philip was for Richard in the *Romance*, and is consequently belittled and overlooked in a similar fashion. In the *Chronicle*, Acre falls as a result of Philip’s siege engines, whereas in the *Romance* it is Richard’s siege engines that are mentioned.<sup>538</sup> Similarly, the besieged Saracens of the *Chronicle* cry out that ‘[b]y Mahomet! Through him [Philip] shall we lose Acre’, [*p]ar Mohom! Par cestui perderons nous Acre*, whereas in the *Romance* it was Richard of whom Saracens say ‘We no seye neur king so biginne,/ it is gret drede he schal ous winne!’.<sup>539</sup> In

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<sup>537</sup> *Reims*, p.1.

<sup>538</sup> *Reims*, p.29; *RCL L.2063-90*.

<sup>539</sup> *Reims*, p.29; *RCL L.2115-8*.

addition, any attack in which the hero does not take part fails.<sup>540</sup> The heroes of both texts are actively successful during battle on a personal level as warriors and strategists, but they also have the authority and technical knowledge to produce the most up to date and effective weapons.

However, in comparison to the core text of the *Romance*, the extent to which factual events are changed in the *Chronicle* to present Philip as a hero is considerable. While the core text of the *Romance* fictionalises the crusade by changing the details and motivations within the separate elements of the journey to Acre and then heightens events in the Holy Land, the *Chronicle* completely alters the sequence of events. Rather than the Kings of France and England joining the siege of Acre, which in reality had been in progress for several years, they sail first to Tyre and take that city before deciding to attack Acre as well.<sup>541</sup> According to the *Chronicle*, at Tyre the kings join an attack that is already in place, as was actually the case at Acre. The addition of French and English soldiers simply tips the scales in the Christians' favour. By altering events in this way the attack on Acre becomes a new initiative that was entirely reliant on the west rather than the culmination of a long and protracted siege with many commanders. Its success is being presented as entirely down to Philip.

Significantly, in the *Chronicle* Acre is taken while Richard is not present. Historically, Richard travelled to Acre via Cyprus, capturing it and then completing his journey in time to meet Philip and the other crusaders at Acre before the final series of attacks were made. As mentioned above, in the *Chronicle* both kings travel together all the way to Tyre before deciding to move on to Acre. This means that Richard's time in Cyprus is portrayed as taking place after the two kings arrive at Acre. Richard is leaving a siege he has already joined which, in the context of the crusade, is more important than any conflict he could take part in elsewhere. In fact Richard is not even shown as turning to a lesser battle but going 'to disport himself amongst the isles and to visit the ladies'; he is enjoying himself and at leisure while on crusade rather than undertaking the serious task of forwarding the Christian cause.<sup>542</sup> While Richard is shown as ignoring and betraying his crusade vow, Philip remains focussed and

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<sup>540</sup> Examples can be seen at *Reims*, p.28; *RCL L.* 2207-34.

<sup>541</sup> *Reims*, pp.27-8.

<sup>542</sup> 'aloit jouer par les isles de meir et veoire les dames'; *Reims*, p.28.

turns his attention to the creation and construction of siege engines that strike terror into the defending army. Having built his weapons, Philip hurled rocks at the city walls ‘and all the other barons did likewise, save King Richard who was on the isle of Cyprus’.<sup>543</sup> Since Richard is the only crusade leader not present, we can see that it is he personally who is denigrated, not just Philip promoted. The extent of the changes to historical facts in this account demonstrates that a greater fictionalisation of events was required to turn Philip into a hero than Richard.

The accusation that Richard was not at the fall of Acre not only removes a competitor for glory, it has two further advantages for the character of Philip. Philip received considerable criticism in the pro-Richard chronicles for his decision to return to France shortly after Acre was captured.<sup>544</sup> So the above alteration of events reverses the accusation that Philip abandoned the crusade by having Richard leave the siege early instead. What is perhaps more significant, however, is that Richard’s military reputation has been entirely undermined. By denying Richard’s involvement at Acre and at the same time belittling the events on Cyprus, Richard is left with no part to play. He does not even appear as a common knight because he is never presented as fighting at all. In fact, apart from his abandonment of the siege of Acre, Richard’s only active part in the early part of the crusade narrative is to demand the best place to set up camp because of his wealth; he is not mentioned as affecting any part of the decision making of the crusade army. Although not specifically stated, the suggestion throughout is that Richard is subservient to Philip: Philip is the first to take the cross; when they travel together Philip’s name is mentioned first; Tyre surrenders to Philip and the ‘other princes’, *li autre prince*.<sup>545</sup> Richard is simply a noble but un-influential member of Philip’s army.<sup>546</sup> Leadership of the crusade was clearly a vital attribute for a fictionalised monarch, be it Richard or Philip.

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<sup>543</sup> ‘*Et tuit li autre baron faisoient ainsi, fors que li rois Richarz qui estoit en l’isle de Chipre*’; *Reims*, p.30.

<sup>544</sup> For example Ambroise says that the French barons themselves were critical of the decision, ‘they blamed him, coming little short of denying his kingship and lordship over them’, *Amb.*, p.105.

<sup>545</sup> *Reims*, p.27.

<sup>546</sup> The ambiguity of the historical relationship between the kings of France and England, in which the king of England held his continental lands as a vassal of the king of France, will be discussed shortly.

Having limited Richard's role in the early part of the crusade narrative, the *Chronicle* proceeds to an all-out attack on his temperament, martial ability and morals in the later sections. In his anger at Acre being taken without him, Richard attacks Lord William of Barres but is unhorsed, faints, and when he comes round makes an assault on Philip's lodging.<sup>547</sup> Richard then attempts to poison Philip and finally bribes the Counts of Flanders, Champagne and Blois to bring about Philip's death, but Philip is warned and escapes in secret back to France.<sup>548</sup> As well as further justifying Philip's return to Europe and making a mockery of Richard's jousting abilities, this story draws on a genuine accusation of poisoning levelled against Richard while he was in the east in sources contemporary to his own lifetime. The Count of Montferrat was murdered and Richard was suspected because of considerable previous bad feeling between them. Some accounts, such as that of Ambroise and the Old-French *Continuation to William of Tyre*, even suggest that some people believed Philip to be in equal danger.<sup>549</sup> As such, this element of the *Chronicle* can be seen as one of its more historical statements, although the motivation ascribed to Richard has obviously been changed in line with other elements of fictionalisation. The most serious charge to be laid against Richard's reputation by the *Chronicle* is, then, one that is strongly based on historical fact.

As well as the crusade itself, the story of Richard's death, which was fictionalised in heroic terms by English chroniclers, was transformed in the *Chronicle* into another opportunity to portray him in a negative light. The episode begins with Richard tempting a hubristic response after a successful Spanish campaign by boasting that he will give many a battle to the kings of both France and Spain but instead, the text gloats, he did not live much longer.<sup>550</sup> At the next siege which is described, Richard is shot in the shoulder by one of the defenders and ignores the advice of his doctors to rest, so it becomes inflamed. Realising the inevitability of his death Richard laments in terms that would be suitable in a favourable source like the *Romance*, but in context appear overblown and full of pride.

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<sup>547</sup> *Reims*, pp.30-1.

<sup>548</sup> *Reims*, pp.32-3.

<sup>549</sup> Amb., 152; *Old French Continuation of William of Tyre* in Peter W. Edbury (trans), *The Conquest of Jerusalem and the Third Crusade, Sources in Translation* (Aldershot, 1996), pp.108-9.

<sup>550</sup> *Reims*, pp.66-7.

Ha! Mors, comme ies hardie quant tu osas assaillir le roi Richart, le mieuz entechié chevalier et le plus courtois et le plus large dou monde. Ah ! chevalerie, comme iras à decline! Hé! Povres dames, povre chevalier, que devenrez vous? Ha! Dieus, qui retenra mais chevalerie, largesce ne courtoisie?

‘Ah, Death, how bold art thou, who hast dared assail King Richard, the most perfect knight and the most courteous and the most bounteous in all the world! Ah, Chivalry, how wilt thou wane away! Alas, poor knights, poor ladies! What will become of you? Ah, God! Who will henceforth uphold chivalry, largess, and courtesy?’<sup>551</sup>

The perception that Richard has of himself in this scene is the same as the one that appears in the *Romance*, but the *Chronicle* makes fun of such an opinion and instead uses it to demonstrate Richard’s arrogance.

However, what is most interesting about the portrayal of Richard that appears in the *Chronicle* is the fact that it is inconsistent. Richard varies from being ‘very evil and very cruel’ to ‘a valiant man, and bold and courteous and bountiful, and a courtly knight’.<sup>552</sup> In early life when he ‘came a-jousting on the marches of France and of Poitou...he so demeaned himself...that all folk spoke well of him’, and the statement that ‘marvellous many fair deeds of knighthood did King Richard perform there’ would not be out of place in the *Romance*, which contains no similarly favourable statements about Philip.<sup>553</sup> The author of the chronicle only characterises Richard in a negative manner during the sections in which he recounts the Third Crusade and Richard’s death. In other circumstances he is given more sympathetic treatment, even to the extent that it is during conflict between the two kings over possessions in France that Richard

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<sup>551</sup> *Reims*, p.70.

<sup>552</sup> ‘*su preuz, et hardiz, et courtois, et larges, et avenanz chevaliers ; pesme et crueuse*’; *Reims*, pp.14, 46.

<sup>553</sup> ‘*Venoit tournoier ou marchois de France et de Poiteu...se demena...que touz li mondes disoit bien de lui ; merveilles i faisoit li rois Richarz de beles chevaleries*’ ; *Reims*, pp.14, 52.

is described as carrying out ‘fair deeds of knighthood’. A pre-emptive defense of Philip’s attacks on Angevin holdings in France is made during the crusade narrative when Richard is presented as saying that ‘back to England will I go, and so soon as I am come thither I will make war on the king [of France]’. However accounts of the French campaigns themselves are far more neutral.<sup>554</sup> The variation in the way in which Richard’s character is presented suggests that his positive heroic reputation was strong; strong enough to prevent his total vilification even in a source with pro-French and pro-Philipian bias.

The strength of Richard’s heroic reputation can also be seen in the way he was portrayed in the *History of William Marshal*, the textual history and intent of which has already been discussed in chapter two. It was composed nearly half a century before either the *Chronicle* or the *Romance* with the intent of glorifying and justifying the actions of its subject. Richard is not the focus of the text and, unlike in the other two texts discussed, the author does not seem to have had any particular point to make with regards to his character. In his early life Richard is criticised as a result of his two periods of rebellion against his father, demonstrating his lack of the quality of loyalty which the *History* values so highly.<sup>555</sup> However, after his father’s death and his own accession Richard recognises the value of the loyalty that was shown to Henry II by William and others and thereafter is shown in a positive light.<sup>556</sup> The author of the *History* did not need to manipulate or manoeuvre the presentation of Richard in order to cast a positive light on its subject’s actions. William Marshal, in the *History*, has his reputation enhanced, or at least not damaged, by his association with Richard. Given the fact that the author of the *History* does not appear to have had any specific intent with regards to Richard’s characterization, it is interesting just

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<sup>554</sup> ‘*Je m’en rirai en Engleterre, et si tost comme jr I venrai, je mouverai le roi guerre*’; Reims. p.34. Following such an inflammatory statement Philip’s attacks on Richard’s French lands are simply an active form of defence given Richard’s own hostility.

<sup>555</sup> For example *HWM* 8071-114. Richard’s rebellions are well attested, so characterising him as disloyal in this context was in line with the facts and contemporary opinion, as was the more favourable image of his time as king. In fact Fantosme’s entire *Chronicle* is concerned with his first period of rebellion alongside the Young King and King William of Scotland. The negative image Richard received as a result of rebellious activity can be seen in the fact that Gerald of Wales, a member of Henry II’s entourage, was one of a number of authors who claimed that when Richard approached his father’s body blood ran from Henry’s nostrils. This story is based on the common belief that the wounds of a murdered man bleed when the murderer is nearby and Gerald uses it to emphasise Henry’s anger at his rebellious heir; Giraldus Cambrensis, *Concerning the Instruction of Princes*, in Joseph Stevenson (trans), *The Church Historians of England*, vol.V, part 1 (1858), p.226.

<sup>556</sup> This episode and its basis in historical reality was discussed in chapter two, p.73.

how positive that characterisation was. Descriptions of him are very much in line with other pro-Richard sources and the position adopted later by the *Romance*. He is described as ‘the best prince in all the world’, *le meillor prince del monde*, and:

...qui tant esteit corteis  
E saives e herdiz e proz  
Qu'en Sulie sormonta toz,  
Reis e duz e barons e contes  
Si ke d'els toz ne fu nuls contes  
Avers lui...

a man who was so courtly,  
wise, bold, and brave,  
that he surpassed all while he was in Palestine,  
kings and dukes, barons and earls,  
to such an extent that all of them together were taken no account of,  
compared with him<sup>557</sup>

Even the crusaders' lack of ability to complete their task of recapturing Jerusalem is depicted in a familiar way; Richard was deserted by Philip who intended to do him harm, but he would still have been ultimately successful if he had not been forced to leave the Holy Land early by John's treachery in England.<sup>558</sup> It is worth emphasising that even in a text that, as previously noted, has very little interest in the crusade, Richard's crusading reputation is still important to how he was portrayed.

Another point of continuity between the contemporary chronicle literature (for example Ralph of Coggeshall and Roger of Hoveden) and the *History* comes in the portrayal, in a heroic light, of Richard's death.<sup>559</sup> His killer is described as ‘a demon, a traitor, a servant of the devil’, *un Satanas, un traïtres/ Qui a diable esteit ministres*, who uses a poisoned arrow to kill the king, but there is no

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<sup>557</sup> *HWM* 9976-81, 11766.

<sup>558</sup> *HWM* 9807-16.

<sup>559</sup> See chapter four, p.150.

account of the siege as a whole or its outcome.<sup>560</sup> Here, as in the account of the crusade, Richard is defended from any potential attack on his reputation but without any space being given to details of the circumstances that required excuse. The author of the *History* used what appear to have become the conventional heroic characterisation of Richard to describe the two elements of his life which seem to have been identified as important for his reputation by both the chronicle tradition and the *Chronicle of Reims*. However the author of the *History* does not describe them in any significant level of detail.

Thus far the *History*'s portrayal of Richard is unexceptional. Richard is described in conventionally positive terms but is given very little space because he and his life are not the focus of the text. It is when attention is focussed on the account of the wars against Philip to regain the Angevin territories in France that the *History* becomes illuminating. Not only is Richard shown as an able warrior in this section but the text's central character, William Marshal, virtually disappears for nearly one and a half thousand lines, and instead Richard becomes the hero.<sup>561</sup> On the basis of the examples looked at in this thesis, the absence of a central character from entire episodes of a fictionalised history is extremely unusual. The only comparable episodes in any of the key texts are the times in the *Romance of Fouke Fitz Waryn* when Fouke has one of his followers, John de Rampagne, disguise himself in order to visit Fouke's enemies undetected. Exactly why Fouke does not undertake these activities himself will be discussed in the next chapter, but the circumstances are different for two reasons: John de Rampagne does not have any identifiable basis in fact so another individual is not being given pre-eminence over the text's hero, and John's actions are all undertaken on Fouke's instructions to receive or plant information that will help with Fouke's schemes.<sup>562</sup> Richard in the *History* is in control of events; he is acting entirely independently of William and as a character he becomes the centre of attention in a way never allowed to John.

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<sup>560</sup> HWM 11761-4.

<sup>561</sup> Between lines 10,150 and 11,770 William only appears in five short sections totalling about three hundred lines.

<sup>562</sup> See chapter six, p.199. John disguises himself in order to tell Morys that Fouke was dead so that he would let his guard down and Fouke would be able to kill him. He also goes to court in disguise to find out details concerning one of Fouke's brothers, who is being held captive, so that Fouke can rescue him. In both cases John simply facilitates plans that are ultimately completed by Fouke.



Richard is complimented consistently in asides throughout the account of the wars against Philip, just as is William in other sections. For example, he is a man of ‘noble heart’, *riche cure*, and is said to have regained many of the castles Philip had originally captured very quickly:

Nes volom pas toz ci nomer  
Quer fort sereit a asommer  
Quans ne quels il en reconquist,  
E coment il les out enprist

We have no wish to name them all here,  
for it would be difficult to count up  
how many he regained, or say which they were  
and how he took them.<sup>563</sup>

This is a very similar statement to that about the number of William’s tournament victories.<sup>564</sup> In fact, Richard is characterised using the same ideal of the perfect knight as was used for William. His recognition of *loyauté* has already been mentioned above, but the other knightly virtues are also apparent; his *prouesse* can be seen when he charges forward in attack without waiting for his men, and he gives out *largesse* following battles.<sup>565</sup>

The long elements of direct speech that are credited to Richard in this section make him a rounded character with whom the audience is clearly supposed to empathise. They portray him as a noble and reasonable but forceful individual who was determined to right the wrongs that had been done to him by Philip. His negotiations over a peace treaty with Cardinal Peter, who had come from Rome at King Philip’s request, are a particularly strong example. Richard arrived at the talks even though he knew Philip would not have the courtesy to attend himself, and has a long conversation during which he points out the wrongs that have been done by Philip, the vows broken, and the fact that if Philip

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<sup>563</sup> *HWM* 10,571-4, 11,073.

<sup>564</sup> *HWM* 4,972-6. Quoted in chapter two pp.90-1.

<sup>565</sup> Philip of France is nearly captured at a battle at a ford at which Richard was the first to attack and apparently performed so well that it was thanks to him that the French were routed, *HWM*.10, 982-11,017. Following the campaign against Beauvais, Richard returns to Gournay with his booty and shared it with his followers, *HWM* 11,301-5.

had acted differently he could have stayed in the Holy Land and defeated Saladin.<sup>566</sup> Even though Peter offers him no concessions Richard shows his desire for peace by agreeing to a five year truce, but angrily withdraws his offer when Peter demands the release of the Bishop of Beauvais. After the ‘patience, forbearance and moderation’, *soufrance e amesure e atemprance*, that he showed early on, Richard’s anger is powerful and dramatic.<sup>567</sup> His sense of personal betrayal in this speech makes him a sympathetic character even though he is sufficiently terrifying that his own men dare not approach him and the cardinal runs away in fear.<sup>568</sup>

In part the attention given to Richard during the *History*’s account of the French wars at the end of his reign is simply a consequence of historical circumstances. As a militarily able king conducting a war, Richard was at the centre of events while William was simply one of his soldiers, if a particularly able and experienced one. However, that alone does not explain why so much space is given to events in which William plays no part. There were other times during William’s life when he was not present during important military engagements, such as the Third Crusade and the beginning of the Young King’s rebellion against Henry II. In these cases brief summaries were given and attention quickly turned back to what William was doing. Neither do the historical circumstances explain the extent to which Richard received his own, sympathetic characterisation. Within the Richard-centred section itself the author makes a point of stating that no writer should include matter in his book which is extraneous to his theme, so he presumably thought that all the information about Richard was important.<sup>569</sup> As Crouch pointed out, Richard is at times given more prominence by the *History* than he had in fact: the expedition against the Bishop of Beauvais is portrayed as being led by Richard when it was actually led by

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<sup>566</sup> *HWM* 11,419-630.

<sup>567</sup> *HWM* 11,433-4.

<sup>568</sup> Peter is stated to be too scared to even go back into the room to collect his cross ‘reckoning that he would lose his genitals if he did’, ‘*qu’il i cuidast perdre les coiz*’, and returns to the King of France ‘in a state of utter dejection and torment and more scared than a deer’, ‘*toz meueiurez e angoissous e plus esfrees k’uns chevres*’; *HWM* 11,625-30. Later Peter refuses to act as envoy to Richard again because ‘he had no wish to die just yet’, ‘*ne voleit pas morir unquore*’; *HWM* 11,701-4.

<sup>569</sup> *HWM* 11,096-104.

Prince John.<sup>570</sup> This last episode may be an example of the *History*'s desire to marginalise John rather than enhance Richard, especially as this is one of the occasions on which William is present and he is portrayed in a particularly heroic light.<sup>571</sup> However, the author could simply have chosen to see a victory by John as extraneous matter and not included it, so the transfer of the victory to Richard still adds to the impression that he is deliberately being presented as the central character in this section of the text; that his reputation was strong enough to draw attention away from William.

Based on analysis of the *Chronicle* and the *History*, it appears that Richard had a strong enough reputation to be able to override the intent of authors whose aims were to glorify other individuals. The author of the *Chronicle* was unable to ignore Richard's positive reputation even while trying to characterise him in a negative fashion. The *History*, for a time at least, deliberately ignores its hero in favour of presenting Richard in a favourable light. Appearances of Richard in other European literary sources add further weight to the conclusion that he had a well known reputation that influenced the way he could be portrayed. In the thirteenth-century Old-French *Pas Saladin* Richard is mentioned as one of twelve knights who successfully hold a pass against Saladin.<sup>572</sup> King Philip is the overall leader and Richard is not given particular prominence however; an interesting circumstance given that it has been suggested that the story may be inspired by Richard and his small group of knights recapturing Jaffa from Saladin.<sup>573</sup> Richard also appears fighting against

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<sup>570</sup> David Crouch, *William Marshal: Knighthood, War and Chivalry, 1147-1219* (Harlow, 1990, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, 2002), pp.83-4. According to the chroniclers Ralph of Diceto and William of Newburgh Richard simply awaited news of this campaign at Rouen and took no active part himself. The *History* has the Bishop himself being captured at an engagement Richard was not involved in by Mercadier, a mercenary who had in reality accompanied Richard on crusade and fought alongside him in France afterwards, so the story is plausible.

<sup>571</sup> William personally attacks the ditch around the castle to rescue another knight and is the first to enter, inspiring the rest of the army to follow him. Richard is said to be upset that William mounted such a personal attack because he wanted to do so too but his advisors would not allow him. *HWM* 11,169-241.

<sup>572</sup> Little scholarly attention has been given to the *Pas Saladin*. It is discussed in a nineteenth-century PhD thesis and is mentioned repeatedly by Loomis in various articles, but it has received little recent attention; Frank E. Lodeman, 'The Pas Saladin: An Old French Poem of the Third Crusade' (PhD: Cornell, 1897).

<sup>573</sup> Loomis, 'Richard Coeur de Lion and the Pas Saladin', p.524. The apparent popularity of the story in art may well have helped to preserve Richard's reputation as a heroic crusader since 'by 1300 the *Pas Saladin* was a common subject for the decoration of castle halls and ... the Christian champions were scrupulously identified by their arms'; Roger Sherman Loomis, 'The

heathens in *Wilhelm von Österreich*, where he is one of a number of Third Crusade leaders who comes to the hero's aid; again he is a minor figure with little authority, this time being placed in the shadow of Leopold and commanding German troops.<sup>574</sup> Even though Richard is not central to the overall plot in these two texts, which are much shorter than the three main fictional appearances that have already been discussed, the fact that he was placed into other stories at all shows that he was sufficiently well known to be instantly recognisable to a wider European audience.

The two short appearances by Richard in the *Pas Saladin* and *Wilhelm von Österreich* conform to the conventional pro-Richard characterisation in which he is the successful crusader to be emulated, reinforcing how important his actions in the east were to his entry into fiction, but they also highlight the extent to which his positive reputation is as a knight not a king. The *Pas Saladin* in particular deprived Richard of his central role as leader, emphasising instead his position as a vassal of the French king. It is worth noting that in the *Chronicle* Richard dies while attacking one of Philip's castles.<sup>575</sup> Although he is a king fighting another king, the nature of Angevin holdings in France made the relationship between these two monarchies more complex; Richard is a vassal attacking a possession of his overlord, a man to whom he has sworn fealty. Rather than seeking treasure as in other fictionalisations or resisting rebellion as in fact, Richard is effectively rebelling himself. In the two English fictionalisations Richard is always the supreme leadership figure, a King of England who, at least in one interpolation to the *Romance*, can expect to be obeyed by the King of France; French and Austrian sources place him in a broader context in which the extent of his authority is far more ambiguous.<sup>576</sup> In light of the diminished role given to Richard as King in the three, non-English sources described above, the *Romance* may be interpreted, in part, as an attempt to reassert his importance as king, and not merely as a knightly figure whose prowess was worth extolling. The *Romance*'s emphasis on Richard as English

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Pas Saladin in Art and Heraldry' in *Studies in Medieval Literature*, Ruth E. Roberts (ed) (New York, 1970), p.246.

<sup>574</sup> Martin H. Jones, 'Richard the Lionheart in German Literature of the Middle Ages', Nelson (ed), *History and Myth*, pp.110-4. The text of this early fourteenth-century poem can be found in Johann von Würzburg, *Wilhelm von Österreich*, Ernst Regal (ed) (1906, reprinted 1970).

<sup>575</sup> *Reims*, p.286.

<sup>576</sup> *RCL C.4699*.

also serves to disassociate him from his identity as a French vassal in favour of emphasising his autonomy, thus simplifying the complex situation between Richard and Philip into one of equals.

The above comparison of the *Romance* with other appearances by Richard in literature has demonstrated two main points. Firstly, it has confirmed the importance of the themes of leadership, crusading and personal heroism to Richard's fictionalisation. The way his life was altered in order to create a negative fictionalisation suggests that his leadership and military success in the crusade were particularly important to his reputation, and that his portrayal as an English King of England in the *Romance* may have been a deliberate technique to bolster his authority. Secondly, the sheer quantity of fictionalised appearances by Richard, and the way he is able to upstage the heroes of other works, show the strength of his posthumous reputation. The non-English sources in particular demonstrate that Richard was seen as a heroic figure suitable for fictionalisation even in France and the Holy Roman Empire, the realms of his historical enemies. As such, attention will now turn to the factors that allowed such a strong reputation to develop.

As Peter Damian-Grint observes, 'Richard's real character and deeds lent themselves to an epic presentation and were perfect *chanson de geste* material'.<sup>577</sup> As was mentioned in chapter two, crusading was a staple element in the life of a medieval ideal knight. For example, Guy of Warwick was portrayed as fighting in Constantinople against pagans even though his story was set long before the First Crusade, and in the romance *Of Arthur and Merlin* Arthur himself goes on crusade.<sup>578</sup> By leading a crusade Richard earned the right to be compared to these and other figures, such as Charlemagne, and his own story became one that was worthy of similar attention.<sup>579</sup> However, the relationship between Richard's crusading and fiction was probably not that straightforward; references to crusading in fiction may have been encouraged by the deeds of individuals like Richard. The literary model of an ideal hero was not static but influenced by the lives of those that others wished to emulate. Just as with William's tournament victories, it is difficult to establish the extent to which the

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<sup>577</sup> Damian-Grint, Peter, *The New Historians of the Twelfth-Century Renaissance: Inventing Vernacular Authority* (Woodbridge, 1999), p.79.

<sup>578</sup> Thorlac Turville-Petre, *England the Nation* (Oxford, 1996), pp.120, 125-6.

<sup>579</sup> Gillingham, *Richard I*, p.3.

importance of Richard's crusade within his fictionalisation was a cause or an effect of the importance of crusading in other literature.

A connection that is less ambiguous is that between crusading and Christian ideals. Crusading was not only a desirable attribute for a literary hero, it was also a duty expected of a good Christian hero. Like Richard, Henry II was praised as a warrior king, earning comparison with Alexander from Gerald of Wales, but his failure to go on crusade earned him considerable criticism, for example in the *Itinerarium Peregrinorum*.<sup>580</sup> Richard by comparison was 'worthy of the name of king' because of his decision to leave his realm in the defence of Christ.<sup>581</sup> By defending Christendom in this way Richard fulfilled an important medieval expectation of rulership, thereby ensuring far greater unity between ecclesiastical and secular authority than existed under either Henry II or John, and probably benefiting his reputation in the clerically composed chronicle material.<sup>582</sup> By going on crusade Richard conformed to the ideals and expectations of those people who, albeit unconsciously, began the process of his fictionalisation, encouraging them to present him in a heroic light.

However, it was not just the fact Richard went on crusade that encouraged the development of his fictional portrayal; the specific circumstances of Richard's crusade aided the transformation. Initially Richard was one of three important western monarchs leading armies on the Third Crusade. However the death of Emperor Frederick Barbarossa before his arrival at Acre and King Philip's departure immediately after the city's surrender left Richard in control. There was little choice for any author intending to write an account of the crusade but to make Richard the central character. The significance of this factor can be seen in the complete alteration of events that was required to portray Philip as the crusade's hero in the *Chronicle of Reims*. Unlike the First Crusade where the great number of leaders prevented any one from achieving over-riding influence, Richard quite naturally assumed the personification of the Christian cause on the Third Crusade.

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<sup>580</sup> Gerald of Wales, *Topography of Ireland*, p.124; *Itin.*, p.143.

<sup>581</sup> Richard of Devizes, *The Chronicle of Richard of Devizes of the Time of King Richard the First*, John T. Appleby (ed and trans) (London, 1963), p.5.

<sup>582</sup> John Gillingham, *Richard Coeur de Lion: Kingship, Chivalry and War in the Twelfth Century* (London, 1994), p.96.

This identification of Richard with the Christian cause was helped by the fact that he had a suitable opponent in Saladin. Saladin was personified as the 'noble enemy', accounts of his chivalry leading to claims that his mother or grandmother was a French or English Christian.<sup>583</sup> The attitude towards Saladin in eastern sources is equivalent to that towards Richard in western ones; Bahā' al-Dīn claims that Saladin's deeds and virtues were such that they caused him to believe the tales of noble heroes that had previously appeared improbable.<sup>584</sup> However, it is unclear that western sources were aware of such eastern views when they described him, and they had significantly different reasons for their portrayal. Saladin was a successful Muslim leader whose victories included the capture of Jerusalem; he was a suitably notorious figure to appear opposite a chivalric hero.

As a consequence of this opposition of two successful military leaders, each of whom could be seen as the central figure on his side, the crusade as a whole came to be viewed in terms of a personal duel. The perception of the crusade in these terms may well have led to the development of the story in which they fought a physical duel; a story which appears to be one of the earliest aspects of Richard's fictionalisation since it appeared in art before the *Romance* was written.<sup>585</sup> The circumstances in which the historical Richard found himself, as the main crusade leader facing an opponent who became himself the stuff of legend, had a direct impact on his fictionalisation by placing him within a familiar context of fiction and encouraging certain specific stories to develop.

However, it was not only Saladin who provided a comparison to Richard. Among the European rulers of the Middle Ages there is a curious grouping of heroic kings in this period. Philip Augustus is well known for his aggressive and successful extension of Capetian royal authority, leaving a reputation as a competent military leader and strategist.<sup>586</sup> Another contemporary of similar stature was the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, who died while en route to the Third Crusade. Both of these men also inspired heroic

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<sup>583</sup> P.H. Newby, *Saladin in his Time* (London, 1983), p.13.

<sup>584</sup> Bahā' al-Dīn, *History of Saladin*, p.13.

<sup>585</sup> See chapter four, p.135.

<sup>586</sup> Jim Bradbury, a biographer of Philip, was unhesitating in describing him as 'a great king' and his defeat of his English rivals as the 'key achievement' of his rule, an achievement that was brought about by military ability and the use of the most up to date technology; *Philip Augustus: King of France 1180-1223* (Harlow, 1998), pp.162-5, 333.

characterisations in biographies written by men who knew them personally.<sup>587</sup> The reputations of these men help to give further context to Richard's since he was able to be presented in their company without shame and, better still, to outshine them while on Crusade.

As well as being able to compare favourably to a number of strong kings, Richard benefited from comparisons with a weak one, his brother John. Whereas Richard was able to inspire the loyalty of his subjects, even in the face of high levels of taxation, John was consistently criticised in both English and non-English sources.<sup>588</sup> The kingly virtues that Richard had displayed were lacking in John throughout his life. For example Roger of Hoveden blames John's lack of generosity for the failure of the 1185 expedition to Ireland, saying that it was due to his unwillingness to pay the soldiers rather than a lack of money.<sup>589</sup> Even Richard's title 'coeur de lion', denoting his fierceness and bravery, contrasts with that given by one author to John, 'coeur de poupée' (doll's heart).<sup>590</sup> In addition, John's actions while Richard was on crusade could be used to justify Richard's lack of success. Richard is regularly presented as being forced to leave the crusade, an endeavour in which he would otherwise have succeeded, because of John's treachery.<sup>591</sup> Christian failure to recapture Jerusalem could therefore be blamed on the unpopular John while simultaneously glorifying Richard by claiming that he was capable of ultimate victory over Saladin.

Another aspect of Richard's life that may have led to him being presented in a particularly heroic light is what Gillingham refers to as 'an orchestrated

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<sup>587</sup> The main primary sources on Philip and his reign are the *Gesta Philip Augusti* (commonly known as the *Life* or *Vita*) by Rigord, a monk at St Denis, with its continuation by William the Breton, a personal friend of the king, and William's longer verse account of the reign in twelve books, the *Philippide*. Both accounts are extremely favourable, even that by Rigord in spite of his disapproval of Philip's affair with Agnes de Méran. Editions of both works can be found in *Oeuvres de Rigord et de Guillaume le Breton: Histoires de Philippe-Auguste*, H.F. Delaborde (ed), (Paris, 1882-5). Barbarossa's uncle wrote a biography entitled *The Deeds of Frederick Barbarossa* that remains historical while glorifying him in a similar fashion to Ambroise with Richard I; Otto of Freising, *The Deeds of Frederick Barbarossa*, C.C. Mierow (trans) (New York, 1966)

<sup>588</sup> John Gillingham, 'Historians Without Hindsight: Coggeshall, Diceto and Howden on the Early Years of John's Reign', S.D. Church (ed), *King John: New Interpretations* (Woodbridge, 1999), p.25.

<sup>589</sup> Gillingham, 'Historians Without Hindsight', p.10.

<sup>590</sup> Jim Bradbury, 'Philip Augustus and King John: Personality and History', S.D. Church (ed), *King John: New Interpretations* (Woodbridge, 1999), p.349.

<sup>591</sup> As has been seen, this argument is used in both the *Romance* and the *History*.



propaganda campaign against his reputation'.<sup>592</sup> In order to justify their action in capturing and attacking the lands of a crusader, Richard's opponents claimed he was treacherous and had damaged the Christian cause in the east. This is a common complaint in the English sources; Roger of Hoveden goes into great detail of attempts by the French to blacken Richard's character on their return from the east, as does Richard of Devizes.<sup>593</sup> William of Newburgh claims that on the murder of Conrad of Montferrat Philip 'lamented the unworthy fate of his friend, but he joyfully seized the occasion to defame the king of England, which compensated for his grief'.<sup>594</sup> Attacks on Richard from outside appear to have reduced any criticism he might otherwise have suffered from within his own realm; even his high taxation was seen as reasonable given the circumstances.<sup>595</sup> In responding to the attack on Richard's reputation his supporters may also have over-emphasised his heroic qualities in compensation, or at least been more willing to excuse those actions with which they disagreed.

That said, Richard's heroic qualities may not have been in need of much emphasis; like his life, his personality has often been seen as ideally suited to treatment in romance. The *Itinerarium Peregrinorum* claims that God gave Richard 'virtues which seemed rather to belong to an earlier age. In this present age, when the world is growing old, these virtues hardly appear in anyone'.<sup>596</sup> Although de Templo was probably making use of a standard claim to glorify his hero, the almost universal praise that Richard received from those chroniclers who were his subjects suggests that he successfully fulfilled contemporary ideals. Returning to the ideal knightly virtues, Richard undoubtedly possessed prowess. He seems to have been genuinely a courageous and talented military leader who inspired his men by his tendency to lead from the front.<sup>597</sup> Even the *Chronicle of Reims*, with its largely hostile portrayal of Richard, says that he was a marvel and

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<sup>592</sup> John Gillingham, 'Royal Newsletters, Forgeries and English Historians', M. Aurell (ed), *La Cour Plantagenêt* (Poitiers, 2000), p.185.

<sup>593</sup> Annals of Roger de Hoveden, pp.256-7; Richard of Devizes, *Time of King Richard the First*, pp.80-1.

<sup>594</sup> William of Newburgh, *Historia Rerum Anglicarum* in Richard Howlett (ed), *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I*, Rolls Series, 82 (1884), vol. 1, pp.596-7.

<sup>595</sup> Gillingham, *Richard Coeur de Lion*, p.114.

<sup>596</sup> *Itin.*, p.145.

<sup>597</sup> Richard's role and behaviour as a military commander during various campaigns have been discussed by John Prestwich, 'Richard Coeur de Lion: *rex bellicosus*' in Nelson (ed), *Richard Coeur de Lion in History and Myth* (1992), pp.1-16.

inspiration to his men.<sup>598</sup> In addition, the *Itinerarium* says that some of the king's advisers 'scolded him over his frequent recklessness and cautioned him against such behaviour' but Richard did not heed their advice and continued to be the first to attack and last to retreat.<sup>599</sup> Similarly, largesse appears to have been part of Richard's contemporary reputation. For example, a German poem of c.1200-1208 used Richard as an example of the benefits to be gained through generosity held up for Emperor Philip to emulate; because Richard was generous his subjects were willing to raise his ransom.<sup>600</sup> Richard had the necessary funds to be able to be generous to his followers but he also chose to use the money he had in that way, living up to expectations.

Consequently, it is possible that within the 'propaganda campaign' over his image Richard himself chose to be seen in chivalric terms. There is a self-consciousness about Richard's appearance as the ideal chivalric knight which suggests he may have manipulated his image to present himself as a hero. Gillingham argues that the series of public letters Richard sent to prominent individuals deliberately and successfully influenced the accounts of the events described in most contemporary chronicles; some even copied them out in full.<sup>601</sup> Richard was helped in this by the large number of chronicles produced during and shortly after his reign. Ralph Turner suggests that one of the reasons for John's bad reputation is the fact that there were no court historians of his reign, the major sources being the anti-royalist St-Albans chroniclers writing in retrospect after the problems of Henry III's minority.<sup>602</sup> The very existence of so

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<sup>598</sup> *Reims*, p.285.

<sup>599</sup> *Itin.*, p.267. As has already been mentioned above a similar event occurs in the *History*, *HWM* 11,169-241.

<sup>600</sup> Jones, 'German Literature', pp.86-90. Philip of Swabia was one of two contenders for the title of Holy Roman Emperor in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. He was supported by the southern states and Philip of France while the northern states instead voted for Otto IV of Brunswick, with additional support from first Richard I and then John. Otto was ultimately successful only after the murder of Philip in 1208. The murder has been examined recently by Peter Landau in the context of regicide, 'Die Ermordung des deutschen Königs Philipp von Schwaben in Bamberg am 21. Juni 1208. Rechtsgeschichtliche Fragen zum ersten deutschen Königsmord', in Johannes Giessauf, Rainer Murauer and Martin P. Schennach (eds), *Päpste, Privilegien, Provinzen: Beiträge zur Kirchen-, Rechts- und Landesgeschichte*, Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung, 55 (Vienna, 2010), pp.229-44. For the relationship between Otto and England see Natalie Fryde, 'King John and the empire', Church (ed), *King John: New Interpretations* (1999), p.335-46; and Jens Rohrkasten, 'Otto IV und England', in Bernd Ulrich Hucker, Stefanie Hahn and Hans-Jürgen Derda (eds), *Otto IV Traum vom welfischen Kaisertum*, (Petersberg, 2009), pp.41-8.

<sup>601</sup> Gillingham, 'Royal Newsletters', p.171; for example, *Annals of Roger de Hoveden*, pp.221-4.

<sup>602</sup> Ralph Turner, *King John* (London, 1994), pp.8,12.

many different chronicles allowed Richard's presentation of himself to contemporary historians to be the one which survived to influence later authors.

In Richard's letters Philip is presented as placing his own honour above that of God by leaving the crusade, Saladin is so afraid of the Christian forces that he abandons Syria, and Richard is a knight who can unhorse 'three knights with a single lance'.<sup>603</sup> The image is of a heightened reality, not quite myth making but with a distinct awareness of the benefits of being seen in a chivalric light. A number of other sources attest to Richard's interest in self-promotion. In a song composed in 1188, the noted troubadour Bertran de Born stated that Richard 'desires honour more than any man, Christian or infidel. He seeks honour and success so intently that his reputation constantly grows and improves'.<sup>604</sup> According to Bahā' al-Dīn Richard himself stated that 'My only aim is to establish my reputation amongst the Franks', though such a claim from one of his enemies must be treated with a certain degree of skepticism.<sup>605</sup> Richard's habit of acting in the way expected of a literary hero encouraged his early moves towards fictionalisation in the chronicles and made other literary conventions appear believable if told of him, but it may have encouraged his presentation as a knight rather than a king.

Richard's own personality and deeds, encouraged by the manipulations of his image for political purposes during his lifetime, encouraged his move towards a fictionalised presentation and the 'orchestrated propaganda campaign against his reputation' did not end with his death.<sup>606</sup> Unlike the other three individuals whose fictionalisations form the basis of this thesis, it was not until several decades after Richard's death that most complete fictionalisations were written, and the events that occurred between his death and fictionalisation did have some impact on the way he was portrayed; especially with regards to the *Romance's* characterisation of him as English. The political situation in which Richard was transformed from historical figure to literary character was very different from that in which he lived. Richard ruled over a large area, of which England was just one part; he himself was culturally far more 'French' than 'English'. The

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<sup>603</sup> Edbury, *The Conquest of Jerusalem*, pp.179-80; quoted in Gillingham, *Richard Coeur de Lion*, p.102.

<sup>604</sup> Quoted in Gillingham, *Richard I*, p.260.

<sup>605</sup> Bahā' al-Dīn, *History of Saladin*, p.228.

<sup>606</sup> Gillingham, 'Royal Newsletters', p.185.

majority of his early life was spent in Aquitaine, and he chose to be buried at the emotional and devotional centre of Anjou, the abbey of Fontevrault, in company with his mother and his father.<sup>607</sup> John was buried in Worcester. Henry III was brought up in England; by 1242 the only continental land under his control was Gascony.<sup>608</sup> Although there were further attempts to restore the crown's continental holdings, and Henry clearly retained a strong sense of his duties towards a lost inheritance, the fact remains that by 1250 the kings of England had become English kings in a way that Richard never was, spending the vast majority of their time within that country. Therefore, by characterising Richard as an English king the author of the *Romance of Richard Coeur de Lion* may not only have been taking the opportunity to dispense with the more ambiguous aspects of his position, but also reflecting the situation of his own time.

What is perhaps more significant however is that the change in Richard's nationality allowed him to be seen as a proto-national hero and therefore a powerful tool in Anglo/French conflict. The narrowing geographic focus of the kings of England led to an increase in national awareness of and hostility to aliens. Powick argued that 'the most distinct result of the separation from Normandy was the development of the idea of treason and the law relating to aliens'.<sup>609</sup> One of the most consistently discussed aspects of Henry III's reign is the level of hostility to foreigners within the English barony during, and in the decades immediately preceding, the 1258-65 rebellion of Simon de Montfort.<sup>610</sup> Illustrative of the increasing tendency for England to see itself as separate is one of the very few differences between the two manuscripts of the *Chronicle of Richard of Devizes*. Appleby suggests that the change from describing Richard's troops as 'nostris' to 'Neustiis' may indicate that while Devizes identified with

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<sup>607</sup> Nigel Saul, *The Three Richards: Richard I, Richard II and Richard III* (London, 2005), p.87.

<sup>608</sup> John Gillingham, *The Angevin Empire* (London, 2000), pp.114-5.

<sup>609</sup> F.M.Powicke, *The Loss of Normandy* (Manchester, 1913), p.420.

<sup>610</sup> Some mention of this issue was made in the Introduction pp.19-21. The work of H. Ridgeway is particularly useful on this issue, see especially 'King Henry III and the 'Aliens', 1236-1272', *Thirteenth Century England II*(1988), pp.81-92 in which he points out that responses to the two main foreign groups in Henry III's court, the Savoyards and Poitevins, should be considered separately as their level of integration was different and, in fact, much of the early rivalry was between these two groups rather than between them and the English. Other articles of note on the subject are Ridgeway's 'Foreign Favourites and Henry III's Problems with Patronage, 1247-58', *English Historical Review*, 104 (1989), pp.590-610; J.C. Holt, 'King Henry's Statute against the Aliens', *English Historical Review*, 107 (1992), pp.425-44; and Michael Ray, 'Three Alien Royal Stewards in Thirteenth Century England: the careers and legacy of Mathias Bezill, Imbert Pugeys and Peter de Champrent', *Thirteenth Century England X* (2005), pp.51-68.

them the later scribe saw them as Normans, and so foreigners.<sup>611</sup> Even the use of English as the language of the *Romance* points towards an interest in portraying Richard's story in a proto-nationalistic light as the prologue states that English people will prefer to listen to stories of English heroes.<sup>612</sup> If Richard was to be a hero of England in a period when France was an increasingly alien and hostile place, his story had to be fictionalised to some extent in order to allow him to be presented as English.

In fact Henry III seems to have personally encouraged the continued interest in Richard's positive reputation as part of his attempt to overlook his father John's reign and restore the Angevin monarchy to its old position as it had existed under Richard.<sup>613</sup> The earliest artistic images of Richard fighting Saladin and the lion, from the mid-thirteenth century, were produced under royal patronage, as was the wall painting of the duel commissioned for Clarendon Palace. This last is particularly suggestive. It is the only Third Crusade scene to appear alongside a whole group of images of the First Crusade and it was commissioned in 1250.<sup>614</sup> Henry III made two crusade vows though he never went to the east, one in 1215 which was presumably made on his behalf for political purposes since he was too young to fulfil it, and again in 1250.<sup>615</sup>

The fact that Henry chose to commission a visual reminder of his grandfather's crusading heritage in the same year as he himself took the cross highlights the extent to which Richard's crusading tied in with the interests of his successors. Edward I was for a long time seen by popes and crusaders as the best candidate for leadership of a new crusade. Having led one as a prince in 1270-2, he vowed to take the cross again but never did.<sup>616</sup> What is particularly interesting is that Henry III was competing against a self-consciously crusader king for the recovery of his dynastic lands. Louis IX went on crusade in 1248, two years before Henry's second vow, and again in 1270 alongside Prince Edward.<sup>617</sup> As a result of Louis' strong crusading reputation, which was a powerful element

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<sup>611</sup> Richard of Devizes, *Time of King Richard the First*, p.xxii.

<sup>612</sup> See Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*, p.10, for the importance of language to nationalism.

<sup>613</sup> Alan Harding, *England in the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1993), p.275.

<sup>614</sup> Loomis, 'Richard Coeur de Lion and the Pas Saladin', pp.514, 522.

<sup>615</sup> José Manuel Rodríguez García, 'Henry III, Alfonso X of Castile and the Crusading Plans of the Thirteenth Century', in Björn K.U. Weiler and Ifor W. Rowlands (eds), *England and Europe in the Reign of Henry III (1216-1272)* (Aldershot, 2002), pp.99, 101.

<sup>616</sup> Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*, p.131.

<sup>617</sup> Joinville, *Life of Saint Louis*, pp.17-18

within his eventual canonisation, Henry's own crusading vows have been seen as an attempt to match his brother monarch.<sup>618</sup> Henry may have emphasised Richard's reputation for the same purpose, giving his family a strong crusading heritage.

That Richard was being used as part of a wider propaganda campaign at the time of the composition of his fictionalisations as well as within his own life time may help to explain why he appears so differently in the *Chronicle of Reims*. If Richard was being put forward as the English answer to Louis IX's crusading then it is hardly surprising to see a French source denying that claim. Although the *Chronicle* does not set out to praise Louis as a crusading king, the fact that it probably dates from the same decade as the *Romance* suggests that the two represent a competition for Richard's reputation. As was the case during his life, after his death Richard's image was heightened due to political rhetoric that formed part of Anglo-French conflict. He was consistently controversial so he was either attacked by detractors or lauded by admirers, encouraging a more fantastic and idealised portrayal; neutral observers were few and far between. However, as has already been shown in the example of the *Chronicle*, Richard's positive reputation and characterisation was much easier to justify while remaining within the bounds of historical fact than was a negative one.

Richard's crusading was clearly the basis of the reputation that led him to be fictionalised. It brought him in line with literary archetypes, provided exciting events and a suitable bad guy, and formed the background to his use in the ongoing propaganda wars between England and France as they fought over the former Angevin territories. However, the Third Crusade was not the only event that brought Richard's life in line with literary tropes. Captivity was also a stereotype of romance, appearing in texts as diverse as Chrétien's *The Knight of the Cart*, *King Horn*, and the early parts of the *History of William Marshal*.<sup>619</sup> The events of Richard's captivity as it appears in the *Chronicle* are illustrative of

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<sup>618</sup> García, 'Crusading Plans of the Thirteenth Century', p.101.

<sup>619</sup> The narrative of *The Knight of the Cart* is based around the rescue of Guinevere by Lancelot, but he is then imprisoned himself in Meleagant's Tower. Although Horn himself is never held captive he has to rescue his wife, Rymenheld, from imprisonment by her suitor Fikenhild. The episode of William's captivity as a child is one example but it is slightly different because he is not yet a knight, however he also gets captured as a young man and is portrayed in particularly fictionalised terms during this episode, *HWM* 485-703, 1706-865. In fact the motif of captivity is so prevalent that 'Captives and Fugitives' take up a whole chapter in Thompson, *Motif Index*, vol.5, pp.268-95.

his broader identification with positive models of literary heroism. In this version of events Richard is secretly captured and imprisoned by the Duke of Austria while attempting to disguise himself as a kitchen knave to avoid detection by his enemy.<sup>620</sup> Although it is known that someone is being held captive no one in the surrounding area knows who the prisoner is, and no messages are sent to England so no one known what has become of the king. After four years of captivity Richard's location is discovered by a faithful minstrel who has been travelling around Europe in search of him. Having found a castle with a mysterious prisoner the minstrel, Blondel, stays there all winter hoping to discover who it is but without success. Then one day Richard spots him and begins to sing a song they wrote between them that no one else knew in order to make himself known without compromising Blondel's position.<sup>621</sup> This is one of the more famous legends of Richard in the present-day; however, it was not widely known until the eighteenth century.<sup>622</sup> Although Blondel was a historical figure his association with Richard is an invention of the *Chronicle*, with reference to Richard's reputation as a patron of troubadours.<sup>623</sup>

The real hero of this story of course is Blondel, not Richard. It is the untiringly faithful servant that is given the most space in the text and whose actions are the most admirable, so seeing this story as entirely pro-Richard would be misleading. In addition, Richard's presentation is variable; disguising himself as a servant was not an action befitting his standing but it was his quick thinking in coming up with a way to reveal himself without endangering his rescuer that ensured a successful outcome. Even his subjects' pleasure at his discovery is

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<sup>620</sup> *Reims*, pp.34-5.

<sup>621</sup> *Reims*, p.41-5.

<sup>622</sup> John Gillingham, 'Some legends of Richard the Lionheart', Nelson (ed), *History and Myth*, p.56.

<sup>623</sup> Broughton, *Legends of King Richard*, pp.126, 128. Blondel was a Jean de Nesle, a troubadour known to have written at least twenty five songs that appear to have been well enough known to have influenced other contemporary works. He was nicknamed Blondel for his fair hair. However, there were two individuals with that name who may be the inspiration for the character in the *Chronicle*. In 1942 Holger Petersen Dyggve, identified him as Jean II de Nesle who was active in both the Fourth and Albigensian Crusades; *Trouvères Et Protecteurs Des Trouvères Dans Les Cours Seigneuriales De France* (Helsinki, 1942). However, more recently the earlier Jean I de Nesle was suggested by Yvan G. Lepage on the basis of the *Chronicle*'s account of this event because he was involved in the Third Crusade and would therefore be a suitable companion for Richard; 'L'OEuvre Lyrique de Blondel de Nesle; Textes, Edition critique avec introduction, notes et glossaire' in *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie*, 113 (1997), pp.125-8. The story is entirely fictional however. There is no evidence to suggest that the historical Blondel and Richard had any particular association and the events of Richard's captivity were definitely not compatible with this story because Richard's whereabouts were well known.

couched in terms of self interest rather than pure admiration for him; ‘they were all passing glad; for the king was the most bountiful man that ever buckled spur.’<sup>624</sup> Although generosity was an admirable lordly virtue, given that Richard’s wealth appeared as part of criticism against him during the crusade narrative, the praise here is ambiguous. However, by comparison to his depiction on crusade the presentation of his captivity is far more favourable.

As was the case with the Coeur de Lion and Pluck Buffet stories about Richard’s period of captivity in the *Romance*’s interpolations, the *Chronicle*’s Blondel story pertains more to Richard’s private person than to his royal standing. The Blondel story follows the pattern, noted in the *Romance*, that accounts of Richard’s captivity tend to be more fictionalised than those relating to the crusade. All three captivity stories are entirely invented rather than developed from other events, suggesting a different kind of correlation between captivity and fictionalisation than that which existed between crusading and fictionalisation. All accounts of the Third Crusade, even the highly inaccurate version given by the *Chronicle*, were based on the historical events of the crusade, whereas once in captivity Richard’s fictionalisation becomes completely fictional.

The more and less historical episodes within Richard’s fictionalisation do not act in cooperation in the way that was seen in the *Romance of Fouke Fitz Waryn*.<sup>625</sup> The completely fictional captivity episodes do not strengthen, or restate in a new form, the important themes from the more historically based crusade section. It is true that in the *Romance* the captivity stories emphasise physical prowess, while in the *Chronicle* Richard does not regain the warrior reputation that was denied to him on crusade; in the later example it is his wits and musical ability, rather than his strength and bravery, which are being fictionalised. However, the themes of Anglo/French conflict and Richard’s role as leader, which were central to the crusade narrative in the *Romance*, do not re-emerge in any form in its account of his captivity. While, even if the *Chronicle* does not show Richard as a warrior while in captivity, the Blondel story is a definite move away from its previous intent to show Richard in the worst

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<sup>624</sup> ‘Si en sont très lié; car li rois estoit li plus larges hons qui onques chauçast esperon’; Reims, p.44.

<sup>625</sup> See chapter three, pp.102-33.



possible light. The historical fact of captivity seems to have inspired its own, much less historical, fictionalisation which was only associated with the crusading one because it happened to the same man.

Without wanting to engage too closely with debates over the validity of defining medieval literary genres, it appears that crusading and captivity connected Richard to different literary archetypes. Where captivity appears in literature it is usually in stories alongside recognisable romance motifs such as princesses or noble ladies and single combats. That is to say, captivity normally features in contexts that are highly stylised and can therefore be easily identified as fiction rather than history. By contrast, appearances of crusading in literature, even entirely fictional literature, tend to be tied more strongly to reality. The fictional *Gui* fights at Constantinople, a real crusading location, and the Matter of France, which deals predominantly with conflict between Christian and Moors, was based on the historical King Charlemagne and his court.<sup>626</sup> These works tend to focus on warfare and military deeds rather than the more ‘sanitised’ romance motifs of courtly chivalry, referring back to the older form of literature, the *chanson de geste*. Therefore, although both crusading and captivity were aspects of the historical life of Richard I, and both were staples of fictional literature, their literary models had different relationships with fiction, which in turn affected the extent to which they were fictionalised in accounts of Richard’s life.

Richard had a consistently strong reputation, both during his life and in the decades immediately following it. The power Richard had in popular memory

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<sup>626</sup> The Matter of France is one of three groups of stories current in medieval Europe, the others being the Matter of Britain (tales of Arthur and his knights) and the Matter of Rome (versions of Greek and Roman Mythology). The Matter of France was based around the person and court of the historical eighth- and ninth-century Frankish king Charles the Great (c.742-814); for an account of his life see the recent biography by Derick A. Wilson, *Charlemagne* (London, 2005); a collection of *Lives* of Charlemagne and his son written in the ninth century, including that by Einhard which is the most well known, can be found in Thomas F.X. Noble, *Charlemagne and Louis the Pious : the lives by Einhard, Notker, Ermoldus, Thegan, and the Astronomer* (University Park, Pa. 2009). The Matter can be broken down further into three groups, *Geste du roi*, *Geste de Garin de Monglane*, and *Geste de Doon de Mayence*, the first two of which have conflict with infidels as a central theme. The most famous, and earliest, example is the *chanson de geste* known as the *Song of Roland* which recounts in heroic terms events during Charlemagne’s historical wars in Spain against the Moors; Glyn Burgess (ed & trans), *The Song of Roland* (New York, 1990). The transition of Charlemagne’s image to that of a Christian hero and ‘proto-crusader’ began in the tenth century, before the crusades themselves, and had become well established by the mid twelfth century; Jace Stuckey, ‘Charlemagne as Crusader? Memory, Propaganda, and the Many Uses of Charlemagne’s Legendary Expedition to Spain’, in Matthew Gabriele and Jace Stuckey (eds), *The Legends of Charlemagne in the Middle Ages: Power, Faith, and Crusade* (New York, 2008), pp.137-52, at pp.137-9.

forced authors to portray him in certain ways; he and his military capability could not be overlooked even in works that were aimed at glorifying someone else. The consistency of his characterisation was primarily associated with the events of Richard's life and his own character. His life was dramatic and his personality conformed closely to ideals of knighthood, allowing for an easy development into fiction because comparatively few details had to be changed. Richard's historical role as crusader was the main impetus for the development of his characterisation, as well as being emphasised as part of it. His crusading made him a hero, and the historical events of the crusade encouraged his portrayal as the personification of the Christian cause. The potential for fictionalisation thus provided was brought to fruition by the manipulation his image received at his own hands, those of his contemporaries and by others after his death. However, crusading was not the only aspect of Richard's life that allowed him to be seen in fictional form. His period of captivity brought him in line with a different literary model, one which allowed for a far more fictional and stylised characterisation of Richard to develop. Captivity did not make Richard a hero, and might not even have resulted in fictionalisation if his reputation had not already been so strong from his crusading, but it was the aspect of his life that was most consistently portrayed in an entirely fictional manner. As such both crusade and captivity, alongside a character already well suited to a heroic presentation, can be concluded to be circumstances that encouraged the transformation of a historical individual into a fictional character.

## History Controlling Fiction: *Story of Eustace the Monk*

As was shown in the case of Richard I, fictionalisation seems to have been encouraged particularly by a certain typology of event. For Richard it was his crusade and captivity that formed the dramatic core, other events simply appearing for completeness or in an entirely unrecognisable form. A third such circumstance was outlawry. A fictionalised account of a historical outlaw has already been examined in this thesis, the *Romance of Fouke Fitz Waryn*, in which a historical individual is presented as a hero. By contrast the *Story of Eustace the Monk* shows its central character in a less than admirable light; as a devilish magician and skilled deceiver. A single character archetype, the outlaw is portrayed in very different ways in the two texts, raising the question of what it was that determined how someone would be portrayed. The following chapter will begin by comparing the literary presentations of Eustace and Fouke to demonstrate their differences, before exploring those differences in the context of pre-existing literary outlaw models, and finally considering the reasons why certain models might have been used in each case. It will be argued that the nature of Eustace and Fouke's fictionalisations were controlled more by the historical facts of the individual's life, whether or not those facts were themselves fictionalised, than they were a choice by the author.

The literary outlaw is a complex phenomenon that has engendered a considerable amount of scholarship.<sup>627</sup> Among all the attention outlaws have received three main categories have emerged; the social bandit, the good outlaw

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<sup>627</sup> Concerning medieval outlaws the most important work is Maurice Keen, *Outlaws of Medieval Legend*, although Keen himself has since expressed caution over some of the elements within it. So many publications have been produced on outlaws it is not possible to list them all here but recent additions to the literature on the subject which have particular relevance to England and Northern France include Timothy Scott Jones, *Outlawry in Medieval Literature* (Basingstoke, 2010), Helen Phillips (ed), *Bandit territories: British outlaw traditions* (Cardif, 2008), and Alexander L. Kaufman (ed), *British Outlaws of Literature and History: Essays on Medieval and Early Modern Figures from Robin Hood to Twm Shon Catty* (Jefferson, NC, 2011) A number of compilations of medieval outlaw tales have been published, most recently Thomas H. Ohlgren (ed), *Medieval Outlaws: Ten Tales in Modern English Translation* (Stroud, 1998) which was expanded and reissued as *Medieval Outlaws: Twelve Tales in Modern English Translation* (West Lafayette, Indiana, 2005). However, the literary outlaw extends beyond the medieval period, and an interesting exploration of its broader context appears in Graham Seal, *The Outlaw Legend: A Cultural Tradition in Britain, America and Australia* (Cambridge, 1996).

and the trickster.<sup>628</sup> The first of these, social banditry, need not be considered because it is anachronistic to the Middle Ages, but the other two will be extremely helpful for the following discussion.<sup>629</sup> The model of the good outlaw was developed by Ingrid Benecke who used the *Romance of Fouke Fitz Waryn* as one of her four main examples.<sup>630</sup> In this model, although outlaws are by their very nature outside the law and in opposition to the state's authority, they are presented as the possessors of a moral authority that supersedes those they oppose.<sup>631</sup> The outlaw becomes the supreme authority figure within the text. It is he, not kings, counts or bishops that fulfils the duties of leadership and protects the realm. Often at the end of the narrative, the people in power will be defeated and learn their lesson so the outlaw can be pardoned, coming back within the law and so indicating that moral authority has been returned to the state.<sup>632</sup> Outlaw narratives of this type, that is those with exemplary heroes, are didactic, giving them a similar function to history.

The second model of interest has a dramatically different ethos. A trickster is a being who uses specific patterns of behaviour, such as disguise and deceit, to trick his opponent into humiliation and defeat. Tricksters appear in myth and literature all over the world in many guises but are virtually all male and are often associated with animals, Reynard the Fox being a well known medieval example.<sup>633</sup> Many of the motifs expected of an outlaw tale are characteristic of the trickster; the strategic tricks used to gain information, confuse or trap the enemy, and affect a rescue or escape.<sup>634</sup> As such, there are elements of the trickster in the presentation of all good outlaws, including Fouke. However, it must be remembered that these theoretical categorisations, while

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<sup>628</sup> Ohlgren, *Medieval Outlaws*, pp.xxvi-xxxii.

<sup>629</sup> Social Banditry was defined by its creator Eric Hobsbawn as a phenomenon 'about class, wealth and power in peasant societies'; Eric Hobsbawn, *Bandits* (London, 1969, 2000 edition), p.9. As such, although it is relevant to later medieval outlaws, especially Robin Hood, outlaws who are of aristocratic birth fall outside its remit.

<sup>630</sup> Ingrid Benecke, *Der Gute Outlaw*, (Tübingen, 1973).

<sup>631</sup> Helen Phillips, 'Bandit Territories and Good Outlaws', Helen Phillips (ed), *Bandit Territories: British Outlaw Traditions* (Cardiff, 2008), p10.

<sup>632</sup> Benecke, *Der Gute Outlaw*, p.159.

<sup>633</sup> The widespread resonance of this archetype can be seen by the fact that, alongside the French Renard, a small selection of the characters who have been identified as tricksters include the Norse god Loki, Greek god Hermes, Celtic Puck, Native American Coyote, and Eshu from the Nigerian Yoruba religion. Renard the Fox will be discussed in more detail later but for an outline and bibliography of work on this complex text see Kenneth Varty, *The Roman de Renart: A Guide to Scholarly Work* (London, 1998).

<sup>634</sup> Ohlgren, *Medieval Outlaws*, p.xxxii.

useful starting points for discussion of the *Story* and *Romance*, are modern definitions rather than medieval ones. A fuller analysis of the place of these two texts within thirteenth-century literary outlaw tradition will take place later in this chapter after they have been compared to one another.

The *Romance of Fouke Fitz Waryn* and the *Story of Eustace the Monk* are two texts particularly well suited for comparison.<sup>635</sup> Both Fouke and Eustace historically spent time as outlaws in the first decade of the thirteenth century and the outlaw narratives in both texts are given a far greater proportion of space than the length of the historical period of outlawry would warrant.<sup>636</sup> The accounts were produced very quickly after the death of the central character, although in the case of Fouke that death took place much later so the texts were composed some decades apart.<sup>637</sup> In both cases fictionalisation also took place in the locality in which the central character had lived; Ludlow for Fouke and Boulonnais for Eustace, and the resulting texts were of approximately similar lengths.<sup>638</sup> Finally, both texts even appear to have received a similar level of circulation. Like the *Romance*, the *Story of Eustace the Monk* survives in only one manuscript; Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, fr.1553, and there is evidence that it was not the only copy produced. Inventories of Charles V of France's library made in 1373 and 1380 show that there were at least two other copies in

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<sup>635</sup> The only modern edition of the *Story* was published as *Li Romans de Witasse le Moine: Roman du treizième siècle*, Denis Joseph Conlon (Chapel Hill, 1972), hereafter abbreviated as *ETM*; all references are to the line numbers of that edition. It also appears alongside the *Romance* in Glyn Burgess, *Two Medieval Outlaws*. For details on dating the composition of the *Romance* mentioned in this paragraph see chapter three above.

<sup>636</sup> With Eustace the historical outlawry was even shorter than Fouke's, probably only a year around 1204 and early 1205; *Two Medieval Outlaws*, p.16.

<sup>637</sup> The *Story* can not have been written after 1284 because the text immediately preceding the *Story* in the manuscript claims to have been written down in that year and they are by the same hand, so the latest possible date of composition was sixty-seven years after Eustace's death. The earliest possible date of composition was 1223, the year in which Louis VIII became king of France, because the text refers to him by that title. It is possible that the author may have waited until after the death of the *Story's* villain, Renaud de Dammartin, in 1227 before composing it because Raymond would no longer be able to object to his presentation. However, Burgess points out that Renaud was not local to the area and was in prison for the later years of his life so an author need not have had to wait for his death to characterise him unfavourably. Burgess also believes that the accuracy in the names of individuals present at key events suggests that the author may have been present himself or had spoken to people who were, suggesting very early composition. Consequently Burgess accepts a date between 1223 and the early 1230s for the *Story*, making it far more contemporary to the events described than the *Romance*. *Two Medieval Outlaws*, pp.42-44

<sup>638</sup> A large number of place names from the area of Boulonnais appear in the *Story*, suggesting that the author was familiar with its geography, whereas information about more distant locations, including within France, is sketchy. This led Burgess to conclude that the author was probably from the same area as his subject, *Two Medieval Outlaws*, p.41

existence, in comparison to the three other copies that can be deduced concerning Fouke. These similarities make the differences in the nature of the two individuals' fictionalisations particularly interesting.

There are two levels to the differences between the ways in which Fouke and Eustace were fictionalised; the form and structure of the texts as a whole, and the characterisation of individuals within the text. The first of these concerns the extent to which they can be seen as history or fiction. The word 'story' used in the title of the *Story of Eustace the Monk* is not intended to indicate that it was necessarily a different type of literature to the *Romance of Fouke Fitz Waryn*. That was the name given by its most recent translator, Glyn Burgess, but Burgess himself predominantly refers to the *Story* as a romance and provides no explanation as to why he used the word 'story' in the title. Stylistically the form that the *Story* takes is octosyllabic rhyming couplets, the traditional form of medieval French romance, and its editor identified it as a *romans*. Therefore, in spite of differences in nomenclature, both texts are usually seen as falling within the same genre. However, the content of the *Story* does not include the kind of romance motifs that were seen in the *Romance*. There are no princesses to be rescued or chivalric single combats, and it does not have an interest in knightly or aristocratic culture; it is a different type of literature. As a consequence, as will be shown, the two texts interact with the borderland between history and fiction in a very different way.

Beginning as usual with historical accuracy, there does not at first appear to be any significant difference between the levels of fictionality in the *Story* and the *Romance*. Establishing the level of authenticity in the *Story* is helped by the fact that the historical Eustace was famous in his own time for his role in naval warfare between England and France, especially his death fighting for Prince Louis at the Battle of Sandwich (1217). Therefore, unlike Fouke who only appears in the historical record in charters and other administrative documents, Eustace appears in narrative sources that can provide some idea as to his character. The main chronicles to mention him are the *Histoire des Ducs de Normandie et rois d'Angleterre*, a French prose account of the kings of England from the mythical Brutus to 1217 and the *Flowers of History* by Roger of Wendover which was then expanded upon by Matthew Paris in his *Chronica*

*Majora*.<sup>639</sup> Interestingly, he also appears in the *History of William Marshal*.<sup>640</sup> However, there are still very few episodes in the story that can be tested against other accounts, especially in the pre-outlawry and outlawry sections.

Only two episodes before the outlawry are mentioned in other sources. The first concerns the reasoning behind Eustace's decision to leave the monastery which the *Story* describes as a result of the death of his father, Bauduin Busquet. Bauduin was murdered by Hainfrois de Heresinghen 'because he wanted to get hold of his property' and Eustace turned to the Count of Boulogne for justice.<sup>641</sup> Mathew Paris contradicts the *Story*; he believed that Eustace left to secure an inheritance when his brothers died without children.<sup>642</sup> However, Paris can not be correct because one of his brothers was still alive and active in the Channel Islands after Eustace's death.<sup>643</sup> Given the lack of alternative evidence and the fact that the author appears to have had considerable local knowledge, Burgess accepted the reason given by the *Story* as more plausible than that provided by Paris.<sup>644</sup> The contemporary confusion over this issue may explain the level of attention it receives in the *Story*. The judicial proceedings cover fifty three lines, nearly five times the amount devoted to Bauduin Busquet's death itself, so the author clearly felt that this was an important plot point.<sup>645</sup>

The second is Eustace's role at Count Raymond's court. The *Story* tells us that Eustace entered the Count's service as the seneschal of Boulonnais, a fact which can be confirmed and even dated to 1203 when he replaced Daniel de Bétencourt who was to accompany the Count to Normandy.<sup>646</sup> However, Eustace

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<sup>639</sup> *Histoire des ducs de Normandie et des rois d'Angleterre, publiée en entiere, pour la première fois, d'après deux manuscrits de la Bibliothèque du Roi*, Francisque Michel (ed) (Paris, 1840, reprint London, 1965). The more recent edition of the text, William Crow, 'An Edition of the *Histoire des Ducs de Normandie et rois d'Angleterre* Contained in French MS.56 of the John Rylands Library, Manchester University' (PhD: Glasgow, 1999) is only interested in the short version of the text which does not mention Eustace. *Two Medieval Outlaws*, p.5.

<sup>640</sup> He receives a number of brief mentions at the start of Henry III's reign, *HWM* 17,150-460. The presentation that he receives in the *History* will be discussed later.

<sup>641</sup> 'K'il le voloit deshyreter'; *ETM* 313.

<sup>642</sup> Mathew Paris, *Chronica majora*, ed H.R. Luard, Rolls Series, 73, 7 vols (1872-84) vol.III, p.29.

<sup>643</sup> A brother and uncle of Eustace were captured during a raid on the island of Sark in 1214 and were imprisoned in Porchester Castle; J.A. Everard & J.C. Holt, *Jersey 1204: The Forging of an Island Community* (London, 2004), p.86.

<sup>644</sup> *Two Medieval Outlaws*, p.11.

<sup>645</sup> *ETM* 318-71.

<sup>646</sup> Lambert of Ardes, *Historia comitum ghisnensium*, in M. Bouquet, *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France*, 24 vols (Paris, 1734-1904), vol.XVIII (1822), p.587.

was not as successful in that role as the *Story* would have us believe. The *Story* claims he was forced out of favour by his father's enemy Hainfrois de Heresinghen, but Malo, Conlon and Burgess all pointed out that the only information that has survived about Eustace's time as seneschal concerns his incompetence in dealing with a perceived threat from the Count of Guînes while Renaud was supporting Philip Augustus in Normandy.<sup>647</sup> Eustace's inability to deal with the situation led to a group of Renaud's workers being routed. Therefore, even assuming that Eustace became an outlaw as a result of a disagreement with Raymond over the way he fulfilled his role, which can not be confirmed, the Count would have had reason to question his competence without any enemy working against him.

Although there is no doubt that there was a period of outlawry during which Eustace was an active annoyance to the Count, and the account the *Story* gives of that time is long and detailed, only three of the outlaw episodes have ever been suggested to be based on reality and even in these episodes there exists no direct evidence in any case.<sup>648</sup> The very first outlaw episode described in the *Story*, the burning of two mills during a wedding, is emphasised as truthful in the text in a way that other stories are not and it was accepted in the late nineteenth century by Henri Malo on the basis of local geography.<sup>649</sup> The other two elements of possible accuracy were suggested by the text's editor Denis Conlon; Eustace's attack on Renaud while he was acting as rearguard for King Philip Augustus, and his capture by Renaud where he is able to escape because a number of the local nobility persuade the count to send him to the king rather than hanging him immediately.<sup>650</sup> The only evidence for either episode is that the individuals named are known from contemporary documents. Burgess accepts the possibility of a historical basis but goes no further than saying that 'one might legitimately wonder' whether they took place.<sup>651</sup> The limited nature of the evidence from other sources means that all that can be concluded about the

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<sup>647</sup> Malo, 'Eustache le Moine', p.14; *ETM*, pp.15-6; *Two Medieval Outlaws*, pp.12-3.

<sup>648</sup> The *Histoire des ducs de Normandie* and the *Chronique de Béthune* both mention an extended period of conflict between Eustace and Renaud, but they do not provide any details of the events that took place. *Histoire des ducs de Normandie*, p.167; extract from *La Chronique de l'anonyme de Béthune* in Bouquet, *Recueil des historiens*, p.774j.

<sup>649</sup> *ETM* 429; Malo, 'Eustache le Moine', pp.14-15.

<sup>650</sup> *Li Romans de Witasse le Moine*, pp.16, 121-2.

<sup>651</sup> *Two Medieval Outlaws*, pp.14-15.



historicity of the outlaw section is that the author was concerned to give at least an appearance of accuracy in some parts by referring to other recognisable historical individuals and he may have based a few of his episodes in actual events, a statement that could just as easily be made about the portrayal of Fouke's outlawry.

It is in the third, post-outlawry, section that the majority of the historical information contained in the *Story* appears. It was during this last period of Eustace's life, when he was a mercenary rather than an outlaw, that he was most famous in his own time. The overall shape of this section is accurate; Eustace left Boulogne in order to work for King John who did indeed employ Eustace in the Channel Islands, and possibly along the northern French coast, presumably as part of his attempt to regain Normandy; the *Histoire des ducs de Normandie* says that John even granted Eustace rights over the Islands.<sup>652</sup> Beyond that, Wendy Stevenson is prepared to accept the *Story*'s account that Eustace recaptured the Isles from the French. She dates the event to August or September 1205, after their presumed loss in May 1204 when the then Lord of the Islands surrendered his lands to Philip of France.<sup>653</sup> Other facts known about Eustace during this time demonstrate that, although John was sufficiently impressed with Eustace's service to grant him land in Norfolk, other sailors and the authorities of the Cinque Ports were antagonistic and afraid of him.<sup>654</sup> This may well have been because Eustace did not always act entirely in accordance with John's wishes; on one occasion John had to order the bailiffs of the Cinque Ports to help restore a ship Eustace had stolen from its owner.<sup>655</sup> Two grants of safe conduct allowing Eustace to visit England, for May 1206 and April 1207, demonstrate that he was felt to be in sufficient danger from enemies within his adopted country to warrant direct royal intervention for his safety.<sup>656</sup>

Given what can be deduced about Eustace's character and actions from the circumstances above, two episodes that appear at this point in the *Story*,

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<sup>652</sup> *Histoire des ducs de Normandie*, p.167.

<sup>653</sup> Wendy B. Stevenson, 'England, France and the Channel Islands, 1204-1259', *La Société Guernesaise, Reports and Transactions*, 19 (1971-5), pp.570-1.

<sup>654</sup> *Two Medieval Outlaws*, p.16.

<sup>655</sup> There is disagreement on the date that this order was issued; Conlon placed it in April 1205, *Li Romans de Witasse le Moine*, p.109 but Burgess argues that since it is from the seventh year of John's reign that would make it 1206, *Two Medieval Outlaws*, p.17.

<sup>656</sup> *Li Romans de Witasse le Moine*, pp.109-10.

which do not specifically appear in other records, are within the realms of possibility. Firstly, a raid up the Seine against a man called Cadoc, a name reminiscent of Lambert Cadulque, the *bailli* of Pont-Audemer, who was himself a ruthless adventurer and could consequently have appeared as a personal rival to Eustace. Plausibility is added to the *Story*'s account by the fact Eustace is said to have manoeuvred Cadoc into a marsh and there is a large stretch of marshland near Pont-Audemer.<sup>657</sup> Secondly, the circumstance of John demanding that Eustace return a ship he had stolen demonstrates that Eustace was engaged in acts of piracy similar to the one described in the *Story* in which Eustace defeats and steals from a ship without provocation.<sup>658</sup>

The same pattern, of a broadly accurate outline with plausibility to some specific elements, continues when Eustace leaves John's service and returns to France. Historically we do not know why Eustace chose to switch his allegiance. One possibility is that Count Renaud's decision to ally with King John put Eustace back in conflict with his old enemy; the annals of Dunstable say that Renaud set traps for him that forced him to flee.<sup>659</sup> However the *Histoire des ducs de Normandie* places the problem between Eustace and John himself, stating that John imprisoned Eustace and his wife for some time though providing no explanation.<sup>660</sup> From the dates it seems unlikely that increased contact with Renaud was the only problem; Renaud had been making overtures to John through Eustace from 1209 and eventually performed homage in May 1212, while Eustace was on good terms with John at least until October 1212 and may still have been as much as two years later.<sup>661</sup> The *Story* combines the two possibilities, stating that as soon as Eustace saw his enemy in England he decided to return home to France but later telling King Philip that he could not be at peace with John since the latter had had his daughter killed.<sup>662</sup> However, the use of two disguises in this short section - he is a minstrel in his escape from England and then becomes a messenger-boy when he attempts to contact Philip -

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<sup>657</sup> *Two Medieval Outlaws*, pp17-8.

<sup>658</sup> *ETM* 2126-35.

<sup>659</sup> Quoted in *Two Medieval Outlaws*, p.26.

<sup>660</sup> *Histoire des ducs de Normandie* (1965), p.167.

<sup>661</sup> *Two Medieval Outlaws*, pp.22-3, 28

<sup>662</sup> *ETM* 2164-5, 2226-30; there is no mention of Eustace himself being imprisoned as the *Histoire des ducs de Normandie* suggested, but that is not at all surprising, since it would act against his characterisation to place him in a vulnerable position at this point.

demonstrates that even where there is accurate information it is not presented in a historical context.<sup>663</sup>

The final episode in the *Story*, Eustace's death, is also the one that engendered the greatest interest at the time and consequently appears in most other sources.<sup>664</sup> Eustace died at the Battle of Sandwich, a conflict that was decisive in ending the First Baron's War. He was working for King Philip's son Louis (the future Louis VIII) at a time when Louis was attempting to claim the crown of England on the invitation of disaffected barons.<sup>665</sup> Eustace's personal role in the conflict was extremely significant; he supplied John's opponents with siege weapons; it was on Eustace's own ship that Louis travelled to England in 1216 when he conquered Kent, and Eustace took an active part in the Battle of Winchelsea.<sup>666</sup> The Battle of Sandwich marked the end of the war in part because of Eustace's death which was seen as hugely significant.<sup>667</sup> The account that the *Story* gives of this battle is accurate but its significance is ignored. A possible reason is that a full explanation of the battle would present Eustace in a poor light; Cannon concluded that the French had the initial advantage but were overconfident, so Eustace led his side to a defeat that was both disastrous for the war and personally humiliating.<sup>668</sup> Neutrality may have been the most positive way that the author could find to describe his hero's death.

The above consideration of historical authenticity in the *Story* has demonstrated that a significant minority of the episodes it describes were based on historical facts. As with Fouke in the *Romance*, the outlaw section has the fewest episodes that appear to have been based on true events but both texts do have a number of plausible stories within that section that make use of recognisable historical situations and individuals. In both cases the central outlaw

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<sup>663</sup> *ETM* 2168-2239.

<sup>664</sup> Burgess gave examples of fourteen chronicle accounts of the battle and death showing how universally significant was the event, *Two Medieval Outlaws*, p.34.

<sup>665</sup> For Prince Louis' campaign and its wider context see Alan Harding, *England in the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1993), pp.268-72, James Clarke Holt's influential *Magna Carta* (Cambridge, 1969, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed 1992) and Henry Cannon, 'The Battle of Sandwich and Eustace the Monk', *English Historical Review*, 27 (1912), pp.649-70. These events are described in some detail in the *History of William Marshal*, A.J. Holden (ed), S. Gregory (trans), D. Crouch (notes), Anglo-Norman Text Society Occasional Publications Series 4-6 (London, 2002-6) and a comparison between the two key texts will be made later in this chapter.

<sup>666</sup> *Two Medieval Outlaws*, pp.31-3; *Histoire des ducs de Normandie* (1965), p.167.

<sup>667</sup> He was sufficiently well known that after his death his head was mounted on a lance and taken to Canterbury, as well as other locations around England; *Histoire de ducs de Normandie*, p.202; *Two Medieval Outlaws*, p.39

<sup>668</sup> Cannon, 'The Battle of Sandwich and Eustace the Monk', pp.662-3.

section is also flanked by sections of unequal length that have a greater basis in fact. The *Romance* places most of its historical information in a long opening section with only a couple of recognisable features appearing at the end while in the *Story* the situation is reversed; it has a short beginning and long section after the outlawry that is based to a significant degree on verifiable history. So the *Story* and the *Romance* contain similar levels of fictionalisation where authenticity is the only factor to be considered, but they have very different attitudes to that fictionalisation.

As was the case with the *Romance*, the narrative of the *Story* falls into three sections; pre-outlawry, outlawry, and post outlawry, the central one of which takes up the most space and contains the most purely fictional episodes. However, unlike the *Romance* which characterises Fouke's outlawry as being a necessary consequence of previous historical events, there is little interest in the *Story* in connecting the outlawry section to the events before or after it. The *Story* does make some attempt to explain and justify Eustace's outlawry in a short section which claims that his father's enemy, Hainfrois de Heresinghen, made things difficult for him at court and denounced him to the Count, causing the Count to question Eustace's abilities and ultimately leading to Eustace renouncing allegiance and becoming an outlaw.<sup>669</sup> However, when at line 1882 Eustace ends his life as an outlaw and travels to England to work for King John the decision is made without comment or explanation after one of Eustace's many pranks in France; there is not even a paragraph break in the text. Although such a loose narrative structure, lacking any deliberate alteration of the sequence of events, could indicate history according to Fleischman's definitions there are two reasons to overlook that interpretation; a lack of context and a lack of causality.

The first section of the *Romance* provided a strong historical context for the remainder of the action, especially the outlawry. By contrast, the *Story* opens with a short fantastic section in which Eustace learns and uses magic and then undertakes his short stint as a monk.<sup>670</sup> From the very beginning Eustace is presented in a highly fictional context. Unlike the *Romance*, the *Story* has little interest in Eustace's family background, only in Eustace's life itself. His family

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<sup>669</sup> *ETM* 376-99.

<sup>670</sup> *ETM* 1-279.

is only mentioned because it was the death of his father, Bauduin Busquet, which caused Eustace to leave the monastery and seek revenge. Even once it has been brought up the family connection is immediately ignored because, although Eustace did not accept the judgement of his lord Count Raymond of Boulogne in the trial by battle of his father's killer, he nevertheless decided to work for the Count rather than pursue justice.<sup>671</sup> Eustace is not placed in a historical context in the way that Fouke is; the account of his life starts with no indication of when it took place and his actions are entirely his own rather than being part of wider political and cultural developments.

The lack of causal connection between events in the *Story* can be seen also as demonstrative of fiction in spite of the usual connection between structure and increased fictionality. Not only is the outlawry largely unconnected to events before and after it, the separate episodes within it are also unconnected to each other. However, in spite of the length of this section there are no subdivisions, such as those which were supplied by Fouke's travels and romance style episodes, and no causal links between one episode and the next. In fact, virtually every episode begins with some version of the formula 'one day Eustace' with no sense that time has passed between them.<sup>672</sup> The homogeneity of style and repetitious phrasing creates a sense of timelessness throughout this section, and events pile on top of each other with no connection between them; the order of the episodes could be completely changed and it would make no difference to the narrative. The lack of the obviously fantastic creatures and events which appeared in accounts of Fouke's journeys can, on one hand, be seen as an indication that the author of the *Story* was trying maintain *verisimilia*, but in combination with a lack of causality it simply creates a different kind of fictional narrative space.

The sense of timelessness created by the disconnected episodes and lack of connection to broader historical events suggests that the author of the *Story* was not concerned with creating an overall sense of reality in the way that the author of the *Romance* was. In fact the *Story* boasts that '[t]his very night I shall tell you something which will make you laugh', indicating a very different intent to the *Romance*'s statement that 'one should speak of such things as could be

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<sup>671</sup> *ETM* 304-99.

<sup>672</sup> Examples include *ETM*, 400, 430, 776, 930 and 1284.

profitable for many people'.<sup>673</sup> The *Romance* is an entertaining tale but it also has a deeper function; in the *Story* entertainment is the primary goal. An attempt at moralising does take place in the last two lines of the *Story* but they are unconnected to the events that led up to them and seem to be merely a conventional ending.<sup>674</sup> Eustace is neither an example to be inspired by nor a cautionary tale; he is simply an entertaining character. Intent and narrative syntax therefore indicate that the *Story* is fiction rather than a conscious combination of history and fiction as was the case in the *Romance*.

The *Story*'s more fictional approach, especially its function as entertainment rather than exemplar, carries over into the second of the two levels of difference between the two texts identified above, characterisation. The portrayal of Eustace as an individual in the *Story* is far more fantastic than that of Fouke in the *Romance*. That is not to say that there are no similarities; both characters spend large sections of their stories in the forest undertaking the type of trickster activity that Maurice Keen saw as characteristic of the 'real outlaw'.<sup>675</sup> There is also considerable overlap in the content of these trickster stories; for example both escape their enemies by reversing their horses' shoes in order to appear to be travelling in the opposite direction.<sup>676</sup> The theme of disguise appears repeatedly; Eustace appears, among other things, as a monk, a charcoal burner, a potter, a pilgrim, and a leper.<sup>677</sup> Although Fouke was more restrained, he still dressed as a charcoal burner and a merchant and had other members of his band disguise themselves at various points.<sup>678</sup>

However, already differences begin to emerge. Even within the accounts of trickery and disguise Fouke has noticeably more moral and political aims for his activities; he does not want simply to humiliate his enemy but to achieve a particular set of law and land based objectives. The theme of authority that played out so strongly in the *Romance* in terms of Fouke's moral and legal right to act as he does is not in evidence in the *Story*. While Eustace uses his disguises

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<sup>673</sup> *ETM* ll.281-2; *FFW* 3.8.

<sup>674</sup> *ETM* ll.306-7 ; *Nus ne puet vivre longhement/ Qui tos jors a mal faire entent*. [No one who is always intent on evil can live for a long time.]

<sup>675</sup> Keen, *Outlaws of Medieval Legend*, p.174. The concept of the 'real outlaw' as representing popular concerns against noble authority has been rejected, not least by Keen himself (pp.xii-xiv), but as a model for character behaviour rather than purpose it remains persistent.

<sup>676</sup> *FFW*, p.32; *ETM*, ll.1494-545.

<sup>677</sup> *ETM*, ll.996-1185,1396-465.

<sup>678</sup> For example *FFW*, pp.29, 32.

to steal horses and small amounts of money or to play tricks, like having pies at a feast filled with tar so the guest's teeth get stuck together, Fouke uses them to try to force a settlement with John.<sup>679</sup> Both Fouke and Eustace were outlaws historically and it was that aspect of their lives which was fictionalised but the resultant characters have few similarities beyond their surroundings.

In spite of the variety of narrative styles in Fouke's *Romance*, Eustace is presented as having a much wider variety of skills. He is a magician, can imitate the calls of birds, construct elaborate disguises, bake and sail among other talents. He is the central character in every story in which he appears; any companions are reduced to ciphers that simply follow orders and have no initiative of their own. By comparison Fouke's brothers, and especially the duo of John de Rampaigne and Mador de Monte de Russie, have a considerable degree of autonomy; they are able to emerge as characters in their own right. It is John, not Fouke, who wears the more complex disguises to infiltrate their opponents' homes, and it is Mador who controls the voyages at sea.<sup>680</sup> Fouke is still presented as a lord; he has the ability to delegate rather than having to do everything himself; whereas Eustace, even when he is in favour and well off, is never seen in a commanding position.

As we saw at the beginning of the chapter, and using the definitional framework developed by Benecke, Fouke is a Good Outlaw; he was one of the examples upon which that model of outlaw behaviour was created. Eustace the Monk by contrast does not fit into that model; Kelly instead uses the term Bad Outlaw based on the work of Keith Busby.<sup>681</sup> The few attempts made to present Eustace as a moral authority are constantly undermined by his inherent devilishness and casual cruelty. While Fouke Fitz Waryn focuses his activities on the individual with whom he is in conflict and is on friendly terms with other

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<sup>679</sup> *ETM*, ll.1820-81; *FFW*, p.49.

<sup>680</sup> For example, compare the disguises of John as a black minstrel, Fouke as a charcoal burner and Eustace as a one-legged man. We are told about the complexity of the first and last, both of which also require some considerable acting talent, whereas all Fouke does is switch clothes. *FFW*, p.37, 49; *ETM*, ll.1423-65.

<sup>681</sup> Thomas E. Kelly, 'Eustace the Monk', in Ohlgren, *Medieval Outlaws*, p.103; Keith Busby, 'The Diabolic Hero in Medieval French Narrative: *Trubert* and *Wistasse le Moine*' in Evelyn Mullally & John Thompson (eds), *The Court and Cultural Diversity: Selected Papers from the Eighth Triennial Congress of the International Courtly Literature Society* (Cambridge, 1997), pp.415-26. Busby does not use the term Bad Outlaw himself.

kings and lords, Eustace spreads his net beyond simply Count Renaud.<sup>682</sup> From the unfortunate guests who have their teeth stuck together by tar-filled pies to the church goers who are tricked out of money under the impression that they are giving alms to a cripple, any one who comes into contact with Eustace in any context is likely to be the worse for it.<sup>683</sup>

One simple way in which this can be seen is in stories where the outlaw hero swaps clothes with an incidental character. Fouke swaps clothes with a charcoal burner in order to trick King John into a trap and attempt to resolve the conflict between them through negotiation.<sup>684</sup> Other than in the act of swapping clothes the charcoal burner himself is not mentioned and seems to have had no adverse consequences from his decision. However, when Eustace swaps, the charcoal burner is arrested and beaten by the Count and his men who were told by Eustace himself where to find him.<sup>685</sup> Eustace immediately performs the same trick again, switching his charcoal-burner's outfit for that of a potter and sending the Count after the ex-potter who is then beaten and imprisoned.<sup>686</sup> In frustration the Count orders his men to round up everyone they come across and a further sixty innocent bystanders are incarcerated.<sup>687</sup> Moreover this entire sequence of events was unnecessary. Eustace had been warned in plenty of time of the Count's approach and could simply have hidden or fled as he eventually does. Instead he is willing to cause harm and inconvenience to those around him simply for the amusement value of humiliating his enemy. The contrast with Fouke's use of disguise to attempt to bring about peace could not be more pronounced.

Similarly, Fouke only became an outlaw after John violated his authority by deliberately acting unjustly whereas Eustace's reasoning is much more tenuous. Although there is an attempt at explaining Eustace's initial falling out with his lord, his attempts to gain justice for his father's death fail and Eustace's position in the Count's household is made difficult by the killer, there is never

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<sup>682</sup> *FFW*, pp.26-7, Fouke works harmoniously with the kings of Wales, France, Orkney and Barbary as well as the Duke and Princess of Carthage and numerous English barons.

<sup>683</sup> *ETM* 1423-67, 1826-73.

<sup>684</sup> *FFW* 49-50.

<sup>685</sup> *ETM* 1006-61.

<sup>686</sup> *ETM* 1072-125.

<sup>687</sup> *ETM* 1174-85.



any sense that the outlawry was necessary.<sup>688</sup> The killer was brought to trial for the crime and was declared innocent in a trial by combat which Eustace refused to acknowledge. In addition the immediate cause of his leaving court was not to do with the conflict over his father but as a result of charges that he had been undertaking his duties badly. Eustace's motivation from the start is revenge rather than justice but it is his lord rather than the killer that is the focus for that revenge. When, in one of the outlaw stories Eustace comes across the killer they eat together and part amicably, Eustace even uses the opportunity to send a message to the Count telling him about a previous trick.<sup>689</sup>

Eustace is also happy to antagonise other authority figures without provocation. When King Philip of France and his son Prince Louis are in the area Eustace captures and robs a townsman and kills a knight for no discernable reason, then tells the townsman to go and tell the King what he has done.<sup>690</sup> This is the first mention of Philip in the text and there is no suggestion of any previous contact between them so Eustace can have had no motivation beyond angering a powerful man that previously had no quarrel with him. He then attacks the rear of the king's army and captures, five knights, six palfreys and five warhorses, again without provocation or motivation.<sup>691</sup> Throughout his outlawry there is no sense in which Eustace is morally right to act as he does and the text does not attempt to credit him with any positive motive. Eustace does not act outside the bounds of society because he has the moral authority to do so but simply because he wants to; '*Il amoit miels guerre que pais*'.<sup>692</sup>

The difference in the nature of Fouke and Eustace's outlawry extends beyond it to their behaviour while still within the law. While Fouke was an ideal child and knight under kings Henry II and Richard I, it was not with the onset of outlawry that Eustace's opposition to authority began.<sup>693</sup> The rest of his life similarly lacks a moral compass. As a young man he studied with the devil who told him that he would cause trouble throughout his life, and during his brief period as a monk before joining the Count's household Eustace is described as

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<sup>688</sup> *ETM* 323-96.

<sup>689</sup> *ETM* 1368-97.

<sup>690</sup> *ETM* 1306-12.

<sup>691</sup> *ETM* 1360-5.

<sup>692</sup> *ETM* 1471 (he preferred war to peace).

<sup>693</sup> *FFW* 22-3.

*malfé*, a demon.<sup>694</sup> Demonic connections need not mean that a character is bad, as we have already seen Richard I was referred to as a demon and had further connections to the devil through his mother without any lessening of his heroic image, but the persistent use of demonic comparisons throughout the whole *Story* makes the devil a central aspect of his characterisation.<sup>695</sup>

While in the monastery he was a corrupting influence:

‘Il faisoit les moignes juner  
Quant se devoient desjuner;  
Il les faisoit aler nus pies  
Quant devoient cauchiés.  
Wistasce lor faisoit mesdire  
Quant devoient lor eures dire;  
Wistasce lor faisoit mesprendre  
Quant devoient lor grascas render.’

He made the monks fast when they should have eaten and made them go barefoot when they should have worn shoes. He made them curse when they should have been reciting the office and made them misbehave when they should have been giving thanks.<sup>696</sup>

He also stole and gambled away the entire house’s wealth at backgammon. In later years, even though he worked for the kings of both France and England, he is not operating out of fealty but for money or revenge, and with his family as hostages for his good behaviour.<sup>697</sup> At no point during his life is he presented in an unambiguously positive light. Being legally placed outside the bounds of correct society was simply an acknowledgment that that was where Eustace belonged; he never comfortably fitted within it.

Moving on to stories about the fantastic, one is made even more aware that very different characters are being created in the two texts. In the *Romance*

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<sup>694</sup> *ETM* 1-38, 269.

<sup>695</sup> *RCL* C.1114; see chapter four, p.126.

<sup>696</sup> *ETM* 224-31.

<sup>697</sup> *ETM* 1882-910, 2136-250.

of *Fouke Fitz Waryn*, for large sections of Fouke's period of outlawry he is portrayed as leaving the forest to take part in narratives that are reminiscent of chivalric romance rather than folktale. In these romance sections Fouke is a knight errant bringing justice to distant lands through deeds of arms; the chivalric Christian hero. He overthrows tyrannical lords, such as the richly dressed peasant thieves and the dragon, who oppress their lands so that none can safely live there and, via single combat with another knight, persuades a Saracen king to convert to Christianity so that he can marry an heiress rather than force himself on her and her lands through war. All of these stories are entirely fictional and compare far more readily to the works such as those of Chrétien de Troyes or Marie de France than to any outlaw narrative. This is a narrative style that has no parallel in Eustace's tale.

Within the *Story of Eustace the Monk* the fantastic is still present but its place is easy to identify, though less well integrated; Eustace himself is a magician who learned his craft from the Devil but is very rarely seen to use it.<sup>698</sup> Only in the first few hundred lines do we see any evidence of his magic, when Eustace takes revenge for petty wrongs done him by a landlady and a carter. The style remains folkloric and burlesque. Eustace is definitely not a knight in these stories as he has no horse and has to hire passage with the carter, and we see none of the typical romance motifs like single combats or princesses.<sup>699</sup> In fact, the magic elements are probably the most low-brow and least romance like parts of the text.

Overall, although both texts focus on their hero's time as an outlaw and spend a similar proportion of their time upon it, the balance of narrative elements is very different. While Eustace's fantastic tales seem to be incidental, the outlaw elements in Fouke's story are overwhelmed by the long foreign digressions into romance. So although for sixty percent of the romance Fouke is an outlaw, only about half of that space sees him acting as one. Therefore neither was the fact that Fouke's story contains so many romantic incidents, nor Eustace's devilish trickery, an automatic consequence of fictionalisation. It would have been easy to remain within the historical framework of outlawry, telling an entertaining story, and produce a very different kind of hero.

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<sup>698</sup> *ETM*, 1-38.

<sup>699</sup> *ETM*, 160-219.

Attention will therefore turn to why the characterisations of Eustace and Fouke took the form that they did. The following discussion will consider three sets of circumstances; the literary context, the situation at the time of writing, and the historical events of the hero's life. The motif of the literary outlaw was one which appears to have held considerable contemporary power in the thirteenth century, possibly due to baronial discontent with royal policy under John and Henry III. As well as the newly composed stories being discussed in this chapter, historical outlaws of the past, such as Hereward the Wake, received a second lease of life as their stories were copied out anew.<sup>700</sup> It was in this context that the romances of Fouke fitz Waryn and Eustace the Monk were written. However, in spite of the level of interest, there was no single unified outlaw type since the Robin Hood ballads that were to become the central and most recognisable model of medieval outlawry had not yet been written.<sup>701</sup> Just as a warrior could be described using either the style of chivalric romance or *chanson de geste*, an author intending to write about an outlaw had a variety of styles available to him. As was mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, while modern outlaw classifications are useful they would not have been recognisable to a contemporary audience. The very fact that the *Romance* was the second earliest of the texts used to define the 'good outlaw' model demonstrates that at the time it was written there was no such clearly defined category into which the author was trying to fit his characterisation.

In fact, there was a very limited number of previous examples of outlaws that could be drawn on by authors, the two most important of which have already been mentioned, Hereward the Wake and Reynard the Fox.<sup>702</sup> However, neither

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<sup>700</sup> The *Life of Hereward the Wake* was originally written in the first quarter of the twelfth century but the only surviving manuscript dates from the thirteenth century, Michael Swanton, *Three Lives of the Last Englishmen* (London, 1984), pp.xxv-xxvi.

<sup>701</sup> The first reference to a literary Robin Hood tradition is a mention in Langland's fourteenth-century *Piers Plowman* of 'rymes of Robyn Hood', but there are no surviving examples until the fifteenth-century *Gest of Robyn Hode* which was probably based on an early-to-mid fourteenth-century version. *The vision of Piers Plowman*, A.V.C. Schmidt (ed) (London, 1978), 5.396; Thomas H. Ohlgen (ed.), 'The Gest of Robyn Hode', *Medieval Outlaws: Twelve Tales in Modern English*.

<sup>702</sup> The only other significant example in an English context is the description of Earl Goodwin's outlawry in the third and fourth prose sections and third, fourth and fifth verse sections of the *Vita Edwardi Regis qui apud Westmonasterium Requiescit*, an anonymous life of Edward the Confessor probably written in the immediate aftermath of his death in the household of his wife, Queen Edith, who was also the daughter of Goodwin. It is therefore intended to present both King and outlaw in a positive light and lacks virtually all of the elements that were to become characteristic of medieval outlaws. Later accounts of Goodwin's life such as anecdotes in Walter

of these characters were outlaws in the sense of Fouke and Eustace, so they did not provide straightforward comparisons. Historically, Hereward was apparently one of a number of Anglo-Saxon noblemen who opposed the Norman Conquest, holding out in the fens around Ely which were very difficult territory to attack.<sup>703</sup> So although he was technically outside the law the context was very different because he did not renounce fealty to an overlord against whom he then acted. Reynard was even further outside the experience of Fouke and Eustace because he was entirely fictional; an anthropomorphised fox. The authors of the *Story* and the *Romance* drew on and adapted these available models in very different ways.

Of the two comparative texts it is the outlaw trickster of the *Roman de Renart*, or *Romance of Renard the Fox*, that is the most universally applicable characterisation.<sup>704</sup> The *Roman de Renart* outlines a shift from a feud between two barons, to a dispute between vassal and king, which in later branches even leads to the usurpation of thrones. This pattern appears in the more historical section of the *Story* in Eustace's initial argument with his father's killer spilling over into conflict with his lord, and in the *Romance* when the baronial war over Ludlow leads ultimately to Fouke's break with John. As such, in spite of its lack of a factual basis, the *Roman de Renart* has a structural similarity to the historical circumstances of Fouke and Eustace. The resemblances between the *Roman de Renart* and the *Story* are particularly strong; Schmolke-Hasselmann identified thirty eight similarities between the *Story* and branches II, Va, III, IV, I and

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Map's late twelfth-century *De Nugis Curialium* (*Trifles of Courtiers*) included characteristics of the trickster; Ohlgen, *Medieval Outlaws*, pp.xvii, 1-5.

<sup>703</sup> On the historical accuracy of the *Gesta Herewardi* see D. Roffe, 'Hereward 'the Wake' and the Barony of Bourne: A Reassessment of a Fenland Legend', *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*, 29 (1994), pp.7-10 and Paul Dalton, 'The Outlaw Hereward 'the Wake', His Companions and Enemies', John C. Appleby & Paul Dalton (eds), *Outlaws in Medieval and Early Modern England* (Farnham, 2009) which outline all the sources that mention him directly and, more interestingly, demonstrate the fact that some of the other individuals in the *Gesta* also have a basis in fact and can be connected to either Hereward himself or the locations in which he appears to have been active.

<sup>704</sup> The *Roman de Renart* is extremely complex as it is not a single text but is made up of twenty seven poems, referred to as branches, composed between c.1175 and 1250 that tell over forty stories and appear in various combinations. There are fourteen surviving long manuscripts that contain extensive anthologies as well as a further nineteen manuscripts with brief anthologies, single branches or fragments. Further confusion is added by the fact that the two main editions, by Ernest Martin and Mario Roques, are based on different manuscripts so they number the branches differently, but it is the system of roman numerals established by Martin that is most commonly used by scholars. Varty, *The Roman de Renart*, pp.1-3.

XXIII of the *Roman de Renart* alone.<sup>705</sup> He even went so far as to say that although the passages the texts have in common can not be proven to be directly related they are so similar that some influence can be assumed.<sup>706</sup> As has already been seen, Fouke was also portrayed using trickster motifs and Schmolke-Hasselmann argued that both Fouke and Eustace can be seen as foxes in human form that simply do not have access to typical animal types.<sup>707</sup> The direct influence of Reynard on Eustace's characterisation makes such a conclusion valid in his case; during his outlawry Eustace is simply portrayed as a human Reynard, further supporting the *Story's* categorisation as fiction given that beast epic was the one category unambiguously described as *fictae* by medieval commentary. However, the case with Fouke is more complex.

Although Reynard himself was an outlaw, it is his sneakiness and wit, rather than his outlaw status, which were seen as his most recognisable characteristics. For example, in the *History*, the way that John Earley warns William Marshal of conflict in Ireland is described as 'a subtle reply, in the manner of Reynard the Fox'.<sup>708</sup> In addition, the trickster type that Reynard encapsulated had far more wide reaching applications than simply outlawry and the episodic nature of trickster activity made it very easy to insert into other narratives. Similar style stories appear in the characterisation of all four of the individuals whose fictionalisations form the basis of this thesis. William's tricking of a town into providing him with food and lodgings, and Richard's 'joke' played on Saladin's messengers, where he has them served with roast Saracen heads at a banquet, both have a similar character to episodes within the outlawries of Eustace and Fouke without any implication that the hero is acting outside the law.<sup>709</sup> They demonstrate the heroes' superior ingenuity and intelligence to those around them. Consequently, the similarities between Fouke

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<sup>705</sup> B.Schmolke-Hasselmann, 'Füchse in Menschengestalt. Die listigen Helden Wistasse le Moine und Fouke Fitz Waryn', in Jan Goossens & Timothy Sodmann (eds), *Third International Beast Epic, Fable & Fabliau Colloquium* (Köln, 1981), p.367.

<sup>706</sup> Schmolke-Hasselmann, 'Füchse in Menschengestalt', p.370.

<sup>707</sup> Schmolke-Hasselmann, 'Füchse in Menschengestalt', pp.356.

<sup>708</sup> 'Il respondi comme soutilz : / Issi dist Reinart li gorpilz'. *HWM* 13,959-60.

<sup>709</sup> The association between Richard and the trickster model saw its apogee in his appearance in the short ballad *The King's Disguise, and Friendship with Robin Hood* in which Richard disguises himself as an Abbot in order to meet Robin Hood before pardoning him and taking him to court. It is Child Ballad 151 from Francis James Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, 5 vols (Boston, 1982-98), vol.3, pp.220-2.

and Reynard were characteristic of heroes in general as well as outlaws in particular.

While the model of outlaw as represented by Reynard the Fox and trickster activity could easily be applied to a huge variety of individuals, the model in the *Gesta Herewardi* was much more specific.<sup>710</sup> The *Gesta* describes how as a young man exiled by Edward the Confessor Hereward travelled throughout the courts of Europe as a knight, taking part in romance style episodes such as pitched battles and having romantic entanglements with princesses, before returning to England and becoming a trickster character hiding in the marshes around Ely to protect the people from unjust actions by the country's new leaders.<sup>711</sup> In effect Hereward has two entirely separate characterisations: one as outlaw trickster in the style of Reynard (though that text had not yet been written so it must have been drawing on an earlier model) and the other as exile. As Keen pointed out, the fantastic stories of the exile prove the extent of the fame and popularity of the outlaw; it was that which made him famous and other legends collected around him.<sup>712</sup> The romantic elements help to characterise Hereward as a suitable individual to defend his country; he had been fighting for rightful rulership for years before the Norman invasion.<sup>713</sup>

This model of outlaw as exile uses the chivalric concept of the perfect knight and, as was previously mentioned, one of the characteristics of a knight

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<sup>710</sup> The definitive scholarly edition of the *Gesta Herewardi* is still that by T.D. Hardy and C.T. Martin (eds), *Lestorie des Engles solum la translacion Maistre Geffrei Gaimar*, Rolls Series, 91, 2 vols (London, 1898-9), I, pp.339-404. It has also been translated as the *Life of Hereward the Wake* by Swanton in *Three Lives of the Last Englishmen*, a translation which was reprinted as 'The Deeds of Hereward' in Ohlgen, *Medieval Outlaws*, pp.12-60. The author of the *Gesta Herewardi* explains in his 'prefatory letter' that he based his account initially on a collection of Anglo-Saxon stories about Hereward's early life to which he later added information about the defence of Ely collected from people who had been there. The author was therefore claiming for his work the status of history by using both written and eye-witness sources. The fact that he wrote in Latin rather than a vernacular and was himself used as a source by an unnamed monk writing a history of Ely Abbey in the mid-twelfth century backs up the categorization as history. Swanton, *Lives of the Last Englishmen*, pp.xxv-xxvi.

<sup>711</sup> It is not actually certain by whose order Hereward was exiled but there is no evidence to prove that it was not Edward the Confessor, Keen, *Outlaws of Medieval Legend*, p.12.

<sup>712</sup> Keen, *Outlaws of Medieval Legend*, p.12.

<sup>713</sup> Examples include gathering and training a group of soldiers with whom he defeated all the King of Ireland's enemies within a year, and ensuring the prince of Flanders' victory over the Count of Guines. *Gesta Herewardi*, Hardy and Martin (eds), pp. 347-8, 354-6. In the context of the narrative the entirely fictional romance section provides the character of Hereward with gravitas, experience and a reputation which helps to bolster his importance in the later outlaw section, even though it was his time as an outlaw that caused the story to be written. It also helps to justify his portrayal as the leader at Ely in spite of the actual presence of important figures such as Earl Morcar and the imagined presence of Earls Edwin and Tostig who were both dead by that point; Ohlgen, *Medieval Outlaws*, p.32.

was *franchise* (the bearing that comes from good birth and virtue) or nobility.<sup>714</sup> The most famous exile heroes in thirteenth-century English literature, King Horn and Havelok the Dane, were both princes being denied their rightful inheritance. Therefore, use of this model was dependant on the subject being from a suitable family and his cause being universally significant. The exile acts on a global rather than a local stage and consequently his actions are of global importance. The author of the *Romance* uses this model to justify Fouke's outlawry, implying that his actions are those of a knight fighting on behalf of legal right against tyranny rather than a single individual seeking personal gain. Fouke's outlawry is of national importance and so must be played out on a larger stage than the forest.

Eustace was from a noble family and some attempt was made to describe him in chivalric terms in the post-outlawry section of the *Story*. According to the *Story's* account, Eustace's first act for John was to capture the Channel Islands and it suggests that there was one decisive battle in which Eustace fought as a warrior.<sup>715</sup> He is described as wielding an axe:

Maint elme en a esquartelé  
Et maint destrier a espaulé;  
Fiert a destre, puis a senestre,  
De l'estor se fait sire et maistre.

He splintered many a helmet, and many a warhorse lost its shoulder. He struck blows to the right and blows to the left, making himself lord and master of the fighting.<sup>716</sup>

This description is forcefully reminiscent of the descriptions of Richard I wielding his own axe; it shows a military leader.<sup>717</sup> This portrayal is in almost exact contrast to the earlier part of the *Story* where Eustace very seldom uses force to deal with a situation, relying on trickery instead. However, Eustace's

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<sup>714</sup> See chapter two, p.66.

<sup>715</sup> The whole Islands episode is quite short, only forty lines, *ETM* 1911-53, but the battle itself takes up almost all the space, 1924-49.

<sup>716</sup> *ETM* 1942-5.

<sup>717</sup> For example he used his axe to kill many Greeks in Cyprus, *RCL* L.1368-73, and to cut the chain at Acre, *RCL* L.1792-1826.



change in characterisation at this point is quite mild; he retains the unpredictable and trickster-like personality alongside fighting pitched battles. The shift in style, away from outlaw trickster to one with more of a romance influence which is indicated by this episode, does not materialise, and, other than his trip to Toledo to learn from the devil, there is no foreign travel so the *Story* does not attempt to make use of the outlaw exile model at all.

The differences in the way the *Story* and the *Romance* use the models available to them may simply be a result of their authors' intent. The high entertainment value of trickster stories made that model particularly suitable for the author of the *Story* who was aiming to produce an entertaining fiction. The fact that the trickster model refers only to actions rather than motivations means that it could be used under any circumstances, however, and the association of such activity with outlawry, which came from the characterisation of Hereward as well as Reynard, made it a vital element of the fictionalisation of any historical outlaw. Consequently, trickery was also suitable for use by the author of the *Romance*. By contrast, the model of outlaw exile was dependent on a moral and exemplary purpose which the *Romance* had but the *Story* did not. In fact, after Eustace promises Philip '*Je ne ferai mais se bien non*' [I shall do nothing other than good], the new well behaved Eustace does not seem to have been of interest.<sup>718</sup> The *Story* ends soon after with only two further events before his death, the accounts of both only two sentences long, so there is no opportunity for character development, demonstrating that it was Eustace the misbehaving, unreliable trickster who was being fictionalised.<sup>719</sup> Therefore, while the exile model assisted the author of the *Romance* in portraying Fouke in a positive light it would have been entirely unsuitable for the *Story*'s characterization of Eustace; explaining why only a single model was used in the *Story* whereas two can be seen to operate within the *Romance*.

The connection between intent and characterisation does not explain why the authors of the two texts had such different intents. The first, and most obvious, reason is that they were writing under different circumstances. The normal characterisation of the *Romance* as an 'ancestral romance' of a similar

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<sup>718</sup> The author confirms that from then on he was '*bons guerriers*' [a good warrior]; *ETM* 2249-50. It is uncertain whether we are supposed to believe these assertions as only two lines later he is again being described as devilish.

<sup>719</sup> *ETM* 2255-65.

type to *Bevis of Hampton* or *Guy of Warwick*, suggests the Fitz Waryn family as a possible influence on, or even patron of, the story and therefore as a significant impact on the text's intent.<sup>720</sup> If this were the case presentation of Fouke in a positive light could be easily explained as a way of glorifying his descendants and the political message may have been connected with their own aims. However, it is impossible to demonstrate that there was any direct influence by the family and, since Fouke's son died fighting for Henry III at Lewes, they do not seem to have been likely to promote resistance to authority.<sup>721</sup> In addition, the best possible source of inside information that has been suggested is Fouke's mother but her death in the *Romance* over two decades before she is last heard of in the historical record makes that unlikely; and the very large number of other inaccuracies in the family history, especially the missing out of an entire generation, supports the view that the work was not intended for the family.<sup>722</sup>

This does not, of course, mean that they had no impact at all. According to Keen, since Fouke was from a knightly family remnants of chivalric ideals attached to him and since 'historical reputation acted as a natural magnet to myth' some of the stories had a chivalric bent.<sup>723</sup> The same applies to Eustace but it is possible that since he remained a problematic character for the rest of his life, whereas Fouke rejoined the nobility, Fouke's knighthood was a more important part of his image. Even if Fouke's family did not directly influence the story it is unlikely that an author writing in the area they held power would want to present him in a less than favourable light. However, Fouke's representation had wider implications than just to benefit his descendants.

As we have seen, the theme that comes out of all sections of the *Romance* most strongly is authority, especially royal authority, and its limitations. As was mentioned in the Introduction to this thesis, the question of the crown's position in regards to the law was still under debate in the thirteenth century.<sup>724</sup> A thirteenth-century law book claimed that the barons felt a duty to 'put a bridle, that is the law, on the king'.<sup>725</sup> The events of the Barons' War between 1258 and

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<sup>720</sup> M. Dominica Legge, *Anglo-Norman Literature and its Background* (Oxford, 1963), pp.171-4.

<sup>721</sup> Burgess, *Two Medieval Outlaws*, p.107.

<sup>722</sup> *FFW*, p.xxxii; Sidney Painter, 'The Sources of Fouke Fitz Warin', *Modern Language Notes*, 50 (1935), p.13.

<sup>723</sup> Keen, *Outlaws of Medieval Legend*, p.132.

<sup>724</sup> See Introduction, pp.20-21.

<sup>725</sup> Ralph V. Turner, *Magna Carta Through the Ages* (Harlow, 2003), p.2.

1267 demonstrate that, for many of the nobility at least, the King was not the final arbiter; if he failed his people they had the right to correct him.<sup>726</sup> Therefore, by discussing the relationship between a lord and an unlawful king the *Romance of Fouke Fitz Waryn* was speaking to the concerns of all the nobility at the time of writing, not simply those directly connected to him.

Exactly which elements of the *Romance* reflect a particular occasion is impossible to discover with any degree of certainty, in large part because the uncertainty over the date of composition would call into question any specific connections that were made.<sup>727</sup> In addition, it is difficult to analyse how far the more romantic, fantastic sections were rewritten by later authors so their connection to thirteenth-century events is even more tentative. Based on the survival of the original verse within the surviving prose, it is the family history and outlaw episodes that are closest to the original, but comparison with Leland's sixteenth-century summary demonstrates that there were far more similarities than the verse fragments indicate.<sup>728</sup> Leland was, however, not especially interested in the fantastic parts of the story and gave only very brief notes on that section, making it impossible to say with any certainty what the fourteenth-century scribe altered.

In spite of this, the circumstances surrounding the writing of the surviving manuscript deserve consideration. As previously stated, the scribe was probably a canon of Hereford who accompanied Adam de Orleton, bishop of Hereford, when he became bishop of Worcester in 1327, writing at around that time. It has been suggested, by both the Anglo-Norman Society editors and Burgess, that he rewrote the story he inherited with the bishop in mind, since Adam was a bishop notable for his political activities.<sup>729</sup> Adam had a history of conflict with the king and some connection with Roger Mortimer who, alongside Queen Isabella, overthrew Edward II in 1327.<sup>730</sup> So regardless of whether the scribe changed his text significantly it is interesting that both the original text and the surviving

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<sup>726</sup> For example the settlement after the battle of Lewes put a council in charge of court appointments and included the statement that it would outlive the person of the king and be binding to his heirs, Harding, *England in the Thirteenth Century*, p.292.

<sup>727</sup> See Introduction pp.22-3 and Dannenbaum, 'Anglo-Norman Romances of English Heroes' (1981-2), pp.601-8.

<sup>728</sup> *Fouke Le Fitz Waryn*, Anglo-Norman Text Society, pp.xix-xxiii.

<sup>729</sup> *Fouke Le Fitz Waryn*, Anglo-Norman Text Society, p.xliiii; Burgess, *Two Medieval Outlaws*, p.130.

<sup>730</sup> Burgess, *Two Medieval Outlaws*, p.131.

manuscript were written in circumstances when there was considerable conflict between the king and the higher nobility. That was why Fouke was of interest. The topos of outlaw as bringer of justice was not yet established and so could not provide the same kind of authoritative precedent to an audience as could the exile, so Fouke's image was manipulated into a more useful shape in the interests of later political concerns.

If we return to the comparison with Eustace, no similarly strong political context can be seen surrounding his story. The lack of the dramatic circumstance of civil war means that Eustace's outlawry would not have had the same associations for the people in his area as Fouke's did. However, the situation in England should not be seen as entirely separate from the rest of Europe. Examples of documents produced in other countries during the thirteenth century that were similar to the English Magna Carta have already been mentioned, but there were also more specific similarities in circumstance between France and England.<sup>731</sup> Philip's successful campaigns against Angevin holdings on the continent had vastly increased the proportion of French lordships that were under the direct control of the king, expansion which continued under Louis VIII.<sup>732</sup> The administrative systems which developed to deal with the increased activity and the centralisation of authority in the king's court led to some members of the higher nobility feeling threatened.<sup>733</sup> It was this feeling - that local independence was giving way to growing royal power - which led the Franco-Flemish aristocrats to patronise the vernacular prose historiographies produced in the early thirteenth century which were studied by Spiegel.<sup>734</sup> The perceived threat led, at the beginning of Louis IX's reign, to 'the most redoubtable coalition of great barons which the House of Capet ever had to face', whose members made the unprecedented attempt to seize the person of the twelve year old king Louis

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<sup>731</sup> See Introduction, pp.20-1.

<sup>732</sup> Roger Price, *A Concise History of France* (Cambridge, 1993), pp.36-8.

<sup>733</sup> Philip's reign saw the first surviving royal account, first lists of royal domain rights and military service, the setting up of a royal archive and a system of registers for documents, Elizabeth M. Hallam & Judith Everard, *Capetian France 987-1328* (London, 1980, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 2001), p.205. The centralising of royal authority in France was not as extensive as existed in England at the time, large areas still remained virtually independent, but there was some national rhetoric in use; when Louis IX inherited there were some objections to his mother as regent because she was a woman, but also because she was a foreigner; Robert Fawtier, *The Capetian Kings of France: Monarchy and Nation (987-1328)* (London, 1960), p.27.

<sup>734</sup> Gabrielle M. Spiegel, *Romancing the Past: The Rise of Vernacular Prose Historiography in Thirteenth-Century France* (Oxford, 1993), p.54.

in order to take over the regency from his mother.<sup>735</sup> The changing position of the French crown as a consequence of increased power meant that its role was under scrutiny, if less dramatically than was the case in England at the time.

The historical context in which the *Story* was produced was different from that surrounding the *Romance* in that although similar issues were of concern to the nobility in both countries they were less immediate in France. However, it is in the lives and characters of the individuals that were being fictionalised that the biggest differences lie. As was the case with Richard's various fictionalisations, it was the historical facts that provided the most significant impetus for the author's intent and choice of characterisation. Fouke was an influential member of the nobility for fifty years after the end of his outlawry, so even though he supported the Magna Carta barons against John he was a member of the established elite. Outlawry made his life exciting but it was an aberration from his customary role that had to be explained away. To portray him as untrustworthy and devilish, in the way that Eustace was in the *Story*, would raise questions about why these traits only materialised for a short period in a life that was otherwise conventional.

The case with Eustace is even clearer. It would have been impossible for an author to fit Eustace within the circular model of exile and return because, although he occasionally worked with authority figures, he was never reconciled with the man who outlawed him in the first place and never stayed loyal to one man for long. The historical Eustace's primary concern appears always to have been his own benefit and he was willing to work for others only as long as it served his purpose. Where Eustace appears briefly in the *History of William Marshal* he is described in very similar terms to those in the *Story*:

'Cil qui unques ne quist essoines  
A faire mal de son poeir,  
E li fist Dex aparceveir;  
Plus mal engingnos ne puet ester,'

a man who never lost a chance

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<sup>735</sup> Fawtier, *The Capetian Kings of France*, p.28.

to do whatever harm was in his power,  
as God made him realise.

Never was a more scheming man to be found,<sup>736</sup>

So Eustace, like Fouke, had an established characterisation beyond the text of the *Story* that would be recognised. In both cases the author was using the literary model that fit most closely to the character of the historical individual as it was perceived by contemporaries.

The location of the historical information which appears within the texts confirms which parts of the individuals' lives define their characterisation. Although this chapter has focused on the long sections that deal with Fouke and Eustace's outlawry, both texts also have a single main historical section that takes up nearly a third of the story and provides the believable backbone. The difference is that it comes first for Fouke and at the end for Eustace. Historical information provides a justification for Fouke's outlawry; his status as a landed noble, a member of a family with a history of bravery and loyalty, is emphasised repeatedly and shapes his actions as an outlaw. By contrast, Eustace's outlawry is the background to his history; the unpredictability and lack of loyalty he showed in the final years of his life when he was in the public eye are explained by the fact that he had spent his early life as a devilish, outlaw trickster. Both men were outlaws historically, but their places in popular perceptions of the past were shaped by events in their lives that were entirely unrelated to their time as an outlaw. As such, although it was their outlawry that provided the archetype that made them suitable subjects for fictionalisation it was their lives as a whole that determined the form that fictionalisation would take.

Comparison between the two broadly contemporary outlaw narratives, the *Story of Eustace the Monk* and the *Romance of Fouke Fitz Waryn*, demonstrates the complexity of the creative process involved in combining the two elements of fact and fiction. As with crusading and captivity, outlawry encouraged fictionalisation to take place because there were literary models in place that could be easily adapted. However, unlike the other two archetypes, outlawry did not yet have a single predominant characterisation or literary style

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<sup>736</sup> *HWM*, 17156-9.

that determined the way an individual being fictionalised would be portrayed. Instead, these two early outlaw narratives helped to shape the way such stories would appear in the future, especially the *Romance*'s combination of exile and trickster types into a unified good outlaw. The way in which pre-existing models were used in the two texts depended not only on the type of story the author was trying to write but also on the historical events of the individuals' lives outside of outlawry. As was seen in the case of Richard I, where characterising him in a negative light proved extremely difficult for the *Chronicle of Reims*, there were limits to the extent that fictionalisation could move an individual away from their place in popular memory.

## Conclusion

‘History’ in the thirteenth century was not a discipline with codified rules, or a strong sense of inherited practices, such as those which existed for rhetoric, theology and law. Even in the most reliable chronicles there are elements which appear to contradict the authors’ stated concern for accuracy and which modern scholars have seen as fantastic or fictional.<sup>737</sup> However, as set out in chapter one of this thesis, there were conventions which authors were expected to fulfil, at least theoretically, to make good a claim to writing what contemporaries were prepared to accept as ‘history’. Writings which warranted the *honestum nomen historiae* were expected to be truthful and to relate its subject matter in a truthful manner. Precisely what that truth entailed is harder to judge. During the course of the thirteenth century a semantic shift can be detected among theorists in the meaning of the word, moving from ‘the true nature of things’ to being virtually synonymous with *factae*.<sup>738</sup> This shift renders it all the more difficult to ascertain what sort of truth-claim authors in the period were making for their works.

Accuracy of information and fidelity in interpretation were related to each other by contemporary authors. The emphasis placed on diligence in research and valid source material, which features heavily in the chronicle prologues of the period, suggest that accuracy was a desirable quality; and one that was worth extolling and advertising to the intended readership.<sup>739</sup> The factual content of history was seen as important because true knowledge of the past had an important role within the present. Justifications of historical writing in the High Middle Ages were not substantially different from those that had gone before; it was the duty of the present to record events properly for the benefit of the future

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<sup>737</sup> In the early twentieth century this denigration of medieval historiography could be quite severe, for example the view of Floyd Lear that by the Middle Ages the high quality historical writing of the classical period had ‘dissolve[d] into a dream’; Floyd S. Lear ‘The Medieval Attitude Toward History’, *Rice Institute Pamphlets*, 20 (1933), p.164. Even more recent commentators have pointed out the inaccuracies of the long speeches and dramatic battle scenes to be found in virtually all medieval chronicles but they have done so with a less judgmental attitude. For example Nelson mentions that the ‘flesh[ing] out’ of events was a continuation from classical methodology; William Nelson, *Fact or Fiction: The Dilemma of the Renaissance Storyteller* (Cambridge, Mas, 1973), p.27.

<sup>738</sup> See chapter one, p.48.

<sup>739</sup> William of Malmesbury provides a number of such statements over the course of the many prologues in his *History of the Kings*, for example when he describes how he had to search for chronicles ‘far and near’, William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum; The History of the English Kings*, R.A.B. Mynors (ed and trans), completed by R.M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom (Oxford, 1998), p.150.



because they could provide exempla of both good and bad behaviour, and the consequences of both.<sup>740</sup> The writing and reading of history were therefore worthy tasks that brought practical benefit to those who practised them. By contrast, historians and theorists within the High Middle Ages saw fiction as having no value other than entertainment. The claiming of historical status by Geoffrey of Monmouth for his *History of the Kings*, a work that contained a high proportion of invented action, was seen by William of Newburgh as actively dangerous.<sup>741</sup>

Given the theoretical divide between history and fiction, medieval fictionalised accounts of the lives of historical individuals exist in an ambiguous borderland between the two. They are complex texts with no two having exactly the same relationship with what might be termed the historical facts as they relate to the particular individual's life and deeds. Of the four examples which form the body of this thesis the *History of William Marshal* conforms most closely to the conventions outlined by medieval theorists and chronicle prologues. It contains a large amount of information about events the record of which can be corroborated with the witness of other sources, and is concerned to place itself within the literary conventions of historical writing by claiming, and using, good quality source material. The author also claims to avoid inventing details to fill in gaps in his knowledge. Fictionalisation only appears in the earliest sections of the work where there was little accurate information on which an account could be based, and in the 'spin' placed on those circumstances which might otherwise have presented William in a negative light. The intent of the *History* appears to have been to justify its subject against accusations of disloyalty that were made after his death. In order to fulfil its function obvious fictionalisation was not an option if it was to be convincing.

The author of the *Story of Eustace the Monk* took an opposite approach. Although Eustace was a historical individual and the *Story* includes a substantial section which outlines events from the latter part of his life that also appear in other sources, the author made no attempt to claim historical status for his work.

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<sup>740</sup> The moral value of history was accepted in the early Middle Ages. A statement about history's ability to teach good conduct appears in Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, Bertram Colgrave and R.A.B. Myons (ed and trans) (Oxford, 1969), pp.2-3.

<sup>741</sup> William of Newburgh, *Historia Rerum Anglicarum* in Richard Howlett (ed), *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I*, Rolls Series, 82 (1884), Vol. I, p.13.

Instead he states his intent to make the audience laugh and gives the majority of space within the text to a long catalogue of highly repetitive and formulaic outlaw episodes which are almost entirely unconnected to reality. Even in the more historically grounded later section of the *Story* the emphasis remains on Eustace as a trickster who fools his enemy into falling into a marsh rather than a sailor, warrior, or mercenary; each of which characterisations would have been (equally) historically valid.

In contrast, the *Romance of Richard Coeur de Lion* and the *Romance of Fouke Fitz Waryn* both fall somewhere between the *History* and the *Story* in terms of the level of their fictionalisation. Both contain multiple literary styles and characterisations; Richard as a crusading warrior and romance style captive, and Fouke as an outlaw and chivalric knight. Fouke's fictionalisation embraces the variety of models available and combines them into a single text that explores historical questions using different narrative styles and situations. However, the original author of the *Romance of Richard Coeur de Lion*, He who composed the core text, took a less comprehensive approach to the various characterisations which were available to him. He rejected the fantastic elements of Richard's fictionalisation in favour of a more moderate one; simply shifting events into heroic style while retaining plausibility. Other authors then interpolated fantastic episodes into the existing *Romance*, as well as making alterations to the core text, which resulted in a much more piecemeal and incoherent characterisation of Richard than exists for the other three individuals whose fictional characterisations were all the product of a single author.

Given that no two examples have the same intent with regard to the level of fictionalisation and the way it is to be employed, the similarities between these diverse texts make it possible to emphasise some general conclusions about fictionalisation as a whole. Firstly, there were undoubtedly reasons for the nature of an individual's fictionalisation that reflected the time of writing, although difficulties of dating and identifying authorship make it impossible to say exactly whose view of the past was being recounted or in what circumstances. Of the four main texts discussed in this thesis only the *History of William Marshal* can be directly linked to the family of the hero. Henry III seems to have had a hand in encouraging Richard's presentation as a crusading hero, probably as part of his competition with Louis IX, but there is no evidence he commissioned the

*Romance* any more than the families of Fouke or Eustace did those romances. However, a lack of precise details of composition is not a problem because the similarities in the themes of the different texts demonstrates that they were exploring the wider concerns of the time - leadership, good governance and the place of the king in relation to the law - rather than necessarily reflecting specific circumstances. For example, Richard's presentation as English transformed him into a proto-nationalistic figure whose influence could extend beyond his immediate family.

Even if the date and circumstances of composition were known, alone they could not explain why an author, or patron in the case of William Marshal the younger, would choose fictionalised history of an individual as the means of expressing themselves. Authors who wanted to celebrate a family or make a particular point about contemporary life had various means of doing so: the invention of an entirely fictional ancestor such as *Gui of Warewick* or verse commentaries such as the *Song of Lewes* for example.<sup>742</sup> With this variety of options available any author who chose to use historical events as a basis presumably felt that those events had something to contribute. So the second of the general conclusions to be drawn about fictionalisation is that contemporary politics was only one of many elements the author may have had in mind; alone it cannot explain why an individual was chosen for fictionalisation or the nature of the character created. The circumstances under which individuals were written about, that is the cultural, political and social environment of the author, are perhaps better seen as a secondary element to the process of fictionalisation.

Instead, as was suggested in chapters five and six, it appears that it was a person's life and reputation that formed the genesis of their fictionalisation. Once again the point can be seen most strongly in the case of Richard I whose appearances in romanced literary contexts in continental Europe, such as the *Chronicle of Reims* and the *Pas Saladin*, are briefer than the English sources but

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<sup>742</sup> *The Song of Lewes* describes a decisive battle in 1264 during the Second Barons' War at which Henry III was captured by the baronial army headed by Simon de Montfort. The *Song* is in two parts, the first of which describes the context and battle and the second of which explores the responsibilities of a king to take good counsel and govern for the benefit of the community. It is an argument in favour of the actions of the barons and presents a particularly favourable image of Simon de Montfort himself. It argues that the faith and fidelity of Simon has become security and peace of all England; *Carmen de bello Lewensi: The Song of Lewes*, C.L. Kingsford (ed & trans) (Oxford, 1890), lines 250-60. The song has received one more recent translation by Jane Holden in 1965 but has otherwise been largely overlooked by scholars.

for the most part are no less complimentary. In manufacturing their image of Richard these sources were not motivated by a desire to glorify Richard for his own sake but were making use of a positive reputation which already existed.<sup>743</sup> Richard's military reputation was so strong that he had a tendency to become a central character at the expense of the nominal hero of a story. Even where an author wanted to portray another of Richard's contemporaries as morally and militarily superior to all others, as was the case with Philip Augustus in the *Chronicle of Reims* and William Marshal in the *History of William Marshal*, sections of the text still see Richard characterised in a similar fashion to his own romance. A similarly consistent, albeit negative, characterisation can be seen in the case of Eustace the Monk, although the scale is more limited given his appearance in fewer sources.

Consistent characterisations existed even where there was no story specifically written about an individual which could cement his image. King John of England is a secondary character in all four of the key texts discussed in this thesis and had no romance or biography written about him, but his consistently negative image is striking. The only text in which he does not get presented in an explicitly unfavourable light is the *Story of Eustace the Monk*, and since in that he appears as a mildly indulgent ally to a demonic pirate it is not exactly positive either. His bad reputation was just as powerful in shaping the impression of the hero in whose story he appears as was Richard's good reputation. For example it was John's image as an unjust ruler that allowed a good outlaw such as Fouke Fitz Waryn to act against him without receiving censure. It appears that characterisations of individuals existed in the public consciousness and that authors could draw on them as necessary but were also restricted by them.

The plausibility of any particular author's characterisation of an individual depended on its similarity to the actual character of that individual, as indicated by his actions and accepted in the public consciousness. William Marshal and Richard I were both easy to cast in the role of the ideal knight

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<sup>743</sup> Joinville's use of the fact that Richard did not capture Jerusalem in spite of being 'the greatest of all Christian monarchs' to justify Louis IX not attacking the city, while at the same time defending Richard's own reputation by saying that it was the French soldiers with him who refused to let him attack, is a particularly neat example of the way an already positive reputation could be enhanced by an author who was drawing on it for his own ends; Joinville, *The Life of Saint Louis*, in M.R.B. Shaw (trans), *Chronicles of the Crusades* (London, 1963), p.304.

because of their extensive and successful military experience and good reputations.<sup>744</sup> Although John also spent much of his historical life engaging in military activity it would have been implausible for an author to characterise him in the same way as William and Richard. John's reputation as being immoral and quick to anger, combined with his dramatic loss of much of his French inheritance, preclude a positive characterisation. Similarly, the hostility felt by contemporaries towards Eustace the Monk, and his changes in loyalty, ensured that Eustace could not be characterised as a good outlaw in the way that was done with Fouke. The importance of the individual's character, as it was remembered, in the construction of a fictionalised characterisation, can be seen particularly in the *Chronicle of Reims*. Although the author of the *Chronicle* attempted to characterise Richard in a way that was contrary to his reputation by overlooking and belittling his military role he was unable to do so completely. Richard's good reputation, like John and Eustace's bad one, limited the extent to which he could be characterised in any other way.

Alongside an individual's actions and the reputation he received as a result of them, the events of his life also affected the nature and extent of fictionalisation. The ways in which a historical situation could be fitted within the framework of fictional narrative depended in part on how closely it conformed to pre-existing literary conventions.<sup>745</sup> Circumstances such as crusade, captivity and outlawry, which were all popular themes in unambiguously fictional literature, provided the focus for fictionalisation; they were the sections of individuals' lives which were described in most detail and with the most embellishments. Even William Marshal, whose life does not immediately seem to fall within any of these categories, was described in his most romancified style during his two periods of captivity; as a child hostage playing games with King Stephen and when wounded and held for ransom he is aided by a noble lady smuggling him bandages inside a loaf of bread.<sup>746</sup> Such

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<sup>744</sup> Although charges of disloyalty were made after William's death, which his son was apparently trying to overcome by commissioning the *History*, his appointment as regent by John and the lack of active hostility to such a powerful man in the chronicle sources suggests that he had a reasonably positive image that could be drawn upon. Richard's good reputation has been discussed at length in chapters four and five.

<sup>745</sup> As noted in the cases of William's tournaments and Richard's crusading the relationship was not necessarily this clear cut; the fact that certain high profile individuals were known to have taken part in a particular activity could have contributed to its place in literary convention.

<sup>746</sup> *HWM* 485-703, 1706-865

events provided a recognisable narrative structure which could be enhanced as necessary without straying entirely from the useful, and therefore worthy and authoritative study of the past.

However, just as an individual's apparent character could force his characterisation in certain directions, so too could the events of his life. The large number of overlapping literary genres in the thirteenth century make categorical statements about which one any individual text or group of texts belongs to inappropriate, but there does seem to have been a link between literary styles and the kinds of events they describe. For example, the association between outlawry, trickery, and a bawdy folklore style narrative ensured that Fouke was described in that way even though the majority of his characterisation was as an exiled knight. Similarly, although crusading appears regularly in romances it had a particular association with *chansons de geste* through the Matter of France and the cycle of *chansons* that were written about the events of the First Crusade.<sup>747</sup> The connection between captivity and romance, and crusade and *chansons de geste*, contributed to the unusually incoherent characterisation of Richard because different parts of his life conformed to different models.

In spite of their different conventional positions within the web of literary modes, what connects all three of the types of events listed above is that they provided distance from the everyday experience of the audience. Crusaders, outlaws and captives were all both geographically and legally separate from the general community. Crusaders were pilgrims with specific legal protections and financial advantages in canon law.<sup>748</sup> In the case of crusade to Jerusalem they also moved physically from the known environment of western, Christian Europe into the mysterious East. As such the measure of what had probability changed and became more conducive to romancified elements than would a narrative that was geographically static. Outlaws were in a similar position; placed outside the law and living on the fringes of society in forests or at sea their lives were

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<sup>747</sup> The Matter of France has already been outlined above p.185. The most famous example of the Crusade Cycle is Nelson, Jan A. (ed), *La Chanson d'Antioch*, The Old French Crusade Cycle, 4 (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 2003).

<sup>748</sup> For details of exactly how crusaders' legal status differed and was managed by the courts see James Brundage, 'Crusaders and jurists: the legal consequences of crusader status', *Le Concile de Clermont de 1095 et l'appel à la croisade* (Rome, 1997), pp.141-54; and James Muldoon, 'Crusading and Canon Law', in Helen J. Nicholson (ed), *Palgrave Advances in the Crusades* (Basingstoke, 2005), pp.35-75.

outside the scope of normal experience. Even captives were cut off, but by the walls and guards of their prison rather than distance, from the world around them. In fact, judged by the relative levels of fictionalisation that took place between Richard's crusading and captive characterisations it is possible that the isolation of captivity provided more opportunity for invention than did crusading where the circumstances were more generally known about and recounted in other sources. The lives of individuals who took on any of these three roles were already unusual, already exceptions to the norm, and so could accommodate episodes that would not have been suited to accounts of individuals who stayed in their locality as part of normal society.

The past itself, by its very inaccessibility, could accommodate fictionalised stories in the same way as tales of forest living or distant lands. While it is likely that anecdotes circulated about all of the individuals discussed in this thesis during their lifetime, in the case of Richard I, which is the one instance where we can track fictionalisation over time, there seems to have been a move from relatively minor stories that then became elaborated in later versions. Except in the case of the *Story of Eustace the Monk*, there is a pattern among the texts that form the basis of this thesis, namely that the more fictional stories appear in written form approximately fifty years after the events that they describe. The passing of time, and the changes it brought with it, meant that past events occurred outside the audience's frame of reference; a 'different country', so different rules. As was the case with physical separateness, temporal distance allowed for a greater range of narratives to be seen as plausible than was the case for recent events.

Consequently the *Romance of Richard Coeur de Lion*, the *Romance of Fouke Fitz Waryn*, the *History of William Marshal*, and the *Story of Eustace the Monk* are a particularly interesting group of texts because there was such a short period of time between events and their fictionalisation. Other thirteenth-century accounts of events that contain an equivalent level of fiction to the group above, for example *the Song of the Cid*, concern individuals from well over a century prior.<sup>749</sup> The close proximity of this group both temporally and geographically, not only in terms of content but also of composition, suggest that the

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<sup>749</sup> Burton Raffel (trans) and Maria Rosa Menocal, *The Song of the Cid: Dual Language Edition* (Harmondsworth, 2009).

circumstances of this time and place, that is England and Northern France in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries, were particularly conducive to the production of fictionalised history.

The probable answer lies in the person and reign of John. As has already been mentioned, John appears as a character in all four of the key texts of this thesis. Even more significantly, John's negative reputation was important to the characterisation of all three of the English examples: it allowed Fouke to act outside the law and receive praise rather than blame as a consequence; it allowed Richard to be seen in an even more positive light because John could be blamed for the Third Crusade's failure to take Jerusalem; and it forced the author of the *History* to turn to fictionalisation in order to disassociate William from John. However, just as was the case for the individuals who received specific fictionalisations, John's reputation, and resultant characterisation, was a consequence of the circumstances of his life as well as his own personality. The dramatic events of John's reign, especially the loss of the majority of the Angevins' French territories and the signing of the Magna Carta, created an image of him as a weak and unsuccessful ruler.

These events also had a profound effect on English culture as a whole, which began to become aware of itself as separate from the French territories to which it had once been connected. For example, during the list of knights in attendance at the tournament in Lagny-sur-Marne the *History* explains that since the death of Richard the Normans had not been worthy although they had been during Henry II's reign.<sup>750</sup> The fact that the Normans' loss of worth took place when John, the king who lost Normandy, came to the throne, suggests that the two are connected. The alteration from the term 'nostris' to 'Neustiis' between manuscripts of the *Chronicle of Richard of Devizes* also implies a perceived change in status for people from Normandy in an English writer; they were increasingly being seen as foreigners rather than equals.<sup>751</sup> The significance that contemporaries placed on John's loss of Normandy can be seen from the fact that it was used to identify John as the 'lynx' in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Prophecies of Merlin*; the king through whom the Normans would lose control over

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<sup>750</sup> HWM 4648-52.

<sup>751</sup> Richard of Devizes, *The Chronicle of Richard of Devizes of the Time of King Richard the First*, John T. Appleby (ed and trans) (London, 1963), p.xxii; see chapter five, p.180.



England.<sup>752</sup> The thirteenth century in England saw the country gradually come to terms with the consequences of the events of John's reign.

The role of cultural change in the romancification of historical events was at the heart of Spiegel's work on French vernacular prose historiography.<sup>753</sup> Her conclusion that the French aristocracy turned to accounts of the past as a means of dealing with a perceived threat raises the possibility that fictionalisation could be a common response to periods of dramatic change. The portrayal of Hereward the Wake discussed above was only one of a number of works produced in the two generations following the Norman Conquest that featured individuals of that period in fictionalised terms. Although in the case of the Conquest there appears to have been a more hagiographical interest than in the thirteenth-century group, with both Edward the Confessor and Harold Godwinson being characterised along religious lines, the similarities between the two groups of texts are interesting and would benefit from a sustained analysis.

Although the transformation that took place during and in the immediate aftermath of John's reign was by no means as decisive as was the Conquest, there does appear to have been awareness that an important change had taken place. In the short term, that change had profound implications for the nobility in many ways. For example, the newly limited geographical area that the English kings ruled meant that monarchs spent more time in the country and consequently took a more direct interest in the affairs of their subjects. There were also financial consequences from the loss of continental territory, especially the rich areas of Southern France, as well as from the continued attempts to restore it. In attempting to deal with the changes and cultural trauma that came about as a result of John's reign the succeeding generation appear to have responded in part by exploring the issues it raised through literary re-evaluations of the situation that created them. The characters that surrounded the period of change - Richard, the good crusading king who could have prevented it if he had not died so soon; John, the weak, deceitful, lecherous king who did not live up to his brother's example; William, the loyal knight who in spite of his ability could not prevent his lord making damaging decisions; Fouke, the good knight who

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<sup>752</sup> See chapter three, p.118.

<sup>753</sup> Spiegel, Gabrielle M., *Romancing the Past: The Rise of Vernacular Prose Historiography in Thirteenth-Century France* (Oxford, 1993).

had to step outside the law in order to defend justice; and Eustace, the adventurer who took advantage of the chaos - were of immediate interest to those who followed them. Even though they were still within living memory they had existed in a dramatically different world, one that was consequently suitable for fictionalisation.

## Appendix

### Core text of the *Romance of Richard Coeur de Lion*

Line numbers identified as core text by Schellekens (versions L, A, D &E)	Equivalent line numbers in Brunner (version C)
1-34	1-34
733-734 (735-738 not in C)	1287-1288
739-772	1315-1344
773-780 (781-784 extended in C)	1429-1436
785-1161 (1162-1175 not in C)	1667-2040
1176-1834 (1835-1847 extended in C)	2041-2650
1848-2226	2683-3046
2227-2273 (2274-2277 extended in C)	3125-3176
2278-2410	3229-3346
2807-2842 (2843-2859 not in C)	3699-3730
2860-2890	3731-3758
2891-2950	4817-4870
3085-3154	5003-5072
3807-3827 (3828-3861 not in C)	5931-5950
3862-4146	5951-6222
4309-4378	6381-6446

This table is approximate; short sections of none core text that appear in C, where they are only a couple of lines long, have been ignored for simplicity.

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