

FOUNDATIONS

WALDEF

**A FRENCH ROMANCE
FROM MEDIEVAL ENGLAND**

Translated by
**IVANA DJORDJEVIĆ,
NICOLE CLIFTON,
and JUDITH WEISS**

ARC HUMANITIES PRESS

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SERIES EDITORS' PREFACE

THE EARLY THIRTEENTH-CENTURY *Waldef* is the least known of the French-language romances of England. Pioneering attention from Rosalind Field has drawn attention to *Waldef* as a major work in the “matter of England” and as a great intertextual work at the heart of the insular romance corpus, catching up many themes from earlier romance and historiography in its allusions and going on in turn to influence subsequent romances. Work by Judith Weiss has explored *Waldef*’s engagement with empire, with East Anglia and the sea and other aspects of its thematic riches and its complex relation to romance convention and historical circumstance. The extant manuscript of the French text continued to attract readers’ inscriptions in its margins into the later Middle Ages and *Waldef* was twice translated into Latin in the fifteenth century. Yet the enduring medieval interest in this text has not attracted proportionate interest from modern scholars of insular romance.

The FRETs (French of England Translation) series—previously published by Arizona Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies and now published as part of ARC Humanities Press’s Foundations series, recognises both the cultural vitality of translation as a form of medieval literary activity and the significance of modern translations of medieval texts as the driver of new literary study and exploration. As editors of the series we have long felt that the chief reason for the under-recognition of *Waldef* is its lack of a modern English translation. At 22,000 lines, the romance has been a formidable project for any individual to take on. But here, at last, much dedicated collaborative work by Ivana Djordjević and Nicole Clifton together with a doyenne of translations from insular French, Judith Weiss, has enabled FRETs to offer a remedy for inattention to *Waldef* in the form of a full translation.

We thank Anna Henderson, our publisher at ARC Humanities Press, and her production team for identifying the provision of this substantial text as fitting ARC’s mission to make a wider range of medieval texts accessible. We are delighted to offer a volume that will enable scholars and students reader access to *Waldef* and very grateful to our translators for their selfless hours of labour.

Thelma Fenster
Jocelyn Wogan-Browne

TRANSLATORS' PREFACE

UNTIL 1984, WHEN A. J. Holden published his edition of *Le Roman de Waldef*, this romance was known, but rarely studied. While there were entries on it in encyclopedic compendia, and it was occasionally mined for linguistic material, the only sustained discussions of the work as a whole were by Legge, in her survey of Anglo-Norman literature, Levy, in a 1972 article, and Anderson, in an extended entry in a multi-volume work (see Suggested Further Reading). The availability of Holden's edition changed this, though less than might have been expected. The sheer length of the text, as well as its unavailability in a modern English (or French) translation, still prevented it from attracting the attention it deserves, in spite of Rosalind Field's seminal 2000 article "*Waldef* and the Matter of/with England" and Judith Weiss's discussions of some aspects of it in a series of articles over the past fifteen years or so. We embarked on the present translation in the hope of rescuing this highly interesting narrative from undeserved neglect by making it more accessible both for novices and for seasoned scholars. It has a great deal to offer both categories.

The lengthy genesis of the book had its roots in each translator's dissatisfaction with the romance's academic obscurity, but each of us balked at the sheer magnitude of the undertaking. In the spring of 2011, Thelma Fenster pointed out that a text of this length required a collective effort, and that is how our team came together. During the years we spent working on *Waldef* we have had few opportunities to meet in person: an initial get-together over lunch to discuss general principles, a break between conference sessions a year later, which we used to review a draft translation of some sections of the text together, and, several years after that, a week when all three of us were able to sit around the same table, putting the finishing touches to our first complete draft. In between, e-mail, cloud-based data sharing, and electronic video-conferencing allowed us to bridge the Atlantic and ignore, for the most part, differences in time zones. A meticulously transcribed, occasionally even improved, electronic version of the Holden edition made our life easier, for which we thank Simon Beaulieu. Henry Bainton's excellent translation of the *Waldef* prologue appeared in time for us to use it, gratefully, to improve and correct our own rendering of some lines in the same section. We have been sustained throughout by the enthusiastic interest, support, and generous advice of the series editors, Thelma Fenster and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, to whom we are greatly indebted. The publication of the book was supported by much appreciated funding from Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Thomas F. X. and Theresa Mullarkey Chair in Literature, Fordham University; the Marc Fitch Fund; the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Northern Illinois University; and the Faculty of Arts and Science at Concordia University (Montreal).

ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| ACMRS | Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies |
| AND | Anglo-Norman Dictionary: www.anglo-norman.net/gate |
| ANTS | Anglo-Norman Text Society |
| Bramis | Bramis, Johannes. <i>Historia Regis Waldei</i> . Edited by Rudolf Imelmann. Bonner Studien zur englischen Philologie 4. Bonn: Hanstein, 1912 |
| CFMA | Classiques français du moyen âge |
| FRETS | The French of England Translation Series |
| Holden | <i>Le Roman de Waldef (Cod. Bodmer 168)</i> . Edited by A. J. Holden. Bibliotheca Bodmeriana 5. Cologny-Geneva: Fondation Martin Bodmer, 1984 |
| ODNB | Oxford Dictionary of English Biography: www.oxforddnb.com |
| OED | Oxford English Dictionary: www.oed.com |
| SATF | Société des anciens textes français |
| Tobler-Lommatzsch | Tobler, Adolf, and Erhard Lommatzsch. <i>Altfranzösisches Wörterbuch</i> . 12 vols. Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1955–2018 |

INTRODUCTION

DATED TO APPROXIMATELY 1200–1210,¹ the anonymous romance *Waldef* provides a foundation myth for East Anglia, particularly Norfolk. Drawing on a rich combination of earlier romances, classical legends, chronicles, and saints' lives, the author creates a multi-layered story of pre-Conquest kings whose shifting political alliances lead both to battles and to peace treaties, some brokered by princesses who fall in love opportunely with these belligerent monarchs. Although the author does not name his patron, he claims to write for a lady who wanted to "read and learn" (v. 81). The intended audience is the French-speaking (or at least French-literate) gentry and nobility of England, most likely during the reign of King John. Set in an indeterminate past after the withdrawal of the Roman Empire in 410 and before the Conquest of 1066, the romance underlines the Anglo-Norman upper classes' identification with their new homeland: the Anglo-Saxon era is their history, too. The adventures of Waldef and his family connect England to a wider world, not only Normandy and France, but Germany and the Mediterranean.² At the same time, the romance problematizes that connection, as Waldef's sons overreach their ability to rule outside their father's kingdom.

The romance critiques social structures and political actions as well as chivalric values. Its protracted battles repeatedly reveal the difficulties inherent in shaping and maintaining alliances, as well as emphasizing the value of reconciliation and forgiveness. It also traces fault-lines and conflicts within families, particularly between fathers and sons. The author reworks one common romance motif, the separation and reunification of a family, by refusing to allow Waldef to live happily ever after once his lost sons, Guiac and Gudlac, return to him. Instead, the grown sons leave home in search of foreign conquests, rejecting their father's strategy of warring on his neighbours. Their parents grieve their departure, rightly so since the second separation proves permanent: Waldef dies alone, battling the treacherous nephews of a former enemy turned ally. Conflicts continue through generations, rather than achieving lasting resolution.

Similar revisions of familiar tropes occur frequently. The poet combines well-known plot devices in original and thought-provoking ways, interlacing themes so that readers are constantly challenged to re-evaluate their judgments of characters and situations. Because *Waldef* both draws on earlier tales and influences later stories in both Anglo-Norman and Middle English, it is central to the Anglo-Norman literary corpus. Its narra-

1 *Le Roman de Waldef*, ed. A. J. Holden, Bibliotheca Bodmeriana 5 (Cologny-Geneva: Fondation Martin Bodmer, 1984), 16–18.

2 Attention to the interaction of empire with more local concerns is a characteristic of the "second generation" of Anglo-Norman romance, to which *Waldef* belongs. Rosalind Field was the first to talk of two "generations" of these romances: see her groundbreaking article "*Waldef* and the Matter of/with England," in *Medieval Insular Romance: Translation and Innovation*, ed. Judith Weiss, Jennifer Fellows, and Morgan Dickson (Cambridge: Brewer, 2000), 25–39. Judith Weiss explores the theme of empire-building in "Emperors and Antichrists: Reflections of Empire in Insular Narrative, 1130–1250," in *The Matter of Identity in Medieval Romance*, ed. Phillipa Hardman (Cambridge: Brewer, 2002), 87–102.

tor deliberately situates his story in an insular literary tradition that blurs the dividing line between history and romance. The prologue refers to the Norman Conquest, then to the *Brut*, a history of England from its legendary founding by Brutus, a descendant of Aeneas. Next the prologue invokes Tristram, who became connected to the Arthurian legend, and Aelof, the father of the hero in the insular *Roman de Horn*. The narrator thus prepares his audience for a particular kind of story, although his *estoire* of Waldef and his family almost immediately departs from known territory, either historical or legendary. Nonetheless, names of characters and places give the romance a distinctly English flavour. *Waldef* clearly continued to attract readers for more than two hundred years after its composition, since the single extant manuscript was copied around 1300, two Latin translations were made in the fifteenth century, and names of some fifteenth-century readers appear in the margins of the Anglo-Norman manuscript.³

Brief Plot Summary

The *Roman de Waldef* is a lengthy text and we cannot do justice here to all its interesting developments.⁴ In his prologue the author claims his *amie* (sweetheart) has asked him to translate the story of King Waldef from English. He traces the early history of Norfolk (the northern half of East Anglia) from Roman settlers and their cities to Anglo-Saxon petty kings, starting with Atle (founder of Attleborough) and moving to his descendants: King Bede, his nephew Florenz (son of Odenild, Bede's sister), and Bede's son Waldef, whose mother is sister to King Morgan of Normandy. When Bede dies, a wicked seneschal takes power and marries the queen. Florenz takes his nephew to Normandy, where Morgan protects them. Florenz and the adult Waldef return to England and Attleborough, and kill the usurper. Waldef is crowned and marries Ernild, daughter of the king of Lincoln, after battling two rivals for her hand: Osmund, king of Oxford (who becomes a friend), and the rapacious Uther, king of London. In Waldef's absence, his land has been invaded by the Swedish king Urvein. Waldef's appeals for help to Okenard of Narborough and Urri of Brancaster, as well as the kings of Colchester, Thetford, and Cambridge, are all refused, but Harding of Tasburgh comes to his aid. Waldef and Harding achieve an alliance with Urvein, and then Waldef takes revenge on the men who refused to aid him, seizing Thetford and all Suffolk. When he lays siege to Colchester, the inhabitants expel their king, Swein, whereupon Waldef, who has become Swein's ally, has the citizens punished. His sons, Guiaç and Gudlac, are born.

Uther summons all the English kings to a feast in London, which Waldef and Swein do not attend; to punish them, Uther and his vassals march on Thetford, but they are defeated and Uther is killed. His place is taken by Fergus of Guildford. While Waldef is at

3 We refer frequently to the longer Latin version, by Johannes Bramis, a monk at Thetford Abbey (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 329), in the notes to the text; see Abbreviations for bibliographic details. The later, shorter Latin version is in Dublin, Trinity College, MS 632, second half of the fifteenth century: "The Romance of Waldef," ed. J. G. Smyly, *Hermathena* 18 (1919): 240–328. Readers of the romance are discussed later in this introduction.

4 A. J. Holden supplies a generous synopsis of the poem in the introduction to his edition of it (Holden, 7–16).

Thetford, his wife and sons are abducted by Saracen pirates. Storms separate the sons from each other and from their mother; Guiac is finally sold to the king of Cologne, Gudlac to the king of Morocco, and Ernild ends up in Denmark. In searching for her, Waldef is imprisoned in Valencia, rescues a calumniated queen in Poitou, and also rescues Ernild twice, first from Denmark and next from Dublin, where she is nearly married to Urvein.

After reconciling with his enemy Merlin, Florenz falls in love with his own mother, Odenild, and their marriage is narrowly averted when she recognizes the ring he wears as the one she gave him when he was a baby. Fergus seizes and imprisons Waldef, but Waldef is saved by the intervention of his former enemy Okenard, who then manages to join him in Thetford. The allies besiege London, where Fergus is aided by his nephews Brand and Hildebrand.

Guiac serves Conrad, king of Cologne, and helps him defeat the pagan king Eron of Saxony. Gudlac has to flee Morocco, then reaches Denmark, and helps its king beat back a Norwegian attack. The brothers are each rewarded with men and a fleet. They meet, unaware of their relationship, at sea on the way to England; at first they fight, then they are reconciled. Gudlac and his Danes become allies of Fergus, who offers Gudlac his daughter in marriage. Guiac's army from Cologne devastates East Anglia, forcing Waldef to abandon his siege and confront the massed forces of Fergus, Guiac, and Gudlac. A single combat to settle differences between Waldef and Guiac is interrupted by Ernild, who, thanks to an angelic revelation of Guiac's identity, halts the fight between father and son. Waldef makes peace with Fergus.

Resolved on further conquests, Guiac and Gudlac leave for Cologne, despite their parents' tearful protests, taking Florenz's son Lioine with them. Conrad having died, his men elect Guiac their king. Guiac invades Saxony, whose king is Saluf, brother of Eron (whom Guiac and Conrad had defeated earlier). Lioine takes Guiac's challenge to Saluf, on the way killing Saluf's nephew, Garsire, and befriending Tierri, who helps and accompanies him when on his return journey he is pursued by Saracens. Guiac puts Saluf and his army to flight; the latter asks for help from the German emperor, Alexis, but Guiac then defeats and wounds the emperor, besieging him in Worms. The emperor's daughter falls in love with Lioine, and summons him to secret meetings with her in a tower, which he can only reach by swimming a dangerous river. A palace official learns their secret and decoys Lioine out to sea, where he drowns. When his body washes up on the shore and is brought to the palace, the distraught princess dies beside him.

The lengthy siege forces the emperor to submit. Guiac is crowned in his stead and announces he intends to conquer Rome and Greece. (There is a gap in the manuscript here; according to Bramis's early fifteenth-century version of the romance, Guiac also has designs on the Holy Land and the Earthly Paradise.) His followers are enthusiastic, but their celebrations are interrupted by the arrival of a mysterious pilgrim, warning the emperor of God's anger at his presumption. As the pilgrim disappears, bad news comes from England: though the dying Fergus has left London to Gudlac's wife, Brand and Hildebrand have seized it and Winchester, and, with the help of an Irish giant, Hunewald, have killed Waldef and his men in Rochester and taken all his castles except Attleborough, Tasburgh, and Thetford. Guiac interprets this as divine punishment, gives up his empire, which he returns to Alexis, and retires from the world. Charged with avenging

his father, Gudlac returns to England and prepares to fight Hunewald. (At v. 22306, the romance breaks off. Bramis provides a continuation which may not be a totally reliable indication of the original ending of *Waldef*. In Bramis's version, Gudlac kills the giant Hunewald, then returns to Thetford to tell his mother about this feat and Guiaç's renunciation of the world. Calling on his allies from Cologne, Gudlac raises an army to attack Brand and Hildebrand and re-take London. Bedemund, the son of Gudlac's friend Wicard, kills both Hildebrand and Brand, the former during a mission requesting him to submit, the latter in battle with Gudlac's forces. In the meantime, Guiaç wanders, begging, as far as Babylon, where he does penance for eight years. An angelic vision then orders him to return to Germany and follow the orders of its barons. It turns out that Emperor Alexis has just died, and the assembled barons elect him their new emperor. Once crowned, Guiaç travels to England to see his brother, only to receive word that his German capital is besieged by an army from the East. The two brothers return together to Germany, where they kill the invaders. Following this triumph, Guiaç successfully conquers first Greece, then Rome. He gives Greece to his nephew, Richer, and has himself crowned emperor of Rome. His sons and grandsons inherit his double empire.)

Date, Author, Audience

Though we are not told the name, position, or geographical context of the writer, nor the name of the lady for whom he writes, his *amie*, he is clearly familiar with East Anglia. His occasional distortions of its geography, such as placing Thetford on the sea, can be explained by the literary convention that a significant city must have a port.⁵ Several East Anglian families have been suggested for his patron: the Bigods, who ruled over both Norfolk and Suffolk, the Warennes, and the Mortimers.⁶ The romance's connection with East Anglia is reflected in the likely distribution of its manuscripts to East Anglia in the medieval period. Henry Bainton notes that Thetford Priory must have had access to a copy of *Waldef* when Bramis translated it, and that Peterborough Abbey may have owned a copy in the late fourteenth century.⁷

The poet supplies us with other information about himself in his claims for his narrative. Eager to assert the historicity of his *estoire*, he gestures to his influential forerunner, Wace's *Brut* (vv. 23–24), and alludes repeatedly in his prologue to written historical sources and "heroic tales" (*gestes*, v. 53). He implies he is following the example of those Normans who, discovering that "the great histories composed in English" (vv. 40–41)

⁵ Holden, 32.

⁶ Holden, 33–34. In an unpublished conference paper, Neil Cartlidge has argued that the poem may have appealed directly to the Bigods, perhaps specifically to Roger III and his brother Hugh, but also "to the whole community of Norfolk aristocrats" ("Glorious East Anglia: Alternative History in the *Roman de Waldef*", 15th Biennial Conference on Romance in Medieval Britain, Vancouver, August 2016).

⁷ Henry Bainton, "Waldef [Dean 155], Prologue: Cologny-Geneva, Fondation Martin Bodmer, MS Bodmer 168, f.1^{r-v}," in *Vernacular Literary Theory from the French of Medieval England: Texts and Translations*, c. 1120–c. 1450, ed. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Thelma Fenster, and Delbert W. Russell (Cambridge: Brewer, 2016), 45–51 at 46–47.

still remained, translated some of them into French. Such claims are not uncommon, as French writers seem to have been stimulated by the well-established and generically ranging English book culture of the later eleventh and twelfth centuries.⁸ However, the only substantive surviving example of English-to-French translation is Gaimar's *Estoire des Engleis*, which relies on the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.⁹ When Latin histories claim to translate English or British sources, the claims may be not verifiable fact but an invocation of authority. Henry of Huntingdon's translation of the Battle of Brunanburh really does translate the account of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. On the other hand, the *Gesta Herwardi*'s Old English source, if it existed, is now lost, while Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain* was widely regarded as fictional even at the time of its composition, despite the author's claim to have relied on "a very old book in the British tongue."¹⁰ The *Waldef* poet's claims, however, signal his familiarity with such histories, and thus suggest that he is well-read in English as well as in the more usual Latin and French. He may well have been a cleric, despite his claim to have a sweetheart.

Anglo-Norman literature so often presents a female patron "collaborating with her clerk or chaplain, estate steward or other writer" that the claim in *Waldef* is plausible.¹¹ Women's patronage of Anglo-Latin writers was already an established tradition in the eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon court, with significant works commissioned by queens including Emma of Normandy.¹² This tradition continued into the Anglo-Norman period, with Edith-Matilda, the first wife of Henry I, commissioning biographical and other works in Latin.¹³ Henry I's second wife, Adeliza of Louvain, requested a French biography of her husband, which is the first known use of written French in historical writing. In the twelfth century, we find nuns and secular noblewomen as well as queens moving in literary circles. Geffrei Gaimar, author of the *Estoire des Engleis*, names both

8 Thomas O'Donnell, Matthew Townend, and Elizabeth M. Tyler, "European Literature and Eleventh-Century England," in *The Cambridge History of Early Medieval English Literature*, ed. C. Lees (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 607–36.

9 Geffrei Gaimar, "*Estoire des Engleis*" / *History of the English*, ed. and trans. Ian Short (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

10 Henry of Huntingdon, "*Historia Anglorum*": *The History of the English People*, ed. and trans. Diana Greenway (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 310–14. Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain: An Edition and Translation of "De Gestis Britonum,"* ed. Michael D. Reeve, trans. Neil Wright, *Arthurian Studies* 69 (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2007), 4–5. *De Gestis Herwardi Saxonis*, transcr. and trans. S. H. Miller and D. W. Sweeting, *Fenland Notes and Queries* 3 (1895–97): 7–72 at 7. For contemporary attitudes toward Geoffrey of Monmouth's work, see "Appendix D: Early Responses to Geoffrey of Monmouth" in *The History of the Kings of Britain*, trans. Michael Faletra (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview, 2007), 287–91. Bainton says that Geoffrey's influence is "indirect, but profound ... apparent in *Waldef's* vast scale" ("Prologue," 46).

11 Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Thelma Fenster, and Delbert W. Russell, "*Si sa dame ne li aidast*: Authorship and the Patron," in *Vernacular Literary Theory from the French of Medieval England*, 89–95 at 91.

12 Elizabeth M. Tyler, *England in Europe: English Royal Women and Literary Patronage, c. 1000–c. 1150* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), particularly 120–34.

13 Lois L. Honeycutt, "Matilda [Edith, Mold, Matilda of Scotland]," *ODNB*; Tyler, *England in Europe*, particularly 302–53.

Queen Adeliza and Constance, the wife of Ralf/Ralph fitz Gilbert, who helped Gaimar by borrowing books on his behalf.¹⁴ The nuns of Barking Abbey, an elite institution with a sophisticated Franco-Latin culture, not only commissioned works in both languages but also composed texts in French, such as the *Life of Edward the Confessor*.¹⁵ Its author conceals her name, a common move for both men and women writers of the period.¹⁶ However, concealing the name of a patron, as the author of *Waldef* does, is unusual, since high-ranking patrons add to the prestige of writers and their works. “The erotics of patronage ... with all its pleasures of submission, service, inversion and play with relations of power” is another reason for our poet to claim he writes for an *amie*.¹⁷ The medieval writer’s position with respect to his employer is usually subordinate, or feminized, as Elaine Tuttle Hansen has argued; it is easier for a male writer to negotiate this equivocal position when that patron is a woman.¹⁸ The *Waldef* poet simultaneously obeys and defies his *amie*. Although he agrees in the prologue to translate the story for her, later he refuses to stop when she wants him to, instead sketching a lengthy outline of his hero’s adventures (not all of which come to pass) to be continued “when it pleases her to hear more” (vv. 7141–96). His reference to his listeners as *seigneur* (vv. 8151–52) seems to hint at a masculine audience, but as this is a conventional address to mixed audiences, it offers no help in identifying either audience or patron. The claim to write for an *amie* situates *Waldef* as suitable for a female audience, signals the writer’s familiarity with literary conventions, and, since he promises to name her at the end of the book, encourages his audience to read on or to keep listening in order to discover the mysterious patron.

Since *Waldef* can be dated only loosely, primarily by the state of its language, it is not possible to speak precisely of its “historical moment.” Nonetheless, its themes and incidents bear witness to the uncertain political situation in England during the last decades of the twelfth century and the opening years of the thirteenth. Difficult choices faced the nobility when a king clashed with his sons in conflicts bordering—or no longer merely bordering—on civil war (as with Henry II, d. 1189, and his sons); or when a king was long absent from the realm (as with Richard I, d. 1199) or was a young child (as in the early years of Henry III, crowned 1216). Under all the Angevin kings, allegiances shifted constantly. Both royalty and magnates abused power, and it was difficult for nobles to oppose them. The kings and their families engaged in incessant efforts to preserve and increase their landholdings, at the same time as cities grew more powerful and tried to

14 Gaimar, *Estoire des Engleis*, vv. 6436–65; for Adeliza, v. 6489 and the appendix. Honeycutt, “Adeliza [Adeliza of Louvain],” *ODNB*; Tyler, *England in Europe*, 359–60.

15 On Barking’s literary patronage see Thomas O’Donnell, “‘The ladies have made me quite fat’: Authors and Patrons at Barking Abbey,” in *Barking Abbey and Medieval Literary Culture: Authorship and Authority in a Female Community*, ed. Jennifer N. Brown and Donna Alfano Bussell (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press/Boydell, 2012), 94–114.

16 *La Vie d’Edouard le confesseur: poème anglo-normand du XII^e siècle*, ed. Östen Södergård (Uppsala, 1948), v. 5308: “Mais sun num n’i vult dire a ore.”

17 Wogan-Browne, Fenster, and Russell, “*Si sa dame ne li aidast: Authorship and the Patron*,” 92.

18 Elaine Tuttle Hansen, *Chaucer and the Fictions of Gender* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 3–7.

expand their prerogatives.¹⁹ Moreover, bloody power struggles were almost inevitable when the legitimate ruler was engaged in conquests (or crusading) in faraway lands, as was the case with many of the Plantagenets as well as with Waldef and his sons.

Rather than responding to any particular conflict, king, or problem, *Waldef* can be seen as a way to make sense of contemporary tensions by mapping them onto the past. As king, Waldef struggles to unite and expand his territories, repeatedly making alliances and fighting battles, facing treachery and sudden turns of fortune. The audience for *Waldef* could never know how their own history was going to develop; what they knew was the present uncertainty. Waldef's story might seem reassuring, suggesting that the turmoil of their days had its counterpart in other periods of English history. Indeed, since one of the names written in the manuscript's margins is that of an attendant on Elizabeth Woodville, Edward IV's queen (d. 1492), it appears that *Waldef* found an audience during the fifteenth-century Wars of the Roses.

Sources and Influences

Waldef draws on both historical and literary sources, which often overlap or intertwine in the text. For example, there were several men named Waltheof (the Anglo-Saxon spelling) in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, who appear in both chronicles and hagiography. The most famous is probably the earl of Northumbria, who initially submitted to William the Conqueror but later rebelled against him and was executed in 1076.²⁰ After the earl was buried in Crowland Abbey, the local abbot encouraged the idea that he might be a saint. His grandson, another Waltheof, first a monk and then an abbot, was likewise believed to be a saint. An earl of Lothian who died in the late twelfth century was also named Waltheof. The romance avoids clear references to historical events in the plot, but uses the resonance of the name to help characterize the hero, a significant landowner who had complex relationships with other lords in East Anglia and the Midlands. Etymologically, the name means "foreign thief" in Anglo-Saxon, which offers another layer of significance to any reader or listener who was fluent in English as well as French.

Other names also help to add a sense of historicity to the romance. Waldef's father, Bede, borrows his name from the great eighth-century Northumbrian historian of the English church. Edwin, Elfer, Emma, and Edward all have the names of Anglo-Saxon kings and queens. Cnut and Hardecnut/Hardecunut share their names with Danish kings of England. The many names ending in -bert, -brand, -ald, and -ild are all Germanic in origin; Erkenwald and Hereward, in particular, evoke the Anglo-Saxon past.²¹ The name

¹⁹ Susan Reynolds, *An Introduction to the History of English Medieval Towns* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977); D. M. Palliser, ed., *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, vol. 1: 600–1540 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Maurice W. Beresford, *New Towns of the Middle Ages: Town Plantation in England, Wales, and Gascony* (London: Lutterworth, 1967; repr., Gloucester: Sutton, 1988).

²⁰ C. P. Lewis, "Waltheof, Earl of Northumbria (c. 1050–1076), Magnate," *ODNB*.

²¹ A seventh-century bishop of London, Erkenwald later became the patron saint of London. Hereward, a Saxon rebel against William I, from East Anglia, has some basis in history but many of his exploits are probably fictional.

Uther alludes to the father of the legendary King Arthur; other Arthurian names include Hoel, Merlin, Morgan, and Moderet/Modred. The city of Winchester, a traditional setting for Arthur's court, also plays an important role for Waldef. Both the narrator and characters refer to King Arthur, so we must assume that the narrator's use of Arthurian names is deliberate.²² They seem to form part of the critique of empire-building that begins in the prologue, with the introduction of Julius Caesar in v. 7.

Historical writing forms an important part of the intertextual matrix of *Waldef*. In the opening lines of the text, the author refers explicitly to the *Brut*, a title applied to various medieval histories of Britain's origins. Here it may refer specifically to the French text by Wace, who introduces Androgeus aiding Julius Caesar in his conquest of Britain.²³ Indeed, our author explicitly sends readers to the *Brut* for Romano-British history (vv. 23–24) as a supplement to his own account of English kings (v. 28). Elements of Androgeus's story find their echoes in episodes of *Waldef*: strife between uncle and nephew, accidental killing of one boy in a fight with another, the motif of enemies reconciling ("after great anger, great love, after great shame, great honour").²⁴ The romance's prologue also alludes to a favourite motif in Wace, the effect of time and change: "people, who changed at that time, just as the languages did" (vv. 43–44), "the world changed, times changed, kings and peoples died" (vv. 257–58). Wace says, "Then foreigners arrived ... then the Angles and Saxons arrived.... Next the Normans and the French came."²⁵ Holden has observed that the author of *Waldef* picks up some other episodes from the *Brut*,²⁶ yet he fails to note the importance of the Belin and Brenne section. This portion treats the lives of two brothers who make war on each other, then reconcile through their mother's intervention, and go on to conquer all of France and Italy as far as Rome. It clearly underlies the careers of Waldef's sons Guiac and Gudlac, and Guiac explicitly likens himself and his brother to the earlier pair of British brothers (vv. 14976–15014, 17661).²⁷

Romance likewise contributes to the intertextuality of *Waldef*. The prologue refers to Tristram, a tragic lover with conflicting loyalties, and to Aelof, the father of Horn, a brave fighter who dies heroically, thereby indicating that his story will treat knights' suf-

²² See Rosalind Field, "What's in a Name? Arthurian Name-Dropping in the *Roman de Waldef*," in *Arthurian Studies in Honour of P. J. C. Field*, ed. Bonnie Wheeler (Cambridge: Brewer, 2004), 63–64.

²³ Wace's "*Roman de Brut*": *A History of the British*, trans. Judith Weiss (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1999; rev. ed. 2002), vv. 4424–834, and *Waldef* vv. 16–17. Although similar stories appear in Geoffrey of Monmouth's Latin *History of the Kings of Britain*, contemporary authors generally referred to this work by its author's name. Holden acknowledges the influence of Wace's *Brut* on "inspiration and organization" but thinks precise references are "rare and vague" (27–28).

²⁴ Wace, *Brut*, vv. 4434–45.

²⁵ Wace, *Brut*, vv. 3762–69; the whole passage at vv. 3757–84 is relevant, as are vv. 14729–56.

²⁶ Holden, 27–28.

²⁷ Their story appears in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain* (III.1–230); Wace devotes nearly a thousand lines to the brothers, adding more dramatic and romance-like elements (vv. 2313–3169), which is why we think our author was most familiar with Wace's version. Furthermore, one of the brothers' antagonists is named Guthlac in Wace (Guithlacus in Geoffrey), making the allusions in *Waldef* yet more pointed.

fering, both emotional and physical. *Waldef* is studded with motifs familiar from insular and Continental romance, whether these are direct borrowings or drawn from a common repertoire. For example, the motif of a landless hero serving a ruler, for which he is rewarded with an army (or a princess), familiar from Anglo-Norman romances such as *Boeve de Haumtone* and *Horn*, occurs twice (in Denmark and in England) in the career of Waldef's son Gudlac. Another motif is that of the abandoned baby who survives to an accomplished adulthood and reunion with his family, familiar from the *Lais* of Marie de France as well as from the *Life of Saint Gregory*. Moral tales also make an appearance, such as the story of the vindictive wife from the Latin story collection *Dolopathos* (a version of the *Seven Sages of Rome*). The widely disseminated legend of St Eustace (versions are extant in Latin and most vernacular languages of Christian Europe), with its account of a family separated and reunited, is another possible influence on the vicissitudes of Waldef and his family. Towards the end of the poem, the author includes an extended account of Lioine's tragic love affair, drawing on the classical tale of Hero and Leander, best known to medieval audiences through Ovid's *Heroides*.²⁸ Old French epic also contributes episodes and attitudes, such as the complicated relationship to "Saracens," including a deathbed conversion.

Names and events from the Anglo-Saxon past combine with references to romance, epic, hagiography, and didactic and classical stories to add a patina of historicity to the story of Waldef and his family, while situating the narrative with respect to Latin and French literary history. In turn, *Waldef* supplies a fund of episodes and literary tropes drawn on by subsequent romancers. The thirteenth-century *Gui de Warewic*, in particular, owes much to *Waldef*, as Holden has shown, with "precise and sustained" verbal similarities between the two.²⁹

Themes and Issues

Waldef is about three times the length of one of Chrétien de Troyes's romances, which are for many readers the "standard" against which other French romances are measured. The greater length allows the poet to develop and revisit many issues, offering new perspectives as the years pass and characters age. Many significant themes are interlaced throughout the romance, introduced at one point and revisited at others: the Anglo-Saxon past; the problems of conquest; political relations between England and

²⁸ Holden, 24. Rudolf Imelmann discusses this source in the introduction to his edition of the *Historia Regis Waldei*: see Bramis, lvii–lix.

²⁹ Holden, 29–31. *Gui* cannot be dated with complete certainty, but recent studies have placed it earlier in the thirteenth century than its editor did. "*Gui de Warewic*": *roman du XIII^e siècle*, ed. Alfred Ewert, CFMA 74–75, 2 vols (Paris: Champion, 1932–33), 1: v–vii. Holden considered the hypothesis underlying Ewert's dating to 1232–1242 "very fragile" (29). On the dating of *Gui*, see Judith Weiss, "The Exploitation of Ideas of Pilgrimage and Sainthood in *Gui de Warewic*," in *The Exploitations of Medieval Romance*, ed. Laura Ashe, Ivana Djordjević, and Judith Weiss (Cambridge: Brewer, 2010), 54–55n44, and also Yin Liu, "Romances of Continuity in the English Rous Roll," in *Medieval Romance, Medieval Contexts*, ed. Rhiannon Purdie and Michael Cichon (Cambridge: Brewer, 2011), 149–59.

Normandy, and between England and the rest of the world; patterns of loyalty, betrayal, and shifting alliances, both personal and political; religion; the role of women; and family relationships and generational conflicts.

Waldef claims the Anglo-Saxon past as part of the heritage of French speakers living in England. At the time of the poem's composition, the Norman Conquest was already some 140 years in the past. Inter-marriage had long since mixed the Normans and the English, and those Normans who settled in England, such as the Bigods and Warennes in East Anglia, had quickly committed to their new home, investing in their lands and architectural projects.³⁰ *Waldef* is not a propaganda piece urging the conquerors to respect Anglo-Saxon culture or reassuring the conquered English that the Normans can see value in their stories and laws. Rather, the romance (like *Gui* and *Boeve*) stresses continuity, establishing ancient origins for contemporary families, regions, and customs. On one hand, the distant past functions as an exotic "other" just as do physical places such as Spain and Morocco; on the other hand, that past and those places affirm for contemporary readers the centrality of England and the shared identity of its inhabitants. The English (of whatever origin) are English because of their relationship to the island. *Waldef* begins English history with the Romans, a conquering people, rather than with Brutus or Albina, the individual explorers who found Britain in the *Brut* narratives; Saxons and Normans in turn follow the Romans to English shores. All three groups are seafaring peoples, explorers, invaders, and conquerors.

The romance announces its concern with the complexities of conquest by beginning English history with Julius Caesar, whom it inaccurately terms "emperor" (he was one of the last rulers of the Roman Republic). *Waldef* represents Caesar as making repeated efforts to conquer England, although historically he invaded once, and later Roman incursions were under other leaders; the more effective campaign was some eighty years after Caesar's invasion. The Roman withdrawal from England in the early fifth century left the country at the mercy of Germanic invaders, as in the accounts of Geoffrey of Monmouth and Wace. In romances as well as chronicles, King Arthur finally brings about political stability, only to have Rome demand tribute. Arthur's determination to turn the tables and instead make Rome pay him appears as a justifiable response to an unreasonable request, although some later texts criticize his war on Rome.³¹ In contrast, English history according to *Waldef* omits the Germanic invaders, and Guiac and Gud-

30 Andrew Wareham briefly traces Roger Bigod's investment and building projects in *Lords and Communities in Early Medieval East Anglia* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2005), 139–52; see also Judith Green, *The Aristocracy of Norman England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

31 The *Alliterative Morte Arthure* expresses this view, which is shared by some earlier texts, such as *Draco Normannicus*, the *Historia Meriadoci*, and *Ipomedon* (which embeds stock Arthurian motifs in a romance with a southern Italian setting): see Judith Weiss, "Emperors and Antichrists," 97–98, and Judith Weiss, "Ineffectual Monarchs: Portrayals of Regal and Imperial Power in *Ipomedon*, *Robert le Diable* and *Octavian*," in *Cultural Encounters in the Romance of Medieval England*, ed. Corinne Saunders (Cambridge: Brewer, 2005), 55–68. In many ways the figure of Alexander the Great also influenced that of Arthur, from Geoffrey of Monmouth onwards. See Judith Weiss, "Arthur, Emperors and Antichrists: The Formation of the Arthurian Biography," in *Writers of the Reign of Henry II*, ed. Ruth Kennedy and Simon Meecham-Jones (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 239–48 at 241.

lac's desire to follow in Arthur's footsteps by (re)conquering Rome arises purely from ambition rather than as a response to any aggression from that empire.

At least since Æthelred's marriage to Emma of Normandy in 1002, England and Normandy had enjoyed cordial relations. As the mother of King Edward the Confessor and the great-aunt of William the Conqueror, Emma is a key figure in late Anglo-Saxon history, linking Normandy not only to England, but also, through her second marriage to King Cnut, to Denmark and Norway.³² Although *Waldef* has no female character who corresponds precisely to Emma, the romance's network of connections among the English, Normans, and Danes hints at the author's awareness of her significance, as does Bede's marriage to Ereburch, sister to King Morgan of Normandy. King Bede, Waldef's father, serves Morgan faithfully for a year, earning both respect and rich gifts as together they battle the French, a separate group from the Normans. After Bede's death, the young Waldef finds refuge at Morgan's court, as Edward the Confessor found refuge in Normandy after Æthelred died. Morgan and Normandy fade into the background once Waldef grows up, retakes his father's throne, and subdues his English neighbours. In the romance, the past is a time of constant conflict, but the most important warfare takes place within England. The adventures of Waldef and Ernild outside of England show them as victims of fate, enduring their trials and responding to opportunities, like the heroes of hagiographic romance.

Waldef's sons, though kidnapped as children, do not remain passive victims. They actively resolve to make their mark via foreign invasion, dividing the world between them and sometimes re-writing their father's adventures. In Morocco, Gudlac's attack on the king's nephew (vv. 11817–906) echoes his father's unfortunate quarrel with the son of the mayor of Rouen (vv. 2348–58). Together, Guiac and Gudlac place East Anglia in relation to countries bordering the Mediterranean and the North Sea. Guiac's claim on the German imperial crown demonstrates that an Englishman could, if he wanted, hold that position (vv. 20359–670).³³ Both of Waldef's sons, insisting upon their Englishness despite their foreign upbringing and affective ties to the kings who adopted them (vv. 11773–76; 12185–96), set out to find their home and parents once they are old enough to strike out on their own. In this way, the romance seems to assert the importance of ties to land and lineage, even as the ending of the romance opens Guiac's and Gudlac's ambitions to criticism. Although Gudlac arguably ought to have stayed in England with his wife, his continued search for fame and fortune after marriage echoes Chrétien's Yvain, while Guiac's religious conversion might be considered a happy outcome by medieval audiences (as the conversion of Gui de Warewic is presented).

32 Both Tyler, *England in Europe*, and Hugh M. Thomas, *The Norman Conquest: England after William the Conqueror* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), have genealogical tables showing the complex intermarriages of the English royal families before and after the Conquest.

33 No medieval Englishman actually became Holy Roman Emperor, though Henry I's daughter Matilda (1102–1167) was empress through her marriage to Heinrich V (d. 1125), Holy Roman Emperor and king of Germany; see Marjorie Chibnall, "Matilda [Matilda of England]," *ODNB*. Henry III's brother Richard of Cornwall (1209–1272) made several bids for the imperial title and did become king of the Germans; see Nicholas Vincent, "Richard of Cornwall, First Earl of Cornwall and King of Germany," *ODNB*.

Their attempts to extend their father's patrimony, though unsuccessful in the romance, arise from impulses they share with their father and other ancestors, and Bramis's continuation offers an ending in which Guiac becomes emperor of both Germany and Rome, with his descendants succeeding him.

Political alliances in *Waldef* are repeatedly made, broken, and sometimes reforged. The aggressive East Anglians constantly make war on their neighbours.³⁴ This perpetual fighting results from the early barons' decision to split up the country into factions (vv. 261–72), perhaps reminiscent of the Heptarchy (the seven kingdoms of Anglo-Saxon England). At first it seems that the narrator approves of this picture of endless war and conquest, since the hero, his allies, and his sons engage in warfare almost all the time. But repeated reconciliations modify this impression. Although it is rare in romance for bitter enemies to settle their differences, *Waldef's* conflicts with Osmund, Urvein, and Okenard all resolve in friendship.³⁵ In fact, *Waldef* himself makes an important statement about reconciliation:

[E]ntre amis avient suvent
 Grant curuz e grant maltalent,
 Cum avient entre pere e fiz,
 Qui suvent par mal sunt partiz
 E puis devienent bons amis,
 Qui ançois furent enemis;
 Cum plus sunt enemis mortels,
 Plus devienent amis charnels

vv. 4625–32

[Between friends great displeasure and anger often occur, as they occur between father and son, who often separate in anger and later become good friends when previously they were enemies. The deadlier their enmity, the closer their friendship.]

The context is ambiguous: *Waldef* expresses these hopeful sentiments in letters to potential allies against a pagan invasion, but the addressees, Rut and Cnut, remember past wars and insults from him and dishonour his messengers, returning messages of defiance. Ultimately *Waldef's* men kill these two kings in battle (vv. 5391–402). Nonetheless, anger does turn to affection in several cases: Osmund decides to help *Waldef* because he is impressed by his behaviour (vv. 3834–42); Urvein, a pagan, makes a calculated decision based partly on *Waldef's* honour in battle and partly on *Waldef's* men having stolen a march on him (vv. 5081–98); and Okenard, despite having been dispossessed by *Waldef*, discovers under stress that he still feels more loyalty to *Waldef* than to his employer, Fergus, who has behaved dishonourably by capturing *Waldef* when he is out for a pleasure sail (vv. 10323–786; see discussion below). At the same time, military aggression threatens to destroy *Waldef's* family when his own sons first attack

³⁴ See Judith Weiss, "'History' in Anglo-Norman Romance: The Presentation of the Pre-Conquest Past," in *The Long Twelfth-Century View of the Anglo-Saxon Past*, ed. Martin Brett and David A. Woodman (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), 275–87 at 280.

³⁵ Osmund and *Waldef* at vv. 3934–37; Urvein and *Waldef* at vv. 5083–104; *Waldef* and Okenard at vv. 10415–56.

each other and then him. They do become friends, yet the sons' ambitions prevent them from aiding their father in his final battle.

Compared to many contemporaneous romances and epics, *Waldef* does not foreground religion, despite the presence of several groups of pagans who interact with the Christian heroes. Major feasts and fasts of the Christian calendar do not even appear as calendar markers: Easter, Christmas, and Pentecost are never mentioned. The feast of the Ascension appears once (v. 3263), and even Trinity Sunday appears only twice, as the day on which Waldef and Florenz receive arms (v. 2653), and on which Waldef begins his decisive war on Fergus (v. 10925). The characters invoke God, Jesus, and assorted saints with some frequency, and in a handful of encounters with pagans, the Christian Trinity is favourably compared to the "Saracen trinity" of Mahomet, Tervagant, and Apollin.³⁶ Notably, the Saracens are honourable opponents, who behave courteously. Urvein proposes single combat between himself and Waldef to avoid the bloody waste of a pitched battle. Later, he returns Ernild to her husband, providing the couple with great gifts (vv. 8581–692), although he had hoped to marry the lady. The king of Valencia, old and feeble, offers Waldef great riches in return for his help in battle; when Waldef refuses this gift and asks instead that the king release his Christian prisoners, the king grants his request (v. 7503–39).³⁷ Lioine's encounter with Garsire, a headstrong young pagan, ends in the latter's deathbed conversion to Christianity (vv. 15967–16096). However, none of the heroes undertake battles for religious reasons. Although many romances of the period refer to or include crusading among their themes, *Waldef* does not engage with the crusades as such.

Much of *Waldef's* plot focuses on battles, alliances and betrayals, raising armies, and similar masculine activities. Nonetheless, women play a significant role, beginning with the claim that a woman is the romance's patron. Love and attraction drive the plot at key moments throughout the text. For example, Morgan's sister Ereburc falls in love with Bede and encourages his advances (vv. 1029–106). Their public courtship contrasts with the clandestine affair conducted by Bede's sister, Odenild, with Dereman, one of Bede's soldiers (vv. 429–626). This affair ends in the tragedy of Dereman's death and the drama of Odenild concealing her pregnancy, the result of which is Florenz/Foundling, Waldef's cousin and protector. Florenz, abandoned as an infant, eventually falls in love with his own mother, but at their wedding feast, she recognizes his ring and so their relationship comes to light. The Dereman-Odenild-Florenz thread, interlaced through nearly nine thousand lines of the romance, shows the poet playing with the romance tropes of abandoned infants and their recognition, but where Marie de France, to take one example, focuses on the woman and her predicament, *Waldef* places the tropes of abandonment and restoration in a framework that emphasizes their political signifi-

36 Many texts refer to these figures as the "gods" of the Saracens; Mahomet derives from the Prophet Mohammad, the origins of Tervagant are uncertain, and Apollin's name comes from the Greek god Apollo. See notes to vv. 4968, 4965–80, and 11712. The encounters are as follows: Waldef and Urvein at vv. 4739–5110; Waldef and the king of Valencia at vv. 7197–550; Lioine and Garsire at vv. 15826–16098.

37 This episode closely resembles a similar adventure in *Gui de Warewic*: see Holden, 29.

cance and implications for the men. Indeed, Florenz's first wife (the sister of King Swein, and presumably the mother of his son, Lioine), seems to have been forgotten, perhaps to have died without mention. Underneath the satisfaction of the recognition scene we can see that women are often men's prey. Even marriage to a king may not be adequate protection. Florenz's war against Felix for lust's sake recalls that of Uther against Gorlois in the Arthurian legend. However, when Odenild recognizes her son's ring, Waldef and Florenz's emotional ties are strengthened by the discovery that they are not merely companions but cousins (vv. 9223–68). Odenild's husband Felix, restored to his throne, also benefits from his association with his wife's son and nephew (vv. 9293–322).

The principle of interlacing episodes also helps to make sense of an episode, partly borrowed from *Dolopathos*, in which Bede expresses troubling misogyny through a request for a courtier to bring his jester, his enemy, and his friend to court (vv. 1632–33); the “enemy” turns out to be the man's wife.³⁸ The men present all take the wife's reaction to public shaming as proof of women's perfidy, and Bede delivers a tirade on the perversity and wickedness of women (vv. 1933–2094). The narrator interrupts with praise of his patron, which sits uneasily in this context as a reminder of women's socio-economic indispensability (vv. 1845–72). Some six thousand lines later, Waldef finally provides a retort to his father, when he saves a calumniated queen, proving her innocence and the guilt of her accuser. Waldef instructs her husband, “be careful never to trust any man who accuses your wife of wrongdoing unless you can properly ascertain that she's in any way guilty” (vv. 8071–76). When men weave nets of deceit, women have limited options for response.

In many medieval romances, the family is a point of departure, from which the hero sets out on his adventures, perhaps never to return. Certainly *Waldef* contains many instances of separated families: Florenz's mother abandons him (vv. 677–712), Waldef must be taken away for his own safety (vv. 2191–222), Waldef's wife and sons are kidnapped (vv. 6970–72), and Tierri leaves his father and sister to help Lioine and Guiac (vv. 16443–82). At the same time, themes of family loyalty and family conflict run throughout the romance, a smaller-scale version of its political alliances and betrayals. Family members help each other and turn on each other: Florenz, Waldef's cousin, saves him from being killed by his stepfather, the treacherous steward Frode (vv. 2154–90). He also kills Waldef's half-brother, Frode's son, presumably to prevent him seeking revenge when he grows up, as Waldef did (vv. 3121–64). Brothers may be allies or rivals. Belin and Brenne, aggressive brothers from *Brut* historiography, are explicitly invoked as models by Guiac and Gudlac (vv. 14976–15014, 17661).³⁹ In a dramatic recognition scene, Ernild follows the example of Belin and Brenne's mother by baring her breasts in order to make peace between her sons (v. 14501); as she suckled them both, they should have pity on her and each other. Whereas Wace spells this out with a lengthy account of the mother's speech (vv. 2729–816), the author of *Waldef* simply alludes to it with Ernild's gesture, assuming that his audience will understand its significance.

³⁸ Johannes de Alta Silva, “*Dolopathos*,” or, “*The King and the Seven Wise Men*,” trans. Brady B. Gilleland (Binghamton: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1981).

³⁹ See note 27.

The family reunion, though joyful, proves impermanent, turning into intergenerational conflict. When Waldef tries to persuade his sons to stay in England by suggesting that they could win lands there, they point out that Cornwall, Devon, and Somerset belong to his neighbours and that warring on them would upset recently established political arrangements (vv. 15080–104). Here again the author layers relationships and critique, with the sons calling their father's practice into question. And yet the neighbours continue to wage war on Waldef, suggesting that his may be the right perspective after all. King Fergus's nephews, Brand and Hildebrand, rebel in an effort to reclaim their uncle's throne (vv. 20883–916), despite Gudlac's marriage to Fergus's daughter Ykenild (vv. 13149–88), which ought to cement the alliance and ensure a lasting peace. Although apparently a betrayal of agreements with Waldef and his allies, this episode echoes the successful efforts of Waldef and Florenz to regain Waldef's heritage at the beginning of the romance. The same conflicts play out repeatedly, in different settings and generations. They almost seem to echo *Beowulf's* interpolated stories of semi-mythical family conflict, in which truces brokered by marriages repeatedly shatter, with women torn between their fathers and their children, their brothers and their husbands.

Style and Aesthetic Qualities

Like most medieval French narratives, *Waldef* is composed in octosyllabic rhyming couplets, which occasionally become monorhymed sections of four, six, or more lines, reminiscent of the *laissez* (rhymed or assonating) of *chansons de geste*.⁴⁰ The couplet is a flexible form, capable of both brisk movement and slow elaboration. Medieval stylists preferred each couplet to express a single thought, although a complex sentence may extend over a number of couplets, each containing a sub-clause. The author of *Waldef* uses regular octosyllabic couplets throughout, and also respects the unity of the couplet, rarely using enjambment or continuing a single thought beyond the bounds of the rhyming lines.

The poet frequently uses multiple synonyms to intensify his meaning: “destroy and lay waste” (v. 112), “outlaws, thieves, and raiders” (v. 120), “an excellent, valiant knight, bold, fierce, and a great fighter” (vv. 127–28). This repetition is a deliberate stylistic choice to highlight ideas important to the poet and to his readers. For example, the many temporal adverbs in the prologue emphasize successive waves of action and reaction, insist on the cyclical nature of history, and invite comparison of the “English” heroes to the Roman ruler who invaded England.⁴¹ The technique is both common and admired in medieval French (and English) literature.

This principle of intensifying by accretion applies to episodes as well as within sentences. Whenever some phrase or motif recurs, readers will do well to assume that the repetition indicates a deliberate emphasis, and question the assumptions, conventions,

⁴⁰ Holden counts 581 quatrains, sixty sets of six lines of the same rhyme, ten of eight lines, three of ten lines, and one of a dozen lines (36).

⁴¹ These adverbs are *jadis* (v. 1), *devant nus* (v. 3), *dunc* (v. 5), *ore* (v. 6), *suvent* (vv. 10, 13, 21), *puis* (vv. 16, 22), and *combien de tens* (v. 20).

or realities that underlie it. The many separations and reunions, alliances, battles, courtships, and other repeated motifs all serve to explore these tropes from different angles, and to stress that these are the building blocks of romance and of human relationships. Often these incidents, especially the recognition scenes, allude to an underlying question about identity: Who am I, away from the context of family, friends, home, and language? In expressing such anxieties, the romance provides opportunities for vicarious exploration of problems involving identity, only some of which achieve final resolution.

Analyzing a single passage from the poem will illustrate some of the poet's characteristic devices and techniques. When Okenard saves Waldef from King Fergus's prison, he fully expects to sacrifice his life for his lord's. However, Edward, the sheriff of London, makes a speech of some sixty lines in which he firmly rebukes Fergus and his desire for revenge. After this, Okenard is allowed to leave. The bulk of the speech focuses on Okenard's status, Fergus's feelings, and the legal issues (we omit nearly twenty lines summing up Okenard's actions). In this extract, monorhymed sections are underlined; alliterating sounds appear in **bold**; the polyptoton on *treire* receives double underlining; and words associated with speaking and hearing are *italicized*. We leave marking other lexical terms (discussed below) as an exercise for the reader.

| | |
|---|-------|
| "Rois," fet il, "vers moi <i>entendez</i> . | |
| Par vostre ire ne vus hastez | 10712 |
| De fere tant contre reisun, | |
| De <u>treire</u> hum a dampnaciun; | |
| N'est pas l'us de ceste <u>cité</u> | |
| Que humme soit a mort <u>dampné</u> | 10716 |
| Par ire ne par <u>volenté</u> , | |
| Si par esguard nun del <u>regné</u> . | |
| D'Okenard vus voil jo <i>mustrer</i> , | |
| Qu'ore vus oï <i>comander</i> | 10720 |
| Que il fust <u>detreit</u> u pendu; | |
| Cest esguard n'avom pas veü, | |
| Ne vus apent rien d'esguard fere— | |
| <i>Dire</i> le vus voil e <u>retreire</u> — | 10724 |
| Mais vostre curt feire le doit, | |
| Iço apent a nostre droit. | |
| De la cité sui, si <i>dirrai</i> | |
| Mun <i>avis</i> , pur nul nel lerrai, | 10728 |
| D'Okenard que avez <u>jugé</u> : | |
| A mult grant tort l'avez <u>dampné</u> . | |
| De traïsun l'avez <u>reté</u> , | |
| Ateint ne l'avez ne <u>prové</u> ; | 10732 |
| Unc ne vus fist pur <u>verité</u> | |
| Ne fiance ne <u>fealté</u> | |
| Ne vostre humme unc ne devint, | |
| Terre n'onur de vus ne tint, | 10736 |
| Ainz est estranges soldeers, | |
| Servi vus a pur vos deniers; | |
| Se il demain de vus s'en veit | |
| Foi ne fiance ne vus deit. | 10740 |
| De tant le devom plus <i>loer</i> | |
| E de lealté <i>afermer</i> , | |

| | |
|---|-------|
| Quant sis sires l'ot <u>dechascié</u> , | |
| De sa terre <u>deshérité</u> , | 10744 |
| E puis le vit si <u>encombré</u> | |
| Que il estoit a mort <u>dampné</u> ; | |
| N'iert mervelle s'il ot dolur | |
| Quant il vit tenir sun sengnur, | 10748 |
| Qui humme lige il estoit | |
| E ligance a lui fet avoit | |
| | |
| Si nul i a qui el en <i>die</i> , | |
| Que il en ait fet felunie, | 10768 |
| Par devant vus se <i>defendra</i> , | |
| Si cum la curt esguardera, | |
| E se nul ne li veult <u>pruver</u> | |
| Ne rien envers li <u>desreisner</u> , | 10772 |
| Je l'os pur verité <u>juger</u> | |
| Que il s'en doit tut quite <u>aler</u> ." | |

["My lord king," he said, "listen to me. Don't rush, in your anger, to act so far against reason as to condemn a man. It's not the custom in this city for a man to be condemned to death in anger or by arbitrary will but only by the decision of the kingdom. I want to speak to you about Okenard, whom I've now heard you order to be pulled apart or hanged. We have not made this judgment. Let me inform you that it's in no way your prerogative to make a judgment: your court should do it instead. This concerns our rights. I'm from the city, and I'll tell you my opinion about Okenard, whom you've sentenced; no one can make me desist. You have condemned him quite wrongly. You've accused him of treason but you have neither established it nor proved him guilty. The truth is that he never swore you loyalty nor homage, nor did he ever become your man. He held neither land nor fief from you but is an outsider, a mercenary who served you for your money. If he leaves you tomorrow, he owes you neither oath nor loyalty. Therefore we should praise him all the more and applaud his fidelity, since his lord Waldef drove him out and dispossessed him of his land, but then Okenard saw Waldef in a dire predicament, condemned to death. It wasn't surprising that he was distressed when he saw his lord held captive, whose liege-man he was and to whom he had done homage. ... If there's anyone who says otherwise, that he has committed a crime, he'll defend himself before you as the court decides, and if no one wants to show that he's guilty or prove anything against him, I venture to pass judgment that he should get off scot-free."]

Edward uses many words that emphasize speaking and hearing, since the spoken word is the basis for medieval legal relationships:⁴² *entendez* (v. 10711), *mustrer* (v. 10719), *oï comander* (v. 10720), *dire ... retreire* (v. 10724), *dirrai / mon avis* (vv. 10727–28), *loer* (v. 10741), *afermer* (v. 10742), *die* (v. 10767), and *defendra* (v. 10769). The central question is to whom Okenard owes loyalty, and therefore whom he can have betrayed. Fergus thinks Okenard betrayed him, but Edward insists that with respect to Fergus, Okenard is a mercenary; his loyalty belongs to Waldef. Thus, in the centre of this speech, which itself occurs at the centre of the poem, Edward uses a series of alliterating synonyms, *fiance ne fealté* (loyalty nor homage) and *foi ne fiance* (oath nor loyalty), combined with multiple negatives, to emphasize that Okenard's faith is not owed to Fergus (vv. 10734, 10740).

⁴² See M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066–1307*, 3rd ed. (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), particularly chap. 8, "Hearing and Seeing" (255–94).

juger / aler (vv. 10771–74). Again Edward accompanies them with multiple negatives: if no one wants to “show that he’s guilty or prove anything against him,” Edward himself will judge (“pass judgment”) that Okenard should go free. The series of legal terms ends with the verb *to go*, allowing the narrative as well as Okenard to move away from this crisis point.

The poet’s use of doublets within lines or couplets, such as *foi* and *fiance*, extends to a similar technique at the level of episodes. Some episodes echo each other precisely, as in the doubled kidnap of Ernild by pirates and the doubled recognition scenes when Waldef finds her again. In others, repetition of themes, symbols, or words advances the plot and illustrates the poem’s moral outlook. In the sequence in which Okenard rescues Waldef, is defended by Edward, and receives his reward from Waldef, the poet marks a contrast between Waldef and Fergus in their treatment of their followers. Following Edward’s speech, Waldef raises an army to take revenge on Fergus, and the question of payment or reward for fighting returns. The poet moralizes about the difference between serving a good man and a bad one: “Whoever serves a worthy man prospers mightily, but whoever serves a bad man comes off the worse. He who serves the worthy man will in the end profit by it, and he who serves the bad one, as we have heard many times, will never get anything good from him” (vv. 10861–67). *Profit* (*pru*) is a key word here, and difficult to translate, since it means both honour and wealth. The romance distinguishes between wages—that is, cash paid for a defined term of service, such as Fergus pays Okenard—and the sort of reward offered by Waldef to men who will follow him to war because of their affective ties. Their fortunes run in parallel: if Waldef wins, he will distribute the lands he gains among his followers, but his defeat could mean losses for his men, as well. The point is illustrated by an interruption in the Fergus-Waldef conflict when a messenger from Lincoln announces the death of Erkenwald, Waldef’s father-in-law (vv. 11031–36). Waldef delays his attack on London, Fergus’s stronghold, in order to award Lincoln to Okenard as a heritable fief. Okenard’s reward for his loyalty, though a substantial one in monetary terms, functions not in a cash economy but in an economy of honour, based on personal ties. Waldef must go in person to introduce Okenard to the city-dwellers of Lincoln, indicating his own ultimate responsibility for the city and his trust in Okenard as its new lord.

The entire sequence emphasizes respect for the law and its processes. Edward is presented as an admirable character, a man from the city, identified with and upholding its customs (*us*); able and willing to speak against a powerful and angry man, and to defend a man whose actions could be interpreted either as praiseworthy loyalty to his lord despite their past disagreements, or as a betrayal of his current employer. The sheriff sorts out the ambiguities and insists on the difference between being paid and being rewarded, being an employee and being a liege. Even his name, Edward, evokes the Anglo-Saxon past and the *Leges Edwardi Confessoris* (mid-twelfth century), which, claiming to go back to Cnut and Edward the Confessor, “constituted the legal standard of the age.”⁴⁴ The poet’s style is intimately connected to his content.

44 Bruce R. O’Brien, *God’s Peace and King’s Peace: The Laws of Edward the Confessor* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 56; Weiss, “‘History’ in Anglo-Norman Romance,” 285.

The Manuscript and Its Readership

The romance is found in just one manuscript, Bibliotheca Bodmeriana 168 (formerly Phillips 8345), dated from the end of the thirteenth century to the beginning of the fourteenth.⁴⁵ It also contains the *chanson de geste Otinel* and the romance *Gui de Warewic*. The manuscript's margins show traces of early readers, including the names of four early modern women who may have owned or read its texts. These are Ane Wyn (fol. 209r), Elezabeth Matssil (fol. 209r), Jane Grey (fol. 5r; rear flyleaf), and Anne Echyngham (fol. 207v, with a partial attempt, "Anne Ech," on fol. 208v).⁴⁶ These four names are all in different hands, of the fifteenth or sixteenth century. The two from folio 209r are unidentified, although "Mattsil" suggests Mattishall, in Norfolk.⁴⁷ Jane Grey's signature appears in two other extant volumes: London, British Library MS Royal 14.E.iii, and Princeton University Library, Garrett MS 168, which allow us to date her to the fifteenth century, and to place her in royal circles, probably as an attendant to Elizabeth Woodville, Edward IV's queen.⁴⁸ She may have been a relative by the queen's first marriage to John Grey of Groby. There are two plausible candidates for Anne Echyngham. The first was born to Sir Thomas Echyngham and Margaret Knyvett in the 1420s and died in 1498; she was married twice, first to John Rogers of Dorset and then to John Tuchet, sixth Lord Audley. Another possibility is an Anne whose father's name is unknown; as the widow of Edmund Lewknor of Sussex, she married Edward Echyngham and died in 1539. No men's signatures appear in the manuscript, but an *ex libris* in the binding shows that the manuscript later belonged to "W[illia]m Fermor, Esqr of Tursmore in Oxfordshire," probably the William Fermor (1737–1806) who built Tusmore House and came from a Catholic family of collectors and connoisseurs.⁴⁹ The women's signatures strongly

⁴⁵ Available online at www.e-codices.ch/en/list/one/fmb/cb-0168.

⁴⁶ Françoise Vieliard had trouble with Anne Echyngham's secretary hand, reading her entries as "Anne Elhy ..." and "Anne Rey." Vieliard, *Manuscripts français du Moyen Âge*, Bibliotheca Bodmeriana: Catalogues, 2 (Cologne-Geneva: Fondation Martin Bodmer, 1975), 93–94 at 94. She noted that one branch of the Grey family were well-attested as book collectors as early as the fourteenth century, implying that they might have owned the manuscript. In correspondence (June 10, 2008), Mme Vieliard linked Bodmer 168 with Cambridge, Fitzwilliam 242, the Grey-Fitzpayne Hours, which, she said, bore the arms of Sir Richard de Grey, who married Joan, daughter of Sir Robert FitzPayne, in 1308; the implication was that this Joan might have been among the owners or readers of the MS. The Fitzwilliam Museum, however, has refuted this: the owner of Fitzwilliam 242 was in fact John de Pabenhham, whose coat of arms was similar but not identical to that of the Greys of Codnor.

⁴⁷ The rear flyleaf also has a rough sketch of two ladies' heads, looking away from one another, and a crossed-out inscription, "Wyn my louve wt lyeill [loyal]," which suggests a pun on the surname Wyn, perhaps even a family motto.

⁴⁸ Princeton University Library, Garrett MS 168, is an account of the death of the Turkish sultan Mehmed II in May 1481, so Jane wrote in that book no earlier than the second half of that year. Jane's signature also appears on the flyleaf of London, British Library MS Royal 14.E.iii, in the company of the names "Elysabeth, the kyngys dowter" (b. 1466) and "Cecyl the kyngys dowter" (b. 1469), the daughters of Elizabeth Woodville and Edward IV.

⁴⁹ See Judith Weiss, "Wace to Lazamon via Waldef," in *Reading Lazamon's "Brut": Approaches and Explorations*, ed. Rosamund Allen, Jane Roberts, and Carole Weinberg (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2013), 559–60n33, for the Greys' connection to the Gorleston Psalter. An ancestor, Sir William

suggest that *Waldef* and the other texts of Bodmer 168 had an audience of aristocratic women in the early modern period.⁵⁰

In addition to these names, which are clearly signatures in different handwritings, two other women's names appear along the inner margins of folios 188v and 190v: M A R G E R E T and K A T E R I N E, in elaborate capitals echoing the style of the large capitals adorning the text. These might be pen practice, the names of popular saints, or the names of family members or love objects of male readers. In any case, they add to the sense of a female presence in Bodmer 168.

Note on the Text and Translation

We have translated from the text of *Waldef* edited by A. J. Holden, with reference to the digitized manuscript as necessary.⁵¹ Our translation is in prose rather than verse, since prose narrative is the closest equivalent in our own time for the medieval use of verse as the standard medium of long and complex narratives.

The manuscript has paragraph breaks, which we have nearly always retained, but where paragraphs are lengthy we have introduced extra breaks. Our treatment of the editor's punctuation is fairly free: we do not always keep it but may rearrange his sentences, sometimes combining separate ones, sometimes substituting a full stop for a comma or vice versa. Occasionally we contract a sentence into a more compact one (for example, vv. 8077–82). Medieval French makes heavier use of pronouns than modern English and we have sometimes replaced a pronoun with its proper noun for clarity's sake. Where synonyms are particularly close in meaning, we have sometimes translated by substituting an intensifying adverb: "ran very swiftly," for example, in place of "ran fast and swiftly." As regards proper names, if they are recognizably taken from Arthurian literature we have used the familiar spelling: *Artur* is translated as Arthur, *Utier/Uthier* as Uther, *Moderet* as Modred. The spelling of many of the remaining names varies throughout the poem; in these cases we have chosen the variant that occurs the most often.

At some point in the textual transmission, a section of text running from v. 10875 to v. 11022 (ff. 65vb–66va) appears to have been transposed from its proper place in

Fermor (1648–1711), in his will left "statues, pictures and books" to his son Thomas, whose wife Henrietta (née Jeffries) was a notable antiquary; in 1698 another William Fermor bought up some of the collection (marbles, medieval manuscripts) of Thomas Howarth, the Earl of Arundel. See *Genealogical Collections Illustrating the History of Roman Catholic Families of England*, pt. i, ed. J. Jackson Howard and H. Farnham Burke (privately printed, 1887), 2 ff. See also Bernard Quaritch, *Contributions towards a Dictionary of English Book-Collectors* (London, 1892–99), pt. xii, "William Fermor Esq. of Tufmore [sic]."

50 In the late medieval and early modern periods, the gentry and nobility of both sexes routinely learned French. See Kathleen Lambley, *The Teaching and Cultivation of the French Language in England during Tudor and Stuart Times* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1920); Douglas Kibbee, *For to Speke Frenche Trewely: The French Language in England, 1000–1600: Its Status, Description, and Instruction* (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1991); and James Carley, *The Books of King Henry VIII and His Wives* (London: British Library, 2004).

51 We signal all divergences from the text as printed by Holden, except when they concern dittographies and accidentally transposed letters in his edition.

the narrative: in the only extant manuscript it precedes vv. 11023–184 (ff. 66va–67va) instead of following them. As a result, elements of the episode in which Waldef inherits Lincoln and gives it to Okenard as recompense for his loyal service are mixed up with Waldef's retaliatory campaign against King Fergus of London.⁵² While the state of the text is compatible with a bifolium having been copied back to front, or with a copyist losing his place in the exemplar and picking it up at the wrong point later, without further work it is difficult to reconstruct how this might have happened. Our translation follows Holden's edition in preserving the manuscript order, but we print a reordered text in Appendix II, to make it easier to follow the action of this part of the narrative.

52 There is no transposition in Bramis (146–49), in whose translation the two episodes are separate: the feast at which Waldef learns of King Erkenwald's death is held in Thetford before the campaign against London, and Okenard's coronation in Lincoln likewise precedes the siege of London.

Suggested Further Reading

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