

“Threads of Resistance
to the Post-Conquest
Kings of Norman Descent:
A Post-colonial Reading of
Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108”

by

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ABSTRACT

From the end of the thirteenth century comes a manuscript now classified as Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108, a devotional anthology containing an acephalous poem entitled *The Ministry and Passion of Christ*; an apocryphal text recounting the pre-gospel childhood of Christ known as *Infancy of Jesus Christ*; a collection of saints lives entitled *Early South English Legendary*; three short religious poems known as “The Sayings of St. Bernard,” “The Vision of St. Paul,” and “Dispute Between the Body and the Soul”; two early Middle English romances *King Horn* and *Havelok the Dane*; an alliterative poem entitled “Somer Soneday”; and three short verses on the flyleaf. What distinguishes the Laud Misc. 108 is that it is the oldest extant manuscript written entirely in Middle English at a time when Latin and French were the languages of power. This project evaluates this manuscript through a post-colonial lens. Produced almost 250 years after first contact with the Norman colonizer, the exclusive use of Middle English was a potentially subversive choice that challenged the Norman claim to power and criticized the post-Conquest kings of Norman descent while working to re-make and re-claim an “English” identity.

Because William the Conqueror’s line was firmly established as the royal family of England by the time of the manuscript’s compilation, any political criticism or resistance would need to be subtle. Woven through the manuscript are threads of subtle resistance to this ruling family. One such thread is the manuscript’s inclusion and presentation of several pre-Conquest kings of Anglo-Saxon England as ideal kings whose interests and devotions are to God, the Church, England, and her

people. These Anglo-Saxon kings function as foils to the post-Conquest kings who, according to the manuscript, do not share these same devotions. While the manuscript places the Anglo-Saxon kings as polar opposites to the post-Conquest kings, it also aligns the post-Conquest kings with iconic villains, the quintessential evil pagan emperors from the early Christian period. The manuscript also subversively employs hagiography as a vantage point from which to re-tell the Conquest story from the English viewpoint and to provide its audience with models not only of piety, but of political dissent as well. The last subtle thread is the manuscript's presentation of the post-Conquest English clergy, represented by SS Wulfstan, Becket, and Edmund of Abingdon. The manuscript constructs them as models of devotion to God, champions of the English people, and models of courageous resistance to kings who unrightfully occupy the English throne. These subtle threads of resistance implicitly invite the late thirteenth-century English-speaking audience of the Laud Misc. 108 to question the legitimacy and quality of their own post-Conquest "English" king.

CHAPTER 1
Introduction
Conquest, Colonization, and English Identity

For more than one thousand years, beginning with the Roman invasion of England in 55 B.C.E. and ending with the Norman Conquest in 1066, England was a “contested space.”¹ The Norman Conquest was the last successful effort to overtake and possess the island. Pursuant to the natural results of conquest, the language now labeled Old English took its place behind Norman-French² and Latin in the linguistic hierarchy, and occupied that inferior space until the middle of the sixteenth century.³ Richard Helgerson states that English was added to Latin in Church services in 1550, and that “[r]eplacing law French with English in the proceedings of the common law was a late step, taken only in 1650 by Parliament, after the execution of Charles I, as another way of declaring the now fully sovereign English nation free of its ‘Norman’ overloard [*sic*].”⁴ In post-colonial terms of power and dominance, the Anglo-Saxon language, along with the Anglo-Saxon people and culture, were the de-centered or marginalized “Other” in this conquest scenario. The English showed signs of resistance to Norman colonization and domination, as is typical of many marginalized and/or dominated cultures. Where there is colonization and conquest, according to Edward Said, “there was *always* some form of

¹ My thanks to Brian McFadden for clarifying my argument by inserting this phrase into our conversations.

² According to Rolf Berndt, while generally called French, the reference to the spoken language is “more correctly ‘Norman-French’” for the first 140 years after the Norman Conquest. See Berndt’s “The Linguistic Situation in England from the Norman Conquest to the Loss of Normandy (1066-1204),” *Philologica Pragensia* 8 (1965): 161.

³ Richard Helgerson, “Language Lessons: Linguistic Colonialism, Linguistic Postcolonialism, and the Early Modern English Nation,” *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 11.1 (1998): 291.

⁴ Helgerson, “Language Lessons” 292.

active resistance.”⁵ Although Said is speaking of more modern cultures, his analysis applies to medieval England as well.⁶ One evidence of resistance to the Normans appeared almost 250 years after the Conquest: a manuscript written entirely in Middle English compiled circa 1300 and now classified as Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108. While the entire manuscript certainly was not compiled as a result of an explicit agenda of resistance, there is a layer of interpretation within the manuscript that can be read as a political-linguistic act of resistance to the line of post-Conquest kings of Norman descent who rule England after the Battle of Hastings. The very fact that the manuscript is written entirely in English is a political act, a sign of resistance to the hegemonic cultural and linguistic hierarchy imposed by the post-Conquest kings of Norman descent.

The Value of Manuscript Context in Interpretation

The Bodleian Library categorizes this manuscript, one of 461 manuscripts that Archbishop William Laud gave to the Bodleian Library on May 22, 1635,⁷ as “miscellaneous,” a descriptor used not to reflect the internal content of the manuscript but used to reflect the fact that the manuscript does not fit into any of the other categorical designations the library employed to group Laud’s donations. The designation “miscellaneous” indicates that the Bodleian librarians grouped this manuscript with other

⁵ Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1993) xii; cited in Peter Childs and Patrick Williams, *An Introduction to Post-Colonial Theory* (London: Prentice Hall, 1997) 108.

⁶ See below for my reasons for applying post-colonial theory to a medieval text.

⁷ Kimberly K. Bell, “Generic Convention and Transformation in Middle English Romance: The Manuscript Evidence in King Horn and Havelok the Dane,” Ph.D. diss., Georgia State U, 2002, 2234.54. According to Bell, in total Archbishop Laud donated approximately 1300 manuscripts and rolls to the Bodleian Library over a five-year period.

seemingly unrelated manuscripts, rather than indicating the use of “miscellaneous” as used by critics to designate a collection or grouping of varied and disparate texts of a seemingly unrelated nature. The MS Laud Misc. 108 is a compilation of texts that on the surface are religious in nature: an acephalous poem entitled *The Ministry and Passion of Christ*; an apocryphal text recounting the pre-gospel childhood of Christ known as *Infancy of Jesus Christ*; a collection of saints lives entitled by Carl Horstmann as *Early South English Legendary (ESEL)*; three short religious poems known as “The Sayings of St. Bernard,” “The Vision of St. Paul,” and “Dispute Between the Body and the Soul”; two early Middle English romances *King Horn* and *Havelok the Dane*; an alliterative poem entitled “Somer Soneday,” and three short verses on the flyleaf.

While the romances at first glance would seem to be out of place in a manuscript of saints’ lives and religious poems, viewing the romances in the manuscript context of the Laud Misc. 108 indicates a methodology in the compilation. It is precisely through and by way of the manuscript context, as Kimberly Bell argues with respect to *Havelok the Dane* and *King Horn*, that the compiler encourages and even leads the audience down certain interpretive paths. According to Bell,

[n]o matter what kinds of texts a particular narrative is bound with, reading that narrative within the entirety of the manuscript invites us to see similarities in character, theme, plot, incident, structure, or purpose. The reader draws parallels amongst texts of different genres that he or she may not perceive when reading a text divorced from its context.⁸

Bell asserts that the presence of saints’ lives next to the romances encourages the

⁸ Bell, “Generic Convention” 88.

audience to see Horn and Havelok as saints. According to Bell, “[o]n reading the two romances within the context of saints’ lives, however, one perceives echoes, parallels, and similarities between the two genres [saints’ lives and romance]”⁹; and, as a result, “[i]n *King Horn*, the author directs readers to see the connections between romance and saints’ lives through Horn’s assumed disguise [of Cuthbert, a saint’s name]. In *Havelok the Dane*, Havelok himself embodies the qualities associated with saints.”¹⁰ Read individually without consideration of the manuscript context, both Havelok and Horn are typical romance heroes following typical romance patterns. However, reading the two romances within the manuscript collection of the Laud Misc. 108 refutes the idea that generic designations were mutually exclusive and opens the way for other thematic connections between the texts of historical and symbolic importance. These thematic connections lead to other interpretations of the manuscript as a whole.

The Laud Misc. 108 manuscript is a compilation of texts that are religious in nature or that have underlying religious themes, and the manuscript’s designation as a religious didactic codex intended for a lay audience has been the vantage point from which many have viewed, analyzed, and interpreted the manuscript. Thomas Heffernan argues, however, that there other possible interpretations or purposes for hagiographical writings such as those found in the Laud Misc. 108 manuscript. Heffernan asserts that “[c]ontemporary scholarship’s focus on the exemplary characteristics of the hagiographic legends in collections of *libri festivalis*, like the *SEL*, tend to blunt the social and political

⁹ Bell, “Generic Convention” 97.

¹⁰ Bell, “Generic Convention” 99.

edge of this genre.”¹¹ Like Heffernan, I contend that more than religious instruction, the medieval English audience would also find within the popular religious stories and romances in the Laud Misc. 108 a “social and political edge.” One such edge is a post-colonial subtext of “social and political” consequence that attempts to bring the marginalized, colonized, “inferior” English language, culture, and people back to the center, back to a position of influence, or at least to the position of consequential identity in late thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century England in opposition to their post-Conquest kings of Norman descent.

Who Are the Subjugated English and Who Are the Normans?

If the MS Laud Misc. 108 functions as a political text that articulates oppositional stances against the power structure of late thirteenth-century England, who are the powerful Normans and who are the subjugated English? The subjugated “English” is a diverse collection of people. “English” included those of Norman origin as well as Anglo-Saxons because family genealogy at the time was not necessarily a required factor of “Englishness.” Within one or two generations of the Conquest, those whose ancestors came from Normandy considered themselves “English” and spoke the English language. Concurrently, the post-Conquest kings and the ruling aristocracy considered themselves “English,” but few of them spoke English as their native language. Norman immigrants married English women. Intermarriage played a significant role in the transformation from Norman to English: Linda Georgianna characterizes intermarriage as “[p]erhaps the

¹¹ Thomas Heffernan, “Dangerous Sympathies: Political Commentary in the *South English Legendary*,” *The South English Legendary: A Critical Assessment*, ed. Klaus P. Jankofsky (Tübingen, Germany: Francke Verlag, 1992) 3.

most crucial factor in hastening the process of cultural identification of all settlers as ‘English.’”¹² Incidentally, intermarriage was mutually beneficial: Georgianna points out that intermarriage was “highly desirable among well-born Anglo-Saxon women looking to retain their lands and status, and equally desirable among Norman castlemen looking to normalize and stabilize their power.”¹³ In linguistic terms, the result of intermarriage solidified the continued use of English as a spoken language. From these Norman/Anglo-Saxon marriages came an ethnically hybrid English-speaking people who were, according to William Rothwell, “the first successive generations of children [for whom] the French language *could not hope* to remain long a vernacular in the true sense of the term.”¹⁴ Intermarriage, then, was a significant deterrent to the success of Norman-French, or any of its derivatives, as a vernacular language. Rothwell explains the conditions under which Norman-French would have survived as a vernacular language: “[o]nly a closed linguistic community willing to practice exclusively intermarriage amongst its own members has any chance of keeping its vernacular alive in a strange land.”¹⁵ Other than the ruling aristocracy, Normans and those of Norman descent spoke English as a natural result of intermarriage.¹⁶

In addition to use of the English vernacular as a marker of “Englishness,” the

¹² Linda Georgianna, “Coming to Terms with the Norman Conquest: Nationalism and English Literary History,” *REAL* 14 (1998): 48.

¹³ Georgianna, “Coming to Terms” 48.

¹⁴ William Rothwell, “The Role of French in Thirteenth-Century England,” *The Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 58 (1975-76): 448. Emphasis mine.

¹⁵ Rothwell, “Role of French” 449.

¹⁶ Other European mercenaries fought with William the Conqueror at Hastings and also made England their home after the Conquest. See Hugh M. Thomas, *The Norman Conquest: England After William the Conqueror* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008) 31, 46, 50; see also Berndt, “The Linguistic Situation in England” 147.

other marker at the time is a connection to Anglo-Saxon land. Racial genealogies or ethnic origins in the Middle Ages did not play the same dominant role that they play today in determining nationality. Georgianna asserts that at the time “the terms ‘English’ and ‘Norman’ are far more likely to have a territorial or political than an ethnic valence.”¹⁷ By the time of the compilation of the Laud Misc. 108 manuscript, England had lost all of her French land holdings other than Gascony¹⁸; therefore, the “practical reasons” for widespread retention of the French language among the ruling elite were no longer present.¹⁹ By the late thirteenth century, most of the immigrants of Norman descent solidly connected themselves and identified themselves with the English land they possessed. Georgianna explains that “land tenure laws in England encouraged new settlers to forgo place of origin as the determining factor in cultural identity in favor of defining themselves in terms of the genealogy of these lands.”²⁰ In other words, if the land is English, the landowner is English. What we find, then, is that, as Georgianna explains, “the binary opposition between Norman and Anglo-Saxon ethnicities, so central to modern constructions of English national identity, operated as a crucial distinction for only a generation or two at the most in the rapidly shifting cultural climate of post-Conquest England.”²¹ Thus the ethnic (for lack of a better term) transformation to “English” is complete: the inhabitants of England whose families had lived in England for generations by the time of the MS Laud Misc. 108, and who spoke English, even if they were of Norman or any other European genealogical origin, constituted the English

¹⁷ Georgianna, “Coming to Terms” 47.

¹⁸ Thomas, *The Norman Conquest* 63.

¹⁹ Berndt, “The Linguistic Situation in England” 161.

²⁰ Georgiana, “Coming to Terms” 48.

²¹ Georgiana, “Coming to Terms” 49.

side in the English-Norman dichotomy of the Laud Misc. 108 manuscript. It was the so-called “Normans” of England’s power structure, or the English royalty and aristocracy of French descent, who were the oppressors against whom the subversive swipes of the Laud Misc. 108 manuscript are directed.

While the kings of England may have called themselves English, even after more than two hundred years had passed since their arrival in England as the ruling family, the Norman and Angevin kings had yet to produce a king who spoke English as his native language. In fact, Henry III (1215-1272), king just prior to the time of the compilation of MS Laud Misc. 108, was born of a French-speaking father King John and a French mother Isabella of Angoulême. Like his father and grandfather, Henry III married a native French woman, further perpetuating French as the native language among the royalty of England. French continued to be the language of the royalty in England for many years after the compilation of the Laud Misc. 108 manuscript. R. A. Lodge characterizes the purpose of the continued use of French: “[t]he descendants of the Norman invaders seem to have striven to maintain their ancestral language as a badge of status and identity,”²² but it was nothing more than an artificial distinction. The Anglo-Norman period ended with the loss of Normandy in 1204,²³ but the continued influx of the French language from the continental spouses of English royalty perpetuated the use of French²⁴ by the nobility and royalty long after the loss of Normandy. In fact, by the

²² R. A. Lodge, “Language Attitudes and Linguistic Norms in France and England in the Thirteenth Century,” *Thirteenth Century England IV: Proceedings of the Newcastle Upon Tyne Conference*, ed. P. R. Coss and S. D. Lloyd (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1992) 80.

²³ See fn 2 above.

²⁴ Berndt specifically states that the name of the language spoken among the nobility and royalty from the Conquest in 1066 through the loss of Normandy in 1204 is “more

middle of Henry III's reign, Gascony was far too distant to have any regular cultural or linguistic influences on language spoken in England; however, the English royalty and aristocracy of Norman descent maintained the use of French to separate themselves from their English-speaking subjects in spite of the loss of the "practical reasons" to maintain the French language. Lodge explains, "retention of the language of government [French] within a limited number of hands is always an effective way of retaining the powers of government within those same hands."²⁵ The difference in language created a clear line of demarcation between royalty and subject, between powerful and powerless.

Not only did language differences prevent the English king from being truly English, or from being bound to his people by common language, other barriers also prevented Henry III from being an English king for the English people. His English subjects expressed many complaints about their rulers and their abuses of royal power. A particular point of irritation was the presence and influence of "foreigners" in England. Like his father, King John, who signed the Magna Carta requiring the deportation of certain influential foreigners, some of whom were French, and who continued to employ French counselors in powerful positions even after the loss of Normandy,²⁶ Henry III showed favoritism to his and his wife's French relatives, his the Poitevins and hers the Savoyards; such preferential treatment damaged the morale of his subjects. Michael Prestwich cites an incident between Englishman John FitzGeoffrey and one of Henry

correctly 'Norman-French'" ("The Linguistic Situation" 161); however, scholarly reference to the language spoken by the nobility and royalty after the loss of Normandy is generally "French."

²⁵ Lodge, "Language Attitudes" 82.

²⁶ Michael Prestwich, "Englishmen and Foreigners," *English Politics in the Thirteenth Century* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990) 82.

III's Lugisnan half-brothers Aymer de Valence. Prestwich quotes chronicler Matthew Paris's comment that "'the king had raised up his half-brothers as if they had been native born, contrary to the right and law of the kingdom, nor would he allow any writ to go out from the chancery against them.'"²⁷ To the English, it seemed as if Henry III applied one set of laws to his subjects and another set to his French relatives because Henry III was a king whose abuses favored his French roots above his English commitment. In addition to Henry's preference for his French relatives, Henry's reign also included many confrontations over legal issues between Henry and the baronial class, who were effectively the champions of the cause of the "English." Henry desired to possess Sicily and spent copious amounts of the English treasury, which consisted of tax revenue, on that failed attempt; Henry also spent large amounts of money to retain control of Gascony.²⁸ As a result, resentment toward Henry and his people ran high. Thorlac Turville-Pêtre provides an indication of the pervasiveness of this "anti-Norman"²⁹ sentiment in thirteenth-century England:

[w]hat the hostility addresses is the widespread resentment felt by bondmen who suffered heavy and often arbitrary taxation especially at times when they could least afford it, by freemen who had acquired some wealth but still lacked power and status, by monasteries too, who frequently came into conflict with

²⁷ Prestwich, "Englishmen and Foreigners" 87.

²⁸ For a comprehensive discussion of the strain on the English treasury because of Henry III's desire to possess Sicily, his spending on the Crusades in the Holy Land, and the costs associated with his efforts to maintain Gascony, see J. R. Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994).

²⁹ Thorlac Turville-Pêtre, *England the Nation: Language, Literature, and National Identity 1290-1340* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996) 96.

neighbouring lords over disputed property.³⁰

This hostility is directed toward the king. Even though Henry III's son Edward I was the king of England by the time of the actual compilation of the MS Laud Misc. 108, the problems that the "English" people had with their previous king *of Norman descent* likely remained fresh in their memories.³¹

Post-colonialism in the MS Laud Misc. 108

It is in this political and social context that I wish to examine the MS Laud Misc. 108 as a post-colonial document. As an analytical tool and as an offshoot of feminist examination of "power relations," "post-colonialism introduces racial and cultural dimensions into the analysis."³² In its resistance to the colonizer, the Laud Misc. 108 manuscript demonstrates a power conflict that fits Lois Tyson's definition of a post-colonial text because of its "anti-colonial resistance"³³ to the English ruling class, but more specifically, to the post-Conquest kings of Norman descent. First, however, it is important to examine certain potential objections surrounding the use of post-colonialism

³⁰ Turville-Pêtre, *England the Nation* 97-8.

³¹ For explanations of specific problems with Henry's French relatives, see Michael Prestwich, "Englishmen and Foreigners" 79-94; for a discussion of problems with "foreigners" in general during Henry III's reign, see Huw Ridgeway, "King Henry III and the 'Aliens', 1236-1272," *Thirteenth Century England II: Proceedings of the Newcastle upon Tyne Conference 1987*, eds. P. R. Coss and S. D. Lloyd (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1988) 81-92; for a discussion of the importance and role of Simon de Montfort in the contentions with the baronial class, see Heffernan, "Dangerous Sympathies" 1-17, and Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort*. For a discussion of Edward I's response to the problems with the barons after his father's reign, see J. R. Maddicott, "Edward I and the Lessons of Baronial Reform: Local Government, 1258-80," *Thirteenth Century England I: Proceedings of the Newcastle Upon Tyne Conference 1985*, eds. P. R. Coss and S. D. Lloyd (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1985) 1-30.

³² Childs and Williams, *Post-Colonial Theory* 22.

³³ Lois Tyson, "Postcolonialism and African American Criticism," *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1999) 372.

to analyze a medieval text. For example, literary critics generally apply post-colonialism as a literary analytical tool to more modern writings dating from after the beginning of the Western European imperial projects in the late 1400s to the present, and employed by indigenous, colonized peoples who are most often non-Caucasian. Homi Bhabha narrowly limits the time period and authors to modern “minority” groups stating that “[p]ostcolonial perspectives emerge from the colonial testimony of Third World countries and the discourses of ‘minorities’ within the geopolitical divisions of east and west, north and south.”³⁴ While the Laud Misc. 108 manuscript’s locus is England, rather than the “Third World,” the manuscript represents a “minority” voice within the “geopolitical divisions” of England. Moreover, focusing on Tyson’s definition of a post-colonial people as “any population that has been subjected to the political domination of another population,”³⁵ England of the late 1200s certainly fits into such a definition. There is debate about whether Caucasian cultures, such as Canada, Australia, and even the United States can lay a claim to being a post-colonial people,³⁶ and the same concern about race could be raised about medieval England. Even though medieval England was “racially” Caucasian and would, therefore, generally not fit into the mold of a post-colonial society or culture, I argue that, in this case, the definitions of domination apply because (1) the idea of “race” is often difficult to define and is replaced with ethnicity (meaning English or Norman) in the period,³⁷ and (2) in the England of the Laud Misc. 108 manuscript,

³⁴ Homi Bhabha, “Postcolonial Criticism,” *Redrawing the Boundaries: The transformation of English and American Literary Studies*, eds. Stephen Greenblatt and Giles Gunn (New York: The MLA of America, 1992) 437.

³⁵ Tyson, “Postcolonialism” 371.

³⁶ Tyson, “Postcolonialism” 371.

³⁷ Lisa Lampert-Weissig, *Medieval Literature and Postcolonial Studies* (Edinburgh:

both discrimination from the colonizer and resistance by the colonized occur along linguistic, not genealogical, lines.

Recently there has been insightful and reasoned application of post-colonial theory to the Middle Ages in general.³⁸ For example, in “Hybrids, Monsters, Borderlands: The Bodies of Gerald of Wales,” Jeffery Cohen discusses, along lines similar to Gloria Anzaldúa’s concept of the ‘mestiza’ as seen in her work *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, the hybrid entity produced when two cultures meet.³⁹ Gerald, a monk whose mother was Welsh and whose father was Norman serving King Henry II, witnessed Welsh subjugation first-hand under Norman occupation, a dominance perpetuated particularly on the basis of language. In “Postcolonial Chaucer and the Virtual Jew,” Sylvia Tomasch explores Chaucer’s use of the Jew as the “Other”⁴⁰ to define the “English” people and culture some 80 years after the Jews had been expelled from England.⁴¹ Kathryn Powell has produced convincing post-colonial readings of

Edinburgh UP, 2010).

³⁸ For collections of essays, see Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, ed., *The Postcolonial Middle Ages* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000) and Ananya Jahanara Kabir and Deanne Williams, eds., *Postcolonial Approaches to the European Middle Ages: Translating Cultures* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005). For single-author criticism, see John M. Ganim, *Medievalism and Orientalism: Three Essays on Literature, Architecture and Cultural Identity* (New York: Palgrave, 2005); Sylvia Huot, *Postcolonial Fictions in the Roman de Perceforest: Cultural Identities and Hybridities* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2007); and Geraldine Heng, *Empire of Magic: Medieval Romance and the Politics of Cultural Fantasy* (New York: Columbia UP, 2005).

³⁹ Jeffery Jerome Cohen, “Hybrids, Monsters, Borderlands: The Bodies of Gerald of Wales,” *The Postcolonial Middle Ages*, ed. Jeffery J. Cohen (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000) 85-104.

⁴⁰ According to Robert Bartlett, the Jews came to England from Normandy with William the Conqueror and continued to speak French until their expulsion in 1290. See Robert Bartlett, *England Under the Norman and Angevin Kings 1075-1225* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000) 346.

⁴¹ Sylvia Tomasch, “Postcolonial Chaucer and the Virtual Jew,” *The Postcolonial Middle*

Anglo-Saxon texts as well. In “Orientalist Fantasy in the Poetic Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn,” Powell persuasively argues that the poems represent an effort to re-center and reassert the Anglo-Saxon position as God’s elect,⁴² a position feared lost because of their unwise use of knowledge and lack of faith. In the “Solomon and Saturn” poems, Powell explores the re-centering of the Anglo-Saxons as the wise Christians of the West set in opposition to the unwise, pagans of the East—the “Other.”⁴³ Similar post-colonial issues of conquest, de-centering, othering, and hybridity are central to the MS Laud Misc. 108. The standard definition applied to post-colonial analysis, that is, the analysis of “literature produced by cultures that developed in response to colonial domination,”⁴⁴ does indeed apply to the Laud Misc. 108: in spite of ethnicity and date, concepts Lampert-Weissig takes to task in her recent work,⁴⁵ England had been conquered, colonized, and ruled by a foreign entity from 1066 and into the late thirteen/early fourteenth century of the Laud Misc. 108 audience. It is the English resistance, both stated and implied, to the powerful post-Conquest kings of Norman descent as evidenced in the MS Laud Misc. 108 that allows for the features of post-colonial analysis to serve as a relevant template.

Ages, ed. Jeffery J. Cohen (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000) 243-60.

⁴² The theme of the Anglo-Saxon people as God’s chosen is also a theme in the MS Laud Misc.108.

⁴³ Kathryn Powell, “Orientalist Fantasy and the Poetic Dialogues of ‘Solomon and Saturn’,” *Anglo-Saxon England* 34 (2005): 117-43. See also Powell’s “Meditating on Men and Monsters: A Reconsideration of the Thematic Unity of the *Beowulf* Manuscript,” *Review of English Studies* 57 (228): 1-15.

⁴⁴ Tyson, “Postcolonialism” 364.

⁴⁵ Lampert-Weissig reviews post-colonial scholarship as applied to the medieval period and this scholarship’s work to cross “modern borders and extend the postcolonial to the Middle ages and not just to the rise of the West in the sixteenth century” (“The Future of the Past,” *Medieval Literature* 1-30.

Use of the English Language as a Post-colonial Strategy

Linguistic issues are particularly important in terms of reading the MS Laud Misc. 108 as a manuscript with a post-colonial perspective. Conventional wisdom established by scholars such as V. H. Galbraith (1935), Johan Vising (1923), Dominica Legge (1941), among others, had, until rather recently, advanced and maintained the idea that England in the Middle Ages was essentially a bilingual community with its population at all levels freely using English and French, with Latin reserved for the Church and higher-level clergy. More recent scholarship disagrees with that conclusion. In terms of population size, the Anglo-Normans and other French speakers did not at any time comprise a significant portion of the population in England. Berndt establishes that “Normans and the settlers from other parts of France always constituted a relatively small minority whose numerical strength never exceeded 10% of the whole population of England.”⁴⁶ While native Norman settlers were small in number and while it is true that many kings did indeed learn to speak English to varying degrees of proficiency,⁴⁷ the royalty continued to “move mainly in predominantly French-speaking circles”⁴⁸ and to speak French as their mother tongue until long after the Norman Conquest. Moreover, the language of the powerful, that is, of the government as an extension of royalty, was French.

There were indeed bilingual people in England at the time. Berndt indicates that

⁴⁶ Berndt, “The Linguistic Situation in England” 147.

⁴⁷ King Henry II, for example, was a native French speaker who could understand English but could not speak it. See Berndt, “The Linguistic Situation in England” 162.

⁴⁸ Berndt, “The Linguistic Situation in England” 194.

merchants and trades people continued to have a need for French⁴⁹; the higher ranks of the clergy, such as Thomas of Canterbury and Edmund of Abingdon who figure so prominently in the *Laud Misc.* 108, were schooled in France and spoke French as well as Latin and English⁵⁰; and those whose duties dealt with both lower and higher levels of society would likely speak both English and Norman-French,⁵¹ a language which evolves into what scholars call Anglo-Norman, which itself is then replaced by French. Ian Short marks the class lines in society that would speak both Norman-French and English: “[i]f in the aristocracy a large measure of practical bilingualism can be assumed, lower down on the social scale, and at a point still far short of peasant status, the minor clergy appear to have remained irremediably monoglot.”⁵² In effect, only those who had contact or commerce with both the ruling upper-class monolingual Norman-French speakers and lower class monolingual English speakers had need to be bilingual. Indeed, for the general English population, bilingualism was not at all the norm. Berndt states that “the numerical strength of this [peasant] class alone fully guaranteed the further use of English and decisively limited the vitality of French in England.”⁵³ Moreover, according to Rothwell, both Latin and French were typically viewed as learned languages,⁵⁴ and, therefore, the languages of a small minority. Rothwell continues, “to postulate therefore the general retention of French as a vernacular in England a century and a half after the Battle of Hastings (i.e., about five or six generations) is to fly in the face of common

⁴⁹ Berndt, “The Linguistic Situation in England” 155.

⁵⁰ Berndt, “The Linguistic Situation in England” 158.

⁵¹ Berndt, “The Linguistic Situation in England” 160.

⁵² Ian Short, “On Bilingualism in Anglo-Norman England,” *Romance Philology* 33.4 (May 1980): 478.

⁵³ Berndt, “The Linguistic Situation in England” 154.

⁵⁴ Rothwell, “Role of French” 447.

linguistic experience and historical evidence.”⁵⁵ Extending the timeline an additional fifty to seventy-five years to the time of the compilation of the MS Laud Misc. 108 lessens further the likelihood of a common use of French vernacular throughout England. Nevertheless, those who spoke primarily either Norman-French or later Anglo-Norman or French were always a small but highly influential and powerful minority. The language of power in royal and governmental circles continued to be French, while the native language of the majority of the population was English.

Because the language of the powerful and influential in thirteenth-century England was Anglo-Norman/French, that the MS Laud Misc. 108 is written entirely in English is evidence of resistance. In post-colonial theory, writing in the indigenous language is a way to “reject colonialist ideology and embrace [...] pre-colonial culture.”⁵⁶ In her analysis of the *South English Legendary* (*SEL*), Anne Thompson discusses at length the implications of a scribe/compiler of late thirteenth-century England choosing to write in English rather than French. While Thompson observes that the most obvious and logical reason for writing in English is that the audience simply would not know French or Latin, she also pointedly identifies the political nature of *choosing* to write in English, particularly considering that the majority of the English society was peasantry of Anglo-Saxon lineage. Thompson, quoting R. H. Robbins, writes: “[a]ny author who selected the native tongue as his medium, up to the end of the fourteenth century ... was in effect supporting dissent.”⁵⁷ To write in English is an act of dissent because doing so

⁵⁵ Rothwell, “Role of French” 449.

⁵⁶ Tyson, “Postcolonialism” 368.

⁵⁷ Anne B. Thompson, *Everyday Saints and the Art of Narrative in the South English Legendary* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2003) 25-26.

empowers the large but socially inferior and dominated group of thirteenth-century England. In Turville-Pêtre's estimation, writing in English "meant that it [the text] was open to a general readership,"⁵⁸ and according to Robert Mills, "[i]t is also clear that writing in English in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries was a political decision."⁵⁹ With respect again to the *SEL*, Thompson points out that the "use of English vernacular reveals its [the *SEL*'s] intention to speak without apology or defense not just to and for, but also with, not those who ruled, but those who were ruled, the laity whose only language was English."⁶⁰ Writing in English, then, was a form of "dissent" because it directly addressed and included a numerically large, marginalized group in terms of influence and power and brought that group into a discourse of social and political issues with which they dealt daily. The Laud Misc. 108 texts are not addressed to the powerful who spoke French, but to the literate English-speaking clerics, nobility, baronial class, and possibly even lower classes,⁶¹ thereby removing the English royalty of Norman and French descent from the central position of power and acknowledging the existence of and thus empowering the non-ruling English-speaking majority.

Promotion of English National Identity as a Post-colonial Strategy

Another important political implication of writing in English at the time is the use of English to recognize and assist in the formation of a national identity. Turville-Pêtre

⁵⁸ Turville-Pêtre, *England the Nation* 26.

⁵⁹ Robert Mills, "Violence, Community and the Materialisation of Belief," *A Companion to Middle English Hagiography*, ed. Sarah Salih (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2006) 100.

⁶⁰ Thompson, *Everyday Saints* 56.

⁶¹ For possible audience demographics from the lower social classes, see Thompson, *Everyday Saints* 51-54.

states: “[t]he very act of writing in English is a statement about belonging,”⁶² particularly at a time of “national insecurity”⁶³ by creating a group to which to belong. “National insecurity” manifested itself in several ways. For example, in the last years of Henry III’s reign, when England had already lost most of its French landholdings, the English people witnessed Henry’s fickle and arbitrary nature in the administration of justice when dealing with his French relatives; the English witnessed constant conflict between the barons and Henry III over the extent of royal power; and lastly, while Edward tried to remedy many of the mistakes his father had made as king, the English people still had concerns about Edward as king because of his pivotal role in suppressing the barons’ revolt at the Battle of Evesham in 1265 and because of his stern opposition to Simon de Montfort and de Montfort’s place in the memory of the English people.⁶⁴ The “national insecurity” brought on by these issues and concerns provided common ground upon which the English people of different social classes could gather in effort to define themselves as a group, as “English.” Not only is belonging important in creating a definition of self, but, again according to Turville-Pêtre, in the creation of a definition of “us” as a nation, combines common language and common problems with the king: “[t]he use of English, then, becomes a mark of those who share national identity with us. In this lies the tremendous advantage in writing about the national community in the national language.”⁶⁵ Turville-Pêtre further explains, “[i]t was important for [the redactors/compiler] to represent an image of a whole nation of English speakers,

⁶² Turville-Pêtre, *England the Nation* 11.

⁶³ Turville-Pêtre, *England the Nation* 9.

⁶⁴ For a discussion of Simon de Montfort, see chapter 4 of this project, “Hagiography as a Resistance Strategy.”

⁶⁵ Turville-Pêtre, *England the Nation* 21.

because their language was the living witness to the people's Anglo-Saxon ancestry."⁶⁶ Connecting to their Anglo-Saxon past further allows the English, in post-colonial terms, to "embrace [their] pre-colonial culture."⁶⁷ This use of the English language is not only an affront to the French-speaking aristocracy of the late 1200s, but it is also a rallying cry for those who called themselves "English." This rallying cry aids in the formation of an "English" identity and thereby re-invigorates the English nation.

This effort to create a national identity, or to re-invigorate it behind a common "English" language, is not new to thirteenth-century England. Sarah Foot discusses King Alfred's efforts during the ninth century to solidify an English identity. Foot writes, "Alfred's vision of one people united through a shared history, common faith and opposition to the Danes under a single rulership"⁶⁸ was realized to a great extent through the promotion of a common language. Foot writes that "[i]n accentuating the potential of the written language—*Englisc*—to bind together his subjects as the *Angelcynn*, Alfred shows how the promotion of the common tongue they shared might be useful in overriding the inheritance of political and ancestral separateness in the creation of a new identity."⁶⁹ Alfred used the English language (Old English) to unify his *Angelcynn* against their common enemy the Danes. Likewise, the MS Laud Misc. 108 emphasizes, particularly through use of the English language, that England had faced a common foe in the invading and colonizing Normans of just over two hundred years prior and that

⁶⁶ Turville-Pêtre, *England the Nation* 20.

⁶⁷ Tyson, "Postcolonialism" 368.

⁶⁸ Sarah Foot, "The Making of Angelcynn: English Identity Before the Norman Conquest," *Old English Literature: Critical Essays*, ed. R. M. Liuzza (New Haven: Yale UP, 2002) 63.

⁶⁹ Foot, "Making of Angelcynn" 53.

thirteenth-century England faced that same foe in the English kings of Norman descent who continued to rule England. Use of the English language allows the colonized to stake a position on the issues at hand, to resist the colonizer.

Alfred the Great's example of joining behind a common language extended to include joining behind a common English "political identity"⁷⁰ as well. Alfred Smyth has explained how Alfred the Great began a process that solidified English identity in the ninth and tenth centuries against a common enemy, the Danes. Prior to Alfred, the land of England was comprised of several smaller, separate kingdoms, each of whose people had their own royalty, history, and often even different racial origins. Separately these smaller kingdoms were no match for the Danes; united, however, they could prevent a complete Danish takeover of the smaller kingdoms. Smyth explains that Alfred the Great was able to join these disparate groups into one because of the identity void left by previous Danish attacks: "[b]y conquering all of England outside of Wessex, the Scandinavians conveniently removed Anglo-Saxon localism which ultimately depended on dynastic and quasi-tribal loyalties throughout East Anglia, Mercia and Northumbria."⁷¹ Although Danish conquerors had weakened the "dynastic and quasi-tribal loyalties," absence of those loyalties also removed most of the resistance to being under a West Saxon king. Moreover, Alfred also appealed to the "noble past" of the people he was asking to join with him without colonizing or subsuming the individual kingdoms' identities and histories, and he did so by preserving the origin stories, histories, and even local saints

⁷⁰ Alfred P. Smyth, "The Emergence of English Identity, 700-1000," *Medieval Europeans: Studies in Ethnic Identity and National Perspectives in Medieval Europe*, ed. Alfred P. Smyth (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998) 42.

⁷¹ Smyth, "Emergence of English Identity" 42.

from all of the kingdoms joined under the West Saxons.⁷² During Alfred's time, a time of great threat from the Danes, Smyth states:

English identity now clearly relied on the protection of a West Saxon king, but from now on – in the face of a challenge posed by the [...] 'nation' of Danish conquerors-turned-colonists - it would be more important to be 'English' rather than Mercian, West Saxon or Kentish. This ever-growing sense of English political – as opposed to just cultural – identity, culminated in the first unified kingship of all England under Athelstan, King Alfred's grandson, and his immediate successors from the 930s to the 970s.⁷³

While these smaller kingdoms had a separate past, they did have a common enemy in the Danes, a common religion in Christianity, and a common language in Old English. King Alfred's efforts to produce ancient texts in Old English, because "*Englisc* [is] that 'language that we can all understand,'"⁷⁴ was critical for unifying such varied groups of people and for promoting the English language. There already existed in England, then, a willingness to bind against a common foe behind an "English" nationality, or "political identity," that included those living within the borders of England who had a common religion⁷⁵ and a common tongue. While not an exact parallel, the similarities between the time of Alfred and the former kingdoms of England in conflict with the "conquerors-turned-colonists" Danes and the time of the redactors/compiler of the MS Laud Misc.

⁷² Smyth, "Emergence of English Identity" 42.

⁷³ Smyth, "Emergence of English Identity" 40.

⁷⁴ Smyth, "Emergence of English Identity" 41.

⁷⁵ Smyth also explains that Alfred's translation project promoted an association between the English and the Children of Israel; Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* encouraged the Anglo-Saxon people to see themselves as "people of the Covenant." See "Emergence of English Identity" 41.

108 in conflict with the “conquerors-turned-colonists” kings of Norman descent are striking. Just as Alfred’s “gens Anglorum”⁷⁶ consisted of Mercians, West Saxons, and Kentish against a common enemy, the “English” of the MS Laud Misc. 108 were people of many different genealogical and linguistic origins who were now English-speaking Christians joined against their common foe.

There are those, however, who see the concept of nationhood, much like many see post-colonialism, as anachronistic with respect to the Middle Ages. Diane Speed states that John Lucas “dates the emergence of the modern nation to the Restoration and the emergence of national literatures to the late eighteenth century.”⁷⁷ However, Speed persuasively argues and illustrates, using examples from *Havelok the Dane*, that Lucas’s criteria “could reasonably be taken back [and applied] to literature of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, especially to the early romances.”⁷⁸ Granted, because of the fact that England’s population consisted of various conquering and immigrating peoples over a period of approximately 1000 years, such as, the Romans, Anglo-Saxons, Scandinavians, Vikings, Danes, and Normans, racial or ethnic definitions could not have as much bearing in settling identification of nationalism or national identity as they do in the modern and postmodern periods. Addressing the part that race plays in the construction of national identity in the medieval period, Foot emphasizes that “racial differences were generally considered less relevant in the formation of concepts of nationhood in the Middle Ages than cultural qualities such as customs, language, and

⁷⁶ Smyth, “Emergence of English Identity” 40.

⁷⁷ Diane Speed, “The Construction of the Nation and Medieval English Romance,” *Readings in Middle English Romance*, ed. Carol M. Meale (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1994) 136.

⁷⁸ Speed, “Construction of the Nation” 136.

law.”⁷⁹ Considering Speed’s persuasive argument that nationalism appears in literature as early as the late thirteenth century and considering that nationalism is “the most important unifying force for resistance,”⁸⁰ the hints of nationalism in the Laud Misc. 108 serve to unify a population of multiple ethnic ancestry in opposition to their post-Conquest king.

Given the relevance of post-colonial issues of power, self-definition, and self-validation for the late thirteenth-century Laud Misc. 108 audience, the manuscript allows space for the construction of an “English” identity for a population who feels oppressed by a common foe in their post-Conquest kings. The manuscript creates binaries that place England on the side of good and right and place the post-Conquest kings on the side of evil and wrong. In this project I will examine specific elements that reinforce these binaries whose effect is to justify the Laud Misc. 108 audience’s resistance to the post-Conquest kings. In Chapter 2, “The Ideal Anglo-Saxon King as a Resistance Strategy,” I discuss the presentation of Anglo-Saxon, pre-Conquest kings in the Laud Misc. 108 whose personal traits and rule serve as foils highlighting the inadequacy of the post-Conquest kings, who, by extension, merit the resistance they encounter. The Anglo-Saxon kings also provide a glorious pre-Conquest past for the audience to claim, an idealized past being a vital element of post-colonial writing. In Chapter 3, “The Use of Mirrored Language as a Resistance Strategy,” I examine the similarities of presentation in the Laud Misc. 108 between the Post-Conquest Kings and the iconically evil early Christian-era pagan rulers. The pagan rulers’ interactions with the early Christian martyrs

⁷⁹ Foot, “Making of Angelcynn” 53.

⁸⁰ Childs and Williams, *Post-Colonial Theory* 71.

and the virgin martyrs and the post-Conquest kings' interactions with the post-Conquest English clergy/martyrs present the post-Conquest kings as the moral equivalents of their pagan counterparts through the repetition of key descriptive words and phrases. I also discuss the presentation of England as a virgin martyr, who, like the virgin martyrs of old, offers an example of resistance to an oppressive ruler. In Chapter 4, "Hagiography as a Resistance Strategy," I discuss the use of the saints' life, or hagiography, as a safe vantage point from which to criticize the post-Conquest king. I will discuss how the Laud Misc. 108 version of the *St. Wulfstan* legend, although significantly less subtle in its anti-Norman bent than the other legends of the *ESEL*, re-tells, in typical post-colonial fashion, the Conquest story from the English point of view, a move that brings the English people from the margins of history and the margins of the manuscript into the center of their own story. And in Chapter 5, "The English Clergy as a Resistance Strategy," I explore the constructed presentation of the three post-Conquest clergymen and saints, SS Wulfstan, Thomas of Canterbury, and Edmund of Abingdon, who serve as champions for the English against their kings and who, like the early Christian-era martyrs, function as models of resistance and defiance to unjust and oppressive kings. Each of these four post-colonial strategies construct resistance to and criticism of an unworthy royal line whose claim to the throne of England is suspect at best.⁸¹

It is my argument that the MS Laud Misc. 108, read through a post-colonial theoretical lens, provides a political text produced by and for a colonized people and contains a subtle thread of resistance to the excesses of the colonizer, represented in the

⁸¹ For a discussion of the legality and legitimacy of William the Conqueror's claim to the English throne, see chapter 4 of this project, "Hagiography as a Resistance Strategy."

post-Conquest kings who the audience sees as illegitimate. Once the “English” see their place as the “good” in the manuscript’s subtle good/bad binary, they allow themselves the power of dissent and the right to oppose not only the initial colonization but also the subsequent domination by the post-Conquest kings of Norman descent.

CHAPTER 2

The Ideal Anglo-Saxon King as a Resistance Strategy

The creation of a noble and great past to which a colonized people can attach themselves, what Lois Tyson calls “continuity with the pre-colonial,” is critical to post-colonial resistance writing.¹ This noble past along with its noble heroes provides an identity around which the colonized group and their hybrid descendants can rally. To a subjugated, conquered people, the representation of superior Anglo-Saxon kings in the Laud Misc. 108 manuscript allows its readers, in post-colonial terms, to idealize and embrace the important concept of a pre-Conquest past which de-centers the English king and aristocracy of Norman descent and re-centers the English as a people, as a language, as an identity, and even as a nation. The superior representation of the legendary and saintly Anglo-Saxon kings of the past implicitly and subversively invites the late thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century English-speaking audience of the Laud Misc. 108 to question the quality and legitimacy of their “English” kings of Norman descent.

Native heroes are a critical anchor for a conquered people whose noble past has become a casualty of conquest, and, in the case of England, the Normans essentially co-opted the Anglo-Saxon past as their own² in an effort to present their presence and rule as a legitimate continuation. Lisa Lampert-Weissig describes the typical “Norman” method of conquest: “when Normans settled a conquered territory they had a tendency to integrate and adopt numerous aspects of the cultures they had vanquished, even as they

¹ See Lois Tyson, “Postcolonial and African American Criticism,” *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1999) 374, 376.

² Susan Crane, *Insular Romance: Politics, Faith, and Culture in Anglo-Norman and Middle English Literature* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1986) 15.

dominated their new territories through military, monetary and technological advances.”³ Unlike the typical post-modern conquest and colonization model, it was the Normans, though conquerors and colonizers, who assimilated into the Anglo-Saxon way of life. However, for the people of England the “crisis of identity” introduced by the presence of a colonizing power (that is inherently part of post-colonial writing⁴) still existed, and as the conquered, the people of England yearned for self-definition, which, for a conquered group in a post-colonial setting, is “one way of reclaiming cultural power.”⁵ Tapping into a glorious past helps to define the conquered in a way that is both acceptable and validating. Explaining the importance of native heroes for the medieval English, Kathy Lavezzo cites an example from Ranulf Higden’s history of the Britons *Polychronicon* concerning Geoffrey of Monmouth’s use of King Arthur. Lavezzo writes, “nations [...] are given to constructing heroes whose exceptionally grand qualities testify to the grandeur of their people [...] and offer a fantasy that creates a sovereign nation.”⁶ For a subjugated, conquered people, the Laud Misc. 108 manuscript utilizes what Thorlac Turville-Pêtre terms “national propaganda”⁷ in these stories of superior Anglo-Saxon kings, propaganda which then allows the colonized “English” to idealize, to embrace, and to establish a connection with their pre-Conquest past, an important aspect not only of

³ Lisa Lampert-Weissig, *Medieval Literature and Postcolonial Studies* (Edinburg: Edinburg UP, 2010) 42.

⁴ Peter Childs and Patrick Williams, *An Introduction to Post-Colonial Theory* (London: Prentice Hall, 1997) 89.

⁵ Childs and Williams, *Post-Colonial Theory* 106. For a more complete discussion concerning questions of identity in post-colonial terms, see “Metropolitan Theorizing,” *Post-Colonial Theory* 65-90.

⁶ Kathy Lavezzo, introduction, *Imagining a Medieval English Nation*, ed. Kathy Lavezzo. (Minneapolis & London: U of Minnesota P, 2004) xiv.

⁷ Thorlac Turville-Pêtre, *England the Nation: Language, Literature, and National Identity 1290-1340* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996) 5.

nationalistic but of post-colonial resistance writing.⁸ These stories of superior Anglo-Saxon kings aid the English, according to Linda Georgianna, in “constructing a usable past”⁹ that de-centers and discredits the post-Conquest kings all the while re-centering and validating the English as a people and as a “nation.”

Bound behind the collection of saints lives known as the *Early South English Legendary* (*ESEL*) are the Middle English romances *Havelok the Dane* and *King Horn*. Because of noted thematic similarities between the texts of the *ESEL* and these two romances, including the saintly qualities of both Havelok and Horn, it appears that the late thirteenth-century compilers chose to bind these booklets together¹⁰ as a “whole book,”¹¹ what Julie Nelson Couch calls “intentional anthologizing.”¹² *Havelok the Dane*

⁸ Tyson, *Critical Theory* 374, 376.

⁹ Linda Georgianna, “Coming to Terms with the Norman Conquest: Nationalism and English Literary History,” *REAL: The Yearbook of Research in English and American Literature* 14 (1998): 50.

¹⁰ For a discussion of the organization of the booklets and quires that comprise the Laud manuscript, see A. S. G. Edwards, “Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108: Contents, Construction, and Circulation,” *The Texts and Contexts of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108: The Shaping of English Vernacular Narrative*, eds. Kimberly K. Bell and Julie Nelson Couch (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2011) 21-30. For a discussion of the early assessments of the manuscript’s structure, see Thomas Lyszka, “MS Laud Misc. 108 and the Early History of the *South English Legendary*, *Manuscripta* 33.2 (1989): 75-91.

¹¹ The possibility of a compilation plan that views the Laud 108 manuscript as a “whole book” wherein the separate texts share themes that likely resulted in their being bound together is the focus of the recently published collection edited by Kimberly K. Bell and Julie Nelson Couch entitled *The Texts and Contexts of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108: The Shaping of English Vernacular Narrative*, eds. Kimberly K. Bell and Julie Nelson Couch (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2011) 8. For a discussion of the saintly qualities shared by Havelok, Horn, and saints appearing in the *ESEL*, see Kimberly Bell, “holie mannes liues,” *The Texts and Contexts of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108: The Shaping of English Vernacular Narrative*, eds. Kimberly K. Bell and Julie Nelson Couch (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2011) 251-74.

¹² Julie Nelson Couch, “The Magic of Englishness in *St. Kenelm* and *Havelok the Dane*,” *The Texts and Contexts of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108: The Shaping of*

contains the description of the ideal king Athelwold, who is the heroine Goldboru's father and king of England. Athelwold was king of England "bi-are dawes" [in earlier days]/ pat in his time were gode lawes / He dede maken an ful wel holden [uphold]."¹³ Immediately following a twenty-six line call for his audience's attention, the narrator launches into an extended description of Athelwold's ideal reign (ll. 27-105). These lines gather in and transport the Laud Misc. 108 audience back to a fictional time¹⁴ in the Anglo-Saxon, pre-Conquest past when Anglo-Saxon kings both established and upheld "gode lawes." While the most logical beginning for this romance would be the hero Havelok's origins in Denmark, the romance's initial focus on Athelwold's reign in England serves to offer up his reign as a template for the ideal king,¹⁵ a template that resonates throughout the Laud Misc. 108 manuscript. Athelwold and his reign function as a sort of retrospective model for the ideal English king both chronologically and spatially within the Laud Misc. 108 manuscript. With *Havelok the Dane*'s physical location bound directly after the *ESEL*,

English Vernacular Narrative, eds. Kimberly K. Bell and Julie Nelson Couch (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2011) 242.

¹³ All quotations from *Havelok the Dane* are from G. V. Smithers, ed., *Havelok* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987) ll. 27-29. All subsequent references noted parenthetically.

¹⁴ Havelok is a fictional character who, as a romance figure, "suggests ... the less-than-precise boundaries between history and myth." See Ronald Herzmann, Gram Drake, and Eve Salisbury, eds., introduction, *Havelok the Dane* in *Four Romances of England: King Horn, Havelok the Dane, Bevis of Hampton, Athelston* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1999) 78. For other scholarship concerning the origins of the Havelok story, see Nancy Mason Bradbury, "The Traditional Origins of *Havelok the Dane*," *Studies in Philology* 90 (1993) 115-42; Thorlac Turville-Petre, *England the Nation* 143-55. For information discussing Havelok as an "historical" figure, see Rosalind Field, "Romance as History, History as Romance," *Romance in Medieval England*, eds. Maldwyn Mills, Jennifer Fellows, and Carol M. Meale (Cambridge, UK: D. S. Brewer, 1991) 163-73.

¹⁵ David Staines also describes Athelwold's reign as ideal: "[t]he portrait of Athelwold is an idealization which will be realized in the fully matured Havelok" [*"Havelok the Dane: A Thirteenth-Century Handbook for Princes," Speculum*, 51.4 (Oct. 1976) 611].

Athelwold reads back onto the kings in the *ESEL*, both good and bad, and provides a way to ascertain each king's effectiveness. Ronald Herzmann explains the importance of Athelwold's reign as presented in *Havelok*: it serves as "a model of rulership that fosters social and political stability in [its ...] realm [...] and functions to assure the continuance of the 'office of monarch when the king dies.'"¹⁶ Athelwold's exceptional qualities make an appearance, in one combination or another, in the legends of the saintly Anglo-Saxon kings or in stories of other Anglo-Saxon kings who appear in the Laud Misc. 108 manuscript and who embody the qualities that "foster [...] social and political stability." By contrast, Athelwold's exceptional qualities are noticeably absent in the legends where post-Conquest kings appear. Athelwold is a king of England from the glorious, though mythical, past under whose rule "was Engeland at hayse [ease]" (l. 59). It is on the foundation of this type of king that the *Havelok* narrator builds his story; it is also on the foundation of this type of king that the Laud Misc. 108 manuscript can claim a glorious past as proof of English superiority, a needful element for post-colonial, anti-colonial resistance writing.

Athelwold's template asserts that the ideal king is a thoughtful king who loves "soth [truth]" (ll. 35-36) and patiently pursues it. In the Laud Misc. 108, even kings who ruled in England prior to the advent of Christianity demonstrate a love for truth. In the *SEL*'s *St. Augustine* King Aethelbert, ruler at a time when "al engeland : is puyr [pure] hepenesse" (356.33),¹⁷ epitomizes a king who holds an affinity for truth that comes to

¹⁶ Herzmann includes the rule of Birkabeyn, Havelok's father and king of Denmark, in this description. See the introduction, *Havelok the Dane, Four Romances of England* 75.

¹⁷ This description of England comes from the *ESEL* legend of *St. Gregori*, who himself loved England and desired to bring Christianity to England, but his appointment as pope

him in the form of Christianity. Under the direction of Pope Gregory, also known as the “apostle of Engelande” (359.116), Augustine brings Christianity to England in the sixth century. Kimberly Bell points out that despite the legend’s title, *St. Augustine*, the focus of the legend is King Aethelbert in the *SEL* version. Bell writes, “Aethelbert’s embrace of Christianity is the subject of the narrative,” rather than Augustine’s work in England, and she offers as proof, as does Klaus Jankofsky, that because Aethelbert is the only character in the legend whose words come through “direct speech,”¹⁸ England’s conversion to Christianity is the primary point of the legend. After hearing Augustine’s message, Aethelbert demonstrates a reasoned and thoughtful response to what was a radically different belief system from his own. The *ESEL* reads, “þe king stod...ase þei he were in þouzte” (25.56). Emphasis on Aethelbert’s thoughtfulness as he considers a possible truth highlights this exemplary kingly quality.

King Aethelbert demonstrates to the audience the importance of thinking and evaluating prior to taking any action that significantly affects his kingdom. The message Augustine delivers to Aethelbert “fram þe court of Rome” (25.50) mentions the blessings of conversion to Christianity but does not promise any earthly reward: the extant portion of the Laud Misc. 108’s *St. Augustine* promises only eternal reward for conversion.

Augustine explains:

þe loye of heouene : þat so riche was and is,

required him to send St. Augustine in his place.

¹⁸ Bell, “holie mannes liues,” *Texts and Contexts* 258. For Jankofsky’s discussion of “direct speech,” see “*Legenda Aurea* Materials in The *South English Legendary*: Translation, Transformation, and Acculturation,” *Legenda aurea, sept siècles de diffusion; actes du colloque international sur la Legenda aurea, texte latin et branches vernaculaires à l’Université du Québec à Montréal, 11-12 mai 1983*, ed. Brenda Dunn-Lardeau (Montréal: Bellarmin, 1986) 322.

þat he scholde after þis lijf : tuye into þulke blis

And be þere with-outen ende : with god þat us bouzte (25.53-55).¹⁹

Aethelbert's patient and thoughtful reaction to such wonderful eternal promises demonstrates that he acknowledges and understands the import and difficulty of a conversion that seems to lack immediate tangible benefits to his people. Aethelbert's efforts to think through the implications of conversion show in his response. He replies,

Swyþe fair þing [...] it is : þat þov bi-hotest me ;

Mizhte ich beo siker þat hit sothþ were : ich wolde don after þe.

Ake ich ne concenti nouzt þer-to-- : for it is zeot so neowe,

Are ich habbe more vnderzite : 3weþur þis Message beo trewe (25.57-60).²⁰

Wisely, Aethelbert states that it is too soon for him to know if the Christian message is true, that he will not "consent" to conversion until he better comprehends Christianity and its implications for him and for his country. Even with the promise of such wonderful eternal blessings, Aethelbert's response demonstrates two important aspects of kingly behavior: (1) the importance of understanding the facts in the decision-making process, and (2) the need for time to ponder before making important decisions. The *ESEL* implies that Aethelbert, both as a man and as a king, must be sure of his decision: he must "beo siker [certain] þat hit sothþ [true] were" (25.58). Aethelbert is more interested in truth and accepts Christianity only after he is convinced of its veracity.

¹⁹ "the joy of heaven that was and is so rich, / he who should turns to that same bliss will after this life / And be there forever with God who bought us" (25.53-55). All translations are mine unless otherwise indicated.

²⁰ "So fair [a] thing it is that you promise me; / Might I be certain that it were true : I would wish to follow thee. / But I consent not to [it] : because it is still so new, / Before I have more understanding [of]: whether this message be true" (25.57-60).

Aethelbert's slow decision-making process stands in direct contrast to the way that the *ESEL* describes those who unjustly invade the land. In *St. Eadmund the King*, the Danish antagonists demonstrate rashness. Hyngar with his brother Hubba, "wolden [wanted] al enguelond" (297.14); theirs was a desire for possession, and in pursuit of King Eadmund, Hubba "wende him þudere ful hastifliche : with is lūpere men"²¹ (297.31). Hubba and Hyngar conspire "in lūpere þouȝte" (297.7) "to bringue enguelond to nouȝte" (297.8), and attack "hastifliche," or quickly. In *St. Wulfstan*, the narrator describes William the Conqueror's invasion as hurried as well. William's speedy invasion in order to "winne [conquer] Enguelond" (72.64) and bring her "to grounde" (72.60) is, in practical terms, likely part of a military campaign designed to take advantage of an opponent's weakness. In response to William's speedy attack, Harold Godwinson must rush to "liet griepie faste is ost"²² (72.70). Just following their victory against the Vikings under Harold Hardrada in the north at Stanford Bridge on September 25, 1066, Harold Godwinson and his English men heard of William's landing at Pevensey Bay. The English marched the 250 miles from Stanford Bridge to Hastings in twelve days and met the Normans for battle on October 15, 1066. This timeline speaks to Harold's need for "quick" preparation. Hyngar's speed in pursuing King Edmund and William's eagerness to attack England in order to seize power and wealth²³ demonstrates a bias in the Laud Misc. 108 manuscript to present these antagonists as being in a rush to invade or harm England and, by contrast, to present good English leaders, such as

²¹ "went there speedily [searching for] him [Edmund] with his wicked men" (297.31).

²² "have his men prepare quickly" (72.70).

²³ For a discussion of the financial value of England at the time of the Conquest, see Hugh M. Thomas, *The Norman Conquest: England After William the Conqueror* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2008) 3-14.

Aethelbert, as being slow to act because they are thoughtful and deliberate in their actions.

The Laud Misc. 108 manuscript's similar presentations of William and the pagan Vikings Hubba and Hyngar depicts these antagonists in totalizing and essentializing terms. The invaders are simply hasty and cruel, and their hastiness and cruelty have horrific consequences for England. William's attack resulted in the shedding of "manne ane mannes blod" (73.96). Those who survived Hastings lived under a new king who "heold forth þe kyndom: of enguelonde with wouȝ"²⁴ (73.100). To describe William's leadership style as one inflicting "woe" speaks to what the English people suffered under William. Although the *ESEL* provides few details beyond "woe," the historical record provides many examples of William's aggressive leadership and ruling style.²⁵ Hugh Thomas explains, "[i]n the decade-and-a-half after William's arrival [1067-1071] most parts of England experienced warfare [against William and his army], and some faced it several times"²⁶ because of their resistance to the Normans. What details of cruelty the *ESEL* does provide are those with which Hubba and Hyngar ravaged Northumbria and then turned their sights on "al enguelone" (297.14) with intense ferocity:

Into is hexte toune he [Hyngar] came : er any man were i-war,
And robbede furst al þat he fond : and made þane toun wel bare ;
And al-so he slov þat folk to grounde : al þat he miȝte of-gon,
ȝong and old, wyf and Mayde : he ne sparede neuere on.

²⁴ "held forth the kingdom of England with woe" (73.100).

²⁵ See, for example, Hugh Thomas, *Norman Conquest* 44-51.

²⁶ Hugh M. Thomas, *The English and the Normans: Ethnic Hostility, Assimilation, and Identity 1066-c. 1220* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003) 59.

Children fram heore moder breste : he drov and let heom quelle

And al-to-hewe bi-fore þe moderes : þat reupe it was to telle;

þare-After he let þe Moderes a-sle : sorewe þare was I-nov3!

þane toun he barnde al to douste : and al þat folk a-slov3 (297.19-26).²⁷

Because the audience is mindful of all that the “English” suffered at the hands of Hubba and Hyngar, the *ESEL*’s use of similar terminology to describe William’s initial attack encourages the audience to associate William’s actions with Hubba and Hyngar’s. Like William who “destruyde and nam al þat he fonde”²⁸ (72.68), Hubba and Hyngar also “destruyden al þat huy founde” (297.12). What the *ESEL* accomplishes by making William the moral equivalent of Hubba and Hyngar is to highlight the cruelty with which the Normans of “oper lands,” whose descendants are now England’s kings, devastated and devalued England and her people, without having to provide details. A good Anglo-Saxon king in the Laud Misc. 108 manuscript never treats his people in such a way; moreover, a good Anglo-Saxon king would never beat his people into submitting to him. As a post-colonial strategy, conquerors typically use totalizing and essentializing terminology to describe the conquered as a way to justify invasion and their continued presence; in the same manner, the *ESEL* totalizes and essentializes the invader to provide

²⁷ “To its highest town he [Hyngar] came before any man were aware / And robbed first all that he found and made the town bare / And also he slew the people completely all that he might overtake, / Young and old, wife and maiden : he spared none. / Children from their mother’s breasts he pulled and had them killed / And hewn down in front of their mothers : great pity it was to tell / Thereafter he had the mothers killed : there was indeed sorrow! / Then he burned the town to dust and all of the people slew” (297.19-26). While Hubba remains in Northumberland (297.15), presumably to secure their claim to the land after having destroyed/conquered it (297.13), Hyngar marches on in their shared quest to have “al enguelond” (297.14) and to “quelle þat þare were” (297.16), including King Eadmund of Suffolk (297.16-19).

²⁸ “destroyed and seized all that he found” (72.68).

the colonized English justification for resistance to these foreign invaders.

As the ideal king, Athelwold not only loves truth, but desires the counsel of good and just men. Of Athelwold, the *Havelok* narrator says, “Ricthwise men he louede alle, / And oueral made hem for to calle” (ll. 37-38): Athelwold appreciates just (“ricthwise”) men and actively seeks their company (“made hem for to calle”). A king with good counselors benefits the people. Aidan, converts many in the North, fulfills the role of counselor in *St. Oswald*. The extent of Aidan’s influence as a counselor to the king is clear in the *ESEL*’s description of their relationship: Oswald “ne dude noþing with-outen him : ake with him he heold him faste, / And to-gadere al heore lijf huy were : and in heouene atþe laste” (46.15-16).²⁹ In the first clause the *ESEL* credits the relationship to Oswald. It is Oswald who does nothing without Aidan, and it is Oswald who keeps Aidan close. The implication is that at Oswald’s instigation Aidan becomes the counselor on whose input Oswald relies heavily throughout his rule. Even though Aidan is an English saint of significant renown in his own right, other than describing him as “þe Bischoþ guode Aydan” (46.18) or as “holie man” (46.13), the *ESEL* does not even mention his import as a saint. Aidan’s sainthood is secondary, even irrelevant in this case, because the focus of the legend and one of the post-colonial type foci of the Laud Misc. 108 manuscript is Oswald’s goodness and wisdom as an Anglo-Saxon king. It is Oswald’s wise ability to keep good counselors and to listen to good counsel that categorizes him as a noteworthy king of the great Anglo-Saxon past.

Other Anglo-Saxon kings demonstrate an affinity for good counselors, a trait that

²⁹ “did nothing without him but kept him close, and they were together all their life and [together] in heaven at the end” (46.15-16).

testifies to their quality as kings. *St. Dunstan*, for example, discusses four West Saxon kings who rule consecutively from circa 924 to 975 and who interact with Dunstan: Athelston, Eadmund, Edwyn, and Edgar. For each of these kings the advice they receive and the quality of the advice indicates the *ESEL*'s assessment of their failure or success as king. Dunstan impresses King Aethelstan to the extent that the king "graunted al his bone [requests]" (20.33); that is, the king had complete confidence in the correctness of any request Dunstan might have. Aethelstan's successor and brother Eadmund I (circa 940-46) also recognized Dunstan's goodness and exceptional qualities; in fact, the *ESEL* states, "seint Dunstan : hadde gret power / With þe king Eadmund, [...] he [Dunstan] was his conseiller" (20.49-50). Edwyn³⁰ (circa 955-59) became king after his father's death.³¹ In the six lines of the legend that focus on King Edwyn, the audience learns that Edwyn is the lone king of Anglo-Saxon origin who does not fit the narrative of the exceptional Anglo-Saxon king, a narrative that the *ESEL* works so dutifully to advance. Unlike Aethelstan who benefits from Archbishop of Canterbury Anselm's advice by bringing Dunstan within his circle of advisors, and unlike Eadmund I who also benefits from Dunstan's advice, Edwyn "hadde ful vuel red" (21.53), that is, he believed³² evil counsel or advice, and exiles Dunstan "for is guodnesse" (21.66). The *ESEL* reduces the reason for Edwyn's ineffective reign to the fact that he acts not simply on poor advice, but he acts on evil advice that would, by extension, come from "evil" counselors. Edwyn's

³⁰ History generally records his name as Edwig or Eadwig.

³¹ The *ESEL* omits from its version of history the nine-year rule of Eadmund's brother and immediate successor Eadred, who was king circa 946 to 955. The *ESEL* does not acknowledge the inaccuracy of the timeline; it simply states that Edmund I's son Edwyn became king after his father's death, "ake nougt riȝt sone after a-non" (21.52).

³² *MED* 2(b).

brother and successor Edgar (circa 959-75), however, restores the integrity of the Anglo-Saxon throne by listening to good advice. While Edgar appears not to know Dunstan, Edgar, as a good Anglo-Saxon king of action, listens to what “Men tolden him of seint Dunston” (21.65) and calls the exiled Dunstan back to England “a-non [right away]” (21.67) asking Dunstan to match his own urgency by coming “sone” (21.67). Edgar recognizes the value of selecting good counselors and asks Dunstan to “bi-leue [remain] is conseiler” (21.68). Because Edgar, like Aethelstan and Eadmund, recognizes and heeds the good advice he receives, he demonstrates one of the exceptional qualities of the Anglo-Saxon king that benefits England as a land and benefits her people.

While Edwyn and Edgar both heed advice, the *ESEL* extends Athelwold’s principle of having good counselors to include the importance of the king possessing the wisdom to distinguish good advice from bad. The verbs associated with the advice Edwyn and Edgar heed, “nomen” and “haven,” respectively, illustrate this distinction. Upon the Bishop of Worcester’s death, the *ESEL* emphasizes that King Edgar and Archbishop of Canterbury Odo “nomen heore rede” (21.74)³³ and made Dunstan Bishop of Worcester. The *ESEL* describes King Edgar’s actions upon Archbishop Odo’s death in similar terms: “þe pope and þe king Edgar : þar-of nomen heore rede” (22.90),³⁴ which resulted in appointing Dunstan as the next Archbishop of Canterbury. In both cases, Edgar takes action informed by input from high-level religious representatives: he makes his decisions not in a vacuum, but in conjunction with the occupant of the highest religious office in England, Archbishop of Canterbury Odo, in the first instance; and with

³³ “took their counsel” (21.74).

³⁴ “the pope and the king Edgar : from that made a decision” (22.90).

the occupant of the highest religious office on the earth, the Pope, in the second instance. Absent the mention of any conflict between the king and the religious representatives, an added message is that the king's decisions are in accordance with God's representatives, and are therefore in accordance with God. Such decision-making also illustrates Edgar's understanding that although a king, his earthly role and desires are secondary to that of the Church and God. As Diane Speed explains, the king and the Church comprise "a normative ideology of a partnership between church and state in which the church dominates the state."³⁵ In contrast, Edwyn passively receives counsel ("hadde ful vuel red"). "Had" implies a passive acceptance of counsel and perhaps a lack of investigation and contemplation on Edwyn's part, which is in direct contrast to Edgar. While important, lineage alone, as in Edwyn's case, is insufficient for good rule. King Edgar's goodness rests in his ability, first, to surround himself with good counselors, second, to discern good advice from bad or evil advice, and third, to take decisive action as the result of that good advice, all of which are qualities good Anglo-Saxon kings possess.

The consequences of heeding bad advice play a significant part particularly for those who are unrightful rulers. Concern about rightful occupation of the throne is a recurrent theme in the legends and romances in the Laud Misc. manuscript, and the *ESEL* credits bad advice in *St. Edward the Elder* and *St. Kenelm* as the one of the reasons for which both of the young kings are murdered, resulting in the ascension to the throne of an unrightful claimant. Though not a "child-king" like Havelok and Kenelm, Edward the

³⁵ Diane Speed, "A Text for Its Time: The *Sanctorale* of the Early *South English Legendary*," *The Texts and Contexts of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108: The Shaping of English Vernacular Narrative*, eds. Kimberly K. Bell and Julie Nelson Couch (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2011) 108, 130.

Elder is like Havelok and Kenelm because he is “a vulnerable [...] king” who “figures” England.³⁶ Like Havelok and Kenelm, Edward is betrayed by someone from his inner circle whom he should be able to trust but who betrays him because she, his stepmother, covets his throne for her son. In *St. Edward the Elder*, the historical sequel to the line of Anglo-Saxon kings presented in *St. Dunstan*, King Edward, also known as Edward the Martyr, followed his father King Edgar to the throne in 975, but only reigned for three years. Edward’s stepmother planned Edward’s death “þoru3 tricherie and onde [envy]” (47.2). Through her machinations and her envy fueled by her “luyte [small amount of]” love for Edward (47.5), her son Aethelred³⁷ became king because she “wilmde more þane ani-þing : þat seint Edward ded were, / þat hire owene sone aftur þe king : þe heritage bere” (47.9-10).³⁸ The *ESEL* credits such ambitions and actions to bad advice: his stepmother “euere radde lufur red” (47.5). “Always” (“euere”) indicates that this evil counsel is the norm for the stepmother. The queen conspires with “lufere” people who devise how they might essentially subvert God’s will by seeking to remove a rightful king, particularly one who, in direct contrast to his stepmother, is “wis of conseil” (47.16). In the same vein as Edward’s stepmother, young King Kenelm’s sister Quendriht desires the throne that is Kenelm’s by right, and she too finds bad counselors to support her point of view. Because, like Edward’s stepmother, she “hadde gret onde [envy]” and desired to be “riche” (348.91) and “eir of hire fader lond : and of more power” (348.92),

³⁶ Couch, “Magic of Englishness,” *Texts and Contexts* 223. For a complete discussion of Kenelm and Havelok as the vulnerable children who represent England, see Couch’s “Magic of Englishness” 223-50.

³⁷ This king is commonly known as “Aethelred the Unready” who ruled from 978-1016 and whose name, interestingly, means “bad counsel.”

³⁸ “wished more than anything that Saint Edward were dead, [so] that her own son after [would/could] bear the heritage of king/be the king’s heir” (47.9-10).

she also devises a plan [“þouʒte” (348.93)] with her counselor so that she might be queen. Like Edward’s stepmother and her co-conspirators, Quendriþ and the tutor Askebert agree upon the best plan, a decision made only after conferring or counseling with one another.³⁹ These women take counsel from evil people who encourage them to usurp the throne. The result of this evil counsel is an occupant on the throne who, though legal, should not be there.

Bad advice in *Havelok* leaves the thrones of England and Denmark with unrightful occupants as well. On his deathbed King Athelwold asks, “Wo may yemen hire [Goldboru] so long, / Bopen hire and Engelonde, / Til þat she [be] wman of helde / And þa[t] she mowe [hir] yemen and welde?” (ll. 172-75).⁴⁰ Athelwold expresses his concern not only for his little daughter, but on a broader scale expresses concern for the English throne and for the land as well. Only in this instance does Athelwold apparently fail to carry the standard as the ideal Anglo Saxon king because he heeds poor advice. According to the advice Athelwold receives, Godrich of Cornwall is the best person to choose as guardian because he is a “trewe man wituten faile, / Wis man of red, wis man of dede, / And men haueden of him mikel drede” (ll. 179-81).⁴¹ Other than Godrich being someone to fear, this advice, of course, turns out to be incorrect, but the damage to both Goldboru and to England is done. Even though Godrich swears to King Athelwold that he will care for and protect Goldboru, to find her the “heste [best] man þat michthe liue” (l. 199) to be her husband, and to bestow the throne of England on her when she is old

³⁹ *MED*, “bi-speken,” 3(a).

⁴⁰ “Who may protect her for so long, / both her and England, until she is a grown woman / and she is able to take care of and help herself?” (ll. 172-75).

⁴¹ “true man without fail, / [a] wise man of counsel, [a] wise man of action, / And men dread him very much” (ll. 179-81).

enough (ll. 185-203), Godrich is not faithful to his solemn oath. In this instance, Athelwold demonstrates how difficult it is to discern good advice from bad. Upon Athelwold's death, Godrich "sayse" ["seizes"] (l. 251) and solidifies power by placing his trusted knights in castles around the country (ll. 252-53). In addition, Godrich requires all of the people to swear allegiance to him ["alle þe Englis dede he swere" (l. 254)], which is what William the Conqueror required of his English subjects as well, although a fact absent from the *ESEL*. Godrich begins what Athelwold intended only to be an interim rule in a manner much different from the manner in which good King Athelwold had reigned.

Havelok's father, King Birkabeyn of Denmark, also recognizes the importance of the counsel he receives when making decisions as king. Like Athelwold, Birkabeyn knows he is dying and sends for priests, canons, and monks "for to wisse and to rape" (l. 361). Because he too worries for his two young daughters and three-year-old son and future king Havelok, both as a father and as a king, Birkabeyn understands the importance of choosing the best guardian for his children. He actively seeks out from clergymen and from his knights advice about who would "yeme [care for]" (l. 368) his children best. Like Athelwold, Birkabeyn chooses a man who is rich (l. 373), who is the king's friend (l. 375) and who is "the trewest" (l. 374). The superlative form of the adjective alone indicates the apparent wisdom of Birkabeyn's choice. Because, like Athelwold, Birkebeyn is concerned not only for his children but also for his country, he requires Godard to promise to "yeme" (l. 392) the children and to care for "Al Denemark" (l. 386) until Havelok is of age to be king. Birkabeyn requires Godard to "suere" (l. 388) on all that is holy to care for the children, but like Godrich, even such a

solemn and holy oath is secondary to Godard's own ambitions and lust for power. Even though Athelwold is the epitome of the good Anglo-Saxon king and Birkabeyn is an equally good Danish king, there is a cautionary lesson in this romance and throughout the Laud Misc. manuscript: the wisdom to discern good advice from bad is a critical quality of good rule.

While a king's bad decisions negatively impact his people and his children, such bad decisions seem even worse when made by unrightful rulers. SS Edward's and Kenelm's murders and the attempted murder of Havelok illustrate those consequences. In the case of Edward and Kenelm's siblings, Atheldred and Quendrith, they are legitimately next after their brothers in the line of succession to the West Saxon and Mercian thrones, respectively. Their ascensions, though, are the result of evil manipulation. Atheldred is "mauden him king : as right was and wone" (49.92), according to law and custom, but the *ESEL* makes clear that it was Atheldred's mother who "him [Edward] liet a-quelle" (52.202) and set events in motion. While the *ESEL* states that King Atheldred is blameless in Edward's death, the *ESEL* makes no such comment about Quendrith. Quendrith's crowning is questionable: she "liet hire makien quiene of þe Marche" (351.199).⁴² The *ESEL* uses a causative construction⁴³ to describe Quendrith's actions. Quendrith does not simply become the undisputable queen, but she, by her own authority, and like William the Conqueror who "liet [him] crouni king" (73.92), causes it to be so. Aethelrad and Quendrith inherit their thrones unnaturally when their

⁴² "had herself made/crowned queen of the Mercia" (351.199).

⁴³ The causative construction, called the "causative *faire*" in French, is a construction wherein the subject has something done or directs something to be done rather than performing the action himself.

predecessors are murdered, and Quendrith is certainly guilty of Kenelm's murder. Even while Quendrith is planning how to depose of God's rightful king, the *ESEL* presents her, at least during the planning stages of the murder, as one concerned with being "queen with lawe" (348.94), that her ascension to the throne be legally indisputable. One emphasis in the *ESEL* is the consequences of an unrightful heir on the throne: the *ESEL* does not gloss over the negative consequences even if the heir is unrightful only in terms of timing.

In spite of the fact that Aethelrad was Edward's legitimate successor to the throne, his unrightful rule has negative consequences for the kingdom by threatening peace in the kingdom. For example, when Edward's body is enshrined at Shaftsbury Abbey twenty-one years after his death, King Aethelrad, who loved his brother Edward, is unable to accompany Edward's body because "he was so bi-set mid weorre" (52.204).⁴⁴ In the description of *Havelok's* Athelwold, one of the strengths of Athelwold as king is that he kept England at peace: "Michel was svich a king to preyse [praise] / þat held so Englonð in grith [peace]" (ll. 60-61). The point is clear: even if the person on the throne is a legitimate heir, unnatural deaths resulting in that ascension to the throne have consequences for the kingdom as severe as the loss of peace and stability.

In addition to being thoughtful and well-counseled, according to the template, good Anglo-Saxon kings who emulate the leadership style of *Havelok's* idealized English King Athelwold rule justly and thoughtfully rather than by fiat. For example, although King Aethelbert is not ready to embrace Christianity himself, in his role as a king who loves justice and truth, he is willing to allow his people to decide for themselves on issues

⁴⁴ "he was so overwhelmed with war" (52.204).

such as religion. Aethelbert tells Augustine, “And ich graunti also þat alle þulke : þat wollez to eov torne, / Guode leue ich [ziue ech] man : for i-nelle no man weorne” (25.65-66).⁴⁵ Within Aethelbert’s scope and understanding of truth and of his protective responsibility as king, he allows his people the opportunity to choose for themselves rather than simply forcing them to follow his decisions. For the king to give his people such liberty betrays the *ESEL*’s anachronistic interpretation and understanding of sixth-century events. Historically, conversion to Christianity after the fall of the Roman Empire was, according to John A. F. Thomson, “one of conversion from the top downwards, securing the approval of the lay rulers for the new religion, and following it up with mass baptisms.”⁴⁶ For Aethelbert to give his people the liberty to choose their religion for themselves would have been out of sync for his time, but the concept of personal conversion reflects practices more familiar to the *Laud Misc.* audience. Following the directives of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, which included, among other objectives, efforts to improve the laity’s understanding of Christian doctrine, the thirteenth-century church encouraged the concept of personal, individual devotion⁴⁷; in Aethelbert’s time the norm meant following en masse the political or religious decisions of their ruler. The practice of personal choice rather than forced compliance in *St.*

Augustine reveals a tendency on the part of the *ESEL* to fit Anglo-Saxon kings into their

⁴⁵ “And I grant also that all those : who wish to convert to you, / I give each man certain permission [or good leave] : because I will not refuse any man” (25.65-66).

⁴⁶ John A. F. Thomson, *The Western Church in the Middle Ages* (London: Arnold, 1998), 14. Thomson also describes Pope Gregory’s desire to spread Christianity in England, a desire that the *ESEL* describes an ardent desire (see *St. Gregory*), in less glowing terms. Thomson concludes that such proselytizing “may have been prompted in part by a desire to increase the prestige of his see by recovering for the Church one of the few areas of the Western Roman Empire which had been lost to Christianity” (*The Western Church* 9).

⁴⁷ My thanks to Julie Nelson Couch for pointing out this change in practice to me.

thirteenth-century notions of what characterizes a good king.

In contrast to Aethelbert's example of a king who, albeit anachronistically, does not force his people to comply to his personal ideas or religious conversion, post-Conquest kings as well as those who unrightfully and unjustly occupy the throne in pre-Conquest days do force their subjects into political compliance by ruling through intimidation. Again, upon Athelwold's death in *Havelok*, Godrich, for example, forces the people of England to swear an oath of allegiance to him (ll. 254-55). Thereafter, as the narrator describes, "Al Engeland was of him adrad [afraid]" (ll. 278). Unlike Athelwold, whom all of the people loved, Godrich inspires fear and dread. In *St. Kenelm*, Quendrieth is the rightful, lawful heir to the throne upon her brother's death, but she has ascended not by God's timetable, but by her own. Quendrieth's fear that her manipulation will be discovered reveals itself in her leadership style, and she rules much like Godrich. Not only does she mistreat her people (351.202-03), she also forbids them to speak her brother's name (351.204) or complain that he was no longer king (351.208). For the Laud Misc. audience, such a requirement would sound familiar: after the Battle of Evesham, King Henry III forbade the people to speak the name of rebel baron Simon de Montfort.⁴⁸ In comparison to rightful kings, unrightful kings or queens exhibit unjust behavior, and they rule through intimidation. This forced compliance places those who rule unrightfully in an adversarial role against the people they rule.

Just as Havelok's restoration as king of Denmark corrects the course of suffering on which Godard sets Denmark by unrightfully and unlawfully seizing the throne for his

⁴⁸ For a thorough discussion of the conflict between Henry III and Simon de Montfort and the consequent Battle of Evesham, see J. R. Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort* (Cambridge, UK: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 1994).

own, there are other instances of course correction or restoration within the manuscript which, as part of a post-colonial interpretation, encourage the Laud Misc. audience to fantasize about a restoration of rightful rule.⁴⁹ At the end of his story, Havelok becomes the king of England,⁵⁰ the country whose welfare is of premier importance to the story⁵¹ and to the audience. The narrator states that as a result of Godrich's removal from the English throne and Havelok's crowning, "þer mouthe men se / þe moste ioie þat mouthe be" (ll. 2321-22)⁵² because England has a legitimate king on the throne. The narrator also provides in this "fantasy of empowerment"⁵³ a long-term plan for peace and stability as Goldboru and Havelok have fifteen sons and daughters (l. 2980); there is for England an abundance of rightful heirs. In *St. Edward King and Martyr*, even though Atheldred rightfully and legally succeeds his brother as king, the *ESEL* gives a rather flat and unenthusiastic endorsement of Atheldred's piety simply stating that he "guod man was i-nou3" (52.225). The closing lines of the legend do, however, restore a sense of rightful order to the line of kings. Atheldred loved his brother Edward and names his own son and heir after him. The young King Edward's piety far exceeds what the *ESEL* unenthusiastically terms as his father's lower level of religious devotion, and the piety of this King Edward, who "to alle guodnesse drou3" (53.226), mirrors that of his uncle whose piety is superlative, a "guodnesse [...] ne may no man telle" (47.13). Bringing the

⁴⁹ Couch discusses the "fantasy of Englishness" in "Magic of Englishness," *Texts and Contexts* 224-50.

⁵⁰ By way of his marriage to Goldboru, the heir to the English throne, Havelok becomes king of England.

⁵¹ For a discussion of the precedence of England within *Havelok the Dane*, as well as within the Laud manuscript, see Couch, "Magic of Englishness," *Texts and Contexts* 224-50; and Bell, "holie mannes liues," *Texts and Contexts* 251-74.

⁵² "there might men see / the most joy that might be" (ll. 2321-22).

⁵³ Couch, "Magic of Englishness," *Texts and Contexts* 250.

succession back to a king named Edward who does not rival but who does approach the unrightfully deposed King Edward in piety functions as a restoration of royal order for the people. Moreover, the legend also connects the pious King Edward, and by extension his brother King Atheldred and his nephew King Edward, to King Alfred the Great. King Alfred built the Abby at Shaftsbury (52.182) where Edward's body lies, and the *ESEL* further contextualizes and endorses Edward by including that Alfred is "[h]is graunt-sire" (52.182). By the end of the legend, the audience would then understand that King Edward's brother and nephew are also directly related to Alfred, which historically, legally, and morally legitimizes them both. In a sense, connecting King Edward the nephew to his uncle's piety and to his great-grandfather's line of succession restores the appropriate and legitimate person to the throne.

In addition to being legitimate, a good king aligns with all levels of society, including the common, ordinary people of England. *Havelok's* praise of Athelwold demonstrates the extent to which Athelwold was truly a king for *all* of England. The narrator states:

Hym louede yung, him louede holde –
Erl and barun, dreng and þayn,
Knict, bondeman, and swain,
Wydues, maydnes, prestes, and clerkes,
And al for hise gode werkes (ll. 30-34).⁵⁴

This list of those who loved and respected Athelwold attests to his effectiveness as a king

⁵⁴“young loved him, old loved him - / earl and baron, vassal and retainer, / widows, maidens, priests and clerks, / and all [loved him] for his good works” (ll. 30-34).

for all of the English, irrespective of location or social status. Athelwold demonstrates his goodness by being generous with the poor and needy: “He was large and no wicth gnedē [stingy]” (l. 97). The *ESEL* demonstrates that the other Anglo-Saxon kings had similar concerns. King Oswald of Northumbria who, when hearing of the beggars outside with nothing to eat, took his leftovers and “sende þar-of wel largeliche” (46.22), he also took a silver dish and broke it into small pieces to give to the beggars (46.23-24). The *ESEL* describes King Edward as “[d]e-bonere for-to speke with : ant with pouere men mest” (47.15). In other words, Edward is “kind, gentle, or gracious”⁵⁵ in his general speech, but “mest”/most indicates that to the greatest degree or amount,⁵⁶ Edward is “kind, gentle, and gracious” in his speech with poor men. Moreover, the narrator emphasizes that “among lowe Men and simple: deol þere was i-nouȝ” (49.95) when they heard of Edward’s death. In contrast to the “heize” men, or those of power and influence who quickly forget about Edward, it is the “folk,” or the common, uneducated, and poor people of England, as well as possibly including, according to Thorlac Turville-Pêtre, the “middle classes and gentry”⁵⁷ who mourn Edward’s passing and with whom Edward has an enduring connection.

⁵⁵ *MED.*

⁵⁶ *MED.*

⁵⁷ Anne Thompson cites Turville-Pêtre who states, “the present consensus of opinion is that ‘lewed men’ were not the poor but the middle classes and gentry.” See Turville-Pêtre’s “Politics and Poetry” 5-6, fn 79 [Thompson, *Everyday Saints and the Art of the Narrative in the South English Legendary* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2003) 56]. Thompson assesses that the “possibility of its [the *SEL*’s audience] comprising both gentry and peasantry can no longer be dismissed as a romantic fiction of the Victorians.” Thompson also notes the wider range of the audience in her discussion about Becket that his connections to the “folk” and his response to “the king’s [...] general vendetta of the powerful against the powerless” place Becket in the “role as savior of ‘Holy Church’ and champion of the poor” (*Everyday Saints* 51).

Not only do Oswald and Edward have a connection to the people of England because of their generosity and compassion for the poor, which is also one of Athelwold's great qualities enumerated in *Havelok*, but the *ESEL* also demonstrates in the king's loyalty to the less powerful and influential a post-colonial-style resistance to royal and aristocratic establishment of the powerful/powerless binary. Athelwold, for example, is one who defends the fatherless, widows, and maidens (ll. 75-86) no matter the station of the offender; Athelwold also seeks for justice for the lower levels of society. Like Athelwold, other Anglo-Saxon kings in the *ESEL* defend the powerless, and this defense merits the loyalty of those they champion. Upon King Edward's death, the poor people mournfully cry, "ho schal for us beo?" (49.97). The implication is clear: in life Edward was "for us," for the common people. Couch describes the value of what she calls the "communal us" found in the closing prayers of the saints' lives that serves as a "direct invitation to the audience [...] thus merging readers, narrator, and protagonists."⁵⁸ While the *ESEL* specifically discusses the common people at the time of the legend in the late tenth century, the "us" in this instance serves to draw in the Laud Misc. audience, transferring the concerns of the past to the present because the audience can see problems with their king reflected in similar situation in the *ESEL* past. That is, the Laud Misc. 108 audience, lacking any more good Anglo-Saxon kings, could well ask, "who shall be for us"? Who among the politically and financially powerful will speak for the "lowe and simple Men" of late thirteenth-century England who, according to Turville-Petre and

⁵⁸ Julie Nelson Couch, "Defiant Devotion in MS Laud Misc. 108," *Parergon* 25.1 (2008) 61.

Thompson, could reasonably include “both gentry and peasantry”?⁵⁹ Where do the “lowe and simple Men” find examples of champions in their post-Conquest reality? They do not find them in their kings, but instead their champions are in the Laud Misc. 108 manuscript: church leaders, like Archbishops Wulfstan, Becket, and Edmund of Abingdon,⁶⁰ or political leaders like rebel baron Simon de Montfort.⁶¹ Like Edward’s people of the late tenth century, the narrator feeds into the disaffected feeling of the Laud Misc. 108 audience, perhaps touching on their perceived lack of a champion in their king who seemed to favor his French relatives over his subjects.⁶² This lack of connection with their king and the resulting lack of loyalty to him serve as justification for their resistance to him.⁶³

As presented in the Laud Misc. 108 manuscript, not only do the Anglo-Saxon kings display a natural affinity for all of England, they, like Athelwold, love God and Church. The *Havelok* narrator states that Athelwold “loued God with al his micht, / And Holi Kirke” (ll. 35-36).⁶⁴ Indeed Athelwold is evidence of an important theme within *Havelok* that Couch terms a “Church-State emphasis established by the English saints of

⁵⁹ See fn 57 above.

⁶⁰ For a detailed description of the use of the English clergy as a method for a post-colonial-style resistance, see chapter 5 of this project, “The English Clergy as a Resistance Strategy.”

⁶¹ For a more extensive discussion of Simon de Montfort, see chapter 4 of this project, “Hagiography as a Resistance Strategy.” See also J. R. Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort*. Cambridge, UK: Press Syndicate of the U of Cambridge, 1994).

⁶² For a more extensive discussion of Henry III’s favoritism for his French relatives, see below. See also chapter 1, the introduction to this project.

⁶³ Discussing *Havelok the Dane*, Couch writes of “a continued sense of unrightfulness (and foreignness)” (“Defiant Devotion” 76) that “justifies defiance of illegitimate political rule and/or illicit political behavior” (“Defiant Devotion” 72).

⁶⁴ Athelwold “loved God with all his might and the Holy Church” (ll. 35-36).

the L[aud] *SEL*.”⁶⁵ In *St. Dunstan*, kings Eadmund and Aethelstan demonstrate the Anglo-Saxon king’s devotion to God by granting leave to Dunstan to build churches (20.39-41). In the same legend, the *ESEL* points out that when Edgar, also not a saint, becomes king, Edgar “louede wel holi church” (21.63). Edgar’s devotion to the church makes him not only suitable, but also worthy to be king. When Havelok becomes king of England, he also builds churches (ll. 2521-26). In *St. Edward*, when King Edward’s nephew and namesake becomes king, the *ESEL* notes that this King Edward “to alle guodnesse drouȝ [drew]” (53.226), with “guodnesse” specifically referencing his piety and virtue.⁶⁶ In *St. Edmund*, King Edmund is well known for his goodness: even the invading Dane Hubba had “Of þe guodnesse of seint Eadmund : [...] heorde much telle” (297.17). In *St. Oswald*, King Oswald, who ruled Northumbria before Christianity was “puyrliche stable” (45.5) in his land, demonstrates his goodness and devotion to God: after his own conversion, he “so wijsliche [...] gan heom lere” (45.6)⁶⁷ and subsequently brought Aidan from Scotland to preach and establish Christianity in “al [h]is lond” (45.10) until Christianity “stable was i-nouȝ,” or firmly established. Their devotion and piety extends to and benefits the people of their particular, smaller kingdoms, but also, as the *ESEL* emphasizes through synecdoche with the smaller kingdoms representing all of England, benefits all the English people. Loving devotion to God and supporting the establishment of Christianity result in deliverance and salvation, both in this life and in the next, for the king and for his subjects. For the ideal Anglo-Saxon king, there is no disconnect between his goals and God’s.

⁶⁵ Couch, “Magic of Englishness” 228.

⁶⁶ *MED* 1(b).

⁶⁷ “wisely taught them [his people]” (45.6).

In opposition to the Anglo Saxon king's typical love for God and Church are the post-Conquest kings' antagonistic relationship with the church. William the Conqueror had "þe Abbeie of þe bataille" (73.98) constructed at Hastings as a monument to the fallen soldiers. However, building this abbey was not evidence of William's love for God and church, but rather as evidence of William's penance for doing what he know to be wrong: "þis willam bastard, þat was king : sethþe him onder-stonde / þat he mid vnrihte hadde i-sched : mani ane mannes blod" (73.95-96).⁶⁸ In *St. Thomas Becket*, threats by King Henry II against the "holie churches rihtes" are constant throughout the legend. And in *St. Edmund [of Abingdon]*, Henry III, like his grandfather, "a-3ein holie churche was / Ase king henri is graunt-sire" (445.507-08).⁶⁹ Such open contention with the church on the part of these post-Conquest kings demonstrates an open rebellion against God and Church in contrast to the Anglo-Saxon king's typical love for God and Church. For a post-colonial, thirteenth-century audience, kings who do not give precedence to God and Church deserve resistance.

Another legitimizing aspect of these Anglo-Saxons kings is that they, like Athelwold, are kings of England with a legitimate connection to the land and her people. Speaking specifically of *St. Kenelm* and *Havelok the Dane*, Couch explains, "The prominence of England in these poems fantasizes social and spiritual validation for a non-courtly, non-ecclesiastic vernacular identity, highlighting a desire for an empowered

⁶⁸ "This William Bastard, who was king : soon understood / that he unrightfully had shed many a man's blood" (73.95-96).

⁶⁹ "was against [the] Holy Church / as [just like] King Henry [II] his grandfather" (445.507-08).

Englishness found throughout the L[aud] manuscript.”⁷⁰ Any group longing for relief from a colonizer would naturally engage in such a “fantas[y of] social and spiritual validation.” The introductory lines of *SS Augustine*, *Oswald*, *Eadmund*, and *Kenelm* illustrate this desire for validation by emphasizing each king’s connection to the land itself and to English history. In *St. Augustine*, for example, the *ESEL* describes sixth century Aethelbert as “kyng of Engelande” (24.23), even though Aethelbert was in actuality king of the smaller kingdom of Kent at a time when the island was comprised of several smaller kingdoms rather than the centralized, single kingdom with which the Laud Misc. 108 audience would be familiar. The *ESEL* presents Kings Oswald, Edmund, and Kenelm⁷¹ in similar ways: although kings of smaller pre-Conquest kingdoms, the legends first identify each as a king of England and only secondarily in the next line or two as the king of the smaller kingdom.⁷² Implying that Aethelbert, as with the others, is the king of the entirety of England, rather than identifying him more narrowly as “Kentish”⁷³ certainly carries weight for the Laud Misc. 108 audience of the late thirteenth

⁷⁰ Couch, “Magic of Englishness,” *Texts and Contexts* 224.

⁷¹ Couch makes a similar connection regarding *St. Kenelm*: the text “gives an impression that Kenelm may be the King of England” before identifying Mercia as specific realm. See “Magic of Englishness,” *Texts and Contexts* 235.

⁷² Oswald’s introduction reads, “SEint Oswold þe holie king : of þe on ende of engelande / King was, ase þulke tyme bi-feol : in northþ-homber-londe” (45.1-2). Kenelm’s introduction reads, “he was kyng in Engelande : of þe Marche of Walis” (345.2), or of Mercia. Eadmund’s introduction reads, “SEint Eadmund þe holie kyng : i-bore was here bi este / In þe on ende of Engelande : of 3wam Men makiez feste;/ For of southfolke he was kyng” [“the holy king : was born here by the east / on the one end of England : whose religious feast men observe / because he was king of Suffolk”] (296.1-3).

⁷³ “Aethelberht I,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*, Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2010, 24 Mar. 2010 <<http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9003890>>. It was not until the end of Aethelbert’s reign that his kingdom included all of England south of the Humber River.

century by widening the definition of a glorious Anglo Saxon past to include more than what is historically accurate. On one level, giving precedence to a larger English identity allows the Laud Misc. 108 manuscript to incorporate the feats of these kings of smaller kingdoms into a broader national history that the audience as a whole shares. Including all of these kings also serves to present a long trajectory of *English* history that connects England of the past to England of the present.⁷⁴ As Kimberly Bell states, “shifting England to the center of the *SEL* reveals a purpose beyond that of moral instruction and edification.”⁷⁵ That purpose, Bell continues, is that it “invites the audience to recall, contemplate and explore its own unique and chosen place within the history of the Christian world.”⁷⁶ In post-colonial terms, the manuscript instructs the audience beyond England’s Christian concerns to include a historical and political agenda. As Bell has established, prioritizing England is one of the Laud Misc. 108’s “subtle revisionist strategies”⁷⁷; I argue prioritizing England also illustrates resistance to the Norman view of history. These saintly⁷⁸ Anglo-Saxon kings re-packaged as English kings share with

⁷⁴ Couch explains, “The *SEL* narrator often links past events with criticism of the present state of things [...] draw[ing] explicit links between past grievances and a present, continued sense of the unrightfulness (and foreignness) of current rulers.” While Couch is discussing the role of political grievances the *SEL* audience had with the post-Conquest kings, my point is that connecting the pre-Conquest kings to all of England accomplishes the same result by bringing the “present state of things” into the forefront of the audience’s mind. See “Defiant Devotion” 76. Thompson also addresses the connection between historical circumstances in the past that mirror current circumstances, and she calls these circumstances “political moments linking past and present.” See *Everyday Saints* 49.

⁷⁵ Bell, “holie mannes liues,” *Texts and Contexts* 259.

⁷⁶ Bell, “holie mannes liues,” *Texts and Contexts* 260.

⁷⁷ Bell, “holie mannes liues,” *Texts and Contexts* 259; Couch, “Magic of Englishness,” *Texts and Contexts* 228.

⁷⁸ Josiah Clark Russell points out that Edward the Confessor, the English king just prior to the Conquest, was the last English king to become a saint while Rome continued to

the audience a homeland, a place of origin, and a connection to an English past.

By contrast, in the same way that the Laud Misc. 108 manuscript emphasizes the glorious Anglo-Saxon past by connecting the kings with England itself and, by extension, with its inhabitants, the manuscript emphasizes the post-Conquest English kings' simultaneous lack of connection to England and strong link to Normandy. William the Conqueror in *St. Wolston*, is, of course, "Eorl in Noremaundie" (72.63). His connection to Normandy is understandable, but emphasizing that connection highlights that William is an outsider; in post-colonial terms, he and his become the "Other." In *St. Thomas Becket*, King Henry II's frequent connection to Normandy emphasizes his outsider status as well. Henry II becomes king almost one hundred years after the conquest, but the *ESEL* positions Henry's place on the throne in terms of his predecessor Steven of Blois, who, the *ESEL* notes, was "Duyk of Normandie" (113.234). Even though the *ESEL* describes Henry II in this *one* instance as "king of Engelande" (113.233), in most instances in *St. Thomas*, the *ESEL* emphasizes Henry's connection to Normandy. For example, when Becket's predecessor, Archbishop of Canterbury Tibaud, dies, and when Becket is ordained Archbishop in Tibaud's stead, King Henry is "In Noremandie" (114.281, 115.289). When Henry comes to survey his English kingdom, he must come

find saints amongst those in the line of French kings, such as Louis IX, through the thirteenth century. See "The Canonization of Opposition to the King in Angevin England," *Anniversary Essays in Medieval History* (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1967) 289-90. Russell states, "it was easy to believe in the divine right of a line of kings traced back to Clovis and Charlemagne, possessing a Louis IX, and aided miraculously by a Joan of Arc, and to feel in its steady increase of power a manifestation of divine approval" (289). On this other hand, the post-Conquest English kings were in seemingly constant conflict with their people (the English), and, as the *ESEL* often implies, that conflict had its roots in the question of whether the post-Conquest kings had a legitimate claim to the English throne.

“overt of Noremandie” (116.343). And when Henry’s men report Becket’s death to him, Henry is again “in normandie” (168.2156, 170.2223).⁷⁹ Whenever Henry II needs to deal with a specific problem or responsibility in his English realm, the *ESEL* states not simply that he is absent from England, but that he is in Normandy. Even though as king of England Henry II ruled over substantial land in France⁸⁰ as well as in England, such repeated absences from England coupled with his repeated presence in Normandy implies that Henry’s concerns lie with Normandy. By repeatedly connecting Henry II to Normandy, the *ESEL* questions the king’s loyalty to England by implying that his decisions will be primarily in the best interest of Normandy. William as “Earl in Normandy,” Stephen as “Duke of Normandy,” and Henry II whose seemingly constant retreat to or presence in Normandy when England requires him all point to the post-Conquest kings’ primary devotion to Normandy, not to England; their devotion to Normandy provides one more reason for the audience to resist these kings who do not serve the interests of the “English.”

Good kings, like Athelwold’s template indicates, are devoted to their land and their people, demonstrated in part by a shared language, the English language. Like King Edward, King Edmund demonstrates his connection to the common people of the land through his generosity; he is “large in eche poynte” (297.6). The common people reciprocate with their loyalty. After the wicked Danes Hubba and Hyngar kill King

⁷⁹ See 114.267-68, 271; 161.1897; 163.1985; 173.2327-32; and 173.2335 for additional examples of Henry II being in Normandy rather than England.

⁸⁰ With Henry II’s marriage to Eleanor of Aquitaine, England’s landholdings in continental France grew quite large. In fact, prior to the loss of Normandy in 1205 during King John’s reign, the English king ruled over more of continental France than did the French king.

Edmund, it is the common people who search for his body and who continue searching for his hidden head. These “cristine Men” (299.73), as the *ESEL* describes them, found the body quickly, but “sou3tten it [the head] longue, In manie studes” (299.76).⁸¹ These Christian men, whom the legend later identifies as “folk,” that is, the population of a “city, province, or region,”⁸² or common people,⁸³ are by definition “good,” albeit simple men. What this episode demonstrates, though, beyond the loyalty the “folk” have for their king, is the linguistic link that binds people and king to one another. Edmund’s head calls out “‘here, here, here,’ with swete voy3” (299.81). Those who understood this “sweet voice” that speaks in *English* are the “Christian men” of *England* whose mother tongue and religiosity identify them as part of the “us” with whom the Laud Misc. 108 audience of the late thirteenth century identifies. What connects Edmund to his people is a culture of shared religion and shared language.⁸⁴

By marking Hubba and Hyngar as “other,” this legend refuses to include King Edmund’s antagonists in at least a portion of a shared culture. This refusal to include is historically inaccurate. In reality, regions north of the Humber River, such as Northumbria where Hubba and Hyngar first attack, contained many Viking settlers who, like the post-Conquest Normans, soon assimilated into the English population and became part of the anachronistic unified “we” with which the *ESEL* implicitly blankets pre-Conquest England. Alfred Smyth writes, “recognition of a common Germanic culture

⁸¹ “sought it [King Edmund’s head] for a long time in many locations” (299.76).

⁸² *MED* 2(a).

⁸³ *MED* 1(a).

⁸⁴ See Alfred Smyth, “The Emergence of English Identity, 700-1000,” *Medieval Europeans: Studies in Ethnic Identity and National Perspectives in Medieval Europe*, ed. Alfred P. Smyth (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998) 28.

– above all enshrined in similarities in language and oral literature – which existed between English and Danes, [...] may have been largely responsible for the relatively rapid assimilation of Danish settlers into a newly forged Anglo-Danish society in the tenth and eleventh centuries.”⁸⁵ Some three hundred years later, though, the *ESEL* must sacrifice historical accuracy in order to make its post-colonial point that pagan Danes Hubba and Hyngar share neither religion nor language with Northumberland and with “al enguelond” (297.14), which effectively defines them as “other.”

Hubba and Hyngar are “other” in legal terms as well. Language indicates legality. Klaus Jankofsky observes that the head calling out in English “may also provide an insight into underlying legal custom: those walking through the woods had to make their presence known by calling out if they did not wish to be considered outlaws and thus incur the danger of being slain.”⁸⁶ To question legality on the basis of speaking English⁸⁷ strengthens the connection drawn in the *ESEL* between Hubba and Hyngar and William the Conqueror; the post-colonial message that the Laud Misc. 108 audience could glean from the connection is that, although Christian, because neither William nor his Normans shared a language with the English,⁸⁸ they, too, were outsiders, “outlaws,” “other.”

⁸⁵ Smyth, “Emergence of English Identity” 31.

⁸⁶ Klaus Jankofsky, “National Characteristics in the Portrayal of English Saints in the South English Legendary,” *Images of Sainthood in Medieval Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1991) 87.

⁸⁷ For a discussion of the legality of William the Conqueror’s invasion and rule of England, see chapter 4 of this project, “Hagiography as a Resistance Strategy.”

⁸⁸ Because the Normans were Christian, the religious aspect of identity must be excluded from the *ESEL*’s list of differences between the two groups; however, I think that, because of the parallels drawn between the Normans and the Danes, there is the subtle implication that the Normans behave in pagan rather than Christian ways. Further evidence of the post-Conquest kings conducting themselves in ways similar to the pagan emperors is in chapter 3 of this project, “The Use of Mirrored Language as a Resistance

More than displaying the ability to speak English, which can be an acquired skill, Edmund's head's speaking "here, here, here" in English can also serve to separate *native* from *non-native* English speakers. Jankofsky notes that similar accounts or versions of *St. Edmund* penned by Matthew Paris exist in both Latin and French, and that both accounts have "here, here, here" written in English.⁸⁹ In such cases, this English phrase appearing in Latin and in French accounts emphasizes the fact that these are English words spoken in a sea of non-English words. The efforts of Edmund's subjects to locate the king's head in response to its "here, here, here," however, even if spoken in English, would identify whether or not the head belongs to a *native* English speaker, that is, one of "us" or one of the "others."

One way in which the "here, here, here" phrase distinguishes native speaker from "other" is through pronunciation. The phrase identifies native speakers in much the same way that in the Old Testament, pronunciation exposed Ephraimite spies who could not produce a particular sound when the Gileadites asked them to say "scibboleth" [ear of corn]. The Ephraimites said *sibboleth*, instead of *shibboleth*, not being able "to express the 'sh' sound."⁹⁰ In English, "here, here, here" functions as a shibboleth that distinguishes non-native speakers, particularly native French speakers. As in Middle English, all letters in Old/Middle French were pronounced; the concept of "silent" letters is a later phenomenon.⁹¹ However, the initial "h" of "here" in the mouth of a Middle

Strategy."

⁸⁹ Jankofsky, "National Characteristics" fn 12, 87.

⁹⁰ Judges 12:5-6, *Douay-Rheims Bible*, 11 Nov. 2011.

<<http://www.drbo.org/lvb/index.htm>>. From this story comes the modern definition of "shibboleth" as a word, term, or saying that identifies members of a particular group.

⁹¹ In medieval spoken French, words of Latin origin that begin with "h" are treated in

French speaker would function in much the same way that it functions today: while the French speaker would likely aspirate the initial “h,” they would not actually pronounce it, resulting in an “ere, ere, ere” pronunciation. In the same way that rhythm and word choice are ready identifiers today of a non-native speaker, pronunciation is also, and the same scenario occurred in medieval England. And, like today, rhythm and word choice were likely manageable skills for a non-native speaker to acquire; however, also like today, pronunciation of certain letters or sounds was more difficult for a non-native speaker to master. In terms of pronunciation, if a native English speaker today were to hear a native French speaker pronounce or at least aspirate the initial “h” of “here,” the native English speaker would recognize the French speaker’s pronunciation of the initial “h” as a “foreign phoneme.”⁹² Because the pronounced English/Germanic “h” is not a sound in French, most native French speakers will not be able to pronounce the English “h” and sound like a native English speaker. The pronunciation of “here, here, here” thus identifies those who do and those who do not belong in the forest, those who are and those who are not English, both within the legal definitions Jankofsky points out and within linguistic definitions. For the *Laud Misc.* 108 audience, the “foreign phoneme,” or shibboleth, serves to expose those who do not belong in England. Unlike King Edmund

pronunciation and grammar rules as if the word begins with a vowel; words of Germanic origin have an aspirated initial “h” that, while not pronounced, is not ignored as is the case with words of Latin origin. This is very much the pronunciation rule today. For example, “l’homme” (or “the man”) is a Latin word whose initial “h” is essentially ignored, and pronunciation and grammar rules dictate treating the words as if it begins with a vowel sound. Because “homme” begins with a vowel sound, the article “le” loses the “e” through elision. On the other hand, “Le Havre” (or “The Hague”) is of Germanic origin; therefore, the initial “h,” while not pronounced is not ignored but is aspirated, and because it is aspirated, the article “le” does not elide.

⁹² My thanks to Dr. Joseph Price, professor of French in the Classical and Modern Languages Department of Texas Tech University, who pointed out the distinction to me.

whose native language is implicitly English, the fact that the native language of the post-Conquest kings, including the Laud Misc. 108 audience's own king, was either Anglo-Norman or French marks the kings as the linguistic "other" in the *ESEL*.

Like *shibboleth*, the use of French in the MS Laud Misc. 108 serves to identify the antagonists of the legends. As Robert Mills has discussed, "the SEL [...] associat[es...] English with sanctity and Anglo-Norman French with evil."⁹³ Only very small amounts of French words appear in the *SEL*, and, according to Mills, for a specific purpose: "the *SEL* enemies continue to speak primarily in English; just a few stock phrases [in French] are enough to convey a sense of linguistic alterity."⁹⁴ Because William the Conqueror in *St. Wulfstan* and Henry III in *St. Edmund [of Abingdon]* speak only indirectly in the *ESEL*, neither of them speak in French even though it was their native language; Henry II does, however, use French phrases often in his conversations with Becket. Many of the pagan rulers also use French phrases, and, as I discuss in Chapter 3, the *ESEL* draws parallels between the pagan rulers and the post-Conquest kings.⁹⁵ In post-colonial terms, the narrator removes the "French"⁹⁶ speaking post-Conquest kings from the linguistic center to the linguistic margins, and moves those who

⁹³ Robert Mills, "The Early *SEL* and Difference: Race, Place, Language, and Belief," *The Texts and Contexts of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108: The Shaping of English Vernacular Narrative*, eds. Kimberly K. Bell and Julie Nelson Couch (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2011) 207.

⁹⁴ Mills also points out to that when saints speak using French phrases it is used "ironically" ("Early *SEL* and Difference," *Texts and Contexts*, 208). For Mills' complete discussion, see 207-12.

⁹⁵ For a more complete discussion of the similarities between the post-Conquest kings and the pagan rulers in the *ESEL*, see 3 of this project, "The Use of Mirrored Language as a Resistance Strategy."

⁹⁶ William the Conqueror would have spoken Anglo-French as his native language; Henry II would have spoken Anglo-Norman as his native language; and Henry III would have spoken Anglo-Norman/French as his native language.

speak English from the margins of history and into the center. As the *ESEL* presents it, a good king shares not just a language, but a native language with those over whom he rules.

Unlike the immigrants who came to consider themselves “English,” the post-Conquest kings did not fully assimilate into English culture in the same way as Norman and other non-royal continental immigrants did. For the most part, the post-Conquest kings and the ruling aristocracy were indeed “English” and even called themselves such. However, the *ESEL*, and the Laud Misc. 108 manuscript overall, exploit the areas in which they did not assimilate. For example, the post-Conquest kings of England spoke French as their native language well into the fourteenth century,⁹⁷ by which time the practical reasons for maintaining the French language had long passed.⁹⁸ Even though many of the post-Conquest kings learned English, they spoke and understood it to varying degrees.⁹⁹ In a practical sense, these kings were either native Norman-French or native French speakers because those were their mothers’ native languages. The fact that those whose mother tongue was French were a small but powerful group served further to prevent this group from fully assimilating both in reality and in the worldview

⁹⁷ Henry IV, born in 1399, was the first English king after the Norman Conquest, after more than three hundred years, to speak English as his native language.

⁹⁸ Once England had lost the majority of her once significant landholdings in France in 1205, the more practical reasons for the English king and the ruling elite to continue speaking French were gone. For a discussion of reasons for the aristocracy and the royalty to maintain the French language, see chapter 1, the introduction to this project.

⁹⁹ For a discussion of each king’s facility with English, see Robert Bartlett, *England Under the Norman and Angevin Kings: 1066-1225* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 486-87. For a discussion of the use of English as opposed to French during this time period, see Bartlett, *England Under the Norman and Angevin Kings* 486-91, and Michael Prestwich, *Plantagenet England: 1225-1360* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) 555-57.

constructed in the Laud Misc. 108 manuscript.

Using the template of ideal reign that the *English* king Athelwold provides the manuscript, the manuscript defines nationality or “us” using language. Such emphasis on the English language and people allows the Laud Misc. 108 manuscript to draw differences along linguistic lines, but, more importantly, to invert the powerful/powerless binary by favouring the English language and English people. By inverting the power structure and labelling the English language and people as good and the Norman/French language and ruling class as bad, the Laud Misc. 108 manuscript presents the English kings of William’s line as “other,” as inferior to their Anglo-Saxon predecessors in every relevant category. This good/bad dichotomy is an unavoidable conclusion for an audience who would take at face value the historical accuracy of the stories in the Laud Misc. 108 manuscript. With an eye toward guiding the audience to a conclusion, the Laud Misc. 108 manuscript denies the post-Conquest kings the space for assimilation that historical reality afforded them.

CHAPTER 3 The Use of Mirrored Language as a Resistance Strategy

The Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108 was collated or bound in the later part of the thirteenth century. As A. S. G. Edwards notes, that date is a compilation date rather than a composition date.¹ The Laud Misc. 108 manuscript contains texts that modern literary criticism places within distinct genres, for example, hagiography and romance, each with its own distinct and specific characteristics; however, these distinctions are largely anachronistic. As Kimberly K. Bell and Julie Nelson Couch's recent companion book to the MS Laud Misc. 108 clearly illustrates, there exists a lively and persuasive argument that the texts, that is, the saints' lives, devotional poems, and the two Middle English romances, were bound together in this particular manuscript with the intent, vision, or plan of a "whole book." Bell and Couch state in their introduction, "the collation of the texts in [MS] L[aud Misc. 108] suggests a purposeful and deliberate arrangement, revealing a prioritizing, perhaps on the part of an owner or compiler, of certain spiritual and political themes and concerns."² One of these "political themes and

¹ For the most recent scholarship regarding the dating of this manuscript, see A. S. G. Edwards, "Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108: Contents, Construction, and Circulation" 21-31; Thomas R. Liszka, "Talk in the Camps: On the Dating of the *South English Legendary*, *Havelok the Dane*, and *King Horn* in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108" 31-50; and Kimberly Bell and Julie Nelson Couch, introduction 1-18. All three chapters are in *The Texts and Contexts of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108: The Shaping of English Vernacular Narrative*, eds. Kimberly Bell and Julie Nelson Couch (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2011).

² Bell and Couch, introduction, *Texts and Contexts* 2. Andrew Lynch also discusses the overlap of generic features in the hagiographical and romance texts of the Laud 108 manuscript. See "Genre, Bodies, and Power in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108: *King Horn*, *Havelok*, and the *South English Legendary*," *Texts and Contexts* 181. Lynch further explains that in the Laud manuscript, the romance hero, such as Horn, has "divine favor" and a "spirituality that which is not distinguished at all from the hero's

concerns” is a post-colonial type thread of resistance to the post-Conquest kings of Norman descent. Resistance to the post-Conquest kings’ unjust wielding of power and unjust governance is present throughout the manuscript. The legend of *St. Wulfstan* in the Laud Misc. 108’s *Early South English Legendary* (*ESEL*), for example, focuses on William of Normandy’s unrightful claim and occupation of the throne of England, making William’s successors, likewise, “unkuynde Eyres” (73.90).³ Beginning with William’s ascension to the throne through the other post-Conquest kings discussed, the *ESEL* emphasizes periodically that William and his descendants are illegitimate rulers.⁴ The assertion of the illegitimacy of the post-Conquest kings is a thread of resistance to royal authority that runs throughout the manuscript.

The manuscript scrutinizes those kings who are considered unrightful by establishing an us/them binary that employs inconsistent and mutable definitions of identity for both what constitutes English and what constitutes non-English, or, in this

normal ambitions as a God-fearing secular monarch”; as for the *SEL* saints, “there is also a political practicality to the[ir] lives and divine loves.” See “Genre, Bodies, and Power,” *Texts and Contexts* 193.

³ All references to the Laud *ESEL* are taken from Carl Horstmann, ed., *The Early South-English Legendary, or Lives of the Saints, I: MS Laud, 108 in the Bodleian Library*. EETS, o.s., 87 (London: N. Trübner and Co., 1887). Reprint, 1987, 2000. This and subsequent references are given parenthetically by page and line number (73.90). For a discussion of the moral and legal meanings of “Vnkuynde,” see chapter 4 of this project, “Hagiography as a Resistance Strategy.”

⁴ Anne Thompson makes a similar point discussing how the *Early South English Legendary* (*ESEL*), unlike the other versions of the *South English Legendary* (*SEL*), stresses the illegitimacy of William and his heirs as kings of England in *Everyday Saints and the Art of the Narrative in the South English Legendary* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2003) 46-48. Bell and Couch also identify Susan Crane’s discussion of the political focus on illegitimate or oppressive rulers of England, especially evident in the anti-Norman *St. Wulfstan*, but present throughout L[aud].” See their introduction,” *Texts and Contexts* 15. Crane, *Insular Romance: Politics, Faith, and Culture in Anglo-Norman and Middle English Literature* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986) cited in fn 47, *Texts and Contexts* 15.

case, what constitutes Norman.⁵ The shifting of definitions is a common post-colonial strategy, constituting what Michael Uebel calls a “fantasy”⁶ of what constitutes English, and what Couch calls “a collective desire that operates in [the] L[aud manuscript, specifically] to imagine a communal English identity.”⁷ In his essay about the presence of Prester John in late medieval literature, Uebel discusses the importance of fantasy in his analysis. Uebel writes, “[f]antasy [...] is vital to both individuals and collectivities as the process by which identity is consolidated, protected against loss and the threat of dissolution.”⁸ The “fantasy” of a “consolidated” English identity plays an important role for the *ESEL* audience and for the larger manuscript’s audience to express “political themes and concerns.” In the absence of other distinguishing group markers in late thirteenth-century England, such as genealogical origin, language, and religious and cultural roots,⁹ the compilers of the MS Laud Misc. 108, at least in its early stage of compilation in the late thirteenth- and early fourteenth century,¹⁰ rely on a “fantasy” of

⁵ For a discussion of Becket’s constructed English identity, see Robert Mills, “The Early *South English Legendary* and Difference: Race, Place, Language, and Belief,” *Texts and Contexts* 197-222; and my discussion in chapter 5 of this project, “The English Clergy as a Resistance Strategy.” For a discussion of Simon de Montfort’s constructed English identity, see chapter 4 of this project, “Hagiography as a Resistance Strategy.”

⁶ Michael Uebel, “Imperial Fetishism: Prester John Among the Natives,” *The Postcolonial Middle Ages*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000) 271.

⁷ Couch, “The Magic of Englishness in *St. Kenelm* and *Havelok the Dane*,” *Texts and Contexts* 244. For other discussions of the “fantasy” of what constitutes “English,” see Couch, “The Magic of Englishness,” *Texts and Contexts* 223-50. For a discussion of the “fantasy of Christendom” and “the *SEL*’s vision of Christian selfhood,” see Mills, “Early *South English Legendary* and Difference,” *Texts and Contexts* 197-222.

⁸ Uebel, 270-71.

⁹ Alfred Smyth identifies these aspects along with literature and laws as markers of a “common culture.” See “Emergence of English Identity, 700-1000,” 28.

¹⁰ There were various stages of the MS Laud Misc. 108 before the manuscript’s completed form that we have today. For a discussion of the various manuscript

English identity in establishing and defining not only themselves, but in defining the “other” as represented in the manuscript by the English kings of Norman descent. What is interesting is that these definitions of “us,” as in the oft-used “English,” and the “other,” as in the post-Conquest kings, are shifting, often changing which characteristics do and do not comprise those identities; this morphing, however, is necessary in order to accommodate varying circumstances and varying time periods from legend to legend or from legend to romance. In the legends of early Christian martyrs, specifically *SS Alban Leger, Fey, Katherine, and Lucy*, the pagans and the Christians represent, just as the post-Conquest kings and the English in the legends of post-Conquest bishop saints, specifically *SS Wulfstan, Becket, and Edmund [of Abingdon] the Confessor*, the two players in the us/“other” or the powerful/powerless binary, a binary that opens the door for a post-colonial reading of the *ESEL*.

In addition to the binary relationships, another way in which the *ESEL* establishes

descriptions, including collation, numbering, hands, dates, stages of compilation, etc., see Margaret Laing, *Catalogue of Sources for a Linguistic Atlas of Early Medieval English* (Cambridge, UK: D.S. Brewer, 1993) 136; Manfred Görlach, *The Textual Tradition of the South English Legendary*, Leeds Texts and Monographs, n.s. 6 (Leeds: The University of Leeds School of English, 1974) 88-89; Gisela Guddat-Figge, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Middle English Romances* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1976); Kimberly Bell, “Generic Convention and Transformation in Middle English Romance: The Manuscript Evidence in *King Horn* and *Havelok the Dane*,” Ph.D. diss., Georgia State University, 2002; and from the recently published companion book to the Laud Misc. 108 entitled *The Texts and Contexts of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108: The Shaping of English Vernacular Narrative*, edited by Kimberly K. Bell and Julie Nelson Couch, see Bell and Couch, introduction 8-10; A.S. G. Edwards, “Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108: Contents, Construction, and Circulation” 21-30; Diane Speed, “A Text for Its Time: The *Sanctorale* of the Early *South English Legendary*” 117-36; and Susanna Fein, “*Somer Soneday*: Kingship, Sainthood, and Fortune” 275-298. The compilation stage I am addressing for the manuscript is the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century.

a connection between these two groups of legends mentioned above is by placing them in close proximity within the manuscript. While most extant versions of the *South English Legendary* (*SEL*) follow a calendrical order, the *ESEL* does not. Rather, as Thomas Lyszka argues, it appears that the *ESEL* scribe “experimented with [...] order.”¹¹ The legends I will discuss in this chapter appear in succession in the *ESEL*. *St. Alban*, marked as item number 19, begins this particular grouping, followed directly (and in order as they appear in the *ESEL*) by *SS Wulfstan*, *Matthew*, *Leger*, *Fey*, *The 11,000 Virgins*, *Katherine*, *Lucy*, and *Thomas of Canterbury*,¹² which is marked as item number 27. I have also included *Edmund [of Abingdon] the Confessor* (marked as item number 68) in this discussion, but *Edmund* is the only legend of this group that is physically/spatially distant from the others. Because of their close proximity to one another, the repetition of terminology, situations, and responses, which *Edmund [of Abingdon] the Confessor* shares with these legends, stand out even more and potentially encourage the audience to associate and equate their post-Conquest kings with early Christian-era pagan rulers.

In addition to the proximity, the *ESEL* notes the similar political circumstances of Roman England and post-Norman Conquest England. In the days when the British Isles were the western reaches of the Roman Empire, England was a colonized and occupied land subject to pagan Roman emperors, specifically Diocletian and Maximian. While the Roman Empire is responsible for the spread of Christianity throughout its kingdom including England, the Laud Misc. 108 *ESEL* seems to ignore that reality and replaces it

¹¹ Thomas R. Lyszka, “MS Laud Misc 108 and the Early History of the *South English Legendary*,” *Manuscripta* 33.2 (July 1989): 75-76.

¹² Of these legends, *Matthew* and *The 11,000 Virgins* are not part of this discussion. An important notation, also, is that England/Britain figures prominently in *The 11,000 Virgins* poem.

instead with antagonist emperors who hold to their pagan beliefs and persecute defiant saints. The Laud Misc. 108 *ESEL* presents the saints of Roman Britain in a post-colonial setting and power structure similar to its own where outsiders rule and oppress. The similarities between the political situation in Roman Britain and the one in which the Laud Misc. 108 audience finds itself are a subversive way of aligning the two time periods.

The *ESEL*'s repetition, or mirroring, of political circumstances and of key words and phrases to describe both the tormentors of the early Christian saints, that is, the pagan Roman Emperors and their agents, in the legends of *SS Alban, Leger, Fey, Katherine*, and *Lucy* and to describe William the Conqueror, Henry II, and Henry III in the legends of *Wulfstan, Becket*, and *Edmund [of Abingdon] the Confessor*, encourages the audience to see the post-Conquest kings as moral equivalents to the pagan persecutors of the distant past.

Political Genealogies and Circumstances

Diocletian and Maximian undoubtedly signify evil; in fact, for the *ESEL* audience, invoking their names would likely have an effect similar to invoking Hitler, Stalin, or Polpot on an audience today. In the early days of Christianity in the late third and early fourth centuries, the Roman Emperor Diocletian, who ruled as emperor from 284-305 CE, and Maximian, his "trusted officer and friend" appointed to rule over the western portions of the Empire that included Britain, were well-known persecutors of Christians. Historically, Diocletian is "noted for the last great persecution of the

Christians”¹³; in addition, Maximian, although very powerful in the ruling structure of the Roman Empire, “seems to have done no more than obediently execute in his part of the empire the first edict of Diocletian, which ordered burning of the Scriptures and the closing of churches.”¹⁴ As his agent, however, Maximian shares Diocletian’s reputation in the *ESEL*. The infamy of Diocletian, Maximian, and Maxentius,¹⁵ son of Maximian, was part of the *ESEL* audience’s cultural present in the late thirteenth century. Diocletian and Maximian are not the actual persecutors in the legends; they order their agents to torture the good saints of God in the *ESEL*’s *SS Alban, Lucy, and Fey*; Maxentius is the Emperor in *St. Katherine*. Evoking Diocletian and Maximian allows the *ESEL* not only the space that hagiography itself provides for political commentary,¹⁶ but also, allows the distance of time, centuries ago, resulting in a “safe” space of plausible deniability from which to demonize the current king of England by aligning him with the infamous Diocletian and Maximian.

Diocletian and Maximian and their underlings also represent a colonizing,

¹³ "Diocletian," *Encyclopædia Britannica, Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2011). 10 Jan. 2011.
<<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/164042/Diocletian>>. Jean Cousin notes in this same article that Diocletian’s persecutions of Christians “spread through the empire with an extreme violence that did not succeed in annihilating Christianity but caused the faith of the martyrs to blaze forth instead.”

¹⁴ "Maximian," *Encyclopædia Britannica, Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2011). 10 Jan. 2011.
<<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/370442/Maximian>>.

¹⁵ While Maxentius is only mentioned in *St. Katherine*, considering the popularity of the Katherine legend throughout the Middle Ages (see Winstead, *Virgin Martyrs*), it seems logical that Maxentius’ name would carry nefarious implication for a medieval audience comparable to that of Diocletian’s and Maximian’s names.

¹⁶ Thomas Heffernan, “Dangerous Sympathies: Political Commentary in the *South English Legendary*,” *The South English Legendary: A Critical Assessment*, ed. Klaus P. Jankofsky (Tübingen, Germany: Francke Verlag, 1992) 1-17.

dominating force in the England of long ago, a fact that the Laud Misc. 108 audience would not likely miss. In *St. Alban*, for example, the wicked justice is to the people much like William's descendants were to the Laud Misc. 108 audience. When Alban suffers at the hand of a "lupur Iustise" (68.11) functioning in England at the behest of Diocletian and Maximian, the *ESEL* invokes the names Diocletian and Maximian before discussing the actions of the true antagonist:

þe lupere prince þat was þo: dioclician,
And an oþur þat was al so : þat heiȝte Maximian,
Cristine men þat huy miȝhten i-wite : huy brouȝten alle to grounde;
In eche londe huy lieten heom seche : ȝware huy miȝhten beon i-founde,
And to strongue deþe heom duden : swiþe manie and fale ;
huy ne spareden none þat huy miȝhten finde : noþur grete ne smale (67.5-10).¹⁷

Diocletian and Maximian are "wicked prince[s]" who have sent their man to England for the specific purpose to rid the land of Christians and Christianity: "[t]o Martri alle cristine men : and destruyen cristindom" (68.12). In *St. Fey*, in the same manner, while justice Dacian is the actual persecutor, the legend mentions Dacian only after invoking the names and reputations of Diocletian and Maximian:

A lupur Aumperour þare was þo : þat hiet Dioclician,
And is felawe þat was al-so : þe schrewe Maximian :
A lupur Iustise huy hadden with heom : is name was dacian :

¹⁷ "The wicked prince who was then, Diocletian, / And another also who was called Maximian, / Christian men who they were able to discover : they destroyed; / In each land they had them searched out : where they might be found,/ And to terrible death did [put]: a great many; / They spared none that they were able to find : neither great nor small" (67.5-10). All translations are mine unless otherwise indicated.

To depe huy brouzten zware huy founden : ani cristine Man (83.5-8).¹⁸

Even though Dacian is the one who carries out the orders, the legend also blames Diocletian and Maximian for the Christian persecution by using “huy,” the plural “they” (83.8), not the singular “he,” to identify who had Christians put to death. Similarly, in *St. Lucy*, blame is placed for Lucy’s death and for the Church’s difficulties at the feet of Diocletian and Maximian, even though Justice Pascasius is the acting villain. Unlike *SS Alban* and *Fey*, this legend does not mention Diocletian and Maximian until the end of the narrative. After Justice Pascasius has killed Lucy by cutting her throat (105.153), she miraculously continues to preach through the wound in her throat; laughingly and with a touch of contempt, Lucy says,

[...] riȝht nouȝe is holi churchē : I-brouȝt in guod pes :

For hire tweie wiȝerwines : þat habbez i-beo so zare,

Riȝht nouȝe beoȝ to nauȝte i-brouȝt : ȝe þorue habbe of heom no kare.

For þe luȝere dioclician : þat so mucche harm hath i-do,

he is i-pult out of his kynedom : he ne cometh nou-more þar-to;

And also Maximian : þat so luȝur hath i-beo,

Riȝthe nouȝe he deide in luȝur deth : ȝe schulle him non-more i-seo;

So þat þe luȝere wiȝer-wines : þat a-ȝein holie churchē were,

Out of heore miȝhte beoȝ i-brouȝt : ne habbe ȝe none fere (105-6.158-66).¹⁹

¹⁸ “A wicked emperor there was then : who was called Dioclitian, / And his fellow who was also : the shrew Maximian; / A wicked justice they had with them : his name was Dacian; / To death they brought where they found : any Christian man” (83.5-8).

¹⁹ “right now [/at this moment] is the Holy Church : brought to good peace / because her two infidels : who have been so eager, / right now are brought to naught : you by them/of them have no care. / Because the wicked Diocletian : who has done so much harm, / he is

Lucy comforts the Christians of Sicily by pointing out that Diocletian and Maximian are dead, and that the Christians need no longer fear for their safety nor for the safety of the Holy Church. Lucy specifically mentions *two* “wiperwines,” or “infidels.” Judge Pascasius, the one who actually cut Lucy’s throat, however, does not even merit mention in the resolution of the legend. Diocletian and Maximian serve as lightning rods of sorts for the *ESEL* audience because they infamously embody the worst of those who persecuted the early Christians.

Just as evoking Diocletian and Maximian provide a political genealogy of evil for early Christian-era antagonists, the post-Conquest legends use a similar method to invoke another political genealogy of evil to remind the audience of the post-Conquest kings’ illegitimacy as rulers. Each English saint’s life presents a mini-history lesson, what Andrew Lynch calls “quasi-historical” in reference specifically to *SS Dunstan, Thomas Becket, and Edmund of Abingdon*.²⁰ In *St. Wulfstan*, the *ESEL* reminds the audience that after “the holy king Edward” died, Harold Godwinson took over as “the rightest heir” (72.61); but then William “the bastard,” Earl of Normandy (72.63), illegitimately “liet crouni king” (73.92) after Hastings. In *St. Thomas Becket*, the narrator reminds the audience that Henry II became king after another Duke of Normandy Steven of Blois; this notation for Steven, while factual, underscores that he and Henry II are related to William the Conqueror. Also in *Thomas*, the *ESEL* points to Henry III’s faulty heritage (175.2410-2415) as the son of “Iohan [...] euere of lupere rede, / luyte pouzte bi is daie :

put out of his kingdom : he comes there no more; / And also Maximian : who has been so wicked, / Right now he died in wicked death : ye shall see him no more; / because the wicked infidels : who were against the Holy Church, / are brought out of their power : have you no fear” (105-06.158-66).

²⁰ Lynch, “Genre, Bodies, and Power,” *Texts and Contexts* 183.

to don so guode dede” (175.2411-12)²¹ even while praising Henry III for his efforts as a young king to enshrine the martyred Becket. While *Thomas* does not specifically mention William, the audience would be aware of the line of kings since the Conquest and would be able to connect Henry III and his father, John, back to William. The *ESEL*’s *St. Edmund* also historically connects Henry III to the ruling family, to John and further back to Henry II, reminding the audience that this King Henry III’s problems with Archbishop Edmund of Abingdon are much like the problems “is graunt-sire : hadde a-zein seint Thomas” (445.506-08). The audience would know of Henry II’s and likely Henry III’s connection to William. Connecting these post-Conquest kings to their predecessors and ultimately to William himself serves to reiterate the illegitimacy of these English kings of Norman descent because of their familial relation to William. Just as Diocletian and Maximian represent the conquering, foreign Roman Empire at whose feet belong the blame for the abuse the saints of long ago suffered, William represents the conquering, foreign Normans at whose feet belong the blame for what England, her saints, and her people have suffered. The established genealogy further enforces the similarities between the early Christian-era pagan emperors and the post-Conquest kings of Norman descent who, like the pagan judges who occupy and rule in “foreign” outreaches of the Roman Empire at the behest of their pagan Emperors, occupy and rule England because of William the Conqueror.

²¹ “John [...] always [the recipient of] wicked advice/counsel, / thought little during his day [as king] : to perform such a good deed” (175.2411-12).

Mirrored Characteristics

Another way that would help the *ESEL* audience of the late thirteenth century to see the parallels between the early Christian martyr legends and their current political concerns is by employing the transitive property of mathematics, meaning if $a = b$ and $b = c$, then $a = c$: similarly, if the ruling pagans persecute Christian saints, and if the post-Conquest kings persecute English saints, then the post-Conquest kings are no different than the ruling pagans, nor are the English saints different from the early Christian saints. Bad guys, as well as good guys, become composite character sketches differing little from legend to legend. Karen Winstead explains that for the virgin martyrs, for example, individual identities, details, and specific manners of suffering are not the main goal; the goal is to make the martyrs into a representation, or a type of Christ. Winstead states, “[e]mblems and accounts of suffering, then, are not simply a means of distinguishing one virgin martyr from another; they are simultaneously a means of subsuming the saint into a single ‘life’ of triumph through suffering alongside Christ and the male martyrs.”²² This association places England and her people alongside the virgin martyrs, the male martyrs, and Christ. The *ESEL* achieves the same result by presenting the antagonists as only slightly varying versions of the same enemy, who, at their core are representatives of the devil.

Setting the stage in the legends of the early Christian-era saints, the descriptions of the pagan antagonists leave the audience little interpretive latitude: these pagans are angry and evil. A common title for these antagonists is “tormentours.” A word of French

²²Karen A. Winstead, *Virgin Martyrs: Legends of Sainthood in late Medieval England* (Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1997) 3.

origin, whose entry into Middle English is concurrent with the *ESEL*, “tormentour” can mean a torturer or an “officer charged with executing cruel punishment.”²³ The definition also encompasses in its meaning “a devil who tortures souls in hell.”²⁴ In other words, the term carries both religious and governmental meanings. For example, in *St. Alban*, it is a “tormentour” (70.95) who beheads Alban.²⁵ In *St. Leger*, four “tormentours” find the saint, so that they can kill him (70.95). In *St. Fey*, the saint surrenders to the “tormentors” (84.26, 27), and later “þe tormentors” turn her suspended over a fire as if she were meat on a spit (85.63). Moreover, in Dacian’s extreme anger, his “wod-wrothþ” (86.99), “þe tormentors” (86.101), doing “heore maistres [Dacian’s] bone [will]” (86.104) take St. Fey’s body and those of her Christian friends and behead them. The pagan antagonists are also “quellares,” or executioners appointed by the government, whose responsibility is to torture or eliminate those in opposition to the government.²⁶ For example, in *St. Katherine* once the Emperor Maxentius has become completely frustrated because he cannot persuade Katherine to accept his pagan gods and marry him, he sends for “quellares” (100.278); in *St. Leger*, the “Four tormentors” (82.26) Ebrom sends after Leger are later referred to as “quellares” (82.31). Even though “tormentor” is a term associating these representatives for the pagan rulers with hell, “tormentour” and “quellare” also serve to connect the pagan rulers with governmental officers, a connection that demonstrates abuse of office on the pagans’ part.

²³ *Middle English Compendium (MED)* 1(a).

²⁴ *MED* 1(a).

²⁵ Additional references to “tormentours” in this legend are in lines 69.58, 69.64, and 69.68.

²⁶ Not until the mid fifteenth century does the term “quellare” take on the meaning of murderer in a non-official capacity (*MED* 1(b)).

Abuse of royal power was an issue of great concern to the late thirteenth-century *ESEL* audience. The struggle to limit royal power and protect the rights of the English people, especially the barony, was ongoing from the time of the Norman invasion until the *ESEL* audience's present. Like the antagonists to the early Christian-era saints, in *St. Thomas*, those who serve the king by killing Becket are also referred to as "lupere kniztes" (163.1967).²⁷ Throughout the section leading up to the murder wherein the murderers explain to Becket all of the wrongs he has committed against Henry II, the constant repetition of the adjective "lupere" to describe Henry's men seems to be a nudge to the audience to ignore what these men say about Becket. More than simply "wicked" knights, the *ESEL*'s use of "quelle" (163.1968) implies, just as it does in *SS Leger* and *Katherine*, the imposition of unjust royal rule. Using the term "quellare" would have specific and pointed implication for the *ESEL* audience that would fill the act of killing Becket with great meaning: because of the *ESEL* audience's perception of Becket as the quintessential good clergyman, his murder by these "quellares" is the carrying out of a government-sanctioned act, in this case, of an "on-rizhte" or illegitimate government.

Not only does the terminology describing the antagonists in *Wulfstan*, *Becket*, and *Edmund [of Abingdon]* echo that of the terminology describing the antagonists in the early Christian-era saints' life, but these three post-Conquest legends also echo each other. The echoing language encourages the audience to equate these post-Conquest kings and antagonists in these three legends with one another making them part of the composite evil antagonist in the Laud Misc. 108. Wickedness figures heavily in these

²⁷ Other references to these "lupere knizte(s)" in this section of *St. Thomas* are 165.2035, 167.2104, 168.2139, 168.2151, 169.2189, or to a "lupere clerk" (165.2052).

three legends. In *Wulfstan*, for example, the narrator describes William's actions, that is, having himself crowned king (73.101) and having "bisette," or invaded England with "straunge men" (73.102), as "swuch [a] luper dede" (73.104) and done with "on-rihte." Considering the definition of "on-rihte," the *ESEL* notes that William's actions are unjust, illegal, and immoral.²⁸

Likewise, the *ESEL St. Thomas* uses terms of wickedness and evil on the king's part to describe the problems between Becket and Henry II. When the king imposes a taillage tax on the poor people of England, Becket terms the tax "an onriztful dede" (117.392). The echo of "onriztful" between the *Wulfstan* and *Becket* legends reiterates not only the illegitimacy of William's invasion, but also questions the moral and legal justification for Henry II's taillage.²⁹ The *ESEL's Edmund [of Abingdon] the Confessor* continues the comparison between these three post-Conquest kings. Like Becket, Edmund's problems with his king begin, at least as relayed in the *ESEL*, with a tax. The heriot tax, payable upon the death of a spouse, was what St. Edmund called a "lupur lawe" that is "nōpur [neither] rihtful ne guod" (445.490). Again, "rihtful" echoes the "on-riht" of both William's invasion and conquest and of Henry II's financial burden on the people of England. And even more forcefully, Edmund says of the heriot tax, "þe deweles lawe it is of helle" (445.494). Invoking the devil as the author of this law, when

²⁸ For a discussion of the illegal and immoral elements of the Norman Conquest as presented in the *ESEL*, see chapter 2 of this project, "The Ideal Anglo-Saxon King as a Resistance Strategy."

²⁹ Becket points out that one of his concerns with the taillage is that Henry's way of imposing and collecting the tax is done in such a way as to be double taxation, and it is a tax imposed that "so ne dude no king ere" ["no king ever did in such a way before"] (118.400). As a result, Becket determines that this new, creative method of taxation is one "with vnrihte i-take" ["taken illegally or immorally"] (118.402).

in actuality the author and benefactor of the law is Henry III, equates this king with the devil in this instance. Reading these legends in context with one another, or their proximity to one another, effectively leads the audience to associate each of these three kings with the devil.

The *ESEL's Becket* and *Edmund [of Abingdon]*, while equating Henry II and Henry III and their actions with the devil, do allow for a small amount of safety, what could be called "plausible deniability," in their criticism of the post-Conquest kings. This safety derives from the fact that the post-Conquest kings, like their early Christian-era counterparts, are not devils, but are merely his agents. *St. Edmund* indicates that Henry III is the devil's agent in much the same way as the wicked justices Dacian, Pascasius, and Ebrom are agents for Diocletian and Maximian. Unlike *Becket* where the *ESEL* provides the details of the conflict between Becket and Henry II with play-by-play specificity, other than the passage discussing the heriot tax, the *ESEL* version of *Edmund* provides few details about the conflict between Archbishop Edmund and Henry III. One possible reason for this lack of specificity is because even though Edmund had been dead since 1240, Henry III had only been dead since 1272. The *ESEL* compilers/redactors possibly assumed that the audience would be very aware of Henry's mismanagement as king or would have been fearful of reprisal for pointedly attacking the recently-deceased king.³⁰

³⁰ The date for the compilation stage of the *ESEL* with the romances is circa 1280-1300: see Thomas R. Liskka, "The *South English Legendaries*," in *The North Sea World in the Middle Ages: Studies in the Cultural History of North-Western Europe*, ed. Thomas R. Liskka and Lorna E.M. Walker (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001) 243-80; Görlach, *The Textual Tradition of the South English Legendary*, Leeds Texts and Monographs, n.s. 6 (Leeds: University of Leeds School of English, 1974) 89; Thomas R. Liskka, "Talk in the Camps: On the Dating of the *South English Legendary*, *Havelok the Dane*, and *King Horn* in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108," *Texts and Contexts*, 31-50.

Moreover, the people were likely fearful of Henry's successor King Edward I's response to attacks against his father and previous king because Edward did not tolerate and aggressively pursued those who venerated and supported the baronial cause.³¹ Despite the lack of details of the problems between crown and church, the *ESEL* identifies the source of the problems as the work of the devil. The *ESEL* reads that because Edmund "treuliche heold up [supported] holi church : and wuste [preserved]³² hire from ech wouȝ" (445.503), the "deuel of helle : to him onde [malice] i-nouȝ : / he bi-gan for-to a-rere kontek : bi-tweone him [Edmund] a-non / And þe king hanri þat was þo : þe kinges sone Ioan" (445.504-06).³³ The narrator even allows a small amount of space for the audience to stand back, so to speak, and formulate a broader perspective: Henry III, John's son, as the *ESEL* notes, contends against the church because of the devil's influence rather than because he, the king, is evil.

Likewise, while the Becket legend relays what seems to be an endless litany of detailed instances where the Henry II and Becket clash, the *ESEL*'s *Becket* also credits the devil as the root cause of the difficulties between the two men. *Becket* reads,

þe loue was euere gret i-nouȝ: bi-tweone seint thomas

³¹ For a discussion of Edward's "severe treatment of inveterate traitors," see David Staines, "*Havelok the Dane: A Thirteenth-Century Handbook for Princes*," *Speculum* 51.4 (Oct 1976): 620. Heffernan states, "the crown supported punitive measures against the rebels loosely aligned to de Montfort" ("Dangerous Sympathies" 6). See also J. R. Maddicott, "Edward I and the Lessons of Baronial Reform: Local Government, 1258-80," *Thirteenth Century England I: Proceedings of the Newcastle Upon Tyne Conference 1985*, ed. P. R. Coss and S. D. Lloyd (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1988) 1-30. For a discussion outlining Prince Edward's contention and dealings with de Montfort, see Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort* 334-36, 339-43.

³² *MED*, "witien" 2(a).

³³ "the devil of hell : toward him [Edmund] [had] malice indeed: / because he began to raise up contention : between him [Edmund] right away / and the king Henry who was then : the King John's son" (445.504-06).

And þe kinge, for-to þe feond : destourbede hit, allas!

luyte an luyte þat contek sprong : for pouere Mannes rizte

paie ore louerd and þe kinge : þis holi man ne mizte (117.379-82).³⁴

Here, the *ESEL* identifies the reason for the change in what had previously been a very close relationship between Becket and Henry II (117.379-80) as the work of “the fiend,” of the Devil himself (117.380-81). When reading or hearing the *Edmund [of Abingdon]* story, the *ESEL* audience would be hard-pressed to miss the fact that the contention between their king Henry III and their Archbishop of Canterbury Edmund was likewise the work of the devil. Henry II and Henry III work against England and the Holy Church, but do so at the behest of the devil. Because Henry III was either king or recently king for the Laud Misc. 108 audience, it was safer but still resistant to label the Devil rather than the king as the source of the problem.

Other terminology connects the personality traits of the pagan rulers of the early Christian-era saints’ lives to the post-Conquest kings. The pagan antagonists are often angry, and it is an anger that increases in intensity to culminate in the antagonist being out of control by the end of the legend. For example, when Alban refuses to honor the pagan gods in spite of the threat of punishment by torture, the “lupere Iustise” is “swyþe wroth” (69.47), or “excessively angry.”³⁵ When Ebrom, the “lupur Iustise” (82.3), is unable to “tuyrne is [Leger’s] pouzt : from þe heuene kinge” (83.6),³⁶ Ebrom is “wroth

³⁴ “The love was indeed always great : between Saint Thomas / and the king, before the fiend : disturbed it, sadly! / Little by little that contention sprung up : for poor men’s rights. / Please our lord and the king, the holy man was not able” (117.379-82).

³⁵ *MED*.

³⁶ “turn his thought from the heavenly King” (83.6) is a common term to describe conversion in the Laud 108’s *ESEL*.

inou3” (82.7) to have Leger’s eyes put out (82.7-10). Of course, Leger does not “turn his thoughts” as the pagan leader wishes, once again leaving Ebrom “wrope” (82.10).

Ebrom’s anger reaches its apex quickly: Leger’s “longue prechingue” leaves “þe lufere men [...] “wropest” (82.16). In other words, when Ebrom is unable to break the saint, then the superlative angriest best describes his emotion. Escalating anger in the face of calm defiance on the saint’s part is a common image of resistance in MS Laud Misc.

108’s early Christian-era and post-Conquest saints’ lives.

Most commonly, the narrators employ the term “wod(e)” with “wroth” to describe the level of frustration, the lack of control, the visceral and animalistic level of anger the antagonists reach when dealing with the saints. In *St. Fey*, for example, because of Fey’s wonderful reputation as a convert to Christianity, her antagonist Dacian goes through Fey’s town “as a wod man [...], / And burstinde in grete wrathþe” (83.12-13). The image of Dacian being so angry that he is bursting is a noteworthy description because it implies that Dacian is physically disturbed and visibly out of control: he is relying on his most basic and unreasoned responses. In essence, even prior to meeting Fey, Dacian is intensely angry. Describing Dacian’s demeanor the first time he meets Fey and before any words are spoken, Dacian is animal-like and out of control. The *ESEL* reads: “þe Iustise bi-heold þat Maide : [...] / he grennede and femde toward her ; riȝt as he wod were” (84.35-36).³⁷ The mental image of Dacian grimacing and snarling and foaming at the mouth is that of a rabid dog. Robert Mills notes a similar presentation of the

³⁷ “The Justice beheld the maiden [...] / he grimaced/snarled and foamed at the mouth toward her : as if here were crazy” (84.35-36).

antagonist and usurper Godard in *Havelok the Dane*. While being flayed alive,³⁸ Godard “bigan to rore” (2496). Mills states, “Godard’s sufferings animalize him, transforming him into a beast without language.”³⁹ In this same scene, the narrator also calls Godard a “Sathanas” (2512); his rebellion against the correctly designated king Havelok certainly casts Godard appropriately as a Satan-like figure. Godard is one more example in the *Laud Misc.* 108 of another evil antagonist, like the Romans under Diocletian and Maximian, who has unjustly obtained the throne, and the parallel to the Norman claim to the English throne is clear. In *St. Fey*, when the saint calls Dacian’s pagan gods “devils” (85.53-56), the *ESEL* describes Dacian’s emotion as reaching the point of crazed anger: “þo fierde þe Iustise as he were wod: and made wel sori bere / And was neihȝ wod for þis Maide seide : þis godes deuelene were” (85.55-56).⁴⁰ This intensity of anger renders Dacian speechless, making noises but not words that depict Dacian as more irrational animal than rational human. Once his anger has reached the level of madness, what the *ESEL* describes as “[w]od-wrothþ” (86.99), Dacian has Fey and the other Christians beheaded. The coupling of “wod” with “wroth” in this phrase adds an element of ferocity, insanity, and perversion to the anger already displayed because of its uncontrolled and animalistic aspects. In fact, the phrase, “wod-wrothþ” means “furiously enraged; wildly or violently irate.” Because this legend is relatively short, the image of Dacian’s crazed

³⁸ The line reads that Godard’s punishment for his crimes, specifically usurpation of the throne, is to be “al quic flawen [flayed alive]” (2476). All citations from *Havelok the Dane* come from *Four Romances of England: King Horn, Havelok the Dane, Bevis of Hampton, Athelston*, eds. Ronald B. Herzman, Graham Drake, and Eve Salisbury, TEAMS Middle English Texts Series (Kalamazoo, MI: Western Michigan U, 1999). Subsequent line numbers are noted parenthetically.

³⁹ Mills, “Early *SEL* and Difference,” *Texts and Contexts* 218.

⁴⁰ “Then behaved the Justice as if here were crazy : and made a vexed outcry, / and was almost crazy because this maiden said these gods were devils” (85.55-56).

anger dominates the poem. St. Fey's ability to withstand and oppose the pagan ruler's will drives Dacian to the point of insanity of animalistic proportions which serves to reduce the antagonists to the position of "other" because they are not behaving as people. The anger that these pagans display serves to mark them even more distinctively as different, as not human, as "other."⁴¹

Like Dacian and Ebrom, Katherine's antagonist Emperor Maxentius (92.5) demonstrates an intense amount of anger and frustration when dealing with her. When Katherine, whom Maxentius calls a "fol woman" (96.130), successfully argues with the Emperor's "gretteste maistres of clergie" (94.66), Maxentius speaks "In grete wrathpe" (96.129). And also like Dacian, Maxentius exhibits animal-like anger. Because Katherine will not honor the Emperor's pagan gods, he "loude zeolle and rore" as a demonstration of his "wrathpe" (99.238). In other words, the Emperor's reactions, his loud yelling and roaring, present him and his frustration at Katherine's opposition, like Dacian's frustration with Fey, as a speechless animal. Also like Dacian, the Emperor later becomes "wroth and wod" (99.250). Associating Dacian and Maxentius with animals questions their ability or fitness to rule. In *St. Lucy*, her pagan antagonist, simply known as "þis lūpere iustise" (105.149), becomes so frustrated with Lucy's strength and devotion to her God in the face of intense physical torture that "þe iustise, þo he þis i-seiz : for wrathþe he was neizh wod" (105.131).⁴² Again, frustrated by his inability to sway Lucy's opinion,

⁴¹ Robert Mills points out in his discussion that the bodies of the enemies in the *Laud Misc. 108* manuscript "are not even human bodies at all." Mills states that in *Havelok*, "Godard's sufferings [he roars while being flayed (*Havelok*, ll. 2493-99)] animalize him, transforming him into a beast without language." See Mills, "Early *SEL* and Difference," 218.

⁴² "the justice, when he saw this : he was almost crazy because of anger" (105.133).

the justice becomes angry to the point of madness. Being unable to sway or persuade the saints successfully, the pagan rulers are unable to control their own anger. Like Godard who when tortured becomes more animal-like, the frustration of Dacian, Ebrom, and Emperor Maxentius reduces them to animals.

Like the pagan antagonists, the post-Conquest kings' anger intensifies when the "English" saints Wulfstan, Becket, and Edmund [of Abingdon] are resistant and defiant. Initially the narrator describes William's anger with Wulfstan simply as "wrothþ" (74.107) because Wulfstan "wel ofte him withseide" (73.103) and "spac a-zein him baldeliche : and ne spared for no drede" (73.105). Understandably William is angry for the simple fact that Wulfstan is not afraid of William (74.108).⁴³ But, unlike the legends with pagan emperors, *Wulfstan* does allow William a small space for repentance and resolution. As with the beginning of *St. Wulfstan* where William is absent from the first sixty-two lines, William is absent from the last fifty lines of the poem as well. The middle one hundred twenty lines deal with the Conquest and William's confrontation with Wulfstan; however, only thirty-seven of those lines deal directly with William. William's dominant characteristic in those lines, like Dacian's, is anger; the only difference is that William's anger subsides once he accepts Wulfstan and asks forgiveness.

Henry II's anger with Becket does not subside as easily and as tidily as William's does with Wulfstan. Unlike the other post-Conquest legends in the *ESEL*, *St. Thomas* recounts the problems between Henry II and Becket with specific detail; in fact, the story

⁴³ For a discussion comparing the "good" qualities of the Anglo-Saxon kings as compared to the English kings of Norman descent, see chapter 2 of this project, "The Ideal Anglo-Saxon King as a Resistance Strategy."

of Becket occupies “a good fifteen percent of the entire *sanctorale*.”⁴⁴ Like Wulfstan and the early Christian saints, Becket is bold yet calm in his opposition to Henry II which illustrates that Becket and Wulfstan are the emotional polar opposites of their respective post-Conquest kings. Like Wulfstan, who “ne spared for no drede,” Becket does not fear a confrontation with the king; moreover, the repetition of “baldeliche” and both saints’ lack of “drede” encourage the audience to draw further comparisons between Becket and Wulfstan. Henry tries to put Becket in his place by pointing out that as Chancellor of England, Becket’s duty is to support the king (118.404-05). Contrary to Henry’s intention, Becket then resigns his position as Chancellor and demonstrates his religious devotion stating, “I ne mai nouȝt loki [guard] bope [both] wel” (118.408); therefore, “ich þe zelde up here : al-out þe chauncelerie, / And take me al to holi church : to god and to seinte Marie” (118.411-12).⁴⁵ The decision seems prudent; after all, Becket realizes that he cannot attend to, or satisfy, both positions well and decides to devote himself fully, or “al” to God and Church. Because Becket does not give even tacit approval to King Henry’s decisions, Henry, as the *ESEL* describes him, is “wroþere þane [angrier than] he was er [before]” (118.413). Just as the *ESEL Leger* uses the superlative to describe Ebrom’s anger, the comparative form “wroþere” serves the *ESEL Becket* well by demonstrating Henry II’s rising anger. Henry II becomes angrier, for example, when his emissaries return from presenting Henry’s claims against Becket to the King of France and the Pope and report their failure to him. The narrator indicates “þa was þe king bope

⁴⁴ Mills, “Early *SEL* and Difference,” *Texts and Contexts* 209.

⁴⁵ “I yield up here completely from the chancellorry / and devote myself completely to [or be under the care of] the Holy Church : to God and to Saint Mary” (118.411-12).

sori and wroth : þat he was neiz a-wed” (148.1452).⁴⁶ When the King and his followers coronate Henry II’s son young king Henry as the future king of England, they have encroached upon the legal rights of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and therefore upon the legal rights of the Church. Because Becket excommunicates them all in response, Henry is likewise angry to the point of insanity and responds, “for wrathþe he was neiz wod, / he eode op and doun as witles” (161.1905-06).⁴⁷ Not only is Henry angry to the point of insanity, the poet’s description of Henry as “witles,” or as acting without using his intelligence, or crazy, or irrational,⁴⁸ shows Henry’s anger to be at a pathological level, leaving him pacing “up and down as if he were crazy or irrational.” Again, the irrational pacing would likely bring the image of a caged animal to the audience’s mind aligning Henry squarely with the animal. Not only has Henry lost control of the situation with Becket, but he has lost control of himself as well.

Like the Roman rulers with their opposing saints, like William with Wulfstan, and like Henry II with Becket, Henry III displays intense anger with his Archbishop of Canterbury Edmund [of Abingdon]. One striking contrast between the Wulfstan and Becket comparison and between the Becket and Edmund comparison is that the narrator of *St. Edmund* makes specific and pointed efforts to align Edmund with Becket.⁴⁹ Like Becket, Edmund becomes the Archbishop of Canterbury and, also like Becket, is a champion for the poor and a defender of “holy church.” Edmund had “euere of selie

⁴⁶ “then was the king both sad and angry / [to the point] that he was nearly enraged or insane” (148.1452).

⁴⁷ “out of/because of anger Henry was nearly insanely angry, / he went up and down as if he were crazy” (161.1905-06).

⁴⁸ *MED*.

⁴⁹ For a discussion of the efforts in the *ESEL* to present Edmund of Abingdon as another Becket, see chapter 5 of this project, “The English Clergy as a Resistance Strategy.”

bonde-men : pite and deol i-nouȝ” (444.477).⁵⁰ And like Becket, Edmund, as “ensaumple of seint thomas” (445.514), champions the poor, and, by extension, the people of England as a whole, against unwarranted taxation by the king. Edmund holds on to his goal to “treuliche heold up holi churche” (444.503) remains, even in the face of opposition to the powerful, because Henry III “and mucche del of is folk : a-ȝein holie churche was” (445.507). Because of what the *ESEL* describes as Henry’s “war” against the Church at Canterbury, Edmund excommunicates Henry and his people (446.529-30). The statement, “Ne þarf no man esche : weþur huy weren wroþe i-nouȝ!” (446.532),⁵¹ clearly illustrates Henry’s anger that degenerates into “þretningue” (446.533); such threats align Henry III’s angry reaction with those of William, Henry II, and the pagan Roman rulers. Whereas, Edmund’s response and demeanor, “seint Eadmund heold him stille, / [...] and liet heom speke heore wille” (446.533-34), align with Wulfstan’s and Becket’s stoic reactions to their kings. The connections are clear: Edmund is of the same vein as the early Christian martyrs, as Wulfstan, and as Becket; Henry III is no different than the pagan Roman rulers, nor than William and Henry II before they repented.

Antagonists Attack Christianity and the Church

Motives expressed in almost identical terms echo throughout the legends connecting post-Conquest kings to the pagan rulers. The echoing of similar words and phrases, including “beon brouȝte all to grounde,” defending “holi churches riȝhte,” and “held up holi churche” allows for the *ESEL* audience not only to group the pagan Emperors and justices together as the same essential character, but it also allows the

⁵⁰ “always [had] pity and compassion indeed for innocent bondmen” (444.477).

⁵¹ “No man need doubt : whether they were angry indeed” (446.532).

audience to draw connections between the goals and motivations of their post-Conquest kings in the *ESEL* with those of Diocletian and Maximian.

In *SS Alban*, *Fey*, and *Lucy*, Diocletian and Maximian seek not only to kill Christians, but to destroy Christianity itself. The *ESEL St. Alban* explains that under the Romans, the Christians were “brouzte alle to grounde” (67.7); in *St. Lucy*, at the saint’s triumphant moment in her legend, Lucy comforts her audience that the emperor did not prevail and that the “holi church [...] is in guod pes [peace]” (105.158). Lucy further reassures her followers that they need no longer “habbe of heom [Diocletian and Maximian] no kare [any concern]” (106.160). In *St. Wulfstan*, the narrator uses similar phrasing to characterize the motives of the invading Normans as seeking to overcome England’s rightful king Harold Godwinson and his followers (73.85-87). The *ESEL* indicates that William seeks to conquer England so that she [“enguelond”] may be “brouzten [...] to grounde” (72.60, 73.78, 84), identical phrasing to the pagan rulers’ malicious intentions for Christianity and the early Christians in *SS Alban*, *Faith*, and *Lucy*. Employing the same terminology raises the stakes for England’s fate and for her importance as a land and a people. As Couch emphasizes, and others have argued about the *SEL*, the prominence of England and English saints in the MS Laud Misc. 108 places England on par with Christianity. England and her people occupy a space of value within the realm of Christianity while the post-Conquest kings and their supporters do not. The *ESEL* equates the motives and actions of the post-Conquest kings with those of widely recognized pagan persecutors of early Christians and Christianity. By using essentially the same terms and phrases, the narrator encourages the audience to make two correlations: one between Diocletian and Maximian and William the Conqueror, and, by

extension his “unkuynde Eyres,” and the other between the early Christians/early Christianity and England and her people.

The *ESEL* also employs the phrase “brouzt to grounde” in *St. Thomas Becket*. In these instances, the entity overcome shifts from simply England and the English people to England’s holy Church and her people, more specifically her Christian English people. For example, the *ESEL*’s *St. Thomas* uses the phrase “beon i-brouzt to grounde” (155.1682) in reference to the Holy Church; Becket prays to Christ because the “holi churche is ope þe pointe : to beon i-brouzt to grounde” (155.1682). Historically, the issue at hand between Becket and Henry II is whether or not the Church, along with all of its accumulations and land holdings is a “fief” to the king. The Constitutions of Clarendon (dated 1164)⁵² indicate that the church is indeed subject to the king, and, according to the *ESEL St. Thomas*, King Henry “swore [...] þat a-cord he nold non / bote þe status of Clarindone” (154.1675-76).⁵³ Becket worries, however, that by doing so, Henry infringes upon the Church and upon her rights, and as a result, the Church would “beon i-brouzt to grounde” (155.1682). It is “holi churches riȝhtes” (155.1682), those rights articulated by the “olde guode laws” (122.536), that Becket wishes honored by all, despite what the Constitutions of Clarendon state. The phrase “olde guode laws” invokes the memory of the pre-Conquest days when the Anglo-Saxon kings did indeed honor and revere God and the Holy Church ahead of their own personal desires. At least as the *ESEL* characterizes them and in direct contrast to the conflict between the post-Conquest kings and the

⁵² For a succinct discussion of the Constitutions of Clarendon, see Robert Bartlett, *England Under the Norman and Angevin Kings: 1075-1225* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000) 407-08.

⁵³ “swore [...] that he would not abide by any accord / except for the Statutes of Clarendon” (154.1675-76).

English bishops, the will of the Anglo-Saxon kings did not conflict with God or with the church.⁵⁴ In reference to SS Wulfstan, Becket, and Edmund [of Abingdon], Lynch writes, “as servants of God rather than the crown, the *SEL*’s bishops defy agendas of earthly monarchs.”⁵⁵ The implication is that the “agendas” of God and of the post-Conquest kings conflict. Through each of his many confrontations with Henry II, Becket places his argument on a single crucial point: the desire to preserve the rights of the Holy Church, which, by implication means Henry II is fighting *against* the Church’s rights, and by extension, against England.

The *ESEL*’s *Edmund [of Abingdon]* also points to King Henry III’s desire to destroy the Holy Church. *Edmund* does not, however, employ the phrase “brouȝte alle to grounde,” but it does employ similar terminology and phrases used in the *Becket* legend to describe Edmund’s difficulties with Henry III. *Edmund* reads that Henry III, like his “graunt-sire” (445.508), fought “a-ȝein holi churche” (446.516). St. Thomas even appears to Edmund to encourage him to continue to be strong in his defense of the Church in his conflict with Henry III. In this vision, Becket instructs Edmund, “beo stif and studefast : to holde up þe churches riȝhte” (446.536),⁵⁶ which is the same cause, the rights of the Holy Church, for which Becket fought against his king.

To reiterate the similarities between Edmund and Henry III and between Becket and Henry II and to emphasize the gravity of the situation, the *ESEL* aligns Becket and Edmund with St. Wulfstan by describing each legend’s conflict between church and state

⁵⁴ For a discussion of the how the Anglo-Saxon king’s will did not conflict with that of God or of the Church, see chapter 2 of this project, “The Ideal Anglo-Saxon King as a Resistance Strategy.”

⁵⁵ Lynch, “Genre, Bodies, and Power,” *Texts and Contexts* 192.

⁵⁶ “be unyielding and steadfast in supporting the Church’s rights” (446.536).

in metaphorical terms of war. The narrator describes the relationship between Edmund and his king and Becket and his king as “contek,” or conflict, dissention, discord. *Edmund* reads, “Ofte huy nomen louedai : ake þet kontek euere i-laste” (445.510). Unfortunately, the “louedai,” the day set for a meeting mediation between opposing parties, results not in resolution, but in continued conflict. Because of actual events, the *ESEL*’s *Wulfstan* naturally describes William’s invasion as war: “þe weorre was þo in Enguelonde” (*Wulfstan*, 73.73). *War* is the term chosen for the later archbishops’ conflicts with the crown as well: Becket pleads with Henry II that he “ne weorri non more op-on holi churche : zif it were is wille” (151.1556)⁵⁷; and *Edmund* reads: “Wel ofte he [Edmund] bad þe kinge and his : zif it were heore wille, / þat huy ne weorredan nougt a-zein holi churche” (446.515-16).⁵⁸ Not only does the war terminology link these conflicts between clergyman and king, but describing the conflict as a war emphasizes just how important these internal conflicts were to the stability and peace of the state, which in these cases, is not only England, but also Christendom.⁵⁹ Moreover, as the *Becket* and *Edmund* legends point out, these “wars” are ones that the post-Conquest kings choose to fight. William certainly chooses to invade England, and the deferential and conditional refrain “zif it were is/heore wille” in both *Becket* and *Edmund* emphasizes that the effects of the conflict on England and her people are under the kings’ control. Employing terms like “woerreden” (446.516, 529), particularly on the aggressor’s part,

⁵⁷ “wage war no more upon the Holy Church : if it were his will” (151.1556).

⁵⁸ “Often Edmund asked his king and his [the king’s followers] : if it were their will, / that they not war against the Holy Church” (446.515-16).

⁵⁹ Lynch discusses the connection between the stability and peace in England as a representation of the stability and peace of Christendom. See “Genre, Bodies, and Power,” *Texts and Contexts* 191.

elevates these disagreements and conflicts because they have a spiritual importance that threatens national peace and security.

For one likely *ESEL* audience, the barony,⁶⁰ describing Edmund of Abingdon's conflict with King Henry III as war resembles the barony's own conflicts with Henry III, which, in the late thirteenth-century audience's recent memory meant civil war at Evesham in 1265. The conflict between Archbishop Edmund and his King began, as related in *St. Edmund*, with the heriot tax. Drawing an analogy between this story and the barony's reality exemplifies part of the barony's conflict with the Henry. As the heriot tax requires, the old widow must pay the tax of her "beste ayzte" (445.488), her best cow, upon her husband's death. Without this beast, she had little else to the extent that, without the cow, "heo nuste in 3wat manere : ne hou heo mizhte lieu" (445.485).⁶¹ The barony could see a similarity in their problems with Henry III. Henry took from the barony just as he took from this poor widow. Thomas Heffernan explains the historical circumstances: "[i]n rewarding those who supported him against de Montfort through the confiscation of baronial properties (reclaimable through ransom), Henry exacerbated the potential for further class conflict."⁶² Heffernan further explains, "the eviction of hereditary baronial families from lands they had held since the Conquest created severe social dislocation for the vassals who lived on these lands" as well as "severe social dislocation" for the barony.⁶³ The *ESEL* joins different classes, the barony, the poor, and

⁶⁰ Susan Crane identifies the audience of the insular romance to be the barony in her book. See *Insular Romance: Politics, Faith, and Culture in Anglo-Norman and Middle English Literature* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986).

⁶¹ "she did not know in what manner : nor how she might live" (445.485).

⁶² Thomas Heffernan, "Dangerous Sympathies" 6.

⁶³ Heffernan, "Dangerous Sympathies" 6.

the clergy as champions specifically for the poor, in their complaints against the king. Such a broad sampling of societal groups illustrates the breadth and depth of dissatisfaction with the king throughout English society. The example of the heriot tax is one more analogy the *ESEL* draws between the circumstances in the legends and late thirteenth-century reality. Like the old widow without her cow, the barony without their land could not earn a living. In this analogy, the baronial audience sees themselves as oppressed as the old widow; and like Edmund, who was like Becket, who was in his turn like Wulfstan, the barony were, in a manner of speaking, “at war” with their post-Conquest king. Couch states that the actions of the enemies of the people from whom the Laud Misc. 108 prays for relief, “justifies defiance of illegitimate political rule and/or illicit political behavior.”⁶⁴ The *ESEL* demonstrates a bias to construct the post-Conquest kings as enemies of the English people and of the English Christian church on par with the wicked, devil-like pagans who fight against the early Christians and Christianity.

England as Martyr

Mirroring terminology to describe the actions, motivations, and moral character of the antagonists to the early Christian-era saints and to the post-Conquest saints provides a critical space for the *ESEL* audience to draw two crucial parallels: that the post-Conquest kings are types of the pagan Roman leaders, and that the post-Conquest English saints are types of the early Christian-era saints. The virgin martyr legends, likewise, contribute an additional layer of criticism of the political situation. In spite of the fact that they are female, the virgin martyrs are very powerful and willful individuals who, like their male counterparts, are strong, defiant, and outspoken; however, as Lynch states, “[t]he threat

⁶⁴ Couch, “Defiant Devotion” 72.

posed [to the virgin martyrs] is frequently sexual, whether explicitly in forced marriage, denudation, bodily torments, accusations of whoredom, or attempted prostitution, or implicitly in the general demeanor of male authority figures.”⁶⁵ The virgin martyrs are special: they belong to God. In the analogous world of the Laud Misc. 108 manuscript, the virgin martyrs are a symbol for what a feminized England, favored by God, can do in opposition to the conquering Normans. Couch has discussed that in *St. Kenelm* and *Havelok the Dane* England is “construct[ed ...] as an object of desire” and “appears initially as a nation at risk, as the ‘damsel in distress’ who needs saving.”⁶⁶ Reading *Wulfstan*, *Becket*, and *Edmund [of Abingdon]* and the virgin martyr legends of *SS Fey*, *Lucy* and *Katherine* together, England takes on the characteristics of another virgin martyr, not a “damsel in distress,” but the focus of the male gaze, the object of desire, the “thing” for William and his successors to conquer and possess. The *ESEL*’s presentation of England as a virgin martyr hints at England’s unexpected superiority, goodness, and intelligence standing in defiance of the conqueror.

For a conqueror intent on expanding his own kingdom and borders, England was certainly a great prize, an object of desire, and the *St. Wulfstan* narrator emphatically asserts that because of William the Conqueror’s invasion, “Enguelond was þoruȝ tresoun : þare i-brouȝt to grounde” (73.84). While I have discussed above this phrase “brought to ground” as a militaristic term, I would like to focus here on its less militaristic implications. William’s desire is not to destroy, but to force England, both the land and the people, into submission, to control them, and, ultimately, to profit from them. In the

⁶⁵ Lynch, “Genre, Bodies, and Power,” *Texts and Contexts* 190.

⁶⁶ Couch, “Magic of Englishness,” *Texts and Contexts* 244.

eleventh century, there were ample reasons for wanting control of England because it was a land of great bounty and riches. Hugh Thomas writes, “[w]hen William the Conqueror’s biographer described his hero’s return [to Normandy] with massive plunder, he emphasized the land’s wealth in precious metal and grain. To ambitious predators such as William, the Norwegian king Harald Hardrada, and their followers, England seemed a rich prize indeed.”⁶⁷ One factor contributing to England’s wealth was the established Anglo-Saxon system of taxation that was very efficient and lucrative for those at the top. As Thomas explains, “the eleventh-century [English] economy and society [...] were designed to channel wealth upward. [...] much of the wealth produced by ordinary people passed into the hands of the king, the earls, and the thanes.”⁶⁸ The king was the wealthiest person in the kingdom because of the standardized system of taxation, called a *danegeld*-- a tax levied with the specific goal of either fighting, appeasing, or distracting Viking marauders.⁶⁹ In addition, England also had a stable system of government, which, when coupled with England’s wealth and plentiful resources, made England an object of desire. Financially prosperous and politically stable, England was a prize to win, possess, and exploit, much like the beautiful, virginal saint’s body.

Echoing terms and phrases from the virgin martyr legends used to describe England underscore England’s place as an object of desire. William’s desire to possess England in *St. Wulfstan* mirrors the pagan rulers’ desires to possess the virgin martyrs in *SS Katherine* and *Lucy*. Although the pagan emperors desire to destroy Christianity, they

⁶⁷ Hugh M. Thomas, *The Norman Conquest: England After William the Conqueror* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2008) 3. For an overview of England’s wealth at the time, see Thomas’ chapter 3, “The Background to the Conquest” 3-14.

⁶⁸ Thomas, *The Norman Conquest* 4-5.

⁶⁹ Thomas, *The Norman Conquest* 7-8.

also wish to win over the saint and possess her body by offering her great reward and honor in exchange for her physical and religious submission and support. Indeed, winning over the saint would be a political coup for the pagans because they could then quash revolt among the Christians by disempowering their living, breathing, charismatic leader. The price of refusal for the saint is first torture and then death. In *Katherine*, the pagan Emperor Maxentius⁷⁰ sees Katherine as an object of desire, someone to be “conquered,” someone who should submit to him. Maxentius even offers marriage to Katherine after he has his own wife put to death for converting to Christianity. Katherine, of course, refuses. In *St. Lucy*, the wicked justice Pascasius attempts to rob Lucy’s of her virginity by sentencing her to live in a brothel as a sexual object. The pagans also use torture, though unsuccessfully, to achieve their goals.

Historically, in much the same way that the pagan emperors attempt to exert their will on the defiant Christian martyrs, when William’s object of desire, England, does not submit by “turning her thought” politically to this new but “unrightful” king, he likewise “tortures” England in ways just as horrific as those of the pagan rulers. The *Laud Misc.* 108’s *Wulfstan* does not describe nor allude to such events despite what history records of how William “tortured” England,⁷¹ but the legend does indicate William’s strength and

⁷⁰ Maxentius, the son of another Roman leader mentioned in the *ESEL* Maximian (see *St. Alban* and *St. Fey*), is only identified by name at the beginning of the legend; subsequent references to him are simply as “þe Aumperour” (92.14, 93.31, 36, 94.71, 96.129, 96.136, 97.177, 98.197, 98.220, 99.233, 99.238, 96.256, 96.262, 100.278) or “þis Amperur” (93.50, 94.65, 94.77, 96.153, 98.211) suggesting that it is not important to identify Maxentius specifically by name because he is simply no different than the other pagan Roman Emperors.

⁷¹ In response to uprisings in the north of England and specifically in York, for example, Thomas states that *The Domesday Book* of 1086 records massive destruction in Yorkshire to person and property in response to resistance to Norman domination. Thomas assesses

power when it came to his plans for England: “no man ne mighte him [William] lette [impede]” (73.102). Such parallels between the post-Conquest kings and the pagan rulers would allow a space for the late thirteenth-century English audience to equate the pagan use of torture to “turn the thought,” or to win what the virgin martyr possesses that of is of value to her pagan antagonist with William’s efforts to “turn [England’s] thought” to accept him as legitimate so that he could possess what is of value to her. What the virgin martyrs possess that the pagan rulers desire is twofold: of spiritual value is her allegiance and her free will and of physical value is her beautiful body; similarly, what England possesses that the English kings of Norman descent desire is also twofold: of spiritual value is England’s devotion and loyalty, and of physical value is her wealth and riches.

The *ESEL* highlights the inferior position, a position of interest in post-colonial terms, of both England and the virgin martyrs in opposition to the post-Conquest kings and the pagan rulers, which not only renders their resistance all the more impressive, but also further encourages the audience to see similarities between the two. *St. Katherine* begins by pointing to issues of gender. As a virgin martyr, Kathrine is not a ‘typical’ female of intellectual inferiority, nor of natural or requisite submission. What is noteworthy about Katherine’s initial encounter with Maxentius is the focus on Katherine’s ability to “reason,” which, judging by the surprise of the men with whom the virgin martyr debates, is considered unnatural for a woman. The narrator sets the stage: “þat holi : resones made so quoynte / þat the Aumperour ne non of his : ne coupe hire

the result of William’s response: “William’s ruthlessness helped crush English rebellions and deterred natives from rising again” (Thomas, *The Norman Conquest* 51). Moreover, Thomas also states that because of the destruction William administered in response to the rebellions in Yorkshire, for example, land values declined sixty percent from 1066 to 1086 (*The Norman Conquest* 94-95).

ansuerie in none pointe” (94.61-62).⁷² Not only does this scene illustrate the hagiographic trope of the virgin martyr who defies masculine authority,⁷³ but it also illustrates in Katherine an intellectual acumen so well-developed that she is able to “reason” successfully so that neither the Emperor nor any of his men could counter her arguments. The use of both terms “resones” and “quoynte” indicate Katherine’s intellectual prowess and ability. The meaning of “resone” indicates “logical thought,”⁷⁴ and “quoynte” adds the element of wisdom to Katherine’s ability to reason. Before Maxentius responds to Katherine’s plea, the narrator reveals what Maxentius is thinking privately: “Gret wonder him þougte of hire fair-hede : and of hire Quoyntise” (93.32). These two terms “fair-hede” and “quoyntise” are romance terms: “fair-hede,” which describes Katherine’s “physical beauty, splendor, attractiveness” is an aspect I will address later; and while “quoyntise” describes her intelligence and wisdom, another meaning at the time of “quoyntise” is neither respectful nor laudatory. “Quoyntise” can mean a “ruse” or “stratagem,”⁷⁵ or it can also mean “a trick” or “a dishonest act or deceptive statement.”⁷⁶ Adding “quoyntise” colors Katherine’s reasoning with an element of chicanery. One possible implication is that Maxentius not only sees but admires what he determines is Katherine’s ability to be disingenuous. The characterization of Maxentius’ thoughts as “gret wonder,” that is, surprise and amazement,⁷⁷ or even “puzzlement,”⁷⁸ indicate that

⁷² “the holy maiden reasoned so wisely and skillfully / that neither the emperor nor any of his [people] : could answer/refute her on any point” (94.61-62).

⁷³ For a discussion of the tropes/characteristics of what Karen Winstead calls the “Generic Virgin Martyr,” see *Virgin Martyrs* 5-10.

⁷⁴ *MED* a(b).

⁷⁵ *MED* 2(b).

⁷⁶ *MED* 2(c).

⁷⁷ *MED* 3(a).

Maxentius did not expect such wisdom or intelligence, or perhaps deception from this “maide” (93.37, 49, 94.63).

In addition to their initial assumption about Katherine’s intelligence, the masters of clergy further reduce Katherine to nothing more than a sexual being. The clergymen call her a “fol wenche” (94.75). At the time of the *ESEL*, “wenche” meant simply an unmarried and even young girl⁷⁹; however, “fol” allows more room for a disparaging interpretation. While “fol” certainly means foolish, it could also carry implications of sinfulness⁸⁰ and also of “lecherous[ness], lascivious[ness, and] wanton[ness],⁸¹ thereby identifying Katherine in sexual terms. While the clergy reduces Katherine to a sexual object, Maxentius seems to resist doing so, at least for a time, and commands that the masters of clergy “hire ouer-come : with rezones In some wise, / þane we with strenche hire maden : to don þe sacrefise” (94.79-80).⁸² Maxentius wishes, at least initially, that she submit to the pagan gods as the result of logical argument instead of as the result of physical threat. Even though Maxentius continues to refer to Katherine as “maide,” he at least acknowledges her intellectual abilities, unlike his masters of clergy who assume that female equates with unintelligent.

While Maxentius understands that Katherine is not simply an intellectually foolish woman, he seems to separate Katherine’s mind or intellect from her body. Convincing Katherine to “turn her thought,” or change her mind, would be a religious and political

⁷⁸ *MED* 4(a).

⁷⁹ *MED* 1.

⁸⁰ *MED* 2.

⁸¹ *MED* 3.

⁸² “overcome her : with reason in some way / rather than we force her with [threat of physical] strength / to make the sacrifice” (94.79-80).

victory, but possessing her body seems to be Maxentius' primary goal. Maxentius prioritizes Katherine's physical appearance by first noting her "fair-hede" (93.32) before noting her intellectual ability. Later Maxentius' words also carry sexual overtones. Karen Winstead explains the virgin martyr trope: "[w]hat distinguishes the legends of most female martyrs from those of their male counterparts is a preoccupation with gender and sexuality. Almost all virgin martyr legends dramatize some threat to the saint's virginity."⁸³ Although a trope, the virgin is indeed the object of sexual desire. .

Maxentius also responds to Katherine's defiance in ways similar to William, Henry II, and Henry III. When his masters of clergy fail to convince Katherine through reason, like the post-Conquest kings, Maxentius is "In grete wrathþe" (96.129). After his masters of clergy reveal that they themselves have converted to Christianity, Maxentius orders them martyred. Maxentius immediately sends for Katherine, which then encourages the audience to expect Maxentius to show his "grete wrathþe" to Katherine, but instead he attempts to do what the masters of clergy could not: persuade Katherine through reason. Though he attempts to reason with Katherine, Maxentius's words do not focus on religion, but instead betray that his focus is on her body. Maxentius begins the conversation, "haue reuþe of þi noble bodi : þat is so fair and hende" (96.155).⁸⁴ The three adjectives "noble," "fair," and "hende" are all terms that indicate Maxentius' focus on and admiration for Katherine's *body*, not her intelligence. Of course, Katherine is the daughter of "noble kunne" (92.1), that is, a noble family, which, in medieval terms, has a value in and of itself; however, "fair" is a word that emphasizes physical beauty, and

⁸³ Winstead, *Virgin Martyrs* 5-6.

⁸⁴ "have pity on thy noble body that is so fair and beautiful!" (96.155).

even splendor; and “hende,” while indicating courtliness, can likewise indicate physical beauty. In other words, Maxentius is asking Katherine to consider what will happen to her beautiful body rather than what will happen to her mind, or to her spiritual self. Maxentius speaks as if the body were an entity separate from the intellectually astute Katherine, something existing outside of her. Moreover, Maxentius offers Katherine a place in “grete nobleye” [“great nobility”] (96.156), “hext after þe quene” [“highest after the queen”] (96.157), if Katherine will renounce her god. More interestingly, though, Maxentius offers to make Katherine into a literal object. Maxentius betrays his own psychological desire to objectify Katherine by offering to make a gilded image of her and place the statue or idol in the middle of the town so that “ech man” can “honour” it (96.158-60). In a very literal way, Maxentius proposes to reduce Katherine to an expensive physical object, an idol, one of his “Maumates” (92.12), effectively rendering her an object without reason or intellect whose only purpose is to be honored, worshiped, and admired by men. Maxentius desires to reify her beauty and attempts to win over Katherine by an appeal to what he hopes are Katherine’s all-too-human desires to avoid pain and to accumulate riches and fame. Such appeals, of course, are futile for a true saint: even though Maxentius promises these things on condition that Katherine “þi þouzt wende [turn]” (96.156), he does not attempt to convince Katherine as an intellectual equal, but does so by separating intellect from body. Separating mind from body reveals Maxentius’ true desire to reduce Katherine to an object of the male gaze, an object of desire.

Maxentius not only sees Katherine as an object without thought or reason, he also wishes to possess her as a sexual object. Even after ordering Katherine to be tortured and

starved in prison, Maxentius, though quite angry still, reveals his sexual desire to have Katherine as his own. As a result of Katherine's resistance, the Emperor must, like any good pagan emperor worth the title, attempt to beat her into submission by stripping and torturing her. The Emperor "[...] hire let strep[e] naked : and to a piler fast hire bounden, / With strong schourges men beoten hire sore : and maden hire harde wounden" (97.167-68).⁸⁵ Stripping Katherine and subsequently cruelly beating her nude body further draw focus to her female body by making it a spectacle. Moreover, Maxentius also assaults Katherine's body by starving her. The *ESEL St. Katherine* reads, Maxentius left her "In þat prison [...] : twelf dawes and twelf nigt, / þat heo noþer .et. ne dronk : ne i-saiȝ non eorþelich liȝt" (97.173-74).⁸⁶ Although Katherine is in prison without food, drink, or light, she emerges from her imprisonment "swiȝe fat and round" (98.199). Unbeknownst to Maxentius an angel provides for Katherine's physical needs (97.175-76, 98.208), but Maxentius blames the jailers and wants to "tormenti heom ful sore" (98.204). Maxentius again turns his attention to Katherine's physical, "hendie" (98.211) aspects saying, "of all maidenhede þov art flour" (98.212), that is, she is the best (flower) of maidens, meaning that she is physically attractive, the ultimate prize. Maxentius offers Katherine again a position of prominence, but this time as the Empress' "per" (98.213), or "peer," as one equal in position and power to the Empress. A third time, Maxentius sweetens his offer: Maxentius' sexual desire for Katherine is unmistakable when he wants her for his wife even though he sees Katherine as responsible for conversion to Christianity of his wife

⁸⁵ "the Emperor had her stripped naked and bound fast to a pillar, / With hard scourges men beat her horribly and gave her severe wounds" (97.167-68).

⁸⁶ "in that prison twelve days and twelve nights / that she neither ate nor drank nor saw any earthly [or natural] light" (97.173-74).

and his trusted knight Sir Porphyry. Though blaming Katherine for “taking” his wife “mid þine fole rede” (100.271),⁸⁷ and even though it is the Emperor who orders his wife beheaded, Maxentius offers Katherine forgiveness for her “misdede,” a word that can translate to something as benign as a minor offense or transgression to something as serious as a sin or a crime, but it is difficult to discern which one. Maxentius also offers her a place at his side as empress on condition, again, that she will “torni þi þouȝt” (100.272). Though Maxentius frames the offer as a give-and-take arrangement, as a negotiation, it is Maxentius who would win on both points: in political terms, if Katherine “turns her thought” by renouncing Christianity, then his subjects would no longer have Katherine the Christian to follow, which will reinstate the pagan gods to their proper place in society and reinstate Maxentius’ authority as well. Secondly, in sexual terms, with Katherine as Empress, Maxentius will undoubtedly possess that which he desires—Katherine’s “noble,” “fair,” and “hende” body. Maxentius’ progressively escalating offers to Katherine reveal Maxentius’ sexual desire for her.⁸⁸

St. Lucy, which directly follows the legend of *St. Katherine* in the *ESEL*, also indicates a desire on the part of Lucy’s pagan antagonist Pascasius to reduce Lucy to an object of desire. While Pascasius separates Lucy’s body from her intellect or mind, he shows no concern for Lucy’s intellect. Pascasius also differs from Maxentius in that Pascasius does not desire himself to enjoy Lucy’s body, but offers her to others as nothing more than a sexual object. After Lucy gave all her fortune to the poor, Pascasius

⁸⁷ “with you foul counsel” (100.271).

⁸⁸ Brian McFadden makes a similar argument about *St. Margaret*. See “‘The Books of Life’: Theotimus as Narrator of Identity in the Old English Lives of *St. Margaret*,” *English Studies* 86.6 (December 2005): 473-92.

assumes that Lucy has spent all of her money in physical and sexual pursuits. Without any supporting evidence to indicate how he reaches this conclusion, Pascasius assumes that Lucy has wasted her fortune on sexual dalliances. The implication is that simply because Lucy is female, she must have wasted her fortune on “whoredom and [...] lechery” (103.86). In much the same way, issues of race and conquest hinge on the process of “othering,” and “othering” works to limit an audience’s opinions and perception of characters in story with whom they are unfamiliar to one or two defining characteristics. Pascasius reduces Lucy, as a woman, to a single, simple characteristic—she is over-sexualized. From this faulty assumption comes Pascasius’ decreed punishment which condemns Lucy to a life as a sexual object: “to þe commune bordel þov schalt be : i-lad oþur i-bore, / And þare schal mani a moder-child : go to þi foule licame / And ligge bi þe, alle þat wollez : in hore-dom and in schame” (103.96-98).⁸⁹ The *MED* defines “licame” as “body,” particularly “the body as the seat for evil passions,”⁹⁰ Lucy will spend the rest of her life, not as a person, but as a thing, as a wicked, sinful, or evil body⁹¹ for the pleasure of whoever wishes to enjoy it.

Another aspect of objectifying the female martyr is by removing her ability to exercise her own will; she does not act but is acted upon. In an attempt to emphasize the lack of control that Lucy will have over her body, Pascasius uses the term “wollez”: Lucy’s body is available to “alle þat wollez” (103.98). “Wollez” indicates “will” or

⁸⁹ “to the common brothel you shall be : led or taken / and there shall many a mother’s child : go to your foul body / and lie with the, all who wish : in whoredom and in shame” (103.96-98).

⁹⁰ *MED* 1(d).

⁹¹ *MED*, “licame” 4.

“wish,”⁹² that is, personal agency, and possibly also sexual desire⁹³ for her body.

Pascasius sees engaging in sexual activity with Lucy’s *body* not as Lucy’s choice, but as the choice of anyone other than Lucy: others will decide what *they* will do with the object which is Lucy’s body. Lucy’s body will be the object to be acted upon by any and “alle” who desire to have it, but Lucy will not have the power to control or direct what others do with or to her body. Lucy’s body, according to Pascasius’ punishment, is truly an object with only one designation: sexual gratification. Despite Pascasius’s efforts and in true virgin martyr fashion, Lucy defies Pascasius’ punishment by claiming the role of agent, arguing that if her body is given against her will, “þe clenore [cleaner] is mi mayden-hod” (104.102). In Lucy’s view, without her consent, her virginity remains intact; she is not moved to the brothel after all so that her virginity remains literally intact as well. In addition, Lucy exercises her own free will and acts as agent even in death. After the last rights were spoken, the *ESEL* explains, “heo 3af þene gost” (106.175).⁹⁴ Just as Christ decided when he would die, or “give up the ghost,” it is Lucy, rather than Pascasius, who exercises agency by deciding when she will die. Like Christ, the virgin martyr resists the ruling secular authority’s attempts to control her. While Pascasius seeks to reduce Lucy to a sexual object by removing her own personal will and by controlling when she would die, Lucy foils Pascasius’ plans by her miraculous immovability which preserves her virginity, and at her time of death by claiming the ability and power to assert her own free will: to echo the *Becket* legend, she “protect[s] *her* righes”⁹⁵ (emphasis mine).

⁹² *MED* 1(a).

⁹³ *MED* 1(c).

⁹⁴ “she gave (up) the ghost” (106.175)

⁹⁵ The men are unable to move Lucy physically to the brothel.

The echoing of the term “winnen” aligns the virgin martyr Lucy with England and the English church. Pascasius advertises Lucy’s sexual availability, that “hire ane fole i-winne” (104.109).⁹⁶ To use the term “winne” has interesting implications. The verb “winnen” means to “contend” or “war against a foe”⁹⁷; and to “win by means of legal decree.”⁹⁸ “Winnen” can also mean to “take forcefully.”⁹⁹ Considering Pascasius’ punishment for Lucy as the “foul” body available for anyone’s, even a fool’s, sexual use, to “take forcefully” clearly has sexual overtones. Six legends earlier in *St. Wulfstan*, this same verb, “winnen,” appears with clearly militaristic connotations; however, in view of its sexual undertones in *St. Lucy*, “winnen” in *St. Wulfstan* can also acquire an undercurrent of a sexual or physical conquest on William’s part directed toward England. The *ESEL Wulfstan* reads, “willame [...] / þouȝte to winne Enguelond þoruȝ strenȝe and tricherie” (72.64-65). To “winne” by means of and “strenȝe,” of violence, embodies another strain of meaning when coupled with “tricherie.” “[T]richerie,” betrayal or deception, indicates that this violent conquest has behind it selfish and insincere motives. Therefore, William, as an “Vnkuynde Eyre [...]” (*Wulfstan*, 73.90), or as an “unnatural heir” of the English throne, has “conquered” or “subdued” England by means of “brute bodily might”¹⁰⁰ and “deception.”¹⁰¹ A reasonable interpretation of “winnen” in *Wulfstan* implies, as it does in *Lucy*, an intent on William’s part to deny England a say in determining her own will/future. As I have described elsewhere, the Norman conquest of

⁹⁶ “any fool/ignorant person can have her” (104.109).

⁹⁷ *MED* 1.

⁹⁸ *MED* 2(c).

⁹⁹ *MED* 2(b).

¹⁰⁰ *MED*.

¹⁰¹ *MED*.

England is accomplished with “unrizhte” (*Wulfstan*, 73.96),¹⁰² meaning without the legal or moral right to do so. In addition, the verb “winnen” functions in *Wulfstan* in much the same way that it does in *Lucy*: as with *Lucy*, it serves to objectify England. Moreover, reading one legend influences the reading of another, in the same way that, according to Diane Speed, the “other texts [in the MS Laud Misc. 108 ...] offer implicit medieval readings of the *SEL*. Such readings, arguably, highlight matters that would have held particular significance for contemporary readers [...].”¹⁰³ *Wulfstan* emphasizes legal and moral betrayal. William becomes king, but not through the normal lines of succession; William as king *forces* himself upon England and requires her acceptance. The use of “winnen” in *Lucy* implies forced sexual encounter, or rape. Reading *Wulfstan*, *Lucy*, and *Katherine* allows “winnen” to carry both militaristic *and* sexual layers of meaning, both of which ignore the wishes of the entity conquered. In the mirroring and reflecting world of the *ESEL*, reading *Wulfstan*, *Lucy*, and *Katherine* together suggests an interpretation of England as a virgin martyr, the defiant object of desire, in opposition to William the Conqueror who, in turn, assumes the role of the pagan emperor in this account of the Norman conquest of England.

¹⁰² See chapter 3 of this project, “Hagiography as a Resistance Strategy.”

¹⁰³ Diane Speed, “A Text for Its Time,” *Texts and Contexts* 122-23. Bell also comments on how reading a text in consideration of the other texts with which the text is bound: “reading [... any] narrative within the entirety of the manuscript invites us to see similarities in character, theme, plot, incident, structure, or purpose. The reading draws parallels amongst texts of different genres that [... a reader] may not perceive when reading a text divorced from its context” (“Generic Convention” 88). For other analyses of how the texts (hagiography, romance, and the poems as well) of the MS Laud Misc. 108 influence the interpretation of one another, see Couch, “Magic of Englishness,” *Texts and Contexts* 223-250; Bell, “‘holie mannes liues’: England and its Saints in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108’s *King Horn* and *South English Legendary*,” *Texts and Contexts* 251-274.

The parallels between the virgin martyr and England, as well as the people of England, encourage the late thirteenth-century English to emulate not only the virgin martyrs, but also the post-Conquest English saints in their defiance of unjust and unrightful rule. The post-Conquest kings, like the pagan rulers, want to benefit from the “body” of England by way of taxation as seen in *Becket* and *Edmund [of Abingdon] the Confessor* and by way of the wealth William desires in *Wulfstan*. Both Maxentius’ and Pascasius’ desires to overcome Katherine and Lucy, and the virgin martyrs’ unwillingness to submit, even after being tortured, is reminiscent of William the Conqueror’s appearance in Anglo-Saxon/English history. Just as Maxentius wishes to possess and exploit Katherine sexually, and just as Pascasius wishes to exploit Lucy sexually, William wishes to possess England and her wealth. However, the virgin martyr defies the will of the pagan ruler and chooses to act rather than to be acted upon, just as Lucy decides whether or not she will continue to be a virgin or decides when she will die. The parallels between the early Christian-era saints and the post-Conquest saints and even England itself is that the English of the late thirteenth century, like the saints of the *ESEL*, are God’s chosen people who are valuable, who can make choices for themselves, and who can endure and triumph over punishment and torture inflicted on them by an agent of the devil. The martyrs serve as models for defiance, even a “fantasy” of defiance for the English people, and such post-colonial models of resistance found in the *ESEL* encourage them to maintain hope in their ability to exercise their own free will and agency, even if the benefits of those choices are not realized immediately.

CHAPTER 4

Hagiography as a Resistance Strategy

Throughout the hagiographic texts of the MS Laud Misc. 108 runs a post-colonial-style thread of resistance to the post-Conquest kings. In the normal course of events, one benefit of prevailing in war is that history records the conflict from the winners' point of view. As a result of the Norman Conquest, the English had become a conquered people subjected not only to the Normans and the post-Conquest kings of Norman descent but also subjected to the Norman version of the Conquest. However, as an anti-colonial text of resistance, the Laud Misc. 108 operates in a truly post-colonial fashion by pushing back against the colonial ideology, the Norman power structure, and the Norman version of events by re-telling the story of the Conquest from the subjugated English people's point of view. In addition to re-telling the events of the Conquest from the English point of view in *St. Wulfstan*, the Laud Misc. 108 *St. Dominic* also alludes to the thirteenth-century anti-royalist and English hero Simon de Montfort and the role of the barony as champions against their rapacious king Henry III. Together these hagiographic texts, *St. Wulfstan* and *St. Dominic*, justify resistance by reminding its late thirteenth-century audience of the illegitimacy of the post-Conquest kings and providing models of piety but, more importantly, models of political dissent.

The hagiographical texts in Laud Misc 108 occupy the largest portion of the manuscript: the *ESEL* occupies the first four of the six booklets comprising the manuscript,¹ and Diane Speed observes that the *sanctorale* portion of the *ESEL* [items

¹ For a description of the Laud Misc. 108 manuscript, see Manfred Görlach, *The Textual*

based on saints lives, as opposed to the *temporale* which are items based on biblical history or on Christ's life²] "alone accounts for almost three-quarters of the codex by sheer volume."³ In addition to the *sanctorale* are the Middle English romances *Havelok the Dane* and *King Horn*, both of which Kimberly Bell and Julie Nelson Couch compellingly argue are presented as saints in the context of the Laud Misc. 108 manuscript.⁴ The hagiographical portions of the manuscript as it likely existed in the

Tradition of the South English Legendary, Leeds Texts and Monographs, n.s., 6 (Leeds: The University of Leeds School of English, 1974) 88-90; Carl Horstmann, *Leben Jesu* (Münster, 1873): 1-7; Carl Horstmann, "Die Legenden des Ms. Laud 108," *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen*, 49 (1872): 395-414; J. Hall, *King Horn* (Oxford, 1901) viii-x; Gisela Guddat-Figge, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Middle English Romances* (Wilhelm Fink Verlag Munchen, 1976) 282-85; Kimberly Kristina Bell, *Convention and Transformation in Middle English Romance: The Manuscript Evidence in King Horn and Havelok the Dane*, *DAI* 63 (2002) 2234; and G. V. Smithers, ed., introduction, *Havelok* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987) xi-xvi. For a description of the manuscript contents, see A. S. G. Edwards, "Bodleian Library, Laud Misc. 108: Contents, Construction and Circulation" 21-30; and Murray J. Evans, "'Very Like a Whale?': Physical features and the 'Whole Book' in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108" 51-70, both in *The Texts and Contexts of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108: The Shaping of English Vernacular Narrative*, eds. Kimberly K. Bell and Julie Nelson Couch (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2011).

² Dan Kline points out that the terms *sanctorale* and *temporale* are constructed, "an academic artifact imposed from other sources." See "The Audience and Function of the Apocryphal *Infancy of Jesus Christ* in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108," *The Texts and Contexts of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108: The Shaping of English Vernacular Narrative*, eds. Kimberly K. Bell and Julie Nelson Couch (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2011) 141.

³ Diane Speed, "A Text for Its Time: The *Sanctorale* of the Early *South English Legendary*," *The Texts and Contexts of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108: The Shaping of English Vernacular Narrative*, eds. Kimberly K. Bell and Julie Nelson Couch (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2011) 120.

⁴ In their introduction to *Texts and Contexts*, Bell and Couch point to the Laud 108 manuscript's rubricator who titled *Havelok* as "[Incipit] *Vita Hauelok quondam Rex Anglie Et Demarchie*," 9. For a discussion of the saintliness of Horn, see Kimberly Bell, "holie mannes liues," *The Texts and Contexts of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108: The Shaping of English Vernacular Narrative*, eds. Kimberly K. Bell and Julie Nelson Couch (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2011) 260-68. For a discussion of *Havelok*'s saintliness, see Bell, "Resituating Romance: The Dialectics of Sanctity in MS Laud Misc.

early fourteenth century⁵ make up approximately eighty-five percent of the manuscript, or 203 of 238 folios. Looking at the entirety of the manuscript in its fifteenth-century form,⁶ Bell points out that sixty-one of the sixty-seven poems in the entire Laud Misc. 108 are “explicitly hagiographic texts,”⁷ a fact that illustrates the “generic and thematic dominance of *SEL* material.”⁸ The hagiographical texts of the Laud Misc. 108 are both physically and thematically the driving force of the manuscript.

Hagiography is an apt delivery method for criticism and resistance. In addition to hagiography’s fundamental purpose of “offering listeners and readers examples of exemplary virtue and models of perfect Christian behavior to be imitated and admired,”⁹ Thomas Heffernan describes a certain plausible deniability inherent in hagiography. Heffernan explains, “[h]agiographic collections, like the *SEL*, could easily [...] be the vehicle for political commentary [...] since they could shield themselves from retribution beneath the cloak of religion.”¹⁰ Hagiography also illustrates well Rossell H. Robbins’s

108’s *Havelok the Dane* and *Royal Vitae*,” *Parergon* 25.1 (2008): 32-51; see also Julie Nelson Couch, “Defiant Devotion in MS Laud Misc. 108: The Narrator of *Havelok the Dane* and Affective Piety,” *Parergon* 25.1 (2008): 53-79.

⁵ For a description of the manuscript along with scribal features, compilation dates, etc., see A. S. G. Edwards “Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108: Contents, Construction, and Circulation,” *Texts and Contexts* 24. The Laud 108 manuscript at the early fourteenth-century stage would not include folios 228v – 238v which are SS *Blaise*, *Cecilia*, and *Alexis*, the poem *Somer Soneday*, and the three short poems added in the fifteenth century.

⁶ See fn 5 above.

⁷ Bell, “Resituating Romance” 32.

⁸ Bell, “Resituating Romance” 32.

⁹ Bell, “holie mannes liues,” *Texts and Contexts* 253. As evidence of her statement, Bell cites Thomas Heffernan’s purpose of hagiography being “to play down differences while extolling socially accepted paradigms of sanctity.” See Heffernan, *Sacred Biography: Saints and Their Biographers in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, Oxford UP, 1988) 14; cited in Bell, “holie mannes liues,” *Texts and Contexts* fn 9, p. 253.

¹⁰ Thomas J. Heffernan, “Dangerous Sympathies: Political Commentary in the *South*

definition of “protest and dissent” in writing that “manage[s] to ask significant questions under the very nose [...] of the Establishment.”¹¹ The Laud Misc. 108, a manuscript written in English that includes legends of Anglo-Saxon saints, provides the audience with a text whose content allows for the “significant questions” that the audience can safely explore behind the cover of hagiography.

One modification that adds political dimension to the Laud Misc. 108 is the inclusion of details about England, the landscape, and buildings. Both Klaus Jankofsky and Bell have commented on the inclusion of common, everyday details about England and English life that contribute to this political dimension. Jankofsky writes that the inclusion of unremarkable information “anchors the narratives in reality and lends them, to a certain degree, the character of historical narrative, if not historical documentation.”¹² Bell states that the additions of such “prolific, *specific* details found exclusively in English *vitae* add a historical level to the fundamental spirituality of the English lives that is largely absent in the other *vitae*.”¹³ Because of this added historical element, the English saints’ lives encourage the audience to read them for both spiritual and political themes surrounding England.¹⁴ Couch explains, “[t]he English saints and heroes who punctuate L[aud 108] stand out as much for their spiritualized *political*

English Legendary,” *The South English Legendary: A Critical Assessment*, ed. Klaus P. Jankofsky (Tübingen: Francke, 1992) 2-3.

¹¹ Rossell Hope Robbins, “Dissent in Middle English Literature: The Spirit of (Thirteen) Seventy-six,” *Medievalia and Humanistica* 9 (1979): 41-42.

¹² Klaus Jankofsky, “National Characteristics in the Portrayal of English Saints in the *South English Legendary*,” *Images of Sainthood in Medieval Europe*, eds. Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Timea Szell (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1991) 84.

¹³ Bell, “holie mannes liues,” *Texts and Contexts* 255. See p. 255 also for a listing of the types of details about England and her people included.

¹⁴ Bell and Couch, introduction, *Texts and Contexts* 18.

courage as for the special favor of God they possess.”¹⁵ Unlike a modern audience who might view a saint’s life as a fantastic or supernatural work of fiction, the late thirteenth-century audience would possibly view hagiography as an accurate representation of historical fact, and, as such, they would easily make connections between the political circumstances of the saints’ lives and the political realities of their own lives.

As a post-colonial document, the added “historical” element in the English saints’ lives also provided models of dissent for its late thirteenth-century audience. This undocumented audience has been variously posited to include barons,¹⁶ “men and women who were culturally sophisticated and socially and professionally ambitious,”¹⁷ and, based on the fact that the manuscript is written entirely in Middle English, “a broader spectrum of readers and listeners”¹⁸ including the peasantry.¹⁹ If the audience were a combination of all of these theories, each group noted had significant difficulties and differences with their post-Conquest kings, and the Laud Misc. 108 manuscript provides a space for varied audiences to resist and criticize their king.

¹⁵ Couch, “Magic of Englishness,” *Texts and Contexts* 226.

¹⁶ Speaking specifically of the Middle English romances as adaptations of Anglo-Norman romances, Susan Crane posits a baronial audience. See Crane’s *Insular Romance* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1986).

¹⁷ Using manuscript evidence, Andrew Taylor identifies a more “sophisticated” audience. See “‘Her Y Spelle’: The Evocation of Minstrel Performance in a Hagiographical Context,” *The Texts and Contexts of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc.108: The Shaping of English Vernacular Narrative*,” eds. Kimberly K. Bell and Julie Nelson Couch (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2011) 78.

¹⁸ Bell and Couch, introduction, *Texts and Contexts* 15.

¹⁹ Because of the use of Middle English, Anne Thompson posits that at least a portion of the *ESEL* audience could have included, among others, those of lower classes who spoke only English. See *Everyday Saints and the Art of the Narrative in the South English Legendary* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2003) 56.

The Anglo-Saxon Saints in the *SEL* Tradition

Undoubtedly criticizing a sitting king or his royal descendants is a dangerous and somewhat futile undertaking when, as in the case of the Laud Misc. 108, William the Conqueror's descendants are firmly entrenched in the fabric of late thirteenth-century English society. This hold on the monarchy becomes the target of dissenting "political commentary" at the very core of the manuscript. One way that the Laud Misc. 108 approaches political resistance is by avoiding overwhelming the manuscript with criticism of the powerful monarchy. The presence of English saints, including Havelok and Horn,²⁰ in the manuscript is resistant in and of itself, and their presence is subversive because the moments of potential criticism are scattered throughout the manuscript. As Bell explains, numerically, of the sixty-one hagiographical poems bound in the Laud Misc. 108,²¹ seventeen (including *Havelok the Dane* and *King Horn*), or just under twenty-eight percent, are Anglo-Saxon saints or saints such as *SS Gregory* and *Augustine* whose legends also present a positive view of England and her people. The inclusion of this positive view of England and her people helps the audience to personalize these stories primarily because these are stories of the audience's own "historical" past. At just under one-third, the English saints' legends are noticeable, but not ubiquitous; there is not an onslaught of pro-English or Anglo-Saxon saints in the Laud Misc. 108, merely an intermittent and what seems to be a randomly ordered presence.

While the number of Anglo-Saxon saints lives constitute less than one-third of the

²⁰ See fn 4 above.

²¹ For a listing of the specific lives that are Anglo-Saxon, English, or pro-England/ pro-English, see Bell, "Resituating Romance" 32, 35. Bell notes fifty-nine hagiographical texts in the *ESEL*, but I have included in my count *Havelok the Dane* and *King Horn* as well.

total number of saints lives in the Laud Misc. 108 manuscript, the Anglo-Saxon saints do occupy a significant physical presence within the manuscript. Considering only *ESEL sanctorale* items, that is, the saints' lives beginning with the *Sancta Crux* and ending with *St. Hippolyt*, I have looked at the number of folios within the manuscript to determine how much physical space the Anglo-Saxon and pro-English saints' lives occupy within the codex.²² The Anglo-Saxon saints' lives and the non-Anglo-Saxon saints' lives that focus on England and her people physically occupy just over thirty-nine percent of the manuscript. The legend of *St. Thomas of Canterbury* occupies a majority of that space at almost fourteen and one-half percent of the manuscript,²³ and combined, the others occupy almost twenty-five percent. To occupy such a large physical space within the codex is significant. Adding in *Havelok* and *Horn* as English saints pushes the evidence of a pro-English presence to the forefront, at almost thirty-nine percent of the manuscript,²⁴ or 92.25 of 238 folios. While the English saints' lives appear sporadically throughout the *ESEL*, their physical presence is unmistakable and provides more evidence of the Laud Misc. 108 as a codex of subversive criticism of and resistance to the post-Conquest kings because this recurring focus on England and her people brings the English and England, rather than the victorious Normans, to the foreground of the story told in the Laud Misc. 108.

²² Where Bell evaluated the number of Anglo-Saxon or English saints' lives, I have looked at the number of folios occupied by legends that focus on England. To arrive at the percentage, I included the two missing folios from *St. Brendan* and the one missing folio that contains the end of *St. Dunstan* and the beginning of *St. Augustine* in order to see the *ESEL* in the same way that the late thirteenth-century audience would have.

²³ *St. Thomas* occupies 2,478 lines, or 26 folios in the Laud Misc. 108 manuscript.

²⁴ I arrived at this figure by dividing the 92.25 extant folios by 238 folios.

The Norman Claim to the English Throne

In addition to the intermittent presence of English saints, there are a few of the saints' lives that are not subtle in their privileging of England and in their criticism of the post-Conquest kings. The English royalty of Norman descent would certainly have an interest in promoting a narrative "justifying Norman presence in England"²⁵; however, one important element of post-colonial resistance is that the colonized, or subjugated group rejects and *de-centers* the colonizer's view of history and *re-centers* the colonized people and their own point of view. The late thirteenth-century Laud Misc. 108 audience reasserts the English version of events by re-telling the Conquest story. In order for a proponent to promote a particular point of view and to ensure that the audience will perceive, process, and comprehend the situation in the same way that the proponent advocates requires the proponent to adjust certain perceived historical facts, either by minimizing or exaggerating those facts. Because hagiography can function as history for the medieval audience,²⁶ re-telling the story of the Conquest of more than two hundred years earlier places the colonized group's point of view in the privileged position of assumed truth, or fact. As a post-colonial strategy, re-telling the Conquest story allows the conquered and colonized to establish or reclaim an identity that pre-dates the one assigned to them in the conqueror's version of events.²⁷ This re-telling of events is an

²⁵ Crane, *Insular Romance* 15.

²⁶ Felicia Liftshitz, "Beyond Positivism and Genre: 'Hagiographical' Texts as Historical Narrative," *Viator: Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 25 (1994) 97. See also Jankofsky, "National Characteristics" 84 and Bell, "'holie mannes liues,'" *Texts and Contexts* 255 as discussed above.

²⁷ Lois Tyson, "Postcolonial and African American Criticism," *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1999) 374.

example of and a model for dissent because it “resist[s] colonialist ideology”²⁸ and takes the conquered group from the margins of the Norman version of events and brings the English to the center of the story.²⁹

In the Laud Misc. 108, *St. Wulfstan* re-centers the “English” point of view of the Conquest; this life is by far the most overtly critical of the post-Conquest kings. A contemporary of William the Conqueror, Wulfstan was the Bishop of Worcester at the time of the Conquest. The *ESEL Wulfstan* recounts some of the details of Wulfstan’s life, the death of Edward the Confessor, Harold Godwinson’s ascent to the English throne, the Norman victory at the Battle of Hastings, and some of Wulfstan’s subsequent contact and conflict with William the Conqueror as king of England. Scholars including Manfred Görlach, Thorlac Turville-Pêtre, Anne Thompson, Klaus Jankofsky, and Robert Mills have commented on the “anti-Norman” bent of the Laud Misc. 108 version of *St. Wulfstan*.³⁰ For example, Görlach’s work points out that lines 60 through 90, which contain particularly anti-Norman commentary, are unique to the Laud Misc. 108.³¹ He states, “[i]t is significant that no source for the anti-Norman lines in L[aud 108] has been found, so that they may be the author’s own contribution, and that later *SEL* MSS [such as the] (‘C’) [manuscript, Corpus Christi, MS 145] obviously by deliberate editing take

²⁸ Tyson, “Postcolonial and African American Criticism” 374.

²⁹ Tyson, “Postcolonial and African American Criticism” 377.

³⁰ See Manfred Görlach, *The Textual Tradition of the South English Legendary*, 34; Thorlac Turville-Petre, *England the Nation: Language, Literature, and National Identity 1290-1340* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996) 18; Anne B. Thompson, *Everyday Saints and the Art of the Narrative in the South English Legendary*, 47-48; Klaus Jankofsky, “National Characteristics” 85; and Robert Mills, “The Early *South English Legendary* and Difference,” *Texts and Contexts* 207.

³¹ Görlach 137. In addition to 73.60-90, Görlach also identifies 73.91-94 and 73.99-100 as lines unique to the Laud *ESEL*’s *St. Wulfstan* (*Textual Tradition* 137).

away some of the offensiveness.”³² It is the “offensiveness” of the Laud Misc. 108 version of *Wulfstan* that unequivocally requires the audience to consider the most fundamental questions concerning the Norman presence in England: their right to invade and, as a result of their victory, their right to rule England.

St. Wulfstan specifically challenges the post-Conquest king’s right to rule through the use of words that carry specific shades of meaning and that lead the audience to interpret the “facts” in a specifically guided and pointed way. The Laud Misc. 108 version complains that Harold’s death at the hands of the Normans leads to a line of illegitimate kings:

So þat he [Harold] was bi-neoþe i-brouzt : and ouer-come atþe laste

And to grounde i-brouzt, and alle his : and al Enguelond also,

In-to *vnecouþe* mannes honde : þat *no riȝht* ne hadden þar-to;

And neuer-eft [it] ne cam a-ȝein : to *riȝhte Eyres none*—

Vnkuynde Eyres ȝeot huy beoþþ ; ore kinges echone (73.86-90)³³

(emphasis mine).

These lines question the validity of the Norman claim to rule England. According to the

³² Görlach, *Textual Tradition* 34.

³³ “So that he [Harold] was vanquished : and overcome in the end / And conquered/subdued and all his [Harold Godwinson’s people] : and all of England as well, / Into foreign/unknown men’s hands : who had no right to the place [England]; /And since that time [England has] never come again to any lawful heirs—/ Foreign heirs they still are : our kings each one” (73.87-90). All translations are mine unless otherwise indicated. All references to the Laud *ESEL* are taken from Carl Horstmann, ed. *The Early South-English Legendary, or Lives of the Saints, I: MS Laud, 108 in the Bodleian Library*. EETS, o.s., 87 (London: N. Trübner and Co., 1887). Reprint, 1987, 2000. This and other references are given parenthetically by page and line number.

MED, as a phrase, an “vnecoupe manne” (73.88) is a “stranger,”³⁴ a “foreigner,”³⁵ or a “non-native”³⁶; as an adjective, “vnecoupe” means “unknown”³⁷ or “unfamiliar.”³⁸

Therefore, an “vnecoupe manne” is one who is an outsider, who, because of his place of origin, is unknown to the English. The use of “vnecoupe” emphasizes that these Normans are outsiders. As a post-colonial strategy, the establishment of an insider/outsider binary to delineate “us” and “them” is an effective but complicated method of criticism and resistance³⁹ specifically because such binaries require totalizing or reductive methods that often ignore the reality of the fluidity of identity. This totalizing approach, however, works in the *Laud Misc. 108* because the manuscript’s definition of English and Englishness depends upon the situation. As a result of the Battle of Hastings, England is now in the care of those who do not belong in England, and who, moreover, “no riȝt ne hadden þar-to” (73.88), which is important because the compilers/redactors establish an insider/outsider binary. The term “riȝt,” indicating having “legal or moral right”⁴⁰ to claim England, questions the claim of these Norman outsiders to England in moral terms and in legal terms as well.

Historically, there are varying opinions about whether William had a legitimate claim to the throne of England. The *ESEL*, however, does not even consider that

³⁴ *Middle English Compendium (MED)* 1(d).

³⁵ *MED* 2(b).

³⁶ *MED* 2(b).

³⁷ *MED* 1(a).

³⁸ *MED* 1(b).

³⁹ I will discuss this further in consideration of fluid definitions of Englishness. See Peter Childs and Patrick Williams’s discussion of Trinh T. Minh-ha’s views of the complexities and difficulties of the “insider/outsider binary” in *An Introduction to Post-Colonial Theory* (London: Prentice Hall, 1997) 73.

⁴⁰ *MED* 5(b).

possibility because to do so does not support the *ESEL*'s point of view that William and his followers do not belong in England. The *ESEL*'s use of the word "right" focuses on whether William's claim to England is just in the eyes of the law. Lines such as, "Neuereft to is cuynde heritage : ne cam it [England]" (73.94) reference the illegality of William's actions. The *MED* defines "cuynde heritage" as "lawful inheritance"⁴¹ with "cuynde" bringing in issues of family connection; as a result, the *ESEL* implies that William is not part of King Edward the Confessor's "family" and is, therefore, an illegal possessor of the throne. In reality, however, William was a relative of Edward the Confessor. William's grandfather Robert II, Duke of Normandy, was King Edward's maternal uncle and brother to Edward's mother Emma. There existed, then, a familial connection by bloodline between Edward and William. In addition, because Edward had no children of his own, the most logical heir by bloodline, according to David M. Wilson, would have been Edgar Atheling, the grandson of King Edward's half-brother Edmund Ironside. However, such was not the case. Wilson explains, "primogeniture was not necessarily the normal means of succession: the first-born had a strong claim, but if he was too weak or (as was the case with Edgar) too young, a strong man of royal stock could be elected to the throne. [In such cases ...], a king could in some sense nominate his heir."⁴² It is possible that, in addition to having a familial connection, Edward had named William his successor just as William claimed. Edward had been exiled to Normandy while a child and did not return to England until his late thirties when he became king. Although Edward was more than twenty years William's senior, the two

⁴¹ *MED* 3(a).

⁴² David M. Wilson, *The Bayeux Tapestry* (London: Thames & Hudson, Ltd., 1982) 15.

had a rather close relationship, as Wilson explains, and for Edward to appoint William as his successor would not have been at all out of the ordinary.⁴³ Moreover, William had what Wilson terms a “legitimate dynastic claim.”⁴⁴

Questions about Harold Godwinson’s legal and familial right to claim the throne after Edward’s death existed as well. Harold was the brother of King Edward’s wife Edith. Although not a blood relative to King Edward, Harold “is said to have been named as Edward’s successor by the dying king.”⁴⁵ Like William, however, there existed no definitive proof of his appointment. Wilson explains:

[d]espite the events of 1051-2 – when [Harold Godwinson’s father] Godwin and other members of his family were outlawed, when the Queen was repudiated and when William probably visited England--it cannot be shown either that Edward at any time wanted William to succeed him or that he did not, although he seems to have dangled the succession before him [as Edward had done before many others].⁴⁶

Whether Harold or William was King Edward’s appointed successor is an issue that continues to be open for debate; however, what mattered, according to Wilson, was the actual coronation. Wilson clarifies, “once this sacred ceremony [coronation] had taken

⁴³ Wilson, *Bayeux Tapestry* 16.

⁴⁴ Wilson, *Bayeux Tapestry* 16. In addition to William, Wilson also asserts that Harold Hardrada, King of Norway, also had a “legitimate dynastic claim” to England.

⁴⁵ Wilson, *Bayeux Tapestry* 16.

⁴⁶ Wilson, *Bayeux Tapestry* 16. Wilson states that Edward “dangled the succession before the members of the old royal line, Edward Aetheling, Edgar [Aetheling], and possibly before Sven Estridsson of Denmark and Harold of Wessex [also known as Harold Godwinson].

place it was difficult to challenge the anointed of God.”⁴⁷ Harold’s coronation, though, did not seem to deter William in his efforts to claim the English throne. In view of the historically ambiguous facts, the denial of the legality of William’s claim to the throne of England, a repudiation unique to the Laud Misc. 108 *Wulfstan*, effectively resists the legitimacy of the Norman claim to England.

Once the *ESEL* questions the initial and fundamental issue of William’s legitimacy as king, the Normans no longer possess the central space in the story. From the establishment of this central and critical point, the *ESEL* also presents the other key characters from the Conquest story, specifically William, Wulfstan, Harold Godwinson, and the barony, in ways that re-tell the story of the Conquest from the English point of view. Comparing the presentation of these characters in the Laud Misc. 108 version of *St. Wulfstan* with those of a later *SEL* transcribed from Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 145⁴⁸ illustrates this point.⁴⁹

The grammatical construction of sentences describing William’s actions in the two manuscripts, for example, presents two subtly different views of William. Describing

⁴⁷ Wilson, *Bayeux Tapestry* 15.

⁴⁸ Charlotte D’Evelyn and Anna J. Mill produced another *South English Legendary* (*SEL*) by transcribing Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 145 as the primary manuscript or text and using Harley 2277 to fill any gaps; they also used Bodley, MS Ashmole 43 and British Museum, MS Cotton Julius D.ix as “control” texts. See “Foreword” v. The Corpus Christi 145 version of the *SEL* is dated to the end of the fourteenth century according to W. F. Bolton whose work Görlach cites (see Görlach fn 30, p. 244), but, according to the *MED*, it is dated to 1450. Görlach considers the 1450 date as “most likely” (see Görlach, *Textual Tradition* 78). For a description of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 145, see Görlach, *Textual Tradition* 77-79. For a description of British Museum, MS Harley 2277, see Görlach, *Textual Tradition* 84-85.

⁴⁹ I do not explore completely the reasons for editing in the Corpus Christi 145 *SEL* because such reasons are beyond the scope of this project; however, because of its later compilation date, Corpus Christi 145 seems to be indicative of a more accommodating attitude toward the Normans and the post-Conquest kings.

William's preparation and arrival at Hastings, the Corpus Christi 145 *St. Wulfstan* presents a commanding and decisive William who is in charge and giving orders: "He [William] let him greiþe folk inou" (D'Evelyn 10.65), "He let ordeiny is feorde wel" (D'Evelyn 10.67), and "And let destruye al þat he uond" (D'Evelyn 10.68).⁵⁰ With the inclusion of "let," the Corpus Christi 145 uses the causative verbal construction to present William in a positive way. The causative is a verbal construction where the subject of the sentence or clause directs that an action be taken or causes someone other than himself to perform an action.⁵¹ As the subject of each of the clauses, William does not personally perform the actions indicated, but instead directs others to do so—that is, "William had many of his people assembled" (10.65), he "ordered his [national] army to be arranged well [in battle formation]" (10.67), and he "had [or caused] them to destroy all that they found" (10.68). As presented in this version, it is under William's direction that his army prepares for war and then destroys "all that they found." Of course, an element of strategy requires the military leader to direct his men's actions and movements; however, I think that William's direction of actions, rather than his participation in those actions, is relevant. The causative construction in Corpus Christi 145 presents William as a

⁵⁰"He [William] had many of his people assembled" (10.65); "he ordered his [national] army to be arranged well [in battle formation]" (10.67); and "and he had [caused to be] destroyed all that they found" (10.68). All translations are mine unless otherwise indicated. *St. Wulfstan*, in *The South English Legendary*, eds. Charlotte D'Evelyn and Anna J. Mill, 3 vols., EETS, o.s., 235 (London, Oxford, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1956, 1959). This and subsequent citations are noted parenthetically by editor (Horstmann or D'Evelyn) if ambiguous, followed by page and line number.

⁵¹ "Causative" differs from indicative in the following: using the causative, "William had a house built"; using the indicative, "William built a house." In French grammar, the verbal construction is referred to as the "causative *faire*." See chapter 2 of this project, "The Ideal Anglo-Saxon King as a Resistance Strategy," for a discussion of the causative verbal construction used to describe the actions of Quendriþ and Edward the Elder's stepmother.

commanding, authoritative leader, and thus potentially presents him in a positive light.⁵²

The Laud Misc. 108 version of *Wulfstan*, on the other hand, eliminates William's distance from the battle as leader and strategist. The first two actions in the Laud Misc. 108 *ESEL*'s *Wulfstan* read exactly the same as the lines from the Corpus Christi 145 version read; however, the third action differs in two small but significant ways. While the first two actions in the Laud Misc. 108 *ESEL* also contain the causative construction indicating that William directs these actions, the Laud Misc. 108 *ESEL* lacks the causative construction in the third action and reads, William "destruyde and nam al þat he fond" (Horstmann 72.68) [again, Corpus Christi 145 reads, "And [William] let destruye al þat he uond" (D'Evelyn 10.68)]. Unlike the Corpus Christi 145 manuscript, the Laud Misc. 108 manuscript indicates William does not direct the destruction and seizing of "al þat he fond," but instead he himself participates in the "ravage[ing]" and "demolish[ing]"⁵³ of a people not yet protected by the presence of the English king and army. Because the Laud Misc. 108 version surrounds and even overpowers the last action noted, that William "destruyde and nam al þat he fond," with a greater number of direct actions [such as he "nam," he "dude," he "cam," he "arerde," and he "a-ferede" (Horstmann 73.65-68)] and prefaces these actions as ones William carries out "þoruȝ strenȝe [violence] and tricherie" (73.64). These lines present William as a schemer, but also presents him as a leader involved in every step of the preparation and invasion. In addition, all of the actions in this four-line section occur before the Normans ever faced the English army. William's aggression toward an undefended people also paints him and

⁵² My thanks to Julie Nelson Couch for this assessment of William's presentation in the later *SEL*.

⁵³ *MED*, "destruyde," (1), (2).

his followers as bullies.

A second important distinction between the Laud Misc. 108 version and the Corpus Christi 145 version of William is the “and nam” in line 68 of the Laud Misc. 108 version (Horstmann 72.68). According to the *MED*, one definition of “nimen” is “to take possession of something; [or] to take something away,”⁵⁴ but it can also mean “to steal.”⁵⁵ While traditional military practice dictates that “to the victor go the spoils,” because William himself took possession of the spoils, a more negative interpretation would be that William “*stole* all that he found,” which reduces him to a criminal. The use of “nam” in the Laud Misc. 108 version indicates an inclination on the part of the *ESEL* to diminish William’s leadership skills and to place blame directly on him not only for what happened at Hastings, but, by extension, to lay blame for all of England’s ills at the feet of the kings of William’s line. While the chronologically later modifications to the Corpus Christi 145 version reveal an inclination to present a positive, assured, and commanding leader in William, the image in the Laud Misc. 108 version of William in the trenches, so to speak, actively participating in the destruction at Hastings against undefended country people presents William as deliberately and treacherously destructive, thus evil, against a vulnerable people, or the “folk.”

The Laud Misc. 108 *ESEL* uses the causative construction one other time in its presentation of William and his invasion, but in this instance its use casts William in a negative light. For comparison, Corpus Christi 145 describes William’s coronation in much the same way as people would term a coronation today: “As sone so he was king

⁵⁴ *MED* 1(a)(b).

⁵⁵ *MED* 1(b).

ymad” (D’Evelyn 11.91).⁵⁶ The Laud Misc. 108 *ESEL*, however, reads, “willam liet [him] crouni king : þo þe bataile was al i-do” (73.92).⁵⁷ It is William, rather than God, who decides who should be king. What the Laud Misc. 108 *ESEL* presents via the causative construction is a man usurping God’s role, and that willingness to usurp God’s role further serves to render William unworthy, to marginalize and de-legitimize him.

The Laud Misc. 108 *ESEL* and the Corpus Christi 145 *SEL* characterize differently those who fight alongside William as well. For example, the Laud Misc. 108 describes the invaders, including William, who come “against them of England” as “þis straunge men” (Horstmann 73.75), but the Corpus Christi 145 describes them as “þe stronge men” (D’Evelyn 10.75). While each adjective is a variant spelling of the other, they do not share interchangeable definitions: the adjective “straunge” used in the Laud Misc. 108 *ESEL* is of Old French origin meaning “foreigners,”⁵⁸ and the adjective “stronge” used in the Corpus Christi *SEL* is of Old English origin and describes physical strength or sturdiness.⁵⁹ The presence of the anti-Norman lines in the Laud Misc. 108 encourages an interpretation of “straunge” as outsider or foreigner; however, the absence of those same lines in the Corpus Christi 145, in consideration of its more pro-Norman stance, encourages a positive interpretation of “stronge” as physical strength. With its resistance strategy to question the Norman presence, the Laud Misc. 108 *ESEL* focuses on the invaders as outsiders.

The two versions of *St. Wulfstan* also differ in their presentation of Harold

⁵⁶ “as soon as he was made king” (D’Evelyn 11.91).

⁵⁷ “William had himself crowned king : when the battle was finished” (73.92).

⁵⁸ *MED* 1(a).

⁵⁹ *MED* 1(a).

Godwinson. The Corpus Christi 145 version reads that, following Edward the Confessor's death, "Harald was suppe kyng: with traizon alas / the croune he bar of England" (D'Evelyn 10.61-62).⁶⁰ The phrase "with traizon alas," with its mournful "alas" and reference to treason, questions Harold's claim to the crown. The Corpus Christi 145 *Wulfstan* questions *Harold's* legitimacy as king of England by almost begrudgingly admitting that Harold's methods for obtaining the crown amounted to a betrayal of his king and family. In spite of the disturbing question of treason, the Corpus Christi 145 version drops the subject of Harold. It seems that the Corpus Christi 145 version views Harold's methods of becoming king as suspect, which tacitly justifies his overthrow.

The Laud Misc. 108 *Wulfstan*, however, deals more gingerly and positively with Harold Godwinson.⁶¹ The Laud Misc. 108 manuscript states that following Edward's death, "Harold was the rightest eyr : for non opur þere nas" (Horstmann 72.60-61).⁶² The use of the superlative "rightest" seems to be at the very least an acknowledgement on the part of the Laud Misc. 108 *ESEL* that there is no definitive answer as to who should succeed King Edward. What is clear, though, is that there is no need for a superlative without a prior comparison; that is, some potential heirs are more "right," or correct, than others. The superlative implies that among the competing possible heirs,⁶³ Harold

⁶⁰ "Harold was after king; sadly with treason he bore the crown of England" (D'Evelyn 10.61-62).

⁶¹ For further information about Harold Godwinson, see H.R. Loyn, *Harold, Son of Godwin* (Bexhill-on-Sea, UK: The Historical Association Hastings and Bexhill Branch, 1966). For historical information about Harold's legitimacy as King Edward's successor, see pp. 12-13 above.

⁶² "Harold was the rightest heir for there was none other" (Horstmann 72.60-61).

⁶³ The principle possible successors to King Edward were William, Harold Hardrada, Edward Aetheling, Edgar Aethling, and Harold Godwinson.

Godwinson's description as the "rightest eyre" "indicat[es] a position of favor"⁶⁴; in fact, none of the others were more "right" than Harold. The Laud Misc. 108 version of *Wulfstan* validates Harold as the best option as King of England; whereas the Corpus Christi 145 version presents Harold as the lesser of two illegitimate options, and by couching Harold's claim in terms of treason, Corpus Christi 145 offers no support for him and justifies William instead. However, a positive view of Harold in the Laud Misc. 108 version is critical to the *ESEL*'s post-colonial agenda. For the Laud Misc. 108 version to present a negative or even an ambivalent view of Harold would not further what I argue is a post-colonial-style resistance to the colonizer, a resistance to foreign invaders such as William and his descendants, specifically Henry III and Edward I, as legitimate kings of England. In literature of dissent, the side-by-side comparison of a hero in opposition to a villain strengthens the resistance's argument—an effect more difficult to achieve when the options are reversed as Corpus Christi 145 illustrates. Clear distinction between these two options is necessary to validate the Laud Misc. 108 *ESEL*'s criticism of the post-Conquest kings and to highlight its post-colonial undercurrent.

The barony is another important group whose historical role the Laud Misc. 108 version of *St. Wulfstan* re-packages for purposes of re-telling the Conquest story and re-centering and re-establishing the English point of view. For the Laud Misc. 108 audience, the barony's difficulties with their king in the thirteenth century were but a cluster of points on a long trajectory of conflict resulting in agreements negotiated between king and barony, such as the Councils of Clarendon, the Provisions of Oxford, and several iterations of the Magna Carta, among others, meant to reconcile the two parties by

⁶⁴ *MED*.

delineating boundaries of power and influence.⁶⁵ These conflicting points of view had clashed in the recent history of the Laud Misc. 108 audience at the Battle of Evesham in 1265 where the rebel barons under the leadership of Simon de Montfort lost to the royal forces under Prince Edward. In her discussion of the audience for the Middle English romances, Susan Crane argues for a baronial audience for the English romances that derive from Anglo-Norman sources, such as *Havelok the Dane* and *King Horn*, because the “English hero champions causes of practical and current interest to England’s barony.”⁶⁶ Crane explains that in Middle English romances such as *Havelok the Dane*, heroes “correct royal injustice toward their fellow vassals” and “alter social conditions for the general good.”⁶⁷ In contrast to the role of the barony in *Havelok*, both the Laud Misc. 108 *ESEL* and the Corpus Christi 145 *SEL Wulfstan* present the barons at the time of the Conquest as fundamentally self-serving. The texts state, “þe baronie of Enguelonde : redi was wel sone / þe king to helpe and heom-sulue” (Horstmann 72.71-72; D’Evelyn 10.71-72): that is, the barony’s quick preparation for battle was as much for their own benefit as for their king. Of course they would help the king and fight for him, and to fight in their own self-interest is a reasonable motivation. Keeping in mind the baronial audience for the romances, and, by extension, for the *ESEL*,⁶⁸ the compilers/redactors

⁶⁵ For an extended discussion of the barony in conflict with the English king, see Crane, *Insular Romance*.

⁶⁶ Crane, *Insular Romance* 75.

⁶⁷ Crane, *Insular Romance* 217-18.

⁶⁸ For scholarship discussing the overlap between the hagiography and romance genres in medieval literature that identifies hagiographical elements in romance heroes, such as *Havelok* and *King Horn*, and identifies romance elements in saints’ lives, see the following: Diana T. Childress, “Between Romance and Legend: Secular Hagiography in Middle English Literature,” *Philological Quarterly* 57 (1978): 311-22; Beth Crachiolo, “Seeing the Gendering of Violence: Female and Male Martyrs in the South English

seem to have conflated the Anglo-Saxon barony from the time of the Conquest and the barony of the late thirteenth century who were, in fact, of entirely different ethnic origins than the barony in *Wulfstan*. This conflation reveals more about the Laud Misc. 108 baronial audience's concerns about "control of [their] land"⁶⁹ than it does about accurate historical narrative.

Both texts blame the barony's moral conduct for the Norman victory even though the barony heeded the call to fight alongside their king. Both versions establish a cause and effect scenario: because of the barony's "tricherie" (Horstmann 73.77), their "faithlessness to [their] sworn oath or obligation"⁷⁰ to their English king, the Normans prevailed. In almost identical terms to those used in the Corpus Christi 145 *SEL*, the *ESEL* explains, "For þe englische barones bi-comen some : on-treowe and false also / To

Legendary, 'A Great Effusion of Blood?': *Interpreting Medieval Violence*, eds. Mark D. Meyerson, Daniel Thiery, and Oren Falk (Toronto: Toronto UP, 2004) 147-63; Klaus P. Jankofsky, "Entertainment, Edification, and Popular Education in the South England Legendary," *Journal of Popular Culture* 11 (1977): 706-17; —, "Personalized Didacticism: The Interplay of Narrator and Subject Matter in the South English Legendary," *Texas A&I University Studies* 10 (1977): 69-77; Thomas R. Lyszka, "The South English Legendaries," *The North Sea World in the Middle Ages: Studies in the Cultural History of North-Western Europe*, eds. Thomas Lyszka and Lorna E. M. Walker (Dublin: Four Courts, 2001) 243-80; Gregory M. Sadlek, "Laughter, Game, and the Ambiguous Comedy in the South English Legendary," *Studia Neophilologica: A Journal of Germanic and Romance Languages and Literature* 64.1 (1992): 45-54; Annie Samson, "The South English Legendary: Constructing a Context," *Thirteenth Century England I: Proceedings of the Newcastle Upon Tyne Conference 1985*, ed. P. R. Coss and S. D. Lloyd (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1986) 185-95; Elizabeth Leigh Smith, *Middle English Hagiography and Romance in the Fifteenth-Century England: From Competition to Critique* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2003); Orsi Réthelyi, 'Apostles & martirs þat hardy kni[infinity]'tes were': *Saint's Lives from the South English Legendary and Their Relation to Middle English Romances* (S.I.: s.n., 1997); Bell, "Resituating Romance" 27-51; Couch, "Defiant Devotion" 53-79; Bell, "holie mannes liues," *Texts and Contexts* 251-74; Couch, "Magic of Englishness," *Texts and Contexts* 223-50; and Diane Speed, "Text for its Time," *Texts and Contexts* 117-36.

⁶⁹ Crane, *Insular Romance* 6.

⁷⁰ *MED* 1(a).

bi-traize heom-self and heore kyng : þat so mucche heom truste to” (73.79-80).⁷¹ The verb “bicomēn” is interesting because it implies a “change to a different (state).”⁷² In other words, the English barony begins the conflict on the side of their English king and country, but their loyalties change in favor of William. Such disloyalties, then, lead to the English loss at Hastings and also to England becoming an occupied land. In consideration of their earlier self-serving support for Harold (Horstmann 72.72 and D’Evelyn 10.72), this change in devotion seems credible. Hugh Thomas explains the historical realities the Anglo-Saxon nobility faced:

powerful natives initially had good reason to hope that they might survive the conquest by supporting William. [...However,] William crushed all but the lowest fringes of the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy through systematic dispossession of their land. [...B]y the time of *Domesday Book* [in 1086], landholders who can clearly be identified as English held only six percent of the land in England as measured by hides, or carucates, and just over four percent of the land as measured by yearly values.⁷³

Many Anglo-Saxon aristocrats lost their land after the Conquest, and William then rewarded those same lands to those who fought by his side, those of Norman descent as well as mercenaries from the continent.⁷⁴ William’s granting of land “cemented his

⁷¹ “because some [of] the English barons became untrue, or disloyal and false too / to betray themselves and their king who [had] trusted them so much” (73.79-80).

⁷² *MED* 4a(a).

⁷³ Hugh Thomas, *The Norman Conquest: England After William the Conqueror* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2008) 48.

⁷⁴ William also used clerical positions as reward to his Norman and continental supporters. For a discussion of William’s filling the clergy with his supporters, see chapter 5 of this project, “The English Clergy as a Resistance Strategy.”

reputation [with his supporters] as a good lord,” according to Thomas.⁷⁵ Additionally, William worked to remove any threat to his rule from the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy by dismantling and neutralizing it so that by the compilation of Domesday Book, William “had basically destroyed” it.⁷⁶ The descendants of those rewarded for their service during and following the Conquest over time became the baronial audience of the Laud Misc. 108.

Considering the historical reality and in the context of the Laud Misc. 108’s anti-Norman inclination, the Anglo-Saxon barony’s change of devotion illustrates their role following the Conquest, in post-colonial terms, as mimics. Mimicry is a strategy the colonizer typically employs to remake the colonized into acceptable versions of themselves. Childs and Williams explain that mimicry “is also a strategy of exclusion through inclusion that purports to accept the ‘good native’ [which is] all the better to exclude and denounce the majority ‘bad natives.’”⁷⁷ By emphasizing the barony’s betrayal to their English king and country, the Laud Misc. 108 *ESEL Wulfstan* could imply that the self-serving barons are the conqueror’s “good natives” who can see defeat coming and change their loyalties in order to end up on the side of the victor. Though a conflation of baronies from two different time periods, the thirteenth-century barony sees itself nationalistically as “English” only long after the Conquest, long after William’s “destr[uction] of the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy,”⁷⁸ and long after the Anglo-Saxon barony

⁷⁵ Thomas, *Norman Conquest* 50.

⁷⁶ Thomas, *Norman Conquest* 47; for a discussion of how William destroyed the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy, see *Norman Conquest* 47-51.

⁷⁷ Childs and Williams, *Post-colonial Theory*, 129. For an extensive discussion of mimicry as a colonial discourse, see 129-33.

⁷⁸ Thomas, *Norman Conquest* 47.

had been replaced by barons of non-English ethnicities. Once the barony's continental origins have given way to their connection to their landholdings in England and they see themselves as "English" barons⁷⁹ and "English" subjects, the assimilated barony denies the king of Norman origin that same opportunity to assimilate, and, as mimics who function well within the Norman power structure, they turn on the king, labeling *him* conqueror, occupier, other. The colonized mimic in the Laud Misc. 108 *ESEL* that arises from the conflation of the Anglo-Saxon barony of the Conquest and the barony of continental origins of the late thirteenth century is the mimic who never was a "native" in the first place. Moreover, in their co-opted role as "English," the barony as the colonized realizes that the post-Conquest kings as colonizers lack the authenticity to be in the position of power, if only for the reason that the barony denies the king the latitude to call himself "English." The barony's constructed English identity that ignored their Norman and continental roots demonstrates what Crane describes as the "alchemy" that is the "Norman appropriation of an English past."⁸⁰ Such an "alchemy" allowed for nationalism to emerge, which in post-colonial terms, is requisite for resistance because "nationalism is the most unifying force for resistance."⁸¹ A common nationality, even if it is a constructed and/or appropriated nationality, further aids in delineating binaries grouping opposing sides into "us" and "them."

Considering the historical realities of the landed Anglo-Saxon barony at the time of the Conquest, small editorial differences between the descriptions of the barony in the two versions of *St. Wulstan* provide insight into the post-colonial threads within the Laud

⁷⁹ See Georgianna, "Coming to Terms" 48.

⁸⁰ Crane, *Insular Romance* 15.

⁸¹ William and Childs, *Post-Colonial Theory* 71.

Misc. 108 manuscript. The Laud Misc. 108 *ESEL* states that the barony fought with the king “ase riht was for-to done” (72.72); the *ESEL*’s use of “riht” characterizes the barony’s responsibility to fight alongside the king in moral and legal terms of right and wrong. The Corpus Christi 145 *SEL* takes a different view stating that they helped the king “as wone [custom] was to done” (D’Evelyn 10.72). To use “wone,” meaning “custom,”⁸² rather than to use “riht,” minimizes the importance of fighting alongside their king: the Corpus Christi 145 *SEL* reduces the reasons for the barony’s help simply to a cultural practice, rather than a moral obligation, which then absolves them from any responsibility for Harold’s defeat. As many tales of great heroes proverbially warn, a warrior’s success depends on his devotion to a moral code of right and wrong: the Laud Misc. 108 states that these invaders would not succeed “þe 3wyle [as long as] huy [they, that is, the barony] wolden beo trewe” (Horstmann 73.76). The conditional sense of “wolden” sets up the proverbial cause-and-effect situation: if the barony remained true, faithful, and loyal⁸³ to their king and country, then their attackers would have “No strence [...] Aȝeinest heom of enguelonde” (Horstmann 73.75-76). The subtle editorial differences between the two texts produce two separate interpretations of the barony’s role in the defeat at Hastings.

The object attacked by “þe stronge men” fighting with William also varies slightly between manuscripts. In the Corpus Christi 145, the strong men battle “þe baronie of Engeland” (D’Evelyn 10.76); however, in Laud Misc. 108, the foreign men fight against “heom of enguelonde” (Horstmann 73.76). While the Corpus Christi 145

⁸² *MED* 1(a).

⁸³ *MED* 1a(a).

restricts those who suffered from the invasion to a small segment of society who, because of their disloyalty seemingly deserved to be defeated, the Laud Misc. 108 *ESEL* broadens the scope of those affected by the invasion and by the barony's disloyalty to include everyone in England. While a large portion of the audience of the late thirteenth century was certainly baronial, as Crane has so effectively argued, the audience likely included people of other classes as well, as Anne Thompson has likewise effectively argued.⁸⁴ The Laud Misc. 108 bands together all classes of people in England to emphasize that all suffer under the post-Conquest kings. While small editorial decisions in the Corpus Christi 145 *SEL*, a version compiled between ten and fifty years later than the Laud Misc. 108 *ESEL*, seem to reflect a more conciliatory attitude toward the invaders and the post-Conquest kings, as a resistance document, the Laud Misc. 108 *ESEL* contains no such pro-royal attitude.

Historically, judging from the almost constant conflict between the king and the barony in the early thirteenth century and culminating in 1265 at Evesham, the barony had undoubtedly become a real threat to the post-Conquest kings and their power. While blamed in part for Harold's defeat in the Laud Misc. 108 *ESEL* and the Corpus Christi 145, over time the barony had become champions and protectors for the English in ways similar to the Anglo-Saxon kings and the post-Conquest English clergy.⁸⁵ The Laud Misc. 108 manuscript refers to the barony on only a few occasions, but these mentions

⁸⁴ Anne Thompson posits that the sole use of Middle English indicates at least a partial audience being those of the peasantry who spoke only English. See *Everyday Saints* 55-57.

⁸⁵ For examples of both groups as champions and protectors of the English people, see chapters 2 and 5 of this project, "The Ideal Anglo-Saxon King as a Resistance Strategy" and "The English Clergy as a Resistance Strategy," respectively.

illustrate the change in their role over time. In the legend of twelfth-century *St. Thomas Becket*, for example, the Earl of Arundel is part of the “heize barouns and noble kniztes” (143.1308) who are representing Henry II, “þe king of Engelande” (144.1310), in the Pope’s court in Henry’s argument with Becket. While Arundel initially speaks kindly of Becket and of his fidelity to the church in his speech to the Roman court, he finishes by pointing out the damage that Becket is causing England. Arundel says, “þat lond he wole al schende [dishonor]” (144.1330). Arundel and the other “eorles, barones, and bischopes : þe hexte of þe londe” (144.1314) who are Henry II’s emissaries, seek papal intervention not concerning damage to the church, but only for damage done to the country as a political entity. Unlike King Henry II who prioritizes his own ambitions and his own power ahead of his religious obligations,⁸⁶ it is possible in this instance that the post-Conquest barons’ efforts as the king’s emissaries imply a concern for and an investment in England as an entity even though, in their support of the king over the church against Becket, they are certainly on the wrong side of history.

Over the next one hundred years, however, as presented in this particular manuscript, the barony’s continued prioritization of England as an entity grew to include a role as champion for the English people against the post-Conquest king. One legend in the Laud Misc. 108 *ESEL* that references this change in the barony’s role and character from the time of Henry II to that of Henry III is *St. Domenic*. *St. Domenic* only appears in a few *SEL* manuscripts;⁸⁷ perhaps its infrequent appearance reflects the change within the

⁸⁶ For a discussion of the priorities of the Anglo-Saxon kings being in accordance with or secondary to the priorities of the Church, see chapter 2 of this project, “The Ideal Anglo-Saxon King as a Resistance Strategy.”

⁸⁷ For a listing of these *SEL* manuscripts, see Görlach 186.

SEL tradition from the more anti-Norman tone of the earlier Laud Misc. 108 to the more conciliatory tone toward the Normans and post-Conquest kings in later *SEL* manuscripts such as the Corpus Christi 145. The Laud Misc. 108 *ESEL Domenic* does not use the term *baron*; however, reference to a noble landholder in the legend evokes the image of a great champion for the English people of the very recent past, Simon de Montfort, leader of the rebel barons who opposed Henry III.⁸⁸

Simon de Montfort was the king's brother-in-law and formerly one of Henry's favorites; however, their relationship soured because de Montfort sought for limits on the monarchy delineated in the Provisions of Oxford which "created the means to restrain Henry's kingship and to reorder it according to justice and equity."⁸⁹ De Montfort's opposition to the king and efforts to rein in and limit the king's powers placed de Montfort at the head of the anti-royalist cause. Although viewed as a patriotic hero⁹⁰ in

⁸⁸ J. R. Maddicott list Henry III's "misgovernment and incompetence" that led to the baronial wars in the mid thirteenth-century as "his reluctance to abide by Magna Carta, his failure to consult on matters of state business and foreign policy, his licence to unpopular aliens to do as they pleased, his lavish patronizing of these and other favoured *curiales*, and the inflammatory contrast between his munificence to the few and the burdens that he imposed on the Church and on his provincial subjects. In disregarding the largely informal conventions of restraint, consultation and consent which Magna Carta had helped to establish, Henry had forced his opponents to turn those conventions into rules. [...] But it was only in the circumstances of 1258, with the division of the court against the Lusignans and Henry's abasement over Sicily, that the pressures for reform ceased to be containable" [*Simon de Montfort* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP: 1994) 353]. For a detailed discussion of the long conflict between the barony and Henry III, as well as de Montfort's long, personal conflict with the king, see Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort*, and Oliver H. Richardson, *The National Movement in the Reign of Henry III* (Norwood, MA: Norwood Press, 1896) 50-64. Couch also uses the term "oblique" in her examination of the English clergy: Couch calls the undercurrent of criticism of the clergy in Becket's day, as related in *St. Thomas Becket*, "oblique criticism" ("Defiant Devotion" 76).

⁸⁹ Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort* 361.

⁹⁰ In the same way that the Laud 108 *ESEL* "constructs" Becket as an Englishman (see

the *ESEL*, Maddicott describes de Montfort's motivations in less noble terms as the "satisfaction of private grievances."⁹¹ De Montfort died in 1265 at the Battle of Evesham, one of the last battles between anti-royalists and the crown that effectively ended this particular chapter in the conflict between the crown and the barony. For the barony and the populace of the late thirteenth century, Evesham was the equivalent of a holy place and de Montfort was a saint. In his discussion of political sainthood in England, Russell identifies de Montfort as one in a "series of contemporary anti-royal leaders who were honored, partially at least, as saints."⁹² While the pro-royal forces viewed de Montfort and his followers as "traitor[s],"⁹³ for the Laud Misc. 108 audience, de Montfort and his followers were champions who fought for England and Christianity against England's king.

Mills, "Early *SEL* and Difference," *Texts and Contexts* 197-221), de Montfort's identity as an Englishman is likewise a constructed one. In terms of nationality, Maddicott explains, "French by birth, he had become by 1258 at the very least 'an honorary Englishman': his English inheritance, his marriage to Henry's sister, his midlands affinity and his role at the royal court, all grounded him in the country where his fortunes now lay" (see Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort* 361; Maddicott also references D. A. Carpenter, "King Henry III's 'Statute' against Aliens: July 1263," *English Historical Review*, 107 (1992): 937-9. See Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort* fn 63 p. 361). While genealogically and ethnically French, de Montfort enjoyed a dual acceptance in both countries. For a discussion of Becket's constructed English identity, see chapter 5 of this project, "The English Clergy as a Resistance Strategy."

⁹¹ For a detailed discussion of the difficulties between Henry III and de Montfort, see Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort*.

⁹² Josiah Clark Russell, "The Canonization of Opposition to the King in Angevin England," *Anniversary Essays in Medieval History* (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1967) 279-90. Original issue date 1929. Russell also identifies Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Becket, Bishop of Lincoln Hugh of Avalon, Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury Edmund of Abingdon, Bishop of Hereford Thomas Cantilupe, Bishop of Lincoln Robert Grosseteste, and Archbishop Winchelsey as "political saints." These are men devoted their lives to Christianity and to its defense, which included defense of England as a subset of Christianity.

⁹³ Heffernan, "Dangerous Sympathies" 4.

Because de Montfort had been excommunicated from the Church, he would never be canonized; however, de Montfort's posthumous political "sainthood" developed quickly, "within weeks of his death."⁹⁴ In spite of efforts by the pro-royal forces to denigrate de Montfort's memory, devotion to him was far-reaching and across many levels of society.⁹⁵ While the barony seems to be the target audience for the Laud Misc. 108, undoubtedly, de Montfort's political cause to limit the king's power and the memory of him struck a chord with many different groups of English society. Moreover, outside the king's control, de Montfort's memory held great spiritual potency as well. For example, Heffernan cites J. O. Halliwell, who observes that "the narratives written by the monks at Evesham report [...] approximately two hundred miracles performed through the intercession of de Montfort."⁹⁶ In an effort to minimize de Montfort's memory, the royalists had his body "dismembered and the feet, hands and testicles cut off, an act of barbarity which even the [chronicler and] royalist Wykes found shameful."⁹⁷ Heffernan states, "the severe mutilation of the Earl's body points to the depth of the division between the royalists and the rebels: the royalists wished to humiliate and decimate the baronial cause."⁹⁸ However, within the context of the Laud Misc. 108, the royalists' actions served to equate Simon de Montfort with other saints whose bodies had been

⁹⁴ Heffernan, "Dangerous Sympathies" 7.

⁹⁵ Heffernan identifies the wide-ranging groups of pilgrims to Evesham who came in honor of de Montfort as "devotees of diverse social classes, representing the wealthy, the knightly [...], and the villager [... as well as] [b]oth the secular and regular clergy [...] from the humble parish priest to clerics of importance" ("Dangerous Sympathies" 7).

⁹⁶ Heffernan, "Dangerous Sympathies" 7.

⁹⁷ Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort* 342.

⁹⁸ Heffernan, "Dangerous Sympathies" 5-6.

posthumously mutilated in order to prevent a relic around which the people could rally,⁹⁹ and to equate Henry III with other pagans and heretics who unrightfully mutilated the bodies of other saints well-known to the Laud Misc. 108 audience.¹⁰⁰ Henry III decreed that the price of venerating de Montfort as a saint was “corporeal punishment,” which, according to Heffernan, “underscores the King’s realization that the popular movement was directed as much against himself and towards [*sic*] those of the official church hierarchy who supported the royalist position as it was towards reverencing the Earl of Leicester’s memory.”¹⁰¹ In spite of, or in some measure because of, Henry’s efforts to minimize de Montfort’s relevance, de Montfort’s memory occupied a large space in the imagination of the people of England as their champion who fought to reign in the monarchy’s power.

A seemingly passing reference to Simon de Montfort occurs in the *ESEL St. Domenic*; the Simon de Montfort mentioned is not the actual rebel baron, but the rebel’s father. In his insightful discussion of the “Life of St. Dominic” as contained in the Laud Misc. 108 manuscript, Thomas Heffernan characterizes the mention of St. Dominic’s battle companion Simon de Montfort as a veiled reference, or “metaphoric

⁹⁹ One trope in hagiography is that the saint’s body is tortured and mutilated both while living and dead. King Edmund and Thomas Becket, for example, were beheaded; however, once head and body were rejoined, their bodies appeared to be alive. Along with King Edmund and St. Thomas, St. Edward’s body too seemed to be alive as well without any sign of decomposition, specifically worms or foul odors. Like Christ, their bodies (seem) to live even after grisly torture. They are Christ-like in their power over death.

¹⁰⁰ For other connections between Henry III, as well as William the Conqueror and Henry II, and the evil pagan emperors of the *ESEL*, see chapter 3 of this project, “The Use of Mirrored Language as a Resistance Strategy.”

¹⁰¹ Heffernan, “Dangerous Sympathies” 16.

displacement,” and “oblique[...] rather than referential [...] mention”¹⁰² of the son of Dominic’s battle companion against the Cathars in Toulouse in 1218. Because, as Heffernan explains, the Laud Misc. 108 audience likely would not know about their champion’s father, “metaphoric displacement” means that mention of “Simon de Montfort” would evoke the image of the son who held particularly emotional import as champion of the barony and of the English people. Discussing J. C. Russell’s work on hagiography, Heffernan points out that Russell “was the first to examine the manner in which political opponents of the king were transformed into ‘saints’ so as to serve an anti-monarchial movement.”¹⁰³ Although the older Simon de Montfort had no connection to Henry III, at the time of the Laud Misc. 108 manuscript’s compilation, the father’s name, identical to the son’s, would serve for the audience as a “thinly veiled” reference to the son’s saintly image and reputation¹⁰⁴ as the king’s “political opponent.”

Like the anti-Norman lines unique to the Laud Misc. 108 version of *St. Wulfstan*, there are lines unique to the Laud Misc. 108 version of *St. Dominic* (279.39-52 and 282.156-59)¹⁰⁵ that refer, if only tangentially, and “pay [...] compliments, albeit

¹⁰² Heffernan, “Dangerous Sympathies” 11.

¹⁰³ Josiah Clark Russell, “The Canonization of Opposition to the Norman and Angevin Kings,” *Anniversary Essays in Medieval History* (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1967) 279-90. Originally published in *Haskins Anniversary Essays in Medieval Studies*, eds. C. H. Taylor and J. L. LaMonte (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1929). Cited by Thomas Heffernan, “Dangerous Sympathies,” fn 11, p. 3.

¹⁰⁴ Robert Mills, “Early *SEL* and Difference,” *Texts and Contexts* 198. For Mills’ brief discussion of the import of young Simon de Montfort in *St. Dominic*, see 198.

¹⁰⁵ Manfred Görlach explains that the source of the *Dominic* legend is the *Legenda Aurea* (citing W. F. Manning, “The Middle English Verse of *Life of Saint Dominic*: Date and Source,” *Speculum* 31 (1956): 82-91). The references to Simon de Montfort in the *ESEL St. Domenic* (Horstmann 279.39-52 and 282-83.156-76), according to Görlach, “are, however, not represented in the [*Legenda Aurea*]; no close parallel for these passages have been found.” See *Textual Tradition*, n. 258 p. 286. Heffernan argues that “the scribe

indirectly”¹⁰⁶ to de Montfort. This veiled reference to de Montfort demonstrates that because the “vernacular legends were perfectly suited for political commentary,”¹⁰⁷ as a post-colonial text, evoking de Montfort would provide additional space for resistance and criticism. Syntactical ambiguities, or “double meaning[s],”¹⁰⁸ specifically word order, modifying phrases, and pronoun reference, allow for possible confusion of father and son, but likewise provide cover from which to criticize. While Heffernan’s reading is certainly correct, I would like to point out that his interpretation is only one possible reading. The lines in question read as follows:

An Eorl þare was in the londe þo: þat guod Man was i-nouȝ:
 Sire Symon de Mountfort : þat to all guodnesse drouȝ,
 his fader þat was here a-slawe : a-mong us in Englonde
 At the batayle of Euesham : þat longue worth onder-stonde
 (Horstmann 279.39-42).

In “Dangerous Sympathies,” Heffernan provides the following translation:

There was an Earl in that country who was a good man,
 Sir Simon de Montfort who showed forth all virtue.
 He was the father [of the one] slain here among us in England
 At the battle of Evesham, whose worth we well knew.¹⁰⁹

The third line (line 41) requires further analysis. I argue that another plausible translation

of the *Dominic vita* in the *SEL* is responsible for the addition of these lines.” See “Dangerous Sympathies” 12 and fn 33, p. 12.

¹⁰⁶ Mills, “Early *SEL* and Difference,” *Texts and Contexts* 198.

¹⁰⁷ Heffernan, “Dangerous Sympathies” 3.

¹⁰⁸ Heffernan, “Dangerous Sympathies” 12.

¹⁰⁹ Heffernan, “Dangerous Sympathies” 10.

of line 41 is “his father, who was slain here among us in England.” However, according to Heffernan’s translation, it is necessary to omit “his,” to insert “He was the,” and to translate “þat” as “of the one” in this third line in order to make the clarification that it is the older de Montfort being referenced. Not until the mention of Evesham in the following line (279.42) is it even possible that the father of the familiar de Montfort is the subject of these lines. One possible assumption would be that the distinction between the Simons¹¹⁰ “is an attempt on the early *SEL* poet’s part to avoid having the English listener confuse the two men, the one well-known to the audience and the elder foreign”¹¹¹? But would the audience know the difference between the two men and would they rightly modify the line to agree with Heffernan’s translation? According to Heffernan, specific information about the father would be vague for the contemporary audience.¹¹² As presented in the *Laud Misc.* 108, the elder de Montfort was a fine man, who, like many saints, “to alle guodnesse drouȝ” (279.40). He was also a “guod kniȝt [...] and hende” (282.156), a Christian crusader. However, on the darker side, J. R. Maddicott states that in reality the elder Simon de Montfort had a “reputation for greed and brutality [...] acquired during the Albigensian [or Cathar] crusade a generation earlier.”¹¹³ Thus, like many heroes of the *Laud Misc.* 108, the elder Simon de Montfort’s character is a

¹¹⁰ To add a possible third layer of confusion, the rebel baron also had a son named Simon who also played a role in the Battle of Evesham. For information about the rebel baron’s son of the same name, see Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort* 339-44; 370-71.

¹¹¹ Heffernan, “Dangerous Sympathies” 11.

¹¹² Heffernan notes the following information about the elder Montfort: “he was primarily responsible for the military reestablishment of Catholicism in those areas of the Midi under the sway of Catharism; he was the hero of the Battle of Toulouse, and worked closely with Dominic to establish the rule of orthodoxy.” See “Dangerous Sympathies” 11.

¹¹³ Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort* 110.

constructed one. The *ESEL* does not unequivocally clarify the referent Simon as father until the mention of St. Dominic in line 45.¹¹⁴ Only at that point could the audience understand that the Simon de Montfort of *St. Dominic* and the Simon de Montfort of Evesham are different people from two different time periods. The confusion in line 41 functions in much the same way that faulty pronoun reference functions: the unclear references open the space to evoke the Laud Misc. 108 audience's English hero. Surely the mention of Simon de Montfort and Evesham would "obliquely" remind the baronial audience of royal abuses and conflicts that brought about the baron's war and the Battle of Evesham and remind other possible segments of the audience of their own conflicts with Henry III.¹¹⁵ However, the text could reveal anti-colonial resistance commentary and criticize the crown all the while being able to claim that the confusion is merely a function of word order and faulty pronoun references only clarified when considering the entirety of the lines. It is the ambiguity, then, that allows for an interpretation of a post-colonial resistance to and criticism of the post-Conquest king.

Whether the references to Simon de Montfort in *St. Dominic* are to the father or the son is irrelevant because the damage has been done; for the Laud Misc. 108 audience, the image of the rebel baron has been evoked. The two lines following the ambiguous lines about Simon de Montfort (279.43-44) provide further opportunity to remind the audience about their own recent past. The Laud Misc. 108 *ESEL* reads, "þis guode knyzt

¹¹⁴ The lines read, "Seint Domenic al-so a-boute zeode : and prechede azein heom wel faste / So þat þis tweye guode Men : to-gadere heore heorte caste, / þat huy were boþe at one rede") ["Saint Dominic also about good and preached against them right away / so that these two good men together their hearts cast, because they were both of one mind"] (Horstmann 279.45-47).

¹¹⁵ See fn 119 below for a listing of complaints against Henry III as king.

sire Symon : strong knyzt was i-nou3 / And a-zein þis vuele cristine Men : to batayle al day he drou3” (Horstmann 279.43-44).¹¹⁶ It is possible that it remains unclear to the audience to which de Montfort the “good knight” refers. As a result, this point of ambiguity, of confusing father and son, would then allow the audience either to connect or confuse the pro-royalist opposition at Evesham with “these evil Christian men” (279.44) against whom St. Dominic and the elder de Montfort do “batayle” (279.44). In France Dominic and de Montfort battle the Cathars who practiced a heretical form of Christianity,¹¹⁷ and the Laud Misc. 108 equates Henry III and his supporters with the Cathars because Henry practiced an un-Christian form of kingship. Henry III, his son Edward I, and other pro-royal forces were all undoubtedly Christian,¹¹⁸ but “evil” men from the point of view of the Laud Misc. 108. Because the catalog of wrongs on the part of Henry III as king of England¹¹⁹ would have been well-known, the association between

¹¹⁶ “this good knight Sir Simon : was indeed [a] strong knight / and against these evil Christian Men : he engaged in battle all day” (279.43-44).

¹¹⁷ “Cathari,” *Encyclopædia Britannica, Encyclopædia Britannica Online Academic Edition*, Encyclopædia Britannica, 2011. 13 Oct. 2011.
<<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/99473/Cathari>>.

¹¹⁸ While “Christian” and “pagan” are reductive, one-dimensional terms denoting “good” and “bad” in the *ESEL*’s early Christian era legends, in the later legends, “Christian” and “evil” were no longer reductive terms because even Christians can be “bad.”

¹¹⁹ Some of Henry III’s policies that were harmful to the late thirteenth-century audience were excessive taxation both on the part of the state and Rome to finance papal wars in Sicily and to control revolts in English-held Gascony, Henry’s favoring of his and his wife’s French relatives in his government, and governing. For explanations of specific problems with Henry’s French relatives, see Michael Prestwich, “Englishmen and Foreigners,” *English Politics in the Thirteenth Century* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1990) 79-94; for a discussion of problems with “foreigners” in general during Henry III’s reign, see Huw Ridgeway, “King Henry III and the ‘Aliens’, 1236-1272,” *Thirteenth Century England II: Proceedings of the Newcastle upon Tyne Conference 1987*, ed. P. R. Coss and S. D. Lloyd (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1988) 81-92; although an outdated source at this point in time, Oliver H. Richardson’s discussion of the taxation imposed by Henry, the onerous taxes the Roman church extracted from England, Henry’s favoring of aliens

“these evil Christian men” and Henry and his actions is an easy connection for the Laud Misc. 108 audience to make. Because overt praise for rebel baron Simon de Montfort was dangerous and punishable by law after Evesham,¹²⁰ certainly the *ESEL* would avoid any overt praise for him. However, I argue that the *ESEL* uses deliberate ambiguity in *Domenic* to permit an easy, but deniable connection to rebel baron de Montfort that would rally the English anew to view their king skeptically, and would remind them of events leading up to the baronial wars of the recent past. As a result, the *ESEL* offers a safe place from which to offer political commentary as well as to criticize and resist the post-Conquest king.

While there is no definitive proof that the Laud Misc. 108, either in total or in part, resists the post-Conquest kings, the Laud Misc. 108 *ESEL* versions of *St. Wulfstan* and *St. Dominic* contain various post-colonial strategies that open a small but unobtrusive space for a possible interpretation that the audience resisted the Norman view of history and resisted their post-Conquest kings as legitimate rulers. By questioning the Conquest story, even if that meant embellishing or omitting certain information, and by reminding the audience of more recent conflict with post-Conquest king Henry III, the Laud Misc. 108 justifies and validates its audience’s resistance to the colonizers, extending the possibility of viewing the Laud Misc. 108 as a resistance document.

in his government, and the events leading to Evesham is nonetheless instructive. See Richardson, *National Movement*.

¹²⁰ Henry III made praise of Simon de Montfort against the law, what Heffernan calls a “harsh prohibition promulgated by Henry III which threatened ‘bodily harm’ against those who would give reverence to de Montfort.” See Heffernan, “Dangerous Sympathies” 8-9.

CHAPTER 5

The English Clergy as a Resistance Strategy

In the same way that the Laud Misc. 108 manuscript uses the saintly Anglo-Saxon king to portray a post-colonial-type resistance to the English kings of Norman descent, the *ESEL* likewise employs the English clergy, specifically the bishops, as justified and righteous examples of resistance to unworthy, illegitimate, and rapacious post-Conquest kings. The English bishops and archbishops venerated in the Laud Misc. 108 version of the *South English Legendary* (*ESEL*) are Cuthbert, Augustine, Dunstan, Wulfstan, Becket, and Edmund [of Abingdon] the Confessor. As Bishop of Durham, St. Cuthbert's interactions with the political leadership are not the focus of his legend; Cuthbert, therefore, is not a focus in this chapter. The other five legends specifically discuss the saints' interactions with the kings of England, weaving one pattern of venerating the Anglo-Saxon kings, and one of denigrating, through contrast, the post-Conquest English kings. Augustine and Dunstan, as bishops in pre-Conquest England, interact, of course, with Anglo-Saxon kings while Wulfstan, Becket, and Edmund of Abingdon interact with William, Henry II, and Henry III, respectively, in the post-Conquest years. The contrast between the pre-Conquest, Anglo-Saxon kings as recounted in the *ESEL* versions of *Dunstan* and *Augustine* and the post-Conquest English kings in the other three legends is striking¹: the pre-Conquest kings and bishops illustrate appropriate political and spiritual rule, while the post-Conquest kings of Norman descent illustrate the opposite. As a post-colonial strategy, this contrast serves to justify English resistance to the post-Conquest

¹ For a discussion of the contrast between the Anglo-Saxon kings and the post-Conquest English kings, see chapter 2 of this project, "The Ideal Anglo-Saxon King as a Resistance Strategy."

kings.

Of the nine English kings of Norman descent that reigned during the time period from the Conquest to the *ESEL* audience's present (circa 1270²), only William, Henry II, and Henry III receive lengthy narration,³ and those narratives place them in direct conflict with well-known and revered Anglo-Saxon or English clergymen, a conflict of which the *ESEL* takes great advantage. While Augustine and Dunstan and the Anglo-Saxon kings with whom they interact share exceptional character traits and common causes, goals, and points of view, such are not the circumstances for Wulfstan, Becket, and Edmund of Abingdon. Andrew Lynch describes the role of the post-Conquest bishop: "as servants of

² For the most recent scholarship regarding the dating of this manuscript, see A. S. G. Edwards, "Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108: Contents, Construction, and Circulation" 21-31; Thomas R. Liszka, "Talk in the Camps: On the Dating of the *South English Legendary*, *Havelok the Dane*, and *King Horn* in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108" 31-50; and Kimberly Bell and Julie Nelson Couch, introduction, 1-18. All three chapters are in *The Texts and Contexts of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108: The Shaping of English Vernacular Narrative*, eds. Kimberly Bell and Julie Nelson Couch (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011).

³ Other English kings of Norman descent who have brief mention in the Laud version of the *SEL* are William Rufus, Steven of Blois, Young King Henry, King Richard, and King John. William Rufus, who receives a brief, one-line mention in *St. Wulfstan*, is employed primarily to place a fixed date on Wulfstan's death (76.6). Steven of Blois has a one-line mention as the predecessor of Henry II in *St. Thomas* (113.233). William I's son Henry I has only a single reference in *St. Thomas* (117.374). The Young King Henry (Henry II's son who died before his father) only enters the discussion in *Becket* as a plot element (155.1693-1714). King John is mentioned only twice in *St. Thomas*: once along with his brother King Richard as the only remaining heirs to Henry II (174.2372); and once in connection to his penchant for "wicked counsel" ["For þe king Iohan þat longue was : euere of lufere rede, / luyte þouȝte bi is daie : to do so guode dede" (175.2411-12)]. Henry III, as a 13 year-old in *Thomas*, merits positive mention as the one responsible for ordering Becket's body moved and enshrined in the cathedral in Canterbury (175-76.2413-2456). In *St. Edmund the Confessor*, John is identified in only one line as Henry III's father (445.506). All subsequent line references to Horstmann's *Early South English Legendary* are noted parenthetically by page number and line number(s).

God rather than the crown, the *SEL*'s bishops defy the agendas of earthly monarchs"⁴; by contrast, the pre-Conquest bishops are never required to choose between God and the crown. The relationships between post-Conquest English kings and the English clergy in the *ESEL* are clearly adversarial. It is from these two pre-Conquest interactions and three post-Conquest interactions between the bishops and kings that the *ESEL* asks the audience to make broad, generalized conclusions about both Anglo-Saxon kings and about post-Conquest English kings. Encouraging the audience to make these generalizations serves as a post-colonial strategy creating a division, an us-versus-them, a powerless-versus-powerful dichotomy.

Just as Athelwold serves as the template in the *ESEL* for the ideal king, Thomas Becket, as a bishop who serves the Church and England in a manner like that of the pre-Conquest English bishops, functions as the template for the ideal clergyman. The *ESEL* goes to great lengths to cast both Wulfstan and Edmund of Abingdon in Becket's constructed heroic image. The "construction" of these bishops, then, is the vehicle for resistance.

Pre-Conquest Bishops

The pre-Conquest bishops set a precedent, a pattern of goodness for the post-Conquest English bishops in the *ESEL*. The first bishop mentioned in the *ESEL* is St. Augustine.⁵ While not English by birth, Augustine is responsible for bringing Christianity

⁴ Andrew Lynch, "Genre, Bodies, and Power in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108: *King Horn*, *Havelok*, and the *South English Legendary*," *The Texts and Contexts of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108: The Shaping of English Vernacular Narrative*, eds. Kimberly Bell and Julie Nelson Couch (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011) 192.

⁵ *St. Augustine* is numbered as item 12 in the Laud Misc. 108 manuscript. Items 1-7 are

to England in the late sixth century under the direction of Pope Gregory. The narrator presents Augustine as a knight doing battle with the devil. The narrator states that Augustine and the other missionaries “ȝeoden forth wel baldeliche : ase hardie knyȝtes and guode, / huy siweden all heore swete Baner: þe fourme of þe rode” (25.45-46).⁶ Metaphorically speaking, Augustine is an example of the good knight fighting for Christianity in England. Another more important element of the Augustine legend, though, is what the audience learns about Anglo-Saxon king Aþelbert.⁷ As a Christian, Augustine sees the importance of bringing Christianity to England, and Aþelbert, as a good king, sees the importance of allowing Christianity to come to England. That is, Augustine and Aþelbert are both interested in what benefits England.

Like St. Augustine, St. Dunstan is a pre-Conquest bishop who not only interacts with pre-Conquest Anglo-Saxon kings but who embodies the best of personal virtues. Dunstan, an Anglo-Saxon who lived during the tenth century, was first the Abbot at the Abby of Glastonbury, then Bishop of London and of Worcester, and finally Archbishop of Canterbury. Dunstan’s legend specifically emphasizes his wisdom and goodness. Aldelm, Dunstan’s uncle and Archbishop of Canterbury during Dunstan’s youth, recognizes Dunstan’s “guodnesse” and “his wise lore” (20.30) and “gret deinte [esteem] he hadde of him” (20.31). While “lore” designates scholarly learning, it also encompasses

missing from the manuscript; therefore, the Laud Misc. 108 manuscript begins with a fragment of the *Ministry and Passion*, marked as item 8, followed by *The Infancy of Christ*, marked as item 9. Horstmann begins his transcription of the *ESEL* with item 10 entitled *Santa Crux*.

⁶ “went forth very boldly : as strong in battle [*Middle English Compendium (MED)* 1a(a)] or resolute, courageous, faithful actions (*MED* 1a(c)) and good knights, / they all followed their sweet banner : [that was in] the form of the Holy Rood/Cross” (25.45-46).

⁷ For a further discussion of Aethelbert’s kingly qualities, see the chapter 2 of this project, “The Ideal Anglo-Saxon King as a Resistance Strategy.”

a spiritual meaning as well.⁸ Aldelm, then, is impressed not only with his nephew's scholarship, but also with his spiritual state. Moreover, Aldelm is impressed to the point of bringing his nephew before king Aþelston. As expected, Dunstan impresses Aþelston to the extent that the king "graunted e al his bone [request]" (20.33), meaning that the king had complete confidence in Dunstan's decisions and opinions. The narrator points out Dunstan's far-reaching reputation for goodness: "Men speken much of his guodnesse : wel wide feor and ner" (21.72).⁹ Dunstan was also a wise and faithful counselor to the Anglo-Saxon kings Eadmund and Edgar. As Archbishop of Canterbury, Dunstan did much to support and strengthen the church. The *Dunstan* narrator states that under Dunstan, "þe cristindom of Enguelonde : to guod stat he drov3 ./ And þe riztes of holi churche : he heold up faste i-nov3" (22.93-94).¹⁰ Not only does Dunstan strengthen and fortify the "kingdom of Christianity," but he also supports, upholds, and works with enthusiasm and devotion to preserve "the rights of [the] Holy Church," a phrase that essentially becomes a refrain in *St. Thomas of Canterbury* and functions to draw a direct connection between Becket and Dunstan.

Dunstan also shares common goals with the good Anglo-Saxon kings under whom he serves.¹¹ For example, the *Dunstan* narrator explains the difficulties present

⁸ *MED*, "lore" 2(b(a)).

⁹ "men speak much about his goodness : all over far and near" (21.72).

¹⁰ "he [Dunstan] had brought Christianity in England to a good position or status. / And the rights of the Holy Church he upheld vigorously" (22. 93-94).

¹¹ Edwin, who is king between Eadmund and Edgar, rejects Dunstan because of "bad counsel" he receives and has Dunstan exiled. Once Edgar becomes king after Edwin's death and hears of Dunstan's reputation, Edgar sends for Dunstan to be his counselor. Edwin is also the sole Anglo-Saxon king in the *ESEL* who is not of superior moral character. For a further discussion of King Edwin, see chapter 2 of this project, "The Ideal Anglo-Saxon King as Resistance Strategy."

within the clergy in Dunstan's time period stating that on the subject of bad clergymen, Athelwold (Bishop of Winchester), Oswald (Bishop of Worcester), and Dunstan "were all at one rede" (22.99)¹² to rid the clergy of those who were lecherous (22.96). The *St. Dunstan* legend includes "Edgar þe guode king" with this group of three clergymen who "do þat guode dede" (22.100). In other words, like Bishops Athelwold, Oswald, and Dunstan, King Edgar shares the goal of purifying the clergy and acts upon that goal. Through the Anglo-Saxon kings with whom Dunstan interacts, the *ESEL* underscores the rightful responsibility of a king in a medieval Christian kingdom to be "the natural protectors of the Church."¹³ Shared goals between the clergy and the king to honor and care for the church place the king in his correct and appropriate role and likewise justify the people's loyalty to him. Because William, Henry II, and Henry III, as presented in the *ESEL*, place preservation of their own power over protecting the church, they demonstrate kings who do not honor their spiritual responsibilities, and this attitude justifies the people's resistance to their kings.

Post-Conquest Bishops

The post-Conquest bishops emulate Augustine and Dunstan as exemplars of exceptional bishops from pre-Conquest days in their own efforts to defend "the rights of the Holy Church." Unlike Augustine and Dunstan, Wulfstan, Becket, and Edmund of Abingdon instead defend the rights of the Church *against* attacks by post-Conquest kings.

Why does the *ESEL* mention only Wulfstan, Becket, and Edmund? Other post-Conquest English bishops had conflict with their kings and had great success in limiting

¹² "were all of the same opinion" (22.99).

¹³ John A. F. Thomson, *The Western Church in the Middle Ages* (London: Arnold, 1998) 93, 103.

the king's power.¹⁴ By presenting only these three sainted bishops, the narrative creates an impression of general goodness in the English clergy. More importantly, by presenting only these three bishops, the narrative creates a potent Trinitarian image, both spatially within the manuscript and historically within the audience's post-Conquest world of the late thirteenth century. Wulfstan and Edmund serve as bookends to the Conquest of England: Wulfstan as the Bishop of Worcester when William the Conqueror arrived in 1066, and Edmund of Abingdon, who died in 1240, a mere 20 to 30 years prior to the compilation of the Laud Misc. 108 *South English Legendary* in approximately 1270, as the Archbishop of Canterbury during Henry III's reign. Becket stands as the center point, or the apex, of this Trinitarian image, as the quintessential symbol of opposition to a post-Conquest king. Becket, Wulfstan, and Edmund of Abingdon form a triangle, whose form imitates the Trinity, of English clerical strength in opposition to Norman domination and implies an historical constancy of English clerical resistance to the post-Conquest kings from the Conquest beginning with Wulfstan, through Becket, and ending with Edmund in the audience's recent past. The image of the Trinity underscores the spiritual endorsement the manuscript gives the bishops as well.

The significant length of *St. Thomas of Canterbury*,¹⁵ when compared to the other

¹⁴ Archbishop of Canterbury Anselm conflicted with both William Rufus and Henry I; known reformer and Archbishop of Canterbury Stephen Langton conflicted with King John. Josiah Clark Russell describes Langton's reforming efforts as "maneuvers [sic] which led to Magna Carta, one of the greatest of checks upon English Royalty." See "The Canonization of Opposition to the King in Angevin England," *Anniversary Essays in Medieval History* (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1967) 282.

¹⁵ Robert Mills indicates that *Becket* occupies 15% of the *sanctorale* portion of the *ESEL*. See "The Early *South English Legendary* and Difference: Race, Place, Language, and Belief," *The Texts and Contexts of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108: The Shaping of English Vernacular Narrative*, eds. Kimberly Bell and Julie Nelson Couch

legends in the *ESEL*, makes Becket stand out as the premier example of a clergyman defending both the English church and her people against an excessively greedy king. It is Becket who stood at the time and who stands even today as a model defender of the Church in England in opposition to a king who was increasingly encroaching upon the church's rights. To put the king, a king of Norman descent and whose legal right to rule is questionable,¹⁶ at odds with Becket, who represents the Church, leaves the king at a definite disadvantage. Speaking to Becket's popularity, Josiah Russell notes that "in the person of Becket resistance to the king had been canonized."¹⁷ By the time of the compilation and copying of the *SEL* approximately 100 years after his death, Becket's popularity had only continued to grow. The *ESEL* version of *Becket* takes advantage of Becket's famed resistance and uses it to further a post-colonial binary pitting a "good" bishop against a "bad" king.

In order for Becket to be an appropriate symbol of post-colonial resistance for the English people and the English church, the *ESEL* must transform or modify certain facts about Becket. The *Becket* legend begins by petitioning the audience, "Wolle 3e noupe i-heore þis engliche tale" (106.1).¹⁸ Emphasizing the "Englishness" of this particular story is in itself part of a construction. Though born in London, Becket's parents were from the Risle Valley area of Normandy and had immigrated to England several years before

(Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011) 192. While *St. Thomas of Canterbury* is 2,478 lines, most legends are less than 300 lines.

¹⁶ For a discussion of the legality of William's claim to the English throne, see chapter 4 of this project, "Hagiography as a Resistance Strategy."

¹⁷ Josiah Clark Russell, "Canonization of Opposition" 281.

¹⁸ "will you now hear this English tale" (106.1).

Becket's birth.¹⁹ The legend itself, however, indicates that his father, Gilbert Becket, "Of londone [...] was : A bordeys hende and fre" (106.3).²⁰ This description simply erases Becket's Norman roots; moreover, this description of Gilbert Becket's social status is ambiguous about his exact rank in society. The legend also participates in the fiction that Becket's mother was Saracen rather than Norman. The legend recounts the romantic tale of his father traveling to the Holy Land as penance and ending up in prison where Becket's mother, a woman "of hepenesse" (106.5), falls in love with Gilbert. His mother follows the father back to England, converts to Christianity, learns English, and raises Becket to be a good clergyman (106-12.1-202). The mother's identifying marker, "of hepenesse," is a term that indicates not only her identity as a non-Christian but also notes that she is not of English ethnic identity either. Mills argues that Becket's "mixed race heritage [...] is] ultimately effaced by a successful effort to foreground assimilation."²¹ In actuality, Becket's life story lacks such dramatic elements. Herbert Thurston states that Becket's "parents were not peasants, but people of some mark, and from his earliest years their son had been well taught and had associated with gentlefolk."²² Moreover, the legend mentions neither his parents' nor Becket's Norman roots and downplays Becket's

¹⁹ For Becket's parental origins, see Robert Bartlett, *England Under the Norman and Angevin Kings: 1075-1225* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000) 17. See also Herbert Thurston, "St. Thomas Becket," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, v. 14 (New York: Robert Appleton Co., 1912); access date 26 April 2011
<<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14676a.htm>>.

²⁰ "was from London, a citizen (with full rights and privileges) of noble and free status" (106.3).

²¹ Mills, "Early *SEL* and Difference," *Texts and Contexts* 212. For Mills' larger discussion of the *ESEL* representation of Becket's mother as one who fully assimilates into England and into Christianity, see Mills, "Early *SEL* and Difference," *Texts and Contexts* 207-12.

²² Herbert Thurston, "St. Thomas Becket," *Catholic Encyclopedia*.

schooling and social connections.²³ This constructed presentation of Becket's genealogical background presents Becket as a true Englishman, as one of the folk, and emphasis on the legend as an "English tale" helps to highlight the legend's special significance for the English audience.

The *ESEL* represents protecting the church and her rights against the encroaching actions of the king as the primary responsibility of the clergy in England, just as it was Christ's responsibility too. In his discussion of Roman rule, Christ clearly delineates the divide between secular and religious life: "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God, the things that are God's."²⁴ Also revealed in Christ's statement is an understanding that there is a difference between the crown's rights and the church's rights. In *St. Thomas*, the phrase "holi churches rizte" functions almost as a drum beat appearing in one version or another twenty-five times²⁵ throughout *Becket*. Unlike the unity of purpose shared by the pre-Conquest bishops and their Anglo-Saxon kings, the main conflicts that required Becket's defense of the "holi churches rizte" against the king manifest in three central arguments: the king not appointing new bishops for extended periods of time in order to allow the crown to collect the revenues payable to the bishoprics,²⁶ the issue of royal taxation, and the issue of whether clergymen could be

²³ See below for a discussion of the *ESEL* legend's downplaying of Becket's educational level and social status.

²⁴ Matthew 22:21, *Latin Vulgate Bible, Douay-Rheims Catholic Bible*; access date 3 December 2011 <<http://www.drbo.org/index.htm>>.

²⁵ For the phrase "holi churches rizte," including variant spellings, see 113.228-29, 114.255, 118.424, 120.481, 128.772, 133.933, 136.1047, 136.1048, 137.1093, 146.1395, 117.1431, 150.1528, 151.1566, 152.1588, 152.1602, 154.1651, 157.1784, 162.1940, 162.1944, 162.1946, 166.2074, 166.2083, 166.2095, 171.2264; for "bi-nimez al her rizte," see 146.1381.

²⁶ Bartlett refers to "the amphibious nature of the bishops of Norman England—they

tried in state courts instead of in church courts.²⁷

While filling bishoprics with "royal clerks" was also a practice in the Anglo-Saxon church,²⁸ appointments as practiced by the post-Conquest kings were a point of contention between the kings and the English clergy. Bartlett explains that the Norman and Angevin kings would "use bishoprics to reward their clerical servants and the episcopal bench had a definite pro-monarchical tinge."²⁹ During the time of William I, what John Thomson describes as "an age of conflict and possible schism" between church and state, Rome and its clergy had to be realistic when dealing with kings. Thomson writes, "[h]owever, much they might wish to lay down a principle of ecclesiastical independence, political exigencies meant that they [the clergy] had to be pragmatists,"³⁰ and, therefore, had to submit to royal preferences on issues of appointees. William I also succeeded in micromanaging the church by requiring, for example, that all papal correspondence and instruction went first through the king.³¹ In spite of his overt attempt at micromanagement, William negotiated his relationship with the clergy rather well. Jill Frederick writes, "William maintained a relatively conciliatory attitude toward the English ecclesiastical hierarchy, at least in the first few years following the Conquest."³² Quoting M. T. Gibson from his work *Lanfranc of Bec*, Frederick

were barons as well as pastors" (*England Under the Norman and Angevin Kings* 408).

²⁷ For an historical account of these debates, see Robert Bartlett, *England Under the Norman and Angevin Kings* 403.

²⁸ Bartlett, *England Under the Norman and Angevin Kings* 395.

²⁹ Bartlett, *England Under the Norman and Angevin Kings* 398.

³⁰ Thomson, *Western Church* 95.

³¹ Thomson, *Western Church* 96.

³² Jill Frederick, "The *South English Legendary*: Anglo-Saxon saints and national identity," *The Literary Appropriations of the Anglo-Saxons from the Thirteenth to the Twentieth Century*, eds. Donald Scragg and Carole Weinberg (Cambridge: Cambridge

emphasizes, “the only bishops who were deposed were those involved in the recent revolts; otherwise William was content to wait for the death of an incumbent and then replace him with his own candidate.”³³ Overall, William had a marked level of control over the church and over time was able to fill the bishoprics of England with those who were loyal to him during the invasion and afterward irrespective of the appointee’s experience, clerical training, or prior ordination.

Because of William’s strong ties and his successors’ strong ties to France, many of the appointees to bishoprics or to abbacies were foreign-born. During the twelfth century, more bishops were born in England, but most of them continued to be of French descent.³⁴ Citing the *Vita Wulfric*, Bartlett illustrates the disconnect within the clergy of both English and French descent. Bartlett states, “one English priest complained that, since he knew no French, he was ‘forced to remain dumb in the presence of the bishop and archdeacon’.”³⁵ William’s successors followed his practice of using bishoprics as reward; in fact, Becket’s appointment was reward for his own service to Henry II as Chancellor. Bartlett explains one reason for the king’s interest in clerical appointments during the Norman and Angevin period (1066-1225, from the rule of William I to that of Henry III): “[f]ree election’ as defined by canon law placed the selection of the new bishop in the hands of the local cathedral clergy. It was unlikely that the king would be willing to concede such a crucial political power to these assemblies of ecclesiastical

UP, 2000) 58.

³³ Frederick, “The South English Legendary” 58. See also, Robert Bartlett, *England Under the Norman and Angevin Kings* 63-4, 406.

³⁴ Bartlett, *England Under the Norman and Angevin Kings* 400-01.

³⁵ J. Ford, *Vita Wulfric* I.14 pp. 28-9 cited by Bartlett, *England Under the Norman and Angevin Kings*, fn 62, p. 401.

careerists, younger sons of local landowners and royal clerks. He allowed forms of election, but usually made his own wishes clear.”³⁶ Throughout the Norman and Angevin periods, following canon law would threaten the kings' power structure by ceding some power to those groups who sought to limit the king's power. Such a threat to his power could provide the king with ample reason to press for appointees who would support his agenda. During the Norman and Angevin periods, the English clergy saw such political influence as infringing upon the rights of the church. Bartlett quotes Hugh, Bishop of Lincoln (1185-1200) and contemporary of Henry II, who questioned the legality of such a practice. Hugh accuses Henry II of “abusing the power that his predecessors had *usurped* of appointing bishops and abbots” (emphasis mine).³⁷ In conjunction with these appointments, the quality of pastoral care diminished during the Norman and Angevin periods as well. For example, commenting on Henry III's appointment of Boniface of Savoy³⁸ as Archbishop of Canterbury, Oliver H. Richardson calls the appointment “a national misfortune of the first magnitude”³⁹ because Boniface “cared but little for his English flock, and passed his time abroad.”⁴⁰ In summary, by the time of Henry II's reign in the mid-twelfth century, the post-Conquest kings had adopted the practice of the pre-Conquest kings to appoint bishops; however, the post-Conquest kings had varied the practice to the extent that the English viewed it as another power that the post-Conquest kings had seized to which they had no right.

³⁶ Bartlett, *England Under the Norman and Angevin Kings* 406.

³⁷ Bartlett, *England Under the Norman and Angevin Kings* 406.

³⁸ Boniface was Archbishop of Canterbury from 1243 to 1270. Prior to his appointment as archbishop, he was Bishop of Belley in France.

³⁹ Oliver H. Richardson, *The National Movement in the Reign of Henry III and Its Culmination in the Barons' War* (New York and London: MacMillan & Co., 1897) 108.

⁴⁰ Richardson, *National Movement* 109.

An additional issue related to the question of the king's right to appoint bishops is that the Henry II purposefully allowed bishoprics to remain empty with the specific aim of allowing the monies collected to go to the king rather than to the church.⁴¹ The *St. Thomas* narrator addresses this point: after the Bishops of Winchester and Hereford died (116.355-56), "þe bischopriches fullen boþe : In-to þe kingus hond, / For-to onder-fonge al þe prov þare-of : asa lawe was in þe lond"⁴² As "law of the land," delaying the appointment of a new bishop allowed the post-Conquest kings to profit greatly because the established custom when a bishop died was that the monies normally collected by the bishop's diocese would go directly to the king as long as the bishopric remained empty. On this issue, as well as on issues of taxation and the judicial treatment of clergymen, the *ESEL* Becket confronts the king. The legend states that Becket "þouzte þat it was swiþe much : a-zen ore louernes wille, / And þat þe king mihte In swuche manere : holi church a-spille"⁴³ The use of a term such as "spille" allows the *ESEL* to emphasize that the king's not appointing bishops is a practice that will not merely harm, but "destroy" the church. The king's actions overstep his rights on an issue protected by canon law.⁴⁴ At this point in the legend Becket continues to serve as the king's Chancellor; however, it becomes evident to Becket that because the king does not defend the church's rights, Becket cannot maintain both posts. He cannot serve both the king and God (117.369-72).

⁴¹ Bartlett, *England Under the Norman and Angevin Kings* 406.

⁴² "the bishoprics fell both into the king's hands / in order to seize all the profit thereof as was the law of the land" (116.357-58).

⁴³ "thought that it was so much against our Lord's will / and that the king might in such a way destroy the holy church" (117.363-64).

⁴⁴ Bartlett, *England Under the Norman and Angevin Kings* 406.

Becket does acknowledge and defer to the king's right as his sovereign, but does so while connecting the king's sovereignty, as Henry II practices it, with Henry's evil actions against the church. The legend states that Becket serves as the church's champion, its knight in shining armor. The legend describes Becket's clerical clothing as that of a knight:

Ane Creoyz he nam in is hond : and wende forth baldeliche.

þe uestimenz was is Armure : ase bi-feol to swuch ane knizte;

þe fourme of þe creoiȝ was is baner : for holi church to fiȝte.

Forth wende þis guode knizt : a-mong alle his fon (135.957-59).⁴⁵

Just as SS Augustine and Dunstan did in the Anglo-Saxon past, Thomas Becket always cares for the church because, in Becket's case, "þe king dude hire wouȝ ["woe"] (151.1554). The church, as a damsel in distress, needs a knight in shining armor to save her from threats to her virtue that come, in this case, from the king himself. Even King Henry understands the implication of Thomas being dressed in his official ceremonial clothing. Upon seeing Thomas, Henry is "wrathþede" (134.974) stating, "hov þis man me schent / In ȝwuche manere is he In-to þis court [...] / Ase þei we ne lefden nouȝte on cristindom : ne In godes name" (134.975-77).⁴⁶ Dressed as a "knight," Becket articulates the militant metaphor when he implores the king and his men to "weorri nonmore op-on holi church : ȝif it were is wille" (151.1556).⁴⁷ Terms such as "spill"⁴⁸ and "war" in this

⁴⁵ "A cross he took in his hand : and went forth boldly. / The vestments were his armor as is suitable for such a knight; / the form of the cross was his banner : for the holy church to fight. / This good knight went forth : among all [of] his foes" (135.957-59).

⁴⁶ "how this man dishonors me! In such a manner does he [come] into this court [...] / as though we did not believe in Christianity : nor in God's name" (134.975-77).

⁴⁷ "war no more on [the] Holy Church : if it were his will" (151.1556).

combative context indicate an on-going action of serious consequence as opposed to a temporary political conflict. Henry's actions place him as the "other" against whom the "we" on our side fight and resist. Not only does the poet's characterization of the conflict between Henry and Becket as "war" against the church paint Henry in particularly condemning terms, Henry is also set up as the undeniable villain. In fact, the narrator guides the audience's response with the phrase "3if it were is wille." Through this phrase, Becket does acknowledge the king's place as king and sovereign, but secondly, and more importantly, the if/then construction provides no position that presents Henry's actions or motives as honorable. If Henry continues this conflict, then he admits that it is his desire to continue this long-lasting "war" against the church; if Henry ceases the conflict, he tacitly admits that his past actions have been in rebellion against the church and God. Because Becket, as presented in the legend, assesses that the king does not have the legal or moral right to collect rents from the empty bishoprics, Becket chooses to defend the "right," or what is legally and morally the correct course of action, by serving the Holy Church and serving God, a course of action which is indisputably a wise and worthy choice in the eyes of the *ESEL* audience.

While Becket recognizes the king as his sovereign, Becket nevertheless chooses God over his king and commits foremost to serve the Church. Becket says, "I ne mai nouzt loke bope wel" (118.408).⁴⁹ In an effort to cast Edmund in the Becket mold, Edmund too chooses to serve the church over his king. *St. Edmund* reads, "wel ofte he

⁴⁸ The *St. Thomas* legend uses the phrase "holi churche to spille," or destroy, six separate times: 117.364, 120.466, 131.876, 142.1270, 143.1284, and 151.1570.

⁴⁹ "I am unable to guard both well," [that is, positions as Archbishop of Canterbury and as Chancellor of England]" (118.408).

[Edmund] bad þe kinge and his : ȝif it were heore wille, / þat huy ne weorreden nouȝt a-ȝein holi church” (446.515-16).⁵⁰ The repetition of the image of the king at war with the Church makes Edmund’s conciliatory “bow to the king’s will” ring hollow. The repetition of the same conditional construction links Edmund to Becket. Like Becket, when faced with those who “war” against the church, Archbishop Edmund is obliged to care for the church. According to *Edmund*, King Henry III does indeed fight against the church: the narrator points out that “þe king and much del of is folk : a-ȝein holie church was” (445.507).⁵¹ To stress that Henry III contends against the Holy Church is a particularly condemning statement to make about a Christian king who has the important and specific responsibility, as perceived in the Middle Ages, to protect the Church.⁵² Moreover, it is a dangerous and radical statement for the *ESEL*, which was compiled in the last quarter of the thirteenth century,⁵³ to question Henry III’s Christian devotion so soon after his death in 1272. The political realities are simple: within a certain powerful segment of society there would continue to be loyalties to Henry III, and certainly on the part of his son, King Edward I, devotion and loyalty would undoubtedly continue to exist. As crown prince and leader of the royal forces against the rebel barons at Evesham in 1265, Edward would be counted as one of Henry’s “folk”; therefore, the dangers of questioning Henry’s Christian devotion so soon after his death are numerous. The risk, however, seems to have been worth taking for the *ESEL* compilers.

⁵⁰ “often he asked the king and his [men] : if it were their will [to do so], / that they not war or contend against the Holy Church” (446.515-16).

⁵¹ “the king and a great number of his followers were against the Holy Church” (445.507).

⁵² Thomson, *Western Church* 103.

⁵³ See footnote 2 above for scholarship on the dating of *the Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108*.

While the exact nature of the problems between Henry III and Edmund is never stated in the *ESEL*, the similarities between the Becket and Edmund stories were part of the hagiographical tradition by the time of the *ESEL*'s compilation. In his work tracing the hagiographical tradition of St. Edmund of Abingdon, C. H. Lawrence points out that Matthew Paris, in compiling his version of the *Life of St. Edmund* in the mid-thirteenth century,⁵⁴ borrowed heavily from the life and history of St. Edmund written previously by Edmund's personal chaplain, Eustace of Faversham. In his borrowings, Paris "endeavoured to infuse some historical facts into these studied platitudes."⁵⁵ In actuality, Eustace himself borrowed heavily⁵⁶ from the *Life of Becket* written by Becket's own clerk John of Salisbury. Eustace first produced what Lawrence calls a "draft Life of St. Edmund" that Eustace compiled using the letters of postulation⁵⁷ in addition to his own personal knowledge of Archbishop Edmund. Eustace later produced what Lawrence calls the "Life of St. Edmund," which seems to have been completed "before the Procès [for beatification] had ended" in 1246.⁵⁸ In Lawrence's estimation of Eustace's work, whenever "the letters [of postulation] fail him up to the archbishop's departure [into France], he borrows frequently from the Life of Becket."⁵⁹ In fact, Eustace seems to have "borrowed passages freely" from Salisbury's work, "incorporat[ing] verbatim a number

⁵⁴ C. H. Lawrence, *St. Edmund of Abingdon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960)169.

⁵⁵ Lawrence, *St. Edmund of Abingdon* 169.

⁵⁶ Lawrence, *St. Edmund of Abingdon* 79.

⁵⁷ Letters of postulation are letters written by eye witnesses to the life, actions, or posthumous miracles of a candidate for sainthood produced for use in the legalistic process of beatification. For an explanation of the procès (or the legal proceeding) and practices for beatification in the thirteenth century, see Lawrence, *St. Edmund* 7-30.

⁵⁸ Lawrence, *St. Edmund* 30.

⁵⁹ Lawrence, *St. Edmund* 35.

of the passages.”⁶⁰ Unlike the play-by-play accounting of the progression of the argument between Henry II and Becket in the *ESEL*, which extends from initial disagreement to Becket’s death and covers some 1,814 lines, or seventy-three per cent of the legend (116-68.355-2169), the *ESEL Edmund* legend requires only forty-seven lines, or merely seven and one-half per cent of the legend (445-47.505-52), to dramatize the argument between Henry III and Edmund. The lack of details in the *ESEL*’s dramatic representation of Archbishop Edmund at odds with Henry III serves to perpetuate the theme of opposition between church and king already established in *Becket*. The repetition of the pattern in *Edmund*, rather than the recitation of the particular details, implies similarities between Becket and Edmund, but the repetition also encourages the audience to complete any gaps with Becket-like situations and Becket-like devotion on Edmund’s part.

The *ESEL* further aligns Edmund with Becket by having Becket appear to Edmund on two separate occasions. In each instance, Becket encourages Edmund, again without specific details, in his conflict with the king. Becket counsels, though not in direct address:

[...] beo stif and studefast : to holde up þe churches rihte
 And for non eorþelich anuy : ne for deþe, ne flechchie nouȝt,
 Ake nime ansauple of him and oþure : þat so deore as hadde a-bouȝt (446.536-38).⁶¹

Becket’s apparition not only encourages Edmund to remain true to the cause of defending

⁶⁰ Lawrence, *St. Edmund* 25.

⁶¹ “be firm of belief and resolute to hold up the church’s rights / And because of any earthly displeasure : nor because [of] death, waver not, / But take example from him [Becket] and others : who had bought [the church’s rights at] so high a price” (446.536-38).

the church's rights, but also to be inspired by those who had paid so high a price for the Church's rights. While the lines certainly allude to "other" saints found within the *ESEL* who have paid for their devotion to Christianity with their lives, the lines allude more importantly to Christ, the one who bought the church for a dear price, His life. The verb "abien" means to buy, to "pay for (something), obtain at the cost of labor or suffering,"⁶² which was Christ's role as redeemer. Such references align Becket with Christ, and, by extension, they align Edmund with Christ as well. The intentional re-making of Edmund in Becket's image and purpose is an effective post-colonial maneuver for several reasons: it taps into the glorious past that figures Becket as English, it places the archbishop against the post-Conquest kings' in their attempts to undermine the Holy Church and God; and it reinforces the good/bad binary. Moreover, having Becket appear to Edmund and encourage him in his difficulties with the king is an even more powerful, explicit appeal to the audience to make connections between the two archbishops and Christ. In the early writer Eustace's defense, Lawrence posits that Eustace sought "to show that Becket's mantle had fallen on St. Edmund"⁶³; the *ESEL St. Edmund* perpetuates this tradition.

In addition to modeling Edmund's differences with Henry III after Becket's differences with Henry II, and also including Becket's posthumous support to Edmund, the hagiographers also fashion a story of Edmund's exile to Pontigny that serves further to equate Edmund with Becket. The *ESEL* describes Edmund's travel to Pontigny: "seint Eadmund under-stod : of is Auncetres i-nowe, / 3wane huy were in kontek for holie

⁶² *MED*, "abien" 1(a).

⁶³ Lawrence, *St. Edmund* 36.

churche : to pounteneye heom drowe : / Also dude seint Eadmund” (447.555-57).⁶⁴ The lines imply that many previous Archbishops, “[h]is Auncetres,” made the same journey to Pontigny when they also needed to defend the Holy Church against their kings. While it is true that Edmund went to Pontigny, France sometime in the summer before his death in November 1240, the exile element seems to be historically inaccurate. Lawrence points out that “it is difficult to discover any important issue which could have induced Edmund to withdraw from England in 1240.”⁶⁵ According to Lawrence, “[t]here is no doubt that relations between the king and the bishops were strained in 1240, for Henry’s [III] manipulation of Episcopal elections was causing much anxiety.”⁶⁶ However, none of the annalists nor chroniclers of the period term Edmund’s travels to Pontigny and subsequent death in Soisy as an “exile.”⁶⁷ Edmund’s travels to Pontigny simply provide another instance where the hagiographers could solidify connections they saw between Edmund and Becket.

As with *St. Edmund*, *St. Wolston* reveals an attempt in the *ESEL* to present

⁶⁴ “Saint Eadmund understood : sufficiently about his ancestors [former Archbishops], / when they were in contending [for] on the side of the Holy Church : they went [drew] to Pontigny : [which] did Saint Eadmund also” (447.555-57).

⁶⁵ Lawrence, *St. Edmund* 169.

⁶⁶ Lawrence, *St. Edmund* 171.

⁶⁷ In *St. Edmund*, Lawrence points out that for Edmund to go to Pontigny “in exile” would have required a “conspiracy of silence on the part of the contemporary chroniclers” (172). Lawrence specifically names the following annalists, none of whom even briefly note an exile: the Rochester annalist; Richard of Morins, the Dunstable annalist, who was “one of the best informed commentators of the time” (173); the continuator of Gervase of Canterbury, who indicates that Edmund was sick when he left Gravelines but continued on the Pontigny anyhow; the Oseney annalist, who states only that Edmund “crossed the seas about the Feast of All Saints, was taken ill at Pontigny, and that continuing on his way to Soisy, he died at that place” (173). Two other annalists note Edmund’s trip to Pontigny, but “offer a perfectly natural explanation of the archbishop’s journey and death in France” (*St. Edmund* 173-74).

Wulfstan in the same light as Becket is presented, representing the Church's resistance to the conqueror. Although discussing a version of *St. Wulfstan* from D'Evelyn and Mill's edition of the later *SEL*,⁶⁸ Jill Frederick points out that *Wulfstan* "reinterprets past in terms of present"⁶⁹; the *ESEL* version does the same. Wulfstan's opposition to the then enthroned king William comes after a forty-two-line complaint (73.60-102, or eighteen per cent of a 232-line legend) about the illegal and immoral invasion and continued occupation by the "Noremauns" (73.81).⁷⁰ Even though the *Wolston* legend establishes that the post-Conquest kings are illegitimate (73.90), Bishop Wulfstan understands the political realities. Wulfstan is the king's subject; however, like *Becket*, the *Wolston* legend questions what Bishop Wulfstan views as the king's violation of the boundary between the church's rights and the king's rights. William and his appointees to major bishoprics, Norman Lanfranc as Archbishop of Canterbury and Gundulf as Bishop of Rochester,⁷¹ desire to remove Wulfstan from his position as Bishop of Worcester. The three wish "to don him shame" (74.116), to cause Wulfstan shame over the fact that

⁶⁸ Frederick speaks specifically of the version of *St. Wulfstan* as contained in the D'Evelyn and Mill's edition version of the *South English Legendary*, a transcription produced from the following manuscripts: British Museum MS Harley 2277; Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS 123; Bodley MS Ashmole 43; and British Museum MS Cotton Julius D. ix. See "Introduction," *The South English Legendary: Edited from Corpus Christi College Cambridge MS 123 and British Museum MS Harley 2277 with Variants from Bodley MS Ashmole 43 and British Museum MS Cotton Julius D. IX*, eds. Charlotte D'Evelyn and Anna J. Mill, v. 3 (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), 1-28.

⁶⁹ Frederick, "The *SEL*: Anglo-Saxon saints" 65.

⁷⁰ For a discussion of the illegality of William the Conqueror's claim to the English throne, see chapter 4 of this project, "Hagiography as a Resistance Strategy."

⁷¹ The historical Gundulf is "the mastermind behind the Tower of London." See Bartlett, *England Under the Norman and Angevin Kings* 277.

Wulfstan “nas nouzt [...] : wel gret clerk in lore” (74.111),⁷² which, in reality, was not a requirement for the bishops in Wulfstan’s day. John Thomson points out that “from the twelfth century onwards a new breed of men, university-educated clergy, whose training was philosophical and intellectual rather than contemplative and devotional, became increasingly prominent. Significantly, training in canon law became a valuable qualification for high ecclesiastical office.”⁷³ This practice, one which would be applicable in the case of Becket and Edmund Rich, is anachronistic in terms of bishops at the time of the Conquest. Even though Wulfstan pre-dates this intellectual trend in the priesthood, the *ESEL* audience would be familiar with such trends and would likely see Wulfstan’s lack of formal education as evidence for the audience that he is one of them, one of the English people. In fact, in an effort to align Becket and Edmund Rich with the English people, the *ESEL* understates their level of education.⁷⁴ Educational level also introduces class issues by pitting the unlearned against the learned. Rather than responding defensively or being “schamed,” as William, Lanfranc, and Gundulf had wished, Wulfstan acknowledges his place in the power relationship with William, “sire king, þou art mi souerein : and þe erchebischop [Lanfranc] al-so. / [...] Wel fain i-chulle eouwer heste do : ase mine souereines, i-wis” (74.128, 132).⁷⁵ In the triumphant episode immediately following, Wulfstan inserts his cross into the marble tomb of St. Edward and later removes it (75.138-88). This feat provides miraculous proof that Wulfstan should retain his bishopric. In spite of the obvious divine endorsement, Wulfstan

⁷² “was not [a] well-schooled or knowledgeable, scholarly clerk” (74.111).

⁷³ Thomson, *The Western Church* 119.

⁷⁴ I will discuss the *ESEL* minimizing of both Becket’s and Edmund’s education below.

⁷⁵ “dear king, you are my sovereign and the archbishop also. Gladly shall I do your bidding because you are my sovereigns, I know” (74.128, 132).

reiterates his willingness to do his “souereines wille” three additional times (75.165, 76.175, and 76.179). Wulfstan first mention of doing his sovereign’s will comes, however, in the episode where William, Lanfranc, and Gundulf (74.109-38) attempt to remove him from office. Wulfstan includes the understated *caveat* that he [Wulfstan] will be “Vn-boughsome [unrebellious] to holie churche” (74.133). Such claims of submission seem insincere. Whatever his sovereign’s will may be, much like Becket, Wulfstan, as presented in the *ESEL*, will not override his true devotion to God and His church: the reality constructed in the post-Conquest legends of the *ESEL* is that pleasing both king and Church, or God, were at cross-purposes.

When faced with questions of right and wrong, the bishops do not hesitate to speak out for the right, which is, by definition, what God would have them do. Of the episodes recorded, the *ESEL* clearly places the post-Conquest bishops on the side of “right” and the post-Conquest kings on the side of wrong. *Becket* demonstrates in incident after incident Archbishop Becket’s finely-honed sense of justice and right. Even early in his time as Archbishop of Canterbury and while concurrently employed as Chancellor of England, a position described as the king’s “hexte [highest] conseilier” (116.351), Becket finds himself in direct opposition to the king. The narrator states that whenever Becket saw the king do anything that contradicted the “right,” he spoke out against it: “Euere 3wane he ani-þing dude : þat were a-3en þe rizte, / Seint Thomas it with-seide : euere with al is mizte” (116.353-54).⁷⁶ “With-seide” means to voice opposition. As the narrator presents Becket, no matter the circumstances nor the situation,

⁷⁶ “whenever he did anything that was against the right / St. Thomas objected with all his might” (116.353-54).

his moral compass guides his actions and responses, a characteristic supported in the historical accounts of Becket. Like Becket with Henry II, Wulfstan “wel ofte him [William] withseide” (73.103), that is, Wulfstan not only opposes William, but does so outwardly, vocally, and often. And, like Becket, Wulfstan does not fear for his safety. Wulfstan’s boldness in opposition to the king mirrors Becket’s.

Even though Wulfstan’s purported “fearlessness [and] courage” in opposition to the cruel conqueror painted in the *ESEL* are characteristics appropriate for any champion of the subjugated English, historical fact refutes this representation of Wulfstan. In return for loyalty at Hastings, William rewarded his supporters with land or positions of power, including clerical positions of power. According to Bartlett, William “quickly and thoroughly Normanized” the “English episcopate.”⁷⁷ By 1076, Wulfstan was the only pre-Conquest English bishop still occupying his position. Frederick, citing R. R. Darlington’s *The Vita Wulstani of William of Malmesbury*, rightly points out that Wulfstan, despite his portrayal in the *SEL*, was in actuality “among the first [of the] bishops to submit to the Normans.”⁷⁸ Frederick also emphasizes, “the episode [...] wherein both William and Lanfranc threaten to remove Wulstan from his bishopric, and the miracle that ensues (the embedding of Wulstan’s crozier in the marble of St. Edward’s tomb in Westminster) as a result of their threats, is not very likely to have occurred.”⁷⁹ Bartlett’s and Frederick’s point is that the only way Wulfstan would have been able to retain his bishopric would be if he were obliging to William. Therefore, what Frederick characterizes as “the speaker[’s] re-creat[ion of] Wulfstan as an English

⁷⁷ Bartlett, *England Under the Norman and Angevin Kings* 400.

⁷⁸ Frederick, “The *SEL*: Anglo-Saxon Saints” 66.

⁷⁹ Frederick, “The *SEL*: Anglo-Saxon Saints” 66.

patriot”⁸⁰ conflicts with historical evidence. However, though historically inaccurate, a defiant Wulfstan serves a purpose for the *ESEL* and its late thirteenth-century audience: this re-created Wulfstan is an Anglo-Saxon, and he is a champion for England and her people, and he is also bold and self-assured when faced with an illegitimate and cruel king. While the English people may feel impotent when faced with a powerful and rapacious king in Henry III, Wulfstan, as a bold opponent to an equally if not more rapacious king, would serve as an example of what the English people themselves could do. This version of Wulfstan could serve as an opportunity for the *ESEL* audience to connect the illegitimate William with their own king Henry III and to embolden the audience to speak “baldeliche” (73.105) against their own illegitimate and abusive king. Where the historical Wulfstan fails, the constructed Wulfstan provides a strong tradition of resistance in the fashion of Becket and the pre-Conquest bishops.

Becket, Wulfstan, and Edmund bravely voice their opposition in bold yet measured tones. The legend records many instances when Becket defends his own actions and opinions before the King of England, the King of France, and/or the Pope, and in so doing, Becket is bold, yet respectful and calm, and his calm is also in direct contrast to Henry’s comportment. When Henry II and Becket appear before King Louis of France as arbiter of their dispute, Henry is “wroth i-nov3” (151.1567), but Becket “stod and bi-pou3te him : and gan to siche sore” (151.1583).⁸¹ At the point when King Louis, who previously sided with Becket, changes his position to side with Henry, King Louis and King Henry leave “In grete wrathpe” and “noyse i-nov” [“noisily enough”]

⁸⁰ Frederick, “The *SEL*: Anglo-Saxon Saints” 65.

⁸¹ “stood and pondered : and began to sigh sorely” (151.1583).

(153.1619), but Becket, by contrast, “heold him[self] stille” (153.1619). Even when faced with murderers, Becket submits to eventual and unavoidable death: “is heued he buyde adoun” (166.2091).⁸² In spite of repeated confrontations with the king and with powerful mediators from the court of France and from the papal court, and in spite of the vengeance that Henry exacts against Becket’s family and the Cistercian monks, Becket is consistently calm in his responses in the *ESEL*.

The *ESEL* Wulfstan, like Becket, is measured and respectful in his responses to a frustrated William. When William and his bishops try to remove Wulfstan from his position as Bishop of Worcester, Wulfstan displays patience and thoughtfulness. The narrator states, “Seint wolston stod wel mildeliche : and herknede al þat huy sede” (74.125).⁸³ Because “mildeliche” indicates that Wulfstan is listening peacefully, kindly, humbly, and perhaps even forgivingly,⁸⁴ Wulfstan displays not only submission to his earthly king, but impressive self-control. Like Christ who, when the chief priests accused him during His trial, “he answered nothing,”⁸⁵ the audience would recognize in Wulfstan’s demeanor an imitation of Christ. Moreover, because Wulfstan listens to “al þat huy sede,” he displays patience and fairness by not interrupting or protesting and by allowing his opponents to speak “all.” Even after driving his cross into the marble stone of Edward’s tomb, Wulfstan walks among the people “wel softe” (75.147) indicating neither anger nor defiance on his part. In addition, after William’s appointee Bishop

⁸² “his head he bowed down” (166.2091).

⁸³ “St. Wulfstan stood peacefully / and listened [to] all that they said” (74.125).

⁸⁴ *MED*.

⁸⁵ Matthew 27:12, *Latin Vulgate Bible, Douay-Rheims Catholic Bible*; access date 3 December 2011. For other occasions where Jesus does not respond when questioned by Pilate, see Mark 15:5 and John 19:9, and when questioned by Herod, see Luke 23:9. <<http://www.drbo.org/index.htm>>.

Gondolf “baldeliche” (75.156) attempts to remove the cross from the marble, and after William and the Archbishop begin to realize their error in judgment about Wulfstan, they ask Wulfstan to return so that they can apologize. While Wulfstan would seemingly have every reason to be arrogant and unyielding to the king, and while Wulfstan’s removing the cross from the marble is the miracle that assures that Wulfstan will retain his place as bishop, he nonetheless is compassionate toward the king and his bishops when they approach him asking forgiveness. When summoned, according to the narrator, Wulfstan’s “heorte to heom bende” (75.164).⁸⁶ The verb “benden” indicates not only submission to the king as sovereign, but also a Christ-like concern for them as Christians. The narrator also indicates that Wulfstan goes to the court “wel mildeliche and stille” (75.116). “Mildeliche” indicates a certain level of kindness and compassion, as well as a level of graciousness and forgiveness, and “stille” indicates a level of submission⁸⁷; in other words, Wulfstan goes to the court “wel mildeliche and stille” without a need for arrogance or celebration even after the miracle that provides the divine endorsement that he is “worthy” to serve as Bishop of Worcester. Like Becket, Wulfstan demonstrates his place on the side of “right” without any anger, arrogance, unkindness, retribution, or arrogance. The parallel between Wulfstan and Becket, but more importantly between Wulfstan and Becket and Christ, is unmistakable.

Like both Becket and Wulfstan, in the instances where Edmund has need to oppose his king, the *ESEL* also presents Edmund as the calm and steadfast defender of the church. While the *ESEL*’s *Edmund the Confessor*, again, never explicitly indicates the

⁸⁶ “heart bent to them” (75.164).

⁸⁷ *MED*.

particular details of the contention between Edmund and Henry III, Edmund is calm and reserved in his responses to his king. As the Archbishop of Canterbury, Edmund excommunicates all those who “weorreden a-zein þe church of caunturburi : and with on-rihte duden schame” (446.529).⁸⁸ Henry III then reacts with “pretningue and bost” (446.533), both of which are terms that indicate menacing threats. Although Henry attempts to intimidate Edmund, in contrast, Edmund’s demeanor is calm and contemplative before the king. Like Wulfstan, who goes to court and listens “wel mildeliche” (74.125), or Becket, who stands “In þouzte longue” (130.827), Edmund “heold him stille” (446.533). Edmund, again like Wulfstan and Becket, is in control of himself and in control of his emotions and is able to comport himself with unwavering calm and strength as he “stifliche heold” himself (446.534). As the *ESEL* does with Wulfstan, the *ESEL* specifically presents Edmund as a bishop cast in Becket’s mold. For the audience, Becket’s appearance in vision to Edmund and encouragement for him to remain “stif and studefast : to holde up þe churches rihte” (446.536) would solidify Edmund as a recreation of Becket. “Stif” and “studefast” indicate a Becket-like unwavering resolve, not a vociferous confrontation, in a question of right and wrong involving the church’s rights. Becket’s appearance is a narrative element that strengthens Edmund’s resolve, but, more importantly, this connection between Becket and Edmund illustrates the *ESEL*’s spiritual endorsement of Edmund.

However, this representation of Edmund, like that of Wulfstan and that of Becket, is a manufactured representation. The lack of details for conflict between Edmund and

⁸⁸ “fight against the church of Canterbury and illegally and immorally disgraced [the church]” (446.529).

Henry III perhaps reflects the danger of criticizing a king so recently deceased; however, lack of details also allow the narrator tremendous latitude to mold Edmund in Becket's image. The *ESEL*'s characterization of Henry III's actions as "war on the church of Canterbury" immediately reminds the audience of Becket first by invoking "Canterbury" and secondly by drawing attention again to Becket's problems with Henry II, to their disagreement about where the king's rights end and the church's begin. However, the narrator takes liberties with the facts by neglecting to mention that this "war on the church of Canterbury" is as much a secular matter as a religious one, a "personal grievance [...] against the Crown."⁸⁹ Explaining a portion of the historical conflict between Archbishop Edmund and Henry III, Lawrence writes:

The court was claiming the prerogative wardship of the entire estate of Ralph fitzBernard, one of the archbishop's tenants, and the archbishop was apparently not prepared to give up his claims to Ralph's three Kentish fees without a struggle. Edmund also reacted sharply to the king's suspension of his right to return of writ on the liberty of Christ Church. In March 1240 he ordered his Official to publish the excommunication of any persons who entered the fees of Christ Church in order to execute the royal writ in contravention of the archbishop's franchise. It is apparently to these incidents that the hagiographers refer when they speak of an attack on the liberty of the church of Canterbury.⁹⁰

In response, Edmund excommunicates those in opposition to him, a response Lawrence

⁸⁹ Lawrence, *St. Edmund* 171.

⁹⁰ Lawrence, *St. Edmund* 171-72. Lawrence references *The Chronica Majora* of Matthew Paris, ed. H. R. Luard (RS 1872-84) and *The Red Book of the Exchequer*, ed. H. Hall (RS), ii. 472, 725, 727.

says, “seems *if anything* to have been over-aggressive”⁹¹ (emphasis mine). In fact, Edmund’s use of excommunication demonstrates a change in the church’s use of the policy. According to Lawrence, “His [Edmund’s] readiness to employ spiritual sanctions in defence [*sic*] of the archbishop’s temporal rights [...] exemplifies one of the less agreeable developments of the period.”⁹² Using excommunication as redress for his personal financial grievances, in fact, reveals an Edmund abusing his power as Archbishop, which is information completely absent in the hagiographical account. Presenting Henry, rather than Edmund, as the one in error without any explanation of Edmund’s part in the conflict illustrates the concerted effort on the part of the hagiographers, beginning with Eustace, to present Edmund as someone other than he was in reality. In all fairness to the *ESEL* scribe, the exemplar from which they would have likely copied *St. Edmund*, most likely Matthew Paris’s *Life of Edmund*, would have already presented a Becket-like version of Edmund. By the time of the transcription of the *ESEL* version of *St. Edmund*, the exemplar would likely reveal an already existing undercurrent of anti-royal sentiment building in the years leading up to the compilation of the *ESEL*,⁹³ a feeling which would fit well into the anti-royal sentiment of the *ESEL*. This version of *Edmund* with its anti-royal sentiment serves well to further the post-colonial-

⁹¹ Lawrence, *St. Edmund* 172.

⁹² Lawrence, *St. Edmund* 172.

⁹³ Because of Matthew Paris’ well-known anti-royal sentiments, Eustace’s *Life of St. Edmund* likely appealed to Paris; however, Lawrence counsels against giving that fact too much import because “By the time that Matthew Paris came to write his *Life of St. Edmund*, using the work of Eustace as a basis, the story already had a literary history and was well established” (*St. Edmund* 179). Lawrence also cautions against reading too much into Eustace’s borrowing from John of Salisbury’s *Life of Becket*: “It would be unwise to accuse Eustace of deliberate deception. [...] He apparently believed that the spiritual likeness between Becket and his master was a real one, and that was what he wished to convey” (*St. Edmund* 180-81).

style good/bad dichotomy present in the *ESEL*.

The implication of the kings' inability to see where his rights end and where the church's begin amounts to "war" on the Holy Church, a war that extends to a war on the people of England. The *ESEL* carefully crafts a close association between the "English" common people and their respective bishops so that these clergymen defend the common man when they defend the Holy Church. Like Christ, who spent His time with common people, the *ESEL* seeks to make similar connections between bishops Wulfstan, Becket, and Edmund and the common people, an association that would appeal to an audience familiar with the inequitable methods of justice employed by the current king and power structure.⁹⁴ In addition, an oppressed common people is a trope that carries with it emotion and import which any oppressed person could understand. In fact, the *ESEL* audience was likely the barony,⁹⁵ who, like the common people's experience with inequitable justice, had long history with the king infringing on their rights as landholders.⁹⁶ Though a trope, the king's oppression of the common people extends to and is understood by anyone who was not royal.

⁹⁴ For an explanation of the problems between the baronial audience and King Henry III and for other reference sources, see fn 88 in chapter 4 of this project, "Hagiography as a Resistance Strategy."

⁹⁵ Susan Crane argues for a baronial readership for the early vernacular romances including *Havelok* and *Horn* in *Insular Romance: Politics, Faith, and Culture in Anglo-Norman and Middle English Literature* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986). Kimberly Bell and Julie Nelson Couch quote "[Annie] Samson's ["The South English Legendary: Constructing a Context," *Thirteenth Century England I: Proceedings of the Newcastle Upon Tyne Conference 1985*, eds. P. R. Coss and S. D. Lloyd (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1986) 187-94] supposition of a provincial gentry audience for the *SEL*" in their "Introduction," *Texts and Contexts of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108: The Shaping of English Vernacular Narrative* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011) 15.

⁹⁶ For a thorough discussion of the problems between the English kings and the barony as expressed in the Middle English Romance, see Susan Crane, *Insular Romance*.

The *ESEL* specifically aligns Becket with the common people at several points in the legend. In actuality, Becket's background has more in common with those against whom the *ESEL* resists than with the common people with whom the *ESEL* aligns him. Becket was a man of high social rank. As Chancellor, Becket would have had a familiarity with and access to the king that few people had; as Archbishop of Canterbury Becket would have had access to significant amounts of money.⁹⁷ Both positions placed him in the social hierarchy as part of the nobility. He was also a well-educated man who spoke Latin and French in addition to English, and a clergyman who, according to Thomas, was part of "the new breed of men, university-educated clergy."⁹⁸ While the *ESEL* does not ignore or erase Becket's social, political, or financial status and influence as it does with Becket's Norman ancestry, the *ESEL* does minimize those connections by choosing to emphasize Becket's connection with the common man. Adding Becket to the ranks of the resistant gives credence to the manuscript's opposition to the post-Conquest kings.

Even as his own personal difficulties with Henry increase in the legend, Becket's priority is to help the poor rather than to help himself. The legend reads, "Seint thomas nam pouere men : bi þe weie i-nowe, / and ladde hem to is inne : and to þe mete heom sette; / he seruede heom is owene bodi : And i-nov3 mete and drinke heom fette"

⁹⁷ The position of Archbishop of Canterbury was both that of a lay baron, who was subject to the King of England, and that of an ecclesiastical bishop, who was subject to the Pope. Both designations rendered the archdiocese quite wealthy. For an explanation of the wealth attached to the Canterbury archdiocese, see Bartlett, *England Under the Norman and Angevin Kings* 377-432.

⁹⁸ Thomson, *Western Church* 119.

(132.894-96).⁹⁹ Even amid his own difficulties with the king and the resulting need to leave town, Becket, a man of political, social, and financial power fed poor people. The phrase “he seruede heom is owene bodi” requires an understood “with” for the phrase to make sense; however, the allusion to Christ is unmistakable. In the holy communion, Christ does serve His own body to the believers, and in this instance, the ambiguity of the phrase illuminates Becket as a Christ figure. It is with the common people that both Christ and Becket find nurture and consolation. In the early stages of the conflict with Henry II, after the Pope reinstates Becket as Archbishop of Canterbury, the Pope sends Becket to Pontigny, and it was there that Becket remained “With luytel [little] folk” (147.1437). While “folk” already possesses the meaning of ‘common people,’ the use of “luytel” emphasizes the lowly social status of the people with whom Becket remained. It is, then, with common people who are of little significance or import to the powerful that Becket is comfortable. Becket’s relationship with the poor is a reciprocal one too; it is the “folc [who] cride deolfullich : and to church heo drowe / And onovreden þat holi bodi” (169-70.2171-72)¹⁰⁰ upon his death. In addition to indicating the common people, “folc” can indicate a nation or race of people.¹⁰¹ It is the common, lowly people of England, the “English” who honor Becket at his death. In its effort to illustrate how at home Becket is with the common people and they with him, the *ESEL* again downplays Becket’s social

⁹⁹ “Saint Thomas took poor men by the way, / and led them to his inn : and prepared a meal for them; / he served them [with] his own body : and enough meat and drink brought [to] them” (132.894-96).

¹⁰⁰ “the folk cried sadly and went to the church / and honored that holy body” (169-70.2171-72).

¹⁰¹ Robert Mills makes the point that “‘folc’ and ‘lond’ combine to produce a sense of Christendom as both territorially and ethnically distinct” in *St. Mary Magdalene* (477.529-30). See Mills, “Early *SEL* and Difference,” *Texts and Contexts* 202.

status by referring to Becket as the common man's neighbor. The *ESEL* states that Becket "him-sulf he was al one neiz : þei he heiz Man were" (147.1440).¹⁰² The *ESEL* uses the same word "heiz" to describe Becket and those against whom Becket contends because all of them, including Becket, are men of power and influence. While acknowledging Becket's status, "þei he heiz Man were," the *ESEL* works to distance Becket with "þei," which adds "although" or "in spite of the fact" to the phrase: Becket performs these acts of service "in spite of the fact that he was a socially prominent man." Becket does not act in ways typical of a "high" man. Becket is comfortably allied with the Church and with the people of England; whereas, as Becket states, it is "opere grete and heize" (165.2033),¹⁰³ those of social and political standing *other than Becket*, who subvert the church's laws. The *ESEL* works to align Becket with the common people of England and with their English Church as their powerful defender.

The *ESEL* also minimizes Becket's financial standing in order to connect him to the common people of England. When Henry's men go to the Pope's court in Rome, they bring with them "noble ziftes and opur lueles" (138.1110).¹⁰⁴ The *ESEL* explains their motives behind and benefits of bringing gifts and jewels to court: "þare-with man mai ofte at court : þe rizte bringe to wou3" (138.1111).¹⁰⁵ Henry II's goal for sending his representatives with gifts is to subvert justice, and bringing justice or right "to woe" indicates that the resulting court ruling is unjust. By extension, the *ESEL* rightly questions the legitimacy of a court ruling influenced by gifts. In contrast to Henry's

¹⁰² "himself was completely a neighbor : though he was a socially and intellectually upperclass man" (147.1440).

¹⁰³ "other great and [socially] high [and powerful]" (165.2033).

¹⁰⁴ "noble gifts and other jewels" (138.1110).

¹⁰⁵ "with those jewels man may often at court: bring the right to woe" (138.1111).

representatives, the narrator assesses Becket's chances for justice in this circumstance stating, "Nouȝ crist helpe þis holi man : for he is ȝuyt pouere i-nouȝ! / he nadde none ȝiftes forto ȝiue : to holden up is riȝte; / [...] to holi church to fiȝte" (138.1112-14).¹⁰⁶ The *ESEL* appeals to Christ because, as the *ESEL* has described the situation, unlike the king's "gifts and jewels," Becket has no gifts because Becket is poor. The narrator implies that, like the poor and common people of England, Becket is unable to purchase a decision in his favor, even in a religious court. In reality, however, as the Archbishop of Canterbury, Becket would have had a tremendous amount of money at his disposal. However, the goal here is to present Becket as the common man's ally and also to present him in imitation of Christ, poor just as Christ was poor.

As part of the effort to present Wulfstan in the likeness of Becket and in *imitatio christi*, the *ESEL* aligns Wulfstan with the common people of England as well. The *ESEL* indicates that Wulfstan takes his calling as bishop very seriously: "his bischopriche he wuste wel : and also is priorie, / and a-forced him to serui wel: God and seint Marie" (72.55-56).¹⁰⁷ The verb "witen" means "to have experiential knowledge"¹⁰⁸ of something. Therefore, by having actual, hands-on knowledge gained by living among those over whom he has spiritual responsibilities, and by "serving God and Mary well," the *ESEL* models Wulfstan after Becket. Wulfstan is a bishop whose relationships with those under his spiritual care were intimate and personal rather than simply administrative in nature.

¹⁰⁶ "Now Christ help this holy man : for he is yet poor surely! / He had no gifts to give : [in order] to support his right [or his side of the argument] ; ... [and] to fight for the Holy Church" (138.1112-14).

¹⁰⁷ "he knew his bishopric well and also his priory and endeavored to serve well God and Saint Mary" (72.55-56).

¹⁰⁸ *MED* 3(b).

Wulfstan successfully administers to his flock by serving them “well.” Another way in which the *ESEL* aligns Wulfstan with the common people of England is through his origins and education. He is Anglo-Saxon by birth and is not a highly-educated man. As noted previously, William I and his appointees seek to remove Wulfstan on the grounds that he is not “schooled in lore,” that is, his academic knowledge was, in William’s estimation, inadequate to serve as bishop. Like the common Englishman, Wulfstan is not a learned man. The legend offers this explanation for Wulfstan’s lack of learning: “For þo he scholde to scole gon : to church he zeode wel more” (74.112).¹⁰⁹ In a hierarchy of knowledge, Wulfstan’s priority was spiritual learning and nourishment rather than secular learning. For the audience, William’s opposition to Wulfstan, given that Wulfstan is indeed serving both his flock and God *well*, is obviously unjustified. In fact, the seemingly manufactured reason for dismissing Wulfstan, especially if he performs his duties “well,” indicates that William sees Wulfstan as a threat to his power. The *ESEL* indicates that William is angry simply because Wulfstan does not exhibit the necessary fear of William: the *ESEL* reads, “þe king was with heom wrothþ / þat he was so luyte a-drad of him : and swor a-non is othþ / To pulte him out of is bischopriche” (74.107-09).¹¹⁰ In a clearly cause-and-effect manner, because Wulfstan did not fear William, William would not be able to exert control over Wulfstan; therefore, in William’s estimation, Wulfstan could not remain as bishop. Wulfstan’s retention of his position as bishop because of a divine manifestation reassures the audience that, because Wulfstan

¹⁰⁹ “because when he should [have] gone to school : he went to church more often” (74.112).

¹¹⁰ “the king was angry with him / because he [Wulfstan] was so little afraid of him : and swore quickly his oath / to put him out of his bishopric” (74.107-09).

feared God and God alone, then God would protect those who feared God only from earthly rulers as well.

According to the *ESEL*, Edmund, like Becket and Wulfstan, also serves with much compassion and concern for the common people of England. The *Edmund* legend indicates that “he [Edmund] hadde euere of selie bonde-men : pite and deol i-nov3, / For him þou3te þat þe heize men : duden hem al day wou3” (444.477-78).¹¹¹ The specific connotations of word choice here bear inquiry. One important point is that the adjectives pit two disparate groups of people against one another: the “selie” against the “heize” in much the same way that Becket pits the “luytel folc” against the “heize” men. As an adjective, “selie” has several meanings reflecting the character of these people. As “selie,” they are “spiritually favored, blessed; holy, virtuous”; they are “worthy, noble”; and they are even “happy”. Other Middle English definitions of “selie” are “innocent, harmless; good” and “weak, helpless, defenseless, hapless.”¹¹² Lacking influence, power, and money, these people are in no position of power to defend themselves against the ruling class of the country; as “selie” they are, however, people of superior spiritual and moral mettle. Likewise, “selie” has an additional meaning of “wretched, unfortunate, miserable; pitiable” and “humble, lowly; [and] poor.”¹¹³ In other words, the “selie,” while lacking financially, are morally favored of God and spiritually superior, and they therefore merit God’s support and favor; nevertheless, the “selie,” or the “lowly,” and the “bonde-men,” are those who are not free, those who are subject to the upper class of

¹¹¹ “he always had pity and compassion for poor bondmen [the unfree, serf, servant] ; because he thought that the high men acted in unjust ways or against God’s will toward them” (444.477-78).

¹¹² See the following definitions for “selie” in the *MED* 1(a), 1(b), 1(d), 2(a), and 2(c).

¹¹³ See the following definitions for “selie” in the *MED* 3(a) and 3(b).

political and financial power (“heize men”). As an adjective, “heize” indicates “people: of the governing class, of noble rank, highborn, great; of things: honorable, reputable, suitable for a great man.”¹¹⁴ “Heize” certainly contains overtones of irony because, if these are truly “high” people, they would conduct themselves honorably; however, what they do is cause “woe” to the “selie” people. Moreover, the plight of the “selie” is constant: the “high” people in the *Edmund* legend engage in this dishonorable behavior “al day,” meaning “always, [...] again and again.”¹¹⁵ However, the narrator counteracts the high men’s constant abuse of the poor with Edmund’s constant compassion for the poor: “We ne mowen riken nouzt : all is guode dedes” (445.501).¹¹⁶ Edmund’s acts of kindness and goodness to the poor people are innumerable. What the *ESEL* accomplishes by placing people who are politically weak but morally superior in opposition to people who are politically strong but morally deficient is to present an undeniable image of good-versus-bad that maps onto powerless-versus-powerful. Without these good bishops standing for God, for the right, and for the church’s rights, the “selie bonde-men” would remain powerless and ignored. In post-colonial terms, these English bishops and their actions imply the need for constant protection of both the English church and the oppressed English “folc” from the evil colonizers; these English bishops and their actions also represent constant resistance to the evil colonizers.

Another specific way in which the *ESEL* aligns the bishops with the common English people against the post-Conquest kings is through the proverbially populist issue of unjust and excessive taxation. For the Laud Misc. 108 audience, taxes were certainly a

¹¹⁴ See the following definition for “heize” in the *MED* 2(b)(b).

¹¹⁵ *MED*.

¹¹⁶ “we are not able to enumerate all his good deeds” (445.501).

considerable part of their lives. While *Wulfstan* does not address taxes per se, William I was well-known for his onerous taxing policies. Bartlett points out that as king, William owned “18 per cent of the landed estates of the kingdom [...] at the time of the Domesday Survey in 1086.”¹¹⁷ Bartlett continues, “[a]lmost everywhere, he [the king] had more than 10 per cent [of the land]. This meant that the monarchy was drawing revenue from every part of the kingdom and that royal estates gave a local physical focus of royal power everywhere.”¹¹⁸ Concerns about taxing continued through the reigns of the post-Conquest kings. Taxes during John’s reign, for example, were so crippling that the issue of taxation is addressed in *The Magna Carta* of 1215. The document instructs the king “not to levy taxes known as ‘scutage’ and ‘aid’ without ‘the common counsel of the kingdom.’”¹¹⁹ Bartlett summarizes the extent of taxation during the days of the Norman and Angevin kings as follows: “[a]t all times, however, the English monarchy rested on the twin foundations of great domainal wealth and the assured ability to tax its

¹¹⁷ Bartlett, *England Under the Norman and Angevin Kings* 160. For a brief overview of royal landholdings, see 160, 162-63, and 173, and for a brief description of the Pipe Role records of taxes paid to the king, see 174. Bartlett indicates that the size of the Pipe Rolls alone are indicative of the king’s tax collections. He states that in 1159 the Pipe Role consisted of “18 parchment sheets” and in 1199 it consisted of 38 sheets (174), which indicates at least a doubling of taxes assessed.

¹¹⁸ Bartlett, *England Under the Norman and Angevin Kings* 160.

¹¹⁹ Bartlett, *England Under the Norman and Angevin Kings* 65. For an overview of the issues covered by Magna Carta, see 64-67. Bartlett writes, “Magna Carta of 1215 specified that certain taxes were to be levied only ‘through the common counsel of our kingdom’ and that this counsel was to be obtained at a meeting to which the bishops, earls, and greater barons were to be summoned by individual letter and others holding land directly from the Crown through sheriffs” (see 146). For a brief discussion of the Civil War of 1215-17 that resulted from John’s repealing of Magna Carta with the support of Pope Innocent III, see 66. See also Oliver H. Richardson, “Introduction: Primary Forces,” *The National Movement in the Reign of Henry III* (Norwood, MA: Norwood Press, 1896) 16-18.

subjects.”¹²⁰ Under Henry III, taxes were as high as forty per cent, and parliament in 1237 assessed taxes at thirty per cent.¹²¹ The financial burden of taxation would likely have been of great concern to MS Laud Misc. 108’s baronial audience.

Both *Becket* and *Edmund* certainly emphasize the immense financial burdens inflicted by the king. While one of the central issues separating Henry II and Becket is whether certain monies collected were due to the king or to the church, the legend also recounts and comments on the “taillage” (117.389), a tax levied on the common people. Bartlett defines tallage¹²² as “an arbitrary payment demanded from his [a lord’s] own serfs, his townsmen, and, in the case of the king, his Jews” that was “taken either annually or at longer intervals.”¹²³ In the poem, a disagreement arises between Becket and Henry II about taxation: “luyte an luyte þat kontek sprong : for pouere Mannes rizte” (117.381).¹²⁴ The legend indicates that Becket’s concern in regard to the “taillage” levied against the poor marks “þe furste tyme þat seint thomas : ovtliche him with-seide” (117.383).¹²⁵ Placing the conflict in simple terms of rich versus poor, the *ESEL* states the reason for Becket’s reaction: it “was for þe king a-zen pouere Men : dude onriztful dede” (117.384).¹²⁶ The taxes the king collected were certainly high, but more than simply high, the narrator characterizes the collection of taxes as an “onriztful dede” exercised against

¹²⁰ Bartlett, *England Under the Norman and Angevin Kings* 175.

¹²¹ Michael Prestwich, *Plantagenet England* 86, 89. The 1237 tax was levied by a parliament that predates the institution of Parliament existing today.

¹²² See the discussion of the tallage tax in chapter 3 of this project, “The Use of Mirrored Language as a Resistance Strategy.”

¹²³ Prestwich, *Plantagenet England* 162, 323.

¹²⁴ “little by little contention arose/originated [between Becket and the King] : for poor men’s rights” (117.381).

¹²⁵ “the first time that Saint Thomas outwardly spoke against him [the king]” (117.383).

¹²⁶ “it was because the king against poor men : did [an] unrightful deed” (117.384).

the “poor” and also the “common people.”¹²⁷ The adjective “onrȳtful,” again, questions the legality and morality of the tax.¹²⁸ Like the *ESEL*’s description of William’s invasion and ruling of England as being carried out with “vnrȳhte” (73.96), the *ESEL* characterizes Becket’s assessment of the taillage as “an onrȳtful dede” (117.392). The *ESEL* places both actions on equal moral standing. The *ESEL Becket* also uses legal precedent to judge this tax. Becket points out to the king, “so ne dude no king ere” (118.400)¹²⁹ emphasizing that Henry “axest it for a certeine rente : with onrȳte” (118.398).¹³⁰ According to the *MED*, “rent,” is “a money payment in lieu of providing the service of guards for a castle”¹³¹; “rent” also has the more modern definition of payment by a tenant. Only landowners would be assessed tax in the form of service by knights; therefore, the *ESEL* indicates that its audience and the target of the king’s illegal and immoral taxation is not only the common people, but includes landowners as well. Essentially, the *ESEL* marks as “bad” only those of the highest levels of society. In addition, within ten lines, Becket characterizes the tax three separate times as being collected “with onrȳte” (117-18.392-402) reiterating that the tax lacks both legal and moral merits. Because this assessment comes from Becket himself, the Becket aligns himself with the “right,” that is, with prior English kings,¹³² with prior taxation methods, and with the people who pay the tax.

¹²⁷ See the *Middle English Compendium (MED)*: 1(a) and 2(a)(b).

¹²⁸ For a discussion of William’s “unrightful” claim to England, see chapter 4 of this project, “Hagiography as a Resistance Strategy.”

¹²⁹ “no other king before had done so” (118.400).

¹³⁰ “asks it for [payment of] specific/required rent without legal [cause to do so]” (118.398).

¹³¹ *MED* 2(b)(a)

¹³² For a discussion of the ruling practices of the Anglo-Saxon kings, see chapter 2 of this project, “The Ideal Anglo-Saxon King as a Resistance Strategy.”

Like Becket, Edmund of Abingdon takes the side of the poor people who pay taxes. In Edmund's case, it is the heriot tax that causes conflict: according to the *MED*, the heriot is a payment made by the heirs to the lord of the manor upon the death of a tenant. Michael Prestwich makes the point that the heriot was unduly onerous for the "villein," or unfree class of people in England. In a general description of the "villein" and the heriot tax, Prestwich writes,

[i]n theory, [...] the disadvantages of being unfree were immense. A villein was his lord's chattel, to be disposed of as he willed. He was bound to the soil, and if his tenement was sold, he was sold with it. His property was his lord's property.[...] Accordingly, villeins could not sell the land they occupied without the lord's consent. If their land was passed on to their heir, then a death duty, known as heriot, was to be paid. This was paid out of the deceased's goods; the incoming tenant would have to pay an entry fine before he could take over the holding.¹³³

No doubt the heriot tax was a successful revenue-producer. In addition, Prestwich's research of court rolls has led him to conclude first that the "evidence suggests a high death rate for tenants,"¹³⁴ secondly, the villein class suffered greatly from this tax.¹³⁵

For the same reason that Becket denounces the tallage tax, Edmund denounces the heriot tax because of its particularly onerous effect on the poor. While I have

¹³³ Michael Prestwich, *Plantagenet England: 1225-1360* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005) 446-47.

¹³⁴ Prestwich, *Plantagenet England* 533. For a more thorough evaluation of how Prestwich arrives at this conclusion, see *Plantagenet England* 533.

¹³⁵ For a discussion of death rates during the period from 1225-1360, see Prestwich, *Plantagenet England* 532-34.

discussed the sinfulness of the heriot tax in another chapter,¹³⁶ some of those points bear mentioning here as well. Similar to Becket's assessment of the taillage, Edmund states that the tax is "nōþur [neither] riȝhtful ne guod" (445.490). The adjective "riȝhtful" draws attention both to the unjust nature of the law as well as to its spiritually defunct nature. The episode in *Edmund* exemplifies the injustice. A widow, whose husband's death requires that she give her "beste ayȝte" (445.488), that is, her highest quality animal, either cattle, livestock, or goods¹³⁷ to the chief lord, explains to Edmund that aside from this cow, "luyte guode heo hadde more; / heo nuste in ȝwat manere : ne hou heo miȝhte liue, / heo bad him for þe loue of god : þat best a-ȝein hire ȝiue" (445.484-86).¹³⁸ The unfortunate widow's dilemma is that the rules required that she pay the tax with her "best goods," or her cow in this case; however, other than this cow, she has no other way to live. Edmund characterizes the tax as adding insult to injury: Edmund says, "þis guode wif hath i-lore hire louerd : þat al hire guod forhtþ drouȝ, / And to leose þare-aftur ire best best : me þinchez it is wouȝ" (445.491-92).¹³⁹ In addition, Edmund describes the heriot as "þe deueles lawe it is of helle" (445.494).¹⁴⁰ To describe the tax as bringing "woe" raises the issue to a level that concerns God and His will and emphasizes the extent to which such a tax offends God. The *ESEL*'s inclusion in the discussion of God and the devil, whose law it is (445.494), re-injects the good/bad dichotomy existing

¹³⁶ See chapter 3 of this project, "The Use of Mirrored Language as a Resistance Strategy."

¹³⁷ *MED*.

¹³⁸ "little good she had more; / she didn't know in what manner : nor how she might live, / she asked him for the love of God : to give that beast to her again" (445.484-86).

¹³⁹ "this good wife has lost her lord/husband : [from] whom all her property [wealth] came, / And to lose thereafter her best beast : I think it is woe" (445.491-92).

¹⁴⁰ "the devil's law it is of hell" (445.494).

between God and the devil and, in this case, between the king and the poor people of the land. The *ESEL* designates the sides clearly: the people, Edmund, and God are on the side of good and the king and the devil are on the side of bad.

While this is the only specific instance given in the legend of Edmund siding with the common people of England, the legend indicates that this type of response from Edmund is not an isolated event, but a practice. This legend reads, “þis Auntur bi-fel ofte siþe : 3wane men him wolden bidde ouzt / heriot of pouere men : he ne wilnede right nouzt” (445.499-500).¹⁴¹ Unlike *Becket* that mentions several instances of Becket helping the poor, the *Edmund* narrator uses a blanket statement to describe Edmund’s pattern of service: “We ne mowen riken nouzt : alle is guode dedes” (445.501).¹⁴² The *ESEL* works to align Edmund with Becket by recounting only a few instances and allowing the audience to fill in the gaps. Because *Edmund* specifically discusses the onerous nature of the heriot and Edmund’s opposition to it, the *ESEL* neatly aligns Edmund with the poor, with the general taxpayers of England, and also with Becket.

The perception of Becket’s allegiance to the common, lowly people of England is also the result of a conflation of the defense of the Holy Church with a defense of England and her people. This transference comes about, ironically, through the words of the king and his representatives. Henry II sends the Bishop of London, who “was euer a-zein seint thomas : with words and with dedes” (131.880),¹⁴³ the Bishop of Chichestre, the Archbishop of Euerwike, and the Earl of Arundel, and others, to present his case

¹⁴¹ “this event befell/happened frequently : when men would petition [Edmund] about the poor man’s heriot : he desired it not at all” (445.449-500).

¹⁴² “we are not able to calculate : all his good deeds” (445.501).

¹⁴³ “was always against Saint Thomas : with [his] words and with [his] deeds” (131.880).

before the papal court. The Bishop of London begins the presentation of Henry's case stating that the Archbishop of Canterbury "Folliche he bi-gan In engelonde : holi church for-to spille" (142.1270)¹⁴⁴ followed directly by accusing Becket of taking the King's authority and his rights (142.1271). The Bishop of Chichestre next tells the papal court that Becket wishes to "bring al þat lond to schame : and holi church to spille" (143.1284).¹⁴⁵ Both bishops mention the land *before* mentioning to the Pope the effects of Becket's actions on the Church. Mentioning the land before the church implies that both bishops place the country in its secular and political make-up ahead of the church in their priorities. Even with the *ESEL*'s undercurrent of nationalism, the Anglo-Saxon and English saints never place their allegiance to the land before their allegiance to the church. Two other representatives, the Archbishop of Euerwick and the Bishop of Eccetre, or Exeter, speak, but the last representative for the King is the Earl of Arundel who conducts himself the most diplomatically of all. The Earl states that this group Henry has sent represents "þe hexte of þe londe" (144.1314)¹⁴⁶ and continues by speaking four lines of very respectful address to the papal court, and followed by five lines of honorable comments about the Archbishop of Canterbury (144.1316-24). What the Earl then does is indicate that the damage done as the result of Becket's "wille" (144.1325) has been done not to the church, but to England. The Earl states that Becket "bi-guynneth þat lond to spille [destroy]" (144.1326). In fact, the Earl finishes this nine-line request for a mediating papal legate by appealing not to the need to preserve the Church but instead

¹⁴⁴ "foolishly/rashly he began to destroy the Holy Church in England" (142.1270).

¹⁴⁵ "to bring all that land to shame/dishonor : and to destroy the Holy Church" (143.1284).

¹⁴⁶ "the highest of the land" (144.1314).

emphasizing the need to preserve England: “Oþur certus he is ope þe poynet : al þat lond to spille” (144.1333).¹⁴⁷ The object being destroyed is not the Holy Church, but rather England. But the irony of the words coming from one of the king’s representatives to the Pope would be unmistakable to the audience. Though psychologically anachronistic, projecting the king’s guilt onto Becket via his spokesmen highlights the king’s guilt. The narrator has now expanded the conflict between Henry and Becket from a religious issue to include a “political dimension”¹⁴⁸; however, the question remains whether or not the conflict ever was a religious issue in the first place because it seems to revolve around threats to the king’s political power. Becket’s close association with the people of England places him on the side of England in this construction and places his adversary, Henry II, against them as well as against the Holy Church.

Thematically, the pre-Conquest and post-Conquest bishops, as presented in the *ESEL*, demonstrate a deep concern for and affinity with the Holy Church, England, and the English people. While Becket did not require as many adjustments to his story to fashion him as a champion of the Church and of the English, his legend is not completely historically accurate. Moreover, the legends of both Wulfstan and Edmund required reworking in order to fit the Becket mold fashioned in the *ESEL* as the English standard of truth, goodness, and defense of the English people. The Laud Misc. 108 endorses Wulfstan and Edmund of Abingdon as imitations of Becket, but, more importantly, the

¹⁴⁷ “Or certainly he is at the point of destroying all that land” (144.1333).

¹⁴⁸ Frederick points out in her discussion that the result of associating an Anglo-Saxon king with another Anglo-Saxon king known for his goodness (associating Oswald with Athelstan in Frederick’s example) gives a positive dimension and a political dimension to the first king. See “The *South English Legendary*: Anglo-Saxon saints and national identity” 62.

manuscript endorses all three bishops as imitations of Christ Himself. The end result is a visual and spatial Trinitarian image that endorses these bishops as spiritual models, but also endorses them subversively as a post-colonial resistance to a political presence characterized in the Laud Misc. 108 as illegitimate. The need to defend the church and the people of England is the result of post-Conquest kings of Norman descent, who are not only illegitimate, but for whom the line separating their rights as king from the rights of the Holy Church is unclear at best. In post-colonial terms, these illegitimate post-Conquest kings infringe upon the rights of the church and upon the rights of the people, and it is through the ever-vigilant bishops that the *ESEL* resists the post-Conquest kings by establishing the us-versus-them, the good-versus-bad dichotomy.

CONCLUSION

At the Battle of Hastings in 1066, the English suffered a defeat that would be with them for centuries as the Normans conquered and then colonized England. For the English, as Jeffrey Cohen writes, “the postcolonial could be said to originate ‘from the very first moment of colonial contact’ [... and brings with it] a ‘discourse of oppositionality.’”¹ With the Normans came a “struggle for [both] individual and collective cultural identity”² within the English psyche, where the English sought to reject the colonist ideology and to validate and reassert their own identity. Almost 200 years after the initial contact with the colonizer appeared Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108, a collection of texts written entirely in Middle English that expresses a conflict with a colonizer who would never leave. The Laud Misc. 108 manuscript records an effort to construct heroes, from Anglo-Saxon kings and the English clergy, in order to create a glorious past, and to forge an English identity that inserts England, its language, and its people into a place of relevance and importance, even at the “center of a grand, Christian history of the world.”³ It is this construction, even reconstruction of English identity that I have explored. Clearly the Laud Misc. 108 is a manuscript that lends itself to a post-colonial analysis and contains more such avenues to investigate.

¹Introduction, *The Postcolonial Middle Ages* 3. Cohen cites Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1995) 117.

² Lois Tyson, “Postcolonial” 374.

³ Couch, “Magic of Englishness,” *Texts and Contexts* 225. See also Thorlac Turville-Pêtre, *England the Nation* 61-67.

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