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Making Local: The Politics of Place in Anglo-Norman Hagiography

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy  
in English

by

Shay Murray Hopkins

Committee in charge:

Professor Heather Blurton, Chair

Professor L.O. Aranye Fradenburg Joy

Professor Bishnupriya Ghosh

September 2017

The dissertation of Shay Murray Hopkins is approved.

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Professor L.O. Aranye Fradenburg Joy

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Bishnupriya Ghosh

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Heather Blurton, Dissertation Chair

September 2017

Making Local: The Politics of Place in Anglo-Norman Hagiography

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by

Shay Hopkins

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And, finally, I am indebted to my family and close friends whose encouragement made this process worthwhile.

# VITA OF SHAY HOPKINS

September 2017

## EDUCATION

Doctoral Candidate, Department of English, University of Santa Barbara, California  
PhD emphasis in Medieval Studies (expected September 2017)  
M.A., English Literature, University of California, Santa Barbara, June 2012  
Fields of Specialization: Medieval, Literature and the Mind, General Theory  
B.A., English with Departmental Honors, Seattle University, 2009

## PUBLICATIONS

Archive of Early Middle English (AEME), Contributing XML Editor, 2014-present, *online publication in progress*.  
Review of *The Anglo-Norman Lay of Havelok*. Eds. and Trans. Glyn S. Burgess and Leslie C. Brook. *Gallica* 37. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2015. Co-Author. *Forthcoming in Arthuriana*.  
Review of *How to Make a Human: Animals and Violence in the Middle Ages* by Karl Steel. *Comitatus* 43 (2012). 286-288.

## GRANTS and AWARDS

Graduate Division Dissertation Fellowship, University of California at Santa Barbara, Fall 2016.  
Donald Howard Travel Award, New Chaucer Society, July 2016.  
Vercelli Book and Anglo-Saxon Studies Grant, Fondazione Museo del Tesoro del Duomo e Archivio Capitolare. Vercelli, Italy, Summer 2013.

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

"The Danish Connection: *Havelok the Dane's* Multicultural Inheritance." Making Early Middle English, Victoria, B.C., Canada, September 2016.  
"Encoding Wayfinding Techniques in the Hagiographies of Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud Misc. 108." The New Chaucer Society, London, England, July 2016  
" 'Ne sai ki sui': Speculative History and the Havelok Legend." The International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, Michigan, May 2015.  
The Humanities and Technology: Diving into the Digital Humanities, DHSocal THATCamp, San Diego State University, October 2014  
"Sanctifying the Secular: The Hagiographic Politics of Havelock" PAMLA, University of California at Riverside, October 2014.  
"Sovereign Identity in *Guillaume D'Angleterre*," The Medieval Association of the Pacific, University of San Diego, March 2013.

## TEACHING AND RESEARCH INTERESTS

Old English, Anglo-Norman, and Middle English Literatures, hagiography, manuscript studies, the digital humanities.

## **TEACHING EXPERIENCE, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA BARBARA**

### WRITING PROGRAM TEACHING ASSISTANT

Instructor of Record with responsibilities including syllabus design, lectures, facilitation of class discussion, creating all exams and writing assignments, grading student work, two office hours per week, as well as other scheduled student meetings.

Writing 2: Academic Writing, Fall 2014 through Spring 2017.

### TEACHING ASSOCIATE

Responsibilities include: syllabus design, lectures, facilitation of class discussion, creating all exams and writing assignments, grading student work, two office hours per week, as well as other scheduled student meetings

Writing 2: Academic Writing, Summer 2015, Summer 2016

English 15: Introduction to Shakespeare, Summer 2014

English 10: Introduction to Literary Studies, Summer 2012, Summer 2013

### ENGLISH TEACHING ASSISTANT

Responsibilities include: weekly facilitation of two discussion sections, guest lecturing, grading student papers and exams, attending weekly course meetings with instructor, holding two office hours per week as well as other scheduled student meetings

English 101: English Literature from the Medieval Period to 1650, Fall 2010, Fall 2011, Spring 2013, Spring 2014.

English 15: Introduction to Shakespeare, Spring 2012, Fall 2013

English 105A: Early Shakespeare, Winter 2013, Winter 2014

English 10: Introduction to Literary Studies, Winter 2012, Fall 2012

### **SERVICE**

Co-organizer of UCSB's annual Medieval Studies Graduate Student Conference 2014: *Movement and Mobility in the Middle Ages*. May 31, 2014.

Co-chair, 2013 UCSB English Department Committee of Graduate Students

### **RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**

Research Assistant and Editor to Professor Carol Pasternack: performed research on sex and religious identity in Old English texts. Summer 2012, Summer 2015

Transcriber for UCSB's English Broadside Ballad Archive (EBBA), Transcribed black letter from digital copies of popular ballads from Early Modern England. Edited digital images of Early Modern woodcuts for the digital archive. Summer 2013, Summer 2015

Research Assistant to Professor Heather Blurton: worked on an Instructional Development Grant geared toward integrating media and technology into the course English 197: Old English Poetry: Viking Poetry 2011-2012

### **LANGUAGES**

Old English, Middle English, Latin, French.

## ABSTRACT

Making Local: The Politics of Place in Anglo-Norman Hagiography

by

Shay Hopkins

This dissertation considers the category of the local in Anglo-Norman hagiography. More specifically, this project asks how a consideration of local space informs our knowledge of ideologies of power in twelfth-century England? In considering this question, I attend to representations of power and space in an archive of saints' lives and secular hagiography that have strong connections to local, intranational places. Such a consideration of the local complicates the established discourses of power and identity in the High Middle Ages.

When discussing the use of space in hagiography, I employ the term *local* to refer to a category that includes but also extends beyond the physical, geometrical boundaries of a given area. The local encompasses the sum of a place's culture, community, practices, and ideological investments. In this way, the local is dynamic and relational category where geographical space and socio-cultural ideologies of power intersect. Further, my use of the term *local* is yoked to larger methodological discourses on the nation in postcolonial studies. In this project, I use this term to reflect recent shifts in postcolonial theory and build on how medieval studies addresses prenational identities. I am indebted to previous scholars whose work has cleared the way for my use of the category of the local, as the past two decades have witnessed a dramatic shift in how academia views medievalist studies' use of postcolonial theory. My project's attention to the dynamics of space and collective identities in postcolonial studies is timely and participates in what I see to be a third generation of



postcolonial medievalist scholarship. This third generation of postcolonial medieval scholarship moves from a theorization of the nation to the theorization of the local.

This dissertation also stresses the primacy of hagiography in theorizing the category of the local in Medieval Studies. As a genre, saints' lives have very intimate relationships with space. The site-specific location of an English saint's birth, deeds, and his or her bodily remains are key features of these texts and important knowledge for their devotional communities. Hagiography's relationship between the regional and the national that make saints' lives particularly rich texts for exploring how communities identify (or disidentify) with larger geopolitical affiliations. In this way, hagiography has a special advantage when considering spatial formulations of power. More specifically, the project examines Matthew Paris's *Vie de seint Auban* and *L'Estoire de Aedward le rei*, Gaimar's *L'Estoire des Engleis*, and the Middle English *Havelok the Dane* as texts that theorize and complicate our understanding of local and its relationship to power. Together, these texts offer three distinct approaches to the local that include the exercises of power over spaces of private land, monastic land, and sovereign land.

The following chapters seek to demonstrate the primacy of hagiography in theorizing the space of the local. The chapters below examine how figures of authority use space in saint's lives to create and maintain ideologies of power, but there is still much more research to be done on this topic. While *Making Local* shows how hagiography was used as a tool to exert control over space and communities, not all saints' lives from the period were recruited for such goals. This project's discussions of the local and the ideologies they serve rely on a limited archive; I hope that *Making Local* invites further discussion on the intersection of hagiography, power, and place in Anglo-Norman England.

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## I. Introduction

Near the end of the Vercelli Book, the manuscript includes a homily, Vercelli XXIII, that relates a life of St. Guthlac. This vita, which is produced in vernacular prose and based on Felix's Latin source, tells the story of St. Guthlac of Crowland, an Anglo-Saxon saint from the early eighth century. According to the legend, Guthlac was a Mercian soldier from Lincoln who later decided to dedicate his life to God. After spending two years in a monastery as a monk, Guthlac sought intense spiritual isolation and began a self-imposed hermitage on the island of Crowland. As a hermit, Guthlac's piety was tested and tried by various demons, but his faith never wavered. In exchange for his devotion, Guthlac was visited and blessed by angels, and after his death, his body remained whole and uncorrupted. While Guthlac's vita is one of only two prose saints' lives of the Vercelli Book, what truly separates Guthlac's life from the other is the text's focus on local space.<sup>1</sup> Unlike the vita's accompanying prose and verse hagiographies, Guthlac's life takes place in England—more specifically Crowland—as emphasized in the text's opening lines, which read:

Wæs þær in þam sprecenan iglande sum mycel hlæw of eorþan geworht, þone ylcan hlæw iu geara men bræcon 7 dulfon for feos þingum. Þa wæs þær on oðre sidan ðæs hlæwes gedolfen swylce mycel seap. On þam seape ufan se eadiga wer Guðlac him hus 7 eardungstowe getimbrode. (1-4)<sup>2</sup>

[There was in the aforesaid island a great barrow made of earth; the same barrow in earlier years men broke and delved for things of riches. At that time, a great pit was,

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<sup>1</sup> The other verse vita is of St. Martin of Tours. The codex also includes verse lives of St. Andreas and St. Helen.

<sup>2</sup> This reproduction of the original Old English and all subsequent reproductions are taken from Szarmach's edition of the *Vercelli Homilies: IX-XXIII* unless otherwise stated.

in like manner, dig out on the other side of the barrow. In and above this pit, the blessed man Guthlac built himself a house and a dwelling place” (155)]<sup>3</sup>

These opening lines appear in stark contrast to the Vercelli Book’s only other prose vita. In Vercelli XVIII, a life of St. Martin of Tours, the text’s beginning makes clear the vita’s subject and expository purpose, which read:

Men, magon we nu hwylcumhwego wordum asecgan be þære arwyrðnesse þysse halgan tide 7 be þære arwyrðan gebyrde 7 be <ðon halgan life 7 forðfore> þæs halgan bisceopes, þysse eadigan werres, þe we nu in andweardnesse his tid weorðiað 7 mærsiað, þe Martinus wæs haten. (1-5)

[Brethren, we may now speak some few words about the honor of this holy time and about the honorable birth and about the holy life and death of the holy bishop, of this blessed man called Martin, whose feast-day we now at the present time celebrate and proclaim. (117)]

As the juxtaposition of these vitae makes evident, the first lines of Guthlac’s vita are peculiar. Rather than begin with a meditation on faith or Guthlac’s exceptional sanctity, Vercelli XXIII’s opening withholds its saintly subject and broader Christian context for the reader.

In lieu of a more traditional context, Vercelli XXIII begins with a focus on the physical space in which the vita takes place. This opening provides a framework that includes a pointedly local description of the landscape and the place in which Guthlac chose for his retreat from the world. The local aspects of these physical features are explicitly signaled in above phrase “þam sprecenan iglande” [that aforesaid island]. This reference to

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<sup>3</sup> This translation and all subsequent translations of the Old English Vercelli Book are taken from Nicholson’s edition of *The Vercelli Book Homilies*.

external context and relationship with English space implies a familiarity and intimacy with such geography. Such references also echoes Bede's famous formulation of Britain in the first book of his *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*, which begins by stating: "Brittania oceani insula" (5), or "Britain is an island in the ocean." These opening words of Bede's influential history conflate the concept of Britain with its geographical space, which, like Guthlac's vita, suggests the integral role of space in creating meaning. In addition to the homily's focus on the physical space that contextualizes Guthlac's life, these beginning lines also offer a historical dimension to the landscape. Before Guthlac himself finally makes an appearance in the homily's third sentence, we learn about the history that marks the hero's landscape. When mentioning the "mycel hlæw of eorþan ge worth" [great barrow] that Guthlac inhabits, the text references the raised-earthen mound and its past as a pre-Christian burial chamber, which once interred bodies and housed riches. This detail gestures not only to the history of Guthlac's chosen barrow, but also to England's pagan past. In effect, the homily orients the reader to consider how the space in which the vita takes place is as significant as the saint himself.

Guthlac's opening lines emphasize the primacy of space to the genre of hagiography. While the vita's inclusion of geographical features such as "island" and "barrow" signal a keen interest in space, the vita's codicological context indicates how such space may have been used. More specially, the material context of Homily XXIII, demonstrates that space can act in service of power. And, to be certain, Guthlac's vita is only one of several texts in the Vercelli Book that include uses of space to form and maintain ideologies of power. For instance, additional homilies that precede Vercelli XXIII, include sermons that prescribe appropriate behaviors and actions around specific Christian practices. Most notably, Vercelli

XI, XII, XIII, XIX provide instruction on Rogation Days. These homilies describe the sacred celebration's history and provide a code of conduct for parishioners as outlined by their church. When considering how these homilies articulate larger ideologies of space, it should be noted that the very name "Rogation" assumes a hierarchy of power. Taken from the Latin verb "rogare," meaning "to ask," Rogation Days imply an unequal relationship of authority between participants. And, indeed, such was the case. During Rogation, the church exhorted parishioners to ask for penance and mercy. More broadly, the observation of Rogation Days in Western Christendom also included fasting, prayers, and processions centered around the idea of asking for forgiveness and blessings especially in relation to agricultural production. Just as Guthlac's vita above draws reader's attention to the features of the physical landscape, so too, did Rogation rituals. In a custom specific to Rogation, parishioners demarcated their locality. During the procession known as the "Beating of the Bounds," participants walked the boundaries of their local parish while beating the land with a stick. By literally beating and breaking the periphery's vegetation, this act created a physical imprint of the parish's boundary upon the land.<sup>4</sup> Such a custom reinforced the physical limits of the local parish and the resources it encompasses while protecting against possible encroachment from neighboring parishes and landholders. When considering this practice and the procession's act of marking local space, it's important to consider how this ceremony also figures the participants' bodies as literal markers of the parish's jurisdiction. By walking and creating these borders, participants are complicit in locating themselves as

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<sup>4</sup> For more on this ritual in medieval England, see Hutton's *The Rise and Fall of Merry England*, especially pages 34-6, and also Duffy's *The Stripping of the Altars*, pages 136-139.

also belonging to the parish's purview. In this way, the spatial practices of Rogation invite participants to enact and embody the very ideology that controls them.

The ceremonies surrounding Rogationtide further employ space as mode of control when describing local expectations over the parish's behavior. For instance, in Vercelli XIX, the sermon dictates proscriptions for observers below:

Us syndon syndorlice on ðyssonum dagum forbodene—þeah hie on ælclere tide  
forbodene syn, þeah swiðor on þysse tide—idele spæca 7 tæflunga 7 gebeorscipas 7  
þæt nan mann o<n> þyssonum dagum blod ne forlæte ne ne geþristlæce ænig man ætes  
oððe wætes to onbyrigenne ær þære nigoðan tide 7 ær he mæssan hæbbe gehyred, 7  
barefotum Cristes bec 7 his rode tacna oðre halige reliquias eadmodlice gegret hæbbe.  
(71-75)

[(These) are specially forbidden to us on these on these days—*though they are forbidden at every time, still more at this time*—vain speech, gaming [ie; playing at dice], and banquets, and that man on these days spill blood, nor any man presume to partake of food or drink before the ninth hour and before he had heard mass, and has humbly visited with barefeet the book [?] of Christ and the signs of His cross and other holy relics. For everyone both young and old, this fast is commanded (with the result that they must observe it profoundly... (129-30, emphasis mine)]

The above dictum that participants may not break fast until they have “humbly visited with barefeet the book” offers a conspicuous control of parishioner's movement within space. More specifically, the allusion to “the book,” an object that lacks description or linguistic modification, implies an assumed degree of local knowledge. However, this implied intimacy of local knowledge is exploited and used to promote control over parishioners by dictating

the space a Rogation observer is permitted to occupy. In addition to specifying observers' movements in space, such proscriptions also dictate church expectations for behavior within said space. When enumerating requirements for the community's behavior, the homily includes the amusing phrase "though they are forbidden at every time, still more at this time." The inclusion of this temporal specificity, signals the close relationship between behavior, space, and time. In effect, text's emphasis on how expectations for a local community's behavior is contingent on the Church's calendar, illustrates a larger ideological frame of control that encases Guthlac's vita. The inclusion of this local saint and practices of local place demonstrate how space is used as an ideological tool in service of power structures, such as—in the case of the Vercelli Book and its speculative community—a local church.

The church's use of boundaries and physical place during customs surrounding Rogation Days controls a community's time and shape their lived experience. This becomes even more apparent when read alongside many of the Vercelli Book's additional homilies. While several of the codex's homilies discuss Rogation Days, an even greater proportion of the manuscript's homilies focus broadly on eschatological concerns. In fact, a total of nine homilies are specifically concerned with death, the End of Time, and the Last Judgment.<sup>5</sup> Such concerns are typified by the opening lines of Vercelli II, which depict a grim scene of those left behind after the Last Judgment:

Men þa leofestan, þæs myclan dom-dæȝs worc bið swiðe eȝes-lic 7 andryslic eallum  
zesceaftum. In þam dæȝe þa hleoðriendan lizeas for-bærnaþ þæne blod-ȝe-menȝdan

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<sup>5</sup> These homilies include Vercelli II, III, IV, VII, IX, X, XIV, XV, and XXII.



Ʒeard 7 þa-þe nu her syndon on myclum Ʒylpe 7 on unnyttre Ʒesyhðe Ʒoldes 7 seolfres  
7 Ʒod-webbes 7 woƷ-Ʒestreona. (1-5)<sup>6</sup>

[Dearly beloved, the great action...of doomsday will be very fearful and dreadful to  
all creatures. On that day the resounding flames will burn up the blood-mingled earth,  
and (will burn up) those who now are here (engaged) in great boasting and in the  
useless sight of gold and silver and of the finecloth and of ill-gotten property (27)]

These descriptions create an immediacy of an impending Last Judgment: such urgency  
illustrates the high stakes of living according to the proscriptions outlined in accompanying  
homilies—including those dealing with Rogation. Vercelli II's call for parishioners to their  
salvation with urgency is echoed throughout the homilies that follow. In Vercelli IV, the  
homily intensifies the focus on the personal salvation by calling the community

Ʒe wepen 7 forhtien on þysse med-miclan tide for eowrum synum. Forþan ne bioð  
eowre tearas 7 eowre hreowsunƷa for noht Ʒe-tealde on þære to-weardan worulde.  
(1-4)

[weep and fear this short time for your sins. Because your tears and repentance are  
reckoned for naught in the future world (37)].

Both examples—like so many found in the Vercelli Book's other eschatological homilies—  
make clear the stakes of parishioner's participation in faith and the local practices that  
accompany it. By focusing on salvation, the Vercelli Book suggests an ideology that supports  
church authority in facilitating a parish's salvation.

I begin this project with the Old English Guthlac and its codicological context  
because the manuscript makes visible how space is related to ideological investments.

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<sup>6</sup> This reproduction of the original Old English from the Vercelli Book and all  
subsequent reproductions are taken from Foerster's edition of *Die Vercelli-Homilien*.

Guthlac's vita and the accompanying homilies construct the lived experiences for a community assumed by the codex's geographical reach. And, as the homilies dealing with eschatological concerns demonstrate, these lived experiences also include speculative futures; the emotional terror of the Final Judgment shapes a community's practices as much as a parish's established rituals and customs. These lived experiences are brought to the fore in the Old English Guthlac and its accompanying homilies, which make clear the intersection of a hagiography with geophysical space and the ideologies in which they are imbricated. The example of Guthlac also offers a frame for considering a tradition in the use of space in the genre of hagiography. While the following dissertation focuses on an archive of vitae produced after the Norman Conquest, my inclusion of Guthlac serves as an example of the genre's inheritance and how the writing of saints' lives have used space to create and maintain ideologies of power. While the Old English Guthlac is from a literary period prior to that of the saints' lives discussed in the following chapters, Guthlac was a figure that continued to have influence far after the Norman Conquest. In fact, Guthlac reappears in the illuminated *Guthlac Roll*, a Latin life of the local Lincolnshire saint dating to 1175-1215.<sup>7</sup> And, just as the Old English Guthlac of the Vercelli Book emphasizes a relationship to space, so, too does this later version.

While the Old English Guthlac anchored itself to place through descriptions of local space, the *Guthlac Roll* makes visible its connection to place through its material features. The *Guthlac Roll*, which contains *Vita Sancti Guthlaci*, is composed of four and one half pieces of parchment and contains eighteen circular drawings called "roundels." These tinted roundels include various scenes from Guthlac's life including his decision to commit to a

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<sup>7</sup> London, British Library, Harley MS Roll Y. 8

spiritual path, his receipt of the Benedictine tonsure, and various signs of his sanctity before and after his death. The unique shape and stylization of the roll's roundels have attracted a significant amount of attention from scholars. More specifically, the aesthetic of these drawings have lead many to speculate that the roundels function as blueprints or suggestions for the creation of stained glass medallions. In describing these roundels, Florens Deuchler notes that the "drawings, with their heavy firm, continuous contours and sparing use of color, suggest designs for stained glass" (no. 163). Several scholars have also included similar hypotheses when describing the roundels. Michael Tavinor, for instance, calls the Guthlac Rolls drawings "cartoons for stained-glass windows" (41). R.D. Fulk and Christopher M. Cain express similar certainty in this suggestion by referring to the illustrations as simply "eighteen stained glass roundels" (102). These descriptions take for granted the hypothesis that the drawings that accompany Guthlac have a specific connection to space as either designs for a window or a record of one that already existed. It is expected that a saint's life should have such an explicit relationship to place and this project explores this often-overlooked assumption. In this dissertation *Making Local: The Politics of Place in Anglo-Norman Hagiography*, I consider what happens when space is brought to the fore in readings of twelfth-century vernacular hagiography. The chapters below are organized around the central driving question: how does a consideration of local space inform our knowledge of the period's ideologies of power?

Following the examples of space in Guthlac's vitae, the following chapters take a complicated view of the historical and culture context of vernacular hagiographies produced after the Norman Conquest. Each chapter below examines how figures and institutions of power employ local space in hagiography to create and uphold hierarchies. More

specifically, I argue that the use of local space in this project's archive of saints' lives not only registers precarious claims to power over a given community, but also performs these acts of power by promoting the patrons' strategies. The way space is figured in literary texts shapes the contours of community identities and how they belong to, or should belong to, certain groups of inclusion or exclusion. *Making Local* examines how hagiographies lay claim to space and enact structures of power—however real or imagined—from various institutions including monastic houses, the monarchy, and aristocratic land holders. The way these groups represent space act in service of their own goals. By focusing on these three categories of power the Church, the state, and the aristocracy, I hope to show how the uses of the local in Anglo-Norman were not uniform. Rather, the various uses and manipulations of space by figures and intuitions of power demonstrates both the dynamic range and vulnerability of this category.

When considering space, *Making Local* examines the genre of hagiography in order to interrogate medieval practices of intra-national space in Anglo-Norman England. It is widely known that trends in the field have increasingly shifted to focus on space as a category worthy of analysis. As Barbara Hanawalt and Michal Kobińska explain, the discipline is currently “positioned in a dynamic field of discourse about medieval practices of space,” which continues to become more nuanced and heterogeneous (xvii). By using space as an hermeneutic in medieval studies, we piece together a more accurate and multi-faceted understanding of the period. As Hanawalt and Kobińska argue, such attention to space “mark[s] the presence of bodies, signs, and thoughts that had disappeared from view or a discourse in the topography of the medieval landscape” (xi). In other words, our attention to space has the potential to make visible groups and experiences that had once been hidden.

Further, the focus on space in Medieval Studies also allows us to place more importance on the category of the local and intra-national identity as an analytic tool. However, such applications of space were not always so enthusiastically received. Michel Foucault and Henri Lefebvre's respective theorizations of space shifted the way the humanities and social sciences understood the category. Such changes in how we perceive of and interact with space is referred to as "the spatial turn," and has since dramatically altered the discourse. In summarizing these shifts, Michel Foucault notes

Space used to be either dismissed as belonging to 'nature'—that is, the given, the basic conditions, 'physical geography,' in other words a sort of 'prehistoric' stratum; or else is was conceived as the residual site or the field of expansion of peoples, of a culture, a language or a state. (149)

Foucault's claim that space has been taken for granted as a given medium against which history plays out, is echoed in Lefebvre's later theorizations. In *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre explains that there's nothing inert or neutral about space; rather, space is always socially produced and often employed as a instrument of hegemony (10). In fact, for Lefebvre, space is not simply a factor that contributes to culture but the dynamic driving force behind it. Further, in demonstrating space's bias and enmeshment with culture, Lefebvre outlined a triad of space in which our perceived, conceived, and lived experiences of space define. Through these definitions and expectations, we endow space with symbolic meaning. In this way, space is heterogeneous, dynamic and mutable according to our different practices of space.

The way systems of power use and manipulate practices of space is bound with the creation of identity. When Louis Althusser explained his concept of interpellation, or the

acts of “hailing,”—the process by which individuals recognize or acknowledge the ideologies assigned to them—he neglected to discuss how space also enacts such identities. In considering the spatial applications of Althusser’s theory, Tim Cresswell explains how “certain orderings of space provide a structure for experience and help tell us who we are in society” (8). In this way, certain spaces assign ideologies to us and hail us as subjects. Further, recent scholarship on space have expanded these theorizations to articulate even more so the intersections of space and power. In his work, Stuart Elden uses the term *territory* in much the same way I use local; for Elden, territory is a dynamic and relational spatial configuration smaller than the nation-state. Most important for Elden’s definition, is that the space has a historical specificity (10). Similarly, Tim Cresswell, uses the term *place* to discuss the intersection of geophysical space with the area’s social, political, and ideological investments. As Cresswell explains, “‘place’ combines the spatial with the social—it is ‘social space.’ Insofar as these expectations serve the interest of those at the top of social hierarchies, they can be described as ideological” (3). And, most importantly, Cresswell notes that place is not an abstract concept but one that impacts the daily, lived experience of individuals and their community in that “expectations about behavior in place are important components in the construction, maintenance, and evolution of ideological values” (4). These theorists further Lefebvre’s claim that space is not simply a factor in conflicts of sociopolitical power, but rather the facilitating factor that orients it.

When discussing the use of space in hagiography, I employ the term *local* to refer to a category that extends beyond the physical, geometrical boundaries of a given area. Rather, the local comprises the sum of a place’s culture, community, practices, and ideological investments. In this way, the local is dynamic and relational category where geographical

space and socio-cultural ideologies of power intersect. Further, I chose to use the term local, instead of *territory* or *place* to describe the dynamic in order to acknowledge the postcolonial frame that informs my work. Unlike the abovementioned terms, the term *local* is explicitly yoked to larger methodological discourses on the nation in postcolonial studies. In this project, I use this term to reflect recent shifts in postcolonial theory and build on how medieval studies addresses pre-national identities. I am indebted to previous scholars whose work has cleared the way for my use of the category of the local, as the past two decades have witnessed a dramatic shift in how academia views medievalist studies' use of postcolonial theory. Early, first-generation postcolonial medievalists often assumed a defensive posture and had to argue for their right to use this theoretical approach. For instance, Bruce Holsinger defends medievalists' use of the theory by challenging the periodization of postcolonial studies; in tracing the field's intellectual genealogy, Holsinger reveals the method's theoretical roots in the work of medieval historians of the French *Annales* school. In demonstrating the two fields' similar objectives Holsinger writes

From the very beginning the [Subaltern Studies] collective's essays exhibit a deep reflective and critical engagement with medievalist scholarship on economic history, peasant society, and precapitalist social formation, a body of scholarship that represents perhaps the primary positive historiographical influence upon their work.  
(1210)

Subaltern Studies' intersection with medieval historiography demonstrates how movements in medieval studies and postcolonial studies influence and parallel one another. This move also challenges the periodization that aligned "the postcolonial" with "the

modern”—and in doing so, relegated the medieval to a primitive “pre-modern” position.<sup>8</sup> The second generation of postcolonial medievalists used the theory to scrutinize the category of the nation, and more specifically assert that postcolonial methodologies are not bound to the modern category of the nation. Rather, many medievalists—including Jeffrey Jerome Cohen—have argued against the work of Benedict Anderson’s thesis to assert that *we can* speak about ideologies of nationalism before the Westphalian system and the creation of the nation-state.<sup>9</sup>

My project’s attention to the dynamics of space and collective identities in postcolonial studies is timely and participates in what I see to be a third generation of postcolonial medievalist scholarship. This third generation of postcolonial medieval scholarship moves from a theorization of the nation to the theorization of the local. Medieval scholars such as Kathy Lavezzo and Geraldine Heng have utilized postcolonial methodologies to situate our understanding of English collective identities within a larger relational context. Lavezzo’s research on *mappa mundi* and Heng’s work on the Crusades, examines medieval England through a global frame, rather than through the lens of the nation.<sup>10</sup> According to Lisa Lampert-Weissig, such a global perspective not only allows for a more nuanced understanding of colonial interconnection, but has also allowed “an overall broadening in the geographic scope of medieval literary studies” (7). Further, I follow the recent work of Patricia Clare Ingham, Ralph Hanna, and Robert Barrett, Jr. who advocate for a closer examination of intra-English—or local—identities and a dislocation of the nation

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<sup>8</sup> For more on these relationships, see Ingham’s review of Kathleen Davis’ book *Periodization and Sovereignty*.

<sup>9</sup> For a discussion on the temporal associations of the term “postcolonial” and challenges to said assumptions, see Cohen’s “Midcolonial.” For a more on the rise of the nation state see Anderson’s *Imagined Communities*, especially pages 4-5.

<sup>10</sup> For more see Lavezzo’s *Angels on the Edge of the World* and Heng’s *Empire of Magic*.



state as the normative unit of analysis. In rethinking how we approach premodern collective identities, Barrett makes a strong case for shifting the focus to regional and local spaces when he writes, “England maintains its national coherence because its intranational spaces escape sustained analysis” (14-15). By thinking about the local, I am able to attend to an area’s communities of various scale and examine the power dynamics of said communities in a more nuanced way. My concern for how hagiographical texts articulate and produce ideologies to maintain power hierarchies demonstrates how methods of interrogating spatial relationships in postcolonial studies are transposable to a medieval context.

In order to effectively employ the local as hermeneutic, my methodological approach is informed by theorists who dismantle the concept of a monolithic nation-state. I rely on theorists, such as Leela Gandhi and Arjun Appadurai, who are invested in breaking apart uniform—and often Western—models of the nation. In doing so, I draw on Gandhi’s work and her rethinking of the binarisms of West vs. non-West so often employed in postcolonial theory. By acknowledging the existence of internal, anticolonial voices and discourses in the West, Gandhi not only revises the political scope of postcolonial theory, but also the spatial scope; her nontraditional theoretical “emphasis on internal forms of anti-colonial discourse that emerge within the West” (2) expands the site of postcolonial analysis to categories such as the region—a geopolitical category integral to my project. Finally, since I use saints’ lives to interrogate the identity of the local, Arjun Appadurai’s work on the subject is essential to my reading of the work of hagiography. As Appadurai notes in *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, locality and regionalism is a form of identity that is not

inherent to a geopolitical space; rather locality must be produced.<sup>11</sup> For Appadurai, the production of the local emerges within a historical context that calls for an oppositional community; in this way, the category of the local is “not only context-driven, but are also context generative” (186). In this way, my project applies these distinctions and discussions of the local to argue that my particular archive of saints’ lives function as material and ideological mechanisms that actively produce locality and regional knowledge as a mode of control.

*Making Local* argues for the primacy of hagiography in theorizing the category of the local in Medieval Studies. As a genre, saints’ lives have very intimate relationships with space. The site-specific location of an English saint’s birth, deeds, and his or her bodily remains are key features of these texts and important knowledge for their devotional communities. Saints’ lives articulate a double movement between a local community and a larger geopolitical space: the site-specific locations associated with an a local saint’s life events are held in tension with the representation of a saint as a telos of a collective and evolving English spiritual identity as well as the larger transnational identity of Christendom. It is this dialectical relationship between the regional and the national that make saints’ lives particularly rich texts for exploring how provincial communities identify (or disidentify) with larger geopolitical affiliations. In this way, hagiography has a special advantage when considering ideologies of space. Further, this genre’s focus on sacred figures magnifies the connection to place as communities have intimate connections to their local saints. As Robert

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<sup>11</sup> More specifically, in *Modernity at Large*, Appadurai notes: “much that has been considered local knowledge is actually knowledge of how to produce and reproduce locality under conditions of anxiety and entropy, social wear and flux, ecological uncertainty and cosmic volatility, and the always present quirkiness of kinsmen, enemies, spirits, and quarks of all sorts” (181).

Bartlett suggest, saints are not only witnesses of faith but intercessors for the faithful; in this way “[i]ntercession is at the heart of the Christian concept of sainthood...” (5). To be certain, the desire for intercession—the feature which, according to Bartlett, invests saints with power—is tied to local spaces. In fact, the relationship of a community with its local saint is understood via spatial proximity; as Bartlett explains “...members of the Christian community connected with the shrines of the martyrs in two ways: they undertook regular routine rituals to honour them, and they expected extraordinary help from them” (11). In this way, saints are figures that prescribe spatial practices; places associated with a saint’s life and death, as well as a saint’s relics and shrine physically structure the experiences of local parishioners and pilgrims.<sup>12</sup> However, the spatial dimensions of sainthood are also features that invest the figure with authority. A saint’s natural connection to space is also what makes it both valuable and vulnerable to manipulation by those in power. And, hagiography makes visible interests in the control of space and the resources and communities associated with it. Further, hagiography’s focus on the local is what makes this genre such a rich analytical tool for exploring power—especially during the Anglo-Norman period. In the two centuries surrounding the Norman Conquest, England witnessed major shifts in political control and forfeitures of regional land and power. Such tumult, I argue, can be read through the rhetoric and practices of space found in vernacular hagiographies of the period.

While the aftermath of the Norman-Conquest shaped Anglo-Norman categories of the local, an external global force also affected the meaning of local space during this period.

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<sup>12</sup> And, this desire for intercession not only shapes the lives within a saint’s community but also their deaths, as Bartlett explains, “Anyone in the local Christian community could visit the martyr’s shrines and participate in the annual rituals performed there. Much more exceptional was the privileges of being interred close to a martyr’s grave, so-called burial ‘*ad sanctos* (next to the saints)’” (14-15).

The growing power and reach of the papacy and the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Church in Rome during the Investiture Conflict, provided localities in Anglo-Norman England with an force against which to shape themselves. The pope's increasingly intervention in the approval of local saints threatened to diminish the authorizing power of local cults and parishes. Prior to Roman intervention, a saint's life was authorized via *vox populi*, or canonized by popular belief. As Thomas J. Heffernan explains, such attitudes toward local saints were reflected in the relationship between a local audience and the saint's hagiographer. The writing of a saint's life was itself an authorizing act by a locality in that "[t]he author for sacred biography is the community, and consequently the experience presented by the narrative voice is collective" (19). While devotional communities continued to record the lives of their local saints, they increasingly faced the approval of the papacy. As André Vauchez explains, the twelfth century witnessed an rise in the papacy's intervention in local cults of the saints and the processes of canonization. Such interventions were likely viewed as "an opportunity [for the papacy] to assert it authority within the western Church" (22). The papacy's increased exercise of juridical power in the affairs of local saints was especially marked in the second half of the twelfth century. According to Vauchez, "papal canonization began to compete with episcopal translation and then to surpass it," and such intervention reached an apex under Pope Alexander III (24-25).<sup>13</sup> While such exercise of papal over episcopal power in twelfth century had been based on tacit interpretations of pontifical privilege, papal authority in the local cults was made explicit in the early thirteenth century.<sup>14</sup> The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 and the Decretals of Gregory IX outlined the

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<sup>13</sup> See also Kemp's *Canonization and Authority in the Western Church*.

<sup>14</sup> For more on papal authority and intervention in the process of canonization prior to 1215, see Vauchez, pages 22-27.

juridical powers of the papacy in matters of local canonization. This meant that “Pontifical reservation of the right to canonize saints was included in the legislation of the Church and the excuse of [local] ignorance was no longer acceptable, knowledge of the rules being accessible to all” (Vauchez 30). The pope’s global control over local devotional communities and the authority of their saints created an oppositional relationship that threatened local authorities and their ability to facilitate communities around saints. In response, the archive of saint’s lives in *Making Local* demonstrate the precarious claims of local authorities and the power they seek to exert.

As these saints’ lives of this project demonstrate, the local—as with all spatial imaginaries—is above all, tied to discourses of power. And this project provides a sketch for how different instructions of power have used the genre of hagiography to authorize their claims to power and authority over the local. In considering the way the hagiography is used to create and exert power over the local, I focus on three different categories of the local: private lands, monastic lands, and sovereign land. In this project, when examining private lands, I am referring to the property holdings beyond the purview of monastic and sovereign powers. More specifically, this type of private space belongs to the nobility and includes estates and property under the legal term “demesne,” originating from the Latin “dominus,” meaning “a master of a household or household” (“dominus,” sense 1). As the etymology of demesne suggests, this spatial category is entirely under the control of the lord, or land owners, for his use, benefit, and profit. Perhaps most importantly, during this period, this category of space exists outside the influence of the crown, at least in theory. However, the baronial and aristocratic classes’ claims to such landholdings were precarious. After the Norman Conquest, most of these private lands were allocated to Norman transplants by the

king in exchange for their loyalty and services. Therefore, England was constituted as a royal fief in a manner unique in Western Europe. Such grants of land, however, meant displacing the conquered English landholders from their own property. The fraught history of Anglo-Norman land holdings during this period posed a special problem for barons and aristocratic families claiming authority over their estates. The desire of barons and householders to secure their land rights, pushes against contemporary concepts of sovereign power. As *Making Local* demonstrates, the need to legitimize claims to space over and against the purview of the crown creates local regions that push against the larger geospatial concept of nation and sovereign power. Such attention to space and the interests of aristocratic householders adds to current discourses examining the nuanced and relationships of sovereign and baronial power.

Just as barons and private landholders pushed against the jurisdiction of sovereign power, so too did those in control of monastic lands. Such monastic houses acquired their properties through land endowments and resources from aristocratic patrons, sovereign powers, and local tithes. They also exercised considerable control over the economics and trade of neighboring towns. However, the authority and power of these houses were contingent on their property holdings. In other words, an abbey or monastic house could not exist independently of its spatial endowment. This dependent relationship of monastic house with physical space makes the maintenance and control over local physical space especially vital for their survival. Monasteries relied on revenue from pilgrims and the local community's support of their patron saint to reify their control over their local space. Meanwhile, their services and facilitation of religious rituals cultivated an intense connection and control over their devotional community. Monastic houses also had the added challenge

of asserting their place in relation to larger, adjacent bishoprics as well as the control of the papacy in Rome. Monastic houses often had to negotiate the administrative and financial oversight of more powerful institutions. In effect, such monastic houses sought to secure their lands and resources—which often included the adjoining town—by promoting their local interests in direct opposition to adjacent local and global authorities. This understanding of authority as composed of multiple, competing local and global institutions, helps us move beyond the top-down hierarchical model of national power and adds to our understanding of English intranational identities during this period.

The last category of space this project explores is that of sovereign space. More specifically, this category of space relates to the king's spatial authority. During the twelfth century, the category of sovereign space underwent dramatic transformation. Prior to the twelfth century, sovereign authority in England was not fixed to a specific area; the administrative center and royal court existed only in proximity to the king's person. The rise of Westminster Abbey as a physical administrative center in twelfth-century England nucleated sovereign power by fixing it to space. This pre-nation state governmental center, marks a expressed yoking of the crown to a physical, local place. By doing so, sovereign power is tied to space and claims a specific geospatial jurisdiction of power. And while it's tied to local space, sovereign power's manipulation of space demonstrates how the category of the local can expand and contract in the Middle Ages. More specifically, my project examines how the local space is expanded in hagiography to make claims over pre-nation state England as a locality in and of itself, especially in direct opposition to Rome.

The first chapter in this project, “St. Alban's Missing Body: Absence and Ekphrasis in *Vie de seint Auban*” considers how monastic authority uses space to control its

surrounding community. This chapter explores how religious institutions such as St. Albans Abbey employ the genre hagiography as a tool to define and control monastic local space. More specifically, I turn to the fraught relationship St. Albans Abbey has with the relics of their eponymous patron saint. Despite the adamant claims of St. Albans Abbey, historical chronicles and concurrent texts suggest the true location of the body is less than certain. The uncertain location of St. Alban's body had the potential to threaten the abbey's authority over its local community and influx of visiting pilgrims. As an institution that profited on pilgrimage revenues and community contributions, St. Albans Abbey had a vested interest in legitimizing their claim to possess the saint's relics. Aside from the economic advantages of housing Alban's relics, the abbey also used the relics to facilitate the local community's spiritual relationship. The physical proximity of a saint's body was vital for a devotional cult; a relic's material presence demonstrated the strength of the saint's intercessory power on behalf of the community. In order for St. Albans Abbey to secure the resources provided by their local community and the great devotional cult of St. Alban, they had to inspire confidence in the location of the saint's location.

In this chapter, I argue that the abbey's concern over the authentic, material existence of the saint's relics is registered in Matthew Paris's thirteenth-century vita, *Vie de Seint Auban* (hereafter *Auban*). More specifically, *Auban*'s obsession with material objects reflects an uncertainty of the saint's relics and their true resting place. To demonstrate this, I provide close readings of *Auban*'s conspicuous use of ekphrasis; such attention to the text's objects and bodies not only emphasizes the subject's material reality, but also stresses their connection with space. This is especially pronounced in the text's attention to the body of St. Amphibalus—Alban's companion martyr—and the ankh-shaped cross the pair share



throughout the vita. *Auban*'s relationship to objects and Alban's companion martyr creates a diversion for the reader; instead of fixating on St. Alban's relics, the text lures readers to consider a cache of other material objects and relics. Further, this interest in materiality extends to the text itself. The manuscript in which *Auban* appears, contains narrative modes that act independently of the verse life; the inclusion of images and descriptive rubrics, demand a community's attention to the vita itself as an authorizing object in the cult of St. Alban. Ultimately, *Auban*'s obsession with material objects and physical bodies serves to obscure the uncertain location of the abbey's most valued objects: St. Alban's relics. By close reading *Auban*'s use of descriptions and tracing the movement of the text's objects and bodies, I explain how St. Albans Abbey used hagiography and space to control local communities. *Auban*'s attention to objects is a bid to authorize St. Albans's claim to house the relics of their patron saint. And, to be certain, this authorizing move is meant to affirm the abbey's position in community affairs; if St. Alban's Abbey controls their patron saint's relics, they also control the experiences of the accompanying devotional community.

Just as monastic houses such as St. Albans Abbey employed creative means to affirm power over local communities, private land owners also utilized hagiography and its tropes to lay claim to their estates. As mentioned above, twelfth-century Anglo-Norman claims to their private lands were complicated by a history of conquest and reallocation. Since such estates had been inherited via Norman redistribution after the conquest, baronial families lacked historical and ancestral rights to use of their property without sovereign intervention. I argue that this aristocratic concern to demonstrate authority and secure ownership over such estates can be read in texts produced by private patronage. More specifically, in *Making Local*'s second chapter, "Ne sai ki sui": Gaimar's Havelok Episode and Anglo-Norman England's

Inheritance,” I argue that Havelok episode of Geoffrey Gaimar’s *L’estoire des Engleis* (hereafter *Estoire*) registers concern over Anglo-Norman settlers’ precarious connections to their entrusted land. I begin with an examination of the *Estoire*’s Havelok episode and its framing of Havelok the Dane as a local hero. By attending to the episode’s its peculiar use of hagiographical tropes, allusions to the local economy, and the Danish cultural inheritance of East Anglia, I show how the *Estoire* uses the form and generic convention of saints’ lives to manufacture an authorizing past. And, to be certain, this past is not a typical ancestral historiography; the use of tropes from hagiography sacralize the patron’s connection to this past in a bid to strengthen the patrons’ purchase on local land claims. Further, the legitimization of this historical and sacred connection to East Anglian space, allows the patrons to claim a right to their land that extends far earlier than the Norman Conquest. And, to be certain, the East Anglian space that the *Estoire* accommodates has specific cultural and political valences. The locales promoted in Gaimar’s text belong to the Danelaw—the self-governing Danish settlement established in the late tenth century. By yoking its narrative to the region’s past, the *Estoire* provides an authority—however imaginary—that grants historical claims to land that is beyond the purview of sovereign power and influence.

In order to make visible the *Estoire*’s emphasis on local space, I place close readings of Gaimar’s text alongside the later Middle English romance, *Havelok the Dane* (hereafter *Havelok*). This comparison highlights stark contrasts in the relationship between space and power. More specifically, the *Estoire* uses the category of the local to moderate sovereign power while the *Havelok* promotes national space and absolute sovereign power. The comparison between the *Estoire* and *Havelok* brings the privileged status of the category of the local in twelfth century Anglo-Norman England into relief. Further, *Havelok*’s interest in

larger geospatial categories of identification provides us with a simple trajectory for tracing shifts in the rhetoric of the local to the national in the Havelok legend. Through these readings, “Ne sai ki sui” shows how private landholders used hagiography to privileged the local in service of their interests.

Finally, this project considers how the category of the local shifts in scope depending on the ideological aims of those in power. While the previous chapters explore the traditional scale of local, my third chapter, “Edward the Confessor and the Politics of Place in Mathew Paris’s *L’Estoire de seint Aedward le rei*” examines how such categories of space expand to accommodate sovereign interests. In this chapter, I consider Matthew Paris’s mid thirteenth-century vita *L’estoire de seint Aedward le rei* (hereafter *Aedward*) and its representation of St. Edward’s overlapping identities. By figuring Edward as both king and saint, *Aedward* allows the king to straddle identities of the pre-national and the local. The intersection of Edward’s royal, nationalizing identity with his fixed presence at Westminster Abbey, demonstrates how the dynamism of the local and its ability contain other intra-national identities. More specifically, I examine the category of the local through Edward’s relationship to space. I provide close readings of moments that both foreground Edward’s sanctity and also tethers his identity to space; such readings include an analysis of pilgrims’ desperation in seeking his intercession and the king’s healing miracles. Such insistence on Edward’s sanctity and royal authority at Westminster Abbey creates a specifically English category of the local.

*Aedward*’s decidedly English category of the local functions in opposition to larger geospatial category of identity. More specifically, the space *Aedward* promotes counters the global authority of Rome and the papacy. *Aedward* facilitates England’s comparison to the

global center of Christianity is several ways. First, the text defines the local as a center from which space and author radiates rather than a bounded space—a model of the local that parallels the geospatial structure of the Church in Rome. *Aedward* also articulates this relationship to Rome through its subversive use of St. Peter—a figure deeply connected with Rome and the papacy—and its accounts of pilgrims who explicitly seek Edward over the pope’s intercession. I argue that the local’s relationship to Rome and other intra-national spaces in *Aedward’s* reflects the ideological goals of the text’s patron, Henry III. Not only does *Aedward’s* use of space parallel Henry’s project to establish Westminster Abbey as a royal and authoritative center, the narrative of power the text creates privileges English sovereign authority against global forces. By examining *Aedward’s* space and its relationship to royal and spiritual authority, I show how the *vita* complicates our understanding local scope in Anglo-Norman England.

The following chapters seek to demonstrate the primacy of hagiography in theorizing the space of the local . The chapters below examine how figures of authority use space in saints’ lives to create and maintain ideologies of power, but there is still much more research to be done on this topic. While *Making Local* shows how hagiography was used as a tool to exert control over space and communities, not all saints’ lives from the period were recruited for such goals. One only need turn to the *Life of Christina of Markyate* for contrast. Christina’s self-fashioned twelfth-century hagiography uses local space in acts of resistance. After defending her virginity, escaping her husband, and defying a house arrest imposed by her parents, a disguised Christina travels from place to place seeking asylum. Her participation in various local spaces frames her opposition against the aristocratic ideologies that continually attempt to enclose her identity. Throughout her *vita*, Christina resisted

appropriate identities of gender, class, and spiritual devotion to fulfill her own vision of subjectivity. *The Life of Christina of Markyate* one of many texts that may encourage more nuanced readings of the politics of space in the twelfth century England. So, while this project's discussions of the local and the ideologies they serve rely on a limited archive, I hope that *Making Local* invites further discussion on the intersection of hagiography, power, and place in Anglo-Norman England.

## II. “Ne sai ki sui”: Gaimar’s Havelok Episode and Anglo-Norman England’s Inheritance

In a rare record detailing the political aftermath of the Norman Conquest, the *Peterborough* manuscript of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle offers an account of English disinheritance.<sup>15</sup> The entries immediately following 1066 recount a chain of events in which William the Conqueror’s redistribution of English land to Norman supporters foments a rebellion. Intent on installing Edgar Aetheling—the sole surviving heir of the royal house of Wessex—as the rightful king of England, the English staged an unsuccessful coup against the Normans; the chronicle entry for 1068 records the revolt below:

Here in this year King William gave earl Robert the earldom in Northumberland.

Then [1069] the local men came against him and killed him and 9 hundred men with him. And the æthling Edgar then came to York with all the Northumbrians, and the men of the market-town made peace with him. And the King William came from the south with all his army and ravaged the town, and killed many hundreds of men, and the æthling went back to Scotland. (202)

Following this account of the initial Northern insurgency, the chronicle’s next admission describes the Northern region’s alliance with the Danes. More specifically, the entry details the English alliance with the sons and brother of Denmark’s King Swein—a ruler who, for his own political interests, also supported Edgar’s claim to the throne. As the *Peterborough Chronicle* explains, this alliance began with promising gains before William’s forces destroyed the military operation in an event referred to as the Harrying of the North. The North’s defiance of Norman control and political alliance with the Danes, led William to

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<sup>15</sup> Also referred to as the *Laud Chronicle* or the E version.

enact measures granting him strict political control over his newly acquired territories. As a consequence, the English were removed from local religious and shire offices and those who had opposed William were dispossessed of their lands. The *Peterborough Chronicle* details several instances of local English disinheritance including William's above-cited transfer of land to earl Robert and William's granting control of Peterborough Abbey in 1070 to foreigner Turolde, formerly of France. Further, as Majorie Chibnall reminds us, these Northern revolts were not an anomaly. In the 1070s, William's army faced insurgents from other regions and was "forced to spend four years brutally suppressing revolts in south-west England, the west midlands, [and] the fens" (13). While rebellions from the Northern regions posed a particular threat to Norman control, such regional resistance occurred concurrently throughout England.

As recorded in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, the tumultuous years immediately following the Norman invasion highlight two key issues for understating the geopolitical dynamics of the period: first, the records of regional resistance from the Northern regions stress that the Norman Conquest was neither total nor complete on a "national" scale in 1066; second, the chronicle's attention to an Anglo-Danish relationship and their complex political alliances stress the multiethnic culture into which the Normans entered. These two issues become central in Anglo-Norman claims to property and power in England. And, I argue that these geospatial dynamics are especially evident in the literary production of Geffrei Gaimar's *L'Estoire des Engleis* (hereafter, the *Estoire*).<sup>16</sup> More specifically, this chapter

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<sup>16</sup> It should be noted that very little has been written on Gaimar's Havelok episode. Most useful on Gaimar in general include: Short's "Introduction" to his 2009 edition and translation of the *Estoire*; Dalton's "Geffrei Gaimar's 'Estoire des Engleis,' Peacemaking, and the Twelfth Century Revival of the English Nation"; Gillingham's "Gaimar, the Prose *Brut* and the making of English History."

considers literary production in the aftermath of William's creation of England as a collection of royal fiefs. While the king's loyal soldiers and supports enjoyed awards of land tenure in fiefdoms, their claims—and their inheritor's claims—to hold authority over these manors were precarious.<sup>17</sup> I argue that the *Estoire* registers such concerns of the elite by offering a mythic and sacred history rooted in local space. This history, provides the *Estoire*'s patrons with an imagined authority over their inherited local space. By focusing on the local, I examine how politics of power in baronial land holdings push against the larger designation of the nation and add nuance to our understanding of political communities in twelfth-century England.

When considering the category of local in the *Estoire*, I rely on a definition heavily indebted to Studart Elden's understanding of territory. According to Elden, like the local, territory is dynamic, mutable, and relational; it is integral to understanding power dynamics because it allows us to reconsider "the relationship between the state and its territory" (2). The relational aspect of the local Elden describes is key to my close readings in this chapter; the local space the *Estoire* promotes simultaneously links to and relegates the category of the nation, and, more specifically, the power of the sovereign. This is especially evident in my below comparison of the *Estoire* against the Middle English *Havelok the Dane*, a text that unequivocally elevates sovereign power over aristocratic or baronial counsel. By exploring how the *Estoire*'s promotion of local space is also a promotion of baronial power, I show

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<sup>17</sup> While I use the terms *fief* and *fiefdom* to articulate English power dynamics following the Norman Conquest, it should be noted that Susan Reynolds argues against the use of these terms, claiming that such terms do not account for the complexities of medieval systems of political power. For more, see Reynolds's *Fiefs and Vassals* in which she challenges the concept of the "feudal."



how the desire to secure claims over and against the sovereign's reach makes visible local collectivities in the *Estoire*.

Gaimar's *L'Estoire* survives as a unique Anglo-Norman text; not only is it the oldest extant French vernacular history, but it also reflects the multiculturalism of the twelfth-century England. When attending to the text's diverse cultural focus, Ian Short notes that *L'Estoire* "provide[s] a vast panorama of the Celto-British, Anglo-Saxon, and Anglo-Norman dynasties in the British Isles from Trojan times until the death of William Rufus" ("Gaimar's Epilogue" 324). While the text fashions itself as a history of England, the form Gaimar employed departs from the historiographical modes of his contemporaries. Rather than write in Latin, the language of prestige and authority in the twelfth century, Gaimar produced his history in Anglo-Norman, an insular dialect of French. Gaimar's choice of language may stem, in part, from his claim that the history is a "translation" of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*—a collection of annals written in the Old English vernacular. In this way, *L'Estoire*'s unique use of the vernacular positions the text against the historiography of Gaimar's time. In fact, the majority of histories both preceding and following *L'Estoire* in the twelfth century are composed in Latin. According to Peter Damian-Grint's survey of historiography in twelfth-century England, very few vernacular histories are concurrent with Gaimar's. As Grint explains, the period privileged Latin as "[s]ome of the most important Latin historians of the Middle Ages—William of Malmesbury, Henry of Huntingdon, Orderic Vitalis and William of Newburgh, for instance—were active in twelfth-century England and Normandy" (12). In addition to its use of vernacular, *L'Estoire*'s 6500 verse lines are composed in octosyllabic-rhymed couplets, the verse marker of both romance and hagiography in the twelfth-century. These formal features position *L'Estoire* as a peculiar text simultaneously

engaged with many genres. While *L'Estoire's* form recruits features from many genres, its employment of hagiography is especially marked in the Havelok episode. By close reading the Gaimar's use of form and content, I argue that the Havelok episode's resemblance to a saint's life acts in service of the text's historiographical goals. As a segment that focuses on the local history of Lincolnshire and its Danish heritage, the Havelok episode offers a narrative that elevates and authenticates the aristocracy's presence in the region. More specifically, the episode's use of hagiographical form, tropes, and narrative mode strengthens Anglo-Norman purchase on local power by sacralizing a connection to regional English history.

This chapter focuses on the intersection of hagiography with local space in *L'Estoire*. While previous scholarship has approached Gaimar's text through the lens of the nation, I highlight the intensely local concerns of the *Estoire*. The heightened interest in local reflects a historical period of precarity; though the *Estoire's* dating is contentious, Gaimar most likely composed a version and under the patronage of aristocrat Constance FitzGilbert, a English-born woman of Norman heritage who lived during the tumultuous reign of King Stephen between 1138-1150.<sup>18</sup> Stephen's reign, which was marked by prolonged civil war, has been described by John Gillingham as period marked by a "crisis of empire," (99). However, it has been argued that this crisis also helped galvanize an early English national. As Gillingham explains, "[i]t looks as though one of the consequences in the wars against the Welsh and Scots in Stephen's reign was to crystalize a newly emerging sense of English solidarity and identity" (99-100). Viewed in this way, Gaimar's *Estoire* participates in the

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<sup>18</sup> For more on the dating of *L'Estoire des Engleis*, see Dalton. Dalton argues against Bell and Short's dating of the *Estoire* before 1141 and establishes an alternative timeframe for Gaimar's first composition as occurring between 1141 and 1150.

formation of a new English identity by creating continuity between the English past and the Anglo-Norman present. By fashioning Anglo-Norman England as consistent with a pre-conquest history, the *Estoire* constructs a fictitious past. When explaining the motives behind this fabrication, Paul Dalton suggests that such historical narratives were produced "...to create the impression that the Normans were the natural successors of the English" (430). According to Dalton, "...Gaimar's work blends past and present and reinforces Norman nobility to invent and claim its own past—an important element in the process by which the Normans and the English became integrated" (430) While the *Estoire* certainly promotes Anglo-Norman interests in England—a perspective on which I elaborate below—such scholarship also assumes the nation as the normative unit of collective identity in twelfth-century England. Such an assumption applies a monolithic view of the political landscape of England and eclipses the complicated politics of England's localities.

An approach to Gaimar's local identities in twelfth-century England offers a more nuanced understanding of Anglo-Norman power and politics of the period. By attending to the interests of local landholders in Lincolnshire, I show how space is used to construct social and political identities. As Edward Soja explains in *Postmodern Geographies*, such attention to space as an integral and social aspect of history, brings "the construction and configuration of human geographies" to the fore (11). In other words, by attending to the use of space—more specifically, *local* space—this chapter makes visible the social and political dynamics of the landholding Anglo-Norman elite over and against the sovereign. This, in turn, invites us to consider different intra-national structures of power in the twelfth-century that depart from the overly simplistic model of sovereign and loyal subjects. Further, an analysis of the *Estoire* that accounts for the local resists the homogenization of history that it is said to

create. In his discussion of the critical reception of Gaimar's *Estoire*, Henry Bainton questions scholarship's homogenization of the English nation and its past stating

[th]e *Estoire* is frequently perceived as an unproblematically *national* history, a product of a time when the homogenous "Normans" and the monolithic "English" vied for control over the territory of an unproblematic England and its singular, English, past. It is seen above all as a straightforward means by which the Normans who commissioned it could attach themselves to, and root themselves in, England and its past and so "become" "English." (179, emphasis mine)

My analysis of the *Estoire*'s Havelok episode builds on Bainton's criticism and departs from assumptions that the English past "was a preexisting, static and unitary object just waiting to be absorbed by the new settlers" (Bainton 180). Rather, the social and political landscape of England both before *and* after the Norman Conquest was ethnically pluralistic and multilingual and its heterogeneity is best articulated through an analysis of intra-national spaces.

I argue that Gaimar's *Estoire* offers a unique focus on the local. More specifically, the Havelok episode's use of hagiographical elements makes visible the politics of the local as a privileged collectivity in twelfth-century England. When addressing the *Estoire*'s interest in local space over national space, it is vital to consider the text's specific geospatial focus on Lincolnshire. The episode's investment in this geographical space is not surprising given Gaimar's patron, Constance FitzGilbert—named in text's epilogue as "Dame Custance la gentil" (6437). As the daughter of Norman parents who settled in England shortly after the conquest, Constance inherited a culture without a clear ancestral claim to her familial land

and estates.<sup>19</sup> She and her husband, Ralph FitzGilbert, were tenants of several fees in Lincolnshire where the Havelok episode takes place. The geographical connection between the FitzGilberts' land holdings and the *Estoire's* opening episode imply an investment in the politics of local space.<sup>20</sup>

Constance FitzGilbert's patronage of the *Estoire* reflects the legitimizing concerns of both her family and the greater Anglo-Norman aristocracy's in twelfth-century England. As the lines from the above referenced E manuscript of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* demonstrate, the powerful Anglo-Norman families who settled in England after the conquest acquired the majority of their lands from William's dispossession of the English. As a patron without an ancestral lineage to authenticate her family's inherited English land, Constance likely commissioned Gaimar to create a history that legitimized their presence in the region. As Ian Short explains, Gaimar's patron and the larger Anglo-Norman community were likely "responding to their cultural displacement by putting down new roots for themselves in the past of their adoptive homeland" ("Introduction" xlix). Short's assessment of Gaimar's text and the local politics of twelfth-century Anglo-Norman Lincolnshire resonates with M. Dominica Legge's early work on legitimizing narratives in post-conquest England. According to Legge, much of the textual production shortly after the conquest was commissioned by individuals or families without historical ties to newly acquired land. As

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<sup>19</sup> For more background on Gaimar's patron, see both Short's "Patrons and Polyglots: French Literature in Twelfth Century England," especially page 244 and also his Introduction to Gaimar's *Estoire*, xi.

<sup>20</sup> Valerie Wall has recently argued against the FitzGilbert's investment in Lincolnshire and suggests that Constance commissioned the work "not as the wife of a Lincolnshire gentleman but as a member of a family of royal marshals" and intended for the text to circulate in royal court at Winchester (4-6). For more on Constance Fitz Gilbert, and her ties to the de Venoz family, see Wall's "Culture and Patronage in Twelfth-Century Hampshire and Lincolnshire."

Legge explains, “[t]hose who settled in England, from the king downwards, were often younger sons. They felt a need to establish themselves and demanded history and romance, as well as Lives of saints, all of which dealt with the English past” (4). While Legge does not include this episode of the Havelok legend in her study, Gaimar’s project fulfills a similar function. By creating an English history for Anglo-Norman patrons, Gaimar’s text participates in the creation of a literature that legitimizes Anglo-Norman settlement in twelfth-century England.

The authorizing function of the *Estoire* is especially evident in the Havelok episode. The episode, which opens the *Estoire*, takes place in Lincolnshire, features specific local places including Grimsby, and relates the story of Havelok, an exiled Danish prince who eventually rules both Denmark and England. This episode belongs to a larger literary tradition referred to collectively as the Havelok legend, which includes an array of texts composed in both Anglo-Norman and Middle English dating from the 1130s through the end of the thirteenth century. While the plot details of the Havelok legend vary among versions, a few features remain consistent. The hero, Havelok, son of the king of Denmark, becomes orphaned and subject to the political ambitions of an evil uncle. In effort to seize the throne, this uncle hires Grim, a local fisherman, to bind and drown the child prince; Grim kidnaps the boy before quickly abandoning his orders to assassinate the young Havelok. Shortly after taking the prince to his boat, Grim is shocked to discover a bright light emanating from the sleeping boy’s mouth. This light, interpreted as evidence of Havelok’s royalty and divine providence convinces Grim to flee Denmark with Havelok and his own family. After arriving in England, the family assumes new identities and the narrative intersects with a parallel plot. Havelok’s struggle is mirrored by that of England’s vulnerable

orphaned heir: a princess who also falls victim to her supposed guardian and power-hungry uncle. The English uncle, who assumes Havelok is a commoner of low class, forces the princess to wed Havelok and betray her social status. The events that follow include prophetic dreams and visions that suggest Havelok's true lineage, the revelation his of royal identity, his return to Denmark, and the eventual restoration of both the thrones of Denmark and England to Havelok and his wife. Gaimar's very inclusion of the Havelok Legend's mythical hero in a history, makes visible the *Estoire's* concerns. The use of an Anglo-Danish hero so deeply associated with the Matter of Britain, raises questions about historical intent and the local goals of Gaimar's aristocratic patron.

From the start of the episode, Gaimar's attention to the local spaces signals an interest in regional identities. The text's emphasis on the region begins with the introduction of two kings Edelsi and Athelbriht, and the description of the specific territories that each rule:

ke dous reis out ja en Bretaigne  
...Adelbriht out nun uns des reis,  
riches hom fum si ert Daneis;  
li altres out nun Edelsi;  
süe ert Nicole e Lindesieie,  
dés HUmbre desk'en Roteland  
ert le païs en son comant;  
li alter ert reis de la contree  
ki ore est Norfolk apelee. (43-54)

[...there were already two kings in Britain. One of these kings was called Athelbriht, a powerful man and a Dane. The other was called Edelsi; Lincoln and Lindsey lay

within his territory, and the country he ruled over stretched from the Humber to Rutland. The second was also king of the country which is today called Norfolk.

(5)]<sup>21</sup>

This presentation of concurrent ruling kings and multiple ethnic groups reflects a heterogeneous England far from the unified nation that Thorlac Turville-Petre promotes in the later texts of the Havelok legend.<sup>22</sup> Rather than offering a fractured, divided portrait of England, the episode begins with collection of intranational identities within the geographical space that constitutes England. The multiplicity of distinct locales that open the episode, frame the text's interest in relational spaces and configurations smaller than the state. The *Estoire* makes very clear as to which intra-national identities the Havelok episode is concerned; as described above, the two kings' lands correspond to the actual locations of Lincoln, Suffolk, and Norfolk. While these locations include areas of Lincolnshire—the region where Constance FitzGilbert and her husband owned land, these three locales are also all spaces that fell into the Danelaw—the self-governing Danish settlement, established in the late ninth and tenth century.<sup>23</sup> While most other concurrent histories ignore the Danelaw and its communities, Gaimar emphasizes the Danes in England.

The *Estoire*'s attention to the region of Lincolnshire and the Danish presence in England continues to frame the Havelock episode. Gaimar sets the episode in Britain, during

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<sup>21</sup> This translation and all subsequent translations of Gaimar's *Estoire* are from Short's edition, unless otherwise stated.

<sup>22</sup> For more on discussion of the Havelok legend and ideologies of nationalism, see Turville-Petre's "Havelock and the History of the Nation."

<sup>23</sup> It should be noted that Scott Kleinman argues that Gaimar's Havelok episode is concerned with the region of East Anglia rather than Lincolnshire. Kleinman finds similarities between names and plot elements of the Havelok episode and the historical writing of East Anglia including Scandinavian sources imported to the region by the region's Anglo-Scandinavian culture. For more on Gaimar's Havelok and East Anglia see Kleinman's "The Legend of Havelok the Dane and the Historiography of East Anglia."



King Arthur's reign and his campaign against the invading Anglo-Saxons; these invaders, the English, as Gaimar tells us, eventually conquer the Britons and earn the hatred of the Danes in England. The *Estoire* then moves into a greater discussion of kings—Adelbriht, a Dane and Edelsi, a Briton—who ruled territories at the time of Arthur. In contrast to the aggressive militancy of Arthur, these two kings fostered such an amicable rapport that Edelsi gave his sister in marriage to Adelbriht, without concern for their ethnic and cultural differences. In this moment of peace, the *Estoire* recounts this disregard for difference, stating: “Li alter rei estait Breton/ ki Edelsi aveit a nun” (61-62) [(a)s far as king Edelsi was concerned, he [Adelbriht], was a Briton (5)]. The episode's claim to take place during the mythical time of Arthur—around the fifth century—is complicated by the inclusion of the Danes' presence in England. This timeline is challenged by the historical reality that the Danes did not arrive in England until the early ninth century and settled in Danelaw in the late ninth century. While the claims of Gaimar's historiography are not meant to be objectively true, his anachronistic placement of the Danish presence in England registers an engagement with a very specific, local culture. This fictional time frame not only gives the Danes as much of an ancestral claim to English land as the Anglo-Saxons—or “English” in Gaimar's account—but this timeline also provides insight into the specific regional politics to which Gaimar's patron belongs.

The *Estoire*'s embellishment of the Danish presence in the region of Lincolnshire yokes the Anglo-Normans to the Anglo-Danish heritage of the region. More specifically, the text's promotion of Anglo-Danish claims to English lands creates an authenticating history that demonstrates the precariousness of Anglo-Norman power and identity in the twelfth century. In effect, Gaimar and the FitzGilberts demonstrate an aristocratic desire for an

regional lineage by tethering their name and patronage to a history of Lincolnshire, Anglo-Danish heritage, and more specifically, the figure of Havelok. As a hero who lacks his own history, Havelok represents a malleable past that becomes shaped by the *Estoire*'s narrative goals. The imprinting of local history onto Havelok figures the hero as a metonym for Anglo-Norman legitimation; like the FitzGilberts, Havelok receives and assumes a past that others create for him. And, this history that Havelok receives through narrative grants him access to political power.

As a metonym for Anglo-Norman legitimation of power, Havelok lacks a narrative of his own history from the start of the episode. The initial introduction of Havelok obscures any details of his true history as Gaimar describes him as “Cuheran” or “Cuaran,” (103), a cook and serving boy in Edelsi’s kitchen without hinting at his true, royal identity. The revelation of Havelok’s history is delayed in a move that underscores the narratives production of both the hero’s identity and also the Anglo-Norman claims he represents. In fact, the reader only learns of the hero’s true identity after his marriage to Argentille, the disinherited English princess who was forced to marry Havelok by her unaware uncle. After spending several quiet nights together, the curious Argentille wonders about her new husband’s history and asks “Amis, u est li ton linage?” (306), to which he responds:

Dame...a Grimesby.

D’iloc turnai quant jo vinc ci;

si la ne trois mun parenté,

suz ciel ne sai dunt jo sui né (307-310).

[“My lady” he replies, “they’re in Grimsby; that’s where I came from when I first

arrived here. If I don't find my relatives there then I haven't an earthly chance of knowing what the circumstances of my birth were" (19).]

Havelok's reply indicates an amnesic character completely unaware of his own identity. While he cannot remember his past, he does remember Grimsby, the local space of his childhood. By responding to questions of his identity with an answer that privileges local space, Havelok articulates the *Estoire's* desire to link of identity with place rather than past.

In search of answers, the pair set out for Lincolnshire and locates Havelok's foster family—a family Havelok believes to be his blood relatives. Once the pair locate Havelok's foster sister and her husband, the narrative makes clear that Havelok does not have control over his own history. Instead, the hero must rely on others to authenticate his past. Havelok's family first deliberates among themselves as to whether or not they should even reveal the truth of Havelok's past. This scene, which situates Havelok as a passive subject of his own history, is worth including here in its near entirety:

“Dame,” dist il, “[e] que ferom?

Si vus löez, discoverom

a Haveloc le fiz le rei

nostre conseil e le segrei:

dimes li tut overtement

du mil est nez e de quell gent.”

Dist la dame: “S'il le saveit,

jo quid k'il le discovereit

en [i]tel liu, par son folage,

u tost l'en vendreit grant damage.

Il ne[n est] mie si savant  
k'il sace covrir son talent:  
s'il saveit ke des reis fu nez,  
curtes ures serreit celez!  
E nepurhoc ire l'apelom,  
dunt il est nez li demandom,  
e sis a femme vent od lui,  
bien li poüm dire, ço qui,  
du mil est nez e de quell terre,  
com il exillat par la guere.” (339-358)

[‘My lady,’ he said, “what are we to do now? If you approve, let us reveal our secret to the king’s son and take Havelok into our confidence; let’s tell him quite openly what the circumstances of his birth were and what sort of family he comes from.’ To this the lady replied: ‘If he knew the truth, my belief is that he would be rash enough to let the secret out in a way that would straightaway be very harmful indeed to him. (21)]

The above dialogic exchange excludes Havelok from a conversation about his own origins and positions him as a character without narrative control of his own past. Instead, he depends on others to relay his history. When his foster sister finally reveals that Havelok’s true father was the king of Denmark, the hero is told:

vus fustes fiz a un bon rei;  
Danemarche out par heritage,  
si out son pere e son linage; (400-403)

[But here's a secret you must keep well hidden: by birth you are the son of a king, a legitimate king who, like his father before him and his ancestors, had hereditary rights to Denmark. (23)]

When Havelok finally discovers his history and royal lineage he receives this knowledge alongside an injunction for secrecy; the very moment Havelok learns about his identity is the same moment in which he is silenced. Even lines later, after Havelok gains the confidence to return to Denmark and reclaim the throne, he continues to flounder when narrating his history. This uncertainty is especially visible when Havelok returns to Denmark and encounters Sigur, an alderman whom inquires about the hero's identity. Havelok hesitates in his response, stating

“Sire, ne sai,” cil li respon[t].

Mes cum jo fui en la curt grant, si m'apelerent Cuherant  
e tant com jo fui valleton  
sai ben quë Haveloc oi nun. (611-616)

[“My lord,” he replies, “I don't know, but when I used to be at high court, people would call me Cuarant, though I also know that during my youth I was called Haveloc...” (35)]

The fact that Havelok responds “ne sai,” or “I don't know,” at this point in the narrative is peculiar. Havelok has already been told who he is and where he comes from. This scene shows a clear resistance to the hero's historical identity as Havelok's past must continue to be shaped and narrated by others. Havelok's inability to narrate his past reflects the larger concerns of Gaimar's patrons. The FitzGilberts' lack of clear historical claims to local land prevents them from possessing ancestral purchase to the English lands on which they have

settled. Now, like Havelok, they must rely on others—such as Gaimar—to narrate a history that authorizes their presence.

The history that Gaimar creates for Havelok and for his patrons roots itself in a conspicuously local context. The category of the local is brought to the fore when Havelok and Argentille must travel to Grimsby in order to uncover the hero's origins. Grimsby, a local seaport located in Lincolnshire, and named in the local legend for Havelok's foster father, provides an intensely local space in which a narrative of Havelok's history unfolds. The *Estoire* ensures that we attend to the specific locality of this scene by foregrounding the site-specific products of Grim's trade into focus. As Havelok's foster sister reminds him

peison eümes a manger,  
turbuz, salmuns e mulüels,  
graspeis, porpeis e makerels  
a grant plenté e a fusion  
eümes pain e bon peison. (444-448)

[There was no lack of fish for us to eat: turbot salmon, cod, grampus whale, porpoise, and mackerel. (27)]

The strikingly detailed parataxis of the local catch links the narration of Havelok's past to a particular region, and one that corresponds to actual geospatial locations—namely, Grimsby and its region of Lincolnshire. The strange specificity of setting this scene and much of the episode in Grimsby not only aligns Havelok's identity with the local, but also associates this local identity with an historical significance. As a functioning harbor, Grimsby historically served as direct seaport between England and Scandinavia. When considering this local history, Thorlac Turville-Petre reminds us that “there were unbroken trading contacts

between north Lincolnshire and Scandinavia” originating from the time of the Danelaw and operating well into the thirteenth century (151). The text emphasizes Grimsby’s status as an important site of contact between England and Denmark when Kelloc suggests that Havelok board a recently docked merchant ship destined for the prince’s homeland. In describing the vessel, Kelloc notes

Hier arrivat leüs al port  
un grant kenart e bon e fort;  
pain e char meined e vin e blé,—  
d’icel unt il mult grant plenté—  
ultra la mer volent passer;  
si vus volez od els aler,  
jo quid k’il irrunt el païs  
u sunt voz parenz, vos amis. (383-391)

[Yesterday, down at the port, a large ship landed, a good and strong one, with a cargo of bread, meat, wine, and corn—they’re really well provided with that sort of thing. They intend to cross the sea, and if you wish to go with them, I believe they are going to the country where your relatives live. (23)]

While this description of goods highlights the vital commercial exchange between England and Demark, the symbolic power of Grimsby offers a local space where these cultures mix. The use of Grimsby as the context in which Havelok receives his own narrative parallels the *Estoire*’s meta-textual concerns and its investment in a history that promotes Anglo-Norman claims and accommodates Lincolnshire’s Danish heritage. More specifically, Anglo-Norman

Lincolnshire is yoked to a history of Danish presence and control long before the Norman Conquest.

Gaimar's use of Havelok as a metonym for the writing of Anglo-Norman authenticating history is compounded by the episode's use of another generic mode: hagiography. Here and throughout this chapter, I use the term *mode* rather than the *genre* when describing the text's use of hagiography. As Felice Lifschitz reminds us, *genre* is a slippery term when applied to medieval literature. As Lifschitz explains, the very definition of hagiography and its classification arose in opposition to that of historiography in the nineteenth century (93). When the *Estoire* was composed, a system of literary classification was non-existent and the boundaries of genre were much more plastic and fluid. I agree with Lifschitz's contention that the anachronism in employing genre divisions in medieval studies obscures our ability to approach twelfth-century "texts in a culturally-specific manner" (103). By following Lifshitz, I argue that we can read the *Estoire*'s as placing historiography *alongside* rather than *against* hagiography. In doing so, I suggest that the text fashions Havelok as a saint-like hero; the hero's sacred status magnifies the aristocratic claims to English territories by creating a sanctified, local history. The *Estoire* anchors its use of the hagiographical mode to the hero himself as we witness Havelok's saintly traits at the same time the text begins to explore the hero's true identity. Shortly after his marriage to the reluctant Argentille, his wife wakes from a dream to find a light shining from the hero's mouth:

El le trova gisant envers,  
entre ses braz si l'ad äers;  
pur la pour ses oilz ovrit,



une flambé vit ki issit  
fors de la buche son marri  
kiuncore ert tut endormi.  
Merveillat sei de l'avision  
e de la buche son baron  
e de la flambé k'ele vit. (241-250).

[she saw a flame coming out of the mouth of her husband who was still soundly asleep. She found the dream very puzzling, as she did also the flame she saw coming out of her husband's mouth. (15)]

This detail of the light radiating from Havelok's mouth transforms Gaimar's hero into a sacred figure marked by divine providence. At this point in the narrative, the *Estoire* figures Havelok as more than a hero in historiography and links him to the sacred exemplars of the hagiographical mode. In fact, it is this identifying light that allows Havelok to be recognized by his ally, Sigur, later in the episode when he returns to Denmark. When Sigur receives the exiled king, he reflects that the hero has both the same name of the late king's lost son and also that the prince had a light that glowed from his mouth (625-628). And, this very light confirms Havelok's true identity when Sigur spies on the sleeping hero. By connecting the hero's identity to this indicator of sanctity, the *Estoire* presents Havelok as a saint more so than any of the actual, recognized, English saints recorded in Gaimar's history.

When the *Estoire* discusses saints outside of the Havelok episode, the verse is dry and expository. The primary narrative mode resembles a chronicle, which eclipses any holy characteristics of the English saints. The imagery and descriptive language surrounding

Havelok's sacred light, contrasts sharply with the text's Spartan descriptions of other insular saints including St. Athelthyrth of Ely, as Gaimar writes:

Li reis Cenwalh un après  
fu mort; son tens ne fun [unc] mes.  
E puis derichef en l'altre an  
Sexburg transit, la fille Anan.  
[E] el tirez an Ecbrith mort fu,  
e une süe ante, seint' Adeldru,—  
nonaine estait si amount Deu—  
en Eli pert; la est lur liu. (1405-1409)

[King Cenwahl died a year after this, having reached the end of his span, and the year after that Seaxburh, daughter of Anna, died. The year following that, Egbert died, and then so did St. Æthelthryth [Audrey], an aunt of his, who was a nun and a devoted daughter of God. [Her tomb] is .ill to be seen in Ely. (79)]

Here, the reader encounters St. Æthelthryth as a holy figure only through the title “seint.” While we learn that she “nonaine estait si amount Deu,” or “[she] was a nun and a devoted daughter of God,” this abbreviated biography of St. Æthelthryth lacks any mention of miracles or instances of divine providence so characteristic to the hagiographic mode and other writings on this popular native saint.<sup>24</sup> Instead, the *Estoire* focuses on authenticating St. Æthelthryth's historical reality through her documentable, royal lineage and also with the specific location of her tomb. While such dry verse may be an attempt to reflect the narrative style of the Anglo-Saxon

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<sup>24</sup> For more on the hagiographical narratives and literary production surrounding of St. Æthelthryth in England see Blanton's *Signs of Devotion*.

Chronicle—the text from which Gaimar claims to have translated his history—its contrast to the Havelok episode demonstrates the text’s investments. The inclusion of descriptive detail in the Havelok episode suggests the *Estoire* privileges the creation of a saint within a local context.

The only hagiographical moment that compares to the Havelok episode in length and description detail occurs during the *Estoire*’s mention of Edmund, a king martyred by Viking invaders. When discussing Edmund’s passion, the *Estoire* expounds on the style of the king’s death, stating:

A un arbre l’unt fait lier...  
...Donc manderent pur [lur] archers,  
al rei trestrent od arcs manners;  
tant I unt treit e tant lance  
ke son cors fu si effiché  
des darz ke treistrent cil felon  
com est la pel del heriçon  
espés de poignantesbrochetes,  
don’t del gardin ported pometes...  
Donc demanderunt un felon,  
Coran Colbë out cil a non,  
la teste al seint cil ad trenché;  
issi fu Eadmund martirié. (2893-2922)

[... They tied him to a tree...Then they sent for their archers, and they shot at the king with bows. So many arrows did these criminals loose and shoot at him that

his body was stuck more thickly than a hedgehog's hide is with sharp prickles when it takes small apples out of the orchard...They then summoned a foul individual by the name of Coran Colbe, and he cut off the saint's head. Thus, did Edmund suffer martyrdom. (159-161)]

This short description relates Edmund's martyrdom in more narrative and metaphoric detail than any of the *Estoire's* other English saints. Not only does the account specify the method of Edmund's execution but the segment also includes figurative language by equating the arrow-pierced Edmund to a hedgehog. However, in spite of these details, such description avoids any reference to Edmund's miracles—a very requisite of sainthood. As if acknowledging such deficiencies in his descriptions of saints, the *Estoire* follows Edmund's martyrdom with an apology. The text explicitly acknowledges Gaimar's lack of hagiographic details, citing that

Mes si Gaimar eüst leisir,  
il parlast plus del seint martyr;  
pur ço que aillurs en est la vie  
e les lesçons e l'estoire,  
si l'ad leissé [a] ceste feie[e]  
pur l'estoire k'out comence[e]. (2923-2928)

[Now if Gaimar had had the leisure to do so, he would have written at greater length about the holy martyr. But seeing that his life, and his history and [associated] readings are available elsewhere, he has not done so on this occasion because of the [present] history he has already starting writing (161)].

This apology for the lack of description rings hollow for readers already familiar with the

text's inclusion of Havelok. Such dilation of plot and narrative in the Havelok episode suggests an intentional focus on the legend and its local Danish hero.

In the account of another early, insular saint—King Oswald—the *Estoire* offers an a key as to why Gaimar includes accounts of saints without committing to the conventions of the hagiographic genre. After learning about Oswald's fatal battle with Penda, the text recounts the saint's scattered burial. First, Oswald's decapitated body is taken to Bardney for a "bien enterré" (1295) or "good burial" (73); later, his head—and only his head—is reburied with St Cuthbert in Durham (1295-96). Like the *Estoire's* account of St Æthelthryth's tomb, the above description of St Oswald highlights the saint's relationship with geographical space. Rather than describe their lives and deeds, the text attends to the space and specific locations of their resting places. When the *Estoire* later explains Oswald's burial with greater detail, the text highlights the connection between local space and sacred figures as he writes:

...son seint cors fu iloc pris  
si fu porté loins el païs:  
par pïeté e par manaie  
en fu porté a Bardeneie,  
iloc le voldrent sepelir,  
le liu amer, cors server,  
e es, cronices est escrit  
k'il fu iloc ensepeliz (2103-2110)

[...the saint's body was removed from there and taken to a distant part of the country: with much emotion and piety it was carried to Bardney [in Lincolnshire]. Their intention was to bury it there, to have *the place* venerated and the body properly cared

for, and according to the records, this is in fact where it was buried (117, emphasis mine)].

In cataloguing Oswald's remains, the *Estoire* demonstrates the intimate relationship between saint and space. When Oswald's body is carried to Bardney "to have *the place* venerated," the text reveals a concern for what saints can provide to space rather than privilege the possession of relics. The example of Oswald emphasizes the *Estoire's* interest on a saint's ability to sacralize space; for Gaimar's *Estoire*, saints and figures of saintliness provide a mechanism for imbuing the local with sanctity.

Such interest in a figure's ability to sanctify geographical space suggests that the *Estoire* employs the hagiographic mode within the Havelok episode for similar purposes. Not only does the episode utilize conventions of hagiography when describing Havelok's saintly characteristics, the representation of the hero accords with those of local saints from the contemporary period and region. In his work on medieval sainthood, André Vauchez explores traits shared by local saints in England during the twelfth through fifteenth centuries. Vauchez's research describes a typology of local sanctity demonstrated in the figure of Havelok and the trope of the "holy sufferer." In the non-Mediterranean West, the figures of the "holy sufferer" in local cults were—like the *Estoire's* Havelok—overwhelmingly of royal or aristocratic origin (158). The fact that the majority of local devotional figures had exceptional wealth and power conforms to the culture's association of high rank with an *aura sanctitatis*. This interconnection of temporal power with sanctity is especially evident in the figure of the king. According to Vauchez, the king elicits sacralization through his status as a mediator between the temporal and sacred worlds and his

participation in the very theology that predicates his ruling power (162).<sup>25</sup> While kingship most clearly illustrates the nexus of earthly power with sanctity necessary for a local cult, the period's interest in other forms of power—namely, aristocratic power—represents a social belief that “wealth and power were regarded as signs of divine favour and election, [and that] the great of this world were *a priori* best placed to achieve salvation and distinction in the eyes of the world at large (Vauchez 173). While Havelok is a king, not a aristocrat, the inclusion of the nobles in typology of local sainthood in England reflects the powers at work in creating and promoting local saints and holy figures, including Gaimar's aristocratic Anglo-Norman patrons.

While royal blood or noble birth did not guarantee sainthood it certainly helped. In addition to the miracle of high birth, a model of sanctity based more on pity than Christian virtue also contributed to the rise of the “royal sufferer” in local and popular English cults. Vauchez explains that the phenomenon of *pity's* translation into *piety* allowed suffering figures to be canonized by popular opinion as the very “...spectacle of blood unjustly shed...and of the defeat of Good by Evil provoked among the faithful a reaction of emotion and veneration which developed into a cult” (153). As a figure adhering to the period's typology of local English saints, Gaimar's Havelok is not only a king, but also a figure that elicits pity for many reasons: as a child, Havelok lost his father in battle with King Arthur, who then conquered his homeland; the young prince is then orphaned when his mother is killed while attempting to escape Denmark. Notably, the traumatic events that orphan Havelok occur during childhood, a time of incredible helplessness. The inclusion of such

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<sup>25</sup> Kantorowicz famously explicated the divine right to rule and the sanctity of kingship of the Middle Ages. *For on more on this formulation of duality, see Kantorowicz's The King's Two Bodies.*

details heightens the pathos toward the hero, as well as—according to Vauchez—increases the figure’s potential for beatification.

The *Estoire’s* inclusion of miracles and saintly traits in the representation of Havelok suggests an intentional engagement with the hagiographical mode. To be clear, Havelok is not an actual saint, but he is saint-like. While Havelok is neither virgin nor martyr, he possesses characteristics similar to figures of local devotional cults in twelfth-century England. The ostensible use of the hagiographic mode belies the episode’s abovementioned claim that saints’ lives do not concern Gaimar’s work. Rather, the *Estoire’s* use of hagiographic tropes in presenting a local history for an Anglo-Norman patron creates an additional mode of authentication. More specifically, the use of the hagiographic mode attempts to sanctify Gaimar’s history and creates a form of legitimacy that historiography cannot. In other words, the *Estoire* overlays hagiography on historiography to buttress its authority. As Thomas J. Heffernan notes in *Sacred Biography*, the use of saints and the hagiographic mode participates in a self-reflexive literary paradigm. For Heffernan, all saints’ lives are related to one another and their interconnection creates a lineage outside of historical context. In other words, each vita is and always will be tied to all the vitae that precede it. In this way, “the new sacred model [or the production of a new saint’s life] reclaims past models and in turn is authenticated by them as these past lives are reintroduced in the present” (20). This feature gives hagiography a unique advantage over other generic modes in that it operates in a system independent of history. Hagiography’s ability to collapse time, conflating past with present, allows for a vita’s narrative to exist beyond a historical moment and apart from the historical conditions surrounding its production. The use of the hagiographic mode to fortify Anglo-Norman claims to local English space, provide



Gaimar's patron and her culture with a sacred history, however imaginary. By employing hagiography, the *Estoire's* claim to local history becomes a part of a much longer, sacred lineage. The text's desire to ensure ties to English lands long before her Norman parents settle after the conquest. The *Estoire's* need to engage with the hagiographic mode suggests the precarity of Anglo-Norman aristocrat's purchase over local culture. While the aristocratic elite may have wielded political control of local religious and shire offices in the twelfth century, their need to authenticate cultural claims articulate the concerns of a transplanted community struggling to cultivate power in England.

When placed in context with the later literature of the Havelok legend, the local interests of the Havelok episode are magnified. As a point of comparison, the late thirteenth-century Middle English *Havelok the Dane* and Gaimar's episode share many similarities in plot and both texts attribute saintly qualities to the hero. However, unlike the *Estoire's* Havelok episode, which uses the hero to express concerns over ideologies of power and the category of the local, the later *Havelok the Dane* (hereafter *Havelok*) is invested in larger pre-national collectivities. Like its early Anglo-Norman analogue, *Havelok* also insists on a representing its hero as saintly. When the young, orphaned Havelok of the Middle English legend becomes the target of his evil uncle's political ambitions, a local fisherman named Grim, is enlisted to assassinate the child. As the prince lay asleep in Grim's boat, unknowingly awaiting his own murder, Grim's wife notices a bright glow shining from the hero's mouth, as the text recounts:

She saw therinne a lith ful shir,

Al so brith so it were day

...Of his mouth it stod a stem

Als it were a sunnebem. (589-593)

Not only does the appearance of this light signal the divine providence often found in hagiography, but this moment invites reader interpretation. In a moment that resembles the exegesis of sanctity often present in vitae, Grim and his wife immediately offer a critical analysis of the light's possible meaning. The pair begin their exegesis with an invocation to the original exemplar of all vitae: "Jesu Crist!" (596). This invocation is soon followed by an explicit call for interpretation when the wife demands "...loke wat it menes!/ Hwat is the lith, as thou wenes?" (598). The end-line pairing of "menes" with "wenes" situates the pair as charged with the didactic explication of Havelok's sacred traits. Once Grim and his wife discover the hero's "kynmerk" (605), they offer their interpretation, explaining

Goddot!...this ure eir,

That shal louerd of Denmark!

He shal ben king, strong and stark;

He shal haven in his hand

Al Denemark and Engeland (607-611).

That Grim and his wife locate the symbols of Havelok's sanctity and royal lineage within the context of divine knowledge—the "God knows" of "Goddot!"—presents the hero as a saintly figure for the characters and reader to interpret within the conventions of hagiography. And, these hagiographic conventions act in the service of promoting Havelok as a global royal figure who will claim "Al Denemark and Engeland" (607-611).

Havelok's ownership over the narration of his past and true identity in the later legend also makes use of hagiographical conventions. Unlike the uncertain and amnesic hero of Gaimar's *Estoire*, the Middle English Havelok never forgets his true identity and lineage.

The reader first realizes the hero's self-knowledge after Havelok and his new wife share their dreams while lying in bed. The pair's exchange inspires Havelok to accept his history and eventually reclaim his royal rights; the next morning he rides to church, reveals his identity, and narrates his history inside an empty church, stating:

...Have merci of me, Louerd, now!  
And wreke me yet on mi fo  
That ich saw biforn min eyne slo  
Mine sistress with a knif,  
And sithen wold me mi lyf  
Have reft, for in the se  
Bad he Grim have drenched me.  
He hath mi lond with mikel unrith,  
With michel wrong, with mikel plith,  
For I ne misdeed him nevere nouth,  
And haved me to sorwe brouth.  
He haveth me do mi mete to thigge,  
And ofte in sorwe and pine ligge.  
Louerd, have merci of me,  
And late me wel passe the se—  
... And bringe me wel to the lond  
That Godard haldes in his hond,  
That is mi rith, everi del—  
Jesu Crist, thou wost it wel!" (1363-1385).

Here, Havelok's self-knowledge is unequivocal; he understands his past and he exercises ownership over it. While Gaimar's hero learns of his history in an intensely local setting, the Middle English Havelok narrates his past in a church—a physical nexus where local concerns link with the larger global systems. The church's connection to the global networks of Rome, suggest that the space of Havelok's narrative favors larger collectivities over local interests. When considering *Havelok's* interest in ideologies of nationalism, Turville-Petre argues that the text's hero promotes a specific English identity; while *Havelok the Dane* does reference local place names such as Lincoln, “the poem differs from Gaimar and the related Anglo-Norman accounts in setting the local scenes within a national framework” and in this way, “we are positioned to envision the region within the nation” (Turville-Petre 147). Havelok's confidence in his ability to narrative his history continues when he visits his adoptive siblings. In stark contrast to the hero's return in the *Estoire*, the Middle English Havelok narrates his true lineage, rather than receive it passively from his foster siblings. When asked about his past, the hero pithily states his history: “Mi fader was king of Denshe lond—/ Denemark was al in his hond” (1403-1405). Havelok's control of his own history registers a shift in within the context of the larger Havelok legend: the uncertain hero of Gaimar's episode is replaced by a self-assured figure who is willing and able to narrate his own history. Both moments of narration invite a consideration of the meta-textual implication of Havelok's history and what history the text itself may be creating.

The hagiographic conventions found in *Havelok* and its hero also reflect the text's larger manuscript context. Bound in Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Laud Misc. 108 (hereafter referred to as *L*), the Middle English poem appears after a collection of vitae know as the *South English Legendary* (hereafter *SEL*). The overwhelmingly hagiographic context of

*Havelok* enables an expansion and complication of traditional categorizations of the poem's genre. Scholarship on *L* by both Kimberly K. Bell and Julie Nelson Couch, approach *Havelok* alongside the saints of the *SEL*. As Bell notes, in such context, *L* presents *Havelok* as "another heroic English saint" (252). Similarly, Nelson Couch considers the poem's larger context and compares *Havelok* to the Life of Saint Kenelm. While Nelson Couch acknowledges that the two texts end very differently, when read outside the constraints of modern genre expectations, the two share several plot features. In explaining the text's similarities, Nelson Couch notes:

though the ends diverge, the means converge: both poems set the most vulnerable protagonist, a child, against the worst kind of enemy, a treacherous caregiver; and both exact vengeance upon the traitors while exalting the young hero who is, by the grace of God, triumphant. (223)

Just as the *Estoire* invites readers to consider *Havelok*'s sanctity, so, too does the the manuscript codicology that pairs *Havelok* with the Life of St Kenelm. Such overlap of generic modes within the *Havelok* legend expand our modern understanding of the scope and narrative range of hagiography.

*Havelok* and vitae from the *SEL* share more than plot details and hagiographic conventions; like the Middle English *Havelok*, several of *L*'s vitae feature protagonists with strong ties to England. Nelson Couch documents *L*'s interest in England and Englishness, noting that "[o]f the sixty original *sanctorale* texts extant in the *L SEL*, ten are of English saints and two additional ones, *SS Augustine of Canterbury* and *Gregory the Great*, dramatize the conversion of England" (224). However, unlike the *Estoire*, *L*'s texts articulate a broad geographical interest. The manuscript's inclusion of *Havelok* and its attention to a

general Englishness suggests the text's interest in broader collectivities. ideologies of nationalism and English national identity. Further, as Nelson Couch argues, the range of vita in the *SEL* span from Old English kings to post-conquest English figures—such as St Thomas Becket—suggest *L*'s invests not only in concept of Englishness but also in “an English historical identity” (225). Like the rest of *L*, the Middle English *Havelok* promotes a specifically *English* historical identity. In the poem, Havelok uses the narrative of his past to create a cohesive identity that is whole and unbroken. More specifically, the history that Havelok provides, echoes the creation of an English historical identity that imagines a continuous concept of national identity unmarred by a history of conquest. In effect, the history *Havelok* promotes is history that resists and even ignores the Anglo-Norman period. When read in this way, Havelok himself is a meta-textual figure; he relays history—however real or imagined. While Gaimar's episode uses the hero of Havelok as a mechanism that promotes a local ideology that privileges the aristocratic power over sovereign power, the Middle English *Havelok* employs the hero to articulate a national English identity. In fact, while Havelok himself remembers his history, the text itself forgets its Anglo-Norman roots. Most notably, *Havelok* clearly ignores conquest history through the replacement of the French name “Argentille” with the distinctly Anglo-Saxon “Goldeboru.” Such a change in name is especially significant given Havelok's wife's status as the rightful and future heir to England's throne. The lineage that *Havelok* represents through the hero's marriage to Goledboru creates a smooth and continuous link from the Anglo-Saxon past to the mid-twelfth century. By erasing the Norman Conquest and the text's Anglo-Norman inheritance, *Havelok* offers a narrative that fashions a historical “Englishness” that always was and always will be.

Unlike the *Estoire*'s privileging of a local identity, the collective identity in *Havelok* is decidedly national and the text's ending demonstrates that this collectivity represents more than ideologies of nationalism: the text expresses a desire for an English nation-state. Once Havelok claims his inheritance and ascends the throne, he enacts vengeance on his enemies. The harsh punishments the hero exacts on his adversaries, do more than avenge his suffering; the public acts of torture and execution also function to assert Havelok's absolute power. As Michel Foucault explains, the public spectacle of corporeal punishment and execution functions as a type of "political ritual" meant to affirm sovereign power (47). Further, according to Foucault, the performance of such a display is integral to the very maintenance of sovereign identity in that

[t]he public execution, then, has a juridico-political function. It is a ceremonial by which a momentarily injured sovereignty is reconstituted. It restores that sovereignty by manifesting it at its most spectacular. The public execution, however hasty and everyday, belongs to a whole series of great rituals in which power is eclipsed and restored (48).

In fact, Havelok's acts of vengeance mark the return to his royal identity and the power that accompanies it. After his return to Denmark, Havelok raises an army and he overthrows his evil uncle Godard before subjecting him to a particular cruel sentence. Despite Godard's repeated pleas for mercy, Havelok and the Danish people demand that the corrupt king suffer a very public shaming and execution, ruling that

...he be al quic flawen

And sithen to the galwes drawe

At this foule mere tayl,

Thoru his fet a ful strong nayl,  
And thore ben hinged wit two feteres  
And thare be writen thise leteres:  
“This is the swike that wende wel  
The king have reft the lond ilk del,  
And hise sistres with a knif  
Bothe refte here lif.” (2476-2485)

The elaborate punishment outlined in the above judgment places the political traitor’s body under complete control of the state. Further, the very public treatment of treason becomes a lurid display as Godard is flayed alive—a severe corporeal punishment reserved for political traitors—before being led by a horse to the gallows. And, for citizens who were absent from Godard’s brutal torture and execution, Havelok hangs a sign from the traitor’s corpse reminding bystanders of the consequences of treason. In this scene, Havelok’s administration of justice functions to demonstrate his power; as Foucault suggests, the staging of a public execution “show[s] the operation of power” in which the condemned body marks “the anchoring point for a manifestation of power, an opportunity of affirming the dissymmetry of forces” (55). In this way, the spectacle of a public punishment allows the Havelok to display—and uphold—the force of his political power. And, After relaying the details of Godard’s death, the text reinforces Havelok’s absolute political power by describing his inheritance after his uncle’s death:

Sket was seysed al that was his was  
In the kinges hand ilk del—  
Lond and lith and other catel— (2513-2515).



In these lines, the poem figures Havelok's power as a possession and stresses his ownership over citizens' property. The king's exercise of absolute power stands in stark comparison to the exercise of local, baronial power against the sovereign in the *Estoire*.

*Havelok's* insistence on the power of the nation-state continues when the king raises an army to invade England and reclaim the throne from Godrich—the evil uncle who disinherited Havelok's wife, Goldeboru. Once captured, Godrich futilely pleads for mercy (2797) before suffering an execution similar to Godard's. Like Godard, Godrich is punished for treason publically. The villain is bound with his face turned toward the tail of an ass before being led through the streets to the site of his execution. The public spectacle of capital punishment continues once he is bound to a stake and burned alive—an execution style reserved for both traitors and heretics (2830-2833). In this scene, the text makes clear that Godrich's public execution represents more than Havelok's exaction of personal vengeance; the reader learns that the killing also displays the power of the nation-state. Just as Godard's execution warned Danish citizens, so too does Godrich's as Havelok states:

And al to dust be brend rith there.

And yet demden he ther more,

Other swikes for to warne (2841-2843).

Godrich's total obliteration serves as an example of the power the state apparatus has over the individual.

The exercise of political world of *Havelok* contrasts sharply with the justice meted in the *Estoire's* Havelok episode. While the hero of Gaimar's Havelok episode gains the loyalty and allegiance of the Denmark's nobles in order to raise an army and reclaim the crown, once he conquers his enemies in Denmark the hero acquits them. Not only does Havelok pardon

his enemies but he does so on the advice of nobles, as the *Estoire* states that he made his decision “par le conseil de ses barons” (752), or “by the counsel of his barons” (43). The inclusion of aristocratic council exercised alongside monarchical rule presents an image of political power in which members of the landholding nobility—like the FitzGilberts who control local land tenements—check the king’s power. Further, this scene demonstrates how the local functions more than a category of space, but also operates as a practice of space. In the above scene, the political counsel of landholders serves to show how the local intersects with the exercise of power; not only do the above counsel members represent the locales of their control, but they demonstrate a desire to maintain said control by expressing their power over and against the king. The text makes the insistence on baronial power more explicit when Havelok and his army return to England to conquer Edelsi. As he prepares to challenge Edelsi’s army once more, Havelok’s scouts inform him that the impending combat lacks contest as the hero’s troops outnumber Edelsi’s. Instead of risking loss, the nobles advise Havelok that Edelsi and his men will surrender and return the throne to its rightful inheritor. Regardless of Havelok’s plan, the text makes clear that the king must obey the council of his nobles, noting:

Li reis ne put par el aler,  
donc li estut ço gr[ä]nter  
car [si] baron li ont löé. (801-803)

[The king cannot extricate himself in any other way, and he is obligated to follow his nobles’ advice and to concede”(45)].

While Short’s translation captures the political power of the barony, it also passes over the text’s exaltation of the nobles. In describing the baronry, the *Estoire* records the use of “löé”

the passé simple of the verb “loer” meaning “to praise, commend”(sense 1) and “to recommend, counsel” (sense 2) This use of “loer” elevates the political status of Havelok’s nobles and reflects the privileging of local political rule over that of a nation state in twelfth-century Anglo-Norman England. The smaller and more limited scope of Havelok’s power in Gaimar’s *Estoire* reflects the interests and purview of local power and situates Gaimar’s *Estoire* as representing a distinctively local collectivity.

Gaimar’s *Estoire des Engleis* offers a history for the text’s patron, Constance FitzGilbert, and the larger community of Anglo-Norman elites anxious to legitimize their claims to English land and identity. As a vernacular history composed in octosyllabic rhymed couplets—the meter and rhyme scheme of hagiography in the twelfth century—the *Estoire*’s form markedly differs from contemporary Latin historiographies. This departure from the typical form and language of concurrent historiographies in the twelfth century that invites an interrogation of the *Estoire*’s form and its use of hagiographical tropes. By analyzing the *Estoire*’s use of hagiography and the emphasis on local space and power, this chapter demonstrates how the *Estoire* employs the hagiographical mode to fortify its historiographical aims. Gaimar’s history not only supplies his patron with a fictional ancestral claim to Lincolnshire land and history by yoking their heritage to the Danes’ of England, but the text also sanctifies that history. Throughout the Havelok episode, the hero’s saintly characteristics present him within the typology of English local sainthood; Havelok’s saintly features, combined with the text’s verse form, offers us poem in which hagiography acts in service of the goals of local historiography. More specifically, the poem acts in service of ideologies of power that support aristocratic claims to control local space. In this way, Constance FitzGilbert’s and the Anglo-Normans’ historical connections to Lincolnshire

are fortified by a sacred history signaled by a saint's life. Further, the *Estoire's* emphasis on Lincolnshire and regional identity is made apparent when Gaimar's Havelok episode is placed in context with the larger Havelok legend. The latest extant version of the Havelok legend, *Havelok* makes this apparent in its concern with national identity, which eclipses the local interests of Gaimar's text. This comparison makes visible the *Estoire's* employment of generic modes for to legitimize control of private local space. By using hagiography and historiography, the *Estoire*, emphasize the local as privileged site of collective identity and demonstrates that the category of the "nation" need not be the normative unit of analysis for ideologies of power in twelfth-century England.

### III. St. Alban's Missing Body: Absence and Ekphrasis in

#### Matthew Paris's *Vie de seint Auban*

Matthew Paris's *Vie de seint Auban* often shifts its focus from the poem's eponymous saint to Alban's priest and companion martyr: St. Amphibalus. In fact, the poem's movement between Alban and Amphibalus is so frequent that, at times, it is easy to confuse one saint with the other. The poem seems to acknowledge this sentiment by making the pair's interchangeability literal. When word spreads that Amphibalus, a foreigner, has been preaching Christianity, the town's prince orders the army to capture the priest. Before the soldiers arrive, Alban, a nobleman, convinces Amphibalus to switch cloaks with him so that the priest may escape:

E vus ma robe avez u lut li ors burni—

Ne te osera nuire ne cuard ne hardi

Pur quei k'il t'en veie e vestu e seisi;

E jo ta esclavine, ke ça porter vus vi—

Plus l'eim ke peleiçun d'ermine enblanchi. (473-476)<sup>26</sup>

[...you shall have my mantle shining with burnished gold. Neither the cowardly nor the brave would dare to harm you when they see you clothed in it and in possession of it, and I will take your pilgrim's cloak, which I have seen you wear. I like it better than white ermine fur (75-76)]<sup>27</sup>

After this scene in which the pair exchange clothes and fates., Amphibalus flees to Wales,

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<sup>26</sup> The Anglo-Norman text of Matthew's poem represented here and elsewhere is taken Harden's edition unless otherwise stated.

<sup>27</sup> This translation and all subsequent translations of the original Anglo-Norman are from Wogan-Browne and Fenster's translation.

while Alban, is seized and imprisoned before his martyrdom. This moment, like many in previous vitae of Alban, suggests an easy equivalence between the two men; the pair need only trade clothing and their captors are fooled. However, what sets *Auban* apart is the poem's sustained confusion of Alban with Amphibalus. Aside from their exchange of coats, the saints of *Auban* share a small crucifix, which passes smoothly and frequently between them.

In this chapter, I argue that the crucifix's movement between the two saints emphasizes the interchangeability between Alban and Amphibalus. The text's focus on the cross and poem's employment of ekphrasis in referring to the shared object invites readers to concentrate on the cross rather than the saint who possesses it. By doing so, the poem encourages a conflation of the two saints in which Amphibalus is allowed to stand in for Alban. This interchangeability, I suggest, is meant to distract attention away from the titular proto-martyr, St. Alban, and the uncertain location of his holy relics. Further, the poem's diversion from Alban is compounded by *Auban*'s interest in bodies and other objects including the material reality of the text itself. In this way, the poem's collection of physical items offers a surplus compensation that obscures the absence of Alban's relics. The poem's intentional acts of misdirection demonstrates hagiography's complicity in ideologies of local power. For Matthew's monastic house, St. Alban's Abbey, claims to relics were also claims to power and the exercise of said power over the abbey's parish, the surrounding town, and its visiting pilgrims. A saint's relics were integral to a community's faith in that their proximity maintained devotional practices and promises for future salvation. But, as *Auban* makes clear, the possession of these relics also facilitated the institutional control of these communities by defending the power dynamics that mediated a local community's

experience. In other words, *Auban*'s concern for St. Alban's relics is also a concern for authority that legitimizes the abbey's power. From this perspective, the locality that *Auban* promotes is less about geophysical space and more a practice of power. When considering the relationship of place and ideologies of power, Timothy Cresswell notes that "the word *place* clearly refers to something more than a spatial referent. Implied in these terms is a sense of the proper. Something or someone *belongs* in one place and not in another. What one's place is, is clearly related to one's relation to others" (3). In *Auban*, the poem expresses a desire to defend St. Alban's position of power, regardless of the location of its patron saint. Further, *Auban* suggests hagiography's complicity in maintaining ideologies of power over intranational space; such premodern practices of monastic power challenge the homogenous understanding that medieval space was organized under the control of the sovereign or a nascent conception of the nation.

As the first saint who lived and died in Britain, St. Alban's legend has a unique historical relationship to place. In fact, as England's first martyr, Alban is responsible for inaugurating a genealogy of local saints in England. However, before he was the protomartyr of Britain, Alban was a wealthy, third-century nobleman who lived in the Romano-British town of Verulamium—in present-day Hertfordshire.<sup>28</sup> When Alban encounters a Christian priest traveling through his town, he becomes a student of Christianity before his conversion and baptism. Meanwhile, after learning about the priest's presence and Alban's conversion, Verulamium's pagan emperor sends soldiers to seize the priest. When Alban and the priest receive a tip warning them of the advancing soldiers, the two men switch coats, allowing the

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<sup>28</sup> For a discussion on the Romano and Christian history of Verulamium see Niblett's article "Why Verulamium?"

priest to flee. Alban is then captured, identified, and eventually beheaded after professing his unwavering faith to Christianity, performing miracles, and converting bystanders shortly before his execution.

Very little is written about St. Alban until the High Middle Ages. As Douglass Johnson notes, virtually nothing is known of the historical St. Alban apart from his name; the date and historical circumstances of his martyrdom remain a mystery (2). Before the twelfth century, only three sources discuss St. Alban, with the most authoritative and well-known being Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* (hereafter *HE*).<sup>29</sup> In his influential eighth-century Latin *HE*, Bede provides an account of St. Alban and locates his life within the larger historical context of England's conversion to Christianity. While Bede's account focuses less on Alban himself and more on his role within a larger conversion narrative, his appearance within *HE*'s narrative guaranteed a wide audience for his legend. However, unlike later lives of Alban, very few details about the saint are included in *HE*. Instead of discussing details about Alban's person, the text focuses on his identity as a Christian and membership within religion. This focus on Alban's Christianity rather than his individuality is demonstrated from the very beginning of his legend in *HE*. Once Alban has been captured, his judge asks him "Cuius...familae uel generis es?" [What is your family and race?] (I.7.30-31).<sup>30</sup> Alban responds by redirecting the focus from his ethnicity to his religion:

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<sup>29</sup> Before Bede writes about Alban in his *HE*, the earliest known source on the martyr and his life can be found in Constantinus of Lyons's fifth century *Life of St. Germanus of Auxerre*. For more on this early source, see McCulloch's "Saints Alban and Amphibalus in the Works of Matthew Paris," especially pages 764-765. And, also, W. McCleod's "Alban and Amphibal," page 407.

<sup>30</sup> The Latin text of Bede's *HE* reproduced here and elsewhere is taken from Colgrave and Mynor's edition. This translation and all subsequent translations of Bede's *HE* my own



Quid ad te pertinet qua stirpe sim genitus? Sed si ueritatem religionis audire desideras, Christianum iam me esse Christianisque officii uacare cognosce. (I.7.30-31)

[What concern is it of yours to know my parentage? If you wish to hear the truth about my religion, know that I am now a Christian and ready to do a Christian's duty.]

By privileging Alban's spiritual self over his familial identity, Bede makes visible a narrative goal in which the only true family is the family of the Church. And, while Bede obscures details of Alban's person, his description of Alban's priest—later dubbed Amphibalus—is nearly nonexistent. When Bede does mention the priest, he refers to the nameless man as “clericum quendam” [a certain cleric] and also as Alban's “hospite ac magistro” [guest and teacher] (I.6, 28, 29). The vague details of Alban and Amphibalus in Bede's work differ dramatically from later hagiographies, which not only develop both characters as individuals but also promote Amphibalus to the status of companion martyr. Amphibalus's status is especially evident in Matthew's *Auban*, which also departs in its treatment of Alban and the objects associated with him. *Auban*'s focus on St. Alban and St. Amphibalus serves the goals of the abbey. As a monastic house facilitated the religious beliefs and rituals of a local community, St. Alban's abbey would have guided and advised the parish and its practices; if the relics that granted the house a degree of power over the community were threatened, then so would the abbacy's authority.

To compensate for the uncertainty of surrounding Alban's body, Matthew's *Auban* draws attention to the materiality of objects and bodies by way of ekphrasis.<sup>31</sup> In this chapter, my analysis of ekphrasis draws on James A.W. Heffernan's definition of the term, which describes ekphrasis as "the verbal representation of visual representation."<sup>32</sup> I supplement Heffernan's conventional denotation with definitions from scholars in medieval studies including Claire Barabetti, Andrew James Johnston, Ethan Knapp and Margitta Rouse, who argue for a broader interpretation of the term that disrupts the implied binary between text and image.<sup>33</sup> As a whole, these medieval scholars advocate a shift from an analysis of aesthetics to a more context-driven approach that interrogates how ekphrasis informs our understanding of the text's larger political and ideological realities. In short, I use these approaches of ekphrasis to examine the core function of this literary device, which attends to a central paradox: ekphrasis makes present that which is absent. The ability of ekphrasis to render visible missing objects is particularly relevant to approaching *Auban*, a text painfully aware of the missing body at its center. More specifically, I apply these dynamic

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<sup>31</sup> Ekphrasis is a notoriously slippery and contentious critical term and its definition varies widely. Wagner famously stressed the difficulty defining ekphrasis when suggesting, "If critics agree at all about *ekphrasis*, they stress the fact that it has been variously defined and variously used and that the definition ultimately depends of the particular argument to be deployed" (11). Even so, the literary device originated in classical rhetoric and is first defined as early as 19 BC in Horace's *Ars Poetica* through the phrase "ut pictura poesis," or, "as in painting, in poetry," thereby presenting ekphrasis as a nexus between the verbal and the visual (Wagner 5).

<sup>32</sup> Today, Heffernan's widely cited and referenced definition presents ekphrasis as an act of mimesis when he denotes it as "the verbal representation of visual representation" (3).

<sup>33</sup> For instance, Barabetti suggests we approach ekphrasis as a verb, rather than a noun. Similarly, in the "The Dynamics of Ekphrasis," Johnston, Knapp and Rouse argue for a more dynamic view of ekphrasis and argue that "all media are mixed media, and all representations are heterogeneous; there are no 'purely' visual or verbal arts, though the impulse to purify media is one of the central utopian gestures of modernity" (4).

understandings of text and image to question how ekphrasis negotiates the Alban's absence to authenticate the abbey's claim to possess their patron's relics.

From the opening of *Auban*, descriptions of objects take center stage. While the poem's original opening is missing, the extant text begins by detailing Alban and Amphibalus's crucifix. The narrator first describes the personal cross, a wood-carved object of intimate veneration, through negative ekphrasis:

Mes ne ert d'or adubbee ne d'autre metal,  
De peres preciuses, de ivoire ne roal;  
N'i out acastonee ne gemme, ne cristal.  
De fust I fu furmez uns cors d'um mortal,  
Penduz e cloufichez a loi de desloial;  
Avau l'un des costez raa li sancs cural. (2-7)

[“...it was not adorned with gold or any other metal, with precious stones, with ivory or walrus bone; nor did it have a setting of gems or crystal. On it there was a mortal man's body formed from wood, hanged and nailed according to the law regarding traitors; blood from his heart flowed down one of his sides”] (67).

By beginning *Auban* with the rhetorical technique of *occupatio*—a description of what the cross is not—the narrative suggests that the referenced object may be absent. This instance of negative ekphrasis and the stating what the cross lacks before including a description of its features, marks a moment in which the text suggests that it is not simply describing objects from sensory experience or translating an object into language: the text is also creating the object. As Murray Krieger suggests, such a desire for the absent sign at the center of ekphrasis allows texts to attempt “as a construct, a total object, the verbal equivalent of a

plastic art object” (4). By beginning with an ekphrasis that is not just descriptive but also productive, *Auban* informs the reader of the text’s true project: to bear objects into being for the reader, and, ultimately manifest relics that may otherwise be absent.

In the *occupatio* above, the cross is deliberately emphasized as a physical object by way of *Auban*’s invocation of Christ’s corporality. In describing the gore of Christ’s crucifixion, *Auban* stresses the materiality of the cross itself. As Bernhard F. Scholz explains in discussion of ekphrasis and its rhetorical goals, such verbal descriptions aim for the achievement of *enargeia* or *evidentia*, a state in which the “listener (or reader) of the description in question gets the impression of having the object described before his own eyes” (77). When *Auban* insists on the materiality of its objects, it manifests said objects for the reader in a way that conceals the physical absence of St. Alban’s relics. For instance, not only is the defeat of Christ’s physical body depicted by the above description of “hanged and nailed” but also the inclusion of his bleeding body calls attention to a corporeality that can be contained, enshrined, and venerated as an object of devotion. This attention to the materiality of the body and its status as a religious object becomes especially important in *Auban*’s later description of Amphibalus’s martyrdom, to which I will return below. While the ekphrasis of the pair’s crucifix orients us to the importance of sacred objects associated with the companion martyrs, the description also stands in for that which the abbey lacks; more specifically, the cross diverts attention from the possible absence of their patron’s relics and reminds us of the abbey’s control and production of other devotional objects.

To be certain, *Auban*’s attention to the representation of physical objects, especially the opening crucifix, is augmented by the text’s illustrations. Recent work by Cynthia Hahn has noted Matthew’s investment in such objects. By examining Matthew’s verbal and visual

representation of *Auban*'s ankh-shaped crucifix, Hahn argues that Matthew's text demonstrates a "proclivity for sign-like elements"—especially his interest in the relic-crucifix, which had been acquired by St. Albans Abbey during his life time ("The Limits of Text and Image?" 41).<sup>34</sup> This attention to objects, Hahn suggests, sets his work apart from the previous Lives of St. Alban. More specifically, Hahn argues that Matthew's *Auban* is informed by Christian sign theory, which propels the narrative and "constructs a frame that purposefully orients the viewer vis-à-vis the sign of the cross" ("Absent no Longer" 156). While I agree with Hahn's attention to the value of the visual and pictorial representation of objects—especially the relic cross of *Auban*'s crucifix—I depart from Hahn's focus on the cross as symbol. Instead, I am interested in the cross, *as cross*—as an object that has a real material presence and is located in space, especially in the space of in St. Albans Abbey. By focusing on Matthew's textual obsession with physical objects—including but not limited to the above-mentioned cross—I argue that *Auban*'s investment in objects exposes St. Albans Abbey's concern over the location of their patron saint's true relics.

While St. Alban's presence in Hertfordshire is attested to in texts recounting the saint's life, the site of his relics is less certain. Thirteenth-century hagiography and chronicles from St. Albans Abbey obsess over the true location of St. Alban's relics. And, this uncertainty over the true location of St. Alban's relics is especially evident in Matthew Paris's *Vie de Seint Auban* (hereafter *Auban*). Through its use of ekphrasis, *Auban* articulates St. Albans Abbey's concern over the true location of their patron saint's holy corpse. The story of St. Alban's relics and their contentious resting place includes accounts of conquest,

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<sup>34</sup> It should also be noted that McCulloch suggests Matthew emphasizes this cross in *Auban* in order to celebrate an anniversary of the relic's return to St. Albans, "which had been returned to the abbey sometime before 1235" (785).

espionage, and fraud. In a domestic history of St. Albans Abbey by Matthew Paris and, later, Thomas Walsingham, called the *Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani* (hereafter *GA*), the absence of Alban's relics is recorded early and mentioned often throughout the chronicle. The first episode detailing the movement of Alban's relics occurs during an eleventh-century Danish invasion; as the *GA* notes, the invaders plundered the abbey and stole the bones of their prized patron saint. In doing so, the Danes succeed in their goal to

... ossa quoque Beati Albani, Anglorum Protomartyris, extrahere de locello, et Daciam transportare. (1:12)

[...to drag out from the casket and to transport to Denmark the bones of the blessed Alban, protomartyr of the English].<sup>35</sup>

The *GA*'s use of "locello" to describe Alban's casket not only stresses the significance of his relics, which have been enclosed in their own box, but the term also refers to the intimate connection St. Albans Abbey and the surrounding town has to the patron's bones, as "locello" is also used as a diminutive term to describe "locus" or "place." In this way, the Dane's disruption of St. Alban's relics is twofold: first, the martyr's bones are removed from their shrine; second, they are dragged from their resting place—the very space and community responsible for containing and preserving them. As Patrick Geary writes in *Furta Sacra*, the removal of relics is much more than the displacement of material matter but also of entire communities. According to Geary, a relic brought the "continual action of divine providence to a local level [and]...ensured special protection to the community (38). Further, Geary explains:

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<sup>35</sup> This translation of the *GA* and all subsequent translations of are my own unless otherwise stated.

The relics *were* the saint; they had more than a mere mystical or spiritual connection with the eternity of God and his heavenly court. Symbols of divine favor continuing to operate on behalf of men, they were also the reality symbolized since they referred not beyond themselves but to themselves. (39)

As the above excerpt suggests, the displacement of Alban's bones by the Danes is the displacement the community as a whole. And, according to the *GA*, Alban's relics change hands several times before finally resting at St. Albans. Once the Danes removed Alban's relics, the raiders shipped the bones to Demark, where they were housed in an Odense church. There, the relics remained until Egwin—a sacrist at St. Albans, received a vision from the protomartyr, urging him to retrieve the relics and providing him with instructions for their recovery (*GA* I:14). And so begins Egwin's reconnaissance and recovery mission: first he set out to Denmark where he posed as monk—and later became a sacrist—at Odense; after carefully plotting the capture of Alban's bones, Egwin, seized the relics and shipped them back to England; all the while, Egwin's Danish colleagues remained unaware of the interloper's true identity and his double-crossing deeds. While this story of international theft and recovery records the protomartyr's relics as resting at St. Albans, the question over the its legitimacy continued well into the late tenth and early eleventh centuries when Ely also claimed to house the martyr's true relics.

Ely Abbey's claim to house the true relics of St. Alban is not without reason. In an account from the *GA* detailing another impending Danish invasion, St. Albans feared their patron's relics might be stolen again. Fearing another theft of the recently recovered relics, the current abbot, Alfric, hid the patron's relics "sub altari Sancti Nicolai" [under the alter of St. Nicholas] before pretending to send the relics to Ely for safekeeping (1:34). In place of

Alban's true relics—or so the *GA* claims—Alfric sent a substitute body, a deceit that the *GA* forgives by glossing the act as motivated by “intentionis prudentia” [prudent intentions] (1:35). Once peace returns to St. Albans Abbey, the competition between Ely and St. Albans reached a tipping point. When Alfric demanded that Ely return the bones of St. Alban—which, we are told were a fraudulent copy and do not belong to St. Alban—to the original shrine, Ely initially refuses. When Ely finally agrees, Ely's monks replace the fraudulent relics—believing they are authentic—with another set of fake relics. St. Albans Abbey then receives these relics with the knowledge that the protomartyr's true relics never left the abbey. Given this history, it's no surprise that *Auban*'s attention focuses on the presence of objects and their connection to St. Alban's Abbey. *Auban*'s concern for material objects implies a concern to space and the ideologies of power that govern place. As Cresswell reminds us, discourses of space need not be tied to geographical location; rather, space can be configured in ways “provide a structure for experience and help tell us who we are in society” (8). In this way, *Auban*'s focus on relics and their materiality functions to hail the parish as subjects who rely on their church to provide and mediate their devotional experience.

Ely's own chronicle, *Liber Eliensis* (hereafter *LE*) tells a very different story about movement of Alban's relics between the two houses. The *LE* relates how Stigand, a deposed archbishop of Canterbury, fled to Ely, where he summoned Ecgrith, abbot of St. Albans. Before joining Stigand, Ecgrith took the relics of St. Alban with him before turning them over to Ely's abbot (*LE* 175-76). The partisan nature of both the *GA* and the *LE* render the historical truth of the relic's movement and their final resting place unknowable. However, both narratives reveal an intense concern for the power and prestige that relics grant



ecclesiastical institutions over local communities. The saint's association with locality is intensely intimate. As Alan Thacker notes, the connection between sanctity and space—the *loca sanctorum*—confirms a saint's presence and their power to intercede on behalf of their community. The sites of saints' relics, as Thacker explains, “were believed to be the most personally effective in the fullness of their *virtus*, their wonderworking power” (2). Similarly, as Geary notes, the significance of a saint's physical location is related to the “Christian belief in the resurrection of the body... The earthly presence of such a sacred body was thus a pledge or deposit left as physical reminder of salvation to the faithful” (33). But, as *Auban* later demonstrates, the possession of relics did more than maintain spiritual communities and the promise of Christendom: relics also guaranteed authority to those who held and exercised institutional control over local communities.

To return to *Auban*'s crucifix and its function, the object's description does more than orient the reader to the material concerns of *Auban*; the object also promotes an equivalence between St. Alban and Amphibalus. In drawing attention to the cross, Matthew establishes an interchangeability between the pair, as demonstrated in the movement of the cross itself, which is passed between Alban and Amphibalus several times. For instance, the crucifix that begins *Auban*, is an object that first belonged to Amphibalus, as the reader is told:

Ceste croiz aure serrein e matinal

Cum cist ki ert amis Jesu especial. (8-9)

[Amphibalus honored this cross morning and evening, as one who was the special friend of Jesus. (67)]

Here, the cross is associated with Amphibalus and in a very intimate way; we are told that the object structures his time and facilitates his relationship to faith. However, this

unusual ankh-shaped cross is also an object that accompanies St. Alban in present and past iconography contemporary with Matthew's text. In first associating the cross with Amphibalus and then with Alban, *Auban* allows the object to flow between the two saints in a way that confuses and collapses the two saints as one.<sup>36</sup> The interchangeability of the two saints echoes the act of exchange that began this chapter: Alban and Amphibalus's exchange of clothes. The poem's sustained equivalence of Alban and Amphibalus suggests an easy substitution between the two, and allows the text to do just that.

*Auban*'s interest in Amphibalus and his promotion from cameo character to companion saint marks a shift in the context of the texts that comprise Alban's legend. This phenomenon is well documented in twelfth-century hagiographies like *Auban* during a period in which Amphibalus also receives his name—an epithet most likely created by accident. In tracing the history of the priest's name, John Frankis explains the martyr's unique moniker:

The appearance of Amphibalus ('St. Overcoat', as one commentator has sardonically called him) in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* (Wright 1985, 50; V.v in some older editions) is no doubt due to a misunderstanding of *amphibalus*, 'cloak, robe', a rare Greek loanword in Latin, and probably also to a wrong inflection in a manuscript of Gildas used by Geoffrey; Tatlock (1934, 249–50) shows that the correct reading, *sub sancti abbatis amphibalo*, 'under the cloak of the holy abbot', must in some manuscripts have been miscopied as *sub sancto abbate amphibalo* (a

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<sup>36</sup> McCulloch's study of iconography suggests that this cross is most often associated with Alban. This contrasts with the poem's description of the relic as "crux sancti Amphibali," and while the cross was given to Alban, "Amphibalus was its final owner" (783). For a facsimile of Matthew's illustrations to *Auban*, see *Illustration's to the life of St. Alban*.

reading attested in the earliest printed edition), which looks as if it ought to mean ‘under the holy abbot Amphibalus’.” (128-129)

While Geoffrey of Monmouth’s misreading invented the name “Amphibalus”—but not the figure himself—the naming of the priest marks a moment when interest in the martyr spikes, especially among those writing at St. Albans Abbey, where Amphibalus’s cult was popular.<sup>37</sup> It should also be noted that the name that sticks with the priest is also a name that confuses object with person. This becomes especially representative of *Auban*’s compensation for its abbey’s uncertain relationship to Alban’s relics; in Amphibalus’s case, the use of an object to represent the priest, allows for an equivalency between man and object. In fact, Ely Abbey had actually replaced Alban’s relics with a literal coat—symbolic of his companion martyr. As competing claims between St. Albans Abbey and Ely Abbey went unresolved into the early fourteenth century, Edward II decided to settle the dispute once and for all. Upon visiting Ely, the king ordered an examination of the abbey’s relics in 1314. After finding the shrine to contain only Amphibalus’s blood-spattered coat, Edward II ruled that the true location of St. Alban’s relics should be sought at St. Albans Abbey.<sup>38</sup> The story of Edward II’s examination and ruling on St. Alban’s relics suggests the desire for one relic to stand in for another. More specifically, the text’s ekphrasis and overdetermination of Amphibalus’s body and the objects associated with him, responds to St. Alban’s Abbey uncertainty over their patron’s location.

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<sup>37</sup> Tatlock notes that while St. Amphibalus’s cult was popular in this period, it was likely confined to St. Albans as no churches were known to be dedicated to Alban’s companion martyr. For more, see Tatlock’s “St. Amphibalus.”

<sup>38</sup> For more on Edward II’s investigation of and ruling on Alban’s relics, see Haines’s *King Edward II*, especially the chapter titled “His Kingship and its Denouement.”

However, Matthew was not the first to elevate Amphibalus as a key character within the legend. The tradition of elevating and celebrating Amphibalus alongside Alban begins with the Latin prose text, *Passio sancti Albani* (hereafter *PSA*), written by William of St. Albans Abbey at his abbot's request around 1178.<sup>39</sup> William's *PSA* is the most widely known Life of St. Alban and provides the source for the abbey's later versions, which were produced during a period when the abbey "became particularly active in promoting the saint's [Alban's] cult" (Wogan-Browne and Fenster 6). In William's promotion of Alban, his *PSA* takes great liberties with the few historical sources that mention the patron and crafts a figure who possesses a detailed history of conversion, martyrdom, and post-mortem miracles. All the while, William also develops Amphibalus and raises his status as equal to the house's patron saint. The subsequent vitae produced shortly after William's *PSA*, continued William's trend of developing both figures and their relationship. For instance, shortly after the completion of *PSA*, Ralph Dunstable translated William's text into Latin verse and in the early thirteenth century, Matthew Paris produced an illustrated vernacular verse vita of St. Alban based on William's text.<sup>40</sup> While each of these St. Albans Abbey authors preserve the significance and centrality of Amphibalus as a saint alongside Alban, what sets *Auban* apart is its use of ekphrasis and its heightened attention to material objects, including the manuscript itself.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> While the precise date of William's *Passio* is unknown, we know that he produced it at St. Albans under the abbacy of Simon someone between 1167-1183. For more on the dating of William's *Passio sancti Albani*, see Wogan-Browne and Fenster's "Introduction," especially pages 6-7.

<sup>40</sup>For more on the relationship of Ralph Dunstable's Latin verse poem to William's prose version, see McCleod, especially pages 412-416.

<sup>41</sup> It should be noted that there are several Lives of St. Alban based on William's *PSA* that occur after the thirteenth century and are beyond the scope of this chapter. For a

At the time Matthew was writing, the uncertain location of Alban's true relics had the potential to upend the prestige of his abbey and their control of the surrounding community. The ability to assert possession of a saint's relics provided a locale with more than spiritual status; cults and pilgrims seeking the aid and healing from a saint provided an abbey—and the surrounding town—with substantial economic advantages in the form of pilgrimage revenues and capital inflow to the greater community of St. Albans.<sup>42</sup> And, to be certain, the abbey would have the authority to exercise control this market. Further, the recent martyrdom of Thomas Becket in 1170 and his subsequent canonization in 1173, promoted pilgrimage within England in unparalleled ways. In fact, pilgrims began traveling to Becket's shrine in Canterbury as early as 1171. Becket's immense popularity among pilgrims in the twelfth century threatened to demote the status and draw of other local shrines in England; as Matthew's *Auban* appears during a historical moment that valued pilgrimage but lacks the certainty of St. Alban's resting place, it's no surprise that St. Albans Abbey capitalized on the growing market by developing Amphibalus as a saint worthy of veneration and revenue. Coincidentally, it's also during this time that Amphibalus is featured prominently in the hagiographical production at St. Albans Abbey. Not only is Amphibalus developed textually but his presence at the abbey is also made physical when his original tomb and undisturbed relics are conveniently discovered in 1178 near the abbey and then elevated near Alban's shrine.<sup>43</sup>

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complete list and excerpts of these legends as well as a stemma showing their textual relationships, see McCleod's "Alban and Amphibal."

<sup>42</sup> For a discussion of the material evidence for a pilgrimage economy at St. Albans Abbey in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, see Egan's "Pilgrims' Souvenir Badges of St. Albans."

<sup>43</sup> For more on the *inventio* of Amphibalus by St. Alban's Abbey, see Otter's *Inventiones*, especially pages 45-53.

In *Auban*, the increased attention to Amphibalus is also reflected throughout the text's use of objects, especially the pair's shared crucifix. In tracing the cross's movement in *Auban*, it is clear that the poem figures Amphibalus as a substitute for St. Alban. The reader encounters the crucifix once again when Amphibalus's converts Alban to Christianity. After listening earnestly to Amphibalus's teachings, Alban receives a dream vision of Christ's passion and crucifixion. When Alban relates the vision to his teacher, Amphibalus assures him that the vision means Alban will die a martyr for Christ (72). In this moment, Alban catches sight of Amphibalus's crucifix, an object that immediately catalyzes his conversion and subsequent baptism:

Auban de quor l'entent cum clerc fait sa lesçun.

Quant ad la croiz veue e le crucifi en sun,

Ben veit ke signifie la entaille e la façun.

A genoilluns se met par grant devociun;

Des ses errurs fait veraie cunfessiun.” (322-326)

[Alban listened as earnestly as a clerk attends to his reading. When he saw the cross and the crucified man raised upon it, he understood what its carving and fashioning signified. With intense devotion, he knelt down and made a true confession of his errors (73)]

For Alban, the small crucifix acts as a vessel for his faith; the object transforms and contains that which he was unable to assimilate in his initial instruction. Alban's acceptance of Christianity is not acquired by instruction in doxology or thaumatology, but through his intimate sensory encounter with an object. In this moment, *Auban* depicts a lay relationship to faith that is organized by physical objects; just as the crucifix guides Alban's path to

Christianity, an abbey's relics anchor a local community's faith with the presence of tangible objects. However, while the object itself is important to a believer, the fact that it is contained and mediated by an ecclesiastical official is just as important in *Auban*. While Alban's faith is facilitated by a cross, it is vital to note that this object was also given to him by a priest, a figure of power and authority; because Amphibalus controls the relic, he is able to control his follower's experience of it.

St. Alban and Amphibalus's relationship with the crucifix becomes more complicated when Alban acquires the object as his own. The exchange of the crucifix from Amphibalus to Alban—and later back to Amphibalus—makes it difficult to determine with which saint to associate the object. However, this confusion is exactly the goal. In this confusion, the objects associated with Amphibalus become just as significant as those associated with St. Alban. As mentioned above, the act of trading clothes, implies a the narrative gestures toward the men's interchangeability—an interchangeability *Auban* exaggerates in its emphasis on the pair's crucifix. The men's substitution of clothes is complete when Amphibalus thanks Alban by gifting him his crucifix. The poem's attention to the cross in this moment of exchange is key, since the ankh-shaped cross is a symbol that distinguishes the protomartyr in medieval iconography of St. Alban—which is further reflected in Matthew's illustrations. However, this crucifix does not remain with St. Alban; in *Auban*, the object begins and ends in Amphibalus's possession, confusing the symbol's connection to St. Alban's iconography and cult. The focus on objects and their movement between the two saints in *Auban* diverts attention away from the true location of the abbey's patron's relics.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> For a discussion on the promotion of Amphibalus in the architecture of St. Alban's, see Biddle's "Remembering St. Alban," especially page 150. Biddle's research suggests that St. Alban's feretory was moved and elevated behind the high altar in the twelfth century

In the exchange of the saint's shared cross, *Auban* makes clear what is at stake in its representation: the control of local community. When the reader encounters the crucifix again, it appears after Alban's martyrdom and just before Amphibalus torture. After Alban is decapitated in front of one thousand spectators—who bear witness to his miracles and immediately convert to Christianity—the group immediately seeks the spiritual wisdom of Alban's priest and teacher. Having first recovered the crucifix from Alban's corpse, the crowd sets out to find Amphibalus while carrying the bloodied object with them. In the description of this object, *Auban* is careful to include bloody details. The crucifix, now stained by Alban's body, foregrounds the materiality of the cross and St. Alban. This crucifix that first belonged to Amphibalus is now referred to as "Alban's Cross" (90) and marked with the martyr's blood, as the poem describes the object: "Li sancs Auban i pert aers e endurci (1114) [Alban's blood visible on it, hardened and sticking (89)]. In two other moments, the poem reminds the reader that the object bears the presence of St. Alban, through a sustained attention to the cross's blood stains:

"Teinst en sun sanc demeine de sun [Alban's] cors esculent." (1187)

[stained with the blood that flowed down his body] (90).

And, again,

"Quant teinte eu [Amphibalus] sanc Auban la croiz les veit tenir" (1202)

[When Amphibalus saw them holding the cross of stained with the blood of Alban (90)].

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(reflecting a material interest in the promotion of Alban that complements the abbey's literary promotion.



The above emphases on St. Alban's physical connection and proximity to the acquired cross, presents the object as a contact relic—or secondary object that came in contact with the saint. However, *Auban* quickly makes clear that the group that formed around this contact relic cannot and should not interact with object on their own terms. As soon as the crowd acquires the crucifix, they return it to Amphibalus who possess it until death. While the scene shows how the object facilitates community, it also makes clear that the group lacks agency. As soon as the community forms, *Auban* initiates the group's need for a presiding authority figure.

The local community that coalesces around the relic cross is mediated and controlled by figure of institutional power: the priest Amphibalus. As soon as the lay crowd recovers Alban's cross, they return it to a figure of ecclesiastical authority, Amphibalus, who retains it for safe keeping. This moment makes clear that the sacred object that facilitated St. Alban's personal conversion and also organized a devotional group, does not belong to the laity. As Robyn Malo explains, relics and sacred objects are used to structure and maintain power hierarchies; the physical enshrinement of relics purposefully limits lay access to the sacred objects while the narratives that give meaning to relics are implicated in discourses of power. As Malo notes, "in the absence of physical contact, or sometimes, even visual contact, narrative plays a crucial role in affirming the relics sanctity and what it can do" (5). Further, our understanding of these devotional objects are mostly shaped by clerical perspectives, since the very meaning of relics partially relies on written narratives—such as *Auban*—(Malo 9). So, when considering *Auban*—a text produced by an ecclesiastical institution invested in maintaining their parish, its easy to imagine how the use of objects articulate an institution's desire to exercise authority over their local community. In this way, the need for

St. Albans Abbey need to fix the location of Alban's relics is also a concern for the abbey to control and mediate the spiritual experiences of its parish its pilgrims.

Matthew demonstrates the capacity of an object to gather and maintain a community through the crowd's acquisition of the blood-stained crucifix. When one of the converts who had been present at Alban's death obtains the cross, he professes that the object itself—rather than the miracles he witnessed—precipitated his belief as well as that of his community's.

When the convert returns the cross to Amphibalus, he tells him:

Veez ci la croit Auban ke il au muriant

Teinst en sun sanc demeine de sun cors esculent.

Pur ço nus assemblames tuit en un accordant. (1186-1188)

[You see here Alban's cross that, as he died, he stained with the blood that flowed down his body. Because of this we have all come together with one mind. (90)]

Here, the convert's description of Alban's gory martyrdom mirrors *Auban's* first description of the crucifix. The sacrifice of blood that "raa" ["flowed down"] Christ's body is echoed by the blood that "esculent" [flowed down] Alban's. In this allusion to the actual crucifixion, the convert, the language conflates the representation of Alban's martyrdom with Christ's as the object binds a group as "tuit en un accordant" [one mind]. The convert's declaration makes clear the power of relics in the formation of communities and implies Matthew's own goals in affirming St. Alban's Abbey's claims to house the martyr's true relics.

While the crowd's treatment of the crucifix demonstrates the powerful role relics have in forming and controlling communities—and who has control over those communities—this moment also establishes the referential authority of relics. Once the

convert recounts the details of Alban's execution to Amphibalus, the priest fully accepts the witness's account as true based on his possession of the relic, as we are told:

Quant teinte eu sanc Auban la croiz les veit tenir,  
Bien set de li l'estoire unt cunté sanz mentir. (1202-03)

[When Amphibalus saw them holding the cross stained with the blood of Alban, he knew they had told their tale without lying (90)]

The inclusion of the adverb “quant” [When] at the beginning of this sentence marks a pivot in the priest's belief and demonstrates that his faith in the testimony is contingent on the presence of the object. More importantly, this moment demonstrates who has that power to authenticate these narratives; Amphibalus's confirmation of the cross's owner and the account's veracity positions the cross-relic as an object that requires the authorization and interpretation of a cleric. By stressing the physical presence of this object, *Auban* also stresses the local presence of Alban's true relics. In this way, it is easy to see why the text repeatedly returns to the crucifix: if the authenticity of St. Alban's Abbey's relics is in question, then, too, is the authority that controls and maintains the abbey's community.

While the use of ekphrasis centers on the poem's crucifix, *Auban* also lingers on graphic and detailed descriptions of Amphibalus's torture. When Amphibalus is finally captured by Verulamian soldiers, he joins Alban and the other converts in martyrdom. But, unlike the death of *Auban*'s other martyrs, the grim nature of Amphibalus's death is reported in exceptional detail: once caught, Amphibalus's is stripped of all but his cloak; his navel is slit so his intestines may be extracted and knotted to a fixed stake; his hands are bound and tethered to a horse; finally, the horse leads the martyr around the stake while he is eventually disemboweled. While *Auban* refers to Amphibalus as a “martir de cors” (1351) [a martyr of

the heart (93)] such attention to his physical mutilation undermines this statement; the graphic nature of Amphibalus's passion invites readers to focus on his corporeality, which appears especially shocking when compared to scant and relatively tame details of Alban's martyrdom. Aside from the poem's acknowledgement of Alban's decapitation and his bloodied crucifix, very few physical details about the martyr's body are included in the vita. Instead, the surplus of Amphibalus's materiality offers to resolve St. Alban's lack of materiality.

Much has been made of *Auban*'s attention to gore and violence. In discussing the text's unusual and explicit attention to blood, Wogan-Browne and Fenster suggest such imagery may have resonated with Matthew's high-born readers as "[f]or audiences and patrons, whether aristocratic or aspiring, blood was a key aspect of lineage and class" (36). While *Auban*'s attention to the martyrs' blood invites the reader to consider the lineage of St. Albans Abbey and the sacred genealogy of the relics it claims to inherit, the inclusion of blood in this vita also performs a more basic function: to remind the reader of the saints' materiality. In fact, *Auban*, amplifies this material relationship through the description of Amphibalus's gruesome disembowelment. Just as a relic occupies and defines sacred space, so too does Amphibalus's body during his execution. After his disembowelment, Amphibalus is forced to walk in circles around a stake, establishing a clear boundary around a fixed point. Not only does this moment insist on Amphibalus's materiality, as his innards literally bind him to the stake, but it is also makes clear that this body is secured within a

circumscribed space: unlike the remains of St. Alban, Amphibalus body is clearly and undeniably located in place.<sup>45</sup>

No discussion of objects in *Auban* would be complete without discussing the poem's accompanying illustrations. The images that supplement the text of *Auban*, augment the vita's interest in material objects. Matthew's illustrations not only provide summaries of the text, offering readers a visual form of literacy, but also allow text and image to merge on the manuscript page and challenges conventional discussions of ekphrasis and representation.<sup>46</sup> As Barbetti notes, the multimedia nature of medieval texts forces us to reconsider the binary of text and image when discussing ekphrasis.<sup>47</sup> In conventional discussions of ekphrasis, the present text references an absent image or artifice; in *Auban*, text and image unite in a shared space so that the actual text becomes its own referent. By doing so, Matthew's *Auban* functions as a relic whose material reality authorizes its sacred qualities. In this sense, the text refers to itself, and according to Geary, the poem becomes its own referent (39). Thus,

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<sup>45</sup> For a discussion of Matthew's use of walking disembowelment and the motif of the "fatal walk" in Geffrei Gaimar's *L'Estoire d'Engleis*, and several skaldic sagas, see Frankis's "From Saints Life to Saga."

<sup>46</sup> Matthew's association of illustrations with literacy is documented in his later illustrated life of St. Edward the Confessor, when writes near the end of the hagiography: "For laypeople who do not know how to read, I have also represented your story in illustrations in this very same book, for those who want their eyes to see what their ears hear" (105) from *The History of Saint Edward the King*. Eds and translated by Fenster and Wogan-Browne. FRET Series. Tempe: ACMRS, 2008. Matthew's understand of images as a form of literacy was likely informed by Pope Gregory the Great's well-known defense of images in his Letter to Secundius, which is copied in the St. Albans Psalter. Gregory writes: "In a picture those who are unacquainted with letters are able to read and for that very reason a picture is like a lesson for the people" (qtd. in Fenster and Wogan-Brown's "Introduction" to *The History of Saint Edward the King*, 29.)

<sup>47</sup> Barbetti, for instance, asks us think about ekphrasis as a verb rather than a noun and to consider the constant dynamic interplay between text and image as a "living reaction to these processes [of composing and interpreting], and in this living reaction, ekphrasis closes the gap between experience and art" (2).

*Auban* figures itself as an addition to the abbey's cache of relics and by expanding the abbey's store of relics related to Alban, the poem again offers a material object that diverts our attention from the absence of other relics—notably Alban's mortal remains.

In stressing the physical reality of the relic-text, *Auban* continually calls attention to its self as artifice. One way the vita reminds the reader of its material status is through the use of rubrics, or headings that frame the text and describe or summarize the verse it accompanies. These rubrics also demonstrate the complex union of text and image that echo ekphrasis, which operates as the "...site of a radical nexus between the apparently incommensurable modes of visual and verbal representation" (Johnston, Knapp, and Rouse 1). In total, *Auban* features 47 rubrics that summarize or accompany its 36 illustrations. While most of these rubrics complement the life's visual and verbal content, a few rubrics appear between laisses in a way that divides the verse and interrupts the narrative flow. These specific rubrics feature Alban's companion saints and martyrs and signal the beginnings or ends of their passions. The first of these incipit-like rubrics introduces the martyr Heraclius. After witnessing Alban's miracles, Heraclius converted to Christianity before being killed by the Romans for his faith. While *Auban's* attention to Heraclius spans only two laisses—laisse 29 and 30—the minor martyr's presence is marked with a rubric that announces his exit from the narrative, which reads: "Ci finist la passiu Seint Aracle" (29) [Here ends the passion of St. Heraclius (87)]. The brief inclusion of this martyr is bookended by rubrics that visually delimits his passion on the manuscript page. These rubrics provide another degree of verbal description that functions as an act of meta-reflexivity. By interrupting the narrative flow, the reader is reminded of the narrative's material textuality and status as object. Notably, the other rubrics inserted into *Auban* also mark the beginning and end of a martyr's

passion. Immediately following the rubrication of Heraclius's *passio* is a rubric announcing the start of Amphibalus's passion, which reads: "Ci cumence la passiu[n] Seint Amphibal" (29) [Here begins the passion of St. Amphibalus (87)]. The attention to St. Amphibalus and his gruesome death continues until the poem's close, which is noted by the final rubric, which appears immediately after the last *laisse* and reads:

Ci finist li rumantz de l'estoire de Seint Auban le premer martir de Engleterre e de  
Seint Amphibal e des ses cumpainnuns (51)

[Here ends the vernacular version of the history of St. Alban, the first martyr of  
England, and of St. Amphibalus, and of his companions (103)]

Just as the rubrics relating to Heraclius demarcate the *passio*'s beginning and ending on the page, the rubrics associated with Amphibalus spatially establish the *vita*'s parameters. Both rubrics call attention to the form of the *vita* and the physical space of the page, reminding the reader of the text's own material reality.

While the use of intra-verse rubrics delimit *vitae* within *Auban*, the poem also calls attention to itself as text and object worthy of inclusion into the abbey's dossier and reliquary. These intra-verse rubrics visually transform the Life of St. Alban from one *vita* to three *vitae* as the distinct divisions separate the lives of St. Alban, Heraclius, and Amphibalus from one another. By positioning St. Alban's *vita* as the first of these three, *Auban* accomplishes two goals: first, the text plays with St. Alban as the first Christian martyr in England by creating a form in which Alban's life literally begets other martyrs as part of the teleology of England's conversion to Christianity; second, by framing St. Alban's *vita* as a text that produces *vitae*, *Auban* increases its authority as text. Moreover, *Auban*'s meta-textuality not only emphasizes itself as object but also as a relic in its own right. Just as a

relic's authority is confirmed by the proliferation of miracles at its site, *Auban*'s authority is verified by the object's ability to beget other sacred objects—namely, the vitae of Heraclius and Amphibalus. When faced with the questionable location of his abbey's patron saint, St. Albans Abbey produced a text that not only obscures this troubling fact, but also diverts attention from the relics through the production and elevation of more sacred objects. In her discussion of relics and the discourses that maintain them, Seeta Chaganti explains that the display and enshrinement of a relic is in dialectical relationship with its inscription, or textual representation. Chaganti's shows how relic discourse in the Middle Ages often conflates the relic or reliquary with its written inscription (15). Chaganti's discussion of relic discourse and its negotiation of text with materiality invites a reading of *Auban* in which the text becomes a signifier for St. Alban's relics: descriptions of *Auban*'s materiality function to construct and provide meaning of the relics that it celebrates.

*Auban* metatextuality also suggests St. Albans's interest in power beyond its local community. *Auban*'s insistence on its own material status is further demonstrated by the narrator's vows at the poem's close. After witnessing and recording the events related in *Auban*, the narrator predicts that “La estoire ert translate en franceis et latin” (1823) [the story will be translated into Latin and French (103)]. The attention to the vita's language, again reminds us of the content's material features, while the prophetic translation of the text brings to mind the physical labor of transcribing and translating line with ink and vellum before binding each quire. This focus on the physicality of the text is compounded by the narrator's following promise to travel to Rome where “Musterai i mun livre escrit en veeslin” (1840) [I will display my book written there on vellum (103)]. The explicit attention to *Auban*'s medium—its vellum from the hides of local livestock—not only stresses text as



material object, but also an object capable of exercising local authority. The narrator's promise to export *Auban* for display in Rome—the global center of Christianity—endows St. Albans Abbey with an unusual degree local power. This assertion of power is emphasized by *Auban*'s reversal of the period's conventional flow of relics. When the narrator vows to display the local vita in Rome, *Auban* disrupts the typical movement of relics from Rome outward and positions St. Albans Abbey as an authoritative center for the production and dispersal relics. In discussing these dynamics, Thacker notes, “[i]n the Latin west, the principal *locus* of sanctified remains was, of course, Rome”(3). As the global center of Christendom, Rome housed a mass of mortal remains from the saints and martyrs who were persecuted for their faith. The cults of these saints and martyrs—including St. Peter and St. Paul—were exported throughout Christendom “and acquired international significance, attracting pilgrims far and wide and transcending the boundaries of the city” (Thacker 3). Further, in his discussion of imported saints, Thacker explains how cults from Christianity's global center, gained footholds in the smaller locales of the Christendom's periphery; the distribution of contact relics such as objects that bear the blood of the martyr, or splinters of the true cross, from Rome to outlying rural communities “resolv[ed] the dilemma inherent in the necessity for the saint to be at once a strongly and corporeally local presence and a universally accessible patron to the widely dispersed clientage who might invoke him in prayer” (6). In this way, Rome affirms its status as the center of Christianity and the arbiter of sacred objects while expanding the geospatial range of its devotional communities. However, Alban's narrator, reverses the movement of relics and the implied power dynamic by vowing to bring his manuscript to Rome. *Auban*'s flow from local to global, uncharacteristic for the

period, asserts the authority of its monastic house and the abbey's own independence over local, insular authorities.

While St. Albans Abbey competed with Ely's claims to Alban's relics, the geospatial scope of the abbey's assertion of authority expanded beyond a local rivalry. *Alban's* inclusion on the abbey's connection to Rome positions the monastic house as having a much more ambitious perception of the range of its local power. Unlike many other abbeys in Matthew's time, St. Albans enjoyed juridical and fiscal immunity from both secular and religious institutions. Rather than reporting to the local diocese of Lincoln, St. Albans was free from episcopal control (Crick 32). The house's independence was the result of several campaigns and a series of twelfth-century papal bulls, which, according to Julia Crick, granted St. Albans Abbey "the most extensive ecclesiastical Liberty in England" (31). Such exemptions from episcopal control meant that St. Alban's Abbey was free "from regular calls on the abbey's income, annually and occasionally, from hospitality costs, payment for chrism, synodal fees and other episcopal dues" (Crick 32). Notably, the bulls also granted the house "[d]irect control of the fifteen parishes within the Liberty [and] allowed the abbey to retain and benefit from their income" (Crick 32). As one might imagine, such exemptions and immunity enabled the abbey's wealth to increase exponentially.

While the abbey's liberties are well documented in the house's charters—whether authentic or forged—such immunities depended on the presence of Alban's relics. In justifying their claims to such liberties, the monks at St. Albans often cited a charter supposedly written by the abbey's founder, King Offa of Mercia. According to the charter, St. Albans is free from paying fees and tribute to any political or religious institutions indefinitely, as outlined below:

...nullus...immutare seu auferre seu inminuere presumptuose audeat, nec aliquam molestiam aut ecclesie aut siluis ad eam pertinentibus inferre presumat, sed sit libera omnio ab omni tributo et necessitate seu regis, seu episcopi, ducis, iudicum, comitum, exactorum etiam et operum que indici solent, necnon et expeditionis, et omni edicto publico perptuo libertate donabo. (109-110)

[no one.... will so presumptuously dare to either change or dispel or diminish the perpetual freedom of this estate, nor will one largely presume to bring trouble into it or into the woods or church pertaining to it, but it will be free from all tribute and necessity of either the king, or of bishops, of a duke, judges, counts, and also those expelled, indicted men who are isolated for deeds, and also missionaries, and all I publically proclaim.]<sup>48</sup>

Here, the author carefully exempts St. Albans from fees from a parataxis of secular and religious offices—including the king himself. While the excerpt from the above quoted charter outlines the historical precedent authorizing the exemptions of St. Albans Abbey, a later charter stresses the relationship between said privileges and the presence of Alban's relics. In a charter from St. Æthelred, the document links the abbey's privileges with St. Alban's shrine, as Æthelred writes:

...sed omne debitum exoluant iugiter qui in ipsa possessione fuerint ad predicti martyris mausoleum secundum quod ordinauerit abbas qui ipso perfuerit cenobio (180).

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<sup>48</sup> This translation and all subsequent translation of the Latin from *Charters of St. Albans* are my own.

[...but that very monastery, which will have possession of that aforementioned martyr's tomb, may be continually released from all payment, according to the abbot who took refuge there himself.]

Æthelred's charter associates the freedom from paying fees with the possession of Alban's shrine—and the implied relics within it. For St. Alban's Abbey, their patron's presence does more than create present and future spiritual communities; Alban's relics and their location at St. Albans Abbey authorize the abbey's temporal power as a local center free from Lincolnshire's see and indebted only to Rome. Since the historical authentication of abbey's local power literally depended on the site of the martyr's mortal remains, it's no wonder Matthew's *Auban* obsesses over material objects associated with Alban.

Matthew Paris's *Vie de Auban* addresses his abbey's need to authenticate and reinforce the scope of its power. The vita includes ekphrastic descriptions of sacred objects associated with Alban and also the physical bodies of the protomartyr and his companion saint. These detailed and sometimes graphic descriptions stress a materiality that diverts the reader's attention from the uncertain location of Alban's relics. By doing so, *Auban* obscures a contentious episode in his abbey's history and also, through textual production, adds to the dossier of authenticating documents that defend the abbey's claim to local immunity and independence—liberties that were founded on the abbey's possession of Alban's relics. While Matthew's *Auban* makes visible the local politics of St. Albans Abbey and the stakes implicated in the location of a saint's body, the poem also offers formulations of power that do not fit with modern narratives of medieval space. *Auban*'s focus on objects, their connection to space, and their possession by St. Albans Abbey, privileges a practice of the local that establishes power in an entity outside of explicitly sovereign control. In this way,

*Auban* demonstrates an exercise of power more concerned with a local community than than a lager prenatal collectivity.

## IV. Edward the Confessor and the Politics of Place In Matthew

### Paris's *L'estoire de seint Aedward le rei*

In Matthew Paris's *L'estoire de seint Aedward le rei*, a desperate, crippled man arrives at Westminster Abbey in search of healing. The man, Ghillie Michael, relays his reasons for seeking Edward, in a speech worth quoting in its near entirety:

A Rumme sui alez sis feiz,  
En teu manere, en teu destreiz,  
Sis feiz a Rumme ai esté  
Pelerin las e meseisé,  
U saunté m'a promis seint Pere,  
Nepurquant en teu manere  
Ke li gentilz rois Aedward—  
Ke Deus e seint Pere guard—  
A sun col réal demeinne  
Ges[k]'au muster porter me deinne.  
Seint Pere le vout si dfruz,  
Li seint k'il eime sur tuz,  
Il le requert e cumande  
E par moi peccheur le mande  
K'il ne lesse ke ne face...<sup>49</sup> (1953-67)

[I have been to Rome six times, just as I am, in this very distress. Six times have I, a

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<sup>49</sup> The Anglo-Norman text of *L'estoire de seint Aedward le rei* cited above, and all subsequent passages are from Wallace's edition.

tired and suffering pilgrim, been to Rome, where Saint Peter promised me health, but only if noble King Edward—may he remember God and Saint Peter—deigns to carry me on his own shoulders to the Church. Edward’s beloved Saint Peter, the saint Edward loves above all, requires and commands through me, a sinner, that Edward not fail to do this...(78)]<sup>50</sup> In the above plea for Edward’s intercession, Ghillie explains that his search for healing had already led him to Rome six times, and also that each visit to the heart of global Christianity had ultimately failed him. Upon his final visit to Rome, we learn, St. Peter himself tells Ghillie that the only way he will find healing is through expressly local means: the intervention of England’s St. Edward the Confessor at Westminster.

I begin with this episode from *L’estoire de Seint Aedward le rei* (hereafter *Aedward*) because it demonstrates a moment in which the local trumps the global. And, to be certain, the text is very explicit about what constitutes this local space. For *Aedward*, the local is defined by the nexus of Edward with Westminster Abbey, which is also decidedly not Rome. In thinking about how Edward’s life constructs and represents the local, I focus almost exclusively on *Aedward* because of its unique in its joining of the king with Westminster. As Robert Folz has noted, *Aedward* marks a shift in its attention to Westminster Abbey; the poem’s Latin predecessors do not connect the king with the church, as early versions by Anonymous and Osbert of Clare “unissaient à jamais Westminster au Confesseur” (96). In this chapter I argue that the text’s emphasis on Edward’s connection to Westminster not only expands the category of the local, but also reflects the larger historiographical interests of Henry III. More specifically, *Aedward* acts in service of a state-promoted narrative that fixes royal power with local space and promotes sovereign authority as oppositional to Rome.

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<sup>50</sup> This translation and all subsequent translations of the Anglo-Norman are by Fenster and Wogan-Browne.

In Edward's healing of Ghillie Michael, *Aedward* positions Westminster—and England as a whole—as a privileged local space shaped in its opposition to Rome. In other words, Ghillie Michael's above request for healing articulates of a politics of place that stresses the local and local authority of the pre-national space over Rome: the global and institutional center of Christianity. While other chapters of this project discuss the local in terms of smaller intranational identities, Matthew's *Aedward* offer a moment in which the boundaries of the local expand to contain a larger political and geographical space, namely, the collectivity of pre-nation-state England. When considering the wider scope of examination in this chapter, it's useful to borrow Stuart Elden's discussions of territory—a concept he defines as akin to my use of local. As Elden explains, territory is a category less constructed by geographical boundaries than its relationship and opposition to other spaces (2). In fact, territory, like the local, is a “geographically imprecise” unit that expands and contracts in accordance to the goals enacted upon it (Elden 5). Thus *Aedward* presents an instance in which the local expands to contain pre-national England as a unit local collectivity. Further, *Aedward* demonstrates this expansion through Westminster and its relationship to sovereign power, other English intranational spaces, and to Rome. Further, *Aedward*'s depiction of the local is also a space defined by its center rather than its borders, complicating our understanding of the category. The concept of the local and the identities represented in *Aedward* are organized around its center—Westminster Abbey—and defined in relation to the other local and extranational global spaces. This offers a moment in which *Aedward* invites us to rethink models of power as contained in within the concept of the nation and to rethink local space as bounded and incompatible with larger designators of political identity.



While *Aedward* offers a more nuanced understanding of the local in this period, I argue that this vita also provides a presentation of the local that acts in service of royal historiographical goals. Written in Anglo-Norman verse by Matthew Paris, *Aedward* was likely produced in the first half of the thirteenth century and was dedicated to Henry III's wife, Eleanor of Provence, a prominent patron of the arts.<sup>51</sup> The only extant copy of *Aedward* exists as the sole text within MS. Ee.3.59 and contains 37 folios, most of which are illustrated. While it is unclear if Matthew's *Aedward* is the product of royal patronage or monastic initiative, the text is certainly invested in presenting a fixed government apparatus organized around Westminster Abbey.<sup>52</sup> The text articulates a central model of political power through its joining of Edward with Westminster Abbey reflects Henry III's project to establish royal authority and his administrative center at Westminster. Further, *Aedward* not only depicts royal authority as firmly rooted at the abbey, but it also frames this local center of power as existing outside of historical time. In this way, the text portrays Edward the Confessor and Westminster Abbey as having a unique relationship with both time and space. While the text fixes the king and his abbey to a specific site, the text simultaneously removes them from historical time—a move that is also reflected in the manuscript's visual layout of the poem. In effect, *Aedward* creates a vision of English authority that is uninterrupted by the Norman Conquest's social and political upheaval. As a result, this revisionist narrative

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<sup>51</sup> For more on *Aedward*'s patronage see Lewes Gee's *Women, Art, and Patronage* and also Howell's *Eleanor of Provence* especially pages 281-86.

<sup>52</sup> In their introduction to *The History of Saint Edward the King by Matthew Paris*, Fenster and Wogan-Browne suggest the complicated dynamics of author, text and patron. The pair explain: "like other monastic writers, Paris sought support for the church. But he also advises Henry directly, in his closing lines, which ask the king to nourish Westminster: a church that has 'no equal in the entire kingdom' (v.4676)" (17). This demonstrates the complicated priorities of Matthew and his text, making it difficult to objectively determine his own investments in producing *Aedward*.

fashions Henry III's royal inheritance as an imagined continuity of English authority and identity.

Matthew's complicity in the promotion of Westminster and the symbol of an increasingly centralized government under Henry III is peculiar given his outspoken opinions on the state. As Barlow reminds us, Matthew expressed a critical stance against Henry III's taxation of monastic houses and interference into the dealings of ecclesiastical affairs for financial gain in the *Chronica Majora* (Matthew Paris 139). Matthew's prejudice against the monarch as an oppressive and extortionate figure contrasts sharply with the glorification of Henry's Westminster in *Aedward*. It is possible that Matthew viewed his participation in *Aedward* as a opportunity gain the king's favor and expand the privileges of his home abbey, St. Albans. While we know that Henry often visited St. Albans Abbey, we also know from the *Chronica Majora* that the king granted land rights to a loyal subject over St. Albans Abbey.<sup>53</sup> Matthew's role in creating a narrative that promoted and authorized Henry III's power may have been motivated by a desire to curry favor with the king and expand the rights of St. Albans. However, given Matthew's outspoken views, it also possible that his narrative provides an underhanded message to his sovereign. By fixing the king to Westminster, Matthew's narrative also suggests that Henry's ability to intervene in ecclesiastical affairs begins and ends with Westminster Abbey.

When considering Matthew's representation of Edward and the king's role in royal historiography, it is important to consider earlier literary depictions of Edward. As previous scholars have demonstrated, the archive of literature preceding Matthew's vita has increasingly emphasized Edward's status as saint, and more specifically, his practice of

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<sup>53</sup> For more on this conflict, see Barlow's *Matthew Paris*, especially pages 3-4.

chastity. When tracing the textual representation of Edward, there is no doubt that his presence in hagiography has become more holy and virginal. In discussing this trend, Edina Bozoky notes that “the construction of Edward’s sanctity was progressive in the writings about his life as depictions of his virginity and chastity become amplified with each subsequent vita” (173-74). However, whether these representations reflected any historical reality is another question. When considering depictions of Edward’s virginity, Frank Barlow has famously asserted that “not only is the story of Edward’s virginity without good authority, it is also implausible” (8). Following Barlow, many scholars have worked to separate the historical Edward implied in Barlow’s statement from the saintly king of hagiography. As Richard Mortimer warns, such a task is futile: “at the most basic level [the man and the legend] cannot be disentangled” (39). More recently, Johanna Huntington articulates a trend in approaching Edward less concerned with comparisons to the historical figure and more interested in his literary representation. Huntington argues that scholars should not invest their attention in “the ‘real’ Edward, but with a shift in portrayal of Edward the Celibate, which played a crucial part in the creation of Edward the Saint” (119). I follow Huntington’s example by focusing less on a comparison of the historical Edward with Edward the saint.<sup>54</sup> While such critical attention to Edward’s virginity is valuable, I depart from these discussions by suggesting that the representation of Edward’s chastity and sanctity act in serve of larger representations of time and space.

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<sup>54</sup> While the scope of this chapter is limited to portrayals of King Edward the Confessor, scholars such as Otter and Huntington also discuss how texts represent the virginity of his wife, Edith Godwinson. For instance, in “Closed Doors: An Epithalamium for Queen Edith” Otter argues that representations of Edith’s chastity serve to compensate for her bareness. Similarly, in “Edward the Celibate, Edward the Saint,” Huntington suggests that Edith’s childlessness was presented as the product of “spiritually motivated virginity” rather than a failure to fulfill her royal responsibility to produce an heir (124).

I build on previous discussions of Edward's virginity to demonstrate how his sanctity in Matthew's work is part of a larger rhetorical strategy meant to present Edward as separate from historical time. Currently, scholars discuss Edward's virginity as a mechanism meant to absolve the king's childlessness and his role in the inheritance crisis that precipitated the Norman Conquest.<sup>55</sup> While I agree that Edward's sanctity serves to ameliorate his political failures, I argue that the portrayal of his virginity has broader applications. Since the representation and development of Edward's virginity has already been discussed at length, I have the advantage relying on Huntington to summarize the previous patterns in scholarship on this issue:

In the early stages of his cult...Edward's sanctity was not fixed, but took different forms which reflected and consolidated the concerns of his biographers. Just as there are "multiple masculinities," so too there are multiple virginities, some of which are seen throughout Edward's *vitae*. (118)

As Huntington suggests, the different versions of Edward's virginity reflect different historiographical ends. Undoubtedly, the overall trajectory of Edward's sanctity suggests a release of the historical king's culpability in the Norman Conquest. In describing the motivation for representing Edward as saintly in an early Latin hagiography, Barlow speculates that the anonymous author sought to

extricate Edward individually from the [Norman Conquests political] disasters. The solution here was to emphasize the other-worldly aspects of life—his detachment

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<sup>55</sup> It is possible that there were diplomatic and political advantages for remaining childless. For instance, Barlow speculates that "Childlessness gave Edward a diplomatic asset which, it seems, he dangled not a few times in order to make a friend or punish those claimants out of favor" (*Edward the Confessor* 8).

from the base cares of politics—and to lift him from the squalor of the theatre of the world and into the triumphs of heaven. (*The Life of King Edward* lxiii)

To be certain, the absolution of Edward's culpability in events preceding the Norman Conquest has real political advantages. If Edward's childlessness is forgiven, then he has the potential to provide his predecessors with a powerful symbol of kingship. As, Bruce O'Brien reminds us, Edward's peaceful reign and implementation of law codes framed his rule as a "golden age" of England (17).<sup>56</sup> However, I depart from previous conversations by arguing that the representation of the king's evolving sanctity also articulates a special relationship to time and space. More specifically, the intensification of Edward's sanctity and chastity is also an intensification of the figure's both removal from historical time and also his fixity to place. When using the term *historical time* here and elsewhere, I refer to the model of time in which events occur in linear and chronological sequence as ordered by past, present, and future. Rather than depict historical time, *Aedward* represents the king through models of *divine time*—an theological understanding of time informed by Augustine's reading of Genesis popular in this period. According to Augustine, the concept of *divine time* instructed that everything that can exist has already been created at the time of creation; as a result, saints and miracles are instances in which the divine reveals itself within our perception of time. In this way, saints' lives always already operate outside of historical time. A figure such as Edward the Confessor, always has and always will exist in a model of divine time—a perception of time that is characterized by a simultaneity rather than the chronology and the linear sequencing that defines history.

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<sup>56</sup> For more on Edward's law codes and his international policies, see O'Brien's *God's Peace and King's Peace*.

*Aedward* attends to the saint's relationship to time through its representation of the king's sexuality. Edward's virginity is foregrounded early in Matthew's poem; readers are first informed of his abstinence when *Aedward* describes the king, stating: "Sa char venqui par chasteté" (29) [ He conquered the flesh through his chastity (54)]. This focus on chastity is a recurring issue throughout the vita, as we also learn of the king's refusal to participate in the bloodlines that define and shape political histories. Further, the significance of Edward's abstinence is compounded by his royal status. While Ernst Kantorowicz has theorized the king's dual nature as both earthly and divine in the Middle Ages, Edward does not follow this established model because he is explicitly both king and saint.<sup>57</sup> By stressing Edward's chastity, the text portrays a figure withdrawn from historical time in two key ways: first, as a king who abstains from the genealogical duties that define and shape the past and present, Edward shirks participation in his historical lineage; second, on a simpler level, *Aedward's* claim that the king's chastity granted him control over his body, also releases him from the consequences of historical time—by overcoming his flesh, he also overcomes the inevitable decline, death, and decay of the physical, temporal body.

Edward's chastity and his complicated relationship to historical time is made especially evident in the context of *Aedward's* genealogical concerns. In particular, *Aedward's* discussion of lineage demonstrate a lack of investment in the claiming and producing of his bloodlines—and the history they preserve. Not only does Edward's chastity break with a future genealogy, but he also rewrites his past lineage, as well. We first see the king's revision of his own history when he refers to himself as an "orphan," in prayer, stating:

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<sup>57</sup> For more, see Kantorowicz's *The King's Two Bodies*.

Regar, duz Deu, a tun frarin,

*Ki sul es pere a l'orfanin.*

Jhesu fiz Marie, gard

En moi tun sargant Aedward.

*Jhesu, n'ai pere si vus nun.*

Misest ja a confusiun

Le meuz de mun lignane

Par estrange gent sauvage. (754-61, emphasis mine)

[Behold your poor creature, sweet God, *you who alone are father to the orphan.*

Jesus, son of Mary, preserve me as your servant, Edward. Jesus, *I have no father but you.* The best of my lineage has been scattered by the foreign, savage people. (63, emphasis mine)]

In this prayer, Edward suggests that that his self-identification as “orphan” is more than a religious trope meant to distance himself from the temporal world. The last two lines acknowledge actual historical events including the destruction of his paternal line by the Danish Invasion. Here, the reference to Edward’s real, historical family highlights the power of his narrative to revise and reimagine history. While this scene allows Edward to replace his ancestors with a spiritual family and lineage that is not subject to historical time, it is also a moment that demonstrates the meta-historiographical goals of the poem. Edward actively participates in the revision of the past through the creation of his own narrative, just as Henry III’s commissioned life of Edward positions the king as part of a continuous lineage of English sovereigns.

By depicting Edward's abandonment of his earthly lineage and his claim to divine parentage, *Aedward* presents a king untethered from history. Edward's status is especially ironic given that his political standing is rooted in historical models of succession. Further, the poem makes clear that Edward's purported abstinence and his consequent relationship to history has impacts beyond his person: his relationship has high stakes for his subjects and their collective identity. As *Aedward* suggests, the king's withdrawal from history offers his people a break from a traumatic past, marred by the Danish Invasion and political conquest that displaced the English royal line. *Aedward* demonstrates how the king's relationship with history has the potential to reshape a group's collective understanding of the past when Edward first meets with his advisors. When the counsel suggests the king produce an heir, they cite England's past and their desired future as their rationale, stating

Ben veis ke par feluns Deneis

Est li lignage rēal

Mut escurcé e mis auval (1065-67)

[the treacherous Danes have diminished the royal lineage and laid it low (67)].

The counsel's reference to the Danish invasion broadens the scope and raises the stakes for Edward's withdrawal from historical time. In order to mend England's relationship with its disrupted past, the nobles advise a solution far different from the king's. While Edward advocates his total removal from the bloodlines that shape history, his court proposes that he reproduce, as they plead:

Prium vus k'il vus agree

Femme prendre pur efforcer

Le regne, curune e poër,



Ke si il plest au rei du cel

Eium de vus eir naturel (1067-73)

[We pray that it may please you to take a wife in order to strengthen the kingdom, the crown and its power, so that if it please God in heaven, we shall have from you a rightful heir (67)]

Offered in the context of conquest, the counsel's request for a royal heir is also request for the repair of a traumatic history. And, to be certain, the nobles do not equivocate on the means by which the king is expected to repair the collective past of his people: they request an "eir naturel" in an explicit call for an heir produced via of sexual reproduction and *not* through the naming of successor. Further, *Aedward* articulates the stakes and scope of Edward's decision when the above moment creates an equivalence between the course of his reign and the future of his people. In the petition above, *Aedward* not only yokes the three words "regne," "curune," and "poër" by placing them in their own line, but they are also modified by the shared singular article "le." By joining these terms together and creating an sense of interchangeability between Edward and the symbolic authority of the crown and its power, the poem argues that the king's relationship to historical time has broad applications for his people and the authority from which he justifies his power. From this perspective, Edward's decision to shirk his royal reproductive duties live with his wife in chastity not only removes himself from history, but he also removes his people from the disruptive narratives of the past.

*Aedward's* longing for a continuity of England's past echoes the historiographical interests of Henry III. Like Edward, Henry III is invested in the representation of his own participation in the narratives that shape English history. While Edward the Confessor

questions his place in a English past impacted by the Danish Invasion of the eleventh century, Henry III inherits a difficult position in shaping a narrative of continuity after the Norman Conquest. As Bernhard Scholz explains, Henry III, the grandson of Henry II inherits an ancestry that is neither English nor Norman but rather “international and or even cosmopolitan” (55). The king’s mixed identity likely drove Henry’s “fervor” for and “interest in [Edward, his] Anglo-Saxon predecessor” (Scholz 55). Scholz suggests that Henry likely reconciled his hybrid ancestry by reframing the narratives of the Norman Conquest to portray a transfer of power rather than the invasion and defeat of English political rule. In this way, Henry’s interest in Edward served to buttress his own royal authority; by framing his own genealogy as traceable to the last Anglo-Saxon king, Henry imagines a powerful authorizing narrative that roots his power to a continuous, unbroken line of English kings. While *Aedward*’s portrayal of the king’s difficult relationship to history finds analogy in its concurrent political concerns, the text also addresses the question of sovereign authority through the king’s relationship to space.

Just as the king’s chastity demonstrates the poem’s broader engagement—or disengagement—with history, *Aedward* simultaneously intensifies the king’s relationship to the space of the local. In this way, *Aedward* articulates a double movement in which the king is withdrawn from historical time while he is increasingly fixed place. In *Aedward* the space that moors the king and his sanctity to a sense of local place is Westminster Abbey. While other chapters of my project have examined how saints lives makes claims about authority’s power over a local space, *Aedward* marks a moment in which the space of the local is expand to represent the collectivity of England. Further, rather than suggesting that *Aedward* delimits a locale, region, or territory—as is the case with *Vie de seint Auban* and Gaimar’s Havelok

episode—*Aedward* registers the local as a space that is not defined by its borders, but rather its center. For *Aedward*, the center of Westminster functions as the gravitational center around which space organizes itself. As previously mentioned, Elden’s analogous discussion of territory helps us better articulate the representation of the local in *Aedward*. As Elden notes, such space, conceptually and physical, need not be defined by its borders. Like territory, the local is a shifting, dynamic form of spatiality, best defined by its relationship to other spaces and institutions rather than to geography. Instead, such space is according to Elden is defined by the relationship between place and power (10). For *Aedward* and the nationalizing figure of Edward the Confessor, the nexus of place and power. As *Aedward* makes clear, the enactment of power over a such a larger geospatial area is facilitated by the king’s relationship to Westminster Abbey.

As mentioned above, *Aedward* was produced in a period that witnessed the radical centralization of royal power in Westminster Abbey under Henry II and his successor, Henry III. As Paul Binski explains, the construction of St. Edward in royal hagiography in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries nucleated the concept of a royal center at Westminster. As figure Edward served a nationalizing function that began shortly after his canonization in the 1160s, which “began the rise to independence of Westminster Abbey itself” and its promotion as “a stabilizing force of the emergent nation state” (Binski 52, 53). However, the promotion of Westminster Abbey as the political and administrative center of England intensified under the reign of Henry III, the king under which *Aedward* was produced. According to Binski, Henry III’s unprecedented participation in the promotion of the a saint’s cult reflects a conscious consolidation royal power and the work of “developing symbolic

notions of the centralized state” (xviii).<sup>58</sup> So, while we often discuss local in terms of borders and boundaries, *Aedward* offers a theorization of the local that is defined by its center.

*Aedward* establishes Westminster Abbey as the center around which England’s collective identity organizes itself and radiates through its physical relationship with Edward’s sanctity. More specifically, the text’s descriptions of Edward’s healing miracles locate that the king’s power and influence as set within Westminster. The connection of power with local space is made visible in the vita’s first miracle and the scene with which I opened this chapter. As mentioned above, Ghillie’s plea in seeking Edward’s aid positions the king’s identity and authority as unequivocally local. By recounting his past failures abroad before his return to England, Ghillie’s very act of pilgrimage legitimizes Westminster as England’s authoritative center. As a pilgrim who had previously travelled to Rome and sought healing in the global and authoritative center of Christianity, Ghillie’s disappointments serve to elevate Edward and his sanctity. When Rome repeatedly failed to intercede on Ghillie’s behalf, the pilgrim turned his attention to England. In this way, *Aedward*’s inclusion of Ghillie’s story does more than establish Westminster as the political center England; the detail of Ghillie’s six trips to Rome and their repeated failures offer a reorientation in the power dynamics of local to global: England, which had been at the literal geographic margins compared to the global center of Rome, is now presented as a privileged destination for pilgrimage in *Aedward*.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Also, as Barlow explains, under Henry III, the cult of Edward the Confessor was not only promoted but was also considered “fashionable” under the king who considered himself the saint’s “greatest patron” (“Introduction” xviii).

<sup>59</sup> For a discussion on the geospatial relations of England to Rome on medieval mappa mundi, see Lavezzo’s *Angels on the Edge of the World*.

The significance of Westminster as a privileged spatial configuration of power is further demonstrated through the text's inclusion of graphic details surrounding Ghillie's healing. When Edward receives Ghillie's request, he lifts the crippled man onto his back, and carries him as instructed. While Edward carries him, the text records public outcry against the pair's physical contact. As *Aedward* records, bystanders begged the king to drop Ghillie on account of the pilgrim's condition. In a scene that details a witness's objection, *Aedward* includes a plea warning the king of pilgrim's oozing wounds:

De ses boces la quiture

Desent par vostre vesture,

Vostre cors e robe soille

E gesk'as garetz vus moille. (1981-84)

[t]he pus from his wounds is running down your clothing and soiling your robe, wetting you to your garters. (79)]

In this scene of contamination the king is explicitly marked by the pilgrim's wounds.

*Aedward's* inclusion of Ghillie's seeping sores and the urgent risk of pollution he poses to Edward function to bring immediacy to the site of the miracle. While this graphic moment may appear chocking or out of place, Patrick J. Nugent reminds us that such miracle scenes and their focus on bodily fluids were not uncommon in eleventh and twelfth century accounts of healing. According Nugent, the presence of bodily fluids—defined as “blood, pus, and related fluids from the eyes, ears, nose, and throat”—are increasingly frequent fixtures in healing miracles (51). In fact, Nugent argues that such discharges of bodily fluid signify a radical act of disturbance that

interrupts the liturgy...and draws attention to the dire circumstances of the afflicted, the pain that accompanies their healing, the wonder inspired in onlookers, the magnificence of the transformation, and the dramatic effect of the miracle on the witnesses. (62)

In this way, the attention to bodily effluvia shifts the focus from the powerful to the powerless: a reversal that, in *Aedward*, brings immediacy to the population that the king represents. More specifically, the inclusion of these fluids draws our attention to the embodied presence of pilgrims such as Ghillie; his oozing wounds create a physicality that is urgent and expressly present in space. In effect, the mention of Ghillie's wound interrupts the narrative to remind of the space in which these acts of healing take place.

Edward's healing of Ghillie is only one of several miracles in which the king uses the power of his own touch to heal pilgrims. As Marc Bloch notes, king ability to ease suffering with his touch was a common trope of royalty on the continent, but the figure of Edward the Confessor "is still almost universally considered today as the founder of the English rite" making the sites of his healing even more significant to his citizens (23). In a subsequent scene, *Aedward* recounts the predicament of a woman afflicted by infertility, widespread pain, and infected tumors on her neck, which, after becoming putrid, drove her loved ones away. After several unsuccessful medical interventions, the isolated woman received a dream vision guiding her to Edward at Westminster, where, she is told, the king will cure her by applying the water with which he washes his hands. When Edward meets the suffering woman, not only does he surrender his used water but he also initiates her healing with his own touch, as we are told:

De l'eve prist dunt out lavé,

Li liu doillant ad arusé,  
L'emfle e [les] boces manie,  
Ki ord sunt la maladie,  
E ducement de l'eve leve.  
Atant es vus li maus s'escreve  
Par vertu Deu e par miracle. (2662-68)

[He took some of the water he had washed himself with and sprinkled it on the places that ailed her. He touched the swelling tumors, which were nasty from the illness, and washed them gently with the water. At that, the tumors burst miraculously, through God's power. (87)]

Similar to Edward's treatment of Ghillie, this moment of healing takes place in dangerously close proximity to contamination as the king relieves woman's tumors through touch. And, similar to *Aedward's* treatment of Ghillie, the king demonstrates this intimate contact and physical immediacy is expressed though the poem's gratuitous descriptions of bodily fluids, as we are told:

Quant out fa[it] de la croiz signacle,  
Issent verms de la quiture,  
Si en but li sancs a dreiture. (2669-2671)

[When Edward made the sign of the cross and, vermin came out of the pus, and he drank the blood (88)].

The shocking detail of Edward's extraction of the pilgrim's wounds, is only upstaged by his subsequent ingestion of the expelled pus and blood. Such a scene, according to Nugent offers an especially productive reading for understanding the community that is organized by

Edward's sanctity and his connection to Westminster. As Nugent reminds us, the recipients of common healing miracles from this period are mostly "non-descript people: peasants, artisan, anonymous monks, women. Sometimes they are named, and sometimes their healing is an indication of their social marginality" (155). In accord with Nugent's classifications, the ill, nameless woman seeking Edward's intercession serves to articulate the broader collectivity that is represented by the king and Westminster in *Aedward*. By comparison, in an earlier life of Edward the Confessor, the Latin *Vita Edwardi* includes an this same scene that lacks the physical immediacy found in *Aedward*. As demonstrated below, many details of the Latin scene are similar to Matthew's version except for the king's ingestion of pus. As the *Vita Edwardi* notes,

...pius rex sancta dextera premens, et ducens | saniem, nec abhorret in infirma  
muliere hunc elicuit pestem. (ii.1-2, 92)

[...the good king kneaded with his holy hand and drew out the pus. Nor did he shrink from enduring the stench of the sick woman until with his healing hand he had brought out all that noxious disease (ii.1-2, 93)]

While the king places his hands on the woman and draws out the infection himself, he stops short of ingesting the tumors' secretions, thereby intensifying the proximity displayed in *Aedward*. The comparison between *Vita Edwardi* and *Aedward* suggests an intentional insistence on space and physical immediacy in Matthew's text which is further compounded by *Aedward*'s attention to the structure of Westminster Abbey.

Unlike Matthew's vita, the early Latin life does not specify the location in which these events take place. While *Aedward* repeatedly reminds the reader of Westminster's name and significance, *Vita Edwardi* rarely mentions the church. In fact, when describing the



location of the woman's healing and care under Edward, *Vita Edwardi* simply states that events transpired at court, or "curia" (ii.1-2, 92). In fact, the only time that Westminster is mentioned by name in Book II of *Vita Edwardi*, occurs in the context of historical time and national loss. When recounting the subsequent loyalty of a blind man healed by Edward, we are told

Hic usque ad tempora regis Willelmi, qui de Anglis in prelio uictor triumphauit,  
aulam Westmonsterii seruauit regiam (ii.5-6, 100)

[And this man kept the royal hall at Westminster up to the time of King William,  
who triumphed over the English in battle (ii.5-6, 101)]

In this scene, *Vita Edwardi* links Westminster to a disruptive political history. Westminster Abbey's existence as a facilitator of collective community is as fleeting as its appearance; the name appears and disappears in the context of a history of the Norman Conquest. By contrast, Westminster's emphatic connection to Edward in Matthew's poem, provides that the king and his administrative structure are removed from history's damaging events.

The textual comparisons of Matthew's verse life with the earlier Latin text makes visible *Aedward's* intense intersection between the king, Westminster, and the community that surrounds the abbey. And, to be certain, this connection is made literal through Edward's drinking of the woman's pus and blood. The king's startling act creates a recursive relationship between the community, Edward, and Westminster. In this relationship, the suffering woman—and the larger community she represents—is literally contained in Edward, who is contained by Westminster Abbey, which articulates a local center of power within England. The effect of this recursive, nesting-doll like structure is an emphasis on larger designators of identity—namely the expanding space of England that is organized

around Westminster Abbey. This expansion of the local is, importantly facilitated by the sovereign's sacred authority within space.

*Aedward* continues to emphasize the king's relationship to Westminster in the saint's later miracles of healing. When a blind requests to be healed by the water with the king washed his hands, Edward obliges, as *Aedward* recounts:

Leve li reis, ke receue

Fu eu bacin l'eve[e] tenue.

Quant li reis vint a la iglise,

Tant cum furent au servise,

L'a fait as oilz tenebrus

Mettrë e les leve. Es vus

Li oil andui au malade,

Ki errant laid, de culur fade,

Samz vue, e pur ce obscurs,

Devene[n]t seinz e clers e purs. (2776-85)

[When he received the basin of water, the king washed. He went to the church, and at the service applied the water to those clouded eyes and washed them. And there you are: both of the ailing man's eyes, which had been ugly, lackluster, sightless, and dull, became healthy, bright, and clear! (89)].

While the above account of Edward's healing of a blind man offers an example of common miracle likely included to communicate Edward's canonicity, the scene's details stress an intimate proximity of king to pilgrim and witness. The description of the pilgrim's eyes as "tenebrus" [clouded] and later "clers e pur" [bright and clear] communicate a level of detail

that can only be witnessed within the context of physical closeness. Like *Aedward's* earlier miracles, which use bodily fluids to stress a physical immediacy of Edward's sanctity and its performance in Westminster, the details that describe the blind man's healing imply a significant relationship to space and how Edward's sanctity facilitates community.

Edward repeats the miracle of healing the blind twice more in *Aedward* and with both subsequent episodes, the text mentions other intra-English spaces from which the pilgrims travel. The second blind man who seeks Edward is described as "Un burgois l'ot de Nicole" (2829) [a merchant from Lincoln (90)] and a third is noted as traveling from "Brehull," (2998) Brill, near Buckinghamshire (91). The inclusion of these locales position Westminster as the privileged space to which these other intranational spaces defer. In effect, *Aedward* elevates Westminster as the privileged locus where English identities of region and nationalism converge. And, in a final healing miracle, Edward performs a cure that explicitly fixes Westminster as the point around which England territory and identity forms. When recounting the healing of the above-mentioned blind man from Brill, who, after enduring twenty years of blindness, becomes hopeful when a doctor promises a cure following this regimen:

Faire t'apent un pelrinnage  
A seisante e vint eglises—  
Soient pres u loing asises—  
A geune, lange, uraisun,  
Requerant Deu ta gareisun  
E les seinz ki avüez  
Sunt des iglises clamez,

Ke Deu wue aver te face' (2939-46)

[You must make a pilgrimage to eighty churches, whether near or far, with fasting, confession, and prayer, asking God and the saints to whom the churches are dedicated to heal you, so that he may restore your sight (91)].

The doctor's vagueness in describing "eighty churches, near or far" and nameless and varied "saints to whom the churches are dedicated" articulates a lack of faith and certainty in the local religious institutions and figures of the region. The only time a conviction in a specific institution and figure is expressed occurs when the blind man arrives to meet Edward at Westminster. Just as other pilgrims before him—the man is cured of his blindness when the king washes his eyes; such repetition of the successful cure of a recurring ailment provides consistency to the spatial significance created by Edward's location in the abbey.

The descriptions of Edward's sanctity and his performance of miracles do more than locate the king and his authority at Westminster; they also serve to establish the abbey as a symbol of English authority through the poem's linking of England's spiritual communities with the space's political identity. This political identity is articulated as specifically English through *Aedward's* comparison of Westminster Abbey with Rome. More specifically, the poem's comparison of Westminster with Rome emphasizes the scale and scope the sovereign's spatial authority. The oppositional relationship of space to larger centers of power is integral to an understanding of the local. As Barbara Hanawalt and Michael Kobiak explain, the concept of the local was in flux and our understanding of it is impacted by "shifting uses of space and the lack of stability of concepts of space in the Middle Ages" (xvi). However, the relational dynamic of local to global provides a means to understanding formulations of power during this period (Hanawalt and Kobiak xvi). At the time of

*Aedward's* production, Westminster's relationship to Rome granted the church special privileges and the means for elevating the authority and significance of the site. As Binski reminds us, *Aedward's* representation Westminster's significance reflects the special status the abbey gained from Rome in 1222, in which the "papal judges delegate decided that Westminster Abbey should be affiliated directly with Rome, so freeing it from the jurisdiction of the Bishop of London... [effectively making it] exempt from episcopal control"(10). This status not only granted Westminster's monks special privileges, but also affirmed the abbey's independence as a self-governing religious institution exempt from episcopal taxation. When Matthew Paris represents Westminster as also under the control of Edward, two spheres of power converge to signify an authority over the prenational space of England.

In *Aedward*, the promotion of St. Edward the Confessor and Westminster against more traditional canonical figures of Rome further serves the interest of specifically English institutions.<sup>60</sup> This is especially evident in the poem's representation of St. Peter, a figure who is synonymous with Rome. As the founder of organized Christianity and the Church's first pope, St. Peter is, as Binski notes, firmly "linked to the idea of institutional power and the conferral of the power" (63). In *Aedward*, the king's relationship to St. Peter is undoubtedly beneficial and representative of power. The text describes the saint as Edward's protector and "dugun d'Engleterre" [England's friend]. According to Edina Bozoky, the depiction of this relationship with Rome is motivated by "the legitimation and the confirmation of the abbey's privileges and the strengthening of the link between Westminster and the kingdom" (Bozoky 175-76). However, the depiction of the relationship of England to

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<sup>60</sup> For more on the history and process of Edward the Confessor's canonization, see Bozoky's "Sanctity and Canonization of Edward the Confessor."

Rome, as figured through Edward and Peter is not as straightforward as it appears. *Aedward* also includes a more nuanced understanding of their power dynamics through the elevation of Edward over Peter. As we have seen previously through *Aedward*'s inclusion of Ghillie Michael, global powers are not as effective as their local counterparts. While *Aedward*'s use of Peter and Rome strengthens the institutional claims of Westminster Abbey and Edward's sovereignty, the text also suggests that England's authority may even surpass Rome's. In the scene that opened this chapter, Edward's beneficiary, Ghillie Michael, explains how St. Peter himself had promised him health but failed to deliver after six pilgrimages to Rome. Only Edward the Confessor, at Westminster is able to heal Ghillie's condition. The expressed failure of global saints and institutions to cure Ghillie privilege Westminster and the space that surrounds it over the Rome. The elevation of England's authority is even reflected in *Aedward*'s description of Westminster's very architecture, as we are told the church faces West, or "vers occident," away from Rome in a gesture that emphasizes the England's independence from Christianity's global center (2064). *Aedward*'s inclusion of this architectural detail makes literal England's—and Henry III's—political ambitions in fashioning Westminster Abbey as an institutional center of power and authority. *Aedward*'s repeated comparison of Westminster with Rome not only elevates the geopolitical status of England but also functions to fix power to space. To be clear, I suggest *Aedward* compares England with Rome, not to challenge or critique it, but rather to liken England's emerging prenational collectivity with the established institutional weight implied by Rome.

*Aedward*'s focus on the king's relationship to Westminster and its ability to intervene in narratives of the past offers a vision of English future that is far less damning than that

found in *Vita Edwardi*'s. Near the Latin text's close, Anonymous grieves the obliteration of English identity and authority after Edward's reign, bemoaning:

Vi tibi est Anglia que olim sancta prole fulsisti angelica, sed nunc pro peccatis ualde gemis anxia. Naturalem regem tuum perdidisti et alienigene bello cum ingenti tuorum sanguine fuso succubuisto (ii.7, 108)

[Woe is to you England, you who once shone bright with holy angelic progeny, but not with anxious expectation groan exceedingly for your sins. You have lost your native king and suffered defeat, with much spilling of the blood of many of your men, in a war against the foreigner. (ii.7, 109).

By introducing his lamentation with two questions, the narrator communicates the uncertainty of England's future after the Norman Conquest. In this moment, *Vita Edwardi* also links Edward with the fate of England; not only is Edward presented as the "native king" but the loss of Edward is connected to the loss of the concept of England itself, which has "suffered defeat" under the Normans. In contrast, *Aedward* avoids the question of how England fares after said conquest, by obscuring the event all together. However, the poem's attempt to ignore the Norman Conquest appears to be betrayed by its composition in the Anglo-Norman vernacular. However, *Aedward*'s language appears in the context of an imagined history of continuity and thereby frames the language as an insignificant aspect of English history. This concealment allows the poem to be liberated from historical time and the narratives that victimize England. Instead, what remains is a concept of England, determinedly rooted in place and untethered to the past and events that threaten to break or alter a concept of English continuity, however real or imagined.

Just as *Aedward*'s verse presents the king's withdrawal from time and his intense connection to space, the composition of the text's manuscript page further echoes this relationship. However, before considering the relationship between *Aedward*'s content and the manuscript's form, it's worth considering how earlier narratives of Edward the Confessor play with chronology and visualization. In a section of the Bayeux Tapestry, scenes featuring Edward appear out of order. While depicting the events preceding the Norman Conquest, the tapestry presents Edward the Confessor as alive, dead, and then alive again. The confusing arrangement of these three scenes are worth describing in more detail: first, an alive Edward receives Harold Godwinson from his throne; in the second scene, a funeral procession carries Edward's corpse to be enshrined at Westminster Abbey; third, King Edward—now very much alive—addresses his wife, Edith, and Harold from his bed. Many scholars have already noted this break in chronology and considered the causes of its troubling sequencing. Francis Wormald, for instance, speculates that this deviation in an otherwise continuous narrative may be a product of artist error, specifically an oversight while copying (26). Mistake or not, this moment is striking for its defiant disruption to the tapestry's chronology. In addressing this sequence, Paul Binski best observes that although we may never be certain of the reasons for this representation, we can be sure that "what the scene does, above all, is establish a clear narrative break" (90). While the tapestry's sequencing of Edward's life and death may be read as mistake or trivial to the piece's overall narrative, I reference this scene because it echoes the *Aedward*'s representation of the king and his relationship to time. Like *Aedward*, the tapestry foregrounds Edward's status as saint and his connection with divine time. In this context, the Bayeux Tapestry's revival of a previously deceased Edward, is not inconsistent



or errant. Rather, such sequencing draws attention to the way in which a saint life does not map neatly onto teleology of history.

*Aedward's* first Latin predecessor, *Vita Edwardi* also plays with the representation of time through its use of form. For instance, the structure of *Vita Ædwardi* is divided in two independent sections: Book I, provides a history of the king and excludes mention of Edward's saintly qualities, other than his royally-endowed divine providence; Book II, details Edward's religious life and includes the king's miracles and prophesy. The dual structure in which Book I follows Book II, creates narratives which Edward dies at the end of Book I and is revived as a living figure once again in Book II. At the close of Book I, we are told

...idem deo carus rex Ædwardus ex contracta animi egritudine languescens obit quidem mundo, sed feliciter assumptus est uicturus cum deo (i.7,82).

[...King Edward, the beloved of God, languishing from the mental illness he had contracted, died indeed to the world, but was joyfully taken up to heaven to live with God (i.7, 83)]

Despite the Edward's "worldly" death at the end the first book, the king is resuscitated in Book II. After the author's invocation to his muse, we are provide with accounts of Edward's prophecy and his performance healing miracles. While *Vita Aedwardi* plays with Edward's mortality and his divine relationship to time, the Latin text's representation of time pales in comparison to *Aedward's* visualization of the text's interplay of time and space. I argue that the manuscript pages that house *Aedward* make literal the text's interest in ahistorical representation and place through its use of mise-en-page. While *Aedward's* verse offers a vita that moves through beginning, middle, and end, the manuscript's images and rubrics allows

for multiple, simultaneous narratives. As Jocelyn Wogan Browne and Thelma S. Fenster have already noted, *Aedward's* rubrics, images, and verse offer three separate narratives that may be read alongside one another or one their own. While we can only speculate about the practice of reading these distinct elements facilitated, the form certainly invites us to consider creative ways of approaching *Aedward*. Wogan-Brown and Fenster explain such reading possibilities below:

In a sense, by choosing those aspects of an episode to be featured pictorially, Paris provides a shorthand record of elements in the *Estoire's* stories he views as key. The result is that each of these three components [images, rubric, and verse] can be read sequentially and independently of one another, or each can be read in tandem with one or both of the others. Each may highlight or tell slightly different versions of the Edward narrative, and the process of linear reading can be stopped at will in order to consult any other major element of layout; each may become a commentary or supplement to whichever narrative is in the process of being followed through. Reading may thus proceed in linear or non-linear fashion, in one, two, or three dimensions. (28)

Accordingly, *Aedward's* manuscript page provides three separate narratives. While Wogan-Browne and Fenster suggest that *Aedward's* form allows for reading in one, two, or three dimensions, I take this further to suggest that the text can also be read in a fourth dimension—namely one that accounts for space and the manuscript page itself. By recording events through multiple registers that share the same physical space, *Aedward's* layout reflects the narrative goals of *Aedward's* verse: to provide a continuity of place beyond

history. In other words, the visual composition of *Aedward* further articulates the text's interest in an English identity unencumbered by a messy history of conquest.

To demonstrate how the layout of MS E.e.3.59's pages reflects this narrative goal, I use folio 3v, as an example. Folio 3v (hereafter f.3v) is the first folio of *Aedward* that contains all three narrative elements of verse, rubric, and illustration and occurs on the second page of the verse life. The mise-en-page of f.3v, contains a framed illumination that spans the first quarter of the page. Three columns of text are placed beneath this image; the first six lines of the center column contain a rubric, whose red color and centered alignment signals its separation from the surrounding verse. The page's remaining text—the vita's verse—appears in black ink and spans the remaining columns. This early page not only distinguishes the three elements of image, rubric, and text for the reader, but also demonstrates how each element is part of a separate narrative that abbreviates or expands *Aedward* by providing three choices for reading the text. In this way, the very format of f.3v may be read as representative of MS E.e.3.59, as the majority of the manuscript follows a similar format. For instance, just as folio 3v contains a framed image at the page's head, so, too, does each remaining folio of *Aedward* with the exception of one: *Aedward*'s opening page, folio 3r. Further, f.3v's use and placement of its rubrics, which provide a summary of the adjacent verse's main action, mirror their appearance on subsequent folios of *Aedward*.<sup>61</sup> And, finally, 3v's use of columns for dividing the vita's verse also occurs on the previous and following folios, with the exception of the final folio, 36r, which contains only two columns. The details of folio 3v and its representative relationship to the remaining pages of MS E.e.3.59 demonstrate the text's consistency of form. Such uniformity, in which each page

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<sup>61</sup> And, in fact, many folios from MS E.e.3.59 contain two rubrics and 18r and 28r each contain three separate rubrics.

offers three separate narrative registers—image, rubric, and verse—that unfold at different rates within the shared space of the page, reflects *Aedward*'s concern for non-temporal representation of events occurring within a local space. Just as Matthew Paris's vita presents a protagonist withdrawn from historical time and tethered to the local space, MS E.e.3.59's use of simultaneous narratives ignores a linear teleology and instead stresses the concurrent unfolding of events within the shared space of the manuscript page.

The playful relationship between MS E.e.3.59's form and content can be seen in the interplay of folio 3v's narratives. Take, for instance, the image that heads f. 3v, a framed illumination of three of Edward the Confessor's ancestors. From left to right the image contains the following portraits: King Alfred, the founder of Edward's royal line; Edward's grandfather, king Edgar; Edward's father, Ethelred II. The rubric centered beneath this image, the first rubric of *Aedward*, occupies the first six lines of the middle column, and echoes the image's content, stating: "Here are depicted in portraits the saintly kings whose fame endures who were earthly kings and now celestial kings. From their lineage came Edward, about whom this book has been written" (53). The verse lines that border f. 3v's rubric, lines 113-156 relay Edward's royal lineage and match the content of the accompanying image and rubric. More specifically, the verse includes the following descriptions: that Edward was the tenth king descended from Alfred; how Edgar's marriage granted him an alliance with Richard of Normandy; that Ethelred married Emma. The f.3v's inclusion of three separate narratives allows the text to be read in multiple ways. The reader can focus on an single register or move freely from one to another and without concern for linearity. Thus, the text's form mirrors its content. Each page of MS E.e.3.59 relays the events of *Aedward* in a way that resists linear experience. Rather, by allowing simultaneous

narratives to coexist in the same physical space, the mise-en-page of f. 3v and MS E.e.3.59 as whole, allows *Aedward's* vita to sidestep historical time while stressing space. In this way, I argue that the reading of page's composition informs our reading of the text itself; the existence of separate narrative registers foreclose any single linear account or respect for the chronology of historical time.

Matthew Paris's twelfth century vita, *L'Estoire de seint Aedward le rei*, offers an understanding of local power that is defined by its center. The poem figures the local as a formulation of sovereign space and power that is able to expand in size to accommodate the goals of those who exercise power over it. Further, *Aedward's* depiction of Edward's sanctity, virginity, and performance of miracles demonstrates that text's use of the local reflects royal interests, specifically the goals of royal historiography under Henry III. By removing Edward the Confessor from modes of historical time, *Aedward* obscures the king's historical context and his participation in an inheritance crisis that led to the Norman Conquest. Instead, the text anchors Edward's identity to the physical space of Westminster and the English identity it represents. *Aedward's* representation of royal authority is rooted in space that not only mirrors Henry III's administrative project, but also provides the king with a continuous lineage to England. In this way, Henry's Norman ancestry is obscured while his devotion to Edward, the Anglo-Saxon king and holy figure, creates a imagined inheritance to an disturbed English history. Thus, by removing Edward—and the England identity he represents—from historical time, *Aedward* paradoxically creates a political continuity for Henry III.

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