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Three Languages, One Nation: Trilingualism and National Identity in England, From the Mid-Twelfth to the Early Fourteenth Century

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Christopher Anderson
November 12, 2015
Three Languages, One Nation
*Trilingualism and National Identity in England, From the Mid-Twelfth to the Early Fourteenth Century*

A Thesis
Present to
The Faculty of
Western Washington University

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

By
Christopher Anderson
November 2015
Abstract

The present study examines the question of pre-modern national identity and its association with language in medieval England from the mid-twelfth to early fourteenth century, particularly the use of language to express collective identity. In doing so, the use and meaning associated with the three languages of medieval England (English, French, and Latin) are explored through an interdisciplinary approach, using typical historical sources, while also drawing on primary and secondary source material from literary history. Chapter one looks at the changing and reshaping of English national identity following the Norman Conquest of 1066, focusing on assimilation and identity conflict from the mid-twelfth to the early thirteenth century. It concludes by illustrating the development of a collective English identity, the sense of which shared a commonality presented by writers in all three languages. In this chapter, each language is treated separately so as to examine the specific social, cultural, and political associations with the languages and how they inform on matters of identity formation and change over time. The second chapter focuses on the personal reign of Henry III and the baronial reforms and rebellions of the 1260s. Here, the questions of national identity and the meaning of being an Englishman are examined through primary sources written in all three languages of England. Through this, the chapter highlights a moment in the 1260s that represents the collectiveness of the English nation represented in terms of a shared commonality, primarily through a shared history, culture, and customs, but also through their shared English language. The third and final chapter explores changes to English national identity present in the three languages in the reign of Edward I (r. 1272-1307). During his reign, French and Latin writers increasingly expressed their English national identity through the “otherness” of the peoples that surrounded them: most important for this study the French, Welsh, and Scots. In comparison, English vernacular writers began to frame their own sense of English national identity by way of social division, represented by status and education. What is termed the “divided community” is examined through the reading of French and Latin chronicles that speak to the separation of the English people through imperialist conquests as the hallmark of national identity, and English vernacular sources which illustrate an internal separateness, one that is not new, but different from the division present after the Norman Conquest. Overall, the study highlights the discrepant experience of English national identity during the period and how the choice of using one language over the other two implied and actively emphasized different senses of English identity.
Acknowledgements

Every scholar accumulates a significant amount of indebtedness to those who have shaped, guided, and acted as inspiration for their work. This work, itself, is no exception, but it also warrants a particularly lengthy list of acknowledgements considering the amount of time I spent on this project and the journey I went through for its completion. Over the course of my research and writing I moved across the country, was given a life-changing medical diagnosis that significant inhibited my ability to work for months at a time, and tested the resolve and dedication of not only myself, but those who I relied on most directly for support and guidance.

Firstly, I would like to extend my most sincere gratitude to my thesis advisor, Dr. Peter Diehl, who perhaps has endured the worst of it with me. Not only did he prove to be an exceptional advisor and a much needed guide through the process, but also a great friend. Despite all of the setbacks we faced, his support was unwavering, and his dedication to my future as an academic proved to be absolute. From visiting me in the hospital, working with me from a distance, and spending countless hours on the phone discussing the ins and outs of my interests and the shape of the present work, Dr. Diehl exhibits an interest and sincerity with his students that is truly steadfast and enduring. The two members of my thesis committee also deserve recognition, not only for their help, but certainly for their patience. Dr. Sean Murphy served as a critical but necessary voice that challenged my conceptions and pushed me to engage with my work more deeply and thoughtfully. My only regret is that we could not have worked together more closely. Likewise, Dr. Amanda Eurich’s encouragement and support was always needed and much appreciated during the most trying aspect of my medical treatment. Several members of the faculty at Western Washington University also contributed to both the direction and completion of this thesis. I would like to thank the chair of the History Department Dr. Kevin Leonard, Dr. Steven Garfinkle, Dr. Roger Thompson and Dr. Johann Neem. For his years of help and guidance, I thank Dr. Leonard Helfgott who will continue to be an inspiration.

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There is an infinite amount of thanks. Clearly, brevity is not my forte, but I hope it suffices as I draw this to a conclusion to extend my most profound and sincere thanks to the countless individuals who have influenced and support me over the last six years. You all know who you are and have my undying love and appreciation.
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Standing before a group of clerics assembled at the king’s pleasure, Edward I of England described the intentions of Philip IV of France to invade England. The year was 1295 and England was once again interlocked with the kingdom of France over a centuries old dispute concerning the sovereignty of Gascony. Edward claimed that the French king planned not only to invade England, a reality that had been looming for many people after repeated French raids along the coast, but to destroy the English people and “eradicate utterly the English tongue.”

While we know that the French had indeed been raiding along the southern coast of England, there is no indication that Philip truly intended to invade. The threat of an invasion, especially an invasion by the French, was one that was taken seriously, not only because of the traumatic collective memory of 1066, but of the invited invasion of the French prince during the baronial struggles in the final years of King John’s reign in the early thirteenth century. Edward certainly used this existing fear to his advantage in what was most likely a very well-crafted piece of propaganda to galvanize the leading magnates in his kingdom to grant him further funds to forcefully take back his rights of sovereignty of Gascony. More importantly, though, was the choice to equate the destruction of the English people with the demise of the English language. Why include the reference to the destruction of the English language at all? Despite its loss of prestige after the Conquest of 1066, the English language continued to be a prominent characteristic of English national identity. Indeed, by the late thirteenth century, the vernacular

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was once again becoming a popular literary language, and its use was closely connected with the expression of Englishness.² Discussing the connection between language and national identity, however, is not without its controversy, be it in a pre-modern or modern context.

The study of national identity, and by extension nationalism, has been subject to a profound amount of historical revision following the First World War where, to the betterment of our endeavor, the connotations of the ethnic and racial purity of nations have been abandoned. The scholarship concerned with national identity and nationalism following the end of the war in Europe concentrated on dismantling the nationalist arguments by those labeled perennialists, writers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries who viewed nations as inherent and a constant throughout history, and used collective identities of antiquity and the Middle Ages as justification for the modern equivalent.³ Published in 1941, V.H. Galbraith’s work on nationality and language in medieval England dismisses ideas of superseding national identity in preference to regional identity (also referred to as provincialism), making the case that, if asked, a medieval person would relate their identity to the likes of “Normandy, Mercia…rather than England.”⁴ With this, he suggests that competing loyalties - such as the universal Church and Latin as the universal language, along with feudal ties – would have limited the penetration and adherence to

² This point will be discussed more fully in chapter three. Here, I am referring to the proliferation of Middle English pastoral and secular literature following the decree of the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, promulgating the use of the vernacular for the instruction of the clergy and the laity. For examples, see The Southern Version of Cursor Mundi, volume I, ed. Sarah M. Horrall (Ottawa: The University of Ottawa Press, 1978); Robert Mannyng, Handlyng Synne, ed. Idelle Sullens (Binghamton, NY: State University of New York, 1983); Old and Middle English: An Anthology, ed. Elaine Treharne (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000).


a larger participation in national sentiment. Despite this, in his eyes some type of national consciousness, if not identity, did exist in medieval England, though he is careful not to associate it with a sustained movement of nationalism stretching from the Middle Ages to the present. While accepting that vernacular language in England became a part of the characteristics of national identity, he carefully points out that the association does not stretch back in a static tradition, but was instead limited and occurred infrequently until the fifteenth century. Galbraith is very careful in his examination of the connection between language and national identity, repeatedly adding the caution that, “the danger is greatest for those who, rightly conscious of a national sentiment in early times, look for supporting evidence in the growth of the vernacular tongues.”

While accepting that notions of national sentiment existed in England during the medieval period, Galbraith’s work is truly a reflection of the worries of his time. An aspect of the perennialist argument was focused specifically on a cultural collective identity, which they believe was tied to a shared cultural heritage, and often associated with the rise of vernacular tongues. This brand of nationalism developed out of nineteenth-century German Romanticism which laid the groundwork for later theories linking race and nationhood together, resulting in theories of racial superiority that was at the heart of nationalist movements in the 1930s.

Galbraith’s argument effectively walks an academic tightrope where he is not willing to dismiss notions of national identity completely, but is cautious of the modern reaction to earlier scholarship justifying nationalism based on continuity and assumptions that were tenuous at best.

While Galbraith attempted to find some semblance of middle ground in his study, negotiating the reality of medieval national identity while disarming the perennialist position, the

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5 Galbraith, 127.

modernist position in the post-war period moved steadily away from any notions of medieval national identity. As noted by Barnaby Keeney in 1947, “the modern reaction against the assumptions of nineteenth century scholarship has undermined the belief in the existence of any sort of nationalism in the Middle Ages.” This reaction was motivated by the perceived need to move beyond nationalistic histories in the face of the atrocities of two world wars that were seen as the product of nationalism, necessitating the need to disengage from any notions that the nationalism of the present was linked to national identities of the past. By the 1960s nationalism was firmly positioned as a “doctrine invented in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century,” so asserted Elie Kedourie. Scholarship in recent decades has continued to build Kedourie’s ideas, with the most influential scholars not only asserting that nationalism is a product of modernity, but that the very idea of the nation itself should be confined to the modern era.

Among them, Ernest Gellner claims – an often quoted remark – that “nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not already exist,” stamping out any possibility of national consciousness until the eighteenth century. Gellner furthered emphasized his point in his 1983 monograph *Nations and Nationalism* by stating that it “is nationalism which engenders nations.” Eric Hobsbawn agrees with Gellner, at

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least on the basic tenets of nations being a modern invention. He suggests that “nations do not make state and nationalism, but the other way around,” which, again, firmly places nations in the modern era, intrinsically tied to eighteenth century programs of nationalism.\textsuperscript{11} Furthermore, Hobsbawn emphasizes that nations and nationalism are fundamentally tied to the modern nation-state, what he describes as the territorial entity seen only in recent history, and that it is “pointless to discuss the subject in pre-1780 terms.”\textsuperscript{12} But where Gellner sees that manifestation of nations as a product of the transition from an agrarian to industrial society where mass literacy and public education systems encourage nationalism, Hobsbawn sees nations as a construct resulting from invented traditions, such as an invented national history and mythology, used as a mean of social control by the ruling class.\textsuperscript{13} For John Breuilly, national identity and nationalism are purely modern and are a result of political movements as a means for the elite to gain control over the lower classes of society.\textsuperscript{14} In his model, culture and ideology are secondary at best, though he tends to be at odds with his own definition, at times relying on cultural and ideological examples to round out his argument in places where a solely political model is weak. His understanding of history is one that is supported by the assumption that all relationships are built on the premise of power, and it is always polarized between the elite and everyone else. Benedict Anderson, perhaps the most influential of contemporary theorists on national identity and nationalism, also agrees with the modernity of nations and nationalism, though he has forged his own highly regarded path. Instead of viewing nations as an invention or construct, Anderson has


\textsuperscript{12} Hastings, 10.


coined the phrase “imagined community” which suggests that nations emerged through popular imagination associated with the rise of print-capitalism (also a term coined by Anderson) in place of receding institutions such as the Church and dynastic realms. Like Gellner, Anderson sees the rise of print-capital and mass literacy, notably through the publication of newspapers and books, as the driving force for the creation of an imagined political community in the eighteenth century: one that focused more on a horizontal movement within a growing working class then the vertical social order associated with pre-modern societies.

While Gellner, Hobsbawn, and Anderson deviate from what could be called the standard model of modern nations and nationalism, the fundamental point that nations are inherently modern has been the subject of a growing body of scholarship challenging assumptions made about the pre-modern world. For the pre-modernist, a significant problem lies in what Adrian Hastings describes modernists as being “weak on history,” meaning that their assumptions of the pre-modern world either lack substantiation overall or rely on antiquated scholarship that has been subject to extensive revision. The argument for weakness on history is not new, but one that stretches back to the post-war period of the 1940s. To look at Barnaby Keeney again, he remarked in 1947 that assumptions made by modernist in regards to universalism and localism were contradictory, pointing out that these assumptions were simply not true if one were to look at England at the turn of the fourteenth century. The problem persists, as can be seen in


16 Hastings, 2. There is certainly no love lost in how Hastings feels about Hobsbawn, who is one of the prominent historian on national identity and nationalism. In Hasting’s eyes, a historian should not be so faulty and careless about his research.

17 Keeney, 534-536. It is important to note Keeney’s disdain towards nationalism, much like Galbraith. Again, this was a product of the horrors witnessed by two world wars that were dominated by nationalist ideology, something that scholars, both pre-modern and modern, were trying to move away from.
modernists' understanding of medieval relationships and loyalties. Susan Reynolds sees a fault in modernist assumptions about the vertical nature of medieval relationships and loyalties, instead arguing for one that worked more horizontally between peoples and institutions. In essence, Reynolds points to the overriding adherence to feudal relationships and loyalties as the primary fault of the modernists reading of the medieval world. Her analysis could not be more on point; a quick look at the material examined by Anderson for his reconstruction of medieval society in *Imagined Communities* illustrates a reliance on Marc Bloch’s *Feudal Society* and his broad definition of feudalism alone: scholarship that was subject to revision at the time of *Imagined Communities’* composition.

John Breuilly, a modernist who contributed a chapter of an anthology aimed at building dialogue between pre-modernists and modernists, stands as an additional example of weak history in his defense of the modernist position. To demonstrate that nations are indeed a modern phenomenon, Breuilly attempts to deconstruct the argument made by several medievalists that England from at least the time of Bede but certainly by the reign of Alfred the Great constituted a nation. Before proceeding, he notes that he is not “competent to debate with

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20 John Breuilly, “Changes in the Political Uses of the Nation: Continuity or Discontinuity?” in *Power and the Nation in European History*, ed. Len Scales and Oliver Zimmer, 67-101 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). Another study that critiques the pre-modern position is: Krishan Kumar, *The Making of English National Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). I did not include Kumar’s work in my historiography primarily for the sake of brevity, but also because Breuilly’s argument and conclusion reflects Kumar’s almost exactly. Where they differ is that Breuilly is open to the idea of a limited proto-national identity restricted in the elite in the fourteenth century, whereas Kumar argues that a claim for national consciousness could be made for fourteenth century England, but that national identity is indeed a modern phenomenon.
specialists who have researched difficult sources, textual and other, to construct a perennialist argument,” though he believes that since medievalists have suggested that national identity in the pre-modern world might have implications for our understanding of modern national identity, Breuilly feels confident he can refute such claims. 21 What follows is at best a soft reading of the historiography over the past several decades dealing with medieval nations, with an even weaker assessment of the primary source material available. He even stated in an explanatory footnote on his reading of assimilation after the Norman Conquest and what it meant to be English in the early twelfth century that he had not had time to consult one of the more important monographs published on the topic, one which would have undermined much of his argument. 22 What becomes apparent in Breuilly’s chapter is his relentless desire for the medieval world to fit neatly in a modernist model for any arguments for pre-modern nations to be taken seriously. He demands “good, direct evidence,” though he need not bother take the time to truly review the evidence that has already been presented. On one hand my assessment of Breuilly may seem a bit unfair, especially considering that, by his own admission, he is not a specialist: I argue that his criticism warrants my highly critical treatment of his chapter because his argument is predicated on the reading of evidence, which, in truth, he does not do.

Breuilly’s chapter demonstrates what Andrea Ruddick has described as the impasse that exists between pre-modernists and modernists regarding nations, national identity, and nationalism. 23 One way to address this has been to attempt to clearly define what a nation is in order to establish a criterion that can be used to judge when nations arose. Anthony Smith has

21 Breuilly, “Changes in the Political Uses of the Nation,” 70.


23 Ruddick, 2.
attempted to do just that, but the results ended in a definition that favored modernist conditions and has wholly been viewed as unacceptable by pre-modernists.\textsuperscript{24} Another approach has been to create a term that applies to only pre-modern nations, an endeavor also taken up by Anthony Smith. Smith settled on the term \textit{ethnie}, one which can be attributed to sentiments of ‘nation’ seen “in collective cultural units…of the previous era.”\textsuperscript{25} Indeed, scholars of the early Middle Ages have gravitated around “ethnicities” as an appropriate term for pre-modern collectivities, particularly when looking at peoples in motion after the “collapse” of the Western Roman Empire, as precursors in some cases to the centralizing polities of the later Middle Ages.\textsuperscript{26} Susan Reynolds coined the phrase “regnal solidarity” with similar hopes, though Reynold’s term has not received widespread adoption.\textsuperscript{27} One further consideration that underlines the impasse between pre-modernists and modernists are the conditions and restrictions imposed by modernist’s understanding of the pre-modern world; there is a desire to try to fit the pre-modern world into modern units of analysis, which clearly has not worked. Their position of nations as inherently modern does not allow in any way for the existence of pre-modern nations, perhaps making the entire debate dead on arrival. Breuilly’s chapter truly emphasizes the notion that modernists will not be swayed, and the continuing growth in the study of nations by pre-

\textsuperscript{24} Although Smith attempts such a feat in numerous publications, the most relevant to my discussion can be found in: Anthony Smith, “National Identities: Modern and Medieval?”, 24-29. Also see; Smith, \textit{The Ethnic Origins of Nations}, 6-18; Smith, \textit{Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History}, 5-20.


\textsuperscript{27} See Reynolds, \textit{Kingdoms and Communities}, esp. ch. 8.
modernists illustrates an equally clear declaration that they will not be either. Where do we go from here? Do we agree to disagree? The answer is both yes and no.

As R.R. Davies notes in his four-part work on the peoples of Britain and Ireland, we may need to concede that we are talking about different things. While there are undoubtedly parallels to be drawn between notions of national identity in the pre-modern and modern worlds that should not be the focus of our inquiry. Instead of drawing from modern models of nations we should be concerned primarily with the examination of how people in the pre-modern world saw themselves as collective entities and how they defined their identity based on their understanding of the nation. That is not to say that modern models have not been helpful in our attempts to reconstruct the medieval nation in particular. Indeed, several medievalists have drawn on Benedict Anderson’s idea of the “imagined political community,” especially because of how the theory shifts the discussion from race to ethnicity, and allows for an examination of medieval nations without any implications that the authors themselves are adherent to a nationalist ideology. Anderson’s idea of an “imagined community” for the purposes of defining national identity is not one that was groundbreaking for medievalist. As Andrea Ruddick notes, Susan Reynolds stated as early as 1984 that medieval nations should not be judged just on institutions, but also as “a product of its members belief that it exists.” Such scholarship has focused on the cultural and ideological components of nation identity, looking at shared history,

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30 Ruddick, 10; Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities*, 253.
mythology, and language, while also taking an interdisciplinary approach, often incorporating medieval literature into their analysis, and ranging widely chronologically. Earlier studies include Alfred Smyth’s examination of the emergence of English identity in the eighth century, which focuses on elements of a shared collective identity based on self-awareness and common culture, one that was not bound to modern definitions of the nation based on political institutions. Kathy Lavezzo’s work stands out for its exceptional scholarship and creative use of geography and maps as a means of gauging national identity in medieval England, while also incorporating elements of literature and community.

Other works have focused more fully on the components of language and literature, such as Elaine Treharne’s study of status and use of vernacular English before and after the Norman Conquest. Part of her argument, which has done much to inform the present study, strikes at the modernist assumption that the superiority of Latin as a universal language suppressed vernacular languages to the point that no source of collective identity could be found in them, while also rejecting the conventional wisdom that English died out as a literary language in the post-Conquest period. Similarly, Thorlac Turville-Petre discusses the strong association of the English vernacular with the growing body of vernacular writing starting at the end of the thirteenth century. He too deconstructs the modernist position while also going further to assert that language was not a barrier in the expression of national identity, but rather that one could


express Englishness in any of the three languages of medieval England, a point that he did not elaborate on, but the present study will aim to do so. The fourth and final publication in R.R. Davies’ series on the peoples of Britain and Ireland takes a much more diffused look at language, where in part it looks at the linguistic community (one argued for by Treharne) that was associated with the English vernacular, going further to illustrate the ways in which it was used to demonstrate self-awareness and to cast foreigners as others.

Alongside the above works are those that focus on the political institutions of medieval England as demonstrative of a medieval nation beginning to resemble a nation-state. While arguments exist for continuing political institutions from the time of Alfred the Great through the Norman Conquest, a bulk of the scholarship positioning a medieval nation-state does so in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Although Robin Frame’s study focuses on the political development of the British Isles from 1100 to 1400, he sees the origins of the English nation-state rooted in the expansion of the power of the kings of Wessex starting in the ninth and tenth centuries. He places more emphasis, though, on the developments that took place after the Norman Conquest, especially on the assimilation that took place over the proceeding one hundred and fifty years, seen both in terms of political development and overall collective identity. John Gillingham also associates the new sense of Englishness that emerged out of the

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34 Thorlac Turville-Petre, *England the Nation: Language, Literature, and National Identity, 1290-1340* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996). Turville-Petre looks at the expression of Englishness in Latin and French in his first chapter briefly, but discusses as a prelude to the growth of vernacular writing taking place during the thirteenth century. He again looks at the three languages in his final chapter, looking at representations of Trilingualism in medieval manuscripts. I will discuss further below how Turville-Petre’s work both informed my own and how my inquiry is a departure of his ideas.


assimilation of the Normans, especially continuity in pre-Conquest law and institutions, as the impetus for the emergence of political institutions that constitute a nation. Gillingham focuses, though, primarily on the twelfth century and the growth in royal government under Henry II. Like Frame, Scott Waugh sees the foundations of the English political nation in the Anglo-Saxon past, but attributes more of the development of institutions and practices to the post-Conquest kings who built upon those developed by the pre-Conquest monarchs. Furthermore, he sees the actual emergence of the political nation coming out of the reforms during the reign of Henry III that saw the development of Parliament as a more regular institution, and the further solidification under the three Edwards. The most striking thing about these three studies, in light of the current discussion, is that none of them address the modernist position, but instead evaluate the medieval nation on the merits of the evidence, instead of constricting their analysis based on modern interpretations of nations.

Many works can be seen as a hybrid of the two types described above: they look at medieval national identity and the medieval nation both in terms of cultural and ideological components, as well as political institutions. With that, they also vary in whether and how they handle the modernist position on national identity in the pre-modern world. A majority of the works considered here discuss national identity within the wider context of their study. M.T. Clanchy, for example, dedicates a chapter to national identity starting with the personal reign of Henry III to the Second Barons’ War. In it he provides broad overview of the most contentious issues relating to the modernist case, although he does not directly engage with their arguments;


it would be a surprise, though, if he did not structure the chapter to combat modernist assumptions considering that it focused on three of the prime reasons modernist disregard the medieval nation: the universal Church, language, and political institutions. Hugh Thomas’ study of the combativeness and subsequent assimilation of English and Norman identities also deals with questions of political institutions and culture and ideology without directly engaging the modernist position.\(^41\) His work stands out, though, among those considered here because it provides a comprehensive examination of the deconstruction and emergence of a new national identity instead of a cursory survey. Similarly, Michael Prestwich devotes part of his final chapter in his study of Plantagenet England with a large survey of the topic, focusing on Englishness and how it manifested during the course of the thirteenth to the mid-fourteenth century.\(^42\) Prestwich also engages with the modernist argument in a comparable fashion to Clanchy, not actively arguing against the modernist position, but instead evaluating the evidence for English national identity based on an analysis of how people conceived Englishness in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. National identity is a theme that is addressed throughout David Carpenter’s contribution to the Penguin History of Britain, which examines the concept from multiple angles for the period of 1066-1284.\(^43\) Like Clanchy and Prestwich, Carpenter does not engage modernists directly, but his work is unique for its continued reinforcement of the existence of English national identity from the pre-Conquest period into the reign of Edward I.


Only a handful of works have been published that concentrate on the cultural, ideological, and political aspects of the medieval nation. One notable example is David Matthew’s study of documentary poetics, where he explores the act of writing to the king by men starting in the thirteenth century, emboldened by the emergence of the common petition and their perceived rights through the growth of Parliament as a representative body of the community of the realm. Matthew also goes to great lengths to not only engage in the modernist arguments, but to refute them throughout the body of the text. Andrea Ruddick takes a very similar approach, providing an ample historiography outlining the modernist position and addressing her intent to refute it in her study, which looks at the cultural and ideological underpinnings of English identity and how it manifested in political cultural focusing primarily on the reign of Edward III. David Green likewise looks at national identity in both its cultural and political units, where he aims to contextualize the understanding “of the construction of national identities in England, France, and the British Isles,” resulting from the Hundred Years War.

While Ruddick’s and Green’s works fall outside of the scope of the present study, they are important to note because they represent the few works of history -as opposed to works primarily focusing on language, linguistics, and literary criticism- which are focused solely on the question of Englishness and identity. Works like David Matthew’s *Writing to the King*

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represent the best of both worlds: a combination truly worthy of the interdisciplinary label of medieval studies. Such works, however, are few and far between. An impressive quantity of works look at the question of the English nation in the mid-fourteenth century, looking at both cultural and ideological components and the construction of the nation-state. Many of the historical studies focus on the Hundred Years War as the point of genesis for the medieval nation-state in both England and France. Much of the work done on language and literature uses the mid-fourteenth century as a starting point for the growth of the English vernacular, which is not surprising seeing the strong rapid growth in the period and the profoundly prolific sub-genre of Chaucer studies.

This, then, illustrates a gap in scholarship that needs to be addressed, not only because it is widely underrepresented, but also because the processes of the cultural, ideological, and political underpinnings of English national identity began in earnest in the thirteenth century, or so I shall argue below. The present study will take an interdisciplinary approach to examine English national identity from roughly the mid-twelfth century to the end of the reign of Edward I in 1307, looking at both the connection between language and national identity, along with political developments that further fostered its growth. While a comprehensive study is a much


47 See Gerald Harriss, Shaping the Nation: England 1360-1461 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Christopher Allmand, The Hundred Years War: England and France at War c. 1300 – c. 1450 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), esp. 136-150: Allmand looks at the development of the French nation-state over the course of the conflict, while also acknowledging that similar work should be done concerning the English counterpart; Anne Curry, The Hundred Years War (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1993).

needed inclusion to the current historiography, limitations are necessary, especially given the scope of this study: however, the limited chronology selected for this study is meant to begin to address that very gap in current scholarship.

The understanding of national identity, and identity for that matter, which will be presented is one that allows for conflicting and often competing identities in medieval England. This is especially clear in looking at the use of language to express national identity with Latin, French, and English being valid and acceptable mediums to express one’s Englishness. This, in part, targets the modernist position in regards to national identity, and also takes aim at two recent studies that contend that larger collective identities are not compatible with regionalism.49 Furthermore, national identity and expressions of nationalist fervor in medieval England cannot be confined to a program or a movement, but instead as an undercurrent at times while completely on the surface at others. Englishness was defined based on a shared history, a common culture, and a common language, with moments occurring where this collective identity was used and exploited for political gain, be it real or imagined.

With this, each language represented a different community within the larger collective entity of Englishness, expressing discrepant experiences, but all were English, demonstrating further the fluidity of identity in the medieval world. This study will also emphasize the growth in English writing during the thirteenth century and the beginning of its coming to fruition in the early fourteenth century, and the audience associated with it, described as the “lewed” or unlearned in society. This aspect of the study best represents the argument that national identity

49 Tim Machan contends that dialects would have made the transmission of ideas in English nearly impossible during the period in question. See, Tim Machan, English in the Middle Ages (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). Robert Barrett tends towards an understanding of identity where they cannot compete and that superior loyalties inevitably win out over others. See, Robert W. Barrett, Jr., Against all England: Regional Identity and Chesire Writing, 1195-1656 (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009).
was not confined to the elite, as suggested by Breuilly, but was instead notable for those below, and as Reynolds suggests, demonstrates a more horizontal view of medieval society.

These are themes that will be explored throughout this entire work, in which chapter one begins with a discussion of the three languages of medieval England. It will trace the history and use of English, French, and Latin as literary languages beginning roughly in the mid-twelfth century, looking at each language individually in the above order. The affects of the Norman Conquest on the English population will be examined, specifically in the changes it caused in the language communities (as well as the creation of a new one) and to English identity. After the conquest, the use of the English language became a form of passive resistance, a response to the subaltern position of the “dispossessed” English, an identifier that would largely define the English community for the next century and a half. French, naturally so, was identified as the language of the conquerors, one which over the course of the twelfth-century transitioned to the language of the elite that was no longer Norman, but English. Latin, on the other hand, represented somewhat of a middle group, a community occupied by writers of both English and Norman descent. While the vernacular English language continued to demonstrate a distinctive sense of separateness from the nation and its own unique sense of English national identity, the French and Latin communities exhibit the process of assimilation that occurred over the course of the twelfth-century. Overall, each community defined their Englishness through a shared history, culture, and customs, although as I shall show, they manifested in different ways with particular emphases. This chapter, then, illustrates discrepant experience in the English nation, while highlighting the importance of language for each community.

Chapter two examines national identity and language from the beginning of the personal reign of Henry III to the end of the Barons Rebellion in 1265. The xenophobic element of
English national identity will be discussed, looking at the emergence of the issue of the “foreigner” in the personal reign of Henry III, an issue not atypical to this period of English history, but one that had profound affects on how English national identity was constructed. It is during Henry’s reign, and the Barons Rebellion in particular, that the barrier between the English writing community and the rest of the nation begins to dissipate. The process of assimilation witnessed in the French and Latin communities in the previous chapter illustrates the forging of a new nation, one which begins to emerge with the English community, the two becoming almost indistinguishable. Language is again used by each community to express their Englishness, but gradually the English vernacular becomes associated with the entire English nation, all three communities, illustrating a sense of hegemony not notable before in the post-Conquest period. The nation unites under the strain and stress of the Barons Rebellion, demonstrating a sense of homogeneity not previously witnessed in the post-Conquest period, with the English language becoming a source of commonality and collectiveness.

The third chapter complicates the homogenous nation that seemingly emerged out of the Barons Rebellion of the 1260s, by looking at imperial Englishness and the divide community of the early fourteenth-century. While French and Latin sources in this period progressively define their Englishness by comparison with “others” through the imperial ambition and expansion of Edward I, English sources exhibit a division between themselves and the rest of the nation. Indeed, the English community no longer identifies with being “dispossessed,” but rather the vernacular writers express a sense of disparity between themselves and the rest of the nation, one that continues to be primarily associated with language. This distinction, while not entirely new, hinges on the separation between the learned and unlearned, those who are capable in French and Latin, and those who are not. In this way, language continues to be a common unifier for the
English community, but in this instance through a division in status and power. While all three languages continue to be acceptable to convey Englishness, the vernacular language once again takes on a special purpose for a particular audience.
Chapter One

The Dispossessed, the Assimilated, and the Foreigner

*Englishness and Language in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*

In the early thirteenth century, English national identity continued to change and be reshaped. The preceding hundred and fifty years witnessed a radical transition and process of assimilation that affected both the Norman invaders and the dispossessed English, resulting in the framing and reframing of a new people and, indeed, a new nation. While on the surface, at least, the results produced a nation defined by a shared history, culture, and customs, undercurrents of passive resistance on the part of the dispossessed remained a fixture of their identity well into the fourteenth century. One form of passive resistance was the perpetuation of the English vernacular language, a medium for which use became synonymous with a pre-conquest national identity that, while similar to that now assumed by the Normans, retained a distinctive marker for those in the community. This in no way watered down the national identity experienced by the remainder of the English nation, however. One can very easily begin to conflate the discrepant experiences of being English with cultural, or even racial, superiority of one identity over the other: the pure and true Englishness of the dispossessed, compared to the assumed Englishness of the Normans. This was the trap in to which many nineteenth and early twentieth century historians fell.

We must understand that identity was experienced and transmitted differently due to an array of factors, and that multiple loyalties were a reality of the medieval world, where one did not necessarily preclude all others. This is especially important when examining the connection between language and national identity. Each language represented a community, but membership in that community did not limit one’s ability to maintain loyalties to another. A monk, for example, by virtue of his position was a member of the ecclesiastical community, and
with that he could also retain membership in a village community or in a larger collective community like a nation. In terms of language, he could project his membership in each community by using both Latin and French for his work, as was the case with Matthew Paris, who wrote his major works in Latin, while also writing hagiography in French under the patronage of the countess of Arundel.\footnote{Matthew Paris, Monachi Sancti Albani, Chronica Majora, 7 volumes, ed. Henry Richard Luard (London: Longman & Co., 1872-1883); for an English translation see: Matthew Paris, English History: From the Year 1235 to 1273, 3 volumes, trans. J.A. Giles (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1852-1854); Matthew Paris, The History of Saint Edward the King, trans. Thelma S. Fenster and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2008); Matthew Paris, Chronicles of Matthew Paris: Monastic Life in the Thirteenth Century, ed. and trans. Richard Vaughan (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1984).} Were these loyalties and identities ever at odds or create difficulties? Certainly, but such complications were not deterrents in and of themselves.

Writers of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries occupied these spaces and often had themselves conflicting loyalties. This chapter will be divided into three sections, one dedicated to the writing of each of the three languages of post-Conquest England: English, French, and Latin. Throughout the chapter I will use the terms Old English and Middle English interchangeably with the term English, with specific clarifications when necessary; the same is true for Anglo-Norman and French. These terms are distinctions that modern scholars have placed on the languages of medieval England for purposes of categorization and chronological division, and none of the terms held any meaning to the people on which this study is focused. Also, the nature of the evidence requires the consideration of a much longer span of chronology than may seem apparent given that this study is concerned with English national identity and language in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. Indeed, there will be extensive discussion of the Norman Conquest of 1066 and its effects on English identity, the necessity of which will become clearer throughout the chapter. While it is not the purpose of this chapter, or study even, to give a comprehensive history of English national identity from 1066 to 1307, the works and their
authors which will be examined in this chapter continued to be influenced and effected by the Norman Conquest well over a century later. Much of what we can ascertain about one’s Englishness in this period in some way is linked to how the Conquest was remembered. This is crucial for understanding the construction of the identity of the English community in the post-Conquest period, but also vital in understanding the assumption of Englishness through assimilation by the Normans over the course of the twelfth century.

The purpose of this chapter, then, is to illustrate what elements were used to construct English national identity to the early thirteenth century by individually examining each linguistic community. Through this it will be shown that while each community largely identified with an Englishness constructed from a shared history, culture, and customs, the separate languages expressed and emphasized different elements of the community’s unique sense of what it meant to be English.

**English Vernacular Writing to the Early Thirteenth Century**

Our story begins, ever so briefly, with the Norman Conquest of 1066. With the profound amount of change effecting all levels of society after Harold Godwinson’s defeat at Hastings also came dramatic change to the use of language in the realm. Latin soon replaced the English vernacular for official use, notably for writs and charters. The process was gradual at first, with William I continuing to issue charters in English until around 1070, but accelerating thereafter. 51 The vernacular was further displaced by the growth in prominence of French, especially with the “political, economic, and institutional dominance of the Norman elite within England,” in the decades following the Conquest. 52 Despite the relatively low number of Normans in England

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during this period, the popularity of French rapidly grew and quickly outpaced English. Not only did French become a language used alongside Latin for official business, but it also steadily grew as a literary language, further displacing the English vernacular.\textsuperscript{53} While English as a literary medium clearly declined after the Conquest, and continued to do so throughout the twelfth century, the language obviously did not die out. The noted decline among \textit{de luxe} texts has been taken as reason enough to project overall fallout of vernacular writing, with many scholars concluding that if English in the written form was not dead, it was certainly on life-support.\textsuperscript{54} This view, however, downplays the importance of reproductions and compilations of older works, which were heavily produced throughout the eleventh and twelfth centuries.\textsuperscript{55} Indeed, the enterprise of English writing turned into a combined effort of practicality, considering the usefulness of the vernacular for purposes of instruction, while also demonstrating a form of passive resistance to the conquerors, and using language to express identity and membership in the English community.\textsuperscript{56}


\textsuperscript{54} Thomas Hahn’s chapter in \textit{The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature} falls into this group, esp., 62-85. Also see: Watson, “The Politics of Middle English Writing,” esp., 332-333.

\textsuperscript{55} See chart in Treharne, \textit{Living Through Conquest}, 99-101, for a comprehensive list of surviving manuscripts in English between 1050-1100. For surviving manuscripts between 1100 and 1220 see the same volume, 125-126. Treharne has continued to the project online, see: Orietta Da Rold, Takako Kato, Mary Swan, and Elaine Treharne, \textit{The Production and Use of English, 1060 to 1220} (University of Leicester, 2010): http://www.le.ac.uk/ee/em1060to1220/.

\textsuperscript{56} This view aligns with Treharne’s and rejects the notion that the English vernacular writing was continued for nostalgic or antiquarian purposes. See, Treharne, \textit{Living Through Conquest}, 97. For arguments related to the antiquarianism of vernacular writing after the Conquest, see: M.T. Clanchy, \textit{From Memory to Written Record}, 2nd edition (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992); Seth Lerer, “Old English and Its Afterlife,” in \textit{The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature}, ed. David Wallace, 7-34 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Thomas Hahn, “Early Middle English.”
Based on surviving manuscripts, religious texts make up the bulk of English writing from 1060 to 1220, with a third of surviving texts from the twelfth century being homily collections alone. Religious texts continued to be particularly prolific in the early thirteenth century. The works of Aelfric of Eynsham remained popular throughout the period, especially his *Catholic Homilies*, which were reproduced and compiled from well into the thirteenth century, as well as his *Grammar* and numerous hagiographic texts. As noted above, the perpetuation of English vernacular writing served a very practical purpose: instruction. In the early thirteenth century this continued to be the case. The *Orrulum*, dated between the last quarter of the twelfth century and the early thirteenth century, represents this ongoing tradition.

Written by an Augustinian canon named Orrm, the text is comprised of homilies that act as a commentary to gospel readings for mass. In the dedication and preface, Orrm explains that he undertook the task upon the request of his brother Walter, who believed that their congregation would benefit from a vernacular reading of biblical commentary. He makes the humble declaration only a few lines in that he has translated the gospel teachings into English, with the little intelligence God has granted him. Orrm emphasizes the need to bring salvation to the English people who, once they have access to the gospel teachings, will eagerly learn the

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59 Treharne dates the text to the last quarter of the twelfth century, while Hahn suggests that it was written close to 1200. For Treharne see, *The Orrulum* in *Old and Middle English: An Anthology*, ed. Elaine Treharne, 273-280 (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000): introduction to the text, 273; for Hahn, “Early Middle English,” 86-87.

60 *The Orrulum*, 274, ll. 13-16: Icc hafe wend inntill Emnglissh | godspelles hallȝhe lare, | affterr þatt little witt þatt me | min Drihtin hafeþþ lenedd.
path to salvation, which can only be achieved through understanding.\textsuperscript{61} The very language used by Orrm reinforced notions of the English language community and the larger national community that it participated in: he referred to his audience as the “Ennglissh folk” whose path to salvation was through their “Ennglisshe spӕche.”\textsuperscript{62} Orrm himself stands as an excellent example of the fluidity of medieval identity and the ability to associate with several communities without much inherent conflict: he used the twelfth century Latin text \textit{Glossa Ordinaria} as the foundation for his own work, demonstrating his ability and connection to the Latin community, while also exhibiting membership in the English community through his efforts to create an English vernacular book of homilies.\textsuperscript{63} From Orrm’s own admission and worry about the care for the souls of his fellow Englishmen, he clearly felt a connection with the English community; enough so to produce a vernacular work which would have been costly and time consuming. The text was certainly meant to be read aloud to a congregation, with the primary audience for reading the text being the clergy. Pastoral material in the vernacular enabled the clergy to connect with their parish beyond the relationship that inherently existed between them, and emphasized their shared membership in the English community.

The infamous “Tremulous Hand of Worcester” perhaps best exemplifies not only the preservation of English vernacular texts for instruction, but also the lament of the loss of prestige of the English language, and, in his eyes, the cultural and people slipping away with it. Active during the late twelfth through perhaps the mid-thirteenth century, the Worcester scribe’s unique left-leaning handwriting can be found in at least twenty manuscripts in the form of glosses, with

\begin{footnotes}
\item[61] \textit{The Orrumulum}, 275-276, l.111-120.
\item[62] \textit{The Orrumulum}, 274 ll. 19, 276 and 130.
\item[63] \textit{The Orrumulum}, introduction 273.
\end{footnotes}
one manuscript attributed to his copying alone, Worcester Cathedral MS F. 174 (thereafter MS F. 174).\textsuperscript{64} According to Christine Franzen, MS F. 174 represents the early efforts of the Worcester scribe in transcribing Old English (OE) texts into his own early Middle English (eME) dialect, in an attempt to preserve and make accessible important vernacular works which may have been becoming inaccessible due to linguistic changes in eME.\textsuperscript{65} Many of the texts that he glossed in eME were collections of homilies, where the notations made were intended to act as a guide for future readers on how to pronounce the OE words in eME. One such example can be found in his glossing of Bodleian MS Hatton 114, with a majority of the works being attributed to Aelfric’s homilies.\textsuperscript{66} The updating of the language through glossing by the Tremulous Hand stands as a testament of the orality of the English vernacular as a tool for instruction and as a means to connect with the English community.

MS F. 174 contains a copy of Aelfric’s \textit{Grammar and Glossary}, and two poems: \textit{St Bede Lament} and pieces of the \textit{Soul’s Address to the Body}. \textit{St Bede Lament} is of particular interest because of the content of the short poem: a concern about the learning and teaching of the English language. MS F. 174 is the only manuscript the poem has been preserved in, and because of that the origins and author have been difficult to deduce. As noted by S.K. Brehe, the poem was likely composed in the late twelfth century, before it was copied by the Worcester scribe into MS F. 174 (which was eventually compiled into its current catalogued state), with Elaine Treharne dating the composition of the leaves making up the manuscript around 1215.\textsuperscript{67} The

\textsuperscript{64} Christine Franzen, \textit{The Tremulous Hand of Worcester: A Study of Old English in the Thirteenth Century} (Oxford: Clarendon Press: 1991): 1-4. Franzen notes that the Worcester scribe was thought to have worked only in the late twelfth century while he was in some state of infirmary, but more recent scholarship (up to 1991) suggests that his work was undertaken in his youth, with some aliment causing the degeneration in his handwriting during midlife.

\textsuperscript{65} Franzen, 2-4 and 84.

\textsuperscript{66} Franzen, 34-38.
name of the poem itself is contentious, with Brehe and Treharne labelling it the *First Worcester Fragment*, while Frazen offering *St Bede Lament*, and others *The Disuse of English*. Nothing is known about the author or where it may have been composed, though Treharne advances the idea that the poem in the form we have it speaks more to the lament and sorrow of the Tremulous Hand and his efforts to preserve vernacular literature and English culture.68 The content of the poem has reinforced a notion that the Tremulous Hand was working in a tradition as attributed to other Worcester scribes, that being a sense of “metanostalgia,” as described by Seth Lerer and Thomas Hahn, for the loss of the Anglo-Saxon past regarding instruction in the vernacular, rather than viewing the inclusion of the short poem as further proof of the continued tradition of vernacular writing and instruction of OE texts well into the thirteenth century.69

The longing for mass instruction in the vernacular is evident in the poem, with the poet longing for the days of the bishops who taught “our people…in English,” providing explanation enough for the sense of nostalgia promulgated by Lerer and Hahn.70 The poet’s aim, however, appears to be motivated more by a comparison of the position in which he found himself and other writers who contributed to the ongoing proliferation of English vernacular works from the Anglo-Saxon period. It is more about the veneration of these important teachers - namely Bede, Aelfric, and Alcuin - and the continued importance of his own efforts to continue the practice of vernacular instruction.71 More importantly, the inclusion of the poem by the Tremulous Hand


70 Brehe, 531. Here I am using a translation provided by Brehe of a reconfiguration of the poem.
demonstrates the continued aligning of purpose into his own early thirteenth century efforts.

“Now that teaching is forsaken, and the folk are lost,” the task of the Worcester scribe is perhaps more imperative than before, and that because “there is another people which teaches our folk,” the transliteration of such pastoral materials is now of the utmost importance. While it is clear that the Tremulous Hand is participating in the lament and loss of instruction, it is not through the complete disregard or abandonment of the vernacular tradition, but rather the loss of an English presence in the church hierarchy. The thirteen bishops listed in the poem instructed the English in their own language before the practice was abandoned by incoming Norman bishops, a process which was complete by the end of the eleventh century with the death of Wulfstan, the last Anglo-Saxon bishop. Like Orrm, the Tremulous Hand is concerned about the salvation of his people and community, as well as the preservation of their history and culture. As with both writers, their community is defined and shared by their common language.

With ecclesiastical vernacular writing, there was also a long tradition of historical writing in the English language, notably the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. The oldest manuscript, the Winchester Chronicle, is dated to the end of the ninth century, contemporarily with King Alfred, and ends in the mid-twelfth century, with the last entry into the Peterborough Chronicle (the newest of the manuscripts) in 1154. Unlike ecclesiastical works, which continued to be copied and adapted well into the thirteenth century, historical works in the vernacular ceased for nearly

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71 Trehearne, “Making Their Presence Felt,” 403.
72 Brehe, 531.
73 Brehe, 535. Brehe also points out parallels between the voice of the poet and William of Malmesbury who laments the loss of Wulfstan and the destruction of Worcester’s church, which was replaced by a Norman cathedral.
half a century. The continuation of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* is in and of itself an enigma, considering that with the replacement of native prelates in the late eleventh century by Normans also came the transition – as abrupt as it was – from recording history in the vernacular to Latin. This follows the continental preference of writing in Latin over their own vernacular language, a practice brought in by the Normans, which ranged from official documents to recording of history in annals and chronicles. In this way, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* was unique, being the first continuous national history recorded in numerous centers throughout England several centuries before any other European country engaged in such an exercise. However, historical writing in the vernacular was not exclusive in any way prior to the Norman Conquest, and a remarkable decrease in vernacular history is notably throughout the twelfth century, with the *Peterborough Chronicle* outliving its counterparts by about half a century. Considering this, the arrival of Laȝamon’s *Brut* in the early thirteenth century is truly curious and in need of further evaluation.

There has been much debate regarding when he may have written his *Brut*, with dates ranging from 1189 to roughly 1225, which in part has been fueled by the late date – the mid to late thirteenth century - of the two surviving manuscripts of his work, with a growing consensus among scholars placing the date of composition within the early thirteenth century.

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75 M.J. Swanton lists six complete manuscripts and one fragment, accounting the writing of at least five centers where versions of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* were worked on. See, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, xxi-xxix.

76 Antonia Gransden notes that the resistance on the part of the Peterborough monks may be attributed to their resentfulness to any outside interference. The example she gives is the case in 1127 when Henry I imposed a new abbot, a Norman outsider, on the priory, resulting in bitterness and antagonism towards the king. See: Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England c. 550 to c. 1307* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974): 142-143.

77 Hugh Thomas notes that the earliest Laȝamon could have been writing is 1189, while Rosamund Allen places the dating anywhere between 1199 and 1225, but perhaps even as late as the mid-thirteenth century. Elaine Treharne believes he started writing in the early thirteenth century, though she does admit that he could have begun a little earlier. Kenneth Tiller, on the other hand, notes that the composition of the poem can range from 1170 to 1250, though he places the dating more concisely between 1185 and 1216, and decided to ‘split the difference’ to c. 1200. As Allen notes, much of the dating methods have been unreliable, stemming primarily from the discontinued paying
The little we know about Laȝamon comes from the prologue of his work, though the two extant manuscripts are at odds: in MS Cotton Caligula A (MS C) Laȝamon tells us that he was a priest, while in MS Cotton Otho C (MS O) he says that he lived “with a good knight where he read books.”

The two roles portrayed between the manuscripts, one as a country priest and the other a household chaplain, are not in and of themselves incongruent, though, as Allen notes, may be more telling about the purpose of Laȝamon’s text. Casting Laȝamon as a household chaplain certainly has its advantages in explaining the genesis of his text: if he were a chaplain, he would have written his work under a patron and its purpose would have been to entertain an audience within the household, and also potentially used as a tool for instruction. Allen asserts that we must assume that Laȝamon was writing for a patron, someone of status, though clearly not someone fixed squarely in the Anglo-Norman ruling class by virtue of the text being composed in the vernacular.

An alternative view - the one which will be maintained here - sees Laȝamon instead as the priest depicted in MS C and a part of the Worcester tradition seen in the Worcester Fragment and the Tremulous Hand, as someone concerned with the preservation of his culture and people through their shared identity derived from the English language.

Laȝamon states that he wrote his history to “tell of the noble English,” in essence the early history of the English people who emerged out of the chaos of post-Roman Britain. To do
so he traveled widely around the country to gather sources for his work and names three in particular: an “English book made by Saint Bede” (no doubt an English translation of the Historia), a Latin book by Saint Albin (a text that is unknown), and Wace’s Anglo-Norman Roman de Brut, which was inspired by and translated in part from Geoffrey of Monmouth’s Historia Regum Britanniae. Here Laȝamon is positioning himself in a place of authority, not only as a person who is one among many venerable recorders of history, but also by adding textual authority to his work to demonstrate legitimacy. Like many other English vernacular texts of the post-Conquest period, it would appear on the surface that the Laȝamon’s Brut was a simple translation or copying of Wace’s Brut, though a close reading of the text reveals a number of discrepancies: additions and expansions made by Laȝamon. Perhaps the most notable is the emphasis Laȝamon placed on the Arthurian elements of his work, especially his inclusion of the Merlin Prophecies and his added section on establishment of the round table. Laȝamon did not choose Wace’s text simply because of its existing authority, but rather used it like Wace used Monmouth’s history of the British, which appropriated it to fit the new Anglo-Norman history of the island, with the Normans positioned as the natural successors of the English. In this way, Laȝamon followed in the footsteps of Wace, and reclaimed the history of the island for the English by appropriating the Norman historical narrative. Indeed, Laȝamon claims to have drawn on all three languages of England to compose his history - the book of St. Bede the English, that of St. Albin the Latin, and Wace’s the French – “and the three books were joined into one.”

82 Laȝamon’s Brut in Old and Middle English, 370, line 16: He nom þa Englisca boc þa makede Seint Beda.
83 Laȝamon’s Brut in Old and Middle English, introduction 369.
84 Laȝamon’s Brut in Old and Middle English, 370, ll. 15-21 and 29: He nom tha Englisca boc tha makede Seint Beda | Another he nom on Latin the makede Seinte Albin | And the feire Austin the fulluht broute hider in | Boc he nom the thridde, leide ther amidden | Tha makede a Frenchis cleric | Wace wes ihoten, the wel coupe writen; And tha thre boc thrumde to are.
Laȝamon’s work then parallels the other English vernacular texts discussed thus far in his concern with the preservation of the English language, a tenet that can be attributed to his choice of language and by virtue of the community it represented. He took a radical step forward in not only showing the importance of language and community, but of the shared history that was intrinsically part of their identity.

In this light, Laȝamon’s Brut can be seen as an effort of continued resistance against the Normans.\(^{85}\) While his work is concerned with the early history of the English, the author takes two opportunities to not only illustrate disdain for the Normans in general, but also to downplay the significance of conquest, which certainly reflects on the continued shared pain of the memory of the Norman Conquest in Laȝamon’s own period. Both mentions of the Normans relate to the history of London, and specifically the naming of the city by different peoples. Although Laȝamon casts the reoccurring episodes of conquest and transformation of the island with a sense of natural progression, and perhaps even divine intent, by the time the English come into dominance, when it comes to the conquest of the island by the Normans he expresses resentment. This natural progress of transfers and change can be seen in his account of the settlement of the island by Brutus, but comes to a halt when the Normans “gained [the island] by fighting,” and through their “language habits…called it Lundres.”\(^{86}\) The natural succession has stopped and been replaced by taking the island by force and imposing a foreign tongue on the land and its people. In recounting the history and naming of London later on, Laȝamon remarks that the “Normans came, with their nasty malice, And named it as Lundres,” commenting further that the Normans destroyed these people.\(^{87}\) While the Normans make no direct appearance in the Brut,

\(^{85}\) For more on this and a post-colonial reading of Laȝamon’s Brut, see: Tiller, esp. 1-31.

\(^{86}\) Lawman’s Brut, 27, lines 1030-1031.
meaning they were not present in England during the history conveyed by Laȝamon, the author makes the point to lambast the Normans, as in the passage above, and provide lamentation of the Norman Conquest to come. The only relevance present in his inclusion of the Normans is to demonstrate not only his own disdain, but one that apparently perpetuated into the early thirteenth century by the English community.  

The connection between a people and their language is one evident in Laȝamon’s text, not only through his choice of language, by which I mean the archaic form of English used in his text, but also through usage of the term *leod*, which has a threefold meaning: people, land, and language. As we have already established, the *Brut* was composed sometime in the first quarter of the thirteenth century, making it roughly contemporary with the *First Worcester Fragment*. Considering that the two works were composed in the same area and therefore would have employed the same dialect (West Midlands), it is curious that Laȝamon’s *Brut* employs both archaic forms and spellings of words when compared to the *First Worcester Fragment*. Indeed, Laȝamon’s language is more reminiscent of OE prose than the form of eME we see in the *First Worcester Fragment* and as well as the English glosses of the Tremulous Hand. While Laȝamon’s *Brut* is reminiscent of OE prose, the text itself reflects usage consistent with his own dialect, with an Anglo-Saxon style, one that was purposeful and with significance. It may be that Laȝamon used the archaic forms as a means to supply additional authority to his work, putting it

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87 *Lawman’s Brut*, 92, lines 3546-3547.

88 Tiller makes a similar point, see: Tiller, 145-147.


90 This same curiosity has been remarked on by numerous scholars, see: Laȝamon’s *Brut* in *Old and Middle English*, introduction 369; *Lawman’s Brut*, introduction xxvi; Tiller, 18-22.
in line with previous authoritative OE works. One further possibility suggests that by using older forms that harked back to apex of English culture, Laȝamon intentionally did so to emphasize the connection between the English people and their history through a recognizable language of validity, at least in form. If we consider the use of *leod*, a term frequently employed in the Brut, and its connotations of a relationship and commonality between a people, their land, and their language, it seems that Laȝamon was indeed using archaic forms as a means to accentuate such a connection. Laȝamon was not the only writer to use *leod* in such a way: the author of the *First Worcester Fragment* also does so in his lament about “there is another people which teaches our folk,” with the use of *leod* implying both a people and a language.\(^9^1\) The association, then, that Laȝamon stressed throughout his text was the value placed on language as a marker of identity for the English people as one that was linked to their shared history.

The preceding English vernacular texts demonstrate the inherent relationship within the English community between their language and national identity. They also illustrate the reality of individuals working within multiple communities, with Oorra and the Tremulous Hand working in both English and Latin, and Laȝamon doing the same, but also dabbling in the Anglo-Norman community for his own purposes. The emphasis so far has been on how the dispossessed English continued to express not only their collective sorrow over their displacement following the Conquest, but also their sense of Englishness through their shared language. A new sense of Englishness was emerging, however, in the century following the Conquest, one that witnessed the appropriation of the Anglo-Saxon past by the Norman elite to forge a new history, and indeed a new nation. As has already been demonstrated, this new nation was in a way at least partly unilateral, as we see in the English vernacular texts analyzed above standing as a bulwark of

\(^{91}\) Brehe, 531; Tiller, 17-18: *Nu beoþ oþre leoden þeo læþreþ ðre folc* (Now other people [or other languages] teach our folk).
continued resistance and distinction between us, the English, and them, the Normans. However, this does not discount the sense of Englishness that developed over the course of the twelfth century by the Normans, one that would become so important and unifying during the Barons War. The construction of this new identity is seen clearly in Anglo-Norman writing going into the early thirteenth century, which emphasized the appropriated history of the Anglo-Saxon past as a marker of shared Englishness. While the works illustrate a sense of inclusiveness and assimilation, the use of French as the medium for the texts reinforced the exclusive nature of the Norman ruling class. But this in no way, as we shall see, hampered their ability to express their Englishness in an otherwise foreign tongue.

**French Vernacular Writing in England to the Early Thirteenth Century**

Like the English vernacular, the writing of history in the vernacular of the Anglo-Normans never approached the level of history written in Latin. The writing of history in the vernacular, as we have seen, was an isolated practice in England, with the peoples of the continent preferring Latin. Indeed, in pre-Conquest Normandy there is no evidence of any significant historiographical figure writing in the vernacular, and only one notable historian writing in Latin, Dudo de Saint-Quentin. The first history written in French in England was Geffrei Gaimar’s *L’Estoire des Engleis*, written before 1140, it was a work heavily influenced by Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Historia Regum Britanniae*, and translated part of at least one manuscript of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. While Geoffrey’s work may have acted as a source of inspiration, the *L’Estoire des Engleis* only covers about a century of the same material as the

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Historia Regum Britanniae, with the most remarkable parallels being the romantic style in which it was written. The true inspiration for the sudden emergence of Gaimar’s history in twelfth century England was twofold. The first can be traced to the growing interest of history among the Norman ruling class in England, with Gaimar’s work standing as a tribute to this: it was composed under the patronage of Ralf Fitz Gilbert, a minor noble of Lincolnshire, for his wife, Constance. While L’Estoire was certainly meant to inform, it also contained elements of legend and romance made popular by Monmouth, suggesting that the text also served the purpose of entertainment: another point reinforced by Fitz Gilbert making Gaimar’s text a gift to his wife. The second can be attributed to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and the tradition of vernacular historical writing it represented. One way this can be seen is in the similarity of style present in the eleventh and twelfth century continuations of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle which went from annalistic to narrative with much more artistry, though in some manuscripts the writing continued to exhibit strict annalistic entries. Gaimar kept the annalistic style while expanding the narrative and romantic elements of his own history.

The use of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle by Gaimar served a dual purpose: first, it was the most complete history of Anglo-Saxon England from the ninth century through the Norman Conquest; second, the authority of the text added legitimacy to Gaimar’s history. Gaimar sought to emphasis the natural succession of the Normans as the inheritors of England, and by

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94 Another explanation for the cursory usage of the Historia is that the original beginning to L’Estoire is now lost. Gaimar originally started with the fall of Troy and covered the same material as the Historia, using it and other works for his sources. See, Gransden, Historical Writing in England, 209.

95 Damian-Grint, 49.

96 Damian-Grint, 14-16.

97 A great example of the change to narrative can be seen in the Peterborough Manuscript starting in the entry for 1086. See: The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, 217-222.
appropriating the vernacular English historiographical tradition, he was adding further validity not only to the new Norman history of England, but also continuing the practice of recording the history of the nation in a familiar form, but for his own community. For Gaimar the continuation of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* in French would have been only natural to the new conditions of the English nation. The appropriation of the Anglo-Saxon past, as early as the 1140s illustrates the process of assimilation occurring on the part of the Normans. Throughout his work Gaimar is at the very least neutral towards the English, while at times appearing sympathetic, such as his ridicule towards William the Conqueror for his treatment of the nobles of northern England.\(^98\)

Gaimar’s text is unique in that it is the only French vernacular insular history to be directly influenced by the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. As we will see in the next section, Anglo-Latin chronicles and monastic annals in the twelfth century drew heavily from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* to fill out their histories of England. The insular French chronicles of the late thirteenth century, especially Peter Langtoft’s *Chronicle*, were more indebted to the works of those twelfth century writers, like William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon, rather than the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* or Gaimar. In many ways Gaimar’s *L’Estoire* belongs alongside the works of his aforementioned contemporaries because it represents the appropriation and dissemination of the new history of Norman England, which is one of the reasons the work is significant, and despite being a twelfth-century text. Also, three of the four extant manuscripts are dated to the thirteenth century, showing its continued relevance among the Anglo-Normans.\(^99\) It highlights the process of assimilation of the Normans into Englishmen, and stands out for his effort to imitate the Anglo-Saxon historiographical tradition through his own language. Early

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histories such as Gaimar’s show no outright sense of Englishness, and it would be daft to imagine it would, but it illustrates the early efforts to incorporate the Normans into the history of England, and am interest in the Anglo-Saxon past, which would become one of the key features of the Englishness of the Anglo-Norman community.

The proliferation of Wace’s *Roman de Brut* after it was completed in 1155 not only perpetuated the new history of England with the Normans firmly ingrained within the historical narrative, but superseded Gaimar’s *L’Estoire* as the most popular vernacular history of England in the twelfth. 100 Indeed, Wace’s history would become a fixture for French vernacular history as the starting point for numerous continuations of a prose Brut throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. 101 Wace’s *Brut* parallels Gaimar’s text in several ways, though there is no evidence to suggest that Wace was aware of Gaimar or his work. Like Gaimar, Wace used Geoffrey’s *Historia*, but to a much greater degree, with Wace’s Brut being largely an adaption of the *Historia*. Also, while we know that Gaimar’s text was commissioned, the patronage of Wace’s work is much more questionable. In the prologue of his own Brut, Laȝamon asserts that Wace presented a copy of his text to Queen Eleanor, the wife of Henry II of England. 102 Wace would later be commissioned to write his *Roman de Rou*, a history of the dukes of Normandy, a work he never completed. 103 It is clear that, similarly to Gaimar, Wace wrote for a lay audience: he had produced several vernacular adaptations of saints’ lives before embarking on his *Brut*,


102 *Laȝamon’s Brut* in *Old and Middle English*, 370-371, ll. 21-23: Wace wes ihoten, þe wel coupe written; And he hoe þef þare æðelen Ælienor | þe ewes Henries queen | þes heȝes kings.

103 Damian-Grint, 54-55.
writing *La Conception de Notre Dame* between 1130 and 1140 and *La Vie de Saint Nicolas* around 1150.\textsuperscript{104}

There are two notable differences between Gaimar and Wace, however, which are worth highlighting. The first is that Wace may have been aware of the English vernacular historiographical tradition of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* through the works of William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon, two works which certainly informed his own, but there is no evidence that Wace actively sought to continue the vernacular writing tradition in England in French, like Gaimar. The second informs the first: Wace was not necessarily writing for a strictly Anglo-Norman audience, but rather for a wider Norman audience. Wace’s *Brut* is one of the few texts of the Angevin period written in the vernacular to have widespread popularity on both side of the channel, and one of the few insular Norman works to find an audience in England; seventeen extant manuscripts are accounted for in England alone, fifteen of which date to the thirteenth century, demonstrating one way in which this text continued to resonate with the Anglo-Norman community.\textsuperscript{105}

It would be completely shortsighted to assume that Wace did not seek to reach a wider audience beyond the learned in Normandy. There was certainly strong interest within the French community on both sides of the channel about the history of the new Norman domain, especially the early history not widely covered by Latin chronicles, but the subject matter and the popularity of Geoffrey’s alternative early history to Bede’s suggests that Wace had to have been aware that his work would find a large audience among the Anglo-Normans.\textsuperscript{106} We know that

\begin{footnotes}
\item[106] *Wace’s Roman de Brut*, introduction xiii.
\end{footnotes}
Wace became a canon of Bayeux as a reward from Henry II for his Brut and received royal patronage for his Roman de Rou, but it has been difficult to determine exactly what his position was before writing the Brut. Wace was born in Jersey and received his early education in Caen, continuing his training in Paris, and returned to Caen thereafter. At some point, possibly around 1150, he traveled to England, and started work on his adaptation of the Historia soon after. Wace could not have spent much time in England or have traveled very widely: his knowledge of the geography of England is truly limited, with details provided about the southwest such as landmarks like Stonehenge, but very little beyond that area. Wace must have worked in Caen as a canon or possibly a chaplain before gaining notoriety for Roman de Brut, though scholars have suggested that Wace may have undertaken the writing of the Brut with royal patronage, an overall tempting theory, especially considering that no substantial alternative exists for why or for whom he decided to write. Judith Weiss suggests that, considering Wace had been translating saints’ lives into the vernacular and was therefore familiar with appetite of that audience, and because of the popularity of Geoffrey’s Historia, Wace must have “realized he could redirect his talents as a ‘translator’ from Latin into French from saints’ lives towards secular chronicle,” an overall lackluster explanation without any evidence to support it. It seems unlikely that Wace received royal support prior to writing the Brut, but rather gained attention because of it. To add to the conjecture, I postulate that Wace may have even written Roman de Brut with Henry II in mind, perhaps in the hopes of gaining recognition and patronage.

107 Wace’s Roman de Brut, introduction xii; Damian-Grint suggests that Wace must have spent some time in England because of the occasional English word in Roman de Brut, and presumes it was while he was in attendance at Henry II’s court, but he provides no context or date: Damian-Grint, 53.

108 Wace’s Roman de Brut, 206-207, lines 8173-8178.

109 Wace’s Roman de Brut, introduction xii.
Like Gaimar’s *L’Estoire, Roman de Brut* appropriates the alternative narrative of English history into the new Norman narrative. Wace places even more emphasis on the natural and rightful succession of the Normans as the inheritors of England. This in part comes from the effort made by Geoffrey in his *Historia* “to present a history of the Britons for the Norman ascendancy,” but also the effort of Wace to ingrain the Normans and their conquest into the narrative itself.\(^{110}\) In his treatment of the founding of London, Wace departs from his source material and discusses how the name of London had been changed over time by the subsequent groups who ruled the island, ending with his own community who now call it Lundres.\(^{111}\) Here Wace is demonstrating that not only has the island itself gone through repeated conquests, but he also adds a note of finality with the conquest of his own people. With this, Wace also stresses a strong sense of sovereignty over French-held lands, namely those associated with Henry II - Normandy, Anjou, Poitou, Maine, and Aquitaine - and makes a clear distinction that it is France that Arthur was in conflict with, not Gaul: a true departure from Geoffrey’s handling of the same events.\(^{112}\) In this way Wace is modernizing the text to reflect contemporary struggles between Henry II and Louis VII of France, and it demonstrates the position of the king of the Britons, now Henry II, having had a long history of sovereignty over French continental lands. Through this, Wace illustrates not only the legitimacy of Henry over the English as the natural and true inheritor of the English crown, but also a dynastic link to Henry’s continental holdings that are as much a natural succession as the former.

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\(^{110}\) Tiller, 76.

\(^{111}\) *Wace’s Roman de Brut*, 32-33, lines 1238-1240.

\(^{112}\) *Wace’s Roman de Brut*, 278-279, lines 11053-1158; 294-295, lines 11713-11718; 312-313, lines 12417-12420.
If Wace had aimed to attract the attention of Henry, he succeeded. He was made a canon at Bayeux by Henry II and in 1160 he had secured royal patronage to begin work on the *Roman de Rou*, a history of the dukes of Normandy from the founding by Rollo in the early tenth century to his own day. The text itself was more ambitious than the Brut and more historical, with less emphasis on romantic elements with more emphasis placed on historical narrative. Henry’s interest in Wace stemmed from the aforementioned efforts to legitimize both Anglo-Norman rule of England and Normandy in the *Brut*, and Wace continued the theme, with *Roman de Rou* acting as the continuation of the *Brut*. *Roman de Rou* was much more direct in its approach, forgoing the need of symbolism, and instead actively strived to provide legitimacy for the Plantagenets from Brutus to Henry II, emphasizing a genealogical connection that supported Henry’s claim as both king of England and duke of Normandy. Wace continued work on his *Rou* into 1174, but never completed it, the fragmented nature of the ending of the work standing as a testament to it being unfinished. The text survives in only four copies, one in England and three on the continent, suggesting that the unfinished work was probably never circulated widely.

Taken together, the *Brut* and the *Rou* illustrate an effort to not only place the Normans within the history of England, but to emphasize a dynastic link that went beyond the notion of the Normans natural succession as rulers of the island. While the *Brut* promotes the idea of successive waves of conquest of England as an inherent process, the *Rou* goes a step further by claiming a genealogical pedigree of succession from Brutus to Henry II. The two texts ultimately

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114 Dean, 3-4; Tiller, 76-78.

115 Dean, 4.
illustrate, and came to embody, the process of assimilation that was occurring during the mid to late twelfth century, where the identity of the Normans in England was in flux, and there was a desire not only to learn about the land they now inhabited, but to find their place within it. In the mid-twelfth century, as intermarriage and interests of some Anglo-Normans began to concentrate more fully on England, there was a need to negotiate the continued conflict between the conquerors and the conquered, and one way this was perused was through the assumption of the Anglo-Saxon past on the part of the Normans. Gaimar appropriated the Anglo-Saxon past as part of his French vernacular continuation of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, while Wace worked to place the Normans in the early history of England through his adaption of Geoffrey’s *Historia*. In this way, the Anglo-Norman community assembled a new history of England and, from it, constructed a new identity for their new nation.

A second component of the emerging Englishness of the Anglo-Norman community was a growing connection to English culture, most prominently the English church and native saints, a term which is, in and of itself, loaded. I do not propose to argue that the ecclesiastical reforms that began under William I did not “Normanize” and bring the Anglo-Saxon church more in line with continental practices, to a large degree at the expense of Anglo-Saxon religious culture. Indeed, such reforms have been well documented and written about extensively, as well as the scorn expressed by Norman bishops throughout the eleventh and twelfth century towards native saints. Rather, I propose that, over the course of the twelfth century, the process of assimilation and interest in the Anglo-Saxon past, and to a degree an assumption of Englishness,

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resulted in the introduction of insular French vernacular hagiographies of native saints. While hagiography was a popular medium throughout the medieval world, one that captured both the moral teaching of church doctrine and narrative tales that were popular throughout the social spectrum, insular French hagiographies were incredibly rare from the eleventh into the mid-twelfth century. Those that were written in the aforementioned period, namely *The Voyage of St. Brendan* and *La Vie de Saint Alexis*, both written in the first quarter of the twelfth century, were copies or adaptations made from continental originals, and focused on non-native saints.\(^{118}\)

Starting in the late-twelfth century the majority of surviving hagiographies document the lives of native saints, a trend that continues well into the mid-thirteenth century. What makes these texts significant is that they were written for an Anglo-Norman audience and quite clearly addressed a need and interest held by that community. They represented the ongoing process of assimilation and the emerging Englishness of the Anglo-Norman community.

The earliest hagiography written to venerate a native saint was *The Life of Edward the Confessor*, composed by a nun of Barking sometime between 1163 and 1170.\(^{119}\) Edward had been a beloved figure in the twelfth century, one of the few Anglo-Saxon figures to not suffer greatly under revisions of history made by the Normans after the Conquest. The familial link between William I and Edward became important and added legitimacy to the Conquest and Norman rule. With this, Edward came to represent the best aspects of the Anglo-Saxons and the dispossessed English, and worked as a crucial point of negotiation in the Englishness of the Anglo-Norman community. The importance of Edward and his representation of the Anglo-

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\(^{118}\) Dean, 278-279.

\(^{119}\) Dean, 290-291; *La Vie d’Edouard le Confesseur by a Nun of Barking Abbey*, trans. Jane Bliss (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014). It is important to note that Edward was canonized by Pope Alexander III in 1161 at the behest of Henry II and the bishops of England. King Stephen had made a request, but he was turned down.
Saxon past continued to be prominent throughout the period being covered here; another insular French hagiography was written about him by Matthew Paris between 1236 and 1245 and was dedicated to the wife of Henry III, Queen Eleanor of Province.\footnote{Dean, 289-290; \textit{La Estorie de Seint Aedward le Rei attributed to Matthew Paris}, ed. Kathryn Y. Wallace (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1983). St. Edward the Confessor was the favorite saint of Henry III, the importance of which will be discussed in the next chapter.}

Other Anglo-Saxon kings figured prominently in hagiographic works of the early thirteenth century, such as St. Edmund, king of East Anglia in the ninth century, and the namesake of Bury St. Edmunds Abbey. Two lives were written about him, one by Denis Piramus at the end of the twelfth or early thirteenth century, and another anonymous text written in the early thirteenth century.\footnote{Dean 288; \textit{La Vie Seint Edmund le Rei by Denis Piramus}, ed. D.E. Russell (Oxford: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 2014); \textit{La Passiun de Seint Edmund}, ed. Judith Grant (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1978). This is not to be confused with St. Edmund Rich, archbishop of Canterbury who was canonized 1246. Matthew Paris, perhaps the most prolific writer of his age, also wrote a life of St. Edmund, see: Matthew Paris, \textit{The Life of St. Edmund}, trans. C.H. Lawrence (Stroud: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1996).} We know very little about Edmund as a historical figure. He is mentioned only once in the \textit{Anglo-Saxon Chronicle} where his death is recorded at the hands of a Danish invasion in 870.\footnote{\textit{The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle}, 70-71: he is mentioned in the Winchester MS and Peterborough MS.} It seems that very quickly the life of Edmund became embroiled in myth and legend, with Hermann, a Bury St. Edmunds monk and writer of \textit{De Miraculis Sancti Edmundi}, remarking that little was known about the saint until his translation to Beodricsworth during the reign of Athelstan in the tenth century.\footnote{Gransden, \textit{Historical Writing in England}, 125-126.} Like Edward the Confessor, Edmund was seen as an archetypical figure of the best of the Anglo-Saxon past, one who was further glorified by Gaimar in his \textit{L’Estoire}, and later by the crusading knight Richard de Argentan who commissioned a painting of the martyrdom of the saint for a chapel in Damietta.\footnote{Carpenter, \textit{The Struggle for Mastery}, 6.} The pride and
glorification of the saint-kings of the Anglo-Saxon past represent the assumption and appropriation by the Anglo-Normans of the history of the English as their own. The proliferation of native saints was not limited to the likes of royalty, but was extended to other English saints, one example being *The Life of St. Alban* written by Matthew Paris around 1235.125

The histories and the hagiographical texts mentioned above illustrate not only an interest in the Anglo-Saxon past by the Anglo-Normans, but appropriated it by placing themselves within the larger historical narrative of the island and making English history their own. Gaimar did so by continuing the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* in the vernacular of his community, and further emphasized a sense of continuity with the succession of the Normans as the kings of the English. Wace forged ahead more aggressively through his placement of the Normans in the early history of the English, demonstrating not only a natural succession through conquest, but a link between the Normans and the English that went back centuries. In his *Rou* he went even further by forging a dynastic and genealogical connection from Brutus to Henry II, showing the Normans to be inheritors of England by virtue of conquest and birth. The assumption of Anglo-Saxon culture and pride in what had become a shared history is represented through the proliferation of saints’ lives of native English saints. Despite the emerging Englishness of the Anglo-Norman community, expression of ideas and identity continued to be dominated by non-English languages. In the next and final section we will turn to the examination of the use of Latin as a means of expressing Englishness. The Latin writers represented members of both the English and Anglo-Norman communities, but they also produced a unique sense of Englishness that, while constructed on similar aspects, was certainly their own.


**Insular Latin Historiography to the Early Thirteenth Century**

While it is true that Latin acted as a universal language in medieval Europe - as a language for diplomacy between heads of state, as the language of discourse for the learned, and represented in some ways the power of the western church - those who used the language were in no way limited by it or prevented in any way from expressing membership and loyalty in other collective identities. The association of the Latin language with the overbearing and identity-crushing western church as a means of preventing the development and evolution of national consciousness is one that has been overplayed and under-supported.126 As the primary language of discourse – both diplomatic and academic – and the language which was predominantly used to record the annals of history, it would be a true aberration if national identity was not expressed through the Latin language. Indeed, Latin had been a medium used for the expression of English national identity going back at least to Bede, and continued to be the most prolific medium for the expression of Englishness in the centuries following the Norman Conquest.127 This in part can be accounted for by who made up the Latin community in medieval England.

The composition of the Latin community is more heterogeneous and, while exclusive in terms of accessibility for the majority of the English population, represented perhaps the widest cross-section of learned individuals in the English nation belonging to either the Anglo-Norman or English communities. But while membership in the English and Anglo-Norman communities was certainly permeable, membership in the Latin community was more strictly defined by those who were in civil government, in the church, or a part of an elite educated class which generally

126 Benedict Anderson, 12-22. Also see above, p. 4-9.

belonged to one of the previous two. Even though membership was restricted in such a way, nationality did not preclude anyone from the Latin community, although that would have seemed to be the case in the late eleventh century church reform overseen by William I and Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury: by the end of the century only two of the dioceses of England were held by native born men. These reforms sought to bring the English church up to date, so to speak, by implementing reform that was already widespread on the continent and had been championed by William in his capacity as duke of Normandy before the Conquest. It is difficult to assert with absolute certainty that one of the aims of the reform was to displace native born Englishmen from the church hierarchy, as had been done to a large degree with the landed elite, but the profound turnover and elevation of foreign-born bishops, abbots, and the like provoked conjecture of such an objective. Despite this displacement, native-born men continued to fill the lower ranks of the clergy, providing a microcosm of the social order of the English nation, with the Normans positioned clearly above the English. The Latin community, then, was comprised of individuals from various backgrounds, with a wide range of allegiances and loyalties, and also the potential to create a substantial disparity in what it meant to be English.

Latin writers in the twelfth century exemplified such a disparity in ascertaining their own Englishness by rectifying their Norman lineage and the necessity of the Norman Conquest with either their assumed sense of English identity or mixed lineage, but over the course of the century began to solidify a unique image of what it meant to be English with a particular importance on natural born Englishmen. Through this we are given an exceptional glimpse into the process of assimilation that took place over the course of the twelfth century and the shaping

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of a new nation which has been emphasized throughout this chapter. Due to the composition of the Latin community we see the appropriation of the Anglo-Saxon past into a new Anglo-Norman history of England, along with the defense of the dispossessed in Latin historiography. Mixed lineage often presented this particular dichotomy most clearly, as in the case of William of Malmesbury, demonstrated in his *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, completed in 1125.

Here William describes himself as half English and half Norman, with neither side seeming to command all of his loyalty or identity.129 Indeed, William’s identity is ambiguous and fluid, as can be seen in his handling of the Norman Conquest and the subsequent subjugation of the English people. One justification by William for the Conquest was the need to reform the corrupt English church, while he also viewed William I’s claim to the English throne as legitimate.130 Furthermore, William justified the dispossession of the English not only from their land, but the barring of native born men from church offices as a necessity by William I because of the treacherous and unfaithful nature of the English.131 The fluidity, and perhaps uncertainty, of his identity can be seen in his defense of the dispossessed following the Conquest. As is the case throughout the *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, William often contradicted himself and was liable to sway easily between different positions. This can be seen in his reporting the call to arms of the few trustworthy and powerful English landed elite left by William II to defend him against the conspiring Normans, in the rebellion of 1088.132 Here the roles are switched, with the


131 *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, 470.

132 *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, 546-548.
Normans cast as the treacherous people, while a few of the English demonstrated their worth and loyalty to their king by answering a “letter of invitation to all the English,” who William notes as “good men and true.” Like Gaimar, William used the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* as a means of appropriating the Anglo-Saxon past to legitimize the Anglo-Norman present, most notably in his *Historia Novella*. William also glorified the Anglo-Saxon past through his veneration of English saints, the saints of his patria, demonstrating the value he placed not only in the Anglo-Saxon past, but in his fatherland and nation. However, there was certainly no love lost between the English vernacular language and William, who viewed Old English as barbaric and backwards. William was not alone in his attitude towards the English vernacular, but was rather in good company, with several of the most prominent Anglo-Norman historians of his age expressing similar distaste.

The lack of prominence placed on the vernacular language as a crucial part of English national identity by William and his contemporaries illustrates an important element in the process of assimilation and identity formation for those in the Latin community, and in fact all of those who were in the process of forging the new English nation on the Anglo-Norman side. Those born of mixed parentage within the first few generations of the Conquest may not have been raised in bilingual households, as was the case with William of Malmesbury and Henry of

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133 *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, 547.


Huntingdon who were both instead trained in English to translate the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.\textsuperscript{138} By virtue of their mixed parentage and upbringing in a largely Norman world, there is no indication that they would have developed any profound affection for the English language, nor would they have understood the emphasis placed on it by those who considered themselves part of the dispossessed English community. Rather, the split loyalties and fluid identities of such writers illustrate the assimilation of the Normans in part by their appropriation of the Anglo-Saxon past. Their growing assumption of Englishness was not yet associated with a common language, but instead through a shared past that they were actively participating in, while still maintaining a split loyalty and pride in their Norman lineage.

By the end of the twelfth century attitudes within the Latin community had changed. One example is the work of William of Newburgh, *Historia Rerum Anglicarum*. His chronicle begins with the Norman Conquest and ends suddenly in 1198, presumably the year he died, or so asserts Gransden.\textsuperscript{139} In William’s history we see a complete departure from the justified invasion and conquest of the English people by William I. Where Henry of Huntingdon, like his contemporary William of Malmesbury, saw the Conquest justified, and further implied that the Normans were used by God to cleanse England because of their savagery, William of Newburgh cast savagery and a bloodthirsty nature as the impetus for the invasion.\textsuperscript{140} William did not see the Conquest as justified and William I was certainly not a figure to be revered, calling him by his true name, William the Bastard. William II fared no better in the eyes of William of Newburgh, who viewed the second son of the Conqueror as someone unfit to rule, “a man without sense and stability in


\textsuperscript{139} Gransden, *Historical Writing in England*, 263.

all of his ways.”  

William Rufus was further condemned for his ungodliness and oppression of the English people, especially through his dealing with the English church.

William of Newburgh’s handling of William I and his son at first gives the impression that the northern chronicler may have been born to a family of the dispossessed, and he could very well have been. We know very little about William beyond his education at the Augustinian priory at Newburgh where he later became a canon. What we know about his family is disputed by a charter possibly identifying the chronicler as a man who married an heiress and went into the ecclesiastical community later in life. Based on that scenario, however, we are still no closer in knowing who William was or the position of his family prior to the Conquest. While it is tempting to place William strictly within the dispossessed community, like the author of the First Worcester Fragment who laments the displacement of the English by the oppressive Normans, William is rather a skeptic and critical of the past. It has often been remarked that William of Newburgh is, perhaps, the medieval chronicler who is most like the modern historian in terms of his source criticism and demand for the reliability of those sources, but as alluded to above William was also critical of individuals’ character, especially where he deemed it as divergent from his own Christian morality. His dissatisfaction of the quality of character of

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141 The History of English Affairs, 43.

142 Gransden, Historical Writing in England, 263.

143 Gransden, Historical Writing in England, 264. There has been some attempt to identify William of Newburgh with a ‘William canon of Newburgh’ who appears in a charter during this period. This man led a secular life and was married, not having become a canon before he was perhaps fifty-years-old. Gransden dismisses the connection, concluding that the level of mastery William had for Latin would suggest that he had been a canon the majority of his adult life, as well as the commonness of the name ‘William.’ I am more accepting of the notion that the William identified in the charter may in fact be the chronicler discussed here. The charter provides the name of William’s father, Elyas de Meysnilhermer, but the name itself provides no indication of how long the family had been in England or how they had possibly been effected by the Conquest. The matter is trivial in a way, but does help to establish what community connection William of Newburgh may have had. Also see: H.E. Salter, “William of Newburgh,” The English Historical Review 22, no. 87 (July, 1907): 510-514.
both William I and II rests partly on their relationship with the English church and the injustices the northern chronicler attributed to them. When we look at his handling of Henry I, on the other hand, we see a much more favorable representation of the king, associated strongly with his kindness towards the church.  

William of Newburgh’s criticism towards the first two Norman kings was not solely confined to their treatment of the church, but, as mentioned above, in the case of William I his unjust persecution of the English people. William Rufus is seen by the northern chronicler to have carried on with the policies of his father and the continued maltreatment of the English. Henry I is then seen as the one who begins to restore some semblance of dignity to the English, at least in the eyes of William, through not only his piety and respect towards the English church, but also through his ability to rule and, in a way, become English. William continues to be critical of English monarchs throughout his chronicle, with scorn shown to both Stephen and Richard I, but it is his handling of the Conquest and his interest in the treatment of the English people that makes his work truly remarkable when compared to other Latin texts of the same period. While William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon were both sympathetic to the English affected directly by the Conquest, both writers held far more contempt for the people and worked aggressively at times to justify William of Normandy’s invasion and subsequent subjugation of the English people. William of Newburgh was outspoken in both relating his disgust towards the Conquest in general, and of his own Englishness. The attacks on the English

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144 It is worth noting that William was the only writer of the twelfth century to label Geoffrey of Monmouth’s Historia Regum Britanniae as a piece of fiction, stating that if Arthur had existed Bede would have mentioned it. For remarks about William’s “modern historian” qualities, see: John Gillingham, “The Historian as Judge: William of Newburgh and Hubert Walter,” The English Historical Review 119, no. 484 (Nov., 2004): 1275-1278; Gransden, 263; Carpenter, The Struggle for Mastery, 544.

145 The History of English Affairs, 45-51.

146 The History of English Affairs, 43-45.
church were not seen as actions directed just towards the English ecclesiastical institution, but rather as attacks on English culture and by extension the English people.

Insular Latin writers of the twelfth century demonstrated a shift in how the other peoples of the British Isles, namely the Scots, Welsh, and Irish, were characterized and viewed. For the first time we begin to see in England a sense of contempt and the active abasement of those who were not English in the archipelago. John Gillingham and R.R. Davies see this phenomenon as the need to characterize the others as barbarous to justify conquest, which they see as the beginning of English imperialism.\footnote{Gillingham,\textit{ The Angevin Empire}, 22-33; Davies,\textit{ The First English Empire}, 113-141.} The emphasis on otherness, though, extended beyond the shores of the isles and the defining of Englishness began to take on an unprecedented xenophobic element. William of Malmesbury may have been the first to cast an “other” as barbaric in his handling of the Welsh, while William of Newburgh viewed the Scots as a barbarous nation, and Gerald of Wales treated the Irish in much the same way.\footnote{Carpenter, 15.} By the early thirteenth century, the primary way Latin chroniclers are distinguishing their identity from those around them is through the otherness of surrounding peoples. Increased tensions with France following the loss of Normandy, Tours, Anjou, and Poitou by John in 1204 only intensified anti-French sentiment in England and the casting of the French as mortal enemies bent on the destruction of the English people.\footnote{Thomas, \textit{The English and the Normans}, 332-334; \textit{Roger of Wendover's Flowers of History}, trans. and ed. J.A. Giles, Volume II (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1968): 213-214.} This is one element of Englishness that is absolutely unique to the Latin community, with no writers outside of it beginning to use similar language and themes until the mid-thirteenth century.
Roger of Wendover’s *Flores Historiarum* truly encapsulates the shift in the Latin community to focus not only on the other but also on the utter suspicion and hatred of anyone deemed a foreigner. Roger’s chronicle is a compilation of other monastic histories from Creation to around 1200, with few alterations made from the sources he used over the aforementioned period: his account of the moral decline of the English people as the consequence of the Norman Conquest is copied closely from Henry of Huntingdon’s *Historia Anglorum*.\(^{150}\) Gransden notes that after Roger’s entry for 1202 he used no known literary authority, but rather he became the authority to 1234 when the chronicle ends and Roger presumably died.\(^{151}\) It is from about 1204 onward, however, that Roger seemed to find his voice: one which is overly critical of foreigners and relies heavily on the condemnation of the other as a means of defining Englishness.

To Roger, the loss of Normandy in 1204 partly stemmed from John’s decision to marry a foreign bride, Isabel, daughter of the count of Angoulême, on the advice of the king of France after the disillusion of his previous marriage to a native born Englishwoman, Hawisa, the daughter of the earl of Gloucester.\(^{152}\) In Roger’s account, John became complacent with his foreign bride with whom “he believed that he possessed everything he wanted,” and no longer caring to keep his kingdom intact, and through his gluttony believed that his lands were only temporarily lost to him.\(^{153}\) Like William of Malmesbury, Henry of Huntingdon, Gerald of Wales, and William of Newburgh, Roger identifies the barbarous nature of the other peoples of the British Isles as the clearest indication of difference between them and the English. He describes

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\(^{153}\) *Flowers of History II*, 213-214.
the advantageous Welsh bursting “fiercely forth from their hiding-places” to attack English castles during the uncertainty of the interdict. The Welsh here are treated as if they are subhuman, committing atrocities and mutilating victims in a heathenish fashion. The English king then sets forth with an army to “ravage the Welsh territories, and to exterminate the inhabitants.” While the notion of the extermination of the English people is a reoccurring theme in the threat of a French invasion of England, the barbarous Welsh are a people in need of conquest, or at least Roger would have us think.

Roger’s text becomes increasingly anti-French as hostilities continued to build between John and Phillip II of France, beginning first with a rumored French invasion in 1213. Despite the profound unrest domestically between John and his subjects over the interdict, John issued a call to arms of all ships and men to repel the possible French invasion, one which was answered with such popular support that the chronicler notes that after several days the supplies began to dwindle and the commanders of the army were forced to send a large number of men home. As noted above, the threat of invasion was one which was taken quite seriously with the memory of the Conquest not as distant as some historians would believe. Anti-French rhetoric further increased as a result of the prolonged baronial struggle beginning around 1214 and lasting the remainder of John’s reign with intermittent instances of peace, most notably after the signing of Magna Carta in 1215. The renewal of hostilities in 1216 and the invitation of the barons to the heir to the French throne, the future Louis VIII, to invade England and take the throne as their king complicated matters in several ways.

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154 *Flowers of History II*, 257.
155 *Flowers of History II*, 257.
156 *Flowers of History II*, 263.
Indeed, Roger is at odds with how to handle the situation. On the one hand he clearly agrees that the barons and the community of the realm have suffered great injustices under John, especially through his abandonment of the good laws of Edward the Confessor which were reinstated through a charter by Henry I, which was seen as an abandonment of Englishness.\footnote{Flowers of History II, 276.} On the other hand Roger also outlines the treacherous character of the French through Louis’ betrayal of the barons and his plans to seize the English throne for himself and cast out the barons and all other Englishmen.\footnote{Flowers of History II, 377.} Both sides relied on foreigners, John with foreign mercenaries to bolster his own weak position, while the barons called on a foreign prince to champion their cause. The situation completely changes, though, in Roger’s eyes with the death of John and the coronation of his nine-year-old son Henry III, who upon his coronation swears an oath to uphold the charter that was abandoned by his father and to restore the old laws and customs of the kingdom.\footnote{Flowers of History II, 379-80.} Through his condemnation of the unlawfulness of his father and reestablishment of liberties and customs, Henry III becomes the embodiment of Englishness and strips the barons of any justification for further conflict. While Roger allows for the barons to be vindicated in their apprehension towards the young king and his regency, for trust has easily been broken between the monarch and his barons, the tremendous loss at the battle of Lincoln in 1217 followed by the further solidification of the royalist position ended any validity of the continued rebellion against the king.\footnote{Flowers of History II, 385, 391-400.} At this point Louis had clearly lost any claim given to him by the barons, and intended to do harm to the community of the realm in general.\footnote{Flowers of History II, 385.} It was
the treachery of the French and the barons’ abandonment of their Englishness that lost them the rebellion, while Henry is seen as embodying Englishness through his use of superior English soldiery to defeat the foreign invaders, and restoring peace and justice to his people: the community of the realm.

Historians covering the baronial struggles in the reign of John and those during the reign of Henry III – which will be covered more comprehensively in the next chapter – tend to label monastic writers as either pro-baronial or royalist to reflect their position in either conflict. Indeed, Gransden makes it a point to categorize insular Latin writers who covered the events.¹⁶² Not all Latin monastic writers were solely interested in the merits of each side, but, as in the case of Roger of Wendover, were concerned over the suppression of rights of Englishmen and their displacement by foreigners. Like with English and French writers, part of the Englishness of insular Latin writers was based in the shared laws and customs of the land in association with a shared history. Writers like Roger became primarily concerned with the derogation of the position and rights of natural born Englishmen in the face of the elevation of foreigners. As we can see in Roger’s text he wavered in support between the barons and the monarch, but his loyalty ultimately rested with what he believed was in the best interest of the community of the realm. His royalist stance at the beginning of Henry III’s reign changed when the king began to dismiss his native advisors in favor of his kin from Poitou, seen by Roger as the onset of a new period of lawlessness and, in the words attributed to the son of William Marshal, earl of Pembroke, the “oppression of the kingdom and of [Henry’s] natural subjects.”¹⁶³ It is not an accurate assessment in the case of Roger of Wendover to place him in either category of pro-


¹⁶³ Flowers of History II, 566.
baron or royalist, but rather to assess the position of Roger as one who cherished the natural rights and liberties of Englishmen above all else. His outlook was influenced by his own Englishness rather than political loyalties.

As this chapter has shown, while all of the language communities participated in an English national identity constructed from a shared history, culture, and customs, each maintained a sense of uniqueness that differentiated them. The English community lamented the loss of their status and their displacement in the face of the Norman invaders, a shared memory and experience that continued to resonate into and beyond the early thirteenth century. As a unique attribute of their Englishness, the dispossessed clung not only to the English church but also, more importantly, to their shared language. The Anglo-Norman community largely constructed their Englishness through an assumption of shared history, one which saw the appropriation of the Anglo-Saxon past as the shared past of the new English nation. By way of assimilation, the Anglo-Normans began to fade as a distinctive identity into one of a new English people, one that also became strongly linked with English culture and customs, most notably through English saints. Over the course of the twelfth century the connection with Normandy became less important, and by the loss of the duchy in 1204 the transition from Anglo-Normans to English was indeed easy for the majority of those with Norman lineage. The insular Latin historiographical writers of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries perhaps illustrate best the fluidity of medieval identity with all of the writers clearly demonstrating multiple loyalties and community affiliations. While these writers also constructed their Englishness through shared history, culture, and customs, they also exhibited a unique trait of illustrating their national identity by way of contrast to an “other.” Indeed, this became the single most distinctive feature of Englishness expressed by the Latin community: the hatred of the foreigner.
While this chapter emphasized the discrepancy of Englishness felt and expressed by these communities, the next chapter will show how the three communities came together during the baronial struggles of the 1250s to proliferate a more inclusive Englishness. As we have seen here, the common elements of shared history, culture, and customs were consistent throughout the three communities, writers of the mid-thirteenth century, ever so briefly, began to emphasize the importance of one further element: their shared English language.
Chapter Two

“Their utmost endeavors to oppress the natural English subjects and nobles…”\textsuperscript{164}  
*National Identity, the Community of the Realm, and Language during the reign of Henry III*

Identities in medieval England were often in flux and constant need of negotiation. They meant different things to different people, and, in thirteenth century England, the concept of Englishness was particularly controversial. The personal Englishness of Henry III stands out as an interesting example of how national identity was assumed and negotiated with multiple loyalties, while also highlighting the ongoing process of change and reshaping of Englishness. As it has been argued, Henry was, perhaps, the most English king of the post-conquest period up until the reign of his son, Edward I.\textsuperscript{165} Unlike most of his predecessors, he spent the majority of his reign in England, he was also a great patron to the English church, and he took great personal interest in the governance and management of his realm. He was, though, very much an international monarch with lands and aspirations outside of his kingdom.

Despite the loss of Normandy, Anjou, and Poitou by John in 1204, Henry not only continued to claim these titles as his own, but he spent his reign trying to win back the lost lands of his father. He was also duke of Aquitaine and was often occupied with the need to defend its border against encroachments by the French king and competing French nobles. Henry’s aspiration were not limited to himself or expansion in France, but also the creation of a new English empire that stretched into the Mediterranean, with his son Edmund as king of Sicily. He supported his brother Richard in his candidacy as king of Germany and Holy Roman Emperor: another incident of attempted English expansion. Due to the international nature of his kingship,

\begin{footnotes}
\item[164] *Flowers of History II*, 566.
\item[165] Carpenter, *The Struggle for Mastery*, 353: “He was far more English than any king since 1066.”
\end{footnotes}
as well as the international composition of his family, Henry came to trust and rely on people from outside of his primary realm of England, much to the scorn of the English aristocracy. From the beginning of Henry’s personal reign in 1227 until the baronial rebellion in the late 1250s and early 1260s, domestic affairs of the kingdom were repeatedly dominated by the aggravation and contempt the English aristocracy held towards the foreigners in the king’s court. With this scorn came the question of what it meant to be English, and the issue of the importance of the governance of the English by the English.

The barons, while focused on their displacement by foreigners, came to be concerned with the much larger issue concerning the governance of the realm and the protection of what would come to be called the “community of the realm.” Even though the phrase may seem out of place in the Middle Ages and appear to be more egalitarian than the composition of medieval society would allow, the phrase was meant to truly represent all Englishmen, large and small. This was certainly no impetus for democratic rule in England, but it did provide the precedent for the growing role of the political institution of Parliament to become much more prevalent in English politics and society. Henry’s struggle with his barons that led to open civil war in the 1260s witnessed perhaps the largest popular uprising against a sitting English king and his government until the Peasants Revolt of the late-fourteenth century. It was not just the barons who were at war with the king, but the community of the realm which was galvanized to strike back at corruption of foreigners taking control of what should have been an English administered nation. While the popular movement was certainly short lived, effectively ending with the death

of Simon de Montfort at the battle of Evesham in 1265, the movement itself is of great importance not only because of the sweeping powers over taxation and the composition of royal government granted to Parliament, but also due to the brief instance of a truly united English nation.

As shown in the previous chapter, while each community exhibited their Englishness uniquely, the basis of English national identity by the early thirteenth century consisted of a shared history, culture, and customs. The English community represented perhaps the most significant deviation with profound emphasis placed on their shared language as a marker of both their Englishness and especially what made them English in the face of their Norman oppressors. This aspect of national identity for the English community is one that can continue to be traced well into the fourteenth century, and the shared memory of the Norman Conquest, at least as we can see through those writing in English during the period, continued to produce a feeling of dispossession and in some ways estrangement from their own physical nation. The civil war of the 1260s, however, illustrates the first point in the history of what has been described throughout this thesis as the new English nation: a temporary lowering of barriers, so to speak, of language as a separating factor of the English community from the rest of the English nation. Writers in both Latin and English express not only contempt for those who do not speak English, but imply that to be English one needs to know and use the language. As with the popular uprising led by Simon de Montfort, this connection is ever so brief, but is truly significant in that it shows the profound sense of Englishness displayed by those who two generations before continued to exhibit of mixed identity of English and Norman. With this, it shows the importance of the English language as a marker of national identity in thirteenth century England: one that is fleeting for some and deeply rooted for others.
This chapter will be divided into two sections. The first will examine the solidification of Englishness by the aristocracy in the early through the mid-thirteenth century, the personal Englishness of Henry III, and the concentration of anti-foreign rhetoric as a significant impetus for the civil war of the 1260s. The second section will focus on the civil war itself, looking at the popular movement of the community of the realm and use of elements of English national identity as a force to galvanize Englishmen to take up arms. It will also look at the use of the English language as a marker of Englishness for the nation at large, an issue which may seem to warrant its own section entirely, but the two are so intertwined that it is best to handle them together.

**National Identity and the Personal Englishness of Henry III, 1227-1258**

While the loss of Angevin Empire under John represented a shift of concentration from the governance of a wide empire to one more solely focused on the governance of England, in the case of the monarch and members of the aristocracy who held lands on the continent. As Robin Frame points out, though, this change was not one that happened overnight, and until the failed campaigns of Henry III in 1229-1230, there reminded high hopes among the king and the barons of a reunited empire.¹⁶⁷ Loyalties of the English king’s Norman subjects on the continent, however, appeared to have changed quickly in support for Phillip Augustus following his seizure of Normandy; by the end of 1204 a majority of Norman magnates abandoned John and swore allegiance to the French king. Those who continued to hold lands on both sides of the channel were forced to make a choice, effectively choosing whether to be English or Norman lords. The decisions appear to have been based partly on the amount of land held on one side or the other, with those of the aristocracy who held stronger ties to Normandy, both in terms of land and

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identity, chose to depart England for their estates there. From this point on Latin sources begin to refer to the Normans as those who abandoned England for the continent following 1204, putting an end to the distinction between the Anglo-Norman lords and their English counterparts.\footnote{168 Thomas, \textit{The English and the Normans}, 332-333. It will be discussed later on, but it is important to note that English vernacular sources continued to make a distinction between the Anglo-Norman oppressors and the dispossessed English.} It is no surprise, then, that by the early thirteenth century the aristocracy in England began to express their identity as English rather than Normans. While their Norman lineage did remain important and certainly continued to affect their collective identity for perhaps another generation, they came to view themselves largely as English. With the Anglo-Normans assimilated and now viewing themselves as strictly English, the initial struggles between Henry and his barons over the elevation of foreigners to the highest office in the kingdom begin to make a bit more sense.

The first signs of trouble are depicted by Roger of Wendover in his entry marking Henry’s declaration before the great magnates of England that he was now of age and would dissolve his regency.\footnote{169 \textit{Flowers of History II}, 485-486.} With this, Henry dismissed his councilors and elevated Hubert de Burgh, justiciar of England, above Peter des Roches, who had served as guardian alongside William Marshal before taking a position of greater prominence following Marshal’s death in 1219. At first the point of contention was the dismissal of the councilors that had surrounded Henry during his minority in favor of Hubert de Burgh, who the barons feared was filling the young king’s ear with poison, a notion that on the surface appears conspiratorial, yet in 1232 when Hubert de Burgh was dismissed, the accusations levied against him demonstrate not only the disdain towards him harbored by the barons but also the reality of the malleability of the king. The crimes attributed to Hubert de Burgh in Wendover’s chronicle suggests several miscarriages of
justice on his part, along with bold accusations that he poisoned William Marshal and William Earl of Salisbury, and murdered the previous archbishop of Canterbury. 170 The source of the scorn by the barons towards de Burgh likely stemmed from his less than subtle aggrandizement of his own position, namely being created the earl of Kent, as well as assuming powerful lordships along the Welsh marches. With this he successfully and considerably padded his own coffers, suggesting, as Michael Prestwich has remarked, “resentment was inevitable.”171

De Burgh wanted an “England for the English,” in the words of Matthew Paris, reflected by his policy towards the papacy, in which he advocated for the elevation of native born Englishmen to prominent church offices, a practice largely abandoned after the Norman Conquest.172 Despite the clear hatred for de Burgh, he was never attacked on the grounds of his Englishness save for one facet: his loyalty to the king. He was blamed for failure of Henry’s French campaign in 1229 by purposefully acquiring too few ships for king’s army to make the Channel crossing.173 In this case de Burgh was branded a traitor by the king, who believed he was in league with the French queen to frustrate his plans. By the time of his deposition and exile Henry regarded de Burgh as an outright traitor, refusing to even entertain any defense.174 In the end de Burgh was guilty of committing injustices against his follow Englishmen, at least in the eyes of the barons, though he was far guiltier of corrupting the king to serve his own ends. Perhaps the most significant facet of the de Burgh’s rise and downfall for the purpose of this

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170 Flowers of History II, 553-555.


173 Flowers of History II, 531.

174 Flowers of History II, 553-559.
study is that it establishes a narrative of the malleability of Henry, emphasizing the simple nature
of the king and the ease with which he was corrupted. Indeed, a reading of the Roger of
Wendover’s chronicle leaves one with the impression that any injustice committed under the
reign of Henry was not due to the evil nature of the king but that of his advisors. At one point he
even declared the king a simpleton who relied solely on the advice of his one councilor.175 One
should be cautious not to take Wendover’s account entirely at face value, but rather to
acknowledge the trope established by the author: it is one that will continuously reappear by
other writers of Henry’s reign.

The political maneuvering by powerful individuals in the early years of Henry’s personal
reign certainly reinforced such notions of the simple nature of the young king. The power
vacuum left by the deposed justiciar of England was filled by the man who orchestrated his
downfall, Peter des Roches, bishop of Winchester. Des Roches, previously the guardian of the
king, after his dismissal from court in 1227 in part caused by Hubert de Burgh, spent the
intervening time abroad, but on his return worked to regain his former position of influence over
Henry.176 Considering the shifting of power between the two parties, it does appear that the king
had little agency of his own, and was too greatly influenced by those around him. Such readings
do not take into account the active participation on Henry’s part in the governance of the realm.
Rather, it appears that Henry had tired of de Burgh who may have in fact stood in the way of the
king’s desire to resurrect the power of the crown to pre-Magna Carta levels.177

177 Clanchy, England and Its Rulers, 155-156; The Chronicle of Bury St. Edmunds states that, “Hubert [Hugh] de
Burgh, earl of Kent, was imprisoned because he had incurred the king’s displeasure.” It seems that the chronicler
only remarked on it because de Burgh’s wife fled to the monastery of Bury St. Edmunds for safety. The brief
mention, though, does illustrate that de Burgh most likely fell out of favor with the king and was removed because
This is exactly what Henry did with Peter des Roches and Peter des Rivaux at his side. In 1233, Henry began to institute sweeping changes to the administration of the kingdom, dismissing a substantial number of his ministers, Wendover claiming all of them were native born Englishmen, and replacing them with primarily Poitevins, a move reminiscent to the one taken by Henry’s father prior to Magna Carta. With this, thousands of foreign mercenaries were brought into the kingdom to garrison castles with the aim of potentially physically supporting the reforms of the new regime, suggesting that hostilities were clearly seen as a possibility with the king’s court. As Clanchy notes, the move to restore royal authority was reminiscent of the efforts made under John’s reign, with intentional emphasis of the change illustrated through the reappointment of exiled foreign favorites of John. History here repeated itself, with the barons once again rising up to combat injustices on the part of the king. But despite the clear agency on Henry’s part to consolidate royal power, the sources of the period insist that the young king was manipulated by his foreign advisors with particular emphasis placed on the corruptibility of Henry.

In Roger of Wendover’s account of the reaction of the barons led by Richard Marshal, the son of William Marshal, first earl of Pembroke, reproached the king for his destruction of the laws of the land and “by ill advice introduced…foreigners of Poitou to the oppression of the kingdom and of his natural subjects.” Responding for the king in Roger’s chronicle, Peter des Roches declares that the king was “surely allowed to summon as many foreigners as he chose for


178 Flowers of History II, 565-566.

179 Clanchy, England and Its Rulers, 156.

180 Flowers of History II, 566
the protection of his kingdom and the crown,” and further emphasizing his disdain towards the English aristocrats, insisting that the king should import as many foreign men as needed to “reduce his haughty and rebellious subjects to their proper obedience.”  

This was not only a harking back to the ambitions of repressive royal authority seen during the reign of John in the eyes of the barons, but an absolute affront to their liberties and precedence as Englishmen. And throughout the entire conflict the king is not seen as being at fault, but perpetually corrupted by Peter des Roches. As tempers flared and open civil war once again appeared to be on the horizon, Roger’s account of events places the blame solely on regime of des Roches, claiming that the “bishop of Winchester and his colleagues had so perverted the king’s heart with hatred and contempt for his English subjects, that he endeavored by all the means in his power to exterminate them,” through his invitation “legions of Poitevins” who surrounded the king and separated him from all other magnates.  

By des Roches’ encouragement and manipulation the king persisted in his tyrannical policies pushing the Marshal to take up arms as the champion of the native-born English.

The battle was then pitted between the seeming puppet master des Roche, a Poitevin foreigner, and Richard Marshal, who had previously been a vassal of Phillip Augustus before he came into his inheritance as Earl Marshal upon the death of his brother in 1231, an allegiance which may have created reason to question his Englishness. Richard was not unlike many second sons of great nobles, often by necessity seeking their fortune abroad due to the limited potential of inheritance through primogeniture. Indeed, Richard went to France to claim his

\[181\] Flowers of History II, 566.

\[182\] Flowers of History II, 567-568.

\[183\] Clanchy, England and Its Rulers, 157: Here Clanchy makes the claim that even though Richard’s loyalty could have been called into question and that he could have been viewed as a Frenchman by prior allegiance, but that ‘Frenchmen were as much the enemies of Poitevins as English patriots were.’
father’s Norman lands, but relinquished his claim following the death of his brother. Through this, Richard was no less English, but rather followed opportunity wherever it may have taken him like so many others of the lesser sons of noble birth. Any questions regarding Richard’s loyalty to England and his identity as an Englishman would have been invalidated by the position Marshal took during his conflict with king and Poitevins, with the earl seen as the defender of the English people and justice of the land. Roger of Wendover recounts that even though the Marshal faced difficult odds, by way of the king’s superior numbers and wealth to hire more foreigner mercenaries than Richard could, the earl replied by saying, “I do not put my trust in foreigners, nor do I seek their alliance,” further stating that only in the most desperate of circumstances would he even consider it.\textsuperscript{184} Richard indeed sought alliance with foreigners, namely Llewellyn, prince of Gwynedd in north Wales, but Roger does not condemn the act, regardless of his negative treatment of the Welsh throughout his chronicle, rather seeing it as a necessary evil to combat the greater threat of the Poitevins.

The conflict resulted in open rebellion in the Welsh marches, with Richard Marshal departing for Ireland due to pressure being placed on his holdings there by des Roches in 1234.\textsuperscript{185} Meanwhile, the king at convened a council at Westminster in April comprised of the magnates not in rebellion with Marshal and high ranking members of the clergy in hopes of quelling a widespread baronial revolt reminiscent of his father’s reign. There the newly elected archbishop of Canterbury, Edmund Rich of Abingdon, threatened the king with excommunication if he were not to make amends with the earl of Pembroke and expel the Poitevins from his court.\textsuperscript{186} As Roger of Wendover remarks, “the king dutifully listened to the

\textsuperscript{184} Flowers of History II, 577.

\textsuperscript{185} Prestwich, Plantagenet England, 87.
advice of the prelates, and answered with humility, that he would yield to their counsel in everything.”  

Henry indeed did: within days of the council des Roches was dismissed from court to see to the cure of souls in his diocese, and the Poitevins were asked to leave England and return to their homeland.  

Efforts were made to reach Richard Marshal and Llewellyn to make peace, but by the time this was done Marshal had already died: he was wounded in Ireland during the Battle of the Curragh in April 1234, captured and imprisoned by Maurice FitzGerald, jusiciar of Ireland, and died two weeks later. Roger records that upon hearing of the death of Richard Marshal the king “burst into lamentations for the death of such a distinguished knight,” to the shock of all those present.  

The day after Henry received news of Richard’s death, through the encouragement of the archbishop of Canterbury at Gloucester the king issued letters summoning the Marshal’s supporters to make peace, the king promising in the process to remove foreigners from his court and in their place elevate Englishmen. It is at this point that Roger states that the king “then fully discovered how he had been led way by the craftiness of his former advisors.”  

Here the young king is once again relieved of blame by way of his easy manipulated by foreigners.  

Such susceptibility of the king to foreigners continues to be a scapegoat to avoid personally implicating Henry in the injustices committed by his government. The leading figures in the kingdom after the rebellion of Richard Marshal were Edmund Rich, along with Richard earl of Cornwall, the brother of the king, and other native born Englishmen. As Prestwich notes,

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186 Vincent, 434-436.  
187 Flowers of History, 586.  
188 Prestwich, Plantagenet England, 87; Vincent, 436-437; Flowers of History, 586.  
189 Flowers of History II, 592.  
190 Flowers of History II, 594.
this new regime was a moderate one, effectively restoring the rights and liberties of the aristocracy to their position before the rebellion occurred.\textsuperscript{191} But once again in 1236, upon the king’s marriage to Eleanor of Provence, foreigners began to slowly fill Henry’s court, first with the relatives of the queen, labelled the Savoyards in the sources, and later the king’s half-brothers from Poitou. The greatest influx of new foreigners to the king’s court and service did not occur until the mid-1240s. All the while political difficulties continued to ensue over quibbles over taxation, while Henry continued to maneuver to recoup more royal authority.\textsuperscript{192} As noted above, Henry took a very active role in the governance of his realm, made even more apparent after the office of the justiciar was left vacant in part because Henry sought a greater level of independence.\textsuperscript{193} Henry’s impression of his position and power as king was no doubt influence profoundly by Peter des Roches, who advocated the king was a man without peers and superior in all matters of state.\textsuperscript{194} Roches’s mentorship of Henry during his youth and minority shaped the king he would be: one who fought bitterly with his barons at times to reassert the supremacy of the sovereign to pre-Magna Carta levels. Henry was often beaten back, as in 1237 when his request for taxation was met with the threat of rebellion and he was forced to promise to reissue Magna Carta.\textsuperscript{195} Indeed, like Henry’s efforts to consolidate his own power, the elevation of foreigners in his court was not done simply through manipulation, but primarily was a product of

\textsuperscript{191} Prestwich, \textit{Plantagenet England}, 87-89.

\textsuperscript{192} Prestwich, \textit{Plantagenet England}, 90-93.


\textsuperscript{194} Vincent, 9-10, 134-183.

\textsuperscript{195} Prestwich, \textit{Plantagenet England}, 89.
Henry’s own agency to surround himself with people he trusted and who he believed would support his ongoing efforts to bolster his position at home and abroad.\textsuperscript{196}

To understand Henry’s distrust in his barons we must acknowledge a few things about the king’s character and personality. It is well documented that Henry was not only a nervous man, but one who was prone to paranoia. In 1238 when a man tried to climb through his bedroom chamber at Woodstock to murder him, the king reacted by having iron bars fitted on every entrance to his chambers, including the outflow of his privy.\textsuperscript{197} The king was in constant fear that his minister and magnates were plotting against him, a fear which may have been self-serving due to his contentious relationship with the aristocracy throughout his reign. Indeed, his fear had grown to such prominent levels that in 1256, two years before he was seized by a group of nobles led by Roger Bigod, earl of Norfolk, Henry had a picture in his washroom at Westminster painted depicting a king being rescued by his faithful dogs from the “sedition plotted against him by his own men.”\textsuperscript{198} While the sources suggest that Henry was a nervous man overall, the rebellion during the reign of his father appears to have had long-lasting effects on the king, seemingly having instilled an inherent sense of distrust among those who were, in his eyes, supposed to be the king’s men. Such an outlook may have even been encouraged by Peter des Roches, who encouraged Henry’s affection towards the memory of his father during his tutelage and minority.\textsuperscript{199} Through this, the king viewed his native-born barons as quarrelsome men who not only questioned the sovereignty and even the sanctity of the monarch, but actively plotted

\textsuperscript{196} Clanchy, \textit{England and Its Rulers}, 161-163.


\textsuperscript{198} Clanchy, \textit{England and Its Rulers}, 162.

\textsuperscript{199} Vincent, 10.
against him to limit his powers and authority to govern the realm as he saw fit. This inherent distrust towards the native-born aristocracy and the repeated experience of open hostilities towards the king that pushed Henry to continue to surround himself with his own men, those of foreign origin who the king believed would be loyal beyond a fault.

Henry’s reliance and preference for foreign men in his court, along with the contempt he felt towards native-born aristocrats calls into question the Englishness of Henry himself. Indeed, the personal Englishness of Henry complicates matters and creates somewhat of a quagmire in understanding how the king expressed his own national identity, but exalted foreign men above all others. As stated above, Henry was the most English king since the Norman Conquest, a claim made by numerous scholars, and one that is easily quantifiable. Like his fellow Englishmen, especially the assimilated Anglo-Normans, Henry revered not only Anglo-Saxon kings, but also the saints. His dedication to the king-saint Edward the Confessor is well known and began during Henry’s youth with the laying of the foundation stones at Westminster Abbey in 1220, a glowing symbol of the veneration of the Confessor and the Anglo-Saxon past. Henry was also the first post-Conquest king to name his sons after Anglo-Saxon kings, Edward after the Confessor and Edmund after the ninth century king-saint of East Anglia. While this in part is also a reflection of Henry’s piety, an aspect of his character well noted by his contemporaries, it demonstrates a close connection he felt with his nation and its history.

Henry also adhered to what he believed were the laws and customs of England, especially in how he perceived the power and authority invested in him as king. Perhaps the most

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contentious question during Henry’s reign, and the major point of conflict between him and the native born aristocracy, was regarding the prerogative of the monarch to appoint his own minister and assemble his own councils as he saw fit. For Henry, he was simply following an established custom of English kings in the governance of their realm, though, as his baronial adversaries were quick to point out, such a custom conflicted with the provisions of Magna Carta. While this was true, the provisions themselves were vague and liable to a profound degree of interpretation.\(^{202}\) Indeed, Henry’s belief in the sanctity and not-quite-absolute authority of the monarch were grounded in the customs and liberties of his predecessors, especially the prerogative of the king to select his own advisors.\(^{203}\) With this, Henry expanded the scope of the justices of the Eyre, nearly all of whom were Englishmen, and made the administration of royal justice a priority of his reign.\(^{204}\) In his eyes he was acting in a similar capacity as his grandfather, Henry II, by expanding the English common law system while also strengthening the influence and prestige of the monarchy at the same time.

Henry also viewed his expansionist ambitions to be strictly in line with the customs and prerogative of the English monarch. This is an important aspect of Henry’s outlook on kingship overall and of the international nature in which he envisioned his kingship and kingdom. In this Henry was not mistaken: William I demanded and received homage from Scotland, with ambitions to conquer both Wales and Ireland; Henry I took Normandy from his brother Robert,


\(^{203}\) M.T. Clanchy has argued that Henry III believed in the absolute authority of the monarch, anachronistically applying the term ‘absolutism’ to the policies and personal rule of the king. While Henry did pursue policies which would have consolidated and even expanded the power of his royal prerogative, the king continued to delegate responsibility, and often backed down from his most ardent attempts to secure ‘absolute authority.’ See, M.T. Clanchy, “Did Henry III Have a Policy?” *History* 53 (1968): 207-19; Carpenter, “Kings, Magnates, and Society,” 39-70.

\(^{204}\) Clanchy, *England and Its Rulers*, 150 and 159.
reuniting England and Normandy under the sovereign of the English crown; and the Angevin
Empire was created under Henry II.\textsuperscript{205} The loss of the empire under John signified a dramatic
shift in the position of the English king, as noted above, but also on the aristocracy who
increasingly thereafter became concerned with the lands of the primary domain: England. But
with the loss of the continental lands did not come a shift in the English monarch’s view of their
position on the international stage. Indeed, John viewed the losses as temporary, and Henry
worked to regain the lands lost by his father until the Treaty of Paris in 1259. To Henry, and
certainly his two most immediate predecessors, the presence of the English monarch on the
continent, as well as the defense and expansion of those lands, was just as crucial, and just as
English, as the defense and expansion of the kingdom in the British Isles.

Henry’s ambitions did not stop at regaining the lands of the Angevin Empire, but also in
the expansion of the prestige and power of his family. In 1254 Henry accepted the throne of the
kingdom of Sicily on behalf of his son Edmund. This offer was extended by the papacy to rid
itself of the scourge of the Hohenstaufens after the death of Frederick II in 1250.\textsuperscript{206}
Extraordinary sums of money were borrowed by Henry on behalf of the pope, with Matthew
Paris relating with scorn that the king “sent to the pope all the money he could draw from his
treasury, as well as whatever he could scrape from the Jews, or extort by means of his
justiciaries.”\textsuperscript{207} The effort was in vain: Frederick’s illegitimate son defeated the papal army and

\textsuperscript{205} Davies, The First English Empire, 4-20; for William I’s wars with Scotland and receipt of homage, and ambitions
to take Wales and Ireland, see Douglas, William the Conqueror, 159-288; for Henry I and his seize of Normandy, see
Carpenter, The Struggle for Mastery, 137-140; for Henry II and the creation of the Angevin Empire, see
Gillingham, The Angevin Empire, 6-33; for English ambitions in Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, see R.R. Davies,
Domination and Conquest: The Experience of Ireland, Scotland, and Wales 1100-1300 (Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press, 1990): 66-87. The “Angevin Empire,” or the assemblage of the territories of Henry II, is a term
coined in the nineteenth-century by Kate Norgate. There was no contemporary label for Henry’s empire. See
Gillingham, The Angevin Empire, 2-5.

\textsuperscript{206} Carpenter, The Struggle for Mastery, 345-347; also see Clanchy, England and Its Rulers, 169-172.

\textsuperscript{207} Matthew Paris, English History III, 90.
gained control of Sicily by the summer of 1255, though Edmund was invested as king of Sicily before word reached England that the pope’s army had been destroyed and all of Henry’s money had been spent. Anti-papal rhetoric was also profoundly high preceding and following the Sicilian affair, further damaging the credibility of the king’s regime among those both high and low in England. Indeed, Matthew Paris wrote “these and other detestable proceedings, to our shame and sorrow we say it, emanated at this time from the sulphureous fountain of the Roman Church.” Henry also supported his brother Richard earl of Cornwall in his election as king of Germany, another political endeavor that never produced dividends, but instead engendered further discord between the king and his barons.

Henry certainly saw himself as English and acted in accordance with what he believed to be the laws and customs of not only the kingdom but also of the crown and his predecessors. His outlook on kingship and royal authority were not conducive, however, with the change political and ideological landscape of the English nation. The provisions of Magna Carta and the liberties expected thereafter by the aristocracy suggested that they were to have a voice not just in the governance of the kingdom, but in the very men the king surrounded himself with. The loss of the continental domains and Henry’s inability to regain them signified a profound shift in the priorities of the aristocracy with a greater emphasis placed on their position in England, and the majority of the barons forfeiting their continental lands. The reality of the barons did not coincide with the ambitions of the king, resulting in persistent power struggles over both taxation and royal patronage. Despite Henry’s expansionist desires and preference for foreign men in his


210 For a full account of Henry’s relation with the Hohenstaufens, along with his efforts in Sicily and Germany, see Bjorn Weiler, Henry III of England and the Staufen Empire, 1216-1272 (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006). For an account of Richard’s election as king of Germany, see Matthew Paris, English History III, 207-210.
court, he was English. In fact, this was a point on which the aristocracy never questioned him. Instead, it was not that Henry had abandoned his Englishness and his people, but that foreigners corrupted the king against them, or so his opponents would have contended.

**Baronial Reform and the Community of the Realm, 1258-1265**

The relations between Henry and his people at large had deteriorated so much that in April of 1258 a group of nobles, led by seven original oath takers, outfitted in full armor confronted the king and coerced him into accepting general reforms for the governance of the realm. Such an act was truly unique and even revolutionary.²¹¹ While many of the confrontations between the king and his people in the 1240s and 1250s related to the reluctance on the part of the aristocracy to consent to taxation - which was certainly exacerbated by the financial debacle of Henry’s Sicilian affair, and significantly contributed to the baronial reforms starting in 1258 by the king’s appeal to Parliament for taxation to pay for the debt - the most contentious and outspoken issue became not just the foreigners in Henry’s court, but specifically the Lusignan half-brothers of the king and the Savoyard relatives of Queen Eleanor of Provence.²¹² From their arrival in England – the Savoyards around 1240 and the Lusignans in 1247 – an emphasis was placed by contemporary sources on the clear distinction between the foreigners and the English along lines of national identity.

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²¹¹ The seven: Richard de Clare, earl of Gloucester; John Fitz Geoffrey; Roger Bigod, earl of Norfolk; Hugh Bigod, brother of Roger; Peter of Savoy, earl of Richmond and uncle to Queen Eleanor; Peter de Montfort, of no relation to Simon; Simon de Montfort, earl of Leicester. See Clanchy, *England and Its Rulers*, 191. For a sworn document sealing the seven together, see *English Historical Documents III, 1189-1327*, ed. Harry Rothwell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975): 36, 361

²¹² Sources are divided between labeling Henry’s half-brothers Poitevins and Lusignans. Matthew Paris uses both terms somewhat interchangeably, while the Bury St. Edmunds Chronicle uses Poitevins. See Matthew Paris, *English History II*, 446-447: here he discusses the favors given to Henry’s half-brothers referring to them as Poitevins and Lusignans; see *The Chronicle of Bury St. Edmunds*, 23: here the half-brothers are just labeled as Poitevins. Many scholars use the half-brother’s surname, but confusion is easily had been examining the sources, hence the clarification.
Shortly after his introduction to Henry’s court, Peter of Savoy, newly knighted and created earl of Richmond, organized a tournament to test his knightly prowess against that of the English.\textsuperscript{213} With anti-foreign sentiment already running high with the arrival of a new wave of foreigners, Henry increased tensions by bribing a number of the English knights lining up against Peter and his retainers to switch sides, much to the scorn of Roger Bigod and Gilbert, earl of Pembroke.\textsuperscript{214} The implications of the nationalist nature of the tournament are further clarified by Matthew Paris who makes the distinction clear between foreigners and the English, while also expressing his own Englishness in his belief that the English “were more noble and powerful,” than Savoyards.\textsuperscript{215} Despite Henry’s clear partiality towards the foreigners of the court, he cancelled the tournament shortly before it was due to begin, having “repent[ed] that he had wished foreigners to triumph in the martial sport rather than his own subjects,” further illustrating how the king was never implicated in truly abandoning his Englishness with Paris continuing the trope established by Wendover.\textsuperscript{216} Such tournaments continued to be a popular way for the foreigners and the English to challenge each other. In 1247 Henry was forced to prohibit a tournament between Richard, earl of Gloucester and Guy de Lusignan: tensions were already high over favoritism shown to the Savoyards, and the king feared that if the tournament were to take place his brothers and their followers “would be cut to pieces.”\textsuperscript{217}


\textsuperscript{215} Matthew Paris, \textit{English History I}, 322.

\textsuperscript{216} Matthew Paris, \textit{English History I}, 322-323.

\textsuperscript{217} Matthew Paris, \textit{English History II}, 234.
tournament occurred outside of Rochester between foreigners and the English, the composition of the foreign side being unclear: Matthew Paris simply labels the group foreigners without distinction between Savoyards and Lusignans. The English were victorious, chasing the combatants from the field into the city.\(^{218}\) As the foreigners were nearly at the city, so says Matthew Paris, they came upon a group of knights whom they engaged, beating them with sticks and staves, returning the beating they had received at the tournament on the unsuspecting English knights, making “the anger and hatred between the English and foreigners increased in consequence” and becoming more fearful by the day.\(^{219}\)

Distinction between the two groups is also apparent in granting of patronage by the king. Henry was known for his outstanding generosity and preference given to those whom he favored most, having given land to twenty-eight Savoyards and to eight Lusignans, the latter group receiving less because Henry had nearly exhausted his resources on the former.\(^{220}\) But while the Lusignans received less, the increasing competition and resentment between the foreigners and the English by the 1250s resulted in further discord between the king and the aristocracy. With this, Henry’s affection and favoritism for his half-brothers become a particular point of conflict, with the king often interceding on the behalf of the Lusignans, notably over issues of land and jurisdiction with Roger Bigod and Simon de Montfort, two of the seven magnates who confronted the king in April.\(^{221}\) A week before the great Parliament at Westminster called by


Henry to seek taxation to appease the papacy who were threatening excommunication and interdict if the king did not supply the funds he had promised, another instance occurred involving one of Henry’s brothers, Aymer de Lusignan, bishop-elect of Winchester. A conflict over advowson between Aymer and John Fitz Geoffrey, also one of the seven, turned into an armed attack on the men of Fitz Geoffrey, resulting in the death of one, with Henry once again interceding on behalf of his brother.222 While this incident in and of itself did not cause matters to boil over, it certainly added more fuel to a fire that was quickly growing out of control. Henry’s growing preference for the Lusignans and his blind eye to any injustice committed by them resulted in discord permeating through his court, curiously enough pitting old enemies as allies by the inclusion of a Savoyard, Peter, earl of Richmond, as one of the seven.

Taken by surprise on 30 April by the armed group of nobles while the king’s primary guardian Richard of Cornwall was away, Henry and his heir Edward were compelled to swear an oath on the gospels to commit to a general reform of the kingdom. Through their oath the king and his son were now members of the reform party, promising to hold a general council at Oxford on 9 June to work out the details of how the state of the realm would be reformed.223 Besides a promise for a council to oversee the terms of the restructuring of the royal government, the barons demanded the immediate dismissal of the Lusignans from court, their banishment from England, and for a committee of twenty-four barons to be formed to oversee the general reform, matters which were also taken up at Oxford in June.224 Two royal letters were issued on 2 May 1258 confirming both the promise for reform at a Parliament held at Oxford and the

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224 Maddicott, Simon de Montfort, 152-153.
creation of the twenty-four-baron council, twelve chosen by the king and twelve by the barons, signaling the commitment on the part of Henry through sealed royal documents. The implications for such an act were large, and, for Henry, must have been reminiscent of the position he witnessed his father in. But by this point, the king had essentially painted himself into a corner: without the aid of the barons and consent for taxation, he faced excommunication and interdiction if he failed to pay money owed to the papacy, both presenting further difficulties for Henry not only on a personal level due to his renowned piety, but also the possibility of the escalating frustrations on the part of his people turning into open rebellion.

At the Oxford Parliament a document surfaced that outlined the grievances of the community of the realm, comprising of issues felt by those by high and low, a matter which the document itself highlighted. *The Petition of the Barons*, as the document is known, is the most sweeping call for reform since Magna Carta, comprised of twenty-nine clauses addressing issues ranging from matters of inheritance, protection for heirs against predatory lords, and the regulation of relations between a lord and his tenants. The petition also called for restrictions on the position and liberties of foreigners: clause four states that royal castles “shall be committed to the custody of the king’s faithful subjects born in the kingdom of England,” while clause six proposes that the noble women of England should not be married to “men who are not true-born Englishmen.” The clauses aimed at foreigners epitomized the growing feeling of

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226 This stems from money promised to the papacy in the effort to remove Manfred from the throne of Sicily. See Carpenter, *The Struggle for Mastery*, 345-347.


228 *Documents of the Baronial Movement*, 80-81. The original Latin reads ‘uidelicet hominibus qui non sunt de natione regni Anglie,’ placing an emphasis on the nation of England.
discontent throughout the English nation, one focused on the liberties and privileges given to the Lusignans and Savoyards while the community of the realm suffered. As alluded to above, the composition of the document is extraordinary in that it represents the widest cross-section of grievance of English society recorded to that point in history. The aggravation and distrust of foreigners was a feeling that had permeated through all levels of English society, with abuses by the Lusignans and other foreigners felt at the local level by the lesser gentry, knights, and freehold tenants.229 Indeed, one of the first acts of the Parliament at Oxford was the establishment of commissions of four knights in each county to investigate local affairs and abuses.230

The demands of the community of the realm caused a great deal of panic among the Lusignans, with all four of Henry’s half-brothers as sworn members of his twelve of the council of twenty-four. When the delegates at Oxford insisted that Henry empower the council to oversee the control of wardships, escheats, and royal grants and that all lands, holdings, and castles granted by the king to foreigners be given back to the crown and “were entrusted there to certain Englishmen,” the Lusignans left the Parliament and fled to Winchester.231 Accompanied by the king, the barons marched on Winchester prepared to lay siege to the castle until the Lusignans submitted. At stake was the breaking of the oath sworn by Henry’s half-brothers to commit to and uphold the articles of reform, with their flight signaling their abandonment.232

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230 Prestwich, Plantagenet England, 105; English Historical Documents III, 37, 361.

231 The proceedings of the Parliament at Oxford are preserved in a letter from a member of the king’s court. See Documents of the Baronial Movement, 91 and 92-97; also see Maddicott, Simon de Montfort, 162-164.

232 Documents of the Baronial Movement, 92-93.
Lusignans sent envoys to the barons upon the realization of their desperate position, promising to uphold their oaths and comply with the provisions agreed to at Oxford, but the barons insisted on their departure from the realm, to which Henry agreed, signaling the departure of perhaps the most hated group of foreigners in England. The panic and fear of the Lusignans at the Provisions of Oxford were truly well founded. The Provisions themselves drastically reduced the power of the king, effectively making Henry ruler through the consent and direction of a council of fifteen chosen by the council of twenty-four. They also created a new justiciar in Roger Bigod and outlined a program of reform to reevaluate every aspect of the administration of the kingdom, both royal and private.

Furthermore, the Provisions bound together the community of the realm in a way that had not been done before. Through common consent and sworn oaths to each other, the higher nobility, less baronage, the gentry, and prominent free holders created a new political community aimed at preserving the customs and liberties of the people of the land. It was a community that represented the wider English community, the new nation that began to form in the early thirteenth century. As Carpenter notes, it can seem that “community of the realm” may very quickly be seen as the “community of barons” considering where the leadership derived from. The term, however, truly did mean the entire English community, a point reinforced by the language of the oath taken by those present at the Oxford Parliament: the people were “bound together, and promise in good faith, that each of us and all together will help each other, and our


235 Maddicott, Simon de Montfort, 157-158.

people, against all men.” It was sealed with the final words of “And if anyone opposes this, we will treat him as a mortal foe.” They were bound together through a common oath of loyalty and the defense of their people, the English people, against all others. In this way the community truly came together by way of their shared hatred and contempt for foreigners because of the abuses suffered at the hands of the Lusignans and Henry’s disregard for his people by allowing such acts to go unpunished. By working to consolidate his own power and showing blatant disregard for the unlawfulness of a few, Henry gave the nation cause to come together and truly unite for the first time as one people.

Perhaps the best examples of how the reform movement not only meant to address the community of the realm but also unite them are two proclamations issued in October 1258 that were proliferated in all three of the languages of England: the first addressed to the people of the realm in general and the second issued on 20 October, known as the Ordinance of Sheriffs, instituted changes of governance in the localities. The circulation of any document in all three languages was exceptionally rare, with only a handful of examples surviving before the use of English in any official capacity ceased in the mid-eleventh century, a charter from the reign of Henry II is the last example of its use.

While the proclamations were surely circulated in all

237 Documents of the Baronial Movement, 100-101.

238 For more on the idea of a commune and common oaths of loyalty, see Clanchy, England and Its Rulers, 193-195.

239 Middle English copies of the proclamation of 18 October 1258 can be found in English Historical Documents III, 38, 367-368; Early Middle English Texts, ed. Bruce Dickins and R.M. Wilson (New York: Norton, 1951): 8-9; Stubbs, Select Charters, 387-389; for a translation of the French document, see Documents of the Baronial Reform, 116-119. No Latin text survives, but the Burton Annals state that the proclamation had been issued in all three languages. For the Ordinance of Sheriffs, see Documents of the Baronial Movement, 119-123; English Historical Documents III, 39, 368-370. While the proclamation was issued in all three languages, again according to the Burton Annals, only the French copy survives.

240 As noted in the previous chapter, William I continued issuing documents in England until 1070, and issued charters in London in all three languages. Beyond his reign, no examples survive from the reign of William II and only one from the reign of Henry I. The last English charter issued was under the reign of Henry II in 1155. For
three languages in an attempt to reach the widest audience possible, the use of English in these cases particularly illustrates the aim to reach even the lowest in society, those without learning in French or Latin. They show the consciousness on the part of the active reformers around the king to not only garner support popularly throughout the kingdom, but also to reinforce that the efforts of reform were a national enterprise, meant to address the grievances of the English people at large. The *Ordinance of Sheriffs* specifically addresses concerns relating to abuses of power and corruption at the local level, with the order placing restrictions on the power of sheriffs over issues including the unlawful seizure of property, while also limiting the term of office to one year in hopes of eliminating corruption through near hereditary appointments. The proclamation also reiterated the commitment to make sure sheriffs were local men of the counties they oversaw, resulting in the appointment of eighteen new sheriffs throughout the realm that met the aforementioned requirements.  

The language of the proclamation of 18 October also emphasizes such notions, with the document stating that the councilors were chosen by the king and “the community of our king,” demonstrating the inclusiveness apparent in the *Provisions of Oxford*. A truly remarkable aspect of the proclamation, and perhaps most significant for the years ahead, is the requirement of all subjects to take an oath that closely mirrored the one taken by the original seven and those who attended the Oxford Parliament. It required the people to uphold the decisions made by the king’s new council and that all of those who oppose the reform should be regarded as “deadly foes,” effectively binding all of the English people together in a pledge to reform the governance

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242 *English Historical Documents III*, 38, 367-368.
of the realm. Through its propagation in all three languages of the realm, the proclamation of October 1258 bound the three language communities together for truly the first time since the Conquest. The issuance of the document in English, however, specifically addressed the dispossessed, and through its language included them for the first time in nearly two centuries in the larger collective community of the nation. What we see here is just a step, though, and certainly did not collapse the barriers that had been erected between the communities since 1066. But it was a start.

The program of reform proved to be not only difficult, but slow. No legislation was confirmed during the Parliament at Oxford from the Petition of the Barons, and at the Parliament held at Westminster in October regret and frustration were expressed that matters had not been addressed sooner. No legislation was produced at the next two Parliaments, October 1258 and February 1259, but two documents were written, presumably by the baronial council, that related to the administration of the great landlords of the realm. The Provision of the English Barons was possibly a guide for the discussion of legislation in February 1259, and demonstrates the continued effort to address grievances both large and small. The second document, the Ordinances of Magnates, written in March 1259 confirmed such a move through a pledge by the councilors of the king to observe the same laws and customs confirmed by the king in regards to their own men, a true declaration of their determination for lasting change throughout the realm. Despite the provisions, ordinances, and proclamations the actual process of reform remained slow, exhibited by a protest at the Westminster Parliament in October 1259 when a

243 Prestwich, Plantagenet England, 105-106. Evidence this seen in the Ordinance of Sheriffs: ‘…But if we cannot accomplish this as fast as we would like and as need may be, both for our sake and for yours, you must not be surprised, for these things have gone amiss for so long, to our loss as well as to yours, that it can by no means be so speedily put right…’ Documents of the Baronal Movement, 119-121.

244 For the Provisions of the English Barons, see Documents of the Baronal Movement, 122-131; for the Ordinance of the Magnates, see Documents of the Baronal Movement, 131-137; Prestwich, Plantagenet England, 106.
group referred to as the “Community of Bachelors of England” declared that if the provisions agreed upon the year prior were not enacted with earnest they would take matters into their own hands. As Maddicott notes, the actions of the bachelors, most likely knights who had been summoned to Parliament, may have acted as in impetus for movement on legislation, with the *Provisions of Westminster* published on 24 October. While the Provisions were the culmination of the reform movement that began a year and a half prior, with many of the clauses addressing the issues raised in the Provision of Oxford and succeeding documents, the victory was short lived.

Shortly after the conclusion of Parliament, Henry departed England for France, to Paris and the court of Louis IX to be exact, where he stayed until April 1260, and through which he began to achieve a level of independence from his council. It presented a challenge for the members of the reform party: the king could not effectively rule without his council because of the restrictions placed on him by the *Provisions*, but the council could not rule without the king, or at least it was a step some were not willing to take. Henry forbade the council from holding the Candlemas (2 February) Parliament while he was abroad, generating fractures within the reform party itself by the insistence of Simon de Montfort to go ahead with the plan meeting without the king. Montfort also demanded that Bigod not send the king any additional funds

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248 A letter from Henry to Hugh Bigod the king states, “Make no arrangements for a parliament and permit none to be held before our return to England, for when we arrive there, we shall arrange, with your counsel and that of the magnates, for holding a parliament as may be best for us and for our realm.” *Documents of the Baronal Movement*, 168-169. Also see, Maddicott, 192-193.
and to prevent him from returning to the realm with mercenaries. The moves by Henry were significant: he was demonstrating that the kingdom could not operate with the king, while also abandoning the clause of the Provisions stipulating that three Parliaments were to be held each year, and making it very clear that the great councils were a royal institution, not one of the community or his council.249 With the king’s primary supporters from the council with him in France, it is a wonder that the more ardent reformers of the community did not oblige Simon de Montfort. Instead it exposed divisions within the ranks of the reformers, with Roger Bigod intervening and dispersing those who had heeded Montfort’s call for Parliament. Montfort was subsequently put on trial after Henry’s return from France, with charges ranging from his obstruction of the Treaty of Paris of 1259 to his disregard for the king’s commands to forgo the February Parliament.250 Nothing ever came of the trial: a new threat from the Welsh at the end of July 1260 necessitated the services of Montfort in his capacity as a military commander, a role for which he was truly apt for.

Over the course of 1260 and 1261 the momentum and resolve of the reformers in the king’s council continued to falter. Henry was able to postpone the provisions of 1259 with little resistance from the council, and by 1261 members of the original seven, such as the earl of Gloucester, abandoned the reform movement all together in support of the king, likely through favors promised by the king.251 All the while Henry reassured the reformers of his commitment to uphold the provisions as he was seeking papal absolution from his oath in 1258 and


250 Maddicott, Simon de Montfort, 197-199. For Simon de Montfort’s objections to the terms of the Treaty of Paris, see Maddicott, Simon de Montfort, 187-188. For the Treaty of Paris itself, see English Historical Documents III, 41, 376-379. For the proceedings of Montfort’s trial, see Documents of the Baronial Movement, 194-211.

251 Peter of Savoy was dropped from the reform movement in 1260 on the insistence of Simon de Montfort; Maddicott, Simon de Montfort, 204: Maddicott states that those who went over to the side of Henry were retained as familiares from mid-December, for robes and possibly fees. Also see Prestwich, Plantagenet England, 109-110.
subsequent agreements. Indeed, the kings position had greatly improved by March 1261, so much so that Henry felt confident enough to have a list of grievances against the baronial council composed. Perhaps, though, the distance between Henry and the council partial fueled his confidence: the grievances were drawn up while he was still in France. Among the king’s complaints was that the barons had overseen a period of lawlessness, with “no justice done” in the whole realm and it being “impoverished more than it used to be.” The prerogative and prestige of the monarchy was also damaged according to the grievances, with the king complaining that “[the barons] have taken away from the king his power and royal dignity,” and that through this his authority was compromised, reducing his power to “that of the lowest member of his council.” Finally, the English people themselves were being harmed by the baronial regime, the document stating that “certain magnates menace the lord king and his people more than ever before.” Not only was the king’s majesty harmed, but also to the English people and nation.

His prayers were answered, so to speak, in April with the arrival of a papal bull from Alexander IV absolving him of any obligations to adhere to the provisions of 1259, with subsequent bulls issued liberating all those in the kingdom from the oaths taken following the proliferation of the proclamation of 18 October 1258 and an order requesting the subjugation of anyone who continued to adhere to the provisions. The king worked very quickly to restore

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253 Documents of the Baronial Movement, 213.


255 Documents of the Baronial Movement, 217.
royal authority thereafter: Roger Bigod was dismissed as justiciar, Hugh Bigod was relieved of his position as constable of Dover castle, royalist sheriffs were installed in thirty-four counties, and the king’s court once again began to fill with supporters, notably his half-brother William de Valence and Richard of Cornwall.\footnote{Prestwich, Plantagenet England, 110; Maddicott, Simon de Montfort, 204. For more on the consolidation of royal power and the fall of the reform regime, see Maddicott, Simon de Montfort, 206-215; Morris, The Bigod Earls of Norfolk, 81-87.} While Henry had certainly strengthened his position within the central administration of the realm, his replacement of local sheriffs ended up working against him. He effectively alienated local men and credited a base of support for the rise of a new leader who would be seen as championing the Englishman and immortalized as their greatest defender: Simon de Montfort.

The assumed Englishness and later martyrdom of Simon de Montfort as a saint of the likes of Thomas Becket perhaps best exemplifies the fluidity of identity in thirteenth century England.\footnote{One example of the martyrdom of Simon de Montfort is The Lament of Simon de Montfort, written immediately after the events of the battle of Evesham, see Thomas Wright’s Political Songs of England: From the Reign of John to that of Edward II, ed. Peter Coss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996): 125-127. Also see, J.R. Maddicott, “Follower, Leader, Pilgrim, Saint: Robert de Vere, Earl of Oxford, at the Shrine of Simon de Montfort, 1273,” The English Historical Review 109, no. 432 (June, 1994): 641-653; John M. Theilmann, “Political Canonization and Political Symbolism in Medieval England,” Journal of British Studies 29, no. 3 (July, 1990): 241-266.} Like Richard Marshal, Montfort came to England to petition for inheritance, having grown up in France, however his direct line had little to no connection with England.\footnote{For Montfort’s family lineage and early life, see Maddicott, Simon de Montfort, 1-7.} We know very little about him until his appearance on the political stage in England in 1230. Montfort was noted for his military prowess upon his introduction in England, suggesting that he may have gained experience by either fighting alongside his brother during the Albigensian
Crusade or perhaps was present at Louis VIII’s siege of Avignon in 1226; unfortunately Montfort is mentioned only a few times in the sources for unrelated things before 1230, so we have no way of being certain. After negotiations with Henry III, Montfort was guaranteed the transfer of the lands of the earl of Leicester in 1231, later granted the title in 1238, and rose to prominence in the king court, becoming one of the favorites of Henry. Montfort’s marriage to Henry’s sister Eleanor, the widow of William Marshal, in 1238, is a testament to the position he had achieved at court, much to the dismay and anger of the great barons of England who were generally consulted on the marriage of women of such prominence. The marriage resulted in a ‘flash revolt’ by Richard of Cornwall and Gilbert, earl of Pembroke, with Matthew Paris listing Montfort among the foreigners who corrupted Henry in the 1230s.

Between his marriage to Eleanor and the beginning of the reform movement in 1258, Montfort spent time both in and out of favor with the king. In 1239 he departed on crusade after a quarrel with the king over a debt owed to Peter of Savoy, returning in 1243 to much affection from Henry who was known for his violent mood swings and propensity for love when the feeling struck. Montfort was made governor of Gascony in 1248, although his rule was unpopular and prompted Henry to go himself to Gascony in 1252 to oversee a trial of Montfort for abuses of power. The fallout from the Gascony affair was short lived, because Henry needed the earl’s guidance and military expertise in his campaigns in the aforementioned province in

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1253. From 1253 to 1258 he was employed several times to aid the king, serving as a representative of Henry in Scotland in 1254 and in France in 1257.

The reconciliation between Henry and Montfort appears to have been superficial, with the earl holding a lasting grudge regarding what he viewed as his disgraceful termination as governor of Gascony. There were also longstanding tensions between the two regarding finances, notably Henry’s unwillingness to press the earls of Pembroke over the remaining portion of Eleanor’s dower from her first marriage, coupled with feelings of being slighted over the lack of land associated with her pension as fitting her position as a sister of the king. Personal grievances with the king hardly seem to signify the change in Montfort’s position from a royal support to a reformist, though given his position as a member of the barony who felt the abuses of the Lusignans the move is not surprising. The seven magnates who swore the original oath to reform in 1258 had all adversely been affected directly or indirectly by the abuses and lawlessness of the Lusignans, with growing dissent occurring throughout the localities. At first Simon did not emerge as a leading figure in the reform movement, but began to take a more active role during the Parliament at Oxford in 1258, and subsequently served on all of the leading councils until Henry reversed course in 1261. After the baronial regime fell in 1262, instead of staying in England under the new conditions imposed by Henry, Montfort departed for France, still ardent in his belief in a top down reform of the nation.

It was in 1263 that Montfort began to emerge as the leader of the renewed effort on the part of the barons to reissue the provisions of 1259, though the composition of the group hardly


266 Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort*, 151-159.
changed radically over the course of Montfort’s self-imposed exile. Throughout 1262 and 1263 Henry found increasingly alarming resistance among the lesser gentry and affluent freeholders, though their attempts to unite under a common banner continued to be stymied due to a lack of leadership, with the great barons of the initial reform back under the patronage of the king.\footnote{David Carpenter, “Simon de Montfort: The First Leader of a Political Movement in English History,” \textit{History} 76, (1991): 3-23.}

Henry spared no expense in garnering support from his former rivals, often though bribing and other rewards; this was certainly aided by the return of the wealthy brother Richard in 1261 who began to bankroll some of the king’s efforts. Financial support from the king of the Germans was not enough, however, and Henry began to pressure the localities more forcefully through what was seen by those in the counties as abuses of his new sheriffs. With the great lords no longer supporting the cause of reform in earnest, minor nobles and the gentry began to take matters into their own hands, but without the support of a more prominent magnate, the efforts were diffused and often fleeting in scope and design.\footnote{David Carpenter, “English Peasants in Politics, 1258-1267,” \textit{Past and Present} 136 (1992): 3-42.}

Regardless, support continued to remain strong outside of the center of politics, with new men rising up to combat the injustices of what they saw as a tyrannical monarch overstepping his authority. This, coupled with the profound amount of adherents to the provisions outside of the center, created an opportunity for someone who held an influential position and could lead a disorganized mass towards a common goal, a recipe ripe for the leadership and charisma of a man like Simon de Montfort. The earl of Leicester had gained a reputation as a man who did not bend to royal prerogative, having spoken out against Henry’s appeal for funds while campaigning in Gascony after Montfort had been dismissed.\footnote{Maddicott, \textit{Simon de Montfort}, 129-136.} Without question his
outspokenness after the issue of the provisions and insistence on their observation despite the growing independence of Henry in 1260 added further credit to his name. Montfort had also presented himself as a man of the people, so to speak, through his devotion to Ordinance of the Magnates and the preservation of liberties and freedoms for his own people in the Midlands. With the tide of xenophobia in England reaching a zenith in 1263 by Henry’s reintroduction of his Lusignan half-brothers and increased detestation for the queen’s Savoyard relatives, who were blamed along with her for the renewed abuses on native born Englishmen, the stage was set for Montfort’s return as a political leader, general, and defender of the English people.270

The rise of Montfort as “the shield and defender of the English; the enemy and expeller of aliens” is in and of itself an enigma, illustrated by the Melrose annalist who followed the above quote by stating that “[Montfort] himself was one of them by nation.”271 Indeed, Montfort had at times been critical of the English, purportedly having said in 1263 that of all the places he had traveled, he had never “found such deceitfulness and infidelity as in England.”272 While the statement is in nationalistic terms, it is also general and appears to have been aimed at the barony. Montfort had express similar sentiments when asked to originally join the reform movement, saying that he feared there “was no consistency in the English, who were all too likely to turn tail when in a fix.”273 It would seem then that the earl viewed his fellow magnates as unreliable, which they had been; Montfort departed England for France in 1262 after all

270 Carpenter, The Struggle for Mastery, 374-375; Maddicott, Simon de Montfort, 226-228.


273 Maddicott, Simon de Montfort, 161. This is taken from the chronicle of St. Benet of Hulme attributed to John of Oxenedes, see Chronica Johannis de Oxenedes, ed. H. Ellis (London: Rolls Series, 1859): 225.
because of their lack of commitment to the provisions and reform, and he only gained marginal support from the great magnates in 1263 despite the strong position of the reform movement after Henry conceded to reissue the provisions to put an end to hostilities. It comes as no surprise then that Montfort would have held his peers in contempt because their tenuous support and propensity to abandon the cause while he continued to pursue the course they set out on. His opinion of his fellow magnates does not completely inform his overall feelings toward the English, and if his actions are any indication of his own loyalties and perhaps what became his overriding national identity, Montfort may very well have considered himself English. At the very least Montfort had achieved a level of honorary Englishness in the eyes of his peers. He had long been a proponent of expelling foreigners and surrounded himself with Midland knights instead of foreign knights, like other aliens in the kingdom.\textsuperscript{274} Montfort was even described as\textit{ naturalis}, “native-born,” by Matthew Paris in 1252.\textsuperscript{275} However, it was his actions more than anything else that aligned him with the community of the realm and the English nation.

After securing Henry’s reaffirmation of the provisions, Montfort moved quickly to expel from the realm the very group of people blamed for the ongoing disturbances: foreigners. While the Lusignans continued to be despised, it was the Savoyards who were targeted in 1262 after Queen Eleanor’s encouragement of her son Edward to rid himself of the native-born men in his entourage, the same men who would appeal to Montfort for aid in arms.\textsuperscript{276} With unrest alarmingly high in the localities, enough so that Henry reissued the provisions in haste but to little effect in January 1263, the overwhelming uniting source of English national identity and


\textsuperscript{275} Carpenter, “King Henry III’s ‘Statute’ against Aliens,” 938; \textit{Chronica Majora}, vol. 5, 338.

the battle cry of the reform movement was the expulsion of foreigners from England. In their agreement for peace a royal decree was issued that limited the holding of office to native-born Englishmen and with some exceptions expelled foreigners from the realm. With Montfort once again at the head of the king’s council and credited for the expulsion of foreigners from the realm, his cause generated a profound level of popular support throughout the country, resonating within all levels of society.

The importance of the “foreigner” as a means to unite the English people cannot be stressed enough, nor the level of cohesion it provided which had not been seen since the Norman Conquest. The three communities were truly converging for the first time. Writers in all three languages began to express similar notions of Englishness, and at a level of consistency that had not occurred before. The Song of the Barons, a French text written soon after the removal of hostilities in 1263, speaks of the Savoyards conspiring against the English, a prominent notion in popular discourse, and praises the renewed baronial opposition against foreigners on the part of Simon de Montfort. Peter d’Aigueblanche, the Savoyard bishop of Hereford, is said to have had “thought to eat up all the English,” until his plans are stymied by Montfort and the might of the English barons. Likewise, The Song Against the King of Almaigne, an English vernacular text written in 1264, labels Richard of Cornwall as a coward for taking shelter in a windmill following the defeat of Henry III at the battle of Lewes, while criticizing him for his foreign interests and the oppression of the English people. The Latin chroniclers covered in this

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278 Political Songs of England, 59-63.
chapter thus far have also illustrated the universal cry of contempt for foreigners, who were seen by both Roger of Wendover and Matthew Paris as the source of Henry’s apathy towards his people and his subsequent acts of tyranny against them. Like his Latin counterparts, the writer of the sole English vernacular chronicle of this period also condemns foreigners and constructs Englishness largely through the opposite of the foreign other, a true departure from previous English texts.

In many ways Robert of Gloucester’s chronicle is not unlike other monastic histories of the thirteenth century, and indeed the text does follow the standard series of events evident in sources like Matthew Paris and the *Chronicle of Melrose*. It differs in part by the near verbatim copying of Laȝamon’s *Brut*, including the discussion of the languages of England, one of the unique aspects of Laȝamon’s appropriation of Wace’s text. From the end of Laȝamon’s work the chronicle is largely a compilation of well-known sources, such as Geoffrey of Monmouth, William of Malmesbury, and Henry of Huntingdon, but becomes independent of any known sources at the beginning of Henry III’s reign. Perhaps the most striking thing about Robert’s chronicle is the assimilation of the Normans and English into one people. From the Norman Conquest to the early reign of Henry III, Robert maintains that the Normans and English are two separate peoples, “the Normans the high men of England, while the Saxons [the English] were the low-men, as he understood.” He also notes that language, to a degree, maintained the

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279 *Political Songs of England*, 69-71. The song is also known as *The Song of Lewes*, often confusing it with *The Battle of Lewes*, a Latin song written shortly after the battle in 1264. For the song under the title of *The Song of Lewes*, see *Early Middle English Texts*, 10-12. Also see Matthews, *Writing to the King*, 34-38.

280 For the origins of Gloucester’s chronicle and the possible identity of the writer, see Gransden, *Historical Writing in England*, 432-435.


division between the Normans and English, noting that the Normans “continued to speak their
own language,” and that they “taught their children the French language,” even though they
“came to England.” For Robert, the distinction between English and Norman ceased with the
invasion of Louis of France in 1216, and he became more concerned with a French other. So
much so that when Henry III ascended the throne he reminds his reader that England had been
occupied by the French at that time. Since then, however, the kingdom had been rid of the
French and the king with the guidance of his English nobles reinstituted “the good old laws,” as
Robert describes them.

Like the Latin sources, Robert sees Henry’s misdeeds to the English people through his
“taking of other council,” while differing by blaming part of the king’s sudden abandonment of
“the rights of the holy church and the good old laws,” because of his marriage. The chronicler
does not name the Savoyards, but it could be their introduction to court that he is referring to,
and it is certain their “other council” that Robert is referring to. It is here that Robert begins to
describe events in more nationalistic terms, casting the half-brothers of the king, Frenchmen, as
those who act against Englishmen and regard them as nothing, while also taking from poor men,
a refer no doubt to the English community in general. The theme of good laws versus

283 Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester II, ll. 7535-7539, 543: Þus com lo engelond in to normandies hond | & þe
normans ne couþe speke to bote hor owe speche | & speke French as hii dud atom & hor children dude also teche.

284 Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester II, ll. 10634-10640, 716-717: Vor to abbe as we sede er þe gode olde law;
Matthews, Writing to the King, 33-35.

285 Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester II, ll. 10888-10891, 728: He drou to oþer conseil than he was iwoned to do | &
of þe rights of holichurche & of þe gode olde lawe.

286 Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester II, ll. 10990-10999, 732-733: Ac sir willam de valance & sir eimer þer to | Elit
of wincetre & sir gui de lisewi al so | Þoru hom & þoru the queen was so mueche frenss folc ibrouȝt | Þat of englisse
men me tolde as riȝt nouȝt | & þe king hom let hor wille þat ech was as king | & nome poueremenne god ne paiede
no þing | To eni of þis bretheren þuȝ þer pleinede eni wiȝt | Hii sede þuȝ we doþ ou wrong wo ssal ou do riȝt | As wo
seiȝ we beþ kings ur wille we mowe do | & manie englisse alas hulde mid hom al so.
lawlessness brought on by foreigners is consistent throughout Robert’s account of Henry’s baronial struggles and reform, and one that is concurrent with the Latin sources. Robert’s chronicle is unique among English vernacular texts because the opposition to the foreigner makes up such a substantial portion of the Englishness expressed in the text. Vernacular works examined in the previous chapter placed a great deal of emphasis on the dispossessed quality of national identity in the English community, which exists in Robert’s text but fades away by the reign of Henry III. Instead there is congruence with the Englishness associated with the community of the realm that is consistent in sources that cover the Barons War, demonstrating for the first time in a vernacular English text an association of the English community with the new nation that emerged at the beginning of the thirteenth century. Robert’s expressions of Englishness drawn from opposition to foreigners in England, along with the noted popular enterprise and adherence to reform throughout the realm indicates at least a common sense of English national identity during the period in question.

It is during the renewal of the baronial reform movement in 1263 that we also see the first mention of the English language in association with English national identity in a source outside of the English community. In his entry for 1263 the St. Albans chronicler proclaimed that “anyone who did not know how to speak the English language was despised and treated with contempt,” a remarkable statement, not only because it was written in Latin, but more so because it signifies language as a marker of identity. Following the anti-foreigner rhetoric of his predecessor, Matthew Paris, though toned down throughout his continuation, it is not surprising to see contempt for foreigners in his addition to the chronicle, but the evocation of the English language as a component is unique. Indeed, Robert of Gloucester did not make any remarks

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287 Flores Historiarum II, ed. H.R. Luard (London: Rolls Series, 1890): 481. ‘Nam quicunque Anglicum idioma loqui nesciret, vilipenderetur a vulgo et despectui haberetur.’
regarding the English language in his discussion of foreigners and Englishness, which is precisely the place one would expect to find it considering the emphasis placed on the English language and identity in other vernacular sources.\textsuperscript{288} Even though such an approximation is made in only one source, its significance should not be disregarded on that count alone.

The popular support of the reform movement and the inclusiveness of the community of the realm for people regardless of social class brought sectors of English society together in a common cause that was unprecedented in English history. It was the minor nobles and the gentry who urged Simon de Montfort to return to England to fight the reinstitution of the provisions. His largest group of supporters, just by sheer numbers, were peasants who saw themselves as members of the community of the realm and supported the baronial reform movement because it provide their only source of “redress against the oppressions of both their lords and the king.”\textsuperscript{289} The primary language of both of these groups would have been English, with French known to minor barons, the gentry, and to an extent the more prosperous freeholders, with perhaps some members of the two former groups using it fluently. Indeed, French continued to be the language of court and was used widely by nobility in both managing estates and as a language of record, but by the later thirteenth century French was largely learned by the English through formal instruction instead of family usage.\textsuperscript{290} While English continued to languish in production as a popular literary language, the body of people speaking the language certainly grew and would have represented a majority of the population. The proclamation of 18 October 1258 and the

\textsuperscript{288} The only commentary on language by Robert is the peculiarity of two vernacular languages being spoken in England, when it is not the case in the rest of the world. \textit{Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester II}, ll. 7544-7547, 544.


Ordinance of Sheriff’s proliferation in English stand as a testament to this, suggesting that not only was knowledge of the English language widespread, but that there were people who could both write the documents and those who could read the decrees to people throughout the country. English as a literary language for the nation was yet in its infancy, if not gestation, in the thirteenth century, but English as a spoken language was rapidly expanding and represented the mother tongue of all those outside of the royal family and highest nobility. The community of the realm then may have very well identified the spoken vernacular as a component of their Englishness.

It was this group, a mixture of minor nobility, the gentry, and the commoner, who represented the breadth of Simon de Montfort’s support. While Montfort was able to force Henry into the reissuance of the provisions he lacked the backing necessary to effectively hold the king to his word. As had become the norm in the reform movement, Henry began slowly consolidating baronial support through patronage and bribery, placing the realm once again on the brink of civil war. In an attempt to avoid open warfare, it was agreed upon by both parties to refer the matter to Louis IX of France for arbitration in January 1264. Unsurprisingly, Louis ruled in favor of Henry, nullifying the provisions, a decision that Montfort was not willing to accept, resulting in the very thing the arbitration was meant to avoid: civil war. Montfort and his allies were in a desperate situation: Henry had considerably more resources, not only in funds but also in numbers, while Montfort and his supporters controlled London and the Midlands, centered on the lands of the earldom of Leicester. The king and his heir took up an aggressive


293 *Documents of the Baronial Movement*, 253-293. The decision is known as the Mise of Amiens. Three documents are included: the complaints of Henry III, those of the barons, and the decision of Louis IX.
position between London and the Midlands at Oxford, hoping to cut Montfort off at his base. Military brilliance and sound judgment won the day for the earl of Leicester, however, at the battle of Lewes where he defeated the superior royal army, capturing Henry, Edward, and Richard of Cornwall in the process.\textsuperscript{294} The victory was commemorated in \textit{The Song of Lewes} where the writer saw the victory as one of the English over aliens and expressed his pride in the skill and grace of his people as they vanquished unlawfulness in favor of the provisions.\textsuperscript{295} A new council was formed following the provisions with nine men appointed who were accountable to three electors (Montfort, Gilbert de Clare, and the bishop of Chichester), all of whom answerable to the community of the realm in Parliament.\textsuperscript{296} Simon de Montfort was the dominant member of the electors, effectively seizing power from the king and ruling in his own name.

Despite the astonishing victory at Lewes, the great magnates did not flock to join the new regime, and the overall stability of Montfort and his government was tenuous at best. Threats abounded on all sides and the center of power continued to rest on London with support from the Midlands. As a result, Montfort worked to expand his existing base of support among the gentry and the large freeholders. The decision made sense in that Montfort had become a champion for the people outside of the nobility through his belief and adherence not only to the provisions, but to the Ordinance of Magnates. Furthermore, the middle people of the community, as they are described in the \textit{Chronicle of Mayors and Sheriffs of London}, also rejected the decision of Louis IX, providing a perfect convergence of interests.\textsuperscript{297} Montfort’s commitment to reforming the

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\item \textsuperscript{294} Carpenter, \textit{The Struggle for Mastery}, 376-377.
\item \textsuperscript{295} \textit{Political Songs of England}, 72-124.
\item \textsuperscript{296} \textit{Documents of the Baronial Movement}, 294-301.
\item \textsuperscript{297} \textit{English Historical Documents III}, \textit{6}, 173; Carpenter, \textit{The Struggle for Mastery}, 377-378.
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state of the kingdom under the advisement of the community of the realm can be seen clearly in the summons to Parliament for December 1264: each county was to choose at least two knights to come to Westminster to represent their interests in the great council.\textsuperscript{298} A remarkable step was also taken in the summoning of citizens or burgesses from the towns to Parliament, and this move was repeated in the Parliament of 1265.\textsuperscript{299} Montfort even called on lesser men, free peasants, who were called to arms in defense of the realm because of a threatened invasion by the queen from France. The response was tremendous, with peasants converging on Kent to repel the foreigners who threatened English liberties and the community of the realm.\textsuperscript{300}

Even with such popular support Montfort was unable to hold onto power long: he needed baronial support to be able to maintain his authority. Montfort actively alienated the nobility, and became despised by his peers for the grandiose lifestyle he led while in power, along with the substantial amount of land taken under his personal control and those granted to his sons.\textsuperscript{301} A row between Montfort and Gilbert de Clare cost the earl his most important ally among the barony. Henry and Edward were kept as prisoners in all but name, shown great courtesy and respect by Montfort and his regime, but they were kept under guard and always traveled with the earl. Despite the precautions, Edward managed to escape in May 1265 and gather the great magnates to the cause of restoring the king, quickly coming to terms with the defected de Clare and the marcher lords. The smaller army of Simon de Montfort was surrounded by the royalist army at Evesham in August, with no amount of strategic brilliance or luck on the side of


\textsuperscript{299} \textit{Documents of the Baronial Movement}, 300-317.

\textsuperscript{300} Carpenter, \textit{The Struggle for Mastery}, 378-379.

\textsuperscript{301} Prestwich, \textit{Plantagenet England}, 115.
Montfort in this engagement.\textsuperscript{302} His army was destroyed, Montfort’s body was mutilated, and the great movement of reform seemingly perished on the field that August day. \textit{The Lament of Simon de Montfort} written in French shortly after the battle captures the despair felt by the community of the realm at the death of the earl of Leicester and his supporters, “who for the peace so long after suffered themselves destroyed, their bodies to be cut and dismembered, to save England.”\textsuperscript{303}

Through common hatred of foreigners and the belief in the maintenance of English laws and customs, for the first time since the Norman Conquest, the English nation for the first time since the Norman Conquest came together in common cause and expressed a united sense of Englishness, one that was felt in all levels of society. Opposition to the king and his government certainly was not universal, with court cases proceeding the battle of Evesham against those who took up arms against the king suggesting that perhaps half of knights in the country had at one point joined Montfort’s cause: a staggering figure.\textsuperscript{304} Those who had taken up arms against Henry paid for it dearly, their lands seized and their children disinherited, but the disorder that continued to exist throughout the realm pushed the king to rectify the situation in a way which showed a degree of mercy and benevolence while exacting punishment in the form of payments to the crown. The Dictum of Kenilworth of 1266 allowed the disinherited to purchase back their lands, promised absolution for their crimes and the king and the realm, and restored liberties to cities like London which participated and conspired with Montfort.\textsuperscript{305} With this, the provisions were completely invalidated and the king was restored to his previous position of power, and the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[303] \textit{Political Songs of England}, 125.
\item[305] \textit{English Historical Documents III}, 43, 380-384; \textit{Documents of the Baronial Movement}, 316-337.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
cult that was building up around the martyrdom of Simon de Montfort was formally condemned by the crown and the English church. Not all of the ideals of the reform movement died, however, with the Statute of Marlborough of 1267 reenacting many of the provisions of 1259, with emphasis placed on the inclusion of more men from both “high and low estate” in the governance of the realm and the perpetuation of English liberties and customs.  

The development and emergence of a more inclusive English nation was one built on not only the belief of the administration of the realm by Englishmen, but one that cherished English liberties and customs, providing a common sense of identity built around those notions. A striking addition to English national identity by the community of the realm at large was the English language, one that was certainly not universal, but without question would have resonated throughout the majority of the population. Despite the singular mention in the sources, the statement by the St. Albans chronicler is a significant one, with the very association being one that would continue to grow over the remainder of the century. It remained a reality to be English without knowledge or an appreciation for the English language, with Henry III himself standing tribute to this. We have no evidence suggesting that the king spoke any dialect of the vernacular language, with his court conducted in French and official records and communication preserved in Latin. Henry’s personal sense of Englishness, however, is unquestionable. The completion of Westminster Abbey and the translation of the remains of Edward the Confessor by Henry and other members of the royal family, quite literally, on 13 October 1269 signified the king’s participation in the shared history and culture of the nation.  

As we have seen, language itself was not a barrier in the expression of English national identity, with the period in question

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producing literature in all three languages of the nation that emphasized various aspects of Englishness. So while the connection of English national identity with the English vernacular language was significant, and indeed one which would grow over the duration of the century and beyond, the connection we see in the Barons War is one that is just developing. By the end of the century, as noted in the introduction of this thesis, the connection appeared to be strong enough throughout the community of the realm for Edward I to effectively use the threat of the extermination of the English people and language as an impetus for support against his wars with Philip IV of France. But as we will see in the next chapter, there continued to be discrepant experiences in being English and the presence of an ongoing distinct English community within the larger nation itself.
Chapter Three
Imperial Englishness and a Divided Community

*English National Identity during the Reign of Edward I*

The beginning of the reign of Edward I marked another period of evolution for English national identity, one focused heavily on the comparison and separation of the English from the foreign “other.” Where Englishness in the reign of Henry III became largely concentrated on the distinction between the native-born and the court foreigners, the rapid, and at times successful, expansion of English sovereignty in the British Isles and France resulted in an Englishness defined by the comparison to peoples outside of England. Indeed, the imperialistic conquest of a new Angevin Empire by Edward I, one which would have eclipsed that of Henry II’s, acted as an impetus for further nationalistic rhetoric which sought to unite the English people against an enemy who, if not defeated first, would certainly “eradicate utterly the English tongue.” While the campaigns in France were often cast as necessary by virtue of keeping the French king in check, the expansion of English authority and control throughout the British Isles was portrayed as the subjugation of lesser peoples and the restoration of a united Britain under the rule of the English crown. It was the virtue and chivalry of the Englishmen against the treacherous and villainous nature of the Scots and Welsh, a trope present in many of the literary sources of the period. Irony aside, the conquered had now become the conquerors.

Divisions among the language communities of England appeared to be all but eliminated by the time of the Barons War, with all three communities largely expressing a shared sense of

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308 Here I am making a distinction between the foreign “other” and the “other” who inhabited the England until their expulsion by Edward I in 1290: the Jewish community of England. While an argument could certainly be made about the potential defining of Englishness against a Jewish “other,” it is outside of the scope of this study.

309 *Select Charters*, 480; Ruddick, 161; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 383.
English national identity, one based on a shared history and culture, with a particular importance placed on shared liberties and customs. For the first time language had become a discernable element of Englishness, although one that appeared to be fleeting in nature, but certainly noteworthy due in part to the vernacular’s place as the mother tongue to a majority of the community of the realm. But while the expression of Englishness by the Latin and French communities remained indistinguishable (other than the medium of their writing), from the thirteenth century on, by the end of the thirteenth century there once again appears to be a clear division between the English writing community and the rest of the nation. As many of the Latin and French writers embraced the imperialistic expansion of English dominion and actively castigated the “other,” English vernacular writers retreated from the anti-foreigner rhetoric exhibited in the chronicle of Robert of Gloucester and *The Song Against the King of Almaigne*, and once again began to focus on an aspect somewhat similar to the dispossessed of the post-Conquest period: the unlearned.

The previous division between the English community and the rest of the nation was predicated by an ongoing belief by the former group that they as a nation had been subsumed by another in the post-Conquest period. It was the English people, those identified by their language, who were suppressed by the Normans. Such a division ceased to be notable, and perhaps was nonexistent by the early reign of Henry III with traces of the division gone by the time of the Barons War. While this could simply be a result of assimilation and the formation of a truly inclusive English nation during the aforementioned period, it is also possible that such an impression briefly vanished as a result of the heightened political climate and the composition of the community of the realm, a community among which the former dispossessed appeared to count themselves. It may have been then that a common cause and enemy was what brought the
English community into the great community of the realm, with the end of the reform movement and subsequent broken promises of the Ordinance of Magnates exposing an undercurrent of division that never truly went away. Although the English language only made a brief appearance as a marker of English national identity for the community of the realm, the vernacular continued to be a prominent aspect of what made one a member of the English community and indeed the English nation. Vernacular writing was both directly and indirectly targeted at this community, with writers like Robert Mannyng and the anonymous author of the *Cursor Mundi* defining and addressing their audience based on their knowledge of the English language. As with the vernacular writing period the post-Conquest period, the choice to write in English was charged with a sense of inclusiveness and directed towards a specific group of people.

Such a clear ongoing distinction represents the discrepant experiences of being English in our period, with the English community continuing to base a seemingly significant proportion of their Englishness on their shared language, while, for other members of the nation, it was their shared history, culture, liberties, and customs that more accurately defined their own national identity. As I have stressed before, we must bear in mind that, although we may note divisions within the English nation, there is no point in working to define one superior nation over another, but rather to examine the elemental aspects of English national identity and understand that Englishness was represented and expressed differently among the various communities of the nation. Englishness expressed in either Latin or French in no way expressed less national identity nor was the validity of the Englishness of the writer in question. However, the importance of the English language as a marker of identity once again takes prominence in 1295, as seen at the

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beginning of this thesis and repeated above, signifying the growing connection between the vernacular language and the national identity of the community of the realm.

This, again, illustrates the fluidity of medieval identity, especially in how aspects of national identity are easily interchangeable in terms of priority: in one instance language is a significant marker for the community of the realm at large, while in another shared history become the primary marker. What we see in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century then is what I will call a divided community, in that the English nation as seen in the community of the realm of the mid-thirteenth century once again becomes divided. While both are certainly English, those writing for the English community, a group the writers see as continuously distinct from the larger nation, place greater importance on the vernacular language as the marker of their Englishness, while the rest of the nation, those writing in Latin and French, define their national identity by the comparison with the foreign “other,” deriving much of their Englishness from the imperialistic expansion of English dominance in both Scotland and Wales.

This chapter then will be divided into two sections. The first will examine expressions of Englishness by Latin and French writers who concentrate on the foreign “other” as a source for the comparison of the Englishman to his neighbors. It is through this contrast that writers in Latin and French emphasize not only national character as a distinguishing feature of English national identity, but also the piety, virtue, and chivalry of Englishmen above all others. The second section will examine the division expressed by writers of the English community beginning sometime between the end of the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. A particular emphasis will be placed on the increase in production of vernacular texts beginning in the mid-thirteenth century and what appears to be the impetus for it, namely decrees from the Fourth Lateran Council encouraging the instruction of not only the clergy in the vernacular tongue but,
more importantly, the laity. It is here that we see perhaps the most important piece of evidence that discredits the modernist argument that the universal church suppressed both national identity through the universal Latin language and the vernacular as an identity marker. Rather, the church encouraged the proliferation of vernacular languages, and by extension, especially in the case of the English language community, national identity.

A New English Empire: Imperialist Englishness in the Reign of Edward I

Ebb and flow may perhaps serve as the best description of English imperial power from the Norman Conquest to the collapse of the British Empire in the twentieth century, but it is particularly fitting for our period, namely the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. Through inheritance by both birth and marriage Henry II controlled a substantial holding in France, one rivaling the French king, and pursued an aggressive agenda of the expansion of English dominion in the British Isles mostly for the purpose of reestablishing the sovereignty of the crown lost during the reign of Stephen.311 Over the course of the reigns of John and Henry III English dominion in the British Isles and on the continent diminished at an astonishing rate with the loss of a majority of the continental possessions by John and Henry III’s failure to recapture them. Aquitaine was also gradually being chipped away at by the French in the latter part of

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311 Davies, Domination and Conquest, 75-79; Gillingham, The Angevin Empire, 22-33. Henry II also went on to conquer Ireland and subjugate the Irish kings and aristocracy to English rule, relying on colonization and the implantation of English nobles in Ireland to maintain control. The title of ‘lord of Ireland’ was added to the list of other titles maintained by the English king, and was passed down to John who took his lordship over Ireland quite seriously, before and during his reign as king of England. Henry took a cursory interest in Ireland, mainly using it as a source for revenue to be used for his campaigns in Wales and France. Likewise, Edward I took little interest in Ireland, even during his time as lord of Ireland before his coronation in 1274. There was one instance in 1290 where Edward took a more active role, but the situation was quickly handled and business return to normal. So while Ireland was an important aspect of English imperialism, and perhaps more so for English colonialism, the island played an insignificant part to the overall make up of English national identity by comparison with the ‘other’ in the reign of Edward I, hence its brief mention here. For more on events listed above see, Davies, Domination and Conquest, 77 and 80-81; Davies, The First English Empire, 149-150; Gillingham, The Angevin Empire, 27-29; Prestwich, Edward I, 353-354. For an account of the conquest of Ireland by Henry II, see William of Newburgh, The History of England in English Historical Documents II, ed. David C. Douglas and George W. Greenaway, 322-373 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953): 339-342.
Henry’s reign. John and Henry each had some success in Wales, but their efforts were both short-sighted and lived.\(^{312}\) With this, overlordship of Scotland became tenuous at best, with the English king often not in a position to exercise the rights of sovereignty over Scotland as a fief of the kingdom of England, but rather the recognition of Scotland as an independent and sovereign realm from roughly 1217 to 1296.\(^{313}\)

Henry III had effectively given up his claim to Normandy and the other lands lost by John in the Treaty of Paris of 1259, but had shown perhaps his only noteworthy military prowess in royal campaigns into northern Wales in 1241 and 1245-46, reducing the power of the Welsh princes and placing them more firmly under English control.\(^{314}\) In the Treaty of Woodstock in 1247, Henry was able to restore his authority in Wales to what it has been in 1241, requiring all local nobility to swear fealty and homage to him, thus superseding the sovereignty of any “Prince of Wales.”\(^{315}\) His subjugation of the Welsh did not go unchallenged, however, with Llywelyn ap Gruffudd taking advantage of the instability of Montfort’s regime between 1264 and 1265, and using the loose alliance between himself and Montfort to secure a favorable treaty, granting him a level of independence and sovereignty.\(^{316}\) The defeat of Montfort at Evesham did nothing to effect the position of Llywelyn and the English crown was in no position to address the Welsh situation until 1267, but the financial reality of the kingdom prevented any large scale campaign to subdue Wales with the financing of Edward’s crusade certainly making any royal campaign

\(^{312}\) Frame, 129-130.

\(^{313}\) Davies, *Domination and Conquest*, 76, 81-82, 84.

\(^{314}\) For the Treaty of Paris, 1259 see *English Historical Documents III*, 41, 376-379; Davies, *Domination and Conquest*, 82-83.


\(^{316}\) Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort*, 336-338.
impossible. Llywelyn was able to make an offer for terms that were embarrassing for Henry and damaging for English sovereignty and imperialism in the British Isles: Henry had no choice but to accept. The Treaty of Montgomery confirmed the territorial conquests ceded to the Welsh under Montfort’s regime, as well as confirming the requirement of Welsh magnates to do homage to Llywelyn. The most profound concession however was the recognition of the title “Prince of Wales” which was to be held by Llywelyn and his heir in perpetuity, with the prince only doing homage to the king of England, effectively breaking any ties of sovereignty the English king had over the nobility of Wales.317

Thus the precedent had been set for English imperialism both within the British Isles and abroad in France, and all that had been lacking in the reigns of John and Henry III was the domestic stability and the military prowess necessary to expand the domains of the English crown. Prior to his succession as king of England, Edward I had demonstrated his capabilities both as a knight and a general, first most at the battle of Evesham in 1265, and shortly after on crusade where his reputation was profoundly enhanced.318 The state of the realm at the time of his succession also proved to be less divisive and much more tranquil, with the death of Henry III and his accession thereafter not being questioned despite the lack of Edward’s presence in England during the first two years of his reign.319 Indeed, his succession was secured before his departure for the Holy Land with new men loyal to Edward placed in positions of power, and he was proclaimed king upon his father’s death, instead of at his coronation which had been the custom.320 While the realm tranquil compared to a decade before, England was not without its

317 Carpenter, The Struggle for Mastery, 385-386.
318 Prestwich, Edward I, 51-53 and 66-85; For Edward at the battle of Evesham and as a crusader, see The Chronicle of Bury St. Edmunds, 30-31 and 39, 46, 47-49.
319 The Chronicle of Bury St. Edmunds, 53.
problems during Edward’s absence after his succession. Disputes continued to persist in the marches despite the peace made with Llywelyn of Wales in 1267, an embargo on wool exports to Flanders was not observed, and in January 1273 the government suspended the general eyres in the counties. With this, financial instability continued to plague the crown, with the cost of the Barons War weighing heavily, along with the cancellation of the general eyres which were incredibly lucrative for the crown. While there was no internal dissension as had been present in the 1260s, Edward certainly had his fair share of obstacles to overcome if he were to make a serious effort in rebuilding the lost English empire.

After his coronation on 19 August 1274 at Westminster, Edward set to work to reorganize the finances and governance of the realm, with a commission dispatched to visit the hundreds of England to assess not only the lost liberties and rights of the crown, but to inquire about the abuses of officials both royal and private: the subsequent report is known as the Hundreds Rolls. One of the most striking things about the inquest of 1274-75 is how closely they resembled the investigations carried about by the reform party in 1258 to assess abuses by royal and private officials throughout the realm. Edward managed to take a technique which was used to examine and ultimately limit the power of the crown and turn it into a tool for reform that

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320 Prestwich, *Plantagenet England*, 122-123


322 None of the surviving accounts of the coronation provide much detail, with the Bury St. Edmunds chronicler simply remarking that Edward and his wife Eleanor were crowned at Westminster in 1275. Even Peter Langtoft, perhaps the most ardent support of the king also provides a detail-free account of the coronation. See *The Chronicle of Bury St. Edmunds*, 57, *The Chronicle of Pierre de Langtoft II*, ed. Thomas Wright (London: Rolls Society, 1868): 166-167. For the formation of the commission to oversee what would become the Hundred Rolls, see Prestwich, *Plantagenet England*, 123-124. For recommendations for reform from the Hundred Rolls, see *The inquests of 1274-75: the commission and the articles of 11 October 1274* in *English Historical Documents III*, 45, 392-396. Also see Caroline Burt, *Edward I and the Governance of England, 1272-1307* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
reflected the interests of the king. Such abuses were addressed at his first Parliament at Westminster in 1275, with legislation produced which sought to eliminate the sources of corruption noted in the Hundred Rolls, though the effectiveness of this first piece of legislation is questionable, especially with subsequent legislative reform in the years to follow. Nevertheless, the immediate impact of Edward’s efforts at reform reinforced a sense of a new beginning for the realm following his succession, one which moved the king much closer to his subjects than before through his commitment to handling local grievances and corruption firsthand.

Likewise, Edward worked vigorously to improve the financial stability of the crown, with the commission of the Hundred Rolls working to assess financial obligations owed to the crown as well as seeking out corruption and local grievances. One source of revenue in particular that the king aimed to exploit was the income from crown lands, a scheme that in the end failed in part because of the vast alienation of royal holdings during the reign of Henry III, along with poor implementation of a new system for managing the estates similar to that used by other large stakeholders. Two other sources of financial reform proved to be beneficial and lucrative for the crown, namely the levying of customs on wool agreed to by Parliament in perpetuity and the use of Italian merchants to establish lines of credit, notably from Ricciardi of Lucca a source used by Edward to finance part of his crusade. Edward was also successful in the early years of his reign in exacting taxation directly from negotiations made in Parliament, an effort that was not as stable as the customs affixed to wool exports, yet effective in 1275 when the king

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successfully petitioned for a fifteenth. Despite work that continued into the 1280s to reform the finances of the realm, a stable income continued to elude the crown, but the granting of customs and taxation through Parliament allowed Edward to build the confidence necessary with the Ricciardi to give the crown access to funds more easily and quickly.\footnote{Prestwich, Plantagenet England, 127-128. This is a very cursory overview of financial reform during Edward’s early reign. For more on financial reform, see H.S. Deighton, “Clerical Taxation by Consent, 1279-1301,” The English Historical Review 68, no. 267 (Apr., 1953): 161-192; Michael Prestwich, “Edward I’s Monetary Politics and Their Consequences,” The Economic History Review 22, no. 3 (Dec., 1969): 406-416; Prestwich, Edward I, 98-100 and 237-249. For commentary on the change of coinage, see Pierre de Langtoft II, 172-175.}

With administrative and financial reforms underway, the first thrust of renewed English imperialism began with the invasion of Wales in 1277. Open warfare between the English and the Welsh had been inevitable, with territorial disputes between Llywelyn and the marcher lords persistent throughout the 1270s, and the Prince of Wales’ failure to pay homage to Edward as stipulated in the Treaty of Montgomery in 1267.\footnote{Prestwich, Edward I, 170-182; Frame, 151-155.} The nationalistic rhetoric in the sources for Edward’s first war against the Welsh is rather subtle compared to later rhetoric, with emphasis placed on the difference in national character of the English and the Welsh, though not overtly. The Flores Historiarum continuation to 1307, written by an anonymous monk at Westminster, highlights several of standard negative attributes of the Welsh, the same that can be seen in Roger of Wendover and Matthew Paris.\footnote{Here I am using both the Latin text and an English translation. For the Latin, see Flores Historiarum III, ed. H.R. Luard (Rolls Series, 1890). For the English translation, see Matthew of Westminster, The Flowers of History II, ed. and trans. C.D. Yonge (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1853). For more on the two continuations of Flores Historiarum, see Gransden, Historical Writing in England, 453-463; Antonia Gransden, Legends, Traditions and History in Medieval England (London: Hambledon Press, 1992): 245-266. Gransden contends that the author of the continuation is unknown, while Yonge names Matthew of Westminster as the collector of the continuations. To avoid confusion I am using ‘Matthew of Westminster’ as the footnote heading to differentiate it from the ‘Flowers of History’ attributed to Roger of Wendover used previously.} He stressed the fearfulness and cowardice of Llewelyn and his people who “fled to their accustomed refuge of Snowdon,” upon hearing word...
of the approach of the English army. Conversely, the English are seen as virtuous and Edward warranted in his quest for justice against the unfaithful Llywelyn, who “entreated [the king] to show mercy, and not justice.” Likewise, Peter Langtoft, who was perhaps the most outspoken supporter of Edward’s imperialist expansion among all of the chroniclers, treats the first war with Wales in a very subdued manner, especially when compared to his fervent damnation of the Welsh in the 1290s. This is largely due to the rapid pace of the English campaign and the little resistance offered by the magnates of Wales to oppose Edward’s army for their prince. Indeed, many of the magnates quickly turned on Llywelyn and swore oaths of fealty to Edward, who had become known for what could be called a tyrannical rule of his principality, leading to a quick settlement by the prince. Perhaps most importantly, the first war was instigated by Edward even though the transgressions of Llywelyn may be considered acts of hostility and resistance to English sovereignty and especially the continuous Welsh incursions in the marches. Renewed hostilities in 1282 however held much more significance for both the contempt of the Welsh and the reinforcement of English national identity as a result.

Edward’s second war with Wales is most accurately described as a rebellion, with individual magnates throughout the country working in concert in March 1282 to attack English strongholds and undermine English authority. While Llywelyn was not among the instigators, he quickly joined and led the uprising, galvanizing the Welsh people against the injustices of the English king. Indeed, many of those who initially took up arms had petitioned Edward

329 Matthew of Westminster, 471; Flores Historiarum III, 49.


331 Prestwich, Edward I, 172-173, 176-177.

332 This is the position taken by Peter Langtoft, see Pierre de Langtoft II, 170-173. Langtoft was not concerned whether or not Llywelyn actually instigated or condoned Welsh incursions in the marches.
regarding loss of land and liberties and found that they no better liked the rule of the English king to that of the Welsh prince they had cast off.\textsuperscript{334} Unlike the war of 1277 which aimed to subdue the Welsh and bring Llywelyn to heel, the campaign beginning in 1282 was meant to conquer Wales once and for all. It was perhaps the surprise attack on the English that prompted such a harsh backlash on Welsh national character by contemporary sources, notably vilification of Llywelyn and his brother David as symbolic of the entirely of the Welsh people. The Prince of Wales and his brother embodied the rebellious and treasonous nature of the Welsh when they surrounded the castles of Rutland and Flint, destroying them and slaying all inhabitants regardless of sex or age.\textsuperscript{335} Even the \textit{Chronicle of Bury St. Edmunds}, known to have little bias in nationalistic terms, notes the outrages committed by Llywelyn and David with a level of contempt for the traitors.\textsuperscript{336}

Once again, Llywelyn retreated back his base of power at Snowdon as the English forces slowly made their way west, an example of the ongoing cowardice of the Welsh. Such fearfulness was cast aside however after the defeat of English forces at Anglesey, with the Prince of Wales marching out of the safety of his stronghold to face the English in the field.\textsuperscript{337} The might of the English prevailed against the Welsh when Roger Mortimer attacked the army of

\textsuperscript{333} Llywelyn and his brother Dave are marked as the instigators of the rebellion by many of the sources, see \textit{The Chronicle of Bury St. Edmunds}, 73-74; \textit{Pierre de Langtoft II}, 176-178; Matthew of Westminster, 476-477; \textit{Flores Historiarum III}, 56. However, Michael Prestwich notes that Llywelyn was not initially part of the rebellion, instead stating that it was his brother, Prince David who attacked Roger Clifford’s castle of Hawarden. Even so, it is questionable whether Llywelyn was ignorant of his brother’s plans. See Prestwich, \textit{Edward I}, 182-185.

\textsuperscript{334} Prestwich, \textit{Edward I}, 182-183; for more on the grievances of the Welsh, see 184-188.

\textsuperscript{335} Matthew of Westminster, 476-477; \textit{Flores Historiarum III}, 56.

\textsuperscript{336} \textit{The Chronicle of Bury St. Edmunds}, 74.

\textsuperscript{337} Prestwich notes that Llywelyn may have been trying to capitalize on the confusion following the English defeat at Anglesey, a victory for the Welsh that renewed their spirit in the face of superior English forces, but that the move may have been partly based on the fact that Llywelyn knew that if he stayed at Snowdon he would eventually be starved out. See, Prestwich, \textit{Edward I}, 193.
Llywelyn and defeated them “without losing any of his men,” an indication of the superior might of the English. Indeed, the might of the English here did prevail: not only were the Welsh defeated, but Llywelyn was killed, his head removed and carried off to the Tower to be displayed. Edward did not wait for the Welsh to appeal for peace, but instead moved ahead with the total conquest of Wales, securing it within six months of Llywelyn’s death. Resistance ended with the capture of Llywelyn’s brother David, who was cast as “the most cruel persecutor of England, a deluder of his own nation, a most ungrateful traitor, and the author of the war,” by the writer of the *Flores Historiarum*. Peter Langtoft presents a moment of redemption for the Welsh however, attributed the capture of David “by the power of the people” who dismembered the brother of the prince, sending his head to London as a gift. In actuality, David was tried and executed in Shrewsbury, but Langtoft often did not let facts get in the way of a good story.

More important for Langtoft’s narrative, and to a degree that of the *Flores Historiarum* chroniclers, was the idea that Edward restored not only order and justice to Wales, but brought Wales back into the folds of the empire created by Arthur, the legendary king of the Britons. The latter chronicler states, “the crown of the ancient famous king of the Britons, Arthur, was given up,” signaling a physical and symbolic transfer of power from the Welsh who represented the ancient Britons to the English, the new masters of the British Isles through Edward who was seen as fulfilling the Prophecies of Merlin. While modern historians cannot use the legendary

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338 Matthew of Westminster, 477; *Flores Historiarum III*, 57.
340 Matthew of Westminster, 478; *Flores Historiarum III*, 58.
341 Pierre de Langtoft II, 181; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 202-203. The writer of the *Flores Historiarum* provides a fairly accurate depiction of the execution of David, though the sources are fairly conflicted over the details. See Matthew of Westminster, 478; *Flores Historiarum III*, 58.
founding of Britain, the tales of King Arthur, or the Prophecies of Merlin as sources to
reconstruct historical events, we must acknowledge that some of our medieval counterparts did
exactly that. These were, in fact, the most popular historical narratives of England of the later
Middle Ages, with some 250 surviving manuscripts of Brut histories from the thirteenth to
fifteenth centuries: 51-55 in Anglo-Norman, 181 in Middle English, and 19 in Latin. So
popular, and perhaps influential, that in 1301 Edward used the legendary stories claims of
universal power in Britain of Brutus and King Arthur as historical precedents for his
overlordship of Scotland, an effort at which he spared no time or expense, having cathedral and
monastic archives searched to find evidence that supported his claim. Whether Edward truly
believed that such tales were precedent for his imperial ambitions is not at stake here, but rather
how much clout they held in popular imagination and how they contributed to the justification of
English dominance of the British Isles. With this, they helped to fuel the belief that the English
were superior to the other peoples of Britain which in turn contributed significantly to the
expression of Englishness during the period.

Peter Langtoft’s chronicle above all others focuses on the fulfillment of Merlin’s
prophecies regarding the return of a united Britain under an Arthur-like figure. The conquest
and subjugation of the Welsh was merely a stepping stone in his narrative leading to the more

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(Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006): introduction, 1-2. For the Anglo-Norman Prose Brut to 1332 see Prose Brut to
1332, ed. Heather Pagan (Manchester: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 2001). For the Middle English Brut to 1479 see
The Brut or the Chronicles of England, ed. Friedrich W.D. Brie, 2 parts (London: Early English Text Society, 1906-
08). For the development of the Middle English Brut see Lister M. Matheson, The Prose Brut: The Development of
a Middle English Chronicle (Tempe, AZ: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1998).

344 Prestwich, Edward I, 491-492; Roger Sherman Loomis, “Edward I, Arthurian Enthusiast,” Speculum 28, no. 1

345 The Anglo-Norman prose Brut to 1272 gives a full account of the Brut story from Monmouth and Wace, but
provides a very cursory account of contemporary events, and does not make connections between contemporary
events and the fulfillment of the Prophecies of Merlin. See The Oldest Anglo-Norman Prose Brut Chronicle, 287-
295.
important reunification of not just the British Isles, but the domains of Arthur’s day, which included his French possessions (most notably Gascony), the territory Edward turned to next. Langtoft reports very little of the activities of the king while he is abroad, stating only that Edward “caused justice to be proclaimed, and put right the wrongs,” which is not surprising considering the majority of king’s time was spent securing his position within the duchy, a series of events which did not lend well to Langtoft’s narrative.346 He does mention the Welsh insurrection led by Rhys ap Maredudd in 1287 and uses it as another opportunity to condemn the Welsh for their general rebellious character and treachery, but also indicates that Maredudd and his compatriots singled out Englishmen in their attacks, a statement supported by both the Flores Historiarum and the Chronicle of Bury St. Edmunds.347 While the three sources fail to elaborate on why Maredudd targeted Englishmen, Prestwich notes that in a letter from Edward to Edmund of Cornwall, the regent of England while the king was in Gascony, Edward instructed the earl not to cause any harm to Maredudd. A clerk noted at the bottom of the letter that, “the whole world knows Rhys stands against the English allegiance.”348 Despite the direct attack on Englishmen, an action that one would assume would generate a more profound response from Langtoft, the chronicler appears to be more concerned with the disruption it caused Edward in Gascony and the threat that continued Welsh rebellions levied against the fulfillment of Merlin’s prophecies. Indeed, it is the disruptions to Edward’s imperial ambitions that draws the greatest ire from Langtoft, remarkably so in the disastrous year of 1294.


Having subdued the Welsh and asserted his authority in Gascony, only Scotland remained outside of Edward’s sphere of power, though it is questionable whether or not the English king sought to extend his influence north at least at the beginning of the Great Cause. The *Annals of Waverly Abbey* state that Edward held a council in 1291 with his leading nobles where he outlined his intentions to subjugate Scotland in the same way he did Wales. Langtoft however is explicit in his insistence that the king was only interested in determining who the rightful king of Scotland was and that by selecting John Baliol, Edward was only exercising his right as overlord of Scotland. Overlordship of Scotland certainly appeared to be on the mind of Edward; in March 1291, before his meeting with Scottish magnates and clergy in Norham, the king ordered all monasteries in the kingdom to review their archives for any mention of English sovereignty over Scotland in the chronicles. Furthermore, during the meeting in Norham, the first part of the hearing was dominated by arguments for English overlordship, “with the chief justice of the King’s Bench asking the Scots to recognize Edward’s overlordship.” While reticent at the beginning of the procedures, the Scottish claimants accepted Edward’s argument for lordship and jurisdiction over Scotland, but only as long as he agreed to give the realm in full to the chosen successor to the Scottish throne. The English king indeed handed over the Scottish realm to his chosen successor John Baliol in November 1292, but Baliol was made to swear fealty and pay homage to Edward as overlord of Scotland, setting a precedent that would be at the heart of Anglo-Scottish relations well beyond the reign of Edward.

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350 *Pierre de Langtoft II*, 193.

Although the English king did not hold Scotland outright, Edward had positioned the crown to hold sovereignty over more land than it had since the loss of Normandy in 1204. While the colonization of Wales and the continued exertion of English dominance had certainly been challenged, notably by the rebellion of Rhys ap Maredudd, the massive fortification of English positions in Wales and relative peace signaled a victory for the Plantagenet king in his imperial program. Gascony had, by and large, been secured during Edward’s lengthy visit, with no major challenges to his sovereignty from those along the borders of the duchy. But as Langtoft laments, it all came crashing down in 1294: a year that witnessed disastrous disturbances on all three fronts of Edward’s empire.

War was declared between England and France over Philip IV’s seizure of Gascony, a new rebellion emerged in Wales, and relations with Scotland took a nasty turn when Edward demanded military service of the Scots in his war against France.\footnote{Prestwich, \textit{Edward I}, 365-369. This is not the first time an English king had demanded homage from the king of Scotland: Henry II required such an act from William the Lion in 1175. See Davies, \textit{The First English Empire}, 13-14.} Langtoft conflates the events of 1294 and 1295 in Scotland and he also places the blame on John Baliol, who, in fact, remained loyal to Edward and was removed from power in 1295 by a group of magnates, stating that, with the advice of his barons, he appealed to the pope for absolution from his coronation oath which confirmed the English king as overlord of Scotland.\footnote{Pierre de Langtoft II, 199-233; Matthew of Westminster, 501-509. \textit{Flores Historiarum III}, 87-95.} The frustration of Langtoft by the treachery of the Welsh and Scots is made clear when he states “May Scotland be cursed by the mother of God, and may Wales be sunk deep to the devil,” further condemning Wales “for it has always been full of treason.”\footnote{Pierre de Langtoft II, 221-223; Prestwich, \textit{Plantagenet England}, 232-233.} French national character is also noted by Langtoft in his
account of Thomas de Turbeville, who was coerced by Philip IV to spy on England. Here the cruelty and deceitfulness of the French is stressed: Turbeville’s two sons were taken hostage while he completed his task, and Philip aimed to instigate open warfare on the Welsh and Scottish borders. But it is the good and gentle nature of Edward, the archetypical Englishman, which prevails. While Turbeville is discovered and executed for his crimes, Edward agrees to papal appeals for peace, despite Philip’s intention to create discord within the English king’s domains.

Although Langtoft certainly held both the Welsh and the French in contempt and readily used their national character flaws to emphasize the superior traits of the English, the chronicler held a special hatred for the Scots, a people he spared no indignity when comparing to his own. His hatred for the Scots appears to be twofold. First, Langtoft was a Yorkshireman, a canon of Bridlington, an area which saw no shortage of Scottish raids; second, he held the Scots to a greater level of condemnation for their betrayal of Edward, and by extension the impediment they created to the fulfillment of Merlin’s prophecies through their treachery. In Langtoft’s eyes, the Scots were a backwards people, unskilled militarily and living a life hardly better than savages. Indeed, Langtoft illustrated their backwardness in a song mocking the Scots: “Scattered are the Scots, Huddled in their huts, Never do they thrive.” The English, with their chivalry and military prowess, trampled the Scots in their initial invasion, killing some four thousand while only losing one knight. Later, the Scots flee at the sight of an English army led by

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356 Pierre de Langtoft II, 227-229. The Flores Historiarum also provides an account of Thomas de Turbeville, see Matthew of Westminster, 511-512, Flores Historiarum III, 95.

357 Pierre de Langtoft II, 229-231.

358 For more on the life and work of Peter Langtoft, see Gransden, Historical Writing in England, 476-486.

359 Pierre de Langtoft II, 237.
Humphrey de Bohun, “fleeing away flies before the wind like straw does,” and the English chasing them, “like sheep which flies when it see the wolf come out of the bush.” Langtoft further remarks that despite how well armed the Scots appeared to be “that not one of them is worth a farthing in deed.”\(^{361}\) Those who were slaughtered by the English, ten thousand and fifty-four by Langtoft’s hyperbolic count, were responsible for the raids in Northumberland where cattle, priest and clergy were butchered indiscriminately, casting the Scots as ungodly, a further justification for their fate on the field of battle with the righteous English.\(^{362}\)

In his condemnation of the “other” Langtoft also uses an old trope, the impending invasion and destruction of the English people by foreign conquerors. It is here that the chronicler first mentions the twelve peers of Scotland who dethroned Baliol and outlines their alliance with the French. The Scots and the French planned to “go conjointly to destroy England from the Tweed into Kent,” where they would “leave no man alive, father nor kinsman,” but thankfully the “treacherous conference remains without effect.”\(^{363}\) Although Langtoft does not go into detail here, this is no doubt part of the invasion Edward warned the assembled clerics about in 1295 when he was fighting to secure funding for an expedition into France, unaware that the Scots were plotting with the French. Here the disloyal nature of Baliol is emphasized, along with the deceitfulness of the French through Philip IV. The threat seemed real enough, with raids conducted on Dover in August 1295 and an attack on Winchelsea was narrowly avoided by an English counterattack.\(^{364}\) Regardless of a potential French invasion, the Scottish

\(^{360}\) Pierre de Langtoft II, 233.

\(^{361}\) Pierre de Langtoft II, 247.

\(^{362}\) Pierre de Langtoft II, 247-249.

\(^{363}\) Pierre de Langtoft II, 253-255.

\(^{364}\) Prestwich, Edward I, 383.
campaign into northern England failed, with English forces quickly subduing the Scots and bringing Baliol and the council of twelve to heel. Langtoft rejoices that “now has king Edward Scotland entirely,” while also proclaiming victory and the fulfillment of Merlin’s prophecies: “Ah, God! How often Merlin said truth in his prophecies if you read them…now are the islanders all joined together…there is neither king nor prince of all countries except king Edward, who has thus united them; Arthur had never the fiefs so fully.”

It is on this triumphant note that Langtoft appears to have originally ended his chronicle, only to take up the quill once more in 1297 when the Scots rebelled under William Wallace and the hope of a new English empire seemed to slip out of reach. Perhaps as some consolation, Langtoft lived to see the death of William Wallace, “the master of thieves,” as he described him. The chronicle ends in 1307 with the death of Edward I, framed in a lament for the passing of the Arthur-like king.

Edward spent the rest of his reign in a state of war with Scotland, with intermittent campaigns occurring between 1298 and 1303, and no end in sight upon his death in 1307. A tentative peace between Edward and Philip IV was confirmed in June 1298 and sealed with the marriage of Philip’s sister Margaret of France in September 1299, though the issue of the release of Gascony to Edward continued until 1303 when the French were defeated by the Flemish at Courtrai; Philip could not risk renewed English and Flemish alliance, so he relinquished his control of the duchy. After the rebellion of 1294-95 Wales remained in a state of relative tranquility, and control transferred to the future Edward II in 1301 though the prince never visited the country thereafter. It was through the king’s imperial ambitions that Latin and French

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366 Pierre de Langtoft II, 363.

insular sources came to identify Englishness so strongly by comparison with the “other.” It was often cast as the virtue, chivalry, godliness, and might of the English in their triumph over the Welsh, French, and Scots. The Latin and French sources also emphasized the separation and differentiation between peoples and nations, with the English always represented as a whole people in one nation, while the “other” was always labelled in nationalistic terms. The Song on the Scottish Wars perhaps best sums up the nationalistic divide between the four peoples, with the Scots, Welsh, and French described as “the enemies of the English,” and goes on to state the “English like angels are always conquerors, they are more excellent than the Scotch or Welsh.”

A Divided Community: English Vernacular Writing in the Reign of Edward I

As illustrated in the first section of chapter one, English as a literary language perpetuated after the Norman Conquest with fewer de luxe manuscripts, but with continuity in the propagation of existing texts, many of which became pieces in larger compilations of OE works. Such existing works were modified and adapted with the ongoing literary evolution of the English vernacular: the transition noted by scholars from OE to eME. By the mid-thirteenth century there was what may be described as a literary revival, with a notable increase in the number of de luxe texts written in the vernacular. Robert of Gloucester’s chronicle, for example, belongs to such a revival. While French and Latin texts continued to be produced in greater numbers, by mid-century English texts began to occupy the same space as French and Latin in compiled manuscripts. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby 86 contains 101 works in French, Latin, and English, texts ranging from devotional works to miracles of saints and romances.

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368 Political Songs of England, 163 and 179.

Likewise, Cambridge, Trinity College B. 14. 39 is also a collection of works that include works from all three languages, with over forty individual works in English, a tremendous sum by any accounting.\textsuperscript{370} The transition of English from a subaltern language, one associated most closely with and by the dispossessed community after the Conquest, to a language that not only shared space, but a significant amount of it with French and Latin suggests a shifting tide in thought and prominence of the language. The obvious questions are: how did this happen? What changed in the thirteenth century that allowed for such a transition? I posit that it was the decrees of the Fourth Lateran Council, specifically those that required the clergy to be educated in the vernacular and that their parishioners be instructed in their \textit{vulgari lingua}.\textsuperscript{371}

Of the seventy canons of the Fourth Lateran Council three dealt most directly with clerical and lay education: canons nine, elven, and twenty-seven.\textsuperscript{372} Of the three, only canon nine addressed lay education directly, stating that the laity was in need of instruction, “by word and example,” in their mother tongue.\textsuperscript{373} Canons eleven and twenty-seven focused solely on clerical education, where again instruction in the vernacular was emphasized as a crucial component to ensure not only that the clergy was indeed capable of understanding church doctrine themselves, but able to adequately instruct the laity. Such an emphasis was not new. The Third Lateran Council in 1179 had similar decrees, but those were concerned with the education of the clergy


\textsuperscript{372} Eight canons addressed educational reform for the clergy directly, those being six, eight, nine, eleven, twenty-one, twenty-seven, thirty-two, and thirty-three.

\textsuperscript{373} See fn. 61.
only, stressing the need of qualified masters in cathedrals to combat the perpetual problem of poorly trained priests with limited knowledge of dogma.\textsuperscript{374} The movement for improved education in Lateran III and IV were also responses to the ongoing crisis in western Christendom of heresy, which arose – at least in part – due to the dissatisfaction of parishioners and intellectuals with the church and the celebration of faith.\textsuperscript{375} Part of the overall program of pastoral reform promulgated in the aforementioned councils sought to address the growing discontentment within not only the laity, but the clergy as well – the group most prominently associated with medieval intellectuals.\textsuperscript{376} The experience of mass was to be transformed through personal commitment and investment in the church through confession and communion, as well as instruction in what these acts meant. The only way to do so was through the vernacular, a common language shared between parish priests and their parishioners.

While the effects of the canons of Lateran IV were collateral – meaning that there was no active intention on the part of the papal curia to spark a revival of the vernacular language in any part of western Christendom, let alone England – those made by the council concerning clerical and lay education with an emphasis placed on the importance instruction in the vernacular lead to a profound increase in the proliferation of vernacular texts. However, such a result was not the product of the decrees of Lateran IV alone, but through the active, and perhaps enthusiastic, participation of the church hierarchy in England. Indeed, between 1219 and 1268 nearly every

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English diocese held or participates in synods and councils directed towards implementing and expanding on the canons of Lateran IV.\textsuperscript{377} While the wider issues of pastoral reform were eagerly taken up and expanded upon, only four synods before 1281 addressed the need for instruction in the vernacular.\textsuperscript{378} It was not until the Council of Lambeth in 1281 that the movement truly became engrained within the English church. Through the efforts of John Pechman, archbishop of Canterbury, the council decreed that all candidates for the priesthood in England were to be tests in both Latin and English before taking up their ecclesiastical post.\textsuperscript{379} To support such a lofty goal, Pechman himself composed the first comprehensive guide in England outlining the necessary religious knowledge expected of priests to ensure that they would be able to preach to and instruct their flock.\textsuperscript{380} The text, \textit{Ignorantia Sacerdotum}, was widely circulated throughout England, and, like the canons of Lateran IV, it was widely adapted by individual dioceses to fit their needs.\textsuperscript{381}

Despite its composition in Latin, the work sparked a new wave of vernacular writing, much of which was appropriately liturgical and devotional in nature, including manuals of confessions, collections of sermons, and exempla, as well as general texts on pastoral care. At

\textsuperscript{377} Katherine French, \textit{The People of the Parish: Community Life in Late Medieval English Diocese} (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001): 28-29. It is importance to note that England was not exceptional in this, but that similar responses occurred through western Europe.

\textsuperscript{378} Out of the four synods, two were held in Durham, one in Salisbury, and another in Worchester. The synods in Durham and Salisbury were conducted by the same man, Richard Poore. See \textit{Councils & Synods: With Other Documents Relating to the English Church II A.D. 1205-1313, Part I 1205-1265}, ed. F.M. Powicke and C.R. Cheney (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964): 57-96, 100-125 and 201; Boyle, 35.

\textsuperscript{379} \textit{Councils & Synods II}, 898: \ldots et recipients eos seu simul seu sigillatim in vulgari lingua publice instruantur de distinction ordinium. For the complete decrees of the council see the same volume, 886-918.

\textsuperscript{380} Pechman required that priests were to know and to explain to their parish at least four times a year: the fourteen articles of faith, the ten commandments, two precepts of the Gospel, the seven works of mercy, the seven deadly sins, the seven principal virtues, and the seven sacraments. See French, 177.

\textsuperscript{381} The bishop of Exeter did so in 1287, the bishop of Winchester in 1308, and Simon Langham, archbishop of York in 1359 and 1364. For Exeter, see \textit{Councils & Synods II}, 982-1058; for Winchester and York, see Rubin 87-88.
the end of the thirteenth century, the English vernacular had become a budding literary language: a trend that continued well into the fourteenth century. This should not be exaggerated, however: Latin remained the primary language of intellectual and political discourse; however, by the late thirteenth century, French was in a slow decline as a literary language, perhaps even more slowly being replaced by English, while it continued to be a language of legal and courtly discourse into the fifteenth century. Even though the production of texts in English remained significantly below those in the other two languages of England, what we see here is the beginning of what will only be an upward trajectory for English vernacular writing. Alongside the liturgical and devotional texts were also assortments of secular poetry and romance, to only name two genres. Such texts often occupied space in the same compilation: Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby 86, for example, contains religious verses such as *The Harrowing of Hell*, along with secular works like *The Thrush and the Nightingale* and *The Fox and the Wolf*. While the majority of English works in Cambridge, Trinity College B. 14. 39 are devotional, it also includes the *Life of Saint Margaret*: a religious work. Saints lives were a popular literary medium meant for spiritual edification as well as entertainment.

Even though the secular works may not be heavily influenced by religious works or thought – though most were – they were a result of the literary revival caused by the canons of the Fourth Lateran Council and the subsequent promotion of the reforms by John Pecham. The

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383 *The South English Legendary* is another example of a text that was not purely meant to be instructional or pastoral, but occupied space as a text meant both for devotion and entertainment. See *The South English Legendary*, ed. Charlotte D’Evelyn and Anna J. Mill, 3 volumes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956-58).
work done by John Pecham effectively repositioned the English church as an institution that not
only trained clergy in the use of the vernacular, but also promoted its use. As with English as a
literary language, religious works did not suddenly take up English as the authoritative or
preferred medium for such discourse, but rather a space was created where training in the
vernacular became increasingly widespread. With an institution of power such as the church
promoting the English language as a medium of authority, especially if we think as simply as the
relationship between the priest and his parish, the language came to embody a sense of authority,
one which had been lacking for nearly two centuries. In this way, not only was the vernacular
language taught and promoted by the church, but it was also embodied with authority. While it
has been argued that the church promoted the unifying language of Latin as a means of
controlling western Christendom through the suppression of the vernacular, here we see a clear
contradiction.\textsuperscript{384} Unintentionally, the church promoted the use of the vernacular as a means to
instruct both the clergy and the laity, for it also put in place mechanisms – like Pecham’s
requirement that priests be tested in Latin and English – that enabled the use of the vernacular in
spaces outside of instruction. As a result, the availability of English as a literary medium was
extended and opened in a way it had not been (not to mention its new level of authority) since
the end of the eleventh century.

The English vernacular continued to be used by a particular community for certain
purposes. As we have seen, though, membership in this community was expanding and
distinctions between one writing community and another were becoming increasingly unclear.
Despite the ongoing distinctions made by English vernacular writers, the English community
was increasingly more heterogeneous. As demonstrated in the previous section, writing in Latin

\textsuperscript{384} Benedict Anderson, 12-22.
and French built on the imperial ambitions of Edward I and acted as means of propaganda, whether intentional or not, to demonize the others on the peripheries of England. In such, the identity of writers as Englishmen was created through a shared sense of national identity defined on the distinctive qualities of English national character. In comparison, the national identity of English writers continued to be centered on their common language and a shared experience that differed from the one exhibited by French and Latin writers. Homogeneity within the English writing community began to be emphasized not by defining the identity of the English and their nation on the foreign other, but rather on an internal divide, one that was perhaps more tangible than imaginary. Once again discrepant experience was present in the English nation in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. Those who wrote in English continued to do so for the purpose of exhibiting a distinction between themselves and the rest of the community of the realm, a division within the community that highlighted, at its core, social order and status. Increasingly, English vernacular writers, especially those writing pastoral literature in one form or another, expressed the distinction as one between the lered and the lewed, the learned and the unlearned.

At its heart, this distinction was constructed in terms of access and participation in the nation, and reflected a sense of social status division, one which had always existed between the English community, who were predominantly among the lower ranks of society, and those in the French and Latin communities who represented their social superiors. The social relationship between the communities was one that had existed since the Conquest, but the discourse for expressing had changed since the turmoil of the early thirteenth century that solidified a sense of

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Englishness in the upper echelons of society. Whereas before the English community voiced their subjugation through a shared lament of the loss of their culture and their subordinate position under the Normans, widespread assimilation and the hybridity that resulted from it necessitated a new means by which to express difference. It manifested in the very real disparity in access and participation in the nation through a language barrier: a vast majority of the English population engaged in oral discourse, with instances of individuals capable of understanding French and Latin rare outside of ecclesiastical and aristocratic spheres.\(^{386}\) English writers in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century began to make the distinction clear, emphasizing that it was one between those in society who understood Latin and French, the learned, and those who were unlearned, only understanding their mother tongue, with the latter often described as their target audience.

The anonymous writer of *Cursor Mundi* made such a declaration. Written c. 1300 in northern England, presumably Yorkshire, although some manuscripts suggest that it may have originally been composed in Lincolnshire, the text is made up of short couplets interspersed with lines of verse.\(^{387}\) It survives in nine extant manuscripts, with four manuscripts representing what has been collectively labelled “the Northern version,” and the other five collectively called “the Southern version.”\(^{388}\) The “Northern version” preserves the oldest form of the poem, found in Cotton Vespasian A in the British Library dated to the early to mid-fourteenth century, while the

\(^{386}\) M.T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, 199-254.


“Southern version” preserves the four extant manuscripts that were translated into the Southern Middle English dialect from early to mid-fifteenth century. The two “versions” are nearly identical, with the exception of an omission in four of the five southern manuscripts, the significance of which will be explained below.

The text itself was a Christian universal history, one focused on “spiritual rather than political history, ground in the Holy Trinity,” telling the story of mankind from creation to doomsday.389 Like many of the texts discussed throughout this thesis, the author of the Cursor relied on a variety of sources, drawing on works in Latin, French, and English. In particular, it drew heavily from Peter Comestor’s Historia Scholastica, a text that sought to summarize all biblical knowledge and was a standard text in theological schools.390 The intent of the author then appears to be aimed at fulfilling the mandate issued by John Pecham, and as a result “produced…a well-proportioned compilation of pre-existing material translated into serviceable Middle English verse.”391 However, the author was concerned with contemporary affairs, particularly the social division noted above, while also being acutely aware of importance of writing such a work in the English vernacular. The end of the prologue to Cursor Mundi is striking in that the author clearly defines his audience as “common English people,” stressing the importance of man knowing where he began and understanding that it is grounded in his Christian faith.392 The work that he translates, he stresses, is done in the English language for the

389 Turville-Petre, England the Nation, 41.
390 Turville-Petre, England the Nation, 41.
391 Southern Version of Cursor Mundi, introduction 11.
392 Southern Version of Cursor Mundi, 40-41, ll. 225-231 and 235: Nedeful me þinke hit were to man | to knowe hymself how he bigan | How he bigan in world to brede | How his ospryngbegan to sprede | Boþe of þe firste and of þe laste | In what course þis world is paste | Aftir holy chirches astate; For commune folke of engelonde
love of their own vernacular, so that they, the common Englishmen, can understand and learn.\textsuperscript{393} It is for both love of his fellow Englishmen and love of their shared language, a language that represented England and their own sense of national identity.

As mentioned above, four of the five southern manuscripts contain a discrepancy through the omission of lines 237-242, six lines which are rather significant for the described purpose of the \textit{Cursor} author.\textsuperscript{394} In these lines he condemns the use of French, as it is of no good or use to Englishmen for they cannot understand it: it is only useful to the French he says.\textsuperscript{395} Here the author emphasizes the distinction in language between the communities, making it clear that French is written for French men: for those who are learned. The nation of England, he stressed, was a nation and people in common, meaning a people bound by their shared language.\textsuperscript{396} It is after this that the southern manuscripts pick back up with the northern manuscripts. Unfortunately, the omission of the lines in the fifteenth century manuscripts has no clear explanation. The discrepancy itself has been noted by several scholars, yet none have offered any commentary on why the scribes may have left the seven lines out.\textsuperscript{397} However, beyond this, the lines are significant in and of themselves. They provide clarity for what the author has to say

\textsuperscript{393} \textit{Southern Version of Cursor Mundi}, 40-41, ll. 232-234 and 236: þis ilke book is translate | Into English tonge to rede | For þe loue of Englishe lede; Shulde þe better hit vndirstonde

\textsuperscript{394} The lines are omitted from one of the northern versions as well, Trinity College, Cambridge R.3.8, while they are present in a later southern version, MS Additional 31042 British Library, preserving the original version in four of the nine extant manuscripts. See \textit{Cursor Mundi: A Northumbrian Poem}, 21-23; \textit{Southern Version of Cursor Mundi}, introduction 14-15, and 41.

\textsuperscript{395} \textit{Cursor Mundi: A Northumbrian Poem}, 20-22, ll. 237-239: Frankis rimes here I redd | Communlik in ilka sted | Mast es it wroght for frankie man. All passages from this text are taken out of the transcript of Cotton Vespasian A because of its completeness and composition close to the date of the original text.

\textsuperscript{396} \textit{Cursor Mundi: A Northumbrian Poem}, 22, ll. 241-242: Of Ingland the nacion | Es Inglis man þar in commun

next: in the next two lines he states that the common language known to most, the English vernacular, must spread, the necessity of which is clear in that most speak and understand it.\textsuperscript{398}

Echoing the criticism, or perhaps curiosity, of his vernacular writing predecessors Laȝamon and Robert of Gloucester, the \textit{Cursor} author points out the oddity of a non-native language holding such prominence in England: “Seldom was by any chance, the English language praised in France.”\textsuperscript{399} He goes on to suggest that each community should have access to knowledge in their own language, further stressing the importance of his work and emphasizing the division within the English nation. It is for the unlearned Englishman that he speaks, for they can understand what he says.\textsuperscript{400}

Robert Mannyng, in his pastoral care text \textit{Handlyng Synne}, also emphasized the same societal division as the author of the \textit{Cursor}, in fact using much of the same language and sentiments, particularly the distinction between the learned and the unlearned, the English from the rest of the nation. Mannyng’s work also survives in the same number of manuscripts as \textit{Cursor Mundi}, nine, a number which suggests that, like \textit{Cursor Mundi}, \textit{Handlyng Synne}, it was a fairly popular text.\textsuperscript{401} The text was completely, or so Mannyng says, in 1303, though at some time after 1317 he edited the text and wrote the prologue.\textsuperscript{402} Mannyng compiled much of his

\textsuperscript{398} \textit{Cursor Mundi: A Northumbrian Poem}, 22, ll. 243-244: þe speche þat man wit mast may spede | mast þar-wit to speke war nede; \textit{Southern Version of Cursor Mundi}, 41, ll. 243-244: þat speche þat moost vs may spede | Moost to speke hit were greet nede. The difference here is purely based on dialect while the meaning remains roughly the same.

\textsuperscript{399} \textit{Cursor Mundi: A Northumbrian Poem}, 22, ll. 245-246: Selden was for ani chance | Praised Inglis tong in france; \textit{Southern Version of the Cursor Mundi}, 41, ll. 245-246: Selden hit is for any chaunce | Englisshe tonge preched in fraunce. Again, the dialect is different, but the relative meaning remains the same.

\textsuperscript{400} \textit{Cursor Mundi: A Northumbrian Poem}, 22, ll. 249-250: To laud and Inglis man I spell | þat understands þat I tell; \textit{Southern Version of the Cursor Mundi}, 41, ll. 249-250: To lewed men englisshe I spelle | Þat vndirstondeþ what I con telle.

work from other sources, drawing on William of Waddington’s *Manual des Pêchés* most heavily, with the general outline and organization of the Waddington’s work retained for Mannyng’s own. However, Mannyng truly made the work his own. The text provided instruction on several aspects necessary for the *cura animarum* outlined in Lateran IV, specifically the Ten Commandments, the seven deadly sins, the seven sacraments, and the twelve rules and graces of confession. Mannyng’s strategy to education while also entertaining was executed through the use of exempla, a common feature of medieval pastoral literature, which were essentially short stories or fables that reinforced the lesson it followed. While about half of the exempla from *Handlyng Synne* was taken from Mannyng’s translation of *Manual des Pêchés* and sources like *The Dialogues of Gregory the Great*, the remaining half was tales selected by Mannyng which are interspersed throughout the work.

Many of the exempla chosen by Mannyng were English in origin, tales from Bede’s *Historia*, the South English Legendary, and several fables that may be unique to his text, though they may have come from otherwise unidentified saints lives and other various collections. When retelling tales from English sources, Mannyng always places emphasis on the fact that the tales are connected to the English nation. In his recounting of the story of Coenred’s Sergeant introduced as a tale of Bede, “a story in England that men read.”

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402 *Handlyng Synne*, 5, l. 76: a þousynd and þre hundryd & þre; Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*, 47.

403 Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*, 46-47. Turville-Petre notes that Manual des Pêchés was addressed to the ‘laie gent’, but that some manuscripts were owned by clergy who may have tried to transliterated for the laity. For more on this see E.J. Arnould, *Le Manuel des peches: étude de littérature religieuse anglo-normande* (Paris: 1940).

404 Lines 147-2990 deal with the Ten Commandments, 2991-8586 with the Seven Deadly Sins, 8587-9500 with sacrilege, 9501-11310 with the seven sacraments, and 11311-12638 with the rules and graces of confession. See *Handlyng Synne*, introduction xvii.

405 *Handlyng Synne*, introduction xvii.

406 *Handlyng Synne*, 110, ll. 4366-4367: As tellyþ þe holy man seynt Bede | Yn gestes of yngland þat men rede.
Bede, a brief life of St. Fursey, Mannyng depicts the journey of the saint through East Anglia, taking his reader through the English countryside, depicting a familiar space recognizable to his reader as one belonging to the nation. An added layer to the life of St. Fursey is that Mannyng “nativizes” the Irish saint, a common alteration the writer made to several of the tales of saints to draw a stronger connection of commonality, shared culture, and history. Indeed, this can be seen in his handling of the German carolers of Colbek, as well as the Italian saints Eutychius and Florentius. The German carolers are even placed within an English setting, the author claiming that the events took place “in this land,” instead of Saxony, the setting actually attributed to the tale. Mannyng also draws a connection between the physical space of England and the monarchy, perhaps the most prominent embodied symbol of the nation, in this tale by placing it “in the time of a king called Edward.”

Mannyng’s use of exempla, and especially those drawn from English sources, served a dual purpose. His primary concern was the care of the souls of his fellow Englishmen, and to reach this audience, he did so on the one hand by writing in the vernacular, while on the other he used English tales set in familiar settings, most notably within rural villages and communities. As Thorlac Turville-Petre notes, Mannyng rarely referred to urban areas, only mentioning London once. While he used English tales as a means of reinforcing a sense of English community both big and small, his overall use of exempla was intended as a means of drawing

407 Handlyng Synne, 64-68, ll. 2473-2634.
408 Kate Greenspan, “Englishing the Saints in Robert Mannyng’s Handlyng Synne,” in Sanctity as Literature in Late Medieval Britain, ed. Eva von Contzen and Anke Bernau, 60-79 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015): 67. For the carolers, see Handlyng Synne, 225-231, ll. 9011-9263; for saints Eutchius and Florentius, see Handlyng Synne, 101-107, ll. 4001-4240.
409 Handlyng Synne, 225, ll. 9015-9018: And fyl þys chaunce yn þys lond | Yn yngland, as y vndyrstond | Yn a kynes tymes þat hygte Edward; Turville-Petre, England the Nation, 58.
410 Turville-Petre, England the Nation, 50. For his mention of London, see Handlyng Synne, 69, l. 2699.
people into his overall narrative. Mannyng claims in his prologue that it was for the “unlearned man that he took up the writing of his book in the English tongue,” such men who “love to listen to ideal tales,” but through their ignorance can be seduced, falling into “deadly sin and other folly.”

His purpose, then, was to educate while also to entertain, and to place the tales within a familiar context of local community, one of many within their shared community.

Mannyng constructed his piece of pastoral literature to reflect the homogeneity of the English community (those who only knew the English language), and in doing so established a binary between the learned and unlearned that can be found throughout his work. As we know, the English community itself was much more heterogeneous, and that Mannyng’s construction—and his English vernacular contemporaries—does not hold up to criticism. Instead of dismissing the binary though, we must examine why it was constructed and what it meant for Mannyng and his worldview. He understood the world as one that was in a constant struggle against sin and what he believed was the social evil it caused.

His world, to no surprise, also consisted of a ridged social hierarchy, with the unlearned occupying the bottom, despite the growing heterogeneity of the English community, and learned who made up the rest of society: principally the clergy, the aristocracy, and the king. In this social order, Mannyng places the greater burden of responsibility on the learned, especially the responsibility for the care of the souls of those at the bottom. Indeed, the learned failed to provide the necessary means for the souls of the unlearned.

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411 *Handlyng Synne*, 4, ll. 43-50: For lewed men y vndyr toke | On englyssh tonge to make þys boke, | For many beyn of swyche manere | Þat talys & rymys wyle bleþly here | Yn gamys, yn festys, & at þe ale, | Loue men to lestene trotoual, | Þat may falle ofte to velanye | To dedly synne or outher folye. My transliteration sacrifices some of the poetic beauty of Mannyng’s work, for which I can only apologize.

412 Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*, 49.
In his “Tale of the Priest’s Concubine,” which he places in his own contemporary time of “good Edward, son of Henry,” the seventh deadly sin, lechery is illustrated through a priest taking a wife, thus providing an indication of the priest’s own sinfulness, and the poor example he is setting for his parishioners. But as Mannyng always does, there is redemption in the story, a path shown that, if taken, will lead not only to a life of less sin, but also to a healing of society. In the story the priest has four sons with his concubine, all of whom become priests, and soon after their father dies. Soon after, with the priest’s concubine on her deathbed, her sons ask her to repent for her sins, for through their training they are made to know that they were born in sin, and that their mother “all her life lived in deadly sin.” To this she exclaimed, “so may my soul to god be brought | for any sin that I have wrought,” and that while she had lived in sin her whole life, she “had been called a priest’s wife.” God’s displeasure is pronounced after her death through violent earthquakes, leaving a lasting impression on the sons, one of whom then goes forth and to preach against the sin of lechery “throughout England, in every county.”

The priest, representing the learned, not only succumbed to sin by taking a concubine, he also abused his station and power over that of an unlearned, the woman who believed she was his wife. By placing the tale in Mannyng’s own time – specifically the reign of Edward I - he is suggesting that was a distinction between the priest, who was presumably trained before Pecham’s promotion of educational reform for the clergy, and his sons, who were then taught under the reforms, having learned the sinfulness of lechery through instruction in their mother

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413 *Handlyng Synne*, 201, ll. 7987-7988: Yn þe tyme of gode Edward | Edward, syre henryes sone.

414 *Handlyng Synne*, 201, ll. 8007-8010: Þese four children had gret þoght | how þey were yn synne furþ broght | And how here moder leued ynne | Al here lyff yn dedly synne.

415 *Handlyng Synne*, 201, ll. 8021-8022: So may my soule to god be broght | for any synne þat y have wroght; p. 202, ll. 8029-8030: Bogh y haue leued a sinful lyff | And haue be called a prestes wyff.

416 *Handlyng Synne*, 203, ll. 8072-8073: He preched þys yn stedes sere | þurgh yngland, yn eury cunte.
tongue. Mannyng makes no mention of language in the tale, but it is implied when he states the father “sent them to school to learn,” for their priestly education.\textsuperscript{417} It was through their education that they were able to understand the sins of both their mother and father, their father being ignorant, as seen through the final word of their mother, her believing she was free of the sin they accused her of because she was called a priest’s wife. The redemption is exhibited through the travels of one the sons, he who himself is an embodiment of the seventh deadly sin, where he preaches against lechery throughout England. Despite being born of sin, the son through his priestly education in his own language, learns the signs of sin and is then able to move throughout the space of the greater English community to combat the evil. As such, Mannyng is illustrating how the learned should behave and emphasizing the duty they have for those below them.

Mannyng continues with his criticism of the learned through the binary he established by way of social status through the event of the tournament. He sees the tournament itself as a sinful act, an event that is “forbidden in the holy church.”\textsuperscript{418} The tournament is the spatial location in which Mannyng deconstructs the aristocracy, displaying them for the sinners he believes them to be. In the unholy events, as he sees them, are present all the deadly sins, pride for the boastful nature of the competition, envy for the success of other knights, and wrath for “often tournaments are made for hate.”\textsuperscript{419} He also notes the presence of lechery because “many times knights make the tournaments for women,” where they would display their knight prowess to

\textsuperscript{417} \textit{Handlyng Synne}, 201, l. 7998: He settle them vnto scole to lore.

\textsuperscript{418} \textit{Handlyng Synne}, 115: ll. 4576-4577: Of tournamentes þat are forbade | Yn holy cherche as men rede.

\textsuperscript{419} \textit{Handlyng Synne}, 115-116: ll 4579-4580: Fyrst ys pryde, as þou weyl wost | Auauntrement, bobaunce, and bost; ll. 4583-4586: Were þou weyl þyr ys enuye | Whan one seeþ an ouþer do more maystrye | Øper yn wrdes or yn dedes | Enuye most of alle hem ledes; l. 4587-4588: Yre and wraphpe may þey nat late | Øfte are tournamentes made for hate.
win the woman’s love and affection.\textsuperscript{420} Mannyng also notes the manifestations of greed in the prize being fought over – that other than the love and affection of young women, of course – and that of gluttony through the feasting associated with such aristocratic gatherings. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of his deconstruction of the tournament as a bed of sin is that Mannyng places it all beneath the deadly sin of sloth. In a very Weberian discourse – a phrase I do not use lightly because of how anachronistic it feels – the writer associates rich men with the sin of sloth, for “all these rich men it wins,” here implying that it is through leisure brought on by riches that men succumb to the deadly sin.\textsuperscript{421} Those who are rich are already in poor faith, as a man who has wealth pays heed to “holy church men calling,” for rich men take no notice, “of matins.”\textsuperscript{422} Mannyng thus associates the practice of tournaments with laziness, asserting that it is because they are already prone to the deadly sin because “certainly fall into slough, for they love [the tournament] more than god or mass.”\textsuperscript{423} Through his discourse on sin as the evil of society, Mannyng then places the rich, the aristocracy at the very top, providing a thinly veiled criticism of the excesses of the learned class and the overall harm that he witnesses them doing to the rest of the society: the unlearned.

Several of the poems and lyrics from MS Harley 2253 shared the binary of learned and unlearned as seen in both \textit{Cursor Mundi} and \textit{Handlyng Synne}, with many of the pieces being secular in nature, providing somewhat of an alternative perspective of the English vernacular community. In the political satire, “The Song of the Husbandman,” the anonymous poet gives

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\textsuperscript{420} \textit{Handlyng Synne}, 116: ll. 4609-4610: Many tymes for wymmen sake | Knyghtes tourmentes make.

\textsuperscript{421} \textit{Handlyng Synne}, 107: l. 4244: Alle þese ryche men hyt wynnes.

\textsuperscript{422} \textit{Handlyng Synne}, 108: ll. 4259-4264: Whan he heryþ a belle rynge | To holy cherche men callynge | Than may he nat his bed lete | But þan behouþ hym lykke & swete | And take þe merry mornynge slepe | Of matynes ryche men take no kepe.

\textsuperscript{423} \textit{Handlyng Synne}, 116: ll. 4591-4592: And certes they falle yn sloghness | Þey loue hyt moreþan god or messe.
\end{flushright}
voice to a figurative peasant who complains about the excessive taxes of the king.\textsuperscript{424} As with all the material in MS Harley 2253 (and certainly a challenge with many manuscripts), the poem is difficult to historicize because of the unclear date of composition. While it is generally agreed that the manuscript was compiled c. 1340, Elaine Treharne suggests the some of the material is much older, perhaps very early fourteenth century, however Thorlac Turville-Petre postulates that the entire manuscript runs from 1314 to 1349.\textsuperscript{425} To complicate matters further, Thomas Wright establishes the period for the piece to be somewhere within the reign of Edward I, although he provides no explanation for his dating, while Turville-Petre places the date of this specific piece in the early reign of Edward III.\textsuperscript{426} Michael Prestwich uncritically accepts Wright’s dating of the reign of Edward I stating it was “a poem of Edward I’s day,” adding an additional layer to an already perplexing issue.\textsuperscript{427} Reasonably speaking, the poem could have been composed in either reign; taxation for the purposes of proposed military expeditions was a constant fixture in the reigns of Edward I and his namesake grandson. Also, there is no indication whether or not the phrasing in the poem, “for ever the fourth penny must go to the king,” is meant literally.\textsuperscript{428} Therefore, the poem will be treated simply as a piece of early fourteenth century political poetry with the meaning and situations expressed temporally transferable.

While the harangue against taxation itself reinforces the notion of social division so far covered in this section, the imagery of distinction between the learned and the unlearned in “The

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Political Songs, introduction xi; Turville-Petre, England the Nation, 197.
\item Prestwich, The Three Edwards, 237.
\item The Song of the Husbandman, l. 8; Political Songs, 149.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Song of the Husbandman,” perhaps best emphasizes the binary established by the *Cursor Mundi* and *Handlyng Synne*. The poor husbandman, as the anonymous poet presents him, is placed in a subordinate position by “baron and bondsman, the clerk and the knight,” not only because of his social status, but also because of his illiteracy. “Still tax collectors come with excessive arrogance | ‘Pay me silver for the green wax! | You are entered in my write, as you well know!’ | More than ten times I have paid my tax!” The power in the relationship of the bailiff over the husbandman exists here in the power of literacy exhibited by the bailiffs’ ability to note that the husbandman is on his writ and the power embodied in it through the green wax seal. M.T. Clanchy notes the symbolism of power embodied in seals, suggesting that England never developed a “uniform scribal system for authenticating documents,” because of the use of seals. As he points out, it was not the signature of the scribe that matter, the scribe was irrelevant, but rather it was the placing of a seal that gave the document authenticity and power. The written word in this piece is still important however, because while the seal gives the document authenticity, the husbandman is still powerless as an illiterate to challenge what is clearly being portrayed as the corruption of a learned man. “The Song of the Husbandman,” also fits into the social world constructed by Mannyng. Considering the secular characteristics of the poem and that the poem does not have any religious overtones and themes, like Mannyng’s ongoing mantra of sin, the representation of the learned then is presented as worldly. Whereas the learned throughout the piece are noted for their gluttony and greed, illustrated by their “falsehood grow[ing] fat,” and that “never have tax collectors declared their full gains,” it is

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429 *The Song of the Husbandman*, ll. 28 and 37-39; *Political Songs*, 150-151.

430 M.T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Records*, 309-318.
placed in the gluttony and greed of men, the secular world, not that of the devil who sought to corrupt the world in Mannyng’s work.431

“Satire on the Consistory Courts,” also demonstrates the binary between the learned and unlearned, but this piece presents it in a comedy, where a wily man is brought before a consistory, or ecclesiastical, court, to be tried for the seduction and “lying with on the earth,” of a young women who he is not willing to marry.432 Here the unlearned is pitted against the learned of the church, and like “The Song of the Husbandman,” the unlearned is placed at a pronounced disadvantage because of his illiteracy. Whereas the writ and the seal represent the embodiment of power, in this piece it is the book on which the poet places emphasis to illustrate the literary symbol of power. The poem begins with, “no unlearned man may survive in the land | unless he be always in court so craftily skilled | as the learned who lead us about,” providing a clearer distinction of the binary than “The Song of the Husbandman,”.433 The imagery of literacy and the power it embodies is then presented in the form of a book, but more wholly the written word, which does not only occupy the space of the court, but the poet offers descriptions of sounds; “[the priests] turn over unclasped books,” and “they stab with their pens on their parchment.”434 Furthermore, the power of literacy is acknowledged by the seductive man when he states, “if I’m written into their record | then am I in disrepute,” signaling the helplessness of his situation when facing the learned.435

431 The Song of the Husbandman, ll. 33 and 59.


433 Satire on the Consistory Court, ll. 1-3; Political Songs, 155. For some additional commentary on the poem, see Turville-Petre, England the Nation, 201-202.

434 Satire on the Consistory Court, ll. 13 and 25; Political Songs, 156.

435 Satire on the Consistory Court, ll. 33-34; Political Songs, 157.
As we have seen, English vernacular writers tended to express their Englishness through a social division with an emphasis on language. This, of course, was not a perfect binary, and was challenged by real issues of literacy. The anonymous author of *Cursor Mundi* and Robert Mannyng in *Handlyng Synne* present an ideal-type world where education of the clergy and the then subsequent instruction of the laity in their mother tongue would both enlighten and inform, giving the unlearned access to knowledge from which they had previously been barred due to ignorance. But we must keep in mind that neither author intended their text to be revolutionary in the Marxist sense through dismantling the alienation that the church created between man and society through word and text. Indeed, the authors recognized the true power of their work through the solidarity it offered their community through shared language.

“The Song of the Husbandman” and the “Satire on the Consistory Court,” both indicate tension in perhaps the lofty ideas of the *Cursor* author and Mannyng. While education in church doctrine would certainly provide movement towards the better care of souls for the English community, the goal of both pastoral texts, practical limitations remained by way of literacy: the capability of the laity to engage and overcome the power of the written word. In both of the secular pieces, the unlearned acknowledge symbolic objects that represent the power of literacy as physical reminders of their subaltern status in society. In this way, both pieces indicate the disparity within the English nation as a whole, where society, in many ways, is divided into a rough binary of the learned and the unlearned.

But a complication arises when we consider the position of the anonymous *Cursor* writer and Mannyng, who each occupy space in all three communities. Based on the source material of both *Cursor Mundi* and *Handlyng Synne*, both writers demonstrated trilingual abilities, working within all three writing communities to produce their vernacular English works. On the one hand,
both the *Cursor* author and Mannyng seem to be removed from the English vernacular community to an extent, for they hold the status of learned men. But on the other hand, based on their decision to write in the vernacular language, both the *Cursor* author and Mannyng would have seen themselves as firmly part of the English community. Their decision to write in the vernacular was not a casual one. Indeed, as we have seen throughout the present study, there was a political, social, and cultural charge associate with the use of the English vernacular. And like many of the other medieval writers discussed above, they maintained flexible, fluid identities, and exhibited the ability to work within and participate in the larger English nation while continuing to serve what they viewed as their distinct English community.

**Concluding Remarks**

The above works delves into many complex conceptual issues while focusing primarily on the questions of nations and identity through the examination of the three languages of medieval England. The work itself is merely a starting point for further investigation and was intended to address the gap in the historiography where issues of language and national identity overlap, while also highlighting the importance of cultural, ideological, and political developments in the thirteenth-century for the formation of English national identity.

By beginning in the mid-twelfth-century, an extensive background of the social and cultural landscape of post-Conquest England was presented to situate and contextualize the assimilation of the Normans and the formation of a new English nation over the course of the twelfth-century. But as I argue in the chapter, each language community in the twelfth and early thirteenth-century presented discrepant experiences of English identity: the English vernacular writers gravitated around the shared status as a subaltern, dispossessed people; the French gradually assumed a sense of “Englishness” through assimilation and an appropriation of shared
history and culture, and the Latin writers, through a middling group of sorts, perhaps exhibited the most apparent conflict with self, community, and identity as some, like William of Malmesbury, struggled to rectify their own mixture of English and Norman.

Engaging in discourse through any of the languages carried with it specific implications and intent. As shown, the use of English emphasized one’s position and status as a member of the “dispossessed” community, whose use of the vernacular language acted as a form of resistance to their Norman oppressors. Writing in French, on the other hand, drew association with the Norman, though, after time, the Anglo-Norman, elite, and Latin emphasized a connection with the literary elite. However, the use of French or Latin as the chosen language of discourse did not negate the sense of English identity expressed in either language. Indeed, while the English language was closely connected with the expressed national identity of vernacular writers, emphasizing overall a unique connection with language and national identity, language did not act as an impediment for the expression of collective identity. Therefore, the Englishness of the French and Latin writers was in no way less or diluted in comparison with the Englishness of the vernacular writing community. Language could be strongly associated with national identity, but it was not contingent on it. English national identity was fluid, changing and reshaping over the twelfth-century, with a new nation emerging at the beginning of the thirteenth-century.

By the personal reign of Henry III and his ongoing struggle with the English aristocracy the new nation appear to be in full bloom. As I argue in the second chapter, the three language communities begin to express a shared sense of English identity for the first time, much of the commonality is drawn from opposition to foreigners in the court of the king. Indeed, sources from all three languages began to construct their own sense of Englishness through a shared
history, culture, and customs and liberties that they perceived as threatened and encroached upon by the monarch. Here the foreigners were cast as the impetus for such abuses and as the group who benefitted from the transgressions of Henry.

Perhaps the most significant development was English being used as a source of commonality and collectiveness for the “community of the realm” at large. Proclamations at the beginning of the baronial reforms in 1258 and 1259 were promulgated in the vernacular language alongside French and Latin, a profound departure from standard practice, with the last widespread proliferation of a royal proclamation in the English vernacular occurring in 1154. English vernacular writers, such as Robert of Gloucester, joined their French and Latin counterparts in the shared lament of foreigners and the injustices inflicted by them on the community of the realm. However, it was the statement of the St. Albans chronicler in 1263 that carried the most striking declaration of the association of the English language with the wider national community. The development is a significant one, even if it was all too brief.

The reign of Edward I witnessed a renewed division within the community of the realm, between the English vernacular writing community and the rest of the nation. Whereas the French and Latin communities become nearly indistinguishable in their rhetoric and discourse used to emphasizing their national identity, English writers presented a division based on the access of knowledge and social status. French and Latin writers constructed their own sense of Englishness through the imperial consolidation of the British Isles and crown lands in France by Edward I, hinging their own identity on the “otherness” of those around them, while the English community focused their own internal distinction of identity on the difference between the lered and lewed and the social division inherent in English society. It is in the late thirteenth and early
fourteenth century that the English vernacular language once again becomes associated with a specific audience for a particular purpose.

But as the summons of Edward I in the opening lines of this thesis illustrates, the association of English identity and the English language with the wider community of the realm had not completely disappeared. Rather, it had once again become an undercurrent, if it had ever truly been anything more than that. Indeed, the connection of the vernacular language with English national identity for the community of the realm may have been tenuous at best, that it was used repeatedly not only as a means of commonality of the English vernacular community, but the nation is significant. National identity in medieval England was profoundly fluid and multifaceted, with elements and characteristics that were emphasized at different times for a variety of purposes. Edward used the association of the English language and people with the nation to garner support, whereas the vernacular writing community used it as a means of solidarity by way of difference. Although it was used for different purposes, and certainly had different implication based on context, the idea of the English nation was shared across the communities, despite the fractures and division. Although there were numerous communities, they belonged to one nation.
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