Textual Transformations and the Challenges of Self-Narration in *Bevis of Hampton* and *Guy of Warwick*

by

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Abstract

This thesis studies the narrative challenges presented to individual subjectivity over time in two Middle English romances, *Bevis of Hampton* and *Guy of Warwick*. These long, episodic texts put pressure on the social, cultural, national, religious, and personal identities of their heroes, testing their capacity and willingness to perform the personal memory work necessary to maintain a coherent identity over time. Combining an historicist interest in medieval models of autobiographical memory with New Philological attention to the social and cultural implications of manuscript variance, I argue that the variation in the manuscript traditions of *Bevis* and *Guy* points to a persistent textual interest in the portrayal of romance heroes as engaged in the critical cognitive work of personal reflection and subjective cohesion. This was a particularly important function in relation to the capacity of these texts to provide moral and spiritual models of Christian selfhood for both knights and laypeople.

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Introduction: Memory, Identity, and the Romance Subject

This thesis began out of an interest in the analytical challenges and opportunities presented by texts with a history of significant manuscript revision and variation. Medieval manuscript variation, combined with the absence of an identifiable author or authorial version, confounds conventional literary practices of close reading. Variation forces literary scholars to begin their work with difficult questions that the nature of modern print culture largely obscures: when we have been trained to read in detail, how do we approach texts where word choice and sometimes even narrative structure are variable? Where is variation a result of deliberate editorial intervention, and where is it unintentional, the result of a scribal mistake or a damaged exemplar? When does variation become so extreme that it produces a new text? What can we learn from sameness versus difference? When and why did variation occur, and what results did it produce? All of these questions apply to the Middle English romances *Bevis of Hampton* and *Guy of Warwick*, which are the focus of this thesis—and, with some minor adjustments, these questions apply equally to the heroes of these texts, whose subjective coherence as characters is often stretched to its limits over the compounding of narrative episodes, cultural influences, and editorial revisions. Every time *Bevis* or *Guy* was copied anew provided an opportunity for change and editorial intervention in a popular narrative that its authors strove to make recognizable; continuities and divergences both represent active editorial choices. Similarly, every time Bevis or Guy moves from one adventure to the next within these narratives, they face the same "editorial" choices in shaping their own self-narratives: reinventing, recalling, forgetting, cohering. Behind the ways in which these romance heroes articulate their senses of their own identities lie the choices of textual editors, communicating their own concerns about the way a character or a text expresses who or what it is.

Much of the existing scholarship on *Bevis* and *Guy* discusses these two romances alongside other Middle English romances, focusing on high-level matters such as how medieval audiences would have understood romance as a genre[1] or on how these romances contributed to the construction of a sense of English identity.[2] Scholarship that does focus exclusively on the issues presented in these two romances tends to take a single-manuscript approach that addresses one manuscript's particular vision of the text,[3] or else a textual survey approach concerned with the general mapping and characterizing of major points of variation between manuscript versions.[4] The sheer length of *Bevis* and *Guy* and the variety presented in their respective manuscript traditions pose natural challenges to efforts to address the full breadth of readings presented by each of these texts. On the topic of memory, with which my project is particularly concerned, Jamie McKinstry has addressed the function and presentation of memory in Middle English romance,[5] including *Bevis* and *Guy*; his focus,

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[1] See, for instance, Melissa Furrows, *Expectations of Romance: The Reception of a Genre in Medieval England*, D.S. Brewer, 2009; Raluca L. Radulescu and Cory James Rushton (eds), *A Companion to Popular Romance*, D.S. Brewer, 2009; Rhiannon Purdie, *Anglicising Romance: Tail-Rhyme and Genre in Medieval English Literatur*e. D.S. Brewer, 2008; Carol Fewster, *Traditionality and Genre in Middle English Romance*. D.S. Brewer, 1987.

[2] See, for instance, Siobhain Bly Calkin, *Saracens and the Making of English Identity: The Auchinleck* Manuscript, Routledge, 2005; Robert Allen Rouse, *The Idea of Anglo-Saxon England in Middle English Romance*, D.S. Brewer, 2005; and Thorlac Turville-Petre, *England the Nation: Language, Literature, and National Identity, 1290-1340*, Clarendon Press, 1996.

[3] For the most comprehensive overview of current scholarship specific to *Bevis* and *Guy*, see Ivanna Djordjević and Jennifer Fellows (eds), *Sir Bevis of Hampton in Literary Tradition*, D.S. Brewer, 2008; and Alison Wiggins and Rosalind Field, *Guy of Warwick: Icon and Ancestor*, D.S. Brewer, 2014.

[4] Jennifer Fellows and Alison Wiggins have made particularly foundational contributions here on *Bevis* and *Guy* respectively, characterizing each manuscript version for both of these texts, tracing the textual history of each manuscript copy, and noting the effects of and contexts for some of the key variations between versions. In particular, see Jennifer Fellows, "Introduction," in *Sir Bevis of Hampton*, Oxford University Press, 2017, pp. xv-lxxix; Jennifer Fellows, "The Middle English and Renaissance Bevis: A Textual Survey," in *Sir Bevis of Hampton in Literary Tradition*, edited by Jennifer Fellows and Ivana Djordjević, D.S. Brewer, 2008, pp. 80-113; and Alison Wiggins, "The Manuscripts and Texts of the Middle English Guy of Warwick," in *Guy of Warwick: Icon and Ancestor*, edited by Alison Wiggins and Rosalind Field, D.S. Brewer, 2007, pp. 61-80. Additionally, scholars such as Siobhain Bly Calkin and Robert Allen Rouse have used the diversity of the *Bevis* tradition specifically to drive their discussions of depictions of Christian-Saracen interactions (Calkin and Rouse), national identity (Calkin and Rouse), and national/regional tensions in England (Rouse). See Siobhain Bly Calkin, "Defining Christian Knighthood in a Saracen World: Changing Depictions of the Protagonist in Sir Bevis of Hampton," in *Sir Bevis of Hampton in Literary Tradition*, edited by Jennifer Fellows and Ivana Djordjević. D.S. Brewer, 2008, pp. 127-144; and Robert Allen Rouse, "For King and Country? The Tension between National and Regional Identities in Sir Bevis of Hampton," in *Sir Bevis of Hampton in Literary Tradition*, edited by Jennifer Fellows and Ivana Djordjević. D.S. Brewer, 2008, pp. 114-126.

[5] See Jamie McKinstry, *Middle English Romance and the Craft of Memory*, D.S. Brewer, 2015.

however, is on the trends and issues raised across the corpus of extant Middle English romance in general, and his approach is not philological, tending to involve the single-text reading of *Bevis* and *Guy* described above. My work analyses the ways in which the complex manuscript traditions of these two romances are deeply involved with the memory-work and memorial themes to which McKinstry directs attention.

My approach in this thesis combines historicist attention to medieval models of autobiographical memory with New Philological attention to the ways that manuscript variance signals social and cultural engagements by medieval redactors, authors, scribes, translators, and audiences. Reading multiple versions of *Bevis* and *Guy* in parallel has allowed me to map out in detail where versions of these texts converge and vary, pointing to editorial preferences within each distinct manuscript version and to the areas that redactors and editors repeatedly revisited and revised. Rosalind Field writes that romance, while predictable, is "grounded in the anxieties, aspirations and difficulties of its readers and audience" ("PR" 28); areas of frequent revision within a single manuscript tradition can be areas that illustrate precisely these senses of editorial anxiety and dissatisfaction, particularly when they deal with culturally problematic issues. Parallel readings of the *Bevis* and *Guy* manuscripts reveal frequent disparities in lines and episodes in which the titular heroes of these romances deal with the extension of their own subjectivities over time. In other words, manuscript disparities mark moments when the narratives require the heroes to address the relationship between their past and present selves, or when the narratives prompt~~ed~~ acts of personal memory.

The background for my argument draws together issues of cultural and national identity, chivalry, piety, and personal memory, interrogating the pressures to which these fraught issues were subjected over time—in the sense of the narrative time across which these lengthy romances extend as well as the centuries over which these texts were copied and

revised. In this thesis, I argue that the textual interventions of the *Bevis* and *Guy* redactors demonstrate a constant sense of unease with the narrative problems left by their predecessors, particularly those problems presented by the pressure these lengthy narratives put on their heroes to balance subjective development with subjective continuity. The attention paid to these moments of subjective temporal crisis by multiple redactors and editors indicates their importance for medieval authors, copiers, and audiences. The textual variation in these episodes suggests that the portrayal of fictional romance heroes as critically aware of and reflective upon their own subjectivity over the course of the narrative was important to authors and audiences, particularly in relation to the capacity of these texts to provide moral and spiritual models of selfhood for both knights and laypeople. Popular romance is not traditionally a genre known for its interiority or verisimilitude; indeed, Raluca L. Radulescu observes that "an attractive and, in some cases, defining feature of some medieval popular romances is (the intrusion of) the outrageous and the spectacular or unexpected, which unsettles the order of chivalric adventures encountered in these texts" (31). Yet manuscript variation in *Bevis* and *Guy* demonstrates a clear anxiety about crafting heroic characters who undertake familiar cognitive challenges related to memory and identity in exemplary ways.

The remainder of this introduction provides a theoretical framework for the discussions of medieval memory theories and chivalric debates that inform the following two chapters, as well as a discussion of the New Philological approach used to identify and argue for the significance of the issues of memory and subjectivity under discussion. Chapter 1 discusses *Bevis of Hampton*, focusing on the many instances in which the narrative requires Bevis to articulate his conceptualization of himself as a subject undergoing personal, social, cultural, and physical transformations over time. Chapter 2 discusses *Guy of Warwick*, examining the vision of knighthood the text presents in the context of Guy's sometimes egregious moments of forgetfulness and in relation to the moment of spiritual revelation that

prompts the text's penitential turn in its second half. Together, the challenges these texts presented and the ways in which various redactors adjusted and adapted to them demonstrate a growing concern over time with the capacity of Bevis and Guy to provide models of moral, spiritual, and cultural unity within shifting and multivocal discourses of chivalry, cultural identity, and piety.

Medieval Approaches to Memory

Memory and subjectivity are both issues treated academically by a relatively small group of literate, educated intellectuals; this was true in the Middle Ages, but it is also true now as the fields of psychology, cognitive science, and neuroscience become increasingly specialized, requiring extensive training and subject-matter expertise to comprehend. While we cannot reasonably assume that medieval lay audiences had much or any familiarity with contemporary scholastic and philosophical theories about these topics, we can acknowledge that—then as now—memory and subjectivity are also personally experienced, constructed, and comprehended by people with no academic training whatsoever. With the exception of specific forms of neurodivergence, everyone remembers, and everyone uses memory both for functional purposes—communication, task completion, social acceptance—and for the construction of a sense of self based on personal experiences, relationships, and social expectations. However basic and uncritical these cognitive processes may sometimes be, they nonetheless occur without formal academic instruction or understanding, informed by both biological and socially determined mechanisms. Approaching the related processes of memory and selfhood in a medieval context thus requires a series of foundational observations: that medieval intellectuals had sophisticated ideas about how these mental functions worked, that laypeople participated in and recognized these functions without necessarily knowing or understanding these contemporary ideas, and that some of the ideas

and assumptions related to cognition will be familiar to us today while others are specifically medieval. All of this is useful to recognize when attempting to clarify the particular visions and expectations of consciousness as a temporal process written into medieval texts and interpreted by contemporary medieval audiences.

Before we discuss the ways in which romances such as *Bevis* and *Guy* represent and engage with the processes of memory and subjectivity, we can observe that memory plays a fundamental and metatextual role in the audience's experience of any romance, or indeed of any text. Michael Riffaterre has described how memory forms the "major underpinning of orality,"[6] elements of which he argues "inhere in any literary text" (29-30): the "universals of literariness" that he identifies are all memory-based and depend on the reader's ability to complete cognitive processes such as connecting a text with a remembered relevant reference (31-33). At a more fundamental level, Jamie McKinstry writes that "as narratives structured by episode, romances rely upon recollection for aesthetic and moral effect and to support the overriding theme of a narrative which might be of loyalty, bravery, love, courtesy, or religious devotion" (*Craft* 6). Memory, he says, is "essential for a character to understand his or her situation in a tale and for an audience to be able to follow their progress and comprehend a romance's structural or moral unity" (*Craft* 3). Narratives work because of the audience's ability to remember earlier episodes in a text and connect them to the textual present, which can be particularly challenging in lengthy, wandering romances like *Bevis* and *Guy*. Narratives also work because audiences expect the characters to share their own capacity for learning and remembering, both in basic practical matters—recognizing characters they have met before, for instance—and in loftier metaphysical ways, such as by recalling their goals and morals under duress or distraction. The audience's textual

[6] Riffaterre specifies that orality is underpinned specifically by memory and not merely by memorization, quoting Dennis Tedlock's argument that "the narrators in primary oral cultures … do not memorize stories, but *remember* them" (qtd 30). Lines and phrases may be memorized but they are primarily tools for expressing the broader vision of the story that the teller "sees" (30).

assumption is that "the remembering subject always wants to ensure that they have recollected things accurately and in as much detail as is required at a particular moment" (McKinstry *Craft* 4). Moments when characters disappoint these expectations—when they forget, obscure, or lose focus—are generally treated as exceptions with narrative consequences; when this is not the case, we end up with texts like Samuel Beckett's *Molloy*, where consistent memorial failure in the text's narrator creates a deliberate and disorienting effect.[7]

Understanding the particular memorial expectations placed upon romance characters by authors and audiences is made easier by an awareness of contemporary medieval ideas about how memory functioned and of the specific and central role memory played in medieval society, where it was conceptualized as an intellectual art form with various methodologies. This thesis is concerned with what modern psychologists and cognitive scientists refer to as self-memory or autobiographical memory, terms that encapsulate an individual's ability to recall their personal experiences and to understand those past experiences in relation to their present self.[8] These terms are not medieval, but they are clearly one of the forms of memory Saint Augustine addresses in his *Confessions*: he describes the "the immense palace of my memory" in which "I even encounter myself and I bring myself to mind: what, when and where I did something, and how I felt when I did it"

[7] As we shall see in *Bevis* and *Guy*, both texts feature numerous moments of conscious and unconscious forgetfulness that are sometimes left unresolved or unexplained, thus appearing to break the expectation described above. However, even when this is the case, McKinstry notes that the first-person position of the romance narrator creates "the impression of great memorial capabilities," which he likens to Caedmon's famous ability to remember Scripture (*Craft* 11). Even when medieval romance heroes seem lost and confused, the narrator assures the audience of their control and certainty in telling the story.

[8] In 2000, Martin A. Conway and Christopher W. Pleydell-Pearce first introduced the self-memory system (SMS) as a model of autobiographical memory, describing the SMS as containing both autobiographical knowledge and the current self's working goals. Conway, Jefferson A. Singer, and Angela Tagini adapted Conway and Pleydell-Pearce's SMS model to include a long-term self and to discuss fundamental tensions within the SMS related to self-coherence. The modern SMS model obviously does not reflect medieval understandings of neuropsychology related to memory and the self, but it does interestingly encapsulate some of the problems, challenges, and assumptions that appear in *Bevis* and *Guy*, demonstrating a certain universality to the intellectual problem it seeks to address.

(10.14). From his memory, he can take "now these, now those likenesses of things (whether those experienced or those derived from experience) and combine them with things of the past, and from these I can even think over future actions, happenings, and hopes—and all these, again, as if in the present" (10.14). For Augustine, memory is "a vast and unlimited chamber" so great it prompts him to admit that "I myself do not grasp all that I am. Is, then, the mind too narrow to hold itself [?]" (10.15). The cognitive functions he describes should be recognizable to modern readers, as well as the challenges: the existence of a sense of self within a network of one's memories; the manipulation of memories to plan, hypothesize, imagine, and form goals; the sense that one's own mind and memory exceed the capacity of full understanding.

Though Augustine's work demonstrates an awareness of this foundational function of memory, autobiographical memory was not primarily at stake in the medieval art of *memoria*. Memory training involved constructing what Mary Carruthers describes as a "'random-access' memory system" that allowed one to recall pieces of information as needed without reconstructing the entire structure in which the information resided and without "relying on simple chance to fish what one wants out from the murky pool of one's undifferentiated and disorganized memory" (8).[9] The *artes memorativa* and the methods Carruthers discusses were primarily used for learning academic content, not for creating systems for personal

[9] The complexity of memory and identity formation as cognitive processes mean that scholars frequently draw distinctions between different forms of memory. Riffaterre's discussion of memory and orality distinguishes between memory based on experience and "memory focused on the verbal means of storing and retrieving information," as in language acquisition and linguistic competence (36). McKinstry provides a more scientific breakdown, explaining that modern science distinguishes between "short and long term categories of varying immediacy and accessibility" as well as between "procedural memory (the memory of skills) and declarative memory which, in itself, comprises two categories: episodic memory (the memory of events in a particular spatial and temporal context) and semantic memory (the recollection of general knowledge and facts about the world)" (2-3). As an added complication, when approaching medieval texts that deal with memory, we cannot always assume that they are treating any faculty or cognitive process that we would recognize as memory today at all, even within the breadth of memorial faculties McKinstry summarizes. For instance, Carruthers notes that what was called *memoria* in a monastic context is "more like what is now called 'mindfulness' than what many psychologists deem to be memory, a discipline of attentive recollection and concentrated reading of texts in the Bible (*lectio divina*) which took place during the daily office and in private meditation, and formed the core of monastic life" (*BM* 154).

memories; these methods helped with what we refer to today as semantic memory, which McKinstry summarizes as "the recollection of general knowledge and facts about the world" (*Craft* 3).[10]

However, autobiographical memory was not entirely excluded from the field of *memoria*, nor was it entirely separate from academic memory. In modern terms, autobiographical memory encapsulates memories of personal sensory experiences, thoughts, and feelings that inform "the experience of enduring as an individual, in a culture, over time" (Conway and Pleydell-Pearce 261), while semantic memory deals with abstract intellectual ideas, constructs, and narratives. Both autobiographical and semantic memory rely on a variety of knowledge types that may be stored and recalled in overlapping and complementary ways. We can say that autobiographical and semantic memory both rely on the capacity of personal memory, which encapsulates more broadly all the memories that an individual has.[11] Carruthers effectively summarizes the difference between experiential autobiographical and academic semantic memory when she notes the distinction between the observations, "I remember Chaucer writing *Troilus and Criseyde*," and, "I remember that Chaucer wrote *Troilus and Criseyde*" (*Meditations* 151). The former is autobiographical in that it implies that witnessing Chaucer's composition of *Troilus and Criseyde* was a personal

[10] In fact, the medieval understanding of the neuropsychology of memory presented specific challenges that could only be resolved by distinguishing the two. Carruthers notes that Thomas Aquinas develops from Augustine and Aristotle the concept of intellectual memory, contrasted with the "memory of sensorily perceived objects," in part to explain how individuals could remember abstract concepts and ideas when the memory was considered to store *phantasmata*, mentally produced visual models based on sensory perceptions, which the mind's eye could then "scan" (*BM* 19, 62). For Aquinas, "things created in thought rather than sensorily perceived" were remembered as a function of the intellect; like Aristotle, however, he believed that all human thinking required the use of images, even if these were human-generated conceptual models rather than images that had been sensorily perceived (*BM* 63).

[11] The distinctions I draw here are meant to describe types of memory that share particular characteristics and function in specific ways but are not necessarily disparate categories. Autobiographical memory necessarily includes some abstract semantic content that is learned externally rather than being remembered personally, such as the circumstances of one's own birth. Coincidentally, Conway and Pleydell-Pearce echo the thirteenth-century philosopher John Duns Scotus in observing that some of the knowledge types that constitute autobiographical memory are not episodic memories but semantic memories about personal information; see Conway and Pleydell-Pearce's discussion of autobiographical knowledge (pp. 262), and Marilyn McCord Adams and Allan B. Wolter's explanation of Scotus' unique contribution to medieval memory theory (pp. 175), which will be discussed in more depth shortly.

experience for the speaker, suggesting a degree of physical (not to mention temporal) proximity; the latter is an abstract academic fact that can be recalled by anyone who takes the time to read and memorize it.[12]

We could add to this a third statement, "I remember reading that Chaucer wrote *Troilus and Criseyde*," which recalls learning this information as a personal act through the mediation of a book, rather than through witnessing the act of composition personally, as in the first statement.[13] The connection between autobiographical memory and personal memory is clear: an individual's autobiographical memory consists of personal memories about particular experiences, sensations, relationships, and so on. However, medieval theories of, and practices for, memory also insisted on the close relationship between personal memory and academic semantic memory. Carruthers cites Hugh of St. Victor's instruction to use the manuscript page as a mnemonic device, emphasizing "the color, shape, position, and placement of the letters … in what location (at the top, the middle or bottom) we saw [something] positioned, in what color we observed the trace of the letter or the ornamented surface of the parchment" (qtd *BM* 10).[14] These details are not intrinsically attached to the abstract text or the ideas it conveys, but to the personal memory of an individual visual encounter with a physical book. Carruthers observes later that

Successful memory schemes all acknowledge the importance of tagging material

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[12] Carruthers goes on to explain that "we make firm boundaries between what [Julia] Annas calls 'non-personal' (or factual) and 'personal' memory" (*Meditations* 151). However, Carruthers' point here is in fact that although we make "firm boundaries" between these two memory types today, medieval narratives frequently use statements similar to both the examples she outlines above ("I remember…" and "I remember that…") (*Meditations* 151).

[13] Again, it is perhaps better to consider the difference between personal memory and autobiographical memory as one of scale rather than type. Remembering the moment in which one learned a particular fact is part of an individual's autobiography, but not typically a formative one. Moreover, the value comes from the memory of the content learned rather than from the process of learning.

[14] The thirteenth-century English scholar John of Garland provides advice reminiscent of Hugh of St. Victor's suggestion here. Like Hugh, John recommends making note of the circumstances in which one first heard or read a text in order to facilitate its recollection, such as by mentally noting the place in which it was heard and the physical details of the teacher from whom it was heard or the physical details of the page and writing (Carruthers *BM* 157). John's advice suggests visual personal memory cues related to the individual experiencing of hearing or reading a book can be used whether the process of "reading" the book occurs aurally or visually.

> emotionally as well as schematically, making each memory as much as possible into a personal occasion by imprinting emotional associations like desire and fear, pleasure or discomfort, or the particular appearance of the source from which one is memorizing, whether oral (a teacher) or written (a manuscript page). (*BM* 96)[15]

These recommendations assume the importance of personal memory and personal experience in remembering abstract academic content. The act of recollecting a specific piece of academic material is accompanied by the memorial reconstruction of the uniquely personal experience of acquiring that material. Marilyn McCord Adams and Allan B. Wolter note the crucial link provided by the thirteenth-century Franciscan John Duns Scotus when he described memory as "an act with a double object" (175). As McCord Adams and Wolter put it, "I do not remember your having sat there unless I remember my having seen you sitting there"; Scotus names these two components of a single memory as the remote and proximate objects of memory respectively (175). Scotus demonstrates an awareness of the fact that every memory is in some capacity a memory of personal experience, even if personal experience is not the focal component of the memory.[16]

Carruthers' discussion of the medieval neuropsychological understanding of *memoria* and foundational techniques for practicing the *artes memorativa* also emphasizes the particularly embodied and sensory act of forming and reconstructing memories. Drawing on both the common metaphor of memory as an *arca* or storage box and on the model of Christian moral development as the construction of a temple, Hugh of St. Victor outlines the

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[15] Carruthers also notes the "Guidonian hand" credited to Guido d'Arezzo, "in which the tones of the gamut are assigned to various locations on the left hand" (*BM* 22). Carruthers describes this as a method of visual coding, but it is also a fundamentally embodied memory technique in which one's literal body provides a mnemonic model.

[16] McCord Adams and Wolter note that Scotus distinguishes the type of memory in the example they describe here from the knowledge of things that one cannot recall from firsthand experience; they write that one can know the day of one's birth but cannot actually remember being born (175). Memory requires both the proximate and remote object; however, in the context of medieval writings related to training the memory rather than recognizing its process, the semantic content becomes the remote object while the process of personally reading or hearing the semantic content becomes the proximate object.

model of the *arca sapientiae*, which Carruthers argues clearly refers to memory (*BM* 53). For Hugh, the *arca sapientiae* is an individual mental construct composed of a complex system of levels, ship's ladders, doors, and cells, often involving the "movement" of an implied self through this memorial space so as to "see" various elements of the memorial construct (*BM* 294-300). Carruthers also discusses memory models in which memories were stored in bags or boxes (*BM* 40, 51), again implying a pseudo-somatic component in memory creation and access. Another model involved the construction of *loci*, which Carruthers explains by drawing on the experiences of the early-twentieth-century performing memory-artist Solomon Shereshevski. Carruthers describes how Shereshevski's process of recollection "was a process of perception; he mentally walked through his memory places and looked at what was there" (*BM* 97). Many prominent models for developing the *artes memorativa* were thus not only deeply tied to personal experience, but also involved a specific sense of active movement and sensory perception involved in creating, storing, and reconstructing memories. Even if the focus of these techniques was primarily academic, their methods intrinsically required a sense of autobiographical continuity and unity. The subject that traversed the *arca sapientiae*, opened the memorial storebox, or viewed the memorized material set against specific *loci* had to remember the process of self-constructing and storing those memories, and the organizing principle with which they were stored, so as to know where to find a particular memorial object. As Carruthers explains, "in medieval memory-work one consciously embeds non-personal memories within personal ones. History, 'the past,' thus is marked in some way also as 'my past'" ("Meditations" 152).

The consequences of a well-trained or poorly trained memory were not merely scholastic. According to Carruthers, memory "was much more than a matter of providing oneself with the means to compose and converse intelligently when books were not readily to hand, for it was in trained memory that one built character, judgment, citizenship, and piety"

(*BM* 11). She notes that *memoria* was "an integral part of the virtue of prudence, that which makes moral judgment possible" (*BM* 11). Thomas Aquinas considers prudence an "intellectual virtue" that directs the will; as Carruthers says, for Aquinas, prudence "requires knowledge but it acts to shape up our ethical life so that we may live well" (*BM* 83). Prudence is also written about by classical and medieval authors as *sapientia*—wisdom—in which capacity it encapsulates "the suitable use of all knowledge, practical and speculative" (*BM* 83). Because prudence has a profound connection with memory, its components are intrinsically temporal: Carruthers summarizes Cicero's definition of prudence in *De inventione* as constituted by "memory being of what is past; intelligence of what is; foresight of what is to come" (*BM* 83). Prudence as a virtue guides the cognitive work Augustine describes in reasonable and meaningful directions. It requires not only the capacity for storing and retaining mental information of various types, but the ability and volition to use those mental stores to guide the way in which one interacts with the world. Self-recognition and recognition by others of one's own well-trained memory thus carried a spiritual and moral dimension constitutive of an individual's sense and performance of selfhood.

Moreover, autobiographical memory was implicit in ideas related to penitence and confession, both of which require the ability to recall, evaluate, reflect upon, and move on from personal memories. Penitence and confession thus involve a simultaneous incorporation of, and distancing from, one's past self. For instance, Paul Price discusses Augustine's assertion that he must recollect the "abominable things" he has done, not because he loves these sins but so that he may love God; Price writes that "to confess the past is to confine it and to begin again through the momentum generated by this liberating discharge" (93). Andrea Hopkins' description of contrition according to Saint Bernard of Clairvaux invokes similar ideas: she writes that contrition according to Bernard requires the sinner to "recognize his own sinfulness, his self-knowledge leading to a state of humiliation and disgust with his

own weakness, accompanied by true grief at having offended God and a desire to start a new life" (51). Peter Abelard contributed to the twelfth-century debate on the nature of contrition and penance by suggesting the nature of sin is not in wrongful acts themselves, but "in the internal act of the will"; Hopkins notes that Abelard "went so far as to say that if a penitent is truly contrite, his love and sorrow at having offended God are sufficient to win pardon, and so confession is not always necessary" (52). Hugh of St. Victor's writings on penance offered another perspective: for Hugh, "just as sin is one act composed of two parts, evil intent and actual deed, so penance is of two kinds: external penance by affliction of the flesh, which remits the fact of the wrong deed, and interior penance by contrition of the heart, which remits the evil intention" (Hopkins 52). While these scholars debated the nature of sin and the function of confession, their arguments demonstrate a shared sense that contrition required the capacity for an individual to reflect critically on their past—not only to recall a personal memory, but to recognize its sinfulness, reflect meaningfully on its role in shaping their relationship to God, and undergo the painful and emotional experience of genuine contrition. The debate surrounding penance and contrition demonstrates a clear sense that one's relationship with one's own past carries profound spiritual implications.[17]

Memory, Romance, and Chivalry

Returning to the context of romance, we can recognize that the romance hero's ability and willingness to engage in accurate memorial work has significant implications beyond the level of plot. Acts of forgetting or rejecting one's past create social and practical problems for

[17] This did not preclude the role of physical atonement in penance and contrition. Richard Kaeuper describes in more detail the vigorous medieval debate over the process of atoning for sin that Hopkins suggests. Kaeuper writes that "a crucial question was whether the mechanism of atoning for sin should be considered heroic and intensely physical, or rather as a more spiritual and interior dialogue between the sinner and God" (*HW* 171). Even as the experiences of confession and penance for the laity became increasingly nonphysical, visual and literary depictions of Purgatory and Hell continued to emphasize horrific physical punishments for sinners, making physical atonement difficult to overwrite (*HW* 176).

the hero, but these moments also have moral and spiritual consequences. This is true not only when these moments result in the hero inadvertently or purposefully betraying an ideal or moral principle; failing to remember or reflect is in itself a moral issue. In general, it signals an absence of prudence; in cases where the hero has acted sinfully, it prohibits acts of genuine contrition, with damning spiritual consequences. At the same time, the memorial struggles of romance heroes illustrate what all students of the *ars memorativa* must have recognized, which is that memory-work is difficult. The extensive manuals of *ars memorativa* highlight the intense discipline and mental work that memory requires. On top of its intellectual rigours, memory-work was also hard in the sense of being psychologically painful. Carruthers draws on Augustine's definition of time as *distentio*—the mind "stretching"—to point out that at least for Augustine, "the sort of mental stretching involved in time-making was painful; it hurt" ("Meditations" 153). The processes of remembering, reflecting, and mentally constructing a unified sense of self were spiritually crucial but practically difficult.

This was particularly true for knights, the perennial favourites of romances. In the first place, the format of the romance posed a particular challenge. As Radulescu explains, most romances involve a process of maturation for a young knight as he grows into a recognized hero ("GaC" 39); romances were set up to dramatize a narrative of intense personal change and development, with the knight recognizably transformed by the end of the text. This narrative trajectory requires the audience to recollect the knight's undeveloped youth and compare his past self against the noble, mature warrior into which he develops. The process of transformation presses both the audience and the knight himself to understand the hero as a continuous individual, one whose past is part of his selfhood even after his character is transformed. Troublingly, however, memory-work could be incompatible with the social reality of knighthood, and—consciously or unconsciously—romance could

dramatize the problems this incompatibility created. In his work on the *Knight's Tale*, Lee Patterson argues that chivalry "entailed a form of selfhood insistently, even exclusively, public. It stressed a collective or corporate self-definition and so ignored the merely personal or individual. It sought, as a code of behaviour, at every turn to foreclose self-reflection and critical distance" (168). In the *Knight's Tale*, he explains that the Knight's self-conflicted narration is

> a rhetorical version of the struggle at the heart of chivalry itself, and it enacts the same kinds of suppressions and elisions that enabled chivalry to function as both an ideology and a form of practice. The economy of the *Knight's Tale*, as of chivalry, is an oscillation between knowing and unknowing, between the simultaneous recognition and suppression of reality. The *Knight's Tale* shows us the chivalric mind engaged in an act of self-legitimization that simultaneously and secretly undoes itself. (169)

For Patterson, the *Knight's Tale* articulates Chaucer's analysis of chivalry "as a failure of self-understanding" that requires knights to repress knowledge of chivalry's intrinsic violence and to deliberately obscure the helplessness that chivalric life involved. From this perspective, chivalry as an identity and social institution demonstrated a fundamental incompatibility with the kind of temporal clarity and reflection that was morally and spiritually crucial.

Richard W. Kaeuper points to a number of similar paradoxes at the heart of chivalric identity that required knights to avoid undertaking effective reflection. Particularly notable for the purposes of this discussion are his comments on the ways in which knights "appropriated" religion, absorbing "such ideas as were broadly compatible with the virtual worship of prowess and with the high sense of their own divinely approved status and mission" while downplaying or ignoring "most strictures that were not compatible with their

sense of honour and entitlement" (*CaV* 47). Although some texts explored and exploited the problems inherent in fusing piety and prowess, Kaeuper observes, like Patterson, that "more often the gap was simply, wilfully, not seen" (*CaV* 48). Kaeuper's work suggests that knights dealt with these paradoxes in part by accepting chivalry "as a practiced form of religion" (*CaV* 50) that exempted them from the spiritual and pietistic standards which the rest of society was expected to uphold. This approach to chivalry even allowed for the circumvention of the type of self-reflection required for penitence, with knights perceiving the difficulty of their lives and their bravery and perseverance in the face of hardships as penance for the necessary sins their lifestyle involved (*CaV* 50).[18]

Middle English romances offer a huge range of depictions of and attitudes towards the relationship between chivalry and piety. Helen Cooper writes that the aggression so fundamental to the very existence of chivalry is "inherently anti-social, and chivalry and the whole chivalric romance ethic were aimed at channelling such aggression into socially useful roles: the support of the weak, the support of the king, the support of God and the Church" (41). In general, Radulescu observes that popular romance characteristically expressed a self-consciousness "at the level of criticism against courtly or chivalric values or cultural taboos," and she notes as well that chivalric romances "developed an awareness of, and sometimes even a narrow focus on, religion" (*GaC* 40). Moreover, the audience that Radulescu and Cory

[18] Kaeuper's work points to a number of other paradoxes central to the institution of chivalry. He highlights the fundamental tension in the role of the king, whose responsibilities and priorities as sovereign were often in conflict with his identity as a knight, specifically in relation to the issue of violence within the realm (*CaV* 95). He discusses as well concerns that crusade and religious rhetoric were used to disguise bloodthirstiness and greed for worldly goods (*KKaB* 217). Notably, whereas Patterson argues that Chaucer's Knight participates in the active repression of self-knowledge required to participate in chivalry, Kaeuper notes evidence that at least some real knights recognized and cared about the tensions exhibited in literary representations of their profession, particularly in relation to their status as professional warriors and the religious worldview of the time (*KKaB* 216). While chivalry as an institution may have required an acceptance of contradiction and a willful refusal to self-reflect, real knights could be critical individuals who recognized the fundamental instability of the very institution they inhabited and sought to uphold. Indeed, as Patterson notes, Chaucer's past personal experience of, and ongoing connection to, the chivalric world allowed him to construct the critical analysis of knighthood that the *Knight's Tale* presents (169). On the other hand, real knights could also believe fervently in the compatibility of piety and chivalry; for instance, Kaeuper describes Geoffroi de Charny's profound conviction that "spiritual rectitude and physical force fused in the knightly mission" ("Introduction" 35).

James Rushton describe for popular romance may not align with the accessibility and widespread consumption we associate with the word "popular" today, but their description presents an audience that was more socioeconomically diverse than the primarily aristocratic audiences of the French or Anglo-Norman romances, traditions that provided the sources for so many Middle English texts (5-6). Manuscript context suggests that many popular romances (including, as we shall see, *Bevis* and *Guy*) were perceived as having some form of moral value or benefit for readers. Romance heroes might be intended to represent idealized knights, but they also represented moral and spiritual qualities more broadly resonant with audiences who might not belong to the chivalric world. Romance authors, redactors, and copiers thus faced a tension in their work. The memory-work, self-reflection, and subjective cohesion that could be so at odds with chivalry as an institution became increasingly important for crafting characters who were morally and spiritually exemplary.

Textual Approach

Bernard Cerquiglini writes that "variance is the main characteristic of a work in the medieval vernacular. [...] This variance is so widespread and constitutive that, mixing together all the texts among which philology so painstakingly distinguishes, one could say that every manuscript is a revision, a version" (37-38). While scholars have argued against the universal applicability of Cerquiglini's perspective to medieval texts,[19] Cerquiglini's focus on French romance makes it unsurprising that his arguments are similarly applicable to

[19] Writing from the perspective of a textual editor, for instance, Derek Pearsall has argued that the "intrinsic textual mobility or meaningful instability" Cerquiglini and subsequent scholars attribute to medieval texts is not applicable to texts that did not have an oral background and in which we have processes for analysing authenticity (198, 201). Pearsall stresses the importance of distinguishing between scribal variation and authorial revision, focusing in particular on the process of editing the works of Chaucer and Gower. Middle English popular romance is an obviously different case as its anonymity and proliferation of parallel redactions from source texts in other vernaculars present challenges in "analyzing authenticity," while manuscript attestation in the popular romance tradition demonstrates the freedom scribes and redactors in editing, adapting, and updating their texts. The purpose of this study is not editorial in focus and does not present a case for the best method of editing, publishing, or presenting these texts to modern audiences, but rather focuses on the interests and occupations of medieval redactors and editors revealed through their textual interventions.

Middle English romance. Middle English romances based on Anglo-Norman or French sources add further complications, as different translations of the same source can easily produce multiple versions of a recognizably cognate text. Where anonymous Middle English romances survive in more than one copy, variance is often a defining characteristic that challenges traditional literary approaches to interpretation. Both *Bevis of Hampton* and *Guy of Warwick* exist in several distinct versions and demonstrate a convoluted history of independent redaction and revision. As anonymous texts that demonstrate a relatively high level of variance between versions, we cannot easily identify a "best text" to anchor readings and analyses of *Bevis* or *Guy*, particularly because the tradition of copying and revising popular romance generally demonstrates a greater sense of freedom than that surrounding texts by prominent authors such as Chaucer and Lydgate.

For Cerquiglini, "the work copied by hand, manipulated, always open and as good as unfinished, invited intervention, annotation, and commentary" (34). While he points to the flexibility with which scribes and redactors adapted, abridged, and edited their work, in the context of Middle English popular romance specifically, there is also significant value in focusing on the ways in which different versions of a single text share consistencies and agreements.[20] Focusing solely on the points in which different versions of a text disagree can obscure what is often a more widespread tendency towards consistency, one which suggests that redactors and revisers separated by time and distance often shared a relatively coherent vision of what they considered to be a text's most central narrative elements. Problematic lines, narrative details, and even entire scenes might be removed, but they might also simply

[20] Relatedly, Daniel Wakelin has argued that manuscripts demonstrate that scribes were frequently concerned with correcting. Wakelin notes corrections of inessential grammatical words in texts that nonetheless slightly alter the sentence's impact, suggesting that scribes did indeed care for individual words, not just for the "general idea" of a text overall (251). Macro-level textual agreement as well as evidence of what Anne Hudson calls "centripetal correction" to correct errors and reduce variation suggest two different levels at which scribes seem to have regularly demonstrated a sense of their manuscript copies as participating in a shared tradition of a single text or narrative (251): general narrative sense and specific textual details. While manuscript variation proves that scribes and editors did not always feel bound to adhere to their exemplars, they also showed an interest in maintaining textual consistencies and correcting variations they interpreted as errors.

be adjusted or left untouched, demonstrating an interest in working within a text's existing parameters. Modern approaches to these texts reflect this shared vision in recognizing romances such as *Bevis* and *Guy* as consisting of different versions and variations rather than constituting different texts.[21] Consistencies and points of agreement gesture to narrative elements that were routinely identified as necessary and suitable to the text. Read against a general pattern of agreement, points of variation can then take on increased significance as moments in which redactors identified and felt a pressing need to revise what they viewed as narrative problems.

Reading versions of a Middle English romance in parallel can draw attention to unexpected areas of disagreement and revision. Mapped throughout and between texts, points of variation suggest areas of concern for redactors that are not always obvious during a single-version reading of a text. Particularly when the same lines or scenes are continually reworked by different redactors, the versions within a manuscript tradition can highlight narrative elements that redactors collectively viewed as inappropriate, outdated, or uncomfortable.[22] While we can never decisively know a redactor's reasoning for making a particular change,[23] textual histories of variation clustered around particular episodes or lines suggest that revision occurred as a result of active choice rather than due to practical matters such as exemplar quality. Reading in parallel reveals the ways in which redactors attempted to rework these elements while still operating within their individual visions of the text's narrative coherence, moral message, and cultural relevance.

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[21] Scholars distinguish between *Guy of Warwick* the anonymous romance, *Guy and Colbrond*, and John Lydgate's *Guy of Warwick* as different texts with distinct sources. The shared Anglo-Norman sources of the romance *Guy* and the general high-level textual agreement between versions provide sufficient grounds for approaching the different manuscript versions as versions rather than as distinct texts.

[22] Siobhain Bly Calkin discusses this in the manuscript tradition of *Bevis of Hampton*, demonstrating how different versions of Bevis's various engagements with Saracens create subtly distinct definitions of Christian knighthood ("DCK" 128).

[23] As Arthur Bahr explains, aesthetic manuscript choices cannot always be easily distinguished from practical ones (6). His argument focuses on the inclusion and placement of texts within compilations, but his point is valuable when addressing manuscript decisions made by scribes, redactors, authors, and compilators in general.

As the earlier theoretical framework has already indicated, this thesis is concerned with the ways in which the authors and redactors of *Bevis* and *Guy* dealt with the temporal subjectivity of their knight heroes. This topic formed a textual node at which the moral and spiritual attitudes towards memory-work and reflection, the chivalric necessity of obscuring self-knowledge, and the expectations of author and audience relating to the functions and priorities of Middle English popular romance all intersected. Parallel readings of *Bevis* and *Guy* highlight the fact that temporal subjectivity was an issue that repeatedly concerned the redactors and editors of these texts. Moments in which the narratives require Bevis or Guy to undertake acts of personal recollection or articulate relationships between their past and present identities are repeatedly revisited and revised across the manuscript traditions for these two romances. These instances of variance convey a sense that redactors considered these issues important and that they were routinely unsatisfied with how these issues had been treated in existing versions of the text. Based on the temporal spread of the manuscripts themselves across the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, this thesis argues that the later versions of *Bevis* and *Guy* demonstrate an increased sense that a chivalric romance hero ought to act as a general example of subjective unity and self-reflection throughout the entirety of the text. Later versions overwrite the inherent contradictions of chivalric identity that earlier versions expose, insisting instead that a morally and spiritually exemplary romance hero must have the capacity to comprehend his own past from the very start of his story.

Chapter One: *Bevis of Hampton* and the Cultural Coherence of the Subject in Time

Along with *Guy of Warwick, Bevis of Hampton* has been identified by Robert Allen Rouse as one of a selection of romances concerned with the Matter of England, all of which are regionally rooted narratives that participate in the construction of the history of England (*Idea* 86).[24] Rouse and other scholars have also acknowledged, however, that Bevis is an odd example of English knighthood, with Rouse describing Bevis as "a strange and unsettling example of an English knight" ("FKC?" 116). Bevis has a fraught, often ambiguous relationship with England, which he first leaves unwillingly as a child after his father is unlawfully killed. Though Bevis eventually returns to England to avenge his father's murder and take back his rightful holdings, a series of disputes with England's king lead him to depart again to rule with the converted Saracen princess Josian over a continental kingdom won from one of his old enemies, close to the Saracen lands where he grew up. Birthright alone is not sufficient to keep Bevis in England—and yet *Bevis* is associated by Rouse with the development of a national narrative, while its Anglo-Norman source *Boeve* is linked with the establishment of an aristocratic Anglo-Norman family in England.[25]

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[24] Rosalind Field attributes the first use of the term "Matter of England" to W.H. Schofield, inspired by Jean Bodel's classification of the Matters of France, Rome, and Britain ("CH" 29-30). Schofield includes *Guy* and *Bevis* in his grouping, but Field points out the general disagreement over which romances to place in this category, listing several scholars who include *Guy* and *Bevis* as well as several who do not. Field's purpose more broadly is to interrogate the usefulness and appropriateness of the term, and she ultimately concludes that

> it is a classification of texts, about which there is no clear agreement, which has no medieval justification although it sounds plausibly medieval and which has been appropriated very effectively to describe the historiographical debate of the twelfth century. It is a term used to yoke together romances that may have more significance in terms of differences than similarities, and it carries an ideological weight in its assumptions about national literature and language which render the texts themselves rigid, official, and univocal. ("CH" 39)

With Field's critique in mind, I nonetheless find Rouse's use of the term useful in discussing the cultural status of *Guy* and *Bevis.* His definition includes "those romances that are explicitly set prior to the Norman Conquest" (*Idea* 52) and his interest is in the way in which these romances participate in "the writing and rewriting of England's history" (*Idea* 53).

[25] Susan Crane contests the common theory that *Boeve* and other Anglo-Norman romances frequently referred to as "ancestral romances" were produced at the commission of the families whose titles their heroes share (16). Her work does point to the purpose these and other Anglo-Norman romances shared in justifying Anglo-Norman presence in England, however (see 13-18).

Why does Bevis abandon his ancestral home in England, when its reclamation is so central to his development as a knight, and what does this abandonment mean for Bevis's identity narrative? The evolution of Bevis's relationship to his birthplace over the course of his life conveys concerns about temporal experience, personal memory, English identity, and shifting priorities related to the values of secular chivalry and Christian piety. Drawing on medieval theories of earthly time and human memory, this chapter argues that the diverse manuscript tradition of the Middle English *Bevis of Hampton* reveals a consistent interest in adjusting how the text presents Bevis's sense of himself as a subject engaged in conceptualizing the transformations of his identity over time. The *Bevis* authors faced some significant challenges in their efforts to unify Bevis throughout the text; in particular, the lengthy, episodic nature of the text makes it vulnerable to inconsistencies and discrepancies between episodes. Nonetheless, the manuscript history of *Bevis* demonstrates that the text's later authors were increasingly invested in creating a hero who remained a recognizably consistent subject throughout the text's temporal progression, and, moreover, in creating a hero who recognized himself as such. Bevis's moments of self-narration are often points of variation between manuscripts, demonstrating the diverse priorities of the poem's authors as they worked to transform inconsistencies, anomalies, and episodic adventures into a cohesive chivalric narrative. The *Bevis* authors negotiate a persistent sense of Bevis's importance as a distinctly English hero, a courtly romance tradition that influenced the Anglo-Norman source text *Boeve de Haumtone*, and an increasingly pious model of knighthood common to Middle English romance. This work occurs through complex and organized manipulations of personal time that allow for the production of subjective unity.

Pierre Duhem writes that for the Franciscan philosopher Peter Aureol (c. 1280-1322), time "is what fixes an order and establishes a continuity between parts of any successive

quantity or any movement whatever" (300).[26] Yet Aureol also observed that "time as continuous succession does not exist outside the mind"; only in the mind do the past and future exist, while beyond the mind is only the instant of the present (300). Aureol's contemporary William of Ockham also discusses the perception of time as a human activity, drawing on the work of the Muslim philosopher Abu al-Walid Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Rushd (known in the West as Averroes). Duhem notes in particular Averroes' argument that

> when we perceive any moment, whether it is external or internal to our soul, we sense that we exist in a mobile fashion, subject to change (*sentimus nos esse in esse moto et transmutabili*), an existence rendered divisible by continual transformation. It is in this way, and only in this way, that we perceive time. If we existed in an existence which the absence of transformation rendered indivisible, this existence would constitute an instant, and there would be no time for us. It is therefore necessary, in order for us to have the sensation of time, that we exist in a changing and mobile existence, and that we perceive that our existence is of this kind. (314)

Duhem's observations here point to key concepts in medieval philosophies of time that appear in the challenge *Bevis* posed to its authors and audiences. The human perception of time requires that the individual is subject to change and that they are aware of their existence as such. However, it is also true that time beyond the instant of the present only exists within the human mind, which is able to remember the past and conceptualize the future. Aureol, William of Ockham, and Averroes are concerned with the cosmology of time, but their ideas present a clear challenge to the subjectivity of the individual. The necessity of human mutability, combined with the existence of continuous time solely within the human mind, suggests that subjective continuity and cohesion—the certainty that an individual in the

[26] I refer here to medieval ideas about earthly time, i.e. the way time is experienced for humans on earth, which is under discussion in the works of these philosophers and is most relevant to the earthly nature of *Bevis.*

present moment is recognizable as the same individual in the past, despite temporal transformations—is not guaranteed.

The nature of Bevis's expansive, wandering narrative invites consideration of the problem of the continuous subject in time across all complete versions of the Middle English *Bevis*, which share their basic narrative structure. Bevis first leaves England as a child: he speaks out against his mother for her role in having his father killed, after which he attempts to kill her lover, the Emperor of Allemagne. Despite his best efforts, he is unable to avenge his father and reclaim Southampton, and ends up sold to a Saracen king, who raises him. By the time Bevis returns to England, he is an experienced knight: he has fought in battles, killed a monstrous boar, escaped from a seven-year-imprisonment with divine assistance, slain a dragon, taken on a Saracen giant as a page, and won the love of a Saracen princess who has converted for his sake. Bevis's second attempt to avenge his father is successful, but after retaking Hampton he does not remain in England for long. After a disagreement with King Edgar, Bevis returns to the continent, leaving his uncle Saber in charge of his English holdings. Bevis is connected to England through a personal past reiterated via heredity, yet his development as a knight necessarily pulls him away from his own history. His personal progression through time is made explicit through transformations of character that largely take place outside England, and often outside Christianity.

Several of the disparities between the *Bevis* manuscripts reflect the efforts of the texts' authors to balance these two foundational aspects of Bevis's knightly identity: his connection to Christian England, which is rooted firmly in his past, and his development into a renowned knight, which is tied more closely to his experiences and adventures in foreign lands populated predominantly by Saracens. The narrative adjustments made by the text's various authors indicate a growing sense over the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries that for Bevis to be a spiritually, morally, and culturally worthy hero, he must be able to recognize

himself as a unified individual by resolving his temporal experiences into a cohesive narrative, even as opposing aspects of his identity prevent easy resolution. At the same time, agreements between different versions of the *Bevis* narrative indicate a level of commitment to the story's tradition and a general unwillingness to alter its fundamental elements. The authors working to unify Bevis's expansive adventures into the narrative of a single, consistent Christian subject do so within the constraints of a relatively predetermined narrative tradition. The *Bevis* manuscripts represent efforts at depicting knightly self-narration that are constantly reiterated, mutable, and sometimes inconsistent as they address a complex web of narrative priorities. This chapter will survey a selection of manuscripts from within the *Bevis* tradition to establish the problem posed to Middle English redactors by their Anglo-Norman source, followed by a discussion of the various ways in which the textual tradition negotiates episodes key to the establishment and expression of Bevis's identity: his English childhood, the Christmas Day massacre, Bevis's initial encounter with Terri, Bevis's respective relationships with the kings of England and Armenia, and the treatment of Bevis's twin sons.

Manuscript and Material Contexts

Because textual differences between *Bevis* manuscripts are central to my argument, I will begin by briefly outlining the *Bevis* manuscript tradition, focusing in particular on the four manuscripts primarily under discussion in this chapter. The Middle English *Bevis* is based on the Anglo-Norman *Boeve de Haumtone,*[27] the composition of which Judith Weiss has dated to the 1190s, although extant copies of the Anglo-Norman text date to the thirteenth

[27] The *Bevis* story was hugely popular in medieval and Renaissance Europe, and versions of the tale exist in Continental French, Anglo-Norman, Middle English, Middle Welsh, Irish, Old Norse, Dutch, Italian, and Yiddish (Fellows *BI* xv). Of these, Fellows notes that the Insular texts (Anglo-Norman, Middle English, Middle Welsh, and Irish) form a relatively consistent narrative group, while others exhibit more variation (*BI* xvi). The Anglo-Norman *Boeve* appears to be the source for the Middle English, Middle Welsh, and Old Norse narratives, while the incomplete Irish version appears to be based on the Middle English (Poppe and Reck 37, Sanders 52).

century.[28] The transmission history of the Middle English *Bevis* from its Anglo-Norman source is convoluted. The surviving Middle English copies of the poem include nine manuscripts dating from the early 1300s to the late 1400s, some of which are only fragmentary, as well as several early print copies that seem to have drawn on manuscripts that no longer survive. As Jennifer Fellows notes, the relationship between these copies and their Anglo-Norman source is unclear,[29] as no single redaction consistently demonstrates a closer relationship to *Boeve* than others. Each distinct version of the Middle English text contains unique agreements with, and variations from, the Anglo-Norman source that are not found in other manuscripts. Noting that none of the extant manuscripts can be directly descended from each other, Fellows draws on the stemma proposed by Eugen Kölbing, which postulates eight lost manuscripts to connect the extant texts (*BI* lxii).

Of particular interest in this chapter are the versions of *Bevis* in Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 19.2.1, composed around 1330 (the Auchinleck manuscript, referred to throughout as A); Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, MS XIII.B.29, composed between 1450 and 1460 (referred to throughout as N); London, British Library, MS Egerton 2862, composed late fourteenth or early fifteenth century (referred to throughout as S); and Cambridge University Library, MS Ff.2.38, composed late fifteenth or early sixteenth century (referred to throughout as C).[30] The close similarities between N and S prompted Kölbing to suggest that both shared a primary source, now lost. Fellows has

[28] Albert Stimming's 1899 edition of *Boeve* drew on the extant Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS nouv. acq. fr. 4532 version of *Boeve*, and on another manuscript of *Boeve* that is no longer extant. Fellows notes that both versions of *Boeve* were incomplete but overlapped complementarily. She also notes the existence of two further *Boeve* manuscripts that survive today only as fragments (Fellows *BI* xix).

[29] Fellows notes that comparison between the extant *Boeve* manuscripts suggests that the Anglo-Norman text exhibited less variation than the Middle English *Bevis* (*BI* xix). Fellows' stemma for the Middle English *Bevis* (*BI* lxii) further suggests that the variations in *Bevis* come from within the Middle English tradition rather than from non-extant Anglo-Norman variations.

[30] Dates for N, S, and C are taken from Fellows; see *BI* li-lviii for detailed descriptions of each of these manuscripts, including their contents, conditions, hands, and dates. The Auchinleck manuscript (A) has been the focus of scholarly attention in recent decades and scholarly consensus agrees on the 1330s as its date of composition; Fellows cites Laura Hibbard Loomis, Timothy A. Shonk, and Ralph Hanna on A's 1330s date and London composition (*BI* lviii, fn 236).

combined the two in her comparative editions of N, S, and C, and so I follow her in referring to NS together as representing a relatively cohesive single version of the text with minor variations. A, N, S, and C are all manuscript compilations that contain a variety of other texts, including other romances, saints' lives, and various moral, pietistic, and historical materials. Fellows writes that *Bevis'* manuscript company in its later redactions, including N, S, and C, indicates that "it was felt by contemporary readers to be a morally uplifting tale" (*BI* xxi).[31]

The Middle English *Bevis* contains significant textual variation between manuscript copies, but Fellows notes that major variations occur at particular episodes in the text, while other episodes tend to remain fairly static between copies. Fellows suggests that this may be due to a practice of excerpting single episodes from longer manuscripts and circulating them independently of the rest of the narrative ("TS" 90). She suggests that the Cambridge, Trinity College, MS O.2.13 *Bevis* (referred to throughout as T) may represent this process, as this manuscript contains only a single, reasonably self-contained narrative episode that has been recorded on blank leaves at the end of the quire, placed in a way that suggests the episode is a deliberate stand-alone and not a fragment of a longer narrative ("TS" 90). Fellows notes that this version does not exhibit line-to-line correspondence with other extant copies. Its readings are often "garbled to the point of nonsensicality," which may indicate efforts at oral or memorial transmission existing alongside the more reliable process of textual copying in the *Bevis* tradition ("TS" 91). Considering *Bevis* as a text read aloud for entertainment also raises the problem of the narrative's length, which would make it extremely impractical for

[31] We can recall here Bahr's comments on the problem of distinguishing aesthetic choices from practical ones in manuscript analysis. He points out the difficulty in determining whether texts were placed together for thematic/dialogic reasons or simply because they fit into the available leaf space or were readily at hand (6). Bahr argues that manuscript arrangements have the potential to produce literary effects, though he notes that compilations do not have cohesive literary meaning in themselves; rather, their meanings depend on how the individual reader interprets them (10-11). The manuscript contexts of *Bevis*, specifically the other works with which it occurs in compilations, are not the focus of this chapter, but it is noteworthy that the N, S, and C versions of *Bevis* all occur in manuscripts with thematically similar contents, as Fellows points out. This suggests that the inclusion of *Bevis* in these manuscripts was, to some extent, an aesthetic choice related to the perceived moral value of the tale.

completion in a single sitting. This, together with the observations made by Fellows about T, suggest that *Bevis'*s audiences would likely have consumed it in discrete episodes, rather than as a single narrative.[32] All the same, the several complete or nearly complete versions of *Bevis* that do survive indicate a sense by many of the poem's authors and copiers of *Bevis* as a cohesive narrative, as do efforts at improving the internal consistency of the text as a whole.[33] My arguments in this chapter frequently draw on connections between narrative episodes and on the placement of narrative episodes within the entirety of the *Bevis* story, following the assumption based on manuscript context that *Bevis* was approached by at least some of its authors and readers as a single narrative. However, it is useful to acknowledge that the whole-text approach to *Bevis* suggested by its manuscript tradition was not necessarily the only way that its audiences experienced and conceptualized the story.

Bevis also led an extra-textual life as a figure of oral folklore, though his folkloric and literary identities bear few resemblances. Although the titular Hampton refers to Southampton, in Hampshire, Jacqueline Simpson notes that the folkloric Bevis was particularly associated with the nearby West Sussex. This was likely due to the West Sussex town of Arundel, which bears the same name as Bevis's famous horse (n.p.). The folkloric Bevis and the literary Bevis both ride a horse named Arundel and wield a sword named Morglay, but otherwise they are distinct figures. Where the literary Bevis is a young knight of noble birth who does most of his adventuring outside of England, Simpson explains that in West Sussex lore, Bevis is a giant

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[32] In his 1968/1969 study of Middle English romances, Dieter Mehl observes that *Bevis* is three times as long as *King Horn*, a romance that Mehl notes has similar plot elements but that, unlike *Bevis*, could have been read in a single sitting due to its length (213). Although *Bevis* lacks formal divisions, Mehl writes that "the story itself suggests several clearly marked caesuras" that divide the text into five approximately equal sections, each around 900 lines (213). In addition to plot elements that Mehl uses to break down the text into these five sections, he notes moments of recapitulation that occur around his posited section breaks and that serve to remind the audience of key moments from earlier in the text (213-216).

[33] See, for instance, Melissa Furrow's comments about the "shocking dissonance" of Escopard's betrayal in *Boeve*, which the Middle English texts address and attempt to lessen with a selection of different narrative strategies ("AB" 145). Fellows also comments that, compared to *Boeve*, *Bevis* is much more concerned with internal consistency and its redactions make various attempts to achieve this (*BI* xxxiii-xxxiv).

> who could wade across from the Isle of Wight, and frequently did so, for his own amusement. He acted as warder at the gates of the Earls of Arundel, who built a tower to house him, and allowed him a whole ox and two hogsheads of beer each week. He served them loyally for many years, and when he grew old and felt that his end was near, he flung his sword from the top of the castle keep, and asked to be buried where it fell. A prehistoric burial mound in Arundel Park is known as Bevis's Grave, a huge sword in the armoury is alleged to be Morglay, and the tower called Bevis Tower is pointed out as his home. (n.p.)[34]

Whereas the literary Bevis exists within the narrative values and tropes of romance—noble birth, dragon- and Saracen-slaying, love and marriage, a narrative of exile and return—the West Sussex Bevis takes on distinctly folkloric attributes as an amiable giant who offers local protection and service. Unlike the literary Bevis, this Bevis is intimately tied to the local architecture, artifacts, and landscapes of southern England. His narrative persists through a variable oral tradition and through the narrativization of the region's physical landscape. For the residents of West Sussex, Bevis's specific regional ties and physical presence were clearly important aspects of his character. The literary Bevis has a much looser connection to his birthplace; while this reflects the different priorities and generic values of the *Bevis* romance, we will see that it also represents a challenge that the *Bevis* authors often sought to resolve.

The convoluted transmission history of *Bevis*, its significant textual variation, and its folkloric offshoot point to an open textual tradition that was consistently under revision. Textual variation was, of course, inevitable in medieval literary transmission, and it was particularly prevalent in popular, anonymous texts such as romances.[35] The variation in the

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[34] Simpson records stories of a similar nature associated with the town of Bosham, also in West Sussex. Like Arundel, Bosham had artifacts and landscape features attributed to or named for Bevis (n.p.).

[35] Drawing on the work of Cerquiglini, Susan Fleischman, Anne Hudson, and other scholars concerned with manuscript variance, Pearsall observes that different variants may exhibit more than scribal variation; they may

literary *Bevis* tradition demonstrates an ongoing interest in editing and adjusting the tale following the shifting priorities and interests of its authors. The disparity between the literary Bevis and the folkloric Bevis is particularly useful in identifying how Bevis's role as a cultural and quasi-historical figure existed in tension with the actual material of his romance. Simpson's description of the folkloric Bevis points to the physical, geographical, and social ties that anchor him to a particular region in England: his habitual traversal of England as he waded across from the Isle of Wight, his loyal service to the Earls of Arundel, the burial mound he allegedly chose for himself, the huge sword displayed as an artifact of his presence in the Arundel Park treasury.[36] The folkloric tradition repeatedly insists on Bevis's deep connection to the places and people of southern England, a connection that is notably absent in *Bevis* the romance. Central to this problem is the position of Bevis himself in the romance, as his chivalric development perpetually threatens to separate him from his literal and cultural connections to his English past and property.

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constitute different texts altogether (199). As noted in the introduction, Pearsall's discussion focuses on practicalities related to editing the major poems of authors such as Chaucer and Gower, for which relatively reliable authorial archetypes exist, but he distinguishes between variant texts and textual traditions that exhibit variance. In the same volume, Matthew Fisher observes that "variants are not always neutrally attested readings, clustering in their variation around an authorial and thus authoritative text" (207). Fisher's discussion of scribal authorship (and of authors behaving as scribes, in the case of Thomas Hoccleve's authorial copies of his own manuscripts) has obvious relevance for the freedom with which anonymous romances were copied and adapted. He explains that

> Scholars agree that sometimes scribes copied what was in front of them, sometimes they altered a subset of the text they were copying, and sometimes they transformed their source text almost completely. Yet the consensus on the instability attendant upon dialectical transformations by scribes does not more generally trouble the assumption that scribes intended to copy their source texts. (213)

The complex stemma Fellows proposes for *Bevis* requires the assumption of a number of non-extant missing links in the manuscript's transmission, so that the matter of which narrative elements were added when and by whom becomes functionally impossible to untangle. However, the variety in the textual tradition of *Bevis* and in the popular romance tradition more broadly indicates the freedom with which translators and copiers often approached their source texts.

[36] Rouse analyzes the ways in which *Bevis*, particularly in its A version, displays the tensions between a national identity focused around the king and strong senses of regional identities key to medieval English culture ("FKC?" 117). As he points out, A has co-opted a version of Bevis with "an inherently regional narrative focus" for a manuscript intended for a "national and cosmopolitan audience" (117). Some of the discrepancy between the folkloric Bevis and the literary Bevis can similarly be linked with the regional importance of the folkloric Bevis as compared with the more cosmopolitan audience expected of a literary text: the audiences and their expectations are not the same. However, it is notable to find such a significant discrepancy between these two versions of Bevis, particularly in comparison to Guy of Warwick, whose folkloric identity remained much more closely connected to his literary identity. This will be discussed in more depth in the next chapter, but for now it is worth noting that the folkloric Bevis tradition seems to value the English ties that the romance tradition lacks.

Boeve de Haumtone *and the Inheritance of a Narrative Problem*

This chapter focuses on the Middle English versions of *Bevis*, but it is useful to begin by briefly discussing their source. The Anglo-Norman *Boeve* was the foundation from which Middle English authors inherited the narrative problems of *Bevis* and adapted their characterizations of the romance hero. Speaking about the Anglo-Norman *Boeve de Haumptone*, Weiss describes Boeve in the early parts of the poem as

> amongst the rudest heroes in Insular romance… He never asks for advice and, when he is given good counsel, either rejects it or takes some time to be persuaded into sensible courses. All this is at odds, possibly deliberately and ironically so, with one of his constant epithets—*li sene* ("the wise"). ("*Mestre"* 30)[37]

Boeve is certainly not the only "rude" hero in romance history, but the context of his development into knighthood is somewhat unconventional. Boeve, having spent his early childhood in Southampton, completes the rest of his knightly development away from England; the "rude" knight Weiss describes develops to maturity in this foreign context, often surrounded by Saracens who appear to be peers and friends as well as enemies. Though Boeve matures over the course of the narrative, he never seems fully immersed in the court culture of England, and he maintains consistent ties with his foreign, Saracen-influenced past. His Armenian affiliations often seem to compete with or overshadow his English ties, and his development into a knight of renown seems to pull him further away from his English past.[38]

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[37] Weiss notes that *curteis*, another common epithet for Boeve, seems to be a misnomer as well. She writes that "little description is allotted him, whether in or out of armour; his characteristics are conveyed through action and speech, whether in pretending to snore when Josian comes to his bed or in jeering with grim humour over fallen adversaries" ("Introduction" 7).

[38] Most of the narrative features of *Boeve* described here are carried forward to some extent in the Middle English tradition, particularly in the early A version of the text, and will be discussed in their Middle English forms in greater detail. However, there are a few useful moments in *Boeve* to point out for comparison. The Anglo-Norman emphasizes Hermin's great love for Boeve (411-415), which Boeve seems to reciprocate fully when he tells Terri that "my lord wouldn't do that [order Boeve's death] for three hundred cities" (848-862), painting a portrait of mutual affection and loyalty, so that Hermin's betrayal becomes not just behaviour expected of a Saracen but the breaking of a familial bond that evokes the behaviour of Boeve's mother. Boeve

This is an odd circumstance for a knight who was often regarded as particularly English and who also existed as an English folk hero. In Weiss's explanation of the date she suggests for the initial composition of the Anglo-Norman *Boeve,* she draws on an argument by M. Dominica Legge, who suggested that *Boeve* was written for the Earls of Arundel.[39] Legge describes *Boeve* as an ancestral romance, writing that in an Insular context, poems in this romance sub-genre were written "for and about particular Norman families, binding them to their adopted English home" ("Date" 237). In this context, Boeve's ties to England are important to the poem, even though they are often at odds with Boeve's adventuring. The English folkloric Bevis is difficult to date and disentangle from the development of the romance Boeve/Bevis, but his close ties to West Sussex towns and landmarks also emphasize an essential understanding of Bevis as a regional English hero. The contemporary treatment of Bevis as a quasi-historical literary figure suggests that the text's audiences felt the cultural tension: Fellows notes that between Bevis and Guy of Warwick, both comparably famous popular heroes of ancestral romances in fourteenth-century England, Guy was adopted as an official ancestor of the Earls of Warwick, whereas the Earls of Arundel did not appear to do the same with Bevis. Fellows and Ivana Djordjević attribute Guy's popularity in England to his "rather ostentatious kind of Englishness" (3). They note that Bevis's Englishness is, in

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reconciles easily with Hermin when he reappears in the text, riding to aid him against Yvori and making peace over Hermin's past betrayal when Hermin agrees to hand over the traitorous stewards who turned Hermin against Boeve in the first place (3053-3179). When Hermin dies, he has Boeve's son Gui crowned his heir while Gui's brother Miles is made a duke of his lands, which apparently remain Saracen (3284-3378); when Miles eventually marries the king of England's daughter, he thus carries with him his own social and political affiliation to his brother's religiously ambiguous foreign realm, so that Boeve's whole family seems to carry heavy Saracen, foreign ties. In contrast, after Boeve avenges his father and reclaims his English lands, he comes into conflict almost immediately with King Edgar's son, followed by Edgar himself and Edgar's court ; though several of Edgar's advisers speak up on Boeve's behalf, he ultimately chooses to give up his English lands to Sabaoth in order to preserve the life of the horse given to him by his Saracen foster-family (2404-2673) and leaves England.

[39] Weiss's article revises the date and patron proposed by Legge, who suggested that *Boeve* was composed for William de Albini, the second Earl of Arundel, between 1154 and 1176 ("Date" 237). Weiss discusses the historical circumstances of both William II and his son William III, and draws on issues raised in the second half of *Boeve* such as Boeve's conflict with King Edgar to suggest instead that *Boeve* "in its existing shape (though not in its existing, thirteenth-century language)" was composed in the last decade of the twelfth century with both William II and William III in mind ("Date" 240).

contrast, "more tenuous," particularly in *Boeve*; Bevis only became a national hero after his translation into Middle English (4). Fellows compares Guy's status as a historical ancestor with Bevis's popularity as a folk hero; as the earlier manuscript survey demonstrated, however, Bevis's folkloric identity is not closely aligned with his romance identity, overwriting the foreignness of the literary Bevis with regional English ties manifested in the West Sussex landscape. In short, the Middle English *Bevis* authors inherited from their Anglo-Norman source a thorny narrative problem: the Englishness of their English hero was not fixed, and his hereditary English ties often fell into tension with his progression as a knight.

Boeve presented its redactors with this narrative challenge, but its construction also offered a relatively easy solution, one that could have been adopted by later Middle English authors at any stage. Fellows and Weiss, among others, have noted that *Boeve* naturally breaks down into two distinct halves. The first half completes the exile-and-return narrative set up in *Boeve*'s opening; having become a worthy knight, Boeve returns to England, kills his stepfather, reclaims his ancestral holdings, and marries Josian. The first half on its own forms a complete narrative, one in which Boeve's distance from his Englishness is temporary and his return to England aligns with and solidifies his chivalric maturity, so that his knightly development and his Englishness are mutually reinforcing. In the second half, Boeve leaves England again and undertakes new continental adventures, many of which are associated with the people and places of his early chivalric development. He returns to England only to find himself in conflict with King Edgar once again, after which he ultimately leaves England to his son and rules over Mombrant with Josian. Aside from the fact that the first half forms a distinct, enclosed narrative unit, the shift after the end of the first section is also marked by changes of form and quality in the writing. Weiss summarizes some of the key distinctions between the two sections:

> The two halves of Boeve de Haumtone (laisses i-clxv, and clxvi - end) are very different in character. There are numerous discrepancies between them in story, characters and style, and they are clumsily linked by a two-line prediction tacked on to the end of laisse clxv. People and episodes in the second half are referred to as if they had already been introduced earlier, when in fact they have not. In the first half, Boeve is an English hero; in the second, apparently French. Characters abruptly change allegiances between the two parts. Laisse style is handled mostly competently, occasionally very well, in the first half; in the second, it is merely a means of arbitrarily breaking up large hunks of narrative. ("Date" 240)

Weiss suggests that the first section may have been intended as the complete *Boeve* narrative by its author, after which a less talented author decided to continue Boeve's adventures in a series of increasingly episodic and repetitive adventures ("Date" 240).

The natural resolution of the narrative problems posed by this dual structure for redactors and Middle English authors would be to excise the second section. The redactors and authors of *Guy* clearly felt comfortable removing problematic narrative episodes and severing *Guy* from the interlaced *Reinbrun* narrative to better align the text with their goals, and I have already cited Fellows' suggestion that individual narrative episodes of *Bevis* may have circulated independently in the Middle English *Bevis* tradition. Additionally, the variation in the *Bevis* texts—and in medieval texts more generally—suggests that this would not have seemed an unreasonable or overly intrusive solution to some authors and copiers. However, no extant copies attempt to resolve the narrative problems of *Boeve* by abridging it. Instead, aside from independent episodes such as the T *Bevis*, all extant copies of *Bevis* contain the entirety of the *Boeve* narrative. Middle English authors have instead attempted to smooth over the jarring distinction between the two sections of *Boeve* by improving narrative

consistency.[40] The entirety of *Boeve* was evidently considered a cohesive narrative, with the second section forming an essential part of the Bevis story despite the narrative problems this presented. Middle English *Bevis* authors were thus left to manage the text's characteristic tension between Bevis's English past and the trajectory of knightly development that consistently pulls him away from England, along with the subjective disunity that this odd narrative structure created. The Middle English manuscript tradition demonstrators a commitment to working within the messy narrative parameters of the Anglo-Norman source text alongside an interest in adjusting *Boeve*'s narrative problems to present a more cohesive and consistent vision of Bevis's identity throughout the text.

Central to the construction of Bevis's identity are his cultural affiliations across the text's long narrative, which raise questions about his status as an English hero and his sense of his own cultural allegiances. Discussing *Boeve* and *Bevis* as texts about English heroes whose cultural identities were tied to their association with England requires some clarification about the nature of England as a "national" community in the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries, however. When Rouse discusses Matter of England romances, he first outlines the debate surrounding the legitimacy of ideas of nationalism in medieval England. Scholars including Thorlac Turville-Petre, Geraldine Heng, and Kathy Lavezzo have all argued that ideas of the nation and national identity can be productively applied to medieval texts (and, in the cases of Turville-Petre, Heng, and Rouse, to Middle English romance specifically), while stressing the importance of recognizing that the medieval nation is not the same as the modern nation-state.[41] Rouse and Thomas H. Crofts write that the picture of

[40] See footnote 9 for specific examples of this.

[41] I cite Rouse here because of his specific engagement with issues of national identity in *Bevis* and *Guy,* but his work draws on a much broader discussion of the development of English national identity and the forms in which a sense of a shared English community existed during the Middle Ages. My interest in the interaction between *Bevis, Guy,* and a medieval sense of Englishness is not in describing the specific vision (or visions) of Englishness in which these romances participated; instead, my primary goal here is to establish that these romances had a particular connection to discourses of Englishness. I argue that in the cultural reception of *Bevis* and *Guy* in England, it was important that these figures *were* English, whatever forms that Englishness took.

Englishness in romance is "one that is complicated by ties between England and the continent, regionalisms within England itself, and even worrying similarities with the Saracen Other" (82). In *Bevis* specifically, Rouse notes tensions between regional and national interests played out in Bevis's recurring conflicts with King Edgar ("FKR?" 122). At the same time, Rouse argues that the Middle English *Bevis,* particularly the A version, features additions intended to heighten the text's Englishness, in keeping with a growing cultural effort to generate a sense of national identity and shared national interests ("FKR?" 115). In short, those involved in the production and consumption of *Bevis* as a text were participants in a society that made various social, political, and cultural claims to a sense of national identity. Given the additional religious differences between Christian England and Saracen Armenia in *Bevis,* the Anglo-Norman Boeve's inconsistent and unclear demonstrations of his cultural identity presented problems for Middle English authors. The *Bevis* manuscript

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However, making this claim requires acknowledgement of the foundational work on the subject of medieval nationalism done by scholars including Thorlac Turville-Petre, Geraldine Heng, Ardis Butterfield, Kathy Lavezzo, L.O. Aranye Fradenburg, Andrew Galloway, Kathleen Davis, Larry Scanlon, D. Vance Smith, Lynn Staley, and Claire Sponsler. These scholars and others have articulated various arguments for the existence of a sense of national identity in fourteenth-century England, though one necessarily different from the sense in which we understand nationalism and the nation-state today.

Turville-Petre writes that early fourteenth-century historical works in English shaped "a sense of nationhood by developing a consciousness of the nation's past" (14). He identifies territory, people, and language as the three principle criteria picked to represent England in fourteenth-century English historical texts: in his words, for the fourteenth-century English, "we are English first because we inhabit England, secondly because we are the descendants of the first English settlers, and thirdly because we speak the language of England" (14). In reality, none of these ideas are straightforward or unproblematic, and writers had to "confront, or more often conceal, those instances where imaginative construction is at odds with reality" (14).

Lavezzo summarizes some of the key arguments against the existence of any sense of medieval nationalism. She describes Hans Kohn's assertion that "identification with a *res publica generis humani* under one *ecclesia universalis* that transcended ethno-political ties superseded all other social forms in the medieval Occident" (viii); she also discusses Benedict Arnold's description of a medieval religious attitude that prioritized the absorption of peoples and their histories into a centripetal, hierarchical, and providential worldview where "sachral monarchies" ruled over subjects in territories without fixed boundaries (viii). However, Lavezzo cites various indications of a sense of English national community: popular chronicles that narrate a shared past (particularly *Brut*); the 1360 Gough map, which was unprecedented in Europe and suggests sense of unified territory; a sense of a shared language seen in the increasing presence of English as a legal, courtly, and literary language; and a "web of bureaucracy" uniting the territory politically by administering and regulating currency, taxes, laws, and markets (xvii). Lavezzo explains that "the Middle Ages did not see the birth of a unified English community, but instead witnessed the construction of multiple, contingent, and conflicting 'Englands,' each geared toward the respective needs of different social groups (monarchic, Lollard, monastic, etc.) engaged in national discourses" (xix).

tradition demonstrates two distinct yet related textual interests: signalling Bevis's Englishness in a general sense by reducing the text's cultural tensions, and presenting Bevis as a hero who actively participates in the mental work required to articulate an ongoing sense of his own continuous identity as a native of England.

Inheritance, Duty, and Faith: Bevis's Childhood Identity

The problem inherited by the Middle English *Bevis* authors is one of temporal subjective unity. All complete extant copies of *Bevis* have in common their lengthiness, which demands that the audience keep the narrative events and characters fixed in their minds and that they accept the Bevis of each particular textual episode as a continuous character. The text itself attempts to balance Bevis's past, where his Englishness resides, with his constant progression through his adventures, which allows for his development as a knight, by insisting that his hereditary and childhood Englishness remains a constant element of his identity. A convincing performance demands that the narrative portray Bevis as able to comprehend and express his identity in such a way that his temporal experiences can cohere, allowing the constant permeation of his English past into his chivalric present. The challenge is essentially one of autobiography. Writing on the treatment of memory in Middle English romance, McKinstry notes that reconciling the present self with earlier versions "now distant from, and even alien to, the older individual" (*Craft* 164) carries an inherent challenge. Memory allows for this continuity of identity, and McKinstry argues that romances allow the creation of "a coherent sense of identity over time" (*Craft* 165), even while they also depict the difficulty of maintaining a unified self in the face of dramatic change (*Craft* 166). McKinstry focuses primarily on instances in romance in which points of "subjective crisis" are resolved and the subject remains coherent. He writes that *Bevis* is part of a group of

romances[42] that explore how memory "can be challenged, but also how any interferences during the process of recollection can be overcome creatively" (*Craft* 6). However, disparities between *Bevis* manuscripts at particular moments of self-identification suggest that not all *Bevis* authors viewed the matter of memory as adequately resolved, and that some felt the need to adjust their depictions of Bevis's self-identification to overwrite the tensions inherent in the narrative.

The A, NS, and C versions of the text all emphasize Bevis's understanding of his own connection to Southampton prior to his exile, firmly establishing him as English by birth and upbringing. A and NS characterize Bevis as possessing an adult understanding of Southampton as his legal inheritance in the wake of his father's death. Despite his young age, he attempts to act as an adult knight in defending his holdings and avenging his father, though his failure aligns with the text's indications that he is still a child in need of training and development. In NS, after the Emperor has murdered Gui and Bevis's mother has ordered Bevis killed, Bevis looks "home toward Hampton / That schulde be his" (NS 401-402, similar in A),[43] expressing an understanding that he is tied to Southampton via the legal inheritance of his father. In NS, he later indicates that he feels the Emperor's actions have wronged him personally and articulates a desire for personal vengeance, reflecting that "myght I euer with the emperour speke, / Of him I wolde bene awreke— / For all his ferde!" (NS 409-411).[44]

After Bevis first speaks out against the Emperor, Bevis's mother orders Bevis's uncle Saber to have Bevis killed. Saber treats Bevis as a child in his efforts to protect him, faking Bevis's death to placate Bevis's mother and planning to send him away to an unnamed earl

[42] McKinstry's group includes *William of Palerne, Sir Launfal,* and *Sir Orfeo* in addition to *Bevis* (*Craft* 6).
[43] Quotations from NS and C are taken from Jennifer Fellows' 2017 Early English Text Society edition of Bevis from these two manuscripts. Where A, NS, and C are all in approximate agreement on lines, I generally quote from NS and note similarities with A and/or C. This follows Fellows' judgment that NS is a "'middle-of-the-road' conservative" *Bevis* manuscript ("TS" 87). Quotations from A are taken from the Early English Text Society's 1973 reprint of Eugen Kölbing's three volumes of *Bevis*.
[44] Here A is closer to C, where Bevis swears vengeance against the Emperor for his father (discussed below).

who will teach him "curteisye / In this youthe" (NS 386-387, similar in A). He promises that when Bevis has the "art of age" (NS 390, similar in A) and wields arms, he can return to win back his heritage, with Saber swearing to help him when he is "of elde" to "gete þi rȝt" (NS 395, similar in A). Saber's desire to send Bevis away for training suggests that Bevis is still a child, and Bevis's failure to avenge his father's death confirms this. Bevis ignores Saber's instruction and goes to confront the Emperor himself, demanding of the Emperor,

> What dost þou here apon my lond
> Without leve?
> Yef thou my lond and my fe,
> And but thou hens fast fle
> I schalle the greve! (NS 454-459)

His language expresses his ownership of the land and his desire to exercise his sovereignty over it as Southampton's new lord. The parallel lines in A have Bevis focus on the illegitimacy of the Emperor's relationship with his mother, but Bevis still demands to know what the Emperor is doing "vpon me londe / Wiþ outen leue?" (A 428-429) and criticizes the Emperor's seizure of Bevis's property ("fe", A 430). Bevis strikes the Emperor but does not manage to kill him, and the incident prompts Bevis's mother to have Bevis sold to traveling merchants. In this early episode, A and NS foreground both Bevis's adult understanding of his connection to Southampton and his childish need for development.

C's approach focuses primarily on emphasizing Bevis as a child. Although lines 454-459 quoted above are practically identical in NS and C, allowing Bevis to articulate his legal claim to Southampton, elsewhere C emphasizes Bevis's grudge against the Emperor as one rooted in the Emperor's crimes against Gui rather than against Bevis himself. Where A and NS's Bevis looks "home toward Hampton / That schulde be his" (C 401-402), C's Bevis looks "ynto the towne, / That was hys fadurs all same" (C 401-402). Similarly, NS's Bevis

proclaims that "myght I euer with the emperour speke, / Of him I wolde bene awreke" (C 409-410), suggesting a desire to avenge himself on the Emperor for bringing about Bevis's downturn in fate. At the parallel point in C, Bevis says instead, "yf y may wyth þe emperour speke, / My fadur dethe y wyll awreke" (C 409-410; here A is closer to C than to NS); his desire for vengeance on the Emperor is expressed on behalf of his father, not himself. A, NS and C align closely in Saber's promise to send Bevis away to train until he is "of age" (NS, C 390) to take back his land, so that C overall favours depicting Bevis as a child—a son connected to Southampton via his familial ties to his father. This is also reflected in the Emperor's words to Gui before his kills him: in A and NS, he promises that after Gui is dead, "thi sonne Beuys schal anhongid be" (NS 229, similar in A), indicating that he rightfully perceives the young Bevis to be a threat. In C, the Emperor makes no such remark, and thus Bevis is not foregrounded as a threatening semi-adult figure. C emphasizes Bevis's childish qualities, setting up the expectation and necessity of Bevis's personal development over the course of the narrative, but is less concerned with having Bevis express his own ownership of Southampton. C's childlike Bevis allows for a more linear trajectory of growth across subsequent episodes, whereas A and NS's Bevis seems to regress from a precocious English child with adult sensibilities into a rude young knight in Armenia.

The initial episode in England is also the space of Bevis's first temporal crisis. When Saber tries to protect Bevis by sending him out into the fields, Bevis undertakes a moment of self-reflection in which he struggles to reconcile his present condition with his understanding of his identity as Gui's son. As Bevis stands out among the sheep, he reflects in A and NS, "am I noght an erlis sone, / And nowe am herd? (NS 407-408, similar in A). He struggles to reconcile his nobility with his present condition as a shepherd, with the interrogative self-questioning expressing his difficulty in comprehending the shift. The lines suggest that he understands his past identity as an earl's son as persistent and enduring; the challenge lies in

accepting that a downturn in fortune can make him both an earl's son and a lowly shepherd. In C, the effect is slightly different: the parallel lines read "I was sometyme an erlys sone, / And now a schepard" (C 407-408). Here, he articulates his downturn in fortune as an actual shift in identity as he transitions from being an earl's son in the past to being a shepherd in the present. McKinstry writes that romances frequently hint at the difficulty of divisions between past and present, depicting moments of crisis in which individuals cease to believe in the stability of their identities and in the persistence of the people they remember being (*Craft* 166). He cites as an example *Sir Orfeo*, pointing to a series of juxtaposed external changes in circumstance that contrast Orfeo's new identity as a poor man living in the wild with his past identity as a king (*Craft* 167). Bevis undertakes a similar process here, reflecting upon his downturn in fortune by juxtaposing his past and present social identities. As McKinstry notes, however, Orfeo's moment of "subjective crisis" closes by returning to his harp, which acts as a point of connection between his past and present selves. Orfeo's harp is both a physical object and as a signifier of his continued social identity as a musician (*Craft* 168). Bevis lacks such an object; instead, he must assure himself of the continuity of his past identity through action, using the moment of crisis to instigate his confrontation with the Emperor. The action is appropriate for an earl's son, motivated by a sense of honourable hereditary duty, but it also seeks to reestablish Bevis's social identity literally through the reclamation of his father's property. Lacking the physical continuity of Orfeo's harp, however, Bevis can only resort to action to affirm his sense of his identity, a process that must be reiterated in response to every subsequent subjective crisis he faces. This becomes increasingly difficult as he spends more time away from England.

After he has been sold to merchants, King Ermyn provides Bevis with another opportunity to assert his confidence in the steadfastness of his own identity. Ermyn demands that Bevis convert so that he can marry Josian and become Ermyn's heir, and Bevis responds

with a spirited refusal to forsake Christ for any cost. In A and NS he insists that "all mote thei be doumbe and deve / That on fals goddis bileve!" (NS 632-633, similar in A), while in C he proclaims, "all be they brente to dethe / That on odur false goddys beluyth!" (C 632-633). His refusal reaffirms the stability of his identity as a Christian, while in refusing he also rejects Ermyn's offer to make Bevis heir to the lands of Armenia; implicitly, he rejects the displacement of his identity as heir to Southampton in Christian England with a new identity as heir to a Saracen kingdom. Bevis strengthens his connection to Southampton by insisting to Ermyn that

> if yef hit euer so bitide
> That I may on hors ride,
> Armys bere and shaftes breke,
> My fadiris dethe I wol awreke. (NS 612-615, similar in A and C)

In all versions, Ermyn accepts Bevis's rejection; in C, in fact, Ermyn's love for Bevis is said to increase because Bevis "wolde not chaunge hys lore" (C 635). For C's Ermyn, Bevis's ability to retain and express a coherent, continuous sense of self is part of his merit. Even as a child, he is able to affirm his hereditary spiritual identity and to express a sense of his social rights and responsibilities as an English noble.

In these instances, the text positions Bevis as easily able to articulate a sense of his own identity—as an earl's son, as a Christian—and to reassert this identity even through external efforts that threaten to shift it. However, in both cases Bevis demonstrates an insistence on reiterating a past identity and rejecting development outright. The text has already established that, like most romance heroes, Bevis requires development; Bevis himself acknowledges this when he tells Ermyn he will avenge his father's death if he is ever able to ride a horse and bear arms. The challenge for the *Bevis* authors throughout the rest of the narrative is to integrate the stable identity Bevis articulates in these early moments with

the accumulation of temporal experience that allows Bevis to become a celebrated knight. The tension between Bevis's past and present becomes evident almost immediately after he refuses to convert. Despite his brazen rejection of Ermyn's offer, Bevis politely submits to Ermyn's subsequent decision to make Bevis his chamberlain and to have Bevis bear Ermyn's banner when he becomes a knight (A 572-574, NS/C 636-639), accepting a course of service and training under a Saracen king. Bevis remains in Armenia "yere and othir; / The king him louyd as his brothir" (NS 642-643, similar in A and C): his fierce opposition to Saracens is undermined by his willingness to serve Ermyn, which the passage of time transforms into a relationship that is practically familial. In A and C, the tension produced here is made even more explicit by the wording of Ermyn's instructions. He tells Bevis that "þou schelt, whan þow ert dobbed kniȝt, / Me baner bere in to eueri fiȝt!" (A 573-574, similar in C). His desire to have Bevis bear his banner into every fight expresses Ermyn's vision of Bevis's future in which Bevis remains permanently in his service. He overwrites the desire Bevis has just expressed to become a knight so he can reclaim Southampton and avenge his father, and Bevis submits willingly, telling Ermyn, "What ȝe me hoten, don ich wil!" (A 576). In short, we see the first cracks in Bevis's identity begin to appear. As a child, he demonstrates a confident understanding of himself as an English noble and a Christian, established in part through his rejection of Saracen inheritance and religion, and yet the narrative also requires his willing assimilation into the Saracen world. The text demands compromise that sits uneasily alongside the vehement repudiation Bevis uses to establish his own identity.

The Christmas Day Massacre and the Construction of Meaningful Religious Identity

As Bevis spends more time away from England and develops alongside Saracen knights in Armenia, the tension in his temporal experiences becomes increasingly difficult to unify, despite his spirited assertions of his own subjective consistency in the text's first

episode. A, NS, and C all follow *Boeve* in including the Christmas Day massacre as the first real episode of Bevis's early chivalric career. In A and NS, one of Bevis's Saracen companions "askid him whate he clepid þat day" (NS 659, similar in A), to which Bevis replies "I ne wote wate day hit is, / For I nas but x yeris olde / Fro Cristendome wan I was solde" (NS 661-663, similar in A).[45] The Saracen explains the religious significance of Christmas Day for Christians as the day "thi god was bore without dole" (NS 669, similar in A) ending with the polite suggestion that Bevis should "honowren her god so I schal myne, / Bothe Mahond and Appolyne" (NS 672-673, similar in A). Bevis responds with his own personal recollection of Christmas Day:

> Of Cristendome I haue vpbreyde.
> I haue sey in a wey right
> Armyd many a gentil knyght,
> To turnay fast in the felde,
> With helmys bright and many schilde. (NS 675-679, similar in A)

Though Bevis declared that he would never forsake Christianity when he first met Ermyn, he demonstrates here that the temporal separation from his English past has impeded his ability to think and behave like a proper Christian. He admits himself that his understanding of Christianity has been impeded by the time that has passed since he was last physically involved in Christendom. His confusion is specifically temporal; when he admits that he "ne wote wate day hit is" (NS 661), he suggests both his unfamiliarity with the Christian calendar and, subsequently, his own unanchored temporal state, detached as he is from the Christian system of ordering time. Narratively, the scene comes right after Bevis's arrival in Armenia

[45] NS here demonstrates a minor narrative inconsistency not found in A or C when Bevis says here that he was sold at the age of ten. Earlier A, NS, and C all agree that Bevis was sold when he was seven, and in this passage in A and C Bevis keeps his age consistent at seven. This could be read as an failure in personal memory on the part of NS's Bevis, particularly given the context of his confusion over Christmas Day as a Christian holiday; however, it is difficult to read this as anything other than a textual error related to a minor detail not particularly significant to the text.

as a child, so that the text points to the fact that the passage of time seems to have dampened the heated assertion of Christian identity Bevis made when he arrived from England.

What Bevis does know of Christmas Day is associated not with the day's spiritual significance but with secular tournaments. In response to the Saracen's suggestion in NS and A that they should each worship their own gods, Bevis issues a challenge to his Saracen companions: "I wolde, for my Goddis loue / That in Heuen sitte aboue, / Fight with you euerichon" (NS 684-686). Bevis does attempt to honour his God, as the Saracen suggested, but he is only able to do so in a spiritually vacuous way; his expression of his Christianity occurs purely as an act of aggression against non-Christians. This is not unusual for romance; Rouse and Crofts note that in romance, the Saracen often acts

> to simplify the inherent complexities of individual and national identity. By adhering to the binary paradigm of Christian as good and Saracen as evil, the oppositional model of identity formation produces a construction of identity that, while reductive, allows a clearer and less problematic definition of self and nation. (83)

However, the Christmas Day massacre draws specific attention to Bevis's ignorance of Christianity, with violence against Saracens becoming Bevis's only method of Christian behaviour. Bevis overwrites the Saracen's non-aggressive, spiritually focused explanation of Christmas with his own memories of Christmas as a time for secular tournament, so that the spiritual might of a Christian challenging Saracens in the name of his faith is diminished. Instead, the challenge he issues in response to the Saracen's attempt to educate Bevis about his own religion seems disproportionate and violent.

This is particularly evident in consideration of *Bevis'*s frequently lenient approach to Saracens and Christian-Saracen relations, especially in A and NS. Bevis is knighted by the Saracen King Ermyn and serves him loyally until Ermyn betrays Bevis. Bevis also marries the Saracen-born Josian and is served by the Saracen giant Ascopard; although Josian

converts, Ascopard ultimately does not, and Bevis seems untroubled by keeping company with Ascopard as his Saracen page.[46] As Bevis travels back to Armenia, he is also said to meet in A a "gentil kniȝt, / Þat in þe londe of Ermonie / Hadde bore him gode companie" (A 1986-1988), or in NS a "hethen knyght" (NS 2516) who seems to be an old friend; "þei kist and clipte anone with þat, / And either axid of othiris state" (NS 2516). In A and NS it is thus difficult to interpret the Christmas Day massacre as a moment of implicitly endorsed anti-Saracen slaughter. If Bevis intends the Christmas Day massacre as a moment of religious self-definition, it is not obviously successful, as it coexists and conflicts with other moments in the text where his relations with Saracens are cordial and even familial. Instead, Bevis' behaviour here seems to align with Weiss's "rude" Anglo-Norman Boeve, whose disinterest in heeding council is matched by his inclination for violence. After the Christmas Day massacre, Bevis begins proving his strength and boldness as a knight, but—at least until his imprisonment at Damascus—his faith seems incidental to his character and his accomplishments, reiterated against the Saracen social world that surrounds him without any substance or clarity. Taken in the context of the tale as a whole, the Christmas Day massacre primarily illustrates the variability of Bevis's Saracen interactions and the effects of temporal distance on Bevis's Christian identity.

C makes some effort to mitigate some of the questions raised about both of these issues in its version of the Christmas Day massacre. The dialogue between Bevis and the

[46] This is a point of distinction between the Anglo-Norman *Boeve* and all extant Middle English versions of *Bevis*: in *Boeve*, the Saracen giant Escopart does convert, though this does not stop him from later betraying Boeve and returning to serve one of his old Saracen masters, for reasons that are never made entirely clear (see Furrow "AB" 146-148). Furrow writes that Escopart's conversion "creates a challenging hybrid: an alien-looking monster brought into the fold, playing for the home team" (148). Weiss also comments on Escopart's conversion, noting that the text does not seem to take the moment seriously as an instance of genuine religious awakening; in fact, she writes that Escopart's "funniest hour is when he is baptized: the fact that he is too large for the font perhaps signals the impossibility of a true accommodation of his pagan faith with Christianity" ("Introduction" 7). The Middle English tradition avoids Escopart's confusingly hybrid identity by having Ascopard refuse to convert at the last minute during the baptism scene (for more on the narrative function of this change, see Furrow "AB"). In doing so, however, it gives Bevis a perpetually Saracen companion who serves Bevis loyally for several episodes in the narrative and even plays a role in helping him avenge his father and reclaim his English title.

Saracen is generally similar in sense to the equivalent lines in A and NS. In C, however, after the Saracen has explained the Christian significance of Christmas, Bevis makes no mention of recalling Christmas tournaments. Instead, he tells the Saracen

> Of Crystendome y am vpbrayde:
> Yf y were as whyte yn place
> As euyr Syr Gye, my fadur, was,
> And þen y were armyd wele
> Bothe yn yron and yn stele,
> I wolde, for the loue of hym
> That dyed on Rode for my synne,
> Fyght wyth yow euerychon. (C 675, 680-686)

C's Bevis takes the opportunity to reaffirm his recollection of and connection to his father, proclaiming that if he were as strong as his father, he would wish to fight with the Saracens. Instead of illustrating Bevis's disconnection from a spiritual understanding of Christianity, the moment asserts Bevis's sense of the continuity of his secular identity as Gui of Hampton's son. C's Bevis also issues his challenge not just "for my Goddis loue" (NS 684), as he does in A and NS, but "for the loue of hym / That dyed on Rode for my synne" (C 684-685), which hints at the persistence of a less generic and more spiritually sophisticated understanding of Christianity, despite the time that has passed since Bevis left Christendom.

Although Bevis's reaction to the Saracen's explanation of Christmas still seems disproportionate, the rhetorical structure of his response in C suggests that his challenge is issued hypothetically—*if* he were as strong as Gui and well-armed, then he would fight the Saracens—whereas in A and NS, his challenge seems instead to express intention. It is thus the Saracen's response in C—"Let vs all abowte hym rynge / And harde strokys on hym dynge!" (C 691-692, similar in A and NS)—that becomes disproportionate as he takes

Bevis's hypothetical challenge literally, positioning the Saracens as the instigators of the incident. In A and NS the Saracen's response is practically identical, but reads as an escalation of the conflict instigated by Bevis. Additionally, while C generally aligns with A and NS in some of the moments of Christian-Saracen cordiality outlined above, Siobhain Bly Calkin notes that C in general promotes an ideal of Christian knighthood in which the knight "ideally manifests unmitigated enmity towards the Saracen world" ("DCK" 138). In this context, Bevis's aggression towards his Saracen companions seems to align with his spiritual identity rather than displacing it. Taken together, the C variations in the Christmas Day massacre do not excise Bevis's moment of spiritual uncertainty from the text altogether—C agrees with A and NS in having Bevis express the effect of temporal and physical distance on his understanding of Christian practice—but the scene does demonstrate an effort to craft Bevis into a more conventionally and consistently devout romance hero from the outset of his chivalric development. Bevis's expression of his own physical and temporal distance from Christian England is mitigated in C by a speech that assures the audience of the persistence of his connection to his English Christian past.

Mediation between Past and Present Familial Obligations in the Terri Encounter

Bevis's encounter with Terri as he travels to Damascus marks another moment in which he is compelled to address the tensions between his past and present identities, this time in the form of competing obligations to his English birth-family and Armenian foster-family.[47] In A, the encounter becomes a moment of subjective crisis, while NS and C

[47] The degree to which Ermyn can be reasonably named as a foster-father varies between *Bevis* versions. As Calkin notes, A follows *Boeve* in having Bevis proclaim his loyalty to and trust in Ermyn, solidifying the sense of a familial relationship between them, while C's Bevis is more neutral and provides no clear indication of a strong relationship between Bevis and Ermyn (132). However, the text is unable to occlude some sense of foster relationship entirely without radically overhauling the story. We can recall Saber's stated intent to send the child Bevis away to train as a knight until he is able to bear arms: Ermyn effectively fulfils this role, as it is in his household that Bevis becomes a martially competent knight and performs his first chivalric acts.

circumvent this crisis and instead make a point of insisting on Bevis's subjective continuity. In all extant versions of the episode, Terri is seeking Bevis, and asks Bevis if he can tell Terri anything of him. Bevis chooses not to reveal his identity, and instead invents for Terri a story about the last time he saw Bevis. In the NS and C versions of the episode, Bevis says he recently dined with Bevis and declares Bevis to be a beloved friend. A instead follows *Boeve* in Bevis's response to Terri that he recently "seȝ þe Sarsins þat child an-honge!" (A 1308). Calkin reads the assertion that Bevis has been hanged as a deliberate severing of Bevis' ties with his English associates, accompanied by a proclamation of allegiance to Bevis' Saracen foster-father when Bevis later defends the strength of the relationship between himself and King Ermyn ("DCK" 131). Calkin notes that A is the earliest of the extant *Bevis* manuscripts, and suggests that the shift in the later versions of the episode reflects the growing temporal (and thus cultural) distance from England's participation in crusade, and in particular from the cultural intermingling of the Crusader kingdoms ("DCK" 133).[48] Without contemporary sites of extended Christian-Saracen contact, everyday coexistence between the two religions became increasingly difficult to envision.[49] Rouse also comments on Bevis' Saracen ties and their cultural implications, arguing that *Bevis* conveys anxieties about the cultural identities of English knights who spent long periods of time in the Crusader states ("FKC?" 117). Both of these readings are crucially temporal, related at the textual level to the long period Bevis has spent away from England immersed in Saracen society, and at the metatextual level to anxieties and ideas of the period that changed with the times and imprinted themselves into the text.

[48] Calkin cites the fall of Acre in 1291 as a point after which "hopes of imminent repossession of the Holy Land decreased" and "memories of a time when Westerners ruled parts of the Middle East became dim" ("DCK" 133).

[49] Calkin adds that in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the increasingly unified and powerful Ottoman Empire became an Eastern threat unlike the scattered Muslim and Christian territories of earlier centuries ("DCK" 133), a political context that would have been contemporary to the later copies of *Bevis*, including N, S, and C.

Another notable distinction between versions of the episode is the phrasing of Terri's initial question, which in A specifically prompts Bevis to address his attachment to his English childhood. Terri asks Bevis

> Ȝif a herde tell ȝong or olde
> Of a child þat þeder was solde
> His name was ihote Beuon
> Ibore a was at Souþhamtoun. (A 1301-1304)

This is the point at which Bevis responds that he "knew þat child wel inouȝ"(A 1306) and that not long ago "I seȝ þe Sarsins þat child anhonge!" (A 1308). In NS and C, in contrast, Terri explains that he has been traveling for seven years, seeking "[a]fter a man that I schal nemen— / Beuys he hat, bi God of Heuen" (NS 1502-1503, similar in C). He proceeds to explain that he is seeking Bevis so that he can bring him to England to help Terri's father, and at Bevis' prompting says that Saber is in "moche strife" for having saved Bevis' life as a child against his mother's orders (NS 1526, similar in C). Only in A does Terri claim to be seeking a "child" named Bevis "þat þeder was solde," referring to Bevis as he was when he left England and referencing the specific circumstances of his departure. In NS and C, Terri asks after a "man" named Bevis, and discusses Bevis' past primarily in the context of Saber's role in saving Bevis' life and the present consequences that action has brought him. Thus, in A, Bevis' self-effacing violence in proclaiming to have seen the child Bevis hung by Saracens reflects a sense of division between his past and present self, and specifically an intense estrangement from the child Bevis who grew up in England before being sold into Armenia. Bevis expresses an unwillingness to connect his present identity with his past due to the time that has elapsed since he was Bevis the "child" and the personal development that has occurred since. His claim to Terri that he saw Bevis hanged by Saracens implicates Saracen society in this point of fracture, suggesting the subjective violence of prolonged

cultural immersion. While A's Bevis symbolically suggests this fracture to Terri, the consequences of his tale enforce it literally: if Bevis is dead, as he claims, then Terri and Saber have no reason to continue seeking him, and a crucial tie that might draw Bevis back to England has been eliminated.

Of course, Bevis does eventually return to England to aid Saber, avenge his father, and reclaim his land; his attempts to distance his present self from his past are neither so simple nor so complete as the A version of the Terri incident suggests. Bevis's crisis of self-continuity prompts us to return to the Augustinian idea about the experience of temporal extension through the processes of memory. We can recall Henry Chadwick's assertion that for Augustine, "this psychological experience of the spreading out of the soul in successiveness and in diverse directions is a painful and anxious experience" ("MHPCM," Chadwick qtd 153), as well as Carruthers's succinct summary that "the sort of mental stretching involved in time-making was painful; it hurt" ("Meditations" 153). Bevis's challenge in A is not forgetfulness (which we will see is a crucial problem for Guy); the tale he tells Terri illustrates his intellectual grasp of his past and his ability to manipulate it in his storytelling. What he articulates is an inability or unwillingness to undergo the "painful and anxious experience" required to reconcile the dissonance of his past and present into a single subjective identity.[50] Rather than undertake the "spreading out of the soul in successiveness," he prefers to remain in the present, focused on the goal at hand and the loyalties that accompany it. In the context of Bevis's initial return to England, this incident becomes a moment of rash immaturity, acting as a developmental milestone that solidifies Bevis's transformation into a worthy English knight over the intervening episodes. In the context of

[50] The narrator's portrayal of Bevis's attitude towards cultural hybridity here is particularly interesting in contrast to C. I have begun (and will continue) to outline the ways in which C in particular shuts down some of the avenues through which Bevis can be read as a culturally hybrid figure, making an effort to insist instead that his Englishness is always steadfast and dominant. A's Bevis here also seems to rejet a culturally hybrid identity, but from the opposite perspective, making an effort to shut down any sense that his English ties remain a part of his cultural identity.

the full text, however, in which Bevis constantly finds conflict in England and never settles there for long, this moment becomes symptomatic of the narrative's difficulty in maintaining suitable cohesion between Bevis's Christian-English and Saracen-Armenian pasts.

NS and C avoid this moment of subjective crisis, instead replacing it with an instance of dramatic irony that relies on Bevis's subjective continuity to function and reiterates Bevis's connection to Southampton. In these versions, Terri asks after a "man" named Bevis, rather than prompting Bevis to reach back all the way to the experience of being sold to merchants as a child. In NS, Bevis responds that he knows and has recently seen Bevis, telling Terri:

'Bi God, þat ilke man I knawe!'
And seid, 'Hit is not long ago
Sith I him sie in moche wo:
Hit is nought III daies withalle
That we ete togadir in on halle:
Bothe we eten on mete;
At one borde we sete.
Bi the tale þat thou tellist,
That was Beuys and no man els.' (NS 1539-45, 1548-9)

Bevis's response in C is similar, except that the emotional and physical proximity between Bevis the speaker and the imagined Bevis is even more intense, as Bevis says

'Soche a man well y knowe;
Be all that y on lefe,
I loue no man so moche as Befe.
Hyt ys not ȝyt III dayes falle
Syth we yete yn oon halle:

Bothe we ete of oon bredd,

And bothe we sate at oon stedd,

And ete bothe of oon flesche,

Of oon plater and of oon dysche.' (C 1539-47)

After these speeches in NS and C, Bevis tells Terri to return home to his father and promises that he will speak to Bevis himself once he has delivered his message (NS, C 1550-1559), with Bevis adding in C that he himself will accompany Bevis to England (C 1561).

The joke in NS and C is that Bevis the speaker and Bevis the feaster are so socially and physically close because they are, in fact, the same person. Structurally, the humour here relies on the straightforward understanding that Bevis remains a recognizably consistent, coherent subject throughout the passage of time. This seems obvious, but the joke occurs at precisely the point in the narrative where A's Bevis rejects the mental effort required to reconcile his past and present identities into a unified subject. Bevis's decision to disguise his identity to Terri necessitates third-person narration of the stories Bevis tells in all manuscripts; however, where in A Bevis seems to observe the hanging of the child Bevis from a distance, NS and C emphasize the physical (and, in C, emotional) proximity of the present Bevis to the past Bevis he constructs at the feasting table. NS and C both feature images of the present Bevis dining with a past Bevis at the same table and eating together, in C even sharing "oon bredd" and "oon flesche" from "oon plater" and "oon dysche" (C 1544, 1546, 1547). Bevis imagines his past self as physically and temporally proximate—he sat close to Bevis only three days ago—and, particularly in C, as emotionally proximate as well. Where A depicts subjective fragmentation, NS and C insist upon displaying Bevis's sense of the close adjacency of his own past: not only does his invention come easily to him, but it suggests his own understanding of the closeness between his past and present selves.

Moreover, Terri subsequently brings up Bevis' life as a child in England in NS and C, allowing Bevis to confirm his continued sense of connection and duty to his English past. When Bevis asks why Terri seeks him, Terri explains that his father Saber is Bevis' uncle, and that Saber "sauyd the childeis life" (NS 1526, similar in C) when Bevis' mother ordered him killed, for which Saber has suffered punishment. In NS and C, Bevis tells Terri to return home to England and promises he will speak to Bevis himself after he has delivered his message to Damascus. C, again, even increases the closeness of the temporal connections between Bevis' past, present, and future selves, as Bevis promises he will accompany Bevis to England himself. Bevis's delayed promise allows the narrative to continue unimpeded, but takes the opportunity to have Bevis express his sense that his English past informs his present self and as well as his future intentions. NS and C's Terri assists in this process through his temporally layered description of the situation in Southampton. He references the events of Bevis's childhood, when Saber saved Bevis's life, but explains as well that Saber's past actions have resulted in his present persecution by the Emperor; England is not a static, unchanged memory from Bevis's childhood, as A's Terri depicts it, but a place where time passes that offers another present for Bevis. The effect of this variation between A, NS, and C has implications for the trajectory of Bevis' development throughout the text. A's Bevis rashly refuses any effort to integrate his past and present; his subsequent imprisonment at Damascus can be read, in part, as a punishment for his allegiance to the Saracen bonds of his present. In NS and C, Bevis' assertion of his subjective continuity prepares the audience for his eventual decision to return to England to defeat his stepfather and take back his inheritance. The Damascus imprisonment in NS and C thus becomes primarily a generic trial of Bevis's physical and spiritual endurance. These versions of the text emphasize Bevis as a remembering subject, one who is able to access memories of his past self and past experiences in the present to guide and shape a cohesive future.

The interaction with Terri occurs in the wilderness as Bevis rides between Armenia and Damascus, beyond the bounds of civilization. In NS and C, Bevis is explicitly said to ride through "a forest long and brode" (NS 1460, similar in C), whereas in A Bevis is simply said to encounter Terri "beside Damas" (A 1284) "vnder a faire medle tre" (A 1287). McKinstry and Carruthers have both noted that the wilderness—specifically the forest—has a special significance in medieval memory theory that is often invoked in romance. Carruthers writes that Cassiodorus described the *silva* or forest as a place of disorganization and confusion, a contrast to the proper organization of *topica memoriae* or places of memory (*BM* 39). At the same time, following Quintilian, out of the "mass of unrelated and disordered material" that is the *silva*, the trained mind, "like a knowledgeable huntsman, can readily find the places (*loci*) where the rabbits and deer lie … As the huntsman finds game and the fisherman fish, so the student finds his stored material—by knowing its habits and habitats" (*BM* 78). McKinstry adds that the forest plays a complex role in romance specifically, where it often functions as a space that challenges mental devotion and stability (*Craft* 76). The Terri episode fits this tradition: Bevis is loyally delivering a letter for Ermyn, the Saracen foster-father figure who knighted him and whose daughter he loves, while Terri's quest attempts to pull Bevis away from his duties to Ermyn and back to England, encouraging physical and social adherence to his English ties. In NS and C, Bevis neatly navigates the challenge by promising to send Bevis to England once he has completed his mission for Ermyn. Narratively, this delay allows for the occurrence of formative adventures before Bevis finally returns to England, including the discovery of Ermyn's betrayal, Bevis's imprisonment, the introduction of Ascopart, and the slaying of the Cologne dragon. In NS and C, Bevis is Quintilian's "knowledgeable huntsman," able to navigate the *silva* of his own autobiographical memory. He acknowledges his duty to Saber and Southampton without

forsaking the ties he has developed during his time in Armenia, balancing the obligations of his past with those of his present.

In A, the incident is not so neatly resolved, as Bevis appears to reject his obligation to England outright. Of the three texts discussed here, A is also the only one in which Bevis does not explicitly travel through a forest. Though he meets Terri under a tree, the landscape of Bevis's journey from Armenia to Damascus is left undescribed. Unlike NS and C, there is no invocation of the forest to frame the scene as one of memorial challenge, and Bevis's answer to Terri offers no reassurance of Bevis as a hero able to unify his temporal identities. The unformed landscape of the encounter provides no symbolically charged framework for interpreting the challenge, reflecting A's depiction of the episode as a moment in which Bevis refuses to engage in memory work rather than as a moment of forgetfulness. What is at stake in A is not Bevis's ability to remember, but his unwillingness to incorporate his past into his own identity narrative. Aside from the "medle tree" under which Bevis meets Terri, the only descriptor provided for the episode is Terri's position "beside Damas." Terri offers a reminder of Bevis's connection to England, but he is placed against the draw of the Saracen city of Damascus, Bevis's destination on his mission for Ermyn and thus a symbol of his loyal bond to Armenia's Saracen king. A sets up the Terri encounter as a conflict between the competing draws of Bevis's past and present, in which the present visually and physically dominates the past; Bevis's departure from Terri seems, at the time, a conclusive linear movement away from his past. NS and C circumvent this by presenting versions of the Terri episode that deliberately reaffirm Bevis's subjective continuity, evoke medieval ideas of orderly memory work, and narratively reassure the audience of Bevis's attachment to England as a place of past memory, present obligation, and future achievement.

Damascus itself plays different roles in these three versions of *Bevis,* enhancing the goals of the three versions of the Terri episode. In A, Damascus is an apparently

unremarkable city that receives no visual description; after Bevis leaves Terri, the narrator simply tells us that "forþ him wente Sire Beuoun / Til a come to Dames toun" (A 1347-1348). NS and C take the time to describe Bevis's approach to Damascus as he first views the city. In both versions, he sees the city "aboute mydnyght" (NS 1596, similar in C): from a distance, the city "schone as bright as eny glas" (NS 1595, similar in C), shining "so clere and so bright / That Beuys had forlorne his sight" (NS 1597-1598, similar in C), with C adding that Damascus "schonne bryȝt as sonnelyght" (C 1597). Both versions go on to provide a detailed visual description of the city's architecture, explaining that although Bevis is still 30 miles away, he sees these details "as he had in the cite be" (NS 1641, similar in C).[51] In NS and C, Damascus is a site of temporal disruption. It shines blindingly bright in the middle of the night, artificially imitating daylight (C emphasizes this explicitly) and disrupting the natural temporal pattern of day and night. The city's light also creates a spatial/temporal disruption when Bevis views the city from a distance as if he were already in it. Positioned directly after the neat memory-work Bevis has just completed with Terri in NS and C, Damascus becomes representative of the Saracen world as a space of temporal disorder. It foreshadows the stasis of Bevis's seven-year imprisonment,[52] a marked contrast to England, which promises the opportunity for Bevis to progress by avenging his father and taking back his land.

In A and C, Bevis's arrival in Damascus is also accompanied by an act of spontaneous Saracen violence. In A, Bevis sees Saracens leaving a mosque, at which point he runs to the mosque, slays the priest, and throws the temple's idols into a ditch (A 1355-1356). C's incident is similar but has Bevis slaying everyone at the temple, brutally beheading and

[51] Calkin notes that C's description of Damascus particularly emphasizes features of interest to a combatant, such as the city's fortifications (134); NS includes many of the same details. NS and C thus develop Bevis's opposition to Damascus by implicitly positioning him as a combatant strategically surveying Damascus.
[52] In *Bevis*, the Saracen world is often characterized by stasis, in contrast to the constant temporal development of Bevis and other key Christian characters. This will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

dismembering worshippers, after which he makes a fire to burn both the Saracen idols and all the Saracens (C 1654-1671). Calkin points out that A's version of this episode, in which Bevis targets the Saracen priest and the Saracen idols, gives the sense that Bevis takes issue with Saracen religion specifically, while allowing that there is more to Saracens than their religion (134). C, in contrast, has Bevis killing Saracens indiscriminately, so that Bevis is positioned as hostile to the Saracen world at large (134).[53] Taken together with preceding incidents, including the Christmas Day massacre and the Terri episode, A continues to leave space for the Saracen ties that prompted Bevis to reject Terri and his English roots. A's depiction of Bevis's violence in Damascus contributes to the text's generally uncertain and variable attitude towards Bevis's relationship with the Saracen world. C's version of the episode reiterates that Bevis's immersion in the Saracen world has not resulted in assimilation; the allegiance to England he declared in the Terri episode affirms his identity as an English Christian inherently opposed to Saracens.[54]

Wounding, Starving, and the Necessity of Temporal Experience for the Chivalric Knight

Bevis's development into knighthood takes place in the Saracen world, naturally raising questions about the nature of his continued affiliation with England and Christianity. The episodes discussed in the previous section represent moments where Bevis's past and present come into contact in ways that can threaten to dismantle Bevis's temporal unity and which A, NS, and C each address following their own particular priorities. All three traditions

[53] Calkin also notes that the version of *Bevis* represented by later, printed *Bevis* tradition presents another iteration of this scene. Bevis arrives in Damascus in the middle of a Saracen festival, so that their religion permeates the city rather than remaining confined to the temple; although, as in A, he attacks only key figures of worship, the Saracens fight back, and he kills those who attack him, so that the Saracens become aggressors forcing an association between their religion and the entire city ("DCK" 135-136).

[54] NS does not include any equivalent episode of violence; Bevis simply enters Damascus and proceeds to deliver Ermyn's message to Bradmond, and so the episode does not offer any insight into the text's attitude towards Saracens and the Saracen world. The NS version of the Damascus episode is instead a relatively neutral depiction of Bevis interacting with the Saracen world, in which the focus is not on his attitude towards Saracens or their religion but on driving the story forward to its next major narrative episode.

agree, however, in their particular emphasis on the physical, personal experience of time as an essential feature of a romance hero. *Bevis* in general repeats motifs that code characters as subject to—or cut off from—temporal experience and development, using these moments to assist the audience in their interpretation of the romance's key figures. A, NS, and C all demonstrate a consistent interest in playing out the physical consequences of time: Bevis is repeatedly wounded or starved, physical conditions that demonstrate temporal passage as they are inflicted, experienced, and resolved.[55] Starvation emphasizes the passage of time in its very definition, as its effects compound with time. Wounding marks the physical intrusion of the past—the moment of injury—into the present, which may then be successfully banished when the wound heals, demonstrating the hero's physical, temporal development.[56] The text emphasizes moments in which Bevis is unable to fight at his best because he is weakened by a wound or lack of food, insisting on the visceral nature of his temporal experience and hinting at the differences between the various iterations of Bevis.

The most significant instance of this textual interest is Bevis's seven-year imprisonment in Damascus. The trial he undergoes here has a pointedly temporal component, emphasizing Bevis's temporal suffering through descriptions of physical change and endurance. In A and NS, the narrator tells us that Bevis remains in prison until "the here

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[55] This interest is not unique to *Bevis*, but it should not be taken as a universal quality of Middle English romance. *Guy*, which is similar to *Bevis* in many aspects—its length, its episodic nature, its hero's lengthy stints away from England—does not share this preoccupation, for instance. Across the different versions of the text, the *Guy* narrator rarely dwells on wounds and privation as lingering conditions that affect the physical abilities of Guy or Herraud.

[56] In McKinstry's discussion of wounding in romance, he argues that wounds are understood as corporeal inscriptions of violence that demonstrate a continued experience of violence even as they physically fade. He cites a number of romance examples that "demonstrate ways to accommodate painful experiences through recognition, acceptance and crucially, expression" ("PBT" 61). A key component of McKinstry's interest here is in arguing for "a relationship between the human experience of trauma across the centuries" ("PBT" 59). This chapter does not engage in a discussion of the ways in which our modern ideas about trauma as a psychological phenomenon are appropriate or inappropriate to a medieval context, but McKinstry's work does point to the ways in which romance depict physical wounds as literal and metaphorical markers of identity transformation crucially linked to memories of the violence that inflicted them. *Bevis* deals both with wounds that seem to heal fully and with wounds that leave lasting scars.

grewe to his fete" (NS 1995, similar in A), highlighting the physical effect of the passage of time on his body. C opens Bevis's imprisonment with a gruelling fight: Bevis uses a staff to defend himself against two dragons for three days, until the dragons are finally dead and "hys staffe was nere away— / A lytull laste yn hys honde ay" (C 1858-1859), the prolonged battle having worn his staff down to nothing. C's narrator also tells us that Bevis's prison requires that he stand "yn watur to the kne" (C 1841), communicating the passage of time during Bevis's imprisonment by writing that

> VII yere he stode vpryght;
> He ne myȝt neuer mete wynne
> But onys yn a weke a symple messe
> Of sodyn barley was hartlees.
> Ratons and myse and soche smale dere—
> That was hys mete that VII yere;
> For bredd of whete ete he noon
> Tyll þo VII yerys were all goon. (C 1867-1875)

C's depiction of the passage of time during Bevis's imprisonment focuses on his privation and physical endurance by describing the hardship of his circumstances and repeatedly emphasizing the seven-year duration. The imprisonment is a knightly trial of a specifically temporal nature, with Bevis's strength conveyed through his ability to withstand its incredible length.

After Bevis kills his jailers, A, NS, and C all describe Bevis enduring a further three days[57] without food or water until he finally escapes. In the fight that ensues when Bradmond and his allies give chase, Bevis acknowledges the effects of privation on his body,

[57] Fellows notes that N and S differ slightly here: S says Bevis goes three days without food or drink, while N says four (see fn to NS 2117).

proclaiming that, "Hit nere no maistry me to slo: / This is the fourth day agone / That mete and drink ete I none" (NS 2233-2235, similar in A and C).[58] In typical romance fashion, Bevis still manages to hold his own against his assailants, but his condition ultimately forces him to flee before he is able to win the fight. When Bevis reflects on the battle later, having eaten and rested, he wishes that

> Bradmond the kyng—
>
> He and alle his ofspryng—
>
> Were nowe in this grene!
>
> For now I wolde for my tene
>
> Swithe wel bene awreke—
>
> Shulde he neuer go to speke!
>
> Nowe my hungre is isette,
>
> Lyst me neuer to fyght bette. (NS 2470-2479, similar in A and C)[59]

The text depicts Bevis as keenly aware of his own physical temporality. He recognizes that his ability as a knight is not static but is vulnerable to his temporal experiences and their effects on his body. Time transforms him physically, just as the audience recognizes that time transforms him from a child into a renowned knight. Recalling the context of Bevis's earlier moments of subjective crisis, we find that the physical and psychological vulnerability of the subject's body to change over time—its potential to be transformed by wounding or prolonged cultural contact—is actually a requirement of the literary model of knighthood that appears in lengthy romances such as *Bevis* (and, as we shall see, *Guy*). The subject's

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[58] Fellows notes that N and S again differ slightly here: S reads "fourth day" whereas N reads "xl day" (see fn to NS 2234), which does not clearly relate to any specific interval or event given in the text. In the parallel lines in C, Bevis simply says that, "Hyt ys no maystry me to sloo; / For yf that y slayne bee, / Hyt ys þorow hungur and not þorow þe" (C 2233-2235), perhaps referring to the three days of starvation as well as the general deprivation of his seven-year imprisonment, which C has already emphasized.

[59] C 2470-2473 match the parallel lines in NS, but C has no parallel for NS 2473-2479; typical of C, the speech is abridged.

mutability carries risks of dissolution as well as the potential for growth that the young, undeveloped Bevis requires. A, NS, and C all agree that this is a crucial element of knighthood in *Bevis*; where they differ is in their willingness to accept the risks and inconsistencies to subjective continuity that are natural risks of subjective development.[60]

Across the *Bevis* texts, the imprisonment episode also involves a moment in which Bevis is wounded on the brow by the bite of an adder. In NS, the wound is such that

> His brow stank for faute of yeme,
>
> That hit aftirward was sene;
>
> Wherþorw þat maid Beuys knewe noȝt
>
> When þei were togadir broght. (NS 2036-2039, similar in A)[61]

The scar becomes an unavoidable intrusion of Bevis's past into his present, physically imprinting onto his body the trial that Bevis undergoes during his imprisonment.[62] When Bevis reunites with Josian, disguised as a pilgrim, it is the scar that initially prevents Josian from recognizing him; speaking of the disguised Bevis, she tells her servant Boneface that

> Nerehis browe so totore—
>
> Bi the modir that me bore!—
>
> Me wolde thinke bi his facion

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[60] Although Radulescu explains the difficulty in establishing a coherent set of generic parameters for classifying Middle English romance, she notes some commonly cited characteristic features, including a frequent focus on the process of maturation for the young male knight as he grows into a recognized hero (39). As the earlier sections of this chapter have suggested, *Bevis* clearly fits this structure.

[61] C also has Bevis bitten by an adder on the brow, but has no parallel lines for NS 2036-2039 and does not explicitly mention a scar. However, when Bevis later comes to Josian (the "maid" referenced in NS 2038) disguised as a pilgrim, both NS and C have Josian say that she would believe the pilgrim to be Bevis if not for the scar, so C seems to retroactively imply wounding during this scene to agree with the other *Bevis* texts. In the lines cited above, NS displays a temporally disruptive narrative technique typical of the *Bevis* texts in general, and of NS in particular, in which the narrator interrupts the narrative "present" by connecting it to a future narrative episode, encouraging the audience to understand the text's distinct episodes as interrelated parts of a broader narrative.

[62] Calkin suggests that C emphasizes the imprisonment as a religiously formative experience that Bevis endures as Christian penance ("DCK" 141); in this context, the scar can be read as a visual signifier of the spiritual transformation Bevis undergoes in his prison. Taken together with the adjustments C makes to the Christmas Day massacre episode, in which the ignorance Bevis displays of Christianity in A and NS is not present, C's version of the imprisonment episode suggests this version's broad interest in adding religious substance to Bevis's character and experiences, giving the sense that he is a Christian in more than name alone.

That he were Beuys of Hampton. (NS 2696-2699, similar in A and C)

Though Bevis disguises himself as a pilgrim to approach Josian, it is the change to his body—the scar on his brow—that makes Josian doubt Bevis's identity, drawing attention to the physical marker Bevis's temporal experience has left on him.[63] The particular emphasis on Bevis as a subject physically transformed by temporal experience enhances the concerns outlined in the previous section of this chapter: if the text insists on reminding the reader of Bevis's identity as a fluid subject, it does so at the risk of rendering his connection to his past in Christian England increasingly tenuous.

However, *Bevis* insists that mutable and temporally expansive subjectivity is an essential feature of a romance hero. We have already noted that the subject's capacity for change is what enables Bevis to develop into a knight, even when this capacity carries with it the risk of dissolution and disconnection. The text suggests that the capacity for change over time has a moral component: in *Bevis*, it is part of what distinguishes romance protagonists from romance antagonists. This becomes obvious when Bevis is compared with the text's major antagonists, many of whom are characterized by a static inability to develop during the passage of time.[64] The recurrence of the vendetta as a conflict motivator is a key example. It

[63] Similarly, it is the passage of time that allows Bevis to enter the Emperor's hall undisguised when he finally does return to England. He lies about his identity, but he requires no other physical disguise to convince the Emperor that he is a man named Gerard who is willing to fight Saber on the Emperor's behalf; the passage of time has changed Bevis enough to allow him to pull off his trick. The text's emphasis on Bevis as a subject altered by temporal experience allows him to participate in the romance tradition of disguising his identity without manipulating his appearance. Time and experience transform him to the point of unrecognizability.

[64] Although beyond the scope of this chapter, it is worth noting that Josian also undergoes transformations that decisively interrupt her subjective continuity and mark transitions from past to present. Most notably, she converts to Christianity when she is baptized, and she transitions from virgin to wife and mother when she marries Bevis and bears him twins. These points of transformation depend on both the establishment of their past contrasts and an irreversible moment of severance as Josian spiritually and physically changes. Josian can only convert because she was first a Saracen, and, as the Patriarch in Jerusalem tells Bevis, he must only marry a "clene maide" (NS 2492, similar in A and C); Josian must be a virgin to marry Bevis, a state she maintains through great ingenuity during the seven years of her marriage to Yvor, but the physical change in her body and the moment of giving birth demonstrate that she has moved irreversibly from maiden to mother. Fellows notes that the Middle English *Bevis* tradition in general, and the A *Bevis* in particular, demonstrate an interest in developing Josian as a female counterpart to Bevis ("TS" 84-85). Josian's transformations throughout the narrative represent one of the ways in which the text achieves this parallelism, though Josian's temporal experiences occur in a specifically gendered way.

drives Yvor's repeated attacks on Bevis and Ermyn, for instance, as Yvor pursues his grudges against them relentlessly, unable to move on and develop; Bevis, by contrast, engages in battle with Yvor when Yvor provokes him to do so, but seems uninterested in initiating conflict himself for the sake of their tumultuous past. This is particularly striking in NS and C when Ermyn and Yvor are said to be fighting for Josian's sake, as if she were still Yvor's wife, rather than the wife of Bevis and the mother of his two sons (NS 4315-4318, similar in A and C).[65] Contrasted with Bevis, the developmentally stagnant antagonists emphasize the expectation and necessity of the romance hero's progression. Their stagnation is a narrative necessity built into the structure of *Bevis*, as is Bevis's contrasting development and temporal progression over the course of the narrative: their relentless, obsessive antagonism drives many of the major conflicts Bevis encounters. As narrative necessities, however, the distinction between the hero's experience of time and the antagonists' experience of stasis suggest that the capacity for change is an essential part of what distinguishes these two narrative roles, and thus that it carries with it a moral dimension. The framing of the issue in the various manuscripts marks critical distinctions in how this development is conceptualized and how its risks are navigated.

Edgar and Ermyn, Gui and Miles:
Competing Models of Lordship, Paternal Loyalty, and Lineage

Manuscript variations relating to Bevis's personal identity narrative offer the possibility of transforming the role of Bevis's Englishness in the overarching structure of the

[65] Ascopart also represents an interesting case of temporal stasis. Furrow notes that in the Middle English tradition, Ascopart never converts to Christianity, remaining religiously static ("AB" 151). She argues as well that the text depicts him as permanently childlike, denying him the chivalric development undergone by Bevis and by Bevis's other companion, Terri ("AB" 152-157). Furrow points out that this depiction of Ascopart in the Middle English tradition diverges from the characterization of Escopart in *Boeve*, and argues that the changes demonstrate the efforts of Middle English redactors to address the dissonance of Escopart's unexplained betrayal of Bevis in the second half of the poem.

text. As the previous section demonstrated, A, NS, and C agree that Bevis must be capable of change; where they often disagree is on the matter of the extent to which change and hybridity are acceptable in Bevis's cultural identity. A, NS, and C all share significant episodes in the text's second half that engage with Bevis's continued Saracen ties as well as his relationship with England: Bevis returns to England, departs again after conflict with King Edgar, reconciles with Ermyn and aids him in battle, becomes king of Mombrant after killing his old enemy Yvor, returns to England to resolve a property dispute, fights the citizens of London, arranges a marriage between his son and Edgar's daughter, and finally returns to Mombrant, where he, Josian, and Arundel die. The text's constant movement from conflict to conflict and place to place bounces Bevis back and forth between England and Saracen lands, inter-Christian conflict and Christian-Saracen conflict, inter-Christian relationships and Christian-Saracen relationships. Often, the complexity of the plot and its abundance of distinct narrative episodes mean that single incidents offer multiple avenues of interpretation. For instance, Edgar's threat to execute Arundel for kicking Edgar's son to death prompts Bevis to leave England, proclaiming that

> […] for no catelle
> Nel y lese so Arondelle;
> But, certis, my hors for to were
> Englond y wol forswere. (NS 4085-4088, similar in A and C).

The incident invites several avenues of interpretation. It draws attention to Edgar's poor kingship,[66] but also illustrates that Bevis is willing to forsake England for the sake of a horse given to him by the Saracen family he served in his youth.[67]

The incident emphasizes the continuity of Bevis's Saracen ties and invites a comparison between the two kings Bevis serves, Edgar and Ermyn, that is not clearly favourable to Edgar. When Ermyn later asks for Bevis's aid against Yvor, he begs Bevis's forgiveness for his betrayal, later passing his crown on to Bevis's son Gui before he dies.[68] In NS and C, Ermyn agrees to convert to Christianity "for thi loue" (NS 4338, similar in C), but in A he does not; Bevis is thus once again allied with a Saracen king, and his son Gui apparently inherits a Saracen kingdom. Edgar eventually decides to have his daughter marry Bevis's other son, Miles, "in this maner pese to make" (NS 4792, similar in A and C), but only after Bevis's brutal battle against the citizens of London. Bevis's line thus ends up split between Armenia and England, with Bevis and Josian ruling over Yvor's kingdom of Mombrant. The implications of this division are unclear without the context constructed

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[66] Weiss explains that the fraught relationship between Bevis and Edgar may reflect historical conflict between William d'Aubigny, 3rd Earl of Arundel, and Henry II. Upon the death of William II, William III did not inherit all of his father's property as he should have, and had to pay a significant relief to reclaim his property, as Bevis does in his second conflict with Edgar ("Date" 239). *Bevis*'s Edgar is consistently shown as a weak king who fails to treat Bevis in a way befitting a vassal, which Weiss argues may be related to the legal dispute between William III and Henry II.

[67] Arundel's cultural signification is ambiguous. He is given to Bevis as Bevis prepares to fight Bradmond's army in service to Ermyn. In NS and A, this is part of an arming scene in which both Ermyn and Josian take part; in C, only Josian is involved in the actual arming. In all texts Josian is the one who gives Bevis Arundel; she, of course, later becomes Christian, but Arundel is nonetheless introduced at a moment in the text specifically associated with Bevis's service to Ermyn in inter-Saracen conflicts.

[68] In his introduction to Geoffroi de Charny's *A Knight's Own Book of Chivalry*, Kaeuper comments that for Charny, "only loyalty can assure the necessary hierarchy and stalwart fighting that is justifiable and ennobling" ("HI" 38). Bevis's relationships with both of the kings he serves involve moments in which each king wrongs Bevis; however, if Bevis can be said to show loyalty to one king over the other, Ermyn seems the more likely candidate, as Bevis repeatedly fights for him and aids him in conflicts, even returning to him to combat Yvor before Ermyn has made amends for his earlier betrayal. In contrast, Bevis never fights for Edgar, and their relationship is primarily characterized by moments in which Edgar treats Bevis unfairly. In fact, in *Boeve*, the English king even expresses fear over Boeve as a potential enemy, saying, "Boeve has arrived; he bears a crown and his son rules over all Hermin's subjects. I think he has come to make war on me, and I fear the approach of death. I have a daughter, who is my heir; I will give her to his son, if you advise me so" (3740-3804). The Edgar/Ermyn/Bevis relationship comes from a source in which the English king approaches Boeve as a foreign enemy rather than as a subject.

throughout each version of the text: do Bevis's sons represent his critically fragmented cultural identity, a successfully hybridized identity, or an expansionist English fantasy?

Bevis's twin sons carry many of the same competing cultural influences as Bevis, so that the cultural confusion seen in Bevis seems to be transmitted forward through Bevis's line. Gui and Miles are sons of a Saracen-raised Christian and a Christian-converted Saracen princess. They are conceived in England, born in a foreign forest, raised by foreign commoners, and ultimately split up between England and Armenia at the end of the text. Radulescu writes that popular romances commonly address "anxieties over heredity and the ruling of the country, which are, in typical romance fashion, satisfactorily resolved for all concerned" (41). This seems true of *Bevis*: his sons carry on his upward social mobility, becoming kings in their own right and ruling over separate kingdoms in fraternal harmony.[69] However, the twins and their cultural and political inheritances carry with them a number of cultural oddities, seemingly also inheriting the split cultural identities of their parents. Radulescu notes heredity as a concern for Middle English romance, raising the question, "whose features does the heir inherit?" (41). This becomes doubly troubling in Bevis, where the cultural identities of both parents are so ambiguous. Josian gives birth to the twins not in England or Armenia but "vndir the wod ryme" (NS 4114, similar in A and C)[70]—at the outskirts of a forest—in a "logge" (NS 4116, similar in A and C) constructed by Bevis and Terri. The setting recalls the memorial forest in which Bevis first encountered Terri in NS and C. In the Terri episode, the forest acted as a space where Bevis could assert his control over the mental work required to cohere his past and present, so that the "logge" Bevis and

[69] Rouse argues that Bevis's repeated conflicts with Edgar play out tensions between Bevis's regional ties to Southampton and his status as a national hero ("FKC?" 122-124). Rouse reads Miles' marriage to Edgar's daughter as an effort to resolve the text's regional/national tensions ("FKC?" 125). Rouse's reading and Weiss's comments on the historical context that may have informed the depiction of Edgar (see fn 44) offer some explanation for the uneasy relationship between Bevis and Edgar; intentionally or not, however, one result is that Bevis's ties to Edgar seem notably weaker than his ties to Ermyn, as discussed earlier.

[70] A simply says that Josian gives birth "in a wode" (A 3620).

Terri construct for Josian here can be read as a site of human social order in the wilderness. In A, which lacks this precedent,[71] the interpretative framework for reading this episode is less clear; Bevis has not proven himself capable of mentally organizing the memorial *silva*, and so the birthplace of the twins can equally be read as a lonely outpost in the midst of a politically unformed wilderness that reflects Bevis's own confused cultural identity.[72]

Continuing Bevis's line through twin boys is a narrative necessity in *Bevis,* one that the redactors of NS and C strove to fit within their realignment of Bevis's cultural identity. In A, the twins and their respective inheritances of England and Armenia solidify the culturally hybridized identity of Bevis, splitting Bevis's sons between the two kingdoms most formative to his development as a knight. As mentioned above, NS and C make sure to include Ermyn's conversion before Gui inherits his crown, so that Gui comes to rule over a kingdom that has been spiritually transformed by his father's influence; NS and particularly C have already made efforts to strengthen Bevis's ties to England and loosen his Saracen connections, but now they insist that it is Bevis who has influenced Armenia, rather than vice versa. At the same time, all three versions treat the twins in ways that raise questions about the balance of power between Bevis's sons. The texts show a clear and consistent preference for Gui over Miles. He is the only child Bevis names and for whom Bevis provides instructions on upbringing; Bevis gives Gui to a forester to foster, whom he directs to name the child "Gy, as my fadir hete. / And yef that childe be of ydle, / Teche him to bere spere and schilde" (NS 4172-4174, similar in A and C). Miles, by contrast, appears something of an afterthought, particularly in A and NS, where the infant is given to a fisher without any of the direct dialogue that occurs when Bevis fosters out Gui. C makes an effort to balance this,

[71] We can recall that A not only lacks Bevis's moment of subjective affirmation during the Terri encounter, but in fact lacks the placement of the scene in the forest at all, instead setting the encounter in an unformed space next to Damascus, so that the birth scene contains no particular echoes of the Terri encounter at all in A.
[72] All three texts similarly align in their descriptions of Bevis arriving back at the "logge" to find two "hethen children" (NS 4152, similar in A and C); whether this refers to the cultural identity of the twins or merely to the fact that they are unbaptized infants is unclear.

uncharacteristically adding direct dialogue between Bevis and the fisher,[73] with Bevis asking the fisher to "þis chylde take / And crysten hyt for my sake?" (C 4179-4180). Whereas Gui bears the name of Bevis's noble father, NS and C indicate that Miles bears the name of the fisher himself (NS 4185-4186, C 4183-4186).[74] Already, the text suggests an imbalance: Gui carries the name of Bevis's noble father and is to be raised as a warrior, whereas Bevis leaves Miles unnamed and provides no instructions for his upbringing. Even C's efforts to improve the balance of Bevis's investment in each twin still leave Gui as the favourite.

This trend continues throughout the text. When Gui and Miles are grown and have reunited with their father, they fight at his side in a number of key battles, including a series of battles against Bevis's perennial enemy Yvor as well as Bevis's London battle. Gui consistently receives more narrative attention than Miles. Though Gui and Miles both participate in killing Yvor's Saracen army (NS 4511-4514, similar in A and C), NS and C have Gui alone ride to Mombrant "for to sesy that ilke toun" (NS 4516, similar in C).[75] Similarly, although both Gui and Miles are described preparing to join Bevis in his London battle, Gui's description in NS and C is much grander than his brother's:

> Sur Gy bistrode a rabite
> That was moche and nouȝt lite,
> That Sur Beuys with his hond
> Had ywonne in paynym lond.

[73] C in general shows a preference for succinct, indirect dialogue where NS includes direct dialogue, so this is a somewhat unusual shift.

[74] A does not indicate that the fisher is named Miles and in fact gives no explanation as to the origins of the name. It is interesting to note, however, that Miles is also the name of the man who abducts and forcibly marries Josian, and whom Josian strangles on the night of their wedding so that she can remain a virgin and later marry Bevis. This is true in all three versions, but without the explanation of the fisher naming Miles after himself, A suggests the lingering impact of Josian's marriage to Miles.

[75] In Gui's effort to take Mombrant, he is advised by a "paynym" (NS 4517, similar in C) to disguise himself in "Saresyns armes on him to doo" (N 4518, similar in C; here S differs from N and reads "Saresyns ayen him gan go"). The episode indicates the split cultural nature of Gui's own identity, as he willingly listens to advice from a non-Christian and disguises himself as a Saracen. A ends this episode with Bevis, Terri, Gui, and Miles killing Yvor's Saracen army and does not include the capture of Mombrant at all.

A swerde he had of moche mey,
That was clepid Randuney:
Hit was Sir Lancelettis de Lake—
Many a crowne þerwith was crake.
In the pomel was a carbonkil stone;
A betir swerde nas neur none,
The romans tellith, as y the say,
Ne schal be tille Domysday.
Sur Milis, withouten faile,
Bestrode a rabite London to assaile
That was swift as eny swolowe;
Shulde no man with him be galowe. (NS 4683-4698, similar in C)

Gui receive twelve lines of description to Miles' four. Moreover, Gui is also depicted as the heir not only of Bevis, but of the romance tradition more broadly, riding a horse won by Bevis in his earlier adventures as well as carrying Sir Lancelot's own sword. C, again, makes an effort to provide some balance by describing Miles' horse as "a stede þat hyȝt Arondell" (C 4696), so that Miles is at least connected to his father by riding a horse with the same name as Bevis's famous steed.[76] Overall, Armenia seems to gain the more impressive of Bevis's two sons, while Miles and his affirmation of the family's Englishness become something of an afterthought. At the same time, at least in the London arming scene, both NS

[76] A's version of this description is much shorter and more balanced: Gui "lep on a rabbit, / þat was meche & noþing lite, / And tok a spere in is hond" (A 4475-4477) while Miles "wiþ gret randoun / Lep vpon a dromedary" (A 4480-4481). In short, A does not enhance the narrative focus on Gui over Miles in the way of NS and, to a lesser extent, C, but nor does it make any particular effort to equalize the initial narrative imbalance shown in the naming episode after the twins' birth.

and C insist on identifying Gui with another hero of romance: Gui bears Lancelot's sword and with it, the text suggests, his legacy as a warrior out of English romance tradition.[77]

Does the text's ending suggest Bevis's ultimate estrangement from England and his inability to conceptualize a sense of self that incorporates his English past? Do Bevis's sons and their respective realms represent the incorporation and reconciliation of Bevis's chivalric identity with his English past? Do Gui in Armenia and Bevis in Mombrant craft a fantasy of Bevis as an essentially English hero who expands Christian influence into Saracen-occupied continental lands? Or does the uneven division of narrative interest between Gui and Miles indicate that Bevis's ties to the lands and peoples of his Saracen youth are ultimately stronger than his ties to England? The text offers no definitive reading for its conclusion. However, the efforts each manuscript tradition makes to shape Bevis's self-narration across the temporally and experientially extensive narrative guide the audience towards meaningful interpretations of these narrative features within the framework each version establishes for understanding the coherence of Bevis's cultural identity over time. In a pattern that should be by now familiar, we see that A offers the least guidance for interpreting Bevis's relationship with the kings of England and Armenia and the cultural identities of his sons: A's Ermyn remains unconverted, and the son who bears the name of Bevis's English father inherits an apparently unconverted Saracen kingdom. Without significantly overhauling the narrative details of the text, C makes the greatest effort to steer interpretation towards a clear sense of

[77] Even this affiliation is somewhat unclear, however; Helen Cooper notes that "in English tradition, Gawain remains the top knight of the Round Table; Lancelot is a peripheral French invention, and his affair with Guinevere, if it registered at all, seems to have been dismissed as a French slander on the great British hero" (34). Lancelot is certainly Christian rather than Saracen, but his prevalence in French literature seems to weaken any function he might serve to tie Gui to England specifically. On the other hand, this is not the first mention of Lancelot in *Bevis*: he is listed alongside the English heroes Wade and Guy of Warwick when the *Bevis* narrator contextualizes the heroism of Bevis's fight against the Cologne dragon (see NS 3167-3180, similar in C), so there is textual precedent for recognizing Lancelot as an exemplary English hero within *Bevis*. Guy's English ties will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter; Wade, as Furrow notes, "was prominent enough that Chaucer mentions him twice" (*EoR* 69), and though we have no surviving romance of Wade today, R. M. Wilson explains that he was originally an Old English figure and traces some elements of his character in Middle English literature based on numerous references made to him (16-19).

Bevis's ultimately English loyalty, identity, and legacy. C has Ermyn convert, so that Gui inherits Armenia from a converted Christian king, and balances the attention given to Bevis's sons, so that Gui and Armenia seem less narratively focalized overall. NS, as usual, sits somewhere in the middle, adjusting some of the identity problems left unresolved by A but untroubled by others that we see tweaked in C.

A, NS, and C: A Spectrum of Approaches to Bevis as a Temporally Unified Subject

Read within the context of the *Bevis* story in its entirety, Bevis's development represents an inherited narrative challenge to which the text's Middle English authors responded with various strategies and priorities. A's Bevis frequently shares with the Anglo-Norman Boeve a distinct detachment from his English Christian roots. His attachment to England is firmly established in the text's opening episode, but weakens as time and experience distance Bevis from his childhood identity. After several years in Armenia, A's Bevis openly admits to knowing nothing about Christian holidays, distances himself from his English past, and mingles closely and easily with his Saracen peers. Of the three manuscript traditions discussed in this chapter, the tradition represented by C is the most distinct from A in this respect. C demonstrates an effort to craft Bevis into a cohesive English Christian hero by redefining the expectations for Christian knighthood and by adjusting representations of Bevis's understanding of how his own temporality interacts with his subjectivity. In C, antagonism towards Saracens is a fundamental aspect of Christian knighthood, so that Bevis's acts of unprovoked aggression become chivalric expressions of his identity as a knight whose immersion in the Saracen world has not interfered with the precedence of his past ties to England. NS, in keeping with Fellows' description of its "middle-of-the-road" *Bevis* tradition, falls in between the spectrum presented by A and C on the matter of Bevis's ability to unify his past and present. It tempers some of the more worrying moments of

subjective fracture articulated by A's Bevis but does not make the same effort as C to realign Bevis within the text's overall narrative structure. NS is difficult to characterize in this respect overall, following A during some episodes and C during others; it demonstrates C's sense of unease with many of the Anglo-Norman elements that A retains relating to Bevis's ties to England, but lacks C's clear effort to realign the Saracen-influenced components of Bevis's identity. As each text demonstrates an unwillingness to rewrite the overall narrative structure of the *Bevis* story, NS and C demonstrate the varied interests of their respective authors in working within the story's narrative framework to make Bevis's unsettled relationship with and eventual departure from England less worrying. These manuscripts work to reassure audiences that Bevis is always essentially English and that he is a strong moral example in his ability to perform the personal memory work required to retain one's cultural identity across temporal and geographical distance.

In *Bevis*, the problem of subjective coherence over time predominantly unfolds through a negotiation of Bevis's cultural identity, and particularly through negotiating the ways in which Bevis communicates his own sense of his cultural identity. Manuscript variation unearths obvious anxieties about cultural contact and permeability. Bevis spends much of his life in Saracen lands, including formative years as a young knight in which he appears to form close relationships with his Saracen lord and Saracen peers; does this reduce his credibility as an exemplary English Christian hero? Rouse notes that A contains certain unique additions to the text that he reads as attempts to make the texts more English, such as references to St. George in the battle with the Cologne dragon ("FKC?" 115), and yet of the three manuscript traditions discussed in this chapter, we have seen that A makes the least effort to assure its audience that Bevis recognizes himself as an English hero. Are the legal and political connections that tie Bevis to England sufficient to render him an English hero, or must he understand himself as constantly and fundamentally English? Many of the

narrative variations in NS and C seem to suggest the latter, perhaps reflecting Turville-Petre's observation that fourteenth-century nationalism was ethnic in nature (17). Turville-Petre argues that Englishness during this period was something that could be acquired through birth alone (17); thus, for Bevis, a born Englishman was always essentially English.[78]

While cultural identity becomes the natural focus of Bevis's subjectivity, the continuous mental work required for the retention, comprehension, and personal narrative-making of autobiography has implications beyond the facts of one's cultural and spiritual identity. Engaging in the often difficult work of reflecting on one's past and cohering it with one's present are processes with moral and spiritual dimensions, functionally necessary for establishing and maintaining Christian identity, but also crucial Christian acts in their own rights. In other words, when NS and especially C insist on Bevis's connection to his English Christian past throughout the text, it is not just to establish Bevis's identity as a Christian, but to demonstrate his spirituality in practice through the fundamentally Christian act of memory-work. Radulescu notes that Middle English romance diverges from French romance in its strong homiletic or hagiographic features, with penance and social order appearing as clear priorities within the genre (40-41). *Bevis* may seem a dubious example of this, but numerous elements of the text indicate an effort by Middle English authors to add pious and hagiographic elements to the story.[79] The religious dimensions of personal memory mean that

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[78] In contrast, Turville-Petre describes the Anglo-Normans as a "'lateral ethnie', with a culture restricted at first to a small social group" (10). He notes that the Anglo-Normans initially made an effort to distance themselves "from the ethnic community over which they ruled" (10). For the Anglo-Norman audiences of *Boeve*, making Boeve "too English" may have in fact been undesirable.

[79] Rhiannon Purdie suggests that *Bevis* may have been influenced by Beneit's *La Vie de Thomas Becket*, noting that Becket, like Bevis, offers a specifically English example of "implacable, exemplary resistance to royal abuse of authority" (47). Fellows and Weiss both note that the second half of Bevis repeatedly draws on motifs from the story of St. Eustace (Fellows *BI* xix, Weiss 240), while Fellows, Rouse, and Calkin all note the motifs added to various versions of *Bevis* that connect him with St. George (Fellows "TS" 83, 89-90; Rouse "FKC?" 116; Calkin "DCK" 140). Calkin also notes that while Boeve prays to God for aid, God's actual involvement in the rescue is minimal; Boeve's religious faith is not allowed to overshadow his martial prowess and strength. In the A *Bevis*, Bevis' strength is still emphasized but his prayer receives more attention and God plays a more significant role in his escape; in C, Bevis fights dragons in the prison that link him to St. George, is visited by an angel after he prays, and experiences a miracle, with the whole imprisonment now figured as religiously formative and specifically penitential ("DCK" 140-141).

Bevis's ability to make sense of his past as a coherent part of his identity becomes an issue of spiritual morality required of a Christian hero, and particularly of a Christian hero so closely tied with England's history and folklore. Bevis is by no means a particularly devout hero: his Christianity is primarily established through incidents in which he decries the false religion of the Saracens, and in brief moments of prayer or divine aid that occur in a chivalric context, most notably when his prayers for assistance are answered during his seven-year imprisonment at Damascus. In NS and C, however, he is subtly Christianized further through a sense of self-continuity that adheres to the patterns of cognitive work expected of a Christian individual. Though the moral and spiritual aspect of Bevis's capacity and inclination for autobiographical memory remain an undercurrent to the text's anxieties over Bevis's cultural identity, we shall see in *Guy of Warwick* that the performance of memory-work as an aspect of Christian identity becomes increasingly important in crafting historical romance heroes who can serve as uplifting moral and spiritual models for their audiences.

Chapter Two: Chivalry, Forgetfulness, and Penitential Reflection in *Guy of Warwick*

In the first half of the Middle English *Guy of Warwick*, Guy leaves England several times at the behest of his beloved Felice, whose changing demands require that he continuously improve his worth as a knight by accomplishing great deeds and acquiring renown. The text positions Felice at the centre of Guy's quest for chivalric excellence: she pushes him to become a knight in the first place, and where Guy seems willing to settle in his chivalric pursuits, she drives him to prioritize the pursuit of exemplary knighthood above all else. Felice seems central to Guy's identity and quest; and yet, in an episode in Constantinople that ought to prompt recollection of Felice, Guy seems to forget her entirely. For his great services to the Eastern Emperor, Guy is offered the hand of the Emperor's daughter. He goes along with the marriage without protest, having apparently forgotten Felice altogether; only at the altar does the sight of the marriage ring suddenly remind him of Felice, at which point he requests that the wedding be postponed.

This episode appears in two surviving versions of the Middle English *Guy of Warwick* as well as in *Gui de Warewic*, the Anglo-Norman source for the Middle English text. It serves as a moment of emotional anguish for Guy as he deliberates between marrying the Emperor's daughter and inheriting an empire or returning to Felice, but otherwise neither the narrator nor the characters seem particularly concerned by Guy's memorial lapse. At least one redactor of the Middle English *Guy* seems to have doubted the usefulness of including the incident in Guy's story, however. The episode is notably absent from a fifteenth-century version of *Guy*, and while absence alone does not prove the redactor's censure, it is suggestive that the episode joins other morally problematic narrative incidents absent in this particular version of the text.[80] As with *Bevis,* the text's Middle English authors seem to have

[80] Alison Wiggins explains that this version of *Guy* also lacks the morally dubious episode in which Guy kills Earl Florian's son with little provocation, as well as several episodes related to personal revenge (73).

disagreed over the importance of a knight's relationship with his own past and the capacity of their various understandings of chivalry to accommodate fractures and failings in the realm of personal narrative.

We have seen already how the Middle English *Bevis* texts engage in a debate about the relative importance of a knight's ability to conceptualize a cohesive, stable sense of subjectivity, a debate enacted over more than a century via the process of textual adaptation as authors adjusted their visions of *Bevis* the text and Bevis the knight. In *Bevis*, though each of the three manuscript versions examined presents a slightly different view of Bevis's personal relationship to his past, the texts agree in approaching the issue of temporal subjectivity as one in which the subject himself plays an active role. The narrative problem introduced in *Gui* and taken up by the Middle English *Guy* authors is different. What is initially at stake in *Guy* is not the subject's ability to articulate a sense of his present identity as continuous with his past, but the actual memorial capacity of the subject and its relative bearing on that subject's ability to perform a morally and spiritually meaningful chivalric identity. In the three versions of the Middle English *Guy* that this chapter discusses, the relative importance of Guy's memorial capacity for the development of his chivalric identity is evaluated and revised according to the varying priorities of the Middle English authors. These versions of *Guy* articulate different visions of how a subject's memory interacts with his chivalric development, spiritual identity, and ability to articulate a sense of the continuity of his own subjectivity in time.

Elizabeth Allen writes that Middle English romance tends to use an episodic structure, which "strings *aventures* together in paratactic relationships; rather than relying on formal density, romances in particular unfold events in series" (192).[81] Reading or hearing an

[81] With long romances such as *Bevis* and *Guy*, an episodic structure was both a narrative feature and likely a means of dividing up the way the story was copied or read, as the previous chapter discussed. Just as Fellows suggests that individual episodes from *Bevis* might have been circulated or read aloud independently, Field observes that *Guy* is divided into "discrete episodes of a manageable length" ("PR" 13). She compares the

isolated episode emphasizes the existence of narrative before and after the excerpted section, particularly when an episode involves characters or events from earlier parts of the narrative, as occurs frequently in both *Bevis* and *Guy*. Allen's observations about the nature of episodic structure in romance also suggest that episodic structure impacts the experience of reading a romance in its entirety in a particular way:

> Like their earlier French cousins, later Middle English romances avoid clear causation and even subordination, relying on readers to connect one scene to another. Episodic juxtaposition of this kind challenges readers to assess the sort of truth an individual episode conveys, often based on events in previous episodes, which imply retrospective explanations for undermotivated events. (192).

Allen highlights the process by which romance's episodic structure requires active participation from the reader in meaning-making, including via short-term memory-work, extrapolation, and interpolation—processes that are particularly necessary in *Guy*, where the narrative linking of episodes via foreshadowing common to *Bevis* is largely absent, and events often occur without much explanation. Whether by accident or design, a single episode in *Guy* rarely contains enough information in itself to understand its events and significance fully, and the audience is frequently required to make assumptions about motivation, causation, or consequence based on earlier episodes. As a result, the removal, addition, or adjustment of a single narrative episode or detail in a particular manuscript version has the potential to impact not only the relatively self-contained episode in which it appears but the audience's much broader understanding of the characters, events, morals, and meanings.

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episodic structure of *Guy* to that of a television show in which entertainment potential is released one episode at a time ("PR" 13). Field points in particular to the episode in the second half of *Guy* in which Guy rescues his old friend Tirri, who is being wrongfully accused of killing Guy's old rival Otoun. Field observes that the episode's relation to a whole is "as part of a series, not a serial. It develops several themes germane to the romance's purposes but is not essential to the narrative structure: Guy's life story would be complete enough without it" ("PR" 14).

Bevis and *Guy* are often discussed together in modern studies of Middle English romance, and they share a number of notable similarities that make this approach a useful one. Rouse classifies them both as Matter of England romances, set in an (ostensibly) Anglo-Saxon past; Marianne Ailes note that the Anglo-Norman sources of both are often grouped together with other ancestral romances;[82] Furrow points out that both appear frequently on lists of romances and romance heroes in medieval texts (*EoR* 70).[83] Both share a number of narrative features, including their lengthy, expansive structures, which challenge the memories of audiences and the coherence of the titular characters themselves as they move from conflict to conflict. At the same time, the structure of *Guy* means that the particular challenges the *Bevis* redactors strove to accommodate in their efforts to craft Bevis into a subjectively unified hero are less relevant for Guy. Guy is raised and knighted in England; though he spends most of his time outside of England, his constant movement from alliance to alliance and place to place means he never forms the competing familial ties seen in *Bevis*, and certainly not with Saracens. Unlike Bevis, he also fights for England, returning to defend the country at two crucial moments, first from a dragon and later from a Danish invasion. In short, his autobiography presents few of the obvious cultural and political tensions that characterize Bevis, and his cultural presence in late medieval England suggests that he was easily classified by contemporary audiences as an English hero, as we shall see shortly.

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[82] Ailes in fact names this sub-genre of romance "so-called 'ancestral' romances" ("WiaN?" 61), referring to Crane's criticisms of this category. Crane argues that the term "ancestral romance" relies on the theory that four of the Anglo-Norman romances in this group, including *Boeve* and *Gui*, "owe their genesis to a particular family's commission, which itself had been sparked by a particular crisis in the rights of the family to its lands or titles" (16). She finds this theory unpersuasive, pointing out that none of these poems "praises a patron, mentions the contemporary family holding the title of the celebrated hero, or even takes careful note of the alleged patrons' history and possessions" (16). My purpose in using the term "ancestral romance" here is not to argue for or against Crane's criticism but to note that *Bevis* and *Guy* both features heroes holding titles associated with baronial families present in both Anglo-Norman England and fourteenth- and fifteenth-century England.

[83] The medieval trope of cataloguing prompted writers to sometimes list "strings of names from romances, usually in prologues to give their own work context by comparison or contrast" (Furrow *EoR* 62); these are the "lists" to which Furrow refers, and which she uses to assist her work in determining the texts that medieval audiences would have identified as romances.

Bevis's subjective dilemma revolves primarily around his ability and willingness to make sense of his cultural identity over time; Guy's is different, drawing on inherent tensions between the difficulties of Christian memory-work and the practicalities of chivalric life. If variations in the *Bevis* tradition point to anxieties over the essential and fixed nature of chivalric cultural identity, variations in the *Guy* tradition reveal anxieties about the capacity of chivalric knighthood to accommodate the forms of memory and reflection required of a Christian subject.

This chapter argues that the three versions of *Guy* discussed here all participate in a shared understanding that Guy's engagement with his past in the first half of the text plays a crucial role in both his spiritual awakening and in the effort shown in the second half of the text to perform a spiritually meaningful mode of knighthood. Despite significant variation in the manuscript tradition, *Guy* consistently demonstrates a concern with a knight's capacity and willingness to undertake the mentally difficult work of critical reflection on one's own past. In each version, moments of forgetfulness in the first half of the text are addressed and resolved in the penitent chivalry Guy performs in the second half of the text, expressing the sense that exemplary chivalric prowess is not enough to make a knight an exemplary Christian: he must also be prepared to perform the intellectual work required of a unified, self-aware Christian individual.[84] Where the manuscript variations differ in this matter is in the inclination each version of *Guy* shows to emphasize Guy's memorial insufficiencies in the first half of the text, variously exposing or masking the ways in which secular chivalry

[84] *Guy* here demonstrates a departure from ideas about chivalry articulated by real knights, perhaps most notably those of Geoffroi of Charny. Kaeuper notes that while Charny values prowess as the ultimate and defining trait of knighthood, piety and chivalry do not occupy separate spaces. Kaueper writes that "in Charny's mind the honour of the body and the salvation of the soul stand together" ("Introduction" 27). This is not to suggest that all knights understood chivalry in the same way as Charny or that knights never experienced any doubts about the coexistence of their chivalric and religious identities, but Charny's attitude towards piety as performed and enacted through chivalry indicates an important variant perspective on the ways in which active knights might approach this issue.

comes into fundamental conflict with the traits required of a morally and spiritually exemplary Christian.

Manuscript and Material Contexts

Guy shares with *Bevis* its descent from an Anglo-Norman romance, here *Gui de Warewic*, and a Middle English tradition in which it existed in several distinct versions. Jeanne Wathelet-Willem and Emma Mason have suggested that the Anglo-Norman *Gui* was composed before 1215, and possibly before 1205 (cited in Weiss "*GdW*" 4). This puts it within a few decades of Weiss's date for the composition of *Boeve*, and Weiss suggests that *Gui* shows influence from *Boeve* as well as from the same *chanson de geste* tradition that influenced the composition of *Boeve* ("*GdW"* 2). Djordjević notes that the Middle English *Guy* follows its Anglo-Norman source very closely ("*GoW*" 27), and explains that the Middle English versions of the text indicate that *Gui* was independently translated into English "at least five times between c. 1300 and c. 1450, as evidenced by the survival of the five independently produced redactions" ("*GoW*" 29). Djordjević also points out that extant *Gui* manuscripts demonstrate the existence of two versions of the text in Anglo-Norman. This is crucial to remember when approaching the Middle English *Guy* tradition, as Djordjević argues that translation from Anglo-Norman to Middle English should not be assumed to be the primary point of literary innovation that accounts for differences between the Middle English versions. Some of the Middle English "innovations" in later *Guy* manuscripts can actually be traced back to the second version of *Gui* represented in the extant Anglo-Norman manuscripts.[85]

[85] Giselle Gos has drawn attention to this in the case of the Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College, MS 107/176 *Guy*. While Carol Fewster suggests this version of *Guy* shows literary evidence of patronage by the Beauchamp family and increased efforts to localize the story, Gos draws on earlier work by Maldwyn Mills indicating that a number of the distinct features Fewster discusses in this version of *Guy* can actually be traced to the second version of the Anglo-Norman *Gui* (160).

Gui de Warewic survives in sixteen extant manuscripts, including several in which it is fragmentary (Furrow *EoR* 72). The Middle English *Guy* survives in five extant manuscripts (two fragments and three relatively complete texts) as well as in later printed editions. The *Guy* manuscripts are approached as representing three distinct versions of the text based on their forms and dates of composition; I follow the Database of Middle English Romance in referring to the versions as the couplet *Guy*, the later couplet *Guy*, and the stanzaic *Guy*.[86] The couplet *Guy* and the stanzaic *Guy* appear together in the early fourteenth-century Auchinleck manuscript (Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 19.2.1, again referred to as A). The A couplet *Guy* recounts the first half of Guy's adventures, up to the point where he finally marries Felice; the stanzaic *Guy*, which survives only in A, picks up from this point and recounts Guy's life after his religious awakening, concluding with his death and the removal of his body from England. In A, the stanzaic *Guy* is followed by the short romance *Reinbroun*, which narrates the adventures of Guy's son, and which is itself directly followed by *Bevis*; the material of the A *Reinbroun* comes from *Gui*, where it is interlaced into Gui's own story. I follow Wiggins in approaching A's couplet and stanzaic *Guy*s as based on two separate texts by different redactors, rather than as the product of a formal artistic choice made by a single redactor to switch from couplets to stanzas at the text's midpoint ("MT" 66).[87] Wiggins suggests that the "slicing and splicing" of the A

[86] Alison Wiggins offers a more specific breakdown of the Middle English *Guy* redactions, identifying five different redactions between the three complete manuscripts and two fragments of *Guy* that survive. Her detailed overview considers more precise composition dates and includes regional language indicators; she also includes *Reinbroun* in her breakdown (see "MT" 65). I draw on Wiggins' breakdown occasionally when discussing relationships between manuscripts and when dealing with passages where manuscript leaves or lines are damaged or missing, but I am primarily interested in approaching the narratives as they are presented in each manuscript as single, distinct works, so I generally find the Database's simplified breakdown sufficient for distinguishing between works.

[87] Wiggins notes that the stanzaic *Guy* was likely circulated as an independent romance, without the couplet *Guy* with which it is paired in A (and thus without the first several thousand lines of Guy's exploits, which are instead very briefly summarized at the start of the stanzaic *Guy*) ("Introduction" n.p.). Because the focus of this chapter is on the text that A presents and not on the experience of reading the stanzaic *Guy* as a hypothetical single text, however, the two A *Guy*s are approached with the assumption that they were intended to be read (and were read) as a single work.

couplet and stanzaic *Guy*s is a result of exemplar availability ("MT" 66). The manuscript context of the A *Guy* indicates that the two versions are intended to be read as a single text. The stanzaic *Guy* opens with an address to the audience typical of romance openings that positions it as a new, independent romance, but the scribe has not used any rubrication to set the stanzaic *Guy* apart. Its first letter is an initial, but initials are used elsewhere throughout both versions in A as well. In contrast, where A's stanzaic *Guy* transitions to *Reinbroun*, the final words of *Guy* are marked "explicit" and *Reinbroun* begins with a miniature and a rubricated title that mark the text as a separate romance.

Also of interest to this chapter are the couplet *Guy* in Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College, MS 107/176 (referred to throughout as G) and the later couplet *Guy* in Cambridge University Library, MS Ff.2.38 (referred to throughout as C, as in the previous chapter). G is a single-text manuscript composed in the fifteenth century. The first part of Reinbrun's story, in which Herraud leaves England to seek Reinbrun after he is kidnapped by merchants as a child, is interlaced into the *Guy* story, but G eventually drops the Reinbrun narrative thread and ultimately leaves Reinbrun's fate unresolved. C, as noted in the previous chapter, was composed in the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century. In C, as in A, the later couplet *Guy* appears with *Reinbroun* as a separate romance; also like A, C is a compilation in which both *Guy* and *Bevis* appear. Wiggins characterizes the A, G, and C versions of *Guy* by noting that A shows evidence of revisions "designed to heighten Guy's English identity" ("MT" 69), whereas G and C demonstrate a stronger interest in Guy's chivalric status and regional and baronial associations ("MT" 69). Wiggins observes that G and C edit the *Guy* story to remove or adjust some of Guy's more morally problematic behaviours. She characterizes C as "a polished and updated version of the legend that is more straightforwardly historical and exemplary than earlier versions" ("MT" 70). G, which is "spliced together" from the couplet *Guy* represented in A and the later couplet *Guy* represented by C, is "Guy lite"; it abridges or

removes fight scenes, violence, extensive descriptions, and lengthy speeches as well as morally problematic episodes ("MT" 72).[88]

Guy also led a robust literary and cultural life beyond the various Middle English redactions of the romance *Guy of Warwick*. Out of all the episodes in the romance, Guy became particularly known for defeating the Saracen giant Colbrand, one of only a few major narrative episodes that actually takes place in England. This inspired its own romance, *Guy and Colbrond*,[89] which generally follows the narrative of the latter half of the *Guy* romance, focusing in particular on Guy's fight with Colbrond and his role in repelling the Danish invaders from England. Guy's fight with Colbrand is also the subject of the *Song of Colebrond*, which Wiggins explains "was sung in the Prior's apartment at Winchester Cathedral in 1338 by a *joculator* named Herbert" ("MT" 62). John Lydgate also treated Guy's battle with Colebrond in his *Guy of Warwick*, although A.S.G. Edwards explains that Lydgate's version was apparently based not on the Middle English romance but on an account of Guy in a Latin chronicle (87).[90] Lydgate's contribution, and that of his Latin source, reflect Guy's acceptance into historical record.

Guy's historicism was actively promoted by the Beauchamp family, the members of which "well understood the importance of an unbroken family history" after they became the Earls of Warwick through marriage in the early thirteenth century (Griffith 120). Field explains that in *Guy*'s later history in Middle English, the story was "taken up as an ancestral

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[88] Maldwyn Mills has suggested that the absence in G of passages found in the A couplet *Guy* might be explained by a damaged exemplar, but Wiggins disagrees, arguing that the lines and passages not present in G demonstrate "a self-conscious process of abridgment" ("MT" 72). She explains that all absences in G "represent divergences from the main narrative that could be extracted without disrupting the flow of the story" and that the reviser "took care to ensure that the narrative remained seamless, without loss of sense or abrupt switches of location and, where necessary, fashioned a 'linking' or 'bridging' couplet to patch up the excised portion of text" ("MT" 72).

[89] *Guy and Colbrond* survives only in British Library, Additional MS 27879, which is dated c. 1600; however, Wiggins notes that it is "quite possibly of much earlier origin" ("MT" 62).

[90] Specifically, Lydgate claims that his *Guy* is based on an account in a Latin chronicle by Gerald of Cornwall. This account only survives as extracts today, but Edwards writes that based on surviving evidence, Lydgate's *Guy* does seem to follow Gerald's account closely; however, Edwards also notes that some details suggest Lydgate may occasionally have borrowed from the French *Prose Guy* as well (87).

history by one of the most powerful baronial houses in the land; its very directness and lack of narrative ambiguity make the story of Guy into a powerful propaganda tool" ("PR" 16). David Griffith describes various avenues by which the Beauchamps actively worked to incorporate Guy into their family history. Earl William Beauchamp (c. 1238-1298) named his heir Guy around 1271, apparently after his legendary ancestor (121).[91] Earl Thomas (1313/14-1369) likely played a role in instigating "a policy of creating a tangible presence that would reflect the prestige of the earldom and deliver spiritual and financial benefits" in the form of a shrine at the Guy's Cliffe hermitage, where Guy was said to have settled after returning from the holy land (121). The earls' home was shaped to reflect Guy's legend, most notably in the construction of Guy's Tower in the late fourteenth century (121). Earl Thomas also bequeathed to his son "the coat of mail sometime belonging to that famous Guy of Warwick," while the twelfth earl (1338-1401) in turn bequeathed to his son items depicting "the arms and story of Guy of Warwick" as well as Guy's sword and mail coat (121).[92]

Beyond the lineal concerns of the Beauchamps, Guy was recognized as a historical figure in a way that Bevis was not. The *Liber Regum Anglie* briefly discusses Guy as a historical English figure (Furrow *EoR* 76), while the devotional *Speculum Gy de Warewyke* is premised to be a sermon written by a deacon named Alcuin—presumably named to evoke the real scholar Alcuin of York (c. 735-804)—at the request of Guy. Furrow explains that this sermon "is based on the real Alcuin's Latin *Book of Vices and Virtues*. The belief that the premise was true was widespread enough that one of the late manuscripts of Alcuin's work

[91] Carol Fewster adds that the name Guy was not, at this point, a Beauchamp family name, nor the name of a contemporary, suggesting the literary Guy as the son's namesake (107). She notes too that in the 1340s, Earl Thomas Beauchamp named his sons Guy, Thomas, and Reynbron, adding the name of the fictional Guy's son into the family (111).

[92] This paragraph has cited just a few examples of the Beauchamp family's efforts to craft Guy into a historical ancestor, but there are many more. For a more detailed history of the Beauchamp relationship with Guy, see Fewster's "Romance Reception: Society's Adaptations of the Guy of Warwick Story" in *Traditionality and Genre in Middle English Romance*.

(ca. 1450) is actually labelled as having been written for Guy of Warwick" (*EoR* 77).[93] These are not the only literary examples of Guy's historicism, and Furrow lists a number of other texts in Middle English, Anglo-Norman, and Latin that feature Guy as a historical figure (*EoR* 73). The city of Winchester, the supposed site of Guy's fight with Colbrond, signified Guy's presence in the designation of its urban spaces: a 1455/1456 record gives the name "Colebrondis Hede" to part of the city wall; a specific stone in the city wall was known as "Colbrond's Chair" and included a visual depiction of the combat; and the treasury of the St. Swithun's priory contained "the 'Danish' axe with which Guy decapitated Colbrond," an identification that the romance *Guy and Colebrande* affirms (Rouse *Idea* 139-145). In addition to the historical identity crafted for Guy through literature, urban place names, and attributed artifacts, Guy led a robust life as a folk hero. Wiggins and Field discuss a "parallel oral tradition" (xviii) that contributed to his fame throughout England. Like the literary Guy, the folkloric Guy was strongly associated with the defeat of Colbrond, but Simpson and Stephen Roud add that the folkloric Guy also became associated with defeating a monstrous boar and the Dun Cow, two foes not featured in *Gui* or *Guy* but added to post-medieval chapbooks and street ballads loosely based on *Guy* (n.p.). These folkloric exploits featured their own artifacts, with various sites displaying bones said to be from the monstrous boar and cow that the folkloric Guy defeated (n.p.).

The focus of the medieval tradition surrounding Guy in his various literary, folkloric, and historical iterations differed across times and places. Texts, visual depictions, and physical artifacts varyingly emphasized Guy's nobility, chivalry, piety, and strength, but repeatedly insisted on his historicism. Notably, the most well-known of Guy's adventures and the one most universal amongst his various cultural identities is Guy's fight with Colbrond—

[93] The *Liber Regum Anglie* and the *Speculum Gy de Warewyke* are both included in the Auchinleck manuscript (Fellows *ER* 76-77).

a battle fought on English soil in defense of English sovereignty. As with Bevis, Guy's Englishness in popular, oral, and visual culture was clearly a central component of his identity and appeal. Guy was memorialized in his romance and in other texts that proclaimed his historicism, but his legendary legacy was also displayed visually, architecturally, and geographically through artwork, place names, artifacts, and buildings, many of which were accompanied by little to no textual context. Guy's physical and geographical afterlife relied on the audience to reflect upon a tradition of shared cultural memories surrounding the literary Guy's identity and accomplishments.

From this brief and superficial overview of Guy's extensive presence in medieval English culture, Guy's status as a definitively English hero seems clear. The various traditions surrounding him indicate the range of functions his presence in English culture served. He was a folk hero famed for defeating mythical opponents as well as a knight revered for his prowess in the more politically complex conflicts that make up his career in his romance and in historical texts. In this aspect of his character, his physical strength and ability as a knight are crucial elements of his appeal. Though his Middle English romance generally focuses on his exploits outside of England, he demonstrates his Englishness by returning at crucial moments to protect the country; the culturally iconic nature of his climactic fight against Colbrand to defend England from Danish invaders indicates that this performance of Englishness was generally agreed to be a central feature of his character. However, other aspects of Guy's cultural presence—his presence in *Guy and Colbrond,* the *Speculum Gy de Warewyke*, and Lydgate's *Guy of Warwick*; the likelihood that the penitential stanzaic *Guy* circulated as an independent romance; the shrine to Guy at the Guy's Cliffe hermitage—indicate that Guy was also highly valued as a figure of moral and spiritual excellence. These elements of Guy's character did not always coexist easily. The three versions of *Guy* discussed throughout this chapter will highlight the ways in which the

Middle English *Guy* redactors worked to fashion Guy into a figure who could function cohesively as both an exemplary English knight and an exemplary Christian.

Felice's Conditions: A Progress-Oriented Vision of Knighthood

Guy's attitude towards his own existence in time is, at least initially, an intrinsic component of his knightly aspirations. His attitude can be usefully contextualized within the same framework used to understand the vision of chivalric development constructed in *Bevis* in the previous chapter. We can begin by recalling Aureol's observation that the past and present exist only in the mind, along with Averroes' argument that the sensation of time requires an understanding of our own "changing and mobile existence" (Duhem 314). Charny relies upon the mutability of human existence in his conceptualization of chivalry, seeing in its fluidity the potential for constant progress; Keen writes that for Charny, "chivalry involves a constant quest to improvement and cannot rest satisfied" (15). Unsurprisingly, this attitude is also crucial to romance, which typically dramatizes the hero's transformation into a knight of renown. Robert W. Hanning writes that

> the great adventure of chivalric romance is the adventure of becoming what (and who) you think can be, of transforming the *awareness* of an inner self into an *actuality* which impresses upon the external world the fact of personal, self-chosen destiny, and therefore of an inner-determined identity. (4, author's emphasis)[94]

Romance authors construct their fictional heroes as figures who understand their own capacity for development. Envisioning the future allows for the conceptualization of change, while envisioning the past allows for a vision of development that involves contrast between

[94] Hanning refers here specifically to twelfth-century French romance. He argues that "the particular, defining achievement of twelfth-century chivalric romance does not survive its cultural moment" on the basis that thirteenth-century romance evolved in various directions as it took up new thematic concerns (6). *Bevis* and *Guy* are not twelfth-century romances, but they are based on Anglo-Norman romances composed at the turning point of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and thus naturally carry some of the same assumptions and thematic concerns as the romances Hanning discusses.

a past identity and a recognizable but transformed present identity; for Hanning, this is what romance is truly "about." The capacity to conceptualize the past in the mind, and to understand a past subject as continuous with a present one, also allows for the creation of knights whose experiences and deeds compound into their reputations. Knights become famous in romance, as in history, because their names are attached to records of their remarkable past deeds and their exemplary demonstrations of prowess. *Bevis* and *Guy* follow many other romances in their reliance on the straightforward principle that personal development involves the accumulation of experience as a subject progresses through time.

In *Guy*, Felice lays out an explicit vision of her expectations of knighthood, one that conceptualizes knighthood in terms of the knight's potential for establishing a formidable reputation. Felice initially rejects Guy, who is the son of her father's steward and thus socially inferior to her, but she eventually agrees to return Guy's love "when þou hast armes vnder-fong, / & ichaue it vnder-stonde" (A 670-71, similar in G and C).[95] When he fulfils this requirement by becoming a knight, she clarifies the stakes, demanding that he prove his valour "þurch þi miȝt" (A 747, similar in G). Felice quickly moves past the fact of Guy's lower social standing, instead seeing in him the potential for development into knighthood where his worth will be defined by his deeds. Like Charny, she privileges prowess as the essential trait of knighthood; to use Charny's own words, Felice articulates a sense that "he who does more is of greater worth" (48).[96] C makes Felice's goal for Guy even more explicit

[95] Quotations from A and G are taken from the 1966 one-volume reprint of Julius Zupitza's edition of *Guy* from these manuscripts (see Zupitza, J., ed. *The Romance of Guy of Warwick*. Oxford University Press. 1966). Quotations from C are taken from the 1966 reprint of Julius Zupitza's edition of *Guy* this manuscript (see Zupitza, J., ed. *The Romance of Guy of Warwick*: *The Second or 15th-Century Version*. Oxford University Press. 1966). Where manuscripts are generally in agreement in sense on lines, I generally quote from A unless otherwise noted, given Wiggins' observation that G both tends to abridge portions of the *Guy* narrative, while C has fewer original readings and tends to agree in sense with either A or G.

[96] While Felice's ideas about chivalry align with Charny's on the privileging of prowess and the accomplishment of great deeds, her vision of chivalry is certainly not identical to Charny's overall. Notably, Felice makes no effort to reconcile piety and chivalry; her focus is entirely on chivalry as a means of increasing Guy's honour. Moreover, whereas Felice seems to offer prowess as a means of surpassing and erasing low birth, Charny's sense that "he who does more is of greater worth" should not be taken as an endorsement of meritocracy over lineage. Kaeuper observes that social classes in continental kingdoms—including France,

than A or G, providing a list of specific achievements Guy must accomplish to prove his valour as a knight. Felice explains that Guy will only be worthy of her

> [W]han y may wite and see
> That thou hast in torment*is* bee,
> And that thou hast knyghtes nome,
> Castell*is* and Toures ou*ere*come,
> And thurgh all the londe and Contree
> Thy knyghthode full good knowen bee[.] (C 741-746)

Felice's vision of knighthood in C is straightforwardly temporal: the present Guy is not a worthy knight, but the future Guy can be once he has accomplished the feats she outlines. C's emphasis on Guy's reputation—Felice desires that "thurgh all the londe and Contree / Thy knyghthode full good knowen bee"—insists on Guy's temporal unity as a requirement for knighthood. It assumes that Guy will become a famous and worthy knight because the great deeds in his past will be attributed to him, requiring him to remain recognizably continuous as a subject even as he transforms into an accomplished knight.

However, the specific standard of knighthood that Felice articulates does not require Guy himself to perform this retrospective work on his own identity, instead emphasizing subjective unity as something to be maintained externally. What matters is not Guy's own ability to recognize himself as a continuous subject over the course of his development, but the ability of others "thurgh all the londe and Contree" to recognize Guy's unity in the form of his knightly reputation. C in particular emphasizes formalized instances of success (winning at tournaments) and physical monuments to Guy's achievements (captured castles), further establishing a sense that Felice expects a social and physical record of Guy's worth as

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where Charny was writing—were less permeable than they were in England (*CaV* 112), and even England showed increasing anxiety about social movement, as I discuss shortly.

a knight. Personal introspection is not necessarily in conflict with Felice's vision, but nor is it in any way a requirement of knighthood, which is essentially about memorialization and recognition through social performance.

When Guy has returned to England after fighting in Duke Reyner's tournament and traveling around continental Europe, he reminds Felice of her promise only to have her clarify the terms once again. This time, although Felice acknowledges Guy's achievements, she expresses concern about the possibility that Guy's development may stall. She tells Guy that he is not so accomplished that she "ne may fine oþer mo" (A 1134), and worries that if she gives him her love now, "sleuþe þe shuld ou*er*come : / Namore wostow of armes loue, / No comen in turnament no in fiȝt" (A 1139, similar in G and C). She tells Guy that he may call her "leman" (A 1150) but that she will not grant him her love "[e]r þou perles holden be / & best doand in þis cuntre, / Þat nowhar bi lond no w[e]ter / No be found þi beter" (A 1153-1156, similar in C and G). Felice presents an outline for becoming an ideal knight that is based on a clear narrative of progression: she withholds her love from Guy because his present self has not yet developed sufficiently, and she envisions the path of that development specifically in terms of the accumulation of experience, particularly in the specific feats outlined in C. Moreover, she worries about the possibilities of stagnation or regression when she expresses her concern that sloth will overcome Guy and he will cease to do great deeds if she grants him her love too soon. As in *Bevis*, chivalric development is future-oriented and concerned with the creation of an exemplary knightly reputation, emphasizing the distancing of the hero's past, present, and future selves as he strives to become "perles holden," though Felice's vision of knighthood also emphasizes the importance of a knight being publicly associated with his past deeds. Notably, Felice's guidelines for Guy also focus entirely on the

accumulation of chivalric prowess: her ideas about his development are secular and worldly, fixating on his success in knightly combat rather than on social, spiritual, or moral growth.[97]

Narratively, Felice's demands drive Guy's pattern of return and departure from England, and instigate his efforts at achieving knightly excellence. Felice's concerns about stagnation shape a vision of knighthood that requires constant progression and development. Though she suggests that her vision has an achievable endpoint—that Guy can one day become "perles holden"—the narrative structure of the text indicates otherwise through its insistence on emphasizing instability over time. Though Guy succeeds in battle after battle, political infighting constantly leads the continent back into chaos; England is attacked twice; Tirri moves Guy's body to France after Guy requests that he be buried in England. Stasis of any kind seems utterly unachievable. The vision of ideal knighthood shared among the *Guy* texts is thus one in which the priority is always the linear movement forward in time that allows for a knight's prowess and accomplishments to accumulate and develop. A knight's grasp of his past and his sense of continuity with his own past are inconsequential.

In fact, in the context of Patterson's comments on knighthood from the introduction, the cognitive work required for making sense of one's own autobiography actually appears detrimental to chivalric identity. Patterson describes chivalry as entailing a public form of selfhood that "sought, as a code of behaviour, at every turn to foreclose self-reflection and critical distance" (168).[98] Felice's fixation on prowess does not prohibit self-reflection in any

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[97] Again, this is in keeping with Kaeuper's comments on how much medieval chivalry valued "sheer prowess" ("HI" 2), which he goes on to describe as "that most essential chivalric trait," and which he notes is discussed "tirelessly" in Charny's work ("HI" 19). Felice's focus on prowess here does not necessarily exclude emphasis on spiritual excellence. The introduction to this thesis brought up Kaeuper's arguments that "knights conceived of chivalry as a practiced form of religion" (*CaV* 50) and that "earning honour by prowess appears throughout most chivalric literature as complementary to the worship of God" (*CaV* 48). While we can read these ideas as encoded in Felice's instructions to Guy, it is notable that she does not otherwise emphasize moral or spiritual excellence.

[98] Patterson also quotes Johann Huizinga's assertion that "in order to forget the painful imperfection of reality, the nobles turn to the continual illusion of a high and heroic life. They wear the mask of Lancelot and Tristram. It is an amazing self-deception" (qtd. 170-171). Although recent scholarship has supplanted and complicated Huizinga's characterization of medieval chivalry, it is worth noting that *Guy* is one of many romances that provide a comforting, aspirational model of chivalry, soothing the fundamentally disorderly and random

way, but nor does she encourage it, and as Guy moves from adventure to adventure, the absence of this form of cognitive work proves to have distinct advantages in the practicalities of the chivalric work Guy undertakes. Fixating on his aspiration to become an unsurpassable knight allows Guy to move from allegiance to allegiance easily and prompts him to urge reconciliation over the pursuit of vendettas, both traits that prove to be political necessities for chivalric work in the text. Moreover, an aspirational model of knighthood in which one's past is unimportant is the only model of knighthood of any worth to Guy. After all, he becomes Earl of Warwick not through birth, but through marriage to Felice; as Felice points out scornfully when he first confesses his love for her, Guy is only the son of the Earl's steward. Though he belongs by birth to the noble world of chivalry, he is no social match for her. Patterson observes that social distinctions in the late fourteenth century became increasingly important for both the peerage and the lower ranks of the nobility. The lower ranks in particular "were threatened by the prospect of slipping into the ranks of the nonnoble," which led to a "growing insistence upon the priority of lineage as a definition of nobility" (193).[99] For the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century audiences of the Middle English

violence that Patterson sees the Knight obscuring from himself in the *Knight's Tale*. In *Guy*, Guy's astounding prowess guarantees his victory, even against staggering odds; the narrative demands that he not only always survives, but also always succeeds. Even so, the text has certain lacunae that are not (and, it seems, cannot be) addressed in its vision of secular chivalry. Guy is future-oriented, but only to a degree; until his moment of spiritual reflection at the turning point of the text, he never thinks further ahead than becoming an unparalleled knight and marrying Felice. Moreover, for all his greatness, he is unable to offer permanent solutions to many of the conflicts in which he engages in the first half of the text. Repeatedly, across all three versions, his departure for a new adventure is marked by his allies begging him not to leave, fearing what will happen when they are left unprotected; without Guy's continued presence, every territory he visits seems liable to fall back into chaos at a moment's notice, undermining his successes. The very end of the text, too, suggests a certain powerlessness when Tirri moves Guy's body to Lorraine, despite Guy's final request to be buried in England. Intentionally or not, the text points to the knight's inability to effect lasting change in worldly matters; Guy's presence seems always to be required for his will to be carried out.

[99] See also Keen's description of the increasingly stringent restrictions around entry into knighthood based on requirements related to lineage (143-145). Interestingly, he also notes that the later Middle Ages saw a growing number of young men whose lineage made them eligible for knighthood but who chose not to go through the formalities of the dubbing ceremony to take on full knighthood. Keen notes that this was particularly prevalent amongst the lesser nobility, and notes that as a result, knighthood "was beginning to lose its significance as the common tie binding together higher and lower among the aristocracy, to be placed as such by a shared consciousness of noble bearing and a common right to the hereditary insignia of nobility, armorial bearings" (144). In this context, Guy is perhaps something of a nostalgic figure, a lesser noble whose prowess earns him the respect of dukes, earls, kings, and even emperors.

Guy, Guy's relatively low birth would likely have resonated as a particular problem in his pursuit of Felice, an earl's daughter. From this perspective, Felice's aspirational model of knighthood requires both Guy, and, ideally, the audience to forget his low birth as his predetermined social status is overshadowed by his own incredible prowess.

Felice and Clarice: Memorial Objects and the Failures of Personal Memory

Knightly renown depends upon memory, upon the integration of a knight's past and present selves, but Felice's articulation of knighthood suggests that this memory work is most important when performed by others who recognize a knight for his great deeds, not by the knight himself. The natural consequences of the single-minded focus on the future that Felice suggests are failures in personal memory. In the first half of the text, Guy frequently demonstrates memorial lapses or disinterest in performing or correcting memorial work. Guy's disinterest and disconnection from his past signal his single-minded commitment to the forward temporal momentum required for chivalric development, as well as active efforts to distance himself from the social problem of his low birth. While the text often appears unconcerned by Guy's poor memory, at times it also gestures to the practical consequences of Guy's failure to engage with his own past. The incident with the Emperor of Constantinople's daughter in A and C stands out as Guy's most egregious, unsettling, and inexplicable memorial lapse.[100] Although superficially it appears to be a moment of purely private conflict, the episode sets up broader sociopolitical problems related to questions of loyalty, forgiveness, and penance that are explored throughout the text.

[100] The Constantinople episode is, in fact, not even the first time Guy appears to have forgotten Felice. In Guy's first tournament, part of the prize for the winner is the love of Duke Reyner's daughter, Blancheflour, on the specific condition that the winner does not already "haue a fairer [maiden] in his cuntre" (A 836, similar in G and C). The wording of the prize actively invites Guy to remember Felice, yet in all three versions he accepts the prize without mentioning or reflecting on Felice. Blancheflour never appears in the text again and Guy faces no consequences for his acceptance, so it is unclear whether he has actually forgotten Felice or whether he feels that accepting Blancheflour's love in the formalized context of the tournament does not constitute a betrayal of Felice.

The text explicitly frames the gravity of the dilemma Guy's forgetfulness causes in the Constantinople episode, emphasizing both its severity and its expansive temporal extension. If Guy marries Clarice, he will not be able to marry Felice, who drove him to become a knight in the first place; marrying Clarice will thus divorce him permanently from the vision at the heart of his chivalric identity, preventing him from ever achieving the goals he set for himself in the past. Furthermore, if he marries Clarice, the Emperor has promised that Guy will inherit the Eastern Empire after he dies. Marrying Clarice will overwrite the ostensible core of Guy's knightly identity—becoming worthy of Felice's love through military prowess—as well as realigning Guy's cultural and political identity, tying him to the Eastern Empire rather than England. The moment acts as a node of unresolvable conflict in Guy's model of chivalry: while marrying Clarice means abandoning Felice, whose love is the ostensible goal of all his knightly endeavours, it also represents the ultimate form of upwards social mobility and the opportunity to erase Guy's low birth entirely through the legal means of marriage and inheritance.

The Emperor offers Clarice to Guy twice in A and C, and once in G: first when they are introduced, as a reward for Guy if he can deal with the Sultan (A,G 2885-2888; C 2798-2802), and once after Guy has defeated the Sultan, at which points A and C have the Emperor declare that Guy will marry his daughter the next day (A 4169-4170, C 3929-3932). Guy never actively pursues Clarice, but nor does he raise any objections, not even when the Emperor begins arranging the union. Moreover, not once during the episodes with the Emperor, which span over one thousand lines, does Guy give any indication of recalling Felice. When Guy is put into a situation that seems designed to force him to recall Felice, he demonstrates that he seems to have entirely forgotten her, despite her supposedly central role in his life. The model of chivalry Felice articulates and Guy pursues, in which the knight prioritizes conceptualizing and achieving future goals rather than personally reflecting on the

past, has consequences: not just memorial lapses related to important autobiographical information, but specifically memorial lapses related to the reason Guy became a knight in the first place. Guy's failure to recall Felice as he moves from conflict to conflict throughout Latin and Eastern Christendom suggests that the model of knighthood in *Guy* is problematic at the practical level for its potential to erase and destabilize the knight's sense of his own identity and purpose.

Guy happily agrees to the wedding when the Emperor proposes it, and makes it most of the way through the ceremony before he finally remembers Felice. In A, and similarly in C, the Emperor opens the wedding ceremony by promising Guy

> Mi daughter ich ȝiue þe here,
> And þritti castles wiþ hir also,
> Wiþ þe worþschip þat liþ þer-to,
> And half mi lond iche ȝiue þe,
> Bifor mi barouns þat here be.
> Þou schalt ben emperor after me:
> Biforn hem alle y graunt it þe. (A 4184-4190, similar in C)

For Guy, the marriage offers quantifiable physical property that will externally signify Guy's new identity, just as the land he ultimately inherits from Rohaud when he successfully marries Felice signifies his status as an English knight. The Emperor's offer involves a total transformation of Guy's identity, shifting his affection to Clarice and bestowing upon him physical holdings and a social title that memorialize Guy's past service to the Emperor. The Emperor also specifically draws attention to the fact that he makes this offer to Guy in front of his barons, who act as external witnesses to preserve the promises made in the present moment and ensure their continuity into the future—important functions in a text where Guy's personal memory is so unreliable, and where the ability of others to commemorate and

recognize Guy's adventures is prioritized. A's Guy acquiesces willingly: "'Alle,' he [Guy] seyd, 'þat þou bedest me / Ichil afong,' quaþ Gij, 'wiþ hert fre'" (A 4191-4192). C's Guy does not explicitly accept the offer, but nor does he protest against it or attempt to turn it down; the narrator simply tells us that "Gye hym [the Emperor] thanked nobullye / Of hys honowre and hys curtesye" (C 3957-3958), after which the text proceeds to the wedding scene. In A, word choice seems to deliberately attune the audience to Guy's staggering forgetfulness: his "hert fre" suggests both that his heart is unattached, which the audience knows emphatically is not true, and that he enters into his union with Clarice with an unburdened conscience, proving his utter failure to recall Felice.

Guy's moment of recollection comes in the midst of the wedding ceremony, apparently prompted by the sight of the wedding ring. In A,

> Þe erchebischop come forþ
> Wiþ a ring, þat miche was worþ;
> He tok it Gij, & he it gan afong,
> & Gij bi-þouȝt þan in his wille
> Þat Felice he schuld don vnskille;
> He þouȝt him to han hir bodi on
> Wiþ-outen silver & gold & precious ston,
> Þan alle oþer þat were o liue
> Wiþ alle þe gode men miȝt him ȝiue.
> Gij sett him adoun anon,
> & seyd swiche iuel is comen him on,
> Þat he no may of þe stede gon,
> Him þenkeþ his hert brekeþ ato. (A 4191-4208, similar in C)

The presentation of the ring prompts a complex chain of thought for Guy, leading him to engage in memorial work that does not seem to have been readily accessible to him beforehand. The symbolic value of the ring in the marriage ceremony causes Guy to recall Felice: upon perceiving the ring, he suddenly recognizes that by marrying Clarice, "Felice he schuld don vnskille" (A 4199). He recognizes the marriage as a transformation of identity that conflicts with past commitments and desires. The process of memory and critical thought occurs through a series of cognitive associations, recollections, and hypothetical judgments, with the "worþ" of the ring leading to a particular visualization that seems to provoke Guy's subsequent emotional response. The ring's symbolic value reminds him of his commitment to Felice and the centrality of his devotion to her to his identity; its material value prompts a comparison between Felice's body "wiþ-outen silver & gold & precious ston" and all the worldly goods men could give him, with Felice's unadorned body valued higher and eliciting the emotional response in which he "þenkeþ his hert brekeþ ato." In this brief passage, Guy demonstrates that he is capable of personal memory work, and also illustrates literally the point Carruthers draws from Augustine's work on memory that "the sort of mental stretching involved in time-making was painful; it hurt" ("Meditations" 153). For Guy, in this moment, the "process of time-making" involves considering his past as well as his present and future, and recognizing that the commitments he held in the past have come into conflict with his identity in the present. Guy is faced with a situation in which he can pursue the ideals of his past self or the opportunity presented to his present self, but not both; his heartbreak and swooning indicate that the experience is physically and emotionally painful.

C's version of the moment of recognition makes a few minor adjustments to Guy's mental process that play up the temporal anguish. In C, upon viewing the ring, Guy's thoughts are narrated directly:

"A, Felyce," he seyd, "þ*ai* feyre wyght,

I haue þe louyd w*yth* all my myght.

Schall y for ryches forsake now þe?

Hyt schall neuyr for me so bee.

Thy bare body ys darre to me,

Then all the gode in crystyante." (C 3963-3968)

The direct speech through which Guy's inner monologue is narrated suggests privileged access to Guy's thoughts and emotions in a way that A's use of indirect speech lacks. He questions himself, expressing his conflict and uncertainty; he also uniquely asserts here that, "I haue þe louyd wyth all my myght," assuring the audience that he is not only remembering Felice's existence, but remembering and recognizing his own emotional attachment to her in the past. The moment demonstrates his ability to reflect on both his past experiences and his past experience of himself.

The ring that elicits Guy's moment of anguish in both versions serves a particular function as a memory-image, a visual prompt that allows Guy to undergo reflection and recollection. The various medieval theories of memory and guides to practicing the *ars memorativa* draw heavily on mental visualizations in their discussions of how human memory functions and how it can be trained. One of the most prominent medieval models of memory was that of the seal-in-wax,[101] in which memory was conceptualized as "wax or a waxed surface on which 'images of a sort' are inscribed" (Carruthers *BM* 24), comparable to the process of pressing a seal into wax to leave the impression of the seal's shape. Carruthers emphasizes that this model approaches recollection as a visual process in which "one *looks* at the contents of memory, rather than hearing or speaking them" (*BM* 24). Her qualification that for Plato, "the 'representation' in memory is 'verbal' rather than 'pictorial' in nature"

[101] Carruthers ascribes the first explicit use of this model to Plato (*BM* 24), though Plato himself indicates that he is developing the seal-in-wax model of memory from older sources. It was expounded upon by Cicero, Quintilian, St. Augustine, Martianus Capella, and thirteenth-century Latin translators and commentators on Aristotle, among others (*BM* 25).

(*BM* 25), clarifies that recollection as a visual process is comparable to reading. That is, drawing on the work of J.T.E. Richardson, Carruthers explains that mental images are functional, not mimetic; they are defined not by "pictorial qualities" but by the user understanding the image "to represent a certain thing" (*BM* 26). Mental images work not because they perfectly and accurately preserve a concept, experience, or piece of information but because the user of the mental image understands the image "to be a configuration standing in a certain relationship to something else—a 'representation' in the cognitively functional sense, as writing represents language" (*BM* 27). Carruthers concludes that "the assumption behind all the theory is that signs can be meaningfully judged and interpreted. Because it recalls signs, reminiscence is an act of interpretation, inference, investigation, and reconstruction, an act like reading" (*BM* 29).[102]

The simple moment in which the ring prompts Guy to recall Felice in fact represents a complex cognitive process of recollection and interpretation. Aristotle writes that a memory-image is "like an imprint or drawing in us" that allows us to recall "what is not present" (quoted in Carruthers *BM* 27). The ring has no mimetic connection to Felice, but Guy reads in it symbolic and material values that prompt him to remember both Felice and his emotional commitment to her, which he accesses via another image—the imagined contrast between Felice's unadorned body and "alle þe gode men miȝt him ȝiue" in A or "all the gode in crystyante" in C, which he reads and interprets in turn. However, the ring's role in the scene

[102] This type of cognitive work was implicit in many of the material trappings of chivalry. Keen describes a scene from the anonymous *Ordene de chevalerie* (of Northern French origin and likely composed before 1250) in which Hugh, Count of Tiberias, agrees to show Saladin "the manner by which knights are made under the Christian law" (7). The text proceeds to give a step-by-step account of the knighting ritual, emphasizing the symbolic value of each aspect: the bath "to recall to you the baptism of the child," a white robe "signifying the cleanness of the body," a scarlet cloak "to remind him of the knight's duty to be ready to shed blood at need in defence of God's church," and so on (7). Knighthood is an identity awash in physical, material symbols meant to prompt the kind of cognitive associations that Guy makes here; moreover, just as the rituals Hugh explains to Saladin are intended to inform the knight of his purpose and of the essence of his identity, Guy's recollection of Felice prompts an implicit turn to his own reason for pursuing knighthood. Patterson also discusses knighthood's obsession with material symbolism, writing that chivalry "continually reinforced its own sense of its own dignity through rituals that it staged by and for itself" (174).

has an obvious and crucial difference from the memory-images discussed by medieval philosophers and their classical predecessors: it is not a mental image of a ring that Guy has impressed upon his mind for internal interpretation, but an actual, physical ring external to Guy and his memory. Moreover, the ring is produced by the archbishop, not by Guy himself; it is not a permanent fixture of his physical identity that he actively chooses and retains, like Orfeo's harp, but an object presented by another person and one that Guy encounters by chance. The episode demonstrates that Guy relies on the physical objects of his external world for recollection, whether those are inanimate visual cues or people who memorialize his deeds in their own memories.[103]

The text does not openly condemn this fact of Guy's cognition, which is, after all, aligned with the priorities of knighthood articulated in the text. Instead, it uses the episode to pit Guy against himself in a moment of crisis, similar to the moments in *Bevis* that emphasize Bevis's allegiances to his past and present as at odds. Made ill by the emotional conflict of remembering Felice in the midst of his wedding to Clarice, Guy requests that "þis fest deleyed be" (A 4213, similar in sense in C) until "ich in gode hele be" (A 4216, similar in sense in C). Guy retreats to his inn, where

> No wist noman of his wo
> Bot him self: bi niȝt and day,
> Al a fourteen niȝt sike he lay
> Þat he ne com his bed fram,

[103] We can recall McKinstry's discussion of Orfeo's harp as a physical object that acts as a point of connection between his past and present selves during a time of tumultuous transformation, which was discussed in the previous chapter. In *Guy,* such physical symbols of memory come to replace the mental work of memory itself. Guy, moreover, is not lost in the tangled memorial forest in which Orfeo finds himself. Unlike Bevis, Guy has not been sold into involuntary exile; unlike Orfeo, he has not relinquished his social identity in voluntary exile. He is actively engaged in solidifying and increasing his social rank, fully immersed in the chivalric world. Guy is not aided by physical memorial objects; he relies on them to externalize the difficult mental work that he sees no need to undertake himself.

No out atte dore he no cam. (A 4234-4238, similar in C)[104]

What follows is a rare moment of personal reflection for Guy in which he debates the material and emotional merits of marrying Clarice versus Felice. Even this, however, requires externalization; in A, Guy calls for Herraud, to whom he vocalizes the problem:

"Sir Herhaud," he seyd, "conseyl me:
Of mi conseyl ich oxi þe,
Ȝif y schal þemperours douhter take,
Or ȝete abide forþ & hir for-sake.
Ich haue a leman in Inglond
(To telle þe nil y nouȝt wond),
Þerls douhter Rohaut y-wis,
Felice, þat feir maiden of pris.
Oþer þan hir loue y no may,
Sir Herhaud, for soþe to say." (A 4247-4256)

C is similar in sense, but Guy's speech to Herraud puts more emphasis on complimenting Felice, with Guy explaining that, "In all thys londe ys none so wyse. / Sche ys feyre and bryght of hewe: / In all þys worlde ys none so trewe" (C 4008-4010). In A and C, Herraud suggests that Guy should marry Clarice, since the union will allow Guy to become the heir to the Emperor, who is richer and more powerful than Earl Rohaud. Guy, outraged, replies that "ich wot þou louest me nouȝt, / When þou conseyls me mi leman fro" (A 4270-4271, similar in C). Herraud responds that he had not realized Guy loved Felice, and that he only wishes to give Guy the best counsel, concluding that "when þou Felice loues so, / Vn-riȝt it were & þou hir for-go" (A 4279-4280, similar in C).

[104] Although A and C are generally similar in sense here, in A Guy lies sick for fourteen days, whereas in C Guy lies sick for only three days (see C 3987-3996).

Their conversation seems redundant: Guy's indignant response to Herraud (and, in C, his superlative description of Felice) suggests he has already evaluated the problem and come to a decision. However, his insistence on vocalizing the conversation indicates his difficulty in mentally evaluating his preexisting emotional commitment to Felice against Clarice, who represents a reward befitting his present status and achievement as a knight in service to the Eastern Emperor. A and C point to the consequences of the particular cognitive conditioning Guy has undertaken as a knight: while he is able to continuously progress and gain renown, his disinterest in engaging with his own past also has consequences for his ability to perform the difficult, sometimes painful mental work required to cohere his past and present thoughts, goals, values, and feelings into a coherent subject. This is a challenging skill to pick up without practice. Moreover, this type of cognitive work is not merely a matter of individual desire or a romance trope used to heighten drama (although it is certainly also those things). On a political scale, these are the types of decisions implicit in the reality of knighthood, as knights are called upon to make choices within changing networks of alliances and loyalties.[105] While Guy's difficulty in performing this type of mental work is a natural consequence of the model of knighthood he pursues—is in fact a necessity of his pursuit of exemplary knighthood at all, as he strives to distance himself from his low-born past—it

[105] Charny praises "those who are truly wise" in his work, noting that these are knights who, "from their youth, strive diligently to learn what is best to do, to distinguish good from evil, and to know what is reasonable to do; and because they recognize what course of action would be against reason, they endeavour to behave loyally, confidently, and according to what is right" (81). He does not explicitly describe the wise knight in terms of the virtue of prudence, but the qualities he describes resonate with many of the ideas about prudence addressed in the introduction. In contrast, there are

> those who have courage and skill but are thoughtless": these are knights who "are skilled in handling weapons, brave, and adept, but their way of pursuing a career in arms is always such that when they are in action, they do no consider the benefit or advantage for their friends or the harm done to their enemies, but, without giving or taking advice, they spur forward in a disorderly way and perform personally many feats of arms. (81-82)

Charny notes that these knights can still achieve great honour through their bravery, but adds that "as for being worthy in the truest sense, it would be possible to do better" (82). For Charny, himself an active and dedicated knight, the critical mental work that falls under his definition of "wisdom" is an admirable and valuable quality in a knight.

simultaneously poses worrying questions about his ability to perform his role in a politically effective way.

In G, the entire Clarice episode is absent. After Guy has killed the Sultan and brought his head to the Emperor, the Emperor offers Guy his daughter's hand, much as he does in A and C (G 4099-4105), to which Guy responds, "sir, moult graunt mercy!" (G 4106, similar in A and C). A, C, and G all proceed to the episode in which Guy rescues a lion from a dragon, after which Morgadour, the Emperor's treacherous steward, begins plotting to kill the lion. From here, the texts diverge. In A and C, the events discussed above follow: the wedding begins and is halted by Guy upon remembering Felice, after which an emotionally distraught Guy falls ill as he deliberates between Clarice and Felice and seeks counsel from Herraud. In G, Guy returns to his inn, where "in-to his bedde he is stryke, / And therein he lieth longe sike" (G 4235-4236). The lines run approximately parallel to A 4235-4236, which details Guy's illness after he calls for the wedding to be postponed, but in G no cause is given for Guy's illness, and the illness seems to serve no function other than allowing narrative sense to be preserved when G again begins to align with A at 4281.[106]

G's narrative does not perfectly excise the wedding episode: Guy's sickness is an awkward and unnecessary narrative detour without its context in A and C, and the Emperor's promise to wed Guy to Clarice at G 4099-4105 is simply dropped without resolution, so that the marriage never truly materializes as a threat to Guy's relationship with Felice.[107] G's Guy never dwells on Felice during the lengthy series of continental adventures that makes up this

[106] Guy's illness is narratively useful in G because when Guy returns to court after he has recovered, the narrator tells us that the "the Emperour of Guy was fayne thoo, / That his sikenesse was fro him goo" (G 4287-4288), paralleling the equivalent lines in A in which the Emperor is happy to see Guy return after his sickness.

[107] A, G, and C have the Emperor beg Guy to stay in Constantinople and marry Clarice when Guy, angered by the murder of his lion, decides to leave (see A, G 4431-4432 and C 4191-4192). However, aside from the Emperor's initial promise to marry Guy and Clarice, this is the only other moment in G where the marriage is mentioned, and it lacks the narrative context of A and C, where Guy has promised to resume the wedding to Clarice once he has recovered from his sickness. In A and C, Guy's outrage at his lion's death provides a convenient excuse for departing Constantinople and thus extricating himself from the marriage.

part of the text, but because Guy's dedication to Felice is also never challenged as it is in A and C, the text relies on the audience to do the work of implicitly assuming Guy's temporal subjective continuity: G participates in the Middle English romance practice Allen describes of "relying on readers to connect one scene to another," a process often "based on events in previous episodes, which imply retrospective explanations for undermotivated events" (2). Since G gives no indication of Guy's interiority, the audience is left to assume that Guy remains a continuous temporal subject, still adventuring with the ultimate intention of proving himself worthy of Felice. Where A and C establish Guy as a figure uninterested in and unprepared for the rigours of personal memory work, G tends to deviate at key moments so that Guy's capacity for memory is never established nor openly denied.[108] In this sense, G demonstrates an interest in shutting down some of the avenues that A and C leave open—deliberately or not—for recognizing the inherently paradoxical and problematic nature of the mode of chivalry Guy embodies.

Forgiveness, Allegiance, and the Social Consequences of Working without Memory

The episodes discussed in the previous section are primarily incidents in which Guy's autobiographical memory fails, prompting forgetfulness related to his own past. However, memory is not an isolated ability, as we saw in the discussion of the political applications for the type of cognitive work Guy struggles to perform when he decides between Felice and Clarice. The *Guy* tradition explores the advantages and consequences of a disinterest in memory-work in the related social tasks of loyalty, reconciliation, and forgiveness, all of which rely on a knight's ability to comprehend the network of interpersonal relationships,

[108] A and C also differ from G in their versions of the scene in which Guy meets his old squire Amys. In A and C, this is another instance of Guy's memory failing him. Guy and Amys fail to recognize each other, but when Guy has given his name, Amys says that Guy should recognize him because he is an old squire of Guy's who gained renown through his work for Guy; Guy then claims to recognize him, and they embrace (see A 6027-6042, C 5717-5728). In G, Amys says that Guy should recognize him, but offers no explanation as to why, and the past relationship is never established.

obligations, and betrayals that stretches back in time yet informs the present. The sociopolitical world in which Guy moves is one which the fundamentally historical structures of grudges and vengeance drive much of the action; moreover, conflicts frequently occur between people meant to be allies and within network of complex social loyalties, so that violence alone is often ineffective in resolving disputes. Like the antagonists in *Bevis*, the antagonists in *Guy* are frequently motivated to act against Guy and his allies because of their attachment to past events: Otoun apparently resents Guy for his success in their first tournament together, his resentment compounding further every subsequent time he is defeated by Guy; Reyner wars with Segyn because Segyn accidentally killed Reyner's nephew in a tournament; Tirri's father is besieged by the Duke of Lorraine because Tirri eloped with the Duke's daughter Oisel.[109]

Whereas many of Guy's enemies participate in the same stagnant, single-minded vendettas as Bevis's opponents, Guy shows a general tendency to move on from each conflict after its resolution, often with positive results. The particular formula used repeatedly for Guy's adventuring allows for this freedom: Guy arrives in the midst of a pre-existing conflict; he sides with the wronged party and offers his assistance; and through his help, the wronged party is either reconciled with or avenged upon the aggressor. He rarely has any personal connection to the conflict aside from his noble desire to support those who are wrongfully in distress, such as Tirri, Segyn, and the Eastern Emperor. The two conflicts in which his own personal loyalties as an English subject are called upon involve clear-cut threats to England (the dragon at the end of the first part of the text; the Danish invasion at the end of the second) rather than the political infighting seen on the continent. The general absence of

[109] Tirri's situation closely parallels Guy's: Tirri served the Duke and was beloved by him, but fell in love with his daughter, just as Guy loves the daughter of Rohaud, whom his father serves and who demonstrates obvious favour towards Guy. Tirri has been adventuring to prove himself a knight worthy of Oisel's love, just as Guy has been doing for Felice. Guy, unsurprisingly, shows no signs of recognizing the similarities.

preexisting bonds of loyalty allows Guy to move from lord to lord, serving one ally until his troubles have been resolved before moving on to serve another.

Notably, he befriends Emperor Reyner after fighting a number of bloody battles against him on behalf of Duke Segyn. His disinclination to dwell in the past allows him to spend several hundred lines fighting against Reyner for Segyn and then immediately begin serving Reyner once the feud between Reyner and Segyn has been resolved. When Segyn finally manages to lure Reyner to his city to beg for his forgiveness, Guy is part of the faction urging reconciliation over continued vengeance. Extended scenes of consultation emphasize the deliberation surrounding the matter of how best to address the past conflict. Guy offers his own service to Emperor Reyner as he urges reconciliation:

> Sir, for goddis Loue y bidde the,
>
> On this Duke thou haue mercy and pitee,
>
> And with that y shall your man become
>
> To serue the, Lorde, all and some. (G 2687, similar in C)[110]

Tirri urges the Emperor to have mercy on Segyn as well (G 2693, C 2607), and Reyner's own son swears to the Reyner that "euer here-after y shalbee thyn enmy" (G 2664, C 2561) unless Reyner forgives Segyn; a number of Reyner's other advisors speak up in support of Segyn as well. Only Otoun, Guy's perpetual enemy, urges Reyner to continue persecuting Segyn, expressing disbelief that Reyner could forgive Segyn for accidentally killing his nephew and adding that

> Hennes forward wil þe dred non,
>
> Schame anouȝ þai wil þe don;
>
> & ȝif þou haddest þe douk anhong,

[110] Starting at A 2565 a leaf is lost, so the corresponding lines in A are either lost or were never present. Where A is absent, I cite from G to represent the early couplet versions of the text with the assumption that G carries the same general narrative elements as the lost portion of A.

In þi lond men wold þe dred strong,

& þan after-ward þe treytour Gij,

Þat neuer ded ous bot vilanyi. (A 2727-2732, similar in C)[111]

The harshness of Otoun's suggestion and the fact that Otoun is the one to voice it suggest that we are meant to read it as an improper response against the more lenient urgings of Guy, Tirri, and Reyner's son. Reconciliation between Segyn and Reyner is clearly a desired and positive outcome, but it necessitates moving forward from the incident that prompted the conflict in the first place, in which Segyn accidentally killed Reyner's nephew. Otoun's argument is based on an uncritical engagement with the past, in which he considers only Segyn's crime. Otoun demonstrates the same tendency to remain singularly fixated on the past in his endless pursuit of his vendetta against Guy throughout the text, in contrast to Guy's constant pattern of growth and development through his movement between and resolution of conflicts.

However, Guy's advice to Reyner is not exactly the same as those of others involved in the conflict. Guy has no personal stake, nor did he witness the original misdeed. His recommendation to Reyner does not invoke the past; he asks that the Duke have "mercy and pitee" on Segyn, who has just walked through the streets "barefote" (G 2619) and "all weping" (G 2618) to prostrate himself in front of Reyner and beg for his forgiveness. Guy responds to the spectacle of the scene Segyn in the present in his entreaty for "mercy and pitee," additionally directing Reyner to consider the future rather than the past when he promises that he, Guy, will serve Reyner if only he reconciles with Segyn. Otoun, too,

[111] Manuscript condition makes the ways in which A and G deal with this scene difficult to outline with any certainty. After the leaf lost at A 2565, A resumes at 2717 with direct speech, but the name of the speaker is not included, presumably having been given on the last line of the lost leaf. Zupitza's assumption that Otoun is speaking here is sound: the line after this uncredited direct speech reads "When Gij herd Otus speke so" (A 2737), and Otoun is named as the speaker in the parallel lines in C (C 2631), in addition to which the speech is certainly in keeping with Otoun's character and role in the narrative. How G deals with Otoun's speech and Guy's rejoinder, if either are included at all, is unclear, as Zupitza notes that at G 2717 a few lines are missing.

positions his argument around the future effects of Reyner's choice, arguing that if Reyner forgives Segyn it will set a poor precedent that will reflect badly upon him. Though Guy and Otoun give opposing recommendations, they both demonstrate performances of superficial memory-work:[112] Guy suggests an uncritical rejection of the past, while Otoun recommends an uncritical refusal to reevaluate or relinquish the past. The responses of Tirri, Reyner's son, and Reyner's other advisors employ a different tactic, one that involves a critical evaluation of the past and a recommendation for forgiveness—exactly the form of reflection that Guy struggles to negotiate when he agonizes over his choice between Felice and Clarice.

Reyner's son begins his entreaty for Segyn by reminding Reyner that Segyn

> … is a noble baron.
>
> Scythe he obeyeth him to thy wille,
>
> Foryiue him thy wrathe, and that is skille,
>
> Of thy neuyew, that he slow by cas;
>
> For in his defence, by god, it was. (G 2656-2660, similar in C)

Reyner's son does go on to swear that he will become Reyner's enemy if Reyner does not reconcile, again urging Reyner to consider the future impact of his decision; however, he opens his speech retrospectively, first considering Segyn's character in the context of Segyn's relationship to Reyner. Reyner's son argues that Segyn is a "noble baron" who obeys Reyner, using evidence of Segyn's past behaviour to prove his strength of character and to suggest

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[112] My references to "superficial memory-work" or "critical memory-work" are not medieval terms but they are drawn from a distinction made in medieval writings on the *ars memorativa*. Rote repetition of knowledge is not what medieval scholars would have considered the work of *memoria*, as Carruthers explains. She writes that "the 'art of memory' is actually the 'art of recollection,' for this is the task which these schemes are designed to accomplish. They answer to principles that define and describe how reminiscence occurs, what it is, and what it is supposed to do" (*BM* 22-23). She explains further that "the crucial task of recollection is *investigatio*, 'tracking-down'" (*BM* 23), in relation to the construction of sophisticated and expansive mnemonic organizational schemes. Carruthers provides a useful example of this distinction when she distinguishes between the characterizations of Chaucer's Summoner and Man of Law. The Summoner can speak some Latin phrases overheard in court, but the Summoner's "memory" is merely uncritical repetition; in contrast, the Man of Law is notable because he has memorized every statute in such a way that he has "all cases and precedents from the time of King William ready for his immediate use" (*BM* 23). The Man of Law demonstrates an intellectually engaged memory system used for work that requires critical reflection.

implicitly that Segyn will remain a worthy and noble baron in the future. Moreover, Reyner's son revisits the specific incident responsible for the conflict between Segyn and Reyner—Segyn accidentally killed Reyner's nephew—and passes judgment on the incident itself, arguing that Segyn should be forgiven because he only acted to defend himself.[113]

Sir Gaudemer's speech to Reyner employs a similar tactic. He draws on the strength of the existing relationship between Gaudemer, Segyn, and Reyner: "Sir, y loue the Duke ouere all thing; / For he vs hath doo grete worshipping, / And sworne brethern we bee two" (G 2667-2669, similar in C). He also promises future consequences of Reyner does not make peace with Segyn, swearing that

> All my people y shall forsende,
>
> And in-to Coloigne y shall wende:
>
> Thy Castellis and Citees, that been so stronge,
>
> Destroye y shall for thy wronge. (G 2670-2674, similar in C)

Reyner's steward speaks similarly, reminding Reyner that Segyn is "moche worthe" in G (G 2678) or "a doghty knyght" in C (C 2588) and has done Reyner "grete worship" in battle (G 2679) or "grete honowre" in C (C 2589). He promises that "euere of me herafter thou shalt failly" (G 2684, similar in C). Even Tirri uses this temporally complex reasoning when he speaks, acknowledging the past loss of Reyner's nephew and suggesting how to remedy it in the future (in G, Tirri offers to serve in the nephew's place; in C, he suggests that Segyn take the nephew's place). For these continental knights, resolution to the Segyn-Reyner conflict must engage with the past, which is the site of both Segyn's crime and of Segyn's longstanding and loyal relationship with Reyner. Guy may urge mercy and offer his service

[113] Guy arrives in the midst of the conflict with Segyn, and so the audience receives no firsthand narration of the nephew's death. However, the argument made by Reyner's son accords with the apparently objective account of the event given to Guy by a pilgrim (A, G 1822-1896, C 1413-1530). G abridges the pilgrim's story significantly, but A and C give a significant amount of detail, including direct speech, so that the audience seems to be experiencing the incident with the same immediacy as Guy's own adventures.

as a reward for resolving the conflict, but those personally involved in the matter understand that it requires collective memory work through which Segyn's crime can be evaluated and his strong character can be attested. Guy is set apart as an outsider to the historical web of interpersonal loyalties and relationships in which the other knights pleading Segyn's case to Reyner are involved. Importantly, the debate still takes place entirely within the chivalric social world: this suggests that while Guy's particular mode of chivalry struggles to incorporate this form of memory-work, it is not a cognitive process from which knights are fundamentally restricted.

Yet Guy's position also offers particular social and political advantages, in particular the ease with which he can progress from conflict to conflict without undertaking much memory work of his own. Rather than engaging with the complex relationships and assumptions carried between past, present, and future as the other knights do to reconcile Segyn and Reyner, Guy can remain fixated on the future, always looking ahead to his next opportunity to prove his prowess. His attitude has obvious benefits for a noble involved in conflict with other nobles. Unlike Otoun, who insists that Reyner should continue to hold Segyn's crime against him and persecute him as a traitor, Guy is able to urge reconciliation along with Reyner's advisors, even if his future-oriented vision is only superficially involved in the temporal mental work that genuine forgiveness requires. Guy is also easily able to transfer his loyalty from one lord to another, offering his service to those in need of assistance. His transition from serving Segyn against Reyner to serving Reyner solidifies the sense of reconciliation between the two, as Guy goes from being a formidable aggressor of Reyner and his men to being a trusted companion in A and C; A tells us that "þemperour worþschiped Gij þe fre" (A 2795), while when Guy and Herraud leave to assist the Eastern Emperor, Reyner "bedeþ hem castles & tours, / Riche cites, halles, & bours" (A 2860-2861,

similar in C).[114] Unlike Otoun, who advises Reyner against forgiving Segyn and single-mindedly pursues his own vendetta against Guy, Guy easily accepts reconciliation and the accompanying changes in allegiances and alliances.[115] Without extensive past entanglement, Guy can easily leave one lord for another, and he quickly moves on from serving Reyner to aiding the Eastern Emperor against the Sultan who is attacking his lands. Guy's mode of chivalry is exceptionally well-suited to the political realities of knighthood, where allegiances could change radically as campaigns and political priorities shifted.

Once again, this seems to be acceptable and even praiseworthy behaviour; however, during his service to the Eastern Emperor, Guy's absence of fixed loyalty becomes more troubling. In all three versions, Guy, tricked into believing the (Christian) Emperor has betrayed him by the traitorous Morgadour, decides to serve the (Saracen) Sultan against whom he has been fighting instead. The Emperor resolves the misunderstanding before anything can come of the incident, but it demonstrates Guy's willingness to abandon past ties, which in this case include not only his personal tie to the Emperor but also more broadly his own allegiance to his Christian faith.[116] Hopkins notes here that though the Emperor's accusation that wealth motivates Guy's decision to desert him is untrue, Guy's real reason "is

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[114] G does not include parallels for these lines and makes no effort to establish any relationship between Reyner and Guy. While this could represent an interest in underplaying Guy's shift in allegiance from Segyn to Reyner, it could also relate to the author's apparent desire to create a more streamlined narrative, as nothing of note happens while Guy is serving Reyner until he asks Reyner's leave to go aid the Eastern Emperor.

[115] The ease with which Guy's enemies become new allies even after extensive, bloody battles in many ways represents a reality of medieval knighthood. Allies and enemies could easily be the same people, with their specific roles varying campaign by campaign as goals and allegiances shifted. Patterson notes that in Jean Froissart's account of the "horrifying" sack of Caen by Edward III, Froissart focuses "almost entirely on a single episode of chivalric generosity" in which the English knight Sir Thomas Holland rescued two French knights from English men-at-arms because they had travelled as companions previously on other campaigns (177).

[116] The Emperor belongs to Eastern Christendom, which could lessen the strength of the ostensibly common religious ground between Guy and the Emperor. However, Weiss notes that the depiction of the Eastern Emperor and Eastern Empire is surprisingly favourable in the Anglo-Norman *Gui*, particularly in comparison to its depiction of the fractious Holy Roman Empire, which is constantly torn apart by political infighting and disharmony ("*GdW*" 1). *Guy* carries on this tradition, with the Eastern Empire generally unified against the Saracen threat posed by the Sultan while the regions of the Holy Roman Empire are continuously in conflict with each other. Wiggins and Field offer some explanation for the generally positive representation of the Eastern Empire in their observation that *Gui* and *Guy* respond to "an unusual collective English memory, that of the English in Constantinople" (xix). In short, neither *Gui* nor *Guy* offer any particular grounds for reading religious difference between Guy and the Eastern Emperor.

not very much more creditable … he has been told that the emperor made light of his service. Guy's pride is injured" (95).

Moreover, the narrator offers the audience insight that Guy lacks: Morgadour also tries to trick the Emperor into believing Guy has betrayed him, but in A and C the Emperor uses the opportunity to reiterate his trust in Guy. He tells Morgadour that

> Oȝaines me misdo he nold
>
> Nouȝt for tventi somers of gold,
>
> No for to ben al to-hewe:
>
> So gode a kniȝt he is & trewe. (A 3257-3260, similar in C)

Against Morgadour's accusation, the Emperor employs the same method used by Reyner's advisors when they urged him to reconcile with Segyn. The Emperor reflects on Guy's past loyalty to him, using his memory of their relationship to reason that Guy would never betray him. Guy's method for forming and discarding relationships is not invested in the past, meaning that he lacks access to the type of temporal reasoning performed by the Emperor or Reyner's advisors in evaluating the loyalty and character of knights within their network. A and C contrast the Emperor's trust against Guy's lack thereof, and although the incident is resolved without long-term consequences, the contrast exposes how Guy's disinterest in personal memory work interferes with the formation of relationships based on mutual trust and loyalty. Only G circumvents the issue, excluding the lines in which the Emperor proclaims his trust in Guy and thus minimizing the depth of his attachment to Guy.[117] While G's Guy is still taken in by Morgadour's lie, the ease of his deception no longer makes such a strong contrast against the Emperor's declaration of loyalty. Even so, G joins A and C in

[117] In all three versions, the lie Morgadour tells the Emperor is that Guy has slept with his daughter. In A and C, the Emperor swears that Guy would never do such a thing and follows his assertion of Guy's loyalty by remarking that he has already promised his daughter to Guy, so he does not care what Guy does with her. G includes only the latter half of this conversation, so that although the Emperor does not rise to Morgadour's bait, he appears to reject Morgadour only on the technicality that Guy already has a right to his daughter, even if they are not yet married.

establishing overall throughout the first half of the text that Guy's attitude towards his own cognitive engagement with his temporal experiences has consequences for the maintenance of essential social tasks such as forgiveness and loyalty. The portrait of Guy's mode of knighthood painted across all three versions of the text is one of confusion and contradiction. His persistent disinterest in memory-work allows for his upwardly mobile chivalric identity and seems politically advantageous, even necessary, for the type of chivalric work he performs during the first half of the text. At the same time, A and C expose the troubling flaws and failings attached to his method of chivalry; even in G, which seems to make an effort to disguise many of the problems A and C reveal, Guy's disengagement from the past poses troubling questions about his loyalties and commitments.[118]

Penitence and Memory during Guy's Moment of Spiritual Revelation

While the narrative sometimes points to problems caused by Guy's disinterest in reflection, the first half of the text never condemns Guy's model of knighthood outright. Instead, in all three versions, the text rewards Guy for his efforts: having finally satisfied Felice's requirement, Guy and Felice marry with Rohaud's blessing, achieving Guy's original

[118] Despite Guy's general disinterest in reflection, his ongoing feud with Otoun does eventually compel some level of engagement in their past relationship. In A and C, Otoun's extended campaign against Guy make him the one person with whom Guy explicitly refuses to reconcile: when Otoun deceitfully proposes a truce between them, Guy tells him, "No wille ichaue no cosse wiþ þe : / In Lombardye þou bitraydest me, / & min men þou dest sle" (A 5658-5660, similar in C). He references here the episode early in the text in which Otoun's men ambushed Guy and his companions, a moment of violent betrayal that seems to have been too egregious to be forgotten by Guy. Just as Reyner's advisors counselled forgiveness based on the historic strength of Segyn's character, and just as the Eastern Emperor can establish his trust in Guy's loyalty, Guy judges Otoun based on his past behaviour, stating that Otoun's past misdeeds against Guy are too great to allow Guy to forgive him and make peace. Even this judgment, however, is fairly superficial, and in context does not reflect favourably on Guy's ability to synthesize past events and present circumstances into effective decisions about the future. While Guy will not make peace with Otoun personally, he is still fooled into allowing Otoun to make a show of peace with Tirri, and does not recognize that Otoun has set them up for another betrayal until it is too late. His effort at critical memory-work here is superficial and poorly executed. G's version of this episode is notably shorter than the versions in A and C and skims over many of the details. Most notably, G's Otoun does not offer to make peace with Guy, instead offering only to establish peace between Tirri and the Duke. While G's version allows Guy to save face, avoiding the obviousness with which he is hoodwinked in A and C, its version of this episode also means that Guy makes no effort at all to evaluate his past relationship with Otoun critically.

goal for pursuing knighthood. Central to Guy's story, however, is also a critical moment at the midpoint of the text when Guy, having gained worldly renown and finally married Felice, gazes upon the heavens and recognizes his own sinfulness. As Hopkins notes, the text is ambiguous on the exact nature of his sin. In A, to which Hopkins refers, Guy references both the slaughter he has committed and the fact that he has acted for himself rather than for God, suggesting that "either killing people is wrong, or it is only wrong if you do it for the wrong reasons" (103-104). The moment prompts Guy for the first time in the narrative to engage seriously and meaningfully with his past in a moment Price describes as "a future-defining act of retrospection in keeping with the nature of the confessional act" (94). In fact, for Price, the specific nature of Guy's sin—and even, more broadly, the details of Guy's past—is less important that the act of retrospection itself; the "actual accuracy of the confessional retrospection is of no consequence," with the narrative structure of Guy's story more invested in "confession's productive effect over its relationship to the confessor's past" (94).[119]

Taken in the context of Guy's attitude towards memory work and reflection in the first half of the text, Guy's moment of religious revelation marks his first true moment of critical personal reflection and suggests that the sin he recognizes in himself is not necessarily a specific act but a way of living and of engaging with his own subjectivity. Narrative necessity has already compelled Guy to gesture towards this kind of cognitive work in A and

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[119] The English sermon collection *Jacob's Well* implicitly emphasizes the function of memory in confession when it stresses the importance of the penitent's ability to accurately recall and describe the nature of their sin. The penitent must be able to

> in þi schryfte say ryȝtly in what astat & what degre were þou, whanne þou dedyst þat synne, & in what astate or degre was þe oþer persone by whom þou synned, were þou or þe oþer persone syke or hole, chyld or of full resoun, ȝung or olde, pore or ryche or gentyl, fre or bonde, wyttyng or vnwyttyng, wyth þi wyll or aȝens pi wyll, weddyd or sengyll, of þi kyn or of straungerys, seculere or relygyous, clerk or lewyd, mayde or wydewe, of þi gostly kynrede or nay, of þin affynyte or nay, or cristen man or iewe. telle also ryȝt what synne þou hast do, & where þou dydest þat synne, in pryue place or opyn place, in holy place or oþer place, dedyst þi synne alone or wyth helpe & strengthe of oþere, or be oþeres counfort. (185)

Confession requires the penitent to engage in the painful process of reliving their sin through detailed acts of recollection. It demands of the penitent both the ability to store personal memorial information and the willingness to access and express that information. Guy's poor memory for the events of his own life points to a serious problem in his capacity for the mental work that confession requires.

C when he deliberated over the choice to marry Clarice or remain loyal to Felice, but structurally, this moment is different. In the wedding scene, the archbishop presents Guy with the ring, and the difficulty of the mental work Guy subsequently undertakes is such that he has to externalize the process via Herraud; in this scene, Guy goes to a tower himself to survey the heavens and the surrounding lands, and his reflection occurs while he is alone.[120] More importantly, the reflection scene occurs right after Guy has apparently achieved his ideal vision of knighthood: he has become an unparalleled knight, married Felice, and overwritten his low social status, and Felice is now pregnant with a child to carry on his line. He is finally forced to confront the artifice of the endpoint in the linear conceptualization of chivalry he and Felice have constructed. Achieving the ultimate form of worldly success prompts him to consider what comes next, and for the first time in the text, his perspective begins to move beyond the limited and linear span of worldly time as he reflects critically on both his past and, implicitly, on his spiritual future as he considers his life from a religious perspective.

The sinfulness of Guy's individual actions is deeply compounded by his complete unawareness of their sinfulness through his failure to undertake personal reflection. Pierre J. Payer explains that many writers on penance followed Gratian's three-part model, in which penance required "heartfelt sorrow (*contritio cordis*), oral confession (*confession oris*), and satisfaction through deeds (*satisfaction operis*)" (51). Of these three stages, the first—heartfelt sorrow—tacitly assumes critical cognitive reflection, necessitating the memorial ability to recall one's actions, the critical ability to evaluate them as sinful, and the

[120] As Hopkins points out, authors who emphasized the necessity of confessing to a priest (including the *Jacob's Well* author) would clearly not have considered Guy's process of "self-directed penance without confession" an effective means of removing sin (62). However, Guy illustrates here the type of cognitive work that confessional penitence required and encouraged. Pierre J. Payer explains that the "traditional and most fundamental" use of the word penance "is to signify the interior disposition of a sinner seeking God's forgiveness" (50); Guy in the second half of the text is a penitential model in this sense, displaying the "interior disposition" that penitence requires.

emotionally painful but productive work of experiencing genuine sorrow for one's past deeds. Payer quotes as well the summary of the three components of penance from the 1252 directive on confession produced by the council of Nimes:

> Penance is, as Ambrose says, to lament past evils and not to commit again what must be lamented. Indeed, every penitent ought to have sorrow for sins committed and the will and proposal not to sin again. There are three things principally necessary in penance, namely: heartfelt sorrow, oral confession (if the confessant is able to speak), and satisfaction through deeds as far as possible; otherwise it is not true penance but rather simulated and fictive. (qtd 51)

The council's directive emphasizes the temporal extension of genuine penance, which involves the critical cognitive ability to reflect on one's past actions, recognize their sinfulness, and use this moment of reflection to avoid committing similar sins in the future. This summary also insists on the necessity of all three aspects of penance; an individual who is unable or unwilling to engage in genuine heartfelt sorrow and the mental work it requires can never achieve "true" penance. Read within this model, the act of meaningful reflection, rather than the exact material of the memory or its accuracy, becomes essential to the development of Guy's character and narrative in the second half of the text. Guy's moment of spiritual reflection at the text's midpoint involves the recognition of a somewhat nebulous body of sins; the very process of genuine reflection, occurring for the first time in the text, suggests that part of that sinfulness is in the absence of critical reflection in his earlier life.

In A, the reflection scene comes shortly after the text has shifted from couplets to tail-rhyme stanzas. Guy goes "to a turret" (A 21.1), where he "biheld þat firmament, / Þat thicke wiþ steres stode" (A 21.2-3); he reflects on Christ "þat alle his honour hadde him lent" (A 21.5), and on his identity as a "strong werrour" (A 21.7), bemoaning the fact that "mani man he hadde slayn wiþ wrong" (A 21.10). He goes on to expand on the source of his sorrow:

For neuer in al mi liif biforn
For him þat bar þe croun of þorn
Gode dede dede y nare;
Bot wer & wo ichaue wrouȝt,
& mani a man to grounde y-brouȝt:
Þat rewes me ful sare. (A 22.4-9)

As in the Clarice episode, when viewing the ring prompts Guy to remember Felice, Guy's moment of spiritual reflection is prompted by an external image and prompts a chain of symbolic associations, with the firmament stirring Guy to reflect on Christ and subsequently on the sinfulness of his own behaviour. However, several crucial differences mark this as a genuine moment of spiritual growth. Though Guy still requires an external image to begin his process of reflection, here he plays an active role in regarding the stars and initiating his own moment of contemplation. He also demonstrates a different kind of concern about what his contemplation reveals: whereas the ring causes Guy to weigh the practical outcomes of marriage to Clarice against loyalty to Felice, Guy now reflects on the meaning and motivation of his past actions, and the consequences are not practical effects on his social world but doubts about the spiritual quality of his soul.[121] Guy seems to recognize for himself that the events of his earlier life are undermotivated; it is their undermotivation that allows for his subsequent vow to transform himself. Most crucially, whereas other episodes of memory failure in the first half of the text were strung together without any evidence of Guy learning from or reflecting upon them, he now finally engages in reflection as a critical and spiritually transformative activity that produces genuine change in his sense of his temporal experiences. His past is no longer temporally distant and unconnected to his present; rather, it

[121] Indeed, as Furrow observes, the second half of the romance sees Guy abandon his familial and baronial responsibilities (*EoR* 80); matters of social practicality are no longer major concerns.

becomes and guides his present through his decision that "to bote min sinnes ichil wende / Barfot to mi liues ende, / To bid mi mete wiþ care" (A 22.10-12).

The key features of this episode in G are slightly different.[122] In G, when Guy comes in from hunting

> The Contree he beheld about farre,
> And the skye thikke with sterre,
> And the weder that was mery and bright.
> Guy bethoughte him anone right
> That god him had so moche honour doo
> In all londes that he come to,
> That he come neuere in noo fighte
> Bot he was holde the best knyghte,
> And neuer for his creatour,
> That had doon him so grete honour.
> And in his mynde bethoughte him anone
> That all his lif he wolde chaunge tho,
> And in goddis seruyse he wolde him do. (G 7395-7406)

Guy's reflection in G involves reflection not only upon the stars, as in A, but upon the "contree" before him, which draws him to consider how much honour God has done him "in all londes that he come to." Guy's contemplation is specifically geographical; the country before him prompts him to consider his deeds in all the other lands in which he has travelled. Medieval philosophers and the classical predecessors on whom they drew routinely conceptualized the act of remembering in geographical or architectural terms, such as the

[122] Because A has now transitioned to the stanzaic *Guy* and G and C share a common background during this portion of the text, from this point onward G and C tend to be in closer agreement.

"backgrounds" against which Cicero and Tullius discussed viewing memory-objects (Carruthers *BM* 90-91), Quintilian's memorial forest (Carruthers *BM* 78), Philo's characterization of Scriptural study "as being like constructing a building" (Carruthers *BM* 52-53), or Hugh of St. Vincent's ladder diagrams (Carruthers *BM* 300-302), which involve mentally constructing and moving around an Ark as a memory structure. Guy's reflection here is prompted by the landscape before him. In turn, it prompts a memorial journey in which Guy's past is connected to his movement through the lands where the events he contemplates occurred. This sets up the journey he will undertake in the last half of the text, in which physical movement through various countries—many of which he has visited before—facilitates his penitent reflection.

C is generally similar to G in this episode, but places increased emphasis on the use of geographical and architectural landmarks and movement in Guy's reflection. Again, the episode starts with Guy beholding "the ayre / And the lande, þat was so fayre" (C 7127-7128), but in C Guy also specifically recalls

> how he was preysed in euery lande
> Thorow dedys of hys hande,
> And how he had many slane
> And castles and towres many tane
> And how in many londys longe
> He had bene in parallel stronge
> And all for þe loue of þat maye,
> That he trauelde fore nyght and day
> And not for god, hys creatowre,
> That had done hym that honowre. (C 7133-7142)

As in G, Guy's reflection begins by viewing the country around him and continues through the geographical sites of his past. C's emphasis on the "castles and towres" Guy has captured is fitting for a version of the text that Wiggins notes is generally concerned with "outward forms of chivalry," such as material remains at Warwick (71). Unlike A, G and C do not focus on Guy's recognition of all the lives he has taken in vain or his subsequent emotional response. C alone narrates Guy's recognition that the deeds in his past were done for Felice (and, consequently, for the vision of chivalry she articulated), not for God, whereas A and G simply express Guy's dismay that he has never acted to serve God. Charny's work demonstrates his ability to interweave chivalry and piety; for Charny, as Kaeuper writes, "spiritual rectitude and physical force fused in the knightly mission" (35). For Guy, however, the two are not so closely connected. While chivalry does not necessarily preclude piety in *Guy*, it does not necessarily entail piety either; the two can become detached, and a knight can exhibit exemplary prowess without the critical cognitive work required for genuine piety.

The Role of Reflection in Guy's Spiritually Reformed Knighthood

Carruthers writes that for Aristotle, memory "makes the past perception present" and that recollection "was understood to be a re-enactment of experience" (*BM* 76). The second half of *Guy* literalizes this aspect of memory-work. Guy's journey is one of re-enactment, in which the process of reflection and remembering is understood to reconstruct and allow for reflection on moments in Guy's past, rather than reproducing these moments identically. The second half of the narrative meaningfully parallels Guy's earlier adventures in ways that facilitate reflection for Guy and for the text's audience. Each major adventure in the second half aligns with one from the first, symbolically and often literally, allowing Guy to engage in

the process of recasting his past experiences.[123] The focus of this chapter has been primarily on the ways in which Guy's memorial failings reveal unsettling contradictions in the performance of chivalry; Guy's moment of reflection at the text's midpoint marks a moment of transition as he finally begins to develop a method of chivalry that not only allows but necessitates the difficult work of critical engaging with his past. As a result, the memorial failings so prevalent in the first part of text disappear in the second part, but it is useful to consider an example from the second half to demonstrate the juxtaposition in the two models of chivalry Guy embodies in the first and second halves of the text. Each of the three major adventures in the second half deal with memory and reflection in some capacity, but the incident that deals the most overtly with the types of memory-work Guy avoided in the first half of the text is the episode in which he confronts Berrard, the nephew of his old rival Otoun.

In the Berrard episode, Guy encounters his old friend Tirri in distress. Berrard mistakenly holds Tirri accountable for the death of his uncle Otoun, whom Guy actually killed. The episode is not merely a parallel to the earlier episode in which Guy aided Tirri against Otoun and Loyer, but also a literal consequence of Guy's earlier actions; it is the most personal for Guy of the three adventures in the text's second half. The situation reflects the pattern of many of the earlier conflicts, which repeatedly revolved around feuds stemming from past misdeeds. For the first time in the text, however, Guy is not just a helpful bystander, but is personally implicated in the feud's origin. Fighting on Tirri's behalf is not just the action of a knight determined to gain renown by supporting those in need uncritically:

[123] Notably, Herraud largely drops out of the text at this point. The narrative occasionally returns to him as he fruitlessly seeks Guy in the lands through which they travelled together during the first half of the text, but Herraud no longer accompanies Guy on his journey; Guy no longer relies on Herraud's physical or memorial support. Herraud instead takes up responsibility for Guy's son Reinbroun, searching for him after he has been kidnapped by merchants. Combined with the fact that Guy travels in disguise and deliberately conceals his identity in the second half of the text, Herraud's absence demonstrates that Guy has finally internalized his process of engagement with his own past, rather than relying on others to memorialize his deeds and renown.

it also invokes Guy's past friendship with Tirri, as well as his own accountability in the circumstances that have led to Tirri's current trouble. Moreover, the way in which Guy involves himself in the incident repeatedly demonstrates his newfound determination to engage in the difficult work of remembering and the sense of moral value he now places on an individual's commitment to living in a reflective and temporally unified state.

A, G, and C all place similar emphasis on Guy's reformed cognitive work when Guy first encounters Tirri at the start of this episode. Initially, Guy fails to identify Tirri, whose misfortune has physically transformed him. When Tirri's tale prompts Guy to recognize him, Guy beholds him and juxtaposes the Tirri he used to know against the Tirri he now sees before him:

> Sir Gij biheld Tirri ful riȝt,
> Þat whilom was so noble a kniȝt,
> & lord of michel mounde.
> His bodi, was su*m*tim wele y-schredde,
> Almost naked it was bihedde,
> Wiþ sorwe & care ful bounde.
> His legges, þat wer su*m*time hosed wel,
> To-brosten he seiȝ hem eu*er*idel.
> "Allas," seyd Gij, "þat stonde."
> For sorwe þat he hadde þo
> Word miȝt he speke no mo,
> Bot fel aswon to grounde. (A 155.1-12, similar in G and C)

When Guy looks upon Tirri, he sees him in his unfortunate present state but also mentally visualizes the Tirri he used to know, contemplating both the physical and social changes time and circumstance have wreaked upon Tirri, whose body is no longer "wele y-schredde" and

who no longer has the social standing to have his legs "hosed wel." Guy's sorrow comes from the mental juxtaposition of these two versions of Tirri and the recognition that time has tragically transformed him. Importantly, the scene does not suggest that this form of cognitive work has become easy for Guy: the experience is so psychologically painful that it has physical repercussions, causing him to collapse to the ground, just as he did when he remembered Felice during the wedding episode discussed earlier. Despite the emotional difficulty memory-work entails, Guy demonstrates here that he is now capable of undertaking it of his own volition. When he offers to assist Tirri shortly after, he does so not with the undermotivated thoughtlessness that characterized his exploits in the first half, but with the intent to "wreke Tirri, mi fere" (A 159.12, similar in G and C).[124]

Guy articulates his sense of the importance of a close relationship with one's own past at the conclusion of the episode, when he finally reveals his identity to Tirri. He asks Tirri to go "out of þe cite" (A 223.2, similar in G and C),[125] removing him from the public, social space of the city so that he and Tirri are "alon" (A 223.4, similar in G and C). The revelation of his identity thus becomes not a public performance but a private moment of reflection as Guy begins to recount all the ways in which he has helped Tirri in the past, revisiting and reconstructing their relationship. When he finally reveals himself, he chastises Tirri for not recognizing him. A's Guy calls Tirri "vnkinde" (A 224.2) for this failure, while in G and C Guy simply tells Tirri, "thow owtest me to know in som manere" (G 10196, similar in C). This is a stark shift from the moments in the first half of the text in which Guy himself fails to

[124] The Berrard incident is resolved when Guy, still disguised, fights and kills Berrard on Tirri's behalf and asks the Emperor to forgive Tirri. In light of the memorial work Guy has undertaken and the past processes of reconciliation, the actual moment of forgiveness here seems oddly superficial. The Emperor agrees to forgive Tirri and restore his lands (see A 210.1-211-12, similar in G and C) but demonstrates no critical reflection on the accusation that prompted Tirri's misfortune, nor is the erroneous nature of the initial accusation ever resolved. While Guy may have undertaken an individual effort to reform his method of chivalry, this clearly does not mean that the chivalric world as a whole has been reformed.

[125] In G and C Guy does not explicitly ask Tirri to go out of the city with him, but simply to go a short distance with him, after which he leads him out of the city.

recognize close companions, notably Herraud and Amys. Initially Guy's censure seems somewhat hypocritical, given that Guy also failed to recognize Tirri upon first encountering him; however, Guy's invocation of his past relationship during his speech here suggests he is reproving Tirri for failing to recognize Guy's character through his actions—in short, for failing to engage in the type of critical chivalric memory-work that Reyner's advisors undertook when they urged Reyner to forgive Segyn. In chastising Tirri, Guy indicates that he considers this form of critical memory-work essential for his new vision of knighthood.

A, G, and C: Three Approaches to Chivalry, Memory, and Spirituality

The three versions of *Guy* discussed in this chapter all agree upon the centrality to the text of Guy's ability to engage with his own past in a meaningful way. Across these manuscripts, Guy is consistently characterized in the first half of the text as adhering to a model of secular knighthood in which the priorities are always to strive towards an unachievable model of exemplary physical excellence and to be recognized by others through gaining knightly renown. His forgetfulness and his disinterest in reflecting on his own past are natural consequences of his success in pursuing the model of knighthood Felice articulates. They allow for meaningful transformation in the second half of the text: Guy's moment of spiritual epiphany leads to a penitential journey in which Guy reflects upon and transforms the meaning of his past deeds. This transformation crafts the text into a morally uplifting work that exemplifies a form of reflective thinking relevant not just to knights but to Christian individuals at large. While the A, G, and C versions of *Guy* agree on this general structure, they primarily differ in their visions of the disparities required between the first and second halves of this text for the production of a sincere and moral vision of an individual knight's spiritual transformation. Their differences reveal the willingness of each author to expose contradictions of chivalry as a social identity.

A's depiction of Guy in the first half of the text is the most forgetful, and consequently the most morally problematic, prompting consideration of the ways in which Guy's mode of chivalry is essential to success in the political world of knighthood and yet also always teeters on the brink of social and individual breakdown. Guy seems to forget Felice for Clarice; he falls for Morgadour's effort to pit him against the Eastern Emperor, despite the Emperor's faith in him; he threatens to leave the Eastern Emperor to serve the Saracen Sultan who attacks his lands. Above all, he demonstrates a complete disinterest in engaging in any cognitive work that would require him to reflect critically upon his past, even when this disinterest causes trouble for him. A also provides the clearest articulation of Guy's sense of his wrongdoing when he does finally reflect upon his past, pointing to all the people he has killed without purpose in pursuit of his own ends. The A Guy's problematic past presents an obvious need for redress in the second half of the text. His penitence encapsulates his past refusal to engage in meaningful personal reflection and memory-work as well as the moral and spiritual consequences of that refusal. A makes it apparent that it is not only Guy who needs spiritual reforming, but the entire model of chivalry he embodies in the first half; it suggests that chivalry as a social structure risks alienating the individual knight from his own autobiography in a way that has dire consequences for his capacity to perform the cognitive work required of a morally and spiritually engaged Christian individual.

C, like NS in the case of *Bevis*, represents a relatively "middle-of-the-road" version of the text, one that makes minor adjustments to tone down the consequence of some of the moral problems exposed in A's first half, while still generally follows the narrative constructed by A. C's Guy is characterized by forgetfulness that sometimes leads to morally questionable or reprehensible actions, requiring the repentant self-reflection undertaken in the second half of the text. C makes some effort to disguise some of the breakdowns of chivalric logic that A leaves exposed: although C includes the incident in which Guy almost marries

Clarice, for instance, the moment in which he remembers Felice suggests a greater capacity for emotional memory-work than that displayed by A's Guy. C's moment of spiritual revelation also moves away from the blatant critique of mindless violence that A's Guy associates with his early career as a knight. Instead, C here offers the unique criticism that Guy acted for Felice rather than for God in his early career, suggesting a criticism of romance knighthood rather than knighthood more generally.[126] C is also notable for the way in which it introduces a particular focus on memorial monuments and geography that is less emphatic in A. C frequently emphasizes the capturing of towers and castles as symbols of past accomplishments, and includes in Guy's moment of spiritual reflection specific references to geographical and architectural features of his past. C suggests that even after Guy has begun actively engaging in memory-work and no longer relies exclusively on external symbols to prompt recollection, physical memorial objects—and in particular the trappings of chivalry—still have value in their potential for encouraging meaningful reflection.

Wiggins describes G as "a special rendition of the romance, an airbrushed version, in which the hero and his exploits are partially modernized and sanitized" for a fifteenth-century audience ("MS" 471). Absent in G are many of the episodes that in A or C portray Guy as particularly forgetful or morally problematic, including the wedding with Clarice, the Eastern Emperor's unreciprocated declaration of trust in Guy, Guy's failure to recognize his old squire Amys, and Guy's declaration of his persistent grudge against Otoun. As a result, G repositions the function of the second half of the text. G does not require Guy to have committed the particular wrongs seen in A and C; he does not need to be a particularly problematic figure before his transformation, and the text makes an effort to write over some of the holes in the logic of chivalry that A and C expose. It is simply enough that the early

[126] Charny offers approval of women who inspire knights to do great deeds, and thus of knights who are inspired by women (see "Deeds Undertaken for Love of a Lady" 52-53); again, however, Charny conceives of proper chivalry as inherently pious, whereas Guy seems to recognize here that in his focus on Felice he has removed piety from the matter altogether.

Guy does not actively pursue personal reflection and makes no active effort to engage in critical memory-work. G positions Guy as a moral model for the text's audience, suggesting that an individual is not living a spiritually meaningful life simply because he is avoiding wrongdoing. Instead, penitential reflection is a crucial activity of faith in which every individual must engage in order to lead a temporally unified and spiritual life.

Conclusion: Rewriting Text and Self in Middle English Romance

"If romances were totally predictable and conventional," writes Field,

> it would be sufficient to read one or two, and a knowledge of more would offer little; there are plenty of modern popular genres to which this applies. But the experience of reading these works is quite the reverse. We find something of a kaleidoscopic effect by which each work throws a new light and different perspective onto the others, accumulating a cultural and aesthetic depth. In this respect, the very size and categoric slipperiness of the corpus of popular romance become part of its particular quality. ("PR" 28)

The "kaleidoscopic effect" Field describes is not just a consequence of reading different romances, but of reading different versions of a single romance where redactors have taken the liberty of adjusting the text to suit their own particular visions. Manuscript versions of romances such as *Bevis* and *Guy* occupy a space between copies and new texts, a space obscured by print culture but, in many ways, excavated by the digital world. Medieval redactors, authors, translators, and scribes negotiated competing demands for conformity and reinvention; this study of *Bevis* and *Guy* has demonstrated both a sense of commitment to the existing narrative structures in these texts and a desire to make the necessary adjustments to transform these texts into aesthetically, morally, and culturally superior works to their predecessors. Revision indicates an ongoing sense of the relevance of the problems and ideas *Bevis* and *Guy* untangle, as well as of the excitement and moral inspiration they have to offer.

Negotiating one's own subjectivity proves to be cognitive work very similar to the process in which medieval redactors engaged as they conceptualized and adjusted their texts according to their own culturally informed senses of textual identity. Both the texts these redactors copied and the characters they constructed involved a constant and open-ended process of critical reflection designed to produce subjective cohesion. In the previous two

chapters, I argued that manuscript variation in *Bevis* and *Guy* reveals the contemporary concerns of medieval redactors and audiences about the ability of these heroes to demonstrate subjective continuity over the forces of time and narrative pressure. Patterns between variations illustrate not only a concern with crafting temporally unified subjects, but in portraying these heroes as capable of doing the mental work required to comprehend and cohere their own mutable identities. *Bevis* and *Guy* demonstrate a sense of the hero's interior world as the space in which the hero makes sense of their existence in and across time, requiring difficult cognitive work that produces moral and spiritual benefits. This concern extends not only to the capacity of Bevis and Guy to provide spiritual and moral examples of critical autobiographical memory-work and reflection to their audiences, but also to a network of other social anxieties that produced multivocal and variable debates over the centuries during which these texts were written, translated, copied, and adapted. National and cultural identity, lineage, history, folklore, chivalry, piety, loyalty, forgiveness, contrition—*Bevis* and *Guy* reveal the ways in which personal memory-work and the ongoing, adaptable construction of personal identity are implicated in each of these social concerns, and more broadly in an individual's capacity to participate critically in the relationships, ideological structures, and social constructs of their communities.

The contexts in which I discussed these issues were particular to the Middle Ages, drawing on medieval debates about the *ars memorativa*, the neuropsychology of memory, the virtue of prudence, the proper approach to contrition, the essentiality of cultural identity, and the relationship between chivalry and piety. My interests lay in how redactors adapted and adjusted texts to suit their own culturally and historically specific anxieties, and how medieval audiences might have interpreted the ideas these texts presented. In many ways, however, the cognitive challenges to which the heroes of the texts are subjected feel surprisingly modern. The *Bevis* redactors struggle to resolve the cultural identity of their

hero, who spends most of his life split between competing national and religious influences; the *Guy* redactors test the limits of their hero's ability to live a mentally virtuous life within the limits of a social identity that sometimes seems at odds with the very values it strives to uphold. Both Bevis and Guy embody a cognitive struggle inextricably linked to the process of comprehending, articulating, adapting, and sustaining a sense of one's own identity, which is always necessarily put under pressure by our experiences of time. These romances insist that change is an essential, desirable force in the human experience of time, but they acknowledge as well that the mental work required to accommodate experience and development is difficult, often painfully so. The "vast and unlimited chamber" of personal memory that Augustine describes is always a space of negotiation, and his observation that "I myself do not grasp all that I am" (10.15) encapsulates the constant problem of the human subject, for whom the passage of time means the constant pressure to adapt and reflect. Nonetheless, for medieval audiences, the work this process entails is worthwhile: as Carruthers writes, "in human minds, time exists, and yet by disciplined thought we can withdraw from it and in some way imitate the eternal present of God" (*BM* 54). Memory-work is arduous, and autobiographical memory-work can be psychologically agonizing, yet this work weaves connections between past, present, and future, allowing us to construct meaningful narratives about ourselves as subjects in relation to our variable social worlds.

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