GEFFREI GAIMAR

Estoire des Engleis | History of the English
London British Library MS Royal 13 A. xxi, fo. 113r
PREFACE

It is more than forty years since I first read Gaimar, and my copy of Alexander Bell’s edition is beginning to show signs of the heavy and constant use to which it has been put ever since I bought it in Berkeley in 1968. As times change, so does scholarly fashion, and this has resulted in Bell’s meticulously edited and highly interventionist critical text no longer corresponding to today’s editorial orthodoxies. It has also been out of print for decades now, and the need for a new edition (with, of course, parallel translation to meet new tastes and requirements) has long been recognized. One of the reasons for the critical neglect from which the Estoire des Engleis has suffered since the 1960s must surely have been its relative unavailability, and it is in order to remedy this in particular that I have slowly, over the years, been preparing this re-edition. My original intention had been to publish it in the Occasional Publications Series of the Anglo-Norman Text Society, but the colleagues to whom I gave it to read as I worked on it suggested that it could usefully have a wider readership than a scholarly society’s subscribers’ list could provide. It should not, however, be assumed that this edition in any way supplants Bell’s, to whose wide and exemplary erudition I take this opportunity of paying tribute. His variant apparatus and his notes to the text, for instance, remain invaluable resources to any serious student of the Estoire des Engleis. I was fortunate enough, as secretary of the Anglo-Norman Text Society, to inherit, in 1985, Bell’s complete handwritten transcriptions of all four of Gaimar’s surviving manuscripts, and I have made free and full use of these in preparing my text. As Bell’s treatment of textual variants is so thorough and, in general, so reliable, I have not thought it necessary to duplicate these data in my edition.

The list of friends and colleagues whom I have consulted on Gaimar over the years is long and diverse, and I should like to thank everyone who has contributed, in whatever way, to making the volume what it is. Invidious though it might be to single out individuals, I feel that I must mention the large debt of gratitude which I owe to John Gillingham, who subjected not only the historical content of the book but also the translation to searching criticism, and thereby helped
improve it immeasurably. To Sarah Kay also I am particularly grate-
ful, both for her support over the years and for her reading of my final
version and for the skill which she brought to what must often have
seemed a thankless task. I can only hope that I have made the best
possible use of the guidance and advice of both of these friends. My
thanks go, in addition, to David d’Avray and Paul Brand, as well as to
the Oxford University Press and its production team for their part in
bringing this undervalued text back into print and making it available
to a new generation of readers.
ABBREVIATIONS


**Brut** *Le Roman de Brut de Wace*, ed. Ivor Arnold (SATF; Paris, 1938–40)


**Horn II** *The Romance of Horn by Thomas*, ed. Mildred K. Pope; vol. ii revised and completed by T. B. W. Reid (ANTS 12–13; Oxford, 1964)


**T–L** *Altfranzösisches Wörterbuch*, ed. A. Tobler and E. Lommatzsch et al. (Berlin and Wiesbaden, 1925–2008)
INTRODUCTION

Geffrei Gaimar’s *Estoire des Engleis*, the oldest surviving work of historiography in the French vernacular, is all that survives of a much longer and more ambitious chronicle, which, to judge from its epilogue, had originally opened with the mythical Trojan origins of British history. The version extant today begins *in medias res* with the arrival of Cerdic in Britain in 495, and closes with the death of William Rufus in 1100. Up until the accession of Edgar in 959, its narrative follows the annalistic model of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, which Gaimar seems to have known in its Northern Recension. He accommodates this unpromising material to the requirements of a verse chronicle destined for a predominantly secular audience firstly by consistently suppressing all but a few references to ecclesiastical history, and secondly by introducing a number of narrative interludes from more popular sources. Although he does not hesitate to take liberties with chronology, and is neither exempt from error nor averse, on occasion, to creative rewriting, Gaimar’s is in general a conscientious historical narrative. Its principal claim to our attention lies in the fact that it provides an alternative secular voice to those of the better-known monastic and church chroniclers of the twelfth century. His patrons were well-connected members of the minor aristocracy of Lincolnshire, and the provincial Anglo-Norman baronage must, at least in the first instance, have been his intended audience.

At the same time as twelfth-century Lincolnshire, formerly part of the Danelaw, could lay claim to a particularly rich and diverse cultural heritage, it was also to be the theatre of a series of political and territorial clashes between the English, the Normans, the Bretons, and the Flemings during one of England’s rare periods of civil war from 1139 until 1147. The persistence of a Scandinavian cultural substratum in the area, even into the 1130s, can be assumed with a high degree of plausibility. This regional culture had been facilitated by the mutual intelligibility between the Norse and English languages that had long since been a feature of the area’s multiculturalism. A significant Norse influence on the language of the Middle English author Orm from Lincolnshire, for example, is one tangible argument in favour of some measure of Scandinavian cultural continuity even
into the second half of the twelfth century.\(^1\) Another, as we shall see, is the important and privileged place occupied by the Danes, and by narratives of Scandinavian interest and origin, in Gaimar’s *Estoire des Engleis*, the provenance, patronage, and audience of which can all be ascribed, beyond reasonable doubt, to Lincolnshire.

From the point of view of literary production, one needs here to visualize what Dominica Legge aptly described as small provincial courts acting as centres of patronage and connected by a network of close family ties.\(^2\) The production and reception of literature in the French vernacular, the idiolect of the aristocratic Norman élite and their descendants, were initially, in other words, a local affair, even if, as in the case of Gaimar, the work in question had also a national dimension. This is not to deny the existence, concurrently, of other important centres of literary production, in particular the royal court, which, prior to Gaimar, had patronized, for instance, Philippe de Thaon and Benedeit, the earliest Anglo-Norman authors of works dating from the 1110s and the 1120s. Subsequently also, under Henry II, the royal court appears to have served as a centre for history writing in the vernacular in particular, with Wace and, in his wake, Benoît de Sainte-Maure seeming to enjoy the unofficial status of royal historiographers by appointment. The cloister was also, of course, an important producer of writing in Anglo-Norman, particularly translations from the Latin. However, provincial courts continued to function as centres of patronage throughout the 12th twelfth century, as that of Gilbert fitz Baderon lord of Monmouth, another Breton incidentally, who patronized Hue de Rotelande at Credenhill near Hereford in the 1180s and 1190s, so well exemplifies.\(^3\)

Among the incomers into Lincolnshire in the post-Conquest period, three major landowners stand out with particular prominence:

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Hugh bishop of Avranches, founder of the house of Chester, the Breton count Alan Rufus, first lord of the honour of Richmond in Yorkshire, and Walter de Gant (Ghent), the foremost Flemish landowner in England at the time. Whereas descendants of the first two were to become major players in the succession drama of Stephen and Matilda, the family of the third has a particular claim to our attention as fee-holders of the major Lincolnshire estates of Gaimar’s patrons.  

These, as Gaimar himself tells us, were Constance and her husband Ralph fitz Gilbert, who can be presumed to be minor members of the widely disseminated and highly influential Clare family, and who were tenants of the Lincolnshire fees of Gant (at Scampton, South Ferriby, and Great Steeping in particular), and of Crevequer/Crevécœur (in the hundreds of Hill and Candleshoe), and under-tenants of the archbishop of York (at Dowsby and Lenton). The fitz Gilberts had links also with Wiltshire and Hampshire, where Constance seems to have come into possession of estates (at Alton, Empshott, and Eastleigh, amongst others) in right of Robert de Venoiz, an under-marshal in the royal household and, presumably, her father. To categorize Constance on the strength of this supposed relationship as ‘an heiress who lived at Adeliza’s court’, as Legge implied, and others after her have assumed, is quite unjustifiable. Numerous benefactions by the fitz Gilberts are recorded: Southwick Priory near Portsmouth was patronized by them, and they were benefactors also, back in Lincolnshire, to Kirkstead Abbey, Stixwould, Bardney, and Revesby, as well as to nearby Bridlington. Ralph was, in addition, founder of the Augustinian priory of Markby. Ralph was still alive in 1167, and appears to have died around 1172.

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4 ODNB xxi. 389 for Gilbert de Gant; xlvi. 53–6 for Ranulf (II) de Guernons, 4th earl of Chester; i. 557–8 for Alan Rufus (also Notes to the Text, l. 6287); cf. Platts, *Lands and People in Medieval Lincolnshire*; also Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Lincolnshire*.

5 See Notes to the Text, ll. 5899, 6258, 6350–1.


7 Wall, ‘Culture and Patronage in 12th-Century Hampshire and Lincolnshire’; cf. Mason, *William II Rufus, the Red King*, 226–7 for the Venoiz connection, and Notes to the Text, ll. 6182–99. Bell had made the link with the Venoiz (he called them Venuz) in 1921.


9 Newman, *The Anglo-Norman Nobility in the Reign of Henry I*, 78; see Notes to the Text, l. 6003.

10 See Notes to the Text, ll. 1290–1300.
No records have survived of the Venoiz family between 1130 and 1165, and the earliest mention of the fitz Gilberts in Lincolnshire is from after 1139. It is not, therefore, possible to verify Bell’s contention that the family moved from Hampshire to Lincolnshire and that this move coincided with the period of composition of Gaimar’s Estoire, the date of which can in all probability be set, as I have shown, between March 1136 and April 1137. Besides, Gaimar himself tells us that the Yorkshire magnate Walter Espec was instrumental in obtaining one of his source texts for him, that another was kept in Washingborough in Lincoln, and that Nicolas de Trailli, a canon of York and Walter Espec’s nephew, could vouch for its bona fides. In view of this sort of precise and incontrovertible evidence, the need for further biographical conjecture is surely difficult to justify.

Certainly it would be useful and interesting to be able to identify the Geffrei Gaimar who names himself on five occasions as author of his Estoire des Engleis, but he has left no clear trace in the numerous contemporary records, which would seem to indicate that he, somewhat surprisingly, had no benefice or preferment in the region. The forename Geoffrey is too common among Anglo-Normans to be in any way informative, while investigating possible etymologies of his second name is inconclusive: Widemar, Wàidmar/Gàidmar, Winimar are Germanic names, Guihomar (as in Guigemar by Marie ‘de France’), Wimar, and Wymarc are Breton. It is no doubt coincidence that one Wimar/Guimar was steward to earl Alan I of Richmond, and that a certain Geoffrey, recorded between 1100 and 1115, was probably his kinsman and a local steward in Lincolnshire.

As the name is not a toponymic, any link with Gaimara, a locality in Caen, seems unlikely. Equally implausible are other identifications of the sort that link the author with any number of Geoffreys, including the Gaufridus violator who in the 1130 Pipe Roll is granted a generous annual salary for life. The Pipe Rolls of succeeding

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11 Short, ‘Gaimar’s Epilogue and Geoffrey of Monmouth’s Liber vetustissimus’; cf. for a different perspective Dalton, ‘The Date of Geoffrey Gaimar’s Estoire des Engleis’, who argues for 1141–50; see also Notes to the Text, l. 2332.
12 See Notes to the Text, l. 6482; for Walter Espec see ODNB xviii. 602–3.
13 See Notes to the Text, ll. 570, 2923, 3284.
14 Early Yorkshire Charters, ed. Farrer and Clay, v. 18–24, 352–3 and note; The Registrum Antiquissimum of the Cathedral Church of Lincoln, ed. Foster, i. 46, charter 71.
15 Pipe Roll of 31 Henry I, 152. Among candidates for identification are: the family of the Breton Robert fitz Wymarc, who served in the households of Edward the Conqueror, and who was a Domesday landholder in Essex, Norfolk, and Suffolk (ODNB
generations do, however, record a Ranulfus filius Gaimar/Gaimer in Lincolnshire between 1193 and 1196, although no more specific details have survived. Of the six mentions of the author’s name within his work, one (2923) presents a curious and inexplicable variant spelling *Gillemar*, which is confined to one of the four surviving manuscripts.

Gaimar’s command of Latin, English, and French, his wide learning, and his skill as a narrative poet place him in a similar category to that of Wace and Benoît de Sainte-Maure, but with the added qualification of a remarkable knowledge of the archaic West Saxon *Schriftsprache* and of Danelaw traditions. I would expect him to have been born in England. Gaimar would have an honourable place in the history of English literature if only because he must be the earliest known translator of English into French. His claim, however, transcends the purely linguistic, and his contribution to Anglo-Norman literature, as much an integral part of the Continental culture whose language it uses as it is of Insular culture, is highly significant.

As the oldest surviving example of historiography in the French language, the *Estoire des Engleis* deserves the closest critical scrutiny both as a historical and as a literary document. Gaimar, despite being a learned (presumably secular) cleric, deliberately chose to write in French and in verse. He was not attempting—and failing—to write monastic history in the style of William of Malmesbury’s Latin prose.
It is not, therefore, relevant for modern historians condescendingly to castigate his narrative as being ‘so grossly error-ridden as to be altogether unreliable’.\(^{20}\) Accuracy and reliability in that sense were not Gaimar’s aims, and such statements tell us more about modern critical expectations than about medieval intentionality. These are the same scholars who celebrate William of Malmesbury’s supposed ‘modernity’ as a historian without ever commenting on his superstitious gullibility in matters, for example, of portents, wonders, and miracles. Recognizing God’s hand in natural phenomena and in everyday trivia is, of course, a typical attitude of mind among medieval clerics describing the world as they wished to see it, and such a perspective is to be expected and understood. So, too, with Gaimar’s history, which offers an alternative, largely secular view of history as his particular audience wished to see it. Gaimar was writing an innovative sort of history, not ‘history for historians’, but a new genre of ‘history as romance and romance as history’.\(^{21}\) This was history designed for the consumption of the secular aristocracy who patronized him, and for whose instruction, edification, and entertainment he composed his vernacular poetry. In so doing, he was setting himself precisely the same agenda as William of Malmesbury, who famously defined historiography as adding spice to moral instruction by providing entertaining accounts of the past: ‘historiam . . . quae iocunda quadem gestorum notitia mores condiens, ad bona sequenda vel mala cavenda legentes exemplis irritat’.\(^{22}\) And Gaimar would certainly have shared Henry of Huntingdon’s point of view when he contended that learning from the past actually improved the morals of secular society: ‘seculares ad bona sollicitant’.\(^{23}\) Gaimar’s audience and his audience’s tastes were simply different from those of historians and chroniclers writing for a learned reading public. In this difference lies the originality as well as the intellectual and artistic value of Gaimar’s historiographic enterprise.

\(^{20}\) Hollister, *Henry I*, 103. Though more open-minded towards Gaimar’s narrative in general, Frank Barlow, *William Rufus*, 381 writes of his account of Rufus’s expeditions to Maine that ‘scarcely a detail . . . can be trusted’. Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England cc. 550 to cc. 1370*, 209–12, tries to be more sympathetic but uses romance as a derogatory term and finds his history inaccurate and of little value. John Gillingham’s subtle appreciation of Gaimar’s artistry makes him unique amongst contemporary historians (*The English in the Twelfth Century*, 233–58, 113–22), and Emma Mason (*William II Rufus*) follows courageously in his footsteps.

\(^{21}\) Field, ‘Romance as History, History as Romance’.

\(^{22}\) *GRA* 150.

\(^{23}\) *HH* 4.
Breaking the monopolistic hold that Latin had over historiography and the church-centred perspective it propagated, and broadening its accessibility to include those hitherto excluded from historical culture, were amongst the most far-reaching achievements of the humanist venture that we call the Renaissance of the twelfth century. Once the vernacular becomes a vehicle for the preservation of culture, whole swathes of society are admitted into the world of learning by being given a key to the past, functional access to the present, and a means of communicating their hopes and aspirations for the future. Orality is concretized in writing, memory loses some of its fallibility. The dumb not only speak but, even more miraculously, become articulate.

Among the bilingual clerics who, in this process, took upon themselves the role of cultural intermediaries in post-Conquest Britain, Gaimar occupies a unique position as the very first French vernacular chronicler whose work has survived. To his contemporary and rival David, known to us only by name, he suggests, in the epilogue to his Estoire des Engleis (6501–6518), that the writing of contemporary history should henceforth be extended in scope to include such courtly pursuits as festivities, hunting, drinking, pomp, ceremony, displays of wealth and generosity, as well as amorous dalliance. Fun, in other words, as well as grim reality, the social as well as the political. Gaimar’s history itself, of course, exemplifies this mixture of fact and fiction, this juxtaposition of the historical and the literary, and as a recipe the balance between the annalistic rigour of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, his major source,24 and the proto-romance interludes with which he peppers his narrative was both innovative and trend-setting.

That Gaimar wished his history to be regarded as authoritative, however, is abundantly clear from the careful and detailed references in his epilogue documenting his numerous written sources, their provenance, and their pedigree.25 He presents himself as a self-conscious scholar anxious to assure his audience of the authenticity of the material they have been listening to. Although for us today he is very much a literary pioneer, he lays no claim to such a distinction, leaving us to assume that he was writing within an already existing literary tradition.26

24 Gaimar used an independent copy of the Northern Recension of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, on which see Short, ‘Gaimar’s Epilogue and Geoffrey of Monmouth’s Liber vetustissimus’, 320–33. See also Notes to the Text, ll. 2314, 3586.
There is naturally no question of his having invented the French counterparts of either the annalistic or the romance discourses which he uses with such fluency. He makes no overt attempt to emphasize the value of his work as entertainment, but by adding a comparison with the historical text of his rival, Gaimar is able to suggest that his is less limited, less austere, and more courtly in its coverage than David’s. This is the limit of his claim to originality.

His position as pioneer inevitably affects our reading of him. Given the lack of literary precedents, his work is destined to be read always in retrospect, that is in terms of what both historiography and romance later became. He did, however, have a literary contemporary, also presumably a secular cleric, albeit one who wrote in Latin, with whose work his bears comparison. Geoffrey of Monmouth, the source of the now lost first wing of Gaimar’s literary diptych, also contains interludes of sorts (‘curious episodes, some of them more than touched with reality, others purely fictional’)

27 and incidental detail designed to lighten an otherwise seemingly endless succession of battles.

Gaimar’s is also, as Rees Davies reminds us, ‘an essentially English story, with Hereward the Wake outstripping William the Conqueror in the attention he receives’. In common with William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon, and thereby contributing with them to the establishment of a new historiographical orthodoxy, Gaimar sees himself as a historian of England rather than of Britain, which, he tells us (ll. 31–4), lost its name when the Angles invaded and which thereafter became known as England.

All that remains today of the *Estoire des Engleis* are four manuscripts which preserve the second part of what Gaimar’s epilogue informs us was a wide-ranging verse history that stretched from Jason and the Argonauts to the death of William the Conqueror’s son Rufus in 1100. The assumption is that the early part of Gaimar’s chronicle came to be discarded by subsequent compilers in favour of Wace’s *Roman de Brut*. The four extant manuscripts of the *Estoire des Engleis* share a number of features: all of them are historiographic compilations in which in Gaimar’s text is preceded by a copy of Wace’s *Brut*, in two of them (Durham and Lincoln) it is followed by Jordan Fantosme’s *Chronicle*, and in the same two by a copy of the *Description of Britain*.

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MS D

The oldest witness to Gaimar’s text is MS Durham Cathedral Library C. IV. 27, which dates from the end of the twelfth, or the start of the thirteenth century. It has a total of 167 folios measuring 233 × 160 mm, with a writing block of 190 × 125 mm. The ruling, which is elaborate, is in two columns of 36 ll. for fos. 1–138, then in thirty-six single-column lines for fos. 139–167. There are four hands: 1 = fos. 1–60, 2 = fos. 61–96, 3 = fos. 97–138, 4 = fos. 138–end. Gaimar’s text, written by hands 2 and 3, begins in the thirteenth regular eight-leaf gathering and ends in the nineteenth. The verse-lines are set out with alternate indentation. Apart from a gold initial on a blue background on fo. 1, simple red or green initials are the only decoration. The contents are: fos. 1–94 Wace’s Brut (with Prophecies of Merlin by Helias inserted); fos. 94–137 Gaimar’s Estoire; fos. 137–138 Description of Britain; fo. 138 short epilogue to Gaimar; fos. 139–167 Fantosme’s Chronicle.30 This is our MS D.

MS L

Lincoln Cathedral Chapter Library 104 (A.4.12) dates from the end of the thirteenth century. It has 189 folios measuring 255 × 180 mm, with a writing block of 195 × 120 mm ruled in two columns of thirty-two lines. There is a single hand, and there are twenty-four eight-leaf gatherings. There are plain red or blue initials and some elegant marginal grotesques in pen. On fos. 58 and 182 there is a coat of arms, in pencil, of the Courtenay family. The contents are: fos. 1–108 Wace’s Brut (with Prophecies of Merlin by Willeme inserted); fos. 108–157 Gaimar’s Estoire (with short epilogue); fo. 157 Description of Britain; fos. 158–189 Fantosme’s Chronicle. The manuscript may have belonged to Cerne in Dorset.31 This is our MS L.

MS H

London College of Arms Arundel XIV (150) is dated to the first quarter of the fourteenth century. It has 238 folios of 260 × 185 mm, and forms a composite volume of three parts. There are at least four different hands, but the Brut and Gaimar (though probably not Langtoft) seem to be in the same hand. The contents of the first part of the manuscript are: fos. 1–92 \textsuperscript{v} Wace’s Brut (without the Prophecies of Merlin); fos. 93–124 \textsuperscript{x} Gaimar’s Estoire (with some passages missing and no epilogue; fo. 125 is blank); fos. 125\textsuperscript{v}–132 the Lai d’Haveloc;\textsuperscript{32} fos. 133–147 \textsuperscript{x} Pierre de Langtoft’s Règne d’Edouard 1\textsuperscript{er};\textsuperscript{33} fos. 148–9 La Lignée des Bretuns et des Engleis;\textsuperscript{34} fos. 150–221 Chrétien de Troyes’s Perceval (Le Conte du Graal). The gatherings are mostly of twelve leaves. The text is laid out in double columns of forty lines each. The second part of the manuscript consists of Walter of Henley’s Housbon- drie (fos. 222–9 \textsuperscript{v} in an earlier looking hand),\textsuperscript{35} and the third part (fos. 230–8 in a later hand) of a poem on the art of love.\textsuperscript{36} The genealogy on fo. 149 indicates a date of 1307–20 for the copying of the first part of the manuscript, though Thiolier’s further suggestion of a localization in the Welsh marches or Hereford is very speculative.\textsuperscript{37} A manuscript formerly in Peterborough Cathedral and listed in the catalogue as ‘C xvi’ also contained Walter of Henley’s Housbondrie as well as ‘Historia Anglorum Gallice et ritmice’.\textsuperscript{38} Gaimar found his way into the prose Brut tradition and into the Eulogium Historiarum and Chronicon Johannis Bromton in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.\textsuperscript{39} The College of Arms MS is our MS H.

\textsuperscript{32} Dean with Boulton, \textit{Anglo-Norman Literature}, no. 152.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., no. 66.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., no. 29.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., no. 394.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., no. 245.
\textsuperscript{37} In his edition of Pierre de Langtoft, \textit{Le Règne d’Edouard 1\textsuperscript{er}}, 61–9.
\textsuperscript{38} Blaess, ‘Les Manuscrits français dans les monastères anglais au Moyen Age’, 346. The ‘Romancium Historia Angliae’ which king John borrowed from Reginald de Cornhill in 1205 (\textit{Rotuli Litterarum Clausarum}, i. 29) could possibly have been a copy of Gaimar’s Estoire.
MS R
London British Library Royal 13. A. xxi (olim 1146) is also a composite volume, and its second component (fos. 13r–150), belonging to the early fourteenth century, is the book which concerns us most directly here. In its present form the Royal manuscript has a total of 194 folios, with pages measuring approximately 255 × 190 mm. Its first part (fos. 2–11v) consists of a single twelve-leaf quire (lacking its first and its last leaf; fo. 5 is mutilated), written in a thirteenth-century hand in triple columns of forty-seven lines each. It preserves an incomplete Anglo-Norman copy (2,740 lines) of Herman de Valenciennes’s biblical paraphrase Li Romanz de Dieu et de sa mere.40 The recto face of fo. 12 is blank, and on its verso face and on fo. 13r there is what seems to be a preliminary draft of a cosmological diagram. The volume’s third part (fos. 151–192), from the thirteenth century, comprises six religious texts in Latin including Jerome, Cassiodorus, and Isidore, and two letters. It might originally have been at Durham.41 Two flyleaves, fos. 193–4, comprising a fragment of a late fifteenth-century index in French, close the volume.

The second part of the book opens (fos. 13v–39v) with the Latin text of the Imago Mundi, here preceded by two prefatory letters and attributed to Henry of Huntingdon (‘Liber Henrici qui dicitur Ymago Mundi’).42 This is followed, on fo. 40, by a diagrammatic representation (platte) of the Heptarchy, which Bell attributes to East Anglia.43 On fo. 40v, after a blank column, begins Wace’s Brut in a hand that looks identical to that of the Imago. The Brut extends, in double columns of between forty-two and forty-eight lines each in a writing block measuring 205 × 145 mm, as far as fo. 113. Wace’s text is, however, interrupted between fos. 41 and 77v (between ll. 53 and 8728 of the text as printed) by another version, now known as the Royal Brut.44 The Prophecies of Merlin are not interpolated. Fo. 106 is mutilated.

40 Dean with Boulton, Anglo-Norman Literature, no. 485; Li Romanz de Dieu et de sa mere d’Herman de Valenciennes, ed. Spiele, 151, no. 24.
41 Bell, Le Lai d’Haveloc, 84–5.
42 Gaimar, ed. Hardy and Martin, pp. xi–xii, thought that fos. 31–39v were accretions to the Imago Mundi, but cf. Catalogue of Western Manuscripts . . . , ii (London, 1921), 86–7.
43 Bell, ‘The Royal Brut Interpolation’.
The *Brut* is followed, without other interruption than a single blank line and a rubric, and without change of hand, by Gaimar’s *Estoire* (fos. 113–50) with the sole surviving copy of the long epilogue. On fo. 116 eight lines remain unfilled, and on fo. 118 one line has been left blank. Only the first two lines of the second column of fo. 150 have been used, and the verso face is blank. Damage has occurred to fos. 115, 116, and 117, and parts of the text have been torn away. Decoration in this part of the manuscript is minimal: each verse-line initial is splashed in red, and the larger (two-line) section initials are alternately blue and red. Several large index signs in the margin draw attention to particular passages (fos. 113v, 114, 115, 118v, etc.). Names and dates are frequently repeated by the scribe in the margins and outlined in red. There is no indentation in the layout of the text, line initials being aligned and accommodated in a separate column, and the writing begins below the first ruled line. Each verse-line ends with a point at line level. Apart from this, there is little or no punctuation.

The collation of fos. 13–150, the part of the manuscript in which the *Estoire* is copied, indicates that it was a separate unit comprising eighteen quires (catchwords and some remains of signatures survive in several places). The copying of the Gaimar begins within the same gathering as the end of the *Brut*, but the transition from the *Imago* to the *Brut* coincides with a change of gathering:

\[
2^4, 3^4 (+1), 4^6, 5^8, 6^4 (+1)
\]

The Heptarchy platte (fo. 40) is a singleton added to the start of quire 7, and the *Brut* begins on its verso face:

\[
7^{(1+)} 12, 8–9 12, 10^8 (+1), 11^10, 12–13^8
\]

Gaimar’s *Estoire* starts on the second leaf of quire 14 (fo. 113), and ends on the singleton added to quire 18 (fo. 150):

\[
14^6, 15–17^8, 18^6 (+1)
\]

The *Imago*, the *Brut*, and the *Estoire* share the same double-column page size, the same system of ruling, and a single hand seems to have copied all three texts. As is to be expected, however, abbreviations and contractions are much more in evidence in the Latin text than in the vernacular ones, and the scribe is clearly much more at home in the former. Word division is clear and consistent, and punctuation, apart

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45 This textual transition coincides with the introduction of a thicker and stiffer sort of parchment.
from regular verse points, very sparse. Among the palaeographic characteristics of the hand we may note the generally short ascenders and descenders, the wedge-shaped ascenders to \( l, b, d, h \), some forked shafts on \( h \), the connected minims of \( m, n \), and \( u \), the upper bow of \( a \) completely closed, biting between \( d, p \) and following rounded letters, the flattened and elongated lower bow of \( g \), the vertical of \( t \) not rising above the transverse, \( i \) consistently marked in proximity to other minims, some examples of \( e \) made in a single stroke. Individual characteristics of this particular hand include flat-topped \( l \) and right-angled long \( s \). All the above features are consistent with a date early in the fourteenth century, and do not contradict the evidence for a dating around 1307 adduced below.

A fifteenth-century ex-libris from Hagneby Abbey on fo. 14, the first page proper of the *Imago Mundi*, can be assumed to refer to the whole of the book of which the Wace and the Gaimar were, and are, part, and to point therefore to a Lincolnshire connection, if not provenance. Hagneby was situated within a few miles of the Augustinian priory of Markby, of which Ralf fitz Gilbert had been the founder. This would be particularly interesting in view of the strong regional culture which we have posited in discussing the origins of Gaimar’s *Estoire*. Another Hagneby book is Cotton Vespasian B. xi, fos. 1–61, the *Hagneby Chronicle*,\(^{46}\) and, as has already been pointed out by several commentators, it looks very much as if Royal fos. 13–150 and Vespasian fos. 2–61, which have been copied by the same scribe, belonged originally together in the same book.\(^{47}\) The *Hagneby Chronicle*, which has some occasional French passages embedded in its Latin prose (fos. 36, 37, 38r–v, 49v), was written in or shortly after 1307, when its narrative comes to an end.

This is our MS R, the base manuscript of the present edition. That R is, textually speaking, the most complete and by far the best of these manuscripts has long been recognized, not least since Vising, who, in 1882, made a careful study of the textual tradition of the *Estoire* and


drew up a stemma of its extant manuscripts. Vising’s stemma was adopted without modification by Martin who, in 1888, completed Thomas Duffus Hardy’s edition and translation of the text for the Rolls Series using R as their base MS.

TEXTUAL TRADITION

The modern textual history of Gaimar’s Estoire, however, goes back to at least 1794 when the abbé de la Rue devoted several pages to it in his ‘Letter . . . concerning the lives and writings of various Anglo-Norman poets . . .’. Other early mentions of it include those by Joseph Ritson in 1802, by Pierre-Louis Ginguéné before 1815, and by Frédéric Pluquet in 1824. The honour of editing the first texts, albeit in extracts from MS H only, went to Francisque Michel in 1836, and to Petrie in 1848, and this was followed in 1850 by Thomas Wright’s editio princeps, based on MS R, which was then translated into English by Joseph Stevenson in 1854. The Rolls Series edition of 1888–9 remained the only serviceable text of Gaimar’s history until Alexander Bell’s ANTS edition of 1960 (though Bell had already edited the Havelok episode in 1925). In 1963 Professor Legge could still be found quoting from the Rolls Series text in preference to that of Bell’s 1960 edition on the grounds that R was ‘the best though not the oldest manuscript’. In her review of Bell’s edition, she had, with characteristic cogency, denounced Bell’s decision to edit his text from D rather than from R as simply wrong, a sentiment echoed, if in less forthright terms, in an extensive and detailed review by R. N. Walpole and in Ruth Dean’s review. She pointed out that R ‘contains material omitted from D which the editor considers authentically Gaimar’s’, and in fact Bell proves to make scores of emendations to his D base text in favour of readings unique to R, a significant number of which he does not hesitate to categorize

48 Vising, Etude sur le dialecte anglo-normand du XIIe siècle, 25–34; below, Notes to the Text, l. 2084.
52 Legge, Anglo-Norman Literature, 29 n.
as ‘necessary’ or ‘essential’ to the narrative. R’s preservation of the longer epilogue (6435–532), so obviously authentic, and the appearance in the other MSS of a much shorter passage appropriate to a different redaction of the Estoire, is further proof, if such be needed, of its textual value.

For Legge, Bell’s edition produced a ‘monstrosity’ of a composite text. Bell, however, had clearly preferred D to R for reasons other than strictly textual—both because D is chronologically the oldest witness to have come down to us and is in a language little different from what Gaimar’s must have been, and also because R was already known, having been edited for the Rolls Series text. Having accepted Vising’s stemma for his edition of Gaimar’s Haveloc episode in 1925, Bell had endeavoured to modify one of its components in his 1960 edition of the Estoire in an attempt to bolster the filiation of D. But in his effort to eliminate Vising’s hypothetical alpha as a probable intermediary between the original and all of the surviving tradition, Bell’s arguments were, as Walpole indulgently put it, ‘hard to follow’, especially as his eminently sensible statement that ‘R is not a direct copy of the original’ is flatly contradicted by the modified stemma which he ends up by proposing on the opposite page. For the purposes of the present edition, therefore, we revert to Vising’s stemma as a valid diagrammatic representation of the broad relationships between the surviving manuscripts (but with, as we shall see below, one minor alteration), and to the text of the Estoire des Engleis as preserved by MS R despite its later date. We do not hesitate, however, to correct R on those relatively few occasions when the collaterals provide ‘better’ readings and ones which comparison with the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle shows to be probably more authentic.

For the copyist of R himself was not, of course, exempt from error, and his exemplar, moreover, already contained, when it came to him, a certain number of erroneous readings, attributable in all likelihood to the alpha intermediary. Apart from such inherited archetypal errors, the R scribe’s handiwork reveals a propensity to alter place and persons’ names (967, 1138, 1817, 2054, 2217, 2344, 2922), accidentally to omit single lines (3880, 3884, 4424) and couplets (1135–6, 2091–2,

53 Bell, Le Lai d’Haveloc and Gaimar’s Haveloc Episode, 224, 225–6, 227, etc., Gaimar, ed. Bell, 208, 209, etc.; see the detail in Notes to the Text, l. 2084.
54 Bell, Le Lai d’Haveloc, 87–9.
55 Gaimar, ed. Bell, p. xxii.
56 See Notes to the Text, ll. 1390, 1627.
2291–2), to misread his exemplar (2180, 2297, 2766, 3070, 3204), and
to substitute inferior readings (687, 3623, 4278). After l. 532 there is a
short gap in the narrative which R alone indicates by leaving six lines
blank, thus reflecting an illegible passage or perhaps a similar gap in
his exemplar. This we know, moreover, to have been physically
divided into two separate books, the first of which covered the now
lost first section of Gaimar’s narrative based on Geoffrey of Mon-
mouth.57 The apparently deliberate omission in R of ll. 5315–30 raises
questions that we will need to address in more detail below. Subse-
quent damage, finally, to the manuscript means that there are inter-
mittent textual losses between ll. 323 and 692, which can, however, be
made good by use of the collaterals.

Despite this relatively small number of errors, R remains a very
good witness of Gaimar’s surviving text. From the strictly linguistic
point of view, however, its early fourteenth-century date means that its
spelling and prosody no longer give a faithful reflection of the Estoire’s
twelfth-century origins. But that is a small price to pay for a copy
which, from both the literary and historical points of view, allows us to
come reasonably close to what Gaimar must originally have written.

That the manuscript tradition of the Estoire des Engleis falls into two
closely related groups, the first represented by R, the second by D, L,
and H, is clear and uncontroversial. This ordering in time we believe
to be justified by the critical assumption that, in the case of long
historical narratives, composition is just as likely to be followed by
abridgement as by amplification. Literary considerations, moreover,
strongly encourage us to conclude that R’s fuller text is more artisti-
cally fluent and coherent than its abbreviated redaction. It would,
however, be wrong, in the case of Gaimar, to over-schematize the
process of composition, since, as Bell was the first to point out, the
surviving text reveals that the author himself made additions to it as he
went along. Bell argues convincingly, for example, that the Haveloc
episode was a subsequent interpolation by Gaimar which he used,
together with other additions, as part of a wider design to give a
political dimension to his history quite independent of the Anglo-
Saxon Chronicle.58 There are other passages which give the impression
of having been authorial additions of a more incidental nature. These

57 See Notes to the Text, ll. 1–4. The present MS R may also have been part of a two-
volume copy, of which the first volume has been lost.
58 See Notes to the Text, ll. 37, 102.
are sometimes difficult, indeed impossible, to distinguish from various sorts of digressions that draw attention to events or people that clearly have a particular interest for the author.59

Of these several can be linked to Danelaw, or more specifically Lincolnshire, families which were active and influential at the time, the 1130s and 1140s, when Gaimar was writing and when his poem was being copied and circulated. And this in turn leads to questions of local patronage, and of possible revisions and rewritings in response to political developments at a time of civil war in which protagonists could, and did, divide their loyalties between the opposing camps of Stephen of Blois and Matilda, daughter of Henry I. Gaimar’s longer prologue very much gives the impression that the redaction represented by R must be close to the original one, and that it was directly patronized by Ralph fitz Gilbert and his wife Constance, and facilitated by the Yorkshire justice Walter Espec and, more indirectly, by Henry I’s son Robert earl of Gloucester. I have argued that this first redaction probably dated from between March 1136 and April 1137, and could have been localized in Lincolnshire, Lincoln itself, and perhaps also York.60

The changing political allegiances that could have affected Gaimar and his patrons in the first years of Stephen’s reign revolve around two decisive events, the Battle of the Standard in August 1138, in which Matilda’s Scottish allies were routed, and the Battle of Lincoln in February 1141, in which Stephen was defeated and captured.61 One magnate in particular was prominent in both battles, a loyal and brave fighter in the first, a treacherous rebel against the king in the second: Ranulf II de Guernons, 4th earl of Chester, half-brother of William de Roumarch earl of Lincoln.62 Both were sons of the Lincolnshire heiress countess Lucy.63 Believing himself to have been dispossessed by Stephen in February 1136, Ranulf rebelled in October 1140, and after the Battle of Lincoln his neighbour Alan III count of Brittany and earl of Richmond was among the many supporters of Stephen to find themselves dispossessed by the rapacious earl of Chester. Hugh and Alan, appointed earl of Richmond in 1136,

59 See Notes to the Text, ll. 897–920, 969, 2314.
60 See note 11 above. For Robert of Gloucester, see now ODNB xlvii. 93–6.
61 Davis, King Stephen 1135–1154, 37, 49–51.
62 See Notes to the Text, ll. 5860, 6350–1, 6449.
63 Chibnall, The Empress Matilda, 92.
had become bitter enemies over the lordship of Carlisle in particular, and were to remain so until their dying days.\(^{64}\)

The families of both of these men appear with some prominence in Gaimar’s *Estoire*. Ranulf’s grandfather Hugh is singled out in the account of the Maine campaign of 1098 (5859–74), and, despite being portrayed as the ultimate in depravity by Orderic Vitalis,\(^{65}\) is accorded a semi-heroic role in Gaimar’s set-piece account of William Rufus’s Westminster court of Whitsun 1099 (6015–54). Similarly Alan’s ancestor, Alan I Rufus, is the subject of a very laudatory passage describing his bravery at Hastings, his being invested with the county of Richmond in Yorkshire, and his burial at Bury St Edmunds (5315–30), and another of his ancestors, Alan II Niger, is given an incidental mention by Gaimar (6287). Is it entirely due to chance, one wonders, that, while the passages featuring the earls of Chester are reproduced throughout the manuscript tradition, the entire passage on Alan Rufus is lacking in MS R? Whether or not Bell is right in supposing the Alan Rufus passage to have been a later interpolation made by Gaimar himself,\(^{66}\) its absence from R’s text is quite exceptional and needs to be accounted for.

The earls of Chester, in any event, were related to the Clares and were therefore in all probability relatives of Gaimar’s patrons, while the only link between the earls of Chester and Richmond was one of long and bitter enmity. Someone else against whom Alan III had a long-standing animosity was bishop Alexander of Lincoln, Henry of Huntingdon’s patron, and it comes as no surprise when we find Henry describing earl Alan as ‘an abominable sort of person, polluted by every sort of crime, unequalled in evil… and without peer in cruelty’.\(^{67}\) Less personally prejudiced, one assumes, the author of the contemporary *Gesta Stephani* brings some measure of confirmation to this by characterizing Alan as a man of boundless ferocity and guile: ‘immensae truculentiae et doli’.\(^{68}\) Even though such harsh judgements were probably not unrelated to Alan’s disrespectful treatment of the church,\(^{69}\) the count of Brittany and earl of Richmond does

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\(^{64}\) See Notes to the Text, ll. 5315, 6287.


\(^{66}\) Gaimar, ed. Bell, 267.

\(^{67}\) *HH* 728; cf. Dyson, ‘The Monastic Patronage of Bishop Alexander of Lincoln’.

\(^{68}\) Cited in *HH* 728.

seem to have been a particularly unsavoury character in the eyes of his contemporaries.  

Among the other names which appear in Gaimar’s narrative are those of two other members of the Clare family, the sons of Gilbert fitz Richard, Gilbert and Roger, who were supposedly present at the death of William Rufus in 1100. Of interest here is the fact that Gilbert is credited with the title of earl, a title that belongs not to him but to his son Gilbert, who was created earl of Hertford soon after 1138. This Gilbert was the son of Ranulf Guernons of Chester’s sister Adeliza. Also worthy of mention is the fact that the couplet naming Gilbert’s ancestor and his brother Roger does not appear in MSS D, L, or H, and survives only in R, though this is precisely the sort of detail that is routinely lost from the longer text in the process of abridgement. Another link with the Clares is provided by Walter Tirel, whose role in Rufus’s death Gaimar treats with some slight ambivalence; he was the husband of Adeliza, sister of Gilbert fitz Richard of Clare.

Taken together, these various indications might possibly justify a tentative hypothesis: the fortunes of Gaimar’s text, originally composed for the fitz Gilberts of Lincolnshire and favourable to the Clares as well as to both the earls of Chester and of Richmond, could possibly have undergone a revision as a result of the enmity between Ranulf and Alan. Since Washingborough, where Gaimar’s copy of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle was apparently housed, already formed part of the honour of Richmond in 1136, and since Gaimar’s first text was apparently written between 1136 and 1137, the conjectured revision probably post-dated this period. It was perhaps inspired by the various crises resulting from the Battle of Lincoln in 1141 when Ranulf, whether in rebellion or in armed neutrality, began expropriating his neighbours’ lands.

Not only the Breton Alan of Richmond but also Alan’s kinsman (and Ranulf’s also) the Fleming Gilbert de Gant, whose tenant in Lincolnshire Ralph fitz Gilbert was, lost estates to Ranulf at this

70 Though Ranulf was probably little better; cf. Dalton, ‘In neutro later’, 59, who describes him as ‘a slippery, highly aggressive and acquisitive self-seeker’, and Graeme White (ODNB xlvi. 56) who calls him ‘exceptionally ruthless in pursuit of his ambitions, and accordingly he was hated by many and trusted by none’.

71 See Notes to the Text, ll. 6350–1.


73 Lines 6319 ff.; see Notes to the Text, ll. 6258, 6318.

74 Roffe, ‘Lady Godiva, the Book, and Washingborough’.

time. Gilbert de Gant was nephew to Alan of Richmond (his father Walter de Gant, who died in 1139, had married Maud, the daughter of Alan’s brother Stephen), but after his capture at Lincoln in 1141 Gilbert had been forcibly married to a niece of Ranulph’s, Rohese, daughter of Richard fitz Gilbert of Clare. Gaimar’s patron was also a benefactor to Stixwould Priory, and this lay within the Lincolnshire fee of the earl of Richmond. Ranulf of Chester, on the other hand, not only had claims on Lincoln Castle but wider territorial ambitions which seem to have included the domination of the whole of Lincolnshire. Ranulf and Alan had already come into violent dispute over Belvoir Castle in late 1140, but it was in 1141 also that the most dramatic confrontation between the two took place, when the earl of Chester treacherously arrested and imprisoned Alan, whom he humiliatingly forced to do homage to him.

A *persona non grata* in the eyes of the Clares, the earl of Richmond clearly no longer warranted the more than honourable mention which his family had previously earned in Gaimar’s history. Who was responsible for the censorship (author/patron/copyist), and in what particular circumstances, we have no means of knowing. The fitz Gilberts themselves must inevitably have been caught up in the Richmond/Chester feud and the conflicting loyalties that it generated. Their position may have been exacerbated by that of Gilbert de Gant, whose under-tenants they were, since Gilbert’s anomalous ties of marriage placed him directly in the crossfire between the two camps. Since, however, no member of the Gant family is ever mentioned by Gaimar, speculation in this direction, such as Legge’s unsubstantiated claim that Ralph fitz Gilbert was ‘*de facto*, though not *de jure*, son and heir of Gilbert of Gaunt’, can hardly be justified.

Also neighbours to the fitz Gilberts in Lincolnshire were the Halselin family, to which Gaimar grants a none too honourable mention in

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77 *Early Yorkshire Charters*, iv. 89; Crouch, *The Image of the Aristocracy in Britain*, 139; *ODNB* xi. 745; Dalton, ‘The Date of Geoffrey Gaimar’s *Estoire des Engleis*’, 35–7.  
78 Crouch, *The Image of the Aristocracy in Britain*, 227. The mother of Rohese was Aéliz, patroness of Sanson de Nantuil (see Notes to the Text, ll. 6350–51). Hardy and Martin, in their Gaimar edition, ii, p. xiv, speculate that Ralph fitz Gilbert might have been related to Gilbert of Gant, but there is no firm evidence for this. Cf. also Dalton, ‘Aiming at the Impossible’, 122–4.  
82 Legge, ‘The Influence of Patronage on Form’, 137. The couplet mentioning Alan Niger (6286–7) was left standing in R, while the absence of these same two lines from L and
his narrative.\textsuperscript{83} It seems entirely plausible to conclude that Gaimar’s poem was intended to appeal to a wider public than that his immediate patrons, and that by strategically placing mentions of the families of local notables, and by enhancing his history’s Scandinavian dimension, he was targeting a specifically Lincolnshire audience.\textsuperscript{84}

What we can assume, therefore, to have been Gaimar’s own interpolation of the passage in praise of Alan’s ancestors probably dates from his first, 1137 redaction of the \textit{Estoire}, before any territorial antagonism between the honours of Chester and Richmond. Gaimar may possibly have been led to make the addition as a result of Alan’s elevation to the earldom of Richmond in or before 1136.\textsuperscript{85} The excision of the passage from R, which we have assumed to be the closest witness that we have to this early stage of the text, implies that it was already absent from R’s

H is probably to be explained as an incidental part of the general abridgement proper to the beta manuscript tradition.

\textsuperscript{83} See Notes to the Text, l. 5691.

\textsuperscript{84} On the wealth of local allusions to Lincolnshire and East Anglia with which Gaimar studs his text, see Notes to the Text, l. 5691; cf. also note to l. 443.

\textsuperscript{85} Davis, \textit{King Stephen 1135–1154}, 141.
exemplar, which is *alpha* in Vising’s stemma. But the presence of the passage in D, L, H, representing the abridged redaction, indicates that their common ancestor, *beta*, which according to Vising derives from *alpha*, did not have the excision. The simplest solution to this problem is to postulate that the excision took place in an intermediate version between *alpha* and R, namely R’s exemplar, *R*.

In this revised stemma, we assume that the *alpha* stage represented the entire poem, that the replacement of the first part, after 1155, by Wace’s *Brut*, was a deliberate modification made at the *beta* stage; that the *R* version had both parts, and that R was originally one of two volumes, the first of which was a victim of the vagaries of manuscript preservation and has simply not survived (cf. Notes to the Text, ll. 1–4). The *R* version, then, could represent, according to our hypothesis, a copy of the 1137 poem in a redaction, probably dating from shortly after 1141, which reflects a socio-political hostility to the house of Richmond on the part of the houses of Clare and Chester resulting from their respective involvement in the wars of succession between Stephen and Matilda.

The two surviving epilogues to Gaimar’s *Estoire* (ll. 6435–532 and Appendix) and their interrelationship are further relevant factors in our attempts to ascertain how its textual history could have developed. The assumption we made previously that R’s longer epilogue is purely and simply that of the original could now be refined. The longer epilogue, with its plethora of contemporary references and patronage information, must clearly in some way reflect the original edition of the *Estoire*, but it is not impossible that it incorporates, in the form in which we now know it from MS R, revisions made when Gaimar issued his putative second edition. Conjecture in this direction might be encouraged by what could be interpreted as a volte-face, or even a contradiction, between ll. 6484 (Gaimar declares he will now write about Henry) and 6508 (Gaimar now decides not to write about Henry), not to mention the fact that at ll. 6519 and 6524–5 the traditional third-person narrative voice reverts to the first person. If, moreover, l. 6527 were a contemporary rather than a literary allusion (see note to this line), this could also be seen as a possible later revision or addition. A further consideration might be the unusual lengths to which Gaimar goes, in the longer epilogue, to emphasize the authenticity of his text, and his insistence on its widely acknowledged authority, all of which could possibly be seen as responses to criticisms levelled (by his rival David, perhaps?) at his 1137 version. Might an amplified and more explicit epilogue have perhaps been thought necessary to explain and justify the second edition that we postulate?
Whether or not the present longer epilogue is in fact a revised, 1141 version of an 1137 original, the significantly less informative shorter epilogue must presumably represent a separate and later redaction of the *Estoire des Engleis*. There are, in any event, no grounds for postulating that the shorter epilogue pre-dates the longer. In Gaimar’s re-edition, which would approximate to that of the beta stage of our stemma, the names of his patrons and those of the northern and Lincolnshire dignitaries are dispensed with in favour of a single mention of queen Adeliza. Adeliza retained her title after the death of Henry I and died in 1151, but Gaimar’s wording does not allow us to conclude that she was still alive when he wrote the shorter epilogue. A further point common to both surviving epilogues is the reference to David’s book, the existence of which seems in each case to provide Gaimar with a reason (a pretext, perhaps) not to continue his narrative into Henry I’s reign. Had it survived, David’s book would presumably have answered at least some of the many questions which Gaimar’s two, even perhaps three, epilogues raise. Its loss can only fuel conjecture.

Why, when, where, and for whom an abbreviated version of Gaimar’s text, the beta redaction, came to be made, are questions that, given the absence of any sort of evidence, cannot usefully be answered even by speculation. Perhaps it developed progressively in the course of the 1150s when the popularity of Wace, it is generally supposed, led to the fragmentation of Gaimar’s original *Estoire des Engleis*, and to the recopying of the second part of his text as an appendage to the *Roman de Brut*, completed in 1155. The subsequent addition of Jordan Fantosme’s *Chronicle* to this historical cycle produced an impressive vernacular triptych of verse historiography which brought the record of Britain’s past all the way from its distant origins in Greek mythology down to 1173–4.

It is difficult to imagine that Gaimar’s choice of title for his ambitious historiographic enterprise was not influenced by that of his Lincoln neighbour Henry of Huntingdon’s *Historia Anglorum*. Henry completed the first two versions of his history in 1133, and four more versions followed between 1140 and 1155. Gaimar’s *Estoire* can give the occasional impression of being in some way in dialogue with Henry’s version of history, but apart from the fact that they used similar, but certainly not identical, versions of the

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86 *HH* pp. lxi–lxvi.
**Anglo-Saxon Chronicle**, there are few points of relevant contact between them. 87 Whereas Henry discovered Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Historia Regum Britan­niae* (much to his amazement) at Le Bec in Normandy in January 1139 (*HRB* p. xii), Gaimar tells us (6462–66) that he had already had access to ‘the good book of Oxford that belonged to archdeacon Walter’ before he began his *Estoire*, and this could well have been as early as March 1136. The short *Description of England* which follows on from Gaimar’s text in MSS D and L, and which is thought to date from 1133–53, has as its ultimate source the third (1140) version of Henry’s *Historia*, but there is no clear link between this text and Gaimar. 88

**LANGUAGE**

Gaimar’s language having been studied several times already, a summary of its main phonological and morpho-syntactic features will suffice here. 89 The poem’s phonology will be analysed on the basis of rhyme words only, while metrics are discussed separately, with coverage of orthography reduced to the salient features of our base manuscript.

Among the phonological features of note is the characteristic Anglo-Norman reduction of diphthongs, which is attested in the interchange of /ie/ and /e´/ < Latin tonic a.90 The substantive *regné*, for example, rhymes with both *chasce* 3556 (also 872, 968, 1796, etc.) and with *conté* 72 (also 172, 753, 803, etc.). Other mixtures of /ie/ and /e´/ in rhymes that would not be admissible in Standard Medieval French (SMF) include 361–2, 1203–4, 1295–6, 2025–6, 4729–30, 4893–4, 6225–6. Next to regular *ancièn : mien* 4319, we find reduced *tens : paiens* 3395. *An : ancîèn* 1681 and *anz : ancîenz* 1784 are unusual rhymes. The diphthong /ai/ reduces to /e/ in feminine rhymes before /str/ in *Roücestre : mestre* 1067, 1137, and before /r/ in *fere : terre* 4499. *Ere* (= *aire*) is also found in rhyme with *frere* 1755, and *frere* also rhymes with *here* (= *haire*) 988. Before final –s there is also reduction in *après : mes* (= *mais*) 1403. When /ai/

88 Bell and Johnson, ‘Description of England’.
precedes nasals, it can interchange with /ei/, as in plain : serain (= serein) 768, pain : plain (= plein) 449, plein : main 4033. In esché's : Daneis 3653 /ei/ reduces, as it does also in Paskerez : benéeiz 1201. Fel : conseil 517 is probably another example, but féail (= fideil) rhyming with conseil 3181, fedeel with soleil 5552 and féeil with apareil 6029 might seem to argue in favour of a diphthong developing in Anglo-Norman after depalatalized /l/. 91 There is levelling in mains (< minus) : tens 1809. SMF /ieu/ is represented by Deus : liu 1409, Deu : feu (< FEODU) 4321, which could possibly (but not necessarily) indicate loss of the /i/ element of the triphthong. Deus : remês 3601 conceals the variant form Dés which regularly rhymes in /é/. In estorie : vie 2926 we have a non-standard or learned form of what in SMF would be -oire < -ORIA. La victur 2971, 3038, 3195 is a form coined for the convenience of rhyme (as is regnel 2246). The reduction of the diphthong /ou/ is indicated by louent : parlouent 3743. Dous (< DÜOS) : vus 4331 is a clear case of dialectal levelling. Reduction of the /ue/ diphthong either to /œ/ or to /u/ is attested in avoc : Aveloc 359, 2083, and probably also in avoc : iloc 3441, 5109. The diphthong /üi/ reduces after initial /k/ in midi : qui (< Cogito) 1645, dite : quite (< COCTA) 289. Ducs : us (< OSTIU) 5981 is a widely attested dialectal rhyme.

The lack of diphthongization in Anglo-Norman reflexes of Latin ò is illustrated by rhymes of the type jur : seignur 319, Edelwolf : sul 2481. Typically Anglo-Norman are rhymes such as seir : porir 3739, plus : vertius 1933, un : Incarnation 1397 which show /ü/ interchanging with /u/. Rather than an isolated Occitanism, the highly unusual rhyme Orgar : loer 3637 is probably a convenience rhyme in much the same way as Philippe de Thaon's Cesar : guardar in Comput 775. As is usual in Anglo-Norman, there is no admixture of /än/ and /en/. The coupling of empere (< IMPERIUM) with mere 4539 points to a learned form. Ere < ERAT rhymes normally in /é/ with amere 4693 (but cf. erent : entrebeiserent 4359). In raitels : chevels (< CAPU + ALE) 2284 and in peitrels (< PECTORALE) : meienels 6385 /é/ seems to be opening to /e/ or even to /e/. Given prophete assonating in /e/ in Roland 2255, it is unclear to what extent comete : prophete 1433, 5145 equates /e/ and /e/ .92 Synaeresis is indicated in eust 2730, 6225, 6440, and meisme 6316 (and perhaps 4461) shows resolved hiatus.93

92 On rhymes with reparés 4237 (reparés 5985) see Notes to the Text, l. 4243.
93 See also Notes to the Text, ll. 261, 1413.
The lack of palatal /l/ and palatal /n/ in the Anglo-Norman sound system is indicated by *conseil : fel 517 and femme : regne 2529, 3599*. In *encha¸sc¸out : volt (< *volit < *volut*) 2002, where the preconsonantal /l/ seems to have vocalized and assimilated, we have preferred to emend to *quidout*. There is flexibility in the treatment of *ensemble*, which, according to the requirements of the moment, can, in addition to modifying its nasal consonant, drop its /bl/ (it rhymes with *regne* 1969 and with *quaresme 1277*) or its /b/ when it rhymes with *Estengle 1143* (cf. below, Notes to the Text, l. 1970). Preconsonantal /r/ appears to be dropped in rhymes such as *dos : cors 5677*, and /tr/ is simplified in *ancestre : geste 827*, *entrent : dementent 3265*. *Regne : baptesme 957, quaresme : ensemble 1277* and *flete : ceste 2567* suggest the loss of preconsonantal /s/. Flectional /ts/ and /s/ are falling together in *nefs : levez 2575*, *nefs : ales 2583*, *feiz : reis 923*, *dis (< *dies*) : resortiz 2967*. Certain forms suggest (but do not confirm) the preservation of final dentals: *Edelfrid : saisi 1147, fi : Ealdfrid 1499, suth : vertu 2115*. Final /t/, on the other hand, falls in *fu : Jesu 1341*, and seems to be weak in *gent : Flameng 5159* and *cinc : vint 4757* (cf. 1727–28). *Hache : mace 4263* and *feblesce : tecche 2665* (perhaps also 5459–60) represent a well attested type of dialectal rhyme.94

Morphological distinctions can be disregarded in substantives (e.g. 376, 4063), and some analogical present participles are encountered: *vaillante 1336, pesante 6392*. *Regiun* appears as a masculine at 1468 and 2699.95 *Vat* replacing *vait* is found only at the rhyme (4009, 5804). Among older verbal forms we note *eimes 373*, *dimes 343* (cf. *estad (: ad) 2830*). *Faire* shows no contracted forms in *fr*-. Subjunctives *algent 1864, viengent 5827*, *prengez 3703*, and preterite *vinc 308* are current in Anglo-Norman. *Combati`e (: regne` 1796* is an example of a *-dedi* type preterite.96 On the R scribe’s extended imperfect subjunctive forms, see Note to the Text, l. 4878. Past participles *lit 4432* and *cha`u 214*, 5680 are encountered, and whereas Anglo-Norman generally uses analogical *remis*, Gaimar also rhymes *rem`es : nefs 501* and *rem`es : cl`es 2713*. Some terminations can adapt to the rhyme: *resplendid : fist 6107*, *reparens : tens 2462*.97

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95 Cf. Notes to the Text, ll. 1468, 1575.
96 Buridant, *Grammaire nouvelle de l’ancien français*, §207.
97 On English words, on nautical vocabulary, on parataxis, and on *parmi tut ço*, see Notes to the Text, ll. 3652, 2509, 443, 21–2, 3623 respectively. On neologisms, see Notes to the Text, ll. 2246 and 2971.
Little short of two centuries separate the composition of Gaimar’s *Estoire* from its copying into our base MS R, with the result that our edition appears in a fourteenth-century rather than a twelfth-century orthographic garb. The following tabulation attempts to summarize the principal divergences between the Insular graphies of R and their Continental equivalents in the Standard Medieval French used by lexicographers and philologists:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>R</th>
<th>Continental Equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ae = ai</td>
<td>maes (= mais)</td>
<td>509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ae = ei</td>
<td>faez (= feiz)</td>
<td>4830, solaël 4058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ai = ei</td>
<td>mai 313, naire 771, saiun (= seions) 1078, vait 664, raine 84, estaint 38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>avera 271, overit 243, liveré 88, vivere 2661, jouene 4518</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e = a</td>
<td>heéd (= aé) 2303</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e = ai</td>
<td>trest 255, mes 296, lest 1117, fere 186, pes 3388, treson 4456</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e = ee</td>
<td>meinsné 486, 3871, meigné 5829, jurne 3772</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e = ei</td>
<td>sessant 1809, verrement 1416, aincés 4317, saver 316</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e = ie</td>
<td>ben 117, nece 164, paen 1241, 2160, sé 4387</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e = ue</td>
<td>nef 6150, ovec 1340</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ee = é</td>
<td>donee 1207, celee 1259, malfee 2897, enluminee 3664, portee 4203</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ee = ié</td>
<td>see (= sié) 1210, leez 3705, 4840</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ei = ai</td>
<td>meison 441, seint 2059, leisser 3913, meis 37, Seisne 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ei = e</td>
<td>seit (&lt; SEPTEM) 1996, 2035, 2237, ordeiner 2848, valeiz 4489</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ei = ue</td>
<td>neif (&lt; NOVEM) 1928</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i = e</td>
<td>primer 1279, chival 2573, gisir 3955</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i = ie</td>
<td>milz 2175</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ie = e</td>
<td>niefs 5168</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iu = ieu</td>
<td>liu 347</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o = u</td>
<td>chescon 2323, 3928, rancone 878</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o = ue</td>
<td>iloc 308, avoc 360, ovoc 3441, pot 269, nof 1948, 3030, vol 4329</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
In discussing Gaimar’s versification, an initial distinction needs to be drawn between the surface features of the fourteenth-century MS R and the underlying metrical structure of the original twelfth-century
poem, insofar as this can be reconstructed through a study of its textual transmission. Given the fact that the *Estoire*’s rhyming couplets are amongst the earliest octosyllables to have survived in Medieval French literature (discounting the somewhat special case of Benedeit’s *Brendan*), Gaimar’s metrics clearly merit a more extensive study than it would be appropriate to undertake here. Even a summary examination, however, reveals that Bell’s contention that Gaimar’s versification was in general creditably correct is entirely justified. The perceived metrical ‘irregularity’ of so much Anglo-Norman verse is not a feature of the earliest Insular texts.

In the matter of syllable count, it is rare to find an octosyllable which cannot, with minimal and routine editorial intervention, be shown to be regular despite initial appearances to the contrary. Certain discrepancies are less real than they seem, and function only at the level of orthography. Misleading impressions of hypersyllabism, for example, are given by the scribe’s habit of intercalating *e* between *v* and *r*, of augmenting imperfect subjunctive forms by the addition of the -*si*- infix, of not always reflecting elision in spelling, and of introducing analogical forms of words at variance with the author’s usage (e.g. *la forte cité* 5950). Alternative forms is another area where textual transmission can over time lead to the accidental loss or addition of syllables: *cist/icist, ore/or, encore/encor, ele/el*. As for English place and personal names, such is the variability and fluidity in their use that it is probably prudent to leave them out of account in metrical as well as in phonological analyses.

At the medial break (Gaimar’s verse line does not have a strictly fixed caesura), the poet allows himself metrical flexibility in two principal ways. When the final syllable of the first hemistich is unstressed, this can retain syllabic value whether in preconsonantal or in prevocalic positions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Translation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>une vergé teneit le rei 3715</td>
<td>one vergé teneit le rei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al dreit termë l’enfant fu né 3733</td>
<td>al dreit termë l’enfant fu né</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ne ma buchë ne vus beisast 2672</td>
<td>ne ma buchë ne vus beisast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>merci crië a son seignur 4976</td>
<td>merci crië a son seignur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ne voil mettré altre pur mai 4482</td>
<td>ne voil mettré altre pur mai</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

98 Gaimar, ed. Bell, p. xli.
Examples of elision are rarer:

ki encuntr(e) Engleis guereierent 36
la raïn(e) amenout süef 424

When the fifth syllable is /ə/, this can either lose or retain syllabic value:

urent suffreit(e) de lur amis 3110
de sa raïn(e) out bels enfanz 3588
Olaf oscistr(ent) ki dreit reis ere 4694
od grant navirë k’il aveit 4869
a une vilê s’en alerent 498
desci k’il sachënt del dreit eir 521

As in the Chanson de Roland, elision is prevented by what is assumed to be a residual dental in verbal terminations of the present tense, though here the clearest examples are all subjunctives: rendê a 799, viengê a curt 3865, 6126, puissê il 6063. Examples of enclisis include kes 382, kel 2670, jol 5937, 5941, si l 668, 2444.100 Hiatus between words follows the usual conventions (e.g. në a 5865, kê il 178, 1957, 3203, 3387, sê il 2402, 4280), but there are a few anomalies, particularly after ke (e.g. 39, 266, 450, 561, 704). Vowels in internal hiatus are, by and large, preserved intact (e.g. jugleûr 166, aseûrez 571, gr[â]antez 4258, 4912, 5022), though provision seems to be made for the occasional double form: meîmes 6316 is, for instance, disyllabic, and avîsion 247 trisyllabic.101

Gaimar’s rhymes are, as we have seen, correct in the context of the Insular norms within which he is writing (cf. Notes to the Text, ll. 532, 612, 1970), and here we may note, additionally, the occasional tendency he has to construct successive couplets on the same rhyme (see Notes to the Text, l. 2515). Such sound-related couplets are found elsewhere in 12th-c. Anglo-Norman literature.102 What characterizes Gaimar’s French in general is a high level of competence, largely regular rhymes and syllable-count, with only a small number of the dialectal innovations that are later to give Anglo-Norman its particular specificity. He does, however, avail himself of some phonetic licences as well as a number of English lexical items (not to mention an

100 On aphaeresis, see Notes to the Text, l. 1413.
101 Cf. Notes to the Text, ll. 261, 1413, and for enjambement, ll. 1566–67, 5288–9, for loss of /ə/, l. 5750, and for dual forms such as or /ore, l. 353.
102 Johnston, ‘Sound-RelatedCouplets in Old French’. 
exceptionally large quantity of names), traits sufficient to qualify his French as Insular.\footnote{See Notes to the Text, ll. 532, 3652; cf. also 1758.}

How, with this command of the language at his disposal, does Gaimar acquit himself in literary terms of his self-imposed task of chronicler and translator? While he clearly could not have invented \textit{ex nihilo} the literary discourse he uses, he must, at the time when he was writing, have had relatively few precedents on which to model himself. His narrative is, at all events, the earliest of its kind in French literature to have come down to us, and for this reason alone we would presumably be justified in regarding him as something of a literary pioneer. He was, however, clearly acquainted with the vernacular epic (see Notes to the Text, l. 2163), as well as the lyric (Notes to the Text, l. 3637), and seems to have had a particular interest in hagiography (Notes to the Text, l. 1635), as well as in matters legal and clerical (Notes to the Text, l. 2296). A predominantly secular ethos pervades his chronicle (Notes to the Text, l. 3944, 4625), its religious tone is relatively muted, and there is little room given to the supernatural (Notes to the Text, l. 2726).

Gaimar has three principal narrative modes: the annalistic, the amplificatory, and the closely allied anecdotal, and these structure the unfolding of his history. The annalistic he takes over from his principal written source, the \textit{Anglo-Saxon Chronicle}, of which he makes only intermittent use after l. 3586, the accession of Edgar and the annal for 966. For the reigns of Edward the Martyr, Edmund, and Cnut, it is to be assumed that he had access to more popular, probably saga, traditions, of which he also makes free use elsewhere in his narrative.\footnote{C. E. Wright, \textit{The Cultivation of Saga}; see Notes to the Text, ll. 897–920.} There are some parallels between Gaimar’s text and the chronicles of Simeon of Durham, John of Worcester, in addition to William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon, but no direct borrowings can be established. He seems not to have used any Norman sources, and there is no sign that he had read Orderic Vitalis. Gaimar speaks in his epilogue (6442–3) of French as well as English and Latin written sources, but it is not possible to identify these. The post-Conquest part of his narrative is a compilation of material from a variety of mostly unknown sources, in which a less structured presentation takes over from the more strictly chronological arrangement of what precedes.
The amplificatory mode is that of the three major proto-romance interludes with which he varies the pace and tone, and enlivens the rhythm, of his annalistic narrative. They are: the Haveloc saga (37–818), Buern Bucecarle’s rebellion (2573–2700) and its sequel (2701–2832), and the marriage of king Edgar and Ælfthryth (3587–974). They have in common a love interest in a courtly environment. To this category belong also the murder of king Edward (3988–4076), the death of Edmund and the fate of his children (4395–484, 4485–4670), the Hereward episode (5464–5710), Rufus’s Westminster feast (5978–6110), and the death of Rufus (6251–6434), the unifying features of which are fast-moving narratives with dramatic incidents punctuated by dialogue.  

More anecdotal in nature, in the sense that they do not exceed 150 lines in length, have minimal narrative development and a more visibly self-contained quality, are the Walsing episode (897–920), the disinherition of Sigeberht (1805–904), the Danish raid addition (2065–92), St Edmund’s hidden identity (2881–90), the Gormund story (3239–83), the encounter between kings Cnut and Edmund (4257–4394), Cnut and the waves (4605–728), the trial of Godwine (4877–5026), and Taillefer at Hastings (5271–5306). By strategically placing these interludes at intervals throughout his narrative (some, apparently, as revisions to his initial draft), Gaimar ensures that purely annalistic passages are broken up into smaller units that are better adapted to the needs of oral delivery, by which his history must have reached the vast bulk of its audience. This technique leaves only one relatively long section of annalistic discourse unrelieved by any sort of interpolation, namely ll. 926–1805, which John Gillingham might be forgiven for finding ‘tedious reading’.  

The three major interpolations, probably the best-known parts of Gaimar’s text, and certainly those which have claimed most critical attention as examples of nascent romance discourse, promote a courtly ideology by means of narrative adventure, incidental description, human interest, and dialogue, and one element common to all three is love. This leads Jane Zatta to the conclusion that in Gaimar ‘erotic love provides a site from which to explore the competing claims

105 As Blacker, ‘“Dame Custance la gentil”’, 85 points out, the Hereward story is a notable exception in lacking dialogue.
of state, church and individual freedom, and promotes an ideal of mutual responsibility rather than absolute authority.\textsuperscript{108} However, her proposition that the idealistic relations portrayed within the respective marriages were intended by Gaimar to serve as a model for political relationships is unlikely to be equally valid for all three of these episodes. Love is in fact central to only one of the three, since in those featuring Haveloc and Buern the amatory interest is clearly secondary and marginal to feudal issues of inheritance and personal honour. The Edgar story is the only one where love is described for its own sake. While the fact that such love is illicit and extra-marital validates it as the earliest manifestation of courtly love in French literature, the potential adultery is soon resolved in marriage, and the focus immediately shifts onto the political sphere. Love in Gaimar is undeniably political, but rather than it being promoted as a new model of socio-political behaviour, its primary appeal to its audience must inevitably have been human and sentimental.

Gaimar’s depiction of women in general is noticeable for its absence of misogyny, and female members of his audience, not forgetting his patroness, must have particularly relished the prominent roles attributed to women in the Estoire.\textsuperscript{109} While female characters are, understandably for the time, most frequently mentioned in relation to men as queens, wives, and heiresses, they can be seen, in certain of the roles that they play, as foreshadowing some of the heroines of courtly romance. It remains true, however, that they are invariably, to borrow Roberta Krueger’s formulation, displaced from the centre of narrative action.\textsuperscript{110} Argentille in the Haveloc episode, for example, functions firstly as a cipher for lawful inheritance and only secondarily as a ‘humiliated princess’ figure. Although we are given no description of her or her personal qualities, we are allowed some discreet insight into her erotic life (1\textsuperscript{81}–6), though firmly, of course, within the context of marriage. Her attempted abduction sees her adopting a more typically passive role, though she does later instigate the action which ensures victory over Edelsi (7\textsuperscript{73} ff.). It is nevertheless something of an exaggeration to see her as ‘the true protagonist’ of the Haveloc story,\textsuperscript{111} since it is clearly Haveloc’s rehabilitation and reinstatement in his

\textsuperscript{108} Zatta, ‘Gender, Love and Sex as Political Theory?’, 268.
\textsuperscript{109} See Notes to the Text, ll. 2629, 2636, 3887–91. Cf. note to ll. 4883–96 for courtly opulence.
\textsuperscript{110} Krueger, Women Readers and the Ideology of Gender, 10.
\textsuperscript{111} Weiss, ‘The Power and the Weakness of Women’, 15.
rightful heritage that lie at the ideological heart of the narrative. Interestingly, Grim’s daughter Kelloc derives her importance from the narrator’s role that she is given in the story-within-a-story narrative (377–468), a role that other female characters in vernacular literature readily assume.

The rape that is the motive of the Buern Bucecarle episode is in fact more about the relationship between lord and vassal than it is about violence against Buern’s wife (unnamed, incidentally), and it is as much the king’s shamelessness as his actual crime that brings about his undoing. A king’s failure to respect his obligations to his vassal leads to a legitimate diffidatio, as a wife’s personal shame is subordinated to a husband’s social and feudal honour. Gaimar, however, is at pains to emphasize Buern’s sympathy for his wife’s plight, and the couple’s personal crisis is played out, as Jean Blacker remarks, in a remarkably courtly and civilized fashion.

King Edgar’s seduction of the socially inferior Ælfthryth revolves around the latter’s incomparable beauty and the former’s vulnerability to the female sex. But this time royal lust is reciprocated in love, and the couple’s mutual attraction is sensitively and delicately described (3814–32). The by now superfluous husband, Ethelwold, is a losengier-type traitor whose punishment is, in any case, inevitable, and his death (or is it murder?) contributes to resolving the moral ambiguity in Edgar’s situation. The couple’s defiance of the explicit censure of the church in the person of St Dunstan (3941–56) is a striking illustration of Gaimar’s overwhelmingly secular view of society. It is also a classic courtly love paradigm: two lovers obliged to violate society’s morality in order to enjoy their love. Within the narrative, Ælfthryth survives Edgar, but changes character when she becomes complicit in king Edward’s death, without any sign of moral disapproval from Gaimar, is pardoned by St Dunstan and dies among the nuns of Wherwell. The trajectory from heiress to mal mariée to mother to royal lover to queen to stepmother to conspirator and finally to nun is an extraordinary one that is handled by Gaimar with a literary skill which compares more than favourably with the account of Ælfthryth’s career given by William of Malmesbury.114 It has been suggested that

113 Cf. Zatta, ‘Gender, Love and Sex as Political Theory?’, 264.
114 *GRA* 257–9, 263–7; cf. Press, ‘The Precocious Courtesy of Geoffrey Gaimar’. Henry of Huntingdon (HH 324) added one sentence on Ælfthryth to the third version of his history of c. 1140.
Gaimar might have had direct access to the oral testimony of the Wherwell nuns for his account of Ælfthryth.\textsuperscript{115} The curious role of the dwarf Wulstanet (3991–4024), however, might point to a more popular and literary source.

One of the more unexpected aspects of Gaimar’s attitude to English history is in his treatment of the Danes. Though they can, at times, as perennial raiders and plunderers of England’s shores, fulfil the role of traditional villains (\textit{felon Daneis} 3123, 3533, \textit{de mult mal eire} 3470), they can also appear in a significantly more positive light. Gaimar’s pro-Danish sympathies are deliberately, repeatedly, and consistently articulated from the start of his chronicle, when his Haveloc saga ‘reworks the Danish invasions into a success story of intermarriage and international alliance’.\textsuperscript{116} The Haveloc episode (Haveloc is heir to the Danish throne), and the interlude of Buern Bucecarl (who chooses the Danes as his allies) in particular seem to be reflections of twelfth-century east coast romance traditions with significant Scandinavian elements, and to these are no doubt to be added others, now lost, such as the legend of Drogo sheriff of Lincoln.\textsuperscript{117} Cross-cultural concerns continue to occupy a prominent place in Gaimar’s narrative right up until the reign of Cnut, whose territorial compromise with Edmund so well exemplifies Gaimar’s personal ideology of non-violent political accommodation between peoples.\textsuperscript{118} As for the notion of a Danish claim to the English throne through prior sovereignty, this was ‘one of the most memorable features of Gaimar’s history’,\textsuperscript{119} and it found its way into Richard fitz Nigel’s \textit{Dialogue of the Exchequer} in the 1170s:\textsuperscript{120}

\textsuperscript{115} Gaimar, ed. Bell, pp. lxxi–lxxii.
\textsuperscript{117} Marritt, ‘Drogo the Sheriff’; cf. Bell, ‘Gaimar’s Early “Danish” Kings’; Gaimar, ed. Bell, 231, 242; Kleinman, ‘The Legend of Havelok the Dane’. Hereward is, of course, very much an East Anglian story, but it looks outwards to Flanders rather than to Scandinavia (Houts, ‘Hereward and Flanders’). For links between Hereward and Brittany, see Roffe, ‘Hereward “the Wake” and the Barony of Bourne’.
\textsuperscript{118} According to Dalton, ‘The Date of Geoffrey Gaimar’s \textit{Estoire des Engleis}’, 435, 451–2, Gaimar was directly inspired by the contemporary political conflicts of Stephen’s reign, and his history was ‘a didactic mirror’ for his contemporaries, and ‘was intended to teach Anglo-Norman aristocrats about the virtues of peace and stability’.
\textsuperscript{119} Gillingham, \textit{The English in the Twelfth Century}, 119; cf. Notes to the Text, ll. 37, 420, 897–920.
\textsuperscript{120} \textit{Dialogus de Scaccario…Constitutio Domus Regis…}, ed. and trans. Amt and Church, 84.
bellicosa illa et populosa gens Dacorum, qui praeter communem raptorum avaritiam acrius instabant quia aliquid sibi de antiquo jure in eiusdem regni dominatione vendicabant, sicut Britonum plenius narrat historia.

Could this Britonum Historia possibly be a reference to our Estoire des Engleis?

The Danish bias gives way to a pro-English stance in Gaimar’s post-Conquest sections, and this is most clearly seen in the version he gives of Hastings, and in how he portrays Waltheof and Hereward’s rebellion. As R. H. C. Davis noted: ‘The most remarkable feature of [Gaimar’s] work is the treatment of the Norman Conquest, which he somehow manages both to describe and to pass over with studied casualness.’ Indeed, Gaimar seems to view the Conquest as little more than a legitimate change of dynasty, effected with minimum disruption, certainly not as a military, social, and cultural cataclysm. The violence is reduced to a minimum, and in the absence of any need to apportion blame or turn either William or Harold into a hero, Gaimar presents the outcome more as a union than as a conquest. While it is possible to see his version of Hastings as anti-Norman, and even perhaps as ‘part of an Anglo-centric epic of Harold’, it would be an exaggeration to see him as demonizing the Normans, and when he declares that the English ‘pay dearly for their outrageous behaviour’ (5342), he is clearly nodding in the direction of the canonical Norman interpretation of their victory. On the other hand, one purpose of the literary set-piece which Gaimar uses to articulate his deliberately ambivalent account of the Conquest is to deflect attention away from the English defeat. The version he gives of events is seen strictly from the point of view of the English participants in the battle, and Taillefer’s terrifying man-eating horse clearly symbolizes contemporary perceptions of the awesome power of the Norman cavalry.

While considerations of ethnicity and locality, which are among Gaimar’s more constant preoccupations, are not always directly articulated in his narrative, a contemporary audience would presumably have had the necessary tacit knowledge to appreciate them. Gaimar’s brief passage, for example, on earl Waltheof (5721–36) might strike the modern reader as fairly neutral, even bald, but its subtext is full of allusion: here we have an English hero treacherously beheaded by

121 Davis, The Normans and their Myth, 127; cf. Notes to the Text, l. 5342 below.
122 Eley and Bennett, ‘The Battle of Hastings according to Gaimar, Wace and Benoît’, 51.
a Norman conqueror, a saint whose cult is fostered by the same Lincolnshire monks of Crowland as guard the tomb of St Guthlac, related by blood to the royal house of Mercia. Waltheof is an Insular aristocrat whose father Siward was a Dane. Among his allies, when he had rebelled in 1075, were, in addition to a contingent of Scandinavians, the Breton Ralph de Gael, who was also, through Ralph the Staller, a kinsman of Hereward of Bourne. Gaimar clearly knew how to write for his particular audience.

Though the macro-structure of his narrative is dynastic and therefore king-centred, Gaimar also adopts a perspective that one suspects to have been that of his audience, that is essentially baronial in its orientation. Indeed, as John Gillingham observes: ‘it offers us an unparalleled insight into the thought-world of the secular aristocracy of the early 12th c.’ In describing the death of William Rufus, to which he devotes a literary set-piece of considerable length and detail, Gaimar gives a version of events more positive, more human, and more sympathetic than either William of Malmesbury or Henry of Huntingdon, both of whose accounts are coloured by their moral outrage at the king’s perceived immorality and mistreatment of the church. Gaimar, as Barlow points out, offers an alternative to the canonical view of Rufus and allows his listeners to judge this much maligned king by the standards of the secular nobility rather than by those of the cloister or the church. Had Gaimar’s patrons not been known, some critics might even have assumed, as they all too readily do with Henry II because of his patronage of Wace and Benoît de Sainte-Maure, that some direct royal interest or propagandistic intent lay behind Gaimar’s presentation of Rufus’s reign. The portrait Gaimar draws of Rufus may possibly have been embellished by borrowing from that of Geoffrey of Monmouth’s Arthur, but it is equally possible to speculate that Geoffrey could actually have taken some aspects of Rufus and his court to construct his fictional paragon of chivalry. In either case, Gaimar’s portrayal of Rufus as ‘a world-conquering, Arthur-imitating figure’ is quite deliberately placed at the narrative high point of his history as a more fitting exemplar and a

126 Davies, *The Matter of Britain*, 13; Wace’s portrayal of Rufus is, like Gaimar’s, essentially positive; cf. *Roman de Rou*, ll. 9365 ff., 9563 ff., 9699 ff., 9833 ff., 9931 ff. Wace would appear not to have read Gaimar.
more appropriate model of kingship than his recently deceased brother Henry I.

The account of Rufus’s Westminster court of Whitsun 1099 is for many the literary pièce de résistance of Gaimar’s Estoire. This splendidly written passage, a literary set-piece which forms the climax at the same time to Rufus’s reign and to Gaimar’s Estoire, is reminiscent of Arthur’s coronation scene in Geoffrey’s Historia. Gaimar paints a brilliantly evocative portrait of the pomp and ceremonial of the occasion, the visual splendour and courtliness of which contribute to making Rufus’s the ideal secular court of the first half of the twelfth-century. The scene combines hyperbole with courtly emphasis on sumptuous liveries and boundless hospitality. The ideological framework is that of social and political precedence, of one attendant earl over another in the first place, and ultimately, in a dramatic reaffirmation of baronial subordination to the king, of a petulantly independent earl of Chester yielding to a tolerant, humorous, and generous-minded Rufus, truly a prodom and curteis. The courtly harmony and opulence it evokes both look back to an imagined golden age and forward to the start of what promises to be a new era in English history.

There is no reason, or necessity, to suppose that Gaimar’s description of Rufus’s feast indicates direct contact with court life. Even if his patroness had been the daughter of a royal under-marshals, it is unlikely that she herself would have been brought up at court, or had any privileged access to it. This is not some distorted magnification of reality, but the realism of imaginative literature at its most creative. Both Gaimar’s court of Rufus and Geoffrey’s court of Arthur are likely to be recreations of past splendours passed down through literary memory rather than reflections, or even idealizations, of any sort of contemporary reality. Gaimar catches the spirit rather than the matter of the age.

Gaimar’s constant preoccupation, the perennial theme of his narrative, is dynastic continuity and its legitimation. As William Sayers points out: ‘his support and sympathy are for each new dynasty once established and legitimized on the throne’. ‘Gaimar’s ideal

127 See Notes to the Text, ll. 5078–6110.
128 Line 5850; cf. Notes to the Text, l. 5506.
129 Wall, ‘Culture and Patronage’. Which is not, of course, to exclude the possibility that Gaimar’s acquaintance with court life could have derived in part from her and/or her father; see Notes to the Text, ll. 6182–99.
of kingship’, according to Jane Zatta ‘locates the legitimacy of the ruler in the twin principles of hereditary right and the consent of the nobility’.131 Within this optic, reciprocal respect is essential, treachery is the greatest of feudal crimes, and the renunciation of homage the ultimate weapon available to the vassal wronged by an unjust lord. Special praise is reserved for leaders who respect the value of consilium in decision-making, and who settle disputes without recourse to violence and war. As the model for the relationship between ruler and ruled, ‘Gaimar stresses reciprocity and mutual obligation rather than subservience [to institutional authority]’.132

Though Gaimar tends to turn a blind eye to venial examples of royal misbehaviour (cf. Notes to the Text, l. 5026), kings who fail to respect their obligations to their vassals are denounced. Gaimar’s high sense of legality and of the reciprocity of the vassal bond, as well as his abhorrence of disinheritance (as R. W. Leckie, Jnr. puts it: ‘Gaimar measures political power in territorial terms’133), mean that a number of kings come in for particularly harsh treatment. There is, for example, Edelsi (96 ff.), who abuses his niece and alienates her inheritance, Cynewulf (1809 ff.), who disinherits Sigeberht, or Osbrith (2571 ff.), who violently humiliates Buern’s wife. To the long list of such royal shortcomings should be added that of Arthur himself, since it was his invasion of Denmark that led to the disinheritance of Haveloc’s father (408–15, 512–23). Nor is the Conqueror spared criticism when he is found, or at least placed in the position of, breaking his word to his vassals (5381–98). In both of these cases, however, there is no explicit censure; it is sufficient for it to lie barely hidden beneath the surface of Gaimar’s words.

The counterpart of the evil king is, of course, the courageous vassal, and the outstandingly exemplary figure here is Hereward, whom Gaimar portrays, with an unashamedly pro-English prejudice, as a heroic freedom fighter against Norman oppression. ‘A nobleman expelled from this rightful inheritance by the Normans’ (5470–1), Hereward’s fate stands ready-made, as it were, as a microcosm of the plight of the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy—and by extension of the native population—in post-Conquest England. His local connections with Lincolnshire would certainly have been an additional source of

131 Zatta, ‘Gender, Love and Sex as Political Theory?’, 250.
133 Leckie, The Passage of Dominion, 81.
interest for Gaimar’s audience, as would also, perhaps, his Flemish
links in warfare and matrimony. It is interesting to see how carefully
Gaimar had set the scene (5375–98) in order that the 1069 earls’
uprising could be seen an exemplum of royal duplicity driving ag-
grieved barons into rebellion, a theme which he treats elsewhere in the
Estoire.

At almost every turn in Gaimar’s narrative, the baronial class is shown
in a favourable light. Alan count of Richmond, Hugh count of Chester,
and Robert de Bellême are conspicuous stars in this constellation.
Gaimar’s admiration for such men ‘highlights the way in which he
judged men by non-ecclesiastical standards’. The few barons who
fall short, such as Æthelwold the treacherous losengier and Eadric
Streona, meet the same sticky ends as their errant superiors. Occasion-
ally they can redeem themselves, as in the case of the rebel Robert of
Mowbray, who, after more than thirty years’ imprisonment, died a
reformed character (6177). Only the ambivalent figure of Walter Tirel
is allowed to flee with impunity.

The almost exclusively secular nature of Gaimar’s discourse needs
no illustration, and his perspective in this regard is strikingly similar
to that adopted by Geoffrey of Monmouth. In Gaimar, religion and
the church remain a natural part of the fabric of life, but the laity rules.
Bishops, monks, and even saints are accorded walk-on parts, but it is
the military aristocracy, its struggles, its triumphs, and especially its
aspirations and values, that remain centre-stage. By the end of Gai-
mar’s chronicle, the Norman aristocracy is not only fully integrated
into Insular history, but occupies the most prominent cultural pos-
tion within it. The history of the English is now a legitimate part of
the Norman heritage. The age of chivalry has indeed dawned in the
Anglo-Norman world, but it is a chivalry that is becoming more
courteous, more refined, as women’s voices are raised and their
desires, as patrons and consumers of literature, made known. Space
is found for the human in addition to the political, for the individual in
addition to the collective, for sexual love, for marriage, for pomp and
circumstance, and for the arts of peace. Courtly society is beginning to
emerge from the confusing chaos of the past, and Gaimar can claim
pride of place in articulating this turning point in medieval culture to
the Insular and francophone nobility of his day.

135 Hollister, ‘Courtly Culture and Courtly Style’.
Rather than ‘taking refuge in English history’, 136 the listeners to Gaimar’s narrative were responding to their cultural displacement by putting down new roots for themselves in the past of their adoptive homeland. Claiming the cults of the Anglo-Saxon saints as their own was merely an extension of the same process. 137 Instead of ‘helping the Normans to become English’, 138 as if it were a stark alternative, vernacular historiography was contributing to a form of multiculturalism that enabled the many different ethnicities that constituted English society to assimilate at their own pace and in their own time. Anglo-Scandinavian integration within the Danelaw had already been achieved, whereas the new, multi-ethnic Anglo-Norman English, even though they were already calling themselves English by the 1130s, were to retain some sense of cultural separateness right through to the fifteenth century. 139 Historiography was, in this respect, a tool for a continual process of rearticulating and redefining a wide range of cultural allegiances across several centuries. As a courtly chronicler of continuities, Gaimar looked for, and found, common ground on which to foster mutual understanding and respect, and peaceful cohabitation, between peoples of different cultures in Anglo-Norman England and beyond. His advocacy of the peaceful resolution of conflict is a thread which runs unbroken throughout his narrative. Gaimar’s was indeed, as Hugh Thomas reminds us, a ‘conciliatory history of the English’. 140

EDITORIAL POLICY

The purpose of this edition is to bring before a wider public a work that has hitherto been known only to a small number of specialists, and largely by way of one of two rather inelegant and often, alas, inaccurate translations into Modern English. These were in turn based on early and equally inadequate editions of the text. Alexander Bell’s 1960 edition, excellent though it is in its scholarship, presents us with a composite text—a compromise amalgam of an early but textually inferior copy and a much later manuscript with consistently better readings. Dominica Legge’s categorization of Bell’s text as a monstrosity is, of course, grossly unfair. She was clearly writing under the

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140 Thomas, The English and the Normans, 65, 361.
sway of a Bédierist ideology which set greater store by authenticity than by accuracy. While Bell’s text succeeds in providing a remarkably close reconstruction of what Gaimar’s poem must actually have looked like soon after it was composed, it does so at the cost of jettisoning the sort of textual authenticity that modern scholarship, for better or for worse, demands.

The editorial policy that I have adopted here obliges me to present my readers with a fourteenth-century copy (MS R) of a twelfth-century original. I have already analysed above (pp. xxiii–xxiv) the main peculiarities of this particular copy. I do not, however, hesitate, in order to make the edited text more accessible, to emend some of its readings, in particular those that present inconsistencies that could be misleading and orthographic obstacles to easy comprehension. On a few occasions also, when a collateral manuscript has a sense reading superior to that of MS R, or is closer to the Latin source, I have incorporated its text into mine. Every departure from the letter of MS R is scrupulously recorded in the Rejected Readings that figure as footnotes to the text. In cases where square brackets appear in my text, the letters within them are my editorial additions to MS R. Bold type indicates section initials. When I have expanded numerals into words, and on those few occasions when I have rendered \( w \) as \( vu \) or \( uv \), the original is always listed in the Rejected Readings. Punctuation, word-division, and capitals are also editorial additions, as is the purely routine differentiation between \( i \) and \( j \), \( v \) and \( u \). Likewise with diaeresis which I have supplied as an aid to appreciating the syllabic structure of Gaimar’s verse. The scribe does not, for his part, consistently indicate elision or aphaeresis in his spelling, but readers will rapidly learn to identify and rectify this and other discrepancies between how words are written and how they are to be pronounced. They will also soon come to recognize the anarchic tendency of English personal names and place names which can change their syllable count at whim and rhyme in different, often contradictory, ways.

Variant readings from the collateral manuscripts are already available in Bell’s edition, and it has been decided, therefore, not to duplicate them unnecessarily here. Readers consulting them, and

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141 I have consistently emended scribal spellings such as \( livere \) or \( verai \) where the \( e \) intercalated between \( v \) and \( r \) has no syllabic value (cf. Notes to the Text, l. 88), and all such changes are registered in the Rejected Readings. On the other hand I have assumed that cases of, for example, \( ore \) for \( or \) will be tacitly corrected by the reader where necessary.
those who have occasion still to use the Rolls Series edition, will find below a conversion table for the different systems of line-numbering employed:

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NB: there are line-numbering errors in Bell’s text between ll. 828 and 829, and in the Rolls Series text between ll. 6319 and 6320.

A word, finally, on the translation. It will be obvious that I have deliberately avoided a word-for-word rendering. Translating for a twelfth-century public, Gaimar used a range of vocabulary which was consonant with that of his audience and that of his age, whilst I share with the twenty-first-century readers of my translation a quite different order of lexical resources. In such circumstances, it seems to me, a literal English rendering would have given a misleading and anachronistic impression of Gaimar’s invariably fluent and sometimes elegant literary French. Those readers, however, who prefer literal equivalences
can always have recourse to the original wording on the facing page. Some of the unexpected changes in tense usage in the English can be explained by comparable jumps in the French, but I have made no attempt to correlate the two systematically. I have sometimes added dates, in square brackets, to the translation to enable readers to find their way more easily through the narrative. Occasionally also I have indicated some of the more blatant factual discrepancies between Gaimar’s text and his source by incorporating the readings of the latter, again in square brackets, preceded by the sign ‘¼’.

Translating poetry into prose inevitably leads to linguistic impoverishment, and in an effort to minimize this, I have sought faithfully and accurately to render not only the sense of the original but also its tone. This is a highly subjective procedure, and I beg the indulgence of readers who may feel that I have not always succeeded in striking a consistent balance between content and form.

An additional postscript is, unfortunately, necessary on Gaimar’s scholarly reputation. If even an Anglo-Normanist as dedicated and as knowledgeable as Dominica Legge can allow herself to categorize the Estoire des Engleis as having ‘little value as history’, it is little wonder that Gaimar has, over the years, been the object of a great deal of misplaced and inapposite criticism. But even more regrettable are the uninformed judgements to which he has been subjected, and it would be an interesting, if dispiriting, exercise to draw up a list of scholars who have apparently read Gaimar only imperfectly or even not at all. Candidates for inclusion might be Gaston Paris, who described the Estoire as ‘à peu près dénué de valeur littéraire’; C. B. West, who omitted all mention of Gaimar from her Courtoisie in Anglo-Norman Literature; Robert Bossuat, who wrote of Gaimar’s poem that ‘il ne reste qu’un milier [sic] de vers assez médiocres’; J. S. P. Tatlock, who opined that the Estoire was ‘a second-rate poem and by a simple-minded man’; R. R. Darlington, who found that the work has ‘little that is of value to the historian, and its interest lies mainly in the language in which it was written’.

Typically cursory are the references to Gaimar in Bezzola, Les Origines et la formation de la littérature courtoise en Occident (500–1200), ii/2,

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142 Legge, Anglo-Norman Literature, 31.
144 Le Moyen Age (Paris, 1955), 59.
145 The Legendary History of Britain, 452–6 at 452.

Contemporary scholarship continues this tradition of disregard: Gaimar is accorded, at best, no more than a token nod in Marianne Ailes, ‘Early French Chronicle—History or Literature?’, _Journal of Medieval History_, 26 (2000), 301–12; C. Given-Wilson, _Chronicles: The Writing of History in Medieval England_ (London, 2004); Laurence Mathey-Maille, _Ecritures du passé: Histoires des ducs de Normandie_ (Essais sur le Moyen Age, 35; Paris, 2007); M. Otter, _Inventiones: Fiction and Referentiality in 12th-Century English Historical Writing_ (Chapel Hill, NC, 1996); D. Rollo, _Historical Fabrication, Ethnic Fable and French Romance in 12th-Century England_ (Edward C. Armstrong Monographs on Medieval Literature, 9; Lexington, Ky., 1998); Leah Shopkow, _History and Community: Norman Historical Writing in the 11th and 12th Centuries_ (Washington, DC, 1997); Robert M. Stein, _Reality Fictions: Romance, History and Governmental Authority 1025–1180_ (Notre Dame, Ind., 2006). There are, fortunately, honourable exceptions, amongst whom we may mention Philip Bennett, Brigitte Burrichter, Jean Blacker, Peter Damian-Grint, Elizabeth Freeman, the late Jane Zatta, and, from the world of historians, John Gillingham and Paul Dalton (see Bibliography). The present edition will find additional justification in any contribution it might, in its turn, make to the eventual scholarly rehabilitation of a uniquely pioneering author sadly and unjustifiably neglected by a large majority of the scholarly community.

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147 _Historical Writing in England_, 209–12.
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