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The date of composition of *King Horn* has in recent years been moved from ca. 1225 to ca. 1250, or even as late as the 1270s, as more information about the three manuscripts of the poem has become available.[1] Nevertheless, *King Horn* still seems to lie at, or at least very near, the beginning of the Middle English romance tradition, and it thus holds a special interest as a potential indicator of the way in which that tradition came into existence. This paper explores one key element in *King Horn* as a step towards a better understanding of both the poem itself and its literary context.

It has become a commonplace of *King Horn* scholarship to see in the plot of exile and return some reflection of events of the later Anglo-Saxon period. Horn's own homeland is Suddene (140), and that of his bride is Westernesse (163). His adventures take him also to Yrlonde (774, 1024) and, more briefly, to Reynes (971, 1541). These lands are apparently not far apart;[2] and, since Yrlonde is evidently to be identified as Ireland, and not only *King Horn* but also the other early extant versions of the Horn story were produced in England,[3] it has been assumed that the action takes place principally or entirely in the British Isles. Yet the foreigners who invade Suddene, Westernesse, and Ireland are *Sarazins* 'Saracens' (40, 613, and, by implication, 881–91). There could have been no memory of an invasion of the British Isles by any of the peoples belonging to the world of Islam to whom this term was applied.[4] The only non-Christian invaders who came after the English them-

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[1] All line references are to Rosamund Allen's *King Horn: An Edition Based on Cambridge University Library MS Gg.4.27 (2)* (New York, 1984); quotations follow her text, except that indications of emendation and expansion are removed and capitalization is regularized. Joseph Hall's parallel-text edition, *King Horn: A Middle-English Romance* (Oxford, 1901), has also been consulted. For the probable date of composition and a review of the arguments see Allen, pp. 113–14, and her article, "The Date and Provenance of *King Horn*: Some Interim Reassessments," in *Medieval English Studies Presented to George Kane*, ed. Edward Donald Kennedy, Ronald Waldron, and Joseph S. Wittig (Cambridge, Eng., 1988), pp. 99–125. The earlier date seems to have arisen from a belief that the Cambridge manuscript (C) was written around the middle of the thirteenth century, whereas it is now dated ca. 1300 (Allen, *King Horn*, pp. 3, 101), probably just a little later than Bodleian Library MS Laud. Misc. 108 (O), now dated to the late thirteenth century (Allen, *King Horn*, pp. 8, 102–3); the third manuscript, British Library MS Harley 2253 (L), is dated to the 1330s (Allen, *King Horn*, pp. 13, 105).

[2] The sea journeys between Suddene and Westernesse are said to take variously one to two days (125, 193), five days (1325), and, probably, overnight (1459–72). The brevity of references to the sea journeys between Westernesse and Reynes (1537–40), Reynes and Ireland (1548–49), and Ireland and Suddene (1553) seems to imply that no substantial amount of time is involved in any one of them.

[3] See below, p. 567.

[4] In *The Matter of Araby in Medieval England* (New Haven, 1977), pp. 120–25, Dorothee Metlitzki draws attention to certain Arabic records which in her view indicate that Muslims from Spain

selves had arrived were the Scandinavians, and the Saracens of the poem
have come to be identified as Danes or Vikings under another name, with
the origins of the story set in preconquest times.[5]

This interpretation is often accepted as a matter of course and repeated
without scrutiny. For Charles W. Dunn in 1967, "the setting . . . seems to
reflect the period of Viking raids in Britain";[6] for Beatrice White in 1969,
"the Saracens are common-or-garden Viking marauders";[7] for Norman Dan-
iel in 1984, "the Vikings are Saracens . . . in *King Horn*";[8] and for Thomas J.
Garbáty, also in 1984, "the sea raiders were probably originally Danes."[9]

The "Scandinavian" view is based on a combination of historico-geograph-
ical and linguistic arguments, mostly advanced many decades ago. An early
suggestion that Suddene represented Suð-Dene, continental homeland of the
South Danes of *Beowulf* (463),[10] was displaced by suggestions that Suddene
represented one or other place in the south of England, with the invaders
presumed to be Danes, a view endorsed in 1901 through the influential
editions of Joseph Hall and George H. McKnight.[11] In 1903 a setting in the
northwest, with the invaders presumed to be Norsemen, was argued by
William Henry Schofield, who explained Suddene as the Isle of Man and
Westernesse as the Wirral.[12] Then in 1931 Walter Oliver countered Scho-
field's view and identified Suddene as South Dean in Roxburghshire and
Westernesse as the Mull of Galloway, with the invaders again Norsemen.[13]

The various historico-geographical arguments put forward were quite dis-
tinct from each other; but they seem to have been merged in the passage of

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undertook voyages to Britain and Ireland, and she suggests that *King Horn* may "preserve a
record of actual sea raids from Spain." These Arabic records concern a peaceful diplomatic
mission in the ninth century to a western "island" inhabited by Scandinavians and now identified
as either Ireland or Jutland; an adventurous expedition to islands in the Atlantic, with "Britain"
cited as a reference point for directions; an eleventh-century description of Ireland as a Scan-
dinavian society; and a twelfth-century description of the British Isles which includes an account
of another adventurous expedition to an island in the Atlantic. This evidence for Saracen visits
to Britain and Ireland is neither specific nor conclusive; but if such visits did occur as indicated,
they were very occasional, on a small scale, and not attempts at conquest — altogether, events
that might stir up local curiosity, but not widespread fear or military response.

For the scope of Middle English *Sarazin* see below, pp. 566–67.

[5] Hall suggests (*King Horn*, pp. liv–lv) that the story might have originated in the earlier period
of the pagan English invasions of Christian Britain and then been adapted to encode the later
situation of the Scandinavian invasions of Christian England. This speculation is, however, too
remote to discuss in any useful way, and it has not entered the critical discourse.

[6] "Romances Derived from English Legends," in *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English,
1050–1500*, 1: *Romances*, ed. J. Burke Severs (New Haven), p. 19.

[7] "Saracens and Crusaders: From Fact to Allegory," in *Medieval Literature and Civilization: Studies
in Memory of G. N. Garmonsway*, ed. D. A. Pearsall and R. A. Waldron (London), p. 171.

[8] *Heroes and Saracens: An Interpretation of the "Chansons de Geste"* (Edinburgh), p. 290, n. 51.

[9] *Medieval English Literature* (Lexington, Ky.), p. 143, n. 42.

[10] *"Beowulf" and "The Fight at Finnsburg,"* ed. Fr. Klaeber, 3rd ed. (Boston, 1950).

[11] For early suggestions see Hall, *King Horn*, pp. liv–lv; McKnight's introduction to his edition,
King Horn, Floriz and Blauncheflur, The Assumption of our Lady, EETS OS 14 (London, 1901), pp.
xviii–xx; and Schofield and Oliver, as nn. 12 and 13 below.

[12] "The Story of Horn and Rimenhild," *PMLA* 18 (1903), 1–83.

[13] "King Horn and Suddene," *PMLA* 46 (1931), 102–14.

time and seen as constituting a cumulative weight of evidence for a gener-
alized view. None of the recent scholars mentioned makes direct reference
to any specific earlier work in the tradition of historico-geographical inter-
pretation, even to that of Oliver as its last serious proponent. Moreover, the
remarks of White, Daniel, and Garbáty blur distinctions, explicitly between
life and text, and implicitly between race memory and individual conscious-
ness. It may or may not be the case that the triumphs of a legendary hero
called Horn over Scandinavian invaders were recounted in preconquest Eng-
land, but it is the contention of this paper that *King Horn* itself tells another
story.

Lexical comment on *Sarazin* has also been offered in support of the "Scan-
dinavian" view. McKnight, for instance, notes that the word could have a
nonspecific use as "the conventional enemy in mediaeval romance";[14] and
Hall explains that, "through the influence of the Crusades, Saracen became
a general name for heathen of any sort," supporting this statement with
quotations from English texts in which the word is used to indicate Danes
and Saxons as well as the nonspecific "foreigners in general."[15] The *Middle
English Dictionary*[16] confirms a wide range of meaning for the word and
specifically cites *King Horn* for meaning (e), "one of the pagan invaders of
England, esp. a Dane or Saxon." A closer consideration of the evidence,
however, casts a different light on the matter.

King Horn in fact yields the earliest citation in the *Middle English Dictionary*
for meaning (e), even allowing that the poem may have been composed up
to about fifty years later than the date given in the *Dictionary,* ca. 1225.
Whatever its meaning, the word seems to have been fairly new in English
when *King Horn* was composed. For the general meaning "pagan," under (b),
the earliest citations are ca. 1250. The basic meaning "Turk," "Arab," "Mos-
lem," under (a), is cited in Middle English only from ca. 1300 (Middle English
Sarazin was a French borrowing; *Saracene* had been available with the basic
meaning back in the ninth and tenth centuries, but as a Latin borrowing).[17]
After *King Horn* the next texts cited for meaning (e) are *Gloucester Chronicle
A* and *Of Arthour and of Merlin,* both works dated ca. 1300 (as argued also by
their respective editors)[18] and both among the texts cited by Hall. In each of
these two texts the nationality of the Saracens is made clear in explicit state-
ments: in the *Chronicle* the Saracens are variously Saxons (4516, 4522) and

[14] P. 138, n. 42.

[15] Pp. 96–97, n. 38.

[16] Ed. Hans Kurath et al. (Ann Arbor, 1954–).

[17] See relevant entries in *The Oxford English Dictionary,* 2nd ed., prepared by J. A. Simpson and
E. S. C. Weiner (Oxford, 1989); and *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary,* ed. Joseph Bosworth and T.
Northcote Toller (London, 1898), *Supplement,* ed. T. Northcote Toller (1921), with *Enlarged
Addenda and Corrigenda,* ed. A. Campbell (1972).

[18] *The Metrical Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester,* ed. William Aldis Wright, 2 pts., Rolls Series
(London, 1887), 1:xi, and *Early Middle English Verse and Prose,* ed. J. A. W. Bennett and G. V.
Smithers, 2nd ed., repr. with corrections (Oxford, 1974), pp. 158–59; *Of Arthour and of Merlin,*
ed. O. D. Macrae-Gibson, EETS 268, 279 (London, 1973, 1979), 2:62. Citations of *Of Arthour
and of Merlin* are from the Auchinleck text.

Danes (together with Scots and Irishmen: 5550–51, 5592–94) as well as the inhabitants of the Holy Land (8107, 8135); in *Of Arthour and of Merlin* they are collectively Saxons and Danes (111, 316, 2067). In *King Horn,* by contrast, there is no such explicit information about the homeland of the Saracens, which is referred to only in the general term *paynyme* 'pagandom' (821). The texts in which the meaning "Danes" is clear are a generation later than *King Horn,* and their relevance even as retrospective evidence cannot be assumed in the absence of a similarly specific linguistic context. *Sarazin* in *King Horn,* it appears, might as easily mean "pagan" or "Muslim" as "Dane." Thus, neither the historico-geographical discourse nor the linguistic discourse concerned with the occurrence of *Sarazin* in Middle English has, to date, satisfactorily explained the Saracens of *King Horn.*

Of the other two early versions of the Horn story, one features Saracens as the invaders, the other does not. The English tail-rhyme romance *Horn Childe and Maiden Rimnild,* dated ca. 1320, survives only in the Auchinleck manuscript of 1330–40.[19] Its invaders are not called Saracens. They come explicitly from Denmark (49), and numerous references to readily identifiable locations in the north of England fix the setting as an area much subjected to Scandinavian invasion. Whether these non-Saracen foes belong to a form of the story older than that set out in *King Horn* or whether they represent a recasting of a different enemy, Saracen or other, to suit a particular audience has no immediate bearing on this discussion. The Anglo-Norman *Romance of Horn,* dated ca. 1170 or a little later, survives in three manuscripts and two fragments, all from the thirteenth century.[20] Here the invaders are called Saracens, and they come explicitly from Islamic regions: collectively, from Africa, that is, North Africa (297, 1298, 2907); individually, also from Canaan (1463) and Persia (3000).

The *Romance* is roughly seven times as long as *King Horn.* Its metrical structure is that of a chanson de geste (*laisses* of rhymed alexandrine lines), and its style is marked by the repetition and elaboration of detail typical of that genre, but it also has more incident than *King Horn.* Other variations include an almost completely different set of individual proper names. Nevertheless, the two poems have a number of verbal parallels, and both identify the invaders as Saracens. They are probably derived from a common ancestor, but it is not impossible that *King Horn* is derived from both the *Romance* and another account.[21] In either case it is clear that Saracens were featured

[19] Ed. Maldwyn Mills, Middle English Texts 20 (Heidelberg, 1988). Date of composition and manuscript: Mills, pp. 11, 41, 79–81; Dunn, "Romances," p. 20. For the likelihood that the author came from an area in or near Yorkshire see Mills, pp. 40–43, 80–81.

[20] *The Romance of Horn by Thomas,* ed. Mildred K. Pope and T. B. W. Reid, 2 vols., Anglo-Norman Text Society 9–10, 12–13 (Oxford, 1955, 1964). Date of composition: Pope and Reid, 2:123–24; M. Dominica Legge, *Anglo-Norman Literature and Its Background* (Oxford, 1963), pp. 85, 96. Manuscripts: Pope and Reid, 1:ix–xii, lvii–lviii; Legge, p. 104.

[21] For a detailed comparison of the two texts see Hans Helmut Christmann, "Über das Verhältnis zwischen dem anglonormannischen und dem mittelenglischen 'Horn,'" *Zeitschrift für französische Sprache und Literatur* 70 (1960), 166–81.

in the story at least by ca. 1170, although the details of their presentation might vary from one version to another.

The body of literature from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in which Saracens are featured most often as the enemy is the quasi-epic French chansons de geste.[22] The following discussion establishes the likely availability of such literary models to the author of *King Horn* and provides a detailed comparison of the Saracens of *King Horn* with those of certain chansons from the three traditional cycles distinguished in the Middle Ages and one independent chanson.[23] Since repeated reference will be made to these French texts and conclusions drawn in relation to their subject matter, date, and dissemination, it is convenient to set out pertinent information about them here. The extant poems are usually thought to have been derived from earlier accounts, so that the dates of composition given may not be the earliest dates by which their stories or topoi were becoming known.

The most widely disseminated cycle, and probably the first to appear, is the Charlemagne cycle, concerned with the military exploits of Charlemagne and the Twelve Peers in the later part of the eighth century.[24] The essential events of this cycle, focused on the heroic death of the peers at Roncesvalles in 778, are set out in *Roland*, composed at the end of the eleventh century or in the early twelfth century. The earliest manuscript, written in England in the second quarter of the twelfth century or perhaps a few years later, is generally regarded as the earliest of all chanson manuscripts extant.[25] Another early poem in the Charlemagne cycle is *Fierabras*, whose original composition is likely to have been between 1095 and ca. 1120. A number of manuscripts survive from the thirteenth century on. Three versions of the story are of continental origin, and one of these, the most expansive and the most widely disseminated, is designated the vulgate. A fourth version is of Insular origin. Both the vulgate and the Insular versions are represented in

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[22] For the chansons de geste generally see Martín de Riquer, *Les chansons de geste françaises,* 2nd ed., translated into French by Irénée Cluzel (Paris, 1968); Urban Tigner Holmes, Jr., *A History of Old French Literature from the Origins to 1300,* rev. ed. (New York, 1962), chaps. 7–11, 28; André Moisan, *Répertoire des noms propres de personnes et lieux cités dans les chansons de geste françaises et les oeuvres étrangères dérivées,* 5 vols., Publications Romanes et Françaises 173 (Geneva, 1986); Daniel Poirion, *Précis de littérature française du moyen âge* (Paris, 1983), chap. 2.

[23] Some typical elements in the presentation of Saracens in medieval western literature have been discussed in previous studies, such as those of William Wistar Comfort, "The Character Types in the Old French *Chansons de geste,*" *PMLA* 21 (1906), 404–34, and "The Literary Rôle of the Saracens in the French Epic," *PMLA* 55 (1940), 628–59; and those of Daniel, Metlitzki, and White, in their works cited above, in nn. 8, 4, and 7, respectively. The presentation of the Saracens in *King Horn* has not, however, been discussed in any detail. In this paper consistent reference is made to a manageable number of French texts, selected to be representative of the corpus in various ways and at the same time to provide maximal information about *King Horn.*

[24] For a detailed account of this cycle see André de Mandach, *Naissance et développement de la chanson de geste en Europe,* 1: *La geste de Charlemagne et de Roland,* Publications Romanes et Françaises 69 (Geneva, 1961).

[25] *La chanson de Roland,* ed. F. Whitehead (Oxford, 1968). Date of composition: de Riquer, *Chansons,* pp. 34–52; Holmes, *History,* pp. 73–74; Moisan, *Répertoire,* 1/1:58. Manuscript: de Mandach, *Naissance,* 1:408; de Riquer, *Chansons,* p. 83; Holmes, *History,* p. 76; Legge, *Anglo-Norman Literature,* pp. 4–5; Moisan, *Répertoire,* 1/1:58.

Anglo-Norman manuscripts and in the English Charlemagne romances, which are discussed below. References in this paper are to the vulgate version except where otherwise indicated.[26] Two later chansons in this cycle, composed at the end of the twelfth century or the beginning of the thirteenth, are *Gui de Bourgogne* and *Otinel*. Both extant texts of *Gui de Bourgogne* belong to the thirteenth century, the better of them to the first half of the century. The other text was presumably written in England, as it is found in one of the manuscripts containing *The Romance of Horn*. Further texts of the poem evidently existed in codices kept in the libraries of the great abbeys at Peterborough and Canterbury, although the fact that the extant library registers were not made until the second half of the fourteenth century and the fifteenth century, respectively, leaves it uncertain how early these texts were acquired.[27] The story of Otinel is known in two versions, both of Anglo-Norman origin; they may have a common ancestor, or the second, less extensive version may be derived from the first. The chanson, based on the second version, survives in three texts of the fourteenth century, one full and one fragmentary Anglo-Norman text and one somewhat later continental French text. There was a text of the poem immediately following the *Gui de Bourgogne* in the Peterborough codex referred to above; the abbey at Peterborough was closely connected with that at Fleury, whose library housed the extant continental text of *Otinel* in the Middle Ages.[28]

[26] For the vulgate text see *Fierabras, Parise la Duchesse*, ed. F. Guessard, Les Anciens Poètes de la France 4 (Paris, 1860). Date of original composition: André de Mandach, *Naissance et développement de la chanson de geste en Europe*, 5: *La geste de Fierabras: Le jeu du réel et de l'invraisemblable, avec des textes inédits*, Publications Romanes et Françaises 177 (Geneva, 1987), pp. 125–26; this date refers to the first version, whereas the commonly given date, later in the twelfth century, or ca. 1170, refers to the subsequent vulgate version: Guessard, *Fierabras*, p. ii; de Riquer, *Chansons*, p. 211; Holmes, *History*, p. 81; Moisan, *Répertoire*, 1/1:46. Manuscripts: de Mandach, *Naissance*, 5, esp. pp. 165–86. Versions: ibid., esp. chap. 7. Of the Anglo-Norman manuscripts known, two are no longer extant, and one, representing the vulgate version, is very fragmentary; the Hanover manuscript, dated to the first half of the fourteenth century, has a full vulgate text, and the Egerton manuscript, dated 1350–60, has a full Insular text. Of the English Charlemagne poems (discussed below, p. 572), *The Sowdone of Babylone* gives the Insular version; *Sir Ferumbras* combines the Insular and the vulgate versions; and *Firumbras* and *Charles the Grete* give the vulgate version.

[27] *Gui de Bourgogne*, ed. F. Guessard, in *Gui de Bourgogne, Otinel, Floovant*, ed. F. Guessard and H. Michelant, Les Anciens Poètes de la France 1 (Paris, 1859). Date of composition: Guessard, *Gui*, p. viii; Moisan, *Répertoire*, 1/1:49. Manuscripts: Guessard, *Gui*, pp. viii–ix; Moisan, *Répertoire*, 1/1:49. Coexistence with *The Romance of Horn*, in British Library MS Harley 527: Guessard, pp. xiii–xiv, together with Pope and Reid, *Romance of Horn*, 1:ix; H. Wanley et al., *A Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts in the British Museum with Indexes of Persons, Places, and Matters*, 1 (London, 1808), p. 341. Library registers: de Mandach, *Naissance*, 1:268, 272 (Peterborough) and 261–62 (Canterbury).

[28] *Otinel* is edited from the continental French text, with recourse to the full Anglo-Norman text, by F. Guessard and H. Michelant, in the 1859 volume containing *Gui de Bourgogne* (see above, n. 27). Date of composition: Guessard and Michelant, pp. viii–ix; de Mandach, *Naissance*, 1:259; de Riquer, *Chansons*, p. 213; Holmes, *History*, p. 264; Moisan, *Répertoire*, 1/1:56. Manuscripts: Guessard and Michelant, pp. x–xiii; de Mandach, *Naissance*, 1:247–49, 348; Moisan, *Répertoire*, 1/1:56. Versions: de Mandach, *Naissance*, 1:247–49, 348–63. Peterborough library register: de Mandach, *Naissance*, 1:268, 272. Relationship between Peterborough and Fleury: de Mandach, ibid., p. 348.

The Doon of Mayence cycle is concerned with certain rebellious vassals of Charlemagne's time. The focal poem, *Doon de Maience,* was composed in the second half of the thirteenth century, with the earliest manuscript dating from the mid-fourteenth century or a little later. Texts evidently existed in two codices from the library of the earl of Warwick, which was presented to Bordesley abbey in 1306, and in another codex kept in the abbey at Canterbury.[29]

The William of Orange cycle is set in the early ninth century, at the end of Charlemagne's reign and during the reign of his son Louis, and concerns the deeds of Aymeri and his sons, especially William. The Anglo-Norman text *Willame,* probably from the end of the first quarter of the thirteenth century, is the only extant copy of a continental *Guillaume,* which would have been composed in the middle of the twelfth century.[30]

The noncyclic chanson *Floovant* is set in the early sixth century, in the reign of Clovis, the first Christian king of France, but its character types and narrative patterns are similar to those of chansons set in Charlemagne's time, especially *Fierabras* (Clovis even has twelve peers: 1403). The poem was composed in the late twelfth century; it survives in three fourteenth-century texts, two fragments and one full text, which has been placed more precisely at the beginning of the fourteenth century.[31]

For the most part the Saracens in these chansons are clearly identified as people from parts of the Islamic world. In *Doon de Maience* and *Floovant,* however, the situation is less clear-cut.

In *Doon de Maience* the Saracens live in Saxony and have close associations with other pagans who live in Denmark (6338–67). There is, nevertheless, some uncertainty about the meaning of Saracen in this poem. The point is made as they are introduced halfway through the poem that the king of Saxony has taken the land by conquest (6347), implying that some of the Saxons of the poem are the conquered natives of Saxony and others are outsiders who have arrived with the king; and both the Saxon and the Danish

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[29] Ed. F. Guessard, Les Anciens Poètes de la France 2 (Paris, 1859). Date of composition: Guessard, *Doon,* p. vi; de Riquer, *Chansons,* p. 228; Holmes, *History,* p. 263; Moisan, *Répertoire,* 1/1:42. Manuscript: Guessard, *Doon,* p. x; Moisan, *Répertoire,* 1/1:42. Library registers: de Mandach, *Naissance,* 1:260 (Bordesley) and 261–62 (Canterbury).

[30] *La chanson de Guillaume,* ed. Jeanne Wathelet-Willem, in her *Recherches sur "La chanson de Guillaume": Etudes accompagnées d'une édition,* 2 vols., Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres de l'Université de Liège 210 (Paris, 1975), 2:729–1229. Date of composition: Wathelet-Willem, 1:651–55. Manuscript: Wathelet-Willem, 1:41–51. In earlier studies the date of composition varies from the late tenth to the late eleventh century, largely depending on whether the whole poem or its constituent parts are taken as the basis for discussion, and the date of the Anglo-Norman manuscript is given as thirteenth or mid-thirteenth century: for the range of opinion see also de Riquer, *Chansons,* pp. 143–44; Moisan, *Répertoire,* 1/1:48.

[31] *Floovant: Chanson de geste du XIIe siècle,* ed. Sven Andolf (Uppsala, 1941). Date of composition: Andolf, pp. lxxxvii–xcv; Moisan, *Répertoire,* 1/1:47. Full manuscript: Andolf, p. iii; Moisan, *Répertoire,* 1/1:47. Fragmentary manuscripts: Paul Gehrt, "Zwei altfranzösische Bruchstücke des Floovant," *Romanische Forschungen* 10 (1899), 248. For parallels with chansons set in Charlemagne's time see Andolf's edition, pp. xxxiv–lii, and F. H. Bateson, *La chanson de Floovant: Etude critique et édition* (Loughborough, 1938), pp. 38–46.

forces explicitly include the usual oriental Saracens of other chansons (7481, 9204–5). Again, the frequent references to Saracens and the occasional references to Saxons in separate places leave it a moot point whether the poet regards the terms as virtually synonymous, but the use of the terms together may imply some distinction: for example, "Sesnes et Sarrazins," 7567. In view of the uncertainty, however, it is possible to say only that in *Doon* the term Saracen is used rather loosely and is at times interchangeable, if not necessarily synonymous, with Saxon. In *Floovant* the connection between Saracens and Saxons is rather more tenuous. The action of the poem is set in Rhineland areas (e.g., 295–96, 545), and the Saracen leader is able to bestow Saxony in fief (2426–27); but the Saracens themselves are explicitly oriental (e.g., 379, 543, 598), never Saxon, and their leader is a Persian (826).[32]

The French romance *Partonopeu de Blois,* dating from the late twelfth century, with the earlier manuscripts belonging to the thirteenth century, offers some instructive points of comparison. In the first part of the poem, referred to here as *Partonopeu A* (1–3844, one-third of the whole, or one-quarter if the continuation is included), the Saracens are clearly identified as Danes and other Scandinavians (2084–87, 2268). For the rest of the poem, referred to here as *Partonopeu B*, the Saracens are oriental and African (7232–54).[33]

The particular chansons referred to above, together with the romance *Partonopeu de Blois,* afford a reasonably representative range of evidence for

[32] Charlemagne spent more of his life fighting the Saxons than fighting the Saracens: see, for example, Margaret Deanesly, *A History of Early Modern Europe from 476 to 911,* 2nd ed., repr. with minor corrections (London, 1963), pp. 356–65. The Saxon wars, however, feature much less frequently in the chansons than the Saracen wars. The Saxons were also pagan, but the contrasts between them and the French were less marked: they were racially related; Saxon animism was not a particularly organized religion and could not appear to be a large-scale threat; and the Saxons were in any case converted as a nation in Charlemagne's own time. Evidently the Christian poets found the situation to be of less potential interest as material for their art. The main chanson dealing with the Saxon wars is Jehan Bodel's *Saisnes,* from the end of the twelfth century. This poem, edited by Annette Brasseur (Textes Littéraires Français 369; Geneva, 1989; an edition not yet available to me), is discussed in detail by Charles Foulon, *L'oeuvre de Jehan Bodel* (Paris, 1958). Date of composition: Foulon, pp. 11–18. An ambivalence similar to that in *Doon* is evident here: the Saxons have with them men from both Denmark and the Islamic world (172–206, lines summarized by Foulon, p. 256), and the collective forces are referred to as Saracens (Turin-Lacabane text only, 4943–66, 6003–21, lines summarized by Foulon, pp. 281, 289), but the Saxons by themselves are also identified as Saracens: "Sarrasin sont li Saisne" (53, line quoted by Foulon, p. 489). *Sarrasin* in this line explains *Saisne,* not vice versa: the Saxons are the same kind of people as the Saracens. It would seem an easy step from this kind of statement, however, to equate "Saracen" with "Saxon," and it is tempting to think that similarity in sound and spelling may to some extent have contributed to such a process. Interestingly, the Saracens in *Of Arthour and of Merlin* are plain Saxons in the French source, *Lestoire de Merlin,* ed. H. Oskar Sommer, *The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances,* 2 (Washington, D.C., 1908): e.g., *sesne,* p. 20, line 33; *saisne,* p. 45, line 10. For this source identification see Macrae-Gibson (see above, n. 18), 2:2–3.

[33] *Partonopeu de Blois: A French Romance of the Twelfth Century,* ed. Joseph Gildea, with introduction by Leon Smith, 2 vols. in 3 pts. (Villanova, Penn., 1967–70). Date of composition: Holmes, *History,* pp. 152–53 (before 1188). Manuscripts: Gildea, 2/2:5–13.

the possible identity of Saracens in French literature of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries: they are usually oriental or Mediterranean peoples who were, or were regarded as, Islamic; occasionally Saxons; and very occasionally Scandinavians.[34]

French literary traditions were, of course, familiar to many in England after the Norman Conquest, and there is ample evidence for such familiarity in the case of the chansons de geste. Records refer to the presence of various chansons in medieval collections (e.g., *Gui de Bourgogne, Otinel, Doon de Maience*), and in some cases it is known that copies and adaptations of continental texts were made in England from the twelfth century on (e.g., *Roland, Fierabras, Gui de Bourgogne, Willame*). In the case of one chanson, *Otinel*, the composition which gave rise to all known accounts from England, France, and northern Europe was produced in England — possibly at Peterborough, which, there is good reason to believe, became a particularly influential center for the collection and transmission of chansons de geste.[35] The chanson form and style were imitated in other Anglo-Norman compositions, such as *The Romance of Horn*.[36] And eventually, from the fourteenth century on, romances based on material associated with the Charlemagne cycle were composed in English. Apart from three of the very late texts, all the extant English Charlemagne romances are related to three of the chansons: *The Song of Roland* is based on a version of *Roland*; *The Sowdone of Babylone, Sir Ferumbras, Firumbras*, and, later, Caxton's *Charles the Grete* are based on the Fierabras story; and *Otuel and Roland, Otuel*, and *Duke Rowland and Sir Otuell of Spayne* are based on the Otinel story, with *Roland and Vernagu* and *The Sege off Melayne* thought to be related to it. The earliest of these poems are *Otuel* and *Roland and Vernagu*, both found in the Auchinleck manuscript of 1330–40 and composed perhaps a few years earlier, and it is possible that *Otuel and Roland* was composed at the same time as *Roland and Vernagu*, as two parts of a longer work.[37]

[34] Geographical and national references in the chansons, in fact, often present quite a confused view of the world. One major group sometimes included in lists of oriental Saracens is the Slavs (*Esclers*). Historically speaking, the Slavs occupied much of eastern Europe and western Asia; they were animists, not Muslims, and were gradually absorbed into either the western or the eastern church, as a result of Christian campaigning, from the time of Charlemagne on. See, for example, Hermann Kinder and Werner Hilgemann, *The Penguin Atlas of World History*, 1: *From the Beginning to the Eve of the French Revolution*, trans. Ernest A. Menze, with maps designed by Harald and Ruth Bukor (Harmondsworth, 1974), pp. 110–11. From a French point of view the Slavs would lie to the east, along with the Turks and the Persians. Their homeland is not particularized in the chansons as Saxony and Denmark are, and references to Saracens in this paper have not pursued the question of a distinctive identity for the *Esclers*.

[35] For the existence of such a center at Peterborough see de Mandach, *Naissance*, 1:259–78, and pp. 272 and 349 for his view that the archetypal *Otinel* should be identified with the text listed in the Peterborough register (see above, p. 569).

[36] Moisan refers to this poem as one of four extant chansons in a *geste anglaise: Répertoire*, 1/ 1:72. Only one of the other three poems with a similarly "English" subject is composed in the *laisses* associated with the traditional chansons de geste. This is *Boeve de Haumtone*, also from about the middle of the second half of the twelfth century: see Legge, *Anglo-Norman Literature*, pp. 156–61; Moisan, *Répertoire*, 1/1:72.

[37] For a survey of these poems, their composition, manuscripts, and relationships, see H. M.

Chanson-de-geste traditions of the Saracens are a priori likely to have been available to the author of *King Horn,* or whoever before him may have determined the way the Saracens are presented in his poem, at least through the medium of Anglo-Norman, if not continental French, or even, perhaps, through early English treatments which have not survived. The details of their presentation will now be considered individually, and comparisons will be made with the chansons referred to above, with *Partonopeu de Blois,* and with *The Romance of Horn.* The cumulative evidence, it will be seen, points to a close connection between *King Horn* and certain chanson-de-geste traditions.

1. THE SARACENS' HOMELAND

The homeland of the Saracens in *King Horn,* as noted above, is referred to only as *paynyme* (821). The men themselves are designated *payn* 'pagan' twelve times, variously as a noun and an adjective (43, 61, 78, 80, 83, 87, 151, 185, 825, 876,[38] 897, 1348). The phrase *hepene honde* 'heathen hounds' is used of them once (604), and *hund* 'hound' is used by itself another five times (607, 617, 849, 901, 1401). Some variant readings not found in the editor's base manuscript, the Cambridge text, are also of interest. *Paynim* in its second meaning of "(individual) pagan" is found seven times in the Oxford text as a variant of *payn* (at 43, 61, 80, 83, 185, 825, 1348). This manuscript, in fact, does not have *payn* at all but replaces it elsewhere with *hundes* (at 78, 87, 897), with *geant* 'giant' (at 876),[39] and with *hepene* in the phrase *hepene king* (at 151), a reading shared with the London text.

In themselves the native English expressions are of little immediate interest: "heathen," "hound," and the whole phrase "heathen hound" could indicate non-Christian people of various kinds from the early thirteenth century on, as the *Middle English Dictionary* shows; "heathen" and "hound" as separate terms are, indeed, already so documented in Old English (Bosworth and Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*). What is significant in *King Horn* is the clear preference for the French expressions over the English, especially in view of the generally low incidence of French vocabulary in the poem.[40]

King Horn probably yields the earliest citations in the *Middle English Dictionary* for *painime,* in both the regional and the individual senses, and also

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Smyser, "Charlemagne Legends," in J. Burke Severs, "Romances," pp. 80–100. Editions are as follows: *Sir Ferumbras,* ed. Sidney J. Herrtage, EETS ES 34 (London, 1879); *"The Sege off Melayne"* and *"The Romance of Duke Rowland and Sir Otuell of Spayne"* . . . *together with a Fragment of "The Song of Roland,"* ed. Sidney J. Herrtage, EETS ES 35 (London, 1880); *The Lyf of the Noble and Chrysten Prynce, Charles the Grete,* trans. William Caxton, ed. Sidney J. H. Herrtage, EETS ES 36, 37 (London, 1880, 1881); *The Romaunce of the Sowdone of Babylone and of Ferumbras his Sone who conquerede Rome,* ed. Emil Hausknecht, EETS ES 38 (London, 1881); *"The Taill of Rauf Coilyear,"* with the Fragments of *"Roland and Vernagu"* and *"Otuel,"* ed. Sidney J. H. Herrtage, EETS ES 39 (London, 1882); *"Firumbras"* and *"Otuel and Roland,"* ed. Mary Isabelle O'Sullivan, EETS OS 198 (London, 1935).

[38] The reading in C is *kniȝtes.*
[39] The use of this term elsewhere in *King Horn* is discussed below, pp. 577–80.
[40] Observed in Allen, "The Date and Provenance of *King Horn,*" p. 123.

for *paien* (although *Paen* was apparently used as a surname in 1207); Kentish sermons dated ca. 1275 are also cited for both regional *painime* (referring to the homeland of the oriental kings who brought gifts to Christ) and *paien* (referring to those who did not serve Christ). Individual *painime* and *paien* are both used of the Saracens in *Of Arthour and of Merlin:* e.g., *painem*, 5207, and *paien*, 6402. The two poems thus use both words with explicit reference to Saracens, and the sermons use them with reference to oriental and Middle Eastern people outside the Christian sphere, that is, people who might anachronistically have been linked with Islamic Saracens. Possibly the two words were borrowed into English from French contexts in which they were particularly associated with people referred to as Saracens.

In all of the chansons de geste listed above, and similarly in *Partonopeu de Blois, paien* is a very common term for the Saracens: e.g., *Roland* 22, 24; *Fierabras* 31, 37; *Gui* 455, 490; *Otinel* 66, 107; *Doon* 6342, 7986; *Willame* 20, 60; *Floovant* 298, 327; *Partonopeu A* 2177, *B* 7232. *Paienisme* is a less common word altogether, but it is also used of the Saracens in the earlier chansons: e.g., *Roland* 1921 (adjective: *enseigne paenime*); *Fierabras* 4644 (adjective: *loi paienime*), 5673 (noun: regional); *Willame* 206 (noun: individual), 1600 (noun: regional). Both words are used of the Saracens in *The Romance of Horn: paien* commonly, e.g., 84, 274; *paenisme* once, 1648 (noun: regional).

These words unquestionably belong to the conventional lexis of French literary presentations of Saracens, especially in the chansons de geste; they take on the national reference of the particular Saracens in individual texts.

2. The Saracens' Leader

The leader of the Saracens in *King Horn* is an *Admirald* (91).[41] This word evidently entered English through French and Latin forms of an original *amir-al-[muminin, bahr,* etc.] with the literal meaning "ruler of the [faithful, sea, etc.]," spelled in various ways in the European languages under the influence of folk etymology.[42] The *Middle English Dictionary* gives citations for the broad meanings "prince or emir under the Sultan," "any Saracen lord or chieftain," and "any heathen ruler or commander" from the early thirteenth century on and places *King Horn* under this collective heading. The narrower meaning "commander of a fleet of ships" is cited in French-language documents from 1297, in Latin-language documents from 1341, and in English-language documents only from 1429, with the first citation from creative literature being ? ca. 1439. The narrower meaning is derived from a particular title created by the Arabs of Spain and Sicily and might well have been known to western Europeans. It is documented by one citation in the *Altfranzösisches Wörterbuch*,[43] but the broad meanings in French, as in English, are clearly more common. It has been argued recently that the naval meaning should be assumed in *King Horn*, on the grounds that the Admirald arrives

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[41] This is the editorial respelling: C has *Admirad*, O has *amyraud*, and L has *Admyrold*; the word rhymes with *bald* (C)/*baud* (O)/*bold* (L) in the next line.

[42] For forms and etymology see *The Oxford English Dictionary*, entry for *Admiral*.

[43] Ed. Adolf Tobler and Erhard Lommatzsch (Berlin, 1925–51; Wiesbaden, 1952–).

in Suddene by sea,[44] but it is difficult to see how else any invader could be said to reach Insular territory. Furthermore, a lone instance of the naval meaning one and a half centuries before the next known occurrence seems unlikely, especially when there is ample evidence for the currency of the word in the interim in the other meanings. And it may be pertinent to note that a Saracen or general heathen context is associated regularly with the broad meanings but only intermittently with the narrower meaning. Altogether, it seems much more likely that Admirald in *King Horn* means something like "Saracen leader."

With a similar meaning, and in various forms (basically *amiral, amirant,* or *amire*), the word occurs in most of the French texts surveyed in this paper: e.g., *Roland* 2602, 2767; *Fierabras* 1390, 1871; *Otinel* 1677, 1681; *Doon* 6345, 6611; *Willame* 1994, 2015; *Floovant* 484, 486. As with *paien* and *paienisme,* the word is used of Saracens whatever their nationality, and again it is a regular feature of the chansons de geste. It does not occur in *Partonopeu.*

The Romance of Horn has two passing references to hypothetical emirs (608, 3821), but the term is not used of the conqueror of Suddene, who is, rather, given the nonexotic title of king (*reis,* 28). It is used in just one more place, of the conqueror's brother, the Saracen supreme commander, who does not personally participate in the action: *soldein amirant,* 3004. This commander is otherwise repeatedly referred to simply by the first element of this unusual combination expression, as the *soudein* 'sultan' of Persia (e.g., 2930, 3000).

In their respective exotic terminology for "Saracen leader" the two accounts of Horn, it can be shown, reflect different literary traditions, arising from different historico-geographical factors. In the first century after the death of Muhammad in 632 supreme authority in Islam, in both secular and religious matters, rested with the caliph, the "deputy" of Muhammad, and lands taken by conquest were placed under provincial authorities headed by the emir as the representative of the caliph.[45] Spain was part of Islam from 711, constituting one emirate with northern Africa west of Egypt, Sicily, and nearby islands. In 750 control of the caliphate was seized from the Umayyad party by the Abbasid party, which moved the capital from Damascus to Baghdad. The Umayyads, however, retained power in the west and established emirates of their own, which were independent of Baghdad in all but name. The first was set up in Spain in 756; it continued until 1031, and from 929 its emirs assumed also the title of caliph, thereby severing even nominal bonds of subjection to the east.

[44] Metlitzki, *Matter of Araby,* p. 126, writes that "in *King Horn* the title denotes a naval commander," but she observes a few lines later that "we have no way of knowing whether the usage in *King Horn* represents the precise meaning of the word as simply 'any Saracen lord or chieftain.'" Allen, *King Horn,* pp. 263–64, states that "Metlitzki shows that in *King Horn* the title indicates a naval commander . . . which is interesting, in view of the naval references elsewhere in *King Horn.*"

[45] For accounts of the spread of Islam and its power structure see Deanesly, *Early Modern Europe,* esp. chaps. 9, 16, 18, 19; Philip K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs from the Earliest Times to the Present,* 10th ed. (London, 1970), esp. chaps. 8–42; Kinder and Hilgemann, *Penguin Atlas,* pp. 134–37, 150–53, 186–87; Bernard Lewis, *The Arabs in History,* 4th ed. (London, 1966).

The primary and most frequent setting of the chansons de geste is Charlemagne's France and the wars of Charlemagne and his men against the Saracens of neighboring lands, especially Spain. Insofar as the chansons embody some reflection of a historical background, it should be expected that the principal exotic term used in them for "Saracen leader" would be "emir," and this indeed proves to be the case (nonexotic terms like *rei, roi* 'king' are also commonly used).

Changes bearing on this question of nomenclature began to take place in the eastern lands of Islam from the tenth century. Abbasid caliphs continued to hold religious authority, but in 945 secular power was seized by the Persian Buyids, whose leaders formally adopted the title of sultan. Then the Turkish Seljuks, after conquering most of Persia, seized Baghdad in 1055 and went on to take Syria and Palestine, with the result that their grand sultans controlled the greater part of Islam. In 1174, however, their Syrian dominion was taken over by the Kurdish governor of Egypt, Salah ad-Din, the Saladin of legend, who ruled as sultan until his death in 1193.

The First Crusade was initiated in 1095, and several others followed at intervals through the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It was during this period that western nations first engaged in action in the lands of eastern Islam, where the sultanate was the preeminent structure of power. Use of the term "sultan" for "Saracen leader" in western literature thus gives a crusade or postcrusade coloring to the events set out, regardless of when they are supposed to have taken place.

Among the chansons cited, only *Willame* uses the word "sultan," and then only once and in a strange way, as a proper name in a list of names, suggesting that its normal use was not fully understood: *Soldan dalfrike*, 2060. On the other hand, it is used repeatedly of the Saracen leader in the romance *Partonopeu B:* e.g., *soldans de Perse*, 7189.

The Oxford English Dictionary cites *Gloucester Chronicle A* for the earliest occurrence of "sultan" in English, referring to the enemy in the Holy Land: *soudan*, 10901. In the romance *Of Arthour and of Merlin*, however, where the Saracens are Germanic and the wars take place in western lands, both emirs and sultans are featured without apparent distinction: e.g., 6174, 7553 and 4440, 6758, respectively.

An indicator of changing usage is provided by the English Charlemagne romances. In the early-fourteenth-century *Roland and Vernagu* Roland's opponent is the *soudan* of Babylon (467), whereas in the mid-twelfth-century Latin *Chronicle of Pseudo-Turpin*, from which this account appears to be derived, he is a giant (*Gigas*, 18.2) sent by the emir of Babylon (*Babylonis Admiraldus*, 18.4).[46] In *The Song of Roland*, from about the end of the fourteenth century, the ruler of Saragossa is the *soudan* (16), whereas in the French *Roland* he is the king (*reis*, 7); and in *The Sege off Melayne*, from a similar date, the same figure is again the *Sowdane* (830), whereas in *Otinel* he

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[46] The relevant part of the *Chronicle* is reproduced in Herrtage, EETS ES 39 (see above, n. 37), pp. xvii–xxiii, from the 1882 edition by A. Sebastiano Ciampi. For Saracen giants see below, pp. 577–80.

is variously king (*roi*, 10) and emperor (*emperur*, 138). In *The Sowdone of Babylone,* from the early fifteenth century, the father of Fierabras is the *Sowdon* of Babylon (30), whereas in the French vulgate *Fierabras* he is the emir of Spain (*amirans d'Espaigne,* 1871). In the relatively late Anglo-Norman Egerton text of the Insular version, from 1350–60, he is the sultan of Spain (*soldan,* 1306; *d'Espaigne,* 15) and at the same time a duke (*ducs,* 1692).[47]

The title of emir borne by the Saracen leader in *King Horn* was the original and most frequently used exotic title for Saracen leaders in the chansons de geste. The title of sultan appears in French, and subsequently in English, in later versions of the chansons and in romances; it seems not to have been in use in English when *King Horn* was composed. In *The Romance of Horn,* on the other hand, the two terms are used and distinguished in a way that reflects some awareness of their historical connotations: emirs are referred to casually, as Saracen leaders with whom a western European audience would naturally be familiar, whereas the sultan is referred to specifically, as the supreme commander in the east.

3. THE SARACEN GIANT

The Saracens of *King Horn* include at least one giant. While Horn is in Ireland, the Christmas court is interrupted by the arrival of a *geaunt* (820), who announces that he comes from a host of pagans who have just landed, and issues a challenge: one Saracen champion will meet three Irish champions the next day, and the outcome will determine to whom the land will belong thereafter. Although the king appoints to the task both Horn, in his assumed identity as Cutberd, and his own two sons, Horn volunteers to fight alone, and the next day he meets on the battlefield "A geaunt suþe kene" (870). It is not clear whether this champion is identical with the enemy of the previous day: the indefinite article, common to all three manuscripts, suggests not, but in the parallel episode of *The Romance of Horn* Rollac is definitely both emissary and champion. Horn fights vigorously until the giant collapses (876).[48] The giant calls for a respite,[49] saying that he has never before experienced such blows except from Horn's father, whom he nevertheless managed to kill (877–86). Full of emotion, Horn strikes him dead instantly and then pursues and kills his companions.

Giants are found in various literary traditions, but they do appear regularly in the chansons de geste, and sometimes in situations which have some resemblance to the giant episode in *King Horn.*

The word "giant" is used of groups of Saracen warriors in *Roland* (e.g., *jaianz,* 3253), of Effraon in *Fierabras* (*gaiant,* 4922), of a porter in *Gui* (*jaiant,*

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[47] *Fierabras,* ed. Louis Brandin, in "*La destruction de Rome* et *Fierabras:* Ms. Egerton 3028, Musée Britannique, Londres," *Romania* 64 (1938), 18–100. Date and version: de Mandach, *Naissance,* 5:90–91, 166, 170.

[48] Unlike O and L, C here refers to several Saracens (see above, n. 38), but in lines 881–82 the giant alone speaks of having sustained blows.

[49] This editorial reading follows L; in C the respite is called for by Horn, and in O by the giant's companions.

1774), and of the father of the Saxon-Saracen king Aubigant in *Doon* (*gaiant*, 6346). A couple of Saracen warriors are implicitly gigantic because they are fifteen feet high: Fierabras himself in *Fierabras* (575) and Clarel in *Otinel* (1329). Several are at least remarkably tall: Agolafre in *Fierabras* is *grans,* with a tongue as long as a palm frond and other huge features (4745–53); the body of Buffaut in *Doon* is *grant et lons* (9454); in *Willame* Alderufe is *granz,* with a high head and long bust (2143–44), and Tabur is *gros* (3172), which may or may not imply height; Fernagu in *Floovant* is *a mervoile . . . granz* (390). In *Partonopeu B* Armant is *trop . . . grans* (8920). Some of these men — Agolafre, Buffaut, Tabur, and Armant — are also described as hideous or grotesque, but no such appearance is attributed to the giant(s) in *King Horn,* although it is part of a general description of the Saracens at line 1351.[50]

In *The Romance of Horn* the parallel figure, Rollac, is never said to be particularly tall, although he is repeatedly said to be a splendid warrior (e.g., 2930a, 2970). In this poem, however, the Irish episode has been prospectively reduplicated in the first land to which Horn comes as an exile (Brittany, corresponding structurally to Westernesse in *King Horn*). On this earlier occasion, the Saracen Marmorin, who is, like Rollac, both emissary and champion, is explicitly *mut . . . grant* and very hideous, with a surly face (1464).

With regard to the narrative function of the giant(s) in *King Horn* certain correspondences with chanson-de-geste figures may be noted in the case of two who became particularly well known in England, Fierabras and Otinel, although the latter, like Rollac, is said only to be a splendid warrior, not a remarkably tall man.

Fierabras, in the chanson of that name, responding simply to his own rage at the Christian army, issues a challenge to Charlemagne and his men, that he will fight up to six of the peers; and if Charlemagne does not send them out, he will attack and kill Charlemagne himself. In the event Oliver, despite a previously inflicted wound, goes to meet Fierabras, alone, and under an assumed name. After a lengthy verbal exchange Oliver reveals his true identity and fierce fighting begins, punctuated by Fierabras's vain suggestions when Oliver seems faint that they should stop. The fighting eventually ends when Fierabras himself is badly wounded and expresses a wish to be baptized (1–1609). Although his challenge is issued on his own behalf and is not explicitly devised to determine the fate of the Christian nation, as is the case with the challenge in *King Horn,* his threat to the person of the Christian king is implicitly a threat to the nation also. Furthermore, the challenge initially involves more than one of the king's men, but through a decision made on the challenged side only one of them faces the Saracen, and under an assumed name; and the fighting itself is affected by verbal exchange, including a suggestion that it stop, and by a revelation of identity (albeit in different circumstances from those in *King Horn*).

Otinel, in the chanson of the same name, comes to the court of Charlemagne in Paris as an emissary from the king of Spain, his cousin Garsile (the Marsile of *Roland*). In the continental text he comes at Easter (20); but in

[50] See below, pp. 580–82.

the Anglo-Norman text he comes on the feast of the Holy Innocents, which occurs on 28 December, within the Christmas season.[51] This feast is also the setting in time in the English poems *Otuel and Roland* (47) and *Otuel* (55); there is no equivalent reference in *Duke Rowland and Sir Otuell of Spayne*. Otinel calls on Charlemagne to abandon Christianity and give allegiance to Garsile, in return for great rewards. This offer is refused, but the next morning Otinel challenges Roland to single combat to avenge his uncle, Fernagu, whom Roland has killed. The combat takes place in the sight of the king, with both verbal and physical exchange between the combatants; Otinel stops fighting and agrees to convert when the Holy Spirit descends on him (1–628). Like the giant in *King Horn,* Otinel comes as an emissary to a Christian royal court during one of the main church festivals, Christmas in the known Anglo-Norman and English accounts, bringing a message that concerns the fate of the Christian nation. The challenge to combat is not actually part of that message, as it is in *King Horn,* but it is part of the same episode, and there are some parallels in the combat itself: it takes place on the following morning, involves verbal exchange, and is witnessed by the Christian king, and the issue of revenge for a relative slain by the opponent is a factor in it (albeit the roles are reversed).

Neither *Fierabras* nor *Otinel* affords a consistently close parallel to the giant episode of *King Horn,* but between them they suggest that several main elements in that episode could have been inspired by familiarity with some such material.

A Latin borrowing, *gigant,* had existed in Old English, but Middle English *geaunt* is a subsequent French borrowing. The earliest citation in the *Middle English Dictionary* is from *King Horn,*[52] followed by citations from *Gloucester Chronicle A* referring to the inhabitants of Britain before the advent of the British (300, 349). Citations might also have been taken from *Of Arthour and of Merlin,* where a number of giants, named and unnamed, appear among the Saracen forces (e.g., 4885, 5948, 6152, 6278). The early use of the word in English thus seems to be associated more with Saracens than with other groups. Interestingly, it appears that a similar situation pertained also when the word passed from Late Latin into Old French. According to the *Altfranzösisches Wörterbuch,* the instances of *jaianz* in *Roland* are the earliest record of the word in Old French, and there they occur only in lists of Saracen races. Twice the reference is to *jaianz de Malpruse* (3253, 3285), and once the word stands alone for a race: "Turcs et Enfruns, Arabiz e Jaianz" (3518). Subsequent citations in this dictionary refer again to Saracens, as well as to biblical figures (located in lands which in the Middle Ages were part of Islam) and figures from the Celtic past (perceived through Christian eyes as non-Christian beings).

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[51] The relevant lines are reproduced in Herrtage, EETS ES 35 (see above, n. 37).

[52] The citation is from a unique reading in O and dated ca. 1300, rather than from lines in which all the manuscripts agree; such a citation would have pointed to an earlier date, at least that of the common ancestor of the extant manuscripts, and probably that of the original composition.

It may be that *geaunt* was borrowed into Middle English, at least into secular usage, from French literature dealing with Saracens: compare similar possibilities, suggested above, concerning *painime* and *paien*. But regardless of the wider situation, it is at least clear that both the figure(s) of the giant(s) and much of the narrative pattern of the giant episode in *King Horn* find parallels in the chansons de geste.

4. The Saracens' Appearance

The Saracens who conquer Suddene are described by an Englishman, Aþulf's father, as "Sarazins loþe and blake" (1351).[53] According to the *Middle English Dictionary*, *loþe* and *blake*, taken separately, could each sustain different kinds of interpretation which might be appropriate to the context: *loþe* could indicate either a physical or a moral quality and mean either "ugly," on the one hand, or "hateful" or "hostile," on the other; *blake* could be interpreted either literally, as "black" or "dark" in color, or figuratively, as "fierce" or "wicked." This figurative usage, however, is otherwise cited only from the late fourteenth century; and figurative language in *King Horn* as a whole is normally signaled in a quite unambiguous manner.[54] *Blake* is more likely to have a literal meaning, and *loþe* as a consequence is more likely to have its physical meaning, in accordance with stylistic decorum.

The question then arises, In what way might these Saracens appear black? Now, the function of the descriptive phrase is to set the invaders apart from the speaker's side, the English. Many races can have black or dark hair: an accusation of being black haired or dark haired could be leveled at a group of Danes as well as it could at Semitic or negroid Saracens, but it could equally well be leveled at numbers of Englishmen themselves, so that *blake* seems unlikely to refer to hair, or hair alone. An accusation of having black or dark skin, however, would indeed establish the invaders as distinct from the Germanic English, so that *blake* seems more likely to refer to the complexion of the invaders, or perhaps the overall effect given by complexion plus hair.

Saracens in the chansons de geste are often said to be black (*neir, noir*). The original basis for this description would have been actual observation. Many of the peoples who came under the rule of Islam might have appeared "black" to the French, but this would have been particularly the case with the Moors who came to Spain from North Africa, that is, the Saracens with whom the French had much to do in the eighth century.[55] In *Roland* Abisme is as black as pitch (1474), and Marsile's massed troops include people who

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[53] The first adjective is omitted in C. This episode is discussed further below, p. 583.

[54] Such unambiguous uses of figurative language include the simple similes of lines 14–16, the personification in Horn's self-dramatizing apostrophe to his ship at lines 141–56, and the elaborate fishing metaphor and pun on "Horn" in his speech to Rimenhild when he returns to save her from marriage to Mody, at lines 1151–68.

[55] In *Floovant* the emir's daughter, sister of Fernagu, is evidently lighter skinned than the men of her race. Having become engaged to the Christian hero, Floovant, she has to escape detection among the Saracens, and she stains her face to do so. She is specifically said then to resemble a Moor: "Moure rensanblai bien, tant fut noire et oscure" (1777).

are black, with big noses and ears (1917–18) and nothing white about them except their teeth (1933–34). In *Fierabras* the giant Agolafre is black as a devil and as pitch (4659), and the giantess wife of Effraon is blacker than pepper (or pepper sauce: 5039), perhaps with the implication that her husband would match her in coloring. Both Agolafre and the giantess are at the same time described as hideous. In *Doon* Buffaut is black as pitch (9453). In *Floovant* the face of the huge warrior Fernagu is dark in color (*ocur*, 390),[56] and the Frenchman Richier stains his face black as pitch (1220, 1309) in order to pass as a Saracen.[57] There is no mention of dark coloring among the Saracens in *Partonopeu* or *The Romance of Horn* (or among the Saracens in *Of Arthour and of Merlin*).

A possibility that the word "blake" might specifically indicate the Danes should be noted, but it will be seen that it is a very remote possibility.

The Danes who carried out raids on Ireland from bases in England are referred to in the *Annals of Ulster*[58] as *Dub Gaill,* literally "Black Foreigners," at various times in the period 851 to 943. This is an Irish term in the otherwise Latin text, and *Gaill* is occasionally varied as Latin *gentes* or *gentiles.* The first Scandinavian invaders to arrive in Ireland had been Norwegians, called in the *Annals* simply "Foreigners," but when the Danes came as rivals they were called "Black Foreigners," and the Norwegians were distinguished from them in the expanded term "White Foreigners," *Finn Gaill.* The significance of *Dub* and *Finn* in these expressions has been something of a mystery. There do not appear to be any reasonable grounds for assuming that the distinction was made on the basis of hair coloring, complexion, or armor, and it has now been argued that the two adjectives have here the meanings "new" and "old," respectively: that is, the Danes are "New Foreigners," in the sense that they come after the Norwegians, who are then seen as "Old Foreigners."[59] As time passed the expression might, of course, have been understood in this way, or misunderstood, as "Black Foreigners," even if the nature of the supposed "blackness" was not clear (for an example of such misunderstanding, see the case of the *Welsh Annals,* discussed below). But there are several reasons why *blake* in *King Horn* is unlikely to recall this designation of the Danes. The adjective *blake* follows and is detached from the noun it qualifies, *Sarazins,* but *Dub Gaill* is recorded only in that form, the adjective immediately preceding the noun within the one phrase. The collocation of *blake* with *loþe* has no parallel in contexts speaking of the *Dub Gaill.* The Irish expression occurs only with reference to a particular set of circumstances which prevailed

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[56] In *Floovant* the Saracen men in general seem to have had black skin, and in line 1777 *noire* and *oscure* (of which *ocur* is a variant) seem to be close in meaning: see above, n. 55.

[57] Richier's disguise foreshadows that of the emir's daughter: see above, n. 55.

[58] "*Annala Uladh/Annals of Ulster,*" *Otherwise "Annala Senait/Annals of Senat": A Chronicle of Irish Affairs from A.D. 431 to A.D. 1541,* 1: *A.D. 431–A.D. 1056,* ed. and trans. W. M. Hennessy (Dublin, 1887).

[59] For this argument and a review of the controversy see Alfred P. Smyth, "The *Black* Foreigners of York and the *White* Foreigners of Dublin," *Saga-Book of the Viking Society* 19 (1975–76), 101–17; I would like to thank Geraldine Barnes and Margaret Clunies Ross for drawing my attention to this article and Bernard Martin for assistance with the Irish.

within a particular time span. And, with a single exception, it occurs only in
Irish records. The exception is its occurrence within the *Welsh Annals*,[60] which
in much briefer entries deals with the same general set of circumstances.
Once (for 866) the expression used is the Welsh *Dub Gint,* and once (for 853)
the expression used is the Latin *gentiles nigri. Nigri* translates Welsh *Dub* as
"black," probably implying that if Irish *Dub* had meant "new" in this context,
this was not realized outside Ireland.

Because the *Dub Gaill* convention is so restricted in both linguistic behavior
and possibility of reference it is difficult to see how it could lie behind the
blake Saracens of *King Horn.* Rather, the evidence suggests that this descrip-
tion of them recalls a convention of the chansons de geste, in respect both
of their black coloring and of the further association of such blackness with
ugliness.

5. THE SARACENS' RELIGION

A major matter to be considered with regard to the Saracens of *King Horn*
is their religious attitude.

When the Saracens first arrive in Suddene, their spokesman declares their
intentions to King Murry:

> "Þi lond-folk we schulle slon
> Þat Driȝte leueþ vpon,
> And þe we schulle anon."
>   (45–47)

The Saracens thus define their target as Christians and intend to destroy
them. When they have killed the king and his companions, they set about
killing the populace and wrecking the churches; no one is allowed to live
unless he abandons Christianity and accepts pagan practice:

> Folc hi gunne quelle
> And churchen for to felle.
> Þer ne moste libbe
> Þe fremde ne þe sibbe,
> Bute he his laȝe asoke
> And to here toke.
>   (63–68)

The queen flees to a cave where she lives secretly as a Christian
hermit, explicitly in defiance of the conquerors' decree:

> Aȝenes payn forbode
> Þer he seruede Criste
> Þat no payn hit niste.
>   (78–80)

In recounting these events afterwards Horn recalls the statement of the Saracen spokesman as he says:

> "Hi sloȝen and todroȝe
> Cristenemen inoȝe."
> (187–88)

In Westernesse the Saracen episode as a whole is much shorter, and the Saracen boast is accordingly succinct:

> "Þis lond we wulleȝ wynne
> And sle þat þer beþ inne!"
> (609–10)

These lines merely announce a desire for conquest without specific reference to religious concerns; the subsequent challenge delivered by the Saracen giant in Ireland at lines 823–36 has a similar significance.

When Horn returns to Suddene he encounters Aþulf's father, who speaks of the Saracens and their attitude in this way:

> "Ihc was Cristene a while;
> Þo icom into þis ile
> Sarazins loþe and blake
> Þat dude me asake
> On Driȝte þat ihc bileue."
> (1349–53)

After defeating the Saracens, Horn's first action in reversing the effects of their occupation is to restore Christian practice:

> Horn let sone werche
> Chapeles and cherche;
> Belles he dede ringe
> And prestes Masse singe.
> (1411–14)

He then brings his mother back to court from her cave.

Much the same events take place in *The Romance of Horn*, although the anti-Christian actions of the Saracens in Suddene have relatively less prominence in the poem because they are not recounted as they occur but have to be inferred from the nature of the restoration undertaken at the end of the poem (4857–4957): Horn rebuilds and restocks the monasteries and abbeys, restores Christian worship, turns the people back to the Christianity they have abandoned through fear, and brings his mother back from her cave.

The Saracens of *King Horn* are thus driven by secular and religious motives at the same time. They want to seize land and power, and they want to enforce conversion to their own religious practice and stamp out Christianity. It is instructive to compare the reputations of the Scandinavians and the Saracens in respect of their perceived religious intentions.

Scandinavian invaders came to England in three waves.[61] The first recorded raid occurred in 789 and was followed by others during the last decade of the eighth century; these were probably conducted by Norwegians. The second wave continued for over a century, from 835 to 954, and was led by Danes. The third wave began in 980 and included raids led by the Norwegian Olaf Tryggvason and the Danes Svein and Cnut. Cnut was finally established as king of England in 1016 and his dynasty ruled until 1042, when the West Saxon dynasty was restored in the person of Edward the Confessor. The most extensive record of these events is found in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, and some further information can be gleaned from other documents and works of literature. Important information has also been supplied by archaeological finds, especially coins; by place-names and personal names; and by studies of the overall interaction of Scandinavian tongues with English.

The raids were at first relatively small-scale, but developed into larger-scale military operations. The immediate intention of the raiders was evidently to seize any form of portable wealth. To achieve this, they pursued a general policy of slaughter and destruction wherever they went, though tribute or protection money was sometimes negotiated as an alternative to on-the-spot robbery. Actual conquest of the land began about 865. From then on groups of Danes began to settle permanently in England, particularly in the northeastern area known as the Danelaw, sometimes taking over existing villages, but also settling in unoccupied parts, and perhaps on occasion using their spoils to buy land. Some Scandinavians eventually became established in peaceful coexistence with the English, while others continued to come from abroad, variously as simple raiders and as would-be settlers.

The overall Viking expansion of which these invasions were a part seems to have been inspired by some combination of factors in the Scandinavian homelands: population increase, political grievances, and growing interest in the world outside. The raids on England were directed particularly at churches and monasteries because these buildings housed great wealth which was there for the taking. Although strife and violence were common enough between Christian communities themselves, churches and monasteries had generally been accorded immunity; and the horror of the chroniclers and other churchmen at the Scandinavian attacks arose not only from the suddenness with which these expert seamen would arrive by ship but also from their failure, as heathens, to show respect for these vulnerable, but previously immune, buildings. Such further interpretation as was put on the attacks was of an overtly scholarly kind: like the Israelites in the Old Testament, the English were being punished for their failure to live according to God's will.[62]

[61] For accounts of the Scandinavian invasions see Holger Arbman, *The Vikings,* Ancient People and Places 21, trans. and ed. Alan Binns (London, 1961); Gwyn Jones, *A History of the Vikings,* rev. ed. (Oxford, 1984); F. Donald Logan, *The Vikings in History* (London, 1983); P. H. Sawyer, *The Age of the Vikings,* 2nd ed. (London, 1971).

[62] In a letter to Æþelheard, archbishop of Canterbury, written after the sacking of Lindisfarne in 793, Alcuin refers to the opinion of the sixth-century historian Gildas that the destruction brought down on the British king by the then-heathen English was God's punishment for their sins, and he suggests that the English themselves may now similarly deserve what they are

The historical facts and the English attitudes to them expressed by ecclesiastical writers present the Scandinavian invaders as generally aggressive men seeking one or more of wealth, land, and power. In this regard they might perhaps be thought to be reflected in the Saracens of *King Horn*, although plundered wealth, which was evidently important to the Scandinavians, is not referred to in *King Horn* (nor are the victims of the Saracens said to have deserved their fate by sinning against God). In clear contrast with these Saracens, however, the Scandinavians are never said to have intended to stamp out Christianity or impose their own religion on those whom they conquered; on the contrary, those who settled in England accepted Christianity with remarkable speed and were seen to do so.

There is nothing to contradict this view in other early English literature. In *The Battle of Brunanburh*, preserved in the Parker manuscript of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* as the entry for 937 and celebrating a victory of the English over a combined force of Scots and Norwegians, the motivation of the Scandinavians is implicitly a quest for wealth and land, and there is no religious reference at all.[63] *The Battle of Maldon*, an independent poem celebrating the Dunkirkian defeat of the English by the Danes in 991 and thought to have been composed soon after, gives a not dissimilar picture of the Scandinavians, though here they initially propose the payment of tribute as an alternative to battle; they are defined as "heathens" (*hæþene*, 55), but the definition is not amplified.[64] In the basically fictitious *Beowulf* the Danes of an older era are presented in somewhat ambivalent terms, as heroes of the past who have lost some of their effectiveness in the present of the narrative. This poem, preserved in a manuscript of ca. 1000, may have been partly composed in pre-Viking times, but in its present form at least it is probably later, perhaps from the second or third quarter of the tenth century,[65] in which case it would be relevant to observe its unhorrified, though not uncritical, attitude to these supposed ancestors of the contemporary Danes. After the Norman Conquest relationships between England and Scandinavia were focused mainly on peaceful trade, together with some diplomatic, ecclesiastical, and

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suffering at the hands of the Scandinavians. Wulfstan reproduced Alcuin's statement in 1014, when the Danes had renewed their attacks: see his *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos,* ed. Dorothy Whitelock, rev. ed. (Exeter, 1976). For Alcuin and the significance of his words see Arbman, *The Vikings,* p. 50; Jones, *A History of the Vikings,* pp. 194–96; Logan, *The Vikings in History,* pp. 39–40; Whitelock, *Sermo Lupi,* pp. 65–66.

[63] *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel, with Supplementary Extracts from the Others,* ed. John Earle and Charles Plummer, rev. ed. (Oxford, 1892), pp. 106–10. The two parallel texts are Parker and Laud. The Parker text has been edited more recently by J. M. Bately as one part of a larger project: *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition,* 3: *MS A* (Cambridge, Eng., 1986).

[64] Ed. D. G. Scragg, Old and Middle English Texts (Manchester, Eng., 1981). Date of composition: Scragg, p. 28.

[65] For a general discussion of dating and interpretation see J. D. Niles, *Beowulf: The Poem and Its Tradition* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983), esp. chap. 4; I would like to thank Rosemary Huisman for drawing my attention to this book. For dating of the prologue to Athelstan's reign (924–55) and the view that the poem as a whole may have been composed over a period see Audrey Meaney, "Scyld Scefing and the Dating of *Beowulf* — Again," *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 71 (1989), 7–40.

intellectual contact.[66] A reasonable ease between the two peoples would seem to be reflected in the long-term popularity of the Havelok story, whose hero is a Danish prince who becomes king of England: Gaimar's pseudohistorical account in Anglo-Norman was written ca. 1135–40, the anonymous Anglo-French *Lai* in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, and the English romance towards the end of the thirteenth century.[67]

In their attitude to religion the Saracens of *King Horn* bear no similarity at all to the Scandinavians of history or historical imagination. With the Saracens of Islam, however, the situation is quite different.

The rapid expansion of Islam after Muhammad's death had its beginnings in simple population pressures among the Arabs, but its driving force very soon became the idea of jihad, "holy war."[68] At least in theory, the caliph, as noted earlier, embodied both secular and religious power in Islam, and Islam itself was both a state and a religion. In the idea of jihad, accordingly, secular and religious motives were inseparable. The Islamic conquests had the material objectives of land and plunder, while religion provided the idealistic imperative and, as with the figure of the caliph himself, a focus for unity within Islam. Jihad was not, however, fundamentally a missionary exercise. In their dealings with conquered peoples Islamic leaders were pragmatic. It was their general policy not to interfere with established religious practice but, for a price, to tolerate other religions provided that no disrespect was shown to the Muslim faith.

In the chansons de geste religion and nationalism are represented as coinciding quite emphatically for both the French and the Saracens, and the opposition of the two sides to each other is sharpened. The poems are, of course, essentially creative literature, and religious attitudes are inevitably polarized for dramatic effect, and probably for propaganda. The stories are presented from the Christian point of view, both through the narratorial voices and through the shaping of the narratives. The Saracens, as observed earlier, are continually defined as pagans, and the definition is borne out in the accounts of them and their utterances. The Muslim faith, moreover, is understood as a specifically anti-Christian religion, in which the Christian God is replaced by Muhammad as the central deity in a company of false gods: e.g., *Roland* 7–8, 1390–92, 2711–13; *Gui* 419, 446, 3387; *Fierabras* 408, 551, 668; *Otinel* 185, 773–74, 1791–92; *Doon* 8573, 10620, 10668; *Willame*

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[66] See Henry Goddard Leach, *Angevin Britain and Scandinavia* (Cambridge, Mass., 1921).

[67] Geffrei Gaimar, *L'estoire des Engleis*, ed. Alexander Bell, Anglo-Norman Text Society 14–16 (Oxford, 1960). Date of composition: Bell, *L'estoire*, pp. li–lii. *"Le lai d'Haveloc" and Gaimar's Haveloc Episode*, ed. Alexander Bell (Manchester, Eng., 1925). Date of composition: Bell, *Le lai*, pp. 25–29. *Havelok*, ed. G. V. Smithers (Oxford, 1987), and ed. Diane Speed, in *Medieval English Romances*, 2 pts., 2nd ed. (Sydney, 1989). Date of composition: Smithers, pp. lxiv–lxxiii; Speed, pp. 30–31. The terminus ad quem of *Havelok* is fixed by the date of the extant text, which is adjacent to *King Horn* in Bodleian Library MS Laud. Misc. 108 and written about the same time: see above, n. 1.

[68] For Muslim religious attitudes see references under n. 45 above, esp. Deanesly, *Early Modern Europe*, pp. 188, 197, 200, 353; Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, pp. 232–34, 509–11, 523–24, 643–44; Lewis, *The Arabs in History*, pp. 13, 20, 44, 55–60, 99–100.

2120, 2282–83, 3513; *Floovant* 559–60, 643, 721–53. The Christians, for
their part, have the rightness of their position confirmed through the mirac-
ulous intervention of the Christian God in the world, via angelic messengers
and other supernatural phenomena: e.g., *Roland* 2447–80, 2525–69, 3608–
25; *Gui* 150–67, 305–12, 688–96; *Fierabras* 1097–1101, 1168–1244, 1490–
93; *Otinel* 19, 570–77; *Doon* 7282–7328, 8142–82. The main action in the
narrative gives expression to the concept of opposition in that it devolves
typically on military confrontation, involving either armies or individuals,
with the assumption implicit that military supremacy will indicate religious
supremacy. A religious basis for confrontation, however, becomes quite ex-
plicit in the demands by one side for the conversion of the other.

Christians demand the conversion of Saracen opponents at several points
in the poems surveyed. In *Roland* Charlemagne sends Ganelon as his ambas-
sador to demand that Marsile convert: if Marsile agrees, he may have half
Spain in fief; if not, Charlemagne will seize his capital and behead him (428–
83). Later, as Charlemagne and the emir Baligant confront each other in the
course of general battle, Baligant urges Charlemagne to become his man,
but Charlemagne refuses and demands that Baligant accept Christianity
(3593–99). When Baligant refuses, Charlemagne deals him a fatal blow
(3600–19), and Marsile himself dies when he realizes all is lost (3644–47). In
Gui Estout, speaking for Charlemagne, demands that Huidelon be baptized
if he wants to retain his land and avoid death (1916–40), and the subsequent
baptism of Huidelon, his family, and their followers is a prominent event
(2970–3062). Later, Huidelon himself urges Escorfaut, on pain of death, to
convert, with his people; Escorfaut accepts baptism, and those of his people
who do not are killed (3329–3438). Huidelon also urges Emaudras to convert,
but Emaudras refuses with blasphemous words and is killed (3635–65). In
Fierabras Oliver urges Fierabras to convert, first before combat (399–406)
and then as they fight (721–30); Fierabras is eventually converted, expresses
the desire to convert other Saracens to the Christian religion, and is baptized
(1794–1851). Later, Charlemagne sends a group of peers to demand that
Balan be baptized and return the holy relics and the Christian captives, or
be prepared to die (2309–19); after Balan has refused the repeated requests
of the peers (2570–2639), Charlemagne sends Ganelon to demand that Balan
accept Christianity, on pain of death, but despite further pleas Balan will not
do so and is beheaded (5442–5990). In *Otinel* Roland urges Otinel, as they
fight, to convert, with the promise of Charlemagne's daughter in marriage
as an incentive (512–20); Otinel is eventually baptized (620–28). Later, Otinel
himself demands conversion of Clarel; combat ensues, to decide which of
them has the right religion, and results in the death of an unconvinced Clarel
(1276–1529). Otinel also calls on Garsile to convert, and again combat ensues,
resulting in Garsile's defeat, imprisonment, and death (2005–77). In *Willame*,
in the course of general battle, Rainouart' demands the conversion of the
emir of Balan (*sic*), but he refuses and meets his death (3247–72). In *Doon*,
by contrast, the demand for conversion is put in very worldly terms: Doon
offers to help one Saracen leader, Aubigant, against another Saracen leader
if Aubigant agrees to convert, together with his subjects; anyone who does

not accept this offer will be killed (7554–81). Then in *Partonopeu B,* where the relevant context is only a "pretend" confrontation, a tournament with mixed Christian-Saracen sides, conversion to Christianity is treated as a mere convenience: Melior plans that, if the visiting sultan wins her hand as a result of winning the tournament, he will be baptized (7195–96).

Christian demands for the conversion of Saracen leaders and their people are thus a fairly regular feature of the chansons. These demands may be accompanied by threats of violence or by promises of rewards, and the outcome may be the desired conversion or the death of the Saracens. The scenes referred to include some form of statement of Christian dogma, and the official role of the church in effecting conversion is stressed through the enactment of the sacrament of baptism, thereby reinforcing the values of the society from which the poems have sprung. Saracen demands for the conversion of Christian leaders and their people, on the other hand, are uniformly unsuccessful.[69] They similarly provide the opportunity for some statement of Christian dogma, but they are not so likely to provide an opportunity to celebrate the official role of the church, and the relatively limited scope for propaganda may explain why the conversion-to-Islam demand is found less frequently than its antithesis. Nevertheless, it is featured in both *Fierabras* and *Otinel.*

In *Fierabras,* when Fierabras asks Oliver to renounce his origins (*fons*) and be duly rewarded, Oliver replies that he will not abandon his God (*Diu*), as though that were the specific request put (1314–26). Later, Balan sends messengers off to Charlemagne to demand that he believe in Muhammad, return Fierabras, and hold France in fief, or else face Balan's army (2353–58); the messengers, however, are killed on the way (2407–27). In *Otinel* the demand for conversion to Christianity that Otinel puts to Clarel, referred to above, is a response to a demand from Clarel that Otinel abandon his new religion and revert to the Muslim faith (1265–75), and Clarel is ready to fight to the death to enforce his view. The major instance of such a demand in *Otinel,* however, is the message that Otinel brings from Garsile to Charlemagne demanding the conversion of Charlemagne and his line, in return for rewards (137–58);[70] the French refuse and threaten battle, at which Otinel at once declares that the Saracen forces will wipe out the French (169–78).

Most of the chansons de geste, then, clearly depict a state of continual confrontation between Christianity and Islam on religious as well as material grounds. The demand for conversion is a recognizable topos, with a pattern of variables, and the demand that Christians convert to Islam or face destruction is one form of that topos.

As well as attempting to force their own religious practice on the Christians,

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[69] There is an instance of conversion from Christianity to Islam in *Floovant,* but it does not occur in response to a Saracen demand for such conversion: Maudaran and Maudaire, sons of a king who is attacked by the Saracens because he has abandoned their religion for Christianity (253), decide of their own accord to revert to the Muslim faith (681–717) but subsequently meet their death (1680–87).

[70] This demand and its implications have been discussed above, pp. 578–79.

the Saracens of the chansons de geste sometimes actively set about destroying the visible symbols of Christianity.

In *Roland* it is observed briefly that Marsile's supporter Valdabrun has captured Jerusalem, laid waste the temple of Solomon (understood as a Christian monument), and killed the patriarch in front of the font (1566–68). In *Fierabras* the desecration of such visible symbols and their restoration is the principal theme through which the various episodes are lent cohesion. As the poem opens, Fierabras has seized Rome; he has devastated Saint Peter's and carried off the holy relics, killed the pope, and violated the sanctuary of monasteries and nunneries (54–64, 373–81). In the course of the poem the Christians go after the relics, and with the aid of the emir's daughter the relics are eventually handed over to Charlemagne, who brings them to Saint-Denis in Paris (6033–6100, 6186–6206). The devastation of religious buildings and the stopping of religious activities in Rome are referred to quite clearly here, but in a summary manner. They are treated in rather more detail, with greater dramatic impact, in another chanson de geste which is fully devoted to the events leading up to those set out in *Fierabras* and which forms a "diptych" with that poem: *La destruction de Rome*. This poem is known in three versions, corresponding to the two nonvulgate continental versions of *Fierabras* and the Insular version. There are two Anglo-Norman texts: the Hanover, from the end of the thirteenth century, a non-vulgate continental version preceding a vulgate *Fierabras*; and the Egerton, from 1350–60 and somewhat shorter, an Insular version preceding an Insular *Fierabras*.[71] In *La destruction* the Saracens bring death and destruction to the countryside and its religious institutions (Hanover, 441–97, 510–13; Egerton, 169–85, 211–14); they plunder and burn the papal city (Hanover, 1301–18; Egerton, 848–55); and Fierabras is personally responsible for devastating Saint Peter's and killing the pope and a monk (Hanover, 1237–1300; Egerton, 815–47). Bell ringing, incidentally, is the Christian religious practice most referred to here (Egerton, 206, 414, 658; not in Hanover), just as it is one of the two main practices referred to in *King Horn* (1413). Finally, in *Willame*, the Saracen king of Spain, Desramed, lays waste the Gironde area of France and carries off the holy relics (14–16, 40–43); here, however, where the place involved does not have a major symbolic significance for Christianity, it is not clear whether the desecration is a casual insult or part of a deliberate religious policy.

In their attitude to religion the Saracens of *King Horn* bear a fairly close resemblance to the Saracens of the chansons de geste — notably, those recounting the stories of Fierabras and Otinel. There are specific instances in the chansons of attempts by the Saracens to induce the Christians to abandon their own faith and embrace Islam; and there are also instances of

[71] Hanover text ed. G. Grœber, in "*La destruction de Rome:* Première branche de la chanson de geste de *Fierabras*," *Romania* 64 (1873), 1–48. Date and version: de Mandach, *Naissance*, 5:90, 166, 169. Egerton text ed. Louis Brandin, in his 1938 article containing the Egerton *Fierabras* (see above, n. 47). Date and version: as for the Egerton *Fierabras*. The two chansons together are referred to as "le diptyque" by de Mandach, *Naissance*, 5, passim.

actions taken by the Saracens to destroy the visible means of Christian prac-
tice. In *King Horn* similar narrative elements are present; and the religious
tension thereby established between Saracen and Christian is of much the
same kind as that operating in varying degrees of prominence in the chansons
de geste.

6. THE SARACENS' VOYAGES

The last possible clue to the identity of the Saracens of *King Horn* lies in
the fact that they have the means to travel by sea: they arrive in Suddene
with fifteen ships (39), in Westernesse with one ship (603, 637), and in Ireland
with an unspecified number of ships (898, 902). In *The Romance of Horn* the
Saracens arrive with an unspecified number of ships in all three correspond-
ing lands (58, 1336, 2906).

This feature might well call to mind the constant association of the Vikings
with ships and the sea, documented, for instance, in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*,
for example, in the entries for 787 [789], 833 [836], and 981. The Saracens,
however, also had a considerable reputation for naval strength and are no
less likely to have been presented in this way.

Ships came into use in Islam at an early stage and were essential to Islamic
interests in the Mediterranean area.[72] An Islamic fleet was established at
Alexandria in the late 640s, the conquest of Cyprus in 649 being its first
achievement, and a substantial fleet was maintained over the years. In the
west, the fleet of the Spanish emir was arguably the greatest in the world in
the first half of the tenth century. From the eighth century on Saracen ships
also became known, in smaller numbers, through the raids of pirates based
at various times in Corsica, Sardinia, and Sicily.

Saracen fleets are featured in the chansons de geste when appropriate to
the terrain of the action. In *Roland* Valdabrun has a fleet of four hundred
ships (1564), and Baligant has a fleet of over four thousand, moored at
Alexandria (2624–29, 2728–30). In *La destruction de Rome* Laban, father of
Fierabras (the Balan of *Fierabras*), brings his fleet from Agremore in Spain
to Rome: an unspecified number of ships in the Hanover text (215, 224),
seven hundred ships in the Egerton text (141). In *Willame* Desramed sails a
fleet of twenty thousand ships from Cordova up the Gironde (151). Some
ships are also implicit in *Partonopeu B,* as the sultan is said to leave Melior's
lands by sea (continuation, 3912).

The number of ships massed by the invaders in the chansons is much
greater than the number mentioned in *King Horn*; but the numbers in the
chansons reflect a generic tendency to exaggeration, and the number in *King
Horn* is in keeping with the generally more confined scope of the narrative.

Ships, it is clear, could occur in a Saracen context as well as they could in
a Viking context. In any case, as observed earlier in another connection,[73]

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[72] For the Islamic use of ships see references under n. 45 above, esp. Deanesly, *Early Modern
Europe,* pp. 200, 319, 374–76; Hitti, *History of the Arabs,* pp. 167–68, 451, 521.

[73] See above, pp. 574–75.

any group represented as invading the British Isles from abroad would have to come by sea. Ships would have been used by the Danish Saracens in *Of Arthour and of Merlin* for their invasion of Britain (113, 2073), whatever their country of origin.

From the foregoing comparison of the Saracens of *King Horn* with the conventional Saracens of the chansons de geste, it is clear that the Saracens of *King Horn* can be associated with those of the chansons de geste in virtually every detail, lexical or narrative, that could possibly indicate a distinctive identity for them.

In the majority of chansons the Saracens are Islamic peoples; in the occasional text they may be Saxons or Danes as well as Islamic peoples, a situation which is exemplified by *Doon de Maience* and, possibly, *Floovant*. *Doon* does afford some parallels with *King Horn*. The words *paien*, *amirant*, and *gaiant* are used of Saracen characters, and another figure who may also be a giant is said to be black. The emirs and the giant so designated, however, are referred to only in passing (and this in a very long chanson); and, more importantly, although religious definition of character and activity is one basis for structural oppositions in the narrative, it largely gives way to secular, political definition, and religious tension plays very little part in motivation. Much the same parallels with *King Horn* are afforded by *Floovant*, though it is a moot point whether any of the Saracens in this poem should be regarded as Saxons. *Floovant* differs from *Doon* only in that the term "emir" is used of the main Saracen antagonist and the term "giant" is not used at all; the overall level of religious tension is not dissimilar. In the romance *Partonopeu de Blois*, where the first Saracens introduced are Scandinavians, even fewer parallels with *King Horn* are to be found, as this poem moves further away from the familiar conventions of the central chansons de geste. The word *paien* is used of both Scandinavian and oriental Saracens; one oriental Saracen is described as if he were a giant; and the oriental Saracens use ships. Religious difference plays only the most superficial part in the action. The possibility cannot be entirely ruled out that there was some other chanson or romance with Danish as well as Islamic Saracens who might have had rather more in common with the Saracens of *King Horn*. But all that is said about the Saracens of *King Horn* associates them closely with Saracens represented in the chansons as belonging to the world of Islam, above all, those in the older chansons.

King Horn has been shown to have particularly strong parallels with *Roland, Fierabras, Otinel,* and *Willame. Roland, Fierabras,* and *Willame* are thought to be among the earliest chansons composed.[74] All three are, in their own ways, thoroughly heroic poems, scarcely affected by the interest in courtliness and *fin amor* that became fashionable in the later years of the twelfth century. The Saracen princess in *Fierabras*, Floripas, caters for a kind of romantic interest in the exotic and plays an important role in the outcome of the male

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[74] See above, pp. 568–70.

heroic action; but her own conduct is more heroic than courtly, and her love for Gui is merely a means by which the interests of the Christian peers can be served. *Otinel* is about half a century younger than the continental version of *Willame* and about a century younger than *Roland* or *Fierabras*, and it is much shorter and more contained in scope. Its later date is perhaps reflected in a somewhat greater concern with the individual hero: Otinel's conversion, for example, is marked by his personal experience of the Holy Spirit's intervention, and the narrative allows a rather greater prominence to his individual achievement as a Christian warrior than is the case with Fierabras. Again, the Christian princess in *Otinel*, Bellisant, has more courtly manners than Floripas, and her presence is largely decorative rather than integral to the main plot, so that she might have been included as a concession to newer literary interests. Yet her function, such as it is, is completely subservient to the male heroic action, and there is little attempt in that context to depict her as anything more than a political pawn. *Otinel* has, overall, the appearance of being an attempt to imitate the older type of chanson; its slightly antique quality could perhaps be explained by its evidently having been composed in the colony of England rather than in the homeland of France.

Both *Fierabras* and *Otinel* celebrate the successful conversion of a Saracen leader to Christianity, and both stories demonstrably became popular in England at least during the century or so after *King Horn*: the medieval English taste for piety and didacticism in romances is well known.[75] The case of the Fierabras story is, however, unique, for virtually every distinctive element in the presentation of the Saracens of *King Horn* finds a more or less close parallel in *Fierabras* and the introductory *La destruction de Rome*. The Anglo-Norman Hanover text of the whole diptych from the end of the thirteenth century is the earliest firm evidence for knowledge of this story in England; but, in view of the evidence for its general popularity in the thirteenth century, as well as subsequently,[76] it would not seem unreasonable to wonder if it could indeed have been known to the author of *King Horn* twenty years or so earlier.

The Saracens are, of course, only one group of characters in *King Horn*, and this investigation of their background inevitably invites a similar inquiry into the background of the other characters. To discuss them fully would require another paper. But even a brief consideration of the matter shows that, while the Saracen foes are the distinctive feature linking *King Horn* with the chansons de geste, particularly those in the early tradition, there are also elements in the presentation of the other characters which, although they do not always point exclusively to that tradition, nevertheless persistently suggest some further indebtedness to it.[77] Horn as hero, for example, demonstrates

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[75] See, for example, Dieter Mehl's influential work, *The Middle English Romances of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (London, 1968), esp. pp. 4–5, 13–29.

[76] See de Mandach, *Naissance*, 5, esp. pp. 165–86.

[77] Characteristics of typical figures in the chansons de geste were discussed in Comfort, "Character Types" (see above, n. 23), and this work provided a model, plus occasional specific material, for Herbert L. Creek's discussion of *King Horn* and other English romances in "Char-

the qualities of courage, leadership, loyalty, and piety of many chanson heroes and, like Roland with Oliver, has a special relationship with one of his companions, Aþulf. He is also a king (albeit in waiting), and in this role he, like Charlemagne, is served by a special group of twelve (the Twelve Peers themselves presumably being modeled on the twelve disciples of Christ). In *The Romance of Horn*, whose Saracens prove to be comparatively less close to those of early chansons, the number of Horn's followers is fifteen (9). Kings Murry, Aylmar, and Purston can be matched with different presentations of Charlemagne as ideal and less-than-ideal monarch (e.g., in *Roland* and *Fierabras,* respectively). Fikenhild has the role of traitor, blending characteristics of Ganelon (in *Roland*) and Archambaut (in *Doon*). And Horn's betrothed, Rimenhild, blends the aggressiveness of Floripas with the fundamental propriety of Bellisant. Further comparisons might be drawn, linking these and other figures with the chansons adduced here and other chansons; but even these summary indications reinforce the point that much of the material from which this early, or earliest, Middle English romance was created belonged to French chanson-de-geste traditions which were demonstrably maintained and disseminated in the Anglo-French society of postconquest England.

When *The Romance of Horn* was composed, chansons de geste with a Carolingian setting had been staple fare as secular narratives for several decades, and the casting of basically Islamic Saracens as the external foes of the hero was a recurrent element in them. *The Romance of Horn* should probably be associated with chansons in which some adaptations of established conventions were acceptable and natural, as in a living, flourishing tradition. In *Floovant,* for example, composed perhaps within a decade or so of *The Romance of Horn,* the conventional Islamic Saracens of Carolingian times are placed in a pre-Carolingian period, and, as a further modification, religious tension is not a central issue. In *The Romance of Horn* the conventional Saracens are placed in non-Carolingian localities, and, as a further modification, the terms in which they are presented have been modernized to take account of the contemporary Islamic power structure.

By the time *King Horn* was composed, romance had emerged as the dominant fashion in French secular narrative, although chansons de geste were still circulating. The narrative mode of *King Horn* associates the poem as a whole with romance rather than epic literature; but the author's re-creation of the Saracen foe he evidently found in his source relies to a large extent on individual elements of the chansons de geste. The Saracens of *King Horn* are presented through a combination of linguistic and situational conventions which had become "classic" and popular, having been established in the early stages of the chanson tradition, in works like *Roland* and *Fierabras.*[78]

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acter in the 'Matter of England' Romances," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 10 (1911), 429–52, 585–609.

[78] The social milieu which produced *King Horn* has been reconsidered in recent scholarship. Susan Crane, assuming the early date of ca. 1225 for this poem's composition, argues that it

Consideration of the terminology used of the Saracens of *King Horn* and its appearance elsewhere in Middle English literature has tended to confirm their association with chanson-de-geste traditions, while at the same time raising some fundamental questions about scholarly assumptions. Several of the relatively few French borrowings in *King Horn* are words conventionally used of the Saracens in the chansons de geste; but the date of composition of *King Horn,* even if it should be as late as the 1270s, means that there is no known earlier occurrence in English of *painime, paien,* or *geaunt,* or indeed of *Sarazin* itself with any meaning other than the general one, "pagan";[79] and earliest citations in a dictionary are inevitably problematic in some degree. Was the word, or a particular meaning of it, reasonably well established before it was used in the passage cited? Would the word rather have been perceived as unfamiliar, perhaps difficult in some way, or more acceptable in some situations than in others? Did a new word bring with it precisely the same connotations it had in the donor language? And how well does the intratextual context of a citation support a particular meaning assigned?

In the case of *King Horn* such questions call for the recognition that we cannot be sure what imaginative associations the author, or the thirteenth-century audience, brought to the terms *painime, paien,* and *geaunt* or what kind of people they thought were *Sarazins. Of Arthour and of Merlin,* which was brought to bear on the discussion in the past, has been seen to have little relevance for *King Horn,* not only in view of its somewhat later composition and the contrastingly explicit indication of its Saracens' nationality, but also because the Saracens are presented in a rather different way: although the words *painime, paien,* and *geaunt* are used of them, as is *amiral,* the giants have no special function on the Saracen side; the emirs fight alongside sultans with no distinction between them; none of the Saracens is said to be black; and religious difference serves only to identify the two opposing sides and is not developed as a significant theme.

The materials with which the author of *King Horn* seems most likely to

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follows *The Romance of Horn* in expressing the concern of the baronial class for the preservation of its family rights in the face of royal incursions, the choice of English instead of Anglo-Norman enabling it to reach a wider audience: *Insular Romance: Politics, Faith, and Culture in Anglo-Norman and Middle English Literature* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, 1986), pp. 13–40. Allen, "The Date and Provenance of *King Horn,*" preferring a date half a century later and locating the dialect of the poet in the City of London, argues that the first audience of the poem is most likely to have been a gathering of London merchants, probably fishmongers, and possibly including a member of a particular family with the surname Horn: pp. 121–25. Since there is no longer any real evidence to be adduced for a date before the second half of the thirteenth century (see above, n. 1), Allen's view of the milieu may be generally closer to the truth, although the details remain speculative at this stage.

[79] *King Horn* also provides the earliest citation in the *Middle English Dictionary* for the French borrowing *galeie* 'galley': Horn is set adrift in such a ship by the Saracens (191), and later he and his Irishmen travel in such a ship to Westernesse (1030). Although galleys were used not only by Saracens, they did have an association with the Mediterranean (see *The Oxford English Dictionary*) rather than with the North Sea or the Irish Sea. Galleys are featured as part of the emir's fleet in both *Roland* (2625) and *La destruction de Rome* (Hanover, 766).

have been familiar depict the Saracens as Islamic peoples, although it is not impossible that he was also aware of some group of "Saracens" which included Germanic pagans as well. His conscious concern, however, was probably rather with the functional identity of the Saracens as the enemy in his literary construct. The Saracens of *King Horn* are essentially a literary phenomenon, based not on figures from real life, but on other literary phenomena.

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