

Here begins the history of the English according to the translation of Master Geffrei Gaimar

To return, in a former book, if you remember it,¹ you have heard how completely Constantine held possession after Arthur; and how Iwain was made king of Murray and Lothian. But through this he saw much sorrow; all his noble relations were killed, and the Saxons who had come with Cerdic had multiplied. Modred the king had given them from the Humber to Caithness, but they had seized and entirely taken the land once held by Hengest. This they claimed as their heritage; for Hengest was of their lineage. It was for this cause that with great labour they entered Britain. So did the Scots and Picts, the Welsh and the Cumbrians; these strange people made war, and with great damage entered into Britain. The Angles increased every day; for they continually came from beyond the sea. The people of Saxony and of Germany added themselves to their number; for lord Hengest, their ancestor, the others made their chief. Every day they conquered and recovered much from the English, and the land that they subdued they called England. This is the reason why Britain lost her name. Arthur's nephews reigned, who fought against the English.

But the Danes hated them much, because of their relations who were killed in the battles that Arthur fought against Modred, whom he afterwards slew. If that is true which Gildas writes in his story, it is found written, that there were formerly two kings in Britain, when Constantine was chieftain, Constantine the nephew of Arthur, who had the sword Caliburc.² One of the kings was named Adelbrit. He was a rich man and a Dane. The other was called Edelsi; Lincoln and Lindsey were his, and he had the countries from the Humber to Rutland in his command. The other was king of the country which now is called Norfolk. So much were these two kings united that they were sworn friends; and there was such love between them, that Edelsi gave his sister to Adelbrit, that powerful king who was of the lineage of the Danes. The other king was a Briton, whose name was Edelsi; his sister was called Orwain; she was very noble and liberal.

By her lord she had a daughter, who was named Argentille. The maiden grew and throve, for she was carefully tendered. And it happened for all to see, that her father had no other heir. He had four rich counties in the kingdom of Denmark, and in Britain he had conquered the town of Caer Coel [Colchester], with all the country: his kingdom extended in one holding from Colchester to Holland. While he was so powerful, Edelsi was really his friend. But it happened that Adelbrit died in the city of Thetford. He was carried to Colchester, there the king was buried; and Orwain and Argentille, the queen and her daughter, went into Lindsey, to the queen's brother, king Edelsi. The kingdoms which Adelbrit held, were delivered to him to be kept in safety: for the queen was ill, and lived only twenty days after Adelbrit. When she was dead, they buried the queen; and Argentille was brought up at Lincoln and in Lindsey. So say the ancient people.³ She had no noble relation, through her father, amongst the Danes. Hear what that wicked king Edelsi did. To obtain the inheritance he coveted, he mis-married his niece. He gave her to a low fellow, whose name was Cuaran; as he wished to abase her, he thought he would oppress her.

¹ This reference to an earlier work appears to refer to Gaimar's lost *Estoire des Bretuns* (History of the Britons). Some manuscripts just begin, "You have heard..."

² Gaimar appeals to the authority of Gildas, the British author of the *De Excidio Britanniae* (The Fall of Britain). However, he may be referring to the *Historia Britonum* (History of the Britons), which was often thought to be by Gildas (today it is sometimes attributed to Nennius; but generally its authorship is considered unrecoverable). In any event, the two kings to which Gaimar refers are to be found in neither source.

³ Gaimar's words *si cum dient l'antive gent* may be translated "the old people" or "the people of old", which may be important for determining whether his sources are oral or written.

This Cuaran was a cook, but he was a very handsome young man. He had a beautiful face and beautiful hands. He was well-grown, pleasant to look at, and plump; his figure was at all times erect; he had handsome legs and feet. But as he was very bold and ready for a fight, there was not one servant in the house would venture to take liberties with him, or begin to inflict blows upon him, whom he did not throw down with lifted legs; when he was in a passion, he tied him with his sash, and if then he had not fair promises, he beat him well with a rod. And nevertheless he was so frank, that if the servant promised him, that for this he would not love him less, in the same hour he untied him. When they had embraced each other, then Cuaran was joyous; and the king and the knights gave him some of their food. Some gave him cakes, some quarters of simnel cakes, others gave him roast meat and fowl, which came from their kitchens; so that he had so much bread and food, that he kept two servants himself: and he often gave very large presents to the servants of the houses, of simnel cakes, of buns, of roast meat, and of cakes. Through this he was so much loved, so prized, and so approved, that if Cuaran wished for a gift, there was not a free man in the house who would not willingly give it him. But he had no care for wages; to give as much as he had was his way while it lasted; and when he had nothing to give, he willingly borrowed, then gave and spent; what he borrowed he liberally returned. When he had anything he gave all; but he asked nothing of any one.

Thus he was scullery boy to a cook in the house. He had two servants whom he kept. Hear, my lords, why he did this. He suspected that they were his brothers; but his father was not theirs, neither was his mother nor his lineage of their parentage. Perhaps, though he was in such disrepute, he had come from a noble bed; and—if the king had known it—I presume that he would not have had his niece in marriage. He [Edelsi] did not know of whom he was born; he made him his juggler.

To usurp the lands of Adelbrit, he made his niece sleep with Cuaran, the daughter of the king in a humble bed. For Edelsi was guilty of great cruelty through coveting this kingdom when, to have it to himself alone, he (as he thought) dishonoured his niece and gave her to his cook, whose name was Cuaran. He [Cuaran] never knew who the woman was, nor how he ought to treat her, till he came to bed. He lay down at her side and went to sleep.

Argentille was greatly perplexed to know why he [just] lay beside her; and very much she wondered that he never turned himself towards her and did not wish to come near her, as a man ought to do to his wife. The niece complained to the king; often she cursed her uncle, who had so disinherited her, and given her to such a man until it happened that one night they took their pleasure together; afterwards they went to sleep together. Much they loved each other, and were happy.

The daughter of the king dreamed in her sleep that she was with Cuaran between the sea and a wood where a savage bear lived. Towards the sea she saw swine and wild boars coming ready to attack this great bear, which was so fierce that it wished to devour Cuaran. With the bear there were many foxes which had been in great peril all day: for the wild boars attacked them and destroyed and killed many. When the foxes were destroyed, a single wild boar, fierce and bold, alone attacked the bear, which made much noise, and with one bite divided its heart in two halves.

When the bear found itself wounded to death, it gave one cry, then fell, and the foxes came running from all parts towards Cuaran; with their tails between their legs, and their heads bending, they kneeled before him; they appeared to be asking mercy from Cuaran, with whom they had made war. When he had raised them all up, he wished to go to the sea. The great trees that were in the wood bent themselves down on all sides. The sea arose and the waves came, so that he could not keep in the wood. The trees fell and the sea rose; Cuaran was in great distress. Afterwards two lions came: they fell upon their knees. But many of the beasts who were in their way went into the wood. Cuaran, from the fear that he had, mounted into one of the large trees;

and the lions came forward towards this tree, kneeling. Through all the wood there was so great a cry that the lady awoke; and as she had dreamed, she had closely embraced her lord. She found him turned towards her; she had fastened him within her arms. From fear she opened her eyes, and she saw a flame which issued from the mouth of her husband, who still was fast asleep. She marvelled at the vision, and at the mouth of her husband, also at the flame which she saw. Hear now what she said. "Sire," said she, "You burn; wake up, if you please. A flame issues from your mouth. I know not who put it there." So much she embraced him and drew him to her that he awoke and said, "Why, why have you waked me, dear friend? Why are you frightened? He entreated and caressed her so much, that she related all to him and told of the flame and the vision that she had seen of her husband. Cuaran replied to her, about the vision that he heard; he interpreted the dream according to his view of it, though he said all might be an illusion. "Wife," said he, "With us it will be good, both for your advantage and for mine. Now I can understand what this may be; the king will hold his feast tomorrow, and will have many of his barons. There will be so many stags, kid, deer, and other meats, that there will remain much in the kitchen, which we will save from being wasted; the esquires will carry many good larded joints and brawns from the kitchen to the barns. The esquires are obedient to me both at evening and in the morning: these signify the foxes of which you dreamed; they are here. And the bear is dead; he was killed yesterday; the wild animal was taken in a wood. There are two bulls for the lions; let us take the kettles for the sea, in which the water rises like the sea, so that the cold makes it subside; the flesh of the bulls will be cooked: Lady, the vision is explained."

Argentille, when she heard this, inquired, "Before you tell me more, my lord, can you explain that which I saw burning in your mouth?" "Wife," said he, "I know not what it is; I was deceived by sleep. My mouth emitted it while I slept; I felt nothing of the flame. I am really much ashamed that in sleeping this happened to me."

Argentille said, "In my opinion, we are both here in a dishonourable position. It would be better that we should be exiled among strangers, and injured, than that we should live here in such shame. Friend, where are thy relations?" "Wife," said he, "At Grimsby: I left that place when I came here. If I do not find my kindred there, I know not where under heaven I was born." "Friend," said she, "Let us go there to see if we can find them. No man who loved thee ever gave us better counsel." Cuaran answered, "My beloved, be it wisdom or be it folly, I will do what you wish: I will take you there if you so counsel me." They repose in the night until the arrival of clear day; on the morrow they go to their lord, they come to the king, they ask leave. When he heard, he was much amused. Laughing, he gave it to them; he joked about it to his people, and said, "If, on the third day or on the morrow, they should feel a little hungry, they will hasten to return when they cannot do better."

Now they come to Grimsby; there they find a good friend. He was a fisherman who lived there; the daughter of Grim was his wife. When he recognised the young men, Cuaran and the two sons of Grim, and knew the daughter of the king,...⁴ He said to his wife, who was very sensible, "Dame," said he, "What shall we do? If you approve, we will reveal our knowledge and our secret to Haveloc, the son of the King. Let us tell him quite openly of whom he was born, and of what people." The wife said, "If he knew it, I suspect that by his folly he would discover it in such a place that great damage would quickly ensue. He is not so wise as to know how to conceal his inclination. If he should know that he was born of kings, it would be hidden only for a few hours. Nevertheless, now let us call him, and let us ask of whom he was born. If his wife comes with him, we can well tell him with whom, of whom, and in what and he was born, and how he was exiled by war."

⁴ There is a line missing here.

Then they called Haveloc, and Argentille came with him. The good man and his wife thought it good to sound him. "Friend," said she, "Where were you born, and in what place is your kindred?" "Dame," said he, "I left my kindred here when I went from this place. Both by father and by mother you are my sister, I am your brother. Grim, a fisherman, was my father, the name of his wife, my mother, was Sebruc. When they were dead I went from this place, and I took with me my two brothers. Now we are grown up; we are come back again. We did not know our kindred, and now you and your lord are silent upon the subject. You know well that you are our sister." Kelloc replies: "All is quite different from what you think: your father never sold salt, nor was your mother a salt merchant: Grim sold salt and was a fisherman. You know the good-will of my brothers; you will thank them by whom you were nourished. Yesterday a great ship, strong and good, arrived smoothly in port. It brought meat and bread, wine and corn, of which it has great abundance. It will go beyond the sea. If you will go in it, I think it will go to the country where your relatives and friends are. If you will voyage in it, we will provide you well. We will give you a change of clothes, you shall have some of our money, with bread and meat, and good clear wine, to take at evening and at morning. You shall have as much food as you wish; you will take your two servants with you. But keep well your secret: you were the son of a good king. He had Denmark by inheritance, as his father and his forefathers had. Your father's name was Gunter; he married the daughter of king Gaifer, whose name was Alvide; she cherished me and did me much good as long as she lived. She brought me up, so said my mother; the daughter of Grim was her companion. But it happened that king Arthur came to conquer in your kingdom because of his tribute which was withheld; he came into the land with a numerous people. He seemed hostile to king Gunter, and made war with him near the sea. King Gunter was killed with many knights on both sides. Arthur gave the land to whom he pleased. But, because of the war, the queen could not remain in the country, so she fled from it with the right heir. You are he, if, as I believe, you are lord Haveloc, the son of the king. My father had a very good ship; he brought the queen quietly away. He was bringing her towards this country, when, as God pleased, it came to pass that we were met by pirates. We were all plunged into the sea, our knights, our people, and the queen with them. Not a man was saved except my father, no woman except my mother. My father was known to them [the pirates], for whose sake they saved the children, me and you, and my two brothers, by the prayer of my father. When we arrived in this country, we cut our great ship into two; for all was broken and destroyed when the queen was killed. We made a house of our ship, and we supported ourselves comfortably by means of the boat, wherein our father went to fish. We had fish to eat, turbot, salmon, mullets, whale, porpoises, and mackerel in great plenty; we had bread and good fish in profusion. For fish we exchanged bread, of which people brought us great abundance. When we had money my father became a salt merchant. As long as he lived, he and my mother supported you well, better than my brothers. I remember that this noble lord held me in great honour. He was a merchant; he knew how to voyage upon the sea, and well understood how to sell and buy. He was in Denmark in days gone by, and he heard several persons say that if he could find you they would come and would claim the country. We strongly recommend that you return and take our two servants with you that they may be with you to serve you. If good befall you, let us know; if God should give you your inheritance, we will follow if you wish."

Haveloc and his wife said, "We return you many kind commendations; if God restore our heritage, we will do more than you ask, and we will take the young men with us. Through God we will consider the matter well." The dame replied: "Truly you shall remain here until the wind is fair, and if I can manage, before you go, you shall be attired in better clothes." These they put on during their stay; they were clothed handsomely. They stayed so long until the time arrived, and then they went on board the ship. Lord Algers, the merchant, had made an agreement for them. He and Kelloc gave their garments for the retainers of Haveloc, and they put a sufficient

quantity of food for them, so that it would not have failed in three months. They put bread, wine, meat, and good fish in the ship for them in great abundance, and as soon as the ship floated, the steersman trimmed it well. In truth they had two ships, their sails were spread to the wind; so well they sailed and steered that they soon arrived in Denmark. They went into a town in the country in which they had landed; there they asked for horses and carts, and made them bring their food. The merchants are all gone away with their merchandise and two ships, and Haveloc and his wife go to the town to lodge.

A rich man lived there, Sigar Estalre was his name; he was seneschal to king Gunter, and a judge in his kingdom.⁵ But he possessed so much gold in the land that the king greatly hated this rich man—the king who then was powerful over the other people of that country. Instead of his lord, whom he had killed by the power of Arthur the strong, who had sent him by treason, and given him this kingdom. As he was so traitorous and cruel, many of them agreed that they would neither obey him nor take land of him until they knew of the right heir; they would see whether he was dead or alive. The king who then was in the country was brother to king Aschis, who suffered death for Arthur in the place where Modred had done him so much injury; his name was king Odulf, he was much hated by his Danes.

As God pleased, and fate, God placed Haveloc in his [Sigar's] care on account of his wife, who was very beautiful, the daughter of the king, lady Argentille. Six youths then assailed him, took the lady, wounded him, much endangered his servants, and in several places hurt their chief. As they were going away with his wife lord Haveloc was very angry; he seized a very sharp axe, which he found hanging in a house; with it he attacked in the street those who were taking away lady Argentille; three he killed, two he slew, and cut off the fist of the sixth; he took his wife and went to a hostelry. "You are very much to blame," he cried. He took his servants and his wife and went into a church: from fear he shut the doors; then they mounted above on the tower. There he made such a defence that it was not taken without much trouble, for they fought well; those who assailed them were wounded. When lord Sigar came fighting he saw how the stones were falling down. Lord Haveloc, who was very strong, had killed the five brigands. Sigar saw him and considered; he then remembered king Gunter; how formerly he had chosen him, and had once had him for one of his retainers; he resembled his lord so much that when Sigar saw him he felt so much pity that he had great trouble to speak. He caused the whole assault to cease, and assured him peace and truce; he brought him into his hall, himself, his wife, and his companions, the two servants mentioned before. When they were in a place of security the nobleman inquired who he was, what his name might be, and who his companions were: of the lady he asked whence she came, and who gave her to him. "Sir," said he, "I know not who I am; I know that I was born in this country: a mariner, whose name was Grim, took me away when an infant; he wished to go to Lindsey. When we came upon the high sea we were attacked by pirates, by whom we were very badly treated; my mother was there and was killed; I was saved, I know not in what manner, and the good man escaped, who cherished me and loved me much; he and his wife nourished me, much they regarded and tended me. When they were dead I went away; where I went I served a king, and while I was with him two young men were with me; I was much with him in my youth, and this lady is his relation. He, as he pleased, gave her to me, and married us together. I am come into this country and know none of my friends. I knew not with certainty if I had a single relation, except through the report of a merchant now living at Grimsby, a very worthy man, whose name is Algier; he and his wife recommended me to come here, to seek in this land my friends and my relations. But I know not how to name one, and I know not how I can find them." The good man said, "What is thy name?" "Sir," he replied, "I

⁵ The Anglo-Saxon term *Stallere*, of which this is a Normanised form, was equivalent to the later Seneschal, or Steward of the Household.

know not; but when I was in the great court they called me Cuaran, and when I was a boy I know well that I had the name of Haveloc. At Grimsby the other day, Alger called me Haveloc; now I am here you will call me which you please of these two names.”

Sigar stood and listened; he well remembered the son of the king, and the son of Gunter had the very same name which he said. He remembered him by another circumstance, which he formerly saw by the means of his nurse, of a flame that issued from his mouth while he slept. He had him well guarded in the night, in the place where he was reposing with his wife. Because he was much wearied by the battle, and by the thoughts that he had had the day before, he went to sleep thinking nothing about it. Immediately when he [Haveloc] slept, the flame went out of his mouth. The servants who had watched him quickly announced this to their lord, and the good man rose from his bed; when he came he saw the flame. Then he knew well that that which he had thought of him was true. But so precious was this thought to him that he wished to tell his wife as soon as he rose on the morrow. Then he sent for his people, he sent for his knights, for townsmen, and for foot soldiers. Many came from all parts. When he had assembled a large number, he went to speak to Haveloc; he caused him to wash and eat; he had him dressed in new clothes, and brought him into the hall. When he had entered the hall, he saw so many men congregated there that he much feared that these people would pass a severe judgment upon him. He suspected that they were assembled because of the five men he had killed. He wished to go for an axe which a youth there was holding; he desired to seize it that he might defend himself. Sigar saw him, and caused him to be brought to him. As he held him quite close, Sigar said to him, “Do not fear; have no apprehension, my friend; I swear to you, if you trust me, that I love you more now than I did yesterday when you were seated at my table.” Then he placed him near himself, and had the king’s horn brought. This was the horn of king Gunter; under heaven there had never yet been a knight who could sound this horn, nor a huntsman, nor a youth, so that no one could ever near it sound, till the king, or the right heir sounded it. In truth the right heir of Denmark could sound it well; but no other man ever sounded it; other people had laboured for nothing. Sigar had kept this horn; king Gunter had given it to him. When he held it he could not sound it; he gave it to a knight. “Whoever shall blow it, so that it shall give a sound which can be heard distinctly, I will give him a good ring, which, at need, is worth a castle. He who shall have it on his finger will not be drowned if he shall fall into the sea; nor can fire injure him in any way, nor any weapon hurt him: this is what is said of the ring.” Now the household go to sound the horn, the knights and the sergeants; they can neither sound it much nor little; it will not sound for one of them. Then they delivered it Haveloc.

When he held it, he looked at it, and said that he had never blown one. He said to the lord, “I will let it be; as no man can sound it, all declare your ring free, when so many youths have tried the horn.” Sigar replied, “No, you will do it; put it to your mouth.” Sir,” said he, “I cannot refuse you; it shall be well, I will make the attempt.” Then he took the horn, as he was shown, and tried it at his mouth. Directly his lips touched it, the horn sounded well as once formerly his father was heard to sound it; no man knew so well how to blow it.

Sigar heard it; he started to his feet, and folded him in his arms. Then he cried, “God be praised! Now I have found my rightful lord; now I have him I desired, for whom I will fight; this is the lawful heir, and the person who ought to wear the crown of gold.” He then sent for all his people; then they did fealty. He himself kneeled, and swore to keep faith with him. After this he sent for the barons, with whom the king was at strife; all became his subjects, and received him as their lord.

When this was done, the people assembled; in four days there were many hundreds, and on the fifth day there were full thirty thousand knights. They then defied king Odulf; they met in a plain. Many severe blows were struck, and king Odulf was vanquished; for Haveloc so demeaned himself that he alone killed more than twenty. There were two princes of the country,

who before were his enemies and were allied with king Odulf; now they came for his mercy; the poorer people of the country came to sue for mercy at the same time, and Haveloc, by the advice of his barons, granted them pardons. All swore fealty to him; the knights of the kingdom, the chief men and townsmen, made him their lord and king. He held a great festival and entertainment; so we are told by the authentic history.

He afterwards summoned all his ships, with all the power of his kingdom. With his great host he passed the sea, and defied king Edelsi. He sent him word that he challenged him if he would not restore the right of his wife. King Edelsi sent back as answer that he would fight with him. They fought in a plain from morning till evening. Many men were severely wounded on both sides, and many fell down dead, when black night severed them and postponed the issue till the morrow. But, through the counsel of the queen, who devised a stratagem, by which she remedied the evil of the battle, she regained her kingdom without greater contentions. All night she caused poles to be fixed in the earth, thicker and larger than stakes. They fixed the dead men to them, and arranged them through all the night. They made of these two great troops, so that they really appeared as if they were living combatants, although the day before they had been killed. Men who saw them from afar felt as if their flesh were creeping. Both from far and near these unconfessed dead seemed hideous.

On the morrow they prepared again, and drew themselves up in fighting order. The scouts came before to spy the people of lord Cuaran. When they saw that there were so many, they felt as if their flesh was creeping; for against one man that they had there appeared to be seven on the other side. They go back to tell the king, "To fight is of no use; restore to the lady her right, and make peace before things be worse." The king could go no further, so he thought proper to grant this request; for so the barons had advised him. All the kingdom was restored to them, from Holland to Leicester.⁶ King Haveloc held his festival there: he received from all his dominions the homage of his barons. King Edelsi only lived five days after this. He had no heirs so legitimate as Haveloc and his wife; he had children, but they were dead. His nobles willingly agreed that Haveloc and his wife should have the land of King Edelsi. So he had it: he was king twenty years: he conquered much by the Danes.

⁷Then from the Nativity nearly five hundred years had passed, there were but five to tell, when Cerdic with his ships arrived at Certesore, a mount which still appears: he arrived there with his son, whom the English called Chenriz. Horsa and Hengest were their ancestors, as the true Chronicle relates. This Cerdic was the son of king Elessinc, and was an Englishman; Elessinc was son of Elese, and Elese was son of Esling, Esling son of Eslage, son of Wising, son of Gewis, son of Wigening, son of Wilte, brother of Wising, son of Fretewine, son of Freodagaring, son of Freodegar, son of Brending, son of Brand, son of Beldegging, son of Beldeg, born of Winhing: Beldeg was of the lineage of Woden, of whose lineage Horsa and Hengest were born. Of their lineage came those who were called the West Saxons, the South Saxons, the East Saxons, and the Middle Saxons. Now, because of this, that Hengest and Horsa, and Cerdic, who after their death came into the land, and often made war in it, were of this royal lineage, they and their race who were born in the country named Ange, were always called English.

The war lasted twenty-four years, before Cerdic could conquer scarcely anything from the Britons: Cirencester⁸ was blockaded; but, by the carelessness of the Britons, it was set on fire by sparrows, which carried fire and sulphur within, and burned many houses; the besiegers without made the assault with great violence. Then this city was conquered, and Gloucester was taken. They vanquished all as far as the Severn; they killed all the principal Britons, and from the

⁶ One manuscript has Colchester.

⁷ At this point Gaimar begins to use the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.

⁸ The narratives of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and Geoffrey of Monmouth are here blended together.

sea, where they arrived, to the Severn, they converted to themselves all the country and the kingdoms; and expelled the Britons.

King Cerdic reigned fifteen years: Kenric [i.e. Chenriz] reigned after his death. He was the son of Cerdic; he warred much, and many countries became his: the Britons hated him much, and often showed him their spite. The other English spread themselves, and, in several places, seized kingdoms. Each one caused himself to be called a king, as was the custom formerly among the Britons. Saxons came from beyond the sea, and when they arrived, took all; and the Britons, through their wars, thought it better to forsake their good land. Fleeing their own country, they went to Wales in the west, where their other kindred were. They defended this country well, and very often assembled an army; this they led beyond the Severn, and warred with the English, with Kenric and the other kings; they frequently fought, and sold their country dearly.

The Danes were in Norfolk from the time when Haveloc was king; they defended this country, and that which was king Edelsi's.⁹ But Wasing, who was of their lineage, very often committed outrages against them. He would yield for no man; every day he committed ravages without redressing them; he never atoned for any injury. He fought much against two kings: the name of one was king Burgard; the other was called Geine le Choard, who from fear forsook his land. The war had lasted but a short time between them, when the English Kenric came; he and his son, whose name was Chehuling, made war with king Wasing; there was a long contention between them, till Wasing was killed; Kenric, his enemy, slew him. King Burgard assisted; he and Lowine of Gloucester brought two kings from the Saxons. Wasing was dead, and could not be there. The two kings of Saxony were great; they reigned thirty years, and then they died.

The *Estoire* also contains later references to Haveloc and to Danish claims in England:

[A.D. 782.] In that time, so people know, from the coming of Jesus there had been seven hundred and eighty years and two besides; I have an authority for it: for Werburg¹⁰ then died, a queen who devoted herself to religion; king Celred had her for his wife; she lies at Chester in a precious place; and every year it is seen that God does great works there through her. Two years after her death,¹¹ two kings went to war; one was named Cyneheard; he openly killed Cynewulf; eighty-four men Cyneheard caused to fall in that place. At this time king Brictric held Wessex sixteen years, so it is written. He was buried at Werlame [Wareham]; his ancestors extend back to king Cerdic. Then¹² Ecfred [Ecgerth] was made king, and a crosier was given to Hibald.¹³ Through Adrian, a holy man, messengers came from Rome to renew the holy law: as formerly, so I believe, St. Augustine and St. Gregory made it; thus this pope did it. Then¹⁴ king Offa gave his daughter, whom he well endowed, to king Bertriz [Brictric]: he gave his daughter Eadburga, who was beautiful and amiable. At this time the Danes came to fight against the English. They killed the king's seneschal, and seized and took the land; they did much evil in the country, though they had only three ships.¹⁵ Then they went back into their own land; they assembled their friends, and wished to come into Britain; they desired to take it from the English; for they had deliberated amongst themselves, and said that it was there heritage, and that many men of

⁹ No trace of these early Danish kings occurs in any history anterior to the time of Gaimar.

¹⁰ A confusion between the wife of Ceolred and Werburg the patron saint of Chester.

¹¹ A.D. 784.

¹² A.D. 785.

¹³ Actually Higebryht, archbishop of Lichfield.

¹⁴ A.D. 787.

¹⁵ The next three sentences of this section do not correspond to material in any surviving copy of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.

their lineage had inherited the kingdom. They had entered it before the English, and a Danish king, who was born in Denmark, held the kingdom before any Saxon inhabited it; so did Ailbrith and Haveloc, and more might be named with them. Because of this, they said in truth that Britain was their lawful inheritance. Kindled by this, many remained, and on this account did not go away. Their [the Anglo-Saxons'] enemies came upon them from the country of Guenelinge.¹⁶ By reason of this war, it happened that they [the Anglo-Saxons] kept the land.

[A.D. 789.] At this time, and in that of which I am speaking, king Oswald was killed.¹⁷ He held Northumberland; he was a very holy and valiant man. King Penda made war upon him; Sigge beheaded his king. He was killed at Mescesfeld [Maserfeld]. The place will always be dear, for light and a great celestial fire have often been seen there by clerk and priest. But his holy body was taken from thence, and carried far into the country. It was taken to Bardney with piety and care: there they wished to bury him, that the place might be loved, and the body taken care of. It is written in the Chronicles that he was interred there: some say that his friends carried him to Nostell [in Yorkshire]: and several say that they have the relics of this lord at Hexham, and at Colesdeburch¹⁸ [Bamborough], in the south, is his arm, because of which God works miracles; it is entire, God be praised: his head is placed upon the breast of Saint Cuthbert; may he reward the man who keeps it.

[A.D. 1016.] King Athelred had a son [Edmund]; his other two children were very little; they were carried into Normandy, for their relations were there... And Cnut reigned; he had conquered the whole country in many parts. But Edmund the Etheling troubled him. But a misfortune happened to the elder Edmund [the Etheling]; he was seized with an illness, which affected him that it ended his days... But the other Edmund gathered people and warred with great fidelity... And he made great war upon Cnut before the Danes were assembled; he went with a great host against them. Earl Thorkill brought this host; the king's son fought against him. They came to Soreham on the morning of Saint John [24th June]. Here they had a sever battle; many of the English deserted from their lords who had brought them, and went over to the Danes, through treason and wickedness; many nobles there lost their lives. Edriz Estrene deserted, and many others whom king Edward, the son of Athelred, had cherished; the Danes made great rejoicing. Cnut the king, leading his host, repaired to Assendune; and king Eadmund fought with him, with but few people; but no man, this I know, fought better than he fought: Whether he would or not, he lost the field; the Welsh were driven from it by force, and the Danes had the victory. Here war and strife lasted between these two for several days, so that the land became desolated, through their pride and their war. The barons then deliberated and discoursed so much that they made an arrangement. They assembled at Deerhurst; here it was agreed between them that a duel should be fought: this was assented to by each personally. It was discussed and arranged how each should be accoutred. When he entered into the battle, he was to have a hauberk, a helmet; a shield, a battle-axe, a hand-axe, a sword, and a good mace; also that each should have armour on his thighs when he went into the battle. Afterwards they said where it was to take place, and it was agreed that it should be at Gloucester. In the middle of the Severn they were to be brought into a fair and good ship; the ship was to be well fastened, chained, and firmly tied on both sides, that it might be secured exactly in the middle of the river. Thus they arranged the order of battle,

¹⁶ One manuscript has Wellinge, and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* has Haeretha-land, perhaps a region in Norway.

¹⁷ Gaimar has actually confused the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*'s Alfwold with Saint Oswald, who was killed in A.D. 642.

¹⁸ It is unclear where this is: places as far apart as Coldingham and Bamborough in the Scottish borders to Peterborough in East Anglia have been suggested.

and their two armies were to be on both sides. They both swore by reason, gave hostages, and pledged themselves, that if they could not agree together, and if the duel should be fought, to whichever of the two should gain it the others should all ally themselves, and leave him to reign over them.

On the [appointed] day they all assembled; the two kings were brought in the ship; and on both sides on the shore were the two armies, to look on. All the ships of the city were brought upon the river; they placed them at six leagues (?) distance, so that the barons might observe them. They did not wish that any turbulent man should begin a brawl there, but that the fight should be between them two: let him have the kingdom whom God pleased. At one end of the ship was Cnut, who was of Danish extraction; at the other was Edmund, who belonged to the English. They were kneeling in prayer; they humbled themselves much; afterwards they stood and prepared themselves, each one girded with his arms.

When they were quite ready, the one looked at the other. Then Cnut: spoke with great wisdom, and said, “Eadmund, attend a moment. I am a Dane, thou an Englishman; and our fathers were two Kings. The one held the land, and so did the other; each did what he pleased with it. As long as they had it in their power, each had his own will in it. You know well that the Danes, our ancestors, had it long. Nearly a thousand years [king] Dan formerly held it, till Cerdic the king entered it. Cerdic was your ancestor and king Dan was mine; the Danes possessed it from God, *in capite*.¹⁹ Modred gave Cerdic his fief; he did not hold it *in capite*; from him came your ancestors. This I will tell you, if you know it not; if you fight with me, one of us will have the greater wrong; we know not which may be slain. Because of this I desire to make you a proposal, and I will retract nothing from it. Let us divide the kingdom exactly in two parts; let one part be yours, let the other part be mine; and let neither you nor I complain. Then we will conquer that part which neither you nor I have had. As we subdue it, we shall share it between us; and be as two brothers in reality: I will swear to you, you shall swear to me, to hold this same fraternity as if we were born of one mother, as if we were both brothers, and of one father and one mother. Let there be hostages between us; believe me, and I will believe you.”

¹⁹ Gaimar here uses the feudal legal terms respecting land tenures