

THE BIRTHPLACE OF CHIVALRY: THE CASE FOR AN ANGEVIN ORIGIN

by

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ABSTRACT

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When we think of the medieval period some of the first things we think of are knights and their code of conduct called chivalry. Throughout Western Europe, by the early thirteenth century, chivalry became emblematic of knighthood, but where did it begin? That is the question that this thesis aims to answer. Through the assessment of the political, cultural, and literary context of Angevin rulers and their Anglo-Norman predecessors, this thesis argues that the birthplace of chivalry occurred in the courts of the Angevin Empire between 1160 and 1190. This study points to the military reforms of Henry II, clerics such as John of Salisbury and Ralph Niger and their respective literary works *Policraticus* and *De re militari et triplici via peregrinationis Ierosolimitane*, and the cultural context of Henry the Young King to support its claims.

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To Shyann,
the love of my life.
For every knight must have his lady.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- BoC. Geoffroi de Charny. *Livre de chevalerie*. Trans. Elspeth Kennedy and Richard Kaeuper. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996.
- DRM. Radulfus Niger. *De re militari et triplici via peregrinationis Ierosolimitane*. Ed, and trans. John D. Cotts. New York: Routledge, 2022.
- GRA. William of Malmesbury. *Gesta Regum Anglorum*. Vol. I, Ed. and trans. R. A. B. Mynors. Comp. R. M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- HA. Henry of Huntingdon. *Historia Anglorum*. In *The Chronicle of Henry of Huntingdon. Comprising the History of England, from the Invasion of Julius Cæsar to the Accession of Henry II. Also, The Acts of Stephen, King of England, and Duke of Normandy*. Trans. and ed. Thomas Forester. London: George Bell & Sons, 1909.
- HR. *Historia Roderici*. Trans. Simon Barton and Richard Fletcher. In Simon Barton, and Richard Fletcher. *The World of El Cid: Chronicles of the Spanish Reconquest*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000.
- LRdE. Raoul de Houndenc. *Le Roman des Eles*. Trans. Keith Busby. Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1983.

- Ord. Orderic Vitalis. *Historia Ecclesiastica*. Ed. and trans. Marjorie Chibnall in *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*. Vol. 4. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973; Vol. 6. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978.
- PC. *Peterborough Chronicle*. Trans. Harry August Rositzke. New York: Columbia University Press, 1951.
- Poli. John of Salisbury. *Policraticus*. Ed. and trans. Cary J. Nederman. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

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Introduction

*“After all, those knights who, have no regard to their name,
sadly do not understand it, nor does it acknowledge them.”*

-Le Roman des Eles, ll. 51-54.¹

A lance cracks in the midst of a joust, as knights in full panoply are marred in blood and dirt. Swords and prowess clash in a duel over honor and reputation. A man kneels at the feet of his lady while soft hands bestow upon him a token of her love. A prayer leaves the lips of a warrior who knows he will not survive the coming battle. This romantic image of the knight has captivated the minds of countless many for centuries. It has enraptured mine for as long as I can remember. Parsing the real from the imagined has been a recurring task in the field of medieval studies, as contemporaries themselves debated what comprised a knight in reality and what comprised a knight ideally. When someone in England said that a knight was chivalrous, someone in Spain knew exactly what that meant. But codes of conduct and the people who follow them do not spring forth spontaneously, they originate somewhere. That is where this thesis comes in. While it does not seek to find the origin of the knight, it *does* seek to find the origin of chivalry.

¹ LRdE, 31, 161. Original language transcription available in Appendix B.

Background

The study of chivalry began in earnest in nineteenth-century France, where in French *chevalerie* means both “knighthood” and “chivalry”, and while the preliminary literature in the field was written in the late seventeenth century by Claude-François Menestrier, it was not until the nineteenth that proper evaluations of conduct seem to have taken root.² Shaken in the aftermath of revolution, and the rise of the Industrial Revolution, and searching for a unified national identity, the elite of the academy began to write medieval history through a distinctly anachronistic lens, an issue that took well over a century to rectify. This is to say that early French, and later English scholars of the Victorian period in particular, often desired to understand their identity actualized through the lens of medieval history more than they wished to see an accurate recreation of medieval history. This resulted in pre-twentieth-century ideals becoming imposed upon various aspects of medieval history, including the developing understanding of the concept of knight hood and chivalry.

In English, serious scholarship on chivalry did not begin until the third quarter of the twentieth century. Since then, scholars have focused their attention on two general periods in the conception of chivalry: an earlier period, when some key chivalric concepts began to emerge but largely circulated informally, and a later period, when the rise of a substantial body of written conduct literature defined and codified these and other concepts into the prescriptive ethos that became known as “chivalry”.

² For a brief discussion on this linguistic peculiarity see David Crouch, “When Was Chivalry? Evolution of a Code”, in *Knighthood and Society in the High Middle Ages*, ed. David Crouch and Jeroen Deploige (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2020), 278-279.

During the first period between the end of the late tenth century and the mid-twelfth century, three concepts developed that became central to the later, codified, ethos of chivalry. The first of these three concepts was *habitus*, a modern scholarly term for the environment of social norms and expectations that shaped the attitudes and behaviors of every class of society including those of medieval knights and nobles. The second concept was that of the *preudomme*, a man of honor and respect, who became the central figure on which the superstructure of chivalry was erected. The third concept was courtesy (rendered variously as *cortosie*, *cortesia*, or *courtois*), which was the behavior appropriate to noble courts. As the knightly class developed and became an identifiable and discrete segment of society across the twelfth century, conduct literature intended to direct their behavior started coming into vogue. This signaled the arrival of tripartite chivalry, the ethos composed of three central components: social, martial, and spiritual. The martial was inherent to the soldiering profession, the social came bundled with *habitus* and the *preudomme*, and the spiritual was the finishing touch arriving with clerically prescribed conduct literature. The development of the knightly class and the imposition of conduct upon them was when chivalry truly took form, and it is that which this thesis is principally concerned with.

During the second period, from the 1200s until the end of the medieval period, the ethos of chivalry spread across Christian Europe both through social contact and through a growing body of vernacular literature, through the anonymous *L'Ordene de Chevalerie* (1200-1210),³ Ramon Llul's *Llibre de l'Ordre de Cavalleria* (1274-1276),⁴ and Geoffroi de Charny's *Le Livre de Chevalrie* (1350s).⁵ David Crouch argues that "the chivalric turn" from the earlier period to the

³ David Crouch, *The Chivalric Turn: Conduct and Hegemony in Europe before 1300* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 313.

⁴ Crouch, *Chivalric Turn*, 311.

⁵ Richard Kaeuper, *The Book of Chivalry of Geoffroi De Charny: Text, Context, and Translation*, ed. and trans. Richard Kaeuper and Elspeth Kennedy (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 22.

later had occurred by 1210. However, modern scholarly literature on chivalry has said little about the years between the mid-eleventh century and the year 1200 in relation to chivalric development, and has scarcely attempted to locate this shift aside from the occasional allusion. This is the gap that this thesis will seek to fill. It will consider what caused this shift from one phase into the next and where exactly this shift occurred. This thesis will aim both to locate this transitional period in the Angevin world in the years 1160-1190 and to explain why this happened there.

This thesis will primarily exist within the category of knightly and chivalric studies, but it will also overlap with the broader field of conduct studies and social history. It will also consider various examples of medieval literature such as didactic texts and evaluate their impacts on society. Through the evaluation of the history of the context of chivalry and knights, this text will also fit within the field of Angevin and Anglo-Norman literature.

The primary questions that this thesis will address are: where was chivalry formed? How was chivalry formed? Why did chivalry form? How did the transformation of noble habitus into chivalry affect knightly conduct and the place of knights in broader society? How did intercultural exchange, such as between places like England and Normandy contribute to the formation of the novel cultural institution of chivalry? How can linguistics, language, and literature be used to explore the development of chivalry and the transference of culture in Anglo-Norman and Angevin society? What political changes affected the development of chivalry? What singles out one location from consideration as a birthplace of chivalry compared to others? What values and elements crucially and specifically constitute chivalry?

Literature Review

Maurice Keen noted the sudden explosion of chivalric historiography in the 1960s and 1970s.⁶ Prior to that, it was not considered a field of study worthy of scholarly interest in English. In French, treatments of chivalry had existed since the time of Claude-François Menestrier author of *Chevalerie ancienne et moderne* (1683). In English, however, Keen set the benchmark with *Chivalry* (1984), and since his book, there has been immense growth in the study of chivalry and the larger field of conduct studies. Within this complex context, chivalry, distinct from other categories of conduct, can become difficult to perceive and discuss. Thus, the matter of its definition becomes a crucial component in its historiography. A pioneering work was Richard Barber's *The Knight and Chivalry* (1970). Primarily a literary criticism, this treatment of chivalry was detached from a religious, political, and societal inspection of the institution in medieval society.⁷ Maurice Keen's *Chivalry* (1984) was the first to treat chivalry as a component of medieval society that had an impact beyond romance literature. His work is mostly concerned with chivalry in the thirteenth century and onward, once it had already been established and discussed in contemporary literature. Keen points to the *chansons de geste* as the first chivalrous works: they contained characters who exemplified the ideal of a "Christian knight".⁸ Frances Gies' *The Knight in History* (1984), which traced the development and history of the knight in a societal context for a popular audience, saw chivalry, at least in part, as the "sponsored" code of behavior of the Church.⁹

⁶ Maurice Keen, *Nobles, Knights and Men-At-Arms in the Middle Ages*, (London: The Hambledon Press, 1996), ix.

⁷ Jonathan Riley-Smith, *History* 56, no. 187 (1971): 255–255. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24407193>.

⁸ Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 2-3, 50, 62-63.

⁹ Frances Gies, *The Knight in History* (New York: Harper & Row, 1984), 2.

Benjamin Arnold's *German Knighthood 1050-1300* (1985) was the first comprehensive study in English on German chivalry and knighthood. Shortly after, Aldo Scaglione's *Knights at Court: Courtliness, Chivalry, and Courtesy from Ottonian Germany to the Italian Renaissance* (1991) examined the development of courtliness in Italy and Germany. W. H. Jackson's *Chivalry in Twelfth-Century Germany: The Works of Hartmann von Aue* (1994) analyzed the role of Arthurian literature in connecting Germany with Western Europe. Maurice Keen's *Nobles, Knights, and Men-at-Arms in the Middle Ages* (1996), put to rest the idea that chivalry was strictly illusionary and extant only in the romances or in the minds of modern historians. Matthew Strickland's *War and Chivalry: The Conduct and Perception of War in England and Normandy: 1066-1217* (1996) evaluated the intersection of chivalry and violence. A few years later, Richard Kaeuper did the same in his *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe* (1999), which focused on the interplay of violence and the behavior of knights as well as religion's role in mediating this. He developed this further in *Holy Warriors* (2009), in which he examined the interplay between religion and chivalry. Nigel Saul focused on English chivalry in his *Chivalry in Medieval England* (2011). Jennifer Wollock's *Rethinking Chivalry and Courtly Love* (2011) investigated chivalry from the perspective of romantic literature, centering on the role of courtly love in her definition of chivalry. This she approached from the more southerly perspective of Occitania. In 2016, Craig Nakashian's *Warrior Churchmen of Medieval England: 1000-1250* evaluated chivalry through his exploration of normative clerical behavior and religious violence. In particular, his exploration of the licitness of religiously ordained violence is crucial for understanding how chivalry and knightly conduct developed. Richard Kaeuper's *Medieval Chivalry* (2016) used profiles of five archetypal knights to define and explain the evolution of chivalry. David Crouch's *The Chivalric Turn: Conduct and Hegemony in Europe Before 1300* (2019) focuses on the societal context of chivalry

as an evolution and outgrowth of habitus and other modes of conduct. This book is the most recent complete assessment of the development of chivalry. In it, Crouch concretely places and explicates the notion of the “chivalric turn”. He has expanded on the question of development further with his article, “When Was Chivalry? Evolution of a Code” (2020).¹⁰ This stands as the most recent treatment on the subject by the leading expert on chivalry in the English language.

This thesis will also draw on broader studies of the Angevin Empire, the Plantagenets, and Anglo-Normans. John Gillingham’s *The Angevin Empire* (1984) and Richard Mortimer’s *Angevin England, 1154-1258* (1994) both offer surveys of Angevin history. Richard Bartlett’s *England Under the Norman and Angevin Kings: 1075-1225* (2000) is a more recent and fuller treatment of the matter. David Crouch’s *William Marshal: Court, Career, and Chivalry in the Angevin Empire* (1990) touched on multiple topics, and provided both a study of a specific knight who exemplified early Anglo-Norman chivalry as well as an inspection of chivalry amongst the Angevins in general. David Crouch’s *The Image of the Aristocracy in Britain, 1000-1300* (1992) constructed nobility, including knighthood, from a period beginning prior to the Norman Conquest (1066). He builds on this with *The Birth of Nobility: Constructing Aristocracy in England and France: 900-1300* (2005) and *The English Aristocracy 1070-1272: A Social Transformation* (2011), creating a series of assessments of the aristocracy, including knighthood, in England and Angevin territories that further cemented his position as the leading Anglophone scholar of knighthood. A broader text is Thomas Bisson’s *The Crisis of the Twelfth Century: Power, Lordship, and the Origins of European Government* (2015) which examines societal superstructures within twelfth-century society that resulted in various systems of administration, particularly between secular ones such as the nobility

¹⁰ David Crouch, “When Was Chivalry? Evolution of a Code”, in *Knighthood and Society in the High Middle Ages*, ed. David Crouch and Jeroen Deploige (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2020),

and ecclesiastic ones such as the Church. Trevor Rowley's *The Normans: A History of Conquest* (2021) gives us a modern evaluation of the formation of the Norman duchy and its expansion into the rest of Europe. These texts provide the core social background and context for this thesis's assessments.

Ruth Karras's *From Boys to Men: Formations of Masculinity in Late Medieval Europe* (2003) evaluates concepts of masculinity in different parts of medieval society, including how masculinity interacted with knighthood. Craig Nakashian's *Warrior Churchmen* also looks at gender in the context of religious violence and specifically at late twelfth-century Anglo-Norman rhetoric on violence, religion, and gender. Andrew Miller's article "'Tails' of Masculinity: Knights, Clerics, and the Mutilation of Horses in Medieval England" (2013)¹¹ also evaluates the intersection of violence and gender through the specific practice of horse mutilation. David Crouch's article, "The Violence of the *Preudomme*" (2017)¹² evaluates the intersection of violence and the idealized male in medieval society. The induction of violence into the conduct of the *preudomme* is central to the evolution of chivalry for Crouch and (as will be discussed) separating the *preudomme* from violence is vital in identifying the origination of knightly conduct. This was mentioned in Crouch's previous works on the nobility, especially later in the *Chivalric Turn* (2019). Laura Ashe's *Conquest and Transformation: 1000-1350* (2017) is Volume I in *The Oxford English Literary History* and offers extensive modern evaluations on an assortment of texts. The fourth chapter in particular, "The *Bellator* and *Chevalerie*: The Struggle for the Warrior's Soul", focuses on

¹¹ Andrew G. Miller, "'Tails' of Masculinity: Knights, Clerics, and the Mutilation of Horses in Medieval England." *Speculum* 88, no. 4 (2013): 958–95. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43576864>.

¹² David Crouch, "The Violence of the *Prudhomme*" in *Prowess, Piety, and Public Order in Medieval Society: Studies in Honor of Richard W. Kaeuper* ed. Craig M. Nakashian and Daniel P. Franke (Boston: Brill, 2017).

analyzing chivalric literature. Ashe carries on the opinion of other scholars in identifying clerical prescription as crucial in developing a distinct chivalric ethos.

Method of Argument

Components such as courtly romance literature from the *langue d'oc* speaking regions of France, secular and administrative notions of conduct originating in the Ottonian courts of the Holy Roman Empire, and *chansons de geste* and heroic romances from both Insular (relating to the British Isles) and continental sources all contributed to the emerging concept of chivalry, and exploring the details of which will form the foundation for this thesis's argument. However, its full development was characterized by the inclusion of a pious element.¹³ So this thesis's task is not merely tracing where these components became combined, but how, when, and where the crucial ingredient of pious conduct became introduced as well. This will constitute the necessary foundation for the rest of this thesis, and the composition of the first chapter. First, though, chivalry must be defined. To cross centuries and survey various kingdoms that spoke various languages a usable and cogent definition of the term that can be carried across borders, both physical and linguistic, must be furnished. Part of this definition will also be composed of deconstructing and explicating its constituent parts. As mentioned, *habitus* and the *preudomme* spawning chivalry and the knight was a crucial factor in the development of the institution so this thesis will also evaluate *habitus* and the *preudomme* and what made them different from chivalry and the knight. This thesis must also explain what made a knight a knight, and distinct from other segments of warriors in society since another component of the argument is that chivalry as an ideology needed a class of

¹³ Aldo D. Scaglione, *Knights at Court: Courtliness, Chivalry & Courtesy from Ottonian Germany to the Italian Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 20-22.

warriors for it to be embodied by. In making a claim about where chivalry originated, this thesis must be fair in evaluating the possible origination outside of the proposed location: the Angevin Empire. The Angevin Empire (occasionally called the Plantagenet Empire) is the name given to the vast collection of diverse territories ruled by the Plantagenet Dynasty in England and France from 1154 to 1214. After 1214, the dynasty remained but their territories were reduced until they were mostly confined to the British Isles. The first chapter will evaluate the leading areas with competing claims and assess conduct, or possible conduct, in these regions. This chapter will conclude with a definition of chivalry, of knights, and a rationale to argue that the Angevin Empire was the birthplace of chivalry.

The second chapter of this thesis will focus on the origins of the Angevin Empire and the evidence for it as the birthplace of chivalry. It will track the empire's history from 1066 to 1189. This second chapter will draw on economic, cultural, and political evidence to further ascertain the home of chivalry. This thesis will begin in earnest with William II (c. 1060 - 1100), who initiated a campaign of massive recruitment of knights from across France and surrounding territories. William II also instructed his successor and brother, Henry I (c. 1068/9 - 1135), to continue this recruitment drive.¹⁴ This thesis will argue that it was in the cosmopolitan courts of the Angevin kings and the unique political and cultural institutions of the Angevins and Anglo-Normans that the full ethos of “chivalry” first emerged and was able to develop. Institutions such as the knighting ceremony, political reforms under Henry I and Henry II (c. 1133 - 1189) that resulted in the restriction of who could belong to the knightly class, and various historical developments that preceded and resulted in those aforementioned institutions and reforms all contributed to the foundation upon which chivalry could develop. From there, through regional

¹⁴ Nigel Saul, *Chivalry in Medieval England* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011), 22-23.

and international encounters — cultural, political, economic, social, and military — it spread across Europe. This chapter will also discuss the contributions of the Church to the development of chivalry through religious reformation concerning the changing views on violence and who could perpetrate it, and the evaluations of conduct literature and social criticisms written by clerics. This chapter will provide the political, cultural, and religious evidence to make clear the origination of chivalry and also serve as the foundation for the next chapter which will evaluate two core pieces of literature that derived directly from an Angevin cultural context.

The third chapter will inspect the literary and linguistic evidence for the identification of the birthplace of chivalry in the Angevin world. This will take two steps: the first will establish that knights read literature, and the second will evaluate the literature itself. This thesis will evaluate two crucial texts: John of Salisbury's (c. late 1100s - 1180) *Policraticus* (1159), and Ralph Niger's (c. 1140 - d. before 1199) *De re militari et triplici via peregrinationis Ierosolimitane*, hereafter referred to as *De re militari* (1187). The importance of these works in the development of chivalry will be assessed here, as will the evidence of their Angevin origin.

Sources¹⁵

A wealth of primary sources survives for the history and deeds of the Anglo-Normans and early Angevins. This thesis will especially draw on Orderic Vitalis's (c. 1075 - 1142) *Historia Ecclesiastica* (1141), the *Peterborough Chronicle* (1154), followed by William of Malmesbury's (c. 1090 – in or after 1142) *Gesta Regum Anglorum* (1120) and the *Gesta Stephani* (1154). Henry

¹⁵ All sources, passages, and terms unless noted otherwise are translated by me.

of Huntingdon's (c. 1088 - 1157) *Historia Anglorum* (1154) also provides essential evidence for the history of the Anglo-Normans up to the reign of Henry II. Two particularly important Angevin sources are the Charter of 1166 and the Assize of 1181, and their significance will be discussed in depth in relation to how they affected who could join the knightly class and the material and economic conditions of knights. This thesis also evaluates the anonymous *Ordene de Chevalerie* (1220) and Geoffroi de Charny's (c. 1306 - 1356) *Livre de chevalerie* (early 1350s) as they are considered crucial chivalric works that this thesis argues are antedated by the two primary texts it will evaluate: *Policraticus* and *De re militari*. Both these texts were produced by Englishmen intrinsically associated with the Angevin political, social, and cultural milieu, and buttress the claim of an Angevin origination of chivalry. Thus, since this thesis argues these texts are both not only chivalric *and* Angevin, but also the first and most original, they in tandem constitute further evidence for the argument that chivalry was born in the late twelfth century Angevin Empire by late twelfth century Angevins.

Conclusion

In the subtitle of this thesis, "The Case for an Angevin Origin", "Case" performs an operative function. It does *not* mean to imply that it provides definitive and indisputable proof for the origin of chivalry, or that such a thing can be definitively and indisputably proven at all. It *does* mean to provide a large amount of evidence to suggest the likelihood of a specific origin of chivalry. In the course of this process, this thesis will explore a breadth of sources and approaches that will provide utility far beyond just the definition of chivalry, but also the exploration of the Angevin Empire as a hotbed for chivalric development. The temporal location of chivalry in the late twelfth-century to early thirteenth-century period has been done before by both Nigel Saul and

David Crouch (respectively).¹⁶ The novelty of this thesis lies primarily in its heavy focus on exploring and providing evidence for chivalry's pre-thirteenth-century origin specifically, to an extent not done by Saul or Crouch. Another novel component is the focus on narrowing down chivalry's origin geographically to the Angevin Empire, as well as the literary component that focuses on the importance of two central Angevin texts: *Policraticus* and *De re militari*. This is to say that this thesis not only attempts to narrow down the development of chivalry to the period 1160-1190 but specifically makes the claim that the evidence of chivalry's development lies in the Latin and Anglo-Norman literary sources that are derived from writers tied to the Angevin Empire either directly or indirectly.¹⁷ Moreover, the distinct English component of the Angevin Empire is absolutely vital to the development of chivalry and as such makes the Angevin Empire specifically, and not France generally, the meaningful location for the origin of chivalry. The unique political and cultural elements that England imparts will also form a distinct facet of this thesis and will further support the position of the Anglo-French Angevin Empire of the late twelfth century as the birthplace of chivalry, as opposed to the solely French, or at least non-English, regions surrounding it.

Nigel Saul summarized his position on the formation of chivalry in *Chivalry in Medieval England* as follows:

¹⁶ Saul, *Chivalry in Medieval England*, 23; David Crouch, *The Birth of Nobility: Constructing Aristocracy in England and France 900-1300* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2005), 80-86, on 84. Crouch specifically mentions mid-twelfth century Angevin sources but sidelines them to suggest the writers of the and Plantagenet courtier in question were reflective of chivalric values present in the Capetian court of the 1140s more than the Angevin. The extensive background that will be provided in the second chapter should undercut any notion of Capetian preeminence in this regard and establish a long heritage of Angevin chivalry and conduct.

¹⁷ This may seem overly inclusive, if not vague here, but how this will actually be incorporated into the thesis will be much more specific when it becomes relevant in the evaluation of the literary evidence in the third chapter. Suffice to say that what I mean by "writers tied to the Angevin Empire" are for example clerics attached to churches and cathedrals in Angevin parishes, or theologians, trouvères and knights in the courts of nobles who ultimately swore loyalty to Angevin rulers like Henry II, or those that ruled his various continental possessions such as his wife, Eleanor of Aquitaine, and or the countless counts, barons, dukes, and other nobles directly under his vassalage.

Chivalry was an aristocratic ethos which had its origins in the broad open landscapes of northern France and the Low Countries. In its embryonic form it was introduced into England by the Normans after 1066. It was to attain its full flowering as century or two later in the cosmopolitan world of the Angevin and Plantagenet kings.¹⁸

Nonetheless, Saul does not provide citations for that specific statement, and did not for several pages before or after. In truth, his book touches on aspects of what he refers to as “chivalric” culture but does not make an effort to prove its origin and he does not make a great effort to explicitly define the institution either. This does not detract from his work of course, which evaluates various components of what can be considered knightly conduct, but highlights its limitations. Saul states that people only began to talk about chivalry in the early thirteenth century, while also mentioning its importation into England in the eleventh century.¹⁹ This is because Saul is using “chivalry” as shorthand for generalized knightly conduct across multiple contexts. However, the placement of chivalry somewhere specifically in time and space needs greater rigor and specificity. David Crouch has arrived at a different conclusion, however. Crouch points to an early thirteenth-century origin, especially looking to the early thirteenth-century anonymous work, the *Ordene de Chevalerie*:

Chivalric literature approached its moment of maturity when motifs of both these genres (the similitudo and enseignement)²⁰ were combined in the second decade of

¹⁸ Saul, *Chivalry in Medieval England*, 20.

¹⁹ Saul, *Chivalry in Medieval England*, 7, 20-21.

²⁰ The *enseignement* was essentially instructional literature and I will talk about it explicitly later, but as the name suggests, it is somewhat pervasive in my discussion of the chivalric literature. *Similitudo* is a term he does not furnish a definition for, but uses to describe a variety of literature that includes the likes of Ralph Niger’s *De re militari*. See Crouch, *Chivalric Turn*, 291.

the 13th century by an anonymous Picard cleric into a work entitled the *Ordene de Chevalerie*. From Menestrier in the seventeenth century to Maurice Keen in the twentieth, this hybrid work has been taken as an identifiable point which marked the chivalric turn in medieval society, and I see no reason to differ from this conclusion.²¹

There is a reason to differ from this conclusion, however, and this difference is the focus of this thesis. Moreover, as this thesis will endeavor to prove, there are many reasons why the “chivalric turn” occurred decades prior to the creation of the *Ordene*. Crouch does acknowledge something uniquely chivalrous occurring in the court of Henry the Young King (c. 1155-1183) in the years 1170-1183, particularly manifesting in Ralph Niger’s work, *De re militari*. But this he appraised and dismissed in merely a few sentences and as of his most recent work on the subject, “When was Chivalry” (2020), did not consider it of greater chivalric value. He deemed Ralph’s work as a reflexive, almost insecure, response to the excesses he saw in the court of the Young King while attending tournaments that he wished to morally absolve himself of. A core aspect of this thesis is that this could not be further from the truth and it is in fact a work over a century in the making, reflective of broad society-wide trends. To discount it as a simple form of self-distancing by Niger undercuts one of the strongest literary contenders for the genesis of chivalry.

Nigel Saul leaves us asking more questions than he has answered. Where in northern France and the Low Countries did “chivalry” have its origins? How was it introduced and developed by the Normans in England? And most importantly, what is the evidence for this “full flowering” of chivalry that occurred under the Angevin and Plantagenet kings? What caused it to

²¹ Crouch, *Chivalric Turn*, 293.

flower? Why under these kings? Why not elsewhere? Moreover, what is this “chivalry” that is being imported and developed? What defines it and how do the Normans, English, Angevins, and Plantagenets cause it to develop and “flower”? These are all questions that this thesis aims to answer as well. The question of chivalry’s origins is complex, and ascertaining its birthplace is a controversial matter. It is nevertheless a question that this thesis hopes to answer.

Chivalry in the Periphery

“Many an argument did he have with the curate of his village,

a learned man, and a graduate of Sigüenza,

as to which had been the better knight, Palmerin of England or Amadis of Gaul.”

- El ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha, Capítulo primero, párrafo tres.²²

The central argument of this thesis is that chivalry as we know it must have originated amongst the courts and cultures of the Angevin Empire in the late twelfth century. This chapter will discuss the evidence of codes of conduct for knights, or their closest equivalents, as it had existed in those areas until the mid-twelfth century, comparing these ideals of conduct with chivalry. By the early to mid-thirteenth century chivalry was a widely shared concept across Europe. Prior to this, knightly conduct and the concept of chivalry were much less uniform. Thus, one must arrive at a definition that derives from the more unified form of chivalry in the thirteenth century so that we may look back to determine from where it formed.

²² Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quixote*, trans. John Ormsby (London: Smith Elder & Co., 1885), 107. Original language transcription available in Appendix B.

What is Chivalry?

Chivalry is a term that is difficult to approach because the extent of its application has consistently been called into question.²³ Chivalry is a subset of ideals of conduct, or the expected set of behaviors someone adheres to when living in society. Whether chivalry was a term that existed exclusively as a concept in literature to be embodied only by fictional heroes or as a real code of ethics knights were expected to adhere to is fundamental to the treatment of the subject by historians.²⁴ In the course of defining chivalry, the historian must contend with the reality that it was both real and imagined, with the former influencing the latter and vice versa. Despite the controversy of the material applicability of chivalry, historians who study the subject are in general agreement regarding its prevalence. The complexity of a code of conduct that is both real and imagined is a topic that will be explored further in the third chapter. Much has been written regarding the contemporaneous effects literary chivalry had on knights in reality.²⁵ Here, the function of recognizing this dichotomy is to make it clear that chivalry is a concept that must be reckoned in both real and imagined terms, in terms applied to real entities and used in written sources. To deal with tracing such an ephemeral concept we must arrive, as much as possible, at a concrete definition to then evaluate its origins.

For Maurice Keen, chivalry was “an ethos in which martial, aristocratic, and Christian elements were fused together.”. Richard Kaeuper sees chivalry as a “core formed around prowess

²³ Matthew Bennet, “Why Chivalry? Military ‘Professionalism’ In the Twelfth Century: The Origins and Expressions of A Socio-Military Ethos” in *The chivalric ethos and the development of military professionalism*. ed. D. J. B. Trim (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 41-42; see also Taylor Craig, *Chivalry and the Ideals of Knighthood in France During the Hundred Years War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 1-3, for a more metanalysis of the errors in chivalric study; Edgar Prestage, *Chivalry* (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2004), 11-13.

²⁴ Richard W. Kaeuper, *Medieval Chivalry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 1-2; Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 1-4; Aldo Scaglione, *Knights at Court: Courtliness, Chivalry & Courtesy from Ottonian Germany to the Italian Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 3, 79.

²⁵ See Richard Kaeuper, and Christopher Guyol, *Kings, Knights and Bankers: The Collected Articles of Richard W. Kaeuper* (Boston: Brill, 2015), 201-203, for a summary.

exercised in the pursuit and defense of honor,” with a “chivalric soul” and “intense...lay piety”. For Nigel Saul, chivalry was a mixture of “nobility, knighthood and courtesy” with “Christianized ethics” becoming “integral”. David Crouch argues that an evolution of courtly habitus, essentially courtesy, and martial conduct, combined with an intense Christianization of the knightly class seen in Ralph Niger’s text *De re militari* constituted the beginning of the “chivalric turn”.²⁶ Kaeuper writes that: “Chivalry thus becomes the composite, enduring ideal represented by courtesy, prowess (easily sanitized as moral courage), largesse, loyalty, ‘courtly love’, fairness, piety (even ‘muscular Christianity’).”²⁷ In this thesis, chivalry is defined as a code of conduct composed of three components: martial expertise and service, social expectations and behaviors, and embodied lay piety. This thesis will refer to these components as the martial, social, and spiritual respectively as shorthand. While chivalry is most exemplified when all three of these components are present, many typically chivalric behaviors are the result of a mixture of just two of them. Nevertheless, it is the combination of all three that makes *chivalry* distinct from other forms of conduct in the period, and distinct as a form of conduct from this point forward. Where one or two of these components exist without the other (such as the social and the martial without the spiritual), the conduct represented cannot be reckoned as *chivalry* in any meaningfully consistent way. Thus, when evaluating the existence of chivalry in literature, the presence of all three components must be evident.

²⁶ Keen, *Chivalry*, 16; Richard W. Kaeuper, *Medieval Chivalry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2016), 33; Saul, *Chivalry in Medieval England*, 20, 200; Crouch, *Chivalric Turn*, 35-36.
Richard W. Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 34.

Components of Chivalry

Each of the three components comes with values and behaviors that exist within them. That is to say, the martial includes qualities like loyalty to one's liege and prowess in battle, the spiritual implies qualities like adherence to the laws of the Church and piety, and the social implies qualities like courtesy and courtly love. This is reflected in medieval sources such as Raoul de Houndenc's *Le Roman des Eles* (c. 1210), where the "wing" of courtesy is composed of the feather of courtly love.²⁸ Or similar to how *cortoisie* flows from the fountain of *chevalerie*, such that the former necessitates the latter:

And if there is one certain thing to be said about knights, it is that knighthood is the fountain of courtesy, nor can anyone exhaust it, however much he draws therefrom; it came from God and knights possess it.²⁹

In this sense, the grouping of certain ideals into broader categories is both presently prudent and historically appropriate.³⁰ Some of the most prominent subordinate ideals present by the late twelfth century were *prouesse* (prowess), *courtoisie* (courtesy), *loyauté* (loyalty), *honnour* (honor), piety, and *largesse* (generosity).³¹ While direct cognates like loyalty are largely self-explanatory and preform similar functions in the medieval period as they do currently, what do these other

²⁸ LRdE. 167.

²⁹ LRdE. 161. The religiosity of this passage could be noted due to its significance to the argument of my thesis. It exists not only as one of the earliest texts on knighthood, it is also written in Anglo-Norman, thus tying it to an Angevin audience, but also considered didactic in nature, likely meant as instructional for knights (see LRdE. 21). Nevertheless, its dating to the early thirteenth century places it a bit too late for consideration in this thesis. Its proximity is a result of the environment described in this thesis, thus perfect for an illustrative anecdote, but not directly contributive.

³⁰ Richard Kaeuper has come to a similar position, using the terms "core" and "satellite" to refer to primary values and their constituent values respectively. Kaeuper, *Medieval Chivalry*, 53.

³¹ Keen, *Chivalry*, 2; Richard W. Kaeuper, *Holy Warriors: The Religious Ideology of Chivalry* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania 2009), 20, 66; Matthew Strickland, *War and Chivalry: The Conduct and Perception of War in England and Normandy, 1066-1217* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press: 1996), 24; Crouch, *Birth of Nobility*, 68, 79.

more esoteric terms like *courtoisie* (courtesy) and *prouesse* (prowess) actually mean in the context of the period? Though these terms have variations that are strongly associated with their specific regions of origination, a summary set of definitions can be made before describing them in their regional context in depth later in this chapter. Just as chivalry is a subset of conduct, so too are all these constituent terms subsets of their own categories. For the sake of clarity, definitions of these terms will be provided in the subsection of their respective categories, so it is distinct both here and later when a quality being referenced is referred to as being martial, social, or spiritual.

The Social Aspects

Courtoisie, or courtesy, which will be placed under the social category, can be simply translated as the behavior intended and appropriate for the literate and civilized courts of the nobility. In truth, this aspect almost functions as an inversion of the martial aspect, where the behaviors valued are those often diametrically opposed to those seen on the battlefield: song and poetry composition, dances, wit, tactful language, and courtly love.³² This behavior could include ideas as specific as table manners to as general as the need to be vaguely “gentle” in speech.³³ Another premiere social quality is *largesse*, or generosity, which is giving without thought to the limits of one’s wealth. This tied directly to ideals both fantastical and practical: it imitated the mystical feasts and the endless exchange of gifts of the knights of Arthurian lore who were eternally worthy of mimicry, but it also held material value as the very real Baldwin de Condé noted that the giving and exchange of gifts gained knights approval as well as lost any ill will at

³² Sidney Painter, *French Chivalry: Chivalric Ideals and Practices in Medieval France* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1940), 147-148.

³³ Keen, *Chivalry*, 33; John, Gillingham, “From Civilitas to Civility: Codes of Manners in Medieval and Early Modern England.” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 12 (2002): 269, 277-278. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3679348>; For a treatment of speech and courtesy literature in this period see Mark D. Johnston, “The Treatment of Speech in Medieval Ethical and Courtesy Literature.” *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric* 4, no. 1 (1986): 21–49. <https://doi.org/10.1525/rh.1986.4.1.21>.

court and abroad. More than just romantic pining or social politicking, such giving tied deeply with a religious theology that saw *largesse* as a shield against mortal sins like avarice and envy.³⁴ Chivalric values were often used as defenses against these specific sins. The way this was leveraged by the clergy tied directly with the sacralization of chivalry present in the literary sources that proliferated throughout the twelfth century. But for the purposes of the “social” category, *largesse* exemplified the open-handed generosity of the nobility, and when it became adopted by knights,

Another set of social values crucial to tripartite chivalry was *sens* (sound judgment) and *lauté* (dependability or loyalty in all things). The latter was manifested in the everyday reliability practiced by the ideal knight.³⁵ This was a virtue that William Marshal (c. 1146 - 1219), that supreme knight, was said by his early thirteenth-century biographer to have exemplified.³⁶ The former is the ability to not only give sound advice and guidance but be able to receive that advice as well. This seems to have been a virtue that was often the defining feature of the *preudomme*, a forerunner of the knight socially. The ability to have good sense and give good counsel transferred from *enseignements*, or instructional literature, to the chivalric romances, such as the Prose Lancelot cycle, by the early thirteenth century.³⁷

An additional virtue is *hardiesce*: hardiness or fortitude. At first read this appears like a martial quality, perhaps entailing the ability to endure battle and violence, but this virtue is best understood as the general ability for a knight to endure hardship such as rough sleeping conditions

³⁴ Laura Ashe, *The Oxford English Literary History Volume 1. 1000 – 1350: Conquest and Transformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 201-202; Crouch, *Birth of Nobility*, 68-70; Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence*, 193-196.

³⁵ Crouch, *Chivalric Turn*, 68-69.

³⁶ Crouch, *Chivalric Turn*, 70.

³⁷ Crouch, *Chivalric Turn*, 69.

or substandard food. Moreover, the knight was expected to endure all these hardships and unpleasant conditions vigorously and with energy.³⁸ This became emphasized as chivalry developed and became masculinized as a distinct form of conduct separate from the more gender agnostic noble habitus, which imposed conduct across gender and social lines. Another social quality that will be covered is *mesure*, or restraint and self-control, which will be translated as its modern English cognate “measure”. Much like *hardiesce*, this trait is not necessarily martial, and instead indicates something closer to social discipline (*disciplina*), or the ability to manage anger and not swear vengeance. This value was also claimed to be the preeminent virtue by trouvères such as Robert de Blois (fl. late thirteenth century), Garin lo Brun (d. 1156/1162) and Baldwin de Condé (fl. mid to late thirteenth century). What is unique about this virtue is that it exemplified the inclusiveness of the *preudomme*, with Robert de Blois stressing its importance in both layman and cleric and through a contemporarily similar value *retenenza*, or reticence, also being equally important for women.³⁹ Another value that has variations that existed for both knights and ladies is modesty, which worked in tandem with grooming to ensure the knight was a proper physical representative of God and his lord, but was not so obsessed with his appearance that he could be called vain. This is also vital as being modest was considered the virtue that protected against the sin of lust or promiscuity (*puitage*).⁴⁰ Modesty is also praised in the indisputably chivalric *Livre de chevalerie* of Geoffroi de Charny, where he condemns extravagant dress and the knights who pamper their bodies.⁴¹

³⁸ Crouch, *Chivalric Turn*, 75.

³⁹ Crouch, *Chivalric Turn*, 73-74, 88-89.

⁴⁰ Crouch, *Chivalric Turn*, 91.

⁴¹ BoC, 122-123, 190-191.

The Martial Aspects

A term like prowess (or *prouesse*) is placed under the martial category as it often refers to ideals such as moral courage, skill in battle, and skill with arms. In some cases, *prouesse* was a term synonymous with weapons or military arms, and not just the ability to use them.⁴² The ability for a warrior to excel in warfare is vital of course, but for knights as members of an elite warrior class, it was especially important. This became even more relevant during the age of tournaments, where even in times of peace the premiere entertainment for the knight was to practice their craft in these grand feats of mock battle. Tournaments were considered by various chivalric codifiers, such as the venerable Geoffroi de Charny, as the “ultimate” chivalric endeavor.⁴³ A knight's prowess and skill in arms implied a comfort with violence that enabled him to have confidence in his ability to face his enemies bravely and without hesitation, and to take joy in war, as expressed by Bertran de Born's numerous martial elegies.

Another crucial martial virtue was treating other knights fairly and honorably. These were the collection of behaviors that knights performed that relied on the expectation that other knights would perform them as well. They manifested as anything from allowing an enemy to retain their weapon in a duel, the expectation that as a knight you would be captured for ransom as opposed to being killed, and refraining from bolstering garrisons so as not to have the knight who took mercy on you by giving you respite receive an “unfair loss”, or *injusta vexatione*.⁴⁴ In effect, this functioned as a form of mutual respect applied to warfare. This both mediated bad feelings among knights as well as fostered positive relations. To be able to maintain this level of

⁴² Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence*, 34; See also Keen, *Chivalry*, 99, where he refers to fourteenth-century sources that translate *écoles de prouesse* as the “school and study of arms”.

⁴³ Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence*, 161.

⁴⁴ Strickland, *War and Chivalry*, 221.

respect amongst knights meant you had *honeur*; or honor.⁴⁵ The immediate perception of these behaviors may appear as simple knightly favoritism, not fairness, as these behaviors were applied to knights and not foot-soldiers (*pedites*) or civilians. While this is true in a simple sense, it does not preclude the central defining feature of these behaviors, fairness, and this favoritism could be seen across chivalric conduct overall. The favoritism displayed by knights during war provided the stage on which fairness could be performed much the same way that the favoritism displayed by knights during peace provided the stage on which *largesse* could be performed. Both could be seen as examples of knights expressing favoritism amongst themselves but neither preclude the underlying theme of fairness or generosity.

The converse of this is that when matters *were* fair, and competition was afoot, a knight was meant to possess the virtue of bravery, and press his advantage, and show his valor. As bravery directly facilitated how knights supported themselves financially and materially. While a knight was never supposed to deprive another knight while he was low and on the ground, he was absolutely meant to take what he could when at fair play in a tournament, or in battle.⁴⁶ This did not mean that unrestrained violence was licit, of course. Another virtue was that of martial restraint, the martial side of measure.⁴⁷ The ability to refrain from striking a downed foe, especially a fellow knight, signaled a level of control over one's anger that evidenced a significant competence in war.

⁴⁵ Crouch, *Chivalric Turn*, 4-5, 235-235.

⁴⁶ See David Crouch, *William Marshal: Court, Career and Chivalry in the Angevin Empire 1147-1219* (New York: Longman Inc., 1990), 33, for how the naïve Marshal was derided by the host of knights for not claiming his opponents' equipment when he had the fair chance, and Strickland, *War and Chivalry*, 48, for an instance of the converse, in which the Marshal captures two knights' horses, and another couple of knights take the horses from Marshal while he was dismounted, thus constituting unfair conduct. When the Marshal beseeches the offending knight's uncle to aid him, even familial bonds are put aside in the face of chivalric justice when the uncle demands his nephew to return the horses to Marshal or be banished because of the unfair method in which he obtained them.

⁴⁷ Strickland, *War and Chivalry*, 153-158.

The last pertinent martial value that will be delineated here is the notion of brotherhood. This is the loyalty felt between knights that at times became so deep as to constitute something approaching love.⁴⁸ This occurred to such an extent that we often have instances where a knight expressed admiration for an enemy he met in battle, and especially formed bonds for fellow knights that approached familial.⁴⁹ There has been evidence spanning millennia of such wartime bonding, and modern studies substantiate the idea that those who fight together often feel a bond closer than that of nationhood and occasionally indistinguishable from kinship.⁵⁰

The Spiritual Aspects⁵¹

The most important spiritual concept inherent to tripartite chivalry is something David Crouch refers to as a “Davidic ethic”, which places the biblical King David as the prototype to whom medieval rulers were compared.⁵² Crouch summarizes the ethos as opposition to the cruel and unjust, respect for widows and orphans, and the provision of protection “for the weak and helpless, especially the Church.”⁵³ The last portion here is significant as the entire purpose of the clergy promoting these values is to position them as prerequisites for justifying legitimate rule.

⁴⁸ Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence*, 214.

⁴⁹ Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence*, 215-217.

⁵⁰ See Harvey Whitehouse, Brian McQuinn, Michael Buhrmester, and William B. Swann. “Brothers in Arms: Libyan Revolutionaries Bond like Family.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences - PNAS* 111, no. 50 (2014): 17783–17785.

⁵¹ A primary aspect of my thesis revolves around the complicated dialogue between knights and clergy. In general, between violence and Christianity, and in particular how religious qualities enmeshed themselves within the chivalric ethos. The specific claim of this thesis, as stated previously, is that the religious component was a later addition to the initial duo of martial and social, that required a level of deep reconciliation. This is all to say that the upcoming qualities are going to be more complex than those in the social or martial categories. They will not be terms with simple Anglo-Norman cognates and a *trouvère*’s definitions, but concepts with ideas expected of knights from the minds of contemporary theologians.

⁵² Crouch, *Chivalric Turn*, 284-286; Crouch, *Crouch, Birth of the Nobility*, 71-79. The focus on King David as a role model for knights was maximized in the later medieval period and in the Muslim world his martial quality was additionally particularly emphasized as a creator of mail armor in the Qur’an (something quite expensive in the period of the Qur’an’s composition) see Jennifer G. Wollock, *Rethinking Chivalry and Courtly Love* (Santa Barbara, CA:ABC-CLIO, 2011), 19.

⁵³ Crouch, *The Birth of the Nobility*, 72.

This rhetoric arose out of the Carolingian clergy of the eighth and ninth centuries, and judging from the earliest invocations seems to have initially functioned as a way for clergy to moralize kingship, while also allowing the nobility to legitimize their own rulership by placing themselves in proximity to biblical kings. As nobles in post-Carolingian Western Europe struggled to establish their legitimacy, and the clergy struggled to restrict violence, it is no wonder that this set of ethics became so advocated for, at least in theory. Crouch concurs with French historian Jean Flori in placing the shift of the Davidic ethic on knights around the eleventh century, with Flori citing the preaching of the First Crusade as the beginning of this change.⁵⁴ Roughly contemporaneous phenomena that were also occurring in France, such as the Peace and Truce of God movements as well as the gentrification of knights, also contributed to this transfer. It is essentially the argument of this thesis that as knights developed as a class, they obtained land that held inherent expectations of loyalty to secular lords. These lords were often at odds with the Church, which crafted complex philosophies to manage and mediate their control of the nobility. The Church recognized that it was now these knights who were often perpetrating the violence, holding much of the land in practical terms, and were perhaps more effective recipients of their philosophies. Thus, the Davidic ethic, and its attendant values, were extended to knights.

The next spiritual value inherent to chivalry is even more complex than the previous. The next spiritual value inherent to chivalry is best referred to as “chivalric lay piety”. Unlike the Davidic ethos, which was a specific ideal and in a sense a set of expectations dictated to kings, and later knights, by theologians and clerics, chivalric lay piety was instead the inverse. While most

⁵⁴ Crouch, *Chivalric Turn*, 285. The fuller extent of the impact of the Crusades on the sacralization of chivalry will be discussed in the second chapter under the sub-section “The Crusades and Chivalry: The Imposition of Religion”. Flori, through Crouch, in *Chevaliers et chevalerie au moyen age* (Paris, 1998) also cites John of Salisbury’s *Politicratus* in the mid-twelfth century as contributory to the placement of the Davidic ethos on knights but a dedicated discussion on this text will be had in the third chapter.

people in medieval society, including knights, were religious and practiced standard forms of lay piety, knights were also able to exercise a measure of agency by shaping various theological trends in such a way as to conform to their specific profession.⁵⁵ As knights sought religiously based justifications for various aspects of chivalric culture, such as the practice of violence, the display of prowess, the reinforcement of courtly norms, the practice of asceticism and restraint, and so on, they became inseparably linked with what it meant to *be* a knight. Thus, they became inextricably linked with the ideal of chivalry. In practice, this manifested as a pervasive religious undercurrent in which every deed a knight undertook, from fighting in battle, to rescuing a lady, to journeying through a dangerous forest, was justified by religious justifications and validations.⁵⁶ Particularly, aspects of suffering became tied with knighthood, and that suffering, through the lens of chivalric lay piety, became meritorious.⁵⁷ Considering suffering is linked with violence, and as this thesis will discuss violence was considered forbidden to the clergy, with even militant orders like the Templars evoking occasional ire, secular knights became the officially recognized segment of society sanctioned to enact violence and become valorized by the resultant suffering. In effect, embodying chivalric lay piety made it so that even the most mundane or violent of classic knightly actions, if performed in particular ways, were seen as something that elevated the knight in not merely social or martial capacities, but a spiritual capacity above all. The prototype from which the nobly suffering knight was drawn is that of the warrior-saint, from which the earliest literary examples are Anglo-Norman in origin, which extolled knights to mimic various warriors of the

⁵⁵ Kaeuper, *Holy Warriors*, 35-36.

⁵⁶ Kaeuper, *Holy Warriors*, 103.

⁵⁷ Kaeuper, *Holy Warriors*, 96-101.

Bible. Much like the Davidic warrior ethic, chivalric lay piety manifested around the same time and with deep ties to the Crusading movement.⁵⁸

Where chivalric lay piety differs distinctly from the Davidic ethic is the latter placed societal expectations upon knights, while the former was something knights placed upon *themselves*. The latter was something knights, nobles and kings practiced to justify their place and power in society. The latter, however, applied to knights (*milites* in Latin), exclusively, and permeated every action functioning to not only sacralize the profession itself but to reconcile and justify the violence inherent to it. Thus, unlike the Davidic ethos, chivalric lay piety could be found in areas far outside of just homiletics and clerical indictments. Perhaps more than anywhere else knights perceived and could find this piety embodied by knights in chivalric romances, epics, and knightly narratives, to but it also could be found in many other literary genres, including letters and grave epitaphs.

Conclusion

These values compose what became synonymous with chivalry, particularly from the early thirteenth century onward when most scholars agreed that chivalry proper had been established. For this thesis, it will often be referred to as “tripartite chivalry” to denote its inclusion of the three

⁵⁸ James B. MacGregor. “Negotiating Knightly Piety: The Cult of the Warrior-Saints in the West, ca. 1070-ca. 1200.” *Church History* 73, no. 2 (2004): 320-321. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4146527>. As discussed by MacGregor, while the use of warrior-saints as a knightly model technically began prior to the First Crusade, the bulk of this movement occurred during it. The deeper treatment of the role of the warrior-saint in installing chivalric piety will be discussed in the dedicated subsection “The Crusades and Chivalry: The Imposition of Religion” in chapter two. Also see David Crouch, *The English Aristocracy 1070-1272: A Social Transformation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 224-226, for further proof of the connection between Anglo-Normans and warrior piety. MacGregor cites dialogue between a Norman cleric and Anglo-Norman knights in England in the 1070s and Crouch to the court of Willam the Conqueror in general. The 1070s was a time of intense piety in England as the island was being brought back into religious orthodoxy with the rest of the continent. Additionally, we see in both small and large part the foundations for the theological reconciliation of violence and Christianity that will be the foundation for chivalric lay piety.

aforementioned components and to distinguish it from “chivalry” which is often used in the secondary literature to refer to both the “tripartite chivalry”, as this thesis has defined it, as well as occasionally more vague notions of positive behaviors attached to knights prior to the thirteenth century, such as horsemanship or skill in arms. Various regions used similar or synonymous terms, at times varying only slightly or contextually. But for England and France, from as early as the eleventh to mid-twelfth century these were the terms that defined tripartite chivalry, and by the time of codified chivalry in the early thirteenth century these terms, aspects, and ideals encompass the ethos entirely. As this thesis explores the development of tripartite chivalry, from its only partial existence in regions outside of Plantagenet holdings prior to the thirteenth century, and its growing existence in Angevin territories through the twelfth century, this thesis will be referring back to this section. This section will function as a reference to which knightly conduct, both inside and outside of Angevin territories as well as inside and outside of literature, will be compared. Deviations from this list indicate severe deviations from what classifies as later codified chivalry that pervaded Christendom in the thirteenth century and later, adherence to it indicates a conformity indicative of origination, as this thesis intends to prove.

Preudomme and Habitus: The Prototype

Looking prior to the codification of chivalry in the thirteenth century, some of the preceding qualities and behaviors were embodied by the nobility and male society writ large, not merely knights. To possess and embody these terms meant you were a *preudomme*.⁵⁹ The development of the knight from the *preudomme*, and chivalry from habitus, is discussed in secondary literature as

⁵⁹ It's important to note that the possible translation of the term as a “proud man” is appropriate and helpful in understanding the utility of the phrase. Unlike being a knight, being a *preudomme* was not a distinct category mutually exclusive with other categories, but a compliment with strongly held associations.

a natural consequence, so it warrants discussion here. That is to say, if the term is discussed at all, the transformation is perceived as a natural progression, where habitus still exists, as does the *preudomme*, but the development of chivalry is a consequence of the knight's induction into society as a discrete recognizable class of society. It is the position of this thesis that the *preudomme* and his habitus were forerunners of the knight and his chivalry, but vital distinctions must be made. Whereas chivalry was codified first and discussed second, the habitus of the *preudomme* was initially uncoded and unwritten, and became written down second. Conduct manuals for the *preudomme* such as Baldwin de Conde's *Li Contes dou Preudome* (mid thirteenth century), were written well after the development of the term and well after the unspoken norms pervaded society. Moreover, the discussion of "habitus" as a label is much more modern, and its constituent values were not always openly discussed prior to its codification in the thirteenth century. To follow these uncoded behaviors was to be a *preudomme*, and these uncoded behaviors are known as a form of habitus.⁶⁰ In short, a *preudomme* was not a knight, and habitus was not necessarily chivalry. If this is the case, what were they? And how did they relate (or not relate) to knighthood and chivalry?

Habitus is a term that can be traced to the work of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu created the term while studying the indigenous population of the Maghreb in the 1950s to describe the complex and shifting social norms of the region. Crouch uses the term extensively in the context of the medieval period and in particular to describe the behavior of the *preudomme*. For Crouch, "A habitus is the environment of behavioral and material expectations (what [Pierre Bourdieu] called a 'structuring structure') which all societies and classes generate."⁶¹ In short, he understood it as the unwritten expectation of the individual within society. The society was the

⁶⁰ Crouch, *The Birth of Nobility*, 53.

⁶¹ Crouch, *The Birth of Nobility*, 52.

environment, and the individual, whether they be a Berber in the twentieth century, a *preudomme* in the eleventh century, or a knight in the thirteenth century, was expected to adopt those behaviors and expectations. By the mid twelfth century the values that embodied the habitus of the *preudomme* were generally identical to much of the values and virtues that would comprise the social category of chivalry. This is because habitus was understood to be the forerunner of chivalry by Crouch, and it was the warlike profession of the knight that introduced the martial category into their conduct, and the sacralization of the knight by clerical moralizers that introduced the spiritual qualities.⁶² Habitus was broad and general, it applied to both noble and peasant, cleric and layman, as well as man and woman. In this sense, chivalry *is* a form of habitus, as all forms of conduct are. But for both Crouch and this thesis, the chivalry practiced by knights breaks away from merely being referred to as a habitus through its distinct articulation and codification.

A *preudomme* was an ideal man. Beginning in the early twelfth century and recognized throughout Christian Western Europe, regardless of whether the man was a peasant or a noble, secular or religious, a *preudomme* was a man worthy of admiration.⁶³ He was a man who was accorded a level of respect by virtue of his conduct. What garnered this respect? The *preudomme*'s adherence to the unspoken habitus. This habitus was exemplified by a level of masculine control where it was either the ability to regulate the performance of violence, or the lack of committing violence altogether, that exalted his position, not the free exercise of it.⁶⁴ When Plantagenet *trouvères* wished to illustrate the qualities of a *preudomme*, even the great knight William Marshal had his notorious warlike engagements downplayed in his famous biography.⁶⁵ This becomes a complex consideration if we are to understand the *preudomme* as the forerunner to the knight.

⁶² Crouch, *Chivalric Turn*, 3-5, 116-118.

⁶³ Crouch, *The Birth of Nobility*, 241.

⁶⁴ Strickland, *War and Chivalry*, 99; Crouch, *Chivalric Turn*, 56-57, 78-79.

⁶⁵ Crouch, "The Violence of the Preudomme", 90-91.

Knights were defined by their use of violence, long before they adopted any codified or uncoded forms of conduct. It can be easy to understand this if we see the relationship between *preudomme* and knight as not one of transformation, but one of convergence. Initially, the qualities of a *preudomme* were never meant to apply to someone like a knight because the habitus of the *preudomme* emphasized pacifistic restraint. However, as knights began to actualize as a class in the mid to late twelfth century, and codes of conduct grew around them, already extant forms of conduct such as those of the *preudomme* began to have their qualities adopted and adapted to fit the knight's uses. Much in the same way theological qualities of the Davidic ethos were adopted for knightly purposes, certain values and virtues of the *preudomme* were also salvaged for content useful for the development of chivalry.

The *preudomme* and habitus were important preceding and concurring social phenomena that contributed to and provided templates from which knights, clerics and writers who contributed to the chivalric model could borrow from, but they were not one and the same. Moreover, the ways in which they differed were vast, thus, the development of knights and chivalry was not simply an expected development, but a remarkable social transformation that disrupted and deeply modified established ideals of conduct.⁶⁶ While the various aspects of chivalry were discussed in the previous subsection, the question of who this nascent ideology was meant to apply to will be discussed in the subsection that follows.

⁶⁶ For what David Crouch calls the "Disruptive Knight" see Crouch, *Chivalric Turn*, 252-272.

The Preudfemme and the Condition of Women

It could be said that another aspect of chivalry's growth out of the habitus of the *preudomme* was the deliberate and targeted exclusion of women from it. Habitus was not gender-specific and could and did apply to women. A woman who embodied a similar habitus as the *preudomme* was known as a *preudfemme*, and while she was not as laudable as the *preudomme*, there still existed countless tracts on shaping the ideal woman like the *Essenhamen de la Donzela* (late thirteenth century) or *Das Frauenbuch* (1257).⁶⁷ Another facet of this "chivalric turn", as David Crouch frames it, is not merely that it departed from generic noble conduct, but gender-specific conduct as well, and in fact, chivalry could be said to have had an arguably antagonistic relationship with women.⁶⁸ As discussed the *preudomme* and his habitus did not have the expectation of violence. As one might expect this also extended to the *preudfemme*. An identified shift in the condition of women when chivalry took form was that they became compartmentalized. Whether as objects of scorn, as someone able to sway a knight from the right and noble path, as an example of material weakness, or as an object of possession to be fought over and owned as a means of advancing one's own reputation or honor, women under chivalry scarcely ever could exercise their own agency.⁶⁹

In reality, the perception that it was the knight's lady who validated his violent actions has for some been considered a misnomer, and even this rare instance of the agency is undercut by the proposition that the violence endemic and inherent to chivalry and the knight who practiced it was

⁶⁷ For an English translation of Amanieu de Sescás' *Essenhamen de la Donzela* see Amanieu de Sescás. *Essenhamen de la donzela*, trans. Mark D. Johnston, in "The Occitan *Essenhamen de l'escudier* and *Essenhamen de la donzela* of Amanieu de Sescás", in *Medieval Conduct Literature: An Anthology of Vernacular Guides to Behaviour for Youths, with English Translations*, ed. Mark D. Johnston, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 41-59; For an English translation of Ulrich von Liechtenstein's *Das Frauenbuch*, see J. W. Thomas, *Ulrich von Liechtenstein's Service of Ladies*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969. doi: https://doi.org/10.5149/9781469658520_Thomas

⁶⁸ Crouch, *Chivalric Turn*, 83-93, 304-305; David Crouch, "Female Identity before 1250: The Preudfemme", in *Lives, Identities and Histories in the Central Middle Ages*, eds. Julie Barrau, and David Bates (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 142-158.

⁶⁹ Crouch, *Chivalry and Violence*, 225-226.

in fact validated by other violent men, specifically knights.⁷⁰ This becomes more understandable when we recall the impact of wartime bonding mentioned earlier. In truth, few others than fellow knights, regardless of nation, could socially confirm a knight like his brother in arms. Nevertheless, women occupied a particularly odd place within the context of chivalry and knighthood because they could never exemplify chivalry, nor could they ever become knights. Yet they were still intrinsically linked to both knights and chivalry because they were intrinsically linked to masculinity. *How* they were treated by knights and within the context of chivalry changed over time. This treatment ranged from negative and antagonistic, which seems to be most present in clerical prescription, to idealistic and fetishistic, which seems to be most present in romance literature. Even in the latter case, Ruth Karras has characterized “love” in the chivalric sense to be the “successful commodification of women,”⁷¹ The *Livre de Chevalerie* of Geoffroi de Charny for example, places a significant amount of agency in the hands of women.⁷² Geoffroi lauds women who, through their own volition, decide to inspire knights and through their power lead men to honor and to complete great deeds in arms. Some women were powerful independent actors, not just in mythical romance literature but in pragmatic conduct literature and were able to dictate the deeds and actions of knights. Nonetheless, women were unquestionably excluded from the role of knight and the ethos of chivalry.

⁷⁰ Ruth Mazos Karras, *From Boys to Men: Formations of Masculinity in Late Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 21.

⁷¹ Karras, *From Boys to Men*, 25.

⁷² BoC, 95-97, 121-123.

To Whom Chivalry Applied

So, if the *preudomme* embodied habitus, who embodied the nascent ideals of *chivalry*? With both chivalry and the elements of chivalry defined it is necessary to identify the condition of knights whom chivalry was meant to apply. At the time this thesis claims chivalry became codified, between 1160 and 1190, the knight had largely attained his position in Western Europe. By the time of our period and region, the late twelfth century Angevin empire, a knight was someone who was knighted and had obtained a “knight’s fee”, essentially a salary that could afford the knight gear for war and occasionally some land under his control. At other times this land was granted directly, and this itself was also considered a “knight’s fee”. The granting of land imposed upon him the requirement to render military service to the noble who bestowed upon him the land in the first place.⁷³ In fact, this connection between land and knight meant that as late as the late eleventh century the knight was essentially a warrior more concerned with rural and agricultural concerns than anything courtly or royal.⁷⁴ Ralph Turner summarizes what made a knight in England by the end of the twelfth century, and thus amongst the Angevins: “By the end of the century, its meaning was approaching the French sense of a knight who held land in return for mounted military service and presided over a court with minor jurisdiction.”⁷⁵ “Approaching the French sense”, because the foundations of knighthood originated in France first before migrating to England with the Norman Conquest in 1066 before becoming standardized by the late twelfth century through a series of

⁷³ Note that here, and throughout this thesis, I will be using knight in such a way as I have defined here. That is to say, not as an anachronistic catchall for any mounted warrior, which would not apply by this point in Western Europe where this study takes place.

⁷⁴ Gies, *The Knight*, 3,25, 29; Constance Brittain Bouchard, *Those of My Blood: Creating Noble Families in Medieval Francia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 14.

⁷⁵ Ralph V. Turner, “Changing Perceptions of the New Administrative Class in Anglo-Norman and Angevin England: The Curiales and Their Conservative Critics.” *Journal of British Studies* 29, no. 2 (1990): 99, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/175584>

political reforms under Henry II.⁷⁶ While this was the ideal standard, there were still knights who could not meet it. As what constituted a knight's fee in the Angevin Empire by the late twelfth century could be as low as a single pound, there were knights who had the arms and armor to fight, but no land with which to sustain themselves.⁷⁷ In cases like these, they were retained in the household of their lord. Nevertheless, the understanding was that the knight was expected to have land, even if they were not always capable, and at times that ownership of land became definitional. The knight was a product of the feudal organization of society; it was the exchange of land for military service that formed the foundation from which knights flourished as a class.⁷⁸

A knight within the Angevin Empire between 1160 and 1180 was quite simply a male who had undergone the knighting ritual, or adoubement. Usually, he was a squire first, an attendant of a knight or nobleman, and was only knighted when he was considered worthy and if he could afford the arms and horses required.⁷⁹ This ritual was comprised of girding the male with a belt and sword as well as a strike on the shoulder, or accolade. The specific rituals of the adoubement could be somewhat fluid. Swearing an oath was typical, baptism was common but not universal, where it occurred was not always certain, and the person who performed the ceremony could be either a secular lord or a cleric. Once the ceremony was complete the male was introduced not only to the order of knighthood, but manhood as well.⁸⁰ This man occupied a status somewhere

⁷⁶ See Gies, *The Knight*, 3, 29; Emily Zack Tabuteau, "Ownership and Tenure in Eleventh-Century Normandy," *The American Journal of Legal History* 21, no. 2 (1977): 97–124. <https://doi.org/10.2307/845210>. Tabuteau notes Charles Homer Haskins and Henri Navel have considered Normandy during the period of the conqueror to be the "prototype" of feudalism, with detractors noting that it was only after the conquest under William I that such intense feudal structures would form.

⁷⁷ Robert Bartlett, *England Under the Norman and Angevin Kings: 1075-1225* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 233.

⁷⁸ Turner, "Changing Perceptions of the New Administrative Class in Anglo-Norman and Angevin England", 93-94. The article in its entirety does a remarkable job detailing the path of the pre-conquest French knight (a non-noble mounted warrior with some minor political power) into England, where they were to gain both in both power and number despite detractors from the old guard aristocracy.; Gies, *The Knight*, 26, 30.

⁷⁹ Gies, *Knight in History*, 102-103.

⁸⁰ Crouch, *Chivalric Turn*, 9-10, 267-272.

below the lowest rung of the nobility and above the highest rung of free society. By the late twelfth century Angevin knights were approaching the aristocracy. It was becoming increasingly common for English knights at this time to attain small country estates that they would pass down to their children, who would often follow the same path to knighthood that they did. A crucial part of becoming a knight was also being granted a knight's fee, an amount of land and or wealth that was meant to afford the knight the ability to sustain himself and afford the gear to fight if called by his lord. This could be a massive demesne with a manor and the rents of the serfs who worked the land, or it could be little more than a small salary that forced the knight to rely heavily on his lord for room and board. After the 1160s, Angevin knights were members of an increasingly elite component of society that was becoming increasingly enfeoffed (granted land or property as a fief).⁸¹

Before the 1160s, *chevalerie* was not used explicitly though codes of conduct were still placed upon knights.⁸² "Knight" is a relatively modern term that descended from the Anglo-Saxon word *cniht* (plural *cnihtas*). *Cnihtas* (*milites* in Latin) was used by Insular writers for the elite mounted warriors brought over by William the Conqueror in 1066 and later, in contrast to *pedites*, *bellatores*, or *solidarii*, who were foot-soldiers, and *equites*, who were cavalrymen who might or might not have been knights.⁸³ A *cniht* by the eleventh century simply meant a retainer or attendant, often, but not always, separate from a *miles*. But after the conquest, the cultural exchanges that occurred between English and Norman society resulted in the *cniht* attaining various

⁸¹ Bartlett, *England*, 214-216; Kaeuper, *Chivalry*, 76-77; Crouch, *Birth of the Nobility*, 18-19; Crouch, *Chivalric Turn*, 252-255; Gies, *Knight in History*, 2-4.

⁸² Crouch, *The English Aristocracy*, 195. Crouch notes *chevalerie* in the context of conduct was used for the first time in Cr tien de Troyes' (c.1170-1180) works on the Matter of Britain, but in a sense strictly pertaining to skill in arms.

⁸³ For a brief discussion of the distinctions of terms used to refer to soldiers see David Crouch, *The Image of the Aristocracy in Britain, 1000-1300* (London: Routledge, 1992), 122. Other distinctions will be discussed where relevant throughout the thesis.

characteristics that resulted in it becoming more similar to the *miles* of the late twelfth century.⁸⁴ But prior to this, *cnihitas* was a class ambivalent term in the sense that it could refer to both landed knights as well as simple armed attendants. It in fact seems to be the case that by the late eleventh to mid-twelfth century, England had knights, that is, landed mounted soldiers, but the terms used to refer to them (whether *milites* or *cnihitas*) overlapped with “soldiers” in some cases more generally.⁸⁵ There were other regional terms which all seem to derive from the French *chevalier*, such as the German *ritter*, the Spanish *caballero*, and the Italian and Provençal *cavaliere*, which were roughly synonymous with *miles* by the late twelfth century.⁸⁶ These terms all referred to a professional mounted soldier of some variety and were roughly synonymous with the Latin *miles* (plural *milites*), or knight. The Latin *miles* was the internationally accepted term for what we would call a knight which was still in development as a defined class by the early twelfth century. *Miles* as a position first became delineated within medieval society in late tenth-century France.⁸⁷ In some regions within Europe, *milites* were a lesser class of nobility, in others they were an elevated

⁸⁴ Sally, Harvey, “The Knight and the Knight’s Fee in England.” *Past & Present*, no. 49 (1970): 4. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/650206>; Crouch, *English Aristocracy*, 7; See also John Gillingham, “Thegns and Knights in Eleventh-Century England: Who Was Then the Gentleman?” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 5 (1995): 138–139. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3679331>, for a more targeted treatment of the transformation of the term *cnihit* into knight.

⁸⁵ See Keith Kempenich, “The Milites of Orderic Vitalis and the Problem of Knights,” Master’s Theses and Capstones, (University of New Hampshire, 2016), 10, 80. Kempenich’s master thesis makes a convincing case that at least in the case of Orderic Vitalis’ *Historia Ecclesiastica*, *miles* may simply refer to *any* mounted soldier in England as late as the mid-twelfth century, as opposed to knights, that is a uniquely identified class of mounted warrior with land or a fee,

⁸⁶ Frances Gies, *The Knight in History* (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), 3; Keen, *Chivalry*, 36, 40; Kaeuper, *Medieval Chivalry*, 82; Scaglione, *Knights at Court*, 24; See Benjamin Arnold, *German Knighthood 1050-1300* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 31-33, regarding the complex interplay between *milites*, or knights, and *ministeriales*, or serf-knights, a competing social class, in tenth to thirteenth-century German sources. It would seem that the complex and Byzantine nature of post-Ottonian German aristocracy and government would result in a morass of terms like *milites*, *ministri*, *ministeriales*, *clientes*, and *servientes*, which often overlapped with each other, rising and falling in use over the centuries from the 900s to the 1300s. If the French knight was romantic, the German was surely bureaucratic. While the Latin terms used to refer to knights in Germany were very inconsistent, the German *ritter*, was seemingly not, incorporating the former terms in an often synonymous fashion.

⁸⁷ Crouch, *The Image of the Aristocracy*, 121. Crouch cites Georges Duby and his work *La Société aux XIe et XIIe siècles dans la région mâconnaise* (1953) which points out the earliest known use of the term *miles*, or knight, as opposed to *nobilis*, or nobleman, in documents of French Burgundy. This is essentially the first edification of a knight, or *miles*, occupying a socially inferior role to a proper member of the nobility, or *nobilis*.

common person. While the German and Burgundian sources cited above designate some knights as lesser members of the aristocracy, the position of other knights, as something more servile was evident in tenth to mid-eleventh century Flanders, Lothringia, and Normandy in the form of the *ministeriales* (or serf-knights), who were serfs granted political and military obligations and authority.⁸⁸ This is all to say that throughout Europe, the position of knights by the middle of the twelfth century was diverse and well entrenched even if conduct meant for them had not been developed yet. What changes that did occur to the knightly class were not radical, with no major drastic change until the early thirteenth century, after the period of this study.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Jean Scammell, "The Formation of the English Social Structure: Freedom, Knights, and Gentry, 1066-1300." *Speculum* 68, no. 3 (1993): 592. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2864967>.

⁸⁹ Saul, *Chivalry in Medieval England*, 18.

Knightly Conduct In The Holy Roman Empire

The first place this study will look at are the holdings of the Ottonians, Salians and later Hohenstaufen (also known as Staufer) dynasties. These holdings existed in modern-day Germany and Northern Italy and are otherwise known as the Holy Roman Empire. This combination was initially combined into a semi-unified collection of disparate polities by Otto I (c. 912 - 973) through his coronation as King of the Germans in 932 and Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire in 962.⁹⁰ This thesis's inspection of knightly conduct in the Holy Roman Empire will pay particular attention to the culture of the Ottonian and Salian courts that were the result of campaigns started by Otto I as a means to assert control over his political possessions, which continued up until the Staufer dynasties. These campaigns directly influenced and produced conduct for knights and their close social relatives in Germany and Italy before the thirteenth century. The beginning of conduct in the Holy Roman Empire was formed in the cathedral schools, institutions purpose-built for the education of future courtiers and administrators, which were built by Otto and his brother Archbishop Brun (c. 925 - 965), or Bruno, in the 950s in Germany and Italy. These combined with court schools and abbeys built by seventh and eighth-century Lombard kings Cunipert (c. 671 - 700) and Liutprand (c. 712 - 744) in Italy were the foundations for the *curialitas* or appropriate learned behavior, that all government officials, including knights, *milites*, and serf-knights, *ministeriales*, were meant to adhere to.⁹¹ While court clerics led these schools, they did not imbue religious expectations into *curialitas*. It resulted in bishops, prince-bishops, and abbots who were brought up in these schools losing or deemphasizing aspects of their religious character. In this

⁹⁰ Arnold, *German Knighthood*, 1-2; Antoni Grabowski, *The Construction of Ottonian Kingship: Narratives and Myth in Tenth-Century Germany* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018), 11; Uta-Renate Blumenthal, *The Investiture Controversy: Church and Monarchy from the Ninth to the Twelfth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991) 39,

⁹¹ Scaglione, *Knights at Court*, 21-23, 169-170; Stephen Jaeger, C., *The Origins of Courtliness: Civilizing Trends and the Formation of Courtly Ideals, 939-1210* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 4-5.

way, they became more like secular members of the Imperial government who had simply attained ecclesiastic titles and responsibilities without the theological background of clerics in the West.⁹²

The Ottonian court was effectively a school where courtly clerics led by example and taught these “students” *curialitas*. The aforementioned German *ministeriales*, or serf-knights, were initially meant to follow administrative and judicial positions formed by the cathedral schools. This continued until the Investiture Controversy (1076 - 1124) when secular and ecclesiastic forces clashed throughout the Holy Roman Empire and the once lowly *ministeriales* were becoming increasingly enfeoffed. They bolstered the forces of both secular and nominally ecclesiastical lords, rising in social prominence until they threatened the lofty social position of enfeoffed free knights in the Empire.⁹³ This paralleled what occurred in England and France at this time, where there was an increasing number of non-noble freemen, or *liberi*, rising to the rank of this armed lower aristocracy.⁹⁴

For these newly imperial knights, the variation of *curialitas* that was to be impressed upon them was distinct from those impressed upon clerics. For them, it included an emphasis on social qualities such as *milte* (generosity) as well as martial qualities such as *manheit* (prowess) and those that were duly applicable such as *triuwe* (loyalty) and *mâze* (measure). Aspects of courtly love

⁹² James Westfall Thompson, “German Feudalism.” *The American Historical Review* 28, no. 3 (1923): 447. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1836406>.

⁹³ Freed, John B. “Nobles, Ministerials, and Knights in the Archdiocese of Salzburg.” *Speculum* 62, no. 3 (1987): 576. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2846383>; Karl Bosl, “The Rise of the Ministeriales in Germany”, in *The Medieval Nobility: Studies on the ruling classes of France and Germany from the sixth to the twelfth century*, ed. and trans. Timothy Reuter, vol. 14, *Europe in the Middle Ages Selected Studies* (New York: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1979), 291-296; Brian A. Pavlac, *A Warrior Bishop of the Twelfth Century: The Deeds of Albero of Trier, by Balderich*, (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2008), 8; specifically for the proliferation of knights in Germany and the resultant obligations also see Thomas N. Bisson, *The Crisis of the Twelfth Century: Power, Lordship, and the Origins of European Government* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 59, 115, 213.

⁹⁴ Scaglione, *Knights at Court*, 21-23, 47-48; Arnold, *German Knighthood*, 17, 51-52; Uta-Renate, *The Investiture Controversy*, 111. Uta-Renate places the *ministeriales* specifically at the newly constructed and rebuilt fortresses of the Salian Henry IV. Here an emphasis is placed on the initial Swabian (as opposed to Saxon) origin of these knights, as well as the recruitment of local free Saxons, creating continually increasing negative sentiment and politically driven inter-ethnic conflict.

were also absorbed in the imperial milieu, along with an emphasis on manners. We see here a few unique terms in Middle High German, *schöne site* and *schöne zuhte*, both roughly referring to beautiful manners or behavior and politeness, which are reflected in a range of late twelfth and early thirteenth-century German vernacular sources. This focus on manners is also found in Latin sources such as that of the various *Vitae* of Otto of Bamberg (c. 1060 - 1139) and indeed seems to be a uniquely imperial contribution. References to “elegant manners” seem to exist first in the Holy Roman Empire, with Middle High German vernacular sources predating both Old French, Provençal, and Latin sources.⁹⁵ Stephen Jaeger makes a distinction between the German focus on aesthetic “beautiful” conduct and the more moralized perception of “good” conduct present in Old French sources. Looking back on the development of the *ministeriales*, Karl Bosl also recognizes this difference, noting that as imperial knights developed a more chivalric culture up and through the thirteenth century, they shed the even nominally ecclesiastical associations of the monastic *ministeriales*, becoming less religious, and more courtly.⁹⁶ This in tandem with the lack of religiously-coded attributes (as described in the “Spiritual Aspects” subsection) present in the sources indicates not only the separation of knightly conduct and piety in the Holy Roman Empire, but also the inability to reconcile violence and piety together in the inseparable form necessary for the formation of tripartite chivalry. Essentially, despite being brought up in courts where conduct was formulated by clerics, imperial knights did not have their deeds justified religiously, nor did they have religious expectations placed upon them in particular. This puts imperial knightly conduct at odds with the concept of chivalric lay piety, which requires the sacralization of violence

⁹⁵ Scaglione, *Knights at Court*, 64-66. Scaglione notes Gottfried von Strassburg (d. ca. 1210), Heinrich von Veldeke (c. 1140/50 -1210), Hartmann von Aue (C, 1160/70 – 1210) specifically as definers of these terms; Jaeger, *Origins of Courtliness*, 141.

⁹⁶ Bosl, “The Rise”, 306-309.

and knightly conduct writ large. There was thus no spiritual aspect of chivalry within the evidence surveyed.

Conclusion

As we can see from this discussion, tripartite chivalry did not exist in the Holy Roman Empire by the end of the twelfth century. The imperial form of *curialitas* was quite distinct. It incorporated components that directly mirrored values within the social and martial categories of chivalry but lacked any of the spiritual aspects. Even within the categories that are represented, we see evidence that the political and geographic circumstances of the Holy Roman Empire influenced the conduct of German and Italian knights. During this period, the social values of imperial knights did not contain values like a perception of “courtly love” but placed immense values on aesthetic “manners” and an increased focus on martial virtues. This emphasis on court manners likely is the result of warlike serf-knights migrating from court to court and having to signal social class in a diverse empire where both the absence of a *lingua franca* and the presence of constantly changing loyalties necessitated it. Conduct in the tumultuous pre-thirteenth-century Holy Roman Empire is, however, worthy of further study despite its dissimilarity from chivalry.

Knightly Conduct in Iberia

As mentioned in the preceding section the assessments for each region will be different. For Iberia, the history of inter-religious conflict and diverse established polities resulted in a unique political zeitgeist that gave rise to a distinct variety of literature that did not parallel any that existed in the rest of Europe. Thus, an analysis will necessarily be different than in other regions, and here will result in not summarizing the history of the region as it had little direct effect on the development of chivalry and only a tangential effect on the maturation of conduct in the region before the thirteenth century. In fact, in the course of the research for this thesis no sources on conduct were found at all for this region. As a result, this thesis will only be able to consider Iberian conduct and chivalry through a case study of a single eleventh-century knight.

Iberia, and the constituting polities of the Kingdom of Castile and Leon in particular were no strangers to religiously-justified war. Due in no small part to the *Reconquista*, the religious justification of violence bled its way into chivalric literature as well. While the pilgrimage cult of Saint James was an independent creation and originally conceived as quite nonviolent, conflict with Muslims resulted in a militarization of the saint that *could* be seen as a nascent form of violence sacralization. By the time of the popularization of the *Codex Calixtius* in the twelfth century, Santiago de Compostela was certainly established as a premier pilgrimage site within Christendom.⁹⁷ Christian Iberians saw French contributions in the form of Cluniac monastic reformers in the eleventh century as a vital instrument in their spiritual and martial endeavors against the Muslims.⁹⁸ This Franco-Iberian partnership manifested not only in the form of proto-

⁹⁷ Roberto Marin-Guzmán, "Crusade in Al-Andalus: The Eleventh Century Formation of the Reconquista as an Ideology." *Islamic Studies* 31, no. 3 (1992): 290-295. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20840082>.

⁹⁸ Xenia Bonch-Bruевич, "Ideologies of the Spanish Reconquest and Isidore's Political Thought." *Mediterranean Studies* 17 (2008): 29, 40-42. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41167390>; Marin-Guzmán, "Crusade in Al-Andalus", 291-

Crusade homiletics, chronicles that fermented unifying notions of “Christendom” that provided a focus for violence, but also as a source of heroic literature. Stories like the Spanish *Amadis de Gaul* and the Portuguese *Palmerin of England* were by the early modern period conceived in the parodies of chivalry as the oldest of printed chivalric tracts, and these were, as the names imply, ultimately derived from Anglo-French sources.⁹⁹ But these early modern satires were recollections from a period long gone, literary absurdities that Spain came to be known for and not reflections of reality.¹⁰⁰

So there were two periods, in the early period we have French-originated reforms that created the foundation for sacralized warfare and fostered anti-Muslim sentiment that would be a subject in later chivalric literature and vehicle for chivalric expression. In the late period we have satires of chivalry that were derived from Anglo-French sources. The seeds for tripartite chivalry were found in Iberia during this time, the partial sacralization of violence mimic the sacralization required for chivalric lay piety, the culture of knights migrating between the Christian and Muslim courts in the intermittent peace of the *Convivencia* in some primitive way approached certain social

292. Marin-Guzmán cites a series of involvements and associations between Spanish nobility and Cluniac clergy while being sure to acknowledge Papal critiques. These were not merely partnerships of circumstance, Marin-Guzmán believes that these reformed monasteries directly influenced the *Reconquista*.

⁹⁹ Thomas Henry, *Spanish and Portuguese Romances of Chivalry: The Revival of the Romance of Chivalry in the Spanish Peninsula, and its Extension and Influence Abroad* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1920), 4.; Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quixote*, translated by John Ormsby (London: Smith Elder & Co., 1885), V. I Pt. VI. In Spain’s most famous chivalric parody, this is communicated in the context of Nicholas, Don Quixote’s friend, and several other people perusing his collection of chivalric and romantic works disdainfully. Nicholas matter-of-factly notes *Amadis de Gaul* as being the first printed work of chivalry in Spain, and the origin of all the other works of Spanish chivalry. A brief back and forth occurs about whether this makes it the most abhorred as the genesis for Don Quixote’s obsession, or worthy of exception as prototypal, but nevertheless emphasizes the foreign component of chivalry in Spain. The story of *Amadis de Gaul* involves both French and English characters and while the location of “Gaul” itself may seem self-evident, it is a matter first discussed properly by Edwin B. Place in “Amadis of Gaul, Wales, or What?” *Hispanic Review* 23, no. 2 (1955): 99–107. <https://doi.org/10.2307/470917> and he firmly proves its origination in France from vernacular sources dating to as early as late twelfth century Provençal in his earlier piece “The Amadis Question.” *Speculum* 25, no. 3 (1950): 357–66. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2854164>. Here he also notes Celtic inclusions that establish Insular and Arthurian references as well.

¹⁰⁰ Henry, *Spanish and Portuguese*, 321.

aspects and aspects of the martial category can be recognized most obviously through the intermittent but nevertheless constant interreligious, and occasionally intrareligious, conflict.¹⁰¹ With the aforementioned lack of sources for much of pre-thirteenth century Iberia, this assessment will take the form of a case study of a real Iberian knight that has been praised for his behavior, Rodrigo Díaz (c. 1043 - 1099), also known as “El Cid”, for whom there exists a wealth of primary and secondary source literature.

El Cid

Rodrigo Díaz, or El Cid, was born in a small town in the kingdom of Castile near Burgos in 1043.¹⁰² Rodrigo was brought up at the court of King Sancho II of Castile, in whose service Rodrigo fought in many battles and was knighted by the king.¹⁰³ He served Christian and Muslim rulers and accounts about his service can be used to ascertain proper knightly conduct. Rodrigo had no qualms about aiding a Muslim ruler against a Christian ruler in battle. El Cid lacked many core and crucial values that evidenced some embodiment of chivalric conduct. The two main contemporary sources for the life of El Cid, or Rodrigo Díaz, are the *Historia Roderici*, (History of Rodrigo), and the *Carmen Campi Doctoris* (Song of the Teacher of the Field [of Battle]), both of which are in Latin. The latter is generally considered slightly more recent, and part of the title is often elided to *Campeador*, which has become a specific epithet for El Cid (from Arabic *as-*

¹⁰¹ Considering the complexity of *Convivencia* and the courts see Jonathan Ray, “Beyond Tolerance and Persecution: Reassessing Our Approach to Medieval ‘Convivencia.’” *Jewish Social Studies* 11, no. 2 (2005): 1–18. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4467701> and Roberto Marín-Guzmán, “Ethnic Groups and Social Classes in Muslim Spain”, *Islamic Studies* 30, no. 1/2 (1991): 37–66. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20840024>.

¹⁰² Jacques Le Goff, *Heroes and Marvels of the Middle Ages*. trans. Teresa Lavender Fagan (London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2020), 75. Simon Barton and Richard Fletcher, *The World of El Cid: Chronicles of the Spanish Reconquest* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 2, 90.

¹⁰³ Barton and Fletcher, *The World of El Cid*, 90; HR. 100.

Sayyid, “the lord”).¹⁰⁴ Both were composed during the life of Rodrigo, and make it clear that, while brave and pious, he fought for Christian king and Muslim emir alike. Why his loyalties were so eclectic has usually been ascribed to the fact that Rodrigo had both Muslim subjects and vassals and his relationship towards both was generally framed as amicable.¹⁰⁵ These relationships took precedence over religious affiliation when Rodrigo was in conflict with Christians. This is to say he would sooner show loyalty towards a friendly and respectful Muslim subject or ruler than a Christian one he saw as treacherous or unworthy of his service. The next text regarding his life, the *Cantar de mio Cid* or *Poema de mio Cid* (Song or Poem of my Cid) is distinct from the prior two in several ways. It is written in the vernacular, Castilian, well after Rodrigo’s death in 1099, sometime between 1110 and 1150, and depicts El Cid as a warrior who fought solely for Christian masters against exclusively Muslim enemies.¹⁰⁶ Thus, it is a very fictionalized account of Rodrigo’s life and exploits.

The Castilian *Cantar* is intensely religious, filled with considerations of exclusive loyalty and piety that approach the tripartite chivalry of the Angevin world, but it is entirely constructed and false.¹⁰⁷ It was written by the clergy like other similar texts being written in England and France at the same time, but it was not meant to be didactic. Additionally, it was not nearly as fully developed in ideology as it was never meant to sacralize knights or knighthood, or to even

¹⁰⁴ Grabbe, Lester, L. “King David and *El Cid*: Two ‘*Apiru*’ in Myth and History”, in *New Perspectives on Old Testament Prophecy and History: Essays in Honour of Hans M. Barstad*. ed. Rannfrid I. Thelle, Terje Stordalen, and Mervyn E. Richardson, (Boston: Brill, 2015), 230; Colin Smith, “The Dating and Relationship of the ‘Historia Roderici’ and the ‘Carmen Campi Doctoris,’” *Olifant* 9, no. 3/4 (1982): 99–100. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45299107>; Barton, “El Cid, Cluny”, 519.

¹⁰⁵ Joachim Küpper, “EI(AA)RONEIA: The Politics of Religion in the *Cantar de Mio Cid*.” *MLN* 126, no. 4 (2011): 65–66. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41300866>.

¹⁰⁶ Le Goff, *Heroes and Marvels*, 76; Alexander J. McNair, “El Cid, the Impaler?: Line 1254 of the Poem of the Cid.” *Essays in Medieval Studies* 26, no. 1 (2010): 60; Barton, “El Cid, Cluny”, 520. Le Goff gives the composition of *Cantar* between 1110–1150 and Barton gives a terminus ante quem of 1207. In either case, this was written sometime after El Cid’s death.

¹⁰⁷ Helmut Nickel, “About the Knight with Two Swords and the Maiden under a Tree.” *Arthuriana* 17, no. 4 (2007): 36. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27870870>.

indirectly explicate the spiritual responsibilities of knights, but merely to re-cast one famous man, Rodrigo Díaz, to promote the crusading movement amongst the masses.

What the Evidence Says

Ultimately what can be gleaned from an evaluation of the life of El Cid, the most revered knight of the period in Iberia, is a narrative detailing conduct that is not codified and certainly does not approach chivalry. There are several aspects of the martial component emphasized, as is expected for a soldier like the Cid, and due to the influence of the monastic reformers we also see a primitive form of the sacralization of violence that did not resemble chivalric lay piety or elements of the Davidic Ethic. It is perhaps true that Iberia, Castile in particular, was fertile for receiving chivalry *after* its invention by the Anglo-Normans, and that is perhaps why conduct manuals and militant orders took hold so strongly there.¹⁰⁸ Nevertheless, texts like the *Historia Roderici* and *Carmen Campi Doctoris* only praised El Cid's bravery, loyalty, and vaguely defined piety, none of the other aspects of tripartite chivalry. It did not lead to the chivalry seen in the early thirteenth century and that can be seen perhaps most visibly in the fact that the conduct and behavior of Rodrigo was never expected of him because he was a knight. His knightly status was never considered intrinsic to the values he displayed and the virtues he embodied, and in the later revisions of his life like the *Cantar de mio Cid*, the idea that one had to be a knight to embody the virtues displayed by El Cid was also absent. In fact, Rodrigo's knighthood is never mentioned as relevant to his conduct whatsoever. By the mid-twelfth century, the story of Cid was heavily

¹⁰⁸ See the *Llibre de l'Ordre de Cavalleria* of the Majorcan Ramon Llul for literary evidence and for a thorough treatment of the countless militant orders in Iberia see Enrique Rodríguez-Picavea. "The Armies of the Military Orders in Medieval Iberia." *Mediterranean Studies* 20, no. 1 (2012): 28–58. <https://doi.org/10.5325/mediterraneanstu.20.1.0028>.

transformed in stories like the *Poema de mío Cid*, becoming much more propagandistic in its religious rhetoric, but still far from chivalric and scarcely didactic. The religious rhetoric in Iberia was heavily inspired by, and seemed to be exclusively derived from, Cluniac reformers from France. Finding evidence for chivalric sources relies heavily on evidence for conduct literature, which is wholly absent from Iberia at this time. What can be derived from the behavior of El Cid or the texts surveyed does not indicate the values or presence of tripartite chivalry.

The Matter of non-Angevin France

Covering non-Angevin France means distinguishing between portions of France that ultimately belonged to the Plantagenets and their clients, and those that did not. This of course fluctuated and was not static throughout the period in question. In the southern third of the modern country of France we have territories that have spoken varieties of the *Langues d'oc*, as opposed to the *Langues d'oïl* spoken in the north. This not only defined the mutually intelligible languages spoken but also the cultures that were transmitted by way of the spoken languages. This is due to the primary vector of culture transmission in Occitania, the region in which these mutually intelligible languages were being spoken, being the troubadour, a variety of musician and storyteller.¹⁰⁹ In the north, the mutually intelligible languages spoken were known as the *Langues d'oïl*, which constituted the northern two-thirds of the country and contained three primary polities during the period of this thesis's assessment: the areas controlled by the Angevins and their direct clients, the areas controlled by the king of France directly, and the areas controlled by those who were nominally loyal to the king of France, but were sufficiently independent to constitute their

¹⁰⁹ Linda L. Paterson, *The World of the Troubadours: Medieval Occitan Society, c. 1100-c. 1300* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 2-3.

own polity. For the sake of clarity, for the rest of this section the term “Occitania” will refer to the *Langues d’oc* speaking regions of France, and “Northern France” will refer to the *Langues d’oil* speaking regions of France.

Occitania

Chivalry could not have begun in Occitania, because the earliest sources in the region that used the Occitanian term for chivalry, *cavalaria*, lacked any “ethical” and “ideological” connotations.¹¹⁰ This is to say Occitanian knightly conduct did not merely lack certain aspects or categories of tripartite chivalry as German, Iberian, or Italian knightly conduct did, but it quite literally *could* not contain those aspects or categories as the term was not able to possess qualities beyond the denotative value of “calvary” and the simple material actions of those mounted military units. This also extends to how little Occitania distinguished socially between knights and other soldiers, as well as knights and the low nobility, compared to Northern France and Old French sources. Nevertheless, there still existed a form of conduct that can be discussed that may have applied to knights. The most critical concept that lies at the heart of the secondary Occitanian claim to chivalry is “courtly love”, alternatively *fin’amors* in Provençal or *amor cortez* in Occitan, and the less romantic *cortesia*.¹¹¹ This was a uniquely Occitanian invention and would later become a crucial aspect of thirteenth-century chivalry.¹¹² While the Occitanian *cavalaria* was certainly not equivalent to *chevalerie*, or chivalry, an inspection of courtly love could bring us close to a truer cognate, a more valid contender.

¹¹⁰ Paterson, *World of Troubadours*, 64, 69. As Paterson discusses, *cavalaria* and *chevalier* were used interchangeably with *ex* as late as the early thirteenth century.

¹¹¹ Wollock, *Rethinking Chivalry*, 31; Crouch, *Chivalric Turn*, 42-43.

¹¹² Wollock, *Rethinking Chivalry*, 1.

By the mid-twelfth century, crusading as a topic was well accepted within troubadour circles. The figure of the love-stricken Crusader was a frequent fixture in the works of troubadours such as Jaufrè Rudel (d. 1147), Cercamon (fl. 1135 - 1145), and Guilhem de Cabestanh (c. 1162 - 1212). This figure functioned effectively as a sponsor of the crusading movement, romanticizing it and promoting it amongst the general populace. The crusader in these texts was a lover who underwent the pilgrimage for earthly, lustful, and licentious purposes. Taking up the cross was both a symbol of love and a cause of separation.¹¹³ The value of this character in Southern literature is that it represents a fusion of the long-standing carnal tradition, known as courtly love, that was founded in the South, as well as the growing crusading mood. But two things undercut this potential contender. One, it did not embody the piety required by this thesis's definition of chivalry: as mentioned it quite often subverted it, and two, it was contemporaneous, if not predated by, examples in England such as the work of Geoffrey Gaimar (fl. 1130s) in the 1130s and the concept he elucidated known as *cortosie*.¹¹⁴ Thus, from what can be surveyed pre-thirteenth century Occitania was a source of certain chivalric values like courtly love, but none of the rest.

¹¹³ See Lisa Perfetti, "Crusader as Lover: The Eroticized Poetics of Crusading in Medieval France." *Speculum* 88, no. 4 (2013): 932–57. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43576863> for a treatment of this character in troubadour literature in Occitania.

¹¹⁴ Crouch, "When Was Chivalry?", 292-293.

Conclusions

During the mid twelfth century, Germany, Italy, Iberia, and non-Angevin France approached tripartite chivalry but never quite reached it. They were at the periphery of chivalric development, which in turn left only one place for its origination. In the analysis of the expected conduct of knights, there were either entire components or several core chivalric values that were lacking in each of these peripheral regions. As noted above Crouch, Saul, and Kaeuper have located concretely tripartite chivalric tracts in Iberia, Germany, France, and so on throughout the *thirteenth* century, but the preceding chapter has attempted to dismiss the notion of chivalry's origination *outside* of the Angevin Empire through a selection of sources and approaches *before* the thirteenth century. While it is admittedly far from exhaustive, the succeeding two chapters will try to make the case for its origination *within* the Angevin Empire.

The Angevins

“Erembert, of whom I have spoken, was a Norman by birth;

he had been a brave knight before his conversion,

and devoted himself fervently to the monastic life afterwards.”

-Orderic Vitalis, Historia Ecclesiastica, Liber VII, Capitulum XIII.¹¹⁵

This chapter is meant to describe the political and cultural context of the Angevins so as to explain why it was so conducive to the development of chivalry. The previous chapter surveyed the political, literary, and cultural realities of nearby kingdoms and empires to ascertain whether chivalry was extant in those regions by the time of the Angevins. The conclusion was that such was not the case and that the various threads that resulted in the formation of tripartite chivalry did not fully form in any of the previous regions. This chapter will examine the political foundations of the Angevins, from 1066 to 1189, and trace the development of threads that ultimately resulted in the complete existence of tripartite chivalry within the Angevin Empire by the 1170s to 1180s.

¹¹⁵ Ord. Vol 4, Book, VII, 72. Original language transcription available in Appendix B.

Who Were the Angevins?

This thesis has defined and explored chivalry and knighthood. It has also defined and explored conduct in various regions outside Angevin territories, but it has not yet defined who the Angevins were, or the Anglo-Normans who proceeded them. The preceding chapter only made passing reference to the Angevins, but this chapter is entirely concerned with them so a thorough definition will be provided here. The Angevin Empire is the name given to the collective territories held by the Plantagenet dynasty. The Plantagenet dynasty was founded by Geoffrey Plantagenet (c. 1113 - 1151), from *Planta Genesta*, the broom plant, a sprig of which plant he was said to have worn in his cap. He was the Count of Anjou and father of Henry II of England, who created the Angevin Empire in 1154, when he became king of England. Henry possessed the Kingdom of England, the duchies of Normandy, Aquitaine, Gascony, and Brittany, the counties of Anjou and Poitou, and tenuous control over parts of Scotland, Ireland, and Wales.¹¹⁶

Linguistically, the Angevins could also be defined as those who spoke a dialect of the *Langues d'oïl*, or Old French, known as Anglo-Norman. This was a subset of Old Norman, which as the name implies, was spoken in Normandy and England during the time of William the Conqueror and his successors. Anglo-Norman was also the variety of French spoken by the Plantagenets, and while it was intelligible to the Capetians, it was still a distinct dialect for several centuries after the conquest of 1066.¹¹⁷ The English relationship with Anglo-Norman, and in turn the importance of Anglo-Norman as a language for the Angevins, cannot be overstated. Despite the extensive continental territories of the Angevins in France, Anglo-Norman became distinct

¹¹⁶ Bartlett, *England*, 22-23; Richard Benjamin, "The Angevin Empire" in *England in Europe: 1066 -1453*, ed. Nigel Saul (London: Collins & Brown Limited, 1994), 65-67; James H. Ramsay, *The Angevin Empire*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1994), 1; Crouch, *Image of the Aristocracy*, 138; Richard Barber, *Henry Plantagenet* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2001), 23.

¹¹⁷ Karen Pratt, "Introduction", in *The Arthur of the French: The Arthurian Legend in Medieval French and Occitan Literature*, eds. Glyn S. Burgess and Karen Pratt (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2006), 17.

from the Old French spoken by the Capetians by the twelfth century.¹¹⁸ Additionally, Middle English during the time of the Angevins attained immense influence from Anglo-Norman and *not* Old French, further substantiating a unified Angevin linguistic identity.¹¹⁹ This supports the notion that from a linguistic standpoint, while the Angevin world was not isolated from broader Christendom, let alone the broader Langues d'oïl speaking world, it was certainly a concentrated cultural center. This is to say it was not merely a political unit, but a cultural one as well with a singular identity and to some extent recognized past. Indeed, the oldest histories written in Old French were found not in Capetian France but in Norman England around 1135 in Geoffrey Gaimar's *L'Estoire des Engleis*.¹²⁰ This chapter will be largely chronological and will track the development of the Angevin Empire with the overall purpose of highlighting where components and conditions conducive to chivalric development were introduced and implemented.

¹¹⁸ For a treatment of the independence of Anglo-Norman from Old French see Richard Ingham, "Maintenance And Change In Language Contact: The Case Of Anglo-Norman." *Zeitschrift Für Dialektologie Und Linguistik* 84, no. 2/3 (2017): 383–402. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44851478>.

¹¹⁹ Hans C. G. von Jagemann. "On the Relation of the Anglo-Norman Vowel System to the Norman Words in English." *Transactions of the American Philological Association (1869-1896)* 15 (1884): 66–87. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2935801>.

¹²⁰ Charity L. Urbanski, *Writing History for the King: Henry II and the Politics of Vernacular Historiography* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 23-24. Urbanski gives the date 1135, but Paul Dalton gives a date as late as 1140, see Paul Dalton, "The Date of Geoffrey Gaimar's *Estoire des Engleis*, the Connections of His Patrons, and the Politics of Stephen's Reign." *The Chaucer Review* 42, no. 1 (2007): 23-47. <https://doi.org/10.1353/cr.2007.0020>. In either case, both attest to it being the oldest French-language history though this thesis takes Urbanski's dating as the most recent.

The Normans



Figure 1. The Anglo-Norman Kingdom, 911-1100. Depicting the location of Anglo-Norman holdings from the original grant to Rollo, acquisitions throughout the reign of William I, and the state of the Anglo-Norman kingdom at the time of the death of William II in 1100. Gary Girod, *The Norman Conquest of England*, "The French History Podcast", 2023. https://pbs.twimg.com/media/Fr_sPDUakAA5UYI?format=jpg&name=4096x4096

The two primary features of Normandy before 1066 that will be emphasized here are its wealth and the widespread presence of feudalistic practices within it. The wealth of Normandy and England allowed the Anglo-Norman kings -- William I "the Conqueror" (1066-87) and his sons William II "Rufus" (1087-

1100) and Henry I "Beauclerk" (1100-35) -- to sustain and support various institutions that became central to the proliferation of knighthood under them. These were the construction of castles by William I and his successors and the mass recruitment of knights by William II. The second feature is the extensiveness of feudalism in Normandy, which facilitated the social bonds between knights by providing a system that orchestrated interactions amongst knights in both peace and wartime

which solidified their relationships and their class identity. The warfare requirement of feudalism resulted in the spread of knights both culturally and numerically in early Anglo-Norman England as kings and nobles increasingly required men to put down rebellions and defend their territories. This all directly contributed to the establishment of knighthood and chivalry as these knights communicated and identified with other knights as much as they communicated with the kings and nobles they served.

This thesis will begin with a discussion of the wealth of Normandy. It is important to note that, unlike the relatively regionally restricted noble families that composed the Angevins and Anglo-Normans, the “Normans” were quite geographically expansive and held territories in multiple continents and countries outside of England and France. These territories were held by Norman-descended families in North Africa, the Holy Land, Southern Italy, and Sicily, with the Southern Italian and Sicilian properties possessing an immense amount of wealth when compared to their Anglo-French counterparts.¹²¹ This thesis will endeavor to separate the wealth of Norman Italy under the Hautevilles versus that of the territory of Normandy itself in France which was often linked to revenues received from England. This will be an easy task as the culturally plastic Normans remade themselves in the image of the Italians they ruled, much as they did in France when they first settled in the tenth century, and they thus became not only a distinct political group, but also a distinct cultural group.¹²² Moreover, the chivalric contribution of the distinctly Italian

¹²¹ Matt King, “The Norman Kingdom of Africa.” in *Dynasties Intertwined: The Zirids of Ifriqiya and the Normans of Sicily*, 135–65 (Cornell University Press, 2022), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctv1sfsf7w.11>; For the wealth of Norman holdings in Italy see Trevor Rowley, *The Normans: A History of Conquest* (New York: Pegasus Books, 2021), 195–199.

¹²² For a brief summary of the Hauteville’s rise to power in Italy see Sidney Dean, “From Dirty Dozen to Dynasty: The Hauteville Brothers in Italy.” *Medieval Warfare* 1, no. 4 (2011): 6–9. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48577879>; Einar Joranson, “The Inception of the Career of the Normans in Italy: Legend and History.” *Speculum* 23, no. 3 (1948): 365. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2848427>; For the transformation of Norman Italian identity into something distinct from their French relatives see Iris Shagrir, “Franks and Normans in the Mediterranean: A Comparative Examination of Naming Patterns.” *Medieval Prosopography* 30 (2015): 59–72. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44946924>.

branch of the Normans can also be discarded because both the existence of the *feudum*, or fiefdom from which feudal service can be extracted, and *miles*, or knight, can only be attested in the sources from the late twelfth century, far after the time of the house of Normandy and Plantagenet, and late into the period of this thesis's inspection.¹²³ As mentioned previously both the knight and to a lesser extent the feudal system with regards to Normandy, were crucial for the development of chivalry so the lack of these concepts and institutions in Norman Italy before the late twelfth century exempts the region from this thesis. There are limited social sources on Norman society before 1066 but a plethora of economic sources.¹²⁴ The records for Normandy at the turn of the eleventh century demonstrate an economy immensely dependent on and flush with coinage.¹²⁵ During the early eleventh century, there is evidence of a devaluation of currency in the region and from then a massive proliferation of currency. This production of coinage is demonstrated as early as the reign of Richard II (r. 996 - 1026) and reflects an immense sophistication in the ways in which resources could be exchanged. Mortgages and installments for properties were becoming the norm, which in tandem with the rise in the use of currency established an exponential import placed on the value of land, and more importantly, the transfer and bestowal of land. Additionally, there was a massive increase in the exchange and granting of land during this period.¹²⁶

¹²³ Hervin Fernández-Aceves, "Royal *Comestabuli* and Military Control in the Sicilian Kingdom: A Prosopographical Contribution to the Study of Italo-Norman Aristocracy." *Medieval Prosopography* 34 (2019): 8 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27041705>.

¹²⁴ David Bates, *Normandy Before 1066* (New York: Longman Group Limited, 1982), 95.

¹²⁵ Joseph Strayer, "On the Early Norman Charters, 911-1066", in *Medieval Statecraft and Perspectives of History: Essays by Joseph Strayer*, eds. Joseph R. Strayer, Thomas N. Bisson, and John F. Benton (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 40.

¹²⁶ Rowley, *Normans*, 36, 48-49; Bates, *Normandy*, 96-98.

The Anglo-Normans

October 14th, 1066, brought not only the Normans to England but also feudalism.¹²⁷ The form of feudalism brought was the configuration described previously, but the integration of the Insular territories and concerns brought by stifling rebellion fundamentally changed the way in which Anglo-Norman political structures were organized.¹²⁸ Institutions such as the use of the *scutage* (the system in which a vassal could pay his lord a tax, or *scutage*, lord to avoid military service) were brought over as well though had their roots in similar Anglo-Saxon institutions, and works like Domesday, it has been argued, established novel fiscal and legal realities for feudalism.¹²⁹ Indeed, the cultural reorientation that resulted from the Normans' arrival to England, what could be considered the Anglo-Normanification of England, was so intense as to constitute what some historians identify as a broader cultural shift in England towards the Continent, specifically towards France. Reorientation in that it reintroduced already extant continental ties between England and various French cultures and in that it reoriented the Anglo-Saxon culture,

¹²⁷ Robert Liddiard, "The Landscape of Anglo-Norman England: Chronology and Cultural Transmission." in *People, Texts and Artefacts: Cultural Transmission in the Medieval Norman Worlds*, eds. David Bates, Edoardo D'Angelo, and Elisabeth van Houts. (University of London Press, 2017), 105. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv512xnf.13>; Bradbury, *Hastings*, 140; Geoffrey Hindley, *A Brief History of the Anglo-Saxons* (London: Robinson, 2006), 338.

¹²⁸ C. Warren Hollister, *The Making of England: 55 B.C. to 1399*, 7th ed. (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1996), 108-109.

¹²⁹ For the role of Domesday in configuring Anglo-Norman feudalism see Harvey, Sally P. J., "Domesday Book and Anglo-Norman Governance.", in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 25 (1975): 175-93. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3679092>; Hollister, *The Making of England*, 123-124 and Bartlett, *England*, 193-201; J. C. Holt, "Anglo-Norman Feudalism." *The Economic History Review* 16, no. 1 (1963): 114-18. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2592520>, dismisses C. Warren Hollister's notion of a pre-Norman, Anglo-Saxon, scutage and the argument that it was indeed a uniquely post-conquest imparting that the similarities between the Anglo-Saxon and Norman scutage to be coincidental. Hollister offers a strong defense in C. Warren Hollister, "Two Comments on the Problem of Continuity in Anglo-Norman Feudalism." *The Economic History Review* 16, no. 1 (1963): 104-13. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2592519> and Holt seems to have accepted this conclusion in J. C. Holt, "The Carta of Richard de La Haye, 1166: A Note on 'Continuity' in Anglo-Norman Feudalism." *The English Historical Review* 84, no. 331 (1969): 289-97. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/564522>. This thesis holds a nuanced position where Hollister's general conclusion is considered valid, while also acknowledging the inclusions from Holt that point to uniquely Norman additions to this institution.

particularly if not predominantly amongst the nobility towards the Normans.¹³⁰ But as this thesis has made the case for prior, this can also be proof for the solidification of a singular Anglo-Norman, and later Angevin, identity. Even as the political institutions of 10th century Normandy became more generally French in their character, they quickly became and remained distinctly *Norman*, and those political institutions also arrived in England and emplaced themselves there.¹³¹ Just after our period in the early thirteenth century, the political institutions of Normandy were so unique as to require Philip Augustus to assist in understanding numerous aspects of various Norman political institutions upon Normandy's conquest. Even a century after in the fourteenth century Normandy did much to assert its independence under Capetian French with the *Chartes aux Normands*.¹³² The story of the Angevins, for the purpose of this thesis, begins in earnest with the Anglo-Norman king William II of England, also known as William Rufus. For his part, and his role in this thesis, the wealth and feudal nature of the Anglo-Norman holdings facilitated the foundation for what this thesis considers the first proper and crucial stage in the formation of chivalry: the proliferation of knights.

¹³⁰ Monika Otter, "1066: The Moment of Transition in Two Narratives of the Norman Conquest." *Speculum* 74, no. 3 (1999): 565–86. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2886761>; For the connection between England and Aquitaine see George Beech, "England and Aquitaine in the Century before the Norman Conquest." *Anglo-Saxon England* 19 (1990): 81–101. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44509953>; For the pre-conquest establishment of interactions between the English and Norman courts and nobility see R. Allen Brown, "The Norman Conquest" in *England in Europe: 1066-1453*, ed. Nigel Saul (London: Collins & Brown Limited, 1994), 39.

¹³¹ Monika Otter, "1066: The Moment of Transition in Two Narratives of the Norman Conquest." *Speculum* 74, no. 3 (1999): 565–86. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2886761>; For the pre-conquest establishment of interactions between the English and Norman courts and nobility see R. Allen Brown, "The Norman Conquest" in *England in Europe: 1066-1453*, ed. Nigel Saul (London: Collins & Brown Limited, 1994), 39.

¹³² Joseph R. Strayer, "Normandy and Languedoc", in *Medieval Statecraft and Perspectives of History: Essays by Joseph Strayer*, eds. Joseph R. Strayer, Thomas N. Bisson, and John F. Benton (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 49; Daniel Power, "Angevin Normandy" in *A Companion to the Anglo-Norman World*, eds. Christopher Harper-Bill and Elisabeth van Houts (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer Ltd., 2003), 63.

William II Rufus: Setting the Framework and the Inklings of Chivalry

For chivalry to take root it has been this thesis's central argument that the Angevins fostered what could be considered a system of courts comprised of multiple cultures amongst its knights that facilitated a cross-cultural exchange that was absolutely necessary and vital for tripartite chivalry to flourish and be established under the reign of Henry II in the late twelfth century. What this thesis suggests here is that this did not occur first under Henry II, but William II, and was made possible and facilitated by the wealth and feudal system established previously. This is to say that the politically volatile conditions that led up to the conquest were extant still during the time of William II's reign, and this encouraged him to hire an immense diversity of knights with his already established immense wealth.

William Rufus's accession in 1087 was immediately challenged nobility in Normandy who wished to see William's older brother, Robert Curthose (c. 1050 - 1134), on the English throne.¹³³ The *Peterborough Chronicle* concurs, that in 1087, "great treason" was stirred and the "most powerful Frenchmen" were to do to William II as Judas Iscariot had done to Jesus.¹³⁴ The *Chronicle* singles out select clergymen in particular, which coincides with both William of Malmesbury's and contemporary historians' understanding of William II's primary opponents being the Church, (which he economically undermined) and the general populace (which he took great pains to subdue and harassed and suppressed).¹³⁵ William of Malmesbury also characterizes it as a more popular revolt of the *turbarum*, the mob, as well as notes the opprobrium the Church

¹³³ Hollister, *Making of England*, 128-129; Rowley, *Normans*, 90-91; Frank Barlow, *William Rufus* (London: Methuen, 1983), 71-74.

¹³⁴ PC. 122-123.

¹³⁵ Hollister, *Making of England*, 128; Bisson, *Crisis*, 179; O. G. Tomkeieff, *Life in Norman England* (London: Capricorn Books, 1967), 148; Rowley, *Normans*, 91; See also GRA. 558-559 for a pointed criticism of William II's poor treatment of the Church in the form of accusations of simony and disrespect towards the death of clerics as well.

felt towards William Rufus and his extravagance, offering multiple anecdotes, and likening him to his newly recruited *milites*, or knights.¹³⁶ And Orderic Vitalis in his *Historia Ecclesiastica* also notes a *mutatio* took place, which Chibnall translates as “revolution”.¹³⁷ William I bestowed the Kingdom of England upon his second son, William II, on account of the persistent loyalty he showed William I, and instead gave the Duchy of Normandy to his firstborn Robert due to his incessant rebellion.¹³⁸

Nonetheless, the rebellion continued discontent, whether deserved or not, aimed towards William II from the Church, from the masses, from those across the channel, essentially everyone except for one group: the knights he recruited to defend against this discord. Less of a diminutive tyrant hiding behind foreign thugs, countless sources describe William Rufus as more of a knight than a king. His stature, behavior, and garb were said to have been imposing and mimic the ostentatious manner of the knights of his day.¹³⁹ William II recruited knights from all over western Christendom, to put down the rebellion against him. His father, William I, had also, according to William of Malmesbury he admitted “*exterarum nationum homines*” (men of foreign birth) to his service.¹⁴⁰ But William Rufus recruited knights specifically, and while they are not specific with the number of knights recruited, all the sources express that he lavished his knights with wealth and land.¹⁴¹ The intention here is to single out William Rufus’ emotional and social proximity to his new knightly recruits and to show that William II’s noted knightly character laid the cultural

¹³⁶ GRA. 556-557.

¹³⁷ Ord. Vol. 4, Book VIII, 112-117.

¹³⁸ Cassandra Potts, “Normandy, 911-1144”, in *A Companion to the Anglo-Norman World*, eds. Christopher Harper-Bill and Elisabeth van Houts (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer Ltd., 2003), 38.

¹³⁹ See Ord. Vol. 4, Book VIII, 188-191, for an oblique reference here. The descriptions are of the fanciful manners and behaviors of the knights in William’s court, Orderic citing a departure from Biblical endorsement. Many of the descriptions mimic the invectives aimed at knights around the period of the First Crusade; See also PC. 134, for William’s criticism towards the Church and proof that he seems to only be agreeable towards his recruited knights

¹⁴⁰ GRA. 506-507.

¹⁴¹ Saul, *Chivalry in Medieval England*, 23; PC. 122; GRA. 558-559; For William II’s knightliness see Micheal T. Clanchy, *England and Its rulers: 1066-1307* (Newark: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2014), 49-50.

groundwork for tripartite chivalry. He also went on to encourage his younger brother and successor, Henry I (c. 1068/9 - 1135), to continue the mass recruitment of knights.

The Norman noble Robert, son of Humphrey, who according to Orderic Vitalis had crossed to England as a boy and been knighted by King Edward the Confessor before the conquest.¹⁴² Under the service of William I and William II, he aided him in putting down rebellions, particularly from the Welsh. During the reign of William II, a mob of Welsh soldiers ambushed his settlement and slew him in 1093.¹⁴³ Upon his death, Orderic wrote Robert's epitaph in Latin at the request of Arnold, a former knight turned cleric and companion to Robert. This epitaph contains numerous examples of values from all three components of chivalry, tied especially to a real nonfictional knight as an implicit positive endorsement of his behaviors:

1	Here in this tomb Robert of Rhuddlan lies, Dust now to dust returned, like humans all; The son of Humphrey, born of Danish stock, Brave and illustrious always in his youth;
5	Courteous and warlike, handsome, swift and bold, While life remained, a true knight in this world. Most generous lord, faithful and loyal friend, Obedient ever to Christ's bride, the Church; All priests, all monks, orphans and homeless men,
10	Honourably held by him, received his gifts. Rhuddlan his seat; he built the castle there And held it long against wild, native foes. Arming himself to fight barbarian hordes He bore incessant perils undismayed;

¹⁴² Ord. Vol 4, Book, VIII, 138-139.

¹⁴³ Ord. Vol 4, Book, VIII, 140-141. Chibnall notes on 140n that 1088 is the most commonly given date of his death but that 1093 is more generally accurate. Both dates fall under William II's reign.

15 Snowdon's high mountain, Conway's rapid river
 Never deterred his oft-adventuring arms.
 With a few men he ambushed great king Bleddyn¹⁴⁴
 And made him fly abandoning rich booty;
 While Hywel,¹⁴⁵ who once as king led the Welsh forces,
 20 Was bound with thongs and dragged away a captive.
 He took King Gruffydd¹⁴⁶ prisoner, vanquished Trahaearn,¹⁴⁷
 And shone in many such deeds of knightly valour.
 Finally, in a rash onslaught on the Welsh,
 Death claimed him in the first heat of July.
 25 Owain¹⁴⁸ proclaimed the news, King Hywel gloried,
 When vengeance struck under the Great Orme's mount;
 Gruffydd cut off his head: the deep sea claimed it;
 His other bones are guarded in this tomb.
 Now in the cloister of blessed Father Evroul¹⁴⁹
 30 He rests; may the saint's merits earn salvation
 For him who, once so strong, now lies here lifeless;
 Mourning for him re-echoes through our country.
 Now he is turned to dust, powerless for action;
 Reader, in Christian duty, think to help him,
 35 Pray humbly that he may find room in heaven,
 With tears importune God, who governs all things.
 O Christ, glory of God, life-giver and Redeemer
 Of the world, have mercy on your servant here.
 O Christ, save Robert from Hell's fiery furnace,

¹⁴⁴ Identified by Chibnall as Bleddyn ap Cynfyn, Welsh king (d. 1075).

¹⁴⁵ Identified by Chibnall as Ithel ap Hywel, Welsh King, (d. 843).

¹⁴⁶ Identified by Chibnall as Gruffydd ap Cynan, Welsh king (c. 1055 - 1137).

¹⁴⁷ Identified by Chibnall as Trahaearn ap Caradog, Welsh king (c 1044 - 1081).

¹⁴⁸ Identified by Chibnall as Owain ap Edwin (d. 1105).

¹⁴⁹ The Benedictine Abbey of Saint-Evroul in Normandy, dedicated to Saint Ebrulfus, alternatively Evroult, (c. 517 - 596).

40 His guilt is great, yet pardon his transgressions.
 Spare him, I beg, who called on blessed Mary
 Even as he fell transfixed with many weapons;
 Forgive his guilt; grant him abiding treasures,
 44 That he may chant with the eternal chorus. Amen.¹⁵⁰

This passage contains a host of information for such the experienced, successful, archetypal and highly praised knight under the service of William Rufus, and by relation what was to be expected of knights who served the Anglo-Norman kings in this period. For one his initial birth in Denmark is noted, highlighting that not only were foreign knights and potential knights hired from abroad, but that their foreignness is remembered and not necessarily held against them. Moreover, we see in a single line praise for Robert being, courteous (*dapsilis*), warlike (*pugnax*), brave or bold (*audax*), and obedient to the Church. This echoes some values that would become vital to codified chivalry, particularly courtesy and defense of the Church. His martial ability is praised consistently, if not primarily, but it is punctuated with intertwined blessings of the Church and consecration of his death. By implication, this sacralized the conquests and violence Robert had committed throughout his life. Moreover, the explicit care and protection he gave to priests, monks, orphans, and homeless men, echoes *perfectly* and *explicitly* the ideal subjects of chivalric protection outlined by Crouch and discussed above: the poor, orphans, and the Church.¹⁵¹ What is vital to note (in lines 5-7) is the mention of Robert's courtesy, although both in the epitaph and in the summary of his life up to that point, Orderic focused on his participation in warfare and bellicosity. Finally, despite Orderic condemning Robert for killing fellow baptized Christian Welshmen several pages earlier in the text as something unfit for Christians to do even when

¹⁵⁰ Ord. Vol 4, Book, VIII, 144-147. Chibnall's translation is used here. The full Latin transcription of this epitaph can be found under Appendix A.

¹⁵¹ Crouch, *The Birth of the Nobility*, 72.

commanded to by his lord, his epitaph is filled with praise for his obedience to the “Church” and his blessedness. The argument is that while it is likely that Orderic was calling for Robert’s salvation due to his misdeeds towards the end of the epitaph, the larger preceding portion is meant to be valorizing and in some sense *optative*, indicating what knights like Robert *ought* to do even if it was not reflective of Robert’s actions in life.

This reveals the introduction of courtesy to knighthood that William Rufus was noted to have displayed personally throughout his reign, and behavior that he certainly had instilled in the knights under his vassalage. For example, Rufus himself was widely famed for releasing the French Count Helias of la Flèche during a campaign in Maine, despite the count’s negative attitude towards him.¹⁵² Despite the crass words exchanged this was seen as an example of exceptional courtesy displayed by William. It is also important to note that despite Rufus’ employment of knights, physical proximity towards his recruited knights, and frequent reference towards his knightly qualities such as courtliness, courtesy, desire to engage in war, garb and physical qualities, he himself had never engaged in a field battle and was reticent in deploying his knights in such a matter, preferring to use his massive wealth to purchase success.¹⁵³ Whether this was because he was covetous of the knights he spent so much wealth on, because he felt so close to these knights as mentioned by Orderic, or out of simple prudent management of limited human resources cannot be ascertained, but it stands as a peculiarity in his reign.

Much like the vignette discussed in the epitaph, the sources valorize the knightly virtues of an individual in theory, but reality reveals a contradiction that the sources minimize. This signals an intention to aggrandize *ideal* knightly conduct, as opposed to reflecting *real* knightly conduct.

¹⁵² Saul, *Chivalry in Medieval England*, 12-13; GRA. 564-569; Barlow, *Rufus*, 390-392; Ord. Vol 4, Book, VIII, 194-199.

¹⁵³ Saul, *Chivalry in Medieval England*, 23.

This also happens conversely when the reality of an individual's conduct contrasted with their reputation in the sources. For example, the supposedly impious William Rufus granted respite to the Manceaux garrison of Mayet in 1099 because Sunday was near, and the garrison used this respite to bolster their forces to repel the Rufus' following attack.¹⁵⁴ The idea that the supposedly brutal and impious Rufus facilitated his own undoing in this way is potentially perplexing. Especially since it is certain that this was late in his reign, just one year before his death, and he certainly knew what would occur if he showed them mercy. Much like the account of Helias and the epitaph above, what these all represent are instances of discordance between ideal and reality, because what is transcending them is something much more important: a nascent code of conduct even in this early period is composed of many fundamental values of tripartite chivalry.

Henry I and Stephen: Warfare and Reform Molding Chivalry

The reigns of Henry I (c. 1068/9 - 1135) and Stephen (c. 1096 - 1154) were marked with reforms to the behavior of knights along with a continuation of their usage, and with the Anarchy, an increase of their usage. According to William I, William Rufus set the tone for warfare in the time after him by following his father's habit of castle building and method of conducting warfare.¹⁵⁵ The reigns of Henry I and Stephen, concerning the development of chivalry and knightly conduct were a bridge joining the foundational reign of William Rufus and the arrival of the Angevins. Corollary to this, the discussion of these last two Anglo-Norman kings will be joined

¹⁵⁴ Strickland, *War and Chivalry*, 221.

¹⁵⁵ For the continuation of the castle building program throughout the reigns of the Anglo-Norman and Early Angevin kings, including a focus on the connection between William the Conqueror and William Rufus see John H. Beeler, "Castles and Strategy in Norman and Early Angevin England." *Speculum* 31, no. 4 (1956): 581–601. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2850972>.

in a single section and more concentrated than the previous, focusing exclusively on the most relevant points that contribute to the overarching narrative.

After the sudden death of William Rufus in 1100, his younger brother Henry I “Beauclerc” seized English the throne.¹⁵⁶ Henry I continued the trend of recruiting knights, having already been set on this path in 1095 when his older brother William II sent him to Normandy with a large amount of funds to recruit knights. Much like under William II, while the total number of knights recruited is difficult to pin down, we know 1000 knights alone were exchanged between England and Flanders in 1103, beginning a cultural relationship that would result in the tutelage of Henry the Young King (c. 1155 - 1183), son of Henry II (c. 1133 - 1189).¹⁵⁷ While the amount of knights increased, the reported injustices committed by them seemed to have stopped, particularly after the Battle of Tinchebrai (1106) in which Henry I put down Robert Curthose’s pretensions to the crown of England and his claim on Normandy.¹⁵⁸ Henry I heeded the words of many bishops in his court and in particular Robert of Beaumont (c. 1040/1050 - 1118), Count of Meulan, in reining in the conduct of knights that had run rampant under William Rufus. Under threat of mutilation, knights could no longer pillaged. The fanciful dress and hairstyles that were disdained by the clergy and worn frequently under the reign of the previous king were so whole heartedly abandoned that Henry himself reportedly had his own hair shorn at the court in Tinchebrai by the bishop who suggested it.¹⁵⁹ If Rufus was a manifestation of the martial, and portions of the social, aspects of chivalry in a ruler, Henry I represented a much fuller expansion. He reflected a greater expression of courtesy, advocated for justice to the poor as well as restrained and modest courtly culture as

¹⁵⁶ Warren C. Hollister, “The Strange Death of William Rufus.” *Speculum* 48, no. 4 (1973): 637–53. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2856221>.

¹⁵⁷ Saul, *Chivalry in Medieval England*, 23.

¹⁵⁸ PC. 139; HA. 243.

¹⁵⁹ J. O. Prestwich, “The Military Household of the Norman Kings.” *The English Historical Review* 96, no. 378 (1981): 29-30. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/568383>; Bartlett, *England*, 184.

represented in the above anecdote. In addition, he advocated for reconciliation with the Church, which in conjunction with the previously mentioned values signals a marked increase in the presence of chivalric behavior and conduct.

An example of this reconciliation with the Church manifests as an increase in the perception of the piety of the Anglo-Norman (and later Angevin) knightly class in the transformation of the *Gesta Herewardi* tale under Henry I. The *Gesta* written under Henry I includes particular additions to the tale. These additions include the indication that in England, as opposed to France, being knighted by a cleric is considered the *superior* form of adoubement (the knighting ceremony),¹⁶⁰ compared to being knighted by a secular noble. Additionally, according to Robert Bartlett the preference in England at this time was for soldiers to be “ruled and led” by knights as opposed to the nobility. This is attended by the practice of the girding of the sword and belt to the knight, which was deemed “the English fashion”.¹⁶¹ Altogether, this establishes the girding ceremony along with clerical dubbing and knight’s desire to be self-governed as distinctly English. The *Gesta* here is a vital vignette as it arose during the time of Henry I and could likely only arise at this time. The union of Church and knight, essentially a form of sacralization, through the literary preference for clerical adoubement represented the reconciliation with the Church not possible under the injustices practiced by William Rufus. The primacy of knights represented by their belting and preferential control over soldiers was only possible under a unified and relatively peaceful realm that delegated to them the matter of court administration and was not possible under the political turmoil of the Anarchy (a term for the widespread discord wrought by the civil war that occurred between Stephen and Empress Matilda between 1138 – 1153) Stephen. These two

¹⁶⁰ The dubbing ceremony, also referred to by synecdoche as the “accolade”, which was typically the physical laying of the sword on the knight’s shoulder which comprised a part of the ceremony.

¹⁶¹ See Bartlett, *England*, 233-234 for a summary of the *Gesta Herewardi* regarding its novel perspective on knighthood.

elements together indicate cultural evidence for the increase in values present in the spiritual category of chivalry, specifically conceptions of chivalric lay piety with the sacralizing of the adoubement. It also indicates an increase of the martial values in the form of emphasizing their importance in battle through the placement in leadership roles. Looking at a close member of his court, Robert of Beaumont, Count of Meulan, who according to William of Malmesbury had learned much from a foreign retinue sent from the Byzantine Emperor Alexius (c. 1048 - 1118), and had a direct role in transferring the Byzantine habits of modest personal practices, just courtly dealings, and the maintenance of severe laws to the king that was in turn projected onto the rest of the knights in the realm.¹⁶² This example provides a case of how foreign and diverse cultural influences affected the development of tripartite chivalry. The dispersal of behavior from the king to the knights under his service occurred through his household knights (*familia regis*). This was an intentionally built community maintained through the possession of strategically built castles, large amounts of wealth rewarded to his knights, and the reliable promise of future rewards and booty.¹⁶³ Thus, the dissemination of conduct from the king to knights in the realm was not merely an assumed occurrence, but an intentionally constructed one.

Micheal Clanchy says that it is with Rufus that “‘celebrated man, vigorous in knighthood’, chivalric values are displayed for the first time.”¹⁶⁴ Nuance should be added when examining Clanchy’s claim, as the values represented are partial but nonetheless coincide with this thesis’s argument that Rufus laid the chivalric groundwork. Clanchy uses an assortment of primary sources, including the *Chronicle of Battle Abbey* (1066 - 1176), Orderic Vitalis, and William of Malmesbury, to make the same claims that this thesis has: that despite Rufus’s conflicts with the

¹⁶² GRA. 736-737.

¹⁶³ Marjorie Chibnall, “Mercenaries and the ‘Familia Regis’ Under Henry I.” *History* 62, no. 204 (1977): 15–23. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24410084>.

¹⁶⁴ Clanchy, *England*, 63.

church and oppression of the poor, he otherwise “delighted in the honor of knighthood” and displayed the exemplary qualities of a knight, and to some extent, chivalry.¹⁶⁵ As stated, the kingdom handed to Henry I facilitated the continuation of chivalry as Clanchy states, and as this thesis has made the case, his personal reforms veered knighthood closer to tripartite chivalry.

In the evening of December 1, 1035, after falling ill following a bout of hunting, Henry I died at the castle of Lyons-la-Forêt.¹⁶⁶ Orderic notes that among the things he vouches for on his death bed, first are merciful things recommended by the counsel of Hugh, archbishop of Rouen, the next is something of his own volition. He is said to have commanded his son Robert to take sixty thousand pounds (*sexaginta milia libras*) from his treasury at Falaise from which to pay out his household and the knights in his service.¹⁶⁷ The desire to expend such a massive amount of wealth to repay his knights figuring so high on his list of deathbed wishes highlights both his sense of justice and the prominence accorded to knights during this period.

Stephen arrived in England to seize the crown immediately upon his uncle’s death in 1135. Stephen arrived to upend Henry’s daughter, Empress Matilda’s (c. 1102 - 1167), arguably more valid claim to the throne.¹⁶⁸ Catalyzed by weak rule, between 1138 and 1139, a host of rebellions between Stephen and Matilda cropped up and shunted the realm into civil war. In 1138, Robert (c. 1090 - 1147), Earl of Gloucester, half-brother of the Empress Matilda, began a campaign of rebellion as well. The previously conquered Scots invaded England again, and Matilda marched

¹⁶⁵ Clanchy, *England*, 49-50.

¹⁶⁶ Ord. Vol 6, Book XIII, 448-449; PC. 158; HA. 260; David Crouch, *The Reign of King Stephen, 1135-1154* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2000), 30; Rowley, *The Normans*, 94.

¹⁶⁷ Ord. Vol 6, Book XIII, 448-449. The term *militibus* is used, which I have stated and discussed means knight. Chibnall translates this as the more vague “soldier”, which lessens the impact but Orderic will and has used the terms *bellator* (Book XI, 110) or *pugil* (Book XII, 242, 350) to refer to a non-noble soldier. If he wished to refer to mounted warriors writ large of varying knightly status he would use *eques* (Book XII, 352), often preceding or succeeding *equis*, likely as a literary convention.

¹⁶⁸ Benjamin Arnold, “Germany and England 1066-1453”, in *England in Europe: 1066-1453*, ed. Nigel Saul (London: Collins & Brown Limited, 1994), 78; Clanchy, *England*, 110-111.

her troops to claim the crown and initiated a period that would be called, “The Anarchy.”¹⁶⁹ In essence, if reform characterized Henry I’s additions to chivalry, warfare characterized Stephen’s, and this will be briefly elucidated with a key vignette. An example of a scene that illustrates an anticipation of uncoded chivalry is when Philip, son of Robert, Earl of Gloucester and loyal to Stephen, captured Reginald, earl of Cornwall and a host of his knights in 1146. Reginald was making his way from Empress Matilda and, perhaps unbeknownst to Phillip, was under the protection of a royal truce established by his lord King Stephen *and* by the Empress. When Stephen had learned of this he was incensed, according to the *Gesta Stephani*, precisely because he intended for peace.¹⁷⁰ So Philip rushed to free Reginald and his knights to calm the king and maintain his reputation. Matthew Strickland highlights this event as something that both transcended any encoded laws of conduct, but was also a result of this exceptionally tumultuous period requiring such acts that existed outside judicial courts.¹⁷¹ He goes on further to that the maintenance of these unspoken codes of conduct amongst knights was *vital* in instances where knights could only rely on each other’s honor. The Anarchy offered many examples of this, and Stephen’s chivalry is noted to have undercut his potential success several times.

¹⁶⁹ Rowley, *Normans*, 94-95; Crouch, *King Stephen*, 73-82; Clanchy, *England*, 112; Christopher Daniell, *From Norman Conquest to Magna Carta: England 1066-1215* (Oxford: Taylor & Francis Group, 2003), 38; HA, 266-268; See Christopher Harper-Bill, “The Anglo-Norman Church”, in *A Companion to the Anglo-Norman World*, eds. Christopher Harper-Bill and Elisabeth van Houts (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer Ltd., 2003), 188, concerning Church and kingship.

¹⁷⁰ *Gesta Stephani: Regis Anglorum et Ducis Normannorum*, eds. André Du Chesne and Richard Clarke Sewell (London: Sumptibus Societatis, 1846) 116-117, the text reads: “Cepit nihilo minus et Reinaldum Cornubia comitem, maximumque militae sua apparatus, regiis induciis fretum, et ad pacem cum rege reparandam cum comitissa promotum. Sed quia, rege nescio, capto talis provenit, imo quia pacis, et securitatis ex utraque parte datis induciis, ad illicitam Phillippus proruit captionem, reddito tandem viro, offensum regem linivit.”, which I’ll translate to say, “[Philip] captured Reginald, count of Cornwall, and a large amount of his knights and equipment, (who were) relying on royal truce, and (who) promoted with the countess to restore peace with the king. But because, I do not know the king, such a kind of capture arrives because peace and security had been given on both sides, Phillip rushed to the unlawful capture, and at last surrendering the man, he assuaged the offended king.”

¹⁷¹ Strickland, *War and Chivalry*, 48-50.

After the unity brought by William I, there was a slow deterioration of bonds between England and Normandy evident throughout the reign of Stephen. The division between the nobles in Normandy and England manifested in the splitting of noble families into separate cross-channel branches and this was not repaired until the establishment of the Plantagenets.¹⁷² With Matilda assailing England and Geoffrey of Anjou (c. 1113 - 1151), Matilda's current husband, assaulting Normandy, such divisions become almost inevitable. While Matilda's hold on England waned, Stephen's claim evaporated as Henry, son of Empress Matilda and Geoffrey of Anjou made his way to England.¹⁷³

¹⁷² Potts, "Normandy, 911-1144", 42.

¹⁷³ Crouch, *King Stephen*, 240-241.

The House of Anjou and its Context

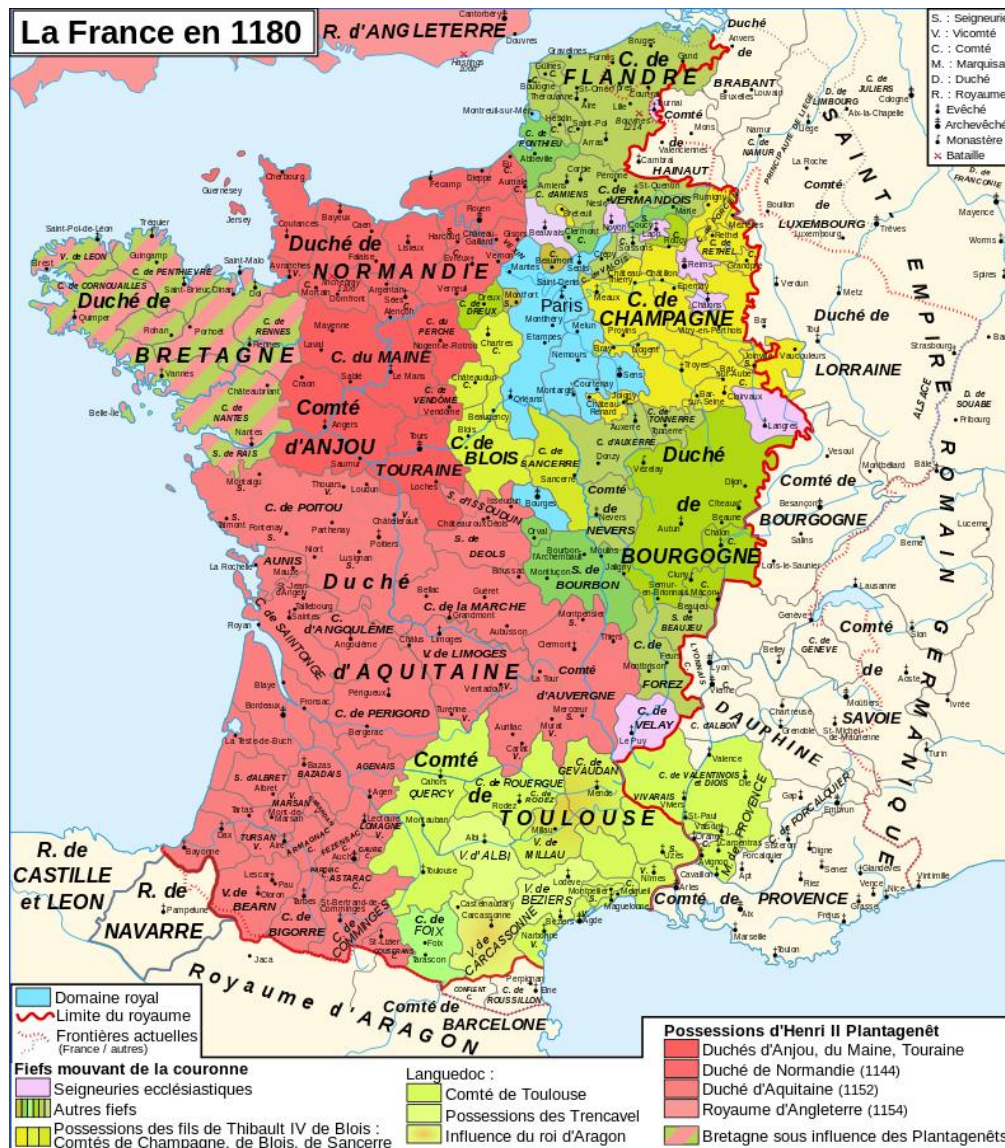


Figure 2. The Angevin Empire, 1144 - 1180. Displaying territories held by Henry II from 1144 to 1180 in shades of red, Church domains in purple, the territories of the French crown in blue, and other territories in shades of green. Zigeuner, La France en 1180, "Wikimedia Commons," 2009, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map_France_1180-fr.svg

Henry II: The Establishment of Empire

The Angevin dynasty begins in earnest with Henry II (c. 1133 - 1189), also known as Henry fitzEmpress for being the son of Empress Matilda. As mentioned previously with Matilda's and Geoffrey's power and health waning respectively, they saw the writing on the wall and so did Henry. Matilda had to withdraw from England in February 1148, and she and Geoffrey convened with the young Henry to return to England to assert his claim to the throne. The arrival occurred

on the 12th of April 1149, where a teenage Henry held court at Devizes in Wiltshire, along with the earls of Cornwall, Gloucester, Hereford, Salisbury, and a host of barons. This arrival was hailed by even royalist sources such as the *Gesta Stephani* as being the coming of the true king of the land.¹⁷⁴ By 1153, the Treaty of Winchester was established which allowed Stephen to remain king in England, but place Henry on the throne at Stephen's death.¹⁷⁵ In 1150, Geoffrey of Anjou granted him the duchy of Normandy. On the 7th of September 1151, he received the counties of Anjou and Maine. In 1152, through the marriage of Eleanore of Aquitaine (c. 1122 - 1204), the ex-wife of the French King Louis VII (c. 1120 - 1180), he gained the Duchy of Aquitaine and Gascony. By the time of the 1153 peace accord, twenty-year-old Henry was in control of the lion's share of Western France. With Stephen's death a year later and the homage paid to King Louis VII some years prior, there was no one on any side to contest his claim to England.¹⁷⁶ At this point the Angevin holdings, or Angevin Empire, were in place.¹⁷⁷ What follows is an analysis of different segments of Angevin society between the 1160s to the 1180s that resulted directly in the development of the tripartite chivalric ethos. Previously, the examples and aspects of society provided before Henry II were meant to establish knightly and chivalric threads. Now, those threads are continued, expanded, and tied together to a single end.

¹⁷⁴ Urbanski, *Writing History*, 38-40; Crouch, *King Stephen*, 240-244; For the coming of Henry to England see *Gesta Stephani*, 127-128, the words regarding the *Gesta* writers claim to Henry's legitimacy read, "Dum haec ita agerentur, Henricus, filius comitis Andegaviae, justus regni Anglorum haeres, et appetitor, cum florida militum caterva, ex transmarinis partibus Angliam advenit", which I translate to say, "While these things occurred, Henry, the son of the count of Anjou, the just/lawful heir to the kingdom of England, and striver (for the crown), with a plentiful band of knights, arrived in England from overseas."

¹⁷⁵ Graeme J. White, *Restoration and Reform, 1153-1165: Recovery from Civil War in England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 89-90; For a discussion of the treaty see Crouch, *King Stephen*, 270-274 and Hollister, *Making of England*, 148.

¹⁷⁶ Urbanski, *Writing History*, 38-40; White, *Restoration and Reform*, 75.

¹⁷⁷ A serviceable tracing of the induction of these territories has been provided up to this point, but a complete and tidy summary of Angevin holdings throughout the reign of the Plantagenets and component families, as well as an argument for the legitimacy of an "Angevin Empire" entirely can be found in John Le Patourel, "The Plantagenet Dominions." *History* 50, no. 170 (1965): 289-308. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24405238>.

The Formation of Knighthood: Military Reforms

The station of knighthood is linked to the development of and the idea of chivalry. This thesis will argue that reforms to the military under Henry II led to the actualization (or further reification and establishment through the formation of political reforms and institutions), of the knightly class. In turn, this allowed them to be better targets for moralizing tracts and conduct literature that were necessary to the development of chivalry.

The Consolidation of Knights

According to Nigel Saul, “the precursor to the final stage in the evolution of chivalry” was “the merging of the greater and the lesser knights to form a single elite group defined by military leadership”¹⁷⁸ Something that has been elucidated in the sources and the notes of this thesis’s translations, particularly those of Orderic, is that while *miles* always meant knight, who a knight was in society was still forming, and even Henry II was not exactly sure of the status and number of the knights in his land. Henry II instituted two major military assessments that identified knights and ultimately served to further unify the class of warriors in his realm: the *Cartae Baronum* of 1166 and the Assize of Arms of 1181.¹⁷⁹

The *Cartae Baronum*, or Barons’ Charters, were intended to find three things. These were: (1) How many knights were being enfeoffed by the tenants-in-chief in his realm, and what were their names. (2) How many knights’ fees were being issued before Henry I’s death, during the time of the Anarchy, and up to the point of the inquest in 1166. (3) How short of the quota of knights each tenant was, if applicable, as each tenant was expected to provide a certain amount of knights. The Assize sought to do one primary thing: divide the English military into four categories on the

¹⁷⁸ Saul, *Chivalry in Medieval England*, 17.

¹⁷⁹ Hollister, *Making of England*, 152; Bartlett, *England*, 212-218.

basis of wealth needed to sustain their position and gear needed to equip them. The first was a holder of at least a single knight's fee and was to be equipped with at least a shield, spear, helmet and coat of mail. The second category of soldier was to be equipped just the same, but was instead supposed to be composed of those whose annual wealth exceeded sixteen marks or more. The third composed those whose annual wealth exceeded ten marks or more and were to furnish themselves with a hauberk, a cap of iron, and a spear. The fourth was composed of all others and merely required that they were free and they were to possess an iron cap, a spear, and a gambeson (a padded jacket worn underneath a coat of mail). All these men were compelled to swear an oath of loyalty to Henry II personally.¹⁸⁰

The result of the Assize of 1166 was that knights were now a clearly identifiable segment group in Angevin society, they had reached actualization. The Assize of 1181 made two partially intertwined distinctions within the military: social and material. Socially, knights are being elevated and made distinct in an official fashion by being placed in a category in which they shared arms requirements with each other. They are given their own category on the Assize, the first, and are defined not by their specific income but by their status in society as a holder of a knight's fee. Materially, if we evaluate the linguistic discrepancy of terms used it is clear the equipment requirements of each class were maintained even if the wealth expected of them was not. For example, despite the top two categories requiring the exact same gear (the same terms of reference

¹⁸⁰ The items listed for the assizes are my translations from the original Latin, Hollister has his own translations of the terms though they lack the nuance I elucidate in the text, for example, *lancea* is translated as "lance" in all instances even in reference to the lowest class of troops, which, while a cognate, evokes equestrian imagery far too greatly, and particularly during this period was indistinguishable from an infantry spear if one views late twelfth-century manuscripts miniatures that accompany depictions of *lancea*; For a transcription of the original Latin see *Assisa de Armis habendis in Anglia* in *Select Charters and Other Illustrations of English Constitutional History from the Earliest Times to the Reign of Edward the First*, ed. William Stubbs. (London: Clarendon Press, 1870), 147-148 and for a summary detailing of the Barons Charters and Assize of Arms in English see Hollister, *Making of England*, 152-153 and Bartlett, *England*, 213-216.

are used), they were of drastically different wealth brackets. The first category was composed of knights (*milites*), so those who held a knight's fee, while the second was composed simply of free men who made *at least* sixteen marks. Considering the amount a knight's fee could amount to during this period could be as low as a single pound, requiring a full mail coat, spear, shield, and full metal helmet was a considerable financial burden.¹⁸¹ Also, consider that the other two categories drastically reduce the material requirements of arms. The lower two categories required merely a cap of iron (*capellet ferri*), likely referring to a simple iron skull cap (*cervelliere* or *pot-de-fer*), as opposed to an expectation of a full helmet (*cassides*). These were often worn under a mail coif and fell helmet but in this instance were expected to be worn alone. And the third lowest category required only a hauberk (*aubergel*), a short-sleeved and short-length mail coat, as opposed to a full-length mail coat (*lorica*), and the lowest a gambeson (*wambais*),¹⁸² or a padded jacket that the others would have typically worn underneath their mail but this poorest class would wear alone.¹⁸³

In essence, each Assize category makes an effort to enforce a level of gear achievable by each group *except* for knights, who could make less than the amount needed to afford their gear. This signals that irrespective of how much a knight was given as a fee, the military requirements of a knight was unbending and paramount for Henry II, thus emphasizing the immense focus on military service and perhaps even leadership. What this in tandem with the Barons Charters of 1166 resulted in was the reduction of total knights under Henry II due to: (1) The reduction in the

¹⁸¹ For the variance in knight's fees see Bartlett, *England*, 223.

¹⁸² Note, this is not Latin but an older form of English, from the Old French *wambais*, which seems to be derived from the Anglo-Norman *wambeysoun*, see *Anglo-Norman Dictionary (AND² Online Edition)*, s.v., "wambeysoun," accessed 29 March 2024, <https://anglo-norman.net/entry/wambeysoun> which we clearly seem to derive our word "gambeson" from. This is speculation on my part as this is what is written by Stubbs.

¹⁸³ For attestation on the wearing of armor see Charles Henry Ashdown, *European Arms & Armor* (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1995), 67-69, 88, also note Ashdown offers "wambeys" as a variation on "gambeson", which may perhaps buttress my earlier speculation in footnote 151.

number of knights being able to afford the new gear requirements. (2) The census cracking down on tenants who were previously able to operate less than sufficiently equipped knights under the assumption that standards were not being enforced. Looking at separate evidence noted by Kathryn Faulkner, it in fact is evident that there *was* a precipitous drop in the number of knights following these surveys, in contrast to the slow decline as understood prior.¹⁸⁴

As stated prior, the Charter of 1166 and Assize of 1181 carried out under Henry II were directly responsible for the immediate drop in the number of knights under Henry II. Additionally, this quick drop is almost certainly a reaction to the Charters and Assize precisely *because* of how quickly it occurred. Another is that this set of surveys was only possible at this time under the level of unity and control possessed by Henry II. The Capetian kings at this time struggled for lordship, and neither Louis VII at any point in his reign nor Phillip II Augustus (c. 1165 - 1223) during the reign of Henry II could exert power outside the Île-de-France sufficiently enough to demand the widespread command, identity, and fees of enfeoffed warriors across an entire kingdom.¹⁸⁵ It was not merely a personal aspersion that the kings of France and Counts of Flanders could not issue these Assizes, but they explicitly copied the earlier Le Mans Assize of 1180 issued by Henry II as a prototype.¹⁸⁶ The reality is that Henry II's colleague in Flanders and overlord in Paris were clearly subservient to the Angevin monarch in regard to his ability to exert and assess control over their knights and vassals, as these legal reforms prove. Nigel Saul's contention that the precursor to the

¹⁸⁴ For the contraction of the knightly class in the late twelfth century see Crouch, *Birth of the Nobility*, 246-248; For the calculation of knight's fees into the actual numbers of knights per the Assize, and evidence of the stark drop in knights under the Angevins during this time see Kathryn Faulkner, "The Transformation of Knighthood in Early Thirteenth-Century England." *The English Historical Review* CXI, no. 440 (1996): 1-23.

¹⁸⁵ See Strickland, *War and Chivalry*, 50-51, for an instance in 1188 where vassals of Philip Augustus and Henry II got into an altercation and captured each other's men. No matter how much Phillip pleaded or attempted to leverage the fact that he was Henry II's overlord, he could not convince Henry to command his vassal to stand down or release his hostages. Also, consider the practically generational military excursions on the Vexin and the ultimate renunciation of homage to Philip that same year, see same source, 235. In short, the Angevin and Anglo-Norman subservience to Capetian overlordship was always nominal at best.

¹⁸⁶ John Hosler, *Henry II: A Medieval Soldier at War, 1147-1189* (Boston: Brill, 2007), 115.

final stage of chivalry was the merging of the knightly class is substantiated here under Henry II and his political reforms. The Assize reduced the number of knights, the Charter reified them politically, and in tandem with the evidence supplied by Faulkner, the case that such a convergence of the knightly class occurred under the reign of Henry II first has been substantiated in multiple ways.

The Church and State: The Imposition of Religion

This next segment will evaluate the Church under the Angevins and how various theological reforms to the institution and society facilitated the development of tripartite chivalry. This is vital as the sacralization of chivalry formed the most critical and final component of the ideal's formation. This is because various social values existed in small part through the courtly conduct present across Christendom before the thirteenth century, and various martial values existed inherent to knights being warriors. Indeed, it was the knights' sacralization, and in turn, the sacralization of their conduct, that finally formed chivalry into its final form. The first issue this section will cover is theological, and that is the matter of the licitness of violence. Before a case can be made that secular knights, not only members of military orders, had a system of conduct expected of them that merged both religiosity and militarism, i.e. tripartite chivalry, we need to reconcile whether the extant theology of the time even considered it admissible for a warrior to be pious *while* fighting, let alone inherently pious, in the first place. Various material conditions regarding the Church necessitated the change in theology that ultimately resulted in knights becoming officially allowed to shed blood with divine sanction. In tandem with this are specific Angevin clerics who interacted deeply with, and in turn played integral roles in, the transformation of chivalry and knighthood: Stephen de Fougères, Thomas Becket, and Ralph Niger.

The Reforming of Violence

War and violence are an integral component of human society, and Christianity had a complex relationship regarding violence.¹⁸⁷ The sacralization of knights, and in turn the melding of religion and chivalry, was a result of the edging out of both clergy and the nobility from the bounds of religiously justified warfare. This gave knights access to what Richard Kaeuper calls “the privileged practice of violence.”¹⁸⁸ This began during the Carolingian period, where between the reigns of Pepin (c. 714 - 768) and Charlemagne (c. 748 - 814), clerically performed and endorsed violence was contextually made licit.¹⁸⁹ This Carolingian practice not so coincidentally changed early during the reign of Henry II, where in the wake of Church reforms in the 1160s warlike clergy were being outmoded and considered improper despite the era being more devout than ever.¹⁹⁰ The nobility too, were being precluded from the bounds of Church-sanctioned combat in a slightly more complex way than simple blanket prohibition. If we recall the connected concepts of the unjust loss (*injusta vexatione*), courteous mercy, and the “right of storm” mentioned above, Matthew Strickland claims that the former was only considered valuable with the threat of the latter.¹⁹¹ That is to say, a garrison only valued claiming “unjust lost” to avoid being taken by “right of storm”. This worked in converse as well, the brutal and wicked “right of storm” only became remotely acceptable in the context that courteous mercy in the form of respite was offered first, and an unjust loss was not incurred thereafter. So a besieging army could not reasonably take a town or castle by “right of storm” without offering respite first, or they would lose reputation

¹⁸⁷ Craig Nakashian, *Warrior Churchmen of Medieval England, 1000-1250: Theory and Reality* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer Ltd., 2016), 27.

¹⁸⁸ Kaeuper, *Chivalry*, 155.

¹⁸⁹ Nakashian, *Warrior Churchmen*, 35-37; Micheal Edward Moore, “The Frankish Church and Missionary War in Central Europe”, in *Between Sword and Prayer: Warfare and Medieval Clergy in Cultural Perspective*, eds. Radosław Kotecki, Jacek Maciejewski, John S. Ott, (Boston: Brill, 2017), 47-48.

¹⁹⁰ Nakashian, *Warrior Churchmen*, 12.

¹⁹¹ For a discussion on the “right of storm” see Strickland, *War and Chivalry*, 224.

and honor. A similar development was occurring regarding the idea of mercy and restraint in battle. Where, paradoxically, a knight was expected to be merciful and benevolent in both battles and tournaments, a member of the knighted nobility (a *supra-miles*)¹⁹² was expected to be ruthless.

This could be noted even within the course of a single individual's life such as William Marshal (c. 1146/1147 - 1219), who was praised as being merciful as a knight, yet he was considered prudent for being unforgiving in extracting rents during his time as Earl of Pembroke.¹⁹³ We see the perception of his behavior change as he went from *miles* to *supra-miles*. He was still technically a knight, but that title, and thus his expected conduct, was superseded by his noble title. Thus, during the course of the twelfth century, we see both the clergy and the non-knightly nobility (*supra-milites*) being restricted from the sanctified perpetration of violence. It was not that warrior clerics and *supra-milites* were entirely excluded from being praised as pious warriors, but that such appraisals were often under two conditions: (1) Participation in a Crusade. (2) Exhibition of what are explicitly noted as *knightly* qualities.¹⁹⁴

In fact, so deeply intertwined was the “knightly” militant clergy and the newly sacralized knighthood during the reign of Henry II, that we see an intense literary dialogue between the two that resulted in both factions delighting in tales like the Anglo-Norman¹⁹⁵ *Song of Roland* where both the secular knight Roland and the ecclesiastic Archbishop Turpin are both praised for various

¹⁹² A term I will use to succinctly refer to a member of the nobility that existed above knights, such as barons, earls, counts, etc. that were often knighted, but rarely if ever were referred to as knights in the sources, opting instead to refer to themselves by their grander noble title instead. Despite being “knights” technically”, their noble blood placed upon them different expectations of conduct than on knights who identified as knights exclusively as explained below.

¹⁹³ Crouch, *Birth of the Nobility*, 65-66.

¹⁹⁴ For the Church assigning licit violence as the purview of knights, whether secular or within an order, see Crouch, *Image of the Aristocracy*, 132-133.

¹⁹⁵ The oldest and most studied version of manuscript is Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Digby 23, which is written in Anglo-Norman, see David Raybin, "The Song of Roland". In *obo* in Medieval Studies, <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195396584/obo-9780195396584-0207.xml>. Later, more numerous but less studied texts have been noted as being written in Old French and Franco-Italian.

chivalric values. Turpin's named sword, Almace, signals his proximity to the rest of the paladins (warrior peers of Charlemagne) as only they had named swords, and indicates an attempt at drawing a parallel between the militant clergy and the knightly class.¹⁹⁶ For it was Wace (c. 1110 - 1174), one of the founders of the Arthurian chivalric romance and a writer who was commissioned by Henry II to write them, who claimed it was Henry's grand predecessor, William the Conqueror, who marched into the Battle of Hastings with his mythical minstrel Taillefer singing the *Song of Roland* ahead of him.¹⁹⁷ It is true that perhaps the *Song of Roland* may have had a broad French appeal in the wake of the various religious wars in the twelfth century, but it is particularly noted that it was to be sung "at a Norman or Anglo-Norman court".¹⁹⁸ This is all to say that this text which binds the clerical and the knightly had particular importance amongst the Anglo-Norman, and as evidenced by Wace later Angevin, cultural milieu. These changes reflect how in practical terms perceptions of licit violence were transformed over the course of the twelfth century. By the late twelfth century, and amongst the courts of Henry II and the Angevins specifically, we see a mixture of the knightly class and militarized theology. Within this context, the reception of the various spiritual values that came to define chivalry, particularly apart from the knightly conduct present in Germany, Italy, and non-Angevin France at this time.

¹⁹⁶ Nakashian, *Warrior Churchmen*, 105; Craig Nakashian, "Li arcevesque est mult bon chevalier': The Chivalric Ideals of Archbishop Turpin" in *Prowess, Piety, and Public Order in Medieval Society: Studies in Honor of Richard W. Kaeuper* ed. Craig M. Nakashian and Daniel P. Franke (Boston: Brill, 2017), 169-170.

¹⁹⁷ Wace, *Roman de Rou*, trans. James Bertrand de Vinchelès Payen-Payne (England: The Jersey Society, 1913), 18-19; Nakashian, *Warrior Churchmen*, 100-102. Note, Nakashian mentions it was the Conqueror's "army" who sang, the source I cite only mentions Taillefer, William's minstrel, singing specifically and it does so twice. The relevance of this may be limited, but for the sake of accuracy it must be stated and I think it may be of greater significance. For my part, I believe it is meant to be intentional, with parallels drawn between William and Henry II and Taillefer and Wace himself. For in the same way that Taillefer regaled William with the *Song of Roland*, Wace regaled Henry II with the Battle of Hastings by presenting him the *Roman de Rou*. A more germane parallel could be made between the knights in Wace's day regaling in the *Song of Roland* and the warriors in the *Roman* regaling in it as well.

¹⁹⁸ Bernard S. Bachrach, "Is the Song of Roland's Roncevalles a Military Satire?" in *Prowess, Piety, and Public Order in Medieval Society: Studies in Honor of Richard W. Kaeuper* ed. Craig M. Nakashian and Daniel P. Franke (Boston: Brill, 2017), 21

The First Chivalric Court

It has been this thesis' position that the origination of tripartite chivalry came to full fruition amongst the Angevins, specifically, under Henry II between the 1160s to 1180s. It is maintained that the kind of chivalry seen ubiquitously everywhere across Christendom in the thirteenth century and later, was first seen in this region during this period first. What should be highlighted, and perhaps even argued further, is that there existed a court within the Angevin Empire tied closely to Henry II where in fact there might have existed an environment even more conducive to chivalry. This does not devalue the greater Angevin claim to chivalry of course, but merely serves to give an example of an intense concentration of chivalric production as a result of the greater chivalric atmosphere occurring in the empire overall. The household in question is that of Henry the Young King (c. 1155 - 1183), eldest son of Henry II, specifically when Thomas Becket (c. 1119/1120 - 1170), William Marshal, Stephen de Fougères (d. 1178), and Ralph Niger (c. 1140 - d. before 1199) were all in attendance. This thesis suggests that it is the existence of *all* of these individuals in a single place at once that created a culture that would result in the production of texts like Ralph Niger's *De re militari* which is the Angevin's strongest claim to the origin of chivalry.

Henry the Young King: Le Roi Chevalier¹⁹⁹

The Young King was crowned as junior king under Henry II in 1170.²⁰⁰ Despite the prevailing historiography portraying him as a careless bachelor, given to tourneying as a means of flouting his duty to govern, the two were contributory rather than contradictory.²⁰¹ The Young King participated in the tournament circuit as a means to prepare himself to govern, but not before

¹⁹⁹ Following the pattern of Matthew Strickland's monumental *Henry the Young King, 1155-1183* (2016), all further mentions of Henry II's eldest son, Henry, will refer to him as "Young King" for the sake of clarity.

²⁰⁰ Bartlett, *England*, 5.

²⁰¹ Matthew Strickland, *Henry the Young King, 1155-1183* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 12.

engaging in a failed rebellion against his father between 1173 to 1174.²⁰² There are countless reasons why the rebellion failed: the complete lack of a strong base of power, a poor handle on wartime logistics, and likely greatest of all, the lack of broad and strong support from the nobility.²⁰³ What cannot be said is that the Young King lacked in personal physical capabilities, or in other words, knightly prowess. According to Gervase of Tilbury, a fellow courtier (*concurialis*), and intellectual (*eruditi*), along with Ralph Niger at the Young King's court, he was "matchless in warfare" as well as courteous, valorous, generous, gracious, and virtuous.²⁰⁴ After the 1174 peace and some time spent in England, the Young King finally left his father's court in 1176 and joined the tournament circuit back on the continent.²⁰⁵

At the same time that the Young King took to the tournament field, various aspects of the knight's equipment from the nascent heraldic caparison and tabard to arms and armor, were becoming standardized and made exclusively knightly as a result of the popularization of the tournament.²⁰⁶ This restriction in gear only became intensified in Angevin territories with the Assize of 1181. For the Young King, the tournament was an opportunity for him to broadcast his chivalric values to an international audience. The epicenter of the tournament by the 1170s was in Northern France, amongst the lands of the Angevins, Capetians, and the counts of Flanders. Here, knights from all around and from a multitude of backgrounds could travel from tourney to tourney making a name for themselves.²⁰⁷ The Young King arrived back on the continent in the late 1170s

²⁰² Thomas M. Jones, "The Generation Gap of 1173-74: The War between the Two Henrys." *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 5, no. 1 (1973): 24-40. <https://doi.org/10.2307/4048355>.

²⁰³ Jones, "The Generation Gap", 35-36, 39-40; Strickland, *Young King*, 204-205.

²⁰⁴ Matthew Strickland, "On the Instruction of a Prince: The Upbringing of Henry, the Young King", in *Henry II: New Interpretations*, eds. Christopher Harper-Bill and Nicholas Vincent (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer Inc., 2007), 202; Strickland, *Young King*, 2.

²⁰⁵ R. J. Smith, "Henry II's Heir: The Acta and Seal of Henry the Young King, 1170-83." *The English Historical Review* 116, no. 466 (2001): 301-302. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/580835>.

²⁰⁶ Crouch, *English Aristocracy*, 32.

²⁰⁷ Strickland, *Young King*, 239.

and brought with him a retinue of about one hundred knights of the highest quality to attend tournaments. And at certain times, such as at the tournament of Lagny in 1179, he amassed over two hundred men, mostly knights but also including over a dozen counts and knights bannerets.²⁰⁸ These knights were not a random assortment but a select few recruited from far and wide. This along with the Young King retaining William Marshal as his mentor meant that he, and his attendants like Ralph Niger, were surrounded by knights and engaged in a knightly cultural milieu.²⁰⁹ In the midst of his tourneying and pursuit of knightly activities, he was also being mentored by Philip of Flanders, a relative of the Angevins, whom Chrétien de Troyes had lauded many of the classic chivalric traits in the introduction of his *Conte de Graal*, which was written rough contemporaneously with the Young King's court cleric Ralph Niger's *De re militari*.²¹⁰ Between the chivalric Philip and William mentoring the Young King, his household was a hotbed of chivalric development.

Stephen de Fougères: The First Codifier

When David Crouch mentioned bishop Stephen de Fougères (d. 1178), he did so to connect the semi-codification of knighthood to the Capetians in contrast to the Angevins.²¹¹ Crouch is effectively arguing that Stephen was speaking to distinctly Parisian notions of sacralization en vogue since the 1140s. But as the early parts of this chapter have already covered, the sacralization of knighthood had already been in deep discussion in England for more than a century prior to this meeting, and for more than fifty years prior to the 1140s. It was the reign of William Rufus when

²⁰⁸ Strickland, *Young King*, 243.

²⁰⁹ Strickland, *Young King*, 244-245.

²¹⁰ Crouch, *Chivalric Turn*, 303.

²¹¹ Crouch, *The Birth of Nobility*, 84.

“king by the grace of God” first appeared on his seal, sacralizing kingship.²¹² This too was not derived from Capetian sources, but a similar Frankish root, for Norman kings, who we will remember are of course the direct descendants of the Angevin and English kings, directly drew ideas of Christian kingship from a late ninth-century Frankish origin.²¹³ Both Capetian and Angevin kings drew from Biblical exegesis and ideas of Christian kingship to legitimize rule, but it was the Angevins who applied these religious assessments towards knights and did so for reasons beyond establishing the legitimacy of rule. That is to say that as the knight was gaining this increased sacred character across his profession, the nobility did not aside from the context of establishing and justifying legitimacy.²¹⁴ This sacred character was entangled in knightly conduct, edifying the chivalric lay piety that went on to religiously justify all knightly deeds and behaviors.

David Crouch has defined three sub-genres of conduct literature that contributed to chivalry in the twelfth century: Catonian, Salomonic, and Instructional. In short, Catonian works are moralistic tracts derived from schoolroom exercises, Salomonic literature derived from clerical sources critiquing the laity, and Instructional literature is the much broader category derived from teaching manuals (*enseignements*), intended to define conduct to the youth.²¹⁵ Stephen de Fougères’s *Le Livre des manières* (1159 - 1163), the earliest French conduct manual on manners and courtesy, clearly classifies as Salomonic. Stephen was in the household of Henry II while the Young King was being raised and the *Livre* was composed while the Young King was in the midst

²¹² Emma Mason, “Administration and Government”, in *A Companion to the Anglo-Norman World*, eds. Christopher Harper-Bill and Elisabeth van Houts (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer Ltd., 2003), 164.

²¹³ Emma Mason, *Norman Kingship*, ed. Judith Loades (Bangor: Headstart History, 1991), 14-15.

²¹⁴ For an example of the sacralization of Plantagenet kingship and nobility, but *not* an imposition of a broader “priestly character”, which is something that I am arguing is becoming increasingly true with Plantagenet knights as a factor in the formation of chivalry see Bernhard W. Scholz, “The Canonization of Edward the Confessor.” *Speculum* 36, no. 1 (1961): 38–60. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2849843>.

²¹⁵ Crouch, “When Was Chivalry?”, 277.

of his youth.²¹⁶ It is this thesis's contention that the writing of *Le Livre* was part broadly-oriented conduct manual, but was also aimed towards the Young King upon his maturity. As Strickland notes, it emphasizes the values of manners and *curialitas* for laymen who sought court positions. In this way, it is also, partially, Catonian in its audience. Lastly, it can surely be said that if the *Livre* is not Catonian, it is definitely Instructional. This is all to say that *Le Livre* meets much of the definitions of foundational chivalric values. This thesis extends the transfer of conduct quite coherently from the text to the Young King as Stephen was responsible for his upbringing, and more than any other monarch the Young King devoted his entire life until his death in 1183 to the life of being a knight. He surrounded himself with knights, tourneyed like a knight, hunted like a knight, warred like a knight, and in the words of his courtiers like Gervase and other writers like Gerald of Wales, he carried himself in both word and deed like a true *chevalier* and *miles*. Nevertheless, in his *Livre*, Stephen asserts clerical control over knighthood, something that has been continuously and validly asserted as a prerequisite for the arrival of chivalry. But he also besmirches the more material aspects of knightly conduct, such as the tourney and the hunt.²¹⁷ A central precursor the creation of chivalry is the creation of conduct literature by clerics intended to control and regulate knights. While that was not *Le livre's* sole intent, as indicated by the minimal amount of it directed towards knight's specifically, it was still one of the earliest

Stephen's critical approach to behavior is not unique to knights, as the rest of *Le Livre* contains similar indictments towards other groups, but this thesis believes such harsh directives were wholly intentional. The idea being that Stephen saw in the Young King, who at this time had the acclaimed knight William Marshal as his protégé, the international standard of knighthood and

²¹⁶ Strickland, *Young King*, 64-65.

²¹⁷ Ashe, *Conquest and Transformation*, 197-198; Strickland, *Young King*, 67.

as such an image on which to project the ideal image of knightly conduct through instruction conduct literature. Works like *Policraticus*, *Le Livre des manières*, and *De re militari* contained conduct commandments directed towards knights that were unique, and could only be written within the latter half of the twelfth century in the Angevin territory due to the unique convergence of aforementioned cultural and political changes. Moreover, the intensely knightly household of the Young King with William Marshal in attendance provoked works like the select knightly passages in *Le Livre* to be made.

Both *Policraticus* and *Le Livre des manières* were composed in the midst of the Barons Charters and the reforms of Henry II, but before the Young King marched out on his own in the late 1170s. While *Le Livre* and *Policraticus* were directed at distinctly Angevin traditions and knights, thus evidencing the uniquely Angevin nature of chivalry, those erudite clerics clearly saw something more on the horizon. They sensed a strengthening, emboldening and in some fashion potential corrupting of the Angevin knightly class, and wished to prevent this debasement through the writing of conduct literature aimed at dictating proper behavior to them. It is of course this thesis's argument that this conduct literature is both chivalric and the first of its kind. Someone who wrote less as a prediction of the *potential* debasement of knights, and more as a response to misdeeds that had already occurred is Ralph Niger. His unique personal background and time with the Young King and Archbishop Thomas Becket distinctly flavored his treatise *De re militari*, which this thesis argues is the first complete chivalric tract, and the most solid evidence for Angevin chivalry.

It is generally surmised that Ralph Niger (c. 1140 - d. before 1199), cleric and theologian, was born sometime in the 1140s.²¹⁹ On the matter of his debated pre-clerical life this thesis takes the position that Ralph had a martial, potentially even knightly, career. Moreover, asserting that this influenced his rhetoric and writing intensely. John Cotts, through Marco Meschini, cites a letter where Ralph claims to have “witnessed” sieges and tournaments as evidence of a military career prior to becoming a secular cleric (a non-monastic cleric).²²⁰ While Cotts concludes that this means Ralph was merely a “clerical observer”, this downplays Meschini’s “Experientia” subsection which asserts that through the letter and *De re militari*, Ralph explicitly claims that he engaged in warfare.²²¹ Specifically, Meschini quotes “For what I drew from the study of the vanity of military exercise, to remedy my fault, I converted the military matter and manner to the spiritual exercise.”²²² Ralph is stating verbatim that he converted to a cleric to directly morally remedy his physical engagement (*exercitio*) in warfare. If he was already a cleric as Cotts claims, he would not need to convert (*converti*) in the first place, and if he only “witnessed” violence and not actually engaged in it, he would not have used the term *exercitio*, which specifically implies physical engagement. If his conversion to spiritual exercise (*converti ad exercitium spirituale*) entailed his

²¹⁸ Much of the work of this subsection has been derived from the research I conducted for the presentation entitled “Mundus in Maligno Positus Est: *De re militari* as a Response to the Murder of Thomas Becket” for the 2024 Multidisciplinary Graduate Student Conference in Premodern Studies.

²¹⁹ Cotts, *On Warfare*, 19. This is simply assumed because the famed John of Salisbury, author of the *Politcratus*, and close friend of Niger, referred to him as a “master” in the scholastic sense in the 1160s. Which was a position that required him to at least be in his 20s to attain. This is an absolute *minimum* age, though, as it is noted that Niger spoke of his father witnessing the reigns of German emperors Henrys IV and V in the very early twelfth century, thus, he could very likely be much older. Frederique Lachaude in *Ralph Niger and the Book of Kings* (2028) notes this mention in a Biblical commentary, via Cotts.

²²⁰ Marco Meschini, “Penser la croisade après la chute de Jérusalem (1187). Le *De re militari* et triplici via peregrinationis ierosolimitane de Radulfus Niger” in *Les Projets de croisade: Géostratégie et diplomatie européenne du XIV^e au XVII^e siècle*. ed. Jacques Paviot. Presses universitaires du Midi: 2014. doi:10.4000/books.pumi.16251

²²¹ Meschini, “Penser la croisade”, 42-45.

²²² The text Meschini, “Penser la croisade”, 44, mentions is, “Quod enim studio vanitatis hausi de exercitio militari, ad eius culpe mee remedium materiam et modum militie converti ad exercitium spirituale...”

actual professional conversion to a cleric, which it did, then his claim of previous engagement in military exercise (*exercitio militari*) in the same sentence using the same verbiage would logically entail some form of actual previous professional military engagement.

The evidence along with the claims by Meschini all concur that it is more likely than not that Ralph had a martial, if not knightly, background. This may seem unusual, but it was quite common for Anglo-Norman and Angevin knights to, at least upon their retirements or deathbeds, convert to clerics in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.²²³ It was not even unheard of for them to convert in the prime of their lives. Ralph's conversion connected him to Becket *specifically*. This is because Becket as a youth spent significant time with Richer II of L'aigle (c. 1118 - 1176), a wealthy, and according to Frank Barlow, God-fearing, Anglo-Norman knight who cared for Becket as a youth, and while taking him hawking saved the young saint's life.²²⁴ Decades later when Becket was exiled to Paris in the late 1160s and met the young Ralph, (who himself was previously a soldier, and now a God-fearing cleric), he saw in him echoes of the man that saved his life so long ago. Niger saw in Becket, through his conflict with the English crown, a manifestation of the spiritual contending against the secular, the shedding of the vain and the martial that Niger in his own words wished to so desperately put behind him. To say he was affected and connected to Becket is not an assumption, because upon the archbishop's murder in 1170, Niger choose exile, and fled England.²²⁵ Despite this, Ralph's continual interest in English politics and reference to other Englishmen as fellow countrymen situates him firmly within an English milieu and speaks both to the connection he felt towards his mentor Becket, as well as his connection to the Angevins.

²²³ Strickland, *War and Chivalry*, 95-96. Specific examples have been discussed previously under the reigns of William Rufus and others will be described in the discussion of *De re militari*.

²²⁴ Frank Barlow, *Thomas Becket* (London: Folio Society, 2002), 22-23.

²²⁵ Barlow, *Becket*, 311.

It is clear that Ralph agreed with the indictments on sycophants present in the *Policraticus* (1159), considering his scathing criticisms of Henry II's court were often articulated as critiques of "gossips of the hall", using similar verbiage.²²⁶ John of Salisbury's (c. late 1110s - 1180), writer of *Policraticus*, reference to Ralph as "master" and frequent correspondence also indicates a clear transmission of ideals going the opposite direction as well.²²⁷ It is clear that both Ralph and John were close friends and peers, and they both were staunch supporters of Becket.²²⁸ While this thesis' intention is not to delve deep to connect these various clerics, it does seek to provide a sufficient background of the relationship between them such that the knowledge of their intellectual cooperation is well understood. In any sense, sometime after the death of Becket, Ralph was attached to the Young King's court in the early 1170s.²²⁹ Ralph was with the Young King in battle at Limoges in 1173 and the same year the Young King had sent a letter to Pope Alexander III (c. 1100/1105 - 1181) justifying his rebellion, predominantly citing his father's abuses towards the Church.²³⁰ This deep religious sentiment was certainly pushed by clerics like Ralph, who as mentioned was personally affected by the injustices inflicted upon the Church and its clerics. Moreover, he was personally intensely critical of his lord's father Henry II, and both waxed invectives about him while lauding praise on the Young King.²³¹ It was not just Henry II that Ralph was critical of though, but knights in general and knightly pursuits, and not in a way to denigrate or destroy the profession, but quite the opposite. It is this thesis's contention that all the criticisms that Ralph held for knights were for the purpose of reforming the profession. Through his close

²²⁶ Nicholas Vincent, "The Court of Henry II", in *Henry II: New Interpretations*, ed. Christopher Harper-Bill and Nicholas Vincent (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer Inc., 2007), 295.

²²⁷ Cotts, *On Warfare*, 22; Frank Barlow, *Becket*, 52, does mention that "Ralf Niger" was a pupil of John, however, mutual deference does not instantiate a lack of intellectual commingling as I have suggested.

²²⁸ Clanchy, *England*, 132.

²²⁹ Bartlett, *England*, 62; Crouch, *English Aristocracy*, 53-54; Strickland, *Young King*, 12, 156, 324.

²³⁰ Strickland, "On the Instruction", 204.

²³¹ Strickland, *Young King*, 147.

mentor Becket, he saw what unprincipled knights loyal to an impious lord could do. Through his close time with the Young King tourneying on the continent, he also developed critiques of the vapidness of tourneying. When he wrote *De re militari* (1187), Ralph developed not merely reservations to unregulated warfare that he believed caused the fall of Jerusalem in 1187, but countless critiques of knights who he certainly saw as the vanguard of that violence.

Chivalry and the Angevins

If the previous part of this section extends and expands on threads, it is here that they will be tied together. As stated, knights as a class were actualized under Henry II into a singular identifiable stratum within society. They were now an officially identifiable class, who also had mandates that enacted upon them requirements that reaffirmed their place within the military aristocracy. Likewise, theological and social reforms precluded both the militant clergy as well as non-knighted nobility from participating in warfare in a religiously sanctioned capacity. That is to say that combat, outside of specific Crusades, ceased becoming officially licit for all but a single, now identifiable, segment of society: knights. The late twelfth-century Angevin milieu was ripe for chivalric development, in particular the household of the tourneying Young King from the 1170s to early 1180s.

Whether romantic or didactic, claims about whether society or cultural context was or was not chivalric has always pivoted around claims concerning the existence of literature aimed at or about knights. Thus, it is this thesis's claim that the earliest examples of conduct that could be called chivalric pursuant to the definition outlined in the very first chapter appeared not just within the last half of the twelfth-century Angevin Empire, but were produced specifically by members

of the court of the Young King. First, Stephen de Fougères developed his *Livre des manières* as not merely a general conduct manual, which was not necessarily unique, but as something directed specifically towards knights. This was due to his familiarity and proximity towards both William Marshal and the growing elevation of knights within the late twelfth-century Angevin Empire as well as his stewardship of the Young King. In 1159 John of Salisbury wrote *Policraticus* which contains even more prescriptions regarding conduct directed specifically towards knights, and it possesses even greater evidence of tripartite chivalry. As he grew, the Young King plunged himself fully into the knightly milieu, and he was attended by not only countless knights but Ralph Niger. Ralph Niger, a friend of John of Salisbury, who was himself a warrior previously, had attended the king in times of war and now had experience with him in tournaments. Thus, he was deeply familiar with knights in both war and peace, and in the wake of the fall of Jerusalem in 1187 he wrote *De re militari*, which contained the largest and earliest evidence for chivalric conduct literature. Stephen, John, and Ralph were all intrinsically linked to the Angevin Empire, and their texts evidence influence from this cultural and political context stretching back over a century.

The Literary and Linguistic Evidence

“The armed knight is by necessity bound to religion,

In just the way that the clergy is consecrated in obedience to God”

*-Policraticus, Liber VI, Capitulum VIII*²³²

The evidence for chivalry ultimately rests on literary sources. As mentioned above, texts like *Ordene de Chevalerie* (1220) were previously the benchmark used to place the origin of chivalry in the early thirteenth century and within a generally French context by scholars like Crouch. What this thesis, and this chapter in specific, will do is set the texts *Policraticus* and *De re militari* as the new benchmarks to push back the origin of chivalry to the late twelfth century and within a specifically Angevin context. Much like didactic works such as Geoffroi de Charny’s *Le Livre de Chevalerie* and Ramond Lull’s *Llibre de l’Ordre de Cavalleria* or reflective works like the anonymous *Ordene de Chevalrie*, the two works that will be discussed here both instruct how knights should act as well as represent in some fashion the position of Angevin knights as representatives of tripartite chivalry.

²³² Poli. 115. Original language transcription available in Appendix B.

The Question of Literacy

The Angevins under Henry II show evidence to support the proliferation of literacy amongst the laity. Specifically, the “bureaucratization” of the government that was initiated under Henry II was led by civil servants who were neither clerics nor urban merchants but knights.²³³ The assizes and charters dictating what the knightly class could wear, and restricting who the knightly class was, were in many cases read by and written by the very same *milites* they were directed towards. The evidence by Ralph Turner coincides with the linguistic evidence by Laura Ashe that the knightly class at this time was becoming smaller and in general more literate.²³⁴ According to Ashe, the alterations happening to the French language in England were a result of the explosion in literacy during this period, pointing specifically to the rise in “teaching manuals”. In addition, she argues that there was already a massive increase in Latin literature aimed at lay audiences during this time. Further proof for literacy in England also exists through the prevalence of letter writing that was present across all the social classes as early as the late twelfth century, and among the aristocracy as early as the 1130s.²³⁵ This is all to say that by the late twelfth century, knights through political expectation by Henry II and the literary cultures of letter writing and manual reading, could be expected to read both vernacular and Latin sources, in particular the Latin manuals this thesis will discuss.²³⁶

²³³ Ralph V. Turner. “The Miles Literatus in Twelfth- and Thirteenth-Century England: How Rare a Phenomenon?” *The American Historical Review* 83, no. 4 (1978): 929. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1867652>.

²³⁴ Ashe, *Conquest and Transformation*, 378.

²³⁵ Martha Carlin and David Crouch, *Lost Letters of Medieval Life: English Society, 1200-1250*, eds. and trans. Martha Carlin and David Crouch, (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 14.

²³⁶ Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence*, 30-33.

Method of Argument

The official onset for chivalry is invariably initiated with the creation of the anonymous poem *Ordene de Chevalerie*.²³⁷ The *Ordene* is about a knight who, after being captured by Saladin, is instructed by him to relate all the elements of proper knighthood. In this first articulation of chivalry scholars stress several key aspects of the *Ordene*. First is the fact that it describes the girding, oath-swearing, and dubbing ceremony. Second is that confers either explicitly or implicitly (often the latter) various core chivalric values. Third is that it assigns specific attributes, generally religious, to parts of the knight's equipment. Fourth is that the text is the result of clerical formulation and sacralization of the institution of knighthood.²³⁸ The presence of all these four elements is what made the *Ordene* chivalric, and the scholarly position is generally that it was first.

The argument here is that the two following texts, John of Salisbury's (c. late 1100s - 1180) *Policraticus* (1159) and Ralph Niger's (c. 1140 - d. before 1199) *De re militari et triplici via peregrinationis Ierosolimitane* (1187), contains all four of the preceding elements decades prior to the *Ordene de Chevalerie* (1220). Moreover, these two texts *also* contain all three chivalric categories, the social, martial, and spiritual, and a promotion of a great number of constituent values, such as courtesy, bravery, and chivalric lay piety respectively. Thus, the argument that they can be interpreted as proto-knightly conduct manuals in the vein of de Charny and Lull becomes much more cogent. In short, these two texts contain all the elements of the universally understood first actualization of chivalry, the *Ordene*, particularly *Policraticus*. Likewise they contain all the

²³⁷ Crouch, *Chivalric Turn*, 273-274, 293; Crouch, *English Aristocracy*, 200; Keen, *Chivalry*, 14, 19; Kaeuper, *Holy Warriors*, 10, 147.

²³⁸ Ashe, *Conquest and Transformation*, 196-197; *Ordene de Chevalerie*, trans. Keith Busby (Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1983), 170-175.

elements of the most complete and archetypal chivalric conduct manuals, particularly *De re militari*.

It is not merely that these texts should be considered the first proper chivalric tracts, but that their context should be considered as well. These texts were both written by Angevin clerics within an Angevin milieu. Additionally, Ralph Niger and John of Salisbury were not merely two random members of the English clergy, they were also close friends and were in dialogue with each other.²³⁹ John of Salisbury calling Niger *magister* intimates at the transference of ideals between the two in a scholastic relationship, and indeed it reinforces the argument that both *Policraticus* and *De re militari* are part of the same Angevin contribution to the birth of chivalric conduct.

²³⁹ John D. Cotts, *On Warfare and the Threefold Path of the Jerusalem Pilgrimage a Translation of Ralph Niger's De re militari et triplici via peregrinationis Ierosolimitane* (New York: Routledge, 2022), 20, 22.

Policraticus

Summary

Written in 1159, *Policraticus: De nugis curialium et uestigiis philosophorum* (Policraticus: Of the Frivolities of Courtiers and the Footprints of Philosophers) is a broad political treatise written in Latin comprised of eight books.²⁴⁰ The primary focus of the text is the practice of proper and good government and the behavior and conduct of an ideal monarch. *Policraticus*'s harsh critique of kingship as well as promotion of tyrannicide positions it as a novel and distinctive work not merely for the twelfth century but for the medieval period in general.²⁴¹ The "Twelfth-century Renaissance", and the Magna Carta owed much to this work which made complex political ideals accessible so that a variety of intellectuals could work them into a diversity of texts both practical and theoretical.²⁴² While *Policraticus* was dedicated to Thomas Becket, it is understood that John believed Henry II would read it as well.²⁴³ Much of *Policraticus* was centered on critical kingship and delimiting the bounds of the monarchy. John extends *Policraticus*'s desire to regulate social classes to knights and knighthood as well. John differentiates "true" from "false" *milites* by whether or not they had sworn service to the king.²⁴⁴ The logic behind this could be interpreted as John attempting to nudge Henry II into proper conduct through critiques that, though harsh, would result in the justified and moralized command of "true" knights due to him being a "true" king.

²⁴⁰ Christophe Grellard and Frédérique Lachaud, "Introduction", in *A Companion to John of Salisbury*, eds. Christophe Grellard and Frédérique Lachaud (Boston: Brill, 2014), 11.

²⁴¹ John Dickinson, "The Mediaeval Conception of Kingship and Some of Its Limitations, as Developed in the *Policraticus* of John of Salisbury." *Speculum* 1, no. 3 (1926): 308, 329. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2847413>; See also Richard H. Rouse and Mary A. Rouse. "John of Salisbury and the Doctrine of Tyrannicide." *Speculum* 42, no. 4 (1967): 693–709. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2851099>.

²⁴² Cary J. Nederman, "The Liberty of the Church and the Road to Runnymede: John of Salisbury and the Intellectual Foundations of the Magna Carta." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 43, no. 3 (2010): 458. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25699350>.

²⁴³ Rouse, "John of Salisbury", 704.

²⁴⁴ Ashe, *Conquest and Transformation*, 214.

The literate, elevated, and newly distinct class of knights as elucidated above needed direction and instruction, and *Policraticus* was, in part, meant to provide this instruction.

Connection to Chivalry

The pervading theme throughout *Policraticus* that contributes to forming ideals of chivalry is John's use of Biblical exegesis in the justification of violence, evoking the core chivalric ideal of the Davidic ethic. He repeatedly justifies the bloodshed of the knightly class through reference to the blood shed by King David. Typically, he contrasts the justified executor of violence with the unjustified executor by labeling the latter a "man of blood". John noted that it is the context that justifies violence, and that the same man can be both a "man of blood" and a just perpetrator of violence in different contexts, saying, for example, "—if one may believe the great Augustine, David is called a man of blood not as a result of war, but as a result of Uriah."²⁴⁵ John is referencing the Biblical story of King David and Uriah,²⁴⁶ where David arranges to have Uriah killed in battle to hide the adultery he committed with Uriah's wife Bathsheba. King David is not an evil "man of blood" because he engages in the mortal sin of spilling blood in battle, but because he committed the mortal sin of adultery. John mentions this concept again in relation to the Templars, the "Knights of the Temple" who he also refrains from calling "men of blood" evoking Davidic references.²⁴⁷ For John, violence itself is not forbidden, but it must support a virtuous cause.

²⁴⁵ Poli. 31.

²⁴⁶ 2 Sam. 11:1 – 12:9

²⁴⁷ Poli. 173.

In the sixth book, John discusses the need for the recruitment and selection of good *militēs*.²⁴⁸ For John's part, the success of nations is predicated upon the strength of its elite military class. "For what made the Romans the conquerors

of all nations? Above all it was knowledge, practice and the loyalty devoted by the *selected men* to the Republic by reason of their oath."²⁴⁹ John is clearly referring to knights here when he mentions Roman "selected men". *Policraticus* extensively uses *exempla*, whereby classical, Biblical, and Patristic anecdotes, models, and samples are used to illustrate and exemplify the moral lessons he intends to make.²⁵⁰ Ronald Pepin notes that in the course of developing his arguments and making his claims, John of Salisbury had a persistent habit of discarding the accuracy of the sources he mentions and the context in which they were originally used. This is to say when evaluating the following passages discussing knights, it is important to understand that John was not making artful parallels between them and Classical Rome, whether Republican or Imperial, but criticizing the society of his day through the inaccurate and bold use of classically coded references.

It becomes even clearer that he means to distinguish between the military aristocracy of knighthood and the common levied soldier when he uses the *exempla* to disparage the use of

²⁴⁸ Poli. 112; *Policraticus*, 344. Cary consistently translates the term *miles* as "soldier" but in the original Latin the term is always *miles* which of course signifies instead the specific station of knight. This is emphasized through John's mention of the knightly order, *militiae ordinatae*, which indicates this singling out of knights apart from standard non-descript soldiers. I will be consistently replacing instances of soldier where the original Latin is *miles* with a bracketed inclusion of "knight" for the sake of clarity and cite both the Cary translation and the Latin source for the location of the original text. The original Latin I am using of the *Policraticus* is derived from *Policraticus* (Amstelaedami: ex officina Viduae Joannis, 1664), <https://archive.org/details/policraticussivedenugiscuamste>, which I will cite as "*Policraticus*" to distinguish it from Cary's translation which does not include an original Latin transcription.

²⁴⁹ Poli. 110. Emphasis mine.

²⁵⁰ Ronald E. Pepin, "John of Salisbury as a Writer", in *A Companion to John of Salisbury*, eds. Christophe Grellard and Frédérique Lachaud (Boston: Brill, 2014), 176-177.

recruited “rural plebians” in contrast to knights (*milites*).²⁵¹ He immediately diverges into an *exemplum* regarding Gideon, and argues that his success was due to “a small group of strong men”.²⁵² He then immediately returns to his Roman *exemplum* by emphasizing the need for a proper fighting force to be dedicated to the act of fighting, relating that to the Romans this meant being bereft of a life of luxury and being accustomed to little food.²⁵³ Turning towards more relatable and insular examples, John engages in one more *exemplum* where the selection of knights is used to explain the victory of Duke Harold’s men over the Welsh.²⁵⁴ Thus, he directly draws a parallel between the *exemplum* of select Roman men, and the knights of his time. This is not a new parallel as Geoffroi de Charny’s *Livre de chevalerie* (1350) also made this same parallel between select literary Romans and knights to illustrate particular chivalric values, in this case Geoffroi explicitly calls these Romans knights and uses their failings religiously as a way to instruct knights how to behave presently.²⁵⁵ This further substantiates *Policraticus*’s claim to being chivalric.

John turns his references to the knights of his day explicitly in the seventh chapter of the sixth book: “What is the formula of the oath of the [knight], and that no one is permitted to serve in the army without it.” This is followed by the statement that such a “sacred oath” is a prerequisite for the receiving of the “belt of the [knight]”, the *militis cingulum*.²⁵⁶ The girding of the belt and sword on the knight, or investiture, has since the time of Henry I been considered the “English fashion” for making a knight and was transmitted down the line of Anglo-Norman and Angevin kings such that by the late 1150s it would have been well known to John.²⁵⁷ What is new is the

²⁵¹ Poli. 110.

²⁵² Poli. 111.

²⁵³ Poli. 112.

²⁵⁴ Poli. 112-114; *Policraticus*, 344. Once more Cary translates the term as “selection of soldiers” but the original in Latin is *militum* which I substitute to translate as knight.

²⁵⁵ BoC, 158-159.

²⁵⁶ Poli. 114; *Policraticus*, 346.

²⁵⁷ Bartlett, *England*, 234.

“sacred oath” he discusses, which is a direct reference to the knighting ceremony which was also present in distinctly and exclusively Anglo-Norman sources dating to as early as the late eleventh century much like the investiture was.²⁵⁸ Here John sacralizes the knighting ceremony sixty years before the *Ordene de Chevalerie* is attested to, satisfying that particular requirement for chivalry.

Chapter eight begins with what can be considered to be the first claim to a clear, while not yet fully realized, formulation of the code of chivalry. The title of the chapter reads, “The armed [knight] is by necessity bound to religion, In just the way that the clergy is concentrated in obedience to God; And that just as the title of [knight] is one of labor, so it is one of honor.”²⁵⁹ John of Salisbury is saying that it is not merely the knight’s duty to defend the Church as an institution, but that the knight is *bound* to religion, thereby sacralizing the class of knights entirely. While John was technically a cleric, *Policraticus* was not a theological work, it was an extensive political treatise with little in the way of dedicated Biblical commentary. In fact, immediately after John delves into proper knightly conduct, he begins a discussion about the conflict between Henry II and the previous King Stephen.²⁶⁰ This emphasizes the fact that John wished to impress pragmatic political expectations upon knights, not just clerical criticisms.

In chapter eight, John also asserts that the knight is bound to honor as well in this same integral way, codifying that particular crucial social value. Additionally, he claims that knights

²⁵⁸ Max Lieberman, “A New Approach to the Knighting Ritual.” *Speculum* 90, no. 2 (2015): 419-420. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43577349>. It’s important to note Lieberman considers, in essence, two distinct events related to the giving of arms, one informal and not conferring rank which seemed to be present in both pre-conquest England and France since the eleventh century, and one much more formal and considered to confer the rank of *miles*. While his article delves into countless topics and complexities related to the knighting ceremony and should by no means be boiled down to the distillation I state here, the latter event he seems to conclude developed over the twelfth and thirteenth centuries into the complex form we would recognize today. The latter more formal title-conferring ritual was found to have been solidified as a recognizable ritual in exclusively Anglo-Norman sources by the late eleventh century first. He points to the works of Orderic Vitalis, William of Malmesbury, and the letters of Guy of Ponthieu.

²⁵⁹ Poli. 114; *Policraticus*, 348.

²⁶⁰ Poli. 118-121.

should “avert injuries to the poor, pacify provinces, shed blood if necessary for their brothers, and give up their lives if necessary.” And this they must do, according to John, for “the public utility” and not for personal purposes but ultimately by “the will of God.”²⁶¹ Chapter 19 is titled, “Of the honour to be exhibited by [knights], and of the modesty to be shown; and who are the transmitters of the military arts and of certain their general precepts.”²⁶² Here it is not merely honor that John wishes knights to display, but also modesty (*modestia*) explicitly through suggesting that knight’s should not serve vanity (*vanitati*) and that knights are useless if, among other things, they “extol themselves” like “boastful soldiers”.²⁶³ This is important because the encouragement of modesty directly relates to the chivalric virtue of modesty, which as described above shields the knight from both lust and avarice. Avarice is something that has been discussed previously as a central sin that the virtue of *largesse* was meant to counter. John also lists modesty as a method of avoiding avarice, using the Romans and Carthaginians as two *exempla*.²⁶⁴ The other reason that John considers modesty important is that immodest knights single themselves out as bearers of spoils (i.e. worthy of being captured or targeted due to displays of ostentatious wealth), and not victory. This echoes and predates the *Livre de chevalerie*’s (1350) indictments against immodest dress. This statement also confers significant meaning as it serves as further evidence that John is indeed specifically referring to knights here and not mere soldiers for two reasons. One is that the custom of ransoming was a significant practice among knights and nobles throughout the medieval period, with John mentioning knights specifically. Being ransomed was a recurring theme in reality as mentioned above in the biography of William Marshal, and in imagination in knightly romances

²⁶¹ Poli. 116.

²⁶² Poli. 122; *Policraticus*, 374.

²⁶³ Poli. 116; *Policraticus*, 349.

²⁶⁴ Poli. 122.

and epics.²⁶⁵ The second piece of evidence is that admonishments regarding the ostentatious fashion of knights abounded during this period. Whether it was in the context of chroniclers admonishing the lavishly dressed knights in the courts of William Rufus as mentioned above, or Bernard of Clairvaux (c. 1090 - 1153) in his *Liber ad milites templi de laude novae militiae* (1129) as a method of praising the Templar's material modesty.²⁶⁶ This is not to say that John praised the Templars, however, or even that he saw them in any positive light. Quite the contrary, John states:

For the Knights of the Temple with the pope's approval claim for themselves the administration of the churches, they occupy them through surrogates, and they whose normal occupation it is to shed human blood in a certain way presume to administer the blood of Christ.²⁶⁷

For John, it mattered little that the Templars refrained from the numerous sins that secular knights were liable to commit, it was the fact that they were clerics first and foremost that precluded them from licit bloodshed. Why then, we might ask, did John consider knights to be both protectors and saviors of the Church as well as *bound* by religion if they also shed blood? Especially since John explicitly made it licit for knights to shed blood for God's sake. This is because knights were never intended to be members of the ordained priesthood despite their sacralization.²⁶⁸ In short, while priests given knightly roles, like Templars, were considered a disgrace to the clerical office, knights given religious objectives and divinely justified tenets were

²⁶⁵ For the intersection of real and imagined ransom in the knightly imagination see, George Fenwick Jones, "Knightly Honor - Refining Influences." In *Honor in German Literature*, 25:88–103. University of North Carolina Press, 1959. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5149/9781469657608_jones.8 and Molly Murray, "The Value of 'Eschaunge': Ransom and Substitution in 'Troilus and Criseyde.'" *ELH* 69, no. 2 (2002): 335–58. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30032023>.

²⁶⁶ Malcolm Barber, *The New Knighthood: A History of the Order of the Temple* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 45.

²⁶⁷ Poli. 173.

²⁶⁸ Barber, *New Knighthood*, 60.

considered ideal knights. In this way, John singled out knights as the preferred enactors of violence moralistically around the same time as they were being singled out politically. By lambasting militant clergymen like the Templars and praising the use of “select men”, i.e. knights, as opposed to the common soldiery, he placed knights in an exceptional position as the only class of society able to justifiably commit violence. Additionally, he also engages in the concept of chivalric lay piety through undergirding the ideal conduct of knights through religious rhetoric.

This is a profound mixture of mandates that fuses political and religious directives in such a way that it can only be summarized as chivalric. By drawing on the established Anglo-Norman and Angevin traditions of girding, oath swearing, and dubbing with the commandments to sacrifice oneself for the sake of the Church, the defense of the poor, the protection of the realm, specifically the “province” (a reference to the land of the knight’s lord), encouragement to fight for their “brothers” (other knights), and in all be bound with both honor and religion, John of Salisbury unites what are in essence all three categories of tripartite chivalry for the first time. Since *Policraticus* is widely considered the first and most complete political treatise of the medieval period, its novelty in codifying and discussing pragmatic political content can also be extended to chivalry, which it also discusses in a pragmatic context and codifies. Thus it can be argued that it is not only the first political treatise of the period, but the first chivalric one as well.²⁶⁹

Considering *Policraticus* inclusion of the knighting ceremony as central to knighthood, as well as its aforementioned elucidation and promotion of numerous chivalric virtues, an argument can easily be made that it predates the *Ordene de chevalerie*, which both de Charny and Maurice Keen cite as the origination of the formulation of the knighting ceremony as a component of

²⁶⁹ Nathan J. Ristuccia, “The Image of an Executioner: Princes and Decapitations in John of Salisbury’s ‘Policraticus.’” *Humanitas* (Washington, D.C.) 29, no. 1–2 (2016): 157; Taylor, Quentin. “John of Salisbury, the ‘Policraticus’, and Political Thought.” *Humanitas* (Washington, D.C.) 19, no. 1–2 (2006): 139.

chivalry, and the most primitive of chivalric texts.²⁷⁰ That is to say, two centuries after *Policraticus* the archetypally chivalric *Livre de Chevalerie* also contained a section on the vital importance of the knighting ceremony in its 36th chapter.²⁷¹ Moreover, this claim withstands even greater criticism when considering the secondary material. For example, Dominique Barthélemy discounts John's text as counter to "properly chivalric spirit", he does so because he takes his classical *exempla* literally and neglects the intensely chivalric environment John was immersed in as well as the countless direct references to chivalric values present in the text.²⁷² This criticism further falls flat when we consider that John's non-literal use of history to make his *exempla* is well known.²⁷³ Likewise, David Crouch dismissed *Policraticus* as barely qualifying as a form of conduct literature despite the entire portion dealing with knights exclusively instructing conduct, and to a much greater extent than the texts he mentions. Moreover, *Policraticus* meets all the definitions of Salomonic conduct literature outlined in the same article, substantiating it as a form of conduct literature.²⁷⁴ In conclusion, *Policraticus* is the earliest example of conduct literature that instructs knights in tripartite chivalric virtues. By the same metrics that place the *Ordene de chevalerie* as the starting point of chivalry, *Policraticus* meets those same metrics only much earlier.

²⁷⁰ Keen, Chivalry, 14.

²⁷¹ BoC, 167-171.

²⁷² Dominique Barthélemy, "Chivalry in Feudal Society According to French Evidence", in *Knighthood and Society in the High Middle Ages*, ed. David Crouch and Jeroen Deploige (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2020), 50.

²⁷³ Pepin, "John of Salisbury", 176-177.

²⁷⁴ Crouch, "When Was Chivalry", 277.

Connection to the Angevins

John of Salisbury was born in Old Sarum, between 1115 and 1120.²⁷⁵ In 1136 he went to Paris to study, but kept his home in his heart, writing about the life of English students in his *Metalogicon*.²⁷⁶ In 1147 he joined the court of Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury (c. 1090 - 1161) on the recommendation of the Abbot of Clairvaux.²⁷⁷ He was secretary to the archbishop when he composed *Policraticus*.²⁷⁸ John addressing the *Policraticus* to Thomas Becket, then chancellor, is noted as a result of his intense focus on Angevin politics.²⁷⁹ John was a particularly politically minded theologian and was immersed in English politics. *Policraticus* was replete with Angevin and Anglo-Norman cultural references and was dedicated to a deeply Angevin political and cleric. Moreover, John himself was personally connected to various members of the Angevin milieu, namely other clerics like Ralph Niger, Thomas Becket, Archbishop Theobald, and Nicholas Breakspear (c. 1100 - 1159) (Pope Adrian IV) before he left England. Thus it is clear that John of Salisbury was as connected to the Angevins as he was to the creation of chivalry.

²⁷⁵ Cary J. Nederman, *Policraticus: Of the Frivolities of Courtiers and the Footprints of Philosophers*, ed. and trans. Cary J. Nederman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), xxix,

²⁷⁶ Bartlett, *England*, 510-511.

²⁷⁷ Nederman, *Policraticus*, xxix; C. C. J. Webb. "John of Salisbury." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 2, no. 2 (1892): 92. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4543597>.

²⁷⁸ FitzGerald, Brian D. "Medieval Theories of Education: Hugh of St Victor and John of Salisbury." *Oxford Review of Education* 36, no. 5 (2010): 580. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25753519>.

²⁷⁹ C. C. J. Webb, "Notes on John of Salisbury." *The English Historical Review* 46, no. 182 (1931): 261. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/552951>; Rouse, "John of Salisbury", 704; Barlow, *Becket*, 52-53

De Re Militari

Summary

De re militari et triplici via peregrinationis Ierosolimitane (1187), comprised of four books and written in Latin, is traditionally understood as a moralistic critique of the crusading movement written in the wake of the fall of Jerusalem and the defeat of the crusaders at the Battle of Hattin in 1187. Its author, Ralph Niger, an Angevin cleric and possibly a former knight, was a staunch critic of the crusading movement.²⁸⁰ Ralph dedicated his work to Philip II Augustus, the French king, whom he praised for his perceived hesitance to go on a Crusade to recapture Jerusalem.²⁸¹ Ralph's potential upbringing as a soldier was not unique for clerics, as knights converting to the clergy was quite common.²⁸² Moreover, his crusading critique was not novel either, as other English clerics also expressed their opinions through various exegetical commentaries.²⁸³ Ralph insisted that the true pilgrimage must be taken internally first before it should be taken externally. In addition to Crusade criticism, *De re Militari* also functioned in part as an emotive text reflective of Ralph Niger's response towards the death of his close friend and mentor Thomas Becket.²⁸⁴ *De re militari* also functioned as a moralistic and didactic text for knights and their conduct. While John Cotts suspects that the impact of Ralph's text as a criticism of the Crusade is rather limited

²⁸⁰ For the most recent summary of Ralph Niger's life see Cotts, *On Warfare*, 19-25.

²⁸¹ Cotts, *On Warfare*, 36.

²⁸² Strickland, *War and Chivalry*, 95-96; See also a very early mention in Ord. Vol 4, Book, VIII, 142-143, for a host of knights, Guy, Roger, Drogo, Odo, and an Arnold, who had left their lives as *milites* in their *adolescentia*, their youths, to become monks, with Arnold in particular being praised for how well he had achieved "monastic perfection" in relation to his companions. The number of knights doing this all at once and the lack of notability Orderic places in this events signals that the knight-to-cleric pipeline had been in place at least a century prior to Niger and perhaps speaks even deeper to the fluidity and dialogue between the two stations.

²⁸³ John D. Cotts, "The Exegesis of Violence in the Crusade Writings of Ralph Niger and Peter of Blois" in *The Uses of the Bible in Crusader Sources* ed. Elizabeth Lapina and Nicholas Morton (Boston: Brill, 2017), 274-275.

²⁸⁴ Tyler Jones, "Mundus in Maligno Positus Est: *De re militari* as a Response to the Murder of Thomas Becket" (paper presentation, 2024 Multidisciplinary Graduate Student Conference in Premodern Studies, Chicago, Illinois, February 2nd, 2024)

due to limited copies of the text being produced and limited discussion in clerical circles, he still considers it a contribution to the nascent Scholasticism movement due to his latter work in the field. Despite this, this text is much more relevant as a chivalric tract, with David Crouch stating that it was “very significant for the courtly habitus of his day.”²⁸⁵ This is certainly due to its novel content. Similar works like the contemporaneous Alan of Lille (c. 1128 - 1202) and his 1184 sermon *Ad milites* merely echoed the themes of Bernard of Clairvaux and Urban II (c. 1035 - 1099) a century prior and did not even attempt to instruct knights like Ralph did.²⁸⁶ Thus, Ralph’s discourse on knightly conduct is second only to John of Salisbury’s in terms of novelty and seniority.

Connection to Chivalry

Most of Ralph's knightly discourse occurs in the first book of *De re militari*. His primary technique is using symbolic interpretations of knightly arms and armor. After the application of spiritual and metaphysical qualities to knightly gear, Ralph then assesses knights writ large. He discusses the moral threats and temptations that face this knight and what occurs when one such knight is captured by sin. The other three books make very little mention of knights specifically, but the third book in its exegetical evaluation of warfare alludes to certain aspects of knightly behavior, and the fourth book’s extensive criticism of countless aspects of society also makes reference to knightly conduct and thus aspects of these chapters will be referenced as well.

The first book of *De re militari* attempts to make a connection between the arms and armor of knights and various spiritual moral values and Biblical examples. The goal of this moralizing is

²⁸⁵ Crouch, *Chivalric Turn*, 35.

²⁸⁶ MacGregor, “Negotiating Knightly Piety”, 317.

to “equip” the soldier of Christ before his *physical* excursion to the Holy Land with this heavily sacralized equipment. Parsing the term “soldier” is important because it is central to making the argument that Ralph is referring exclusively to knights with his text, and not soldiers writ large. While John Cotts translates *miles* in *miles Christ* as soldier, that is not now how he translates it in the title of chapter 27,²⁸⁷ where he translates it as “knight”.²⁸⁸ Nor is it how it was typically translated in this period, which is *also* typically as “knight” as discussed extensively above. This is important because a knight was not *just* a soldier. Ralph meant knights not “soldiers” here when he describes the moralized qualities of the horses, swords, spurs, and lances of the *miles*. This description is not of some nondescript soldier, but of a knight, belonging to that specific class of warriors that could afford those accouterments. This is significant because Niger’s close connection to Becket directly influenced his rhetoric regarding knights. Niger also references normal soldiers separately as *pedes* or *pedites* (foot-soldiers), in chapters 16,²⁸⁹ 21,²⁹⁰ and 37²⁹¹. In chapter 20,²⁹² Niger refers to the *insignia* that are “displayed to demonstrate one’s knightly elegance” (*militarem venustatem*), which are just like the banners and standards by which knights are identified. This is certainly a reference to heraldry, which while in its infancy as an institution, was nonetheless extant and being pioneered amongst the Angevins. Recall that it was Sir Reginald fitzUrse, who was identified by the image of a bear on his shield, that struck the first blow on Thomas Becket.²⁹³ This is all to say, that these specific references were clear invectives towards

²⁸⁷ DRM, 93.

²⁸⁸ Cotts translation, and in turn my evaluation of the original Latin text, is based on the Ludwig Schmugge, *Radulfus Niger: De Re Militari et triplici via Peregrinationis Ierosolimitane: 1187-88* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1977). All instances of “soldier” that Cotts uses and I examine are *miles* in Schmugge’s original Latin.

²⁸⁹ DRM, 82; Schmugge, *De Re Militari*, 105. The text Schmugge uses is *peditum*.

²⁹⁰ DRM, 86; Schmugge, *De Re Militari*, 108. The text Schmugge uses is *pedes*.

²⁹¹ DRM, 100; Schmugge, *De Re Militari*, 115. The text Schmugge uses is *predestris*.

²⁹² DRM, 86; Schmugge, *De Re Militari*, 108.

²⁹³ Barlow, *Becket*, 311-312. See also the miniature from Harley MS 5102, f. 32r, which shows Reginald fitzUrse and the heraldry on his shield in near contemporaneous art.

not only knights in general, who of course had horses, swords, spurs, and lances, but the knights of his homeland specifically, who by the time of Becket's slaughter were one of the few who were consistently using heraldry.

Something that sets Ralph's Crusade critique apart from his peers and contemporaries is that he singled out Western Christians internal and external failures for the fall of Jerusalem. He believed that heretics and heresy present within Christendom, and England specifically, were the primary disqualifying factors that invalidated the legitimacy of Latin claims of "rescuing" the Holy Land.²⁹⁴ Ralph is saying that the domestic threat of heresy takes precedence over the foreign threat of the Saracen, and nowhere is that heresy greater than in England where the slaughter of Thomas Becket by knights was considered the chief crime. The Holy Land became to Ralph what he called a *refugium peccatorum*, a refuge of sinners, as well as of *scelerati*, or criminals.²⁹⁵ When the knight's that slew Becket met justice after attempting to flee from it, they were forced to go on Crusade as penance, in effect becoming sinners and criminals who took refuge in the Holy Land in the same way the Ralph explicitly despised.²⁹⁶

For Ralph, the primary purpose of the arms and armor he sacralizes is to "bring about peace, restrain violence, and guarantee trust." Restraining violence here directly relates to the chivalric concept of measure or restraint. Throughout this preface, he emphasizes the purpose of the parallels between the physical and the spiritual as a means to emphasize the ability of the knight

²⁹⁴ Schmugge, *De Re Militari*, 192, reads, "Quid ergo erit, cum tot civitates in terra nostra et inter nos contra fidem edificentur non omnino occulte, quoniam in terra regis, sub quo passus est beatus Thomas martyr Anglorum, infiniti aperte profitentur hereses suas, etiam adeo inolescere ceperunt, ut ecclesie multe omni de cultura destituantur?", which I translate as, "What therefore will be, when so many cities are built in our lands amongst us openly against the faith, since in the land of the king, under whom suffered blessed Thomas martyr of the English, a boundless number openly profess their heresies, even so much to become insolent, that many churches would be bereft of veneration?"

²⁹⁵ DRM, 251; Schmugge, *De Re Militari*, 194.

²⁹⁶ Barlow, *Becket*, 325

to contend with physical and spiritual threats respectively. This directly references the notion of chivalric lay piety that sought to sacralize even the most mundane of knightly deeds, behavior, and gear. The first item sacralized are the spurs.²⁹⁷ Ralph explains that the spurs relate directly to the feet, which are the movers of the body. They move the knight, “either toward salvation or toward death.”²⁹⁸ They are situated on spiritual and moral ground as much as they are on physical and can spur the knight towards avarice if the knight is sinful, or towards salvation if the knight is virtuous. Once more we see an indictment against avarice, something endlessly important for knights as advocates as *largesse*.

In the second chapter, Niger discusses the importance of “iron greaves” (before the thirteenth century this meant mail leggings).²⁹⁹ These he calls “deliberation and counsel” and says that they underlie all other virtues.³⁰⁰ “Deliberation and counsel” is synonymous with *sens*, or sound and good judgment, a central value of tripartite chivalry. This also ties with the chivalric value of measure as he mentions how deliberation can counsel hasty action, restricting a knight from careless actions such as running headlong into battle, a common downfall for knights. He also explains the importance of discipline in battle and morality. This is paralleled in chapter 32 of

²⁹⁷ DRM, 67.

²⁹⁸ DRM, 68.

²⁹⁹ Of note is Cotts translation of *ocreis ferries* as “iron greaves”. “Greaves” invariably refers to a singular piece of plate armor for the shins, which by the late 1180s, when Niger wrote *De re militari*, did not exist. The earliest example of iron greaves appears to be from the mid-13th century. Ewart Oakeshott notes the earliest example being artistic, existing in the Trinity College Apocalypse from as early as the 1230s, see Ewart R. Oakeshott, *The Archaeology of Weapons: Arms and Armor from Prehistory to the Age of Chivalry* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1994), 284-285. From my research it appears Oakeshott is referring to Cambridge R.16.2 Trinity Apocalypse f. 23r. The rider in the foreground appears to be wearing a very simple rectangular plate greave, nothing formed or shaped. I also have found nothing else in the same manuscript, just this rider. I will refrain from delving into my typical extensive discourse on linguistics here and suffice to say that Cotts translation is inappropriate. *Ocreis* can be translated as “leggings” as well as “greaves” and the former is clearly the proper one here, such that *ocreis ferries* should be leggings of iron, or colloquially, mail leggings, which were ubiquitous at the time. This is important because Niger extensively discusses the importance of the *ocreis* materially as something that covers the feet, shins and legs, which greaves cannot but leggings can, and spiritually as the *ocreis* supports the moral foundation of the knight in such a way that a simple shin plate does not properly represent. Noting the translation as “legging” here is vitally important in Niger’s discussion.

³⁰⁰ DRM, 69.

Geoffroi de Charny's *Livre de chevalerie* (1350), where de Charny extolls the danger of disregarding good counsel or advice in battle and behavior. He develops this further in the next chapter explaining how important it is to share good advice and in the previous chapter he propounds the values of wisdom which allows a knight give good advice.³⁰¹ This is a direct promotion of *sens*, one of the primary social virtues of chivalry. Ralph also states the importance of "restraint and obedience". In the material and spiritual context where Ralph discusses both literal and religious battle respectively, this can mean two things: (1) Knights should possess moral restraint and martial measure. (2) Knights should be obedient to God and obedient to their earthly lord. He also tells the knight to be humble.³⁰² This obedience to God is a promotion of piety and the notion of the *miles Christi*, and obedience to a knight's lord is a promotion of the virtue of loyalty, or *lauté*.

Ralph's next application is on the mail coat, which he uses to explain how if the knight has one virtue, he must have them all, and if he lacks one, he must lack them all. This is to say that as Ralph considers the any one virtue to any other, and any knight to link to any virtue, he also notes it is like a mail coat in which "any ring interlocks four others."³⁰³ This is an intense form of sacralization since it binds the knight to Augustinian virtues in such a way that they are inseparable from the knight himself. In chapter nine, Ralph claims that the sword allows the knight to defend himself and, once defended, he is able to be an exemplar to others, and teach, preach, and expound the word of God. Here he also paraphrases the words of his close friend John of Salisbury's work

³⁰¹ BoC, 150-151.

³⁰² DRM, 70.

³⁰³ DRM, 71. Interesting to note how Niger explicitly and casually mentions mail that possesses rings that "interlock four others", referencing four-in-one mail construction, something that would likely not be familiar to anyone either than one wealthy enough to purchase mail, such as a knight or greater, or an armor crafter. Of course, I contended that Niger was the former and this is further proof of this. See Ashdown, *European Arms & Armor*, 86, fig. 102 for details on this construction.

Metalogicon in emphasizing the importance of the wise knight.³⁰⁴ This is a promotion of the virtue of *sens* (good judgment), which encourages the ability and desire to instruct good morals and knowledge. In chapter ten, “On mounting the horse”, associates the task of mounting with chastity and the value of reason, or the ability to refrain from chastity.³⁰⁵ This directly references the chivalric value of modesty which encouraged knights to restrain themselves from lust and promiscuity. In chapter 12, “On the lance”, Ralph summarizes his previous associations: “Thus, if intention is signified by the sandals, conscience by the mail-coat, reason by the helmet, and truth by the shield, then perseverance is signified by the lance.”³⁰⁶ Chapter 15, “On the armor of the horse”, the armor that protects the head of the horse reminds a knight to be diligent and knowledgeable, and the armor on the horse’s hindquarters reminds a knight to be modest.³⁰⁷ This indictment on pride and vanity is echoed in chapter 28, where Ralph delivers a searing condemnation on vanity couched in religious terms:

Pride both despoils us and casts us down, because when the flesh is disobedient and puffed up, and then grows proud, humility is snatched away, and man is cast down through pride: he who exalteth himself, shall be humbled, and the impious one is always exalted before his ruin. For hate gets rid of love, wrath gets rid of modesty, and lust does the same with continence. Moreover, it diminishes our natural qualities and carries off spoils, because it sometimes enervates the strengths of the body, renders us slow, and dims our vision. It even brings us many similar evils and so weakens the whole body.³⁰⁸

This parallels the 21st chapter of the *Livre* of de Charny, where he, too, emphasizes how a good knight should refrain from pampering himself, and that in fact, “love of that is the worst kind of love there is.”³⁰⁹ Ralph put forth the same concerns about how obsession with oneself causes

³⁰⁴ DRM, 76.

³⁰⁵ DRM, 76.

³⁰⁶ DRM, 78.

³⁰⁷ DRM, 80.

³⁰⁸ DRM, 95.

³⁰⁹ BoC, 123.

the knight to pamper himself to a point of weakness and desire for sloth and luxurious excess. In fact, at times specific lines are repeated almost perfectly. Niger states about prideful knights, “They eat no food unless it is painstakingly prepared, and they accept no drink unless it is a wine that is renowned or mixed with enticing spices.”³¹⁰ De Charny states about pampered knights:

—to sustain these wretched men's bodies which have little time to live that have to be provided with the best food and wine that are to be found, and require to eat at the right time, or otherwise they will be in too great distress because of the great delight they take in such things. And because of this gluttony, they dread the hardship associated with deeds of arms.³¹¹

Ralph and de Charny are on the same chivalric wavelength and their text’s echo each other’s in often extreme fashion. This evidences that Niger is advocating for the value of *hardiesce* (fortitude), in a fashion identical to later chivalric tracts. In chapter 42 of the *Livre*, the spiritual and physical requirements of the order of knighthood are considered intertwined, and chapter 43 also expresses the intrinsic divinity of the knightly station.³¹² De Charny’s *Livre* imitates Ralph’s. There is even discourse on kingship with Ralph spending the entirety of book two on this and de Charny parts of chapter 24 and all of chapters 25 and 26. Thus, Ralph has written an extensive chivalric text anticipating countless ideas and sentiments that would not be seen until later codifications of chivalry. According to Ralph, embodying piety encourages the knight to practice measure, restraint, and modesty. Moreover, he counsels knights to guard the “court of man” in chapter 21, which translates to taking care of maintaining proper conversation and discourse in

³¹⁰ DRM, 306.

³¹¹ BoC, 125.

³¹² BoC, 137, 181-189.

court. This of course is a heavily symbolized promotion of *courtoisie* bound up in religious verbiage, but the chivalric core is there.³¹³

In the 50th chapter of the fourth book, “On the Enumeration of knights”,³¹⁴ Ralph denounces knights who through lust for money become “devoted to tournament” and how this love of the tournament undercuts the brotherly bonds necessary in knighthood because a knight unhorsed “cannot get back up without someone to lift him.”³¹⁵ He also expresses concern for the weakening of the knightly class, which had become similar to women: “The condition of knights has been so enervated that it is now more delicate than that of a tender woman.”³¹⁶ This is another direct promotion of the quality of *hardiesce*, or hardiness and fortitude. Lastly, he essentially summarizes the purpose of his critique at the end of the 51st chapter. He says, “Since the entire knighthood has been corrupted, it should be carefully considered what sins have ensnared the character of each knight, and to what end he seeks to go on pilgrimage.”³¹⁷ The enervating of the knightly class is echoed by the likes of de Charny in the 22nd chapter of his *Livre*. While Ralph’s critique is noticeably more sexist than de Charny’s, the core point of the criticism that pampered and enfeebled knights are worthy of scorn is present in both.³¹⁸ This parallel is vital because substantiating the origination of chivalry is typically positioned in texts, so texts like *De re militari* that predate other chivalric texts support *De re militari* being considered a founding chivalric text. *De re militari* shows evidence for embodied chivalric lay piety, through the internal sacralization of knightly behavior and the lauding of wartime suffering. Ralph also instructs the Davidic ethic through the portrayal of the knight’s enemies as Goliath in chapter 26, directly drawing a parallel

³¹³ DRM, 86-87.

³¹⁴ DRM, 304.

³¹⁵ DRM, 305.

³¹⁶ DRM, 305.

³¹⁷ DRM, 306.

³¹⁸ BoC, 125.

between knights and the Biblical David.³¹⁹ All spiritual chivalric values are embodied in Ralph's text directed towards knights, embodied chivalric lay piety as well as the Davidic ethic. All martial and social values are as well, prowess, measure, modesty, restraint, loyalty, hardiness, good judgment, and many aspects of courtesy.

Connection to the Angevins

Ralph Niger was deeply intertwined with the Angevins. He spent time extensively at the time of the court of Henry the Young King and at various parishes in England and in the Angevin territories. He was a staunch critic of Henry II and even when he was travelling internationally, he always remained in tune with both English and Angevin politics and his English identity.³²⁰ Moreover, Ralph had a lengthy literary history of interweaving the political and religious with his texts, aiming to critique political institutions through Biblical exegesis.³²¹ That is to say he was as intensely political as John of Salisbury was, and the politics were oriented entirely amongst the Angevins.

³¹⁹ DRM, 91.

³²⁰ Cotts, *On Warfare*, 22.

³²¹ Cotts, *On Warfare*, 49.

The Arthurian Consideration

When someone thinks of knights and chivalry they are likely to think of the Matter of Britain and its distinctly French contributor, Chrétien de Troyes (fl. 1160 - 1191). Two things must be noted here that undercut this observation and preclude the inclusion of a discussion of these works as relevant for the central argument of this thesis. One, the *chevalrie* that Troyes used in his works meant something entirely different than the tripartite chivalry described in both this thesis and the secondary literature. The *chevalrie* of Troyes meant something closer to skill in arms or prowess, and was used as a discrete concept along with other terms and ideals of noble social conduct and to a much more distant extent, pious behavior.³²² The second thing to note is that Chrétien's work owed much more to Britain than merely the setting. Chrétien relied heavily on older Angevin and Anglo-Norman writers, both Wace (c. 1110 - 1174) and Geoffrey of Monmouth (c. 1095 - 1155), to write his works. Ian Short notes that the first pre-Chrétien, distinctly English,

³²² Crouch, *English Aristocracy*, 195; Crouch, *Chivalric Turn*, 36, 289; See also Jean Flori, "La Notion De Chevalerie Dans Les Romans De Chrétien De Troyes." *Romania* 114, no. 455/456 (3/4) (1996): 294–295, 314–315. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45039135>. Flori notes that while there are integrated elements of Christianity in the works, warlike and social qualities occupy the majority of references. She compiled the adjectives and their occurrences into a table on pages 314–315 entitled: "Occurrences des Adjectifs Associés à Chevalier" or "Occurrences of Adjectives Associated with Knights.". She evaluates adjectival terms in the twelfth-century epics under evaluation under note and the works of Chrétien De Troyes to reveal that for the former: "En effet, dans les épopées, les adjectifs liés à la naissance (*franc*, *gentiz*, *noble*) occupaient les premières places, loin devant les qualités guerrières (*bon*, *vaillant*, *hardi*), puis celles qui s'y réfèrent indirectement en soulignant renommée acquise par l'exercice de cette fonction: *proz* ou *preu*, de *pris*, *eslis*.", or, "Indeed, in the epics, the adjectives linked to birth (*franc*, *gentiz*, *noble*) occupied the first places, far ahead of the warrior qualities (*bon*, *vaillant*, *hardi*), then those which refer to it indirectly by emphasizing the reputation acquired by the exercise of this function: *proz* or *preu*, from *pris*, *eslis*." And concerning Troyes she says, "Lorsque l'on passe des épopées à Chrétien de Troyes, on s'aperçoit que les adjectifs notant la valeur guerrière viennent très largement en tête, bien avant ceux qui soulignent la naissance: *franc* n'occupe plus ici que le 3e rang, *gentiz* le 12e et *noble* le dernier.", or, "When we move from the epics to Chrétien de Troyes, we realize that the adjectives denoting warlike valor mostly reach the top, well before those which emphasize birth: *franc* only occupies the 3rd rank here, *gentiz* the 12th and *noble* the last.". Thus, warlike and social qualities for Troyes, in that order, occupy nearly all of the lauded qualities and religious qualities seem to not be listed at all. Flori does discuss the complex relationship with Troyes' knights and religious prescription and the adjective *proz*, but seems to note that it means behavior related to that which maintains or improves reputation as opposed to something strictly, or even primarily, religious. Additional note, regarding the full quotation of Flori's text in this footnote. As of the time of this thesis I have only a full collegiate education in Latin, not French which I have only studied independently and in secondary school. Flori's article is vital to this work and requires inclusion but does not have an English translation, so I am obliged to use my own translation. I include the original text, as well as this explanatory note, to maintain complete transparency and academic integrity on my part.

Arthurian tracts were written specifically for the Anglo-Norman knightly class. The purpose in writing them was to create literature that represented knightly conduct that they could personally identify with. It was only in twelfth-century Anglo-Norman and Angevin Britain that the unique mixture of Celtic, English, French, and Latin cultural and literary traditions could come together to create the cultural foundations for the Arthurian world to be created in the first place.³²³ Thus, surveying pre-1180s Arthurian work by Chrétien would not bring us closer to origin point for chivalric literature. Chrétien's chivalry was something entirely different and much more limited than the tripartite chivalry and knightly conduct described by Ralph Niger, John of Salisbury, and later chivalric codifiers. What content he *did* create was derived from distinctly Angevin, or at least Anglo-Norman, origins. During the thirteenth century, discussion of Arthurian texts would become vital when discussing chivalry, but in the twelfth century, Arthurian literature can in no way be deemed instructional or conduct literature, which is a prerequisite for its consideration. Moreover, the *chevalerie* and behavior elucidated in Chrétien's texts are exponentially more limited than tripartite chivalry. This is to say that even if these early Arthurian texts could be argued as being instructional, the conduct it instructs would fundamentally not be chivalric.

As described above, David Crouch defined three forms of literature as being central to the formation of chivalry, Catonian, Salomonic, and Instructional. Arthurian literature at this time, which existed in a broadly Anglo-French milieu and spawned from a distinctly Insular heritage, existed apart from *any* of these three foundational literary categories. Crouch concurs by refraining

³²³ Ian Short, "Language and Literature", in *A Companion to the Anglo-Norman World*, ed. Christopher Harper-Bill and Elisabeth van Houts (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer Ltd., 2003), 194. For the integral and inseparable Celtic contribution see Joseph Campbell, *Romance of the Grail: The Magic and Mystery of Arthurian Myth*, ed. Evans Lansing Smith (Novato, CA: New World Library, 2015), 5, 29, 152, 162-163; John Matthews, *Sources of the Grail: An anthology* (Hudson, NY: Lindisfarne Press, 1997), 25; See also A.G. van Hamel, "The Celtic Grail", in *Sources of the Grail: An anthology* (Hudson, NY: Lindisfarne Press, 1997), John Rhys, "The Origin of the Holy Grail", in *Sources of the Grail: An anthology* (Hudson, NY: Lindisfarne Press, 1997), and A. C. L. Brown, "The Irish Element in King Arthur and the Grail", in *Sources of the Grail: An anthology* (Hudson, NY: Lindisfarne Press, 1997).

from discussing the Matter of Britain as being a part of any of the three sub-genres of conduct literature or using Arthurian literature as an origin point for chivalry. Knightly romances and epics were simply mirrors of chivalry, not dictators of it. They reflected and depicted the behavior of knights that was already extant and being performed, it did not seek to instruct or instill novel behavior in knights. It is certainly the case that a dialogue occurred where romance and epic literature influenced the conduct of knights and vice versa, but this dialogue did not begin in the twelfth century.

What Does This Evidence Say?

The beginning of this chapter asserted two broad claims that the secondary literature contends the origin of chivalry relied on. The first claim is that the structure and context of the *Ordene de Chevalerie* was the first instantiation of chivalry through its inclusion of four elements: (1) The girding, oath-swearing, and dubbing ceremony. (2) The conferral of either explicit or implicit (often the latter) core chivalric values. (3) The assigning of specific attributes, generally religious, to parts of the knight's equipment. (4) The text was written by clerics and attempted to sacralize the institution of knighthood. The second claim is that a change in the instructional literature occurred, which dictated what Crouch calls the "chivalric turn", where knightly conduct literature became divorced from generic noble prescriptions. This is to say that the genesis of chivalry began with literature that *instructed* chivalry, "chivalry" being the tripartite chivalry described in chapter one. This "chivalric turn" is claimed to have begun around the thirteenth century, and chivalric conduct literature is exemplified by texts such as Ramon Llul's *Llibre de l'Ordre de Cavalleria* and especially Geoffroi de Charny's *Le Livre de Chevalerie*.

The argument made is that both *Policraticus* and *De re militari*, especially with the historical and cultural context of the Anglo-Normans and Angevins, satisfy all the previous two claims decades, if not centuries prior to the *Ordene de Chevalerie*, *Llibre de l'Ordre de Cavalleria* or the *Le Livre de Chevalerie*. Specifically, *Policraticus* predates the *Ordene* by decades and satisfies all four elements of claim one, and due to it being an intentionally designed didactic text as opposed to an allegory in the form of a mythologized meeting, it is much better evidence for something intended to be directed towards real and tangible knights and thus reified, actually occurring, conduct. Likewise, *De re militari* specifically predates any and all conduct manuals instructing tripartite chivalry by decades at least. It was by far the first instance of the *miles Christi* in a function intended to instruct knights, and while such a concept was widespread by the early thirteenth century as discussed prior, it was seen first in Ralph's work.

When considering the reception of these two works it is important to note that the secondary source research about them is both sparse and recent. While the novelty of these works in relation to assessing their chivalric content is inherent to the novelty of this thesis's research, it means that inspections into their reception and broader relevance are admittedly limited. As mentioned above, David Crouch claimed that *De re militari*'s effects on knightly courtly culture were "very significant".³²⁴ He also believes the presence of John of Salisbury's and Stephen de Fougères texts in the 1150s indicated a marked and widespread understanding of knightly conduct in England and Northern France.³²⁵ But he makes these claims using the same argument that this thesis does: that these texts existed right before the flourishing of chivalric literature and within the same cultural milieu that chivalric literature would later rise out of so they *must* have had a

³²⁴ Crouch, *Chivalric Turn*, 35.

³²⁵ Crouch, *Chivalric Turn*, 275.

broad reception amongst knights. For Crouch, other chivalric codifiers echoed the sentiments in these works and came from the same culture, so they must have been well received. Dedicated studies on the knightly reception of these texts have not yet been made, and there does not exist space in this thesis to evaluate the reception of these texts in a way that differs from Crouch. As it stands, the claim that these two texts received wide reception in knightly and courtly circles is firmly attested by the secondary literature that has assessed them, even if the evidence used is not as concrete.

Conclusion

“Here ends the Order of Chivalry”

*-L’Ordene de Chevalerie, l. 503.*³²⁶

The chivalric ideal became fully realized at the end of the twelfth century in the Angevin Empire when the extant social behavioral norms and clerical prescriptions placed themselves on a newly crystalized segment of the warrior class: knights. The earliest unambiguous delineations of the ideals of knightly conduct emerged within the Angevin Empire. They were written by Anglo-French clerics closely tied to the courts of Henry II and his heir, Henry the Young King. This thesis argued that these prescriptions functioned as mechanisms of social control, seeking to shape and regulate the behavior of knights, who were becoming a distinct and influential class due to political and social reforms occurring under the Angevins as described in chapter two. *Policraticus*, *Le Livre des manières*, and *De re militari*, contained explicit commandments for knightly conduct, which resonated within the specific temporal and geographic milieu of the late 12th-century Angevin dominion. Moreover, the household of the Young King, with luminaries and chivalric exemplars such as Ralph Niger and William Marshal, initiated the creation of these prescriptive works.

The beginning of this study was necessarily concerned with the assessment, and resultant exclusion, of regions in which chivalry could have potentially developed. These included regions

³²⁶ *Ordene de Chevalerie*, trans. Keith Busby (Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1983), 175. Original language transcription available in Appendix B.

on the periphery of the Angevin Empire that were later hotbeds of chivalric and knightly culture, but whose claims to the origination of knightly culture were arguably dubious. Attempts were made to assess conduct in these regions with the limited space and material available in this study. Through these assessments, the conclusion reached was that these regions had weak claims on the origin of the institution of chivalry as we came to know it. The next chapter was concerned with discussing the political reality of the Angevin Empire for the purpose of making it clear why it was so conducive to the development of chivalry. The chapter traces the history of the empire from its Anglo-Norman foundations to the reign of Henry II. As well as keeping track of various cultural and political artifacts that persisted and present themselves in ways that were central for the establishment of both knighthood, the identity of knights, as well as the further development of conduct for those knights, i.e. chivalry. This is not to say that chivalry had all of its contributions entirely located in one place. To claim that something is ephemeral as a cultural phenomenon could ever be located within the geographic or political bounds of a single polity would be absurd. But irrelevant of where those contributions were originally located, as evidenced from the texts inspected, they ultimately fused together into chivalry in the Angevin Empire between the 1160s and 1180s.

Future Avenues and Limitations of Study

The bounds of this study have been ultimately established by both time and space. I have only been able to dedicate several months to writing and research, and my sources have been restricted to those local to me, as I have no access to undigitized archives with relevant material. I believe the crux of my thesis rests on the sources I have dealt with, and any additional sources

would serve only auxiliary purposes. They would nevertheless enrich my argument should I choose to engage in the future exploration of this topic.

Related to the matter of sources lies my next major limitation in this study which is my limited register of languages. Not being fluent in French has severely limited my ability to fully appraise the secondary source literature on this topic, and the lack of proper Old French and Anglo-Norman knowledge has also hampered my ability to easily read the primary vernacular sources. A full inspection of this argument will absolutely require fluency in French, both old and new, and the knowledge of those languages will likely result in major transformations in the validity of my thesis, for better or worse. I lack any knowledge of any non-French or Latin language as well, such as Middle High German or Old Spanish. While I strongly believe that even with fluency in these languages, and in turn the ability to read the entirety of the sources, the validity of my thesis would not be affected, it still has meant that my exclusion of these non-Anglo-French territories is based on research that was not conducted on original primary sources. As a result, an enterprising scholar who wishes to argue the converse of my thesis (that chivalry began in Iberia, Germany, Italy, etc.), with their fluency in those languages will be much better put to appraise the appropriateness of those regions than I was in this study.

A major avenue of future research lies in references to sieges across the breadth of the twelfth century, and the frequency in which the besiegers granted the besieged clemency in their requests for grace. While the person doing the besieging is invariably mentioned, as they tend to be a member of the nobility, the sources were not always explicit with the station of the person leading the garrison: the constable or castellan. These two roles are avenues worthy of independent inspection of course, but from the perspective of chivalric studies, a survey of recorded sieges in which the besieged are outlined and their roles are delineated, such that their membership to the

knightly class could be possibly ascertained, could be of immense value. As if this is cross-referenced with the frequency of whether respite is granted, it can be derived whether or not the recognition of knightly status, and thus a mutual perception of chivalry, affected behavior in warfare.

Another further opportunity of study is a more through inspection of the role of women. As I have intimated in my admittedly meagre subsection, I am more of the mind that women had more agency in the development of chivalry than they may first appear on the surface. I am generally not wholly on board with Ruth Karras who considers chivalry as an ethos that sought to merely commodify and objectify women. Whether as characters in romance or conduct literature or as inspirations or patrons of chivalry, women surely served vital roles in which through their own agency they were able to affect the direction of conduct. I do not know whether such an investigation will result in an claim on the origin of chivalry, but it would nevertheless be of distinct value in the field of gendered social history. Additionally, I ultimately did not find it necessary to discuss the role of the Crusades in the formation of chivalry. I do believe such an inclusion would have enriched my argument, and evaluating the Crusades could be of immense value, but I simply did not have the space nor time to include an assessment of it, and an assessment of it was not necessary to make an origination claim. Another, and perhaps much more distinct route of further inspection, would be a more thorough analysis of sources such as chronicles and letters to try and ascertain whether or not knights actually read and received the growing body of chivalric literature. Did knights make reference to texts they read either implicitly or explicitly? Can a noticeable shift in behavior be perceived in a region where a chivalric text, whether romantic or didactic, was disseminated? While there are a number of sources on the prevalence of literacy in twelfth century

England and France as included in this thesis, more sources targeting knights specifically would be useful to further prove the spread and reception of chivalric literature.

Closing Thoughts

Knights were an intensely complex component of medieval life. They were expected to be loyal courtiers, romantic poets, and pious warriors, and often all together at the same time. To be a knight, particularly during this flowering age of chivalry, meant being pulled apart at all sides by these series of expectations and pressures. It is often asked whether knights were truly chivalrous, if they truly adhered themselves unerringly to the precepts of their immaculate code of conduct. To ask such a thing is to approach asking whether *humans* are truly good, for only a term such as “good” approaches the capaciousness that is carried by the term “chivalry”. In attempting to find the source of the knight’s chivalry, I am also finding the source of that which has entranced me my entire life. In essence, I perhaps wish to impart a small part of my fascination with this powerfully complex enigma to those who are to read this thesis.

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Appendix A: Epitaph

Robert of Rhuddlan's epitaph in Latin:

1 Hoc in mausoleo Robertus de Rodelento
 Conditur humano more soli gremio
 Filius Unfredi Dacorum spermate nati,
 Fortis et illustris iste fuit iuuenis.
5 Dapsilis et pugnax, agilis formosus et audax
 Miles in orbe fuit, uiuere dum licuit
 Marchio munificus sociisque fidelis amicus
 Ut Christi sponse paruit æcclesiæ.
 Presbiteros, monachos, pupillos et peregrinos
10 Semper honorabat, largaque dona dabat.
 Construxit castrum tenuitque diu Rodolentum
 Firmiter indigenis oppositum rabidis
 Barbaricas contra gentes exercuit arma
 Mille pericla probo sponte ferens animo
15 Montem Snaudunum fluuiumque citum Coluenum
 Pluribus armatus transiliit uicibus.
 Precipuam pulchro Blideno rege fugato
 Predam cum paucis cepit in insidiis.
 Duxit captiuum lorisque ligauit Hoellum
20 Qui tunc Walensi rex preerat manui.
 Cepit Grithfridum regem, uicitque Trehellum,
 Sic micuit crebris militiae titulis,
 At tamen incaute Walenses ausus adire
 Occidit estiui principio Iulii.

25 Prodidit Owenius, rex est gauisus Hoellus
Facta uindicta monte sub Hormaeua.
Ense caput secuit Grithfridus et in mare iecit,
Soma quidem reliquum possidet hunc loculum.
In claustro sancti requiescit patris Ebrulfi
30 Pro meritis cuius sit sibi plena salus,
Quondam robustus iacet hic nunc exanimatus
Hinc dolor in tota personat hac patria.
Hic modo fit puluis, iam nil agit utilitatis,
Ergo pie lector eius adesto memor,
35 Hunc ut in etherea locet arce roga prece digna,
Cum lacrimis uerum qui regit omne Deum.
Christe Dei splendor, uitæ dator et reparator
Orbis, huic famulo propiciare tuo.
Eripe Tartareis Robertum Christe caminis,
40 Est nimis ipse reus, terge precor facinus.
Parce quod ipse piam rogicans clamore Mariam
Consutus rigidis occubuit iaculis,
Indulge culpas, mansuras annue gazas.
44 Ut queat ymnidicis semper inesse choris. Amen.

Appendix B: Epigraphs

Original language transcriptions of chapter epigraphs:

Introduction:

*Li chevalier, a droit esgart, Cil qui n'ont de lor non regart,
Ne connoissent, si est granz deus, Eus ne lor non, ne lor non eus.
-Le Roman des Eles, ll. 51-54.*

Chivalry in the Periphery:

*Tuvo muchas veces competencia con el cura de su lugar,
que era hombre docto, graduado en Sigüenza,
sobre cuál había sido mejor caballero: Palmerín de Inglaterra o Amadís de Gaula.
- El ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha, Capítulo primero, párrafo tres.*

The Angevins:

*Prefatus autem Erembertus erat natione Normannus,
ante conuersionem miles strenuus,
postmodum uero monachus in ordine feruidus
-Orderic Vitalis, Historia Ecclesiastica, Liber VII, Capitulum XIII.*

The Literary and Linguistic Evidence:

*Armatam militiam ad religionem ex necessitate teteneri,
Sicut illam que in clero divinis obsequiis consecrator;
-Policraticus, Liber VI, Capitulum VIII*

Conclusion:

*Explicit li orders de chevalerie.
-L'Ordene de Chevalerie, l. 503.*