NARRATIVE TRANSFORMATIONS OF PAST AND PRESENT

IN MIDDLE ENGLISH ROMANCE: GUY OF WARWICK, AMIS AND AMILOUN

AND THE SQUYR OF LOWE DEGRE

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CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

List of illustrations

PREFACE

This thesis examines the relationship between some Middle
English romances and their literary and societal contexts. Middle
English romance is a strongly formalised genre with a high degree of
self-consciousness about its own literary devices. The thesis
discusses the status of the reading signals set up by the genre, and
examines the capacity of individual poems to re-use reading signals
in some peculiar ways.

To explore the relationship between particular text and literary
context, a small group of three poems has been selected, in which the
poems create their own small reading context in relation to each
other: Guy of Warwick, Amis and Amiloun and the Squyr of lowe
degre.[1]   The romance Guy of Warwick was well-known throughout the

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1   Texts of and references to these three poems will be as
     follows:
          Amis and Amiloun, edited by MacEdward Leach, EETS (London,
          1937).
          The Squyr of lowe degre, edited by William W. Mead (Boston,
          1904).
     All subsequent references will be to these editions, referred
     to as Amis and Squyr, and will be incorporated in the text.
          Different versions of Guy of Warwick will be used, as
     required:
          The romance of Guy of Warwick: the first or fourteenth-
          century version, edited by Julius Zupitza, EETS (London,
          1883, 1887, 1891); the version in National Library of
          Scotland, Advocates MS 19.2.1 (the Auchinleck manuscript)
          will hereafter be referred to as Guy A.
          The romance of Guy of Warwick: the second or fifteenth-
          century version, edited by Julius Zupitza, EETS (London,
          1875-76, repr. 1966); the version in Cambridge, University
          Library MS Ff.2.38 will hereafter be referred to as Guy B.
     References will be from these editions, and will be

Middle Ages, as indicated by the number of extant versions and the
series of allusions to the poem in other works; it is Guy's capacity
to be re-worked and re-quoted that makes it important to this study
of narrative transformations. Guy has interesting implications for a
diachronic survey, too, in the differences and continuity between the
early thirteenth century Anglo-Norman versions of Gui and the late
fifteenth century re-creations of the story.

My second poem is Amis and Amiloun, indebted to a version of Guy
for some features of its style: a large number of lines are shared
by the versions of Guy and Amis in the Auchinleck manuscript. My
argument seeks to extend the literary implications - for Amis, and
partly too for Guy, and for romance - of this self-conscious
borrowing from Guy's style. Certain features of Amis' didacticism
mean that the poem is a useful fund of romance style, in its
exaggerated use of romance style for ironic effect: Amis both
reveals some typicalities of romance, and uses a context of the
romance genre for its own effect.

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incorporated in the text.
    There are two other Middle English versions of Guy:
Version in Caius MS 107, in Guy A; herafter referred to as
Caius.
Fragments of an early fourteenth century Guy of Warwick,
edited by Maldwyn Mills and Daniel Huws (Oxford, 1974);
hereafter referred to as Fragments.

References to the Anglo-Norman versions of Gui will be taken
from the collated edition, Gui de Warewic: roman du XIIIe
siècle, edited by Alfred Ewert (Paris, 1932-33); hereafter
referred to as Gui.
    For all other works, the first reference will be in full;
subsequent short titles will refer to the bibliography.

My third text is the _Squyr of lowe degre_, a late poem which makes extravagant use of features of the developed style of romance, and has been argued to use material from _Guy_ in particular. The final chapter, on the _Squyr_, is used to discuss the development of late romance, and the ways romance self-consciousness can be extended to something approaching parody. The _Squyr_ evokes the broad tradition of romance development, as epitomised in _Guy_ as a major romance which has created its own literary tradition by the mid-fifteenth century.

The emphasis throughout is not on source relations but on the use of a flexible system of reading signals, established within this group of poems and within the whole genre. While comparing the use of reading signals in these three poems demonstrates nicely a loose kind of intertextuality, it is an intertextuality that works ultimately within the genre and must always be referred back to romance. I want to treat this intertextuality and the derivative quality of this group as emblematic of romance as a whole: one cannot press too strongly the source and analogue relations of each of these three poems because they share the distinctive generic qualities.

So the thesis works on a double scale – within this group, and with reference to the whole genre. A comparison of the use of reading signals between _Guy_ and _Amis_, and _Guy_ and the _Squyr_, is extended in chapter two, section A (ii), and chapter five, section A. But while this small group is discussed each in relation to the next, more central to this thesis is the set of generic conditions that makes possible the sharing of a narrative language between three

fundamentally different poems. The thesis tries to evolve a set of different critical methodologies for dealing with individual poems in the context of romance: for that, every part works both to describe a particular poem and to define the reading signals of romance as a whole.

As such the initial chapter discusses the formal qualities of romance - its style, structure, their implications for its socio-political placing, and finally some conclusions about the literariness and self-consciousness of romance, demonstrated in the texts of the Auchinleck manuscript. In the following chapters, each one of these features is examined closely in relation to one of the three poems. So chapter two, 'Romance style: Amis and Amiloun', discusses the features of Amis that reveal romance style used heavily but in an ironic context: Amis has a very high degree of romance stylisation, emphasised in opposition to the poem's didactic meaning. Some of Amis' features are demonstrated by comparison with Guy, especially at those points where Amis shares lines and phrases with Guy.

Chapter three uses Guy of Warwick to explore some features of romance structure: Guy demonstrates some of the relations romance sets up between structure and causation or meaning. In successive versions, Guy displays features of contemporary romance structuring, but presents a world-view of societies in decline that extends more broadly than in other romances.

Chapter four, 'Romance reception: societal re-creations of Guy deals with the question of the socio-political context to romance, and ultimately with its effects on romance style and status. While

the first chapter discusses the internal evidence of the romances themselves, and critics' accounts of the socio-political status of earlier French romance, chapter four deals almost exclusively with external evidence. A series of documents exist to demonstrate the re-creation and propagation of Guy of Warwick by the earls of Warwick in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; and the chapter argues that, while the survival of this evidence is not typical of romance, the relation of this set of readers to the text is representative of romance, and can be extended by analogy to Guy's wider readership, and perhaps to romance readership generally.

Chapter five, 'Late extensions of romance style and structure: the Squyr of lowe degre', examines the whole question of literary self-consciousness , particularly romance's later developments. The Squyr makes some dislocations of style and structure in relation to a wider romance context, which open up the whole question of parody and the ironic re-use of a fixed romance style. Finally, chapter five discusses the ways each poem employs the device of a double or split hero to create a version of diptych structure. The difference between the poems is best shown comparatively, in the narrow context of intertextuality the group sets up.

For each chapter, then, the text studied in detail bears a different relation to the theoretical and general material of chapter one. Amis is an extreme example of romance stylisation; Guy sets up a paradigm of literary and historiographical structuring; Guy's social context may be representative of a broader, less well-documented socio-political status for romance; and the Squyr extends and exaggerates features of the romance tradition, as apparent in its

derivation and deviation from romance.

Thus the argument explores reading signals set up both by single texts and by reference to a broad literary context. Parallel and shared literary features are used to develop a flexible mode in which one can discuss each romance's evocation and re-direction of generic signals.

Chapter I

MIDDLE ENGLISH ROMANCE: THEORIES AND APPROACHES

A 'ROMANCE'?

The validity of a genre name such as romance is dependent upon two conditions. Firstly, it must 'work' as a critical term - different texts are recognizable as belonging to the same group, in that there are a number of shared significant features. Secondly, it demands some evidence of contemporary awareness that different works are seen as belonging to the same 'set' or genre. The second condition is the more important, for it allows an exploration of the ways literary signals evoke audience expectations, then exploit and perhaps frustrate them. So the present study starts not from the point of view of critical classifications, but from the point of view of the texts' indication and use of generic awareness. It explores the ways medieval verse romances economically evoke a larger literary context to use and perhaps re-direct a flexible system of reading signals.

What evidence is there, then, that in the Middle Ages in England there is a genre 'romance'? Are there any uses of the word in Middle English that suggest the recognition of a shared set of literary features, forming a genre?

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, there are plenty of instances of the use of the word 'romance' as a literary or generic word: as Paul Strohm has shown,[1] the word 'romance' or 'romaunce'

develops its meaning from a reference to the French language to a point where the word <u>romance</u> narrows to evoke a particular kind of story, and kind of matter. John Finlayson puts it like this -

> Originally, <u>romance</u> signified a language derived from popular Latin and also designated a translation from Latin into the vulgar tongue...In England the term was used to distinguish Anglo-Norman or French from the native language and literature. From the thirteenth century on, the sense 'fictitious narrative' which the word has today predominated, and the word came to be applied to a particular kind of fictitious narrative in which the writers in romance languages, particularly the French, chanced to excel.[2]

The surviving evidence for medieval usages and partial definitions of the word 'romance' is of two kinds. The first is a whole series of external references to romance by other texts; Paul Strohm quotes saint's life -

> S'avés oï asez souvent
> Les romans de diverse gent,
> Et des mençongez de cest monde,
> Et de la grant Table roonde,
> Que li rois Artus maintenoit,
> Ou point de verité n'avoit.[3]

He quotes too from the <u>Cursor Mundi</u> -

> Man yhernes rimes for to here,
> And romans red on maneres sere,
> Of Alisaundur þe conquerour;
> Of Iuly Cesar þe emparour;
> O grece and troy the strang strijf,
> Þere many thosand lesis þer lijf;
> O brut þat bern bald of hand,
> Þe first conquerour of Ingland;

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1   'The origin and meaning of Middle English <u>Romaunce</u>', <u>Genre</u>, 10 (1977), 1-28; and '<u>Storie</u>, <u>spelle</u>, <u>geste</u>, <u>romaunce</u>, <u>tragedie</u>: generic distinctions in the Middle English Troy narratives', <u>Speculum</u> 46 (1971), 348-59.

2   'Definitions of Middle English romance,' <u>Chaucer Review</u>, 15 (1980-81), 44-62 and 168-81 (p.46).

3   'Origin and meaning', p.11.

> O kyng arthour þat was so rike,
> Quam non in hys tim was like,
> O ferlys þat hys knythes fell,
> Þat aunters sere I here of tell,
> Als wawan, cai and oþer stabell,
> For to were þe ronde tabell;
> How charles kyng and rauland faght,
> Wit sarazins wald þai na saght;
> Of tristrem and hys leif ysote,
> How he for here be-com a sote,
> O Ioneck and of ysambrase,
> O ydoine and of amadase
> Storis als o ferekin thinges
> O princes, prelates and o kynges...[4]

External references such as these are evidence of the contemporary
recognition of a type of literature that is romance: it extends
'rimes' and 'romans' to a discussion of the heroes and subjects felt
to be typical of romance.

The second kind of evidence is even more interesting: many of
the uses of the word 'romance' come from within works which seek to
present themselves as 'romances'. So the Laud Troy Book (c.1400) has
this passage

> Many speken of men that romaunces rede
> That were sumtyme doughti in dede,
> The while that god hem lyff lente,
> That now ben dede and hennes wente:
> Off Bevis, Gy, and of Gauwayn,
> Off kyng Richard, & of Owayn,
> Off Tristram, and of Percyuale,
> Off Rouland Ris, and Aglauale,
> Off Archeroun, and of Octouian,
> Off Charles, & of Cassibaldan,
> Off Hauelok, Horne, & of Wade; -
> In Romaunces that of hem ben made
> That gestoures often dos of hem gestes
> At Mangeres and at grete ffestes.
> Here dedis ben in remembraunce
> In many fair Romaunce;
> But of the worthiest wyght in wede
> That euere by-strod any stede,

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4   Ibid., pp.10-11.

> Spekes no man, ne in romaunce reɡes
> Off his batayle ne of his dedis.[5]

In the first line, the idea that one can 'rede...romaunces' argues strongly for the use of 'romaunces' to mean texts or books. The passage provides a characterisation, too, of the matter of romances – it gives a list of romance heroes, and suggests that they are men of the past, now dead. It has a sense of self-perpetuating circularity: romance heroes read romances.

While this passage ends with a disclaimer – Hector is not commemorated in romance – it nevertheless evokes a firm sense of the suitability of matter in romances, and uses this literary context to extend these associations to the present text. That is, this text is defined in terms that compare and contrast with an established body of literature.

In the romances themselves there is a strong sense of related literature, and a sense of intertextuality: the reader's understanding of a text is partly dependent on a prior reading of comparable texts. The recurrence of lists of other romance heroes suggests this; for instance, <u>Beues</u> <u>of</u> <u>Hamtoun</u> uses other romance heroes for comparison on a specific point –

> After Iosian is cristing
> Beues dede a gret fiɡting,
> Swich bataile dede neuer non
> Cristene man of flesch ne bon,
> Of a dragoun þer be side
> þat Beues slouɡ þer in þat tide,
> Saue sire Launcelet de Lake,
> He fauɡt wiþ a fur drake,
> And Wade dede also,
> & neuer kniɡtes boute þai to,

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5   Edited by J. E. Wülfing, EETS (London, 1902-03), 11.11-30.

> & Gij a Warwik, ich vnder-stonde,
> Slou3 a dragoun in Norþ-Homberlonde.[6]

Not only does this suggest a set of comparable heroes, it also outlines adventures appropriate to stories about them. This passage, indicative of an early sense of Middle English romance's generic consciousness, is added to the earliest English version of <u>Beues</u> (in the Auchinleck manuscript, c.1330-40).[7]

Romances often do list other romances, or at least their heroes: Kölbing's introduction to <u>Beues</u> quotes

> Guy of Warwick, and Tristram also,
> Bevis of Hampton, and othir moo...
> I ne may reken hem all...

and

> I wol reden romaunces non...
> Nor off sere Launcelot the Lake,
> Off Beffs, ne Gy ne sere Sidrake...[8]

The latter, <u>Richard</u> <u>Coeur</u> <u>de</u> <u>Lion</u>, both uses the generic name 'romaunces' and broadens the definition to list the heroes of romance, before defining itself in another way: the implication is of a set of associations for romance, against which <u>Richard</u> can work.

It seems, then, that the word 'romance' comes to imply a generic function in the selection of certain stories and matters appropriate to this group of works that tends to refer to its own translation from 'romance'. For this chapter concerned with formal recurrences, the word 'romance' itself is important as indicating intention - its

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6   Edited by Eugen Kölbing, EETS (London, 1885, 1886, 1894), 11.2597-2608.

7   <u>Beues</u>, pp.xxxvi-vii. The further implications of this addition are discussed in section E of this chapter, pp.72-73.

8   Quoted in Kölbing's introduction to <u>Beues</u>, p.xxxvii.

repetition, especially in prologues and tail-rhyme lines in these works, makes it a formal indicator to a kind of mutual literary awareness which, as I will argue, is very much present in the romances. Not only do the hero-lists and the use of the word 'romance' define other romances, they are also instances of the texts defining themselves, in a self-conscious and mutually comparative way.

One more point is important, however. When English works use the word 'romance', the word often has a double reference – to 'romance' (or French) source text, and to the present text. The word 'romance' in Middle English works may imply a French original, subsequently overlaid with kinds of appropriate elaboration. Just how strong this sense of appropriateness is will be demonstrated in the next section, with regard to Middle English romances' elaboration of their matter and in their adaptation of French sources.

Overall I think romance is peculiar because there is such a clear set of generic signals, which extends to strong formal similarities between romances: even in an age of formalised and formulaic writing, critics have noted the distinctive and repetitive qualities of romance style, and of romance structure too (see following sections). This formal cohesiveness does not carry over to story direction or meaning, however. That is, one can quite easily assemble a catalogue of romances, as writers such as Dieter Mehl,[9] J. Burke Severs[10] and Laura Hibbard Loomis[11] have done, grouping

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9   The Middle English romances in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (London, 1969).

10   Severs and others, A manual of the writings in Middle English 1050-1500, 5 vols (New Haven, 1967), vol 1, 'Romances'.

syntactically, by matter or by shared motif: but these categories are so clumsy as to make apparent the diversity of the works within them. A set of formal similarities between romances are used for a comparative and contrastive range of different kinds of poem. That is why this thesis discusses shared formal elements before dealing with differences of meaning. This chapter examines the means, or the shared fund of reading signals; the four following chapters examine different uses to which this fund is put - a 'romance language' is a tool for the creation of a wide range of different meanings and story directions. A description of distinctive textual signals in romance highlights the ways individual romances' generic allegiance becomes a pre-requisite for the creation of individual meaning.

First, though, a note on the problems of selecting a body of romances. Choosing a group of romances from roughly the same period - preferably early - as a basis for the investigation of shared features presents so many sampling problems as to be practically unworkable as an account of the development of typical romance. Derek Pearsall's list of fifty romances composed before 1400 looks very useful: however, Pearsall's emphasis on the 'development' of Middle English romance is undercut by the rather haphazard survival of his corpus of romances.[12] 'Development' implies a continuous tradition, in which one decade's romances influenced the next decade's romances, to produce a continual smooth change: however,

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11   Mediaeval romance in England: a study of the sources and analogues of the non-cyclic metrical romances (New York, 1924).

12   'The development of Middle English romance', Mediaeval Studies, 27 (1965), 91-116 (pp.93-95).

these romances survive from different regions of the country.

To argue a 'development' in Middle English romance demands, moreover, a representative body of material. However, these scattered romances, supposed to have been composed in the fourteenth century, cannot be representative - either of fourteenth century romance, or even of the extant Middle English romances - for a series of reasons. Firstly, many of these poems survive only in much later manuscripts: for instance, Torrent of Portyngale survives only in a 'fifteenth century' manuscript.[13] Several of the large romance manuscripts - such as British Library, Cotton MS, Caligula A ii (which contains the only copy of Emaré), the Thornton manuscript (Lincoln Cathedral MS 91), and Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff.2.38 (which contains the only copy of Le Bone Florence of Rome) - are from about the middle of the fifteenth century or even later.[14]

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13   Edited by E. Adam, EETS (London, 1887), p.v.

14   Cotton Caligula A ii: see Octovian Imperator, edited by Frances McSparran (Heidelberg, 1979), pp.8-13; and Gisela Guddat-Figge, Catalogue of manuscripts containing Middle English romances (Munich, 1976), pp.169-72.
The Thornton manuscript (Lincoln Cathedral MS 91): see The Thornton romances, edited by J. O. Halliwell, pp.v-xxxvi; and Guddat-Figge, Catalogue, pp.135-42.
Cambridge UL MS Ff.2.38: see Le Bone Florence of Rome, edited by Carol Falvo Heffernan (Manchester, 1976), pp.40-41; Guddat-Figge, Catalogue, pp.94-99.
Frances McSparran and P. R. Robinson, introduction to the facsimile Cambridge University Library MS Ff.2.38 (London, 1979), say of the Thornton MS, Cotton Caligula A ii, Auchinleck and Cambridge UL MS Ff.2.38

These four manuscripts between them contain about three fifths of the surviving Middle English romances composed in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, including three quarters of all the tail-rhyme romances. The Auchinleck manuscript has 15 (5 in unique copies), the Lincoln Thornton has 8 (2 in unique copies), as have the Cotton Caligula A II (4 in unique copies) and Ff.2.38 (one, Le Bone Florence of Rome, in a unique copy).(p.vii)

A probable fourteenth century original text perhaps subjected to later re-workings is of little use to this study of style, and of developing style. Secondly, the surviving fourteenth century romances sometimes survive in such peculiar contexts that one has to doubt how far they were seen, or can be seen, as central to the romance genre: for example, one version of King Horn survives in British Library Harley MS 2253, described by Pearsall as a '"highbrow"' manuscript, which includes King Horn among a series of songs and lyrics and prefaces it 'Her begynneþ þe geste of Kyng Horn'.[15] Thirdly, a large number of the genuine fourteenth century texts are in the Auchinleck manuscript, of c.1330-40.[16] It seems to me that the Auchinleck manuscript is a carefully compiled and edited book which makes an interestingly self-conscious use of generic signals.[17] However, it is hard to determine whether Auchinleck's selection and treatment of romances is unique, or representative of early fourteenth century manuscripts. The degree to which Auchinleck is unusual is not clear in a context of 'fourteenth century' romances of which the Auchinleck romances are a large part. Such considerations constantly frustrate attempts to find a representative corpus of romances - the signs are that the few and accidentally-

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15   See the Facsimile of British Museum MS. Harley 2253, with an introduction by N. R. Ker, EETS (London, 1965), p.xiii and fol. 83; Derek Pearsall, Old English and Middle English poetry (London, 1977), p.113.

16   A facsimile of the manuscript, with an introduction by Derek Pearsall and I. C. Cunningham, The Auchinleck manuscript: National library of Scotland Advocates' MS 19.2.1 (London, 1977), has been invaluable for this study.

17   This will be argued in more detail in section E of this chapter.

surviving romances are not typical enough to generalise about fourteenth century romance, or about Middle English romance as a whole.[18]

So this thesis will do something different: it will discuss the ways individual Middle English romances evoke and allude to a generic tradition. The romances to be discussed emphasise different aspects of the romance genre - they foreground its distinctive style, assumed to be appropriate to particular kinds of subject matter; they evoke romance's sense of its own generic traditionality and longstanding quality; and they extend the particular kinds of structure and story felt to be encoded in generic style. The fragmentary nature of the surviving corpus displays signs of its lack of homogeneity; however, the signals of individual romances imply a homogenous romance tradition to which they can refer in a variety of ways.

Some medieval texts describe themselves as 'romance'; some cross-reference to compare other heroes and stories. Some works make less explicit reference, but share distinctive features of literary style with the works that make generic statements. Internal signals to literary type, working in conjunction with a recognisable style, have led modern critics to assume that certain medieval texts signal that they are to be read as Middle English 'romance'. My material in this chapter is taken from this broad group - of texts which call themselves 'romance', or name other romances as comparable, or share this distinctive style, and for these reasons have been assumed to belong to the romance genre by modern critics.

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18   R. M. Wilson, The lost literature of medieval England, second edition (London, 1970), chapter six, 'Romance', pp.104-22.

Romances in alliterative lines are excluded, because they use different forms of stylistic elaboration;[19] but works usually called Breton _lai_ are discussed with romance, because many important characterizing features are largely shared by romance and _lai_.[20] _Lai_ appears to be a sub-set of romance, and uses a similar literary language for other kinds of story. Both use a stock of formulae and topoi for narrative structuring; both present the validity of their content and form as established by past transmission, often through a French original. Like romance, _lai_ is able to use a finely-gauged formal language to mark differences of meaning, while emphasising its traditionalism. That these stylistic and structural criteria, and an emphasis on the past and its importance to the present, are important characteristics of romance and _lai_, will be demonstrated by selecting from works that call themselves _lai_ or romance. It seems to me, then, that _lai_ and Middle English romance share a flexible literary system that makes it an advantage to discuss them together: differences of content and meaning between the two are marked out partly by the _lai_ use of a literary language shared with romance.

Maldwyn Mills suggests

> It is perhaps time we stopped trying to beat (or beat down) the romances by forcing upon them a rigid system of classification, and instead join them by contriving a

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19 See Thorlac Turville-Petre, _The alliterative revival_ (Cambridge, 1977); Derek Pearsall, _Old English and Middle English poetry_ (London, 1977), chapter six, 'Alliterative poetry', pp.150-88; Geoffrey Shepherd, _The nature of alliterative poetry in late medieval England_ (London, 1970); David Lawton, 'The unity of Middle English alliterative poetry', _Speculum_, 58 (1983), 72-95.

20 See p.62, note 112, which re-asserts this point with regard to those features of romance and _lai_ this chapter has identified as distinctive.

> descriptive scheme that more closely mirrors their own
> literary practice in its flexibility: one, that is, in
> which the same works would be dealt with at more than one
> point, but from different aspects.[21]

This suggests that a flexible system of literary criticism should be

able to mark inclusion in a genre, but need not make dogmatic

statements on exclusion. Texts incorporate a series of romance

features, without possessing all the features of romance: romances

establish a kind of family resemblance, in which any member displays

some, though not all, of a group of distinctive characteristics. So

Emaré,[22] which uses some distinctive features of romance elaboration

and structuring, does not have an adventuring hero: the example of

this text suggests that the absence of some or even many

characteristic romance features is not a reason to deny their generic

affiliation to romance. 'Romances' mark themselves out as

'romances' by the careful use of some, though not necessarily all,

distinctive generic features. Like the act of reading a romance,

this discussion works not statistically but impressionistically - it

discusses the evocative power of some small-scale reading signals.

Finally, this chapter is concerned to discover when this

distinctive literary language was established in England. For this

reason I will consider a specific early collection which includes

self-proclaimed romances - the Auchinleck manuscript. The Auchinleck

manuscript's romances include generic names, and generic cross-

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21   Review of Severs, A manual, Schelp, Exemplarische Romanzen,
     Mehl, The Middle English romances, in Medium Aevum, 40 (1971),
     291-303; quoted by W. R. J. Barron, 'Arthurian romance:
     traces of an English tradition', English Studies 61 (1980), 2-
     23 (pp.4-5).

22   The romance of Emaré, edited by Edith Rickert, EETS (London,
     1908).

references such as the catalogue of romance heroes added to <u>Beues</u> and quoted on pp.4-5. Moreover, there is evidence that the compilers of the manuscript recognised the existence of 'romance', for works are ordered and organised with attention to genre. These claims - for the generic awareness of the authors and the manuscript compilers - will be examined more fully at the end of this chapter, in section E. That the compilation and the works of the Auchinleck manuscript recognise generic terms and types is an indication of the early establishment of a precise set of reading signals, by the 1330s or '40s.

B STYLE

Middle English romances are usually written in one of two kinds of metre - couplet or tail-rhyme. Derek Pearsall's body of romances supposed to have been composed in or before the fourteenth century is made up of

> ...nineteeen romances in four-stress couplet and...twenty-five in tail-rhyme. The remaining six are closely associated with the latter.[23]

The first metre, couplet, is commonly used in the Middle Ages - works of all types are written in couplets. The second, tail-rhyme, is rather more distinctive. Tail-rhyme is used far less widely - its use is confined largely to romance.[24] While there are wide

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23   'Development', p.96.

variations in romances' use of tail-rhyme – for example, a regular twelve-line tail-rhyme stanza is frequently used, but many romances employ a six-line stanza – tail-rhyme is still used mainly by romance.[25] The distinctiveness of the tail-rhyme metre as a feature of romance is suggested by its use in 'Sir Thopas';[26] 'Thopas' works partly by using and exaggerating features typical of romance – such as tail-rhyme.

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24   Compare Caroline Strong, 'History and relations of the tail-rhyme strophe in Latin, French and English,' PMLA, 22 (1907), 371-421, who says that of the 65 or 70 extant English romances, 30 (and parts of two more) are in the tail-rhyme strophe, 28 in octosyllabic couplet, and 5 or 10 in alliterative verse (p.397). Her evidence indicates, too, that most of the surviving tail-rhyme works are from the fourteenth century.

    Jörg O. Fichte, 'The Middle English Arthurian romance: the popular tradition in the fourteenth century', in Literature in fourteenth century England: the J. A. W. Bennett memorial lectures, Perugia, 1981-2, edited by Piero Boitani and Anna Torti (Cambridge, 1983), pp.137-54, treats tail-rhyme as distinctive of Middle English romance –

> Like Sir Percyval of Galles, Lybeaus Desconus also features the tail-rhyme stanza of the popular romance tradition – a fact which seems to substantiate further my thesis of the relationship between the English and the French versions, ie that the English is an adaptation, not a direct translation, of its French source.(p.144)

25   A. McI. Trounce, Athelston, EETS (London, 1951), pp.51-52 and 'The English tail-rhyme romances', Medium AEvum 1 (1932), 87-108 and 168-82, 2 (1933), 34-57 and 189-98, 3 (1934), 30-50, sought to localise the tail-rhyme stanza to East Anglia, using Amis, Athelston and the tail-rhyme part of Guy to do so. However, the complexity of romance distribution is discussed by Guddat-Figge, Catalogue, who argues that in the absence of detailed information and research this claim is not yet proved, and says

> Trounce's assumption of Norfolk as the centre of East Anglian production of tail-rhyme romances cannot be disproved, but there is very little to suggest such detailed localization.(pp.51-54)

26   The works of Geoffrey Chaucer, edited by F. N. Robinson, second edition (Oxford, 1979), pp.164-67.

This claim can be tested with reference to the Auchinleck manuscript. In this manuscript, there appears to be little correspondence between metre and genre - most kinds of literature appear in most metres. The exception is twelve-line tail-rhyme - in the Auchinleck manuscript, everything in twelve-line tail-rhyme displays a set of distinctive characteristics which allow one to describe it as romance.[27] The manuscript even makes some pointed uses of the tail-rhyme metre (which will be discussed in section E), a factor which in itself suggests the strength of the association already established between twelve-line tail-rhyme and romance.

The recurrence of certain formulaic lines and half-lines in romance is linked to the genre's use of the distinctive tail-rhyme metre. For instance, Athelston repeats the line

In romaunce as we rede[28]

as a tail-rhyme line. The line is formulaic - it recurs in this and in other romances - and has a metrical role. But that it emphasises source, and uses 'romance' probably as a generic name, suggests that its content is important too: it is a part of the presented idea of the poem. Its formulaic quality has a double role - metrical, and as a comment on poetic creation.

A romance tends to have a number of these recurrent lines or half-lines, which occur in other romances too: their occurrence is not necessarily limited to romance, but is associated with it by the frequency of their appearance there. There have been various

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27   The Auchinleck manuscript; compare the editors' introduction to the facsimile, especially pp.xix-xxiv.

28   Athelston, 1.383, 569, 623, 779.

collections of these units, or _formulae_, as repeated in individual romances and across the whole corpus of romance.[29] The lists of variations make it apparent that a formula is not a set structure, but often uses a paradigm of its parts: for instance, Susan Wittig discusses the 'substitution systems' in _Amis and Amiloun_, which

> ...demonstrate the poet's ability to vary the acoustical patterns of a twelve-line stanza by altering elements of the line and yet without altering the felt formulaic meaning of the whole phrase:

al thus in {romaunce, boke, gest} {as we say / as we tell / as it is told / as (so) we rede / as ye may here / rede we / to rede it is gret rewthe[30]}

Recent work on formulae in earlier literature has tended to stress the semantic rather than metrical value of the formula, however: for instance, Sarah Kay argues that

> there exist word groups whose members are bound together by habitual association which could reasonably be said to constitute minimal units of composition, and that the formula could be redefined to designate such groups; (and) that in the cases studied, these word groups were not bound by metrical restrictions, but could occur in either hemistich, over a whole line, or over two lines.[31]

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29   For instance, see Carl Schmirgel, 'Typical expressions and repetitions in "Sir Beues of Hamtoun"', in _Beues_, pp.xlv-lxvi; _Amis and Amiloun_, edited by Eugen Kölbing, _Altenglische Bibliothek_ II (Heilbronn, 1887), p.XLIIff.; A. C. Baugh, 'Improvisation in the Middle English romances', _Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society_, 103 (1959), 418-54; for a more recent discussion of these issues, see V. Krishna, 'Parataxis, formulaic density and thrift in the alliterative _Morte Arthure_', _Speculum_, 57 (1983), 63-83.

30   _Stylistic and narrative structures in the Middle English romances_ (Texas, 1978), p.30.

31   'The epic formula: a revised definition', _Zeitschrift für Französische Sprache und Literatur_, 93 (1983), 170-89 (p.185).

Formulae are often marked formally by poetic device: for instance, many formulae alliterate. And Carl Schmirgel's list of 'Typical expressions and repetitions in Beues of Hamtoun' points out

> In several groups of expressions with similar meaning the same rhyming words appear almost universally: Beues, 1.503 f.: Schipes hii fonde þer stonde Of heþenesse and of fele londe; ibid. I.2071 f; etc[32]

Formulae may be formally marked in these ways, but flexible in their phrasing and placing: metrical, alliterative and rhyming devices do not fix the formula so much as make it distinctive. So Geoffrey Shepherd argues for alliterative verse

> Alliteration as a formal device superimposed upon the verbalizations of a culture is itself a mnemotechnique...The recognizable, memorable if unanalysed sound of alliterative verse is reinforced by the peculiar syntax, grammar and diction, co-operating to give weight and distinction to this type of composition.[33]

Shepherd's emphasis on alliterative devices as easily memorable can be extended to the formulae of Middle English romance. Ultimately these units are recognizable not only by formal devices such as alliteration and rhyme, but demonstrate their formulaic quality in syntactical and lexical peculiarities too (this point will be extended in chapter five, section A).

For my purposes the point of the formula is that it is memorable, perhaps locatable - its use is as part of a system of reading signals, related to the reader's recognition of other generic signals, rather than merely metrical. So Wittig's 'formula'

'Dame,' he said / 'Brother,' he seyd / She sayde, 'Mercy'[34]

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32   Beues, p.lii.

33   Shepherd, Nature of alliterative poetry, pp.5-7.

34   Stylistic and narrative structures, pp.19-20.

is a mere metrical and syntactic unit, which is functional in the rhyme-scheme without being remarkable. While an account of the composition of romances might treat this half-line as formulaic, it does not, however, demonstrate its own formulaic quality to the reader. For this reason such half-lines are unimportant to my study of the way romance evokes a literary context by its use of generic signals obvious to the reader.

A mark of the strength of the romance formula in the Middle English romance is that it is quotable, parodiable, and even works predictively: as has been argued for 'Sir Thopas', the interrupted line 'Til on a dai...' suggests the rest of the formula '...it so bifel.'[35] As A. C. Baugh has noted, romances typically use a 'predictable complement' which provides a rhyme-word or an adverbial phrase:[36] one does not, however, need to turn to parody for examples of romances quoting romance by using distinctive formulae.

Something of the way romances establish and use formulae can be illustrated by examining the use of formulae in the topos of the beauty description. As Derek Brewer notes, there is a long tradition of conventional details in the description of ladies' beauty.[37] But his study of conventionality of detail makes an interesting comparison with romances' conventionality: romances add

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35   J. A. Burrow, '"Sir Thopas": an agony in three fits', Review of English Studies, 22 (1971), 54-58 (p.57n).

36   Baugh, 'Improvisation', p.428.

37   'The ideal of feminine beauty in medieval literature, especially the 'Harley lyrics', Chaucer and some Elizabethans,' Modern Language Review, 50 (1955), 257-69; Walter Clyde Curry, The Middle English ideal of personal beauty; as found in the metrical romances, chronicles and legends of the XIII, XIV, and XV centuries (Baltimore, 1916).

to this a conventionality of phrasing. This formal homogeneity of beauty descriptions is extended to different subjects: that is, in romance the fixity of the language is sometimes extended to a range of reference.

This happens quite precisely in the uses of the conventional beauty description in <u>Athelston.</u> First of all, conventional phraseology is used to describe the two sons of the good 'erl of Stane'

> Þat on was fyfftene wyntyr old,
> Þat oþer þryttene, as men me told:
>   In þe world was non here pere –
> Also whyt so lylye-flour,
> Red as rose off here colour,
>   As bry3t as blosme on brere.[38]

At this point <u>Athelston</u> uses the language of elaboration in romance quite conventionally, as a description of beauty: its quality as topos evokes other romance beauty topoi for comparison. But exactly the same language is used of the king's own son later, and the shared formulaic language suggests that the two passages work contrastively. In his rage king Athelston kicks his pregnant wife, and

> Soone withinne a lytyl spase
> A knaue-chyld iborn þer wase,
>   As bry3t as blosme on bow3.
> He was boþe whyt and red;
> Off þat dynt was he ded –
> Hys owne fadyr hym slow3.[39]

This second use relies both upon the description of the earl's sons earlier, and upon the uses of this topos in related literature, for its force: <u>Athelston</u> works contrastively within itself as well as

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38   <u>Athelston</u>, 11.67-72.

39   <u>Ibid</u>, 11.288-93.

with reference to a literary context. The first description foregrounds a generic conventionality; the second uses the same topos ironically. The impact of the second passage depends upon the earlier passage's use of generic convention.

Laurel Braswell's comparison of romance and hagiographic versions of <u>Sir Isumbras</u> and the St Eustace legend treats this use of formulae as distinctive of romance but not of hagiography. She quotes from the story:

> The Saracens send Isumbras away as a spy, but word comes back to the sultan in command that '3one pore mane' is marvelously fair and strong, and that his lady
>
> ...es whitte as walles bone,
> Hir hyre es als the see fome,
> And bryghte als blome on tree. (250-252)
>
> The succinct account of the wife's beauty in Eustace (<u>quod esset decora facie</u>) is here translated into conventional romance formulas.[40]

Braswell is able to use these features of stylistic conventionality to determine genre: she treats them as evoking romance rather than hagiography.

C. David Benson does something similar in an essay on <u>The Laud Troy Book</u>: he gives a more general account of distinctive formulaic lines and topoi to characterise the work 'history as romance'. He quotes the prologue's list of romance heroes and use of the word 'romaunce' (as quoted already, pp.3-4); he adds

> The <u>Laud</u> is the only Middle English version of the <u>Historia</u> to transform Guido's distant narrative into a poem specifically intended for oral recitation. The poet frequently addresses his audience directly, either urging them to hark and listen (e.g., 65, 103-04, 3243-45, and

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40   '"Sir Isumbras" and the legend of Saint Eustace', <u>Mediaeval Studies</u>, 27 (1965), 128-51 (p.142).

3293-94) or calling their attention to an especially
important incident...The poet continually makes the most
superlative claims for the siege of Troy:

> Off swyche a fyght as ther was one,
> In al this world was neuere none,
> Ne neuere schal be til domysday. (35-37)

This sort of promotion is a convention of the Middle
English romance, but our poet often seems to undertake it
with a special urgency...
    The poetry of the Laud Troy Book has a tendency to
become flabby - often it is clogged with meaningless tags
and repetitious lines, which produce the fatigue in the
reader so brilliantly parodied by Sir Thopas.
    ....(There are) elements added to the Laud that can
also be found in contemporary English
romance:...descriptions of armor (993-1000), dress (8039-
64), tombs (12863-66), feasting and sleep after battle
(9313-19)...In addition to battle itself, the Laud-poet is
attracted to the trappings of medieval warfare: the arming
and marching out before combat and the feasting after.
Such passages of romance decoration are frequent in the
Laud, but they never threaten to choke the narrative itself
with rhetorical set-pieces.[41]

Benson is able to use the features of verbal elaboration - formulae

and topoi - and a distinctiveness of address as the distinguishing

marks of romance used by The Laud Troy Book. That is, he treats

these small-scale features of the narration as reading signals

directing to a generic context.

These examples of works directing a romance reading by the

addition of the distinctive stylistic features of romance can be

contrasted to The King of Tars[42] which, although often included with

romances, uses romance devices in some ironic ways. It is basically

didactic, and quotes romance style to offset it against Christian

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41   The history of Troy in Middle English literature (Suffolk,
    1980), pp.67-78.

42   Edited by Judith Perryman (Heidelberg, 1980). Over the next
    few pages, line references will all be from this edition and
    will be incorporated with the text.

meaning. The King of Tars uses such characteristic romance devices as twelve-line tail-rhyme, and a series of references to its own source and transmission —

Herkneþ to me boþe eld & ʒing	1
In rime also we rede	309
& what þai hete, wiþouten feile, Now herken & ʒe may here.	1085
Now herkneþ to me boþe eld & ʒing	1099
Now listen & ʒe may liþe	1104

The girl's beauty is described by using the formulae conventionally used of women's beauty in romance and lyric[43] —

> Þe meiden was schast & bliþe of chere,
> Wiþ rode red so blosme on brere,
>   & eyʒen stepe & gray;   15
> Wiþ lowe scholders & white swere.
> Hir forto sen was gret preier
>   Of princes proud in play.

This is placed ironically, however, by its consequence — her famous beauty makes the 'soudan' demand her. At the feast at which she has to marry him, the poem exaggerates the incongruity by making the feast scene a topos elaborated in the terms of romance[44] —

> Atte his bridale was noble fest,
> Riche, real, & onest;
>   Doukes & kinges wiþ croun.   555
> For þer was melodi wiþ þe mest
> Of harp & fiþel & of gest
>   To lordinges of renoun.
> Þer was ʒeuen to þe menstrels
> Robes riche & mani iuweles   560
>   Of erl & of baroun.
> Þe fest lasted fourteniʒt,
> Wiþ mete & drink anouʒ, apliʒt,
>   Plente & gret fousoun.

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43   Brewer, 'The ideal of feminine beauty'; Curry, The Middle English ideal of personal beauty; and see pp.18-20.

44   See chapter two, section A (ii).

An exaggeratedly romance style is displaced and made ironic by the fact that this is the 'soudan's' feast, and a forced wedding: The King of Tars offsets its own didactic intention against the limited kinds of elaboration allowed by romance: romance's capacity to demonstrate the prescribed limits to romance style by extending that style towards Christian didacticism will be discussed in chapter two, section B.

These examples of the associative value of romance formulae suggest that to emphasise the metrical function is misleading: accounts of their metrical value place an emphasis on the needs of composition, and has in the past been extended to the assumption that a certain 'flabbiness' in romance writing was the result of the demands of metre.[45] There is a quite different way to treat these lines, however: that of the reader's point of view. Formulae are small-scale features which are fixed enough as to be easily recognizable - that is, the fact that these lines are repeated in romance means that their use evokes a context of romance. Formulae have the important function of working as reading signals: they direct a response by encoding a context. Often they subvert the expectations evoked in the reader - formulae provide an economical system for the finely-gauged marking out of different meanings. That they recur at points of literary amplification in romance - for

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45 For instance, see the use of the word 'flabby' by David Benson, quoted on p.21; Mehl, The Middle English romances suggests that this looseness is as a result of the use of the tail-rhyme metre (p.55); claims such as these are examined by Baugh, 'Improvisation'.
    For a contrary view, see Alan T. Gaylord, 'Chaucer's dainty 'dogerel': the 'elvyssh' prosody of Sir Thopas', Studies in the Age of Chaucer, 1 (1979), 83-104.

instance, that they are grouped into the topoi of beauty descriptions, feast and battle scenes - emphasises their literary role, and the extent to which they are signals to a certain way of reading.

Formulae are used extensively at the beginnings and endings of romances: the idea of an opening topos is exploited fully in Lybeaus Desconus and Sir Eglamour -

> Jhesu Criste oure Savyour
> And his moder, þat swete ffloure,
> Spede hem at her nede,
> That lysteneth of a conquerour,
> Wise of witt and a wight wereour
> And doughty man of dede.
> His name was Sir Gyngelayne,
> Gotten he was of Sir Gaweyne,
> Vnder a forest syde;
> A better knyght was neuer prophitable
> With Arthur at the Roun Table:
> Herde J neuer of redde.[46]

and

> Ihesu Crist, of heuen Kyng,
> Graunt vs all good endyng
> And beld vs in hys bowre;
> And ʒef hem ioye þat loue to here
> Of eldres þat before vs were
> And lyued in grett antowre.
> I woll ʒou tell of a knyght
> That was both hardy and wyght
> And stronge in ylke a stowre;
> Of dedys of armys þat he myght here
> He wan degre with iurnay clere,
> And in felde the floure.[47]

These openings use a whole series of devices - an opening prayer for the audience, a promise to tell a story, a series of claims of prowess formulaically expressed - that recur in romance openings.

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46   Lybeaus Desconus, edited by Maldwyn Mills, EETS (London, 1969), 11.1-12.

47   Sir Eglamour of Artois, edited by Frances E. Richardson, EETS (London, 1965), 11.1-12.

How far an opening topos can be typical of Middle English
romance is indicated by the editors of the Middle English <u>Ywain</u> <u>and</u>
<u>Gawain</u>, in their discussion of the adaptations the English poet makes
to the <u>Yvain</u> of Chrétien de Troyes[48]. Generally the Middle English
poet cuts - '...the 6,818 lines of Chrétien's poem are reduced to
4,032 in the English version.'[49] One of the few additions, however,
is at the start of the poem -

> He prefixes the narrative with the standard minstrel
> <u>incipit</u>, naturally lacking in Chrétien, and concludes
> with a prayer, which is also conventional minstrel
> procedure.[50]

The ending uses some generic devices -

> Of þam na mare have I herd tell
> Nowþer in rumance ne in spell.
> Bot Jhesu Criste for his grete grace
> In hevyn-blis grante us a place   4030
> To bide in, if his wills be.
> Amen, amen, par charite.[51]

It uses genre names, 'rumance' and 'spell', and claims an immediacy
to hearing the original and of transmission.

The implications of these claims will be discussed in
section D, 'Romance's implied audience', which draws together the
formalisation of style and of structure, and extends their
implications for the social status of romance. Since prologues and
endings, and their comments on audience and transmission, are
suggestive about the social context of romance, the discussion of

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48 Edited by A. B. Friedman and N. T. Harrington, EETS (London,
    1964), pp.xvi-xxxiv.

49 <u>Ibid</u>., p.xvii.

50 <u>Ibid</u>., p.xxvi.

51 <u>Ibid</u>., 11.4027-32.

beginning and ending topoi will be left till then. For the time being, however, one need note only the strength and the flexibility of these stylistic features. Singly or together, these features of style can be quoted in a text to indicate romance, but they can then be used in ways tangential to romance norms.

C STRUCTURE

Several of the primary romance structures and structuring devices are evident in the romance of King Horn:[52] perhaps particularly evident, since King Horn is a relatively unelaborated text in which the structuring devices are quite obvious. King Horn exists in several very early manuscripts;[53] Derek Pearsall has argued its status as a classical text and probable source for later romances —

> ...Horn seems to us of crucial importance, for it embodies, partly by derivation from La3amon, a conventional technique and conventional phraseology in unalloyed form, like crude ore, from which later romances such as Guy or Richard drew extensively.[54]

The hero, Horn, is displaced from his own land, 'Suddenne', and travels to 'Westernesse' with his group of companions; he wins the king's favour there, then is cast out again. This time he travels, alone, to 'Irelonde', wins the king's favour, and defeats the 'Sarazins'. There are two sets of parallel adventures — they form a

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52 King Horn, edited by Joseph Hall (Oxford, 1901). The quotations over the next few pages will all be taken from the C text in this edition, and will be incorporated in the text.

53 Ibid., p.viiff.

54 'Development', pp.106-07.

diptych structure.[55] Horn's adventures are repeated, but with differences. In the first country, 'Westernesse', Horn speaks for his companions, and knights them when he is knighted (1.491ff.): he acts as part of a group, even to the extent that when he is given an invaluable ring by the king's daughter, she adds

> 'And sire Aþulf, þi broþer,   577
> He schal haue anoþer.'

As the poem puts it,

> Nolde he no3t go one,   527
> Aþulf was his mone.

While in the first part, Horn's adventures are always with a social group, in the second his travels are alone. He arrives in 'Irelonde' alone, and rejects the help of the king's sons, to fight the 'Sarrazin' champion on his own. First he proves his worth with the support of a group, then by himself. Each part rewards Horn by offering him the king's daughter: the similarity of the daughters' names - Rymenhild and Reynild - points out the balance between the two parts.

Horn's adventures are separated from each other partly by the fact that they take place in a series of different countries. Critics have tried - unsuccessfully - to identify 'Suddenne', 'Westernesse' and even 'Irelonde';[56] John Finlayson says

> Paradoxically, in the romance there is little attempt to authenticate the story in terms of actual political, geographical or economic conditions...The romance is contemporaneous in its manners, dress and architecture, but totally outside of time and place in its actions. It may

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55   Theories of diptych or bipartite structure are summarised by W. W. Ryding, Structure in medieval narrative (The Hague, 1971), pp.25-27, and examined in detail on pp.117-35.

56   Hibbard, Mediaeval romance, p.89; Pearsall, 'Development', p.105.

superficially contemporize, but is not concerned to actualize.[57]

These placenames are specific, but are not externally referential: they have a primarily structural role. Names that do not refer to real countries are translated directly into romance structure, separating out the parts of Horn's adventures. <u>Horn</u>'s use of geographical markers to structure the story is evident too in the treatment of the sea journeys: Horn's journeys are presented briefly and formulaically –

Þe se bigan to flowe & horn child to rowe	117
Þe se bigan to posse Ri3t in to Westernesse	1011
Horn gan to sschupe dra3e Wiþ his yrisse fela3es	1289
Þe se bigan to flowe & horn gan to Rowe.	1503

Place and transition between places are not memorable events in themselves but serve to underline structure in <u>King</u> <u>Horn</u>.

In this way, a difference is marked between <u>King</u> <u>Horn</u> and the version of <u>Horn</u> <u>childe</u> <u>and</u> <u>maiden</u> <u>Rimnild</u> in the Auchinleck manuscript: <u>Horn</u> <u>childe</u> begins

> Mi leue frende dere,
> Herken & 3e may here,
> & 3e wil vnder stonde;
> Stories 3e may lere
> Of our elders þat were
> Whilom in þis lond.
> Y wil 3ou telle of kinges tvo
> Hende haþeolf was on of þo,
> þat weld al ingelond.
> Fram Humber norþ þan walt he,
> þat was in to þe wan see
> In to his owhen hond.[58]

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57   'Definitions', pp.58–59.

In this text the emphasis on real English places - '3ork', 'norþ-
humberland', 'staines', and the detail that the 'here...com out of
danmark' (1.49) is markedly different from the structural role given
to names without external reference in King Horn; in fact, this text
seems to mark the difference generically at the invasion -

> He bad þe harpour leuen his lay:
> For ous bi houeþ anoþer play.[59]

The differences between the two texts use small but finely-pointed
signals of literary style and verisimilitude to mark different
degrees of distancing from the present.

At almost every point in King Horn, two parts of the story are
set up in parallel: for instance, at 1.29 Horn's companions are
introduced

> Aþulf was þe beste   27
> & fikenylde þe werste.

At the end, Horn has to rescue Rymenhild from King Mody, while he is
in 'Irelonde', and from Fykenhild, while he is in 'Suddenne'. At
every point the narrative duplicates its adventures: setting up a
pair of adventures confirms Horn's prowess at every stage. Mark
Lambert's account of Malory's language emphasises the importance of
the role of verbal confirmation, of which he says

> ...this likeness makes us feel that the word or words being
> 'confirmed' are the correct ones, the inevitable ones, to
> use for a particular referent. In a work with frequent
> 'confirmation'...the audience is encouraged to regard the
> vocabulary of a given speech as either correct or
> incorrect, accurate or inaccurate.[60]

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58   Horn childe, in Hall, King Horn, pp.179-92, 11.1-12.

59   Ibid., 11.157-58.

60   Style and vision in Le Morte Darthur (New Haven, 1975),
     'Confirmation', pp.8-16 (p.8).

In Horn, repeated adventures set up a kind of structural confirmation: repetition implies the validity of Horn's prowess, and the suitability of the mode used to describe it.

However, Horn also uses some devices to draw together and interpret parts of the narrative. Rymenhild provides her own gloss on the events of the poem during her early involvement with Horn, for instance, by relating a dream –

> Heo sede 'no3t ine wepe,
> Bute ase ilay aslepe
> To þe se my net icaste,
> & hit nolde no3t ilaste;
> A gret fiss at þe furste   660
> Minet he gan to berste.
> Ihc wene þat ihc schal leose
> Þe fiss þat ihc wolde cheose.'

Horn's response treats this as symbolic, and as referring to their relationship –

> 'Crist,' quaþ horn, '& seint steuene   665
> Turne þine sweuene.
> Ne schal iþe biswike,
> Ne do þat þe mislike.
> Ischal me make þinowe
> To holden & to knowe   670
> For eureche oþere wi3te,
> & þarto mi treuþe iþe pli3te.'

He adds

> 'Þe fiss þat brak þe lyne   681
> Ywis he doþ us pine,
> Þat schal don vs tene,
> & wurþ wel sone isene.'

He changes the image: she presents herself as using a capturing net, and her prey as escaping; his re-use of the image presents the enemy as external, as doing harm to the couple. Finally, the symbolically destructive fish is identified as Fykenhild: Horn says

> ...'Lemman derling,   723
> Nu hauestu þi sweuening.
> Þe fiss þat þi net rente,
> Fram þe he me sente.'

This imagery is recalled much later, when Horn returns in disguise after seven years. He gives Rymenhild a series of clues to his identity –

> 'Þu wenest ibeo a beggere,
> & ihc am a fissere,
> Wel feor icome bi este   1135
> For fissen at þi feste:
> Mi net liþ her bi honde,
> Bi a wel fair stronde,
> Hit haþ ileie þere
> Fulle seue 3ere.   1140
> Ihc am icome to loke
> Ef eni fiss hit toke.
> Ihc am icome to fisse:
> Drink to me of disse,
> Drink to horn of horne: 1145
> Feor ihc am i orne.'

Hints to Rymenhild have a structural function too: they return the reader to the earlier wooing scene. Symbolic passages in this story are used for recapitulatory purposes, drawing together parts of the narrative.

Finally, there are a series of people who remember the story's first events, the killing of King Murry: the 'Sarazin' in 'Irelonde' makes an important comment, just before Horn kills him –

> Hi sede hi neure nadde   863
> Of kni3te dentes so harde;
> [Bute of þe king Mory
> Þat was so swyþe stordy.]
> He was of hornes kunne,
> Iborn in Suddenne.

When Horn returns to his homeland, he meets a knight who retells the story's first events –

> 'Ihc was cristene a while;   1317
> Þo icom to þis ille
> Sarazins blake
> Þat dude me forsake...
> Hi slo3e wiþ here honde   1327
> Þe king of þis londe.'

and the knight turns out to be Athulf's father. Characters remember

earlier events; the reader recalls earlier parts of the story. The poem provides a series of devices for figures' remembrance and structural recapitulation, which function both within and outside the narrative. So while <u>King</u> <u>Horn</u> is a basic diptych structure, it uses a whole series of other structuring devices as recapitulatory and elaborating devices, which are evoked finally to close off the whole narrative and to signal an end.

Many romances are basically a diptych structure, often a slightly displaced one, and use other devices to mark hero's progression, and structure. For instance, <u>The</u> <u>romance</u> <u>of</u> <u>Emaré</u> divides into two: the heroine Emaré is first cast adrift by her father, and then by her husband. <u>Emaré</u> marks its neat diptych structure by repeating, almost exactly, the formulae and topoi of some passages in the first half later, in the second half -

> Now þys lady dwelled þore
> A good seuen-ny3th and more,
> As hyt was Goddys wylle;
> Wyth carefulle herte and sykyng sore,
> Such sorow was here 3arked 3ore,
> And euer lay she stylle.
> She was dryuen yn-to a lond,
> Thorow þe grace of Goddes sond,
> That alle þyng may fulfylle;
> She was on þe see so harde be-stadde,
> For hungur and thurste almost madde,
> Woo worth wederus ylle!

> Now þys lady dwelled thore,
> A fulle seuene nyght and more,
> As hyt was Goddys wylle;
> Wyth karefulle herte and sykyng sore,
> Such sorow was her 3arked 3ore,
> And she lay fulle stylle.
> She was dryuen toward Rome,
> Thorow þe grace of God yn trone,
> That alle þyng may fulfylle.
> On þe see she was so harde be-stadde,
> For hungur and thurste alle-most madde,
> Wo worth chawnses ylle![61]

In the first, she has been cast out of her father's home; in the
second half, of her husband's: the repetition is used to mark the
parallelism. Close verbal repetition is used to point out structure
in Emaré.[62]

Malory's 'Tale of Gareth', in many ways the most overtly
structured section of the Morte Darthur, uses ideas both of linear
progression and of diptych structuring. Gareth initially encounters
a series of knights – the 'Blak Knyght', the 'Grene Knyght', 'sir
Persaunte of Inde' and the 'Rede Knyght' – and manages to increase
his triumph a little in each combat. However, when he has reached
his lady he is sent away, and encounters a figure of whom the book
says

> ...and this sir Gryngamoure was all in blak, his armour and
> his horse and all that tyll him longyth. But ever as he
> rode with the dwarff towarde the castell he cryed untyll
> his lorde and prayde hym of helpe. And therwyth awoke sir
> Beawmaynes, and up he lepte lyghtly and sawe where the blak
> knyght rode his way wyth the dwarff, and so he rode oute of
> his syght.[63]

The detail of another advancing knight described as 'the blak knyght'
reminds the reader of the beginning of Gareth's first adventure.
While the obvious signal is to a repetition of the series of earlier
adventures, a diptych structure is set up to be used more subtly:
the earlier adventures are not repeated, but are superseded by a more
complex and socially-orientated set of adventures which both recall
and are different from the first set. Malory evokes ideas of

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61 The romance of Emaré, edited by Edith Rickert, EETS (London,
   1908), 11.325-36 and 673-84.

62 Further examples of internal repetition in Emaré are noted by
   Rickert, Emaré, p.xxvi.

63 Malory: Works, edited by Eugene Vinaver, second edition
   (Oxford, 1977), p.202.

diptych structure at this point to put the diptych convention to original use.

Often the concept of diptych structure is used quite loosely by romance, as two sets of events that are parallel to each other. Havelok,[64] for example, concerns the loss and recovery of the kingdoms of England and Denmark, ruled by the wicked usurpers Godrich and Godard respectively. That is, both the hero and the heroine are disinherited by stories strictly parallel, and working comparatively with each other. The stories happen almost simultaneously: a double adventure is brought to a satisfactory closure by the hero Havelok, and his triumph is doubly marked by his resolution of the two crises at the end.

However, within the poem Havelok's social climb is marked by his use of increasingly more sophisticated - and noble - weapons:

> Als he lep þe kok vn-til,
> He shof hem alle upon an hyl.
>
> Hauelok lifte up þe dore-tre,
> And at a dint he slow hem þre.
>
> þe firste knith þat he [Havelok] þer mette,
> With þe swerd so he him grette,
> For his heued of he plette.[65]

Within a basic diptych structure, Havelok creates a mode in which simultaneous stories are structured in a linear way too, with a series of devices to indicate progression.

Middle English romance is typically structured around the adventures of a single knight: the resolution of the knight's

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64 The lay of Havelok the Dane, edited by Walter W. Skeat, EETS (London, 1868), 11.891-92, 1806-07, 2622-23.

65 Ibid., 11.891-92, 1806-07, 2624-26.

initial displacement marks the close of the text. So in Octovian, Isumbras, Emaré, Lai le Freine, Sir Orfeo, and so on, closure is signalled by re-union with a lost family; in Beues, Horn and Havelok, closure is the regaining of the hero's lost kingdom.[66] This basic structuring around the life of a single hero makes an interesting comparison to Guy of Warwick in chapter three, where his first long quest (for the lady Felice) and its resolution in his winning of her is then superseded by a vow to a second quest; and Guy even continues after its hero's death, in the adventures of his son Reinbron. As chapter three will show, Guy uses an evoked idea of romance closure and the literary signals to it to mark its own differences.

Calling a literary structure 'diptych' is, however, a different proposition from describing as 'diptych' a work of art or of architecture.[67] In the visual arts, an overall structure is immediately apparent: the parts exist within it. Narrative structures are linear - the whole is not immediately apparent. With this reservation, the true value of the description 'diptych' as applied to a literary structure becomes apparent: diptych structure is apparent only retrospectively. Midway through a text, the reader cannot perceive the whole structure - except by recalling previous

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66   Wittig, Stylistic and narrative structures, chapter three 'Larger structural units: the type-scene' (pp.103-90) examines stories and their closure in more detail.

67   Architectural ideas of medieval literary structure are discussed by Ryding, Structure in medieval narrative, pp.16-17, 24-25, 139-54; Eugene Vinaver, The rise of romance (London, 1971); and Sandra Ness Ihle, Malory's Grail Quest: invention and adaptation in medieval prose romance (Wisconsin, 1983), especially chapter one, 'Principles of adaptation: medieval architecture and poetics', pp.3-30.

texts. In signals to diptych structure, an intertextual reading is continuously made important.

So to a reader who knows <u>Horn</u>, or <u>Havelok</u>, or <u>Amis</u>, or <u>Emaré</u>, or any other diptych romance, reading signals midway through the work direct one's response. For instance, halfway through Malory's 'Tale of Gareth', the story appears to the reader to be following the pattern of previous romance diptych structures. Gareth's earlier series of opponents began with an encounter with a 'Blak Knyght'; he begins a second adventure by meeting with a 'blak knyght'. The repetition signals diptych structure – but this expectation is raised only to be disappointed. Unlike architectural occurences of 'diptych', signals to literary diptych mid-way are an evocation of prior expectations of narrative structures, learned from earlier narratives – however, evoked expectations as to structure need not be fulfilled.

The typical narrative structures of Middle English romance focus on the romances themselves, emphasising their literary and self-contained quality. The use of diptych structure means that two halves of a romance work comparatively with each other: diptych is a balanced inward-looking structure, whose meaning is created within its own highly-structured literary frame. In that diptych structure as characteristic of romance is not, as visual forms of 'diptych' are, comprehensible at a glance, diptych is a literary structure that refers to other texts in the romance genre.

Romances present their own structure as largely conventional: meaning is established within a romance, and by comparison with other romances. In some ways this contrasts to the structural devices of other medieval genres, which are validated externally: for instance,

some saints' lives are structured according to concepts of Christian

typology, and with reference to theological ideas of the inversion of

normative human life in the saint's progress;[68] and fabliau has been

suggested to take its structuring impetus from a basis in social

disruption and techniques of humour.[69] Romance does not allude to

external ideas so strongly: diptych structures refer to themselves,

and to analogous literary structures. The concept of diptych is

evocative in a purely literary way.

The sense of artificial self-containedness in the romance

structuring devices described so far - diptych, recapitulation,

verbal repetition, thematic patterning - is opposed to prevalent

critical conceptions of the structure of medieval narratives in the

Middle Ages, in French in particular. Accounts of interlace in the

Middle Ages define it as self-perpetuating, and working against a

firm sense of closure. Eugene Vinaver defines interlace thus -

> ...the feeling that there is no single beginning and no
> single end, that each initial adventure can be extended
> into the past and each final adventure into the future by a
> further lengthening of the narrative threads. Any theme
> can reappear after an interval so as to stretch the whole
> fabric still further until the reader loses every sense of
> limitation in time or space. And any theme is, of course,

68   Erich Auerbach, 'Figura', Neue Dantestudien (Istanbul, 1944),
     pp.11-71, translated by Ralph Manheim and reprinted in Scenes
     from the drama of European literature (Gloucester, Mass.,
     1959, repr. 1973), pp.11-76; Gerhardt B. Ladner, 'Homo viator:
     medieval ideas on alienation and order', Speculum, 42 (1967),
     233-59; Evelyn Birge Vitz, 'La vie de Saint Alexis: narrative
     analysis and the quest for the sacred subject', PMLA, 93
     (1978), 396-408.

69   Thomas D. Cooke and Benjamin L. Honeycutt, The humor of the
     fabliaux: a collection of critical essays (Missouri, 1974);
     Versions of medieval comedy, edited and with an introduction
     by Paul G. Ruggiers (Oklahoma, 1980).

'indivisible' both within itself and 'from other things':
it is not even divisible from themes yet to be developed,
from works yet to be written.

He uses the analogy of Romanesque art –

It contains the same seemingly impossible combination of
acentricity and cohesion as that which characterizes the
structure of cyclic romances, and the same excess of
constructive subtlety.[70]

Rosemond Tuve says

Events connected by **entrelacement** are not juxtaposed; they
are interlaced, and when we get back to our first character
he is not where we left him as we finished his episode, but
in the place of psychological state or condition of
meaningfulness to which he has been pulled by the events
occurring in following episodes written about someone
else.[71]

Although Malory uses a special version of interlace, in general
Middle English verse romances do not make much use of interlace. The
principles of interlace imply an interest in prolonging a work and
implying the relatedness of its parts. However, the formal signals
of shorter romances in the Middle Ages work towards a strong sense of
closure: elements of balance and of recapitulation suggest a sense
of an ending, able to sum up all previous parts. This sense of
containedness and closure is reinforced generically by evoking
similar texts: in typical Middle English romance structures, the
emphasis is on literary and self-referential validation, within a
text and with reference to the genre. As chapter three will
demonstrate, Guy of Warwick is able to evoke a series of romance
structuring devices that imply closure, self-containedness and purely

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70   The rise of romance, p.76 and 77.

71   Allegorical imagery: some medieval books and their posterity
      (Princeton, 1966), p.363.

literary reference in the Middle Ages; however, Guy changes them into modes which demonstrate causational patterns and the processes of change.

D ROMANCE'S IMPLIED AUDIENCE

It is possible, then, to describe a set of strongly-formalised stylistic and structural features for Middle English romance. But do all these devices, put together, suggest a tone and intention for the romance genre as a whole, or for any of its parts? Can these devices be suggestive of a social function for romance?

In the attempt to plot the literary devices described so far – stylistic and structural – against a sociopolitical matrix, the most obvious pieces of evidence to use are those contained in the romances themselves. The prologues to romance very often address an audience directly –

> Alle beon he bliþe
> þat to my song lyþe:
> A sang ihc schal ʒou singe
> Of Murry þe kinge.[72]
>
> Now herkeneþ how hyt was![73]
>
> Lystnes, lordyngys þat ben hende,
> Off falsnesse, hou it wil ende
>   A man þat ledes hym þerin.
> Off foure weddyd breþeryn I wole ʒow tel...[74]

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72   King Horn, 11.1-4.

73   Thomas Chestre: Sir Launfal, edited by A. J. Bliss (London, 1960), 1.6.

74   Athelston, 11.7-10.

> Lef, lythes to me,
> Two wordes or thre...[75]
>
> I will 3ow telle of a knyghte...[76]
>
> Will ye lystyn, and ye schyll here
> Of eldyrs that before vs were,
> Bothe hardy and wy3t...[77]

Many earlier critics have treated such passages as descriptive of the performative situation;[78] it seems to me, however, that the stylistic functions of these references and the placing of these lines in the romances should be discussed in conjunction with other typical features – formulae and topoi – of the romances. It may be that these comments have implications not only for a 'real' social context but also for the literary qualities of romance.

These references to audience and subject are often linked with descriptions of literary transmission – for instance,

> A lai of Breyten long y so3ght
> And owt þerof a tale have bro3ht,
> þat lufly is to tell.[79]

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75   Sir Percyvelle of Galles, in Middle English metrical romances, edited by Walter Hoyt French and Charles Brockway Hale, 2 vols (New York, 1964), II, 531-665 (11.1-2).

76   Sir Ysumbras, edited by Gustav Schleich (Berlin, 1901), 1.7.

77   Sir Cleges, in French and Hale, Middle English metrical romances, II, pp.877-95 (11.1-3).

78   Ruth Crosby, 'Oral delivery in the Middle Ages', Speculum, 11 (1936), 88-110; H. S. Bennett, 'The author and his public in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries', Essays and Studies, XXIII (1937), 7-24; and to some extent A. C. Baugh, 'The authorship of the Middle English romances', Annual Bulletin of the Modern Humanities Research Association, 22 (1950), 13-28; and Baugh, 'Improvisation' and 'The Middle English romance'.

79   Sir Gowther, edited by Karl Breul (Oppeln, 1886), 11.28-30.

> Menstrelles þat walken fer and wyde,
> Her and þer in euery a syde,
>   In mony a dyuerse londe,
> Sholde, at her bygynnyng,
> Speke of þat ryghtwes kyng
>   That made both see and sonde.[80]

Often there is a distinction implied between a source book and an

orally-delivered work —

> Lytylle and mykille, olde and yonge,
> Lystenyth now to my talkynge,
>   Of whome Y wylle you kythe!
> Jesu, lorde of heuyn kynge,
> Grawnt vs alle hys blessynge   5
>   And make vs gladde and blythe.
> Sothe sawys Y wylle yow mynge
> Of whom the worde wyde can sprynge,
>   Yf ye wylle lystyn and lythe;
> Yn bokys of ryme hyt ys tolde   10
> How hyt befelle owre eldurs olde,
>   Welle oftyn sythe.[81]

However, A. C. Baugh comments

> None of the grounds alleged as evidence of minstrel
> authorship can be trusted, and I know of no direct
> testimony that minstrels composed the stories they
> recited...Whoever were the authors of the English romances,
> and however surely these romances were intended for a
> listening audience, they were originally literary creations
> devised by poets with their parchment or wax tablets before
> them.[82]

Baugh says elsewhere

> Many of the Middle English romances are translations or
> else adaptations of French poems. In cases where the
> French original can be identified, at least as to its
> approximate form, the similarities are often such as to
> leave little doubt that the English poet was following his
> source with reasonable fidelity, such fidelity as to
> suggest that the source lay open in a manuscript in front
> of him.[83]

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80   _Emaré_, 11.13-18.

81   _Octavian_, edited by Gregor Sarrazin, _Altenglische Bibliothek_, III (Heilbronn, 1885), northern version (Cambridge, UL MS Ff.2.38), 11.1-12.

82   'The Middle English romance', pp.4-5.

83   'Improvisation', p.431.

While a distinction between written source and oral transmission is sometimes made clear by the romances, this distinction is not, however, always maintained; the beginning of a romance typically refers to present and past transmission, whether by books or 'minstrels'.

Not only do these 'minstrel' references recur, they have established a particular literary place: all these quotations are from the openings, or early parts, of the poems. There are also formally fixed references to source in the body of the poem: for instance, 'in romaunce as we rede' (and its variants - see my quotation from Susan Wittig on p.16) recurs in Athelston. These lines and groups of lines have the status of formulae, and specifically of opening topoi.

The editors of the Middle English Ywain and Gawain are able to use these lines to demonstrate differences between the Old French source and the Middle English romance. The editors list the Middle English lines and their variants -

als sayes þe buke	9, 3209, 3671
þe soth to say	15, 1605, 1847, 2022, 2211, 2658, 3997
trewly to tell	329
so God me rede	713, 2075, 2187
God mot 3ow spede	2998
als 3e sal here	154[84]

That is, many of the additions refer to source 'buke', to present transmission, and to audience. Though the editors call these lines

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84 Friedman and Harrington, Ywain and Gawain, quoted on pp.lv-lvi.

'tags' or 'phrases', what they do not note is that many of these 'tags' refer to transmission. Their content is as interesting as their presumed metrical function.

In fact there are so many of these lines and openings in Middle English romance that Ruth Crosby's article 'Oral delivery in the Middle Ages' was able to construct its argument on oral romance presentation almost entirely from the romances themselves. She describes them as

> ...direct address...to those listeners who are present at the recitation. We have only to select at random the opening lines of French and English romances and chronicles to see how universal a characteristic this is.[85]

She goes on to discuss 'minstrel' composition and presentation of the romances, as described in the romances themselves.

As I see it, there are three peculiarities. First, it is remarkable that any body of literature should refer so often and so fully to its own production. I can think of nothing comparable, except perhaps the Augustan novel: but even early novels do not both refer to and describe the conditions of their own production and transmission - composition, printing and reading. It suggests a very high degree of literary self-consciousness, a suggestion that is borne out by other features of romance. That is, this self-reference has a function as literary device.

Secondly, it is strange that 'minstrel' references occur in almost all romances: as Ruth Crosby suggests, this characteristic is almost 'universal'. This implies a high degree of genre

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85   'Oral delivery', pp.100-101.

consciousness - that the references are a kind of intertextual signal. So these romance openings not only suggest an awareness of the poems as literary artifacts, they suggest the existence of a close literary context too.

Thirdly, in the - admittedly limited - selection of quotations on the previous pages, the earliest extant romances contain much briefer 'minstrel' references than the longer and partially descriptive allusions in later texts such as Emaré, Gowther and Octavian. This is suggestive for the argument that follows but cannot, however, be pressed too far because of the romance survival and sampling difficulties described at the end of section A.

Perhaps one should start with a hypothesis, and then test evidence against that. It may be that, over the whole period during which Middle English romances were produced, production references that are at first mainly literal develop a function that is mainly generic. Information about contexts becomes less important than information about texts, while at the same time, technological and cultural changes mean a move from an oral culture to a predominantly book culture.[86] The generic and literary role of the 'minstrel'

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86   See H. J. Chaytor, From script to print: an introduction to medieval literature (Cambridge, 1945); M. T. Clanchy, From memory to written record: England, 1066-1307 (London, 1979); Paul Saenger, 'Silent reading: its impact on late medieval script and society', Viator 13 (1982), 367-414; John Speirs, Medieval English poetry: the non-Chaucerian tradition (London, 1957), says

> The extant English romances belong to a period of transition - the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries - from an oral poetry to written composition, from poetry for recital (or for being read aloud to a company) to poetry for private reading. They belong to the period of the decline of minstrelsy in England and the emergence (once again in history) of the personal man-of-letters, the literary artist.(pp.105-06)

references increases, while the literal referent disappears. This is

the hypothesis; where does my material fit?

The introduction to the Auchinleck facsimile says

> It is not a collection designed for 'popular' taste, and it
> is far from being the repertoire of a <u>disour</u>, though
> there is some overlap with manuscripts of that kind...The
> taste that it appeals to and is designed for is that of the
> aspirant middle-class citizen, perhaps a wealthy
> merchant...The decoration, the careful penmanship (so
> regular, in the hand of scribe 1 particularly that one
> soon reads it like a printed book), the thoughtful
> rubrication and spacious layout in double columns...all
> demonstrate that this was a book to be looked at and read
> by the private reader. Nothing could illustrate more
> clearly the merely conventional nature of oral address
> within the text of a poem than the contrast between the
> opening of the <u>Chronicle</u> (item 40),

> > Herkeneþ hiderward lordinges
> > 3e þat wil here of kinges
> > Ichil 3ou tellen as y can
> > Hou Inglond first bigan

> and the preceding rubric:

> > Here may men rede who so can
> > Hou Inglond first bigan
> > Men mow it finde in englische
> > As þe brout it telleþ ywis.[87]

A. C. Baugh extends this emphasis on the conventions of address to a

distinction between the 'semi-learned' people who wrote romances, and

the 'minstrels' who performed them. He says

> Poets and versifiers...wrote with oral presentation in
> mind, adopting a style, so far as they were capable of it,
> natural to live presentation.[88]

Dieter Mehl says something similar -

> We can find in many romances striking instances of an oral
> formulaic technique...Nevertheless, the extant romances
> appear to be for the most part 'literary' creations,
> composed with some care at the desk, not just memorized

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87   The <u>Auchinleck manuscript</u>, p.viii.

88   'The Middle English romance', p.9.

reproductions of some improvised recital by wandering minstrels.[89]

Derek Pearsall accounts for the discrepancy between an apparently 'oral' technique and actual composition by describing the 'merely conventional nature of oral address' in this way -

> Similar devices are found in all literature which has to do with the conventions of oral delivery (which persist of course even when private reading grows common).[90]

It seems to me, however, that to talk about 'persistence' is to put it too casually. There is some evidence that these 'conventions' are increasingly used as deliberate generic signals, growing more sophisticated rather than diminishing with time. There are a number of conventional 'oral' references in Guy of Warwick, for instance -

For seynt Thomas loue of Cawnturberye, Fylle the cuppe and make vs mery.	5859
For the gode, that god made, Fylle the cuppe and make vs glade.	7117
But therof be, as be may, Let vs be mery, y yow pray.	7549

The point is, though, that these lines are in the mid-fifteenth century version, Guy B: minstrel references do not appear at these points in the earlier English versions, or in Gui.[91] Both the late date and the sheer length of this version of Guy make it unlikely that this version was ever intended to be memorised, recited or performed - either as a whole or even in parts - by minstrels. Their

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89 The Middle English romances, p.10.

90 Old English and Middle English poetry, p.147.

91 Guy B: at the corresponding points in the other English versions of Guy, these lines do not appear: compare Guy A with earlier versions -
11.5859-60: Guy A, 1.6184, Caius 1.6184, Gui 1.6274.
11.7117-18: Guy A, st. 20, Caius 1.7390, Gui 1.7562.
11.7549-50: Guy A, st. 60, Caius 1.7733, Gui 1.8024.

late addition looks, then, like a conscious generic and traditionalist move: far from being an archaic persistence, these lines are added and are given a literary function.[92]

By the later stages of the romance, technological and cultural change has probably made the recitation of romances obsolescent, if for a poem as long as Gui or Guy it ever existed. The addition of the minstrel references actually creates its own kind of tradition - it is a conscious archaizing move, referring back to an earlier culture as a means to authority. Trounce describes the effect of some features of romance style like this -

> Since the rhymes were conventional, the aesthetic effect of the stricter rhyme-scheme was to make the poems more formal and rigid, to give them an archaic air - the work, we feel, of the early, correct practitioners.[93]

In Guy B, the addition of minstrel lines continually evokes the past and its forms of literary transmission.

In this version, Guy B, the references to presentation have a primary literary role. For one thing, they are of structural importance, providing appropriate breaks in the text; sometimes too they provide inappropriate breaks. For instance, there is a heated scene in which Guy kills earl Florentine's son and then accepts the hospitality of Florentine's feast. The line 'So fylle the cuppe...'

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92   Each Middle English version of Guy adds different versions of these formulaic minstrel references, at different points: for instance, see Guy A and Caius, 1.3997; Caius 1.8654 and Guy B 1.8397; Guy A and Caius, 1.4819, Guy B 1.4617.
    The fact that each version includes different forms of these lines, in different places, demonstrates a sense of the kinds of elaboration and expansion appropriate to Middle English romance; and see chapter two, section A (i) and (ii). However, the lines added in Guy B tend overall to be more obviously 'minstrel' references (see p.46, note 91).

93   'The English tail-rhyme romances', I, 169.

divides this sequence (this is discussed more fully in chapter three, pp.163-64). The minstrel reference is used as an ironic break, and one which dissociates the reader from the action at a crucial stage.

The second part of the references' literary role is their own form: as their placing is conventional, so too is their own phraseology. References to minstrels and to transmission recur in romance, and the lines tend to be phrased in a typical and generic way: they are formulaic. The lines help to generate generic allegiances, by referring to the past: they recall an older means of transmission, and imply the traditionality of their own phraseology. So the lines' own form encodes a traditionalism, an emphasis that this is a piece of old poetry. Their manner of elaboration is quite opposite to an emphasis on a literary culture and a degree of elaborative sophistication that exists in some fifteenth-century poetry (see chapter five, section A). Their mode of authority is taken from literature stated to be old: the repetition of minstrel references suggests both an awareness of a whole genre, and an emphasis on the traditionality of that genre. And a reliance on the past is a part both of their form and of their subject matter.

If romances create their own contemporary image by emphasising their literary history, they exhibit a much higher degree of romance literariness and self-consciousness than that presented by Ruth Crosby's oral-formulaic argument. Ultimately the references to transmission - whether it is oral presentation or source book - are a part of the fictions themselves: the references' historical accuracy is superseded in importance by their own function as fictional devices creating a sense of poetic status.

The fact that Middle English romances authenticate present

literary form in terms of a literary past also suggests an entirely
different relation of romance to society from that argued by George
Duby for Old French romance –

> Je voudrais indiquer encore que la présence d'un tel groupe
> au coeur de la société aristocratique entretint certaines
> attitudes mentales, certaines représentations de la
> psychologie collective, certains mythes, dont on trouve à
> la fois le reflet et les modèles dans les oeuvres
> littéraires écrites au XIIe siècle pour l'aristocratie, et
> dans les figures exemplaires qu'elles proposèrent, qui
> soutinrent, prolongèrent, stylisèrent les réactions
> affectives et intellectuelles spontanées. Il convient de
> remarquer tout d'abord que la 'jeunesse' formait le public
> par excellence de toute la littérature que l'on appelle
> chevaleresque, et qui fut sans doute composée avant tout à
> son usage...En premier lieu, le transfert, dans la
> littérature généalogique écrite au XIIe siècle dans le
> nord-ouest de la France, du modèle majeur, proposé aux
> rêves et aux espérances des juvenes, celui du jeune
> aventurier, qui conquiert par sa prouesse l'amour d'une
> riche héritière, réussit ainsi à s'établir loin des siens
> dans une forte seigneurie et devient la souche d'une
> puissant lignée.[94]

Richard Barber extends this statement that romances cater for young
knights –

> In the carefree world of these romances, this diligent
> search for glory seems the only obligation a knight
> has to recognise beyond his lady's commandments...Before we
> dismiss them as pure escapist fantasy, however, there is
> one point to be considered. His heroes are always young,
> by implication not yet required for responsible duties.
> Knighthood may become the burden of lordship in later
> years, but for Chretien's heroes its essence is this very
> youth and freedom. It does not reject responsibility, but
> is rather something to be enjoyed before responsibility
> becomes unavoidable. And it was as such that knighthood
> was practised by the 'young king', Henry II's eldest son,
> Richard Coeur de Lion, William Marshal, Philip of Flanders,
> and others of Chretien's contemporaries: an outlet for
> youthful exuberance. Thus knighthood begins, by the end of
> the twelfth century, to become something apart from the
> social and feudal status we have already studied.

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94   'Au XIIe siècle: les 'jeunes' dans la société
      aristocratique', Annales, 19 (1964), 835-46 (pp.844-45).

It is this distinction that defines chivalry: the ideals of the knightly class pursued for their own sake.[95]

To assume a similar social function for Middle English romance is, however, misleading: by the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the emphasis has changed. For instance, it has been argued for the Old French romances of Chrétien de Troyes and his successors that they construct an expressive language of psychology and of allegory;[96] however, Middle English romance typically strips away this inventive interior language - it stresses instead stock incident, expressed in formulaic language. The emphasis of Middle English romance is not placed on the inventiveness and fresh experience of young figures, which can be extended by inference to include a young knightly audience; Middle English romance emphasises its own typicality, as demonstrated by reference to generic allegiance. A part of this difference is accounted for by the different dates of the two kinds - Middle English romance is written at the end of a long tradition of romance writing, and its style is made to suggest that traditionality. In Middle English romance, a longstanding generic tradition is made to work as a part of each

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95   The knight and chivalry (London, 1970, repr. 1974), pp.111-12.

96   Erich Auerbach, Mimesis: the representation of reality in Western literature, translated by Willard R. Trask (Princeston, 1953); Charles Muscatine, 'The emergence of psychological allegory in Old French romance', PMLA, 68 (1953), 1160-82; Fichte, 'The Middle English Arthurian romance', says

>   The process of self-realization is a repetitive one. The individual always experiences a personal crisis by accomplishing a number of tasks - a process that not only brings about his personal maturation, but also adds to the collective renown of Arthurian society.(p.140)

work's validation: romances emphasise their generic and traditional qualities.

For Middle English romance, the emphasis is on tradition, both literary and social: romances have a primarily conservative function. They emphasise not only the values of the past but even the validity of its literary forms: Middle English romances stress both their fidelity to source and their use of the traditional forms of direct transmission. This is the implication of the literary features of the texts themselves; that it appears to be true from the evidence of surviving documents is discussed in detail later (see chapter four). The literary signals of the genre point to an emphasis on a traditionalism of style and of content - and this implication is largely borne out by the factual material surviving on a narrow social context to Guy of Warwick, and discussed fully in chapter four.

The minstrel lines and references, and the range of other formal qualities are important in the romances: not necessarily literal, they signal instead a literary intention - that of the presentation of the work's traditional quality. Ultimately it seems to me that the value of the minstrel lines is not how far they are true, but how far this self-conscious and backward-looking repetition is suggestive about the romances themselves.

Arthur B. Ferguson describes an emphasis on the documents of the past in broader terms: a shared stylistic version of traditionalism implies a similar conservatism of style, values and reception inherent in most romances:

> Those who have examined this transitional era have not always given sufficient attention to what should be a familiar enough phenomenon, namely, a tendency for accepted

values to change more slowly than the circumstances of society that ultimately condition them; and they have shown a concomitant willingness to read later values into the words of an earlier period. The men of fifteenth century England tended to evaluate the emerging society of capital and canon, centralized government and international rivalry, for the most part with reference to ideas inherited from an earlier age and hallowed by inveterate custom.[97]

In the romances, a traditionality of literary form is accentuated to emphasise the validity of the former values.

Romance is not unusual in its emphasis on the past - chronicle, historiography and so on do something similar. What is unusual is that romance, which exists for the most part without the historicizing and verifying signals of chronicle or historiography, transforms a concern with the past into its literary style. Romance appears to be neutral in its representation of the validity of the past as informing the present: it has few authenticating details such as dates, precise details, claims to specific authoritative source, or explicit references to its value for a contemporary present group, such as a patron. However, its locus, described means of transmission and especially its style emphasise the importance of the past: romance creates a generic language in which the style itself indicates the importance of tradition. Romance style is traditionalist - it includes a series of devices to signal a traditional quality to its values and matter. My word 'traditionalist' is used to indicate that, while a poem's matter may actually be traditional, the poem's style consciously signals that traditionality: that is, a 'traditionalist' literary style develops.

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97   The Indian summer of English chivalry: studies in the decline and transformation of chivalric idealism (Durham, North Carolina, 1960), pp.xii-xiii.

Like the distinction between 'real' and 'realist' or 'realistic', a style can be used to express the important features about its content - Middle English romance treats of traditional matter in a style that is pointedly traditionalist.

My emphasis on the romance processes of creating a fictionalized social location for romance is important in recurring romance prologues. The prologues are remarkable not only in that they appear almost universally, but also for their neat alignment of story, heroes and audience. Whether this is, however, primarily a realistic or primarily a fictional device is open to argument. The hero of Sir Orfeo, for example, bridges two worlds established in the prologue, of audience nobility ('lordinges þat beþ trewe', 1.23) and old harpers ('þai token an harp in gle & game / & maked a lay & 3af it name', 11.19-20) with his own double identity -

> Orfeo mest of ani þing
> Loued þe gle of harping;
> Siker was eueri gode harpour
> Of him to haue miche honour...
> Orfeo was a kinge,
> In Jnglond an hei3e lording...[98]

The prologue tells us that the story is transmitted by harp-players of the past; Sir Orfeo is both a patron of harp-players and is one himself; and he is a 'lording', like the implied audience.[99] The passage emphasises a similarity of values and of identity between all its figures.

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98   Orfeo, 11.25-29 and 39-40.

99   Compare Walter J. Ong, 'The writer's audience is always a fiction', PMLA, 90 (1975), 9-21; and Paul Strohm, 'Chaucer's audience(s): fictional, implied, intended, actual', Chaucer Review, 18 (1983), 137-45.

Havelok has been called 'bourgeois' romance, and treated as if it were quite different from Orfeo.[100] It uses devices of careful layering, which move its developing king figure through all strata of society (as symbolised by progressive and detailed upgradings in his food and weapons - see p.34); it begins

> Herknet to me, gode men,
> Wiues, maydnes, and alle men,
> Of a tale þat ich you wile telle,
> Wo so it wile here, and þer-to duelle.
> Þe tale is of hauelok i-maked;
> Wil he was litel he yede ful naked:
> Hauelok was a ful god gome
> He was ful god in eueri trome,
> He was þe wicteste man at nede,
> Þat þurte riden on ani stede.
> Þat ye mowen nou y-here,
> And þe tale you mowen y-lere.
> At the beginning of vre tale,
> Fill me a cuppe of ful god ale;
> And y wile drinken her y spelle,
> Þat crist vs shilde alle fro helle![101]

Havelok's style is markedly like that of other romances in its use of a series of romance opening devices. It is very similar to Orfeo, in locating audience firmly with hero: the repetition of the word 'gode' in Havelok links hero and audience. The equivalences between audience and hero set up in the prologue look as if they are a part of romance convention, as opposed to an accurate description of the poem's audience.

The Orfeo and Havelok prologues are stylistically alike, though differing in content: both are careful to suggest that the hero's status and values are similar to those of the audience. One cannot,

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100 For example, see John Halverson, 'Havelok the Dane and society', Chaucer Review, 6 (1971), 142-51; Hibbard, Mediaeval romance, p.106.

101 Havelok, 11.1-16.

therefore, adduce 'bourgeois' or 'noble' audience from a prologue (as some writers have done), because a prologue is a literary feature and not necessarily literal. While there are important differences between Orfeo and Havelok, they cannot necessarily be extended from the topoi of the text itself to generalisations about the differences between Havelok's and Orfeo's audience. A real audience, and an author's reason for writing, are not necessarily indicated by an opening topos. Differences of social function result in different fictions, including fictions of poetic prologues - so while this argument does not invalidate the real differences between the poems, it does invalidate critics' use of a style-conscious and fictive prologue to infer the poem's reception. A romance's tone is a part of its fiction, and a prologue contributes to that tone. So in either Havelok or Orfeo, a partial description of an audience, whether by 'gode'-ness or nobility, is in accordance with the virtues presented in the text through the figure of the hero.

The extent to which opening topoi are largely literary is illustrated in Gamelyn, which begins with a formulaic opening that suggests the start of a chivalric romance -

> Litheth and lesteneth and herkneth ary3t
> And ye schul heere a talkyng of a dou3ty kny3t.

This is quoted only to be undercut a little later, however, when the story of Gamelyn becomes a story not of chivalry but of the problems of finding justice in society -

> Litheth and lesteneth and holdeth youre tonge
> And ye schul heer talkyng of Gamelyn the 3onge.
>
> Now litheth and lestneth, bothe 3ong and olde,
> And 3e shull heere gamen of Gamelyn the bolde.[102]

The first couplet, and its repetition with variations throughout,

replace one's sense of romance norms in an idealised knightly landscape with lines more suited to a story which discusses justice. That is, this change of tone does not redefine a real audience so much as it redefines the tale.

It seems, then, that 'minstrel' formulae and prologues have a function that is more generic than literal: the self-consciously fictive tendency of the text to foreground its own origins is a deliberate move away from claiming ideological continuity with the present and real. Can one infer, then, any kind of socio-political context for romance, as suggested by these literary devices?

Although the prologues and 'minstrel' references are primarily literary devices, their weighting is nevertheless towards the past and its values - they encode a loose kind of conservatism. This tendency to emphasise the literary quality of what appears to be social reference while quietly reinforcing the values of the past is one that extends very strongly to the structural devices of romance discussed in the last section - particularly to the device of centring a work on a 'knight', but also to the narrative structures of romance.

While the romances suggest strongly the high social class of their protagonists, they often do so in indirect ways. Questions of social class are continually transformed into romance structure and closure: the romances both stress knightliness and high birth, and refuse to define more closely. In terms of real social hierarchy, knights are a class, with a recognizable rank as indicated by their

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102   The tale of Gamelyn, edited by Walter W. Skeat (Oxford, 1893), 11.1-2, 169-70, 289-90.

title, a loosely-definable amount of land and wealth, and so on.[103]
But knights in romances are men who have been knighted; the ideal
codes of knighthood are stressed above a real economic base. Knights
in romances often do receive or regain land, but the way in which
they do it is sewn up in the structure and ideals of romance. Guy,
Horn, Havelok, Lybeaus and so on end up with wealth and status when
they have completed their quests. That is, as a result of their
chivalry and quest the knights marry a rich heroine or avenge and
inherit from their fathers - each assures financial reward, but in
each the ending is literary closure in accordance with story pattern.
Wealth, land and social status are offered to the hero tangentially,
as a part of the romance structure; though literary closure is
presented as primary, however, it has plenty of class weighting.

The most obvious example is that of the fair unknown romances,
where a figure's noble birth is evident in his chivalric aspirations;
when his true birth is finally revealed, his achievements and birth
justify each other to argue an innate closeness of chivalry and
nobility. Often the fair unknown figure's lineage is clearly
established, but very much in terms of romance figures: Lybeaus
Desconus is the son of Gawain, Malory's Gareth is Gawain's brother,
Florent is the son of a noble knight.[104] The sense of lineage is a
part of the emphasis on the past in romance: literary traditionalism

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103 The knight and chivalry, pp.17-68.

104 As Jörg Fichte, 'The Middle English Arthurian romance', says

> The progress of Lybeaus, as well as that of Perceval,
> demonstrates that innate gentility conferred upon an
> individual by his noble birth will ultimately prevail.
> Thus, both works are essentially conservative in their
> affirmation of the existing class structure based on
> hereditary privileges.

is extended so far that romances stress that one literary hero gives rise to another - all are implicitly comparable, and linked together in a literary tradition of heroism.

The idea of a fair unknown hero's high birth making him exclusively eligible for the romance world is taken so far in the northern version of Octavian that it works as a kind of in-joke, where Florent's knightly ideas slot far better into the new social context than those of his foster-father, Clement. The poem says

> When the folke had alle etone,
> Clement had not alle forgetone,
> Hys purce he openyd thore.
> XXX florens forthe caste he:
> 'Haue here for my sone and me;
> I ma y pay for no more.'
> Clement was so curtes and wyse,
> He wende, hyt had ben merchandyse,
>   The pryde, that he sawe thore.
> At Clement logh the kyngys alle,
> So dud the knyghtys yn þat halle,
>   And chylde Florent schamyd sore.[105]

Although the joke shared by poet and reader ('Clement was so curtes and wyse / He wende hyt had ben merchandyse!') contrasting the Florent and Clement worlds does stress class differences, it is story -controlled too: Clement is remarkable as a total misfit to the story, unable to understand the patterns of love, feast and chivalry which the story is now bound up. The difference between bourgeois figure and born aristocrat is disguised by the stronger difference between uncomprehending witness and romance hero-knight.

A chivalric rather than class-stressed lineage suggests that the concept of 'knight' is a literary play-space, without closely-mapped

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105   Sarrazin, Octavian, 11.1129-40.

social reference, although with plenty of class weighting. This is important in chapter four, where the involvement of Richard Beauchamp, earl of Warwick, with the story of Guy of Warwick makes it clear that his interest is not a class-aspirant one. The arguments of Georges Duby and other historians of romance and society plot romance consumption against a possible audience of young knights and squires.[106] However, Richard Beauchamp's rank of earl suggests that his interest shares with the romances only an idealising interest in the hero's knightly exploits, not an aspiration to a knight's real social rank.

The typical narrative structuring devices of Middle English romance focus on the romances themselves, emphasising their self-contained literary quality. Diptych structure sets up two halves, working comparatively with and against each other; meaning is created within this structured frame. The devices that work outwards - lists of heroes, the literary and generic qualities of prologues, romance formulae and topoi - refer to the genre; that is, to comparable romances. Features of romance structuring work by reference to a genre, or to the parts of the romance in relation to itself. Malory's version of interlace sets up its heroes and stories as mutually comparable; even the fragmentation of the Arthurian world at the end of the Morte depends for its effect upon our awareness that that world was a whole, with a shared locus, language and chivalric ethos.[107] Romance structure tends to declare its

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106   Duby, 'Les jeunes'; Barber, The knight and chivalry.

107   See Lambert, Style and vision, especially chapter one, 'Aspects of period style', pp.1-55.

homogeneity both within each text and across a carefully-mapped genre. Its validation is purely internal and literary.

Romance also has a well-established set of distancing devices: one of them is the series of ways the literary style suggests its own artificiality, as outlined in this chapter. Another is the element of the fantastic - magic, grateful lions, dragons and giants, foolproof disguises: many of the devices and incidents in romance suggest their own separateness from the real. Paul Strohm says

> Modern critics have therefore been true to the medieval conception of romans/romaunce in identifying the presence of fanciful, marvelous, and especially amorous elements as characteristics which help to distinguish these narratives from further narratives and gestes.[108]

John Finlayson adds

> While the marvellous is not the essence of romance, it is clearly more than an optional 'property'. In most romances, it either initiates the action or defines the nature of the action. In its proper or best use it creates the special atmosphere of the romance world where elements of social reality and the unnatural commingle, not for the purposes of sensationalist contrast between the real and the unreal, but to provide 'a balance between fiction and verisimilitude'.[109]

Lybeaus Desconus makes it clear that even the coats of arms borne by knights have more to do with a literary sense of hero's identity than with the opportunity to identify a real social reference for the heraldry employed. When the hero Lybeaus is first armed, he has

A scheld wyth a gryffoun	Cotton MS, 231
A shelde with one chefferon	Lambeth MS, 254

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108   'Origin and meaning', p.12.

109   'Definitions', p.57, quoting Pamela Gradon, Form and style in early English literature (London, 1971), p.235.

The descriptions themselves are so inexplicit as to be almost meaningless; and that the two manuscript readings vary in this way demonstrates their inexplicitness. However, when Lybeaus has had various adventures his coat of arms is described as

> ...rose reed armure
> Wyth þre lyouns of gold.   Cotton 1538/Lambeth 1600[110]

Giving him a coat of arms like that of the king of England is no more realistic than the first description; it does, however, mark how far the hero has grown in stature. In this instance a well-developed signifying system such as heraldry is changed so that it is inconsistent within the romance itself, and has little external signifying force: heraldry is incorporated into a literary structure and becomes a further literary device.

Romances distance themselves from the present by a sense of past-ness and historical distance: they use, for instance, the specialised Arthurian world which provides a historical or mythical past, with a well-established set of heroes, stories and patterns, forming a whole literary context.

The sense of past-ness is used particularly finely in Sir Orfeo, at the poem's end –

> Now King Orfeo newe coround is,
> & his quen, Dame Heurodis,
> & liued long after-ward,
> & seþþen was king þe steward.
> Harpours in Bretaine after þan
> Herd hou þis meruaile bigan,
> & made her-of a lay of gode likeing...
> þus com Sir Orfeo out of his care:
> God graunt ous alle wele to fare! Amen! Explicit.[111]

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110 Edited by Maldwyn Mills, EETS (London, 1969). Manuscript and line references are incorporated in the text here to demonstrate the variation.

111 Orfeo, 11.593–604.

An initial 'now' that implies that the present tense is that of the story is superseded by references to the couple's death, the subsequent reign, and later 'harpours'; that is, while the initial 'now' and the last couplet both maintain a paradoxical continuity with the present, the movement of the whole suggests the speeding-up of passing time and the story's progressive distancing from the present.[112]

It seems to me that the 'minstrel' references are to be seen within a context of romance distancing devices, many of which emphasise a time lapse between old stories and the present day: the 'minstrel' prologues are a part of all the other literary and formulaic devices used by romance. The point is not that the minstrel lines are extraordinary; on the contrary, the qualities shown in the minstrel lines and prologues are the qualities of romance elaboration generally. Formulae, conventional description, topoi, hero-lists, distinctive structures, are all devices to mark out the artificiality of romance, the closeness of a romance to other romances, and the indebtedness of the whole to a past in which the literary tradition was supposed to have been established: romance uses various stylistic devices in a traditionalist way.

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112   Not only does _lai_ share with romance the use of a distinctive style, _lai_ also foregrounds some of the features argued here to be characteristic of romance: for instance, _Orfeo's_ emphasis on the past and historical distancing, or an emphasis on its own transmission from the past as in _Emaré_ (see p.41). _Lai_ repeats a generic name to emphasise the shared and traditonal quality of its style, as romance does. The similarities between works calling themselves romance and _lai_ are more evident than the differences.

I want to present this traditionalism as a part of the implication and intention of Middle English romance as a whole. From this base, however, individual cases must be considered separately. For instance, the addition of formulae to the latest version of Guy of Warwick, Guy B, seems to imply its move towards traditionalism, which in the late Guy becoms a literary rather than a literal feature of the late Guy. Derek Pearsall presents examples that show two opposite directions for romance development, however:

> The tendency to increased sophistication is illustrated by the fifteenth century rewriting of The Seege of Troye in Harley MS 525. This redactor omits minstrel material such as direct address to the audience and oral punctuation, and adds characteristically 'literary' material such as an expanded account of the building of the New Troy, a learned digression on Neptanebus, and a rhetorical amplification of the grief of Priam and Polyxena over Hector's death...The opposite tendency, what I have called the regression into oral tradition, is illustrated by a number of fifteenth century copies of fourteenth century romances, such as the text of Sir Orfeo in Harley MS 3810.[113]

It is precisely this division, this double use of romance tradition and traditionalism, that is discussed in the thesis' two final chapters. While in chapter four, Guy is treated both as a part of romance and as a part of historiographical tradition, and emphasises some of the conservative and traditionalist qualities of romance as a whole, in chapter five the Squyr of lowe degre demonstrates its strong awareness of romance tradition, which it qualifies and sometimes extends towards other forms of modern literary amplification. The two present opposite forms of extension and amplification - one towards the traditionalism present in romance as a whole, the other away from it.

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113   'Development', p.96.

E GENERIC SIGNALS IN THE AUCHINLECK MANUSCRIPT[114]

The sampling difficulties discussed at the beginning of this chapter suggest that one cannot quantify the use of literary device in romance, or even argue a progressive development, too firmly. This means that a syntactic survey, such as that at the start of sections B and C, is inadequate: one really needs to look instead at the ways different works use a flexible set of reading signals. Romance manages to project a finely-toned range of meanings through a loosely-shared set of formal features. How it does this is the concern of the following chapters, which test and extend the claims on romance style, structure and political status set up here.

But there is a further question, too: when did this romance literary language develop? An examination of an early large collection which includes self-proclaimed romances, the Auchinleck manuscript, suggests that by the time of this manuscript - the 1330s or '40s - a romance generic language was already being used to indicate meaning. The Auchinleck manuscript is important in helping to extend a romance literary language but also as evidence that such a language was already in use. Moreover, some peculiarities of the arrangement of literary texts in this manuscript set up suggestive questions for the literary critic. Since Auchinleck is the manuscript containing the earliest complete[115] English version of Guy

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114　I am grateful to Mr M. B. Parkes for his generous help with this section.

115　Excluding Fragments.

of Warwick and Amis and Amiloun, its use of a set of reading signals is important to this study of literary contexts.

Laura Hibbard Loomis argued that the high degree of mutual reference between the works in the Auchinleck manuscript was evidence that the manuscript was compiled in a London bookshop of 1330-1340.[116] More recently, the bookshop theory has been challenged and replaced by approaches which, while not insisting upon the existence of a commercial scriptorium, suggest that the manuscript is the product of collaborative scribal and versifier activities.[117] However, I. C. Cunningham and J. E. C. Mordkoff say

> The point remains controversial however, as there is no objective evidence that manuscripts of vernacular literary works were being made commercially in England at such an early date.[118]

In their study of later manuscripts, 'The production of copies of the Canterbury Tales and the Confessio Amantis in the early fifteenth century', A. I. Doyle and M. B. Parkes suggest

> Some individuals, either whilst practising one of these crafts [including writing and illuminating], or whilst engaged in some other commercial enterprise, accepted commissions from patrons for the completed books, or they commissioned the occasional copy themselves in anticipation of a purchase: they assumed the financial responsibility in this trade for coordinating the different stages of production...The uniform appearance of copies of Middle English works produced before the advent of printing could be attributed to the proximity of independent practitioners in the neighbourhoods of the metropolis where these crafts congregated. This proximity would enable them to draw on each other's

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116 'The Auchinleck manuscript and a possible London bookshop of 1330-40', PMLA, 57 (1942), 595-627.

117 The Auchinleck manuscript, p.ix.

118 'New light on the signatures in the Auchinleck manuscript (Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland Adv. MS. 19.2.1)', Scriptorium, XXXVI (1982), 280-92 (p.282).

skills and imitate each other's products. The conditions
of a bespoke trade would encourage cross-imitation and
cross-copying: whenever a book was commissioned the
patron or the stationer would have to rely on the
availability of exemplars, scribes and illuminators to
produce the copy.[119]

These questions of the manuscript's production, the degree and method

of collaborative activity, and the state of the exemplars are not yet

settled.

However, the basis for Loomis' original argument remains: the

works in this manuscript refer to each other and display, at some

points, close stylistic parallels.[120] My discussion does not attempt

to further the argument on compilation and collaboration - it seeks

instead to discuss the literary implications, particularly for the

poems considered in this thesis - the Auchinleck Amis and Amiloun and

Guy of Warwick.

Part of Loomis' evidence for the 'bookshop' depended upon her

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119   In Medieval scribes, manuscripts and libraries: essays
       presented to N. R. Ker, edited by M. B. Parkes and Andrew G.
       Watson (London, 1978), pp.163-210 (p.197 and 201-02). They
       point out

           We can find no evidence for centralized, highly organized
           scriptoria in the metropolis and its environs at this time
           [the early fifteenth century] other than the various
           departments in the central administration of government,
           and no evidence that these scriptoria played any part - as
           organizations - in the copying of literary works. We
           believe that it is wrong to assume the existence of
           scriptoria or workshops without evidence of persistent
           collaboration.(p.199)

120   Apart from the similarities discussed here, it has been
       suggested that other items in the manuscript share lines and
       phrasing - see The Auchinleck manuscript, pp.x-xi; Laura
       Hibbard Loomis, 'The Auchinleck Roland and Vernagu and the
       Short Chronicle', Modern Language Notes, 60 (1945), 94-97;
       Nicolas Jacobs, 'Sire Degarre, Lai le Freine, Beues of Hamtoun
       and the Auchinleck bookshop', Notes and Queries, 227 (1982),
       294-301.

demonstration that a number of lines are shared by the Auchinleck Amis and the Auchinleck Guy.[121] As chapter two argues, Amis is a didactic work written in a formalised romance style, and which ultimately sets up disjunctions between Christian didacticism and a distinctive generic style it shows to be limited. Amis does not, however, merely use the style of romance: it shares enough lines with the Auchinleck Guy for Loomis to argue that this is evidence of direct borrowing.[122] As chapter two will show, the sections shared by the Auchinleck Guy and Amis display the kind of similarities that allow one to demonstrate the methods of stylistic expansion made within romance's version of rhetoric.

Amis is placed near the beginning of the Auchinleck manuscript: this is important, because items in the manuscript display signs of careful ordering. Religious poems are grouped together at the start; they are followed by a series of romances, interspersed with short pieces to complete the gatherings; and the final pieces in the manuscript tend towards the political and historiographical.[123] The treatment of generically ambivalent works is significant: although The King of Tars and Amis and Amiloun both appear, by their style and the use of the twelve-line tail-rhyme metre, to be romance,[124] they

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121   Loomis, 'The Auchinleck manuscript', and the much fuller study from which she takes her material, Wilhelm Möller, Untersuchungen über Dialekt u. Stil des me. Guy of Warwick in der Auchinleck Handschrift u. über das Verhaltnis des strophischen Teiles des Guy zu. der me. Romanze Amis and Amiloun (Königsberg, 1917).

122   See chapter two, section A (ii).

123   See The Auchinleck manuscript, pp.viii-ix and xix-xxiv.

124   See pp.21-23 of this chapter; and chapter two, on Amis and Amiloun.

are placed with the religious pieces – they are arranged by the didacticism of their intention, rather than with attention to their surface use of the formal features of romance.

Some works in Auchinleck, relatively early though the manuscript is as a collection including Middle English romances, reveal a highly-developed generic consciousness. Although the leaf containing the beginning of Sir Orfeo in the manuscript is now lost, it is presumed that the manuscript included the earliest version of this prologue to Orfeo – and in Auchinleck, the same prologue is attached to Lay le Freine.[125] Not only is this latter prologue a very full account of lai production, but if shared would also make a link between two analogous pieces – two Breton lais – in this manuscript.

Paul Strohm's study of the developing generic uses of the term 'romaunce' quotes the Auchinleck items' generic labels as 'among the earliest occurrences', and says

> This habit of referring to works as romaunces in order to emphasise their Old French antecedents is clear in many of the narratives of the Auchinleck Ms. (ca. 1330-40). The Auchinleck Beues, for example, was translated from an Anglo-Norman source at about the turn of the century, and its author explicitly acknowledges his debt.[126]

Strohm then goes on to discuss the precise reference of the term 'romaunce', to language, source and genre, in more detail than there is room to do here. Strohm notes that several works in the manuscript give themselves a generic name: for instance, The King of Tars

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125   Bliss, Sir Orfeo, pp.xlvi-xlvii, argues that the prologue was originally the same in Lai le Freine and the Auchinleck Orfeo.

126   'Origin and meaning', p.8.

refers to itself as a 'gest', and once as a 'rime'; Arthour and Merlin, Guy and King Richard use the word 'romaunce' as a generic name.[127]

A group in which one can establish differences of tone and intention of different works by comparison with each other within the manuscript is demonstrated by their reference to and quotation of parts of Guy of Warwick.[128] Once more, until the state of the exemplars and the nature of collaborative activity have been established, it is not clear whether other works in the manuscript refer to Guy's general popularity, or to the Auchinleck Guy. However, references to Guy in Auchinleck are interesting as partly defining Guy in a whole range of ways even at this early stage, and demonstrating the use of a set of generic signals working in a comparable and perhaps contrastive way with those in Guy.

Various items in the manuscript allude to Guy, in different ways: the degree of variation is in itself an indication of the fund of different stories in Guy. Chapter four's survey of different contemporary interpretations and re-creations of Guy will show that the use in Guy of a series of different kinds of episode can be extended to different contexts. For instance, the incident most often quoted separately is Guy's final fight, against the Danish champion Colbrond. Guy undertakes this fight for pietistic and nationalistic reasons - the pilgrim Guy is identified by an angel, and Guy emphasises a political context in the failure of the barons

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127   Ibid., pp.8-12; and see The King of Tars, p.64.

128   The Auchinleck manuscript, p.x.

to oppose the Danes. This is also the episode in Guy that displays

most signs of historical emphasis and verisimilitude: for instance,

Guy fights for King Athelstan - at other points he just fights for

'the king' or, in Europe, for 'the emperor' (see chapter three,

pp.146-50). Works that use just this short section tend to emphasise

its chronological placing - for instance, the Latin didactic version

of Giraldus Cornubiensis is headed

> Guido de Warwicke et vxor eius Felicis

and begins

> Regnante in Anglia inclito rege Athelstano anno domini
> incarnacionis nongentesimo vicesimo septimo.[129]

There are, on the other hand, incidents in Guy with purely fictional

weighting (see pp.146-50 and p.193ff.) - that is, as the poem uses a

range of styles and episodes, so works quoting from Guy can use and

extend Guy's obvious intention at one point.

This degree of flexibility in Guy, and its partial re-creation

in a range of genres, is made clear in the Auchinleck manuscript

items' different allusions to Guy. Auchinleck's Anonymous Short

English Metrical Chronicle, for instance, uses the Colbrond incident,

with historical weighting in Guy, in precisely the way described

above. The Chronicle quotes only the Colbrond episode as a part of

its discussion of the reign of king Athelstan -

> In Aþelstones tyme ich vnderstonde
> Was Gwi of Warwyk in Engelonde
> & for Engelond dude batail
> With a geaunt gret sam fail
> þe geaunt het Colbron
> He was slayn þoru Gwi his hond

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129   H. L. D. Ward and J. A. Herbert, Catalogue of romances in the
      Department of manuscripts in the British Museum, 3 vols
      (London, 1883), I, 493.

> At Wynchestre þe batail was don
> & suþþe dude Gwi neuere non.[130]

The few details included are nationalistic ('for Engelond'), of date ('in Aþelstones tyme') and of place ('at Wynchestre'). The quotation makes use of a set of literary signals, working comparatively and intertextually within the works collected in this manuscript. The Chronicle treats one part of Guy as a source for historiography, using the one nationalistic fight that is most easily datable in Guy itself, as the time of King Athelstan. So as the Chronicle gets some of its authority from Guy as a means of transmission of the past, the Chronicle also gets some of its historiographical authority by comparison with Guy - the Chronicle uses so many more of the devices of history and historiography. The Chronicle's reading of at least one part of Guy is as a historiographical work, although as one which displays fewer of the devices of historical authenticity and ordering than the Chronicle itself.

The Auchinleck Speculum Gy of Warewyke[131] alludes to Guy in quite a different way. Originally a homily in which a figure Alcuin preaches to count Guido of Tours, this version exploits the similarity of the names 'Guido' and 'Guy' to make its hero 'sir gy þe eorl'.[132] The didactic Speculum makes its hero topical (both in the broad sense in which the romance Gui and perhaps Guy was well known by the early fourteenth century, and in that a version of Guy is actually included in this manuscript). While Guy's literary fame is

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130 Edited by Ewald Zettl, EETS (London, 1935), 11.595-602.

131 Edited by Georgiana Lea Morrill, EETS (London, 1898).

132 Ibid., pp.lxv-cxiv.

evoked, the Speculum also treats him as a figure of rank - it stresses his 'eorl'-dom. 'eorl' Guy is used as a listener, later discarded by the homily: the figure does not re-appear at the end. The Speculum exploits the hero Guy's status as secular hero, later converted to Christian voyaging: it stresses both his move to salvation and his need to be saved. Moreover, the Speculum emphasises not only Guy's literary status, but perhaps his social status as well - as chapter four will demonstrate, by the early fourteenth century 'Guy' was identified by some figures as an ancestor of the earls of Warwick. Calling him 'eorl Gy' suggests Guy's significance to contemporary society, as well as his literary fame.

Guy is also treated as a romance, however: Amis explores aspects of its style, foregrounding its typically romance features (see chapter two). The romance Beues of Hamtoun, which follows Guy/Reinbron in the manuscript, alludes to Guy as a romance hero undertaking outstanding adventures (the passage is quoted in full on pp.4-5). Beues quotes the major dragon fight in Guy - an incident which has climactic weight, but no historiographical weight: Beues uses Guy as a comparable romance with a superlative hero. There is also Guy's own capacity to generate a new romance, Reinbron: in the Auchinleck manuscript alone, this part of the story of Guy is set out as a separate text (see pp.74-79) which refers back to the superlative hero of Guy.

So in these final two examples, Guy is treated as a romance, with a romance hero; Amis treats Guy as a fund of romance style; but the preceding works make quite different - historiographical and

didactic - uses of the story. This series of different uses of a set of diverse material demonstrates differences in the tone of the work quoting Guy, and marks too the flexibility and precision of established generic signals.

The presentation of Guy of Warwick in the Auchinleck manuscript sets up some interesting literary questions concerning the poem's structure. In this manuscript, the poem appears to be divided into three parts. The first part is the story of Guy's adventures, and return to Felice; the second is his conversion to Christianity, and the long quest following that; and the third part is the story of Reinbron, his son.

While source and paleographical evidence have not yet been completely examined, it seems to me that the suggested divisions in Guy are interestingly suggestive as setting up critical questions about the structure of Guy (as explored more fully in chapter three). The divisions in the poem in the Auchinleck manuscript are worth examining in detail, because in this manuscript various verbal, metrical and visual signals divide the poem: the divisions employ many of the generic signals described so far, and some more besides.

The story of Guy's son Reinbron appears to be a separate romance in Auchinleck: the beginning of Reinbron employs generic and organisational devices to signal a new text. The Auchinleck Reinbron begins at the top of a page and follows the heading

Reinbrun gij sone of Warwike[133]

accompanied by a picture of knights in a castle: in this manuscript,

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133 The Auchinleck manuscript, fol.167r.

title and picture are visual signals to a new text. In addition, the poem begins with a romance opening topos -

<div style="margin-left: 2em;">

Iesu þat ert of mi3te most,   <u>Reinbron</u>,
Fader, & sone, & holy gost   in <u>Guy</u> A
Ich bidde þe a bone:
Ase þow ert lord of our ginning,
& madest heuene and alle þing,   5
Se, and sone, and mone,
3eue hem grace wel to spede
þat herkneþ what y schel rede,
Iesu god in trone.
Of a kni3t was to batayle boun,   10
Sire gij is sone, þat hi3te Reynbroun,
Of him y make my mone
</div>

including initial prayer, references to audience and to own performance, and the presentation of the knightly hero. The beginning of <u>Reinbron</u> is thus marked by all the devices that tend to mark a new text in this manuscript - title, illustration and literary opening. While chapter three argues that <u>Guy</u> B, in Cambridge, Univerity Library MS Ff.2.38, is a linear kind of interlace, the Auchinleck version of the <u>Reinbron</u> story presents it as a romance of a single knight's adventures.

However, it has been suggested that a further division exists in <u>Guy</u> - Mehl says

<div style="margin-left: 3em;">

The redaction of the story in the Auchinleck Ms. is particularly illuminating because it divides the novel into three completely separate poems of which the first is composed in rhyming couplets and takes the story as far as Guy's return to Warwick.[134]
</div>

As Mehl points out, the division is evident in that the verse form of <u>Guy</u> changes from couplets to tail-rhyme; this change occurs at a natural break in the poem, when Guy begins a new quest with a new motive.

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134   The <u>Middle English romances</u>, p.221.

The section Mehl suggests to be the second part of Guy uses
signals to a new text to create a far less decisive division,
however: there is no title, or picture; and the 'new' text begins
not at the top of a page but right in the middle of a column (see the
next page).[135]   P. R. Robinson has demonstrated that the whole of
Guy (couplet and stanzaic parts, excluding Reinbron) was written by
a single scribe (scribe D).[136] Cunningham and Mordkoff say of the
Guy items in the Auchinleck manuscript

> The number of articles is often given as 44, the couplet
> and stanzaic parts of Guy of Warwick misleadingly being
> counted separately. It is clear that the scribe considered
> them one poem: although they were not copied at the same
> time, no break whatsoever occurs between them for title or
> decoration, as is characteristic at the head of longer
> poems in the manuscript. Nor was the stanzaic continuation
> given its own article number when the manuscript was
> compiled.[137]

So why have some critics treated Guy as two romances, separated
out by formal devices in the Auchinleck manuscript? The signals to a
new text operate less decisively than in the Reinbron example.
However, there are some indications that a new romance is marked out:
firstly, the metre changes from couplets to twelve-line tail-rhyme;
secondly, there is a new opening topos, laden with formulae; and
thirdly, there is a change in the script and format, demonstrating
this change to tail-rhyme.

The reasons for the metrical change are the subject of some

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135   The Auchinleck manuscript, fol.146v.

136   'A study of some aspects of the transmission of English verse
texts in late mediaeval manuscripts' (unpublished B. Litt.
thesis, Oxford, 1972), p.123.

137   'New light', p.281n.

The Auchinleck manuscript, fol.146v; from Pearsall and Cunningham, The Auchinleck manuscript.

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controversy.[138] Some critics have argued that the change of metre at this point was accidental - that Guy was continued by a different versifier, or even that two different versions are tacked together here.[139] Other critics have treated the change as a deliberate dividing of Guy, for structuring reasons.[140]

At the point of the change of metre, from couplets to twelve-line tail-rhyme, there is a new opening topos -

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138   The problems have been summed up recently by Frances McSparran, in the introduction to the Cambridge Ff.2.38 facsimile -

> The Loomis study (1942)...argued that the scribes of the Auchinleck Manuscript had remodelled the one continuous story of all known French and English manuscripts of Guy to give the effect of three separate romances, the couplet Guy, the tail-rhyme Guy and Reinbrun...This argument seems to have been accepted without question, and also without consideration of the fact that there is no extant manuscript of the Middle English Guy in which the histories of Guy and Reinbrun form one continuous romance. The text in Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College, MS 107/176 ends with the death of Guy and omits the later history of Reinbrun, and in Ff.2.38, the only manuscript other than the Auchinleck which preserves this portion of the Anglo-Norman romance, it is, as in the Auchinleck, set off separately, as if it were a separate item, following the conclusion of the story of Guy. The Middle English versions of Guy of Warwick deserve closer analysis, and it may be that the degree of originality of the Auchinleck scribes with respect to their treatment of Reinbrun needs reassessment.

139   Zupitza, introduction to fifteenth-century version of Guy; Loomis, Mediaeval romance, pp.128-9.

140   Baugh, p.22; Pearsall, 'Development', says

> The shift from tail-rhyme at the halfway point in the Auchinleck version, whether the work of a different continuator or not, seems to be the result of deliberate policy which, while recognising the affective nature of the new material - the wedding, Guy's moment of illumination, Felice's sorrow at his departure - adopts the more suitably lyrical and 'poetic' tail-rhyme stanza.(p.99)

```
God graunt hem heuen blis to mede            Guy A,
þat herken to mi romaunce rede              st. 1
Al of a gentil kni3t.
þe best bodi he was at nede
þat euer mi3t bistriden stede,
& freest founde in fi3t.
þe word of him ful wide it ran,
Ouer al þis warld þe priis he wan
As man most of mi3t.
Balder bern was non in bi:
His name was hoten sir gij
Of Warwike, wise & wi3t.
```

Derek Pearsall says of this new beginning

> The opening of the stanzaic Guy is perhaps the best part
> of the poem, a repository and perhaps a primary source of
> classical tail-rhyme writing.[141]

This stanza contains romance opening devices: an initial prayer for

the audience, a string of superlatives, and a generic statement - 'mi

romaunce rede'. The stanza is, additionally, structured by a series

of alliterating formulae in tail-rhyme position -

freest founde in fi3t

man most of mi3t

wise & wi3t

The poem becomes strongly formulaic, both at this point and in the

stanzas that follow - as is argued of the Guy wedding feast

discussed in of chapter two, section A (ii).

The difference is marked visually in the manuscript by a small

decorated initial, and by a series of paraphs. In addition, the

script becomes larger at the point of the metrical change, though

written by a single scribe (see p.76). Cunningham and Mordkoff

suggest that a time lapse accounts for the script's change in size -

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141   'Development', p.99.

> It is clear...from the radical change in his [Scribe 1's]
> hand in quire 22 between the couplet part of Guy of
> Warwick and the poem's stanzaic continuation (f.146v) that
> he did not work continuously in fascicle D; but here
> although the discontinuity of his work can account for the
> cessation of the grey lead signatures, it cannot account
> for the peculiar red ink sequence.[142]

The new opening topos, the change of script and the paraphs do not

seek to conceal the change of metre: if anything, they accentuate a

difference. If one were reading Guy of Warwick in the Auchinleck

manuscript, the ambivalence of these signals - to one poem or to two

- would suggest some literary critical questions on Guy's structure.

Guy undertakes two major quests: for Felice, and for God. The

change in metre divides the two - it is immediately before Guy's

conversion. Suggesting a break at this point divides Guy either into

a diptych structure, where two halves work comparatively, or into two

climactic romances, depending on how decisive one feels the break is.

These questions will be extended to a discussion of evoked diptych

and interlace structuring in Guy of Warwick, in chapter three.

In fact Guy's metrical change is not unique in the

Auchinleck manuscript: Kölbing's editon of Beues of Hamtoun puts it

this way -

> The romance of Sir Beues is composed in two entirely
> different metres. The first 474 lines are written in the
> tail-rhymed 6-line stanza. Only 11.91-102 and 397-408 may
> be considered as 12-line stanzas...The present is not the
> only case in Middle English poetry, in which the metre is
> changed in the middle of the text. In the romance of Guy
> of Warwike in the Auchinleck MS, the first 7306 lines are
> in couplets, the rest in tail-rhymed 12-line stanza,
> Rouland and Vernagu is throughout in the tail-rhymed 12-
> line stanza; but in the first part (1.1-424), the couplets
> consist of lines of four...Sir Ferumbras is mostly in

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142   'New light', p.291.

> short alternately-rhyming lines, (1-3410), whilst the rest
> (1.3411-5890) is in the tail-rhymed six-line stanza. In
> the Auchinleck MS the first 24 lines of <u>Richard Coer de</u>
> <u>Lion</u> consist of two tail-rhymed 12-line stanzas, while the
> rest is written in couplets.
>
>   The reason for these changes of metre in the middle of
> the text is entirely unknown. Neither in <u>Sir Beues</u>, <u>Guy of</u>
> <u>Warwicke</u> nor <u>Ferumbras</u>, is there anything to correspond
> with this change in the original French versions...We must
> confess that we do not know what induced the English
> translator of <u>Sir Beues</u> to change the metre in such a
> remarkable way. Of the other writers of the English
> versions, some have taken offence at this change; S N try
> to continue the stanza until 1.509 by adding the short
> lines, while M O have entirely remodelled this part of the
> poem, in order to eliminate the short lines.[143]

The introduction to the Auchinleck facsimile suggests that this is

evidence of

> the collaborative activity of professional hacks with
> access to the same exemplar...At no point does a change in
> metre coincide with a change of scribe, and it would be no
> part of the current argument that versifier and scribe were
> necessarily one and the same person.[144]

Of <u>Richard</u>, however, the introduction suggests

> <u>Richard</u>...is introduced with twenty-four lines in tail-
> rhyme before passing into short couplets; it may be that
> tail-rhyme was thought of as a specially 'poetic' mode of
> writing and therefore suitable for the opening of the poem,
> as a kind of self-advertisement.[145]

But there is another point, too. Section A suggested that

twelve-line tail-rhyme was the metre associated most frequently

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143   <u>Beues</u>, p.xi. Subsequent quotations from <u>Beues</u> in this chapter
      will be from Kölbing's edition, and will be incorporated in
      the text.
        Baugh, 'Improvisation', argues a loose correspondence to
      the change in the length and formal features of the Anglo-
      Norman laisses – while Baugh suggests that this is the
      historical reason for <u>Beues</u>' metrical change, he does not
      discuss the implications of the Auchinleck <u>Beues</u>' translation
      into two entirely different metres, a difference later
      versions seek to conceal.

144   <u>The</u> <u>Auchinleck</u> <u>manuscript</u>, p.ix.

145   <u>Ibid</u>.

with romance; at this point, <u>Guy</u> not only changes to tail-rhyme but is also quite formulaic and elaborate in the stanzas following. That is, <u>Guy</u> appears to be more obviously romance at the point where the hero stops questing for typically romance reasons - for his lady - and works for God. There may be a disjunction between style and the kind of Christian motivation that removes Guy from the romance world of ladies, honour and home, at this stage: <u>Guy</u> quotes a distinctive romance style as offset against genre.

To investigate the claim that changing metre calls one's attention to a break in <u>Guy</u> at this stage, the other metrical changes in works in the Auchinleck manuscript are useful. As already indicated, the change from two initial tail-rhyme stanzas to couplets in <u>Richard</u> has been read as a 'poetic' opening. In <u>Beues</u> too, the metrical change can be treated as a generic signal, evoking other romance signals, to make a decisive literary change.

Romance can be described partly as the quest of a single hero: however, <u>Beues</u> uses this assumption as a basis from which to structure the poem, by offering a series of heroes. In the first 600 lines, there are three potential romance heroes. The first possible hero is 'sir Gij',

> A stalword erl & hardi   44
> Of Souþhamtoun.

As my later material on <u>Guy of Warwick</u> shows, 'Gij' is a well-established romance hero's name by the early fourteenth century. But if the formal elements of the story's opening - the short prologue, and the description of strong 'Gij' - accord 'Gij' a potential hero's place, so they also make it clear that his story is at an end:

> Man, whan he falleþ in to elde,   46
> Feble a wexeþ and vnbelde

Þourȝ riȝt resoun.

While the comments on his great age and feebleness explicitly dismiss him, his own acts in celebrating past prowess and taking a wife are structural markers of the end of a story: the narrative signals are to closure, not opening.

The second potential hero is the emperor of Almayne. The conventions of romance work more strongly in his favour: he is a young lover-knight, denied his lady, and there is the detail that he is to fight for the lady - in her words -

> '...in þe ferste dai,   91
> Þat comeþ in þe moneþ of May,
> For loue of me.'

The love associations of the first day of May are evoked in the repetition of this detail in the following stanzas: the lady's messenger invites 'þemperur' to the woods, 'in þe ferste day, þat comeþ in þe moneþ o May' (11.133-34) - however, the appointment is to kill the lady's husband. While the text presents the emperor stylistically as a young romance hero and lover, the poem explicitly rejects his role and motive.

In fact Beues, the third hero, does not start as a conventional hero at all. His mother takes him by the ear and has the child sold: his recovery is only marked a little later, both stylistically and by its place in the narrative, by his introduction to a romance heroine

> Iosiane þat maide het,
> Hire schon wer gold vpon hire fet;   520
> So faire ȝhe was & briȝt of mod,
> Ase snow vpon þe rede blod;
> Whar to scholde þat may discriue?
> Men wiste no fairer þing aliue,
> So hende ne wel itauȝt;   525
> Boute of cristene lawe ȝhe kouþe nauȝt.

The familiarity of this literary topos, both in its formulae and in

its placing as introducing a heroine, makes it a signal to the opening of a story - though in no stronger a way than the previous signals evoked particular literary expectations.

The change of metre is at a significant point, and helps to suggest a different literary structure for the story: it occurs when Beues is at Saber's house, immediately before his mother discovers him. That is, the poem's 474 tail-rhyme lines have set up and rejected two potential heroes; however, in the poem the tail-rhyme metre and its style are firmly associated with these two figures. The change to couplets points out that there is a break with the story so far: it is a new opening that points to the establishment of Beues as the hero of this romance. Like the Guy metrical change, the break signals a new set of adventures for the hero.

In Beues, then, the metrical change is itself a signal of a structural change for the reader. In the Auchinleck manuscript, the poem's change of metre can be perceived as a generic signal, evoking the narrative patterns of romance at this point to emphasise the poem's structure. While questions of the collection of works, their composition and translation in the Auchinleck manuscript have not yet been settled, issues of presentation concerning structure of works in the manuscript set up interesting literary critical questions for the reader.

Reading romance works in the Auchinleck manuscript implies that the reader should draw upon a range of signals which have generic implications: while the differences in the handwriting of Guy, the change of metre, also indicated visually (by paraphs), and the romance-formulaic opening and re-introduction of the hero indicate a

new poem, the absence of other visual markers works against that. The implications of a set of ambivalent re-structuring devices are discussed in chapter three, on Guy's structure.

But there is a second set of implications - for the genre as a whole. By the time of the Auchinleck manuscript, romance has an established range of literary signals, made up of a whole series of devices, which can be used with effect by the first part of the fourteenth century.

Chapter II

ROMANCE STYLE: AMIS AND AMILOUN

When the compilers of the Auchinleck manuscript placed <u>Amis</u> <u>and</u> <u>Amiloun</u> in the early – didactic – part, they helped to create a set of interesting critical problems of classification.[1] <u>Amis</u> looks like romance, in the formal ways discussed in the previous chapter: it is in twelve-line tail-rhyme, has a pair of knightly heroes who share a clear-cut diptych structure, and it uses a strong set of generic markers such as romance formulae and topoi. Many of its stylistic and structural features are those typical of romance.

There are, however, features of the story that set it apart from the kinds of adventures and resolution usual in romance. For

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1   Mehl, <u>The</u> <u>Middle</u> <u>English</u> <u>romances</u>, discusses <u>Amis</u> as a romance, but says

> It seems likely that the compilers of the Auchinleck manuscript considered the poem not a romance, but a didactic tale, because they put it among homiletic works, not next to the romances.(pp.110-111)

He adds that a later manuscript of <u>Amis</u>, British Library, Egerton MS 2862, places <u>Amis</u> among the romances (p.111 and 258-59).

> Guddat-Figge, <u>Catalogue</u>, says

> Loosely connected groups of items are discernible even now: up to no. 16 [(The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin)], legends and didactical [sic] works prevail, including two romances (<u>The</u> <u>King</u> <u>of</u> <u>Tars</u> and <u>Amis</u> <u>and</u> <u>Amiloun</u>) whose homiletic character is thus stressed. (p.124)

example, angels intervene to set up moral dilemmas, one hero is afflicted with leprosy (regarded in some medieval theological works as punishment for sin, and in others as a period of penance before redemption),[2] and has a long period of helpless suffering which he cannot resolve. Like the compilers of the Auchinleck manuscript, modern critics have grouped this poem with 'legendary romances of didactic intent'[3] or even 'secular hagiography'.[4]

In fact Amis, instead of treating as compatible a romance style and Christian subject matter, problematizes the issues: it makes the two incompatible. It uses romance style to discuss subjects which are treated in such a way that they seem to be inappropriate to romance style: Amis sketches the boundaries to romance matter. In doing this, it has some interesting implications for the nature of romance style, used self-consciously.

Amis is a poem that poses questions and challenges one's assumptions about romance. How do you recognise romance features? How do you define the areas of meaning appropriate to romance? And how, finally, can a poem separate style and meaning from each other?

In that it makes a deliberate disjunction between romance style and Christian meaning, Amis is illuminating about romance

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2   Saul Nathaniel Brody, The disease of the soul: leprosy in medieval literature (Ithaca, 1974); Peter Richards, The medieval leper and his northern heirs (Cambridge, 1977); these points are discussed more fully on p. 116ff.

3   Severs, Manual, I, 167-69.

4   Ojars Kratins, 'The Middle English Amis and Amiloun: chivalric romance or secular hagiography?', PMLA, 81 (1966), 347-54; see also Diana T. Childress, 'Between romance and legend: "secular hagiography" in Middle English literature', Philological Quarterly, 57 (1978), 311-22.

conventions. <u>Amis</u> is a useful fund of a self-conscious use of romance style, here exaggerated and pointed in the text - it is valuable for an extension and illustration of the theoretical approaches to romance set up in chapter one. The peculiar disjunction between didacticism and romance style in <u>Amis</u> means that a romance style is quoted and emphasised; and a style that is assumed to be a transparent medium for romance matter is made opaque. Because it problematizes romance style and foregrounds its artificiality, <u>Amis</u> is an interesting poem to use for a discussion of romance style; because it separates style and meaning, it uses that romance style in an obvious, even exaggerated, way.[5]

<u>Amis</u>' use of romance style to create a particular didactic meaning is a skilful manipulation and questioning of the kinds of assumptions one makes about romance content and intention. So the first section will discuss romance style in <u>Amis</u>, the second its peculiar redirection of the implications of that style to suggest Christian allegory. However, these two issues cannot be separated too far - romance style is an essential tool for the poem's meaning, in a text which uses the finely-worked language of romance in some especially subtle ways.

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5   Wittig, <u>Stylistic and narrative structures</u>, demonstrates the high incidence of formulae in <u>Amis</u> in that she quotes heavily from <u>Amis</u> to demonstrate typical romance formulae (pp.26-30).

A AMIS' ROMANCE STYLE: (i) SHARED GENERIC STYLE

As _Amis_ _and_ _Amiloun_ makes the kind of disjunction between meaning and romance style suggested above, that implies that this romance style must be strongly marked to be recognisable. For two elements of the text to be offset against each other, it must be clear that they are separate, and are not necessarily compatible - romance style is set against a moralistic and didactic intention. On the one hand, Christian meaning must be presented as separate from romance, or at least existing problematically within it; on the other, romance style must be recognisable and very obvious. I plan to use the criteria of chapter one to show how _Amis_, firstly, marks itself out as a romance, and may use these stylistic criteria structurally; and secondly, uses lines shared with and probably borrowed from _Guy_ _of_ _Warwick_ - in its creation of a romance language.[6]

From the very beginning, _Amis_ uses a characteristic romance style: it starts with a romance prologue -

> For goddes loue in trinyte
> Al þat ben hend herkeniþ to me
> I pray 3ow, par amoure,
> What sum-tyme fel be3ond þe see
> Of two barons of grete bounte   5
> And men of grete honoure;
> Her faders were barons hende,
> Lordinges com of grete kynde
> And pris men in toun and tour;
> To here of þese children two   10
> How þey were in wele and woo
> Ywys it is grete doloure.

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6   Loomis, 'The Auchinleck manuscript'; Möller, _Untersuchungen_ _über_ _Dialekt_ _u._ _Stil_; and see section A (ii).

The opening has features typical of romance openings: it refers to God and the Trinity, it partly describes an audience in a flattering way ('hend'), and implies a performative situation ('herkeniþ', 'I pray 3ow', 'to here'). It includes alliterating formulaic doublets - 'toun and tour' and 'wele and woo'. The tail-rhyme stanza is used in such a way as to give the tail-rhyme lines a partly redundant and recapitulatory function -

> I pray 3ow, par amoure,
>
> And men of grete honoure
>
> And pris men in toun and tour
>
> Ywys it is grete doloure.

The second and third merely confirm the point made in the previous line; the first and third use a formula for the second part of the line. While

> I pray 3ow, par amoure,

and

> Ywys it is grete doloure

are syntactically a part of what precedes them, they refer to response: the tail-rhyme lines can be used for elaboration, or for suggested response.

This prologue not only provides generic signals to romance, it also suggests a set of values and an audience response. The prologue implies 'hend'-ness to be the subject of the poem: the word 'hend' is repeated -

> Al þat ben hend herkeniþ to me   2
>
> Her faders were barons hende   7
>
> And how þey were good & hend   16

'hend' is used of audience, of the boys' fathers, and of the heroes

themselves: 'hend'-ness is a shared value, and implied to be central to the poem. Defining as 'hend' the reader, heroes and the poem's implied subject suggests that this poem concerns nobility and its system of values as governing the reader's response.

Amis has a thematic concern with the nature of Christian language, as used for precise didactic purposes: this is not, however, the implication of the opening –

> For goddes loue in trinyte 1
> Al þat ben hend herkeniþ to me,
> I pray 3ow, par amoure.

These lines have a casualness of religious reference – 'goddes loue' is linked with 'amoure', which has more secular connotations and a wider range of reference.[7] At this stage there is, implicitly, no disjunction between 'goddes loue' and 'amoure', although the collocation of the two, and the stress on 'hend'-ness, are used ironically later in the poem: the story's development works against the initial expectations evoked through the use of generic signals.

If the prologue displays some of the characteristic generic features of romance, the stanzas following continue to use a romance style heavily. The beginning of the poem in particular makes use of formulaic alliterating lines, or doublets in half-lines –

toun and tour	9, 63
wele and woo	11, 13
Herkneþ & 3e mow here	24

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7   Middle English Dictionary, edited by Hans Kurath and others, 56 vols to date (Michigan, 1956–) A3, 260-61; hereafter referred to as MED.
     Baugh, 'Improvisation', emphasises that the hero's thanks to God is repeated in romance; he says 'For such a standard idea a formula is a convenient accessory', and quotes a series of such formulae (pp.423-24).

In romance as we reede	27
free to fond	29
worthy...in wede	30
In ryme y wol rekene ry3t	38
And tel in my talkyng	
mylde...of mood	54
boon & blood	60
bry3t in boure	66
Of hyde & hew & here	81
lef ne loothe	87

These half-lines of elaboration imply that the poem's concern is

secular: the formulae evoke a largely secular - romance and lyric -

context.

The poem repeats references to oral presentation -

> þe children-is names, as y 3ow hy3t,   37
> In ryme y wol rekene ry3t
> And tel in my talkyng.

and

> So lyche þey were both of sy3t   88
> And of waxing, y 3ow ply3t -
> I tel 3ow for soothe
> In al þing þey were so lyche.

In the first, there are three separate references to presentation

('hy3t', 'rekene', 'tel'), piled upon each other as nearly

synonymous. In the second, the point of information ('so lyche') is

repeated, after a series of references to presentation. Points of

information are surrounded by partly redundant phrases, which repeat

not the point itself but the means of transmission. So these

sections develop the romance tendency to multiply references to

transmission with an elaborative and generic function, rather than

necessarily literally.

Amis' strong sense of appropriate romance elaboration is evident at those points at which it expands or contracts the Anglo-Norman versions.[8] Amis makes changes that evoke other Middle English romances. In this its omissions are interesting - where the Anglo-Norman versions characterise figures and individualise events, Amis generalises and stylises them. It omits, for instance, the Anglo-Norman poems' description of court figures, and substitutes material describing the heroes.[9]

In Amis, surrounding figures are known by their social status, implying a sense of their role in the story: 'þe steward', 'his wife', and 'þat riche douke' have no names.[10] Not only do these changes make the role of the two heroes more prominent, they also give the poem a context of conventional romance: surrounding figures are not extraordinary, but have stylised romance roles.

Some of the omissions make more apparent the characteristic diptych structure of Middle English romance. For instance, the passage on Amiloun's marriage becomes compressed from a longer Anglo-

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8   There are three extant Anglo-Norman versions, none of which is the actual source of the Middle English Amis. However, since the Anglo-Norman C text in particular has been argued to be very close to the presumed source of the Middle English versions (Amis, p.xcvii), it will be quoted here for comparison. See Amis e Amilun (Anglo-Norman), in Amis and Amiloun, edited by Eugen Kölbing, Altenglische Bibliothek, II (Heilbronn, 1884), pp.111-87.

9   In the chanson de geste, for instance, these three figures are called Hardre, Lubias and Charlemagne; the Anglo-Norman C version 'adds to KL the information that Haidre, the traitor, is the nephew of Duke Milloun, cousin of Guenyllon' (Amis, note to 310-13, p.117; and see pp.125-27 of this chapter, on Hardré).

10   See Amis, note to 11.331-37 (p.117).

Norman passage (11.151-178), full of details about Amiloun's

establishment of himself and distribution of wealth, to

> Sir Amiloun went hom to his lond
> & sesed it al in to his hond,
> þat his elders hadde be,
> & spoused a leuedy briȝt in bour
> & brouȝt hir hom wiþ gret honour   335
> & miche solempnete.

Amiloun's absence and establishment are achieved as briefly and as

formulaically as possible, allowing nothing to distract from the

parallel structuring of the Middle English poem.

Something of the use <u>Amis</u> makes of the generic language of

romance is clear in the fight between Amiloun and the steward. <u>Amis</u>

makes the fight much less detailed and much shorter than the Anglo-

Norman versions; moreover, it uses a distinctive descriptive style –

> On stedes þat were stiþe & strong
> þai riden to-gider wiþ schaftes long,
> Til þai toschiuerd bi ich a side;   1305
> & þan drouȝ þai swerdes gode
> & hewe to-gider, as þai were wode,
> For noþing þai nold abide.
>
> þo gomes, þat were egre of siȝt,
> Wiþ fauchouns felle þai gun to fiȝt   1310
> & ferd as þai were wode.
> So hard þai hewe on helmes briȝt
> Wiþ strong strokes of michel miȝt,
> þat fer bi-forn out stode;
> So hard þai hewe on helme & side,   1315
> þurch dent of grimly woundes wide,
> þat þai sprad al of blod.
> Fram morwe to none, wiþ-outen faile,
> Bitvixen hem last þe bataile,
> So egre þai were of mode.   1320
>
> Sir Amiloun, as fer of flint,
> Wiþ wretþe anon to him he wint
> & smot a stroke wiþ main;
> Ac he failed of his dint,
> þe stede in þe heued he hint   1325
> & smot out al his brain.
> þe stede fel ded doun to grounde;
> þo was þe steward þat stounde
> Ful ferd he schuld be slain.
> Sir Amiloun liȝt adoun of his stede,   1330

>To þe steward a-fot he 3ede
>& halp him vp ogain.

The Anglo-Norman versions' battle is a series of strokes, each figure winning in turn -

>Amilun fiert le senescal
>D'une grant launce empoingnal
>Par mi l'escu peint a azur.[11]

and

>Le senescal ferir ala,
>El heaume grant coup li dona.[12]

By contrast, the Middle English romance is stylised in the extreme. It includes phrases such as

>& hewe to-gider, as þai were wode,
>For noþing þai nold abide.

and the repeated phrase

>So hard þai hewe...

It uses formulae, repeated within this poem and in other romance battles. Action is generalised even between the figures: 'þai hewe', 'as þai were wode', and so on. Only at the end of the fight are their actions distinguished from one another. Acts in this fight are not specific blows but are shared by the two figures, and by all other heroes of romance. While the English version cuts the elements that make this a particular fight, it adds formulaic, typical and generalising sections: this battle is described in the terms of all romance battles. The normality and typicality of this fight is confirmed by its generic associations; this is offset, however, against a set of later developments that imply this fight to have

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11   _Amis e Amilun_, 11.591-93.

12   _Ibid._, 11.605-06.

been wrong. Since the fight is confirmed and made acceptable by stylistic norms shared by the genre, the later moral implications extend to generic style and assumptions rather than just to this fight. In its adaptation of its Anglo-Norman source, Amis uses a set of signals to romance which mean that actions are justified entirely within the terms of romance.

At some points the Amis poet uses formulaic lines and their repetition, not only to suggest romance analogues but to make analogies between narrative levels in the romance itself. The point at which the duke's daughter, Belisaunt, chooses Amis is heavy with formulae, repeated over three consecutive stanzas –

```
Þat fest lasted fourten ni3t
Of barouns and of birddes bri3t
& lordinges mani & fale.                            435
Þer was mani a gentil kni3t
& mani a seriaunt, wise & wi3t,
To serue þo hende in hale.
Þan was þe boteler, sir Amis,
Ouer al yholden flour & priis,                       440
Trewely to telle in tale,
& douhtiest in eueri dede
& worþliest in ich a wede
& semliest in sale.

Þan þe lordinges schulden al gon                     445
& wende out of þat worþli won,
In boke as so we rede,
Þat miri maide gan aske anon
Of her maidens euerichon
& seyd, 'So god 3ou spede,                            450
Who was hold þe dou3tiest kni3t
& semlyest in ich a si3t
& worþliest in wede,
& who was þe fairest man
Þat was yholden in lond þan,                          455
& dou3tiest of dede?'

Her maidens gan answere ogain
& seyd, 'Madame, we schul þe sain
Þat soþe bi Seyn Sauour:
Of erls, barouns, kni3t & swain                       460
Þe fairest man & mest of main
& man of mest honour,
It is sir Amis, þe kinges boteler;
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> In al þis warld nis her per,
> Noiþer in toun no tour;   465
> He is douhtiest in dede
> & worþliest in eueri wede
> & chosen for priis & flour.'

Each figure - narrator, Belisaunt, and her maidens - uses almost exactly the same romance formulaic language to describe Amis. The lines work in a mutually confirmatory way - their repetition by three different figures suggests that this string of superlatives is not only a valid way but the only way to describe the hero. So the girl's choice of Amis is a logical conclusion, in the terms set up by the repetition of this romance language. The lines work in a mutually confirmatory way not only here but in their repetition across a whole corpus of literature: the romance genre repeats

> douhtiest in dede
>
> worþliest in wede
>
> chosen for priis & flour

That is, these lines are established both internally and generically as a valid set of values, setting up its own consequences. A context is encoded - these lines recur of heroes in romance. Internal repetition and reference to a genre set up and use a romance system of values, fixing Amis in the role of a romance hero. Belisaunt is attracted to Amis for precisely the reasons the narration has just suggested to be valid.

The preconceptions and values of a strongly romance style are set out most explicitly in relation to Belisaunt, and the kinds of assumptions she makes as a romance maiden. She has a strong sense of the norms and values of romance: she refers to, and sometimes even explains, them. Presented as a self-conscious figure aware of her own role, she also has an important place in this poem, in providing

an account of generic norms. For example, she woos Amis in this way

> 'þou art,' sche seyd, 'a gentil kni3t,
> & icham a bird in bour bri3t,
> Of wel hei3e kin ycorn,
> & boþe bi day & bi ni3t,   580
> Mine hert so hard is on þe li3t,
> Mi ioie is al forlorn;
> Pli3t me þi trewþe þou schalt be trewe
> & chaunge me for no newe
> þat in þis world is born,   585
> & y pli3t þe mi treuþe al-so,
> Til god & deþ dele ous ato,
> Y schal neuer be forsworn.'

Her speech recapitulates the conventions of and pre-conditions for love in romance; she is a fully self-conscious romance maiden, quoting the language and assumptions of romance.

That the girl's phrasing is normative and formulaic is, again, pointed by the narrator, who begins the encounter –

> ...as tite as þat gentil kni3t   559
> Sei3e þat bird in bour so bri3t...

The narrator uses of her exactly the same descriptive language that she uses of herself (11.577-78). She has a narrating function in the text, reminding the reader of the norms of romance. Narrator and girl confirm each others' statements in language that uses the authority of a generic context.

The Middle English Amis makes this wooing scene work in romance terms, by using and re-using the romance language quoted above. In fact the Middle English version employs many of the forms of romance elaboration, as appropriate to a love scene. It adds, for instance, the garden topos – in the Middle English romance, but not in the French versions, this love scene takes place in a garden.[13] It

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13   Amis, note to 11.505-89 (p.119).

is elaborated with the formulae of love scenes, too -

> Sche herd þe foules gret & smale,   535
> þe swete note of þe ni3tingale
> Ful mirily sing on tre;
> Ac hir hert was so hard ibrou3t,
> On loue-longing was al hir þou3t,
> No mi3t hir gamen no gle.   540

But there are two subversions of this specialised romance
language. The first is the scene that follows - it is not a love
scene, for he refuses, is abused, and finally blackmailed into bed.
The other is the scene's placing in the whole poem: it is set up as
the first incident and cause of all the troubles that follow.

Precisely at this point, the point of the forced seduction and
the cause of all trials, Belisaunt's role as romance maiden makes her
explicate the generic criteria involved -

> 'Sir kni3t, þou nast no croun;
> For god þat bou3t þe dere,   615
> Wheþer artow prest oþer persoun,
> Oþer þou art monk oþer canoun,
> þat prechest me þus here?
> þou no schust haue ben no kni3t,
> To gon among maidens bri3t,   620
> Pou schust haue ben a frere!'

She expands on how romance knights act, and dismisses the 'frere'
alternative. She reminds Amis that he is a romance knight and hero.

Not only does this speech place Amis in his role as a romance
hero, it has a relation to romance as a whole: this speech is partly
borrowed from Beues of Hamtoun, which also appears in the Auchinleck
manuscript. Eugen Kölbing's editorial notes to the following section
of Beues point out that it is parallel to Amis -

> 'Beter be-come þe iliche,
> For to fowen an olde diche,
> þanne for to be dobbed kni3t,
> Te gon among maidenes bri3t;
> To oþer contre þow mi3t fare;
> Mahoun þe 3eue tene & care!'[14]

The Amis and Beues speeches are similar in content; and there is an
identical line -

> Beues: ...to be dobbed kni3t
> Te gon among maidenes bri3t
>
> Amis: ...no kni3t
> To gon among maidens bri3t

As Kölbing notes, the Anglo-Norman versions of Amis are quite

different; Kölbing concludes

> As for Amis and Amiloun 1.620 = Beues A.1.1122, though none
> of the French texts contain anything like this, still, from
> the speech of the knight, I conclude that the author of
> Amis and Amiloun borrowed from Beues.[15]

So Belisaunt is not only evoking generic parallels, her speech is

supplied by another romance. The speech, while not necessarily

reminding the reader of Beues in particular, works as a generic

signal, reminding the reader of the language and norms of romance.

At the point of the problematic love scene, the conventions of

romance are stated quite explicitly: that is, the language and

assumptions of romance are examined at the beginning of the

adventures that follow.

Amis uses features of romance style to structure the poem, but in

ways that sometimes use romance style ironically. An example is the

parallel between the passages where Amiloun's father and Amis'

father-in-law die and they inherit:

> So wiþ-in þo 3eres to
> A messanger þer com þo
> To sir Amiloun, hende on hond,
> & seyd hou deþ hadde fet him fro   220

```
His fader & his moder al-so
þurch þe grace of godes sond.
þan was þat kni3t a careful man...

So wiþ-in þo 3eres to                                    1525
A wel fair grace fel hem þo,
As god almi3ti wold;
þe riche douke dyed hem fro
& his leuedi dede al-so,
& grauen in grete so cold.                               1530
þan was sir Amis, hende & fre,
Douke & lord of grete pouste
Ouer al þat lond y-hold.
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The passages are parallel in that each applies to one of the heroes,

and is the prelude to an adventure in each of the story's two halves;

this parallelism is marked by a similarity of phrasing. Verbal

similarity is used to point fine differences, however.

In the first, the context is Amiloun's sorrow, and the

conventional 'God's will' expression of acceptance fits in with all

those other Christian references in the poem that attribute humans'

fate to God's will.[16] But this is subtly different from its verbal

echo in the structurally parallel passage. Here the context is Amis

getting rich; and the difference in tone is pointed by the changed

syntax - 'wel fair grace fel hem' has an object, and is expanded

later in the stanza to mean Amis' inheritance. So 'grace' is

literalised in the second passage to mean worldly establishment and

wealth. This move to semanticise romance's conventional use of

Christian expressions by direct and practical reference to the hero's

fortunes works parodically[17] with other Christian expressions in

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16   See p.131ff.

17   The word 'parodically' is used in the broad sense discussed in
      chapter five: 'parody' is treated not just as humorous and
      reductive, but as a metalinguistic device. In this broader
      sense, these stanzas discussed do indeed re-quote and
      relativise the literary norms of romance.

romance. In this poem Christian references in romance are demonstrated to be used no more finely than to endorse the romance hero's success, when Christian phrases so blatantly subserve materialistic actions.

The casualness with which Christian invocations are used in romance is illustrated further in the poem, by later references to 'goddes grace' and 'goddes sond'. Immediately before the dream in which Amis is told how to cure Amiloun, the poem says

> & biþan þe tvelmonþ was ago,   2194
> A ful fair grace fel hem þo,
> In gest as we finde.

Of Amiloun's actual cure, the poem says

> When sir Amylion wakyd þoo,   2407
> Al his fowlehed was agoo
> þrou3 grace of goddes sonde.

These later references use the same language but in a far more precise way: the latter lines refer directly to God's grace. The conventional application of Christian formulae in romance, and their extension to the hero's good fortune in the most worldly sense, is revealed by their continual re-quotation with different meanings in Amis. The same lines encode a double context - of romance's social references to God, and to a more precise Christian belief - and mark the difference between them by their structuring function in different parts of the diptych.

This capacity of Amis to use romance language economically to evoke and characterise the romance genre, and to structure, can be illustrated with reference to Amis' use of one particular form of romance language - that shared with Guy of Warwick.[18]   It

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18   See chapter one, section E.

demonstrates romance self-consciousness; and it illustrates one romance's use of a direct romance context - versions of Guy and Amis exist in a single manuscript - and is therefore a useful critical source from which to demonstrate the creation of a Middle English romance style.

AMIS' ROMANCE STYLE: (ii)GENERIC STYLE IN GUY OF WARWICK[19]

There is, of course, no absolute distinction between Amis' use of romance style and Amis' use of Guy's style. Amis uses Guy's style not to refer directly to Guy but as a useful fund of romance style, taken from a well-known romance. While Amis' use of Guy's style is, then, just a part of Amis' use of romance style, it is an important part - for the peculiarities of these shared lines between one poem to another in the same manuscript provide a very useful illustration of the creation of - and kinds of expression suitable to - a Middle English romance.

In her article 'The Auchinleck manuscript and a London bookshop of 1330-40', Laura Hibbard Loomis quotes an earlier thesis by Wilhelm Möller, which demonstrated the existence of a large number of shared lines[20] between the Auchinleck Amis and Guy of Warwick, as a part of

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19   I am grateful to Mr M. B. Parkes for his generous help with this section.

20   Loomis, 'The Auchinleck manuscript', says of Möller

> Though he did not think these two romances were by the same author, still, by setting forth some 595 lines in which Amis, A[uchinleck], parallels the phraseology of Guy, A[uchinleck], Dr Möller established between all possibility of doubt the extensive indebtedness of the one poem to the other. (p.613)

her argument that the manuscript was produced in a bookshop. She says

> ...a substantial number of lines from the stanzaic Guy appear in Amis. Their number, order and grouping make it impossible to ascribe them to anything but direct textual borrowing.[21]

Loomis' discussion of the close working conditions demanded by this borrowing concluded that a group of scribes, some of whom were also poets, worked together in a London bookshop in the 1330s or '40s. As chapter one, section E showed, the commercial scriptorium theory has been subjected to criticism more recently, although the shared lines and references to each other in the manuscript suggest close collaboration of some kind. It appears that the Auchinleck Amis, which is the earliest extant Middle English version, was created under collaborative working conditions with a number of other texts to hand: the introduction to the facsimile says

> Amis and Amiloun...is continually indebted in phraseology to Guy...and the parallels, being continuous in corresponding passages, cannot be due to chance similarity or casual reminiscence. The distinction of translator and versifier, or of translator/versifier and scribe, is clearly evident here, since other manuscripts of Amis preserve borrowings from Guy that are not present in the Auchinleck: this suggests that the other manuscripts derive independently, ultimately, from the bookshop translation or the bookshop copy that lies behind the Auchinleck copy.[22]

Although questions of the working conditions and the availability of the poems' exemplars are not yet settled, it seems that a version of Amis borrowed from a version of Guy. This example of one romance using another as a part of its language and style demonstrates the

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21   'The Auchinleck manuscript', p.619.

22   The Auchinleck manuscript, p.x.

rhetorical creation of the distinctive style of Middle English romance, particularly valuable to the modern critic in that witnesses to both texts are still extant.

Something of Amis' use of Guy lines can be illustrated with reference to the theme of feasts. Amis has a series of feasts, which are added - or expanded - in Amis as compared to the Anglo-Norman versions.[23] These feast scenes are some of the most formulaic in the poem, which is an indicator of the importance of a feast scene as a place to amplify in Middle English romance. They illustrate a strong consciousness of generic convention as embodied in Guy, and an extension of some of these generic devices, and are used for some points of structural comparison and contrast too.

Parallel passages from Guy A (Auchinleck) and Amis are set out on the following page. The material is presented in this way, with just one continuous section of Guy, and shorter Amis sections placed against it, to preclude the kinds of problems set up by some editors' collections of formulae: it is in the nature of romance formulae that a phrase has parallels, and a poem as long as Guy is bound to have a great many. But from this short section - three and a half continuous stanzas of the Guy wedding feast - three feasts are constructed in Amis. The exact correspondences between Guy and different parts of Amis on this sheet show a direct and self-conscious adaptation of a version of Guy by Amis. Amis both expands the Anglo-Norman versions, and compresses and distributes the Guy passage.

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23   Amis 11.97-133, 409-45, 1505-25, and notes to these lines.

Guy A

Miche semly folk was gadred þare
Of erls, barouns lasse & mare,
  & leuedis briȝt in bour.   st. 15   ①
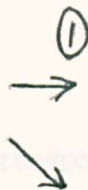
þan spoused sir Gij þat day   15   ②
Fair Felice, þat miri may,
  Wiþ ioie & gre[t] vigour.

¶ When he hadde spoused þat swete wiȝt   16
þe fest lasted a fourtenniȝt,
  þat frely folk in fere
Wiþ erl, baroun, & mani a kniȝt,
And mani a leuedy fair & briȝt,
  þe best in lond þat were.
þer wer ȝiftes for þe nones,
Gold, & siluer, & precious stones,
  & druries riche & dere.
þer was mirþe & melody,
And al maner menstracie
  As ȝe may forþeward here.
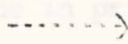
¶ þer was trumpes & tabour,   17
Fiþel, croude, & harpour,
  Her craftes for to kiþe,
Organisters & gode stiuours,
Minstrels of mouþe, & mani dysour,
  To glade þo bernes bliþe.
þer nis no tong may telle in tale
þe ioie þat was at þat bridale
  Wiþ menske & mirþe to miþe;
For þer was al maner of gle
þat hert miȝt þinke oþer eyȝe se
  As ȝe may list & liþe.

¶ Herls, barouns hende & fre,   18
þat þer war gadred of mani cuntre,
  þat worþliche were in wede,
þai ȝouen glewemen for her gle
Robes riche, gold, & fe:
  Her ȝiftes were nouȝt gnede.
On þe fiften day ful ȝare
þai toke her leue for to fare,
  & þonked hem her gode dede.

Amis

Miche semly folk was samned þare,   415
Erls, barouns, lasse & mare,   FEAST II
  & leuedis proude in pride.

Miche was þat semly folk in sale,   1513
þat was samned at þat bridale   FEAST III
When he hadde spoused þat flour,
Of erls, barouns, mani & fale,
& oþer lordinges gret & smale,
& leuedis briȝt in bour.

& seþþen wiþ ioie opon a day   1509
He spoused Belisent, þat may,   FEAST III
þat was so trewe & kende.

þat fest lasted fourten niȝt   433
Of barouns & of birddes briȝt   FEAST II
& lordinges mani & fale.
þer was mani a gentil kniȝt

③

þat riche douke his fest gan hold   97
Wiþ erles & wiþ barouns bold,   FEAST I
As ȝe may listen & liþe,
Fourtenniȝt, as me was told,
[With meet and drynke, meryst on mold]
To glad þe bernes bliþe;
þer was mirþe & melodye
& al maner of menstracie
Her craftes for to kiþe;
Opon þe fiftenday ful ȝare
þai token her leue forto fare
& þonked him mani a siþe.

FEAST I: ll.97-133
FEAST II: ll.409-45
FEAST III: ll.1505-25.

There are some direct correspondences between the two poems, as in quotation number one. <u>Guy</u>'s

> Miche semly folk was gadred þare
> Of erls, barouns lasse & mare,
> & leuedis bri3t in bour

is adopted almost directly into <u>Amis</u> –

> Miche semly folk was samned þare
> Erls, barouns, lasse & mare,
> & leuedis proude in pride.

One half-line alliterating formula is substituted for another – 'bri3t in bour' becomes 'proude in pride'. As the final word of this tail-rhyme line changes to 'pride' to fit the <u>Amis</u> stanza's rhyme, the entire half-line changes: when in <u>Amis</u> the rhyme-word is altered, the formulaic nature of the half-line is maintained by the substitution of another alliterating doublet. In the first line, too, 'gadred' becomes 'samned', making this an alliterating line.

But when later in <u>Amis</u> (11.1513-18) this group is repeated and expanded, the expansions rely directly on romance collocations of words and phrases. So 'semly' becomes an alliterating doublet, 'semly...in sale'; and the list of lords

> Erls, barouns lasse & mare

becomes

> Of erls, barouns, mani & fale,
> & oþer lordinges gret & smale.

The passage expands easily by making single words into alliterating doublets, and by adding associated formulae. These expansions by the addition of parallel near-synonymous phrases display a sense of romance collocations, and the kind of paradigmatic operation of formulae noted by Susan Wittig.[24]

Sometimes the correspondences between the two poems are looser;

for instance, the material in quotation two has a re-ordered and altered corresponding passage in Amis. And Amis adds to the Anglo-Norman versions the detail of the 'fortni3t', which is found in Guy.

My third quotation is a whole stanza of Amis and Amiloun, made by re-arranging two and a half stanzas of Guy: the mode of re-ordering lines that are nevertheless quoted almost directly reinforces Loomis' argument that the Amis poet/translator wrote with a version of Guy in front of him. The whole stanza expands the single Anglo-Norman line

> E hautement lur feste tint.[25]

So the changes are pure Middle English romance elaboration, suggesting Amis' closeness to Guy as a source text here, and departing from the Anglo-Norman versions entirely.

In the Guy stanza, the four tail-rhyme lines are

> Her craftes for to kiþe
>
> To glade þo bernes bliþe
>
> Wiþ menske & mirþe to miþe
>
> As 3e may list & liþe

Three out of these four appear in the Amis stanza, in rearranged order. So do two couplets –

> þer was mirþe & melody,
> And al maner menstracie

and

> On þe fiften day ful 3are
> Pai toke her leue for to fare.

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24   Stylistic and narrative structures, pp.19-20; quoted in chapter one, p.16.

25   Amis e Amilun, 1.38; and see the notes to Amis, 11.61 and 97-133 (p.114).

The result is a stanza structured around the tail-rhyme lines, and freely selecting from Guy's feast formulae. The two and a half Guy stanzas are re-ordered and compressed in a single Amis stanza.

This Amis feast is far less of a full description than that in Guy: it is doing something different. A series of formulaic lines from Guy are compressed until they are not a full description but a series of allusions to a feast. That is, the Amis stanza does not describe in detail so much as evoke other romance feasts - including that in Guy. The style and technique of this re-working of Guy relies very heavily on the use of a set of generic parallels. The passage both refers to and illustrates the elaboration of a feast topos through a rhetoric distinctive of Middle English romance.

That in Amis this section is divided into three feasts is important as an illustration of the capacity of Middle English romance style to work flexibly, by selecting and expanding; it is of structural importance too. The repeated feasts become points of comparison within the poem. The first quotation, 'Miche semly folk was samned þare', and its expansion later in the poem, compares the two feasts. At the first, Amis becomes Belisant's love object; at the second, he marries her. The formulae hardly change, apart from adding 'at þat bridale'. In that - in ways to be discussed later - the poem introduces questions of public evidence as opposed to private guilt, it is apparent that these formulae belong firmly with the former. The formulae refer - generally - to people: there are lists of estates, and the emphasis is on public spectacle. So although Amiloun's false oath will have consequences in his leprosy, the repeated passage works in a recapitulatory way to return the reader to the couple's earlier innocence. In fact it does more than

this - it implies that in the eyes of the poem's public, the 'lordinges', innocence is proved: this is a public celebration of reconciliation, held in a social context. So the formulae return one to the moment when Belisaunt was first attracted to Amis, and disregard the sexual transgression. The formulae are public statements, used at the points where the reader can see only as much as society can. In a poem which considers the status of romance language, formulae are at these points aligned with only what is evident to the 'lordinges'. The formulae are associated with what is evident to society; however, _Amis_ shows that this can be quite separate from truth in romance.

So the two feasts in the middle of the poem, feast II (11.409-45) and the girl's desire, feast III (11.1505-25) and the marriage, balance each other. But there is a further balance set up, with feast I (11.97-133), 'þat riche douke's' initial feast when the friends first arrive in court. There is one last feast, balancing this first one - it is the feast of duke Amis, when the leper Amiloun is outside the gate:

> In kinges court, as it is lawe,
> Trumpes in halle to mete gan blawe,
> To benche went þo bold.
> When þai were semly set on rowe,   1900
> Serued þai were opon a þrowe,
> As men miriest on mold.
> þat riche douke, wiþ-outen les,
> As a prince serued he wes
> Wiþ riche coupes of gold,   1905
> & he þat brou3t him to þat state
> Stode bischet wiþ-outen þe gate,
> Wel sore of-hungred & cold.

The English version makes this parallel in story terms, adding that Amis draws his sword on the leper; it provides an ironic parallel to the first 'riche douke' drawing his 'fauchoun' (1.808) on Amis.

But the use of the feast topos here marks the differences as well as the parallels. Those early feasts ('miche semly folk was samned þare...') re-use the language of romance feasts in their parallel descriptions. But the last feast does not use this standardised romance language of feasts, borrowed from _Guy_ and recapitulated in _Amis_. Instead, it makes it clear that Amiloun 'stode bischet wiþ-outen þe gate': he is excluded from the romance language of the poem, for as a leper he is no longer a romance hero. In this poem romance language is used not only as a mark of generic inclusion, it is used to show exclusion too - the points where formulae fail are used to point the expressive limits to this story and to the whole romance genre.

Why should the poet of _Amis and Amiloun_ use the language of the Auchinleck _Guy_ like this? One possibility is that this is direct allusion to _Guy_ by quotation from it, though Norman Blake has argued that the concept of 'quotation' can demand a close knowledge of the previous text by the reader and a fixity of the text that are made unfeasible by the adaptations and changes that take place in the copying and reproduction of medieval literature.[26]

Some of Blake's limits for quotation or allusion in medieval literature are removed in this particular case: it seems that the _Amis_ translator or versifier had a copy of _Guy_ to hand. Moreover, a copy of _Guy_ is available to the reader, who can refer readily to the

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26 _The English language in medieval literature_ (London, 1977), especially chapter six, 'Parody', pp.116-27.

version of <u>Guy</u> in the Auchinleck manuscript. Witnesses to the texts

of both poems are in the Auchinleck manuscript. If one wanted to

argue specific quotation, directing the reader to a particular prior

text - <u>Guy</u> - then the existence of witnesses to the texts of the two

poems in the Auchinleck manuscript would make that convenient.

However, other items in the Auchinleck manuscript that allude to

<u>Guy</u> do so far more explicitly, by name: <u>Beues</u> gives a list of

heroes, the <u>Chronicle</u> locates its hero as an historical reality, and

the <u>Speculum</u> <u>Gy</u> names its hero 'eorl gy'.[27] These items recall <u>Guy</u>

more directly than <u>Amis</u> does, which merely re-uses the poem's style.

Moreover, <u>Amis</u> does not use distinctive lines in <u>Guy</u>, but shared

generic lines - the passages recurring in <u>Amis</u> and <u>Guy</u> are

distinctive of romance, rather than of a particular text: the nature

of the shared lines undercuts arguments for specific allusion, such

as the previous paragraph's discussion of quotation and allusion.[28]

This generic and shared quality to the lines which occur in both

<u>Amis</u> and <u>Guy</u> means that the passages in <u>Amis</u> cannot be assumed to

evoke the wedding feast in <u>Guy</u> in particular. The reference need

not, however, be so specific: the wedding feast in <u>Guy</u> itself uses

the most typical and formulaic features of romance language. <u>Amis</u>

quotes lines not unique to <u>Guy</u> but shared across romance: <u>Guy</u> is a

useful fund of romance tail-rhyme style at this point. <u>Amis</u> uses

what is very much a shared romance style: its borrowings are

formulaic and generic, as their method of expansion confirms. It

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27   See chapter one, section E.

28   These issues of quotation and reference in Middle English
      romance are discussed further in chapter five of this thesis.

seems to me that, although the co-existence of the poems in the Auchinleck manuscript indicates the _Amis_ poet's use of _Guy_, and allows the reader to cross-refer, nevertheless the borrowings are not specific allusions but generic signals.

The selection and use of these lines indicates the _Amis_ writer's idea of where a Middle English romance style is located, and how one uses it: the existence of both _Amis_ and _Guy_ in the same carefully-worked manuscript allows one to illustrate the manipulation and kinds of expansion open to romance elaboration and description. As _Amis_ uses _Guy_ not as a specific text but as a central example of the romance genre, its expansions and changes illustrate romance's use of a distinctive romance style and its structural uses too.

The interesting thing is, though, that these three and a half stanzas of _Guy_ are significantly placed: although they have an importance in story terms - the wedding of Guy and Felice - they occur at a point at which _Guy_ uses stylistic features partly to demonstrate changes in the poem's structure and meaning. They appear just after _Guy_ changes metre to twelve-line tail-rhyme and begins a typical romance opening with a high degree of formulaic redundance.[29] So _Amis_, using _Guy_ for its sense of the typical in romance, has selected from a point where _Guy_ is itself exploiting and demonstrating a style typical of romance. _Guy_'s ability to create a fund of romance elaboration, as well as to use one, is an important factor in its creation of its own tradition, of story and of style.

So while there is an implicit qualification of the methods and

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29   This was discussed in chapter one, section E; and will be developed in relation to _Guy's_ structure in chapter three.

meaning of romance in <u>Amis</u>, these stylistic features are ultimately not rejected so much as crucial to this poem's organisation. <u>Amis</u> sets up the paradox of ironising these romance devices while exploiting fully the potential they set up. For these reasons romance devices in <u>Amis</u> are not only displayed self-consciously, and useful as a fund of romance signals, but are important tools for the creation of meaning in <u>Amis</u>.

All these forms of elaboration outlined so far - beauty topoi, superlatives, feasts, formulae, doubled quest structure and so on - imply a certain kind of narrative: a secular chivalric one in which the subject is the hero's success in society. Although there are didactic romances - <u>Sir Gowther</u>, <u>Sir Ysumbras</u>, <u>Le Bone Florence of Rome</u>, <u>Emaré</u>, <u>The King of Tars</u>, and so on[30] - none presents style and meaning in quite such a problematic relation to each other as <u>Amis</u> is able to do. What happens, then, when a poem's subject is implied, by all these forms of elaboration, to be foreign to romance? Or more to the point, what happens when serious issues and didacticism are used in such a way that they are seen to be - or made to be - foreign to romance?

30   See Mehl, <u>The Middle English romances</u>, especially chapter five, 'Homiletic romances', pp.120-88.

B   GENERIC LIMITATIONS: ROMANCE STYLE AND CHRISTIAN DIDACTICISM

A large number of medieval versions of the Ami and Amile story

survive, in different languages and genres. Leach lists thirty-four

versions, which include a broad generic range - there is an eleventh-

century 'romantic' Latin version;[31] a French chanson de geste[32] and

miracle play;[33] various Latin hagiographic versions;[34] an Old Norse

rímur and saga;[35] three Anglo-Norman secular versions, Amis e Amilun;

a Middle English short version in An Alphabet of Tales;[36] and so on.

So while the literary signals of Amis and Amiloun can be examined

against a context of Middle English romance, one can also compare the

uses of generic signals and ordering to demonstrate Amis' devices.

As this list of different forms of the story suggests, the Ami and

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31   'The Amis and Amiloun story of Radulphus Tortarius',
     translated in Amis, pp.101-05. These versions are listed by
     Leach, Amis, pp.ix-xiv.

32   Ami et Amile, edited by Peter F. Dembowski (Paris, 1969); Ami
     and Amile, translated by Samuel Danon and Samuel N. Rosenberg
     (York, South Carolina, 1981).

33   Miracle de Nostre Dame d'Amis et d'Amille, in Miracles de
     Nostre Dame, edited by Gaston Paris and Ulysse Robert, 8 vols,
     (Paris, 1876-93), IV, 1-67.

34   Vita Amici et Amelii carissimorum, in Kölbing, Amis and
     Amiloun, pp.xcvii-cx; Amis, pp.x-xvi, includes a list of other
     hagiographic versions.

35   Amicus rímur ok Amilius, in Kölbing, Amis and Amiloun, pp.189-
     229; and discussed by Kathryn Hume, 'Structure and
     perspective: romance and hagiographical features in the
     Amicus and Amelius story', Journal of English and Germanic
     Philology, 69 (1970), 89-107.

36   'Amicus and Amelius', in An Alphabet of tales, edited by Mary
     MacLeod Banks, EETS (London, 1904), pp.38-41.

Amile story transforms easily into either secular or sacred treatments of the story. A certain generic ambivalence is encoded in the story itself.

As critics have shown, these earlier versions use appropriate forms of literary amplification and emphasis that accentuate the story's sacred or secular reference.[37] The Middle English Amis and Amiloun is peculiar in its use of a romance style associated with secular concerns, made problematic by ethical issues suggested to be foreign to that style. That is, while Amis quotes a distinctive Middle English romance style that has been used as a medium for Christian issues in other didactic romances, Amis delineates them as issues inexpressible in, or problematized by, romance assumptions encoded in that style.

Amis and Amiloun evokes contrasting kinds of narrative - for instance, the Bible and the Tristan story - as a part of its meaning.[38] Some of these different types of narrative are a part of the story's own generic history, as indicated above. Amis invokes a range of devices in other narratives, partly to draw attention to their status as narrative devices.

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[37] Kratins, 'Chivalric romance or secular hagiography?'; and Hume, 'Structure and perspective'.

[38] See Sarah Kay, 'The Tristan story as chivalric romance, feudal epic and fabliau', in The spirit of the court: proceedings of the fourth congress of the International Courtly Literature Society (Toronto, 1983), edited by Glyn S. Burgess and Robert Taylor (Cambridge, forthcoming); and William Calin, The epic quest: studies in four Old French chansons de geste (Baltimore, 1966), especially chapter two, 'The quest for the absolute: Ami et Amile', pp.57-117. These issues are discussed further on p.130ff.

Sarah Kay's recent study of the device of the ambiguous oath in Tristan, the chanson de geste version of Ami et Amile, and related texts, describes its approach as one

> which operates through our literary competence, whereby we situate that text relative to other kinds of discourse and especially to other related texts.[39]

Amis uses elements from different kinds of narrative to evoke other texts; the story itself has a long generic history. So there is a wide-ranging set of literary contexts to Amis, which serves in the Middle English romance - and will be used in this chapter - to demonstrate the distinctive use of narrative devices in Amis.

So far, the stylistic and structural devices identified in Amis have been largely generic: Amis makes it particularly evident that this is a Middle English romance. Within this generic context, however, Amis makes changes that are not necessarily a part of romance elaboration, but serve to problematize the issues in this particular case. The main and unique change made by the Middle English romance Amis is that the angel's warning of leprosy is placed immediately before the judicial combat -

<pre>
        As he com prikand out of toun,
        Com a voice fram heuen adoun,   1250
        þat noman herd bot he,
        & sayd, 'þou kni3t, sir Amiloun,
        God, þat suffred passioun,
        Sent þe bode bi me;
        3if þou þis bataile vnderfong,   1255
        þou schalt haue an euentour strong
        Wiþ-in þis 3eres þre;
</pre>

& or þis þre 3ere ben al gon,
Fouler mesel nas neuer non
In þe world, þan þou schal be!   1260

Ac for þou art so hende & fre,
Ihesu sent þe bode bi me,
To warn þe anon.'

In earlier versions, the angel's warning is after the combat, when the victorious Amiloun, still pretending to be Amis, becomes betrothed to the duke's daughter.[40] So the warning suggests that leprosy is a consequence of Amiloun's adultery, or of his betrothal oath when he is already married. The Middle English version omits the trick betrothal - the friends change back, and the real Amis marries the daughter. So what is the effect of the leprosy warning at this point?

Modern expositions of medieval theorising about leprosy make it clear that leprosy can mean different things.[41] There is a strong social stigma: in medieval law, a leper is shunned, legally outcast, deprived of possessions, and declared dead.[42] This is the course Amiloun's wife takes. But there are also contrasting theological traditions of glossing leprosy, explained this way by S. N. Brody -

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40   See Amis, note to 11.1249-85 (p.124).
      Some difficulties of reference are created by the fact that the heroes' names are transposed in some versions of the Ami and Amile story. In the Middle English and Anglo-Norman versions, Amis or Ami is the one accused by the steward, and Amiloun or Amile rescues him and becomes leprous; however, in all other versions, the names are transposed: Amile is accused, and Ami becomes leprous. Every effort has been made to indicate clearly which figure is being referred to; at this point, the antecedents of Amis and Amiloun are referred to by the names of the Middle English figures.

41   Brody, The disease of the soul; Richards, The medieval leper.

42   Brody, The disease of the soul, p.86

> The world of the leper emerges as a world of contradiction and inconsistency - indeed, as a world which accommodated two incompatible ideas of leprosy: the disease was the sickness both of the damned sinner and of one given special grace by God. The idea of the leper as specially chosen by God for salvation was propagated mainly by the Church.[43]

This last demands that one reads inversely: as in some saints' lives, where the saint's outcastness becomes a measure of his or her holiness, human isolation means divine grace - a didactic text itself may become a sign of dislocation between human values and divine blessing. In this last, the leper, though shunned in the social world, symbolises humankind as exiled from the Christian world.[44]

This double signifying tradition is evident in the tendency of the Ami and Amile story itself to gloss leprosy in contrasting ways. Some works make it merely sequential, not a consequence: Leach's translation of the eleventh century Latin version says

> After several happy years, Amicus, you became ill with the well-known spots of leprosy.[45]

and the Middle English short version in An Alphabet of Tales says

> And belife after þis, Amicus happened to wax lepre.[46]

The miracle play says that leprosy will be 'qu'en brief termine', but God's command to the angel is to go to Amis and

> 'Li dy que mesel sera
> Pour ce qu'il a sa foy mentie,
> Et que je vueil qu'il se chastie
> De tel affaire.'[47]

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43   Ibid., pp.100-01.

44   Ibid., pp.103-04.

45   'Radulphus Tortarius', p.104.

46   'Amicus and Amelius', 11.28-29.

47   Miracle, 11.1212-15.

The _Vita_ says

> Omnem filium, quem Deus recipit, corripit, flagellat et castigat.[48]

The evidence of the other versions of the _Ami and Amile_ story itself is to the suggestive multiplicity of ways to read the affliction of Amis with leprosy.

The Middle English romance does not suggest any of these interpretations: although the angel says

> 'Ac for þou art so hende & fre,   1261
> Ihesu sent þe bode bi me,
> To warn þe anon.'

this is the reason for the warning, not for the leprosy itself.   Is Amiloun to be seen as a sinner?   If leprosy suggests sexual sin, then why should the redeemer Amiloun rather than the transgressor Amis be punished?   The Middle English _Amis_ uses the device of leprosy to set up questions which are left unanswered.[49]

Ultimately the occurrence of leprosy is treated as foreign to Middle English romance, not only by the fact that it occurs so little in romance,[50] but by the problems of morality, signification and dilemma it creates for the heroes.   But while it creates more problems than it solves, the angel's warning of leprosy does introduce some thematic issues that are also criteria for judgement.

Amis' trial is in public terms, of evidence to surrounding society.   The basis for a judicial combat is an assumed

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48   _Vita_, p.civ.

49   This point is discussed further at the end of this chapter.

50   Bordman, _Motif index_, quotes only _Titus and Vespasian_, 1.1165ff.; _Beues_, 1.3677ff.; and _Amis_; compare the number of Biblical references to leprosy cited by Brody, _The disease of the soul_, pp.62-119.

correspondence between God-given right and public justice. William

Calin's discussion of the chanson de geste version says of judicial

combats generally

> In the early Middle Ages, trial by battle was considered a
> judgment from God; by its very nature, the judicium Dei was
> a Christian act infallible in determining truth and
> justice.[51]

In our romance, Amis makes the legalistic basis to the combat clear;

he stresses his own vulnerability in terms of the moral absolutism of

judicial combat -

> Ich haue þat wrong & he þe ri3t,   940
> þerfore icham aferd to fi3t,
> Al so god me spede,
> For y mot swere, wiþ-outen faile,
> Al so god me spede in bataile,
> His speche is falshede;   945
> & 3if y swere, icham forsworn,
> þan liif & soule icham forlorn;
> Certes, y can no rede!'

But the judicial combat and the chance to swop places with Amiloun

means the separating out of 'wrong' and public proof: human justice

is no longer equivalent to Christian justice. The substitution of

Amiloun manages to evade this issue because its literal truth fulfils

criteria both of social proof and of divine confirmation of that

proof.

However, while the judicial combat and substitution manage to

separate out public proof and truth, the angel's warning reasserts a

Christian truth that is beyond literalism and beyond language. The

substitution separates proof and truth; leprosy brings them together

again, in that it is external evidence of inner guilt, with dire

social consequences. The whole sequence places language firmly as a

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51   The epic quest, p.85.

human tool, and suggests the limitedness of all such human tools. In its treatment of literary language, Amis evokes not only this legalistic and theological basis, but the treatment of the judicial combat in different genres too.

In the terms suggested in the first chapter, romance language provides its own authority: romance language is largely a generic marker, signalling romance norms by evoking comparable texts. However, this is offset against a further generic location - a group of Christian texts, such as saints' lives, in which language is a sign of the transcendent, mediated through its literal referent. This view of the limitedness of language in a Christian universe is one found more usually in theological writing than in romance. In Amis, the treatment of literary language encodes a generic context and a broad set of criteria for judgement: however, its presentation of a paradox of choices is wrenched back towards the morally ordered world by the warning of leprosy.

This thematic split between public social language and the Christian language of guilt is maintained throughout the poem. The first kind of language - public and social, regardless of guilt - is suggested to be confined to secular literature. There are, for instance, reminders of other secular texts: equivocal oaths occur in the Tristan story, and parts of the story of Lancelot; leprosy as a disguise and occasion for an equivocal oath is a motif in the Tristan story; and so is the separating sword.[52] For Tristan, these are all devices that provide public statements of implied innocence - even

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52   Ralph J. Hexter, Equivocal oaths and ordeals in medieval literature (Cambridge, Mass., 1975), p.16ff.

though he and Iseut are guilty. When equivocal oaths figure in the
Tristan and Lancelot stories, the romance hero's ability to trick and
escape is presented as a satisfactory solution.[53] The use of criteria
of public judgement in Amis is associated with motifs that are used
to recall those secular texts which privilege social statement over
internal guilt.

The language of romance is treated in a similar way. Amis is
heavy with romance formulae, and requires us to recognise that the
generic force of a formula is often more important than its literal
meaning. For instance, the friends swear loyalty to each other

> þat boþe bi day & bi ni3t,
> In wele & wo, in wrong & ri3t,
> þat þai schuld frely fond   150
> To hold to-gider at eueri nede,
> In word, in werk, in wille, in dede...

The alliterating formulaic doublets 'in wele & wo' and 'in wrong &
ri3t' are used with more generic than literal force. The oath is
carried out by the use of typical romance language - only
retrospectively does the word 'wrong' become meaningful. Romance is
treated as a self-enclosed language in which the hero's deeds are
endorsed generically rather than morally. This poem semanticises the
romance formula by giving it a moral context - and by doing so Amis
displays how little of a moral context is usually encoded in the
fully secular language of romance.

So the ambiguous oath in Amis is different from the recurrence
of the motif in other works which use this device. Amis introduces
further criteria for judgement, while using the language of romance
to suggest how far romance creates a morally self-enclosed language,

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53 Ibid., pp.16-26.

governed by norms of generic confirmation and the hero's ability to succeed. In its double evocation of other secular texts, and of the normal function of romance language, <u>Amis</u> both locates the limited moral scheme of the Tristan story and romance language, and marks its own differences.

This can be seen with especial clarity in <u>Amis</u>' treatment of the one figure who is able to draw together questions of internal guilt and public appearance - Amiloun's wife. She gives an internal gloss to this poem -

> So wicked & schrewed was his wiif,
> Sche brac his hert wiþ-outen kniif,
> Wiþ wordes harde & kene,
> & seyd to him, 'Þou wreche chaitif,
> Wiþ wrong þe steward les his liif,   1565
> & þat is on þe sene;
> Þer-fore, bi Seyn Denis of Fraunce,
> Þe is bitid þis hard chaunce,
> Daþet who þe bimene!'

She is actually quite right; confirming the angel's first speech, she argues that human actions are both consequential and subject to divine control. What is more, she makes a link between right and proof in a way that is ignored by the friends at the judicial combat. The point of the ambiguous oath is that evidence - what is 'sene' - relies on literal language, not only in statements to society but in divine verification too. Amiloun's wife 'wiþ wrong' discards this mode of verifying to argue a real link between moral right and external evidence, along with a connection between one's actions and their consequences later. Her gloss fits the force of the poem exactly.

However, this contrasts very strongly to the wife's story placing. In terms of plot she is the villain; and she is slotted precisely in the narrative -

> So wicked & schrewed was his wiif   1561

She is a wholly social figure; her motives are public and familial -

she says

> 'In þis lond springeþ þis word,   1591
> Y fede a mesel at mi bord,
> He is so foule a þing,
> It is grete spit to al mi kende.'

and

> 'It is gret spite to ous alle,   1601
> Mi kende is wroþ wiþ me.'

and her real power is presented as purely verbal -

> Sche brac his hert wiþ-outen kniif,   1562
> Wiþ wordes harde & kene.

Moreover, a strikingly romance language is finally used of her re-

marriage -

> þan had a kny3t of þat contre   2446
> Spoused his lady, bry3t of ble,
> In romaunce as we rede.

The force of the poem is that this marriage is adulterous - the

lady's husband Amiloun, though previously leprous and therefore

legally dead, is now recovered. Moreover, although Amiloun's wife

treated Amiloun as a leper, the established diptych structure

suggests that his story is parallel to that of Amis - Amiloun is

important as a hero in this romance. The marriage is implied to be a

subversion of ordinary romance marriages and thus of the uses to

which these lines are usually put: they are used ironically.

So thematically, in the emerging stress on language and social

action as opposed to ethics, the wife is placed as the villain of the

story. In all these ways the narrative weighting is very much

against Amiloun's wife; but this work nonetheless aligns her gloss

with that of the angel, and with the force of the whole poem's

Christian and moral perceptions.

The role of Amiloun's wife is problematic and highlights some of the issues of plot and character here. In this, the Middle English romance contrasts to the chanson de geste, which concentrates on plot to make its heroic and villainous figures far more distinct. A part of the difference between the chanson de geste and the romance lies in their use of different forms of generic elaboration. However, the chanson de geste makes an interesting comparison to Amis, in that it sets up an alternative narrative structure in the patterning of action and the deflection of blame – a type of structuring that was available to the romance writer, but one which demonstrates a mode of smoothing over moral issues which the Amis poet does not adopt. Unlike Amis, the chanson de geste has a strong sense of all action and meaning being organised between three narrative parts – the hero, the villain, and the adventure as a single event that happens between or to them.

An example of this tendency to polarize good and evil figures is the treatment of the judicial combat in the chanson de geste. The combat lasts two days: on the first day, Hardré is wounded and mutilated; overnight he calls his godson Aulori and advises him on wickedness–

> 'Je te chastoi, biaus filleus Aulori,
> Que n'aiez cure de Dammeldeu servir,
> Ne de voir dire, se ne cuides mentir.
> Se vois preudomme, panse de l'escharnir,
> De ta parole, se tu puez, le honnis.
> Ardéz les villes, les bors et les maisnils.
> Metéz par terre autex et crucefiz,
> Par ce seréz honoréz et servis.'[54]

and on his way to the following day's combat Hardré says

> 'Ier fiz bataille el non dou Criator,

Hui la ferai el non a cel seignor
Qui envers Deu nen ot onques amor.
Ahi, diables! com ancui seraz prouz.'
S'arme et son cors a conmandé a touz.[55]

He is killed immediately afterwards, with Ami's first blow.

Hardré's death is locatable in a series of his own actions and decisions: the immediate cause of his death is his oath to the Devil. While the advice to Aulory and the changed oath help to explicate his wickedness, and his treatment of the friends, they also provide a series of specific actions and statements which work in a sequence with one another. So Hardré's death is a partial consequence of his own character and of some specific acts of his.

Hardre has his own story, and makes his own choices fitting his character; the implication is that his death and mutilation are a fitting end for him. As William Calin shows, this sense of Hardre's separable role is set up externally –

> Ami and Amile face the notorious race of traitors. Hardré himself is an important character in many other epics – Gaydon, Gui de Bourgogne, Jourdain de Blaye, Doon de Nanteuil, La Chevalerie Ogier, Garin de Lorrain, to name just a few – and always plays a villainous role. We now

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54   Ami et Amile, 11.1625-33:

> 'I urge you, good godson Aulory, not to trouble to serve the Lord God or to tell the truth, unless you think you are lying. If you see a worthy man, be sure to insult him, and shame him with your words if you can. Burn down cities, towns and farms. Knock over and smash altars and crucifixes. Only in that way will you be honoured and served.' (Danon and Rosenberg, Ami and Amile, p.77)

55   Ami et Amile, 11.1660-64:

> 'Yesterday I did battle in the name of the Creator. Today I will fight in the name of that lord who has never had any love for God. Ah, Devil, how triumphant you will be today!' He commended to all his body and soul. (Danon and Rosenberg, Ami and Amile, p.78)

know that he has a historical prototype, a certain
Hardradus who tried to kill Charlemagne in 785.[56]

Hardré's separable narrative role merely meshes with Ami and Amile's.

This series of events helps to remove moral responsibility from
Ami and Amile. By the time of Hardré's death, his villainy is well-
established: but that it is established in a series of incidents is
important too in that it separates the sexual transgression and
ambiguous oath from the combat's results. So the chanson de geste
makes less immediate the question of guilt by providing a deplorable
villain, and a series of intermediary adventures.

This concern to isolate a villain as acting from purely personal
- as opposed to ethical - motives, extends to the leper's wife in the
chanson de geste. There the wife, Lubias, is the niece of Hardré:[57]
her outburst over his death is therefore explicable in the terms of
their relationship.

This contrasts completely with the Middle English romance, which
makes no link at all between the leper's wife and the steward. The
romance wife's outburst is a moral gloss on the poem, concerning
itself with guilt and wrong. She is one of only two figures who
provide glosses to this poem: the other is the angel, and the two
figures are similar in their ability to place together moral wrong
and social evidence. Yet the condemnation of her explicitly ('so
wicked & schrewed') and thematically (in her concern with social
statement and public role) dismiss her. The place allocated to her
by the poem's romance rhetoric is quite opposite from her place as

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56   The epic quest, p.77.

57   Amis, note to l.1489 (p.126).

moral interpreter. While the _chanson de geste_ privileges plot partly as an interaction between villain and hero, _Amis_ sets up far more elusive relations between morality and romance figures.

To compare _Amis_ to the _chanson de geste_ regarding their sense of a separable villain is, however, only an extreme way to demonstrate _Amis_' use of a device of Middle English romance. The _chanson de geste_ makes the hero's opponent the villainous Hardré; the Middle English romance calls the opponent 'þe steward' - the figure is given only the title of his role in the plot. 'þe steward' collocates with all those other evil and jealous stewards in Middle English romance.[58] Thus his defeat is the defeat of the villain, generically endorsed. Only in Amiloun's wife's 'wiþ wrong' speech (11.1564-69, quoted on p.123) is the problem re-opened, and made an abstract moral issue. In the _chanson de geste_'s creation of a villainous Hardre, and the Middle English romance's use of a typical romance villain, problems of ethics are subsumed by questions of the hero's success, reinforced by generic norms.

Comparing _Amis_ with the _chanson de geste_ also makes apparent _Amis_' peculiar use of consequence and plot. The _chanson de geste_ has more events: at the beginning the friends separate, then rediscover each other via a series of errors by onlookers who mistake one for the other; there is a series of intrigues by Hardré, and a series of

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58   Gerald Bordman, A motif index of the English metrical romances (Helsinki, 1963) lists the following romances as including the motif of the treacherous steward -

Arthour and Merlin, 79f; Beues, 837f; Generydes, 22f, 939f; Guy, 2962f; Le Morte Arthure, 2522f; Partonope of Blois, 4665 f; Richard, 2244f; Sir Triamour, 13f; Squyr of lowe degre, 283f; Seven Sages of Rome, 1581f; Sir Tristrem, 1492f; Ywain and Gawain, 2163f.(pp.58-59)

adventures by the leper. The <u>chanson de geste</u> treats these as
separate adventures, events which happen and are of interest in
themselves; it uses a strong fictive plot.

<u>Amis</u> drops most of these events to create a starkly diptych
structure, in which the links between the parts are thematically and
structurally comparable, rather than directly causal. In addition,
there is a difference in the treatment of sequence and causation in
each half. The first half of <u>Amis</u> has a strong fictive plot: the
romance demonstrates the initiating function of figures at the start
of a sequence of narrative consequences. As such the forms of
narrative control are presented in romance terms, in the first half –
the emphasis is on the hero's ability to create his own success in
terms evident to society. In this first half, characters pay
attention to such organisational details of the substitution as in
these speeches by Amiloun

> 'Broþer,' he seyd, 'wende hom now ri3t
> To mi leuedi, þat is so bri3t...   1130
> & sai þou hast sent þi stede ywis   1135
> To þi broþer, sir Amis.'

> 'Broþer,' he seyd, 'wende hom ogain.'   1435
> & tau3t him hou he schuld sain,
> When he com þer þai worn.

That the exchange is carefully planned as part of a highly-organised
plot is quite different, however, from the inconsequentiality of plot
in the second part. In the second, a sense of consequence is far more
remote, and less subject to the hero's control: set up tenuously by
the first part, leprosy relies on God's grace as well as a human act
for release.

The first part has active adventurer- and lover-heroes, the
second has the leper Amiloun suffering passively.[59] <u>Amis</u> departs

from a mode in which romance heroes are able to succeed in adventures, and control their own story, to one in which a helpless leper is subject to God-given control which is apart from that usual in romance. Amis makes it evident that romance becomes its own justification by stressing the internal motivation of action: in King Horn, for instance, the romance emphasises that the hero is able to gain control over his own story and finally draw together all the narrative strands.[60] Amis departs from this kind of story ordering, in which the hero's nature matches the nature of his adventures, and in which he is thus able to succeed in the terms of the narrative.[61] Amis provides a concept of event that is not so easily resolved within the self-enclosed world of romance.

References to the Tristan story in Amis help to evoke this problem of hero's status, put most succinctly by Calin in his defence of the chanson de geste heroes' actions -

> Amile is the hero. In certain kinds of literature the hero can do no wrong. He is always right; those who oppose him are in error. The Tristan romances tell of a protagonist

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59   Childress, 'Between romance and legend', says

> Another trait shared by Sir Gowther, Robert of Sisily, and Sir Isumbras is their passivity. The romance hero pursues his goals energetically, even aggressively, but the protagonist of secular legend must patiently endure humiliation and deprivation and suffering...Havelok, Bevis of Hamtoun, William of Palerne, Reinbron, Tristrem are all unjustly estranged from their patrimonies, and must fight to regain them. But the passive heroes of secular legend must wait for God to change their lives.(pp.317-18)

She quotes Kratins, 'Chivalric romance or secular hagiography?' (p.353), who discusses heroes' passivity in Amis.

60   See chapter one, section C.

61   Childress, 'Secular hagiography', pp.313-14; and see chapter one, section C.

and his beloved who commit adultery, perjury, murder, and
any number of lesser crimes. Their situation is analogous
to that of Ami-Amile and Belissant in the epic. Yet Beroul
cannot praise Tristan and Iseut too highly, while their
enemies, even though they tell the truth and defend King
Mark's honor, are excoriated in no uncertain terms.
Although in both stories the heroes commit acts repugnant
to society's commonly accepted standards, the very notion
of ethics is transformed. Rather than that the hero be
considered good because he conforms to given standards, his
actions are proved good simply because it is he who commits
them. In other words, right and wrong are determined not
with reference to a moral code but by the hero himself, who
embodies the secret desires and aspirations of society.[62]

While something of the same status is given to Amis and Amiloun as
romance heroes, Amis suggests the inadequacy of this purely literary
justification. The relocation of the leprosy warning in Amis, the
use of diptych structure to suggest moral ambiguity, and the wrong
statement by Amiloun's wife as simultaneous with her condemnation in
romance terms, problematize the issue of the hero's correctness in
Amis. The poem is doubly evocative – of romances in which the hero
is immune, justified entirely within the stylistically-endorsed terms
of Middle English romance; but also of a set of Biblical parallels,
which help to problematize the story and create a question of moral
guilt.

Amis uses an evoked context of Christian meaning: it is full of
Christian references. The smallest-scale ones attribute events to
God: Amis repeats –

þurch grace of goddes sond

þurch grace of god almi3t

Of the friends as children, the poem says they

...trew weren in al þing,
And þerfore Ihesu, heuyn-king,   35
Ful wel quyted her mede.

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62   The epic quest, pp.86-87.

The significant events in the story are preceded by an angel's giving

information (in the Anglo-Norman versions, the second piece of

information is given simply by 'un voiz').[63] There are details

added, such as that the child-killing took place at Christmas.[64] And

there are some specific story parallels, such as that of the

children's sacrifice with the Abraham story; or the Eden parallels to

the first temptation in the garden; or even the fact that the bulk of

references to lepers are not romance but Biblical.

Sarah Kay's discussion of the chanson de geste version, Ami et

Amile points to the obvious Christological connotations of some of

the work's episodes.[65] William Calin's account of the chanson de

geste, 'The quest for the absolute: Ami et Amile' concludes that the

persistence of deliberate Christian references and parallels in the

poem helps to make the work one concerned with Christian symbolism.

He says

> Any work of literature so permeated with merveilleux
> chrétien and other aspects of the religious was probably
> written as a Christian poem and should be so interpreted.[66]

He calls the trips 'pilgrimages', and adds

> From the viewpoint of Christian typology, life for all men
> is a pilgrimage and exile...The active, external metaphor

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63 Amis e Amilun, 1.1077. Of the first message, the Middle
English Amis says that it came 'in a voice fram heuen adoun'
(1.1250).

64 Amis, note to 11.2251-329 (p.129)

65 'The Tristan story'. On the use of Christianity as
'structural device' in the Middle English romance, see Dale
Kramer, 'Structural artistry in Amis and Amiloun', Annuale
Medievale 9 (1968), 103-22 (pp.118-19).

66 The epic quest, p.95.

of the quest is but a representation of every man's internal struggle and growth through life. [67]

In this way leprosy is

> ...the reflection of all men's suffering...from archetypes [Ami and Amile] become Christ, that is, participate in the attributes of the Christ myth, whose overtones will move the literary public.[68]

Calin's account of the *chanson de geste* version of the story argues that the poem becomes an exemplary structure by its inclusion of the story's trials and Biblical motifs. But while this potential is very much present in *Amis and Amiloun*, one cannot conclude that it is allegorical or even that it uses continuous Christian symbolism. The story parallels are not continuous: they do not amount to an allegory, even of a specialised kind, such as in the Christian typological way saints' lives have been argued to replicate that of Christ.[69] The Christian resonances in *Amis* are mere allusions, suggestive of a Christian context although without allowing that context to specify any answers.

The use of diptych structure in *Amis* continually redirects the reader to a comparison of two halves: to the whole structure, not a conclusive endpoint. Other romance diptych structures discussed in chapter one – *Horn*, *Havelok*, *Emaré* – use parallel adventures in a self-confirmatory way, to emphasise closure and the hero's success. Their balance confirms each part: *Amis*, though formally balanced, does not provide equivalences of matter or of meaning, but leaves

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67   *Ibid.*, pp.107-08.

68   *Ibid.*, pp.111-12.

69   Auerbach, 'Figura'.

questions open by a suggested structural balance that is not carried over to the concerns of the two halves. Amis denies a sense of internal balance, nor does it present external equivalences of meaning. Amis uses a romance diptych structure in such a way that, although it gives various points of reference by generic parallel and Christian resonance, these reference points never do find an exact parallel: diptych is used to set up a structure of questions instead. Amis does not become a Christian text - a licensed artifact in the way saints' lives may - but uses its Christian and moral references as revelatory about the kinds of language and assumptions used in romance.

An instance is those points in the text where two kinds of reading are working quite sharply against each other. At the point of Amis' decision to kill his children, the poem says

> þan þou3t þe douk, wiþ-outen lesing,   2245
> For to slen his childer so 3ing,
> It were a dedli sinne;
> & þan þou3t he, bi heuen king,
> His broþer out of sorwe bring,
> For þat nold he nou3t blinne.   2250

Two groups of three lines are set up as parallel - 'þan' and '& þan' draw attention to the balance, while the sequence makes it clear that there are some interesting uses of different kinds of narrative language here. 1.2247, 'a dedli sinne', uses quite precisely Christian language. There are two 'fillers', parallel in the stanza -

> wiþ-outen lesing   2245

> bi heuen king   2248

In this poem, 'wiþ-outen lesing' is usually a part of the narratorial language: here it can also apply to the truth that this would be 'a

dedli sinne', in conjunction with which it acquires some real force. But the parallel half-line 'bi heuen king' picks up the Christian reference of the previous line and uses it in a far less specific way - as a spoken exclamation, it suggests and supports the hero's moment of decision that follows. The placing of 'bi heuen king' makes it appear to be not a narratorial reference to God but a quoted part of direct speech, an exclamation. So the first group semanticises a narratorial line-filler, the second de-semanticises a Christian reference by making it a part of the hero's speech.

Something similar happens in the tail-rhyme lines:

it were a dedli sinne

has a lot of force, while the parallel

For þat nold he nou3t blinne

emphasises action and works in an adversative way to the 'dedli sinne' line. While human act and moral framework are not necessarily alternatives, the verbal shifts at this moment of decision and contemplation become a way of showing the choice of one over the other.

A difference between reader and hero levels is exploited more explicitly in the rest of the stanza:

> So it bifel on Cristes ni3t,
> Swiche time as Ihesu, ful of mi3t,
> Was born to saue man-kunne,
> To chirche to wende al þat þer wes,
> þai di3ten hem, wiþ-outen les,   2255
> Wiþ ioie & worldes winne.

The detail that this took place at Christmas is added by the Middle English poem - it occurs in no other version.[70] In a text full of

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70   See p.132, note 64.

Biblical resonances and story parallels, the 'Cristes ni3t' references set up problems for the reader - do they, for instance, morally endorse or set up ironies with Amis' sacrifice of the children? Is the idea of 'Ihesu, ful of mi3t...born to saue man-kunne' extended by analogy to the friends' sacrifices for each other - and if so, is the analogy valid or not? If these are problems of signification for the reader, certain devices of story work very firmly against signification: everyone going to church at Christmas is just the occasion for Amis to be alone with the nursery keys, and structurally this echoes the first 'riche douke' going hunting and leaving his daughter Belisaunt alone with Amis. The force of plot and meaning, literal and symbolic levels, are shown to work in quite opposite ways.

All this is presented within a romance language that is itself so self-enclosed and self-referential that it sets up its own justifications generically - once more, a comparison with the chanson de geste will show this. The seduction scene is described in this way -

> Li cuens Amiles avale le donjon,
> Devant lui vint la fille au roi Charlon.
> Bien fu vestue d'un hermin pelison
> Et par desore d'un vermoil syglaton.
> Ou voit le conte, si l'a mis a raison:
> 'Sire, dist elle, je n'aimme se voz non.
> En vostre lit une nuit me semoing,
> Trestout mon cors voz metrai a bandon.'
> Dist le cuens: 'Damme, ci a grant mesprison...
> Je nel feroie por tout l'or de cest mont...'
>
> Li cuens Amiles et la fille au roi Charle
> Par mautalent d'iluec endroit departent,
> Puis en montarent toz les degréz de maubre.
> Li cuens Amiles jut la nuit en la sale
> En un grant lit a cristal et a saffres.
> Devant le conte art uns grans chandelabres,
> Et la pucelle de sa chambre l'esgarde...

Or fu la damme durement corroucie
Dou conte Amile qui si la contralie.
A mienuit toute seule se lieve,
Onques n'i quist garce ne chamberiere.
Un chier mantel osterin sor li giete,
Puis se leva, si estaint la lumiere.
Or fu la chambre toute noire et teniecle,
Au lit le conte s'i est tost approchie
Et sozleva les piauls de martre chieres
Et elle s'est léz le conte couchie,
Moult souavet s'est deléz lui glacie.[71]

The sensuality of this description - full of strong visual images,

precious gems and gold, cloth textures, rich colours and light - is

part of a move to elaborate this passage on its own terms: the

sensual details set up their own consequences, and the passage

justifies itself to the reader in the terms of its own aesthetic

values. It does so for Amile too: the poem goes on to describe his

physical sensations. Moreover, the poetic texture of this passage

separates it from the rest of the poem - it is a separate lyric

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71   _Amis e Amilun_, 11.623-72:

Count Amile was coming down from the tower; the daughter of
king Charles came up to him. Over an ermine-lined robe she
was wearing a long cloak of vermilion silk. She saw the
count and said: 'My lord, I love only you. Call me to
your bed one night, and my whole body will be yours.'
   The count said, 'My lady, this is surely a mistake...No,
I would not do it for all the gold in the world.'...
   Count Amile and the daughter of king Charles parted then
in some displeasure, and each went his way along the marble
stairs. That night, count Amile slept in the great hall in
a wide bed adorned with gems and bordered in gold. In
front of the count, a tall candelabrum was burning, and
from her room the young girl could see him...
   The lady, then, was heartsore to be so spurned by count
Amile. At midnight all alone she arose; she woke no
servant or chambermaid to help her. She threw a fine cloak
of purple silk over her shoulders, put out the light and in
black darkness found her way to the bedside of the count.
She lifted a corner of the precious marten cover and,
slipping in, lay down beside the count. (Danon and
Rosenberg, _Ami and Amile_, pp. 50-51)

piece, which Amile too tries hard to keep separate from the poem's other schemes of moral accountability. If the force of the whole poem is that this is a transgression, the elaboration of this passage works towards its own justification: narrative devices help to separate a part from the whole narrative.

While this descriptive self-containedness and self-justification operates in parts of the chanson de geste, these qualities work strongly in romance language too. The earlier part of this chapter discussed the ways Belisaunt's choice of Amis is governed by the re-use of romance formulae encoding romance values (pp.95-98); and the ways 'hend'-ness is implied to be central to this poem (pp.88-90). That is, romance language continually establishes its own sets of values and of consequences by its re-use of a generic language that is also used self-reflexively within each poem. As the chanson de geste uses a self-justifying literary language at certain points, in romance one recognizes the pervading presence of a self-sufficient and self-justifying romance language at particular points in the works. Amis' tendency to problematize issues directs the reader to question assumptions encoded in romance language, and makes this self-justifying literary language apparent.

The most challenging problem in the story, that becomes itself more completely about ways of reading than any other device, is that of leprosy. In terms of the structure of this story, all that leprosy needs to be is a second exile device - it sets up a further adventure, which is the second part of the diptych. But there are obvious ways that leprosy fills a romance-syntax slot in unsatisfactory ways: Amiloun with leprosy cannot have a romance

hero's control over adventures, but merely suffers helplessly; and Amis' sacrifice of his children sets up the moral problems stated by Amis himself as 'a dedli sinne' (1.2247). Given these problems, it is not surprising to find that leprosy occurs hardly anywhere else in Middle English romance.

As explained earlier, leprosy can mean being a real social and legal outcast. However, in Christian theological tradition it can be physical evidence for sin, especially sexual sin; on the other hand, leprosy can be a testing by God, with allegorical resonances that suggest that the hero is privileged to be given a chance to atone.

To some extent there is scope for all these readings in Amis. For the first, literal and realistic one, Amiloun merely needs to be legally outcast. The second suggests that his ambiguous oath is a sin; this sets up problems, if one sees leprosy as a punishment that makes a real link between sin and evidence, for Amis was the sexual transgressor. And the third makes Amiloun exemplary, suffering for sins common to mankind: this in particular sets up problems about just what kind of a poem this is.

The point is that these meanings cannot co-exist. The choice of one over the other defines the reading one has of the text: whether it is a story of heroes, or of sinners punished, or of Christians self-redeeming in an exemplary way that extends allegorically both to Christian salvation history and to humankind in general. Leprosy is the point of greatest fragmentation - it connotes Tristan and the Bible, exists outside the hero's control, and sets up various readings both prejudicial and abstract.

But my comment in the previous paragraph - that these meanings cannot co-exist - is not, however, strictly true. In Amis, they do

co-exist: a set of contradictions are held together in this poem. These contradictions are held together in a romance structure which is set up as a diptych, and endlessly recapitulated and reinforced stylistically.

In Amis certain unexplained shifts of plot make the hero's story inadequate as a centre and exposition of the text's whole meaning. The hero's dilemma and lack of control, a use of romance style as offset against certain moral issues, and a diptych capacity to set up a structure of unresolved questions mean that this is not a story that is explicated in the terms usual to romance. While the plot does resolve itself - there is a happy ending - the reader's endpoint is the poem's whole structure of questions rather than just the ending.

Romance style and structure are essential to the multiple readings - and reading problems - set up by this poem, in holding together all its assumptions: this text is written in a distinctive romance language assumed to be homogenous, and to have sets of its own values encoded within it. While the values and narrative assumptions are problematized, they can be made problematic only because of this homogeneity. In its precise use of a set of reading signals, used structurally, Amis is pure romance, a mere extension of romance literary practice: it uses a romance language, encoding a set of assumptions, and sets up a structure whose formal balance marks out a series of reading problems.

Uses of the word 'romance' actually refer to a combination of foreign source matter - 'romaunce' - with this distinctive Middle English literary style. The description of that style in the

previous chapter implies that this style is geared to and appropriate for a certain kind of matter: that is, strongly associated with a certain kind of - usually secular - story, and becoming a part of that story. So romance style has a certain transparency - it is an implicitly appropriate conveyor of its matter. Amis, partly in its choice of story and partly in its emphasis on what becomes a problematized morality that is made foreign to romance, both demonstrates the distinctive qualities of a romance style and reveals the assumptions encoded in that style. So Amis manages to suggest a whole series of ways to problematize narrative issues, in a way that makes the medium opaque - it directs attention towards Amis' own style and structure, as shared with romance.

One result of Amis' relocating the angel's warning to just before the combat is that it helps to establish the theme of truth as opposed to evidence. The ambiguous oath defines language as public statement, while superseding in value all such public statements. Presented as a hero's dilemma, the issue is maintained thematically as a split between truth and language. This theme extends to the conventions of narrative, and of romance in particular. The kinds of language implicitly opposed in Amis to Christian truth are fundamentally romance - Amis uses a quotable and distinctive romance style, assumed to be a good medium for certain kinds of matter, and makes changes that make this romance language opaque.

Chapter III

BETWEEN ROMANCE STRUCTURE AND HISTORICAL WORLD-VIEW: GUY OF WARWICK[1]

As chapter one argued, the Auchinleck manuscript uses a range of signals with generic implications to suggest that there is a narrative break in the middle of Guy of Warwick.[2] Guy A is split in two: the point at which Guy is converted to Christian voyaging and becomes a figure fighting for God's sake provides the natural break. Re-organising devices at this point in the Auchinleck version - a

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1   This chapter discusses structuring devices in Guy: quotations will be from two versions, as appropriate. The first part of the chapter considers the structuring peculiarites of Guy A (Auchinleck; Zupitza's fourteenth century version); later on, the discussion of Guy's general structuring devices will be from Guy B (Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff.2.38; Zupitza's fifteenth century version).
       The versions of Guy are fairly similar: Baugh, 'Improvisation', says of the 'Caius-Auchinleck' version

   It is so close to the French text that the two often correspond line for line.(p.433; and see pp.437-38)

Mehl, The Middle English romances, says

   The version contained in the manuscript Ff.II.38 [Guy B] of the Cambridge University Library keeps most closely to the original. The version in Gonville & Caius 107 (C) also follows it very exactly, but it breaks off with Guy's death. (p.221, and see footnote, p.282)

2   Chapter one, section E, discusses the compilation of the Auchinleck manuscript, and the circumstances that produced the metrical change in Guy A: it is clear that the issue is not yet closed. In the meantime, this thesis treats the Auchinleck manuscript's changes in Guy at this point as emphasising a structural peculiarity that may be present in Guy in any case. If the Auchinleck manuscript's peculiarities here set up a number of critical questions about the nature of Guy's structure, then this chapter attempts to answer some of them.

change of metre and of script, a new opening topos and a highly-elaborated series of tail-rhyme stanzas - endorse a new romance structure. But while the Auchinleck manuscript has a clear set of markers to a new text, only some of them are employed: it is not clear whether the second part of Guy's story is a new romance, or a part of the first one. The two stories are linked, but work comparatively with each other.

There is an ambivalence to the way the Auchinleck manuscript emphasises a break by using some of the manuscript's organising devices - metre and script change, and there is a new opening topos; however, there is no heading, or illustration, and the continuation does not begin on a new page. If one was reading the poem in the Auchinleck manuscript, it would not be clear whether a new romance began here. I want to treat what seems to be a careful editorial re-structuring in the terms of the reading issues it presents: these devices suggest literary critical questions to the reader - how is Guy ordered? What difference does this make to reading?

Something of the importance of Guy's structuring devices is suggested by the Guy wedding feast which is borrowed by the Auchinleck Amis and Amiloun: Amis and Guy use the passages they share in very different ways.[3] The wedding feast in the Auchinleck Guy, which occurs soon after the metrical break, emphasises the new metrical form in that, like the opening stanzas to the new part, it

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3   See Loomis, 'The Auchinleck manuscript', and Möller, Untersuchungen über Dialekt u. Stil, for more complete accounts of the lines shared by Amis and Guy: I confine myself here to the sections already used in this thesis to illustrate points concerning romance rhetoric.

is laden with formulae. In Auchinleck, the highly-stylised wedding feast is part of this break, borrowed by Amis and Amiloun to create a distinctive romance style as separated from Christian meaning. Guy shares with Amis a propensity to use this romance-stylised wedding feast in some self-conscious ways that establish literary critical issues. While Amis makes this borrowed scene a part of its distinctive romance style, as detached from Christian meaning, Guy polarizes secular and Christian issues along its length, as it moves from romance structuring to a nationalistic and pietistic concern. So while Amis makes this wedding scene primarily a part of its style, Guy uses it equally self-consciously to create critical questions about its own structure.

The re-structuring role of the break, and of the wedding feast that follows, is important, for the question of structure in Guy is a complicated and challenging one. Guy evokes altered forms of the kinds of structuring described in chapter one - diptych, interlace, repetition and recapitulation - with a set of devices all its own. It is for these reasons of structural importance and complexity that Guy is used here to extend - and sometimes counteract - the structural criteria established in chapter one, section C.

Problems of Guy's structuring are related to the question of Guy's status: a series of pieces of external evidence exist on the attribution of an important status in society to Guy and its subject matter.[4] This socio-political context to Guy often treats the poem

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4   These pieces of evidence are described and discussed fully in
     chapter four.

as a form of historical biography, or at least as a specialized commemorative form of traditional literature. External references to the story frequently treat Guy as the historical ancestor of the Beauchamp earls of Warwick;[5] but in Guy's literary context - particularly Amis - it is a romance. And in the re-quotation of Guy in the Auchinleck manuscript, different aspects of Guy's nature and status are brought out: the Chronicle treats part of Guy as factual and authoritative, Beues and Amis treat it as romance, and the other works alluding to Guy treat it as something in between.[6] There is, then, a certain fluidity to Guy's status in the Middle Ages, depending on the part of Guy these works quote.[7] In Guy, this ambiguity of status is translated into a series of problems of literary structure and kinds of story.

But I want to leave all these questions of Guy's status open for a while, and consider instead its use of literary and distinctively

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5   For instance, The Rous Roll, by John Rous, edited by Charles Ross (Oxford, 1956) demonstrates that the coat of arms of the Beauchamp earls of Warwick derives from that of their ancestor Guy; the early fourteenth century Siege of Caerlaverock, in Eight thirteenth-century rolls of arms in French and Anglo-Norman blazon, edited by Gerald J. Brault (Pennsylvania, 1973) pp.101-25, links earl Guy with 'ma rime de Gy'; and a short version of the poem by Lydgate is dedicated to Margaret Talbot, countess of Shrewsbury and daughter of Richard Beauchamp, earl of Warwick: it says of the hero Guy '...of whoos bloode shee is lyneally descendid' (quoted from H. L. D. Ward and J. A. Herbert, Catalogue of romances in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum, 3 vols, London, 1883, I, 494-95). All this material is discussed fully in the following chapter.

6   See chapter one, section E.

7   The question of the use to which each part of the poem has been put is examined in the following chapter, pp.195-98 and passim.

romance devices. The Auchinleck manuscript's emphasis[8] on the natural break in Guy sets up the first literary critical question to be considered: does Guy fall into two distinct parts?

There is an ambiguity to the structuring role given to the feast scene. Amis and Amiloun uses feast scenes primarily to initiate the action: feasts mark the friends' arrival at court, Belisaunt's love for Amis, and the friends' recognition of each other.[9] In some other romances, feasts are concluding points, celebrations of completion.[10] Given its place in Guy, this feast looks as though it has a concluding function: it marks the end of Guy's adventures, and his marriage to Felice, the reward for his adventures. But this feast becomes an initiator of action too: it begins a new adventure, as implied by the preceding change of metre and the signals to a new romance. So the feast in Guy works in different ways: it appears to close and conclude Guy's adventures, and his marriage to Felice, but actually precedes new ones. Guy's use of formulae and topoi at this point has another function, then – it evokes generic norms to open up different possibilities for its structuring function.

That there is a break marked out in the middle of the Auchinleck version of the poem – a break which could suggest two romances, but retains enough continuity of subject and theme to suggest that they are two halves of a single one – means that episodes in each part work comparatively and contrastively with each other. There is an

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8   No division is formally marked in Guy B, Caius, Fragments or Gui.

9   See chapter two, section A (ii).

10   For example, Lybeaus, Cotton, 1.2107ff; Eglamour, Cotton, 1.1348ff.; Emaré, 1.1027ff.; Havelok, 1.2948ff.

obvious parallel between the dragon fight (Guy A, 1.7125ff.) and the

Colbrond fight (Guy A, st. 233ff.). The two are parallel both in

content and in terms of romance structuring: each is to save

England, and each is a climax at the end of a sequence of adventures

and immediately precedes a narrative break: respectively, they

precede Guy's conversion to a new awareness of Christianity,[11] and

the retirement to the hermitage. However, the difference in

treatment of each helps to establish a scale of reading signals, used

with different degrees of fictionality and verification.

The nature of the opponent in each episode suggests that the first

incident is more purely literary than the second. In the first

battle, the enemy is described like this -

> 'He haþ clawes also a lyoun. Guy A, 7165
> Men seyþ þat it is a dragoun.
> Gret wenges he haþ wiþ to fle.
> His schaft to telle alle ne mow we.
> Þe bodi is gret toward þe teyle.
> Swiche a best nas neuer, saunfeyle. 7170
> Þe teyle is gret & wel long:
> In þe warld nis man so strong,
> & were y-armed neuer so,
> & he wiþ þe teyle smot him to,
> Þat he no worþ ded anon: 7175
> No schuld he neuer ride no gon.'

In the Colbrond fight, the enemy is introduced this way:

> For sir Anlaf, þe king of Danmark, st. 235
> Wiþ a nost store & stark
> Into Inglond is come,
> Wiþ fiften þousend kni3tes of pris:
> Alle þis lond þai stroyen, y-wis,
> & mani a toun han nome.
> A geaunt he haþ brou3t wiþ him

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11 The word 'converted' is an odd one to use here: the young Guy is clearly a Christian. I use the word 'converted' as a way to suggest something of the impact of the change: although the young Guy was Christian, this point of decision changes his life - its habits and its values - quite drastically.

> Out of Aufrike stout & grim:
> Colbrond hat þat gome.
> For him is al Inglond forlore
> Bot godes help be bi-fore,
> þat socour sende hem some.

The dragon is presented through a series of comparative statements ('also a lyoun') and comments on the impossibility of describing or defeating him ('his schaft to telle alle ne mow we' and 'swiche a best nas neuer, saunfeyle'). The force of the description is to work towards a set of superlatives - the dragon is a very terrible opponent. By contrast, the Colbrond episode is precisely quantifiable ('wiþ fiften þousend kni3tes of pris') and uses real place-markers ('þe king of Danmark' and 'out of Aufrike') to suggest a major and realistic threat. In the Colbrond incident, the consequences are precisely stated in terms of England's future: the king says

> þan schal Inglond euermo   st. 239
> Liue in þraldom & in wo
> Vnto þe warldes ende.

The implications are nationalistic, of consequences greater than Guy's own success or failure.

The introduction to each episode suggests a difference between incidental adventures and consequential events. Guy's involvement in the Colbrond section is initiated by a king's parliament at Winchester, at which king Athelstan asks 'erls & barouns' to offer to oppose Colbrond. That is, Guy's intervention is presented as a part of the machinery of war and government. The dragon episode begins differently:

> þe king him loued, sikerliche,   7136
> And wiþ him soiournd sir Gij þe fre.
> On a day at þe ches pleyden he:

> Wiþ þat come þer þre men rideinde,
> Of þe cuntre fre men heldinde:
> To þe king þai seyd, 'sir, vnder-stond:
> Hard tidinges we bring þe an hond...'

and they tell of the dragon. This episode is presented as sudden and incidental, as a new adventure for Guy rather than as a state that existed before his arrival. The dragon fight is a romance hero's adventure; the Colbrond fight has a social and political context, a past and a future.

Halfway through the dragon fight, Guy is astounded at the dragon's strength and asks God for help. The incident suggests Guy's growing piety, and works dramatically to emphasise the dragon's power. But in the Colbrond episode, references to Christianity are used far more systematically: Guy is a pilgrim, and is summoned after king Athelstan's dream –

> Þer cam an angel fram heuen li3t,   st. 243
> & seyd to þe king ful ri3t
> Þurch grace of godes sond.
> He seyd, 'king Aþel-ston, slepestow?
> Hider me sent þe king Iesu
> To comfort þe to fond.
> To-morwe go to þe norþ 3ate ful swiþe:
> A pilgrim þou schalt se com biliue,
> When þou hast a while stond.
> Bid him for seynt Charite
> Þat he take þe batayl for þe,
> & he it wil nim on hond.'

Divine sanction both for the English cause and for Guy's involvement create a pietistic and nationalistic tone for the Colbrond incident: this is far less apparent in the dragon adventure. The force of the reading signals established contrastively between the two episodes is that the Colbrond episode has far more verifying detail, and a nationalistic and Christian weight; it presents a historical context to Guy's deed, as opposed to the dragon episode's presentation of his romance heroism.

It is for these reasons, then, that the Colbrond fight has more separate historiographical status than any other one: it is quoted separately in a whole series of contemporary and later chronicle accounts.[12] Guy itself elaborates each fight differently: the dragon fight is presented in non-specific fictional terms, while the Colbrond fight is described in specific and verifying terms, and is given more nationalistic and pietistic weight. The poem Guy of Warwick establishes its own language in which two adventures, made parallel in the poem's structure, are made to work comparatively, each defining the other by contrast.

Guy is converted to an increased awareness of Christianity halfway through the poem: the secular motives for his earlier quest are rejected, and he begins to quest for God. But while the poem's values have changed, its terms have not. Guy continues to travel off for adventures and to fight for causes related to the causes of the first part. That is, the mode in which an adventurer seeks adventure prevails: only the motivation changes. This means that the point of Guy's conversion is only a partial change - it examines the mode and values of Guy's past, is critical of some but retains others. So the point at which Guy is converted is worth examining in detail: although it never explicitly states the reasons for the change, it is suggestive of some of the narrative differences operating before and after Guy's conversion.

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12 Listed by R. S. Crane, 'The vogue of Guy of Warwick from the close of the Middle Ages to the Romantic Revival', PMLA, 30 (1915), 125-94 (pp.127-28). Some of this material will be discussed and extended in chapter four.

Guy's conversion serves as a breaking device between two parts:
in the Auchinleck manuscript it is emphasised by such formal features
as a changing metre and script, added formulae and topoi. But even
without these Auchinleck devices, Guy splits here: to show how far
Guy's conversion marks a difference between two parts, I quote the
conversion passage from Guy B -

> Hyt was in a somers tyde,
> That Gye had moche pryde: 7120
> He came fro huntyng on a day
> Wyth grete solace and mekyll play.
> þey toke plente of veneson
> And broght hyt vnto the towne.
> At euyn he wente into a towre   7125
> Wyth moche yoye and honowre.
> He behelde there the ayre
> And the lande, þat was so fayre.
> The wedur was clere and sternes bry3t.
> Gye beganne to thynke ryght,   7130
> How god, that sate in trynyte,
> Had made hym a man of grete poste,
> And how he was preysed in euery lande
> Thorow dedys of hys hande,
> And how he had many slane   7135
> And castels and towres many tane
> And how in many londys longe
> He had bene in parell stronge
> And all for þe loue of þat maye
> That he trauelde fore nyght and day, 7140
> And not for god, hys creatowre,
> That had done hym that honowre.

The passage is peculiar in itself: there is little nature
imagery in the poem - references to nature are usually topoi, in the
service of directly linked ideas (such as at 1.4255ff., as a nature
topos introducing Tyrry and Ozelle's love-story). The juxtaposition
and rhyming of

> The wedur was clere & sternes bry3t. 7129
> Gye beganne to thynke ryght...

suggest some link, though not one that is readily apparent. That is,
while the passage suggests that there must be some causal continuity
between these two statements, a looser kind of literary technique and

causation is actually being used at this point.

The passage concerns itself with movement, in which Guy's local movements at the start are parallel to his thoughts on his travels at the end of this passage. In a text that is structured so much by places and the hero's movement between them (see p.166ff., this chapter), Guy's movement is reduced to a series of verbs of motion ('came', 'toke', 'broght', 'wente') with little semantic weight. The attached clauses about possession, too, 'wyth grete solace and mekyll play', and 'plente of veneson', and 'Wyth moche yoye and honowre', are added on with an ease that suggests the lack of effort or achievement. Guy's earlier travels and winnings abroad are reduced to this local sequence: travel and success are localised to these short trips and the winning of food.

These lines (11.7121-7126) are parallel to Guy's thoughts on his exploits at 11.7132-7142. These latter lines quickly recount the story in romance metaphors: that is, they trace Guy's past in the terms of romance, in which love and travel and prowess are equated, each fulfilling and quantifying the previous one. Recounted at speed, those exploits are revealed as potential moral contradictions:

> And how he was preysed in euery lande
> Thorow dedys of hys hande,
> And how he had many slane
> And castels and towres many tane...

In this sequence, the paratactic 'and...and...and' works to coordinate a series of subordinate exclamatory clauses - it refers to sequential romance events by stringing them together, without an apparent means of evaluating the relation between 'preyse' for 'dedys' of killing and capturing. Stated as baldly as this, the sequence by which Guy achieved fame and fortune is revealed as

artificial. Guy's prowess is presented as a series of trips: these lines echo romance syntax in that some romances use a series of places not specifically but as markers to the hero's new adventures (such as _King Horn_).[13] Made quite literal - and as detached from the conventions of romance - this sequence of journeys appears inconsequential.

At the same time, there is a semantic expansion and growing use of pun. At 1.7130, 'Gye beganne to thynke ryght', the word 'ryght' can have a meaning, 'immediately', that fits this passage's initial particularity about time ('on a day', 'at euyn'). However, 'ryght' is also a pun, assuming a pre-established moral right that has not always been apparent in the poem so far.[14] So when at 1.7127ff., 'ayre', 'lande' and 'sternes' mark an expansion of perceived physical space - beyond the hero's adventures - it is used to suggest expanding conceptual space. Guy looks at the stars and thinks of God: the link between world, God and meaning is a more imaginative one for Guy and for the reader, as opposed to the poem's previous emphasis on the practical consequences of adventures and the defeat of opponents. The sliding quality given to the word 'ryght' indicates that language can be doubly referential, to an immediate time-scheme and to moral 'ryght'; the physical world can be both a space for a romance hero's adventures, and a reminder of God's power. Romance's conventional syntax is exposed as a series of _non sequiturs_ precisely at the point where a wider signification is revealed.

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13   See chapter one, section C.

14   'ryght': see _The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary_, edited by C. T. Onions, third edition, 2 vols (Oxford, 1947), II, 1737-38.

The use of the pun on 'ryght' suggests a double scheme, in which
the literal can signify in opposite ways. Retrospectively, the line

That Gye had moche pryde

encodes a double value judgement - of prowess and of sin. The
passage establishes the possibility of a double reading of any event,
sometimes in two opposite directions of signification.

The poem's expansion of causation and association, and Guy's
spiritual growth at this point, are marked by other figures who go on
accounting for Guy's disappearance in the poem's previous terms of
explanation. Felice suggests

> 'Well y wot, so god me redde,   7187
> Ye haue a lemman in odur stedde,
> And now ye wyll vnto hur fare
> And come ageyne neuyr mare.'

Her father Rohaud says

> 'Doghtur,' he seyde, 'let be þy mornyng.
> I may not leue hyt for nothynge,   7320
> That he wolde wende in exsyle
> And put hym in soche paryle.
> He hath done hyt to proue þe now,
> How he may thy loue trowe.'

Techniques set up in the conversion passage are re-used later;
when king Triamour sees the pilgrim Guy, he asks

> 'Telle me,' seyde the kynge than,
> 'Why art thou so lene a man?
> Vnkynde men thou seruest aye,
> When þou partyste so pore awaye;   7825
> Odur hyt ys for thy folye,
> That þou fareste so porelye.'

As the use of pun in the conversion passage points two co-existing
but entirely different systems of meaning for a single word -
'ryght', 'pryde' - so Triamour's question marks the dissociation of
quest and pilgrimage. For Triamour, thinness is a sign of the

failure of lordship or knightlinesss; for Guy, thinness is an inverted sign of virtue. In this part knightly and Christian orders do not coincide so much as exist as mirror-images of each other, an idea first established in the double value to the words 'ryght' and 'pryde' at the conversion passage.

Guy's reply to Triamour's question suggests this too -

'Hyt may,' quod he, 'full wele befalle,
My state knowe ye not 3yt all.   7830
I was some tyme in gode seruyse:
My lord me louyd in all wyse.
For hym y had grete honowre
Of kynge, prynce and maydyns in bowre.
But ones y dud an hastenesse: 7835
Therfore y loste boþe more and lesse.
Sythen y went fro my cuntre.'

This is not literally true of Guy's own past; the only way it can be read as truth is if 'my lord' is read as referring to God, and the whole passage as referring back to Guy's conversion. It may be a lie, or an excuse; it may signify in a Christian universe. The meeting provides a perfect model of a double, and mutually unintelligible, meaning to an interchange.

The conversion passage becomes, then, an examination of the kinds of assumptions made by characters and by romance's narrative language prior to the conversion. The conversion passage - along with supportive formal devices in Auchinleck, such as the metrical break and a heavily romance style - divides the poem, marks a difference in values and intention like that existing between Guy's fights with the dragon and with Colbrond.

The opposition between the dragon and Colbrond fights is, however, not an absolute structural opposition but the result of a gradual change from a fictional structuring and set of values to a mode in which nationalistic and pietistic elements are weighted more

strongly. As literary and external references to Guy indicate, the figure has an ambivalent status as romance hero and historical figure. There are certain features of the romance that help to perpetuate this ambivalence: one is the sequence of events at the conversion passage, which begins a new series of adventures for Guy. Guy as literary figure is an adventurer; but as suggested dynastic founder he must be an ancestor, too. The sequence at which the poem splits - the metrical change, the feast and Guy's conversion - is also the time of Reinbron's conception. From this point on, Guy's ancestral and historiographical role is apparent alongside his heroic role. Guy's status changes from that of a young romance lover and hero, to that of national hero and eventual hermit.

Guy moves from an emphasis on the success of the romance hero to a mode commemorating a broader social and Christian past: literary structure is continually changed, broadened and re-evaluated. However, while the Triamour interchange suggests that the parts of Guy are set up as an opposition between romance and pietistic literature, to emphasise the difference is misleading. Triamour quotes the norms of Guy's earlier assumptions - that prowess brings wealth and status - to mark how far the poem's values have changed. The break is not dramatic: the poem changes gradually. Triamour's recapitulatory function makes this difference evident. However, the movement of Guy as a whole is to broaden and to re-assess the values initially presented by this romance, and to give them different contexts. Since the devices of the Auchinleck manuscript emphasise a central break in Guy A, which I argue is ultimately less important than Guy's devices of change and

restructuring, all subsequent references will be to the fifteenth-century version, Guy B: it does not suggest diptych, so much as emphasise gradual change, broadening and contextualisation.

The process of gradual change, the re-assessment of literary structuring and values, can be demonstrated with regard to one episode: that in which Guy kills earl Florentine's son. On a boar-hunt, Guy becomes separated from his companions, kills the boar by himself, then blows his horn. Immediately and without explanation, a new figure is introduced –

<blockquote>

He was in a farre cuntre
All aloone fro hys meyne,
And, as he openyd there the boore,   6465
Euyr he blewe more and more.
Then bespake erle Florentyne:
'What may thys be, for seynt Martyne,
That y here blowe in my foreste?
Takyn they haue some wylde beste.'   6470
Forthe he clepyd there a knyght,
Hys owne sone, that was wyght.
'My dere sone,' he seyde, 'hye the,
That he were broght anon to me.
Whedur he be knyght or huntere,   6475
Brynge hym hedur on all manere.'
'Syr,' he seyde, 'hyt schall be done.'
He lepe on a stede sone.
To the foreste he came in hye
And sone he mett wyth syr Gye.   6480

</blockquote>

The change in narrative focus, to Florentine's court, begins a new story, and one which has all the reading signals of literary openings to adventure: the obvious literary analogues are those which begin adventures in a romance setting of the Arthurian court. When the son finds Guy and demands his horse in compensation, Guy's reply assumes a shared language of courtesy –

<blockquote>

'Syr,' seyde Gye, 'wyth gode chere,   6491
Yf ye hyt aske in feyre manere.'

</blockquote>

and

<blockquote>

Gye seyde: 'þou doyst vncurteslye   6499

</blockquote>

For to smyte me wrongeuslye.'

The son attempts to take the horse, strikes Guy, and Guy kills him.

Guy states his own justification in terms he assumes to be valid -

> 'Felowe, take þou that therfore.   6503
> Loke, þou smyte no knyght no more.'

This episode is in itself a simple one, without the complex interwoven loyalties and pre-history of the previous adventures; and it centres on a single chivalric ethos, shared by the two knights to the extent that they can debate its points - the argument is not about whether there is an applicable knightly code, but on how you carry it out in practice. Yet the incident already has a context - the foretaste of Florentine's court places the chivalric centre firmly with the son's task as a knight.

It is problematized immediately afterwards, when Guy goes to Florentine's court, is recognised and accused, then escapes. Finally, Florentine is last seen in this way -

> The erle and hys companye,   6703
> Ageyne they went hastelye.
> He toke hys sone, that was dedde,
> And beryed hym in a holy stedde.

while at Guy's return,

> All they made gode chere,   6715
> When þey sawe Gye hole and fere.
> He tolde þem all, or he wolde blynne,
> What parell that he was ynne.

The episode establishes and maintains a double perspective on the action, as seen from the viewpoint of each figure.

The 'Florentine's son' episode is recalled and contextualised in Guy's first adventure after the conversion, when Guy fights the gigantic Amoraunt. Guy meets earl Jonas, whose sons are held by king Triamour, whose son Fabour has killed the soudan's son Sadok;

Amoraunt is the soudan's champion. The core incident is a game of chess at which Fabour, much provoked, killed Sadok: it is analogous to Guy's provoked killing of Florentine's son. But if the two son-killing incidents are similar, Guy's involvement is very different: the Amoraunt episode has a series of devices to distance Guy from the initial act. He fights for Jonas, who seeks to save his sons, who are hostages of Triamour, who seeks to save his son. There are also certain self-justifying romance and chivalric conventions, or morally displacing devices, in play - Guy is merely a mechanical champion in the combat; he has a giant opponent; and he is fighting a figure who Guy calls 'þe deuell and no man' (1.7960). In this episode Guy is on the periphery, and provided with a series of justifications. But he is also at the centre, by analogy to the 'Florentine's son' episode. While this episode is an exercise in models of correct heroic behaviour, it also uses the analogy to Guy's own act of son-killing: he is both external and central, judge and judged. In fact the whole series of justifications and loyalties provided by earl Jonas' story contrast to the incidental carelessness of Guy's involvement in the earlier, 'Florentine's son', incident.

The 'Florentine's son' episode is basically just an adventure, a meeting between two knights in a wood. But a social and political context - that of Florentine's court - is made to matter; and a broader context is implied by analogy to this later adventure. In Guy, a romance hero's single combat is given broader social implications: it has contexts and consequences.

The moral analogues to the defeat of Florentine's son extend even further, however. This adventure is problematized by the adventures surrounding it. It is preceded by Guy killing a wild boar, and

followed by his defeat of a dragon. The dragon episode, which immediately follows it, is its own justification: as a non-human and anti-human opponent, the dragon-killing presents no moral problems. However, in the conversion passage, which follows immediately after the dragon fight, Guy reflects

> 'Farre in many a dyuers cuntre   7162
> I haue many a man slane,
> Abbeys brente and cytees tane...
> I haue done mekyll schame:
> God hath leyde on me þe blame.
> All thys worlde y wyll forsake
> And penaunce for my synnes take.'   7180

The nature of the dragon episode, and this retrospective moral assessment, reflects most obviously back on the penultimate adventure, the 'Florentine's son' episode - and suggests that it was morally wrong.

Structurally, the 'Florentine's son' episode provides a contrasting episode to the boar-hunt that immediately precedes it: the link is that passage quoted earlier, in which the blowing of Guy's horn is both the end of his hunt and the start of the 'Florentine's son' episode. In direct causal terms, the boar-hunt sets up the 'Florentine's son' episode. It is also a comparison, however: Guy kills both boar and son with little reservation. The sequence evokes works which use the analogy of the hunt to suggest an inversion in which the hero becomes the victim of the hunt: fitt three of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, where Bertilak's hunt for game is used to suggest a predatory quality to the lady's wooing is an often-remarked instance.[15] Moreover, Malory's 'Balin' recalls the

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15   The literary history of 'the equation between hunting and wooing' is discussed and extended by J A Burrow, A reading of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (London, 1965, repr. 1977), pp.86-99.

full force of an inverted hunt: the work says

> And soo he herd an horne blowe as it had ben the dethe of a
> best. 'That blast,' said Balyn, 'is blowen for me, for I
> am the pryse, and yet am I not dede.'[16]

Guy reminds the reader of works using an inverted hunt: it makes an analogy between Guy's killing the boar and killing Florentine's son. In what is potentially a sequence of conquests - the boar, Florentine's son, the dragon - the amoral boar-killing hightlights the moral considerations and consequences involved in the 'Florentine's son' episode.

Guy B makes this work thematically, too: it adds a further set of links between the boar-hunt and the son-killing, that established by semantic patterning on the word 'faste' -

> They enturde into a wylde foreste
> And þere þey fonde a bore wylde and preste.
> All þe howndys, they had, than,
> Aftur the bore **faste** they ranne.   6420
> The bore awey **faste** ys gone
> And many of þe howndys he haþ slone:
> Moo, þen twenty, in a stownde
> Had he broght vnto the grownde
> He passyd the foreste hastelye: 6425
> They folowed hym wyth grete crye.
> **Faste** he passyd thorow þe londe:
> Ther durste no hownde come nerehonde.
> The knyghtys prekyd aftur **faste**
> Tyll þer horsys myght not laste.   6430
> The howndys, that folowed þat day,
> Were slayne all be the way:
> Thes odur were werye,
> They went home, þey my3t not drye,
> All, but thre, that were wyght,   6435
> That folowed alwey wyth ther myght,
> Tyll they come to Bretayne.
> Ther folowed þem nodur kny3t nor swayne:
> Of them all was no huntere,
> That wyste, where the borre were,   6440
> But syr Gye hymselfe allone,
> That folowed **faste** wyth grete randone
> On hys stede **faste** prekynge

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16   Malory: Works, pp.55-56.

And wyth hys horne **faste** blowynge.
Gye chasyd the borre so **faste**,   6445
He came to Bretayne at the laste.
Be then was þe boore full hote:
He fonde a dyke and yn he smote.
There he wandyrde **faste** abowte
And wrotyd **faste** wyth hys snowte.   6450

This unusually repetitive passage is structured around the key word
'faste', often rhyming with 'laste'. That 'faste' is the
semantic key to the passage is appropriate not only to its total
meaning - the speed in reaching Brittany, and the sudden solitude on
a basically social and celebratory occasion - but also that by
11.6449-50 it has a context in which the word includes a second
meaning, that of capture or entrapment.[17] 'laste', too, has parallel
meanings, altering between physical endurance at 1.6430 and a meaning
in time, 'at the laste', as the end to one's endurance, at 1.6446.[18]
That the semantic patterning establishes double co-ordinates of
irreversibility in time and a physical trapped quality reflects
significantly on the killing of Florentine's son, where a move leads
Guy both into a physical trap in the court and to something hastily
done that is irreversible. And that the killing of Florentine's son
is a presumed reason for the conversion (see p.160) means that by
analogy the language of the boar-hunt is transferrable to the
transition, with its removal of the hero from aimless dashing around
Europe to wider and more purposeful movement. As I will argue later
(p.166ff.), a typically romance set of unspecified places in which
the hero undertakes adventures is in Guy superseded by a mode in

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17   'faste': MED, F1, 411-13 (items 2, 3, 10 and 11).

18   'laste': MED, L2, 675-79 (items 1 and 7).

which spatial markers are used quite precisely to manipulate meaning.

This 'Florentine's son' episode is omitted entirely by the Caius version, a fact that is suggestive about its place in the poem.[19] It is not attached to the rest of the poem either in a linear or causative way, or in a standard interlace fashion: it is easily omitted. It establishes a sequence of analogies with, and questions to, the surrounding incidents: it helps to establish a set of moral and analytical criteria, in which problems of judgement are pointed.

In this section in particular, those minstrel lines added to Guy B (see chapter one, pp.46-47) have a peculiar structuring function. When in the 'Florentine's son' episode Guy has just told earl Florentine he is too old to fight, and immediately before he escapes, there is -

> Also so god geue yow reste   6687
> Fylle the cuppe of the beste.

And in the analogous incident later, during Fabour's flight after his killing of the soudan's son, the poem says

> But therof be, as be may,   7549
> Let vs be mery, y yow pray.
> But when hyt wyste þe sowdan
> Pat hys sone so was slane,
> He was, y trowe, a sory syre...

In each case the minstrel line forces an inappropriate break; it suggests the reader's distance from the poem's events at a particularly sensitive point. Each time, the 'oral' line is apart from the action, and has a generic function that distances the poem's events from the fictionalized role of the audience in the text. The minstrel lines help to remind the reader that this is a poetic

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19   Caius, pp.352-69.

artifact, and one that deals with the problems of literary selection and ordering. It is significant that they have this odd dislocating function in these problematized episodes in particular - for these are the sections that display a whole range of techniques of narrative ordering in Guy.

This gradual contextualising is a technique suited to Guy's length, and its series of disparate adventures: as in the 'Florentine's son' episode, Guy isolates narrative elements or values, and then makes them co-exist with a set of potential analogies and implications that work both to create and to problematize the discovery of meaning through literary structure. Guy has different ways of setting up the relations between structure, causation and meaning; it places its incidents not in a generic context - as Amis and Amiloun does - but in an exploratory set of contexts within the poem itself.

The poem uses familiar kinds of narrative structuring in some unusual ways: Guy creates an odd version of interlace.[20] While there is a single protagonist, Guy, the adventures of subsidiary figures are interwoven and recur. Guy's use of a kind of interlace means that narrative structuring is used to draw together events, but to suggest their diversity too. The use of interwoven strands in Guy to create narrative continuity stresses too the process of change.

This interlace structuring in Guy works at its simplest in the slot of villain, interwoven consistently as a role shared by duke Otoun of Pavie and his nephew Barrarde. Otoun becomes Guy's enemy in the first tournament, and recurs in various roles and with different

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[20]   'Interlace' is discussed in chapter one, section C.

alliances with European rulers. When Guy finally kills Otoun, he both resolves one set of stories and begins a new set: in the second part, Guy's friend Tyrry is blamed for killing Otoun, and Guy rescues him (1.8743ff.) and later still Guy's friend Amys is blamed, and Guy's son Reinbron rescues him (1.11,299ff.) Earlier strands are recalled in this way, and make the transition from one actant to the other: Guy meets a wretched pilgrim, and asks his name -

<div style="text-align:center">

He answeryd: 'y schall the saye.
I wyll not lye, be my faye.
My name ys erle Tyrrye.
I was ryche, syr, sekerlye: 8820
Now am y a wreche and a caytyfe,
Me forthynkyth, þat y haue lyfe.
All Loren was to me sworne:
In that londe y was borne.
I had a felowe, þat hyght Gyown...   8825
In Warwyke þere was he borne...
He louyd me ouyr all other þynge;
Tyll hyt befelle, that syr Gye,   8835
That was my felowe trewlye,
Slewe the dewke of Payuye....
That dewke had a cosyne,
That ys preuyd a felle hyne:
Barrarde ys hys ryght name...   8845
When y came before the kynge,
Barrarde me askyd of soche thynge
And seyde, Oton þorow my meyne
Was broght to dethe, sekerlye.'   8910

</div>

So Barrarde as Otoun's nephew takes over his role when Otoun is killed, and prepares for the second adventure in the second half. Tyrry's long explanation recapitulates events in the first part of the story to emphasise the continuity of the strands between parts of this story.

However, the Otoun and Barrarde thread is interesting too for its atypical consistency; it shows just how far most of Guy is from the norms of interlace. For instance, in the first adventure after Guy's conversion, Triamour comments to the anonymous Guy

'I oght to hate Gye wyth yre:

He slewe my fadur, Clynant of Tyre,
And my neme wyth hys hande,   7805
And þe sowdan at mete syttande.
I sawe hym smyte of hys hedde,
And wyth strenckyth awey hyt ledde.
Awey he pryckyd at the laste,
All we chacyd hym full faste.   7810
The deuell hym saued: we slewe hym not þan,
But he slewe of vs many a man.
Lorde geue, that he were here:
Then schulde y make gladde chere.
Yf he wolde fyght for me,   7815
All forgeuyn schulde hyt bee.'

This retelling of one of the earliest incidents in Guy (ll.3635-3730) is followed quite abruptly by the comment on forgiveness: the speech's closing lines dismiss former alignments. In an unstable world, the techniques of interlace are used to point change, repatterning rather than confirmation.

This difference between the establishment of a formal continuity and a change in figures' situations is demonstrated in Guy by the use of carefully-organised spatial detail. The Guy world is a very physical one, with three sets of co-ordinates - of geography, lordship and kinship. Guy's figures have unspecific, probably fictitious, names - but references to towns and countries in Guy are used quite precisely. It is possible to map the knights' movements throughout Europe, and in each region there is a well-defined hierarchy, reinforced by kinship - mainly sets of cousins, or father-child groups.

These spatial details are used as literary devices to create and reinforce meaning: for instance, what I argued (p.157ff.) was growing claustrophobia and a futile speed in the Florentine's son episode (supported by the analogous boar-hunt) is supported by the to-and-fro sequence of trips between Lorraine-Gormoyse-Pavia-Gormoyse-Lorraine-Brittany-Lorraine.

That the conversion passage appropriates a broadened set of concepts (p.151ff.) is represented in Guy's wide sweep, in the section following the conversion, to North Africa and the Middle East, while Harrawde's search for him follows the old paths around central Europe (see the map on the following page, A) -

    Schyppe he fonde and passed in hye.   7375
    Comen he ys to Normandye,
    Sythen to Frawnce and Burgoyne,
    To Almayne and to Cesoyne:
   He harde no man speke wyth mowthe,
    That of Gye telle cowthe.   7380

Harrawde's following of the short and localised paths round central Europe, now far narrower than Guy's travels (see map, B), suggests the use in the conversion passage of a broadened set of concepts, and the use of spatial markers to express them.

However, the use of spatial markers to suggest expansion is eventually inverted in Guy. After his conversion, Guy undertakes three major fights, in cities progressively nearer home. He fights Ameraunt in Constantinople, Barrarde in Spire, Colbrond in Winchester, then goes to Warwick and retires to a hermitage near there (see map, C). The distance between each episode progressively decreases, halving each time: the sequence of fights not only moves Guy towards home, it also involves much less travelling. Some saints' lives invert the metaphor of physical quest to transform it into spiritual journeying instead: this literary context is partly evoked by Guy here. Guy reverses the metaphors of physical travel as used to express prowess, love and nobility, and substitutes a physically static spiritual journey.

Finally, the major exception to the poem's usually very practical routes is in Harrawde's panic-stricken search for Reinbron,

Map of Guy's travels round Europe; adapted from
Sir Clinton Lewis and J. D. Campbell, with D. P.
Bickmore and K. F. Cook, <u>The Oxford Atlas</u> (Oxford,
1951, repr. 1961), p.20.

168

KEY:

A ▬▬▬ Harrawde's route, 7375ff.

B ▬▬▬ Guy's route, 7391ff.

C ▬▬▬ Guy's return
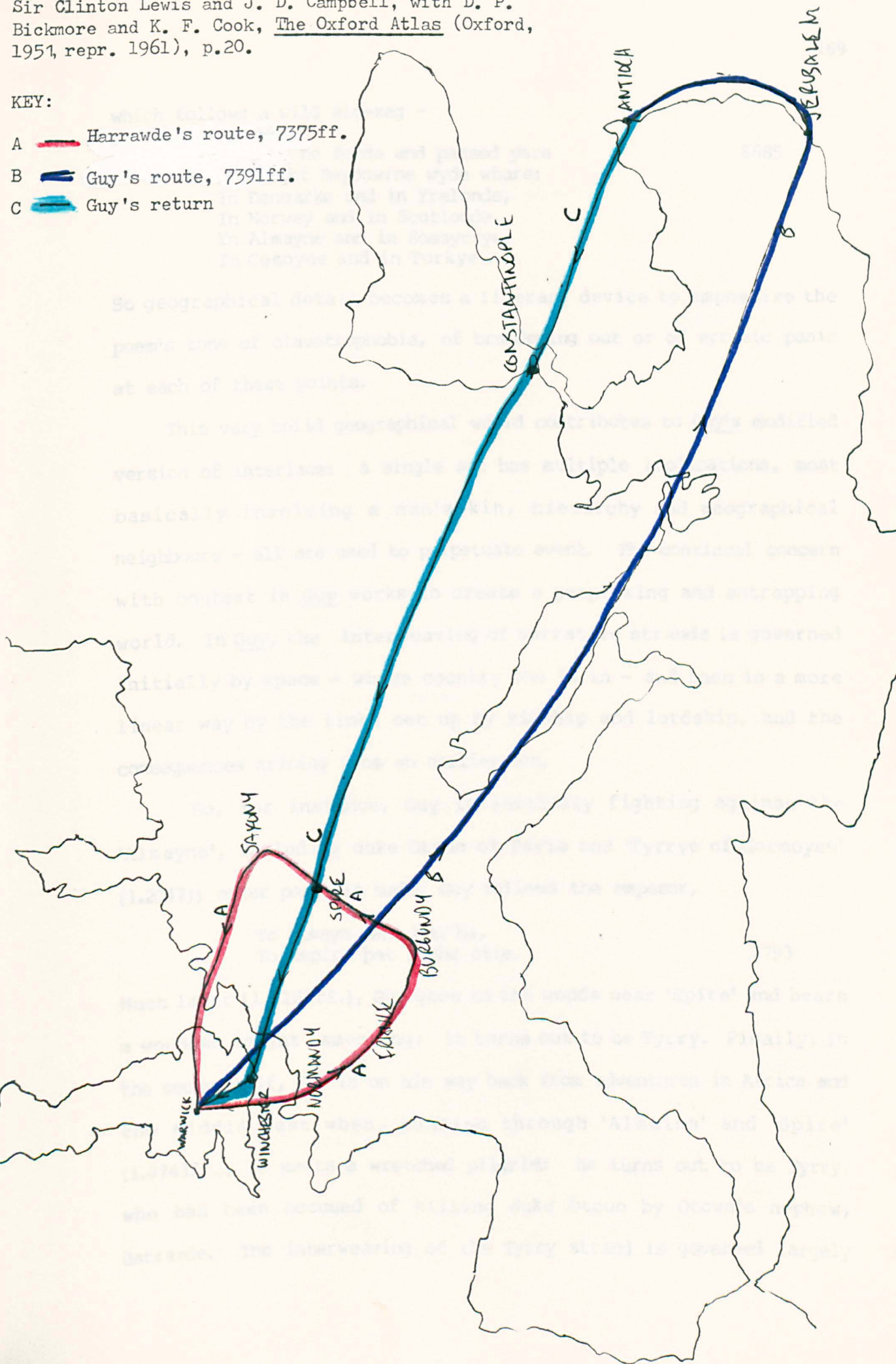
which follows a wild zig-zag -

> Schyppe he fonde and passed yare   8685
> And soght Reybowrne wyde whare:
> In Denmarke and in Yrelonde,
> In Norwey and in Scotlonde,
> Yn Almayne and in Sossyrrye,
> In Cesoyne and in Turkye...

So geographical detail becomes a literary device to emphasise the poem's tone of claustrophobia, of broadening out or of erratic panic at each of these points.

This very solid geographical world contributes to Guy's modified version of interlace: a single act has multiple implications, most basically involving a man's kin, hierarchy and geographical neighbours - all are used to perpetuate event. The continual concern with context in Guy works to create a perplexing and entrapping world. In Guy, the interweaving of narrative strands is governed initially by space - whose country one is in - and then in a more linear way by the links set up by kinship and lordship, and the consequences arising from an earlier act.

So, for instance, Guy is initially fighting against the 'Almayns', including duke Otoun of Pavie and 'Tyrrye of Gormoyse' (1.2047); after peace is made, Guy follows the emperor,

> To Almayn went ben he,
> To Espire þat riche cite.   2793

Much later (1.4265ff.), Guy goes to the woods near 'Spire' and hears a wounded knight lamenting: it turns out to be Tyrry. Finally, in the second half, Guy is on his way back from adventures in Africa and the Middle East when, passing through 'Almaine' and 'Spire' (1.8743ff.), he meets a wretched pilgrim: he turns out to be Tyrry, who has been accused of killing duke Otoun by Otoun's nephew, Barrarde. The interweaving of the Tyrry strand is governed largely

by geography: Tyrry's adventures appear only when Guy is travelling

through 'Almayn'.

Tyrry appears as an <u>alter</u> <u>ego</u> figure to Guy: at many points

their stories are similar. Not only is Tyrry seen only during Guy's

travels through 'Almayn' but Guy involves himself in Tyrry's

adventures. So the two first meet as young champions (1.2047ff.).

Later Guy rediscovers Tyrry, wounded (1.4265ff.) in a fight in which

his lady Ozelle was captured; Guy rescues Ozelle and Tyrry. Later

still Guy finds a pilgrim, who laments

<blockquote>
'I was a knyght of ryche lande
And castels and towres in my hande.
Of gode y had grete plente: 8785
All þat londe had drede of me.
In crystendome þer was no lande,
But y was preysed of my hande.
Y was bothe kynde and hende
And also y had mony a frende.   8790
Golde y had grete plente
And helde mony meyne.
Now haue y not an halpenye
My mete nor drynke for to bye.
Y am nowe a pore caytyfe: 8795
Hyt ys wonder, y haue my lyfe.'
For sorowe myght he speke no more,
For sorowe and for wepynge sore.
</blockquote>

then discloses that he is earl Tyrry, former companion to Guy, and

now oppressed by duke Otoun's nephew Barrarde and accused of the

killing of Otoun (quoted on p.165). It is clear that Tyrry's history

is intimately connected with Guy's own: it was Guy who really killed

Otoun. Similarly, in Tyrry's recounting of his love for Ozelle, the

parallel to Guy's wooing of Felice is clear: the story is initially

told by Tyrry in terms that apply equally well to Guy's own past.

Action is transferred from Tyrry to Guy, from Tyrry's words to Guy's

deeds, Tyrry's twice-reported story to Guy's main one. Tyrry works

as a parallel but failing version of Guy himself: the poem uses the

Tyrry figure to offer a set of alternatives to Guy's success, as well as to generate new but intimately-connected adventures. But Tyrry is also an example of a figure subject to continual change and decline; he, more strongly than any other figure, suggests the fragmentation of the world beyond the hero Guy.

So the poem establishes a double perspective on events: Guy himself continually succeeds, even if, as a romance hero, his adventures are isolated acts of prowess - his actions in killing dragons (1.3843ff. and 6813ff.), and defeating 'Sarazins' and even Danes have a limited societal context in which Guy's role is that of champion. But the figures surrounding Guy present a backdrop of conflict and decline - they are overwhelmed by the social forces surrounding them. Guy's role as romance hero contrasts to the picture of decline around him.

In the story of Tyrry, the idea of change is reproduced in small ways in the narration itself: the long interwoven love-story of Tyrry and Ozelle is finally closed at 1.6395, when they marry. But when Guy re-encounters Tyrry in the Barrarde episode, Ozelle is referred to only as 'hys cowntes' (1.9775). Close acquaintance earlier is replaced by a distancing move to refer to her only by status: an earlier strand is picked up only as a reference to its apartness from the present.

The Tyrry sequence of interlaced events is largely set up by familial links: Tyrry's father Aubri, and Otoun's nephew Barrarde, help to perpetuate the story. But it is also very firmly centred near 'Spire'. Guy creates a sense of places with their own stories. The interlacement of stories is not organised just as interwoven fictive strands; it is geographically structured, which means that

although Guy's involvement gives a centre to all the stories together, they are essentially disparate. The sets of co-ordinates suggest the reason Guy cannot help Tyrry fully: Guy travels away, and in his absence each place continues its own story, usually of strife and decline. The continuity of the physical world contrasts to the change and decline of figures within it. Interwoven stories are organised around physical places - but these places have their own stories. In Guy's absence, the other figures undergo their own trials, and are overwhelmed by social and political forces quite separate from the hero Guy's own prowess.

This is true not only of Tyrry but of Guy's other _alter ego_ figures too: Guy's friend Amys, who lives the stable home-life that Guy resists, is blamed for Otoun's death, and Reinbron rescues him (1.11299ff.). When after Guy departs to fight for God, Reinbron is kidnapped, the English barons accuse Harrawde and he goes into exile to search for Guy (1.7335ff.): in each case, there is an emergent socio-political context quite separate from the hero Guy's triumphs. The poem makes a precise division between a romance hero's success and the fraught socio-political context in which the other figures exist.

So the pattern throughout _Guy_ is that of the single hero (usually Guy, occasionally Harrawde or Reinbron)[21] who draws together

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21   In _Guy_ A, the Guy material is separated out from the material featuring Harrawde and Reinbron, in the ways indicated in chapter one, section E. However, in other versions of the poem, the Guy material is more interwoven with the Harrawde and Reinbron material. Caius ends after Guy's death (_Guy_ A, p.629); and see Mehl, _The Middle English romances_, p.221.

and resolves the strands in a fragmentary world. Beside this, however, there is a continuous process of fragmentation - shown most clearly by the decline of figures such as Tyrry in Guy's absence. Guy, while denying that there is a shared knightly ethos or even a shared geographical centre, uses its single figure to explore the creating of links in a disparate world: the result is a series of found but ephemeral links. This is suggested by the poem in its creation of a series of different and changing forms of textual unity and analogy - contextualising, balancing, grading, and setting up criteria (geographical, of historiographical verification, and so on) in which episodes can be compared.

Figures in this poem seek to make sense of their experience by making a series of statements on ageing, and the kinds of behaviour appropriate to one's age. As a young hero, Guy states that romance knights become too old to be heroes: for instance, the young Guy pities earl Florentine

> Gye had pyte of that knyght,
> When he sawe, he had be of myght,
> And þat he had hys sone slone.
> Twenty wyntur hyt was gone,   6670
> Sythen he myght armes bere,
> Or helpe hymselfe in any were.
> Gye seyde: 'haue here thy stede
> And hye þe whome a gode spede.
> Hyt were bettur for þe to be in churche   6675
> And holy werkys for to wyrche,
> Then to welde schelde or spere
> Or any odur armes to bere.
> I haue 3yldyd the thy mede:
> For þy mete haue here thy stede.'   6680

Some of the other young heroes express this view as well: for instance, Reinbron makes a similar statement at 11.11229-32 when he meets the disguised Harrawde; Tyrry contrasts Guy's pilgrim-disguise to his military abilities at 11.9407-9416; and so on.[22] However,

Harrawde uses the criteria of youthful strength and prowess in reverse: he is initially Guy's guardian, but eventually begins his own quest and a series of romance hero's adventures. He fights Reinbron, and tells him

> '...y telle þe,
> Soche be þe men of my cuntre: 11136
> When þey be well strekyn in elde,
> Then þey waxe stronge and belde.
> Or y depart now fro the,
> Yonge ynogh þou schalt fynde me.'

Harrawde reverses knightly patterns, using the criteria of youth and age to do so. In doing this, he introduces a quite separate view of age: one in which old age implies an increasing power.

The poem presents simultaneously two opposite views of age: while young heroes state that age is decline, an ongoing debate develops thematically to suggest the alternative that ageing is growth. Guy's choices are made more easily as the poem progresses: for instance, he is able to transform his error in killing Florentine's son into the choice of the right side in the Triamour episode, which is obviously analogous but a changed version of the earlier incident.

Guy is structured around a single hero's life, although the story expands to include other figures' adventures, too. Unlike many Middle English romances of single heroes, the story extends over Guy's whole life: Guy has a son, develops a markedly nationalistic and pietistic interest, and finally retires to a hermitage. Eugene Vinaver's description of interlace as

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22   Guy includes a whole series of references to ageing: see, for instance, 11.3570, 4775, 4829, 6670, 8671, 9412, 10820, 11004, and 11008.

...the feeling...that each initial adventure can be
extended into the past and each final adventure into the
future by a further lengthening of the narrative threads.[23]

implies indefinite extension - no end is apparent. So in Malory's

version of interlace, Lancelot has an adult son, but does not

apparently age.[24] This contrasts to Guy, which includes a series of

debates on age: Guy's structure implies an end to adventure, as the

hero ages and changes. However, in Guy chivalry is replaced with

other kinds of behaviour, modes of action presented as appropriate to

an ageing hero.

In that Guy has a series of models of behaviour - chivalry

performed for a lady's sake, then the defence of justice and of a

realistically-presented England, and finally retirement - it uses the

device of the single hero's life to evoke a tradition of wisdom

literature that exemplifies the ages of humankind through the life of

a single figure.[25] Guy's life is presented as a kind of temporal

progression, in which the potential that is present in the

biographical celebration of a historical hero is drawn out to suggest

a growth to a new mode concerning wisdom. Guy's life and ageing

evoke a context in which a man's life is emblematic, a model of the

ages of humankind and the kinds of behaviour appropriate to each age.

These two readings of the age theme within the poem are not

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23   The rise of romance, p.76; the passage is quoted in full in
     chapter one, pp.37-38.

24   Malory: Works, pp.593-608 and passim.

25   Nick Davis, The 'Tretise of Myraclis Pleying' and medieval
     conceptions of drama: an edition and study (Toronto,
     forthcoming) discusses the history and implications of the
     Ages of Humankind concept in the section on 'Thematics'. I am
     grateful to Nick Davis for help with this section.

congruent with each other: the romance view that age is decline is opposed to the context that treats age as experience, as offering the ability to perceive repeated patterns, and which treats Guy's ageing as exemplary and as evoking a context of wisdom literature. The young romance heroes' comments are ultimately superseded by a view that presents wisdom and experience as important.

In this poem, then, ideas of one's age and experience are developed thematically: characters debate the role of old figures in the poem. The young Guy sees age as decline; Harrawde eventually treats age as increasing his value; the old Guy retires to a hermitage. If for a young romance hero, old age is the decline of physical strength, then Guy develops into a mode in which age is growth: the poem changes so that experience, not youth, is important. While for the young romance-hero figures, young strength is a major value, the poem gradually supersedes the implied absolutism of these figures' views. So when the young Guy kills Florentine's son, and dismisses Florentine as too old (11.6667-6686), his view of the absolute value of strength and heroism is problematized by a series of moral contexts, apparent only retrospectively. While Reinbron goes on questing as a young knight, Guy develops an alternative mode in which spirituality and retirement supersede battle: the poem eventually presents a double perspective.

The poem's prologue[26] is a part of the theme of age and

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26   The poem's prologue is substantially the same in Gui, Caius
      and Guy B. The initial page of Guy A is missing; Zupitza
      supplies a page from Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS 50,
      collated with British Library, Harley MS 3775 - this is very
      similar to the version quoted in my text.

experience: it discusses the value of experience, and the validity

of old stories of heroes -

> Sythe þe tyme, þat god was borne
> And Crystendome was set and sworne,
> Mane aventewres hathe befalle,
> That 3yt be not knowen alle;
> Therfore schulde men mekely herke   5
> And thynke gode allwey to wyrke
> And take ensawmpull be wyse men,
> That haue before thys tyme ben:
> Well feyre aventurs befelle them
> (And sythen scheweyd to mony men),   10
> For þat they leuyd in sothefastenes,
> In grete trauell and in angwysche
> Of gode menys lyuys men schulde here
> And of þer gode dedys sythen lere:
> He, that myght lerne and holde faste,   15
> He schulde wexe wyse at the laste.
> Hyt ys holdyn grete maystry
> To holde wysdome and leue folye.

This is an opening topos: it collocates with those opening topoi in

romances that link a present audience and the events of the past,

transmitted through story.[27] But it emphasises the relation between

past and present in rather more specific terms than those used in

most romance prologues: men should actively learn from wise men of

the past ('take ensawmpull', l.7). Those men's wisdom is related to

their 'aventurs' (1.9) and 'angwysche' (1.12); their wisdom may even

be derived from it - they learned from their own past. Finally, one

learns from men of old 'at the laste'. The passage stresses wisdom:

it emphasises too that wisdom is acquired, learned, a product of

experience. In this scheme the reference to 'god' - a familiar part

of a romance opening topos - is not the usual prayer but part of the

poem's time-scheme: one builds upon events between 'þe tyme, þat god

was borne' and our time, 'at the laste'. So while this opening

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27   See chapter one, section D.

evokes other romance opening topoi, it marks the differences from them as well: it displays a very precise sense of the continuity of time as used to create knowledge. In this romance the young heroes emphasise the importance of their youthful strength; however, the prologue begins with a very precise debate on the value of past experience. It makes experience specific - experience is gleaned from long lives, and from the past. The prologue presents a view in which human ageing and experience are vital to understanding - a view exactly opposed to that expressed by the young romance heroes. This debate is important: as the prologue suggests, a belief in the validity of past experience as informing the present is a justification for the poem's existence. This is partly true of romance in general: it is developed and argued explicitly in Guy, however. Guy foregrounds a debate on the value of the past in the present; to do this it moves away from the ornate internal structuring - such as diptych, repetition, interlace - shared by romance.

Guy's own structure is a part of the debate on experience. Guy is a long poem; it does not use any one structuring device throughout. Sometimes an episode - such as the 'Florentine's son' episode - makes little sense, until it is placed in one social and moral context after another: a series of contexts imply answers that can be discovered only retrospectively. Guy's own length becomes a model of moving towards knowledge, and using literary experience to create syntheses.

Thematically, then, Guy concerns itself with experience: the experience of the figures in the poem, and of the poem itself as suggested in the prologue. In this the young hero Guy's comments on

old age as weakening are replaced by a mode in which old age is a positive value, one of experience. In its sets of values, Guy moves between an isolationist and self-justifying sense of the romance hero's absolute correctness, to a social and political context for the hero's actions. Guy presents simultaneously a single hero's success against a backdrop of real change and decline. In the first place, Guy evokes generic devices and literary structuring (for instance, superlatives used of the dragon fight, the knightly clash with Florentine's son) to suggest romance: but Guy also presents a mode in which disparate socio-political contexts are presented through techniques unusual in Middle English romance (precise geographical markers, dating and quantifying in the Colbrond episode, loose sets of moral contexts and analogies, and so on).

Guy changes finally to a mode which concerns the state of past society. Guy's repeated patterns of change and decline indicate an interest in the means to society's redemption, and the discovery of patterns of causation and change which are implicitly applicable to the present. That is, Guy moves from a romance mode to a mode in which historiographical concerns co-exist with romance features. Guy the romance hero becomes Guy the champion of tenth century England, the father of Reinbron, and the pious retired figure. It is this move to historiographical and genealogical concerns that licenses, and is licensed by, Guy's context of traditionalist re-creations by fourteenth and fifteenth century society.

These issues of romance structuring and historical status in Guy are separated out by the poem's length: Guy's nationalistic and

pietistic status is increased towards the end of the poem.[28] So
Guy's devices of authority and structure alter as the poem
progresses. Guy's structuring encodes not only a romance generic
context but eventually a philosophical one as well: Guy finally
presents a solid world in the process of change and decline. So one
can trace Guy's use of the generic structuring devices changing into
its use of literary structures for a commemoration and philosophical
assessment of the past. Guy makes all these concerns into structure:
it suggests the world's mutability partly by its use of changing
structural devices. In its move from primarily romance generic
signals to those created for historiographical purposes, Guy
emphasises structural change and human mutability: changing literary
structure is used to create a kind of historical pessimism.

As the next chapter will show, Guy has a societal context in
which it is treated something like historiography, or at least given
a specific commemorative function. But while the following chapter
is able to trace diachronic changes in Guy's context and structure,
that external context is important to this chapter's discussion of
structural criteria of an asynchronic kind in Guy. Guy is about
tradition, about learning from the past. It establishes its own
status as an embodiment of literary tradition - as its quotation by

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28   As suggested by other works that quote Guy - for instance,
many of the chronicle accounts listed by Crane, 'Vogue',
pp.127-28, use only the Colbrond episode; this is true too of
the Auchinleck manuscript's Anonymous English Chronicle
(chapter one, pp.70-71). Later works that emphasise Guy's
status - such as Lydgate's short versions of the poem (chapter
four, p.205ff.) tend to imply or allude to Guy's last battle
with Colbrond, and retirement to the hermitage. See chapter
four.

other romances and by historiography suggests. But finally, it is itself traditional: Guy changes relatively little between its first, early thirteenth century version, and the fifteenth century version.[29] More to the point, the fifteenth century version shows signs - such as the addition of the minstrel lines - that, rather than re-structuring and partially modernizing the poem as the Auchinleck version, Guy A, does, Guy remains true to its past versions in the latest, fifteenth century version:[30] traditionality is a part of Guy's meaning.

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29   Mehl, The Middle English romances, says

> The English versions [of Guy] follow their Anglo-Norman source for the most part rather closely and do not change the character of the poem to any significant degree. Extensive alterations, abridgements or expansions are rare; most editorial changes are to be found in the second half of the poem which in the sources was rather diffuse and even more episodic than the rest.(pp.220-221)

30   Ibid., p.221 (quoted on p.142, note one).

Chapter IV

ROMANCE RECEPTION: SOCIETAL RE-CREATIONS OF GUY[1]

Certain features of romance style, as examined in chapter one section D, seem to me to suggest that romance literary style itself encodes a traditionalism, and an emphasis on the commemoration of the past. The word 'conservative' was used to imply that literary features probably have a corresponding socio-political value: a sense of literary traditionalism matches a historical self-awareness and endorses a particular social group.[2] This chapter seeks to confirm this theoretical argument grounded in literary style by extending the discussion to a practical examination of a small area of historical documentation - that which survives on the reception of Guy of Warwick in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. As suggested at the end of the previous chapter, a commemorative role allocated to Guy in at least one social context is borne out in the text itself not in direct literary change but in non-change: Guy remains true to its past. So this chapter examines the ways a social conservatism may lie behind the traditionalist features of romance.

In fact there are ways that this exposition of a social and political context relevant to Guy is extraordinarily difficult to do: the initial problem is to decide on the kind of social context, which for the modern critic means the kind of history of the Middle Ages, to choose for Guy. Some writers have used political histories

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2   See chapter one, section D.

to treat literary works as a kind of contemporary political allegory.[3] This approach for Guy would mean, for instance, writing it into a history of the Wars of the Roses – an approach that simply does not work in a mid-fifteenth century text that displays its allegiance more firmly to its Anglo-Norman sources than to contemporary politics. Some writers have used a basis in socio-political fact to treat literature as an ideological reflection, moving towards allegory, of people's responses to those political or economic facts.[4] Other writers give accounts of literature as originating in purely specific contexts – for instance, the 'ancestral romance' theory of M. Dominica Legge,[5] which tends to seek a particular point of origin in a family's fortunes – but their accounts do not give an adequate account of much later versions of the story.

None of these approaches works for Guy; you simply cannot make equations between literary features and political fact in a text that is broadly read and more concerned with literary exactitude or

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3   For example, the works referred to by Richard R. Griffith, 'The political bias of Malory's "Morte dArthur"', Viator, 5 (1974), 365-86.

4   Terry Eagleton, Criticism and ideology: a study in Marxist literary theory (London, 1976); Pierre Macherey, A theory of literary production (London, 1978); Louis Althusser, 'Ideology and ideological state apparatuses: notes towards an investigation', in Lenin and philosophy and other essays, translated by Ben Brewster (London, 1971), pp.121-73; Raymond Williams, Marxism and literature (Oxford, 1977); Sheila Delany, 'Substructure and superstructure: the politics of allegory in the fourteenth century', Science and Society, 38 (1974-75), 257-80; Delany, 'Undoing substantial connection: the late medieval attack on analogical thought', Mosaic, V (1972), 31-52.

5   Anglo-Norman literature and its background (Oxford, 1963).

reworking of previous literature than with direct social and political relevance. More to the point, Middle English romances usually appear politically neutral: literary style is privileged over accounts of societal origins. So by definition, evidence about the production and reception of romances in the Middle Ages is largely invisible - it is concealed behind a concern with literary style.

However, there survives for _Guy_ a series of small pieces of evidence regarding a specific social context, the ways the earls of Warwick used _Guy of Warwick_. _Guy_'s 'context' consists of a set of clues to the reasons for the poem's existence, propagation and reception. The survival of this information is largely accidental: it exists for _Guy_ only because of the Warwick connection. However, it seems to me that while its survival is incidental, the information it offers is not: it demonstrates the relation of a small group of readers to _Guy_, and may be suggestive not only of the wider reception of _Guy_, but of romance generally.

The origins of the Guy story are suggestively indeterminate. As the evidence that follows will indicate, many medieval accounts of the figure Guy give him a historical status in the tenth century, as Guy earl of Warwick.[6] From the viewpoint of modern evidence, it is doubtful that this figure Guy ever existed:[7] certainly he was not an

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6   See p.198ff., 205ff., 218ff., and _passim_.

7   _Dictionary of National Biography_, edited by Sir Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee, 21 vols and supplements (Oxford, 1917-81), VIII, 829.

earl of Warwick.[8] Guy seems to have been known to the Middle Ages

largely through the Middle English romance Guy of Warwick, as many of

the following quotations will indicate. The issue is not, then, a

matter of separating out fact and fiction, but the reception of the

story of Guy of Warwick in the Middle Ages, and the status given to

the Guy story.

Guy may have existed as local legend before, in the early

thirteenth century, the 12,000 line romance was created.[9] It has

been argued that the creation of the original Anglo-Norman version of

the romance Gui de Warewic was linked closely with the contemporary

earls of Warwick. Editing the first extant version of the Anglo-

Norman text, Alfred Ewert uses local place-name references in the

poem to argue -

> Quoi de plus naturel pour les moines d'Oseney que de saisir
> l'occasion de glorifier du même coup la maison à laquelle
> ils devaient leur existence et le gros de leur revenu, et
> celle dont ils escomptaient la protection et le patronage?
> En effet, parmi les obits de l'abbaye d'Oseney, Thomas,
> comte de Warwick (✝ 1242), fils d'Henry et de Margery
> d'Oilgi, figure à côté des d'Oilgi, et c'est dans cette
> même abbaye, au pied du maître-autel, que sa femme Ela fut
> enterrée.[10]

M. Dominica Legge uses a similar argument to suggest that Gui is

ancestral romance -

> The story seems to be pure fabrication, perhaps by a canon
> of Oseney to flatter Thomas earl of Warwick...[11]

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8   Handbook of British Chronology, edited by Sir F. Maurice
     Powicke and E. B. Fryde, second edition (London, 1961), p.453.

9   Gui.

10   Gui, p.vi.

11   Anglo-Norman Literature, p.162.

The earliest manuscript has more recently been redated, using other items from what was originally the same manuscript, to 1206-1214.[12] The same script appears in a manuscript of the Dialogues de saint-Gregoire, which concludes

> Explicit opus manuum mearum quod complevi ego frater A., subdiaconus Sancte Frideswide servientium minimus, anno Verbi incarnati M CC XII, mense XI, ebdomada IIIIa.[13]

The writer has been identified as brother Angier; St Frideswide is now Christ Church, Oxford; Oseney is its daughter house, founded by Robert d'Oily in 1129.[14] As Jean Wathelet-Willem shows, there was an ancestral link between the thirteenth-century earls of Warwick and Robert d'Oily.[15] The argument over the origins of Gui have been discussed most recently by Emma Mason, who confirms an early date and suggests a specific celebratory function for the poem.[16]

These accounts of Gui's date and composition, though differing in detail, agree upon one thing: that the original version of Gui is likely to have been created for an earl of Warwick in the early thirteenth century. Legge's characterisation of Gui as 'ancestral romance' for the family of the earls of Warwick makes an intimate link between the existence of the early Gui and the earldom of Warwick.

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12 Jean Wathelet-Willem, Recherches sur la chanson de Guillaume: etudes accompagnées d'une édition, 2 vols (Paris, 1975), I, 27-51 (pp.42-26). I am grateful to Beate Schmolke-Hasselman for this reference.

13 Ibid., I, 47n.

14 Ibid., I, 46-50.

15 Ibid., I, 45-50.

16 Emma Mason, 'Legends of the Beauchamps' ancestors: the use of baronial propaganda in medieval England', Journal of Medieval History, 10 (1984), 25-40 (pp.30-33).

However, the ancestral view has recently been challenged by
Susan Dannenbaum, in favour of a broader interpretation -

> The ancestral theory proposes that four of the six romances
> of English heroes, Boeve, Gui, Waldef, and Fouke, owe their
> genesis to a specific family's commission, which was in
> turn sparked by a specific crisis in the rights of the
> family to its land or titles. However, this theory is
> without sufficient proof. None of these romances praises a
> patron, mentions the modern family holding the title of the
> celebrated hero, or even takes careful note of the alleged
> patrons' history and possessions...If Gui de Warewic was
> designed to praise the Newburghs of Oxford and Warwick, why
> does Gui hold Walingford and why is his body transported to
> Lorraine rather than to one of the family's abbeys?...The
> very errors in family history, the absence of reference to
> any patron, the general vagueness of setting all suggest
> the significant possibility that these romances were all
> designed and written for a wider audience than a single
> family.

She adds

> The romances of English heroes are socially conservative:
> they respect and value the institutions of marriage and the
> family as well as the class system and traditional feudal
> law. They betray none of the precocious tendencies which
> mark contemporaneous Continental romance...rarely does a
> body of literature resonate so harmoniously with its social
> context.[17]

Ewert and Legge presume that specific origins account for the
existence of the original Gui; Wathelet-Willem and Mason extend their
argument in greater detail. However, Dannenbaum discounts the
ancestral theory to argue a more generally commemorative function.
The issue of the particular origins of the Guy story has not been
settled: however, my concern is not the thirteenth century origins
of the story but the kinds of interpretation it was given in
subsequent centuries. In the discussion that follows, I plan to deal

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17   'Anglo-Norman romances of English heroes: "ancestral
      romance"?', Romance Philology, 35 (1981-82), 601-8 (pp.602-03
      and 605).

more fully with the questions set up by these critics about the inter-relation between a poem's particular origins and the poem's reception by a wider readership. As Dannenbaum suggests, accounts of textual origins are ultimately less significant than the work's own emphases, which demonstrate its importance to a wider audience. Evidence of textual propagation is also evidence of textual reception - and that reception, though instanced in the survival of material relating to the narrow readership associated with the earldom of Warwick, is suggestive about the wider reception of Guy in the Middle Ages. Moreover, evidence for a diachronic relation exists - information on textual origins is superseded by evidence about the subsequent readership of the texts.

The ancestral status attributed to the original Gui by some writers is extended, confirmed and made primary in some of the subsequent re-creations and quotations of the Middle English Guy of Warwick. The extraordinary thing about Gui or Guy is not that it may have begun as ancestral romance, but that this specific commemorative function is very much a part of the Middle English poem's re-creation and reception over the next three centuries. The acts of the earls of Warwick in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in suggesting that Guy was their ancestor have interesting implications for the fiction and its interpretation.

The earliest version of Gui was translated into Middle English, but the romance changed relatively little in the following centuries;[18] and it was this romance version that predominated in the Middle Ages, as some of the more explicit of the later quotations of

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18   Mehl, The Middle English romances, p.221; see p.142, note 1.

the story make clear. From the late thirteenth century, every earl

leaves some evidence of a link created with the story. By the late

fifteenth century, it is clear that the earls - and the writers

associated with them - treated Guy as an actual ancestor of the

family; some of the early evidence, however, merely implies that

Guy's literary status is overlaid with a role as a specific family

ancestor.

In a short period in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth

century in particular, various pieces of suggestive evidence draw

together the existence of the poem Gui or Guy with the interest of

the contemporary earls of Warwick.

In the 1270s William Beauchamp, earl of Warwick (d. 1298) named

his son and heir Guy.[19] The name was not a Beauchamp family name,

nor was there a contemporary earl of that name, after whom Guy might

have been named.[20] It seems extremely likely that the name was

adopted from the poem Gui or Guy, as William Dugdale claimed.[21] This

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19   George Edward Cokayne, The complete peerage, 13 vols (London, 1887-88, revised 1910-51), XII, ii, 370; hereafter referred to as Cokayne. Cokayne, under 'Warwick', XII, ii, 357-419, is the basis for much of the subsequent information on the earldom of Warwick.

20   Powicke and Fryde, Handbook of British Chronology, pp.414-56.

21   Dugdale, The Antiquities of Warwickshire, (London, 1656) gives a great deal of information on the earldom of Warwick, pp.297-339. See Antiquities, p.314; and see also The Beauchamp Cartulary: charters 1100-1268, edited by Emma Mason (Lincoln, 1980), who says

> It is no coincidence that William de Beauchamp (IV) named his infant heir, born in 1271 x 72, after the legendary Guy of Warwick. The supposed relics of the literary hero were preserved with those of the historic Guy, emphasising that the earl had inherited his mantle.(p.xxiv)

act of naming creates a Guy earl of Warwick, implicitly comparable to the legendary and fictitious Guy.

This identity of names was exploited in the heraldic roll and commemorative poem The Siege of Caerlaverock, which took place in 1300. Of Guy Beauchamp, earl of Warwick, the poem says

> De Warewick le conte Guy,
> Coment ke en ma rime le guy,
> Ne avoit vesin de luy mellour:
> Baner ot de rouge colour
> O fesse de or e croissillie.[22]

'ma rime' aligns the contemporary earl Guy with the poem Gui or Guy. It has been suggested that 'ma' indicates that the author of the Siege - perhaps Walter of Exeter - also wrote a version of Guy; this argument rests, however, on dubious grounds.[23] All that can safely be said is that while earl Guy's naming created an implicit link with the poem, the testament of the Siege makes it clear that this connection was understood and adopted by some contemporaries at least.

That there was a copy of the poem in the family's possession at this time is made clear by a document which states that earl Guy gave

> Un Volum del Romaunce de Gwy, e de la Reygne tut enterement

with a list of other books to Bordesley Abbey in 1305.[24] Moreover,

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22 The Siege of Caerlaverock, in Eight thirteenth-century rolls of arms in French and Anglo-Norman blazon, edited by Gerard J. Brault (Pennsylvania, 1973), pp.101-25, ll.185-89; Cokayne, XII, ii, 370n.

23 Le rommant de Guy de Warwick et de Herolt d'Ardenne, edited by D. J. Conlon (Chapel Hill, 1971), discusses the rather doubtful evidence on which this claim is based (pp.23-24 and 33-38).

24 M. Blaess, 'L'abbaye de Bordesley et les livres de Guy de Beauchamp', Romania, 78 (1957), 511-18 (p.513).

the implied literary context is interesting: the list contains many saints' lives and didactic works; of the secular works, chansons de geste predominate. Secular works with English heroes include 'Willame de Loungespe', the 'Romaunce des Mareschaus' and the 'Romaunce de Gwy'. The emphasis is heavily on works with a historicizing or historiographical power, but one with some familial interest too: 'Willame de Loungespe', earl of Salisbury, died in 1226; his daughter Ela married, firstly, Thomas earl of Warwick (d. 1242), and secondly, William de Beauchamp.[25]

In this context, the naming of earl Guy makes the poem Guy implicitly a retrospective explanation of the contemporary earl's name. That the family owned Guy in the early years of the fourteenth century suggests strongly that the fiction was the origin of earl Guy's name; it also establishes the extent to which the past is re-created in the present through literature. At a time when eldest sons were usually named after a close relative, the adoption of a literary name is more than just a naming - it suggests ancestry, and the acknowledgement or adoption of a family name.[26]

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25   Dictionary of National Biography, XII, 115-118.

26   Mason, Beauchamp Cartulary, says

> The families represented in this Cartulary normally used just two alternating names for their elder sons, and added others only when some important heiress brought her own kinsmen's Christian names into the family. Very rarely indeed was a child, especially the eldest son, named after anyone else before the mid-thirteenth century, while these families, and in particular the Beauchamps and Mauduits, were steadily building up their position. They stressed the continuity of their achievement by repeatedly bestowing upon their heirs the personal names of successful predecessors, whose status was thereby recalled, and whose charisma descended upon their equally ambitious namesakes.(p.xxiv)

Other pieces of evidence make the naming of earl Guy, and the earls' ownership of _Guy_, and the _Siege_'s equation of the two Guy figures, significant at this point. The poem was very popular at around this time: there are thirteen extant manuscripts of the Anglo-Norman _Gui_ from the thirteenth and early fourteenth century.[27] The first English versions survive from the early fourteenth century - a fragmentary _Guy of Warwick_,[28] and the version in the Auchinleck manuscript.[29] While it seems likely that the earls of Warwick patronised or owned some of these versions, the precise relationship is not apparent: all that is evident is that a flourishing period for _Guy_ is matched by pieces of evidence about the earls' adoption of the poem.

The second factor is that the family's fortunes thrived in this period: for example, earl Guy's marriage to Alice de Tosny was a good one, both indicating and producing a rise in wealth and status.[30] So in the latter years of the thirteenth century, the

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27 Conlon, _Le rommant_, pp.48-50, gives the most recent complete list of manuscripts and editions.

28 _Fragments_.

29 _Guy A_.

30 Mason, _Beauchamp Cartulary_, says

> The latest accession to the Beauchamp lands to be represented in the charters in this edition occurred as the result of the marriage of Earl Guy, son of William (IV), to Alice de Tosny, widow of Thomas of Leybourne. She was heiress of her brother Robert, and in 1309 inherited extensive lands in East Anglia, the West Midlands, south-west England and the Welsh marches.(p.xxiv and _passim_)

See also Mason, 'Legends', pp.33-34; and K. B. McFarlane, 'The Beauchamps and the Staffords', in _The nobility in later medieval England_ (Oxford, 1973), pp.187-212 (esp. pp.139-42).

Beauchamps acquired the earldom, and worked to consolidate their wealth and power: in this period of expansion, the use of the poem Guy by the earls had particular point in publicising and confirming the rise in wealth and status. The coalescence of these three factors - the consolidation of the family's fortunes, the large number of extant manuscripts, and the earls' ownership of and references to the story - is unlikely to be coincidental, although the exact relation is unclear. It seems likely that the earls of Warwick in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries helped to foster a story which had a broad independent circulation as well: the earls' growing social status both fires and feeds off the Guy story.

Further evidence suggests, however, the inseparability of fiction and history in medieval treatments of the Guy story. The status of the figure Guy as both fictional and genealogical is demonstrated by illustration in the 'Guy of Warwick' mazer, or maplewood drinking bowl.

The print in the bottom of the mazer shows a mounted knight killing a dragon; a lion is to one side of him, and the scene is surrounded with trees. The knight bears a shield with a fess and six crosses crosslet - that is, the Beauchamp coat of arms.[31] The whole is surrounded by a French inscription in Lombardic capitals, which was translated in W. H. St John Hope's description of the mazer -

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31   Charles Boutell, Boutell's heraldry, revised by C. W. Scott-Giles and J. P. Brooke-Little (London and New York, 1978), p. 7 and 110.

Guy of Warwick is his name, who here slays the dragon.[32]

The inscription and picture make it clear that this is the Guy of fiction, in the Anglo-Norman or Middle English romance; but the knight's shield has a contemporary reference. The mazer's illustration makes a link between the poem and the earldom.

The mazer has been argued to belong to the very early fourteenth century: St John Hope says

> The ailettes appearing on the knight's shoulders fix the date as temp. Edward II.[33]

However, this precision is unconvincing, given that the artwork appears to be later, perhaps nearer the middle of the fourteenth century.[34] For the purposes of this chapter, the mazer is assumed to belong to the first half of the fourteenth century.

It seems likely that the mazer was owned by one of the Beauchamps, as suggested by the knight's coat of arms. The earls of Warwick in the fourteenth century used two shields, often quartered or placed on the reverse and obverse of their seals: the Beauchamp arms, which consist of gules, a fess and six crosses crosslet or; and the arms of the old Newburgh earls of Warwick, chequy or and azure, a chevron ermine.[35] As this chapter explains more fully later, with

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32   W. H. St John Hope, 'On the English medieval drinking bowls called Mazers', Archaeologia, 50 (1887), 129-93 (p.142).

33   Ibid., pp.141-42.

34   Elizabeth Danbury and Carol Fewster, 'The Guy of Warwick mazer: the Beauchamp earls of Warwick and romance in the fourteenth century' (forthcoming).

35   C. H. Hunter Blair, 'Armorials upon English seals from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries', Archaeologia, 89 (1943), 1-26.

reference to the <u>Rous Roll</u> (see p.21$), the chequy (Newburgh) coat is often used to refer to past earls, and the tradition of the earldom. But the mazer makes Guy not only an earl of Warwick, but a Beauchamp: that is, it aligns Guy with the contemporary earls by giving him their coat of arms. Depending on the date of the mazer, this may have particular point in referring simultaneously to earl Guy (d. 1315) and the Guy of story.

Judged in its literary context, the selection of this episode is peculiar. As argued in chapter three (pp.146-50), <u>Guy</u> is structured around the climactic fight with the Danish champion Colbrond to save England, and the parallel fight with a dragon to save England. But the mazer quotes another dragon fight, structurally less important in <u>Guy</u>, in which Guy saves a lion[36] - in itself the quotation from <u>Guy</u> of an episode other than the Colbrond one is unusual, given the poem's later historiographical uses and quotation in chronicle.[37] If the Colbrond fight has the greatest quantity of authenticating and locating detail, then the lion and dragon episode has the least: it is the most purely mythical and literary episode in <u>Guy</u>. <u>Guy</u>'s fine differentiation between romance and historiographical tone and verification, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, makes this episode carry fictional connotations: the opponent is a dragon, the fight is without naturalistic or pietistic weight, and is not quantifiable or datable, and it takes place in an unspecified adventure <u>locus</u>, when Guy is hunting and leaves his companions to

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36   <u>Guy</u> A, 11.4109-4422.

37   Ronald S. Crane, 'The vogue of <u>Guy of Warwick</u> from the close of the Middle Ages to the romantic revival', <u>PMLA</u>, 30 (1915), 125-94 (pp.127-28).

pursue this adventure.[38]

In addition, this lion and dragon episode has an external
literary context: the closest analogue is a romance one, the
Chevalier au lion, or Yvain, of Chrétien de Troyes.[39] So the mazer
presents Guy as primarily a romance hero: it is a clear allusion to
literature as literature, referring to the Guy story as romance
rather than necessarily as an authoritative medium for the
transmission of history.

There are two analogues to the mazer's illustration of Guy, in
early fourteenth century manuscript illustration: each makes it
clear that this is Guy, either by naming him or by an exactitude in
its series of episodes. British Library, Yates Thompson MS 13
reproduces a sequence of Guy's adventures, subtitled 'Gwi de
Warrewik';[40] and the illustrations in British Library, Royal MS
10 E iv do not name the figure but make it clear by the sequence of
events that this is the Guy story, in which he kills a dragon to save
a lion.[41] In each the knight's coat of arms is unspecific and is
subject to change: the changing heraldic devices suggest a double
context for the Guy story. In the narrow context of the earldom of
Warwick, Guy is aligned with the family and its ancestry; in the
wider context of a more general readership, this relation is not
valid.

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38   Guy B, 11.4110-14.

39   Yvain, in Comfort, Chrétien, pp.180-269.

40   This and the following item are noted by Loomis, Mediaeval
romance, p.136n. BL Yates Thompson MS, fol.14-17.

41   BL Royal MS 10 E iv, fol.16-17 and 80-85.

The value to literary comparison of these manuscript analogues is that they indicate how far Guy's romance popularity has grown, in that Guy even more than Yvain is the literary figure associated with this typically romance episode. The knight's coat of arms in these manuscript illustrations is not externally referential; this suggests that it is likely that, by contrast, the mazer's specific coat of arms indicates that it belongs to the narrow context of the earldom of Warwick.

The survival of this mazer works to consolidate the pieces of early fourteenth century evidence presented above. It uses the literary background of the romance's popularity and the implicitly ancestral function for the figure Guy to make Guy both a romance hero and the bearer of a contemporary coat of arms; it draws together the interwoven strands of literature and its re-creation in society completely at this point.

However, the mazer's illustration suggests that the modern categories of 'fiction' and 'history' are ultimately invalid. At certain points, generic allegiances of one sort or another are displayed - for instance, the mazer evokes a literary context that is romance; the _Siege_ names its verse form and medium as 'ma rime'. But generic suggestiveness is ultimately subsumed by references that both allude to romance popularity and suggest an ancestral status for _Guy_. As the kinds of changing status given to treatments of Arthur in the Middle Ages indicate,[42] these pieces of evidence finally suggest a view that fiction and history in the _Guy_ story are inseparable.

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42   Richard Barber, _King Arthur in legend and history_ (Ipswich, 1973); Rosemary Morris, _The character of King Arthur in Medieval Literature_ (Cambridge, 1982).

Treatment and allegiance to genre may change - but ultimately Guy's fictional and historical status are part of the same commemorative move.

No manuscripts of Guy survive from the second half of the fourteenth century: however, a series of references to the poem by the earls of Warwick make it apparent that the story was well-known. Some of the references are quite inexplicit - they refer only to Guy's name, and assume that one knows the Guy story.

In the 1340s, earl Thomas Beauchamp (d. 1369) named his three eldest sons Guy, Thomas and Reynbron.[43] Now it could be argued that the eldest son, Guy, was named after his grandfather, earl Guy (d. 1315), just as the second son Thomas was named after his father. But the name of the third son, Reynbron, expands the context of the name 'Guy' to make it clear that this is a reference to the romance: the 'Guy' and 'Reynbron' collocation is an unmistakable reference to the fictional Guy and his hero son.

Earl Thomas' will is abstracted by Dugdale, who says that Thomas leaves

> To Thomas his son and heir...the Sword and Coat of mail sometime belonging to the famous Guy of Warwick.[44]

'The famous Guy of Warwick' is likely to refer to the Guy of story, rather than to earl Guy, Thomas' own father.

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43   Cokayne, XII, ii, 374, note g; 'Reynbrun, b. before 1344, d.s.p.m. and v.p. before 29 July 1361', p.374 note h; CPR, 1343-45, pp.251-52; Dugdale, Antiquities, calls this figure 'Reynburne (so named, doubtless, in memory of Reynburne the son to Guy Earl of Warwick in the Saxons time) that dyed before the 35.E.3' (p.321).

44   Antiquities, p.317.

The first and third sons, Guy and Reynbron, died in 1360 and 1361 respectively; in 1369 the earldom passed to the second son, Thomas Beauchamp (d. 1401).[45] From this point he will be referred to as earl Thomas II, to distinguish him from his father, earl Thomas I.

Earl Thomas II had 'Guy's Tower' built at Warwick Castle:[46] the name itself is sufficiently vague to leave some doubt as to which Guy it commemorates - it could possibly refer to one of the fourteenth century Guy Beauchamp figures. But the Guy references so far in this chapter all, when expanded enough to be explicit, refer to the Guy of fiction: in this light, there is no reason why the reference here should be to a different Guy.

In the romance Guy of Warwick, Guy is converted to a more evidently Christian way of life as he stands in a tower in the castle at Warwick. The naming of Guy's Tower may merely refer to the hero's name, as a famous name adopted in the same way as the name of the opposite tower in the castle, Caesar's Tower; alternatively, it may display a close knowledge of the romance Guy.

When in 1397 earl Thomas II, who was one of the Appellants, was exiled to the Isle of Man, his goods were seized by the Crown; because of this seizure, a list of his possessions survives. It includes

> ...a 'dorser' and 4 'costers' of 'aras' with the story of Guy de Warrewyk; a 'dorser' [and] 4 'costers' of cloth of gold...[with the story] of King Alexandre (de Roy dalisaundre)...[47]

Anthony Goodman suggests that

> The pieces of [the Guy of Warwick] set are likely to have been of especial magnificence, for in 1398 Richard granted them to his nephew the duke of Surrey.[48]

One of the problems of the fourteenth century references to the Guy story is that of source - how far is the story of the hero Guy taken from the poem Gui or Guy? There are, after all, other sources for the story - local legend, chronicle and so on. However, some of the chronicle references - such as that in The Siege of Caerlaverock or the Anonymous Short English Chronicle[49] - are limited to a brief reference, or single event. That the Guy of Warwick 'dorser' and 'costers' are listed in conjunction with 'the story of King Alexandre' suggests a reference to the poem Gui or Guy: here, the reference to 'story' makes it likely that it is the poem Gui or Guy - rather than chronicle or legend - that is known.

The will of earl Thomas II includes this bequest -

> To Richard his son and heir...a Bed of silk embroydered with Bears, and his Armes with all that belong'd thereto. A ...... wrought with the Armes and Story of Guy of Warwick; his sword, harness, and Ragged staves likewise. And...the Sword and coate of Maile sometime belonging to the famous Guy.[50]

While no manuscripts of Guy survive from the later part of the

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47   Calendar of inquisitions miscellaneous (Chancery) preserved in the Public Record Office, 7 vols, (London, 1916-68), VI, 1392-99 (1963), item 307 (p.171); and Cokayne, XII, ii, 377. I am grateful to Alexandra Sinclair for this reference, and for her generous help in the early stages of my research for this chapter.

48   The loyal conspiracy: the Lords Appellant under Richard II (London, 1971), p.139.

49   See chapter one, section E.

50   The six blank spaces occur in Dugdale, p.323.

fourteenth century, there are these pieces of external evidence that suggest how well-known the story was, locally at least. The earls of Warwick exploited the suggestion that Guy was their ancestor largely by alluding to Guy's status as well-known romance hero.

A body of evidence survives to indicate that in the fifteenth century the Guy story was fostered by the earls in such a way that local topography and references in Guy itself change to become more specific references: the Guy story is given a precise locus. The 13th earl of Warwick, Richard Beauchamp (d. 1439) founded a chantry at a place just north of Warwick, referred to by William Dugdale as 'Guy's cliff', and

> ...caused a large and goodly statue of the famous Guy, to be placed, which is still there to be seen.[51]

It was founded at the place to which Guy is supposed to have retired: this founding of a chantry is both influenced by, and confirms, the Guy legend.

The evidence of local place-names suggests that the Guy story was instrumental in changing the significance of local topography in the later Middle Ages. The Place-names of Warwickshire says of the origin of 'Guy's cliff'

> Probably 'Cybba's cliff,' the reference being to the rocks by the Avon here. The pers[onal] name Cybba is not on record, but might be a pet-form of such an OE name as Cynebeald...The later form is due to association with the famous hero of romance, Guy of Warwick.[52]

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51   Dugdale, Antiquities, pp.273-75 and 329. It should be noted that much of Dugdale's account of Richard Beauchamp's life appears to be a paraphrase of that in the Beauchamp Pageant; however, Dugdale's scholarship probably vouches for its accuracy. See also Cokayne, XII, ii, 382, note f.

52   J. E. B. Gover, A. Mawer and F. M. Stenton, with F. T. S. Houghton, The Place-names of Warwickshire (Cambridge, 1936), p.265.

The Anglo-Saxon origin, in the name 'Cybba', has nothing to do with 'Guy' - which, as a Norman name, would be an anachronism in any case.[53]

The Place-name records show the name of 'Guy's cliff' developing by a series of acts of substitution -

Gibbeclyf	1279
-clyve	1334
Quyesclif al. Gybclyf	1492
Gibclyff by Warwick	1496
Guyclif	1530
Guyesclyff, Guysclive	1535
Gybclyffe	1545[54]

From general evidence it appears that the name became 'Quyesclif' or 'Guyclif' only from 1492; but particular references to the name 'Guy' by the earls of Warwick were in advance of that and presumably influenced the change of name.[55] That Richard Beauchamp placed a statue of Guy there is an obvious act in encouraging this change of reference. However, the evidence that Richard Beauchamp fostered the

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53   E. G. Withycombe, The Oxford Dictionary of Christian Names, second edition (Oxford, 1950), p.136.

54   Gover, Mawer, Stenton and Houghton, Place-names, abstracted from pp.264-65.

55   Something of the diversity of forms of this place-name in the fifteenth century is suggested by a reference in the 1480's to 'the place of Gye clif otherwise called Gibcliff' (quoted on p.223, and discussed more fully on p.220ff.). This reference occurs in the Pageant of Richard Beauchamp (see p.217 for full reference) probably written for the family: while the context to this reference suggests an interest in propagating the link between the hero Guy and local topography, it reports that there are different local forms of the place-name too.

place's identification with Guy is not unique: this act is borne out

by the maintenance of the place by his son-in-law, Richard Neville.

In 1449-1450 Richard Neville, earl of Warwick, ordered repairs to the

chantry:

> Charges layed out by the executors of the sayd Earle of
> Warwicke about the buyldinge and repring of Guibcliff.
>
> Anno Regis Henrici sexti
> xxviij° [1449-50)
>
> Custus nove reparacionis et enlargacionis Capelle De Guye
> Cliff incepti ad tercium Diem Marcii Anno Regni Regis
> Henrici sexti vj. xxvij°
>
> ...Capelle De Guyes Cliff...
>
> ...Capelle De Guyes Clyff...[56]

One version of the romance, the fifteenth century version

(probably mid-century), incorporates and fosters this change too -

Gui, early thirteenth century

> Envers Arderne dreit s'en ala,
> A un saint hermite qu'il conui ja
> Qui loinz en la forest maneit.[57]

British Library, Royal MS 8 F ix, early fourteenth century

> Anuers Arderne toust sen ala
> A vn seynt hermite qil conust ia
> ke loynz la foreste esteit.[58]

Guy A (Auchinleck), 1330-1340

> Out of toun he went his way
> Into a forest wenden he gan
> To an hermite he knewe er þan...[59]

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56 Philip B. Chatwin, 'Documents of 'Warwick the Kingmaker in
    possession of St Mary's Church, Warwick', Transactions of the
    Birmingham Archaeological Society, LIX (1935), 2-8 (p.8).

57 Gui, 11.11417-19.

58 Fol.158r.

59 Guy A, st. 282.

Guy B, mid-fifteenth century

Besydes Warwykk go he can
To an ermyte, þat he knewe or þan...
Besydes Warwyke, þat was hys
That Gybbeclyf clepyd ys.[60]

This final version gives the romance the precise local placing that has been created partly by the earls' publicization of the romance association. It looks as if the change in place-name is a result of the influence of the Guy story and those particular people who fostered it: Richard Beauchamp's establishment of a chantry in this place, and the evidence that Richard Neville too used the name 'Guyes Cliff'. The deliberate propagation of the specific associations to the place-name may be the cause of a broader popular acceptance of the Guy association, and one which results in lasting linguistic change.[61]

So around the middle of the fifteenth century a precise contemporary topography was being mapped out to correspond to the details of the romance: Warwick has its 'Guy's Tower' in the castle, and its chantry at 'Guy's cliff'; and the fifteenth century text acknowledges a localness and specificness in the story's reference by adding the 'Gybbeclyf' allusion. A series of deliberate acts by figures with an interest in the Guy story demonstrably cause changes in local placenames; this change of topographical reference is altered in the romance too.

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60   Guy B, 11.10525-30.

61   Conlon, Le rommant, says

> Oral tradition concerning Guy is still strong in the areas where he is supposed to have accomplished his feats. This is especially true of Warwick, where he is a minor tourist attraction.(p.14n)

Records of St Mary's church, Warwick, in 1408, describe a chequy or and azure pennon as 'gyes armes'.[62] This, the coat of arms of the old - Newburgh - earls of Warwick, effectively creates a link between Guy and the earls' ancestors: making Guy the bearer of the old earls' coat of arms stresses his ancestral role. This is carried out even further in the late fifteenth century (see p.217ff., on the Rous Roll); and note too that the act of giving Guy the old coat of arms makes him an ancestor, as opposed to the mazer's attribution of Beauchamp arms to Guy to suggest his similarity to the contemporary earls.

A pointed use of Guy's ancestral status, though with reference to the poem's literary renown too, is evident in the use made of the story by Richard Beauchamp's eldest daughter, Margaret Talbot, countess of Shrewsbury. She commissioned John Lydgate to write a short version of Guy; the poem survives in six manuscripts, of which two have this prologue -

> Here nowe begynneþe an abstracte oute of þe Cronicles in latyne made by Gyrarde Cornubyence. þe worþy Croniculer. of westsexse and translated into Englisshe be lydegate dann Johane at the requeste of margarete Countas of Shrowesbury. ladye Talbot fournyvale and lysle. of the lyf of þat moste worthy knyght Guy of warwike of whos bloode shee is lyneally descendid.[63]

Lydgate's poem implicitly refers to the wider popularity of the story of Guy, as transmitted mainly through the romance Guy. However, it

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62   Ministers' accounts of the Collegiate Church of St Mary, Warwick, 1432-85, edited by Dorothy Styles (Oxford, 1969), p.li.

63   British Library, Harley MS 7333, fol.33r; reproduced in H. L. D. Ward and J. A. Herbert, Catalogue of romances in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum, 3 vols (London, 1883), I, 494-95; see F. N. Robinson, 'On two manuscripts of Lydgate's Guy of Warwick', Harvard University studies and notes in philology and literature, V (1896), 177-220.

names a historiographical source, and the 'lyneally descendid' statement makes explicit the well-established ancestry link. The prologue refers both to Guy's romance popularity ('þat moste worthy knyght Guy of warwike') and maintains a historiographical value ('oute of þe Cronicles in latyne made by Gyrarde Cornubyence. þe worþy Croniculer' and 'of whos bloode shee is lyneally descendid').

Although the poem is quite short, it expands on inheritance –

> ffelice his wyf callying to her memorye
> þe daye gane neghe of her enterrement,
> To forne provided in her testament
> Reynborne þeire eyere ioustely to succede
> By title of hir and lyneall discent
> þe eorlldame of warwike trewely to possede
>
> þe stok descendyng doune by þe peedugree
> To Guy his fadr by title of mariage
> Affter whos dethe of lawe and equyte
> Reynborne to entre in to his Eritage...[64]

It makes a statement on inheritance in legalistic terms, and at some length: this elaborated passage in the poem includes a discussion on inheritance that is extended in the prologue.

Of the two manuscripts in which this prologue exists, one (Harvard MS 530) is a Shirley manuscript: it bears the editorial glosses of John Shirley,[65] who was at one stage secretary to Richard Beauchamp:[66] Shirley's close connections with John Lydgate, and his glosses to Lydgate's work, make it likely that the prologue gives

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64   Fol.35v. The corresponding passage in Harvard MS 530, which is very similar except for spelling variation, is reproduced by Robinson, 'On two manuscripts', p.212.
        I am grateful to Lynne McGoldrick for help with this part, and for discussing this material with me.

65   Robinson, 'On two manuscripts', p.187ff.; Aage Brusendorff, The Chaucer tradition (Copenhagen, 1925), p.221n.

66   A. I. Doyle, 'More light on John Shirley', Medium Aevum, 30 (1961), 93-101 (pp.93-95).

authoritative evidence on the reasons for the poem's creation.[67]

In the other manuscript containing a Lydgate Guy with this prologue (British Library, Harley MS 7333), Guy is preceded by a an item which states that it is a pedigree of Henry VI, translated for Richard Beauchamp by Lydgate; Richard Beauchamp was guardian to the young king Henry VI for a while.[68] Walter Schirmer emphasises the connection between Guy and the Pedigree.[69] Lydgate's Guy is followed by a poem addressed to Shirley: although the manuscript was not in his hand, it is presumed to have been derived from a Shirley manuscript.[70] The Shirley connection for both manuscripts, and the inclusion of Richard Beauchamp's Lydgate pedigree of Henry VI, suggests that the prologue is likely to be authoritative as an account of the reasons for the creation of the Lydgate Guy.

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67   Derek Pearsall, John Lydgate (London, 1970), says

> Shirley's associations with Lydgate are particularly close. He is the sole authority for some thirty of the minor poems...and the detailed knowledge he shows of provenance indicates that he was closely associated with the monk, at once his publisher and his literary agent. Examples have already been given of the invaluable information he provides in rubrics...There are many other examples, scraps of information the very casualness of which is the guarantee to their authority.(pp.74-75)

68   Richard R. Griffiths, The reign of Henry VI: the exercise of royal authority, 1422-1461 (London, 1981), p.52.

69   The prologue to this preceding item says 'made by lydygate John the monke of Bury at Parys . by þe instaunce of my lord of Warrewyk' (fol.31r); and see Walter Schirmer, John Lydgate: a study in the culture of the XVth century, translated by Ann E. Keep (London, 1961), especially pp.118-19.

70   Eleanor Prescott Hammond, 'Ashmole 59 and other Shirley MSs', Anglia, 30 (1907), 320-48 (p.335 and 346); and Chaucer: a bibliographical manual (New York, 1908), p.176; Brusendorff, The Chaucer Tradition, pp.220-21.

So a poem which probably began as essentially private, written
for Margaret Talbot, attains a wider circulation, both with and
without this explanatory prologue. With the prologue, the created
link between the Beauchamp family and Guy is made explicit; without
the prologue, the poem has separate literary status as a Lydgate
poem. A poetic artifact created by and for particular people reached
a broader audience, in general manuscript collections. This is the
kind of relation - that they exist both as specific commemoration and
as 'neutral' literary text - that one assumes for many of the Guy
artifacts. The addition of this prologue is suggestive on reasons for
creation, broad circulation and modes of transmission - and may be
suggestive for the narrow and broad receptive contexts, and their
inter-relation, of some of the other pieces.

The dating of the prologue and Lydgate's Guy is important,
however: the poem is usually dated to sometime in the 1420s, and
Walter Schirmer emphasises its connection with the Pedigree.
However, Schirmer presents evidence which suggests that the prologue
may be later: he quotes F. N. Robinson -

> Robinson challenges Zupitza's dating (circa 1420) with the
> sentence: 'It was written at the request of Margaret
> Countess of Shrewsbury...so that it cannot have been
> earlier than 1442'. (In 1433 Margaret married John Lord
> Talbot and Furnival, who became Earl of Shrewsbury in
> 1442). This conclusion cannot be substantiated, since the
> note in the MS. about the patronage is not by Lydgate and
> naturally takes account of the subsequently higher rank of
> his patroness.[71]

While the Lydgate Guy has been dated to the 1420s, the prologue
at least must be later - after 1442. It is for this reason that the
Lydgate Guy and its prologue are of interest to the events of the

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71   Schirmer, John Lydgate, p.92n.

late 1440s and '50s, when there was a dispute over the Warwick inheritance. The prologue may be a particularly pointed reminder, and may have some precise relevance to Margaret Talbot's own situation, at a particularly troubled time in her fortunes.

As Michael Hicks shows, the Warwick inheritance was disputed in the mid-fifteenth century.[72] After the death of Richard Beauchamp, 13th earl of Warwick, in 1439, the earldom went to his son Henry, the child of Richard's second marriage to Isabel Despenser. When Henry died in 1445, the earldom went to his next-of-kin, his sister Anne, who was Richard Beauchamp's youngest daughter. As Hicks demonstrates, Richard Beauchamp apparently regarded his four daughters as coheirs in default of a male line.[73] Margaret Talbot, the eldest daughter by Richard's first marriage, tried to win the inheritance; Hicks quotes Margaret's attempts to recover

> the lyuelode of the Erldome of Warrewyk the which we the said Countesse [Margaret] claymen to be departed as our enheritaunces.[74]

The will of her husband, John Talbot, earl of Shrewsbury, directs where he is to be buried, and says

> or els to be beried in the College of War'k in the Newe Chapelle there the whiche Richard late Earl of War'k my fader in lawe late make & ordeyn in case that in any time hereafter y may attayne to the name and lordeship of Warewik as right wolle.[75]

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72 'The Beauchamp Trust, 1439-1487', Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research, 54 (1981), 135-49; see also R. L. Storey, The end of the house of Lancaster (London, 1966), Appendix VI: 'The Warwick inheritance', pp.231-41.

73 Hicks, 'The Beauchamp Trust', p.138.

74 Ibid., p.139.

75 'Will of John Talbot, First earl of Shrewsbury, 1452', edited with introduction and notes by Gilbert H. F. Vane, Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological and Natural History Society, 4 (1904), 371-78 (p.373).

However, this fight for the Warwick inheritance is less apparent

than the Talbots' more energetic fight for the Berkeley inheritance,

to which Margaret had a claim through her mother, Elizabeth Berkeley.

Discussing the well-documented Berkeley dispute, A. J. Pollard says

> Furthermore, Talbot had obviously long had half an eye on
> the [Warwick] Earldom, for he referred in his will in 1452
> to his 'right' in the 'honour of Warwick'. But it is to be
> doubted that he pursued this right with any great vigour.[76]

That the three daughters' children made further claims in the 1480's,

however, suggests that the matter was felt never to have been

settled.[77]

The prologue to the Lydgate Guy, which must have been written

after 1442, may make a particular point on inheritance which

emphasises the genealogical claims implied by the poem's concern with

heredity. However, the prologue's 'lyneally descendid' statement is

worded in general terms, and is far less pointed even than Talbot's

'as right wolle'. So even if the prologue to Lydgate's Guy had a

particular function in stating heredity, it does so quite

unspecifically: it uses the force of Guy's general concern with

inheritance and lineage, rather than making a direct claim. Even if

the prologue and the poem's manuscript circulation were propagated

after the mid-1440s, at the time of the dispute over the Warwick

inheritance, the ancestral function of the Lydgate Guy is a broad and

general one rather than emphasised particularly explicitly.

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76   'The family of Talbot, lords Talbot and earls of Shrewsbury in
the fifteenth century', 2 vols (unpublished Ph.D. thesis,
Bristol, 1968), I, 37-38.

77   Hicks, 'The Beauchamp Trust', p.141.

Ultimately the context to the propagation and reception of the

Guy story in the fifteenth century is not necessarily a solely

literary one: the role of Guy artifacts is part of a larger set of

genealogical and commemorative devices. Guy stories are associated

with national political propaganda in at least two manuscripts in

which some items were patronised by the Beauchamp-Talbot family. In

BL Harley MS 7333, Lydgate's Guy - which begins with the Margaret

Talbot prologue quoted above - is immediately preceded by an item

with this prologue -

> Here begynneth a remembraunce of a pee deugre [pedigree]
> how that the kyng of Englond / henry the sext is truly
> borne heir vnto the corone of ffraunce by lynyall
> Successioun. als wele on his ffader side henry the fifth.
> Whom god assoill as by Kateryne quene of Englond his modre.
> Whom god assoile. made by lydygate John the monke of Bury
> at Parys. by þe instaunce of my lord of Warrewyk.[78]

The text itself expands upon its own function, when it says of 'my

lord of Warrewyk'

> He sparith not to put in Juperdye
> Oonly the right for to magnifie
> Of him that is to him moste souerain
> Henry the sext of age ny fyve yere ren...
> And to put his title in remembraunce
> Whiche that he hath to Inglond & to ffaunce.[79]

That this item is placed with the version of Guy with the Margaret

Talbot prologue not only picks up the family connection between

Richard Beauchamp and his daughter Margaret, it also links the desire

to 'put his [Henry's] title in remembraunce' with Margaret's

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78   BL Harley MS 7333, fol.31r; printed in Brusendorff, The
      Chaucer tradition, pp.220-21; and discussed by B. J. H. Rowe,
      'King Henry VI's claim to France: in picture and poem', The
      Library, XIII (1933), 77-88; J. W. McKenna, 'Henry VI of
      England and the Dual Monarchy: aspects of royal political
      propaganda', Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes,
      XXVIII (1965), 145-62 (pp.150-57).

79   BL Harley MS 7333, fol.31r.

'lyneally descendid' statement. So the family's propagation of <u>Guy</u>

has a context in the nationalistic political propagandising that is

so much better documented.[80]

The manuscript British Library Royal MS 15 E vi, which contains

a French prose version of <u>Guy</u>, was the gift of John Talbot, earl of

Shrewsbury (Margaret Talbot's husband) to Margaret of Anjou, probably

on the occasion of her marriage to Henry VI in 1445.[81] This

manuscript begins with Henry VI's genealogy showing French descent;

the manuscript repeats pictures of Talbot as standard-bearer,

upholding Margaret's coat of arms; and the pages are powdered with

heraldic devices, <u>marguerites</u> and a talbot dog. The contents - a

series of chivalric and martial treatises, preceded by 'le liure de

la conqueste du roy Alixandre', 'du roy charlemaine', 'de Oger de

Dannemarche', 'de Guy de Warrewic', 'du cheualier au Signe' - have a

historiographical role. The latter two - 'Guy' and 'cheualier au

Signe' - both have a specific ancestral role as well: the poem of

which <u>Le Chevalier au Cigne</u> is a part originally commemorated the

ancestry of the Bouillon family, and the heraldic device of the swan

was adopted by a number of English families.[82] Moreover, Mason

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80   V. J. Scattergood, <u>Politics and poetry in the fifteenth
     century</u> (London, 1971); Rowe, 'King Henry VI's claim to
     France'; McKenna, 'Henry VI of England'.

81   <u>Le rommant</u>, pp.16-22; <u>The Book of Fayttes of Armes and
     Chyualry</u>, edited by A. T. P. Byles (EETS, 1932), pp.xvi-xviii;
     and Warner and Gilson, <u>Catalogue of Western manuscripts</u>, II,
     177-79 (p.179n).

82   A. R. Wagner, 'The swan badge and the swan knight',
     <u>Archaeologia</u>, 97 (1959), 127-38; W. R. J. Barron, '<u>Chevelere
     Assigne</u> and the <u>Naissance du Chevalier Assigne</u>', <u>Medium Aevum</u>,
     36 (1967), 25-37. The association of the swan badge with the

argues that the swan badge was used by the Beauchamps and their de

Tosny ancestors as an allusion to the literature of Le Chevalier au

Cigne.[83]

The joined devices of heraldry and literature align the cause of

the Beauchamp-Talbot family with that of Henry VI and Margaret of

Anjou: Guy's ancestral function is implied in this broadly

commemorative context. The prologue to Guy in this version makes it

clear that Guy's story is part of a chivalric national heritage

> Ou temps du roy Athlestain, prince de noble memoire,
> regnant en souveraineté ou royaume d'Engleterre apres l'an
> de l'incarnacion Nostre Seigneur Jhesu Crixt .IIIIC. et
> .XXIIII. estoit le dit royaume d'Engleterre sur tous
> autres royaumes renommé. fontaine et miroer de toute
> proesse et chevalerie par la bonté des vaillans et preux
> qui y habitoient dont renommée pour lors couroit par tout
> le monde, et tant que non seullement en son temps mais des
> par avant au temps du regne du tres bon roy Artus, ne se
> tenoit nully des foraines contrées a droit chevalier s'il
> n'avoit esté ou dit païs d'Engleterre soy esprouver et
> acointer avecqes les (bons) chevaliers y estans.[84]

The line of kingship is carefully extended between 'au temps du regne

du tres bon roy artus' and 'ou temps du roy Athelstain, prince de

noble memoire': regnal dating is made to include a continuity of

chivalric prowess. The link created between Athelstan and Arthur

gives Guy a context both in time and in chivalric achievement. In

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de Tosny family, among others, is demonstrated by Brault,
'Heraldic terminology', by this reference in the Siege -

> Blanche cote e blanches alectes,
> Escu blanc e baniere blanche
> Portoit o la vermeille manche
> Robers de Tony, ki bien signe
> Ke il est du Chevaler au Cigne.(p.17)

I am grateful to Carolyn Fleming for help with this part.

83   Mason, 'Legends', p.28.

84   Le rommant, ll.1-12.

this manuscript, Guy's role as ancestral romance is aligned with a national and general emphasis on ancestry and the past.

However, this whole series of suggestions that the earls of Warwick deliberately propagated Guy, and a number of shorter literary forms and artifacts referring to it, does not make the earls' reception of Guy an isolated act of contemporary validation in the terms of the past. The quotation and perhaps patronage of versions of Guy by the earls of Warwick work in conjunction with a series of analogous acts of artistic patronage, many of which use spectacle to endorse status: for instance, in the document that details Richard Beauchamp's funeral and monument arrangements;[85] in Richard Beauchamp's ordering, and Richard Neville's maintenance, of the Guy's cliff chantry;[86] and in the reproduction of the heraldic device of the bear, to such an extent that Richard Beauchamp's countess even owned a tame bear.[87] The devices of spectacle and display frequently involve heraldry as a means of identifying oneself in relation to the past.

Moreover, many of the earls' created artifacts refer to Guy. Allusions to Guy in the later Middle Ages exist somewhere between acts of public display - such as Richard Beauchamp's tomb - and a degree of familial self-validation that is associated with the sophisticated use of national propaganda in the fifteenth century.

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85 See A. R. Myers, English historical documents, 1327-1485 (London, 1969), item 686, 'The contracts for the making of the tomb of Richard Beauchamp, earl of Warwick, 1447-54', pp.1161-63.

86 See pp.201-03.

87 The estates and finances of Richard Beauchamp, earl of Warwick, edited by Charles Ross (Oxford, 1956), p.15.

The difference between acts endorsing the family's own status and acts of English propaganda is not only one of intention but of scale as well: this is illustrated by some other works associated with Richard Beauchamp and later figures - a sermon, a genealogical roll, and an illustrated pageant. These works are suggestive about the function and transmission of the Guy story at around this time.

For instance, a sermon commemorating the death of earl Thomas II, Richard's father, begins

> 'Pulcritudo agri mecum est,' Psalmo xlix, et pro themate hodierno.
> Karissimi mei, secundum Gwidonem et alios dictatores id est dicta, 'Pulcritudo agri' et 'Pulcher ager'. Et ideo, verba que sumpsi pro themate possunt sic Anglicari Reuerenciis vestris, 'The bewte of the feld is wit me,' or 'The feire feld is wit me.' And 3if 3e wol medle Frensche with Englesch, et magis applicare ista verba nostro proposito ad presens, possum dicere sentenciam mei thematis isto modo, 'Beauchampe is with me'. For Beauchampe Gallice est tantum dictu sicut pulcher ager in Anglico.[88]

This work displays many of the stylistic devices of sermon rhetoric. It takes as its theme the name 'Beauchamp', and etymologizes it to commemorate the present earls' ancestry both specifically (with reference to earl Thomas) and by concerning itself with the linguistic origins of the family name. Like the re-creations of Guy in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the sermon combines rhetorical evocation with an attention both to a single ancestor and to the family's genealogy.

Both Guy and the sermon are exercises in the creation of a contemporary image, for the earls of Warwick and for a piece of literature in social terms. The sermon's status is important: it

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88   Patrick J. Horner, 'A sermon on the anniversary of the death of Thomas Beauchamp, earl of Warwick', Traditio, XXXIV (1978), 381-401 (pp.385-86).

may have been preached at the church of St Mary, Warwick,[89] and may have had its origin in an elaborate compliment to the Beauchamp family. If it was preached in public, the act of preaching is itself a form of communication to a wider audience, the kind of audience one assumes exists for such Guy re-creations as demonstrated by the influence of the story on local place-names. Its transmission carries further, in that in the late fifteenth century the sermon was compiled into a mainly Latin manuscript, 'a collection of thirty-four sermons which was originally the property of the Benedictine abbey of St Peter in Gloucester'.[90]

The sermon demonstrates some of the processes by which an act that may have been initially local was then transmitted to a wider manuscript context. From the surviving evidence, it is hard to trace the exact processes of transmission for contemporary re-creations of the Guy story: however, acts that may have been originally private compliments to the existing family spread easily into a wider context, in which the public image of the poem Guy and of the Beauchamp earls of Warwick are re-created together.

The Guy story is quoted in two works created in the late fifteenth century, and commemorating Beauchamp ancestry by placing references to Guy in a historiographical framework: the Rous Roll[91] and the Pageant of the birth, life and death of Richard Beauchamp, earl of Warwick[92] use the Guy story in interesting ways. As

89   Ibid., p.383n.

90   Ibid., pp.381-82.

91   Edited by Charles Ross (Gloucester, 1980).

92   Edited by H. A. Lee-Dillon and W. H. St John Hope (London, 1914).

commemorative acts, probably commissioned, of the family's ancestry and glorious past, their function is similar to that of some versions of Guy.

The Rous Roll is a long vellum roll showing the consecutive earls of Warwick; for each earl and countess there is a drawing of the figure, with his or her coat of arms, and underneath that there is a written piece on his or her deeds.[93] Its illustrations demonstrate certain historical processes - for instance, through the centuries the arms and dress fashions of the figures are seen to change.[94] It was created by John Rous (d. 1491), then a priest at the Guy's cliff chantry, Warwick, and a historiographer and antiquarian.[95]

The roll describes the Mauduit and Beauchamp earls of Warwick: the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth century earls are preceded by a series of legendary ancestors, including Constantinus ('grandfader to kyng Arthur'), 'Sanctus Edwardus - kyng of England a glorius confessur' - and 'Rohaudus Eorl of Warrewyk', 'Dame Felys', 'Sir Gy of Warrwyk flour and honour of knyghthode', and 'Sir Raynbrowne erl of Warrwik'. The format of the roll itself creates a

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93 There are two versions, one in Latin, and one in English; I take my material from the English version. See the Rous Roll, pp.v-vii; and Anthony Wagner, Heralds and ancestors (London, 1978), has a colour plate (IV) showing the format of the Rous Roll and some of its fifteenth century figures.

94 I am grateful to Dr A. B. Cobban for pointing this out to me. See T. D. Kendrick, British Antiquity (London, 1950), pp.27-29; J. G. Mann, 'Instances of antiquarian feeling in Medieval and Renaissance art', Archaeological Journal, LXXXIX (1932), 254-74 (pp.257-62).

95 Rous Roll, pp.vii-xv.

tradition: the reader can trace back each quartering of the coat of arms of any later earl to find its origins.

In the pictures in the Rous Roll, the coat of arms chequy or and azure, a chevron ermine, which is a quartering of the arms of the fourteenth and fifteenth century Beauchamp earls of Warwick, first appears in the illustrations as the arms of 'sir Gy'.[96] In the Rous Roll, this chequy quartering is traceable back to Guy: it originates with the figure Guy. The coat of arms of Guy's father-in-law, Rohaud is gules, crusilly or (that is, a field powdered with crosses crosslet); from the time of the appearance of the figure Guy, the chequy coat is quartered with the crusilly coat. Each of these occurrences is that shield's earliest appearance in the roll.

In actuality, the chequy or and azure, a chevron ermine coat of arms belonged to the Newburgh earls of Warwick, of the early thirteenth century. It derives from that of Warenne –

> An interesting series of arms is met with in the case of the differences employed by the Earls of Warwick. Waleran, Earl of Warwick (d. 1204), appears to have added to the arms of Warenne (his mother's family) 'a chevron ermine'. His son Henry, Earl of Warwick (d. 1229), changed the chevron to a bend, but Thomas, Earl of Warwick (d. 1242), reverted to the chevron, a form which was perpetuated after the earldom had passed to the house of Beauchamp.[97]

In any case, Guy was supposed to have lived in the time of king Athelstan, the tenth century; since heraldry did not become established until the twelfth and thirteenth centuries,[98] the

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96   Ibid., item 21.

97   A. C. Fox-Davies, A complete guide to heraldry, revised by J. P. Brooke-Little (London, 1969), p.371.

98   Anthony Richard Wagner, Heralds and heraldry in the Middle Ages: an inquiry into the growth of the armorial function of heralds, pp.46-52; Boutell, Boutell's heraldry, pp.4-8.

attribution of a coat of arms to Guy is a fictional device of verification, rather than literally true.

So Rous creates a kind of fictionalized etymology of contemporary heraldry - in the Rous Roll, the coat of arms with crosses crosslet, eventually the Beauchamp coat of arms with the addition of a fess, begins with Rohaud; and the chequy, really Newburgh, coat originates with Guy. Rous creates a precise set of family roots in his explication of heraldic origns, using the Guy story as a foundation.

But while Rous uses the Rohaud-Guy-Felice-Reynbron family group as a firm familial origin, Guy is also presented as a romance hero. Rohaud and Reynbron are given the title 'eorl of Warrewyk'; Guy is 'sir Gy' - his prowess as a knight is privileged over his - later - social status. Some other works stress that, after his inheritance from Rohaud, he is earl: Rous calls him 'sir'. And Guy's prowess is emphasised in that he has two coats of arms, which are maintained in the shields of all the later earls: chequy or and azure, a chevron ermine; and chequy or and azure, with a large head - presumably meant to represent that of Colbrond - superimposed. The Rous Roll maintains Guy's fictional status and glory together with his role as an ancestor.

The second late fifteenth century commemorative work to refer to Guy, or Guy, is the Pageant of the birth, life and death of Richard Beauchamp, earl of Warwick: the editors' introduction suggests that the Pageant may have been written for Anne Neville, Richard's daughter, and the drawings may have been by John Rous.[99] It is a

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99   Pageant, p.vi.

series of more than fifty drawings illustrating scenes from the life

of Richard Beauchamp (d. 1439), with a gloss subserving each picture.

The drawings are of Richard's birth, knighting, jousting, travels to

places including the Holy Land, more jousting, French sieges,

friendship with Henry V and guardianship of the young Henry VI

(featuring the claim to the French throne), death, burial, and a

final genealogy down as far as the children of Richard III and Anne.

The whole is full of badges and heraldic devices - bear and ragged

staff, crosses crosslet and the chequy or and azure coat of arms.

Richard Beauchamp's connection with the story of Guy is made

explicit:

> Here shewes howe Sir Baltirdam a noble lorde the Soldans
> lieutenant that tyme beyng at Jerusalem heryng that Erle
> Richard was there and that he was lynyally of blode
> descended of nole Sir Gy of Warrewik whoes lif they hadde
> there in bokes of their langage. he was ioyful of him and
> with greet honoure resceived hym/and desired hym and his
> mayny to dyne with hym in his owne place.[100]

This reference to 'sir Gy' makes it clear that Guy is both a literary

hero, widely known through books, and Richard's ancestor. The

Pageant refers to the wider popularity of the romance Guy while

making the specific genealogical link as well.

The shaping of Richard's life in the Pageant is done in two

particular, and rather interesting, ways. At some points Richard is

portrayed rather like a knight of romance - for instance, he

undertakes a chivalric disguised joust with the French court:

> XXVIII Here shewes howe as it is said. afore thies
> [Richard's] lettres were received. To the first applied
> hym self. a noble knyght j called Sir Gerard herbawines.
> that called hym self Sir Chevaler Rouge/to the secunde

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100 Ibid., p.36.

answered a famous knyght. Sir Hugh lavney callyng hym self
le chivaler Blanke/and to the iijde agreed an excellent
knyght called Sir Colard Fynes/at a certeyn day and place
assigned/that is to say/the xijth day of Cristmasse in a
lawnde called the parke hedge of Gynes.
XXIX Here shewes howe Erle Richard on the first day that
was the xijth day of Cristmasse comyng to the felde his
face covered/a bussh of Estrich fethres on his hede/his
horse trapped w^t the Armes of oon of his Auncestres the
lorde Tony/And at the iijde cours he cast to the grounde at
his spere poynt behynde the horse taile. the knyght called
le Chevaler Ruge/And then the Erle w^t cloos visar. retorned
unknowen to his Pavilyon/And forthw^t he sent to the said
knyght a fair Courser.[101]

The following two days virtually repeat this formula, though they

substitute different ancestral arms for Richard – 'with his armes of

Hamslape' on the second day, and 'in Gy ys armes and Beauchampes

quarterly / and the armes also of Tony and Haunslape in his

trappours' on the third. The portrayal of Richard's chivalric role

here may be inspired by literary treatments, and the evidence of the

Pageant has been adduced to suggest that Richard Beauchamp's life

helped to inspire Malory's treatment of Gareth.[102] The chivalric and

romantic treatment of Richard Beauchamp disguises him each day in the

coats of arms of his different ancestors: however, the devices that

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101   Ibid., pp.56-57.

102   Joseph R. Ruff, 'Malory's Gareth and fifteenth century
       chivalry', in Chivalric literature: essays on relations
       between literature and life in the later Middle Ages, edited
       by Larry D. Benson and John Leyerle (Kalamazoo, 1980), pp.101-
       116 (pp.111-116).
             Moreover, G. A. Lester, 'Chaucer's Knight and the Earl
       of Warwick', Notes and Queries, 226 (1981), pp.200-02,
       suggests

       Chaucer's description [of the Knight] is so like certain
       parts of the Earl's romantic life as described in the
       Pageant that it is possible that Rous was influenced by
       Chaucer, and even that he used the knight's portrait as a
       model for his own unquestionably complimentary
       biography.(p.200)

disguise him also identify him to the reader, making explicit his lineage. Chivalry and genealogy are drawn together in the Pageant: Guy as forebear suggests both.

The second aspect of the treatment of Richard Beauchamp's life combines Richard's specific and local role with that of national history. For instance, the Pageant associates regal prophecies at Henry VI's coronation with promises of

> greet benefytes in tyme to come of devowt commers to the place of Gye clif otherwise called Gibclyff/which in processe of tyme shal growe to a place of greet worship. oon of the moost named in Englond.[103]

The story of Guy, as Richard Beauchamp's ancestor, is treated at the same time, and in the same way, as the nation's inheritance and destiny. Richard Beauchamp's guardianship of the young king Henry VI is emphasised, too - Richard is seen holding the young king, and the text says -

> Here shewes howe accordyng to the last Wille of kyng henry the vth Erle Richard by the auctorite of the nole parleament. was Maister to kyng Henry the vj[th]/And so he contynowed til the yong kyng was xvj yere of age/And then first by his greet labour he was discharged.[104]

These links between Richard Beauchamp's local role and that of national history help to suggest the similarity between the creation of the Pageant, sometime between 1485 and 1490,[105] and broader political propaganda. Sidney Anglo documents the moves of Henry Tudor to cement his authority with pageantry and genealogy, with especial reference to Henry VI -

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103   Pageant, p.93.

104   Ibid., p.89.

105   Ibid., p.iii.

> It was not long before the Lancastrian king became the
> object of popular veneration and worship...the obviousness
> of Henry VI's value to the new Tudor sovereign is
> demonstrated by the important place assigned to him in the
> Worcester pageants...Devout, divinely inspired, a prophet,
> a miracle-worker and a martyr - these qualities   combined
> to make the memory of Henry VI a splendid weapon of
> propaganda, ready-forged for the new king.[106]

Likewise, the Pageant, written after 1485, stresses Richard

Beauchamp's support for the Lancastrian throne; it implicitly disowns

the actions of the following two earls of Warwick, Richard Neville

('the Kingmaker') and Richard III.

In this light it is interesting that the Pageant aligns

Richard's support of King Henry VI with his maintenance of the Guy's

cliff chantry. In a period of political instability, the Pageant

calls up two forms of self-justifying tradition - that of the life of

the last notable pro-Lancastrian earl of Warwick, and that earl's

maintenance of his own family tradition (beginning with Guy of

Warwick) along with the regal genealogy. Richard Beauchamp's

political actions are presented as correct; associated with them are

multiple signs of his reference to his ancestry - he fights in the

arms of de Tosny, Hanslape, Beauchamp and Guy; after his death his

body was brought

> unto Warrewik & there worshiply buried in the College of
> our lady Churche founded by his noble Auncestres...[107]

and he is welcomed in Jerusalem by those who knew the Guy story.

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106   Spectacle, pageantry and early Tudor policy (Oxford, 1969),
      pp.38-41; Anglo, 'The British history in early Tudor
      propaganda. With an appendix of the manuscript pedigrees of
      the Kings of England, Henry VI to Henry VIII', Bulletin of
      the John Rylands library, XLIX (1961), 17-48.

107   Pageant, p.105.

The *Pageant* is important to a study of *Guy* for two reasons: like *Guy*, it is an example of the Warwick use of ancestral biography to suggest the earls' own contemporary validity; and secondly, it quotes *Guy* material to suggest its own traditionalism. Thus the *Guy* story both includes in itself a long descent from the past, and is quotable in chivalric-genealogical works which emphasise traditionality of various kinds.

So the earls of Warwick in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries used *Guy* to suggest the validity of their ancestry; that is, to argue their supposed ancestor's prowess, and to confirm the idea that Guy was an ancestor. In this narrow Warwick context, literature is aligned with techniques of historicising verification, such as heraldry and genealogy: literature's role is to authenticate the present in terms of the past.

The evidence that survives concerning the reception and propagation of *Guy* by specific figures seems not to be peculiar but to be typical of the earls' use of the poem: if for particular periods it seems that a sense of insecurity, or sometimes of growth, prompted a socially self-confirmatory use of *Guy*, then that may be symptomatic generally of the role the earls give to the poem. The evidence of specific items - for instance, the prologue to the Lydgate *Guy* - illustrates a use of *Guy* through literature, heraldry and art over several centuries, in that the prologue and Lydgate poem have a function somewhere between a pointed and topical emphasis on inheritance, and a more generalised statement about the value of ancestry. The prologue states explicitly that the poem is a commemorative act by Margaret Talbot of the figure from whom she is 'lyneally descendid', and demonstrates something of the broader

reception of the poem by the earls in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries: the specific merely states the general.

There are differences in the way Guy is treated as commemorative of the past, though, within this period. In the fourteenth century, and earlier, the only traces of evidence that survive are a series of acknowledgements by the earls that they knew the romance version of Guy - the naming of Reynbron; earl Guy's booklist of 1305; the 'dorser' with the story, preceding that of king Alexander. Their treatment of him as an ancestor is primarily in romance hero's terms; for instance, the bequeathing of his armour. So the fourteenth century largely makes a link between story and genealogy. There is scope to correlate pieces of evidence that suggest the earls' propagation of Guy with particularly tension-filled stages in the family's development: the very active half century around 1400 - roughly, the period of earl Guy's naming, The Siege of Caerlaverock reference, all those Anglo-Norman manuscripts, the romance's translation into English (twice), and the mazer - was a decisive period for the family's rising fortunes. It may be that these pieces of evidence represent a particular effort to confirm and propagate the validity of the earls' power in this transitional period.

The evidence from the fifteenth century is rather different: this later evidence gives clear examples of a reshaping of the story for particular purposes. Patron's intention is marked by changes in literary form: for instance, depending on the date of the poem and prologue, Margaret Talbot's interest may have been the reason that Lydgate used a Latin historiographical and pietistic source ('Gyrarde Cornubyence. þe Croniculer') which quotes only the Colbrond episode,

and which stresses inheritance heavily. The more personally-orientated Lydgate prologue to Margaret Talbot may have appeared at a time when her inheritance was in jeopardy, and was added to a text of Lydgate's <u>Guy</u> which was particularly pointed about ancestry. In various manuscripts (BL Royal MS 15 E vi, the gift of John Talbot to Margaret of Anjou; or BL Harley MS 7333, in which Lydgate's poem on Henry VI's succession, commissioned by Richard Beauchamp, is followed by Lydgate's <u>Guy</u> for Margaret Talbot) the <u>Guy</u> piece is included along with those works connected with Richard Beauchamp, and with a direct intention to stress Henry VI's claim to the French throne: the function of <u>Guy</u> is implicitly analogous. <u>Guy</u> material is used in the explicitly commemorative <u>Rous Roll</u> and <u>Beauchamp Pageant</u>. Versions of <u>Guy</u>, or works partly quoting <u>Guy</u>, appear in conjunction with an increasingly sophisticated national propaganda.

This late move to new re-shapings and partial quotations of the <u>Guy</u> story is important, for it marks, by contrast, how far the romance <u>Guy</u> is non-innovatory and in its literary shaping proclaims the form and style of its literary ancestry, both in its fidelity to an early Anglo-Norman source and in its generic features.

The <u>Guy</u> material predicates two contexts - a context associated with the earldom of Warwick, and a broader readership which does not make this specific association. The ease with which a work of literature transfers from one kind of receptive audience to another is suggested, for instance, by the local preaching of the sermon commemorating Thomas Beauchamp, and its later assimilation in a sermon manuscript; by the existence of the Lydgate <u>Guy</u> both with and

without the dedicatory prologue; and by the inclusion of specific reference - 'Gybbeclyf' - in the fifteenth century version of the romance _Guy_. This sliding quality suggests the double reception for the _Guy_ story too - _Guy_ was probably known as ancestral mainly by figures associated with Warwick, but had independent status as a work of literature beyond this context. The romance _Guy of Warwick_ is equally able to be specifically ancestral and generally commemorative.

This double context suggests a set of questions: how far are a narrow and a broad receptive context inter-dependent? Are features of the _Guy_ story shared both locally and nationally? Are there features of _Guy_, or _Guy_'s reception, which allow one to generalise about the reception of romance from the information surviving about the reception of this particular work?

The evidence of this chapter illustrates something of the workings of direct patronage and manuscript ownership, as accounting for the existence of various of these texts - perhaps for the first _Gui_, certainly for the copy of _Gui_ owned by earl Guy Beauchamp, and explicitly for Margaret Talbot's Lydgate version: these examples demonstrate the importance of patronage at certain stages in the history of the Guy story.[108] But most texts of _Guy_ do not display a particular contemporary origin - their concealment of that origin is a feature of a developed literary style, and one that refers to its

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108 The emphasis placed by Marxist literary criticism on the economic relations underlying literary texts seems particularly appropriate here: see Eagleton, _Criticism and ideology_; Macherey, _A theory_; Williams, _Marxism and literature_.

own development from the past more strongly than it makes any contemporary reference.

It seems, then, that there may be a concealed set of reasons for the existence of _Guy_; that is, while individual indications of literary production are valid accounts of the text's existence, it is a feature of literary style to disguise them. So the visible evidence - those statements of one kind or another, for example earl Guy's booklist - which survives by chance, may demonstrate the invisible reasons for a work's existence. For instance, the closeness of the re-translation and the local reference to 'Gybbeclyf' in the mid-fifteenth century version suggests specific local allegiances, and may even have been translated for an earl of Warwick; as a romance, however, it displays no such affinity.

This tendency to literary self-effacement is true even of the non-romance versions. The Margaret Talbot prologue survives in two versions of Lydgate's _Guy_, largely because of John Shirley's editorial procedures; and perhaps also as a result of Lydgate's sense of himself as a poet, and his post-Chaucerian tendency to add self-conscious prologues; and perhaps because of the hidden circumstances which led Lydgate's _Guy_ to follow Richard Beauchamp's text of Lydgate's Henry VI pedigree. That is, it seems that the survival of the prologue is an accident of circumstance and of literary vogue. But while the prologue survives in two versions, the other four extant manuscripts of this Lydgate _Guy_ say nothing about the reasons for their own creation. Even in a genre and period where a statement about the external circumstances of a text's production is more common than in romance, the literary norm is still for a work of literature to make no such reference. That the works do not refer to

a social origin is a literary feature; it does not, however, mean that that origin is not there. In these terms it may be valid to infer an original socio-political location for apparently neutral works from those works which, for reasons to do with chance, literary vogue and the conditions of their own production, indicate something of the reasons for their own existence.

The fifteenth century version is interesting as a new translation, faithful to earlier Anglo-Norman versions rather than to previous English versions.[109] It suggests particular reasons for its existence - for instance, in the context of a series of indications to the interest of the earls of Warwick in the story, it may well be that this version has a close link with the family. However, its status as romance is more evident - the text is apparently non-aligned with patron or family, but appears only as a major romance. Romance features of literary traditionalism and authority supersede any external or societal reference.

The evidence of this chapter makes _Guy_ appear unique; these pieces of information are specific to _Guy_ and its particular late medieval re-creation and reception. This context of evidence may even suggest that the Middle English romances were patronised by the Beauchamps - as implied by the local reference to 'Gybbeclyf' in _Guy_ B, for instance. But the initial chapter's arguments concerning romance style and structure make it obvious that _Guy_ is far from unique. It shares with romance - both the genre as a whole, and

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109   Mehl, _The Middle English romances_, pp.220-21.

derivative passages like that in Amis and Amiloun in particular - a distinctive set of stylistic and structural romance devices.

The style of Guy is that of romance, and is made more obviously so in the latest, mid-fifteenth century version of the romance - Guy B adds distinctively romance 'minstrel' lines, which are given a structuring, sometimes dislocating, function (see pp.163-64). The additions themselves are of interest: as chapter one, section D, argued, the addition of such lines as -

> For the gode, that gode made, 7117
> Fylle the cuppe and make vs glade.

> Now, lordyngys, lystenyþ of þe noyse... 10749

> Also so god geue yow reste, 6688
> Fylle the cuppe of the beste.

is unlikely to be literal, in such a long poem, and in this very late version. Like the earlier versions - Guy A and Caius - Guy B includes traditional 'minstrel' lines at certain points: each version adds them at different points, however, as part of a sense of elaboration appropriate to Middle English romance. By the time of Guy B, the appearance of these lines is likely to be predominantly literary and generic rather than literal. These are not valid accounts of the text's transmission and production so much as devices indicating literary affinity, and pointing to the assumptions encoded by the romance genre.

Romance names its readership and patronage within the text only occasionally - for instance, in the reference to Humphrey de Bohun in William of Palerne.[110] But the specific references are the

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110 Edited by Walter W. Skeat, EETS (London, 1867), 11.5521-5533 and pp.ix-xii.

exceptions: the closest romance gets to naming a readership is in the general terms -

Lystnes, lordyngys þat ben hende...

Herknet to me, gode men...[111]

- which, chapter one, section D argued, have a predominantly generic role. One cannot rely on the statements romance makes about its own function: a feature of the genre is its refusal to be explicit about contemporary allegiances.

Some of the literary features of romance - the minstrel formulae, in their form as well as their content; opening topoi; a specialized set of literary loci - suggest a concern with tradition, and an extreme conservatism of social use. The evidence of this chapter confirms this conservative function, self-validating in terms of the past, for Guy in one localised social context in particular; the problem now is to determine how far that evidence is typical, of Guy in relation to a wider readership, and perhaps of other romances too. That means arguing from non-existent evidence - and so what can be inferred must be taken from some particular references, and from literary content and the genre's shared features of literary style.

In fact some evidence does survive to suggest that other romances have been interpreted in specific commemorative ways: critics have demonstrated that a part of some works' medieval propagation and reception emphasised their ancestral quality. A precise social placing has been argued for the origins of various romances - for instance, Daniel Rubey claims that all (except Horn)

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111   Athelston, 1.7; Havelok, 1.1; see p.38 and 54.

of the thirteenth century romances are strongly connected with one

place;[112] M. Dominica Legge identifies a group of 'ancestral

romances';[113] and Susan Dannenbaum pursues an ancestral reading in

terms of a broader audience.[114]

The search for a precise social location for Middle English

romance is not confined to the poems' thirteenth century origins:

the French ancestral connection of the cyclic poem of which

Chevalere Assigne is a part, and the later, more general, adoption by

English families of the swan badge, and the use of the swan device by

the Beauchamp family, suggest genealogical reasons for the inclusion

of Le Chevalier au Cigne in Talbot's chivalric and genealogical

manuscript, BL Royal MS 15 E vi. Some other Middle English romances

have a connection with a particular place or family, as in the

association of Beues of Hamtoun with Southampton;[115] and links are

sometimes established partly etymologically - for instance, a

medieval Grimsby seal exploits Havelok's historiograpical resonances

to refer to the story and its fisherman Grim.[116]

A particular interpretation, suggested to be directly

relevant to contemporary society, was established for this

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112 'Literary texts and social change: relations between English and French medieval romances and their audiences' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Indiana, 1981), p.286ff.

113 Anglo-Norman literature.

114 'Anglo-Norman romances of English heroes'.

115 Beues, p.xxi; Legge, Anglo-Norman literature, pp.156-61; Mann, 'Antiquarian feeling', p.257.

116 See W. de G. Birch, Catalogue of seals in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum, 6 vols (London, 1887-1900), II, 83; and Skeat, Havelok, pp.iv-xix, discusses chronicle references to Havelok.

literature; a literary context is also apparent for some societal actions. Consider, for instance, Edward III's deliberate literary re-creations,[117] or the self-conscious Tudor use of Arthurianism.[118] Literature and other forms of social display or action are seen to be mutually influential: for instance, in the closely-linked literary and legalistic reference as foreshadowing a more widespread change of the name 'Gybbeclyf'; and in the potential of literature for use in familial politics, in the case of Margaret Talbot, or national politics, in the quotation of the Guy material in the Rous Roll and Beauchamp Pageant. These are the examples; but they are possible only in a milieu in which romances are used to commemorate the past and re-create the present in those terms. These examples exploit an already-existing relationship between commemorative literature and society's attempts at self-validation.

Hence there is historical evidence that some other romances were interpreted, and may have originated, in the same narrowly ancestral way as Guy. These are hints that Guy is not unique, but may be grouped with other poems which have specific and local interpretations. It seems that Guy itself encodes a degree of commemoration of the past. Specific political moves concerning Guy do not create a different form of the story, re-stating its meaning, but merely refer to Guy: for instance, the mazer illustration

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117   George R. Keiser, 'Edward III and the alliterative "Morte Arthure"', Speculum, 48 (1973), 37-51; Juliet Vale, Edward III and chivalry: chivalric society and its context 1270-1350 (Suffolk, 1982).

118   Anglo, Spectacle; and 'The British History'.

alludes to the romance version of the Guy story; a version of _Guy_ is included in John Talbot's nationalistic and genealogical manuscript; the poem's popularity is referred to by the _Beauchamp Pageant._ Even the 'lyneally descendid' statement included in the prologue to Lydgate's _Guy_ may make a particularly valid point on inheritance; however, it does so in general terms. _Guy_ as a romance commemorates the past: its allegiances are to romance norms rather than historiographical ones, or ones that claim a particular validity for the present.

Guy's romance style is compatible with specific genealogy; it is also compatible with romances' concern with the past. A part of the meaning of romances generally is an emphasis on their own traditionality. That the figures connected with the earldom of Warwick make _Guy of Warwick_ specifically genealogical is not a departure from, but merely an illustration of, the romance's more general reception.

In the thirteenth century, some romances were concerned to emphasise that their subject matter and values were traditional; however, by the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Middle English romance encoded a literary traditionalism, too. So the earliest extant _Gui_ emphasised figures' inheritance, nationalism, Christianity, and class barriers overcome only by prowess. _Guy_ is concerned with justice, in a nationalistic framework at some points, and an eventual pietistic one too. The setting is the distant past - in distanced romance terms in the mythical and non-locatable lion and dragon episode; and in the terms of historiography in the Colbrond episode, dated specifically as the reign of king Athelstan. These references to the past are presented in a romance style that signals

its own traditionality. That is, by the time of the mid-fifteenth century version, the poem encodes a number of references to tradition, in its ´subject matter, its locus and its style. It encodes too some references to its own continuing reception as traditional - the 'Gybbeclyf' reference draws in the earls' propagation of the story as ancestral, and their establishment of a corresponding contemporary landscape, of which the Guy's cliff chantry is a major feature.

As the earls' references to the poem suggest, the fifteenth century Guy refers back to the past, but implies too the continuity of its own literary tradition from the thirteenth century. Each earl of Warwick commemorated his descent from Guy as his father did, but by referring back to the romance. In the historical context of the earldom, Guy represents a continuous link to a much earlier period; and in purely literary terms, Guy's romance style itself is equivalently traditionalist. A celebration of both the remote and the immediate past is implicit in a romance style that uses a set of archaizing features which have become a part of its literary style, and follows generic norms closely. So in the fifteenth century Guy B, the poem itself is traditional (both in its content, and in the long period of its existence); but the addition of minstrel lines, and the addition of a reference to 'Gybbeclyf' are traditionalist - the first consciously evokes the past, while the second evokes a literary past and an image of the past created in part by the contemporary earls of Warwick. The distinction is partly one of demonstrated literary intention - while fourteenth and fifteenth century works use traditional material, they typically use it

pointedly, as an obvious literary style.

So in the fifteenth century _Guy_ B, 'traditionalist' is a description that bridges _Guy_'s place in the development of literary style and its place in the earls' series of commemorative historiographical acts. Romance style's self-conscious traditionalism refers to a set of commemorative re-creations - literary and societal - of the past. A sense of generic solidarity, evoking the genre's shared past, corresponds to the earls' attempts to reinforce their own status.

The pieces of factual material which survive to indicate propagation and reception are ultimately superseded by a broader set of implications. In this chapter, the _Guy_ evidence has served to confirm, in one closely-documented instance, my inferences on romance social context made in chapter one, section D. But this documented context is partly accidental, in the survival of evidence about the reception of _Guy_ by one particular family. Its real value is as evidence of a specific readership's treatment of _Guy_ as a backward-looking and traditionalist poem, which is ultimately a part of a wider readership's reception of romance. For this literary context one does not need, and would not expect, precise evidence about literature's intention and value - that is encoded in the style itself.

Chapter V

LATE EXTENSIONS OF ROMANCE STYLE AND STRUCTURE:

THE SQUYR OF LOWE DEGRE

A STYLE AND ELABORATION

The Squyr of lowe degre presents more difficulties of interpretation than either of the poems considered so far. It exists only in late - sixteenth and seventeenth century - versions,[1] which seem both to recall and to move away from Middle English romance. While the Squyr alludes to a recognizable generic style and romance structure, it makes some changes; there are dislocations between a figure's role and his or her actions. The reader's generically-

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1   The Squyr is extant only in these three late versions -

1 'Two fragments, comprising in all 180 lines, of an edition published (as is supposed from the form of the type) by Wynkyn de Worde about 1520.'

2 Copland's edition, c. 1555-1560.

3 The Squier, Percy folio manuscript version.

All three are printed in Mead, Squyr; the above information is from Mead, Squyr, p.xi.

Mead dates the lost original as '1450, or possibly a decade earlier' (p.lxxvi); he discounts earlier critics' arguments that Chaucer's 'Sir Thopas' draws on the Squyr, and concludes

...nothing prevents us from assuming, in the absence of proof to the contrary, that x itself is a product of the fifteenth century.(p.lxxvii)

The dating of the Squyr has been discussed most recently in 'The Squyr of lowe degre: a critical edition', edited by Jane Herbert (unpublished M. Phil. thesis, Liverpool, 1983), pp.iv-vii.

created expectations are continually answered in some surprising –
and often amusing – ways. For these reasons, one needs a context for
the Squyr: as the poem continually explores the norms of romance,
the critic has to plot both a broad romance context and a narrower
one of analogues and possible sources.

Problems of generic allegiance and consequently of the decoding
of reading signals are set up at the initial feast, when the squire
appears in all his finery. The poem says

> Eche man hym loved in honeste,
> Hye and lowe in theyr degre,   330
> So dyd the kyng full sodenly,
> And he wyst not wherfore nor why.
> The kynge behelde the squyer wele,
> And all his rayment every dele,
> He thoughte he was the semylyest man   335
> That ever in the worlde he sawe or than.
> Thus sate the kyng and eate ryght nought,
> But on his squyer was all his thought.

To appreciate this passage, one needs to see it in the light of some
romance analogues. The poem's editor, William Mead, quotes a series of
analogues very close to this passage in their phrasing –

> Ete ne drinke might he nought;
> On Blaunchefloure was all his thought. [2]

> Ete ne drinke he might noght;
> On Blauncheflour was all his thought. [3]

> Whene he to his mette was sett,
> He myghtte nother drynke ne ete,
> So mekyll on her he thoughte. [4]

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[2] Floris and Blauncheflour, 11.394-95. This and the following four examples are quoted by Mead, Squyr, note to 1.337 and 338 (p.65). See also Amis, 11.538-40 (quoted on p.98).

[3] Ibid., 11.455-56.

[4] Ipomydon, 11.193-95; quoted by Mead, Squyr, p.65.

> And there-Onne faste he loked Anon
> That Alle his lust was Awey gon;
> For nethir to drinken ne to Ete
> Hadde he non luste, wel 3e wete;
> But Evere to loken uppon his wryt,
> That was þe moste thing Of his delyt.[5]
>
> In þe curt & vte
> & elles al abute
> Luuede men horn child,
> & mest him louede Rymenhild,
> Þe kynges o3ene doster.
> He was mest in þo3te.[6]

All employ a phraseology very similar to that of the Squyr; however, all (except the Holy Grail) refer to the love of the hero and heroine.

There are further analogues not of style but of situation - for instance, as quoted from Amis and Amiloun, chapter two, pp.95-96), when Belisaunt falls in love with Amis. The device of hero falling in love with heroine, or vice versa, at a feast scene recurs in romance.[7] In Guy, Horn, and Amis, this scene initiates the action that follows: it has a structural role associated with the beginning of a romance. Although the Squyr uses the stylistic and structural markers of romance to describe this scene, it makes a dislocation between the subject and the language felt to be appropriate to that subject: the lines refer to the king, not to the hero and heroine.

Why should this happen? The answer given by K. S. Kiernan in a recent article is that the poem is a burlesque; it uses romance lines predominantly for humour -

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5   Holy Grail; quoted by Mead, Squyr, p.65.

6   King Horn, 11.245-50.

7   Some examples have been quoted already: for instance, Guy B, 1.1438ff.; King Horn, 1.241ff.; Amis, 1.409ff.; Emaré, 1.205ff. and 385ff.

> Despite the current view of the poem, there is scarcely a line in <u>Undo your door</u> that does not demonstrate the humorous intentions of its poet.[8]

Kiernan's argument ignores, however, the changes in tone and in literary style which in this poem occur very rapidly.[9] Kiernan's insistence on humour at the protagonists' expense seems to me to neglect the vehicle of the poem's devices - its use of different literary styles. I want to shift the emphasis of Kiernan's argument away from the matter of the poem, to a consideration of its subtle uses of literary device. My emphasis on literary technique in the <u>Squyr</u> suggests that the issue is not one of burlesque, but of

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8   '"Undo your door" and the order of chivalry', <u>Studies in Philology</u>, LXX (1973), pp.345-66.(p.347)

9   Even within the limited context set up this thesis, it is evident that several of Kiernan's 'absurdities' are not absurd at all. For instance, Kiernan suggests that the squire's serving the king at a feast instead of serving as a knight is a slur (p.349): in fact there is plenty of evidence in the Middle Ages for people of rank having posts in the king's household, quite apart from this as romance convention to suggest the hero's importance - for instance, in <u>Amis and Amiloun</u> the heroes have household posts.
Kiernan finds it absurd that the coats of arms described by the lady would recall the descent of wealth and status from the lady's side of the family (p.354). In fact the <u>Rous Roll</u> does just this: the family's descent from Rohaud earl of Warwick through Felice is emphasised.
In his discussion of heraldry, Kiernan does not note the essential distinction between real and fiction-oriented coats of arms (pp.353-56); the different charges he describes are meant not for external identification but as a form of fictional elaboration of different knightly qualities.
As Kiernan himself makes clear, the 'mock investiture' (p.351) is just described and not carried out - Kiernan mistakes the lady's descriptive function for an act which then fails to take place.
Contrary to Kiernan's argument (p.359), the romance's money theme is centred in the lady's description; she is not actually seen to give the squire money, which means that Kiernan is wrong to suggest that the king 'erroneously' thinks the squire destitute.

potential parody; Norman Blake makes the distinction in this way -

> Parody is the ridiculing of a particular turn of
> expression, work or genre by imitating its characteristic
> linguistic features and either modifying them slightly or
> applying them to ridiculous ends. Burlesque, on the other
> hand, makes use of current literary conventions and genres
> to poke fun at social aspirations and ideals without
> necessarily intending any mockery to fall on the literary
> forms so exploited. Burlesque looks beyond literature to
> society, whereas the goal of parody does not go beyond the
> belittling of a particular literary work or type.
> Burlesque is general and parody is particular. Finally,
> and most importantly for our purpose, burlesque is more
> concerned with attitudes than with language, whereas the
> very heart of parody is the exploitation and echoing of
> linguistic features.[10]

Blake argues that there are very limited opportunities for parody in

the Middle Ages - that in the absence of authoritative and fixed

texts, 'only general styles could be ridiculed'; and that in an age

of formulaic writing, stylistic excesses are not recognizable as

parody.[11] For the moment I want to leave all these questions open -

a discussion of the Squyr and literary style must precede any

assessment of its intention.

The implications for my thesis of treating the Squyr not as

burlesque but as potential parody include - first of all - a new

focus on the Squyr's style and structure rather than on its subject

matter: as I hope to show, the Squyr is able to use a range of

literary devices subtly and with point. Secondly, considering

literary style helps remove an emphasis on the assumed ends of the

poem - that is, Kiernan's 'burlesque' as directed towards humour, an

emphasis which depends on ignoring the poem's stylistic homogeneity.

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10   The English language in medieval literature (London, 1977),
      especially chapter six, 'Parody', pp.116-27 (p.116).

11   Ibid., pp.116-17.

Thirdly, I want to end the chapter by discussing the status of the
Squyr and its relation to the status of romance's literary style.

The notes and introduction to Mead's edition make it clear that
the Squyr shares with, perhaps borrows from, other romances a great
deal of romance style: Mead identifies a series of expressions and
lines similar to those in other romances.[12] The Squyr makes explicit
allusions to other texts -

> Squyr: 'That I were...
> ....so bolde in eche fyght,
> As Syr Lybius that gentell knyght,
> Or els so bolde in chyvalry,
> As Syr Gawayne, or Syr Guy;   80
> Or els so doughty of my hande
> As was the gyaunte Syr Colbrande...'

and

> Princess: 'Thus my love, syr, may ye wynne,
> Yf ye have grace of victory,
> As ever had Syr Lybyus, or Syr Guy,
> Whan the dwarfe and mayde Ely   615
> Came to Arthoure kyng so fre,
> As a kyng of great renowne,
> That wan the lady of Synadowne,
> Lybius was graunted the batayle tho.'

As the first chapter showed, this tendency to cross-reference to
similar works is characteristic of romance. The Squyr displays a sense
of intertextual reference: it evokes a set of literary norms. The
selective reference to other heroes and stories blurs distinctions
made within these romances, however: the references to 'syr Guy' and
'syr Colbrande' allude to both hero and villain in Guy as examples of
chivalry and prowess. The Squyr's evocation of the superlative
qualities in the Guy story does not discriminate between the kinds of
story role given to each figure.

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12   Squyr, p.lxxxi, and notes.

The _Squyr_'s reference to _Guy_ is not just an allusion, but one that extends to stylistic similarities too. Mead quotes a series of parallel lines and passages between _Guy_ and the _Squyr_, and concludes

> The number of points of agreement is so great that, in view of the fact that the author of the The _Squyr of Lowe Degre_ knew the story of _Guy of Warwick_, the probability that he modelled his work to some extent upon the earlier romance is very strong. At all events no other romance affords so many or so notable parallels in plot and in phrasing.[13]

The _Squyr_'s allusion to _Guy_ - twice - calls the reader's attention to the similarity. For this reason, my discussion of the _Squyr_'s plot and structure in section B will refer to _Guy_. Moreover, similarities between _Squyr_ and _Guy_ exist on quite a small scale as well - lines and phrases are shared. _Guy_ may be a direct source; or the references to _Guy_ may treat _Guy_ as an embodiment of the typical in romance style. Given this degree of uncertainty, all I can hope to do is to extend the claims already made about _Guy_'s sense of typical romance style - often exaggerated and self-consciously displayed in _Amis_ - to an explication of the _Squyr_'s changed uses of typical romance style. While the _Squyr_ may demonstrate specific borrowings from _Guy_, the similarities appear to be general formulaic ones.[14]

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13 _Ibid._, pp.xliv-xlv; Mead adds

> We need not insist too strongly upon the correspondences between The _Squyr of Lowe Degre_ and the fifteenth-century (B) version of _Guy of Warwick_. But that there is a connection between our romance and that version seems highly probable.(p.lxxvin.)

14 Although as Mead indicates, the _Squyr_ is closest to _Guy_ B, the following pages will compare parts of the _Squyr_ to those passages shared by _Guy_ A and _Amis_: this chapter uses the sense of a formula already established in this thesis, and discusses shared romance lines rather than specific borrowings.

The Squyr evokes a sense of narrative convention and of genre in its allusion to other romances, and in its use of romance formulae. However, the Squyr alters this evoked style, using it partially rather than as a complete narrative style.

This is particularly obvious in the final wedding feast in the Squyr, which makes references to those lines in Guy which, in chapter two, were demonstrated to be typically romance by their quotation and exaggeration in Amis:

Squyr, 11.1067-79:

The squyer her hente in armes two
And kyssed her an hundreth tymes and mo.
There was myrth and melody
With harpe, getron, and sautry,
With rote, ribible, and clokarde,
With pypes, organs, and bumbarde.
With other mynstrelles them amonge,
With sytolphe and with sautry songe,
With fidle, recorde, and dowcemere,
With trompette and with claryon clere,
With dulcet pipes of many cordes;
In chambre revelyng all the lordes
Unto morne that it was daye.

Guy A (Auchinleck version), st.16-17

þer was mirþe & melody,
And al maner menstracie
As 3e may forþeward here.

þer was trumpes & tabour,
Fiþel, croude, & harpour,
Her craftes for to kiþe,
Organisters & gode stiuours,
Minstrels of mouþe, & mani dysour,
To glade þo bernes bliþe.
þer nis no tong may telle in tale
þe ioie þat was at þat bridale
Wiþ menske & mirþe to miþe;
For þer was al maner of gle
þat hert mi3t þinke oþer ey3e se
As 3e may list & liþe.

Amis (Auchinleck version), 11.101-08

With meet and drynke, meryst on mold
To glad þe bernes bliþe;

> þer was mirþe & melodye
> & al maner of menstracie
> Her craftes for to kiþe;
> Opon þe fiftenday ful 3are
> þai token her leue forto fare
> & þonked him mani a siþe.

The use of formal devices does not necessarily define a formula;
formal devices do, however, make a formula recognizable and memorable
for the reader. Formal devices can draw attention to a linguistic
entity which appears to be formulaic - and is likely to be used
across the romance genre. So in both _Guy_ and _Amis_, the couplet

> 'þer was mirþe & melody,
> And al maner menstracie'

(_Guy_, st.16; _Amis_, 11.103-04) appears to be formulaic: it uses
alliteration heavily, which accentuates its formulaic quality, and
the line recurs in both these romances. The _Squyr_ uses the initial
line,

> There was myrth and melody

but goes on to list musical instruments. _Guy_'s and _Amis_' usage
primarily emphasises the general and formulaic quality of the
couplet, signalled by alliteration; the _Squyr_ line is marked formally
by a lesser degree of alliteration, and extends to the specific.

The list of musical instruments in the _Squyr_ is part of a
romance topos, the feast scene. However, it contrasts to the feast
lines in _Guy_ and _Amis_, which emphasise formally-signalled formulaic
and general lines - 'As 3e may list & liþe' (_Guy_, st.16); 'Her
craftes for to kiþe' (_Guy_, st.16); _Amis_, 1.105); 'To glade þo bernes
bliþe' (_Guy_, st.16; _Amis_, 1.105); 'þer nis no tong may telle in
tale', (_Guy_, st.16). The first three are given a precise metrical
place: they are tail-rhyme lines. In _Guy_ and _Amis_, metre is used to
signal the typicality and generality of the description. But while

the Squyr passage is obviously a literary topos, it uses the devices
of metre, alliteration and generalisation to signal generic
allegiance far less heavily. The Squyr does link some words by
alliteration, but does so more loosely than the other poems do:
redundant and archaic words are used far less. So Guy extends a
reference to 'mirþe' over two alliterating lines, as just
illustrated, and then expands 'mirþe' to

> Wiþ menske & mirþe to miþe

By contrast, when the Squyr later (1.1107) expands its reference to
'mirth', it becomes 'With myrth and game and muche playe': it has
none of the devices (alliteration, archaism, and so on) signalling
that it is a formula, re-used in romance. The Guy expansion uses
words and phrases with little semantic force, perhaps unusual and
archaic words, for its alliteration. The Squyr expands to a list of
names of musical instruments: it becomes a poetic catalogue, rather
than stressing formulaic quality as Guy and Amis do. Comparing the
Squyr with Guy and Amis makes it clear that, while the latter two
heavily emphasise traditionalist poetic devices in their verbal
elaboration, the Squyr's style is less obviously formulaic and
archaic: this list of musical instruments is a series of specific
examples within a poetic topos, rather than obviously formalized in
ways usual in romance.

That the Squyr lessens the emphasis on the formulaic and generic
force of some of its lines is apparent in its similarity to the Guy
wedding feast in other lines which are quoted and exaggerated by Amis
to emphasise typical romance language:

<u>Squyr</u>, 11.1109-1112

A royall feest there was holde,
With dukes and erles and barons bolde,
And knyghtes and squyers of that countre,
And sith with all the comunalte.

<u>Guy</u>, st.15

Miche semly folk was gadred þare
Of erls, barouns lasse & mare,
& leuedis bri3t in bour.

<u>Amis</u> expands on this borrowed formulaic language to demonstrate a

set of limited formulaic expansions -

<u>Amis</u>, 11.415-17

Miche semly folk was samned þare,
Erls, barouns, lasse & mare,
& leuedis proude in pride.

<u>Amis</u>, 11.1513-18

Miche was þat semly folk in sale,
Þat was samned at þat bridale
When he hadde spoused þat flour,
Of erls, barouns, mani & fale,
& oþer lordinges gret & smale,
& leuedis bri3t in bour

<u>Amis</u> makes <u>Guy</u>'s typical romance language more obviously generic; the

<u>Squyr</u> alludes to typical romance style to make it less evidently

formulaic. The <u>Squyr</u>'s

With dukes and erles and barons bolde.
And knyghtes and squyers of that countre.

is paratactic. <u>Guy</u>'s version

Of erls, barouns lasse & mare,
& leuedis bri3t in bour.

uses formal devices to emphasise formulaic half-lines: opposition in

'lasse & mare', alliteration in 'bri3t in bour'. As <u>Amis</u>' borrowing

demonstrates, 'proude in pride' can be substituted for 'bri3t in

bour': the point is not the sense, but the extent to which

alliteration demonstrates the lines' formulaic quality. As in <u>Guy</u>,

the <u>Amis</u> versions of the couplet emphasise the construction of the
passage - the half-lines are obvious. Both <u>Guy</u>'s and <u>Amis</u>'
exaggeration of romance style at these points demonstrate the
rhetorical and typically romance construction of the line. So the
<u>Squyr</u>'s parataxis is important: it breaks down the half-lines, makes
them less evident - while the sense does not change, the exaggerated
emphasis on the typicality of the construction of romance lines is
removed. Syntactic differences between the re-uses of similar lines
in all three poems are used to point formulaic quality. So

    <u>Squyr</u> And ladyes that were fayre and bryght   1104

corresponds to

    <u>Guy</u>   & leuedis bri3t in bour   st.15

    <u>Amis</u> & leuedis proude in pride   417

    <u>Amis</u> & leuedis bri3t in bour   1518

    <u>Guy</u>   And mani a leuedy fair and bri3t   st.16

As chapter two showed, an earlier version of the first <u>Guy</u> line is
likely to have generated the two <u>Amis</u> ones, in a system that displays
a strong awareness of alliterating formulae, often with little
semantic weight, and of their capacity to be substituted for one
another. In this instance, syntax itself is an indicator of
formulaic quality. The <u>Squyr</u> line 'And ladyes that were fayre and
bryght' makes it apparent that there is a relative clause: it adds
'that were'. In the first three <u>Guy</u> and <u>Amis</u> lines, the use of an
alliterating half-line formula makes apparent a distinctive romance
construction, made up of two half-lines. The fourth <u>Guy</u> line, 'And
mani a leuedy fair and bri3t', does not use alliterating formula but
maintains a structure that presumes the second half-line to qualify

the first. <u>Guy</u>'s 'And mani a leuedy fair and bri3t' - a line that even in <u>Guy</u> does not belong to the whole system of alliterating formulaic substitution - assumes a syntactic looseness of reference that is dependent on the norms of romance construction. The <u>Squyr</u> makes no such assumption: the relation of the two parts is made explicit by the words 'that were'. The addition clarifies the meaning; it also makes it seem less like a poetic formula, marked by obvious formal devices and a certain cryptic quality. The usages of the <u>Squyr</u> tend to move away from the formulaic and traditionalist quality of romance style. The <u>Squyr</u>'s use obviously does not evoke the whole romance system of stylised formulaic description, in which one part is easily substitutable for the next.

So the <u>Squyr</u>'s variations on lines in <u>Guy</u>, as exaggerated in <u>Amis</u>, imply a syntactic and formal sense of what a romance formula is - and how the reader recognises one. The <u>Squyr</u> demonstrates by extending and changing romance style that a formula is signalled by a set of distinctive devices - metrical place, such as tail-rhyme line, or half-line; alliteration; an unspecified capacity to qualify the sense of the previous half-line. Moreover, these are all devices signalling their typicality across a genre: these devices make a formula recognizable, and suggest that it is repeated in the romance genre. The <u>Squyr</u> re-uses the language of the <u>Guy</u> formulae but makes them unformulaic - while they are still suggestive of the language of romance, their force is to evoke the romance genre, rather than to signal their own traditionality and their centrality to romance. The <u>Squyr</u> evokes romance style without necessarily being wholly within or defined by that style.

It is partly for reasons to do with poetic elaboration that one

wants to discount 'burlesque' or 'parody' for the _Squyr_: one of the criteria frequently used for recognising parody or even burlesque is the over-elaboration of a recognizable style.[15] In the wedding passage just quoted (11.1109-12), the _Squyr_'s description is in fact far less full of formal devices signalling formulae, and therefore the romance genre, than the descriptions in the romances discussed already: the _Squyr_ does not emphasise a recognizable generic style at this point. Basic to theories of parody and burlesque is the idea of a recognisable borrowed language: if this description were part of a parody, then one would expect it to be in the distinctively formulaic language of romance. In fact the _Squyr_ expands and moves away from the romance formulaic style as a distinctive generic marker.

This poem has various descriptive catalogues - for instance, at 1.1069ff. it elaborates on the musical instruments played at the feast. Mead's edition of the _Squyr_ quotes some examples, from other romances, of lists of instruments played at feasts: the catalogue in the _Squyr_ is one of the longest, and is one that mentions a great many instruments.[16] _Squyr_ moves away from the formulaic and generic at most points; the difference in usage is not dictated purely by metre, but is evident throughout.

The _Squyr_'s tendency to depart from language shared by romance is supported by Mead's noting of the large number of new and rare

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15 This and other issues concerning medieval parody have been discussed most recently and usefully by Alan T. Gaylord, 'The moment of _Sir Thopas_: towards a new look at Chaucer's language', _Chaucer Review_, 16 (1981-82), 311-29.

16 _Squyr_, note to 1.1069ff. (pp.93-94).

words found in the <u>Squyr</u> – mainly nouns and adjectives;[17] things and their qualities predominate. Its emphasis on the new and exotic is precisely opposite to <u>Amis</u>' use of <u>Guy</u>'s romance formulae. In the list of musical instruments, the names of instruments are indeed multiplied – but as pure elaboration, rather than as the distinctive romance formulae used by <u>Guy</u> and <u>Amis</u>.

So what is the point of this catalogue of musical instruments? It does not display the stylistic tendencies of romance, towards alliterating formulae, redundancy and an emphasis on the simultaneous immediacy and traditionality of presentation. It is stylistically more neutral than that – one could quote as a similar piece of description not a passage from romance, but a section of Chaucer's <u>Parliament</u> <u>of</u> <u>Fowls</u>

> The byldere ok, and ek the hardy asshe;
> The piler elm, the cofre unto carayne;
> The boxtre pipere, holm to whippes lashe;
> The saylynge fyr; the cipresse, deth to playne;
> The shetere ew; the asp for shaftes pleyne;
> The olyve of pes, and eke the dronke vyne;
> The victor palm, the laurer to devyne.[18]

George Kane notes the shared literary value of the <u>Squyr</u> when he says

> A great part of the thousand lines of <u>The</u> <u>Squyr</u> <u>of</u> <u>lowe</u> <u>degre</u> are memorable verse. The man who composed them could write as well as Chaucer, if in a slighter vein and within narrower limits. Even when he is engaged in covering the ground of the narrative he can throw off graceful passages,

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17 <u>Squyr</u>, pp.lxxiii–lxxvi.

18 <u>The</u> <u>Parliament</u> <u>of</u> <u>Fowls</u>, in <u>Chaucer</u>, pp.310–18 (11.176–82); compare Herbert, 'Squyr', who says

> Chaucer employs a remarkably similar trees digression in 'Sir Thopas', so similar, in fact, that critics had at one time been led to suggest that Chaucer was parodying <u>SLD</u> in particular, until it was demonstrated that 'Sir Thopas' preceded <u>SLD</u> in composition. (pp.xxi–xxii)

> both fluent and apt, in which the emotion of the story
> shines through the clear language.[19]

Passages of elaboration - even of narration - in the _Squyr_ employ a polished literary language, shared with courtly and lyric poets in the Middle Ages.

I am not, however, claiming a move to Chaucerian description here, or even to the techniques of description shared by the post-Chaucerian poets. The _Squyr_ passage does not display a single, obvious, style, so much as it belongs to a general and shared kind of narration: it is pure elaboration. It uses the rhetorical device of anaphora, as do several other descriptive passages in the _Squyr_. The passage is not readily locatable in a generic tradition, and does not encode a recognisable poetic style in its expression, but is description used for aesthetic and perhaps structural reasons.

An emphasis on the elaboration of the _Squyr_'s catalogues to argue parody or burlesque would mean replacing the aesthetic value of the _Squyr_'s descriptive passages with an absurd intention, and attributing to them a marked stylistic allegiance which they do not display. The _Squyr_ uses a style which becomes negatively characterizable, by its move away from the distinctive style of romance. This in itself marks out the _Squyr_ as different from my previous texts: while they emphasised the traditionality of their form, the _Squyr_ is stylistically more neutral. But this move away from a backward-looking romance style is juxtaposed in the _Squyr_ with points at which that romance style is quoted and pointed. As a late text, the _Squyr_ displays an ability to look back over romance

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19   _Middle English Literature_, p.96.

tradition, and to quote from romance at selected points. So the _Squyr's_ lateness is important, though in two opposite ways - in its tendency to move out of romance tradition, and in its tendency to use that tradition selectively.

The implication of the first chapter's argument is that romance's literary style becomes so distinctive that it can be quoted and even offset against particular implications of meaning. The end of the _Squyr_ tests this argument perfectly, though in an odd way. A distinctive romance feature is the use of formulaic doublets - typically, two words linked by alliteration, rhyme, or other formal devices, and fixed by the reader's association of them together through continual re-use. Doublets recur in topoi and usual places of elaboration - such as the closing passage of a romance.

In fact the final section of the _Squyr_ uses hardly any of these doublets -

<div style="padding-left:3em">

And certaynly, as the story sayes,
The revell lasted forty dayes;
Tyll on a day the Kyng him selfe   1115
To hym he toke his lordes twelfe,
And so dyd the squyer
That wedded his doughter dere,
And even in the myddes of the hall
He made him kyng among them al;   1120
And all the lordes everychone
They made him homage sone anon;
And sithen they revelled all that day,
And toke theyr leve and went theyr way.
Eche lorde unto his owne countre,   1125
Where that hym thought best to be.
That yong man and the Quene his wyfe,
With ioy and blysse they led theyr lyfe;
For also farre as I have gone,
Suche two lovers sawe I none:
Therefore blessed may theyr soules be,   1130
Amen, Amen, for charyte!

</div>

'ioy and blysse' (1.1127) is a formulaic doublet; 'tyll on a day' (11.1115) is formulaic - but these are exceptional in this passage.

While the closure of this romance is conventional - the marriage of hero and heroine, a feast and its ending, a reference to the couple's happy life - this conventionality is not reinforced generically or stylistically by a conventionality of expression. Instead, the closing lines work to open the story up again -

> For also farre as I have gone,   1128
> Suche two lovers sawe I none.

Though in the form of a superlative, this is not the function of this couplet: the second line is ambivalent in tone, and serves to emphasise the story's distance from reality. The ending, which appears to be invoking other romance lovers as a comparison, does not evoke an unambiguous literary context: instead, it re-opens the question of what kind of a story this is. A final unfixing is supported by the absence of the genre's stylistic reinforcement here: neither in their sense nor in their stylistic evocation of romance norms do these lines close the poem.

But the potential of a strongly stylised romance language to be quoted and recognized is exploited in the poem's alternative ending. The king, who has acted as narrator for much of the poem, sums up as follows

> The Kyng to his doughter began to saye,   1080
> 'Have here **thy love and thy lyking,**
> **To lyve and ende** in Gods blessinge;
> And he that wyll departe you two,
> God geve him **sorow and wo!**
> A trewer lover than ye are one   1085
> Was never yet of **fleshe ne bone;**
> And but he be as true to thee,
> God let him never **thryve ne thee.'**

The phrases in bold type are those which, insofar as they are formally marked and recur in romance, are recognizable as formulae and doublets. The king closes the story in firmly romance terms - he

quotes the language and norms of romance to do so. The distinctiveness of romance style is demonstrated by the absence of formulae in the poem's ending, and their quotation by the king instead. As the following section will demonstrate, the _Squyr_ strongly identifies characters' actions with their kinds of speech.

In fact this tendency by the king to use a distinctively romance style as a form of closure is a device that is repeated throughout the _Squyr_. There are long elaborate passages in which a character describes a course of action. For instance, the princess gives details about how and where the squire is to undertake adventures, at 1.151ff. And the king lists the delights and amusements he offers to his daughter, at 1.739ff. At these points, a figure's elaborative language actually substitutes for action - the promise is either unfulfilled, or narrated very sketchily. The emphasis in this poem shifts from actions as actions, to action as narrated, and even to narration without action.

Ultimately the _Squyr_ breaks down the idea of narrative language as separate from characters' actions. Characters' language substitutes for their actions; it becomes narration. The _Squyr_ not only quotes a range of literary types of narrative language, it also blurs distinctions of narrativity within the poem. The force of narrative within narrative is finally crucial in the _Squyr_, as indicated by the poem's capacity to use a range of narrative styles and narrating devices.

Several of the _Squyr_'s characteristic devices allude to romance but are ultimately separate from it - the quoting of recognizable romance stylistic devices; long catalogues and description used primarily for aesthetic effect; and the tendency of characters in the

poem to assume a narratorial role. These devices need to be placed in relation to each other - in a comparative structure - so that the _Squyr_'s peculiarities are most obvious by comparison with the structures of other texts.

B STRUCTURE AND ACTION

Once more, the devices the _Squyr_ shares with, and perhaps borrows from, _Guy_ and _Amis_ make a useful comparison to the _Squyr_'s structure: _Guy_, _Amis_ and the _Squyr_ all make interesting structural divisions. Each one could be described as a romance diptych structure, but a reader's prior assumptions as to the workings of a diptych structure are used by each text to create a changed diptych structure appropriate to the work's whole meaning. In each, heroes and other figures are equated with parts of the structure in ways that are central to the meaning of each romance.

·_Amis_ emphasises the diptych structure that is characteristic of romance in its use of a pair of heroes: each figure's adventures are the subject of one half of the poem. In fact this gesture towards balance mainly points an imbalance of tone and values - marked through romance device in the opposition of the first half's wooing and battle with the second half's helpless wandering and God-directed sacrifice at the end. The difference is pointed stylistically too - in the initial use of the language of feasts, which mark Amiloun's exclusion from the final feast; the fact that he is separated from the normative language of romance is used to demonstrate the exclusivity of romance style and syntax (see chapter two, pp.109-100)

Amis uses parallel and balance to point out inequations, setting up a series of contrasts of meaning and device between the parts. Its didacticism is set up through, and in opposition to, its pointedly romance qualities.

Guy's device of splitting its hero is structurally more complex. There is the broad split between the young hero Guy and the pilgrim Guy, hinged at the conversion. But there is also a series of alter ego figures, including Tyrry, Harrawde, and Guy's son Reinbron. While Guy sets up two halves as parallel but progressing, it also uses the idea of a co-existent and mutually-defining story to work out a whole paradigm of wider application.

The Squyr's differences are demonstrated in the text by its allusions to, and evocations of, other romance structures - such as diptych - and some close analogues. Reading the Squyr's structure depends on a knowledge of previous texts: as chapter one, section C, demonstrated, the concept of 'diptych' as applied to literary structure is dependent upon the reader's knowledge of previous diptych structures. The Squyr's signals to diptych, to a set of structural expectations evoked generically by means of previous narratives, demonstrate the value of the romances' intertextual reference. There are clues that, in the Squyr, a distinctively romance two-part structure is to be set up.

The potential for diptych structure is suggested in the Squyr by its pointing to the device of splitting for the story of hero and heroine: the princess' initial suggestions for the squire's actions propose that their fidelity will be tested in parallel - by her waiting and his questing. Using the model of Guy and Felice, the Squyr can be seen as an exaggeration and literalisation of the

initial situation. There are romances where the testing of the heroine's love is made parallel to the testing of the hero - for instance, in the King Horn scene that uses a verbal play on the recapitulatory devices of horn and net;[20] or in Malory's 'Tale of Tristram', in the incident in which both his prowess and her beauty are put to the test.[21] So the Squyr signals that it could work as diptych, placing as parallel the squire's quest and the princess' love. Or it could use its structural balance of the squire's seven years' devotion and overheard lament, with the princess' seven years' devotion and overheard lament: it could focus on the equivalence of their love.

But this is not the emphasis of the piece; the squire's adventures are described very briefly (ll.881-990). The longest passage describing the squire's travels is that by the princess, at l.151ff., and it is unfulfilled. The 'hero' does not conform to romance norms - he does not dominate the action, or act as a knight. Generic parallels are evoked as part of the story's unfolding, though the story does not then unfold in the ways implied.

Different interpretations of the story emphasise the squire's unsuitability for the role of hero - Kiernan suggests that a 'Squyr of lowe degre' cannot be a hero;[22] and the Percy folio version introduces a problematic frame -

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20   See chapter one, section C.

21   Malory: Works, pp.258-60.

22   '"Undo your door"', p.348.

It was a squier of England borne,
He wrought a forffett against the crowne,
Against the crowne and against the fee:
In England tarry no longer durst hee,
For hee was vexed beyond the fome
Into the kings land of Hungarye.[23]

The implication that the hero is partly discredited from the
beginning helps to account for the shift of focus in the story.

In the earlier versions of the Squyr, however, the problem of
hero's role is centred in the narration: the squire is seen acting
very little. His exploits abroad are described briefly by the
narrator. His role is seen only as interpreted, by the figure of the
princess. The squire does not dominate the poem's structure - the
princess is not seen, as typically in romance, as just the prize for
his prowess. The Squyr is set not in the large world of adventure
but in the enclosed world of the court. Language rather than action
dominates this poem.

The Percy folio version, The Squier, emphasises the princess'
role and her capacity to direct the story through language. Not only
does it make a problematized frame for the squire, it emphasises that
this is the princess' story: at the king's disclosure, there is this
interchange:

'Father,' shee sayes, 'how might you for sinn
Have kept us two lovers in twin?'   160
'Daughter,' he said, 'I did for no other thinge
But thought to have marryed thee to a king.'[24]

This conversation suggests that the relationship of the couple, and
the princess' marriage, are central to figures' motivation and values

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23   In Squyr (P), 11.1-6.

24   Ibid., 11.159-62.

in this story. David Fowler refers to parts of this Percy folio

version as a 'ballad-like use of dialogue' -

> 'Father,' shee sayes, 'godamercye
> But all this will not comfort mee.'
> 'Daughter,' he sais, 'thou shalt sitt att thy meate,
> And see the fishes in the floud leape.'
> 'Father,' shee sais, 'godamercy,
> But all this will not comfort mee.'
> 'Thy sheetes they shall be of the lawne,
> Thy blanketts of the fine fustyan.'
> 'Father,' shee sais, etc.
> 'And to thy bed I will thee bring,
> Many torches faire burninge.'
> 'Father,' shee sais, etc...[25]

The repeated refrain is the princess' testimony; the Percy version is

the story of her testing, from her viewpoint. But Fowler points to a

form of partial elaboration in the Squier; this ballad repetition

does not appear all the way through, but is a form of ornamentation

at selected points in the poem. This elaboration is an important

structuring device in the Percy version, however; and for this reason

it is useful, as partly defining the text as a ballad concerned with

the princess' emotions, allowing one to begin to characterise the

earlier versions by contrast. The Squyr evokes romance structures,

and suggests a romance background in which the princess' status is no

more than one of catalyst and prize (as in Guy, for instance) to make

it evident that the Squyr heroine's role is much greater. The

princess' status in this text is very much one of romance reader: in

a late text, she reports on the norms of chivalry in romance-

> 'For, and ye my love should wynne,
> With chyvalry ye must begynne,
> And other dedes of armes to done,
> Through whiche ye may wynne your shone;
> And ryde through many a peryllous place,   175

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25   A literary history of the popular ballad (Durham, North
       Carolina, 1960), pp.134-36. The Squier, ll.131-42.

> As a venterous man to seke your grace,
> Over hylles and dales, and hye mountaines...'

Her language is often stilted - it presents romance norms as a catalogue, in which the juxtaposition of one element with another presents no real sequence between the two -

> 'Welcome,' she sayd, 'my love so dere,
> Myne owne dere heart and my squyer;
> I shall you geve kysses thre,
> A thousande pounde unto your fe,
> And kepe I shall my maydenhede ryght,   575
> Tyll ye be proved a venturous knyght.'

Her catalogue of bargains and prices literalises the quest structures of romance, and suggests some generic ambivalence by evoking a fabliauesque reductivism. However, the princess also summarises romance norms, and looks back to previous romance texts - for instance, she warns of the steward before his existence has even been mentioned.[26] Her role is of generic importance - she encodes the norms of romance as a reader of previous romances, and directs this poem from within to follow those earlier texts, while producing a degree of generic ambivalence too.

Her role in the poem changes later, however; it is superseded by the king's role as narrator within the text. The king becomes the director and narrator of events: in the king's narratorial language, the princess' active role becomes the subject of a piece of description -

> The kyng her father anone he sayde:
> 'My doughter, wy are you dysmayde?
> So feare a lady as ye are one,
> And so semely of fleshe and bone, -   710
> Ye were whyte as whales bone,

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26   On the recurrence of the false steward motif in romance, see Herbert, 'Squyr', pp.xxii-xxiii; and see p.128, note 58.

> Nowe are ye pale as any stone;
> Your ruddy read as any chery,
> With browes bent and eyes full mery...'

The speech makes pointed use of typical romance and lyric formulae and metaphors to describe women's beauty.[27] It uses antithesis heavily to imply literary associations to the language used - 'whyte as whales bone' recurs in romance and lyric, to praise ladies' beauty; 'pale as any stone' implies unhealthiness and encodes less of a flattering literary context. The stylised language of romance is used to fix the princess in place, to make her the subject rather than the initiator of the narrative. While the princess' initial role is that of a figure creating a poem - and herself as heroine - through language, the king removes that role from her, at the point of the disclosure:

> 'It was my stewarde, Syr Maradose,   985
> That ye so longe have kept in close.'
> 'Alas! father, why dyd ye so?'
> 'For he wrought you all thys wo.
> He made revelation unto me,
> That he knewe all your pryvyte;
> And howe the squyer, on a day...'

The king replaces the princess' role as narrator with his own narration and recapitulation; he replaces her attempt to see her own story as central with his own function as maintainer of justice. The king presents his own role at this stage as that of punishing the steward; the princess' place in the story is made almost irrelevant.

Both versions - princess' and king's accounts - are expansions upon an evoked idea of basic diptych structure. However, the princess' role is ultimately demonstrated to be quite minor - she

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27   See chapter one, section B; Brewer, 'The ideal of feminine beauty'; Curry, The Middle English ideal.

writes the script for herself, not realising that she is a minor character in someone else's script. Variations on a suggested diptych structure are used to suggest the peculiarities of both forms of selection and structuring - as demonstrated through the figure of the princess, whose move to re-write the structure for herself is seen as particularly ironic.

The idea of diptych is evoked at this point in the story, in the king's recapitulation of the steward's death. The king recounts the same story - the squire's discovery in the princess' chamber - with a different set of consequences: that is, the narration creates a diptych structure from a single event. In this poem the explorations of structure are set in the narrativity of different characters, continually re-casting their own world.

This works most clearly at 11.871-73, when the king sends the squire out on a quest. The king's reported speech includes this -

> The kyng him graunted ther to go
> Upon his iorney to and fro,
> And brefely to passe the sea...

In the squire's adventures that follow, he never does cross the sea; this romance is set in Hungary, not England. Mead quotes some romance analogues;[28] one could also add _King Horn_, where crossing the sea is a major structural marker in the text (see chapter one, section C). This speech by the king seems to include a reference to crossing the sea only as a self-conscious quotation of the norms of romance. The brevity of the narration of the squire's subsequent adventures marks how little he is the hero of the romance - far from structuring a linear tale of heroic adventure, this reference becomes

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28   Mead, _Squyr_, note to 1.873 (p.89).

a part of narrativity, a part of the king's report on romance norms
in his narration.

This text makes more use of symbolism and psychological allegory
than is typical of Middle English romance. For instance, the
squire's entry to the garden is described in progressively smaller
scale, and elaborated on its own terms -

> And evermore, whan he was wo,
> Into his chambre would he goo;
> And through the chambre he toke the waye,   25
> Into the gardyn, that was full gaye;
> And in the garden, as I wene,
> Was an arber fayre and grene,
> And in the arber was a tre,
> A fayrer in the world might none be;   30
> The tre it was of cypresse,
> The fyrst tre that Jesu chese;
> The sother-wood and sykamoure,
> The reed rose and the lyly-floure...
> The pyany, the popler, and the plane,   40
> With brode braunches all aboute,
> Within the arbar, and eke withoute;
> On every braunche sate byrdes thre,
> Syngynge with great melody,
> The lavorocke and the nightyngale...   45
> And many other foules mo,
> The osyll, and the thrusshe also;   60
> And they sange wyth notes clere,
> In confortynge that squyere.

At points this passage is very schematized ('sate byrdes thre'), with
unexplained references to a scheme of mythological knowledge
('cypresse / The fyrst tre that Jesu chese'); however, details of
organisation are subsumed by a randomness of descriptive categories
('sykamoure...reed rose...lyly-floure...pyany...popler'). The
passage's elaboration creates a <u>locus</u> for the initiation of the love-
scene. The obvious analogue is the garden in Chrétien's <u>Cligés</u>;[29] the
<u>Squyr</u>'s description creates a private and enclosed space in which

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29   In Comfort, <u>Chrétien</u>, pp.91-179 (pp.173-77).

nature is used to create a figure's mood and to describe that mood to the reader.

The symbolic resonances of the Squyr work most strongly in relation to the princess. Initially she is described

> That lady herde his mournyng all,
> Ryght under the chambre wall;
> In her oryall there she was
> Closed well with royall glas;
> Fulfylled it was with ymagery,   95
> Every wyndowe by and by,
> On eche syde had there a gynne,
> Sperde with many a dyvers pynne.
> Anone that lady, fayre and fre,
> Undyd a pynne of yvere,   100
> And wyd the windowes she open set,
> The sunne shone in at her closet,
> In that arber fayre and gaye
> She sawe where that squyre lay.

The princess is presented as enclosed by artifice, inhabiting a closed and ornamented space suggestive of the nature of narrative: her opening the windows and letting in the sun coincides with her act of beginning to create the story for herself. That the Squyr makes the princess a partial narrator of a text very much concerned with narrativity sets up an analogy between the princess' degree of control over her own actions, and the kinds of limits set up by stylised romance narration: as already demonstrated, the princess is herself fixed within the king's descriptive language.

The poem uses largely symbolic language to suggest the very limited scope there is in this poem for the princess' sexuality and affections. When she reclaims the - wrong - dead body as still worth something, she says

> 'Now all to dere my love is bought,   681
> But it shall never be lost for nought.'

One romance analogue to the princess' situation is the brief married life of Felice and Guy: the Squyr princess' remark is less

ludicrous than it would seem, as it becomes a minor exaggeration of courtships that exist in romance. The princess' place is limited by romance norms - the basic story is full of potential, and the denial of that potential is a part of the story as demonstrated to the reader. Frustrating the princess' attempts to create her own story illustrates something of the strictly determined nature of her restricted role - and most roles - in romance.

The _Squyr_ description that follows uses the language of re-enclosure to suggest a strange sexuality, possessively necrophiliac -

> And closed hym in a maser tre,
> And set on hym lockes thre.   690
> She put him in a marble stone,
> With quaynt gynnes many one;
> And set hym at hir beddes head,
> And every day she kyst that dead.

The princess' initial liberation from the chamber, and her attempt to tell her own story, is soon replaced by this - a return to her chamber, and the suggestion of repressed sexuality.

As a narrator the princess is frustrated, deprived of speech; as a heroine, she is left only with a dead body. The _Squyr_ links the princess' narrative initiative and sexual initiation; when she is prevented from developing either, the force of a frustrated, enclosed and necrophiliac sexuality is used as a metaphor for the frustration of her attempts at narrative control. Her use of narrative promises to be the means to her sexual liberation; the frustration of her attempts at sexual liberation is used as analogous, as a metaphor, for her limited scope as narrating or controlling this text. The drive is not to humour, but points to the princess' failure to make her own story; at this point, the king takes over the narration.

Initially the princess suggests to the squire that he should

> '...offre there florences fyve,
> Whyles that ye are man on lyve;
> And offre there florences thre,   245
> In tokenyng of the Trynyte.'

Finally she promises the body

> '...every daye whyles I lyve,
> Ye shall have your masses fyve,
> And I shall offre pence thre,   965
> In tokenynge of the Trynyte.'

Repetition is used to reinforce the failure of her attempt to create a story for herself, other than her curious combination of self-directed narrative, quasi-blasphemous religious and erotic devotion, and a sterile substitute for passion and for living: not only does she fail to tell the squire's story, she eventually becomes the subject of her own narration. The joining of narrative language with an ordinarily-passive romance female figure makes a double dislocation from normative romance. The use of heroine as narrator reveals very clearly the limited and fixed role allowed to the heroine of a romance. But her limitations as a romance figure are representative of the stylisation and limitation of romance figures generally - a feature pointed in this poem by the fact that all but the steward are unnamed, known only by the title of their role.

Something of this sense of limits is transferred to the princess' narration too. Figures in this text are trapped in a conventional narrativity, emphasised in the Squyr by the association of princess and narrator. So her adopted role as narrator is her only means to creating a place for herself; on the other hand, the limited mores and style of romance narrativity are combined with the limits of the princess' own role to make the style doubly entrapping. The endpoint of her own story makes her embalming of the - wrong - dead body doubly symbolic: of the princess' place, and of the place

allocated to her by romance narration.

Even the title, then, becomes partly symbolic: Wynkyn de Worde's edition of the Squyr was entitled 'vndo youre dore'.[30] The heroine starts off enclosed in a chamber, within an enclosed garden; she ends up in the chamber, with a dead body. In some ways her final situation is an extension and literalisation of the kinds of desire and fidelity allowed to her by romance. The squire's 'undo your door' is ironic - she never can. But 'unlocking the door' also evokes fabliau, and becomes a sexual image - and the battle outside the princess' chamber evokes fabliau comedy, rather than romance pathos. The Squyr's potential for comic development is suggested by fabliauesque allusions, such as the treatment of this battle - a different kind of narrative possibility is continually suggested. While part of the concern of this poem is the entrapment of the princess in her own romance style, and the presence of pathos is suggested by the romance language, this co-exists with allusions to fabliau, held as an alternative possibility for narrative development.

One result of having the narrators in the text, and making them late readers of romance, is that an ironic level operates, often working to literalise and examine the conventions of romance. Kiernan's insistence on 'the squire's obsession with money as the root of all happiness'[31] is inaccurate; it is the other figures, mainly the princess, who keep offering money. There is little evidence of the squire's interest; in spite of the lady's repeated

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30   Squyr, p.xi, and note.

31   '"Undo your door"', p.351.

offers of money, at the squire's departures money is not mentioned.

Money and reward are not a part of the plot of this story, so much as a part of its elaboration; the princess' narration in particular equates money and chivalry, in a way that is ambivalently fabliauesque and merely distanced from romance convention

> 'To what batayll soever ye go,
> Ye shall have an hundreth pounde or two;
> And yet to me, syr, ye may saye,   605
> That I woulde fayne have you awaye,
> That profered you golde and fe,
> Oute of myne eye syght for to be.
> Neverthelesse it is not so,
> It is for the worshyp of us two.'   610

She offers to pay him piece-rate, then laboriously explains romance conventions: as a romance narrator, her awareness of the conventions of romance is juxtaposed with a literalising and explaining of them. However, the equation of love with chivalry, and the laborious explanation, set at a distance from romance, could also be that of fabliau. The princess' explanation both focusses attention on these conventions, and stresses their narrative conventionality.

C IMPLICATIONS FOR ROMANCE NARRATIVITY

The _Squyr_ world is a world of artifice and artificiality, and one in which description always does supersede action: the role of narrators and of narratorial language in the poem is primary. It seems to me that the _Squyr_ works as meta-narrative – it is about narrativity, on a broader scale than its use of romance. Romance language is used as a quotable and conventionalised style and structure, used by the _Squyr_ to play with ideas of story-telling. It does not, as romance does, rest within those story-telling conventions, but has a series of techniques to depart from and

express that narrative conventionality. It uses the devices of humour, quotation, allusion (the devices of parody, though not necessarily with the broadly reductive intention defined by some writers on parody) to create a work about narration.

Margaret Rose's Parody//meta-fiction: an analysis of parody as a critical mirror to the writing and reception of fiction points out that similarities in technique and meaning do not imply a sameness of end between literary critical forms -

> It will be suggested by the use of the word 'meta-fiction' that some parody provides a 'mirror' to fiction, in the ironic form of the imitation of art in art as well as by more direct references to these authors, books and readers. It is not suggested, however, that all meta-fiction is parodistic.[32]

The Squyr as meta-fiction may be parodic: one can certainly read the poem as parody, by treating the kinds of incongruities argued to exist by Kiernan as ultimately reductive of elaborate literary style. But it opens up a series of other possibilities too: it uses the fixity of a romance style and syntax to create a text whose direction and meaning are perhaps unfixable. The word 'meta-fiction' suggests not only the relation of a particular text to fiction, it also suggests the relation of all fiction to itself. That is, while Kiernan emphasises the squire's particular reductiveness, I want to stress its general relation to fiction, and its similarities to other romance fictions.

How does the Squyr fit, then, into the critical criteria advanced at the beginning of this chapter? Kiernan's characterisation of the Squyr as burlesque is inaccurate because -

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32   Parody//meta-fiction (London, 1979), p.65.

quite apart from those inaccuracies of argument discussed in note nine – he does not note the shifting use of a pre-existent literary language as used to control tone. Kiernan stresses absurdity of situation, whereas it seems to me that the Squyr's subtle use of a developed literary tradition is far more interesting.

Moreover, I want to discount parody as a generic classification which provides a total account of the Squyr's genre, mainly because so many current definitions of parody make humour – and reductivism – the work's main end. While the Squyr uses humour with effect, it is used at certain points, for disturbing and dislocating effects, rather than throughout the whole: that is, humour is a literary technique in the Squyr, rather than an end in itself.

As discussed earlier, however, one of the major arguments of Norman Blake against the existence of parody in the Middle Ages is the absence of a fixed literary language.[33] As this thesis attempts to establish, a distinctive romance literary language and syntax exists, and is seen working in the comparison between the Guy and Amis wedding feasts at the end of chapter two. It is evident there that Amis not only shares passages with Guy, but also uses a well-developed system which demonstrates the rhetorical substitution of one formula or half-line for another. In Amis' use of Guy, the question of specific allusion to a previous text is less important than Amis' more general allusion to a genre, and to the Guy feast at this point as a paramount example.

In these broader terms, however, it seems that 'parody' is a useful critical term to suggest technique in parts of the Squyr, as a

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33   The English language, p.96.

poem which uses a range of literary styles, and demonstrates their derivative quality. Blake denies the existence of parody in the Middle Ages - as this group of texts demonstrates, 'parody' or 'allusion' in medieval romance may be to a specific previous text, but the force of its allusion is towards a distinctive, shared, romance literary language. Romance style is fixed enough, and has enough syntactic and elaborative signals to its existence, for partly displaced texts such as the _Squyr_ and _Amis_ to demonstrate their own derivative quality from a genre. In these cases, both may even foreground their own derivation from _Guy_ - the _Squyr_ names _Guy_ twice, and _Amis_ exists in the same (Auchinleck) manuscript as _Guy_. The _Squyr_'s allusions may refer both to _Guy_ in particular, and to the genre overall. _Guy_ embodies various ideas of the norms and structure of romance, as explored in other poems.

Until much more is known about medieval poems' circulation and readership, it will not be clear just how specific an allusion is. Determining a precise allusion for romance lines probably taken from a version of _Guy_ is not, however, the main point. The point is that romance quotes and re-quotes both its own shared literary language, and particular uses of that in individual romances. The _Squyr_ refers explicitly to _Guy_, and employs the generalised romance rhetoric demonstrated by _Amis_' expansion of a version of _Guy_: so one can compare _Guy_ and _Amis_ with the _Squyr_ - as the beginning of this chapter does - as an approach somewhere between establishing a broadly shared literary language and showing its working in the narrow context of these three related texts.

The derivative features of the _Squyr_ are significant because the poem is a late work that uses the device of narrators within the text

to demonstrate its strata of literary style. Blake's comment

> The constant modernization of language to which medieval
> texts were subject would preempt the need for parody, since
> all literature available would be written in the current
> literary styles.[34]

is not true of the Squyr, which quotes and alludes to a range of
styles. Both Blake and David Fowler – in his discussion of the Percy
ballad version – assume that the versions are updated consistently,
to an overall style. This seems to me to be untrue: the Squyr's
internal narrating devices and shifts of generic norms make it a text
concerned with narrativity, in which different kinds of literary
associations to narration are given a different function and
authority.

But there is one more important point. The Squyr has certain
technical peculiarities that make it a nice illustrative text for the
development of romance style. It is not, however, fundamentally
removed from romance – if it is to be classed as parodic, then the
important question is not its end but its technique, for the Squyr
employs a style largely shared by romance. Repetition and
elaboration are basic to romance; romance's self-consciousness in
quoting and re-quoting itself may be the reason that there are not
more romance parodies – romance constantly discusses its own
techniques of literary creation. Romance is continually self-parodic
in a loose sense, and over-emphasises literary convention. However,
this meta-fictitious quality of romance style is directed not towards
an absurdity of intention, but towards a focus on conventionality and
literary style.

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34   The English language, p.117.

To test this, one could look back at the examples from romance already quoted. At the beginning of this chapter, this <u>Floris</u> and <u>Blancheflour</u> passage was quoted

> Ete ne drinke might he nought;
> On Blaunchefloure was all his thought.

as using a romance expression which, from the context of examples quoted around it, is more usually used of a heroine's love for a hero. <u>Floris</u> reverses the norm – not as parody, however, but to demonstrate the hero's sensitivity and the mutuality of the couple's love. The inclusion of a romance formula often used to describe a heroine's love for a hero helps to emphasise how childlike the couple's love is, and how far it is removed from the adult world of the 'amiral'.[35]

Or look at the <u>Athelston</u> example discussed in chapter one, section B, when king Athelston kicks his pregnant wife, and

> Soone withinne a lytyl spase
> A knaue-chyld iborn þer wase,
> As briȝt as blosme on bowȝ;
> He was boþe whyt & red;
> Off þat dynt was he ded;
> Hys owne fadyr hym slowȝ.[36]

This subverts a conventional beauty description used earlier in the poem, and made formulaic by its re-use in romance. That is, it does not direct the reader's attention towards humour, but foregrounds the conventionality of romance. Romance continually evokes, and changes, generic style: romance tends to acquire a meta-narrative quality. It is for this reason that I do not want to make the <u>Squyr</u>'s use of

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35 See Jocelyn Price, '<u>Floire et Blancheflor</u>: the magic and mechanics of love', <u>Reading Medieval Studies</u>, VIII (1982), 12-33.

36 <u>Athelston</u>, 11.288-93; and see pp.19-20.

romance style a peculiar and reductive one – a literary parody – but rather want to stress that its re-use of a distinctive literary style is typical of romance's own continual self-quotation.

The _Squyr_ presents itself as a late and displaced romance narrative – while the text is often stylistically neutral, its characters quote and allude to the norms of past romance. At points their limitedness – especially that of the princess – is presented as a reflection of the fixed nature of romance narrative style: it is a relatively fixed style, which continually demonstrates its own limits.

Like _Guy_ B, the _Squyr_ is a late poem: however, the two texts make opposite uses of the romance tradition. The social co-ordinates and re-creations of _Guy_ described in chapter four make the late _Guy_ a traditionalist and genre-conscious work. The _Squyr_ is as genre-conscious, but in opposite ways – its narrators report on a past romance style, and evoke its literary devices while exploiting its incongruities. Both _Guy_ and the _Squyr_ use romance tradition, one to emphasise its traditionality, the other to explore some of the implications of generic self-consciousness, as partly displaced to a new stylistic context and demonstrating romance's sense of narrativity. These opposite moves, to an emphasis respectively on the traditionalist solidity and on the relativised literariness of romance style, both fulfil a part of the potential present in romance style.

CONCLUSIONS

It seems that the distinctive romance style, long noted as such by critics, encodes a precise set of meanings in its homogenous and formulaic quality. The homogeneity of romance style has two sets of basic implications: firstly, a self-conscious romance style works self-reflexively, and with a taut set of allusions and comparisons; and secondly, this generic homogeneity is established by reference to a generic past – romance style emphasises its own traditionality.

By the early fourteenth century, romance's reading signals were marked enough for marginal texts – such as the Christian didactic Amis and Amiloun – to quote and offset a distinctive romance language against a separate meaning. This was established by the early fourteenth century, and still fine enough in the early sixteenth century to allow a series of fine allusions to that romance style by the Squyr of lowe degre, a text about narrativity, which evokes romance to demonstrate something of its own narrativity and that of romance in general.

Contrary aspects of romance's development between the early fourteenth century and late fifteenth century are illustrated in Guy of Warwick and the Squyr. As Guy shows, a part of romance's significance is its own commemorative quality, as suggested by the surviving evidence for the reception of forms of the poem in the Middle Ages. For Guy, this emphasis on tradition is actually transmuted into a traditionalist literary style: a style and matter that emphasise an indebtedness to the past correspond to the attempts of a particular socio-political group to validate themselves in terms

of a certain kind of historicism. For the Squyr, on the other hand, the self-reflexive tendencies of romance are quoted as part of a meta-narrative frame that extends to a discussion of the status of various kinds of narrativity. The same romance devices are used in Guy with an implied historical validity, and in the Squyr for their relativising and meta-linguistic capacity: the same romance style, both generic and traditional, is capable of being used in interestingly opposed ways.

The works used in this thesis expand towards generic boundaries, and are suggestive about some of the similarities and differences between romance and related genres. For example, Amis evokes some of the theological metaphors and modes of authority central to saint's life; versions of Guy easily become historiography, and blur the limits between specifically ancestral and generally commemorative romance style: different re-workings of Guy employ different degrees of validation, employing a range of signals found variously in literary and historiographical forms of transmission of the past. The Squyr demonstrates the limits to romance style: the boundaries between a distinctive romance style and structure, and features shared with other literature.

These texts were selected because, in one way or another, they exemplify an aspect of romance style: its self-conscious but morally limited sense of rhetoric is explored in Amis; its transformation of commemoration into 'neutral' literary features in Guy; its self-consciousness and capacity to quote itself endlessly, and to discusss its own narrative conventions, in the Squyr.

To illustrate these points, the thesis has involved a certain

amount of artificial layering. A self-conscious use of romance rhetoric, quoted as entirely separate from Christian value, is not exclusive to Amis - it exists in Guy's conversion and eventual disappearance from the romance to retire to a hermitage, and is marked as a dislocation by Guy A's elaboration at the point preceding the conversion. Romance style, as both validated by and validating its own traditionality, is not exclusive to Guy - it appears across the romance genre, which employs a style and matter which foreground their own traditionalism. Finally, the development of a meta-language to demonstrate a sense of narrativity is not exclusive to the Squyr - it exists throughout romance.

These three sets of implications are aspects of a homogenous romance style, carefully orchestrated over more than two centuries in England. Far from being a naive style, evolved through the limitations of oral transmission, romance style develops into a literary language in which continual references to its own transmission is part of an emphasis on romance style's own history. It is a sophisticated genre which uses a single set of intertextual markers to create meaning in very different ways.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

NOTE: Section A lists editions and related primary texts alphabetically under the name of the text; short titles in the body of the thesis will give only the name of the text, after the first, full, reference. Facsimiles are listed at the end of section A.
    Section B, 'Secondary texts: critical and historical works', is arranged alphabetically under author's name.

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