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## **Exile and Migration in the Vernacular Lives of Edward the Confessor**

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In his *History of the English-Speaking Peoples*, Winston Churchill famously describes the figure of King Edward the Confessor as ‘faint, misty, frail’, surpassed by the medieval legends that sprang up after his death. Churchill sounds an elegiac note as he describes Edward’s final moments:

The lights of Saxon England were going out, and in the gathering darkness a gentle, grey-beard prophet foretold the end. When on his deathbed Edward spoke of a time of evil that was coming upon the land his inspired mutterings struck terror into the hearers. [...] Thus on January 5, 1066, ended the line of the Saxon kings.<sup>1</sup>

Although not published until 1956, Churchill’s account of ‘The Saxon Dusk’, as he called it, was reportedly written during April, 1940. As Germany invaded first Denmark and then Norway, the recently appointed First Lord of the Admiralty worked late into the night to complete the volume, analysing the events of 1066 surrounded by maps of the British navy’s defensive positions in North Sea.<sup>2</sup> It is difficult not to think of this ominous context when reading Churchill’s elegy for Anglo-Saxon England, and to see his *History* as a warning of the dangers of weak leadership and conquest from abroad. Even today, the year 1066 continues to be mourned not only as the end of the Anglo-Saxon state, but of its language, literature, and culture as well.<sup>3</sup> Edward’s death has become a symbol

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<sup>1</sup> Winston Churchill, *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples*, 4 vols. (New York: Bantam Books, 1963 [1956-8]) I, 110.

<sup>2</sup> As recounted by his research assistant, Bill Deakin, cited in David Lough, *No More Champagne: Churchill and his Money* (London: Head of Zeus, 2015), 285. For the standard account of Edward’s life, see Frank Barlow, *Edward the Confessor*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the many examples cited by Elaine Treharne in *Living Through Conquest: The Politics of Early English, 1020-1220* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 1-4.

for the end of an era, but the image of a frail and impotent king dying along with his kingdom, differs dramatically from the many medieval narratives that describe the king and his reign. Medieval authors tend rather to emphasise Edward's power and ability as a monarch, as well as his holy life and eventual sanctification. The anonymous *Vita Aedwardi*, composed only a year after his death, compares Edward to Solomon and declares his reign a golden age in England.<sup>4</sup> Soon after, the early Norman kings began promoting Edward as a just and venerable legislator, asserting the legitimacy of their rule through their familial relationship with him.<sup>5</sup> Later still, thirteenth-century writers describe King Henry III's special devotion to Edward: Henry named his first-born son after the royal saint, oversaw the expansion of Westminster Abbey around Edward's tomb, and became the first post-Conquest ruler to be buried there.<sup>6</sup> In the centuries immediately following Edward's death the memory of the king became a powerful political force that could be harnessed to legitimise a variety of different agendas. The narrative of Edward's life continued to be told throughout the medieval period, his story transposed into different genres, languages, and contexts to suit the changing circumstances around it.

Despite Edward's reputation as the last major Anglo-Saxon king, one episode sits oddly within nearly all accounts of his life: as a young man, Edward spent twenty-five years in exile before becoming king of England. Although the Norman Conquest inevitably colours later accounts of Edward's reign, it was the Danish Conquest of England fifty years earlier that determined the unusual course of Edward's early life. In 1013 Sveinn Haraldsson, king of Denmark, attacked England; the young prince Edward, along with his brother Alfred and mother Emma, was sent by his father, King Æthelred, to take refuge with Emma's family in Normandy.<sup>7</sup> The accession of Sveinn's son, King Cnut, to the throne in 1016 only confirmed Edward and Alfred's disinheritance. Despite a number of abortive attempts on their part to reclaim the throne, the Danes remained firmly in control of England until Cnut's death in 1035. Only several months after the death of Cnut's son Harthacnut in 1042 was Edward finally crowned at the age of thirty-eight. Thus, although he died a king, Edward's social

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<sup>4</sup> *Vita Aedwardi regis qui apud Westmonasterium resquiescit. The Life of King Edward to Rests at Westminster*, ed. and trans. Frank Barlow (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1962), 3.

<sup>5</sup> Janelle Greenberg, *The Radical Face of the Ancient Constitution: St Edward's 'Laws' in Early Modern Political* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 2009, 55-61.

<sup>6</sup> Paul Binski, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets: Kingship and the Representation of Power, 1200-1400* (New Haven, Yale UP), 1-5.

<sup>7</sup> On Edward's time in Normandy, see Simon Keynes, 'The Æthelings in Normandy', *Anglo-Norman Studies XIII: Proceedings of the Battle Conference, 1990*, ed. Marjorie Chibnall (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 1991), 173-205 and Elisabeth van Houts, 'Edward and Normandy', *Edward the Confessor: The Man and Legend*, ed. Richard Mortimer (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2009), 63-76.

and political status was uncertain for much of his early life, and his exile in Normandy represents a problematic, potentially unkingly beginning for any author who sets out to write his *vita*. Nevertheless, it will be shown below that exile is a surprisingly malleable concept: the nature and reasons for the exile, the consequences of exile on the protagonist's state of mind, and the social and political implications of exile upon the wider community, are all issues that can be re-interpreted and re-figured depending on the story each author wishes to tell.

### The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*

Aspects of Edward's life are described in a number of contemporary or near-contemporary Latin sources, such as the *Encomium Emma Reginae* and the chronicle of William of Jumièges.<sup>8</sup> The earliest vernacular account of his reign is, perhaps unsurprisingly, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. The *Chronicle* prose only briefly notes the circumstances surrounding Edward's exile: under the year 1013, it relates simply that, 'se cyning sende Ælfun bisceop mid þam æþelingum Eadwearde 7 Ælfrede ofer sæ, þæt he hi bewitan sceolde' (the king sent Bishop Ælfun with the princes Edward and Alfred across the sea, so that he should look after them).<sup>9</sup> In death, however, Edward is commemorated in verse, and it is in the *Chronicle* poem known as *The Death of Edward* that the implications of his exile in Normandy are explored in detail.<sup>10</sup> In the poetic text, Edward's exile emerges as a key aspect of his life and reign:<sup>11</sup>

Wæs a bliðemod    bealuleas kyng,  
þeah he lange ær,    lande bereafod,  
wunode wræclastum    wide geond eorðan,  
syððan Cnut ofercom    kynn Æðelredes  
and Dena weolden    deore rice

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<sup>8</sup> For an overview of the relevant sources, see Richard Mortimer, 'Edward the Confessor: The Man and the Legend', *Edward the Confessor: the Man and the Legend*, ed. Richard Mortimer (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2009), 1-32.

<sup>9</sup> *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition Vol. 6, MS D*, ed. G. P. Cubbin (Woodbridge: Brewer, 1996), 58. All translations are my own unless otherwise noted. Manuscripts C, D, and E of the *Chronicle* cover Edward's reign, although the poetic *Death of Edward* is only recorded in C and D. For a discussion of the principle differences between the manuscripts' representation of Edward, see Mortimer, 'Edward the Confessor', 5-14.

<sup>10</sup> The poem is cited under the year 1065 and was likely composed soon after the event. For a good overview of the *Chronicle* poems and a review of past scholarship, see Thomas Bredehoft, *Textual Histories: Readings in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 72-118.

<sup>11</sup> The Old English text is from Elliot Van Kirk Dobbie, *The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942), 25-26. Line numbers will be indicated in parentheses.

Engla landes    XXVIII

wintra gerimes,    welan brytnodon. (15-21)

The blameless king was always cheerful, although long before, bereft of land, he wandered the paths of exile far and wide throughout the world, after Cnut overcame the kin of Æthelred and Danes ruled the precious kingdom of England for twenty-eight years, and dispensed riches there.

A Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe has argued, *The Death of Edward* is highly traditional in form and content.<sup>12</sup> It is metrically regular throughout, and almost every half-line replicates formulaic structures found elsewhere in the Old English poetic corpus.<sup>13</sup> Edward is described in language typical of Anglo-Saxon lordship: he is 'Engla hlaford' (lord of the English, 1b), 'hæleða wealdend' (ruler of warriors, 8b), and 'kyningc kystum god' (king good in virtues, 23a).<sup>14</sup> It is notable, however, that this image of traditional lordship is combined with another well-known trope of Old English poetry, that of exile.<sup>15</sup> Like the Wanderer, the Seafarer, and the Grendel-kin, Edward dwells in the paths of exile (*wunian wræclastum*).<sup>16</sup> In place of the absent Edward, the Danes adopt the tropes of Anglo-Saxon kingship: as the *Chronicle* poet notes, it is they, not Edward, who dispense riches to their followers.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless,

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<sup>12</sup> Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe, 'Deaths and Transformations: Thinking Through the "End" of Old English Verse', *New Directions in Oral Theory*, ed. Mark C. Amodio (Tempe: Arizona Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2005), 167-69.

<sup>13</sup> O'Brien O'Keeffe documents the corresponding formulae for each half-line in 'Deaths and Transformations', 173-8. See also Julie Townsend's metrical classification of each half-line in 'Metre of the *Chronicle*-verse', *Studia Neophilologica* 68 (1996), 149.

<sup>14</sup> Further examples are given in O'Brien O'Keeffe, 'Deaths and Transformations', 168. Bredehoft also discusses the marked degree to which the poet seems to recycle expressions from earlier verses, many of which relate to kingship in *Textual Histories*, 112-13.

<sup>15</sup> There is a vast body of scholarship on the theme of exile in Old English literature, but see especially Stanley B. Greenfield, 'The Formulaic Expression of the Theme of "Exile" in Anglo-Saxon Poetry', *Speculum* 30.2 (1955), 200-6; Patrick Cook, 'The Bonds of Exile in "*The Wanderer*"', *Neophilologus* 80 (1996), 127-37; and, more recently, Stacy S. Klein, 'Gender and the Nature of Exile in Old English Elegies', *A Place to Believe In: Locating Medieval Landscapes*, ed. Claire Lees and Gillian Overing (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), 113-31.

<sup>16</sup> For a full list of similar expressions used in these works see the *Dictionary of Old English Web Corpus* (s.v. *wræclast*), ed. Antonette diPaolo Healey et al. (Toronto: Dictionary of Old English Project 2009). Available online at <http://tapor.library.utoronto.ca/doecorpus/>.

<sup>17</sup> O'Brien O'Keeffe gives a useful overview of this and other motifs associated with kingship in Old English literature in 'Heroic Values and Christian Ethics', *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, ed. Malcolm Godden and Michael Lapidge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 107-25.

Edward's triumphant return and defence of the homeland ultimately present his experience of exile in a heroic light. Indeed, the poet describes him almost as a saviour-figure upon his return:

Syððan forð becom freolice in geatwum  
kyningc kystum god, clæne and milde,  
Eadward se æðela, eðel bewerode,  
land and leode. (22-25a)

Then a king came forth, magnificent in arms, good in virtues, pure and merciful, the noble Edward defended his ancestral territory, the land and people.

No longer 'lande bereafod' (bereft of land), Edward now 'eðel bewerode' (defended his ancestral territory). Line 24 - *Eadward se æðela, eðel bewerode* - is the triumphant climax of the poem, with the alliteration and stress patterns of the Old English metre emphasising the closeness of the name of the king (*Eadward*), his political status (*se æðela*), and the homeland (the *eðel*).<sup>18</sup> Edward's return from exile is both a political and a religious triumph. As many scholars have shown, the link between geographical and religious exile was well-established in Anglo-Saxon literature.<sup>19</sup> Renée Trilling notes that Edward is figured as a quasi-Biblical hero in this poem: as in the Old English *Exodus* and *Genesis*, 'being deprived of *eðel* and forced to wander *on wræclastan* marks the breaking of faith with God; it is the fate suffered by Adam and Eve, by Cain, and by the Israelites in the desert, and it also informed the myth of migration that was so important to Anglo-Saxon cultural identity'.<sup>20</sup> The epic form of the Anglo-Saxon verse combines with the well-established trope of exile to present Edward as a 'hero of the faith', in contrast to the usurping Danes.<sup>21</sup> Exile is also a source of wisdom, as in the closing lines of *The Wanderer*, in which the protagonist is described as 'snottor on mode' (wise in mind) as he contemplates

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<sup>18</sup> On the connotations of the word *eðel*, see especially Nicholas Howe, 'Looking for Home in Anglo-Saxon England', *Home and Homelessness in the Medieval and Renaissance World*, ed. Nicholas Howe (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004), 146-47.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. the studies noted above, as well Stanley B. Greenfield, 'The Old English Elegies', *Continuations and Beginnings: Studies in Old English Literature*, ed. E. G. Stanley (London: Nelson, 1966), 147-60.

<sup>20</sup> Renée Trilling, *The Aesthetics of Nostalgia: Historical Representation in Old English Verse* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 210. Trilling draws in particular on Nicholas Howe, *Migration and Mythmaking in Anglo-Saxon England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

<sup>21</sup> Trilling, *Aesthetics of Nostalgia*, 203.

the stability offered by God.<sup>22</sup> Edward too is described as wise in the closing lines of his poem, but in this case the king's wisdom is manifested through his choice of an heir:

And se froda swa þeah    befæste þæt rice  
heahþungenum menn,    Harolde sylfum,  
æþelum eorle. (29-31)

Nevertheless, the wise man thus entrusted the kingdom to the illustrious man, Harold himself, the noble earl.

According to the *Chronicle* poem at least, Edward's return from exile and his accession to the English throne brings to an end the unjustified – even un-godly – interruption of the Anglo-Saxon ruling house. When Edward entrusts his kingdom to Harold Godwinson, the political message is clear: only Harold, the chosen heir, can ensure the continuity of the Anglo-Saxon royal house; only he is Edward's legitimate successor.<sup>23</sup>

Poetry, however, can only influence political events so far, and Harold's dramatic death at the hands of the Normans ultimately reveals the impotence of the *Chronicle* poet's propagandising efforts. In this context it is understandable that many modern scholars find the poem irresistibly nostalgic. As Trilling observes:

the *Death of Edward* is the last example of alliterative metre in Old English. Here, the form itself is a ruin, and its reconstruction from fragments of older poems enacts the historical dialectic. Here, instead of resurrecting events, ideals, or actors from the past, the verse breathes life into a dying form, and its passing also mourns the passing of the cultural history it embodies.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Line 111 of *The Wanderer*, in *The Exeter Book*, ed. George Philip Krapp and Elliot van Kirk Dobbie (New York: Columbia University Press, 1936), 134-37. On this phrase cf. such studies as Robert E. Bjork, 'Sundor at Rune: The Voluntary Exile of the Wanderer', *Old English Literature: Critical Essays*, ed. R. M. Liuzza (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 315-327, and Thomas C. Rumble, 'From *Eardstapa* to *Snottor on Mode*: The Structural Principle of "The Wanderer"', *Modern Language Quarterly* 19 (1958), 225-30.

<sup>23</sup> It should be noted that Harold was not, in fact, a direct descendant of the Anglo-Saxon royal family, but rather the brother of Queen Edith and son of the powerful Earl Godwin. Propaganda such as the *Chronicle* verse was perhaps all the more important for this reason.

<sup>24</sup> Trilling, *Aesthetics of Nostalgia*, 211. Bredehoft argues in a similar vein that the *Chronicle* poet is unable to place Harold in the genealogy of the West Saxon kings and that, 'intentionally or otherwise, the 1065 poem implies that the end of the West Saxon dynasty will, in fact, coincide with the end of Anglo-Saxon history' (*Textual Histories*, 112).

The poem is indeed nostalgic in the way it employs the well-established formulae of the Anglo-Saxon poetic tradition. The poet reframes the events of the early eleventh century as heroic, even divinely ordained, rather than acknowledging the political chaos and social disorder that must have existed at the time. Nevertheless, the end of the Anglo-Saxon period was most likely not envisaged by the composer of the verse himself: the focus on Harold suggests that the poem was composed well before William appeared on the beaches of Pevensey. In his attempt to legitimise Harold's succession, the *Chronicle* poet looks to the future, not the past. The poet may be nostalgic in his use of Old English poetic formulae, but his is a muscular nostalgia: he uses the tropes of exile and lordship not to mark the end of the Anglo-Saxon period, but to celebrate – however briefly – its continuation.

### *La Vie d'Edouard le Confesseur*

Given the overtly political agenda of the *Chronicle* poet, it seems somewhat counterintuitive that multiple lives of Edward were composed during the post-Conquest period. However, reports of miracles at Edward's tomb began to surface shortly after his death, and when the tomb was opened in 1102 the king's body was found to be uncorrupted.<sup>25</sup> The first Latin life that explicitly commemorates Edward as a saint was written in 1138 by Osbert of Clare, prior of Westminster Abbey.<sup>26</sup> As the site of Edward's tomb, Westminster would have benefited greatly from his sanctification and Osbert drew on a number of sources, including the *Vita Aedwardi*, diplomatic texts and oral tradition, in an attempt to publicise the saint and his resting-place.<sup>27</sup> Although initially unsuccessful, the campaign to acknowledge Edward's sanctity eventually gained the support of King Henry II and Edward was officially canonised by Pope Alexander III in 1161.<sup>28</sup> Two years later his body was translated to a new shrine in Westminster Abbey in a ceremony presided over by Archbishop Thomas Becket and attended by the king. A new *vita* was commissioned for the occasion from Abbot Aelred of Rivaulx, who re-worked and expanded Osbert's text, enhancing in particular the dynastic link between Edward and

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<sup>25</sup> Miracles are first recorded in the *Vita Aedwardi* and then in the chronicles of Ordericus Vitalis and William of Malmesbury. See further Mortimer, 'Edward the Confessor', 32-40.

<sup>26</sup> Osbert's *Vita beati Eadwardi* is edited in 'La Vie de S. Edouard le Confesseur par Osbert de Clare', ed. Marc Bloch, *Analecta Bollandiana* 41 (1923), 5-131.

<sup>27</sup> Bloch discusses Osbert's sources in 'La Vie de S. Edouard', 44-56.

<sup>28</sup> On the process of Edward's canonisation, see B. W. Scholz, 'The Canonization of Edward the Confessor', *Speculum* 26 (1961), 38-60 and more recently Edina Bozoky, 'The Sanctity and Canonisation of Edward the Confessor', in Mortimer, *Edward the Confessor*, 173-86. On the development of Edward's cult see Barlow, *Edward the Confessor*, 256-88, and Binski, *Westminster Abbey*, 52-89.

Henry.<sup>29</sup> Only a few years later, likely in the late 1160s, Edward's life was translated into the vernacular of the new aristocracy, Anglo-Norman French.<sup>30</sup>

It is notable, given the number of prominent men involved in the promotion of Edward's canonisation, that *La Vie d'Edouard le Confesseur* is one of the earliest texts in French known to be by a woman. As the author writes:<sup>31</sup>

En Berkinges en l'abeïe  
Fu translatee ceste vie,  
Pur amur saint Edward la fist  
Une ancele al dulz Jhesu Crist. (5304-7)

This *Life* was translated at Barking in the Abbey; a handmaid of sweet Jesus Christ made it for Saint Edward's sake. (170)

Barking Abbey was one of the wealthiest religious communities in England during the medieval period, governed by abbesses from aristocratic and royal families.<sup>32</sup> The nuns would have been well aware of contemporary political and cultural developments outside their community and the story of a royal saint, speaking as it does to both religious and secular concerns, works to bridge the gap between the

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<sup>29</sup> Edited by Jacques-Paul Migne, 'Aelred of Rievaulx: *Vita sancti Edwardi regis et confessoris*', *Patrologia Latina* 195 (1855), 737-90. Translations are from 'The Life of Edward, King and Confessor', in *Aelred of Rievaulx: The Historical Works*, ed. M. L. Dutton and trans J. P. Freeland (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2005), 125-243. On the many ways in which the Norman immigrants used local, English saints to bolster their claim to England, see Hugh Thomas, *The English and the Normans: Ethnic Hostility, Assimilation, and Identity, 1066-c. 1220*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 283-97.

<sup>30</sup> The exact date of the poem is unknown, but it must post-date the composition in 1163 Aelred's Latin *Vita* and predate the death of Henry II, to whom it is dedicated, in 1189. See further Bliss, *La Vie d'Edouard*, 38-39.

<sup>31</sup> The Anglo-Norman text edited in *La Vie d'Edouard le Confesseur: Poème Anglo-Normand du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, ed. Östen Södergård (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells, 1948). English translations are by Jane Bliss, *La Vie d'Edouard le Confesseur by a Nun of Barking* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014), with minor amendments. Line and page numbers are given in parentheses. The identity of the Nun has been much discussed, particularly the question of whether or not she should be equated with Clemence of Barking, author of the *Vie de St Catherine*. The standard arguments for this are made in W. McBain, 'The Literary apprenticeship of Clemence of Barking', *Journal of Australasian Universities Modern Language and Literature Association* 9 (1958), 3-21. Bliss gives a useful summary of the debate in *La Vie d'Edouard*, 39-47.

<sup>32</sup> The text was likely composed during the abbacy either of Mary Becket, sister of Archbishop Thomas, or of King Henry II's illegitimate daughter Matilda. For the political context of the text and the importance of these two women, see Emily Mitchell, 'Patrons and Politics at Twelfth-Century Barking Abbey', *Revue Bénédictine* 113.2 (2003), 347-65. There is a growing body of scholarship on the Abbey and the wealth of literature produced there; see in particular the essays collected in Jennifer N. Brown and Donna Alfano Bussell, eds., *Barking Abbey and Medieval Literary Culture: Authorship and Authority in a Female Community* (York: York Medieval Press, 2012).



two worlds. The Nun's emphasis on the location of the text's translation clearly demonstrates her expectation that the work will travel beyond Barking itself, and indeed its preservation in two Continental manuscripts is testament to a wider readership.<sup>33</sup> Addressing her audience as 'seigneurs' ('lords', 'ladies and gentlemen', 4913), the Nun implies a mixed-gender rather than female-only audience, while her removal of the many Biblical references made by Aelred makes the text accessible to a lay reader.<sup>34</sup> In the passage above she describes the text as a 'vie' (life-story, saint's life) but also uses the term 'rumanz' (narrative in the French vernacular, 5297) to describe her work. Although texts in English continued to be produced in the post-Conquest period, Ian Short has observed that French was particularly suited to the production of monastic literature. As a romance language, French is more closely related to Latin than it is English; it was furthermore understood more widely in Europe.<sup>35</sup> Short argues that in twelfth-century England Anglo-Norman French was 'thus able to form a ready and natural bridge between the traditionally juxtaposed religious and secular cultures'.<sup>36</sup> It will be seen that the *Vie d'Edouard* was just such a bridge, not only linguistically but thematically: as the Nun transposes the Latin saint's life into vernacular verse, she demonstrates the universal applicability of Edward's experience of exile, drawing from it a religious message that extends well beyond the cloister.

As part of this process, Edward's exile is given even greater prominence than in the *Chronicle* poem. In part, this is because Edward was descended not only through the Anglo-Saxon kings but also from the Norman ducal family through his mother, Queen Emma. The Nun expands on Emma's role from the information given in Aelred's *Vita*.<sup>37</sup> After briefly enumerating Edward's Anglo-Saxon forebears, the Nun devotes a lengthy introduction to Emma and her family:

Li reis Edelred prist puis femme,

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<sup>33</sup> The work is preserved in three manuscripts dating from the thirteenth century, all of which are incomplete. They are London, British Library MS Additional 70513 (the Campsey Manuscript), fols. 55v-85v; Rome, Vatican Library, MS Reg. Lat 489, fols. 1r-35r; and Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fr. 1416, fols. 157-181r. All are available through the *Electronic Campsey Corpus* ([http://margot.uwaterloo.ca/campsey/cmphome\\_e.html](http://margot.uwaterloo.ca/campsey/cmphome_e.html)). On the manuscript context see further Södergård, *La Vie d'Edouard*, 46-53.

<sup>34</sup> See further Bliss, *La Vie d'Edouard*, 47-49. Clemence of Barking also addresses her audience as *seigneurs*; Duncan Roberson discusses the importance of this address creating a common cultural ground for courtly and monastic audiences in 'Writing in the Textual Community: Clemence of Barking's *Life of St Catherine*', *French Forum* 21.1 (1996), 25.

<sup>35</sup> Ian Short, 'Patrons and Polyglots: French Literature in Twelfth-Century England', *Anglo-Norman Studies XIV: Proceedings of the Battle Conference, 1991*, ed. Marjorie Chibnall (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1992), 236-37.

<sup>36</sup> Short, 'Patrons and Polyglots', 237.

<sup>37</sup> Aelred describes her simply as 'Emma, daughter of Richard' and 'this most glorious Norman queen' (*The Historical Works*, 131-32).

Mut noble et bele, si out num Emme.  
 Filie est al duc de Normandie,  
 Nobles hom, mut de sainte vie.  
 La hautesce de sun parage  
 Et le bruit et le vassalage,  
 La seinteé de son bon pere,  
 De sun nevu et de son friere  
 Et lur force et lur grant vertu  
 Est ore a tut le mund seü.  
 Iceo set uncore Engleterre  
 Ki par les sens fine sa guerre  
 Par le gloriüs rei Henri  
 Ki de ceo saint lignage eissi  
 Et ore Engleterre a franchie  
 Et religiün enrichie. [...]

Li reis Eldered fist que sage,  
 Quant femme prist de tel linage,  
 Aprés que ses heirs puissant traire  
 De Deu amer et de bien faire. (95-110, 131-34)

Then King Æthelred took a wife, most noble and beautiful, her name was Emma. She is the daughter to the Duke of Normandy, that noble man of saintly life. Her high birth, her reputation and courage, the saintliness of her good father, her nephew, and her brother,<sup>38</sup> together with their valour and virtue, are now known to everybody. England knows this still, for through her own is her war ended: by the glorious King Henry, who sprang from this godly lineage and who has freed England and enriched her Church. [...] King Æthelred did wisely when he took a wife of such lineage: his heirs were able to take after her in loving God and doing good. (60)

Thanks to his Norman mother, Edward legitimises Norman rule in England. The Nun reminds her audience that Emma and Edward are ancestors of the current king, Henry II, whose reign marked the end of the civil war between Stephen and Matilda. The parallel drawn between Edward and Henry

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<sup>38</sup> Respectively, the Norman dukes Richard I the Fearless, Robert I the Magnificent, and Richard II the Good.

further implies a likeness between the Anarchy period of the twelfth century and the Danish wars of the eleventh. In this way she suggests that the valour and virtue necessary to ensure peace after such periods of turmoil come from the Norman side of Edward's family, rather than his Anglo-Saxon ancestors.

It is entirely in keeping with this new political agenda that Edward's exile is portrayed as an offence against divine order, even more strongly than in the *Chronicle* poem. The Danes are unquestionably the villains of the poem, and the Nun indulges in long descriptions of their violence and arrogance (e.g. 283-92 and 355-74). On one hand, she portrays Normandy as the antithesis to war-torn England, describing Edward's education in reading, chivalry and religion in the house of his uncle. She exclaims, 'En la maisun a sun aol / A tuz feseit joie, a nul dol' (313-14) (in the house of his kinsman he gave joy, never sorrow, to everybody, 66). On the other, the Nun adds to the Anglo-Norman text an emotional resonance of sorrow and despair that is not present in earlier versions of Edward's story. The Nun dwells at length on King Æthelred's decision to send his sons to Normandy:

Li reis Edelred vit sa terre  
Arse, destruite par la guerre.  
Mut duta que ne fust surpris,  
K'il et ses fiz fuissent mendis.  
Sanz delaiance par penser  
Prist ses enfanz ou sa muillier,  
En Normandie les tramet  
U troverent seür recept.  
Despuis qu'il les out mis en pais,  
Alegié fu d'un pesant feis. (293-302)

King Æthelred saw his land burned, destroyed by the war. He was very much afraid of being taken, and that he and his sons would be beggared. Without wasting time in deliberation he took his children, with his wife, and sent them into Normandy where they would be safely received. As soon as he had placed them somewhere peaceful, he felt relieved of a heavy burden.

(65)

This focus on Æthelred's interiority is not found in Aelred's *Vita*, nor in the Anglo-Saxon material. The Danish attack is shown to have emotional, as well as political and religious, consequences for the people of England, and particularly for its ruling family. Indeed, the emotional implications of the Danish onslaught affect not only the king but the land itself. As the Nun writes,

Repaierer voil a Engleterre  
Ki uncore maneit en gerre.  
Escharie est de bons amis  
Et pleine de forz enemis.  
Crüelment fu de tuz robee,  
Par tut aveit dol et criée.  
Par tut esteit occisiun  
N'i ot fait relais par raisun.  
Par tut aveit suspirs et plurs,  
Gemissemenz et granz dolurs.  
Par tut aveit desesperance  
Et par tut se mustreit dotance. (355-66)

I want to turn now to England, which is still at war. The country is bereft of friends and filled with strong enemies. Everything had been cruelly torn away everywhere there was sorrow and lamenting. Everywhere there was slaughter with no respite for any reason. Everywhere there were sighs and tears, groaning and great torment. Everywhere there was despair and everywhere terror was seen. (68)

Bereft of friends, the land is almost personified in this passage. Grief and anguish are felt *par tut*, the repetition of this phrase becoming a grim refrain of continual suffering. Affective display – *suspirs et plurs* – is likewise everywhere, and the lack of an identifiable subject who cries and sighs gives the impression that these displays of emotion exude from the very land itself.

It is striking that the Nun employs similar language in passages that describe Edward's experience of exile, drawing a direct emotional parallel between the exiled king and his land. Of Edward, the Nun writes:

Ore esteit Edward sul sans frere  
Et orfanin de sun bon pere.  
Guerpi l'out tute l'aïe humaine,  
Mes l'aïe Deu out procheine.  
De sun regne esteit eisilié  
A force, a dol et a peché. [...]  
De tutes pars l'asaut dolur,  
Anguisse, pesance et errur. (621-6, 633-4)

Now Edward was alone without a brother and bereft of his good father. All human aid had abandoned him, but God's aid was near. He was exiled from his realm by force, by pain and by sin. [...] From all sides grief assaults him, anguish, heaviness, and anxiety. (73)

It was noted that in the *Chronicle* verse the line *Eadward se æðela, eðel bewerode* emphasises the connection between Edward and the land; in the Anglo-Norman poem, emotion and affect work to create a similar link.<sup>39</sup> England is bereft of friends, assaulted by the Danes and filled with grief; Edward too is alone, buffeted by grief and anxiety. Unlike the land, however, Edward has a voice. His grief is expressed not through tears and sighs but through direct speech in an emotional appeal to God. He says:

Sire, bien sez que n'ai aïe  
En ma force ne en ma vie.  
Ceus dunt jeo ai greignur bosoing  
Sunt de mei desevré et loing.  
Encuntre mei sunt mes ami,  
Mes procheins sunt encontre mi.  
Sire, bien sez morz est mi pieres,  
Par traïsun sunt morz mes frieres  
Et mes neveuz sunt eissiliez,  
Crüelment de terre chaciez. (647-56)

Lord, I know very well that I can expect no help from my own strength nor from my own life. Those I have greatest need of are separated from me and far away. My friends are against me, against me are my nearest ones. Lord, I understand that my father is dead, my brothers are dead by treason and my nephews are exiled, cruelly chased out of the land. (73)

Unlike the heroic king of the *Chronicle* poem, who defends his people with military force, the Anglo-Norman Edward is a saint-in-waiting: he relies on God to help him regain his throne. Having established his state of loneliness and grief, he promises that if God will help him to reclaim his

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<sup>39</sup> As Jennifer Brown observes, the bodies of both king and saints frequently stand metaphorically for the nations they represent; she argues that this motif is particularly pronounced in the case of Edward, who fulfils both roles. See Jennifer N. Brown, 'Body, Gender and Nation in the Lives of Edward the Confessor', *Barking Abbey and Medieval Literary Culture: Authorship and Authority in a Female Community*, ed. Jennifer N. Brown and Donna Alfano Bussell (York: York Medieval Press, 2012), 149.

kingdom, he will go on pilgrimage to Rome. When Cnut and his son Harthacnut conveniently die only a few lines later, Edward returns to England and is proclaimed king. In this text, exile is a far more emotional experience than in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. The language of isolation and grief, as well as the affective performance of emotion itself, combine to create an equivalence between Edward and his native land. Exile is, somewhat paradoxically, the experience that binds Edward and England together, despite their geographical separation.

The shared experience of exile is further developed by the Nun in a section of around sixty lines that is entirely added to the source-text. In this section, exile becomes a universal experience as the Nun compares Edward's geographical separation from England with humanity's exile from God:

Pur ceo ke lui Engleis perdirent  
La benurté qu'il jadis virent,  
De tant l'unt il plus desiree  
Ke par Edward fust restoree  
Et pur ceo le plus s'esjoïssent  
Ke sanz la perte ne feïssent;  
Et nus redevum atel faire:  
Vers cele grant benurté traire  
A la quele fumes criëz,  
Dunt diables nus ot sevez.  
Par lui et par nostre pechié  
Fumes lungement eissilié. (739-50)

Because the English lost the blessedness they once knew, so much more did they desire it to be restored by Edward, and so they rejoiced more than they would have done without the loss. And we too must do likewise: draw towards that great blessedness for which we were created, and from which the Devil has separated us. By him, and by our sin, we were long in exile. (74)

In this section, the Nun explicitly equates the invading Danes with the Devil, and they are soon banished to hell, 'lur propre terre' (their own land, 763). The Nun exhorts her audience to be vigilant against their return and draws a direct comparison between Edward and Christ:<sup>40</sup>

Or prium Deu, en qui semblance

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<sup>40</sup> On the Nun's use of the *imitatio Christi* topos, see further Bliss, *La Vie d'Edouard*, 3-6.

Edward fist as suens deliverance,  
Des mains as durs Daneis nus gette  
Et a nostre herité nus mette. (785-88)

Now let us pray to God, in whose likeness Edward achieved the deliverance of his people, to take us out of the hands of the cruel Danish and set us into our heritage. May Jesus Christ give us our own, as Edward did for his people. (75)

It was noted above that Anglo-Saxon understanding of exile had a strong religious resonance, and this theme is developed even more explicitly in the Anglo-Norman text: as the figure of Edward blurs into that of Christ, England metaphorically transforms into the heavenly kingdom. We are all exiles, the Nun reminds her audience; only Christ can return us to our *herité*. The universality of this message is entirely fitting for the diverse audience imagined by its author. In this reworked version of Edward's story, the Nun's message is no less compelling for its obvious didacticism, as the narrative of Edward's exile becomes part of the communal story of Christian salvation.

### The *South English Legendary*

Despite Anglo-Norman French offering a suitable vehicle for Edward's story in the twelfth century, English once again became the vernacular language of choice at the end of the thirteenth. The earliest Middle English *Life* of Edward is based, like the Anglo-Norman *Vie*, on Aelred's Latin text; unlike the earlier work it forms part of a larger hagiographic compilation in the *South English Legendary* (*SEL*).<sup>41</sup> The *SEL* was composed in south-west England, likely around Gloucester or Worcester, and became one of the most widely read texts in the medieval period: over sixty manuscripts and 300 individual narratives survive today.<sup>42</sup> The compilation brings together saints' lives and festival readings

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<sup>41</sup> The title of the *South English Legendary* is a modern convention. As Thomas Litzka has noted, there is significant variation in the extant manuscript collections and the text should be thought of as a collection of *South English Legendaries* rather than as a single, unified text. See Thomas R. Litzka, 'The *South English Legendaries*' [2001], *Rethinking the South English Legendaries*, ed. Heather Blurton and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), 23-65.

<sup>42</sup> This is according to Heather Blurton and Jocelye Wogan-Browne in their introduction to *Rethinking the South English Legendaries*, 3. As they note, Manfred Görlach counts slightly fewer in his comprehensive study of the complex manuscript history of the *SEL*, *The Textual Tradition of the South English Legendary* (Leeds: School of English, University of Leeds, 1974). It should be noted that the *Life of Edward* is only extant in three manuscripts (Görlach's A, B, and J, the principle manuscript), and therefore perhaps less popular than the overall number suggests. Nevertheless, English versions of the *Life of Edward* continued to be produced throughout the period, finally appearing in 1483 one of the earliest books to be printed

arranged in order of the ecclesiastical year. Set in loose, seven-stress lines of rhyming couplets, the individual narratives are relatively short and lively when compared with those in similar collections. Although the text no doubt originated in a monastic context, it is well suited to reading aloud and was likely aimed primarily at a lay audience.<sup>43</sup> The use of English as a language of instruction during the late thirteenth century has been much commented on, by both medieval and modern writers. *Cursor Mundi*, an anonymous poem of religious history, famously opens with a prologue in which the author defends his decision to translate the text into English rather than French, as it is made 'For the loue of Inglis lede, / Inglis lede of England, / For the comun at understand'.<sup>44</sup> Dating to c. 1300, *Cursor Mundi* is witness to the shifting and sometimes conflicting status of English and French at this time.<sup>45</sup> Although the *SEL* does not explicitly engage with the question of language choice, its use of English cannot be ignored. Indeed, Anne Thompson argues that in its apparent lack of engagement with the issue, the *SEL* presents the English language as a 'natural' choice, one that 'implies that there is no choice, just a use of what is "out there"'.<sup>46</sup> In the case of Edward's *Life* at least, such a claim is patently disingenuous, as the text had been translated into a second Anglo-Norman poem only a few decades before. Composed by the well-known chronicler Matthew Paris for Eleanor of Provence, wife of King Henry III, the text is long and lavishly illustrated; the use of Anglo-Norman in this context reinforces the social and political prestige claimed by the royal family through their connection to Edward.<sup>47</sup> In

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in English, Caxton's *Golden Legend* Gloucester. The Middle English *Lives* are edited by Grace Edna Moore in *The Middle English Verse Life of Edward the Confessor* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1942). Citations from the *SEL Life* will be from this edition, with line numbers indicated in parentheses.

<sup>43</sup> On the style of the *SEL*, see Anne B. Thompson, *Everyday Saints and the Art of Narrative in the South English Legendary* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003).

<sup>44</sup> *Cursor Mundi (The Cursor o the World): A Northumbrian Poem of the XIVth Century in Four Versions*, ed. Richard Morris, 3 vols. (London: Early English Text Society, 1874-93), lines 234-36 of MS Cotton Vespasian Aiii.

<sup>45</sup> The increasing use of English as a written language in this period has been much discussed in recent years; see especially Nicholas Watson, 'The Politics of Middle English Writing', *The Idea of the Vernacular: An Anthology of Middle English Literary Theory 1280-1520*, ed. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne et al. (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1999), 331-52; and Thorlac Turville-Petre, *England the Nation: Language, Literature, and National Identity, 1290-1340* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 27-70.

<sup>46</sup> Thompson, *Everyday Saints*, 53. This is in marked contrast to the *Chronicle* Robert of Gloucester, adapted from the *SEL Life of Edward*. As Thompson notes, Robert's anti-Norman sentiments are openly expressed in terms of a division between the French and English languages (*Everyday Saints*, 54-55).

<sup>47</sup> The text is edited Kathryn Young Wallace in *La Estoire de Seint Aedward le Rei* (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1983). There is unfortunately not space to discuss it further here.



contrast, the inclusion of Edward's *Life* in the English-language *SEL* signals a shift in its political affiliation and, consequently, in the way Edward's exile is presented.

Edward is one of several Anglo-Saxon saints in the *SEL*, and he joins such figures as St Kenelm, King Edmund, and St Cuthbert to tell the story not only of Christian martyrdom but of English religious history. Much recent scholarship on the *SEL* has focused on its inclusion of Anglo-Saxon saints and the so-called 'Englising' of the collection.<sup>48</sup> Scholars such as Thorlac Turville-Petre, Jill Frederick, and Renee Hamelinck argue that the *Lives* of the Anglo-Saxon saints reflect a growing sense of English national identity, perhaps even nationalism, during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.<sup>49</sup> The *Life of Edward* participates in this process as the opening lines of the poem announce the importance of Edward's story in the broader narrative of English history. As the poet observes:

Seint edward þe gode king riȝt is to haue in mende  
Ibore he was in englond ichol sigge of whiche kende (1-2)

The importance of remembering Edward – of keeping his story *in mende* – is linked from the very beginning of the poem with his birth location of England and a description of his *kende*, a word that could refer both to the inherent qualities or character of a person and to his ancestry, family affiliation, or rank.<sup>50</sup> The Middle English poet, however, paints a bleak picture of treachery and fratricide at the heart of Edward's family: Edward's father Æthelred, we are told, became king only because his mother orchestrated the murder of his half-brother, Edward the Martyr (114-22).<sup>51</sup> Although Æthelred himself is a 'man of gode lyue' (23) and blameless in the killing, the poet quotes Archbishop Dunstan's prophecy that there will be 'sorwe ynou & wo' throughout his reign as a result of this act (20). Indeed, reminders of the royal family's original sin punctuate the text as kings rise and fall: there are further

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<sup>48</sup> This is the term used by Klaus Jankofsky in 'Entertainment, Edification and Popular Education in the *South English Legendary*', *Journal of Popular Culture* 11.3 (1977), 707-17; and in 'National Characteristics in the Portrayal of English Saints in the *South English Legendary*', *Images of Sainthood in Medieval England*, ed. Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Timea Szell (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 81-93.

<sup>49</sup> See Jankofsky's work above, as well as Renee Hamelinck, 'St Kenelm and the Legends of the English Saints in the *South English Legendary*', *Companion to Early Middle English Literature*, ed. N.H.G.E. Veldhoen and H. Aertsen, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1995), 19-28; Jill Frederick, 'The *South English Legendary*: Anglo-Saxon Saints and National Identity', *Literary Appropriations of the Anglo-Saxons from the Thirteenth to the Twentieth Century*, ed. Donal Scragg and Carol Weinberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 57-73; and Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*, 59-67.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. the *Electronic Middle English Dictionary* (s.v. *kende*), ed. Frances McSparran et al. (Kalamazoo, MI: University of Kalamazoo, [2001] 2013). Available online at <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med>.

<sup>51</sup> The Nun of Barking omits the episode entirely, but there is a brief reference to it in Aelred's *Genealogy of the Kings of the English* (composed 1153-54); see *Aelred of Rievaulx: The Historical Works*, 104.

references to the murder just before the equally treacherous killing of Edmund Ironside (127-30), and again when the poet describes the unlawful accession of Harthacnut to the English throne (222- 24). The repeated references to this episode – to a murder that cannot be forgotten – cast Edward’s family in a far more negative light than in the earlier *vitae*: in this text, Edward is virtuous in spite of his ancestry, not because of it. The references to Edward the Martyr and St Dunstan remind the audience of an alternative affiliation available to Edward: they too are Anglo-Saxon saints, and their lives are also commemorated in the *SEL*. Their inclusion in the tale of Edward reinforces the king’s status as part of the community of Anglo-Saxon saints, rather than his genealogical position within the royal families of England.<sup>52</sup>

At first glance, the representation of the English people in the *SEL* sits oddly with the idea of a nascent English identity. The royal family is not alone in doing wrong; their crimes simply mirror the corruption of the land as a whole. Treachery is rife throughout England and directly responsible for Cnut’s victory over King Æthelred:

so moche trecherie þer was in engelond þo  
 þet no man nuste wham leue ne wham his conseil telle  
 for men here in englond ech oþer gan quelle  
 felaues slo oþer & al dai þer com go  
 englich men wel þilke as traitors þo  
 & turned azen hor owe lond to king k[n]out hor fo  
 ho miȝte here of englond more sor oþer wo  
 traisoun me miȝte ise ynou as me mai euermo  
 so þet þet lond of englond ȝede alto noȝte þo  
 so þet edmond hireside king of englonde  
 In þis wore islawe was wit tresoun ic vnþerstonde (134-44)

The horror expressed in this passage at the treachery of the English is similar to that in the Latin and Anglo-Norman versions, but the repeated emphasis on the *location* of that treachery, with the word *engelond* or *englich* repeated in every second line, emphasises their degeneration rather than that of their enemies.<sup>53</sup> So morally bankrupt are the English in the *SEL* version of Edward’s life that it falls to

<sup>52</sup> As noted above, the composition of the different *SEL* manuscripts varies considerably, but the *Lives* of Edward the Martyr and of St Dunstan are both present in all three manuscripts containing the *Life of Edward* (Görlach, *Textual Tradition*, 151-25 and 168-70).

<sup>53</sup> The corresponding passage in the Anglo-Norman *Vie* contains only two references to *li Engleis* (539, 551); Aelred mentions ‘the island’ twice (138).

the Danish invader, King Cnut himself, to punish them. The Middle English poet notes that Edmund Ironside was killed by his own (English) chamberlain, and that this chamberlain was in turn executed by Cnut. As the poet notes approvingly, 'þei he were luþerman an gode dede he dude do / for me ne mai neuer traitors do to moche wo' (181-2). The Danes are elsewhere presented as the same arrogant, church-burning hooligans described in the Latin and Anglo-Norman texts (e.g. 61-64, 83-90), but the Middle English author's relentless focus on internal treachery emphasises the complicity of the English people in their own suffering.

Edward's exile from England is therefore presented less as a painful separation caused by the Danish invasion and more as a consequence of the crimes of his own people. Unlike the Anglo-Norman text, the Middle English *Life* does not describe Edward's stay in Normandy as a form of exile *per se*; King Æthelred's decision to send his sons away is merely a practical one, as they are not yet old enough to fight (65-70). At first, Edward 'wax wel in normandie', displaying a similarly precocious piety as that described in the Anglo-Norman and Latin texts (75). However, as the wave of treachery carries off Edward's brothers (through death), his mother (through marriage) and his nephews (through banishment), the poet foregrounds Edward's isolation. The loss of his kin seems to paralyse the prince and make him question his affiliation to both England and Normandy: 'whiþer schal ic nou go', he asks God helplessly (196). Unlike earlier versions of the tale, Edward does not explicitly ask God to return his kingdom; rather, his request for divine help is of a more general nature as he promises, 'zif þi wille is to sauī me in þis grete wo / Ich bihote to honouri þe as my lord euermo' (201-2). Edward eventually becomes king not because he appeals directly to God but because the people of England finally acknowledge his natural right to the throne. As the narrator notes, 'englond was þo to longe out of kende ibroz't' through the Danish occupation (222), but this state is rectified by the English people themselves after the deaths of Cnut and Harthacnut: 'þo wente ford men of englond as god zef þet cas / & chose seint edward to hor king þet riȝt eir & kende was' (225-6). Through the acknowledgement of Edward's *kende* the people atone for their sins. In this way, Edward's return to England and his accession to the throne are presented as a triumph for the community as a whole; Edward himself is the relatively passive vehicle through which his subjects achieve redemption, rather than the driving force behind it.

As noted above, Aelred's *Vita* was commissioned as part of the celebrations surrounding the official canonisation of Edward at Westminster Abbey. All versions of the life describe in detail the building of the abbey, which forms an important counterpart to Edward's exile. The abbey is built in place of Edward's promised pilgrimage to Rome because his subjects, fearing another Danish incursion,

beg him not to leave the country. In the Middle English poem the laments of Edward's subjects at this point are described in more emotive detail than Edward's own expressions of sorrow during his exile:

her was deol & sorue ynou þo al þis was ised  
wop & crie & siking for hi dradde sore echon  
to be destrud of luþuermen of denmarc hor fon [...]  
simple men of þe lond þo hi hurde þis  
wope & wrong hor honed þet deol it was iwis (388-94)

Klaus Jankofsky has observed that the *SEL* is distinctive from other, similar collections in its heightened portrayal of emotion and physical suffering.<sup>54</sup> Expanded descriptions of the pain and mental anguish experienced by the saintly protagonists appeal, he argues, to the empathy of the audience, constructing an emotional history of the English people. In the *Life of Edward* the poet's focus on the people's fear and sorrow functions in a similar way, emphasising the importance and agency of the population as a whole. Only when moved by the anguish of his people does Edward send messengers to Rome for advice, and only then is he commanded to build the abbey. The re-founding of Westminster therefore mirrors the tumultuous period of the Danish occupation and the role the English people played in restoring Edward to his throne. The religious implications are stated clearly in this case, as St Peter himself appears miraculously to a hermit to give further details about the abbey: he specifies the location – 'beside londoun is a stude atis half in þe west side / þet ich ches to me & louie wel þet me specþ of wide / [...] i-clepeþ hit is þerneye' (487-90) – and notes that it was previously destroyed 'þorw men of oþer londe' (491). The association of Westminster with the Danish raids is further emphasised by Edward's decision, made at the same time, to abolish the tax first levied by his father Æthelred to fund the country's defence against the Danes. The poet clearly approves of this holy tax-cut; as he notes, 'elles hit hadde iben igadereþ perauntre to þis daie' (520). The re-building of Westminster Abbey thus represents the end-point of Danish involvement in England, a conclusion that offers long-term benefits to the English people, both spiritually and financially. According to St Peter, the abbey will now serve as a 'laddere', 'wharbi angeles scholle alizte & to heuen stie / & bere to god manne bedes þet hi wollet to him crie' (496-98). In place of a physical journey to Rome, Edward provides his subjects with direct access to heaven without the need to leave the island.<sup>55</sup> The construction of Westminster

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<sup>54</sup> Jankofsky, 'Entertainment, Edification', 711.

<sup>55</sup> As Binski observes, all the important events of Edward's reign, including his miracles, are presented as occurring at Westminster, either in the palace or the abbey (*Westminster Abbey*, 5-6).

Abbey takes the place of Edward's promised pilgrimage; it is a symbol of exile inverted, a declaration of stability and permanence rooted in the English landscape.

The abbey functions not only as a ladder between heaven and earth but, after Edward's death, as a visible reminder of the connection between past and present. As noted above, Edward is only one of a number of Anglo-Saxon saints commemorated in the *SEL*. Not only does his *Life* reference events that take place in the tales of those who precede him chronologically, but Edward himself becomes a touchstone for those who come after. The importance of Westminster Abbey as a site of remembrance emerges clearly in *Life* of St Wulfstan, a tale that reprises many of the themes found in Edward's. It is set during the Norman, rather than the Danish, invasion, but the poet's description of the 'strange men' who invade the land is reminiscent of the earlier episode, as is his focus on betrayal from within:<sup>56</sup>

Ac alas þe tricherie . þat þo was and ȝut is  
þat broȝt þo Engelonde . alto grounde ywis  
Vor Englisse barons bycome somme . vntriwe and fals also  
To bitraie hom sulf and hore kyng. (76-79)

Having been appointed Bishop of Worcester by King Edward, Wulfstan refuses to accept the authority of King William after the Conquest. When William demands that he relinquish his position, Wulfstan proves the validity of his claim in a miracle that may be the source of King Arthur's sword in the stone: he plunges his episcopal staff into Edward's tomb in Westminster Abbey and no one is able to remove it until William acknowledges his mistake.<sup>57</sup> As the poet explains, Wulfstan is 'þe kundeste Englishe man' (96), a phrase, as Erin Mullally observes, that encompasses multiple meanings, from 'truest' or 'most proper' to 'most natural' or 'native'.<sup>58</sup> Wulfstan's resistance to William stems from his true English spirit, rooted (quite literally, through the immovable staff) in the monument built by Edward to mark the king's safe return from exile. Mullally argues that this episode 'reminds us of the power of the humble native hero, able to withstand foreign aggression'.<sup>59</sup> It is notable that in so doing, the poet echoes the opening lines of the *Life of Edward* and the poet's stated purpose there of remembering the

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<sup>56</sup> The *Life of St Wulfstan* is edited by Charlotte d'Evelyn and Anna J. Mill, in *The South English Legendary*, 3 vols. (London: Early English Text Society, 1956-59), I, 8-15. Line numbers will be indicated in parentheses.

<sup>57</sup> As argued by Marsha A. Dutton, 'The Staff in the Stone: Finding Arthur's Sword in the *Vita Sancti Edwardi* of Aelred of Rievaulx', *Arthuriana* 17.3 (2007), 3-30. For a thorough discussion of the episode and its sources, see Emma Mason, 'St Wulfstan's Staff: A Legend and its Uses', *Medium Aevum* 53.2 (1984), 157-179.

<sup>58</sup> Erin Mullally, 'The "Kundeste Englishe Man": The Englishing of St. Wulfstan of Worcester in the *South English Legendary*', *English Studies* 92.6 (2011), 601.

<sup>59</sup> Mullally, 'The "Kundeste Englishe Man"', 604.

saint through an enumeration of his *kende*, his qualities and affiliations. It has been seen that the poet's portrayal of the Anglo-Saxon royal family is not unequivocally positive in that text, nor indeed is his portrayal of the Anglo-Saxon people. However, the building of Westminster Abbey creates, to use Pierre Nora's term, a *lieu de mémoire*:<sup>60</sup> it is a place where future generations will come to venerate Edward and remember his story. In the *Life* of Wulfstan the abbey serves to bridge the gap between the Anglo-Saxon and Norman inhabitants of England, its miraculous quality acknowledged even by the Conqueror himself. Woven together with other *Lives* of English saints, the *Life* of Edward articulates a communal English identity, even if that identity is spiritually flawed. As Simon Gaunt observes, however, 'hagiography does not undermine or discard kinship; it subordinates physical, afinal kinship to the spiritual kinship of which all people may partake through God'.<sup>61</sup> As in the Anglo-Norman *Vie*, the Middle English *Life* demonstrates that salvation is only possible through the unifying force of Christianity. In the prologue to the *SEL* the poet reminds his audience of the importance of spiritual, rather than national or filial, kinship:

Nou blouweþ þe niwe frut . þat late bygan to springe  
 Þat to is kunde eritage . mankunne schal bringe  
 Þis nywe frut of wan ich speke . is oure Cristendom.<sup>62</sup>

The figure of Edward offers a model of Christian goodness that speaks to the history and concerns of an English audience. The reader is, however, urged to look beyond national affiliation and to seek out a more universal form of belonging, the *kunde heritage* offered through the daily veneration of the saints.

### *Játvarðar saga*

Perhaps the most surprising translation of Edward's story is to be found not in England, but in Iceland. Likely compiled during the fourteenth century, the Old Icelandic saga of Edward, known as *Játvarðar saga*, draws on an astonishing array of sources, including not only the Latin *vitae*, but also Latin and Anglo-Norman chronicles, Scandinavian sagas of the kings, English service books, and other

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<sup>60</sup> Cf. Pierre Nora et al., *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer, 3 vols. (New York: Columbia UP), 1996-98.

<sup>61</sup> Simon Gaunt, *Gender and Genre in Medieval French Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 199.

<sup>62</sup> Lines 1-3 of the *Banna Sanctorum* in *The South English Legendary*, ed. d'Evelyn and Mill, I, 1-3.

hagiographical texts.<sup>63</sup> The existence of an Icelandic account of Edward's life is not in itself remarkable, as the relationship between England and Scandinavia had been long established. The accession of King Cnut to the throne of England was the culmination of over two centuries of Scandinavian raiding, trading, and settlement in England, while the Normans themselves were of Scandinavian descent. The history of England is well documented in the literature of medieval Scandinavia because for much of that period it was a shared history.<sup>64</sup> It is therefore no surprise that the Icelandic account of Edward's life has much in common with those already discussed, but with one important exception: it does not contain an account of the king's exile in Normandy. Of Edward's accession to the throne, the author notes only:<sup>65</sup>

Nú er at segja frá hinum helga Játvarði konungi – at öll Kristni í Englandi gladdizt af því frelsi, er þeir höfðu fengit eptir Knút konung [hinn ríka ok sonu hans], at taka Játvarð til konungs, er kominn var af [réttri ok] fornri konunga-ætt í Englandi. (389)

Now it will be told of the holy King Edward – that all Christians in England rejoiced in that freedom that they had received after King Cnut the Great and his son, to receive Edward as king, who was descended from the legitimate, ancient lineage of the kings in England.

Instead, *Játvarðar saga* contains a curious account of migration on the part of the king's subjects: after the Conquest, the saga author relates, members of the Anglo-Saxon nobility lead an emigration to Byzantium, establishing a new English colony in the Crimean peninsula.<sup>66</sup> Although this tale occurs

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<sup>63</sup> The saga chiefly survives in two manuscripts, both dating to the latter half of the fourteenth century. Stockholm Perg. fol. No. 5 is a collection of religious works, mainly *vitae* of Icelandic bishops, while *Flateyjarbók* (GKS 1005 fol.) is a collection of kings' sagas and related material. It took Christine Fell three separate articles to detail all of the sources the text draws on: 'The Icelandic Saga of Edward the Confessor: The Hagiographic Sources', *Anglo-Saxon England* 1 (1972), 247-58; 'The Icelandic Saga of Edward the Confessor: Its Version of the Anglo-Saxon Emigration to Byzantium', *Anglo-Saxon England* 3 (1974), 179-96; and 'English History and Norman Legend in the Icelandic Saga of Edward the Confessor', *Anglo-Saxon England* 6 (1977), 223-36.

<sup>64</sup> On this subject, see Richard Dance, 'North Sea Currents: Old English–Old Norse Relations, Literary and Linguistic', *Literature Compass* 1 (2004), 1–10 and, more generally, D. M. Hadley and J. D. Richards, eds., *Cultures in Contact: Scandinavian Settlement in England in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002).

<sup>65</sup> The saga is edited by Guðbrandur Vigfússon in *Icelandic Sagas and Other Historical Documents Relating to the Settlements and Descents of the Northmen of the British Isles*, 4 vols. (London, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1887-94), I, 388-400. Page numbers will be given in parentheses.

<sup>66</sup> For the historical background to this migration and a discussion of the sources, see Krijnie N. Ciggaar, 'L'émigration anglaise à Byzance après 1066: Un nouveau texte en latin sur les Varangues à Constantinople', *Revue des Études Byzantines* 32.1 (1974), 301-42; and Jonathan Shepard, 'The English and Byzantium: A Study of their Role in the Byzantine Army in the Later Eleventh Century', *Traditio* 29 (1973), 53-92.

nowhere else in the *vitae* of King Edward, and indeed only in a handful of sources at all, the episode reprises many of the themes found in accounts of Edward's exile. The focus on home and the reasons one might be forced to leave one's home are just as strong in this section as in Edward's laments elsewhere; but the displacement of these sentiments from the king to his subjects radically alters the way ideas of home and exile function in the text.

The Anglo-Saxon migration is prompted by the Norman Conquest and the unwillingness of a group of English noblemen to accept the new ruler. As the Icelandic narrator relates:

Þá er höfðingjar Enskir urðu vísir, at Danir vildu ekki liðsinna þeim móti Viljálmi; – en þeir voru ráðnir til at þeir vildu eigi under hans ríki búa, – þá letu þeir óðul sín, ok flýðu brott af landi með mykinn her. Þar voru fyrir þrír jarlar ok átta barúnar; var mest fyrir þeim Sigurðr jarl af Glocestr. En þeir höfðu hálf fjórða hundrað skipa ok þar á bæði mikit lið ok frítt. (398)

When the English chieftains became certain that the Danes did not wish to help them against William – but they were determined that they did not want to live under his rule – they left their ancestral estates, and fled away from the country with a great army. They were led by three earls and eight barons; foremost among them was Sigurðr, earl of Gloucester. They had 350 ships and a force both large and splendid.

The fleet sails south into the Mediterranean and as they sail past Spain, Majorca, and Minorca, the Christian Anglo-Saxons attack and kill the Muslim inhabitants of those lands. When they arrive in Sicily, they learn that a so-called 'heathen' force has besieged Constantinople. Seeking to curry favour with the Byzantine emperor, they mount a surprise attack during the night and free the city. A grateful Emperor Kirjalax (Alexius) invites them to stay and to serve in his garrison. This, however, is not acceptable to the wandering Anglo-Saxons. As the text relates:

En Sigurði jarli ok öðrum höfðingjum þótti þau oflítill forlög sín, at eldaz þar með því móti, at þeir hefði ekki ríki til forráða, ok beiddu konung fá sér borg nokkura eðr stað, þann er þeir mætti eiga eðr þeirra erfingjar.

But that fate, to grow old there without a kingdom to rule over, seemed too little to Earl Sigurðr and the other chieftains, and they asked the king to grant them a certain city or place that they might possess, and their heirs after them.

The word *óðal* is translated here and in the passage above as 'ancestral estates'. Cognate with the Old English *eðel*, used in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* poem, it connotes more than just a section of land. In a



study of this and related words, Aaron Gurevich concluded that ‘Freedom, noble descent, connection with ancestors and land possession were united in the notion of *óðal* into a rich and far-reaching polysemantic network with juridical, mythopoetical, ethical, emotional and social aspects’.<sup>67</sup> Leaving one’s *óðal* was not an act to be entered into lightly, and gaining an *óðal* is shown in this text to be the only way to rectify that loss. This sentiment is reinforced by the Emperor’s unwillingness to give the Anglo-Saxon migrants land that already belongs to his followers: ‘En konungr þóttiz eigi mega taka aðra menn af óðulum sínum’ (but the king thought he could not deprive other men of their *óðals*, 399–400). Although many Scandinavians served in the Byzantine guard during this period, acquiring both wealth and fame, the Anglo-Saxons consider this too insignificant a fate; they require a land of their own that they can pass on to their heirs (their *erfingjar*). Like *óðal*, the term *erfingjar* has specific legal and social connotations related to ideas of ancestry and inheritance. The different forms of *erfð* (inheritance) are detailed at length in the Icelandic law-codes, while related terms such as *erfi* denote the funeral feast at which *erfíkvæði* (funeral, inheritance poems) were performed.<sup>68</sup> The use of such vocabulary in *Játvarðar saga* frames the themes of loss and exile in a very specific, legalistic context of ownership, inheritance, and family.

Emperor Kirjalax accordingly grants the migrating Anglo-Saxons title over an area to the north of his realm, one that had once been controlled from Constantinople but had by that time been occupied by the heathens. If the Anglo-Saxons can win the land back, the emperor says, it will be theirs. After many battles they win control over their new territory, and the former inhabitants are driven away. A narrative of war and conquest becomes one of settlement:

Siðan bygðu þeir þat land, ok gáfu nöfn; ok kölluðu England. Borgum þeim er í landinu vóru, ok þeim er þeir reistu, gáfu þeir nöfn staðanna of Englandi; kölluðu bæði Lundunam ok Jork, ok annara höfuð-borga [nöfnum] í Englandi [...] ok hefir þetta fólk þar jafnan síðan bygt. (400)

After that they settled the land, and gave it names; and they called the land England. To the cities that were in the land, and to those that they established, they gave the names of places in

<sup>67</sup> Aaron Gurevich, *Historical Anthropology of the Middle Ages*, ed. Jana Howlett (Cambridge: Polity Press, [1987] 1992), 206–7.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Ottar Grønvik, *The Words for ‘heir’, ‘inheritance’ and ‘funeral feast’ in Early Germanic: An Etymological Study of ON arfi m, arfi n, erfi n, erfa vb and the Corresponding Words in the Other Old Germanic Dialects* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1982); and Joseph Harris, ‘Erfíkvæði – Myth, Ritual, Elegy’, *Old Norse Religion in Long-Term Perspectives: Origins, Changes, and Interactions. An International Conference in Lund, Sweden, June 3-7, 2004*, ed. Anders Andrén et al. (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2006), 267–71.

England; they called them both London and York, and by the names of other major towns in England [...] and that people have lived there ever since.

Gaining legal ownership over the new land is a three-fold process in this text. Although the Emperor is able to give the migrants legal ownership over the land, actual possession of the territory must be asserted through force. Just as Edward can only regain England once the wicked Danes have been expelled, so too can the Anglo-Saxons only claim their new land once they have driven out its heathen inhabitants. In this, they have more in common with the militaristic Edward of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* poem than with his later, saintlier counterparts. The ultimate expression of ownership comes, however, in the naming of the land. The establishment of new settlements named after those left behind chimes in a curiously modern way with modern conceptions of nostalgia. As Svetlana Boym observes,

At first glance, nostalgia is a longing for a place, but actually it is a yearning for a different time – the time of our childhood, the slower rhythms of our dreams. In a broader sense, nostalgia is a rebellion against the modern idea of time, the time of history and progress. The nostalgic desires to obliterate history and turn it into private or collective mythology, to revisit time like space, refusing to surrender to the irreversibility of time that plagues the human condition.<sup>69</sup>

The Anglo-Saxon elite seeks to hold on to the power that was taken from them by the Norman Conquest, and to recreate, far from the island of Britain, the world they chose to leave behind. Through the naming of the space, and the seeming re-creation of English towns and cities in Eastern Europe, the Anglo-Saxons seek to turn back time, to resurrect the nation they and their heirs have lost. Blithely assuring the reader that the descendants of the Anglo-Saxons have lived there ever since, the author of *Játvarðar saga* presents exile as a relative success. In contrast to the other *Lives* of Edward, the Icelandic text suggests that one can flee a political system one disagrees with and, with the benefit of armed force, re-create a lost homeland elsewhere.

In this tale, the Anglo-Saxon migrants engage in an unreflective form of nostalgia: they seek only to restore what they have lost, not to interrogate the difficulties and potential challenges of their new situation.<sup>70</sup> Despite the success of this endeavour, however, there are hints that the author of the text is perhaps not quite as unreflective as his subjects. There is something deeply familiar about the passage, both thematically and in the language used to describe the English colony. The location of the

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<sup>69</sup> Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic, 2001), xv.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. Boym's discussion of 'restorative' and 'reflective' forms of nostalgia, *Future of Nostalgia*, 41-55.

new land, which ‘liggr sex dægra haf í ætt austrs [beggja] ok land-norðrs frá Miklagarði’ (lies six days’ sail both to the east and north-east from Constantinople, 400), is reminiscent of geographical descriptions of Iceland itself. The first sentence of *Landnámabók*, the Icelandic book of settlements, is a good example of this:

Í Aldarfarsbók þeiri, er Beda prestr heilagr gerði, er getit eylands þess, er Thile heitir, ok á bókum er sagt, at liggi sex dægra sigling í norðr frá Bretlandi.<sup>71</sup>

In *De temporibus*, which the holy priest Bede wrote, there is mentioned this island, which is called Thule, and in books it is said that it lies six days’ sail to the north of Britain.

The author of *Játvarðar saga* also praises the quality of the new land – ‘ok er þat hinn bezti landkostr’ (and it is the most excellent land, 400) – in language similar to that found in Icelandic settlement narratives. The quality of the Icelandic landscape is also described in *Landnámabók* by the early explorers who ‘lofuðu land mikit’ (praised the land greatly).<sup>72</sup> The Icelandic family sagas feature similar language: in *Bárðar saga*, for example, the protagonists ‘urðu á þat sáttir at leita Íslands, því þaðan váru sagðir landakostir góðir’ (agreed to seek out Iceland, as there was said to be good-quality land there),<sup>73</sup> while in *Vatnsdæla saga* ‘sótti liðit upp í dalinn ok sá þar góða landakosti at grøsum ok skógum; var fagrt um at litask’ (the people set off up into the valley and they saw there good-quality land with grass and woods; it was beautiful to look at).<sup>74</sup> There are further parallels: in *Játvarðar saga* the Anglo-Saxons leave their ancestral lands (*óðul*) because they cannot bear to live under King William’s tyrannous rule, and a similar reason for the settlement of Iceland is given in some of the most well-known family sagas.<sup>75</sup> As the first chapter of *Eyrbyggja saga* relates, ‘Þetta var í þann tíma, er Haraldr konungr inn hárfagri gekk til ríkis í Nóregi. Fyrir þeim ófriði flýðu margir gofgir menn óðul sín af Nóregi’ (That was at the time when King Haraldr fair-hair came to power in Norway. Because of that

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<sup>71</sup> *Íslendingabók. Landnámabók*, ed. Jakob Benediktsson. 2 vols. (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska fornritafélag, 1968), I, 31.

<sup>72</sup> *Landnámabók*, I, 34–6.

<sup>73</sup> In *Harðar saga: Bárðar saga, Þorskfirðinga saga, Flóamanna saga*, ed. Þórhallur Vilmundarson and Bjarni Vilhjálmsson (Reykjavík: Hið Íslenska Fornritafélag, 1991), 107.

<sup>74</sup> *Vatnsdæla saga*, ed. Einar Ól. Sveinsson (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska fornritafélag, 1939), 41.

<sup>75</sup> The settlement of Iceland and its depiction in the sagas has been much discussed. A good overview is given in Jesse Byock, *Medieval Iceland: Society, Sagas, and Power* (Enfield Lock: Hisarlik Press, 1993). On the representation of Haraldr hárfagri in particular, see Robert Avis, ‘The Social Mythology of Medieval Icelandic Literature’, DPhil thesis (University of Oxford, 2011), (33–51).

conflict many noble men fled from their ancestral properties in Norway).<sup>76</sup> *Víglundar saga* likewise relates:

en margir mikils háttar menn flýðu ór Nóregi ok þoldu eigi álögur konungs, þeir sem váru af stórum ættum, ok vildu heldr fyrirláta óðul sín ok frændr ok vini en liggja undir þrælkan ok ánauðaroki konungs, ok leituðu mjök til ýmissa landa.<sup>77</sup>

and many great men fled from Norway, and would not endure the king's impositions, those who were descended of great families, and wished rather to forsake their ancestral properties and their kinsmen and friends than submit to slavery and the oppression of the king, and they set out for various lands.

The settlement of Iceland and of New England are portrayed in this way as acts of political resistance, but neither is a proletariat utopia. Rather, both colonies are settled by elite members of society: as noted above the Anglo-Saxon fleet is led by three earls and eight barons, while according to the sagas the Icelandic settlers consist of *margir mikils háttar menn*.

Despite these similarities in the settlement-myths of Iceland and New England, a key difference remains: Icelanders rarely name their settlements after the homes they leave behind; rather, they name the landscape after themselves or after events that take place there.<sup>78</sup> According to the saga authors at least, Iceland is empty when the settlers first arrive, and as they move through it the process of naming makes it their own, the foundation on which to build something new. In contrast, the nostalgic desire of the Anglo-Saxon migrants to inscribe English names on their new land is underpinned by violence and religious conflict. Armed struggle and forced colonisation frame the settlement narrative in *Játvarðar saga* in a way quite unlike the Icelandic story. It is as though the saga author holds up a fractured mirror to the stories Icelanders tell of their own history, reflecting back something familiar, but strange. The account of the Anglo-Saxon migration is an uncanny – *unheimlich*<sup>79</sup> – narrative of settlement; from the perspective of the fourteenth-century Icelandic audience, it is both about home, and not about home. In a way, the text forces its reader into a state literary exile from the well-known themes of the saga world. The Anglo-Saxon protagonists of this narrative may be unreflective in their

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<sup>76</sup> *Eyrbyggja saga*, ed. Einar Ól. Sveinsson and Matthías Þórðarson (Reykjavik: Hið íslenska fornritafélag, 1935), 3.

<sup>77</sup> In *Kjalnesinga saga*, ed. Jónannes Halldórsson (Reykjavik: Hið íslenska fornritafélag, 1959), 63.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. the many examples given in Avis, 'Social Mythology', 51-61, as well as the more general discussion in Kirsten Hastrup, *Culture and History in Medieval Iceland: An Anthropological Analysis of Structure and Change* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), 52-69.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. Sigmund Freud's discussion of this term in *The Uncanny*, trans. David McLintock (London: Penguin, 2003), 123-34.

nostalgic attempt to recreate the lost homeland, but the reader cannot be. Rather, *Játvarðar saga* presents an unsettling interrogation of nostalgia, and of the language and tropes through which acts of migration, settlement, and colonisation are described.

## In conclusion

Little is known about Edward the Confessor's time in exile. Although the episode appears in nearly all the medieval accounts of his life, it does not dominate them; medieval authors are drawn rather to the visions and miracles that proclaim his sanctity, while modern readers mourn his death as the symbolic passing of the Anglo-Saxon age. Despite this, the vernacular accounts discussed here all demonstrate the surprising creative potential that lurks in this little-documented period of the king's life; they show how the king's absence from his native land could be rewritten to suit the diversity of social and cultural contexts opened up by the process of translation. The authors of the vernacular *Lives* of Edward are able to use the king's exile as a mechanism through which to promote their different religious and political agendas. The poet of the Old English *Death of Edward* draws on established poetic formulae to portray Edward as an idealised, Anglo-Saxon king; from a state of exile he transforms into a saviour, reclaiming a usurped kingdom for his designated successor, Harold Godwinson. The Anglo-Norman *Vie* re-writes Edward as the genealogical link between the Anglo-Saxon royal family and their Norman successors; in this text exile offers a powerful metaphor for Christian salvation. The Middle English *Life* also emphasises Edward's role in England's redemption, but works to unify the country's Anglo-Saxon and Norman inhabitants, contributing to an emergent sense of national identity. Although the political affiliations of their authors diverge, all of these texts are firmly rooted in the context of England and in contemporary debates about the identity of its rulers and inhabitants. When the story of Edward moves to Iceland, however, it moves to an audience with its own history of migration and exile. In *Játvarðar saga*, the experience of exile is transposed from the king to his subjects; the narrative of exile becomes one of mass migration, and in so doing both are interrogated. The violence that underpins the establishment of the Anglo-Saxon colony contrasts notably with the piety and passivity of Edward in the other hagiographic texts, but it is a stark echo of the Danish and Norman invasions that punctuate those works. England is a contested space in all of these narratives, claimed as a homeland by many and diverging groups. Read together, they are an eloquent reminder of Boym's warning of the dangers of nostalgia:

*Algia* – longing – is what we share, yet *nostos* – the return home – is what divides us. It is the promise to rebuild the ideal home that lies at the core of many powerful ideologies of today, tempting us to relinquish critical thinking for emotional bonding. [...] Unreflected nostalgia breeds monsters.<sup>80</sup>

The question of who belongs, and who does not, in a particular geographical space continues to resonate long after Edward's death. The medieval authors discussed here are in many respects highly reflective in their accounts of nostalgia, exile, and migration. In this, it may be hoped that they offer a useful model for those engaging with similar issues in the present day.

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<sup>80</sup> Boym, *Future of Nostalgia*, xv-xvi.