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## The Pursuit of Courtliness

In the satirical *Mirror of Fools* (circa 1180), written by Nigel Longchamp (or Whireker), the stupid Italian ass Burnel embarks on a journey to find a medicine to lengthen his tail. After the stub of his natural tail is bitten off by a pack of dogs belonging to a Cistercian monk, Burnel decides to upgrade his status by seeking an education. Arriving in Paris to study theology and law, the ass reflects on the merits of the various university corporate guilds known as nations, which were organized loosely along ethnic-linguistic lines.<sup>1</sup> In particular, Burnel is favourably disposed towards the English. As ‘company alters manners’, joining their party may consequently lengthen Burnel’s tail – for word has it that they are tailed men. Their companionship is also rather agreeable, for the English are reputed for their subtle minds, excellent customs, handsome faces and eloquence, their shrewd wit and counsel, and their generosity. Their only vices are ‘Drink health!’ and ‘Lady friend!’<sup>2</sup>

It is easy to take Nigel Longchamp’s high praise of the English with a pinch of salt: their ‘only fault’, excessive drinking (and their tailed behinds), was an excessively strong image repeatedly denounced or satirized in highly moral terms in the twelfth century. Both images: tailedness and drunkenness, ultimately evoked negative associations with the Anglo-Saxon beer drinking culture and the myth of their partially failed conversion in time’s past.<sup>3</sup> In its most negative sense, their laudable traits, such as wit and generosity, could be said to be no more than a thin layer of veneer, a presumptuous conceit, superficially concealing a coarser, unrefined, nature. Taking stock of the purport of Longchamp’s satire, to hold up a mirror reviewing all angles of foolishness, Longchamp’s praise thus turns into mockery. For although Nigel Longchamp was himself an English Benedictine monk at the priory of Christchurch, Canterbury, his satirical *Mirror* was written for a clerical audience, holding up a mirror in which was reflected their own foolish, worldly careerism and

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1 See Hilde de Ridder-Symoens, ‘Mobility’, in Walter Rüegg and Hilde de Ridder-Symoens (eds), *A History of the University in Europe*, 280-306, here at 282-283; Kibre, *The Nations*; Boyce, *The English-German Nation*. For English students in Paris, see Astrik L. Gabriel, *Garlandia. Studies in the History of the Medieval University* (Notre Dame 1969), 1-37.

2 Nigel Whireker, *Speculum Stultorum*, ed. John H. Mozley and Robert R. Raymo (Berkeley, 1960). In Thomas Wright, *The Anglo-Latin Satirical Poets of the Twelfth Century* I (London 1872), 63: ‘Et quia subtiles sensu considerat Anglos, / Pluribus ex causis se sociavit eis. / Moribus egregii, verbo vultuque venusti, / Ingenio pollent consilioque vigent. / Dona pluunt populis et detestantur avaris; / Fercula multiplicant et sine lege bibunt.’ Cf. Clanchy, *England and its Rulers, 1066-1272*, 142; Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, 299.

3 See chapters 6 and 9.

pretensions. The ass' ridiculous quest for a longer tail was, as Nigel Longchamp himself explains in his epilogue, a warning to ambitious clerics not to waste their lives in pursuit of bishoprics and worldly trappings.<sup>4</sup> Ultimately, Longchamp's satire carries the message not to strive against nature and the hand she has dealt you. Turning his message upside down, Nigel Longchamp would thus seem to intimate that 'company does not alter manners'; the clerics should not adopt courtly ideals, a pursuit both ethically condemnable and futile in its nature.

For many twelfth-century clerics and monks born in England, however, Longchamp's message was not something to subscribe to. A century after the Norman Conquest, some Englishmen such as Alexander Neckam, Geoffrey of Vinsauf, or Richard of Devizes, were juxtaposing the pejorative stereotypes of the English as perfidious, cowardly drunken traitors with far more positive images: that of the merry, generous, intelligent, charming handsome Englishman.<sup>5</sup> According to Hugh Thomas, who wrote an extensive monograph on the process of assimilation of English-Norman identities in twelfth-century England, such positive images promoted and reinforced an English identity, strengthening the notion of Englishness and offering an attractive set of valuable, self-professed traits for those men wavering between identifying with the English, Norman or French culture, customs and values.<sup>6</sup> In other words, 'being English' was becoming less shameful, which might speed up the assimilation process.

This chapter discusses how these images bear a remarkable similarity to the courtly, and sanguine, ideals of character and behaviour reverberating at the Anglo-Norman courts of this period, which were filled with a new class of ambitious courtly clerics and servants, careerists representing broad echelons of society. These social climbers reshaped the image of Englishness using courtly norms of urbanity which were very similar to the humoural characterization of the sanguine man. First, it addresses the 'shameful barbaric image of Anglo-Saxon England' in pre- and post-Conquest times. Secondly, it discusses how in the early decades of the twelfth century William of Malmesbury, among others, emphasized how English manners had indeed improved after the Norman Conquest, in contrast to the uncouth barbarity of the Celts, which served as a convenient comparative image. In part, this positioning of the English on a higher rung of civilization must be viewed in light of the educational programs of this period, where the writings of classical authors such as Cicero were studied, and classicizing ideals of urbanity evoked. Thirdly, the flattering stereotype of the intelligent witty Englishman is reviewed as an image transferred from the ideal of courtliness, elicited by the secular clergy as a template for court officials and servants. In addition, positive images of the intelligent English were often embedded in allusions to paeans on the island's

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4 Nigel Whireker, *Speculum Stultorum*, ed. Mozley, 133.

5 English is used generally here for inhabitants of Anglia and their culture. It may include both Anglo-Saxons and Anglo-Normans. Anglo-Norman is sometimes used to set apart the new elite of mixed descent; Anglo-Saxon for the population before the Conquest and their descendants.

6 Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, 300-301.

salubrious abundance and wealth – inherited from Gildas and Bede.<sup>7</sup> Embroidering on the Christian tradition of England as a promised horn of plenty, a land of milk and honey, interwoven with climatic notions, the English was on a higher rung on the ladder of civilization, as paragons of courtliness in keeping with the secular clergy and nobility's ideals. Finally, this chapter discusses first how images of wealth and abundance could also elicit criticism of decadence, and secondly how the image of the Anglo-Normans as civilized courtly paragons might be viewed as an urbane counterweight to the powerful image of France as the centre of chivalry and learning, by which the English at the same time distanced themselves from their Germanic past.

In this period, English attitudes towards the French were ambivalent. Although the political struggle for hegemony over the continental fiefs could at times induce bitter antagonism between Anglo-Norman and northern French aristocrats, the elevated position of northern France as the cultural and intellectual centre had a magnetic attraction, often leaving the English in awe. These men made their careers based upon learning and literacy, frequently garnered in the schools of northern France. At the same time, the English were in competition with the French, with the confidence of the all-powerful Angevin courts flowing off the pages of contemporary sources. Notions of English urbanity were, then, possibly an acceptable, attractive alternative to French claims to chivalrous courtliness.

As we shall see, where the northern French and Normans could claim a firm identity as chivalrous protectors of the Church – according to William of Malmesbury the latter were ‘not priests but warriors, strong in arms and invincible in spirit’ – the Anglo-Normans were however contending with a far more insecure legacy, with a broken English history following a string of conquests, and a general reputation as weak fighters, which had been infused with a strong Norman warrior culture.<sup>8</sup> On the other side of the equation, juxtaposing English civility with the ‘inferior barbaric’ culture of the Celts could serve as a powerful springboard in order to strengthen self-confidence. In addition, by stressing English intelligence in contrast to German stupidity, the English could distance themselves further from the ‘barbaric northerners’ with whom the English had been shamefully associated in earlier times.

First, however, the question should be raised who these twelfth-century ‘English’, ‘Normans’ or Anglo-Normans were, how they vied themselves, each other, and those in neighbouring territories such as northern France. This I discuss only summarily below, in relation to how the English and the Normans stood vis-à-vis, in light of the English pre-Conquest shameful image of barbarity. Twelfth-century England was a hugely dynamic society in which individuals could be subject to complex, fluctuating feelings of belonging. After the Conquest, the name Anglo-Saxon could be more of less

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7 Here the two axes of identity – north-south and east-west – following the biblical and classical traditions again meet.

8 See chapter 7 for images of the French and Germans as knights. Cf. William of Malmesbury, *Gesta regum Anglorum*, ed. and transl. Mynors, Thomson and Winterbottom, vol. 1, 450-451: ‘non essent presbiteri sed milites armis validi, animis invicti’.

synonymous for 'servile', as William the Conqueror had removed the Anglo-Saxon elite from power and ravaged the country.<sup>9</sup> Nonetheless, Hugh Thomas has argued that in twelfth-century historical writing there was still a desire to protect English pride and honour, to defend its culture and self-identity against Norman stereotypes. On the other hand, Normans were 'pragmatic rather than ideological' in their prejudice, refraining from systematically heaping scorn on the English.<sup>10</sup> To an extent, notions of *Normanitas* and Englishness thus remained impalpable concepts, continuously in negotiation and fluctuating.

### **Identities in twelfth-century England**

In recent years, historians have conducted much research on the ethnic identity of the inhabitants of the British island in the centuries prior to and in the wake of the Norman Conquest.<sup>11</sup> Although there is some discussion on the exact period or decades in which the Normans in England started to assimilate with the 'English', this process seems to have been taking place by the end of the twelfth century, in the reign of Henry II.<sup>12</sup> Whereas at the Battle of the Standard in 1138, both Henry of Huntingdon's and Ailred of Rievaulx's version of Robert de Brus' battle speech address the armies as 'we Normans and English', already indicators of a shared allegiance, as a result of acculturation and intermarriage in later decades it was becoming increasingly unclear who was 'ethnically Norman'.<sup>13</sup> Hugh Thomas points to Ailred of Rievaulx' 'Green Tree Prophecy', linking the Conquest to the sin of the murder of Alfred Aetheling by Godwin of Essex in 1035, as a clear marker of assimilation and bonding among the elite.<sup>14</sup> In the late twelfth century, Richard Fitz Nigel famously recorded in the *Dialogue of the Exchequer* that the English and the Normans had become

9 Marjorie Chibnall, *Anglo-Norman England 1066-1166* (Oxford 1993), 11-43; Clanchy, *England and its Rulers*, 44-47.

10 Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, 241.

11 John Gillingham, 'The Beginnings of English Imperialism', in *Journal of Historical Sociology* 5 (1992), 392-409; John Gillingham, 'The English Invasion of Ireland', in B. Bradshaw e.a. (eds), *Representing Ireland* (Cambridge 1993), 24-42; John Gillingham, 'Henry of Huntingdon and the Twelfth-Century Revival of the English Nation', in L. Johnson and A. V. Murray (eds), *Concepts of National Identity in the Middle Ages* (Leeds 1995), 75-101; James Campbell, 'Some Twelfth-Century Views of the Anglo-Saxon Past', *Essays in Anglo-Saxon History*, 209-229; Kathleen Davis, 'National Writing in the Ninth Century: A Reminder for Postcolonial Thinking about the Nation', in *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 28/3 (1998), 611-637.

12 See especially Thomas, *The English and the Normans*. John Gillingham, in his article 'Henry of Huntingdon and the Twelfth Century Revival of the English Nation', dates the process of assimilation to the 1140s, but his argument is based narrowly on Henry of Huntingdon's remarks. See further Davies, *The Matter of Britain and the Matter of England*; Peter Hoppenbrouwers, *De Standaardfactor. Over het gevoel Engels te zijn in de twaalfde eeuw* (Amsterdam 2002).

13 Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, 312; Hoppenbrouwers, *Standaardfactor*, 7; cf. Rosalind Ransford, 'A Kind of Noah's Ark: Aelred of Rievaulx and National Identity', in Stuart Mews (ed.), *Religion and National Identity. Papers Read at the Nineteenth Summer Meeting and the Twentieth Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society* (Oxford 1982), 137-146.

14 Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, 252. Shortly before his death, Edward the Confessor was said to have dreamt of a warning that God would deliver the Anglo-Saxon kingdom into the hands of the devil; this would continue until the green tree, cut into half, should be reunited after it had been carried for three furlongs. These were said, in the 1160s, to have been reunited when King Henry I married Matilda.

so intermingled through marriage alliances and cohabitation that it was almost impossible to distinguish between the two among free people. However, the emphasis here is on the fact that he is speaking only of free men (in the context that full Englishness could only be proven if the subjects were serfs), and that his remark is, as Hugh Thomas put it, ‘expression not of unity but of uncertainty about elite identity’.<sup>15</sup>

The complexities deepen if we look to how the Normans viewed themselves and were viewed by others. By the eleventh century, the Normans had undergone a process of acculturation, speaking French, although retaining their origin myth, sometimes tracing back their Danish ancestors to the Trojan Antenor.<sup>16</sup> In England after the Conquest, the group of Norman invaders (in reality a mixed bunch, including Flemish and others) were in general, cultural terms labelled as ‘French’ by the indigenous inhabitants – something which did not seem to aggrieve the Normans, although they themselves maintained anti-French sentiments.<sup>17</sup> In the course of the twelfth century, with Norman interests increasingly becoming ‘English’, however, the struggle between the Capetian and Angevin ruling houses for control over domains on the Continent was more and more represented in terms of ‘French versus English’. One element possibly strengthening the assimilation process was the anti-French sentiment existent among the Normans, both on the Continent and in England. In the continuous warring over the continental fiefs, the Normans could shape new alliances with the English against a common enemy. Conversely, in Pierre Riga’s poem about the treacherous marriage ceremony instigated by Henry II between his son and Louis’ toddler daughter, stereotypes about the English’ tailed perfidy were thus flung at Henry II’s camp. Thus these struggles over the French territories might increasingly shape Norman-English alliances against the French. At the same time, accusations originally tacked on the perfidious Anglo-Saxons before the Conquest, were now hurled at the Angevin ruling dynasty.

On the other hand, as Richard Southern first wrote, the clerics, if not the nobility, looked in awe to France as the cultural heartland, and admiration for the French remained a strong current in many twelfth-century texts of Anglo-Norman hand. As so many *litterati* in twelfth-century England, these men usually enjoyed their education in the cathedral schools of northern France – Orleans, Tours, Chartres, Laon, and first and foremost Paris.<sup>18</sup> Although, as Rodney Thompson has argued, northern France and England at this time formed a homogenous cultural region marked by an interconnected network of relations, the ideals within the imagined communities of clerics and knights were dictated by social and cultural values which the French, rather successfully, had appropriated.<sup>19</sup> Praise of

15 Richard Fitz Nigel, *Dialogus de Scaccario*, ed. and transl. Charles Johnson, F.E.L. Carter, and D.E. Greenway (Oxford 1983), ed. 53; Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, 66-75; quote on page 75.

16 See chapter 1 note 67 for references.

17 Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, 321.

18 Martin Aurell, *The Plantagenet Empire 1154-1224*, transl. David Crouch (Harlow 2007), 54.

19 Rodney M. Thomson, ‘England and the Twelfth-Century Renaissance’, in *Past & Present* 101 (1983), 3-21, here at 4. Thomson’s article was written in reaction to Richard Southern’s position that England was dependent on France, ‘a colony of the French intellectual empire’, with little achievement or

France, its schools and French chivalry is thus run-of-the-mill in English sources of this period: in Alexander Neckam's laudation of Paris, the men are pious, learned, powerful, prudent, and good at arms; Herbert of Bosham speaks of 'sweet France'; William of Newburgh writes that Richard Lionheart introduced tournaments in England because the French were better at fighting. French gothic architecture was copied and revered; the French language served as *lingua Franca* for the literary blossoming of romances. English clerics might express their admiration for the French monarchy.<sup>20</sup> Conversely, scornful anti-French sentiment, inherited from the Normans, grew as the English participated and supported continental warfare.

To further complicate matters, terminology of the geographic space in this period remains muddled. This is relevant here as ethnic identity could be related climatically to geographical space. Contrary to what Rees Davies believed, in this period the names *Anglia* and *Britannia* often feature as interchangeable toponyms. Certainly, England had become territorially distinct from Scotland (*Scocia*) and Wales (*Wallia*).<sup>21</sup> Nonetheless, Britain – the island of the past – could be identified with *Anglia* – in the present; this is evident in Lawrence of Durham's poem which puns on the angelic Englishman and the British descent from Brutus: 'We beg this horrid Breton to desist / from mocking angel Angles – let us be! Reflect that Britain, lost to you, now takes / its name from us, and England's where we live.'<sup>22</sup> Under the heading 'De Britannia', Bartholomaeus Anglicus in his encyclopaedia also explains that 'first this land was called Albion, perhaps because of the white cliffs surrounding the island. Thereafter, it was called Britannia after Brutus, but eventually it was named Anglia, after the Germans who occupied it.'<sup>23</sup> At the same time however, there was a tendency for descriptions of Britain to slide into those of England, whether from confusion or arrogant carelessness; the name Britain seemingly had little relevance to ethnic consciousness by this

contribution of its own, besides historiography, science, wonders and secular government. See R.W. Southern, *Medieval Humanism and Other Studies* (Oxford 1970), 158-80. Cf. Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, 316.

<sup>20</sup> Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, 316-317.

<sup>21</sup> Clanchy, *England and its Rulers*, 249-250, who states that England and Britain were interchangeable by 1200; cf. Davies, 'The Peoples of Britain and Ireland 1100-1400 II. Names, Boundaries and Regnal Solidarities', 6. Davies stated that the name Britain was erased in the twelfth-thirteenth centuries. This was a process in which one could almost hear the 'smack of firm government'. Yet he was overlooked many sources in which the two names are confused or indifferently interchanged. The on-going discussions about Geoffrey of Monmouth's British history should perhaps also be reviewed in light of the ambivalence of terminology concerning *Anglia/Britannia*; the fissure between British and English was, for the English, perhaps less deep than some scholars have assumed.

<sup>22</sup> Lawrence of Durham, *Dialogi* III vs. 219-222, ed. Raine, 37-38; transl. Rigg, 'Lawrence of Durham: Dialogues', 79: 'Horridus angelicos Brito ludere desinat Anglos, / Quaesumus hic et ubi jam sumus esse sinat. / Cogitat hoc quod ei sublata Britannia, nomen / Mutuat a nobis Anglia, nos et habet.' Cf. Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, 314.

<sup>23</sup> Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* xv 28, 'De Britannia': 'Huic primo Albino nomen fuit, forsan propter albas rupes insulam circumdantes. Deinde a Bruto Britannia est dicta, sed tandem a Germanicis ipsam obtinentibus Anglia est vocata, quare supra multa de Anglia de litera A.' Indeed, in the chapter 'De Anglia', Bartholomaeus offers a more extensive version of the tripartate nomenclature of the 'island' England. Cf. Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum* 12, 12-13.

time.<sup>24</sup> In most cases, ‘Britain’ came to be identified with the kingdom of England; in some, however, ‘England’ denoted the whole island (including Scotland and Wales) – as Alan MacColl remarks, an English habit still common in present times.<sup>25</sup>

This geographical muddle does not, however, hold true for the ethnic groups in Anglia or Britannia; in the geographical descriptions, it invariably were the English (although sometimes represented as ‘descendants of Brutus’), and not the Welsh or Scots, who dwelt upon ‘this fertile plot of land’. The process of identifying the islanders with the Angli (and not the Saxons) had set in in the centuries prior to the Norman Conquest. From the tenth century, kings started, sometimes on charters and coins, to call themselves *rex Anglorum*. According to Rees Davies, it was in this period that boundaries were drawn and royal solidarity became strong, stabilizing the name of the English.<sup>26</sup> In the first half of the twelfth century, the strong concept of ‘Englishness’ continued to carry weight as a group of historians, notably William of Malmesbury, Henry of Huntingdon, and Geffrei Gaimar, ‘triumphantly’ interpreted the past as *English* history, in titles such as *Deeds of the English Kings*, or *History of the English*.<sup>27</sup> Nonetheless, as said, ‘Englishness’ remained problematic, as it also held associations with the servility, treachery and cowardice of the Anglo-Saxons. These complexities demonstrate that caution is needed in discussing ‘English’ or ‘Anglo-Norman’ identity or culture in this period. Some scholars have spoken of a ‘new national feeling in the twelfth century’, of claims to English superiority over the Celts.<sup>28</sup> Undeniably, there was, at times, a sense of pride and confidence at the English courts. But how ‘national’ a twelfth-century notion of English superiority was, remains nebulous. It is highly unlikely that most Anglo-Saxon peasants identified with (or were aware of) of the presumed ‘civilizing process’ which according to William of Malmesbury was taking place in twelfth-century England; or that the men making such claims had Anglo-Saxon peasants in mind, a group destined to serfdom after the Conquest. Whereas the English custom of wassailing (see chapter 9) may have been enjoyed by wide consumer groups, it is hard to fathom that a English culture of ‘civilized manners’ was practiced nationwide. In a remark about men banished from the church by Anselm of Canterbury with their ‘wickedly long and feminine hair’, the monk Eadmer of Canterbury states that ‘whoever is not long-haired is called as an insult “peasant” or “priest”’ – peasant here explicitly meaning Anglo-Saxon, not Anglo-Norman.<sup>29</sup> Whether Nigel Wireker reckoned one could encounter the merry, intelligent generous

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24 Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, 265.

25 Alan MacColl, ‘The Meaning of “Britain” in Medieval and Early Modern England’, in: *Journal of British Studies* 45 (April 2006), 248-269, here at 249. At 259-260, MacColl discusses the possibility that the idea of a ‘British’ England as an island hinges on Bede’s account of attacks on Britons by Irish and Picts who were separated from the Britons by two long and wide arms of the sea.

26 Davies, ‘The Peoples of Britain and Ireland 1100-1400 I. Identities’, 13.

27 Idem, ‘Peoples of Britain and Ireland’, 7-22.

28 Hoppenbrouwers, *Standaardfactor*, 9.

29 Eadmer, *Historia novorum*, 214. Cf. Bartlett, ‘Symbolic Meanings of Hair’, 51; Stafford, ‘Meanings of Hair’, 156.

Englishman among all social layers of society or specifically among the educated men participating in university and court life, is thus questionable.

Markedly in the verse attributed to Hugh of Montacute discussed below, emphasis is laid on the 'indigenous' nature of English courtliness. 'Native' clerics such as Gerald of Wales or Walter Map, however, thought much less of royal officials of low birth including sergeants and foresters or those climbing the ranks through fawning flattery – to say nothing of the generally extremely base image of rustics as swarthy, grotesque, boorish creatures ignorant of religion.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, many clerics also took to criticizing the ambitious courtiers – whose self-image, as we shall see, was transferred onto the *Angli* – in search of promotion and rewards. Begging for ecclesiastical benefices 'in their frantic pursuit of bishoprics and prebends' through flattery and cunning was the flipside bitterly condemned by some satirists such as Walter Map, John of Salisbury or Peter of Blois.<sup>31</sup> Criticism of parvenus, 'lesser men', was commonly clothed in denunciations of the 'democratization of knowledge', as Martin Aurell states.<sup>32</sup> To quote Walter Map, himself hardly of high noble birth but feeling the necessity to trample on those balancing on a lower rung: 'The villeins on the other hand (or rustics, as we call them) vie each other in bringing up their ignoble and degenerate offspring to those arts which are forbidden to them.'<sup>33</sup> Careerism and the tarnishing of the 'independent study of the liberal arts' by putting it to prosaic practical use were additionally lamented, as well a general revelling in worldly delights. By taking up positions at the courts, these educated clerics could thus be thrown into emotional turmoil, as the trappings and ambitions of their secular courtly lives competed with their self-professed ethical desire to devote themselves to non-worldly things. Most of the court critics were, after all, themselves (former) courtiers. Although, as will be discussed below, the image of the English could at times equate to civility, it is therefore probable that this only applied to those English (of Anglo-Saxon or –Norman extract) with enough intellectual alacrity, and moral restraint, to survive the schools and find a position at the courts. Otherwise, the name Anglo-Saxon could still mean 'servile' or barbaric, referring to the lower social strata of society, and still instilling shame.

### **The shame of the English**

Both before and after the Norman Conquest, the Anglo-Saxons suffered from ill repute for a number of reasons. In post-Conquest writings 'Anglo-Saxon' could refer specifically to serfdom, as according to some of the meanest of men were allotted a fate of servility as punishment for their sins and weaknesses.<sup>34</sup> In addition, an unbroken theme in English historical writing justified the wave of

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30 See Freedman, *Images of the Medieval Peasant*, chapter 6; Aurell, *Plantagenet Empire*, 60-61.

31 Aurell, *Plantagenet Empire*, 58-59.

32 Idem, 61.

33 Walter Map, *De nugis curialium* I 10, ed. and transl. James, Brooke and Mynors, 13: 'Servi vero, quos vocamus rusticos, suos ignominiosus et degeneres in artibus eis debitis enutrire contendunt'; quoted by Aurell, *Plantagenet Empire*, 61.

34 Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, 251.

conquests as divine punishment for the sins of the islanders.<sup>35</sup> These sins were substantial. In self-deprecating terms, the gluttony, lust and corruption of priests and monks were frequently called upon, English fighters supposedly wallowing in drunkenness, and displaying weakness and effeminacy. A general decline in religion and learning, and the oppression of the poor, were said to mark the morally debased state of the nation. Cunning, conniving, the Anglo-Saxons were accused of perfidy and treachery, both in older pre-Conquest Norman sources and later notably, within the context of the English-French wars.<sup>36</sup> A recurring image was the ineptitude of English knights in warfare, achieving little military prowess, or as John Gillingham wrote, fighting like country bumpkins; in post-Conquest sources they could be represented as long-haired effeminates, as in Baudri of Dol's verse composition for countess Adela.<sup>37</sup> In some cases, the English were depicted as wallowing in extreme luxuriousness and weakness; this was the collateral damage of England's proverbial wealth, abundance and generosity. All in all, these images were in stark contrast to that of the brave Normans and chivalrous French. They were strong enough for pro-English writers such as Henry of Huntingdon or Ailred of Rievaulx to subsequently internalize them, depicting the English as bad knights.<sup>38</sup>

On a more general level, the slur of inferior barbarity clung to the English.<sup>39</sup> According to William of Poitiers, for example, the English were a *gens rustica*. Typical 'barbaric' traits such as a lack of knowledge and learning crop up both in pro-English and pro-Norman sources, as well as that of a morally and intellectually backward Church. As Hugh Thomas points out, the frequent use of the vernacular instead of Latin – in which Anglo-Saxon culture was indeed exceptional – could be seen as an indicator of English barbarism.<sup>40</sup> But in general terms, the accusation of barbarity has more to do with England's marginal geographical positioning on the edge of the world and with English-German roots than with a vast cultural gulf between the Continent and the island of Britain. Although the Normans were said to have instituted Church reform, bringing with them new books, stimulating intellectual life, with a new emphasis on patristic learning, it is difficult to determine to which extent this would not have occurred in England regardless of Norman influences. Given that the slur of moral and intellectual deterioration was said to have led to the string of conquests, such tokens of barbarity must nonetheless have had a particularly biting sting.<sup>41</sup> Thus, writes Orderic Vitalis, the Normans found the English rustic and almost illiterate, to which they accounted the

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35 See further chapter 9.

36 Cf. Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, 244-246 for pre-Conquest Norman sources. According to Thomas, there was a counter-response among Anglo-Normans such as Orderic Vitalis, emphasizing how the English were faithful to their rulers.

37 Gillingham, 'Henry of Huntingdon and the English Nation', 82. Gillingham is referring here to the opinion of powerful men such as the Norman Waleran of Meulan, who viewed themselves as the flower of knighthood. Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, 247-248.

38 William of Poitiers, *Gesta Guillelmi* II 31, ed. Davis and Chibnall, 152-153; cf. Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, 247, 251 for source references.

39 Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, 242.

40 Idem, 251.

41 Idem, 252-253.

coming of the Danes and the destruction wrought on England as a result of their sins, abundance of food and drink, ‘shallowness and flabbiness of the people’, destruction of the monasteries and lack of canonical discipline.<sup>42</sup>

With such bad press and hovering on the lower social rung of society after the Conquest, it is difficult to imagine how the English – *Angli* in the sources – could be called paragons of civility a mere century after 1066. Such images of barbarity and lack of learning are indeed far removed from the statement made by Nigel Longchamp in his *Mirror of Fools* that the English were charming, full of wit, and intelligent men. As discussed below, this transformation of their reputation – at least of English clerics and monks – was effected in a number of ways: by geographically tweaking the marginal positioning of England in order to bring it into the ‘civilized world’; by referring to Gildas’ and Bede’s imagery of England as a place of bounty, and by specifically appropriating images of courtliness and urbanity. Paving the way in the process of transformation was the adoption of the concept, already existent in some pre-Conquest Norman sources, of an evolutionary ‘civilizing process’ championed early on by monks such as Orderic Vitalis and notably William of Malmesbury. In return, as Hugh Thomas wrote, the English salvaged their identity by defending their pride, respectability and honour.<sup>43</sup> This will be discussed first below.

### **The civilizing process**

Some contemporary historians did attempt to counter-balance the negative image of the English with descriptions of England’s glorious past before the Conquest. William of Malmesbury did not refrain from criticizing the Normans for their fluctuating alliances and love of money. Also, after the Conquest, the Normans were not immune to English culture, adopting the English drinking customs, luxuriousness and gluttony. Orderic Vitalis and Henry of Huntingdon express similar criticisms of Norman ambition, savagery, unruliness and sedition.<sup>44</sup> An anonymous author, writing circa 1180, who identified those who spoke English as his fellow-countrymen, even went so far as to describe the Normans of 1066 as ‘perfidious’, ‘fierce’ and ‘savage’; he went on to assert that ‘our Norman kings should rejoice that they inherited all that is best in the English spirit of generosity, in their pride in their kingdom, in their virtuous way of life and in their fine physical strength’.<sup>45</sup>

More importantly however was that with the coming of the Normans, a new concept entered England: that of the evolutionary progress from a pastoral rural society to civilized urbanity. According to this concept of progress, society makes headway in four stages of human history, in which socio-economic groups transform from being hunters to shepherds, then transforming into an

42 Orderic Vitalis, *Historia Ecclesiastica* IV 2, 208, ed. and transl. Chibnall, vol. 2, 246-247: ‘levitas et mollicies gentis’.

43 Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, 241-261.

44 *Idem*, 259.

45 *The Waltham Chronicle*, ed. and transl. L. Watkiss and M. Chibnall (Oxford, 1994), 2-3, 48-49, 56-57: ‘se gaudeant Normanni reges nostri quod precipuum est in omni munificentia et regni gloria et morum honestate et corporis habitudine decenti suscepisse’.

agricultural society and finally urbanizing. This was championed early on by William of Malmesbury, and later famously applied by Gerald of Wales in his ethnography of the Irish. However, where the Irish failed to make but little progress, the English, under Norman influence, had been more successful.<sup>46</sup>

Where William of Malmesbury precisely took his concept of evolutionary progress from remains unclear. Although this was an ancient concept already put forward by Varro, it is equally possible that Norman scholars orally transmitted this evolutionary concept of progress – perhaps impressing the English to polish their manners now that they were in ‘good company’. Similar anti-Celtic slurs containing the notion of social progress were already being made in Normandy before the Conquest, though less pronounced about the three stages of progress. In the eleventh century, the Norman Warner of Rouen attacked the Irish using common vicious stock types: sexuality, agricultural backwardness, semi-paganism; William of Poitiers attacked the Bretons in a like manner, comparing their polygamy to that of the Moors, ‘who were ignorant of divine law and chaste morals’, and speaking of little cultivation of fields or improvement of customs, as they lived off milk and very little bread (without crop growth), and were given to plunder and feuds.<sup>47</sup> However, William of Malmesbury’s evolutionary notion of increasing *civilitas* could just as much be an intellectual, classical concept. William had immersed himself in classical literature, reading Seneca, Cicero and Lucan; according to John Gillingham, he subsequently adopted the classical view of the world as ‘us and the barbarians’.<sup>48</sup>

To an extent, Gillingham acknowledges that twelfth-century post-Conquest England indeed witnessed a degree of progress under Norman influence: the abolishment of slavery, introduction of chivalry, growth of towns and markets.<sup>49</sup> In William of Malmesbury’s view, however, the social and cultural changes harkened a renewal of progress within an historical framework. Ever since the time of Bertha, the sixth-century Frankish wife of Aethelbert of Kent, French culture had been rubbing off and polishing the English; the Norman Conquest was but another phase in this civilization process.<sup>50</sup> Mutual acculturation partly took place, as the Normans appropriated English (gluttonous) drinking and eating customs; on the other hand, the English adopted Norman ‘mores’. Already in the early decades, Orderic Vitalis thus wrote that the ‘English and Normans were living peacefully together in boroughs, towns, and cities, and were intermarrying with each other. You could see many villages or town markets filled with displays of French wares and merchandise, and observe the

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46 William of Malmesbury, *Gesta regum Anglorum* v 409, ed. and transl. Mynors, Thomson and Winterbottom, vol. 1, 738-741; Gerald of Wales, *Gesta Regis Henrici Secundi* III 10, ed. Dimock, vol. 5, 151, transl. O’Meara, 85-86. See Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, 310-316 for discussion and more source references.

47 William of Poitiers, *Gesta Guillelmi* I 44, ed. Davis and Chibnall, 74-75. Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, 39. Raldulfus Glaber, *Historiae* II 4, ed. and transl. France, 56-59, speaks disparagingly of the vast quantities of milk produced in Brittany, their sole source of wealth.

48 Gillingham. ‘Civilizing the English?’, 18-26.

49 Idem, 21, 37.

50 Idem, 37-38; Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, 254.

English, who had previously seemed contemptible to the French in their native dress, completely transformed by foreign fashions. No one dared to pillage, but everyone cultivated his own fields in safety and lived contentedly with his neighbour.<sup>51</sup>

The concept of a civilizing process was in effect comparative and relational. In order to measure progress, ethnic groups might be set off against one another. Thus, it might have been expedient for the eleventh-century Normans to compare themselves to the backward Bretons. The English likewise compared their urbanity to stagnant Irish socio-cultural norms. Much has been written about the employment of negative dehumanizing stereotypes displaying the attitudes of the Anglo-Norman elite towards the Celtic other, justifying their aggressive oppression and land grabbing in Wales and Ireland in the twelfth century.<sup>52</sup> Underlining the strength of such stereotypes is the anecdote told by Gerald of Wales about the Welsh dean of Cantref Mawr, who, accompanying a Breton nobleman on a tour of local Welsh defences by order of Henry II, ate handfuls of grass, reaffirming the image of the bestial Welsh among the Anglo-Norman elite as almost inhuman.<sup>53</sup> The motive for employing such stereotypes was, according to Jeffrey Cohen, that ‘an indigenous people are represented as primitive, subhuman, incomprehensible in order to render the taking of their lands unproblematic’.<sup>54</sup>

After the Conquest English hostility of the Celts increased markedly, especially from the 1120s. In Hugh Thomas’ view, it is not unthinkable that hostility between Normans and English decreased as anti-Celtic antagonism rose.<sup>55</sup> In many sources, the Scottish were held accountable for atrocious acts, despite the fact that it were the Normans and English who were actually the perpetrators of most deeds of violence. The interests of the Normans and natives were aligned in their encounters

51 Orderic Vitalis, *Historia Ecclesiastica* IV 2, 214, ed. and transl. Chibnall, vol. 2, 256: ‘Civilliter Angli cum Normannis cohabitabant in burgis, castris et urbibus conubiis alteri alteros mutuo sibi coniungentes. Vicos aliquot aut fora urbana Gallicis mercibus et manganibus referta conspiceres et ubique Anglos qui pridem amictu patrio compti Francis videbantur turpes, nunc peregrino cultu alteratos videres. Nemo praedari audebat sed unusquisque sua rura tuto colebat, suoque compari’; cf. Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, 321; Gillingham, ‘Civilizing the English?’, 19.

52 John Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century: Imperialism, National Identity and Political Values* (Woodbridge 2000) and idem, ‘Images of Ireland, 1170-1600: The Origins of English Imperialism’ in *History Today* 37/2 (1987) 16-22; Davies, *The First English Empire*; James Muldoon, *Identity on the Medieval Irish Frontier: Degenerate Englishmen, Wild Irishmen, Middle Nations* (Gainesville 2003); Brendan Smith, *Colonisation and Conquest in Medieval Ireland: The English in Louth, 1170-1330* (Cambridge 1999), esp. chapter 4; Robin Frame, ‘“Les Engleys néés en Irlande”: The English Political Identity in Medieval Ireland’, in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* sixth series, 3 (1993), 83-103; W.R. Jones, ‘England against the Celtic fringe: A study in cultural stereotypes’, in *Journal of World History / Cahiers d’Histoire Mondiale* 13 (1971), 155-171; James F. Lydon, ‘Nation and Race in Medieval Ireland’, in Simon Forde, Lesley Johnson and Alan V. Murray (eds), *Concepts of National Identity in the Middle Ages* (Leeds 1995), 103-123; Richard C. Hoffmann, ‘Outsiders by birth and blood: racist ideologies and realities around the periphery of Europe’, in James Muldoon (ed.), *The Medieval Frontiers in Latin Christendom: Expansion, Contraction, Continuity* (Aldershot 2008), 149-180; R.R. Davies, *Domination and Conquest: The Experience of Ireland, Scotland and Wales, 1100-1300* (Cambridge 1990) 20-23.

53 Gerald of Wales, *Itinerarium Cambriae* I 10; Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, ‘Hybrids, Monsters, Borderlands’, in Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (ed.), *The Postcolonial Middle Ages* (Basingstoke 2000), 85-104, here at 86-87.

54 Idem, 87.

55 Idem, 310. Gillingham, *English in the Twelfth Century*, 27-29.

with the Irish and Welsh, feeling unity in the face of the common foe.<sup>56</sup> More importantly, pejorative stereotypes of the Celts helped the English gain self-confidence as a more civilized people, whose culture was more aligned to that of the Normans and French than of their neighbours living, to use demeaning terms, in their backyard. In this William of Malmesbury was a pioneer, Henry of Huntingdon and Ailred of Rievaulx following suit.<sup>57</sup> By trampling on the Irish – so rustic they could barely transform – these Anglo-Normans willingly set themselves apart as men willing to adapt to Norman culture, thus putting their ‘barbaric’ past somewhat behind them. The English even succeeded in polishing the barbaric Scots. King David of Scotland, promising any of his subjects who might live ‘in a more cultivated style, dress with more elegance and learn to eat with more refinement’ three years of tax exemption, had been ‘made more courtly by his upbringing amongst us and the rust of his native barbarism had been polished away’. David is also accredited with Scotland’s first major wave of urbanization.<sup>58</sup>

The adoption of this notion of cultural progress thus offered the English an incentive and mechanism to trample on cultural groups on the periphery and even the confidence to criticize the Normans and French. Indeed, the notion of a civilizing process, in which society transformed from a pastoral to an urban conglomeration, was eagerly adopted by some Anglo-Normans. In addition, after the Conquest, the civilizing notion perhaps offered an attractive mechanism for ambitious men, as it opened up a passageway to the higher echelons of culture, society and power. As such it could meet recognition among the new elite partly because English government and society indeed witnessed a remarkable growth in wealth and power in the twelfth century. Towns prospered, the economy flourished. As a result, William FitzStephen felt inspired to write an extensive praise of the commodities of London.<sup>59</sup> Henry of Huntingdon said that England’s wealth was greater even than that of Germany, its cities glittering on the fertile banks of beautiful rivers.<sup>60</sup> At the same time, it was such an attractive notion because it offered men of mixed ethnicity and sometimes quite unsubstantial or even ignoble backgrounds an argument to buttress their self-esteem as they polished and refined their manners.

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56 Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, 311-312.

57 Idem, 313-314; Davies, ‘Boundaries and Regnal Solidarities’; Gillingham, ‘Civilizing the English?’, 5-6, 28-29.

58 Gillingham, ‘Civilizing the English?’, 41-42; Jaeger, *Origins of Courtliness*, 181. See also Ailred of Rievaulx’s remarks about King David’s civilizing of the Scots, written in the 1150s: ‘He refined your barbarous customs with Christian piety (...) He knew how to bring a whole people, once rough and rustic, to manners which were refined and gentle (...) The barbarity of that people was completely overcome by his benevolence and by the laws which his royal gentleness imposed.’ These were later echoed by Gervase of Tilbury and Bartholomaeus Anglicus. See also chapter 5. Gervase of Tilbury is one of the few to claim that once Ireland had been allotted by Henry II to the English in knights’ fees, the land cultivated, religion flourished.

59 For the genre of *laudes urbium* see Carl Joachim Classen, *Die Stadt im Spiegel der Descriptiones und Laudes urbium in der antiken und mittelalterlichen Literatur bis zum Ende des zwölften Jahrhunderts* (Hildesheim and New York 1980); J.K. Hyde, ‘Medieval Descriptions of Cities’, in *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 48 (1965-1966), 308-340.

60 Gillingham, ‘Civilizing the English?’, 38.

The secular clergy at the courts seem to have played a substantial role in shaping these new acclaims to civility and refinement, sketching England as a place of bounty, temperance and civilization. Henry of Huntingdon thus relates this new opulence to the superior manners, lifestyle and fashion of the English. As new men (one might say: parvenus) at the courts, some clerics (but also noble men), trying to make careers by finding favour with their lords, could be particularly susceptible to the attractions of courtly 'civilizing' ideals of behaviour and manners. As men of mixed descent, they also took pains to emphasize the 'Englishness' of courtly civility. To understand this, it is necessary to look at the ideals and criticisms of court life in this period, and how they could be appropriated using images of ethnicity.

### **Englishness and ideals of civility**

Whereas the French claimed a reputation of chivalry in the heartland of civilization, the English instead moulded an image of generosity, intelligence, and merriment, which was tightly related to the idea of courtliness. Whereas in the first half of the twelfth century William of Malmesbury still spoke of a civilizing process, those Englishmen, working during the reign of King Henry II, who had received their education in France, the 'centre of culture', thus began to present themselves as paragons of civility, as those who had climbed the ladder of civilization. In order to emphasize their new position, they embraced the ideals of urbanity. In Nigel Longchamp's *Mirror of Fools*, the English students at Paris were famed for being generous, merry, intelligent, charming young men. The rise of government administered by educated social climbers, 'moderns', possibly facilitated this new reputation.<sup>61</sup>

In twelfth-century England, educational opportunities arose for talented men from modest social backgrounds; at the same time the expansion of bureaucracy increased the demand for literate clerks. As a consequence, upward social mobility was recurrent, not only among men of Anglo-Norman descent but also 'native' Anglo-Saxons. Indeed, the men at the Plantagenet royal and ecclesiastical courts were a mixed lot, some of noble standing but many climbing the ranks from lower social strata, lesser knightly and urban families. Some examples of men of unspectacular English birth are John of Salisbury, Thomas Becket, and Ranulf de Glanville – men most famous in their day. The court staff, serving the king as officials and servants, was thus a political community with a broad social background. The majority of court servants had however been students of the cathedral schools of northern France, especially Paris. In this the English royal court differed somewhat from the French Capetian court, where the lesser noble aristocracy and urban elite, and not so much the intellectual upper crust, held sway.<sup>62</sup>

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61 For the notion that clerics of the twelfth century were 'moderns' balancing on the shoulders of ancient giants, see Brian Stock, 'Antiqui or moderni', *New Literary History* 10/2 (1979), 391-400; M.T. Clanchy, 'Moderni in Education and Government in England', in *Speculum* 50/4 (1975), 671-688.

62 Aurell, *Plantagenet Empire*, 47-59.

A typical example of a social climber making in career in a meritocracy, who presents the English as merry and generous, is Alexander Neckam (1157-1217), the son of King John's wet nurse, who later became the abbot of Cirencester. In a verse attributed to him, he paints a generally very benevolent picture of the English, even writing positively about English knights:

They are strong in war, energetic, powerful in fighting,  
 Ever severe, but they grow mild when battles are put aside.  
 They are handsome; cultivated, they flourish with love of virtue.  
 But virtue is nothing, except with respect for duty.  
 The English people do not know the disease of avarice,  
 Love of giving grows as much as wealth itself does. (...)  
 It is very praiseworthy to them [to be] refined with a rich table  
 Cheerful faces always enter no matter what. (...)  
 A gracious nature is given to them and gracious ways,  
 Thus they know what is the sweet mixture of virtues.  
 Why are the English people the envy of every people?  
 Envy seeks the heights, wind blows over the highest points.<sup>63</sup>

The description of the English is remarkably similar to the ideals of civility in this period. The concept of medieval courtliness – or *urbanitas*, the word they frequently used – entailed both ethical and social reform, ethically the ideal of *elegantia morum* and *urbanitas*; socially, the code of *curialitas*.<sup>64</sup> An elegant way of life and discipline, controlling impulsive behaviour (*elegans et urbana disciplina*), entailed grace, charm, pleasantness and agreeable manners. From glosses, it is evident that the words *elegans/elegantior*, *urbanitas*, *facetus* (fine, polite, gentle) and *venustus* (charm) are closely tied to *facetias* (jest, witticism) and *iucunditer* (in a delightful manner). In Papias' *Lexicon*, *facetus*, witty, is glossed as *urbana venusta iocosa*, urbane charming jesting; *venustus*, charm, is glossed as *pulchritudo*, *urbanitas*, *eloquentia*, handsome, urbane and eloquent;

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63 William Camden, *Remains Concerning Britain*, ed. R.D. Dunn (Toronto, Buffalo, London 1984), 18: 'Sunt bello fortes, alacres, validique duelles, / Aspera sed positus mitescant secula bellis. / Sunt nitidi, culti florent virtutis amore, / Sed nihil est virtus, nisi cum pietatis honore. / Quid sit avaritiae pestis gens Anglica nescit, / Crescit amor dandi, quantu ipsa pecunia crescit. (...) Lautior est illis cum mensa divite cultus, / Accedunt hilares semper super Omnia vultus. (...) Gratius ingenium datur his, et gratia morum, / Sic norunt quam sit dulcis mixtura bonorum. / Anglorum cur est gens quaevis invida genti? / Summa petit livor, perflant altissima venti.' Translation by Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, 297. A shorter version is published in M. Esposito, 'On Some Unpublished Poems Attributed to Alexander Neckam', in: *English Historical Review* 30 (1915), 450-471, here at 456-457.

64 These ideals can also be translated into the Old French *courtoisie* and German *hövesche zühte*, according to Stephen Jaeger an imperial tradition independent of the French. Jaeger, *Origins of Courtliness*, 127.

*iocus*, jesting, as *lepos*, *urbanitas*, charming, urbane. Essentially these were classical ideals, urbanity, and elegant, witty speech already being entertained in antiquity.<sup>65</sup>

In the twelfth century, joking, mirth, and urbane wit were typical pastimes of courts across Europe.<sup>66</sup> *Facetia*, jesting, was a secular occupation of the courtly clergy which was sometimes frowned upon in monastic circles, as were *hilaritas* (merriment) and *iocunditas* (Bernard of Clairvaux, Peter Damian).<sup>67</sup> In clerical milieus, jesting could be used to disguise criticism of a ruler. Beautiful manners, harmonious self-control, with respect for the social order, suave speech, and refined gestures also cultivated ‘a beautiful and pure temperament’, as ‘external indicators of inner harmony’.<sup>68</sup> Further specific ideals were affability, amiableness, unbroken cheerfulness, humility, modesty, mildness and patience.<sup>69</sup> Although the clerics were sometimes critical of court life, especially devious courtly plotting, in general these social values were shared by both churchmen and nobility alike.<sup>70</sup>

Indeed, the English courts entertained these very notions of civility. Thomas Becket was said to drill young aristocrats at the court of Henry II to display restraint at the dinner table, eating with moderation, passing dishes in an orderly fashion.<sup>71</sup> Etiquette domesticating the noblemen, urging them to control their urges, refine their manners, was equally practised at the Plantagenet court as elsewhere in French or German territories. The many handbooks instructing on manners point strongly to an active ‘civilizing process’ underway in the twelfth century.<sup>72</sup>

New was also that the ideals of civility were linked to the environment. The wealth of the land might lead to generosity and refinement. This is discussed further below.

### **Generosity and wealth**

A specific characteristic of English refinement linked it to England’s generosity and wealth. In his *History of the British Kings*, Geoffrey of Monmouth said of King Arthur’s court: ‘so noble was Britain then that it surpassed other kingdoms in its stores of wealth, the ostentation of its dress and

65 Idem, 115-143. John Gillingham has argued that the twelfth-century notion of *urbanitas* and civility should not however be related strictly to civil urban communities. Cf. John Gillingham, ‘From Civilitas to Civility: Codes of Manners in Medieval and Early Modern England’, in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, sixth series 12 (2002), 267-289.

66 Jaeger, *Origins of Courtliness*, 145.

67 Idem, 162-163, 171.

68 Quotes in Jaeger, *Origins of Courtliness*, 142-143.

69 Idem, 57-62.

70 For court criticism see especially Egbert Türk, *Nugae curialium. Le règne d’Henri II Plantagenêt (1145-1189) et l’éthique politique* (Geneva 1977); Aurell, *Plantagenet Empire*, 60-68; Jaeger, *Origins of Courtliness*,

71 As English public schools are still taught at the end of the twentieth century. See Aurell, *Plantagenet Empire*, 76; Jaeger, *Envy of Angels*, 297-308, quoting Herbert of Bosham.

72 See Aurell, *Plantagenet Empire*, 73-82. Aurell dates the discussions of civility within intellectual thought to the end of the twelfth century, but Stephen Jaeger has argued extensively that such notions already existed at eleventh-century German courts. See Jaeger, *Origins of Courtliness*, especially chapter 7. However, the notion is far more pronounced in the twelfth.

the sophistication of its inhabitants.<sup>73</sup> Generosity was intrinsic to twelfth-century bureaucracy in England, where many of the king's court advisors and officials exacted large amounts of money in court service, depending on royal favourism.<sup>74</sup> Stinginess and avarice, conversely, represented reprehensible 'barbaric' traits. The English stereotype of generosity – and hospitality – was often related to the opulence of English feasting, 'in the splendid style of English sumptuousness', as Gerald of Wales put in his account of Henry II's entertaining of Irish princes in Dublin.<sup>75</sup> (However, that this extravagant dining could also lead to excessive wining, or in this case beering, was the other side of the coin.) The monarch's wealth was – however – also criticised by some as resulting from extracting large sums money from the peasants.<sup>76</sup>

England's repute of generosity was conceivably also tied up with the country's wealth. The rich isle, 'in want of nothing of the world', was noted for its minerals such as tin (Cornwall), iron ore (Forest of Dean) and lead (Cumbria), and agricultural fertility, its fine pasture land producing meat, cheese, milk and huge wool exports. It has been estimated that in 1086, there were nine million silver pennies in England and huge amounts of coins in circulation.<sup>77</sup> In the twelfth century, the royal revenue and wealth of England were thus well-attested in many anecdotes.<sup>78</sup> For example, upon conquering England, King Harold's mother was reputed to have requested Duke William of Normandy to sell her his body for his weight in gold. Walter Map relates the story how King Louis VII of France compared Henry II's wealth to his own revenue, ironically remarking that 'your lord, the king of England, who wants for nothing, has men, horses, gold, silk, jewels, fruits, game, and everything else. We in France have nothing but bread, and wine and gaiety.'<sup>79</sup>

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73 Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Historia regum Britanniae* IX, ed. and transl. Reeve, 212-213: 'Ad tantum eternim statum dignitatis Britannia tunc reducta erat, quod copia divitiarum, luxu ornamentorum, facetia incolarum cetera regna excellebat.' Quoted by Jaeger, *Origins of Courtliness*, 165.

74 Aurell, *Plantagenet Empire*, 56-58.

75 Gerald of Wales, *Expugnatio Hibernica* 96; citation from Hugh Thomas, *The English & the Normans*, 299-300.

76 See for example chapter 9 note 73 for Jordan Fantosme's verse criticising the extraction of money payments.

77 Richard Huscroft, *Ruling England: 1042-1217* (Harlow 2004), 91. For England's wealth in the eleventh century, see Sawyer, 'The Wealth of England in the Eleventh Century', in: *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 15 (1965), 145-164.

78 Clanchy, *England and its Rulers*, 25, 73, 76, 230, 248.

79 Walter Map, *De nugis curialium* v 5, ed. James, Brooke and Mynors, 451. Citation drawn from Clanchy, *England and its Rulers*, 248.



### England a horn of plenty

Besides economic wealth, clerics and monks also tapped into traditional rhetoric on the geographical situation of the island. Following a conflation of the ancient classical and patristic traditions, England was at the same time pictured as lying almost under the North Pole and as a delightful horn of plenty on the edge of the boundless ocean.<sup>80</sup> As discussed in chapter 1, in the early Middle Ages both Gildas, Nennius and Bede (leaning on Solinus and Orosius) had drawn a hexameral image of Britain blessed with plains and agreeable, arable hills. At the foot of the mountains upon which the animals were put out to pasture, flowers of different hues decorated the scenery. The salutary flow of waters is especially refreshing, with clear fountains, ‘whose constant flow drives before it pebbles white as snow, and brilliant rivers that glide with gentle murmur, guaranteeing sweet sleep for those who lie on their banks, and lakes flowing over with a cold rush of living water’.<sup>81</sup> Bede, with an eye for the produce of the land and waters, mentions its vines, copious land- and waterfowl, the abundance of salmon and eels, shellfish and mussels, enclosed in which ‘are often found excellent pearls of every colour, red and purple, violet and green, but mostly white’.<sup>82</sup> Seals, dolphins and even whales are frequently caught, and from the whelks a scarlet-coloured dye is made, ‘a most beautiful red which neither fades through the heat of the sun nor exposure to the rain’.<sup>83</sup> There are salt and warm springs, and hot baths, and the land is rich in metal, copper, iron, lead and silver. In short, Britain was a pleasant land, full of wonderful amenities.

The English twelfth-century reputation as jolly, intelligent, well-spoken and generous not coincidentally often follows descriptions of England as a divinely blessed plot of land. In his study of the meaning and function of the image of *Merry England* as a place of mirth, singing, dancing and festivity, Günther Blaicher already noted that the ‘*Anglia jocosa*’ stereotype often went hand in hand with descriptions of England’s fertility, although Blaicher does not offer an explanation.<sup>84</sup> These paeans are echoing classical ideal landscapes. The schoolmen of the twelfth century, nurtured upon florilegia of panegyric poetry by Ovid, Virgil and Claudian, were showing off their education by aping the ancients. As such, they had a keen eye for nature.<sup>85</sup> However, with the re-entry of notions of climate influencing character in the twelfth century, these opulent descriptions of England’s wealth and salubrious environment also possibly facilitated the adoption of notions of civility. Thus

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80 Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 1 1, ed. and transl. Colgrave and Mynors, 16-17.

81 Gildas, *De excidio Britanniae* 3, *The Ruin of Britain and other works*, ed. and transl. by Michael Winterbottom (Guildford 2002), 17, 90: ‘crebris undis niveas veluti glareas pellentibus, pernitidisque rivis leni murmure serpentibus ipsorumque in ripis accubantibus suavis soporis pignus praetendentibus, et lacubus frigidum aquae torrentem vivae exundantibus irrigua’.

82 Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 1 1, ed. and transl. Colgrave and Mynors, 14-15: ‘margaritam omnium quidem coloris optimam inveniunt, id est et rubicundi et purpurei et hyacinthini et prasini sed maxime candidi’.

83 Ibidem: ‘rubor pulcherrimus nullo umquam solis ardore, nulla valet pluviarum iniuria pallescere’.

84 Blaicher, *Merry England*, 14-15. Blaicher offers an overview of the image up till the twentieth century. Hugh Thomas, too, remarked that that images of England as an abundant country were related to images of ethnicity, *in casu* their generosity and hospitality. Thomas, *The English & the Normans*, 300.

85 Wilhelm Ganzenmüller, *Das Naturgefühl im Mittelalter* (Berlin 1914), 183.

as discussed below, in many of the sources, a tight relationship is notable between environment and character, as are the similarities between the character of the English and sanguinity. To understand this, we must look to evidence of an awareness of climate theory and environmental influences early on in the twelfth century, in the writings of William of Malmesbury and others.

### **England's marginality**

Rodney Thompson has accused the monk William of Malmesbury of being 'racist, even to the point of paranoia', and anti-Semitic, viewing the Greeks and Saracens as inferior to Western culture, and the Celts to the English.<sup>86</sup> William's rendition of pope Urban II's speech at Clermont in 1095 speaks condescendingly of the northern barbarous people 'frequenting the ice-bound ocean', living like beasts, even having the audacity to call themselves Christians. What is relevant here is that William of Malmesbury was clearly acquainted with climate theory, which he applied to both men in the East as well as on the fringes of 'civilization'. William is evoking the triad of barbarity (in eating and drinking customs as well as an inferior degree of social organization) – lack of Christianity – in relation to the icy northern climate. Ireland, worse still, depended on imports of goods from England, as its soil was barren, its cultivators, a ragged mob of Irishmen, unskilled, poor, living outside of the towns, whereas 'the English and French, with their more civilized way of life, live in the towns, and carry on trade and commerce'.<sup>87</sup>

It is likely that such juxtapositions eased the way for Anglo-Norman scholars to represent England as a suitable locus for civilization. This was necessary as England's geographical position was liminal. Although Tacitus and Caesar had painted England as a pleasant land in antiquity, Jordanes had thus painted a different picture, of bad weather, and people living in wattled huts; a country fertile yet barely sustaining primitive human society.<sup>88</sup> Both from the viewpoint of Jerusalem and Rome, Britain was also positioned on the outskirts of the world. For ancient Rome, Britain was a place of exile, 'from the whole world sundered far', situated in an ocean 'roaring with monsters'.<sup>89</sup> On the east-west axis, early medieval England was a far outpost of the Christian community. On the many Jerusalem-centred *mappae mundi* portraying the holy city as the world's navel, Britain was an island drifting in the hem of the world's outer sea. In the sixth-century *The Ruin of Britain* Gildas had located the island of Britain 'virtually at the end of the world', describing

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86 Thomson, 'Satire, Irony, and Humour in William of Malmesbury', 123-124.

87 William of Malmesbury, *Gesta regum Anglorum* v 409, ed. and transl. Mynors, Thomson and Winterbottom, vol. 1, 738-741: 'Angli vero et Franci cultiori genere uitae urbes nundinarum commertio inhabitant'. Gillingham, 'Civilizing the English', 38.

88 Merrills, *History and Geography*, 139.

89 Virgil, *Eclogue* I, 66: 'et penitus toto divisos orbe Britannos' ('and the Britons, wholly sundered from all the world'). Cf. Catullus, XI, 11: 'horribilesque ultimosque Britannos' ('the formidable Britons, remotest of men'), and Horace, *Odes*, I, 35, 29-30: 'serues iturum Caesarem in ultimos/orbis Britannos' ('protect Caesar as he sets out for Britain at the edge of the world'), and IV 14, 47-48: 'te beluosus qui remotis / obstrepi Oceanus Britannis' ('to you the monster-teeming Ocean that roars at the distant Britons'). References from Nicolas Howe, 'An Angle on this Earth: Sense of Place in Anglo-Saxon England', in: *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 82 (2000), 1-25, here at 9.

it as ‘numb with chill ice and far removed, as in a remote nook of the world, from the visible sun’, to be warmed only by the dazzling rays of Christ.<sup>90</sup> Finally, in the early thirteenth century, Britain’s marginality still shines through in Bartholomaeus Anglicus’ etymologies of Anglia, as ‘Isidore says that the name Anglia comes from “a corner” (*angulus*), as if the land were located at the end or corner of the world’.<sup>91</sup>

England’s positioning within the division of latitudinal climes also brought home its extreme locality on the north-south axis. According to calculations stemming from the ninth-century Persian astronomer Alfraganus, and repeated in thirteenth-century Sacrobosco’s *De sphaera*, the seventh clime ended where the North Pole was raised above the horizon by 50½ degrees. A perturbed Robert the Englishman, lecturing on cosmology in Paris and Montpellier in the 1270s, pointed out that this was ‘hardly across the English Channel, so that almost all of England is outside a clime [i.e. beyond the habitable climes of the world]’.<sup>92</sup> Earlier, in the middle of the thirteenth century, Bavarian

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90 Gildas, *De excidio Britanniae* 3 and 8; in *The Ruin of Britain and other works*, ed. and transl. by Michael Winterbottom (Chichester 2002), 16 and 18. Cf. Eadmer, *Lives of the Saints* II 290-291. In *England and its Rulers*, 22, Michael Clanchy notes Gerald of Wales’ remark that Wales and Ireland were on the furthest borders of the world, and the fourteenth-century Declaration of Arbroath, according to which there was no habitation beyond Scotland. Anglo-Saxon abbot Aelfric of Eynsham (c. 955-1010) described Britain as ‘the outer edge of the earth’s extent’; Isidore, *Etymologiae* IX 102: ‘Gens intra Oceanum mari quasi extra orbem posita.’ The sea flowing between the continent and the British Isles was reason for Isidore to suggest that Britain was even ‘outside our world’.

91 Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* XV 14, ‘De Anglia’: ‘Isidore tamen dicit, Angliam ab angulo dictam, quasi terram in fine vel quasi mundi angulo constitutam.’ However, Isidore does not offer this explanation. Nicholas Howe translates *angulus* as ‘angle’, suggesting that the depiction of England in the oldest *mappa mundi* surviving from England, in Cotton Tiberius B.v., dating from the early decades of the eleventh century, is angular; Nicholas Howe, ‘An Angle on this Earth: Sense of Place in Anglo-Saxon England’, in *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 82 (2000), 1-25, here at 11-12. However, I believe Howe lays too much emphasis on the translation of *angulus* as an ‘angle’, instead of ‘corner’. In the early stages of the eleventh century, for example, Thietmar, Bishop of Merseburg in Saxony, remarked that the ‘English are situated in a corner of the earth’; cf. Thietmar von Merseburg, *Chronik*, ed. Werner Trillmich (Berlin 1957), 392. Bede, on the other hand, says that the English ‘come from a land called Angulus’, a territory between Jutland and Saxony; Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica* I 15, as remarked by Nicolas Howe, ‘An Angle on this Earth’, 3-6. Confusingly, in the ninth century, bishop of Utrecht Radboud’s *Life of Saint Boniface*, discussing successful resistance of the English against invading Danes, states: ‘Saint Boniface’s native ground lies in the island which is called Britannia, which is now inhabited by the Angli, who are said to have taken their origins from the Saxons. Angli, however, they say, not absurdly, comes from *angulus*, i.e. from the strength of the kingdom; for they are truly strong and powerful, and thanks to Christ’s power, with the help of weapons and strong force they made their provinces the safest...’ Ratbodus (Traiectensis), *Vita altera Bonifatii* VI, ed. Wilhelm Levison, MGH SS Rerum Germanicarum 57 (Hannover 1905), 66: ‘Beatus Bonifacius genitale solum in insula que Britannia dicitur habuit, quam modo gens incolit Anglorum, que a Saxonibus originem traxisse putatur. Angli vero ab angulo, id est firmamento regni derivari non absurde dicuntur; qui re vera fortes sunt et validi, Christique opitulante gratia, provincias suas armorum viriumque robustarum presidio tutissimas reddunt...’ A possible explanation proposed by the editor Levison (page 66 note 2) would be that the author interpreted *angulus* as ‘firmament’, following Isidore’s etymology of *angulus* as ‘a “corner”, because it joins two walls into one.’ Cf. Isidore, *Etymologiae* XV 8, 4: ‘Angulus, quod duos parietes in unum coniungat.’

92 For a discussion of Sacrobosco’s and Alfraganus’ calculation of the climes, see Lynn Thorndike, *The Sphere of Sacrobosco and its Commentators* (Chicago 1949), 16-18, esp. n. 88. For Robert the Englishman’s commentary, Idem, Thirteenth Lecture, 186-193, translation on 236-242; citation here at 236.

Dominican friar Albertus Magnus had already struggled with the southerly position of the temperate climate, pushing it up northwards from the fourth to the sixth (from  $41\frac{1}{3}^{\circ}$ ) and seventh climate (from  $45\frac{1}{3}^{\circ}$ , corresponding to the Hellespont). Instead of tampering with the latitude of the climates, Robert the Englishman came up with a different answer, expounding that the reason why most of England ('not two days' journey') was outside the climate, was not because it was unfit to live in. Instead, uninhabited at the time of division into climates, the philosophers 'divided only land which was publicly and notoriously habitable and to which access and return was open'.<sup>93</sup> In other words, it was through their ignorance that the ancients got it wrong.

### The pursuit of temperance

It was exactly the island's liminal position which was thus counter-balanced by images of salubrity. This must be viewed as relevant because of the emerging impact of climate theory and notions that environment determined the temperaments. Robert the Englishman's anxiety over England's positioning beyond the seventh climate provoked him to extol England's abundance in crops and game, and salubrious verdant meadows, strongly echoing Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain* and citing legendary founder Brutus' vision of Britain's designation as a second Troy. In the twelfth century, this image of Britain's abundance was happily copped by many in their descriptions of both the whole of Britain and England, by both Welsh and Anglo-Norman writers. Not only was England fertile, it was also temperate. By evoking its healthy nature, emphasis was laid on its temperateness. Instead of a cold, uninhabitable region, archdeacon Henry of Huntingdon (1080/90-c. 1160) thus states: 'I think I must not omit to mention the agreeable temperateness which makes Britain extremely healthy for its inhabitants. For since it is situated in the north-west, the coldness which comes from the north is tempered by the heat which it receives from the western sun.'<sup>94</sup> This remark follows a paean praising 'that isle, blessed by its far-famed splendour', which surpasses in fertile fields, milk and honey(!), 'all others which that god rules, from whose foaming mouth the ocean flows'.<sup>95</sup> Again, Gervase of Canterbury (c. 1141 -c. 1210), monk of Christ Church, Canterbury, in the opening sentence of his verbal *mappamundi*, lauds 'the isle of England's temperateness, fertility and opulence'.<sup>96</sup>

England's temperate environment was already invoked in some very early medieval sources, such as an anonymous panegyric to Constantine, speaking of its average temperature, abundance of

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93 Lynn Thorndike, *The Sphere of Sacrobosco and its Commentators*, 236 and 241 (translation).

94 Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum* I 6, ed. Greenway, 20-21: 'Nec tacendum arbitror quod temperie gratissima, et ideo inhabitantibus saluberrima sit Britannia. Cum enim inter septentrionem et occidentem sita sit, frigus quod recipit a septentrione, temperat calor quem recipit a sole occidente.'

95 Ibidem (full quotation): 'Illa quidem, longe celebri splendore beata / Glebis lacte favis supereminet insula cunctis, / Quas regit ille deus, spumanti cuius ab ore / Profluit oceanus.'

96 Gervase of Canterbury, *Mappa mundi* I, ed. William Stubbs, *The historical works of Gervase of Canterbury*, vol. 2, 414: 'temperies, fecunditas et opulentia'.

corn, milk cattle and sheep, and absence of serpents.<sup>97</sup> Bartholomaeus Anglicus additionally relates England's diverse fruits, metals and plenteous game to the *character* of the English people. 'Wherefore,' says Bartholomaeus, 'somebody, describing the English island, said in verse:

England, fruitful, fertile land, corner of the earth,  
 Rich isle, in want of nothing of the world,  
 And wholly desiring none of the world's riches;  
 England, full of mirth, free, born to jest,  
 A free people, free of spirit and free of tongue,  
 But the hand is freer and better than the tongue.<sup>98</sup>

These verses are a conflation of two poems now – tentatively – attributed to Hugh of Montacute, 'a shadowy figure from south-west England',<sup>99</sup> prior of the Cluniac house of Montacute and later abbot of the nearby Benedictine abbey Muchelney in Somerset sometime in second half of the twelfth century.<sup>100</sup> Whether or not Hugh actually is the author of these poems, is highly enigmatic. Lines from both poems were circulating separately; other authors to quote from both verses are for example Ranulf Hidgen in his *Polychronicon* and Thomas of Otterbourne in his *Chronicle*.<sup>101</sup> Both poems address the character of the English in similar wordings. In the first, 'Venimus ad naves, conscendere me prohibebat', a Frenchman sailing to England experiences a dreadfully rough Channel Crossing.<sup>102</sup> Seasickness makes him long to set foot upon land – regardless of the locality. The subject is strongly reminiscent of a poem by Bishop of Le Mans Hildebert of Lavardin (c. 1055-1133), modelled upon the choppy Ovidian sea-crossing to Tomi, to which Ovid was exiled.<sup>103</sup> Upon

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97 Cf. R.A.B. Mynors (ed.), *XII panegyrici latini* (Place unknown 1964), 192; *In praise of later Roman emperors: the Panegyrici latini. Introduction, translation and historical commentary*, transl. and eds R.A.B. Mynors, C.E.V. Nixon and Barbara Saylor Rodgers (Berkeley 1994), 231-2; Camden, *Remains Concerning Britain*, ed. Dunn, 6-7.

98 Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* xv 14, 'De Anglia': 'Unde quidam describens insulam Anglicanam metricè sic dixit. Anglia terra ferax et fertilis, angulus orbis. / Insula predives, qua toto vix eget orbe. / Et cuius totus indiget orbis ope. / Anglia plena iocis gens libera apta iocari. / Libera gens cui libera mens et libera lingua. / Sed lingua melior, liberiorque manus.'

99 A.G. Rigg, *A History of Anglo-Latin Literature*, 135-136.

100 A.B. Scott, 'Some Poems Attributed to Richard of Cluny', in: *Medieval Learning and Literature: Essays Presented to Richard William Hunt*, eds J.J.G. Alexander and M.T. Gibson (Oxford, 1976), 192-193. They have, in the past, been linked to Richard of Cluny, but this attribution seems erroneous. Printed earlier in W. Wattenbach (ed.), 'Verse aus England', in *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde* 1 (1876), 600-604, who mentions Henry of Blois and Matthew of Vendôme as possible authors.

101 Ranulf Hidgen, *Polychronicon* I 41, eds Babington and Lumby, II Rolls Series (1869), 18; Thomas of Otterbourne, ed. T. Hearne, *Duo rerum Anglicarum Scriptores* (Oxford, 1732), 6-7. See Scott, 'Some Poems Attributed to Richard of Cluny', 189 for further quotations.

102 Walther, *Initia carminum* no. 20097.

103 *Hildeberti Carmina Minora*, no. 22, vv. 45-60. See Scott, 'Some Poems Attributed to Richard of Cluny', 191.

arriving in England, however, the Frenchman, possibly striving to achieve advancement at an English court, puts himself to the task of observing the character of the English people:

The island of Brutus, with its excellent promontory ports,  
 Sweet soil for the weary, seemed even sweeter.  
 Sweet soil, that, though always sweet,  
 Was to me, after the crossing, especially sweet.  
 I proceeded and after my first ordeal,  
 The second was to turn to this people's manners.  
 And as I was often seen to observe man's way of life,  
 I was an excellent judge of their manners.  
 Examining the famous indigenous nation,  
 Their customs, the jokes they make,  
 Their lively dress and faces, free hearts,  
 And those hands which you think would be born to give,  
 It would be surprising if I, a Frenchman, was not surprised –  
 France, which has never shown the like.  
 Free people, free of spirit and free of tongue,  
 But whose hand is freer and better than its tongue.  
 The mind is free, tongue, hand, and such  
 Is their freedom, that they could not conceive it greater.  
 The mind is free, the tongue freer, and most so the right hand,  
 Bent upon, bringing forth, [striving for] freedom.  
 The reward of their nature promises happy faces,  
 The generous hand ensuring them.<sup>104</sup>

In another poem attributed to Hugh of Montacute, we are again told that England is free and jolly, born to jest, and full of mirth. Again, England is a 'fruitful, fertile land, corner of the earth, most fertile, sacred horn of plenty, England, sweet soil, whose ancient, not foreign or recent charm makes

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104 A.B. Scott, 'Some Poems Attributed to Richard of Cluny', Appendix II, I verse 37-58: 'Eximios portus pretendens insula Bruti, / fessis dulce solum, dulcior ipsa dedit. / Dulce solum quod, cum numquam fuerit nisi dulce, / tunc mihi precipue post mare dulce fuit. / Processi populique suos advertere ritus, / post primam curam cura secunda fuit; / cumque hominum cultus adtendere sepe viderer, / morum precipuus insidiator eram. / Perpendens igitur clarum genus indigenarum, / mores morales, facta faceta fore, / cultus et vultus alacres, et libera corda. / quasque putes natas ad sua danda manus, / si non mirarer, mirum foret, utpote Gallus, / Gallia cui numquam tale videre dedit. / Libera gens, cui libera mens et libera lingua, / sed lingua melior liberiorque manus. Libera sunt mens, lingua, mens, tantum videntur / libera, quod nequeant liberiora fore. / Libera mens, vox liberior, liberrima dextra, / libertatis opus cogitat, edit, agit. / Ingenii pretium facies promittere leta, / at monstrare potest officiosa manus.'

it sweet'.<sup>105</sup> Earlier, another author of continental origin, Baudri of Dol (circa 1050-1130), abbot of Bourgeil and later bishop of Dol-en-Bretagne, in a letter to the monks of Fécamp Abbey articulated his delight at the fecundity of England and the charming character of the English: 'Oh, how much gold and silver are found there! What abundance of food, drunken with wine! What joyfulness and exultation, bountiful brethren, how eloquent, how pleasant, how admirable! I was delighted, and compared to England, I deemed Brittany, where I spent my early years, a place of exile. I rejoiced, I tell you, because I was delighted by the perfume of religion, which glowed in nearly every region.' Revelling in the sweet smells of lilies and roses, he marvels at the lascivious generosity which the English bestow upon him.<sup>106</sup>

It is noteworthy that both Hugh of Montacute and Baudri of Dol came from the continent, or in the case of Baudri, to be more precise, from Brittany. Seemingly in their praise of England's fecundity and joyous character – possibly holding up a mirror to the French –, they were tapping into an already existent tradition in which England as a place of exile is presented as a sweet abode. Hildebert of Lavardin, bishop of Le Mans, had had no qualms in writing a similar eulogy of England in the verse 'Anglia terra ferax, tibi pax diuturna quietem', flattering King Henry I of England, who had actually forced Hildebert to follow him to England after the capture of Le Mans.<sup>107</sup> Less surprising, the same laudations are also articulated in some verses from English soil. In MS. Cotton Julius A VIII, following the lines attributed to Hugh of Montacute that the English were '*nata iocari*', born to jest, and extremely generous, the following poem by an anonymous author has been inserted. Yet again, the joyous and generous, courtly character of the English is related to England's fecundity as a land of milk and honey:

England, jewel and flower of all neighbouring lands,  
 Is content with the abundance of its wealth.  
 When hunger strikes, she restores and refreshes  
 Foreign nations, who, having consumed everything, are in need.  
 The beneficial land, wonderfully fertile, flourishes  
 With prosperity, for it is blessed with the virtue of peace.

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105 A.B. Scott, 'Some Poems Attributed to Richard of Cluny', Appendix II, II: 'Anglia terra ferax et fertilis angulus orbis, / Fertilius cornu, copia sacra, tuo! / Anglia, dulce solum, quod non aliena recensque, / Sed sua dulcedo pristina dulce facit. / Anglia plena iocis, gens libera, nata iocari, / Tota iocosa, velim dicere tota iocus...'

106 Baudri of Dol, 'Itinerarium sive episola ad Fiscannenses', *Patrologia Latina* 166, Col. 1173C-1174A: 'O quantum auri et argenti ibi reperi! quantum ciborum crapulatorum copiositatis! quantum laetitiae et exultationis, quam dapsiles fratres, quam facundos, quam jucundos, quam admirandos! Laetatus sum, et ad Angliae comparisonem, Britanniam, quam incolere coeperam, autumavi exsilium. Gavisus sum, inquam, quia religionis odore, quo pene illa tota regio flagrabat, exhilaratus sum. Bone Deus! quam olentes rosas, quam albicantia lilia ibi persensi! quam ditium aromatum redolentiam ibi hausi; quam amicis complexibus astrictus, quam non fictis obscuracionibus, quatenus cum eorum singulis manerem adjuratus! Non tamen, sicut arbitror, me magnum aliquid, praeter peregrinum, aestimabant: sed charitate, quae in eis redundabat, cogente, cogebat.'

107 Hildebert of Lavardin, *Carmina Minora* 37, 'De Anglia', ed. 24-25.

The English' ports see the sun rise and set,  
 England has a fleet that would support many places,  
 And food and property are sooner held in common;  
 For the men there are eminent by nature.  
 That island, blessed with its long-famed splendour,  
 With its soil, milk, bees, surely surpasses all others.<sup>108</sup>

Temperance, abundance and courtliness are thus tightly interwoven in scholarly sources of this period, characteristics remarkably similar to those of the most desirous of all complexions: the sanguine man. In the seventh century, Isidore already remarked that 'men dominated by blood are pleasant and charming',<sup>109</sup> and Bede's *De temporum ratione* remarked that they are 'cheerful, merry, full of compassion', and that they 'laugh and talk a lot'.<sup>110</sup> As mentioned in chapter 2, in the twelfth century, the character of the four humours was described comprehensively in the anonymous yet extremely popular verse 'Regimen sanitatis Salernitanum', according to which:

Fat and jolly of nature are those [of the sanguine humour].  
 They always want to hear rumours,  
 Venus and Bacchus delight them, as well as good food and laughter;  
 They are joyful and desirous of speaking kind words.  
 These people are skilful for all subjects and quite apt;  
 For whatever cause, anger cannot lightly rouse them. They are  
 Generous, loving, joyful, merry, of ruddy complexion,  
 Singing, solidly lean, rather daring, and friendly.<sup>111</sup>

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108 G. Waitz (ed.), 'II. Reise nach England und Frankreich im Herbst 1877', in *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde* 4 (1879), 9-42, here at 25: 'Anglia, terrarum decus et flos finitimarum, / Est contenta sui fertilitate boni. / Externas gentes, consumptis rebus, egentes, / Quando fames ledit, recreat et reficit. / Commoda terra satis mirande fertilitatis, / Prosperitate viget, cum bona pacis habet. / Anglorum portus occasus novit et ortus; / Anglia classem [habet], que loca multa juvet, / Et cibus et census magis hic communis habetur; / Nam de more viri sunt ibi magnifici. / Illa quidem, longe celebri splendore beata, / Glebis, lacte, favis superveniet insula cunctis.' These last two lines are taken from a poem inserted by Henry of Huntingdon, written before 1129. Cf. the gloss to MS. Reg. 13 B iv, 14: 'Isti sunt versi Alfredi'. Thomas Otterbourne produces yet another conflation of these verses.

109 Isidore, *Etymologiae* XI, 'De homine et portentis': 'Homines quibus dominatur sanguis dulces et blandi sunt.'

110 Bede, *De temporum ratione* 35, *Patrologia Latina* 90: 'Item sanguis eos in quibus maxime pollet facit hilares, laetos, misericordes, multum ridentes et loquentes.'

111 *Regimen Sanitatis Salernitanum* vs. 267-274, ed. and transl. Cummins, 244-245: 'Natura pingues isti sunt atque iocantes. / Semper rumores cupiunt audire frequentes; / Hoc Venus et Bachus delectant, fercula, risus, / Et facit hoc hylares et dulcia verba loquentes. / Omnibus hii studiis habiles sunt et magis apti: / Qualibet ex causa nec hos leviter movet ira. / Largus, amans, hylaris, ridens, rubeique coloris, / Cantans, camosus, satis audax, atque benignus.'

In short, the sanguine man is merry, generous, friendly and intelligent, enjoys good food and drink, which is very similar to the characterization of the English dwelling in a temperate land.

Through emphasis of England's beneficial environment, these clerics and monks presented England as a place where courtliness might flourish, where the civilizing process might succeed. Because of England's pleasant climate, its inhabitants were agreeable, displaying many characteristics similar to the sanguine man, and attune to courtly ideals.

Wealth, generosity, opulence and hospitality knew a darker side, however: luxuriousness.<sup>112</sup> Any 'refined culture' could sometimes be chided for its decadence; the Anglo-Saxons were sometimes pictured as effeminate, as William of Poitiers had already remarked in the eleventh century.<sup>113</sup> Civilized courtly behaviour was like walking a tightrope in a delicate balancing exercise between rough unpolished barbarity and over-courtly effeminate decadence. For the secular clergy serving at court, it was thus vital to manoeuvre dexterously, avoiding the pitfalls of luxurious wantonness, of keeping company with prostitutes and jesters.

### **Court criticism: luxuriousness**

Although refinement of manners and polished etiquette were generally seen as manifestations of civilized behaviour, suggesting control over urges and passions, courtliness did not always carry a positive connotation. With the upsurge of the notion of courtliness from the eleventh century, criticism came especially from Church reformers.<sup>114</sup> Court criticism crept steadily upwards from the south and south-east to the north, each society viewing its southerly neighbours as over-cultured and decadently wallowing in luxury. Tight clothes were associated generally with southern French fashion, although the primal source of Christian 'contamination' seems to lie in Andalusia. Radulfus Glaber wrote that around the year 1000, following the marriage alliance between Constance of Arles and Robert the Pious, a flood of men from the Auvergne and Aquitaine flocked to the north wearing indecent shoes and clothes, and were beardless like actors.<sup>115</sup> Siegfried of Gorze, in turn, complained that French novelties in (short) haircuts (and clean beards) and scanty clothing, were corrupting German territories following the marriage alliance between Henry III and Agnes of Poitou.<sup>116</sup> In stark contrast to the usual stereotype of the German coarseness, Saxo Grammaticus even said the Saxons had contaminated Danish manliness with their *mores Theutoniae*, weak effeminacy.<sup>117</sup> The same accusation was hurled at the Saracens. Critics represented the court as a platform or 'ring of

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112 Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, 300-301.

113 Idem, 247.

114 Jaeger, *Origins of Courtliness*, 155; Stafford, 'Meanings of Hair', 156-157 for the moral connotations of long hair and the reform movement; Bartlett, 'Symbolic Meanings of Hair', 43-60.

115 Radulfus Glaber, *Historiae* III 40, ed. and transl. France, 164-169.

116 Siegfried of Gorze, Letter to Poppo of Stavelot, printed in *Geschichte der Deutschen Kaiserzeit. 2. Blüthe des Kaiserthums*, ed. W. von Giesebrecht (Leipzig 1885), vol. 2, 714-718; Mohr, 'Frage des Nationalismus', 111-112. Cf. Jaeger, *Origins of Courtliness*, 178-179, and Introduction of this study note 106, for more references and discussion.

117 Saxo Grammaticus, *Saxonis gesta Danorum* VI 8, 7 eds J. Olrik and H. Raeder (Copenhagen 1931), 167 Jaeger, *Origins of Courtliness*, 185-190.

turpitude and degeneracy' and idle pleasure, undermining the spirit of manly bravery.<sup>118</sup> Sapping the warriors of their machismo, the nobility was strutting about in tight-fitting clothes. Criticism was directed specifically at new-fangled fashions such as wearing pointed shoes which curled back like scorpion's tails; in the early parts of the twelfth century Anglo-Norman monks William of Malmesbury and Orderic Vitalis wrote that especially during the reign of William Rufus, men 'sweep the dusty ground with the unnecessary trains of their robes and mantles; their long, wide sleeves cover their hands whatever they do; impeded by these frivolities they are almost incapable of walking quickly or doing any kind of useful work'.<sup>119</sup>

At the end of the eleventh century, donning long tresses of hair became fashionable especially among young courtiers in England.<sup>120</sup> Hair-cutting rituals executed by Norman bishops attempted to reinstate the right order. At Easter 1105, on the eve of King Henry I's attack on his brother Duke Robert of Normandy, Henry's hair was ritually trimmed by the bishop of Séez at Carentan in Normandy; according to Orderic Vitalis, the bishop castigated the idleness and wealth of Normandy, which had succumbed to 'trifles and vanities'. Henry and his followers were likened to Saracens; they 'grow the tresses of women on their heads, and deck their toes with the scales of scorpions, revealing themselves to be effeminate by their softness and serpent-like by their scorpion stings'.<sup>121</sup> Hair-cutting, as an act of moral reform, reached its peak at the turn of the century. Penalties for long hair included exclusion from the Church, the denial of a Christian burial, or worse.<sup>122</sup> Such was the fear that the ecclesiastics had instilled, such the 'moral panic about hair and fashion' as Pauline Stafford puts it, that the nobles of Amiens, denied access to mass because of their long hair, were said to have cut off their hair with swords and knives.<sup>123</sup> Such was its potency that Orderic Vitalis stated that God allowed wars, sickness and tyranny because men were prancing about in public with their long tresses.<sup>124</sup>

Effeminacy and decadence were related especially to the nobility at the courts. Baudri of Dol chided the pre-Conquest Anglo-Saxons for their effeminacy, long hair, and general weakness in battle; as such the Anglo-Saxons were 'feminized', as men lacking strength and control.<sup>125</sup> Bishop

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118 Idem, 177.

119 Orderic Vitalis, *Historia Ecclesiastica* VIII 3, 325, ed. and transl. Chibnall, vol. 4, 188-189: 'Humum quoque pulverulentam interularum et palliorum superfluo sirmate verrunt longis et latisque manicis ad omnia facienda manus operiunt, et his superfluitatibus onusti celeriter ambulare vel aliquid utiliter operari vix possunt'; Stafford, 'Meanings of Hair', 157.

120 William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella* ed. 10-12, explicitly relates long hair to courtiers; cf. Stafford, 'Meanings of Hair', 157-158.

121 Orderic Vitalis, *Historia Ecclesiastica* XI 4, 208, ed. and transl. Chibnall, vol. 6, 66-67: 'capita sua comis mulierum comunt, et in summitate pedum suorum caudas scorpionum gerunt, quibus se per molliciem femineos et per aculeos nepae serpentinos ostendunt'.

122 Stafford, 'Meanings of Hair', 157.

123 Idem, 153-156; C.W. David, *Robert Curthose* (Cambridge 1920), 161-163; C. Warren Hollister, *Henry I* (New Haven 2001), 186-187; Frank Barlow, *William Rufus* (London 1983), 101-110; Bartlett, 'Symbolic Meanings of Hair', 50-52; Platelle, 'Le problème de scandale', 1071-1096.

124 Orderic Vitalis, *Historia Ecclesiastica* VIII 3, 324-325, ed. and transl. Chibnall, vol. 4, 188-190.

125 Stafford, 'Meanings of Hair', 165.

Wulfstan II of Worcester (1062-1095) – himself an exceptionally virtuous clergyman on the eve of the Conquest, one of the few to demonstrate abstinence by refraining from eating and drinking<sup>126</sup> – was said (by William of Malmesbury) to have already prophesized that the English' long hair would lead to their downfall before the 1066 Conquest.<sup>127</sup>

To an extent the condemnation was a common complaint lamenting the moral deterioration in modernity, although the fashion of *curialitas*, practised at the dinner table, in elegant conversation, in modes of walking, was certainly à la mode in this period. In its worse manifestations, it resulted in effeminate, girly, luxurious wantonness, with men presenting a 'softness of body' in an 'unnatural' attempt to change the 'natural order'. In the elite male world of warriors, appeals to reform subsequently tapped into ideals of masculinity.<sup>128</sup>

Although such criticism, in the case of England, was directed especially at the knighthood, and although effeminacy was seen as a corrupting influence originating from southern France, these images would have further undermined the weak claims to chivalric talents in English sources. For the clerics, adopting urbane civility was thus a more attractive alternative than stressing any chivalric qualities (as in France); consequently, possibly attempting to compete with French civilization, the English scholars at the courts especially turned to emphasizing their wit – the vehicle used by many of these courtiers in order to ascend the social ladder. In doing so, positioning themselves within the 'civilized world', they focused especially on separating themselves from the 'barbarian' others: the Germans.

### **Divorcing the Germans**

In *English Ethnicity and Race in Early Modern Drama*, Mary Floyd-Wilson remarks that during the sixteenth century 'the English directly confronted and wrestled with their identity as northerners'. Increasingly paying attention to their marginalization, they recognized that the original Britons were of northern descent. A pivotal role herein is attributed to William Camden's *Britannia* (1586) and Edmund Spenser's *A View of the State of Ireland* (1633). In these works, as a result of a supposed rediscovery of humoral theory (which actually occurred much earlier, as we have seen), the early Britons were depicted as warlike, crude, uncivilized barbarians. In order to accept this, the English,

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126 Thomas, 'English and the Normans', 254.

127 *Vita Wulfstani*, ed. 2002, 58; cf. Stafford, 'Meanings of Hair', 155-156, 159-160. Hair was also a distinct ethnic marker as Anglo-Saxons were noted for their moustaches and beards in the pre-Conquest era, whereas the Normans were clean-shaven and short-haired. The English, on the eve of the Conquest, were called 'nancies', with their combed, anointed hair; cf. Guy of Amiens, *Carmen de Hastingae Proelio of Guy Bishop of Amiens*, ed. F. Barlow (London 1972), 20-21. See Wormald, 'Engla lond', 18, for remarks about Danish hair and dress and attacks on England in the eleventh century. A thirteenth-century Latin verse complains how children sent by English barons to French universities, are corrupted, men becoming effeminate just as stallions resemble mares; see Thomas Wright (ed.), *Anecdota Literaria: A collection of Short Poems in English, Latin, and French, illustrative of the literature and history of England in the 13th. century; and more especially of the condition and manners of the different classes of society* (London 1844), 38-39.

128 Stafford, 'Meanings of Hair', 162-164.

according to Floyd-Wilson, had to let go of the myth of Trojan descent of the Britons, as Brutus, their so-called progenitor, Aeneas's grandson, came from the Mediterranean. England's current status of civility was explained by the civilizing influence of its conquerors.<sup>129</sup> Consequently, until the Tacitean idea of the 'pure' Anglo-Saxon was embraced, the English 'as marginalized and belated northerners (...) were in a constant struggle to alter, temper, counter, and even recover what they presumed to be their "natural" complexion'.<sup>130</sup>

However, it is evident that the Anglo-Norman elite in England were already grappling with their northern marginal identity much earlier, in the twelfth century. In order to emphasize their urbanity clerics were stressing the temperate environment. By doing so they were positioning themselves on a higher rung of civilization than the Kelts. At times, English clerics also contrasted their purported *intelligence* to German *stupidity*. As discussed in chapter 2, this was a stereotype springing forth from ancient environmental theory, as Germanic brains were numbed from excessive cold, turning them into slow-witted dunces. In one of the English rhetorician Geoffrey of Vinsauf's didactical works, the prose treatise *Documentum de modo et arte versificandi*, the author thus adorns his explanation of a *continens pro continente* with an array of ethnic stereotypes: '...one can say "keen England, blunt Germany, weaving Flanders, feminine France, boastful Normandy", because of the keen Englishmen, the blunt Teutons, the Flemish weavers, the feminine French, and the Norman boasters'.<sup>131</sup> Likewise, in a religious dialogue written at Bridlington, a young student is admonished by his master for his slow-wittedness, saying that if he 'were as English in the quickness of your mind as you are by race', he would not display such Teutonic (lack of) intelligence, getting 'stuck on the level and looking for a knot in a bulrush, as that fellow says', as something 'sounds like Greek to Teutons, if it be not explained'.<sup>132</sup> The most striking example of how the English' intelligence was explained by and contrasted to that of the Germans' climate, can however be found in Gervase of Tilbury's *Otia imperialia*. Gervase of Tilbury (c. 1150-c.1228) was an English canon lawyer who spent a large part of his life abroad, in Arles and possibly later in Saxony. In his world description, written for Holy Roman emperor Otto IV and drawing heavily upon obligatory encyclopaedic information, Gervase further develops the classic categorization of ethnic character according to climate. After remarking that the Gauls are certainly whiter than their neighbours, he first follows tradition by repeating that 'as a result of the differences in the air, the Romans are serious, the

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129 Mary Floyd-Wilson, *English Ethnicity and Race in Early Modern Drama*, 49-50.

130 *Idem*, 53.

131 *Documentum de modo et arte dictandi et versificandi* II 38: 'Similiter dici potest "subtilis Anglia", "hebes Teutonia", "textrix Flandria", "muliebris Gallia", "jactatrix Normannia", propter Anglicos subtiles, Theutonicos hebetes, Flandrenses textores, Gallos muliebres, Normannicos jactatores.' The translation is by Roger P. Parr.

132 Robert of Bridlington, *The Bridlington Dialogue* VI, ed. A. Religious of C.S.M.V. (London, 1960), 66-66a: 'Si sic esses angulus uiuacitate sensus quemadmodum es natione (...). Sed quia sensu theutonicus es et propterea etiam heres in plano et, ut ille ait, queris nodum in scirpo'; and 133-133a: 'Teutonicus hoc quasi Grecum sonat, si non exponatur.' Looking for a knot in a bulrush was a proverbial expression meaning unnecessarily looking for difficulty; see ed. 66a note 4 for further references. Cf. Paul Meyvaert, 'Voicing National Anthipathy', 751.

Greeks frivolous, the Africans crafty, the Gauls fierce-natured'. He continues this summary by remarking that 'the English are of more powerful intelligence, and the Teutons of greater physical strength, all due to the nature of their climate'.<sup>133</sup> Familiar with climate theory from his knowledge of Isidore's *Etymologies*, it is noteworthy that he directly relates the intelligence of the English to their climate, contrasting it with the physical strength of the Germans.

As Paul Meyvaert remarked, in earlier centuries there was a 'widespread sense of unity between the English and Germanic peoples on the Continent' – English here referring to the Anglo-Saxon past.<sup>134</sup> Bartholomaeus Anglicus himself, quoting Bede, remarks that the 'offspring of the Saxons of Germany possessed the island of Britain, whose language and customs are still the same in many ways to this very day'.<sup>135</sup> By the twelfth century however, after the Norman Conquest, the English were laying claim to character traits such as subtle minds and elegant speech, which were firmly incongruent with the unsophisticated image of the German as intellectually stupid and coarse, or, as in John of Salisbury's letter to Englishman Ralph of Sarre anno 1160, as brutal and headstrong madmen.<sup>136</sup> The fact that many of these scholarly Englishmen had, during their studies in Paris been lumped together with the Germans in the English *natio* (a guild of masters), may have offered further incentive to differentiate themselves from their 'barbaric' forebears.

An example of how this argument could be turned on its head, is presented by Gerald of Wales. Instead of emphasizing England's temperance, Gerald, a notorious flatterer and opportunistic flip-flopper in his allegiances, chose a different strategy. Gerald's father, William de Barry, was an Anglo-Norman knight; his mother was related to leading native Welsh princes. In his *Description of Wales* (c. 1194), which he wrote while in royal service under King Richard, Gerald elected to glorify in the Trojan origins of the British nation. In this case, however, the Britons are set off sharply against the English. Curiously, Gerald seems to place the Britons above the English, even though he includes chapters on how to conquer and reign over the Welsh, probably written for the benefit of the English curia. In answer to the question why the Welsh demonstrated great boldness in speaking, Gerald says that the Britons, 'transplanted from the hot and arid regions of the Trojan plain, keep

133 Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia imperialia* II 10, ed. Banks and Binns, 286-287.

134 Paul Meyvaert, 'Voicing National Antipathy', 752.

135 Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* XV 13, 'De Alemannia': '...quorum progenies et successio Britanniam insulam possidet, quorum linguam et mores Anglicorum gens usque hodie in pluribus imitatur.' Cf. Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica* I 15, ed. and transl. Colgrave and Mynors, 50-51.

136 John of Salisbury, *The Letters of John of Salisbury. Vol. 1: The Early Letters* (1153-1161), no. 124, eds Millor, Butler, Brooke, 204-214; see also his letter to Thomas Becket, dated 1164, in the same volume, no. 55, at 229. Cf. Horst Fuhrmann, 'Quis Teutonicos constituit iudices nationum? The Trouble with Henry', in *Speculum* 69/2 (1994), 344-358, for tensions between German imperial claims, the papacy, and French and English interests. John of Salisbury's negative view of the Germans might be interpreted in view of his active interest in the papal schism of 1159-1178, during which Frederick Barbarossa supported Victor IV, whereas most territories, including England, supported Alexander III; cf. Timothy Reuter, 'John of Salisbury and the Germans', in Michael Wilks (ed.), *The World of John of Salisbury* (Oxford 1984), 415-425. For more anti-Germanic sentiment, see for example Ralph of Diceto's and Ralph of Coggeshall's remarks that the Austrians are huge bodied, stiff necked, dirty, and stupid; cf. Hoppenbrouwers, *Standaardfactor*, 20.

their dark colouring, which reminds one of the earth itself, their natural warmth of personality and their hot temper, all of which gives them confidence in themselves.’ (Gerald’s application of climate theory does not tally with the general belief that hot climates produce cold temperaments, but that is beside the point.) Gerald of Wales is also a strong believer of English ties to the Saxons and their temperaments. For, according to Gerald, although the Romans and the Franks are all bold men, ‘it is not true of the English, nor of Saxons from whom they have descended, nor indeed of the Germans. It is no good saying that the reason for this defect in the English is the state of servitude which they now enjoy’ (i.e. the Anglo-Saxons after the Norman Conquest), as this does not apply to the ‘Saxons and the Germans, who still enjoy their liberty’, although they ‘have the same weakness, so that the argument does not hold. The Saxons and the Germans derive their cold nature from the frozen polar regions which lie adjacent to them.’<sup>137</sup>

Gerald also chooses not to acknowledge the possibility that the English or the Briton’s complexion had changed after migration. The English, ‘although they now live elsewhere, still retain their outward fairness of complexion and their inward coldness of disposition from what nature had given them earlier on’. Similarly, the Britons, migrating from Troy, as did the Romans under Aeneas and the Franks under Antenor, retained their ancient great courage, their magnanimity, their ancient blood, their quick-wittedness and their ability to speak up for themselves.<sup>138</sup>

By adopting the civilizing myth, and contrasting Englishness to otherness, eventually the boundaries between the English and Normans faded into the background; conversely, anti-French sentiment grew in the wake of the continental wars and politicization of Englishness.<sup>139</sup> Geoffrey of Vinsauf thus speaks disdainfully of boastful Gallia, and effeminate Gauls; antagonism between French and English knights during the Third Crusade was marked.<sup>140</sup> Especially the Celts were put down, as the clergy adopted images of urbanity as they climbed the social ladder, competing to assimilate with the Normans. Nonetheless, although England thus managed to enter the temperate, ‘civilized’ world, it remained on the edge on the cultural heartland. Indeed, a darker side to Englishness – their perfidy and drunkenness – remained a potent image.

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137 Gerald of Wales, *Descriptio Cambriae* II 15, ed. Dimock, vol. 6, 193-194, transl. Thorpe, 245-246: ‘non autem Anglos, sicut nec Saxones a quibus descenderant, nec Germanos. Sin autem servitutum causaris in Anglis, et hunc eis inde defectum assignas; in Saxonibus et Germanis, qui et libertate gaudent, et eodem tamen vitio vexantur, ratio non provenit. Saxones igitur et Germani, a gelida poli regione cui subjacent, hanc contrahunt et naturae geliditatem.’

138 Ibidem: ‘Angli quoque, quanquam olim a regione remoti, originali tamen natura tam exteriorum in candore qualitatem, quam etiam interiorum illam geliditatis’.

139 Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, 307, who also stresses that Anti-Semitic hatred, exploding in York in 1190, was shared by both native English and families of continental descent, perhaps temporarily erasing differences and creating ‘a bonding experience’.

140 Hoppenbrouwers, *Standaardfactor*, 15-17.