

“THE DENT OF MYNE HONDE”: THE PRACTICE AND PRESENTATION OF WAR
IN *KING HORN*

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Introduction

When I first read the Middle English romance *King Horn* (*KH* hereafter), a tale of a prince who must fight to reclaim his kingdom from Saracens (Muslims), I was struck by the stark brutality of the battle scenes featured in the romance. The protagonist, Horn, battles Saracen soldiers on three occasions, and each clash is described in blunt and harsh terms. The Saracens are portrayed as completely evil, and Horn fights them with a ferocity and cruelty that is noteworthy. The objective of each conflict is for every Saracen soldier to lie slaughtered on the field of battle – no one is supposed to escape.

Encountering these portions of the narrative reminded me of Christian accounts of battles during the crusades, particularly the First Crusade. I investigated whether there was a relationship between these two phenomena – whether or not there was a connection between crusading ideas about Muslims and the Saracens in *KH*. I subsequently broadened my study to encompass other aspects of the warfare in *KH*, resulting in this thesis, which is a comprehensive study of the warfare in *KH*, particularly as it is influenced by the cultural and religious atmosphere within which it was composed.

By the conclusion of this thesis, the reader should have a much clearer understanding of the warfare in *KH* and why it is presented as it is. The thesis' three chapters each explore an aspect of medieval thought on war that is sometimes implicitly, sometimes explicitly present in *KH*: the venerable tradition of just war, which extended back to St. Augustine, sought to discover by whom a war could be authorized, when it

could be justified, and how it should be conducted; second, the influence of chivalry, the knightly code that stressed individual prowess, feats of arms, and violent exploits as the measure of a knight's greatness; and holy war, a phenomenon that emerged in full force with the crusades, a series of Christian incursions into Muslim territories that had a sizeable impact on many Christians' thinking on war and the Muslim enemy. Each of these aspects of warfare in *KH* is tied together, because they represent stages of Christian reflection on war in the Middle Ages. Christian thinkers had to wrestle with the question of when war could be justified; they had to come to grips with the culturally dominant force of chivalry; and they had to explain the new phenomenon of holy war that was taking Western Europe by storm at the close of the eleventh century. Eventually, a synthesis was arrived at, a synthesis that emerges in *KH*. This thesis will attempt to elucidate the various components that make up this synthesis as it appears in *KH*.

In the first part of this introduction I will set forth some basic information about *KH*: its probable date of composition, its provenance, and how it was composed. The issue of dating *KH* (and the related topic of its composition) will be treated first because the dating of *KH* is intertwined with a major focus of this thesis: the influence of the crusades on *KH*. One of the conclusions I draw is that understanding how the crusades have affected *KH* strengthens dating *KH* to around the 1270s, as argued by Rosamund Allen. Thus, the dating of *KH* has a bearing on the conclusions that can be drawn about the impact of crusading on *KH*.

Before examining the text's history, a brief plot summary of the tale should be given. *KH* is the story of a young prince, Horn, whose father (Murry), king of Suddene, is

slaughtered by Saracens invading from the sea. They subsequently take over Suddene, butcher many of the inhabitants, and force them to convert to Islam. Horn and his twelve friends are set adrift at sea to die by the invaders. The boat, however, docks in Westernesse, ruled by King Aylmar. Aylmar takes in Horn and his companions and raises them in his court. When Horn comes of age, Aylmar's daughter Rymenhild falls passionately in love with him. She demands a meeting with him in her bower and declares her love to him. Horn declines to marry her because he is supposedly of low social station. If she helps him to get knighted, though, he will fulfill her request and take her as his wife. She does, and once knighted, Horn defends Westernesse against a band of Saracen pirates.

Meanwhile, however, Horn's treacherous friend Fikenhild falsely accuses Horn of seducing Rymenhild to Aylmar. When Aylmar returns to find Horn in her bower, he assumes the worst and expels Horn from the kingdom. Horn tells Rymenhild to wait for him seven years, and if he does not return, to marry another man. He then travels to Ireland and stays in King Thurston's court. While there, he helps the Irish deter a Saracen invasion, killing the giant who murdered his father. Word later (seven years' time) reaches Horn that Rymenhild is about to be forcibly married to another king. Horn rushes back to Westernesse and slays his rival. But he refrains from marrying Rymenhild until he has conquered his home country. He sails with the Irish to retake Suddene, which he does, purging Suddene of all the Saracens living there. In his absence, however, Fikenhild again plots against Horn and tries to marry Rymenhild. Horn realizes this through a dream, and returns to kill Fikenhild and finally take Rymenhild as his queen.

The features of the plot involving Horn's violent clashes with Saracens will be the focus of this thesis. As can be seen, clashes with Saracens occupy a considerable portion of the narrative,¹ and the significance of these episodes against the broader medieval understanding of war and the place of war in Christianity will be explored in detail throughout the thesis chapters. The actual history of *KH*'s text as it was composed and preserved in its medieval English context will now be examined.

The editors of the TEAMS edition of *KH* describe it as "probably the oldest surviving English romance,"² and scholarship has customarily ascribed a date of c. 1225 to the tale.³ The standard reasons for this date, Rosamund Allen explains, are "the apparently early stage of development of phonology, syntax, and metrical form in the poem" and the "tacit acceptance of the date previously assigned to MS C, namely 1250/60."⁴ However, the date for manuscript (MS) C (one of the three MS witnesses for *KH*) has now been revised to much later, and is now dated around 1300, which makes it even younger than

¹ See Mary Hynes-Berry, "Cohesion in *King Horn* and *Sir Orfeo*," *Speculum* 50.4 (1975): 656-58.

² Ronald B. Herzman, Graham Drake, and Eve Salisbury, eds., *Four Romances of England: King Horn, Havelok the Dane, Bevis of Hampton, Athelston*, TEAMS Middle English Text Series (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1999), 11. All citations from the text of *KH* used in this thesis, with the accompanying line numbers in parentheses following the quote, are from this edition (unless otherwise specified).

³ William A. Quinn and Audley S. Hall, *Jongleur: A Modified Theory of Oral Improvisation and Its Effects on the Performance and Transmission of Middle English Romance* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1982), 25.

⁴ Rosamund Allen, "The Date and Provenance of *King Horn*: Some Interim Reassessments," in *Medieval English Studies Presented to George Kane*, ed. Edward D. Kennedy, Ronald Waldron, and Joseph Wittig (Wolfeboro: D.S. Brewer, 1988), 103.

another *KH* witness, MS L, which dates to c. 1290.⁵ This raises some questions as to whether it is still plausible to date *KH* to 1225.

In her essay “The Date and Provenance of *King Horn*: Some Interim Reassessments,” Allen argues for a later date for *KH*. She notes that English was not the language used for romances before 1250, Anglo-Norman being the preferred tongue.⁶ Dating *KH* to 1225, then, places it curiously before the flowering of Middle English romances like *Havelok the Dane*, *Bevis of Hampton*, and *Floris and Blancheflour*, during the late 13th century.⁷ Allen also notes that characteristics like the supposedly archaic style (an argument for an early date) may simply reflect the text being adapted for musical accompaniment. The vocabulary and syntax similarly fail to give clear evidence for an early date.⁸

The argument for a later date becomes stronger in light of the fact that the traditional arguments for an early date – the dating of MS C and the style, grammar, and vocabulary of the text – are lacking based on newer research. A more natural date would be around the late 13th century, which coincides with the emergence of other major Middle English romances. The question still remains as to whether a more specific date can be attached to *KH* besides the late 13th century. Allen proposes dating the “first performance” of *KH* to London in the 1270s.⁹ It is interesting, she notes, how the “the political events of the 1270s”¹⁰ parallel the story of *KH*: King Edward I goes on crusade in 1268, docking at Acre in 1271; he is absent when his father (Henry III) dies in 1272; and then returns to be

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., 102.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., 118.

⁹ Ibid., 125.

¹⁰ Ibid., 122.

crowned king in 1274. A story about “a prince returning to claim his kingdom after fighting Saracens would have a particular poignancy in the mid-1270s,”¹¹ she observes.

In all, these arguments form a strong case for revising the date of *KH* to the second half of the 13th century (or late 13th century) possibly in the 1270s. Dating *KH* to this time would place it firmly within a period that oversaw an abundance of Middle English romances being produced, particularly matter of England romances.¹² Additionally, the dominance of the Saracens in the narrative of *KH* – and the fact that it could very likely have been produced in the 1270s in the aftermath of a crusade – indicates that pinpointing the tale’s date of composition soon after King Edward I’s crusade is not implausible. The atmosphere would have been ripe for the presentation of a tale exalting an English king who wields his sword in defense of faith and fatherland. *KH* is also an intensely patriotic poem, glorifying a monarch who is possessed of superhuman prowess and courage, and celebrating England as Horn’s home. Horn sojourns in Ireland for seven years, but his goal is to return and right the wrongs in the English kingdoms of Westernesse and his inheritance, Suddene. *KH* is a most appropriate poem, in other words, for this period of English history.

The next problem facing the critic is the provenance of *KH*, something subject to some debate. Joseph Hall describes the dialect of *KH* as Southeastern with Midland

¹¹ Ibid. George McKnight also points out that the “regularity of the conversion” from *â* to *ô*, and the “lengthening of short vowels in open syllables” indicates a date in the second half of the 13th century (although he adds that there is a paucity of clear examples for this in *KH*) (George McKnight, ed., *King Horn, Floriz and Blauncheflur, The Assumption of Our Lady* o.s. 14 EETS [London: Oxford University Press, 1901, 1962], xxviii).

¹² See fn. 17.

influences,¹³ and McKnight likewise writes that the text is “southern, and probably south-eastern.”¹⁴ *KH* exhibits both Midland and Southern characteristics,¹⁵ which has led to various theories about where exactly this text was produced. Allen suggests that London is an ideal location for the original location of *KH* due to the influx of immigrants (in the late 13th and early 14th century) from neighboring regions, particularly from the East and Central Midlands (which would explain this influence in the dialect of *KH*).¹⁶ Allen’s theory seems to best explain the various dialects present in *KH*, and also fits well with the date of *KH* accepted here. The confluence of dialects in *KH* would have been occurring in London at the very time that *KH* was composed, further indicating that a later date for *KH* should be preferred.

Many of the Middle English matter of England romances¹⁷ (the category of romances to which *KH* belongs) composed at that time were adaptations from French (Anglo-Norman) romances.¹⁸ This leads to an interesting question in regards to *KH*, because it also has an earlier French counterpart that is dramatically different: *Horn et Rimenhild* (*HR* hereafter), which exists in three manuscripts from the late 13th century,¹⁹ and dates to about 1175.²⁰ The length, style, and content of this text differ dramatically from that of

¹³ Joseph Hall, *King Horn: A Middle-English Romance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1901), xlv.

¹⁴ McKnight, *King Horn*, xxvii.

¹⁵ Allen, *Date and Provenance*, 101.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ These are “the non-Arthurian romances dealing largely with English subjects and locales” (Herzman et al., *Four Romances of England*, 2).

¹⁸ See fn. 30 below.

¹⁹ James R. Hurt, “The Texts of *King Horn*,” *Journal of the Folklore Institute* 7.1 (1970): 49.

²⁰ Lee C. Ramsey, *Chivalric Romances: Popular Literature in Medieval England* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), 26; or “about 1170 or 1180” (27).

KH. While *KH* has 1,550 lines arranged in couplets, the French version is written in 5,250 alexandrines.²¹ The French version is, as McKnight describes, “a full-fledged romance, with descriptions of rich adornments, of feastings, of battles, of games, and of tournaments,”²² while *KH* has a “simple, direct style with a noticeable lack of unnecessary description inserted for embellishment.”²³ Although the story is the same between these two versions in the grand scheme, there are numerous additions to the French version.

What, then, is the relationship between *KH* and *HR*?²⁴ Perhaps *KH* is simply a condensed version of the French romance. Albert Baugh disagrees,²⁵ as does McKnight.²⁶ Dieter Mehl cautiously concludes that “we do not know for certain whether the English poet actually made use of that novel [*HR*] or a similar version of the story.”²⁷ The most likely explanation for the roots of the English *KH* is that put forward by Elaine Treharne, who writes that “*King Horn* is derived from a non-extant Anglo-Norman exemplar,

²¹ William H. Schofield, “The Story of Horn and Rimenhild,” *PMLA* 18.1 (1903): 4.

²² McKnight, *King Horn*, viii-ix.

²³ *Ibid.*, viii.

²⁴ An interesting sidebar to this question is the distinctive names in the Harley MS, which are different from the other two versions of *KH*. In *KH* MS L uses “Godmod” as Horn’s alias while he is in Ireland, while MSS C and O prefer “Cutberd” or “Cuberd.” Horn’s father is also called “Allof,” as opposed to “Murry” (MSS C and O) (McKnight, *King Horn*, xxix). Godmod and Allof are the names used in the Anglo-Norman *HR*. Perhaps the Harley scribe was familiar with this or a similar Anglo-Norman version of the Horn story. The scribe certainly was acquainted with a variety of French works, which comprise the largest number of texts in Harley (Susanna Fein, “Compilation and Purpose in MS Harley 2253,” in *Essays in Manuscript Geography: Vernacular Manuscripts of the English West Midlands from the Conquest to the Sixteenth Century*, ed. Wendy Scase [Turnhout: Brepols, 2007], 74).

²⁵ Albert C. Baugh, “Improvisation in the Middle English Romance,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 103.3 (1959): 434.

²⁶ McKnight, *King Horn*, xii-xiii; see also Walter French, *Essays on King Horn* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1940), 24, 141-43, 149. Both think the *KH* version of the story predates the *HR* version.

²⁷ Dieter Mehl, *The Middle English Romances of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1969), 49.

probably written in the late twelfth century.”²⁸ Since other major matter of England romances are derived from Anglo-Norman tales,²⁹ like *Havelok the Dane* and *Bevis of Hampton*, this would be a plausible explanation for *KH* as well. In any case, however, *KH* and *HR* are “distant from each other textually,”³⁰ as Susan Crane says.

Allen was quoted above as describing *KH*’s “first performance” taking place in the mid- 1270s. This raises a question as to how *KH* was first composed – as an oral performance by a minstrel (later written down) or as the written composition of a cleric.³¹ The fact that Middle English romances give the impression that they were meant to be heard has been extensively studied.³² But even though romances often begin with a reference to being sung or spoken, that does not necessarily mean they are oral products – it may simply be a stylistic move by the composer. Even though *KH* begins with “a sang ich schal you singe” (3), Mehl warns against taking this at face value as proof of minstrel composition: “the skilful compression and accentuation of the story-material betrays the

²⁸ Elaine Treharne, *Old and Middle English c. 890-c. 1450: An Anthology*, 3rd ed. (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 582. “The English version follows virtually the same storyline as the French version, although there is no indication that one is a direct influence upon the other” (Carol Parrish Jamison, “A Description of the Medieval Romance Based Upon *King Horn*,” *Quondam et Futuris* 1.2 (1991): 48. McKnight (citing T. Wright, *Essays on Middle Ages*, vol. 1, p. 102) takes a different view: “in the introduction to the French romance of Waldelf we are informed that the romance of Horn was taken from an English original” (*King Horn*, xiii). In the absence of any corroborative evidence for this claim that I am aware of, I have chosen to follow Treharne (and others) here.

²⁹ A.C. Gibbs argues that *KH* “derives almost certainly from a poem in French” (*Middle English Romances* [Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1966], 20).

³⁰ Susan Crane, *Insular Romance: Politics, Faith, and Culture in Anglo-Norman and Middle English Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 40. Crane’s quote in context is: “The *Lai d’Haveloc* and *Havelok the Dane*, like the *Romance of Horn* [*HR*] and *King Horn*, are distant from each other textually but share a close thematic harmony.”

³¹ The authors of romances were typically “clerics of one stripe or another” (Richard Kaeuper, *Holy Warriors: The Religious Ideology of Chivalry* [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009], 26).

³² See Ruth Crosby, “Oral Delivery in the Middle Ages,” *Speculum* 11.1 (1936): 88-110.

hand of a careful and conscious artist.”³³ As Baugh notes, “no Middle English romance has a better claim to be the work of a minstrel than *Havelok*,”³⁴ yet the conclusion of the tale refers to the author staying up late to compose it.³⁵ Thus, Andrew Taylor writes, “when the narrator of *Havelok* calls for a cup of ale [in the opening lines], we are left wondering whether this is a conventional sign in a written tradition which deliberately evokes its oral heritage or whether it is a recording of an actual minstrel’s performing voice.”³⁶ Baugh concludes that “the only safe opinion is that the romances began as written compositions.”³⁷

It seems best to view *KH* as a written composition.³⁸ The argument that references to minstrels and singing indicate oral composition is inconclusive. In some cases, like *Havelok*, these oral references are really just literary devices to evoke an older time and place where oral recitation may have had a more prominent position than it did when *KH* was composed. Whether or not *KH* was derived from oral elements circulating before is impossible to know, but the safest conclusion, and best supported by the available evidence, is that *KH* had its origins in writing.

³³ Mehl, *Middle English Romances*, 50.

³⁴ Albert Baugh, “The Middle English Romance: Some Questions of Creation, Presentation, and Preservation,” *Speculum* 42.1 (1967): 7.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Andrew Taylor, “Fragmentation, Corruption, and Minstrel Narration: The Question of the Middle English Romance,” *The Yearbook in English Studies* 22 (1992): 43.

³⁷ Baugh, “Middle English Romance,” 9.

³⁸ “For the most part they [Middle English romances] are literary productions, individually composed” (W.R.J. Barron, *English Medieval Romance* [London and New York: Longman Group UK Limited], 56).

Once put to writing, *KH* was copied, and it survives in three manuscripts: O, C, and L. While MSS O and L appear to share a common ancestor,³⁹ “no one [of these three MSS] is derived from either of the others,”⁴⁰ McKnight explains. All three derive from a common ancestor that is not necessarily the original version,⁴¹ and the original was likely quite different from its progeny.⁴² The three MS witnesses of *KH*, in full form,⁴³ are Cambridge University Library MS Gg.4.27 (2) (abbreviated C), which dates to around 1300, although it may be somewhat later than that (it is not considered older than MS O);⁴⁴ Bodleian MS Laud Misc. 108 (O), which dates to roughly the end of the 13th or beginning of the 14th century;⁴⁵ and British Library MS Harley 2253 (L), around the 1340s.⁴⁶

With some basic understanding of *KH* as a text, some further consideration can now be given to the topic of this thesis. The thesis is divided into three chapters, each of which unpacks aspects of the warfare in *KH* as it is practiced by its hero. Now, the warfare of Horn does not take place in the classic sense as a conflict between kingdoms, princes, or states. *KH* is a romance, and the “military expedition” of the epics and *chansons de geste* has been replaced in romances by “solitary adventure, of warfare by the feat of arms,”⁴⁷ A.C. Gibbs notes. Nevertheless, the defense of Ireland by Horn and Thurston against the

³⁹ Rosamund Allen, *King Horn: An Edition Based on Cambridge University Library MS Gg. 4.27 (2)* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1984), 61.

⁴⁰ McKnight, *King Horn*, xxix.

⁴¹ Allen, *King Horn*, 25-26, 48.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 29.

⁴³ This list is from *ibid.*, 2.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴⁵ Hall, *King Horn*, ix; Allen, *King Horn*, 8. Hall gives around 1290.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁴⁷ Gibbs, *Middle English Romances*, 8.

marauding Saracens and the invasion and reconquest of Suddene by Horn and the Irish are large-scale military clashes – defensively in the first case, offensively in the second. Horn’s singlehanded defeat of the Saracens invading Westernesse exemplifies aspects of chivalry and holy war, so even though it is not a war, beliefs about warfare from these traditions still apply. Horn’s *fighting*, whether it exactly can be defined as war or not, still borrows ideas from just war thought, chivalry, and holy war.

As a glance at the plot summary above will reveal, there is plenty of violent conflict throughout *KH*. He engages in three major clashes with the Saracens in the narrative. Horn must constantly confront and slaughter Saracens who oppose him in order to achieve his goals, and he does not hesitate to resist his enemies until not a single one is left standing. Horn is even willing to slaughter Saracen noncombatants in the battle to recapture Suddene – such is his zeal for blood.

I approach this fact from the perspective of a modern reader encountering *KH* and raising some obvious concerns about Horn’s conduct. For example, if Horn is a Christian knight, how can he shed so much blood, so recklessly? It is the *problem* of Horn’s eager, unrestrained killing joined to his Christian faith that I will explore in the thesis. The challenge of reconciling violence and faith is not simply a modern concern, either. Richard Kaeuper aptly describes how this issue troubled even those of the past:

Were the tensions and uncertainties [between faith and violence] troublesome to medieval people or are they merely the imposition of modern sensibilities? Framing the question clearly is essential: what is at issue is not whether medieval people accepted and valorized violence. We

know that they did, laity and clergy alike – as most people in other times and places have done. Rather, the issue is whether they recognized the paradoxes involved – such as pacific forgiveness alongside hot-blooded vengeance – and took any steps toward resolution of issues in troubled minds.⁴⁸

Kaeuper thinks that many clergy and knights felt a sense of paradox about these issues.⁴⁹ *KH*, however, does not exhibit a sense of paradox about warfare. I believe this is because, for the author of *KH*, such paradoxes were already satisfactorily resolved, and he apparently expected his audience to feel the same way. He does not feel any kind of paradox about Horn's fighting, because for the author of *KH*, Horn's warfare is justified by his righteous cause and his noble station as a king. His zeal in pursuing conflict is honored by the precepts of chivalry, which demanded that a knight perform great deeds of arms. His harshness toward defeated Saracens is celebrated under the demands of holy war, which taught that foes of the faith should be fought pitilessly.

Christians throughout church history have felt a sense of paradox about the relationship between faith and violence, and those who were not pacifists have sought to broach explanations for when and how Christians could use violence. Attempts to do so have traditionally been described as attempts to understand when a war could be called just – and hence whether Christians could participate, since they should only fight just wars. Thus, the problem of whether or not a war was just was an important issue for Christian thought and life. A classic resolution was provided by Augustine and expanded

⁴⁸ Kaeuper, *Holy Warriors*, 8.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 17, 32.

by later thinkers – the “just war.” Just war principles specified that a war must be fought under a proper authority, for a just cause, and with proper motives – a predominant one being the desire for peace. But medieval Christian thought about war did not stop there. Medieval Christians also experienced the influence of chivalric culture on their reflections about war, a culture which glorified bloodshed. Then, with the advent of the crusades in 1096, Christians also added a new dimension to their beliefs about war: that certain enemies in war were so evil that they had to be resisted without any restraint, until they were annihilated.

This trajectory in Christian belief about war during the Middle Ages has a direct bearing on the warfare depicted in *KH*. Horn does things that *would* clash with much of classic Christian teachings on war – but at the time of *KH*’s composition, many medieval Christians had achieved an understanding of what was expected of a Christian warrior, and a considerable number of these expectations are present in *KH*. Medieval Christians had an idea of what were justifiable causes to fight a war; many believed that the knightly class had a particular responsibility to practice arms ideally (if not so much in reality) to protect the weak and the Church; and most saw the Saracens as utterly depraved pagans who should not be shown mercy, whether they were soldiers or noncombatants.

I do not want to give the impression that medieval Christian views on war were uniform – they were not.⁵⁰ However, a clear majority view was predominant at the time of *KH*’s composition, and it is on this perspective that I will focus in this thesis. I will argue that *KH* represents a moment in medieval Christians’ understanding of war where

⁵⁰ Ibid., 11; see the entirety of chapter 1 (“Violent Knights, Holy Knights”) of Kaeuper for further discussion.

principles from just war thought, chivalry, and holy war are combined into a unique, coherent picture of how Christians should participate in warfare. *KH* contains within it a widespread perspective on warfare within Western European Christianity at the time of its composition. By examining the passages in *KH* that describe Horn's warfare, and placing it within the broader context of the narrative, Christian theological reflection, and medieval discussions of warfare, it will be seen how various aspects of just war thought, chivalry, and holy war coinhere within the story. I do not intend to argue that the author of *KH* was well-versed in the nuances of just war thought and holy war (though he certainly would have been familiar with the values of chivalry). Rather, I will argue that principles from just war thought and holy war (the latter of which was embodied in the crusades) had permeated medieval culture to such a degree that, when a hero like Horn is portrayed engaging in war against specific enemies (Saracens), such principles will naturally be present. If the author of *KH* wanted to portray his hero engaging in just and holy warfare, he would have to draw on a cultural atmosphere that had certain expectations of just causes for war, who could wage war, and how non-Christian (i.e. Muslim or Saracen) enemies were to be treated in war.

Chapter 1 will examine the presence of just war principles in *KH*, showing how medieval Christians, relying on church fathers and contemporary theologians, developed a justification for Christian warfare. These justifications appear implicitly throughout *KH*, and these elements will be drawn out in the chapter. Chapter 2 will discuss the presence of chivalry, specifically its glorification of prowess, in *KH*. Horn spends most of the romance as a knight, and this has major ramifications for Horn's approach to war.

Finally, chapter 3 will take up the presence of holy war in *KH*. Attitudes toward Saracens inherited from the crusades are deeply embedded in *KH*, and holy war explains much about why Horn fights the Saracens as he does.

Chapter 1: King, Kingdom, and Cause: Just War in *King Horn*

One of the most prominent themes of *King Horn* is the amount of violence that pervades the plot. After a description of Horn's fairness (10-20) and his friends (21-30) the narrator immediately describes how, while out riding with two knights, Horn's father King Murry is accosted by a fleet of Saracens. They inform him that they will conquer Suddene, kill its subjects, and slay him as well (47-50), concluding chillingly, "ne shaltu todai henne gone" (50). Murry and his knights are overwhelmed and slain, while the invaders kill "fele hundred" (1343) of Suddene's inhabitants, forcing them to choose between accepting Islam or death (63-70). Horn's mother only escapes by hiding in a cave, where she prays for her captured son (71-84). The Saracens decide to set Horn and his twelve friends adrift at sea to drown (105-10). The children survive, however – their ship floats to Westernesse, where King Aylmar takes them in. Horn spends the rest of the tale battling to regain the kingdom unlawfully stolen from him.

KH begins, then, with violence. Horn's young life is interrupted by violence, and his adulthood is consumed by violence. Horn battles Saracens invading Westernesse, defeats Saracens in Ireland, and finally stages an invasion of his own when he retakes Suddene from the pagans. He must kill King Mody and his men when Rymenhild is threatened by a forced marriage, and Fikenhild as well, who also tries to forcibly marry Rymenhild. Horn is surrounded by, and practices, violence constantly throughout the story.

This chapter will explore the conflicts in *KH* and explain how medieval readers justified the use of violence against enemies, especially for a Christian like Horn. The classic doctrinal summary about war in Christian theology is the idea of *just war*. War is clearly destructive and brings great suffering to many people – so, the question might be asked whether or not it is ever ethical. Christian thinkers in this tradition believed that, under certain specific conditions, one could justify participation in warfare (for Christians in particular). Citations from *KH* will be interwoven with analysis of Augustine of Hippo (354-430) and Thomas Aquinas's (1225-1274) thoughts on war as well as the historical and cultural background to the concept of just war. By placing *KH*'s depiction of its hero in combat within the context of medieval theology, readers can gain a better grasp of why Horn fights as he does. I do not intend to argue that the fighting in *KH* fits exactly in just war precepts – it does not – nor that the composer of *KH* was familiar with the work of Augustine and Aquinas on this issue. Rather, I will show how the ideas contained in just war, accepted in certain forms in medieval Christian circles (see p. 29), are apparent in Horn's fighting. The audience⁵¹ of *KH* and, presumably, the author had preconceptions about war that affect how warfare is presented in the tale.

⁵¹ In the introduction to this thesis I agreed with Rosamund Allen that *KH* probably originated in London. Allen explains who she thinks the original audience was: "If *KH* was indeed written in or near London, its first audience must have consisted of London citizens, probably the merchants of the City, familiar with Anglo-Norman for business purposes and perhaps engaged in some official business with court dignitaries, but less interested in the socially and culturally prestigious Anglo-Norman literature. *KH* is conventionally feudal in tone, but the poet was not concerned with the elaboration of courtly detail and etiquette" (Rosamund Allen, "The Date and Provenance of *King Horn*: Some Interim Reassessments," in *Medieval English Studies Presented to George Kane*, ed. Edward D. Kennedy, Ronald Waldron, and Joseph Wittig [Wolfeboro: D.S. Brewer, 1988], 121; see pp. 121-25, where she investigates in further detail who the original audience was). Interestingly, she notes that merchants "were stoutly loyal to the Crown and to civil authority" (124), which *KH* certainly reflects as well (see Lee C. Ramsey, *Chivalric Romances: Popular Literature in Medieval England* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983], 29, 43). Carol

Despite his violent life, Horn is not, as Susan Crane observes, “an aggressor”⁵² – he is constantly set upon by foes at home and abroad, and his conflicts are defensive in nature.⁵³ He is born into a world where the helpless are exploited by the armed, and only those with a sword can protect themselves from harm. As Mary Hynes-Berry notes, “*King Horn* is set in a world where enemies are a threatening reality, rather than a chivalric ritual.”⁵⁴ The stakes in this environment are extremely high – potentially one’s life. Enemy noncombatants are indiscriminately slain by both sides. A dramatic example of this mentality is when Horn carries the head of a slain Saracen back to Aylmar’s hall on the point of his sword (625-46) to prove his victory in battle. He is entirely comfortable in this harsh environment and proves to be the best warrior in any combat.

Yet Horn is also “of Cristene blode” (181), and the readers or hearers of this romance would have been English-speaking members of Christendom. Christianity was a religion whose Lord was called the Prince of Peace, and which had traditionally portrayed itself as a peaceful faith. Jesus had made statements that could be interpreted as demanding pacifism of his followers: “Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone

Parrish Jamison thinks that the audience of *KH* was courtly (“A Description of the Medieval Romance Based Upon *King Horn*,” *Quondam et Futuris* 1.2 [1991]: 46-47). Allen’s argument seems to be the best explanation of the evidence, since it fits the probable location of *KH*’s composition (London); the fact that it is deeply sympathetic to strong monarchy, which the merchants were; and the simplicity of *KH*’s depiction of court life.

⁵² Susan Crane, *Insular Romance: Politics, Faith, and Culture in Anglo-Norman and Middle English Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 32.

⁵³ Crane discusses how “despite its military expression, Horn’s desire seems peaceable enough. Avenging his father is largely a means of getting his land back and securing his mother and his wife so as to continue the family. Horn is not an adventurer, an expansionist, or even an aggressor. His prowess merely signals his freedom and his right to determine the course of his life....What Horn wants (land and autonomy) is presented as a birthright (heritable, deserved, and justly his). Only evil opposes these rights, while the dependence of Horn’s followers on their leader’s fate further validates his efforts to regain what is lost” (ibid, 32-33). Horn’s campaigns always have a just cause underlying them, something that will be discussed further below.

⁵⁴ Mary Hynes-Berry, “Cohesion in *King Horn* and *Sir Orfeo*,” *Speculum* 50.4 (1975): 659.

slaps you the on the right cheek, turn to him the other also” (Matthew 5.39); “love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (5.44); “put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword” (26.52).⁵⁵ But by the time of *KH*’s composition, most medieval readers were comfortable with a Christian hero who sheds blood. Medieval Christians were not simply ignoring the texts cited above, however – at the point of *KH*’s composition in the late 13th century, some generally agreed upon solutions to the problem of how Christians could kill in war had been reached. Two theologians in particular dominate just war thought: Augustine and Aquinas. Augustine was the preeminent church father for later medieval Christians, and his thinking on war was particularly influential on subsequent thinkers⁵⁶ (Augustine himself was greatly influenced by Greco-Roman and early Christian thought on war⁵⁷). Aquinas represents the height of medieval theology, and his treatment of just war captures what many medieval thinkers believed about war.⁵⁸ There were other major theorists who discussed war or compiled quotes on it (e.g. Gratian, and the canonists,⁵⁹

⁵⁵ All biblical citations are from the English Standard Version (ESV) (Wheaton: Crossway Bibles, 2001).

⁵⁶ “Most questions on warfare raised by the theologians were posed and resolved by Augustinian texts” (Frederick Russell, *The Just War in the Middle Ages* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975], 213). “[Augustine’s] writings in the late fourth and early fifth centuries set the tone for much of medieval theology, including Christian thought about justifiable war” (James Turner Johnson, *Just War Tradition and the Restraint of War: A Moral and Historical Inquiry* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981], 145).

⁵⁷ James Turner Johnson, *The Quest for Peace: Three Moral Traditions in Western Cultural History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 58-59. See also Johnson, “The Idea of Defense in Historical and Contemporary Thinking About Just War,” *Journal of Religious Ethics* 36.4 (2008): 544-45; Johnson, *Ideology, Reason, and the Limitation of War: Religious and Secular Concepts 1200-1740* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), 26.

⁵⁸ “The consensus on justified resort to force...was presented in settled form in Aquinas’s question ‘On War’” (Johnson, “The Idea of Defense,” 545). Johnson refers to the *Summa Theologica* II-II, Q. 40.

⁵⁹ See Johnson, *Just War Tradition*, 121-22, on how indispensable Gratian’s *Decretum* was to medieval thinkers on war, and pp. 121 ff. for further treatment of the canonists (also chs. 3-5 of Russell’s *Just War in the Middle Ages*).

both of whom were essential to the development of just war thought), but Augustine and Aquinas are selected here due to their towering status in Western theology, and it is the theological aspects of just war thought in relation to *KH* that I will examine in this chapter.⁶⁰

It is important to realize that at the time of *KH*'s composition, Augustine's thoughts on what was a just war had finally become, as James Turner Johnson says, "authoritative Church doctrine," since "there is no just war tradition prior to its coalescence in the Middle Ages around concepts drawn from canon law, theology, secular law, chivalric morality, and the habits of relations among princes."⁶¹ So, he explains, after Augustine up until Gratian's twelfth-century *Decretum* (an influential compilation of excerpts from various theologians and fathers) "the Bishop of Hippo's thought on war did not have the authoritative character it would later take on."⁶² Augustine's absence meant that Christians indulged in speculations and innovations concerning just war that go far beyond Augustine's thoughts on the matter.⁶³ Johnson explains that "*there is no just war doctrine, in the classic form as we know it today, in*

⁶⁰ Aquinas is part of the "theological tradition" (Johnson, *Just War Tradition*, 122) of just war – and the theological side of just war thought is the focus in this chapter.

⁶¹ Johnson, *Quest*, 58.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Even though "[Augustine's] ambiguous legacy, worked out with great inner turmoil in a specific historical situation and bearing the quirks of its author, guided the actions of early medieval men" (Russell, *The Just War in the Middle Ages*, 26), still "the genuine Augustinian opinions in all their complexity were neglected, and even his formula for the just war disappeared from view....With the collapse of Roman authority in the west, early medieval observers tailored ancient thought on warfare to their own necessities....The lack of original analysis of the just war itself enabled the construction of a just war built on the strength of traditional and accepted notions as is witnessed by the calls for a holy war or crusade as a way to internal peace, appeals that were voiced by Churchmen otherwise as diverse as Agobard of Lyons and Urban II" (27, 39).

either Augustine or the theologians or canonists of the high Middle Ages.”⁶⁴ For example, the neat organization of *jus ad bellum* (causes for war) and *jus in bello* (right conduct in war) which exist today are a later historical formulation – “conservatively, it is incorrect to speak of classic just war doctrine as existing before about 1500,” Johnson adds.⁶⁵ With this in mind, I will proceed to an explanation of the situation Augustine was speaking to (i.e. the tradition of Christian engagement with war), and how he became an important voice in medieval debates on war.

Augustine was responding to a need in Christian circles of his time – a thoughtful response to if, when, and how a Christian could participate in warfare. He was not the first to address this issue (Ambrose of Milan had discussed it before him),⁶⁶ but Augustine’s various thoughts on the matter were the most comprehensive, and the most influential in later thought on just war. The tensions inherent in the Christian just war doctrine between love and justice, mercy and discipline, violence and peace, are felt in medieval Christian views as well. Some medieval observers *did* recognize the “paradox”⁶⁷ of Christians eagerly drenching their swords with the blood of their enemies. As Kaeuper notes, sometimes “religious ideas threatened to invert or negate chivalry as a

⁶⁴ Johnson, *Ideology*, 7-8. Emphasis original.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 8. Johnson devotes chapter 1 of his book to explaining how “earlier there exist two doctrines, a religious (i.e., theological and canonical) one largely limited to the right to make war (*just ad bellum*) and a secular one whose almost total content related to the proper mode of fighting (Law of Arms, *jus in bello*)” (*ibid.*, 8; emphasis original).

⁶⁶ See the selections from Ambrose’s writings in Gregory M. Reichberg, Henrik Syse, and Endre Begby, eds., *The Ethics of War: Classic and Contemporary Readings* (Malden: Blackwell, 2006), 67-69.

⁶⁷ Richard Kaeuper, *Holy Warriors: The Religious Ideology of Chivalry* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2009), 4. See Kaeuper’s chapter (“Violent Knights, Holy Knights”) for an analysis of medieval reconciliations of chivalry and faith, and the dissonant voices who questioned the synthesis.

fierce warrior code,”⁶⁸ which meant that the “medieval European elite” were forced to confront questions such as, “What had the religion of Christ to do with the worship of the demigod prowess in chivalric ideology?”⁶⁹ and, “Could broadswords – even if directed by clerical voices – carve a rough world into the shape prescribed by the Beatitudes?”⁷⁰

Christians wrestled with similar questions throughout church history, and it is out of this process of grappling with war’s place in Christian faith that medieval believers’ perspective on war emerged. What believers thought about war at the faith’s beginnings in the first century is debated, since understanding first-century Christians’ beliefs rests on contested interpretations of the relevant New Testament texts. David D. Corey and J. Daryl Charles, for example, argue that Jesus’ statements in the Sermon on the Mount, “render to Caesar what is Caesar’s,” or his reproof of Peter in Gethsemane do not “[provide] us with any resolute, universal, and apodictic acceptance or rejection of soldiering and warfare.”⁷¹ Others argue that the New Testament conclusively rules out Christian use of violence, like John Howard Yoder.⁷² Some scholars, like Johnson and Gregory Reichberg, Henrik Syse, and Endre Begby, believe first-century Christians rejected violence, but did so due to their expectation of Christ’s imminent return to usher in a new age, not for any particular theological problem with violence.⁷³ It is unlikely,

⁶⁸ Ibid., 6.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ David C. Corey and J. Daryl Charles, *The Just War Tradition: An Introduction* (Wilmington: Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 2012), 44.

⁷² Some representative works of Yoder’s cited by Corey and Charles are *The Original Revolution: Essays on Christian Pacifism* (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1971), and *Nevertheless: A Meditation on the Varieties and Shortcomings of Religious Pacifism* (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1971).

⁷³ Johnson, *Quest*, 12-14; Reichberg et al., *Ethics of War*, 60-61.

however, that first-century Christians expected Christ's return to be imminent.⁷⁴ And, while the New Testament contains statements that could be interpreted as pacifistic, it does not really comment on questions of war and Christian involvement in the military per se.⁷⁵

After the apostles, early Christian thought (by "early" I mean pre-313; see below) on warfare is likewise contested. As Corey and Charles show,⁷⁶ there are statements that may indicate pacifism, or that could simply reflect an aversion to bloodshed in general. Some early fathers explicitly rejected military service, while others appear to have harbored no objection to it.⁷⁷ However, it is known that Christians had a presence in the Roman army at least since the early 170s, when the "Thundering Legion," a group of soldiers who were probably mainly Christians,⁷⁸ prayed for water when supplies had run down due to drought.⁷⁹ A bolt of thunder terrified the Germanic armies fighting them, and rain fell for the Roman troops.⁸⁰

In describing early Christian perspectives on warfare, then, it is important to recognize that clear *diversity*⁸¹ existed within the churches about this issue. There is

⁷⁴ See Ben Witherington III, *Jesus, Paul, and the End of the World: A Comparative Study in New Testament Eschatology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1992).

⁷⁵ This may simply be because military service was not a prospect for most first century Christians; see Johnson, *Quest*, 32.

⁷⁶ See ch. 2 of their *Just War Tradition*.

⁷⁷ Cyprian, for example, harshly condemned war (Corey and Charles, *Just War*, 38), even though he "acknowledges Christian acquaintances who are serving in the Roman army" (ibid., 39). Fathers who rejected military service out of hand include Tertullian and Origen.

⁷⁸ Johnson, *Quest*, 45.

⁷⁹ Corey and Charles, *Just War*, 33.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Johnson, *Quest*, 47-48. Johnson somewhat overstates the "pluralism" (48) of early Christianity – see Andreas J. Köstenberger and Michael J. Kruger, *The Heresy of Orthodoxy: How Contemporary Culture's Fascination with Diversity Has Reshaped Our Understanding of Early Christianity* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010).

undeniable evidence of early fathers condemning military service; there is more ambiguous evidence of fathers expressing revulsion toward war and violence in general; and there is clear testimony to a Christian presence in the Roman military. Up until now I have confined this survey to Christianity before 313, when it became an officially tolerated religion in the Roman Empire. Many scholars have seen Emperor Constantine's conversion to Christianity and its acceptance by the state as a turning point in the Christian understanding of war,⁸² but this is an exaggeration. While pacifism did evaporate as a mainstream position when Christianity became recognized by the state (moving instead into the cloister), pacifism was not the uniform position of early Christianity.⁸³ It simply became irrelevant once the Empire made its peace with Christianity.⁸⁴ After that Christian thought on war was dominated by thinkers like Ambrose and Augustine, who sought to define when the faithful could deploy violence against others.

By the Middle Ages a consensus had emerged about what was a just war, and hence a war a Christian could lawfully participate in, as Johnson summarizes below:

⁸² "[Constantine's] wars did transform how Christians viewed war" (Paul Stephenson, *Constantine: Roman Emperor, Christian Victor* [New York: The Overlook Press, 2009], 189). See the discussions in Corey and Charles, *Just War*, p. 23 ff., and Johnson, *Quest*, p. 3 ff.

⁸³ Johnson aptly summarizes the situation of pre-Constantinian Christianity: "Christian service in the army was an established fact, though not without opposition by some members of the clergy and some soul-searching on the part of individual soldiers" (*Quest*, 23).

⁸⁴ "Now there was no obvious reason for Christian soldiers to decline to fight; after all, the emperor for whom they fought was Christian, the symbols that led their forces were increasingly Christian, so surely their cause was just" (Joyce E. Salisbury, "'In Vain Have I Smitten Your Children': Augustine Defines Just War," in R. Joseph Hoffman, ed., *The Just War and Jihad: Violence in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* [Amherst: Prometheus Books, 2006], 206).

1. War against enemies of the church – blasphemers, idolaters, heretics, those who would set up a new cult in place of that of Rome. Such war is waged on the authority of the church.
2. Wars of self-defense, which are generally regarded as involuntary and waged on one's own authority. One who comes across a thief in the act of stealing one's goods needs no outside authority to oppose him, with force if need be; the same is true of the prince who acts in behalf of his people to oppose outsiders who are caught in the act of enslaving them or stealing their goods or their lands.
3. Wars of restitution or punishment. These are declared and waged by the prince on his own authority and volition after he discerns, with the help of his counselors, that an injustice has been done to him or his people and has not been set right. Many divisions of this general type of just war are offered by different commentators.⁸⁵

The first point reflects the practice of holy war, which will be discussed in the next chapter. Here, I will discuss how the second two points – which are more secular in nature – are seen in *KH*. Horn's exploits in war aptly conform to this consensus, which in turn reflects aspects of just war thought.

The events in *KH* that most closely correspond to actual wars are the defense of Ireland and the recapture of Suddene. In the former example, Horn heads an army (along with Thurston's sons) to deter a Saracen invasion. In the latter, Horn leads an army of

⁸⁵ Johnson, *Ideology*, 58-59.

Irishmen and destroys the pagan occupants of Suddene, liberating the Christian inhabitants.

When Horn and his companions safely drift to Westernesse (contrary to their captors' intent) on the boat which the Saracens had bound them to, Horn says to the boat before it drifts away:

“Yef thu come to Suddene....
 seie the paene king,
 Jesu Cristes withering...
 ...that hei schalle fonde
 The dent of myne honde.” (147, 151-52, 155-56)

Horn is still a child, but he promises that he will recover his kingdom by force when he can. Once he has reached maturity, he will rescue Suddene by arms. As the king and heir, he is specially qualified to take this task upon himself. If Horn does not act to save his people, no one will.⁸⁶ Horn is not delegating responsibility about Suddene's rescue to anyone else – he rather insists on his inherent authority to initiate a violent retaking of that kingdom from its cruel overlords.

Once Horn has returned from exile to Westernesse after being falsely accused of deflowering Rymenhild, he tells Aylmar that the accusations were false, that he will not marry Rymenhild “Til I Suddene winne” (1290), continuing:

“Thu kep hure a stunde
 The while that I funde
 In to min heritage
 And to mi baronage.
 That lond I schal ofreche
 And do mi fader wreche.
 I schal beo king of tune,
 And bere kinges crune.” (1291-98)

⁸⁶ There is a “dependence of Horn's followers on their leader's fate” (Crane, *Insular Romance*, 33).

Horn's mission is first and foremost to regain his kingdom and avenge his father. He will claim the heritage, title, and symbol of royalty that are rightfully his. He is the initiator of this quest to recapture Suddene, and his express intention is to reinstate his lawful authority on Suddene after it was unjustly wrested from him. His intention is to lead an army (comprised of Irish soldiers) to slaughter the pagans who have taken Suddene and then rule his kingdom as a Christian monarch. And indeed he does – after a bloody battle Horn is reinstated as king of Suddene. From beginning to end, Horn has headed the conquest of Suddene as its rightful ruler.

This is significant because the idea that a proper authority must head a war is one of the foundational concepts of just war theory. The three criteria of a just war are right authority, just cause, and right intent.⁸⁷ The first of these, right authority, is something Augustine discusses as necessary for a war to be just. There is much value, theoretically, in having wars only be led by a recognized public authority. A lawfully instituted leader heading a war prevents war from becoming something led by rebels and insurrectionists. It also keeps various factions from appointing their own leaders and fighting each other, which leads to increased bloodshed and disorder. By centralizing authority, conflict is more controlled, and is legitimated, since it is being done in the public interest by a recognized ruler. Augustine writes:

...it makes a great difference by which causes and under which authorities men undertake the wars that must be waged. The natural order, which is

⁸⁷ Reichberg et al., *Ethics*, 81. James Turner Johnson lists them as “just cause, right intent, hope of success, the end of peace, due proportion of total evil wrought to total good done” (*Just War Tradition*, 151). I will focus here on the more commonly listed three criteria of *jus ad bellum*.

suiting to the peace of mortal things, requires that the authority and deliberation for undertaking war be under the control of a leader, and also that, in the executing of military commands, soldiers serve peace and the common well-being.⁸⁸

As Reichberg, Syse, and Begby note, Augustine's understanding of the pervasiveness of original sin meant that government's role in God's plan was "partly as a punishment for sin," and "partly to keep the peace of this world."⁸⁹ William R. Stevenson, Jr.

summarizes Augustine's view well:

In spite of the perversion intrinsic to political authority,⁹⁰ however, Augustine insisted that such authority works to accomplish God's purposes and thus exists by divine fiat. Political organization is by no means a creation of God; it is very much a human creation. Yet in its very perversion, it works to cancel out the effects of human sin. By means of its coercive ability, governmental machinery can harness human ferocity itself for the important job of providing some minimal social order and cohesion in situations inherently tending toward disorder and disintegration.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Augustine, *Against Faustus the Manichean*, bk. XXII, chs. 74-75, 78. Qtd. in Reichberg et al., *Ethics*, 81. Orig. pub. in Ernest L. Fortin, Douglas Kries, eds., Michael W. Tkacz, Douglas Kries, trans., *Augustine: Political Writings* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994). All cited Augustine material from Reichberg et al., unless otherwise indicated, is originally found in Fortin and Kries, *Political Writings*.

⁸⁹ Reichberg et al., *Ethics*, 81.

⁹⁰ Human rule is "perverse" because (pp. 59 ff. of William R. Stevenson, Jr., *Christian Love and Just War: Moral Paradox and Political Life in St. Augustine and His Modern Interpreters* [Macon: Mercer University Press, 1987]), as Augustine argued, man in his original state of purity would not have needed to be ruled. Inequality amongst people is a result of sin and the need for it to be restrained.

⁹¹ Stevenson, Jr., *Christian Love and Just War*, 62.

But if everyone could use force like this, there would be constant strife.⁹² This was a major concern for medieval Christians, who were, at least in the earlier Middle Ages, surrounded by widespread violence. If the authority to wage war could be consolidated into a few qualified authority figures, or one authority, perhaps violence would be restricted to matters that concerned public interest, as opposed to private gain.⁹³ Thomas Aquinas develops this idea at length in the *Summa Theologica*:

In order for a war to be just, three things are required. First, the authority of the prince by whose command the war is to be waged. For it is not the business of the private individual to declare war, because he can pursue his right (*ius suum prosecui*) before the judgment of his superior.

Moreover it is not the business of a private person to summon together the people, which has to be done in wartime. And as the care of the common weal is committed to those who are in authority, it is their business to watch over the common weal of the city, kingdom or province subject to them.⁹⁴

We see how kings exercise their command over war when King Thurston summons soldiers at Horn's behest:

He dude writes sende

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Corey and Charles explain this rationale further: "Another condition for just war is that it be waged by someone with proper authority (*auctoritas*). This, according to Augustine, is no less than what the natural order of things requires. If every citizen or subject could declare war at will, wars would be much too frequent and arbitrary. And if every citizen or subject could enter into deliberation about war, the social peace would be too profoundly disturbed" (*Just War*, 59-60).

⁹⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, qu. 40; qtd. in Reichberg et al., *Ethics*, 177. Orig. pub. in *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, rev. ed. (orig. pub. 1920) Benziger Brothers, 1948 (reprinted Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1981).

Into Yrlonde
 After knightes lighte
 Irisse men to fighte. (1011-14)

Horn does not seek to circumvent Thurston – rather, he respectfully asks for help to save Rymenhild and regain Suddene (999-1008). Once summoned, the knights are entirely at Horn’s command, and they always fight when he orders them, under his banner (1388). On the other hand, when Horn fights for Ireland, he fights under Thurston’s authority. When Thurston designates him as one of the three knights to fight a Saracen champion, Horn does not refuse, although he qualifies his acceptance by volunteering to be the only knight to fight, since “hit nis no righte / On with thre to fighte” (835-36). At every turn, right authority, whether that of Horn or Thurston, is respected. As Anne Scott writes, “not questioning or testing the inalterable relationship between king and subject, the poem protects certain feudal and political hierarchies.”⁹⁵ Whenever we see proper fighting in *KH*, it is waged by kings, princes, and knights, people who in medieval society were expected to bear arms for the good of their subjects or vassals.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Anne Scott, “Plans, Predictions, and Promises: Traditional Story Techniques and the Configuration of Word and Deed in King Horn,” in *Studies in Medieval English Romances: Some New Approaches*, ed. Derek Brewer (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1988), 55. “Feudal relationships are honoured, Horn validating his promises to both kings [Aylmar and Thurston] with immediate, successful displays of martial valor” (ibid., 51). “Gratitude and deference to high birth could scarcely go farther” (*Essays on King Horn* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1940], 8) Walter H. French says of Horn’s behavior toward Aylmar while he is courting Rymenhild – but this statement aptly describes Horn’s other relations with kings. Yet at the same time, by leading the charge against the Saracens, Horn “proves his dedication to Christian leadership as well. Both of these traits [i.e. his “physical capacity” and leadership] now enable him to return to Suddene and free his own land from pagan rule” (Georgianna Ziegler, “Structural Repetition in *King Horn*,” *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 81 [1980]: 406). Horn becomes a strong leader through submitting to other rulers while at the same time asserting his own prowess and leadership.

⁹⁶ Ramón Lull (c. 1232-1316?) writes: “Every Knight that is not obedient to his lord nor to the Order of Chivalry dishonors his lord and abandons his order” (*The Book of the Order of Chivalry*, trans. Robert Adams [Huntsville: Sam Houston State University Press, 1991], 68). The translation is from William Caxton’s edition, translated “into late Middle English between 1483 and 1485” [ibid., viii].

Illegitimate war is fought by godless pagans who kill, loot, and oppress their victims. It is fundamentally *selfish* in nature, and it is *harmful* to the people it targets – Horn’s battles benefit others. The pagans act from sinful motives, but Horn’s righteousness is proven again and again in everything he does. How else would one expect God’s appointed ruler and servant of his people to act? And how else would one expect depraved pagans to act, who are ultimately usurpers? Horn’s quest, while it clearly serves his interests (the recovery of his inheritance; see ch. 2), is still not done simply to advance his desires at the expense of others, but rather for the welfare of everyone in Suddene.⁹⁷

Horn constantly acts for the good of others when he fights. Once he has pledged himself to Rymenhild, he kills anyone who tries to harm her; he repels a Saracen attack against Westernesse; and he delivers Ireland from its would-be conquerors. The Saracens are usurpers who bring chaos and death to Suddene, while Horn restores peace and justice. The *rightness* of *right authority* is brought home in a powerful manner here. Referring to *KH* and *Havelok the Dane*, Lee C. Ramsey writes, “there is a close identification between the individual and the state. The empire is the creation and embodiment of a single man, the hero; its continued welfare depends totally on his

⁹⁷ Scott notes how Horn’s “prophetic statements and their fulfillments,” for example, “imply that aspect of Horn’s character which is public, community-oriented, and in a way inflexible” (ibid., 50), and how two prophetic statements in particular (found in lines 155-56 and 1291-1300 of *KH*) show how “Horn has taken it upon himself to perform the tasks necessary to restore his homeland to Christian leadership” (63). She refers to the poet’s emphasis on “Horn’s personal election for the salvation of his people” (ibid.) and how this portrayal is designed to make him appear “as much a young savior as an heroic knight” (51); “the poem also highlights the importance of Horn’s loyalty to received codes governing chivalric behavior” (ibid.). See also Timothy O’Brien, “Word Play in the Allegory of *King Horn*,” *Allegorica* 7 (1982): 115, 120-21.

abilities and the soundness of his claim to the throne.”⁹⁸ Horn is everything a right authority should be when waging war, and the fact that he takes primary responsibility in warfare and is the first to meet the foe before anyone else shows how qualified he is to protect those in his charge from their enemies.⁹⁹

The second criterion in just war is the necessity of just cause. Augustine wrote little on this, but he specifies in *Questions on the Heptateuch* that “as a rule just wars are defined as those which avenge injuries, if some nation or state against whom one is waging war has neglected to punish a wrong committed by its citizens, or to return something that was wrongfully taken.”¹⁰⁰ Aquinas concurs (quoting that passage in Augustine), writing that “a just cause is required, namely that those who are attacked, should be attacked because they deserve it on account of some fault (*culpa*).”¹⁰¹ Offensive wars whose objective was simply territorial or economic gain were, therefore, ruled out. The opposing side had to first commit wrong before military might could be summoned against them: “paradoxically, Augustine said that the only proper reason for going to war is to preserve, or to recapture, the peace; that is, one wars for peace,”¹⁰² as

⁹⁸ Lee C. Ramsey, *Chivalric Romances*, 26 (see also 29, 43). Crane makes a similar point: “The crisis Horn faces is inextricably personal and public. Horn’s interests are identical with those of his society; only when he regains his patrimony and wins his wife will his followers in exile and his captive countrymen at home have peace and stability....[Horn] is a repository of national custom, bearing the greatness of his people closed within himself like a seed....Horn’s followers can rely for their identity on such a hero until the homeland is regained; the nation is safely contained in his person. When Horn wins his heritage and his wife, the seed of nationhood he carries can once more flourish in the lives of his people and his descendants” (*Insular Romance*, 33, 38, 39).

⁹⁹ “During the course of these fights [against the Saracens] we see him [Horn] assuming the roles of king and warrior previously upheld by his father” (Ziegler, “Structural Repetition,” 404). Horn’s kingship is forged in the fires of war, and while he possesses authority to wage war as the royal heir, his kingship becomes a reality during and after the battles he wages.

¹⁰⁰ Augustine, *Questions on the Heptateuch*, bk. VI, ch. 10; qtd. in Reichberg et al., *Ethics*, 82.

¹⁰¹ Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II.40, qtd. in Reichberg et al., *Ethics*, 177.

¹⁰² Stevenson, Jr., *Christian Love and Just War*, 39.

Stevenson puts it. Even so, Stevenson qualifies, Augustine “did not readily accept the ‘usual’ definition” of a just war, because “although human beings might sometimes be conscious instruments of God’s wrath, they are more likely to be prideful slaves to their own lust for power.”¹⁰³ Augustine “purposefully omitted any detailed tenets of ‘just cause’”¹⁰⁴ due to this discomfort with even this justification for war.

But, assuming medieval interpreters took Augustine positively here (as Aquinas did), the warfare of the Christians in *KH* fits this criterion perfectly. In Horn’s first conflict with the Saracens, when he slays a band of a hundred (620), the Saracens appear on the shores of Westernesse announcing, “This lond we wullegh winne / And sle that ther is inne” (607-8). Horn acts to defend Westernesse from them – he has not provoked battle. In Ireland, when the messenger giant comes to Thurston’s court, he announces that the pagan army “beoth on the sonde / King, upon thy londe” (815-16). He challenges Thurston to a contest, where three Christian knights will fight one Saracen. If the Saracens win, they get Ireland; if not, the Christians can retain it. Thus, the battle Horn and Thurston’s army fight the next day is entirely defensive in nature. While the people of Westernesse and Ireland are living in peace, the Saracens are active initiators of conflict. They leave their own place (vaguely referred to as “paynyme” [809]) and go abroad to take others’ land and rule their people, without provocation. The Irish’s resistance is something a medieval reader would recognize as fully justified warfare. The

¹⁰³ Ibid., 41.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 42. Johnson likewise points out that “Augustine’s language [in this passage] seems rather descriptive than definitive” (Johnson, *Just War Tradition*, 153), although “Augustine elsewhere named right authority, along with several other criteria not mentioned in the above passage, as requisite for a just war” (ibid.). Thus, the passage may not be a definitive statement of Augustine’s view on just causes for war, but the medieval interpreters discussed in this chapter took his list of just causes at face value.

Saracens, as was previously established in the narrative, will kill, rob, and persecute the Christian inhabitants of Ireland. To defend their land, families, and faith, the only response can be violent confrontation.

Suddene is a slightly different case, but only apparently. Horn and his Irishmen actively attack and conquer Suddene, but it is not to the detriment of its original inhabitants. When the Saracens originally came to Suddene, they told Murry that “thy lond folk we schulle slon” (47), a threat brutally fulfilled when they slaughter “fele hundred” (1343). The pagans rampage through Suddene destroying churches, forcing conversions, and sparing neither “fremde ne the sibbe” (68). The Saracens, then, are aggressors who have wrongfully appropriated Suddene, robbed the people of their right to worship God in truth, and committed murderous crimes against the populace. Consequently, the Christian reconquest of Suddene dovetails with Augustine’s rule that just wars must be to “avenge injuries,” and Aquinas’s requirement “that those who are attacked, should be attacked because they deserve it on account of some fault.” Yet the peace achieved at Suddene is only a peace entailing total destruction of the foe, something not part of Augustine’s original intent – “a just settlement...is not a settlement based solely on coercion,” Stevenson explains about Augustine, “[but] it is a harmonious order based on ‘agreement’...reflecting a respect for human beings as God’s special creatures.”¹⁰⁵ This difference from the Augustinian ethic is notable, and will be discussed further below.

¹⁰⁵ Stevenson, Jr., *Christian Love and Just War*, 40.

For Horn personally, one motive is to avenge his father – “that lond I schal ofreche / And do mi fader wreche” (1295-96) – and another is to seize back his land by purging the pagan incursion: “We schulle the hundes teche / To speken ure speche” (1381-82) he threatens. While the idea of Horn personally avenging a wrong would make Augustine uncomfortable, the avenging of his country’s subjugation is entirely just. The invaders deserve death for their deeds, and so they will pay for it with their lives. The Christian army kills enemy noncombatants along with soldiers during their invasion, however, something just war principles would proscribe. While their *conduct* does not fit the ideal just war, the *reason* they fight would be completely acceptable to medieval readers (and, unfortunately, so would their conduct). While they might not be personally acquainted with Augustine and Aquinas, or be familiar with the nuances of just war precepts, the cause for Horn’s fighting would be recognizably just.¹⁰⁶ It is interesting that in this romance Horn does not travel abroad to conquer territories for his own fame. Rather, the emphasis is on Horn *maintaining* an already good thing, or, in some cases, *establishing* it – that is, peaceful rule by hereditary, Christian monarchs over Christian lands. Despite the amount of blood spilled in the story, peace is the goal, and stability is treasured. When Horn is in Westernesse, he deflects attack; when he goes abroad, he protects the peace of other Christian lands; when he returns, he brings salvation from

¹⁰⁶ “His righteous battles against the pagans” are “perform[ed] for the benefit of the public” (although such actions are “placed in the service of his more personal wants and desires, and are directed toward his union with Rymenhild – the motivation of which seems distinctly personal, not public” [Scott, “Plans, Predictions, and Promises,” 58]). “Horn’s courageous and righteous deeds...stand in obvious opposition to those of his pagan enemies” (44).

oppressors and peace to Suddene. Horn is not so much a conqueror as a “savior”¹⁰⁷ and protector.

Ramsey argues about *Havelok* and *KH*: “these are stories of empire building. Both heroes end as rulers over the land of their exile as well as their inherited land and have political influence that extends beyond the borders of their own personally created empire.”¹⁰⁸ The statement that “both heroes end as...rulers over the land of their exile” is not technically correct for *KH* – Horn weds his friend Athulf to Reynild, Thurston’s daughter, making him the heir of Ireland (1527-30); makes Athelbrus king of Mody’s former kingdom (1519-22); and appoints Arnoldin king of Westernesse after Aylmar dies (1507-1512). Horn is, then, maintaining or creating new dynasties under proper Christian monarchy (as Ramsey notes, “these romances do not speak to a greed for land or conquest in the hearts of their audiences”¹⁰⁹). He certainly does gain, though, “political influence that extends beyond the borders of [his] own personally created empire.” Gary Lim likewise describes Horn’s appointment of heirs to the respective kingdoms as “a process of conquest in benign terms.”¹¹⁰ Yet Horn himself does not, and will not, rule over these kingdoms. He is not, as Crane notes, “an expansionist.”¹¹¹ While these territories may “owe him fealty”¹¹² afterwards, Horn himself has no direct power over those realms. Horn is a protector, not a taker, of Christian kingdoms. He asserts his power without abusing it by appropriating other kings’ lands.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 51.

¹⁰⁸ Ramsey, *Chivalric Romances*, 26.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 30.

¹¹⁰ Gary Lim, “In the Name of the (Dead) Father: Reading Fathers and Sons in *Havelok the Dane*, *King Horn*, and *Bevis of Hampton*,” *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 110.1 (2011): 48.

¹¹¹ Crane, *Insular Romance*, 32.

¹¹² Lim, “In the Name of the (Dead) Father,” 48.

The final criterion for a just war is right intent. This aspect of just war was particularly important to Augustine – the internal state of a warrior was preeminent to his understanding of how Christians could participate in war. This reflects what Reichberg et al. call his “preoccupation with virtue,”¹¹³ specifically how one could preserve virtue in the context of war, which “distracts”¹¹⁴ people from the right. If one could kill an enemy soldier without enmity in one’s heart against them, perhaps the commands of Jesus against hatred of enemies could still be fulfilled. Thus, Augustine advises in his Letter 189 to Boniface:

The will should be concerned with peace and necessity with war, so that God might liberate us from necessity and preserve us in peace. Peace is not sought in order to provoke war, but war is waged in order to attain peace. Be a peacemaker, then, even by fighting, so that through your victory you might bring those whom you defeat to the advantages of peace. “Blessed are the peacemakers,” says the Lord, “for they will be called children of God” (Matthew 5:9)...Let necessity slay the warring foe, not your will. As violence is returned to one who rebels and resists, so should mercy be to one who has been conquered or captured, especially when there is no fear of a disturbance of peace.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Reichberg et al., *Ethics*, 74.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 73.

¹¹⁵ Qtd. in *ibid.*, 79.

Augustine wants the warrior to fight not out of malice, but out of necessity, in defense of others, not hatred of the enemy or selfish desires.¹¹⁶ Augustine only endorses war when it is waged in the interest of others, not self-interest. To defend the weak is to love your neighbor¹¹⁷; to kill in anger is to hate one's enemy, something forbidden by Jesus.¹¹⁸ Augustine writes that "patience...must always be observed with respect to one's interior disposition, and a spirit of benevolence must always permeate the will so as to avoid returning evil for evil."¹¹⁹ The person's internal state is crucial: as Stevenson puts it, "the true moral content of the specific action always resides in the inward disposition, the

¹¹⁶ Augustine takes a dubious view of self-defense in *On Free Choice of the Will* (Augustine, *On Free Choice of the Will*, bk I, chs. 5-6; qtd. in Reichberg et al., *Ethics*, 75-77), although he later accepted "the inclusion of self-defense among the extenuating circumstances for killing" (Corey and Charles, *The Just War Tradition*, 91). While Aquinas allows self-defense, he is quite strict about how one does this – as Paul Ramsey says of Aquinas' perspective, "the Christian must never intend to kill a man, since love refuses to allow that motive, and countenances only the intention of saving life, even one's own" (Paul Ramsey, *War and the Christian Conscience: How Shall Modern War Be Conducted Justly?* [Durham: Duke University Press, 1961], 43). However, "intending to kill a man as a means to the public good is clearly an exception to the basic rule (which still remains in force) that no Christian shall intend to kill any man" (ibid., 41). To summarize the difference between Augustine and Aquinas: "Aquinas does not require, as Augustine does, the individual who is unjustly attacked to omit the *act* of private self-defense; but he does require him to omit directing his *intention* against even an unjust man" (40). As was pointed out above, Augustine later in his life permitted self-defense.

¹¹⁷ Johnson describes the kind of love Augustine wanted Christians to show toward their neighbor: "This charity, selfless and self-sacrificing love for the neighbor, requires that the Christian defend his neighbor against unprovoked, unjust attack. Thus a Christian not only may but should participate in a war aimed at such defense, for [as] a soldier in a just war he is helping to defend his neighbors in the state, who are all being threatened unjustly" (Johnson, *Just War Tradition*, 145).

¹¹⁸ "Augustine, for his part, saw that the scriptural ideals of love and peace had to be reconciled in one way or another with the ideal of justice and that the duty to love one's neighbors sometimes requires that force be used to protect those neighbors from harm" (Corey and Charles, *Just War Tradition*, 82-83). Thus, war could *only* be justified if motivated by love for others – if it stemmed from hatred of enemies, it was wrong. See Darrell Cole, "Thomas Aquinas on Virtuous Warfare," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 27.1 (1999): 75-76 for Aquinas' point of view on this issue.

¹¹⁹ *Letter 138, to Marcellinus*, qtd. in Reichberg et al., *Ethics*, 73.

motivation, of the one who acts.”¹²⁰ Hence, a person can be killed out of necessity instead of hostile intent.

Obedience to a higher power to defend other people is laudable, but, as Augustine says, fighting with “the desire for harming, the cruelty of revenge, the restless and implacable mind, the savageness of revolting, the lust for dominating...are what are justly blamed in war.”¹²¹ Aquinas concurs: “it is necessary that those waging war should have a rightful intention, so that they intend the advancement of good, or the avoidance of evil.”¹²² There should be “love for their enemies, to correct their errors,”¹²³ Johnson says of Aquinas’ view, instead of a lust to kill and harm them. Finally, the goal, always and above all, should be peace with the defeated foes. Peace is sought by those who wish for a speedy end to violence, and who refrain from indulging resentment toward their enemies in their hearts. Hate fuels further conflict, but love desires peace. Any just war must be conducted without feelings of animosity towards the enemy, and with a view toward peace once victory is achieved.

Since *KH* evidently exhibits just war principles of right authority and just cause, perhaps it also portrays the value of right intent toward enemies in war. A look at passages describing the Christians at war, however, is not promising. In Horn’s first clash with Saracens, the narrator says that “the Sarazins he smatte / That his blod hatte” (611-12) – hardly the emotional control Augustine preached. In the battle to defend Ireland,

¹²⁰ Stevenson, Jr., *Christian Love and Just War*, 105. As Ramsey puts it: “The heart of the matter of virtue or of justice consists in a matter of the heart” (*War and the Christian Conscience*, 17).

¹²¹ *Against Faustus the Manichean*, bk. XXII, ch. 74; qtd. in Reichberg et al., *Ethics*, 73.

¹²² Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, qu. 40. Qtd. in *ibid.*, 177.

¹²³ Johnson, *Ideology*, 41.

Horn kills the giant and the rest of the Saracens from a motive of vengeance (875-892) – “his blod arise” (876) when he realizes his father’s murderer stands before him. Horn and the Irish soldiers pursue the fleeing Saracens and cut them all down before they can reach their ships (887-91) – an action that is not really defensive (the enemy is retreating in disarray), but simply reflects bloodlust and hatred. In the conquest of Suddene, Horn proclaims that “alle we hem schulle sle, / And al quic hem fle” (1383-84); he subsequently conducts a merciless butchery of all the Saracens living in Suddene. By doing so he has fulfilled his resolution that he would “do mi fader wreche” (1296).

Just war thought would not approve of Horn’s motives in fighting, nor of his actions (which far overstep the requirements for defense), nor of the absence of a just peace with the Saracens.¹²⁴ What does this aspect of Horn’s fighting derive from? One influence is Horn’s craving for vengeance upon his father’s murderers.¹²⁵ But I would argue another idea is at work here, a theological innovation that grew from just war thought – holy war, which reached its apex in the crusades. War in the service of the faith against Muslims carried additional baggage in its depictions of Muslims and the rules of conduct when fighting against them. Many depictions of Muslims portray them as the greatest threat to Christendom, and shocking brutality against Muslim foes was celebrated. Horn is tasked with fighting the infidel, and he prosecutes it with the enthusiasm a Christian knight should have resisting the enemies of Christ and his Church.

¹²⁴ See Russell, *Just War in the Middle Ages*, 294-96, for a discussion of the medieval Church’s continued ambiguity about violence, particularly in reference to the crusades.

¹²⁵ “[Horn’s] actions are dictated by his desire for revenge and for the recovery of his heritage” (Dieter Mehl, *The Middle English Romances of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* [New York: Barnes & Noble, 1969], 50; see also Lim, “In the Name of the (Dead) Father,” 28).

Augustine desired those engaged in war “to remember,” Stevenson writes, “that all human beings, as such, are creatures of God and deserving of love.”¹²⁶ The Christians of *KH* exhibit none of this ideal.

In conclusion, *KH* demonstrably exhibits the just war principles of right authority and just cause. Just war principles, though formed by theologians and canonists, had seeped into the broader Christian culture and created a rough consensus about whose right it was to wage war and what were justifiable reasons for going to war. War in *KH* is waged by those whose duty and calling it is to wage it – kings and knights – and the hero practices and authorizes violence as one who has royal blood in his veins. The audience is encouraged to admire Horn’s martial exploits, and can trust that as the rightful king he will only fight in the interest of the Christians who look to him for help. Instead of being an opportunist, Horn strives to bring peace to the kingdoms around him, creating alliances with Westernesse, Ireland, and Reynes. There is nothing dubious about Horn’s goals, either – he fights to protect the oppressed and recover what was stolen from him. Horn acts as the Church would say a king should in these respects – he only fights just wars.

¹²⁶ Stevenson, Jr., *Christian Love and Just War*, 112.

Chapter 2: In Defense of Land, Lady, and Lord: Chivalry in *King Horn*

Horn does indeed desire peace, as Augustine specified – but his peace comes at the cost of total annihilation of his enemies, something Augustine would find repulsive. Horn indulges in clear hatred of his enemies and eagerly seeks combat.¹²⁷ A substantial part of Horn's zeal for battle is the desire to earn glory in the practice of arms, which reflects the powerful influence of chivalry on medieval thought about war – Horn tells Rymenhild that before he can marry her, “mid spere I schal furst ride, / And mi knighthod prove” (548-49). He fights with the zeal and ferocity befitting a knight.

Horn is held up as the paragon of chivalry in the narrative of *KH*. For example, toward his lady, Rymenhild, Horn conducts himself with discretion, honor, and faithfulness. Towards the kings who at various points in the plot are his feudal lords, Horn acts with respect and deference. Far from being a threat to these kings' authority, Horn actively protects their realms and offices. But at the same time, Horn does things that seem to jar with the ideals of the chivalric code. For example, rather than giving his routed enemies quarter at the conclusion of a battle, allowing them to honorably retreat, Horn and his men pursue and slaughter them to the last man. Furthermore, when Horn invades Suddene, the kingdom unjustly taken from him in childhood when his father was murdered, Horn does not simply wage war against the Saracen soldiers occupying

¹²⁷ “Horn loves fighting” (Marilyn Corrie, “Kings and Kingship in British Library MS Harley 2253,” *The Yearbook of English Studies* 33 [2003]: 70).

Suddene. Instead, he explicitly targets soldiers *and* enemy noncombatants, sparing no one in his purge of the country.

This should raise some questions for a modern reader. The rules of chivalry forbade knights from harming the defenseless – women, children, and the elderly, for example.¹²⁸ The targets of a knight were to be other knights and soldiers.¹²⁹ Furthermore, knights were theoretically supposed to permit quarter to their defeated opponents, and to allow the opposing forces to withdraw from the field of battle.¹³⁰ Whether or not these rules were observed regularly in reality is not so important for this text – that they were accepted standards in chivalric literature was a reality. Thus, Horn's actions seem to contradict the expectations of his knightly class. However, as will be demonstrated, Horn's actions toward defeated Saracens and Saracen noncombatants were far from irregular for a medieval knight – they were really the expectation, the norm.

The purpose of this chapter is to elucidate the characteristics that make Horn such an excellent knight, emphasizing the military virtues Horn cultivates in his practice of chivalry, and how the apparently discordant aspects of his knightly behavior (his brutality toward the Saracens) fit within a generally accepted view of Christian involvement in war during the Middle Ages – the idea of holy war. By analyzing the *chivalric* aspect of Horn's warfare, a clearer picture will emerge of why Horn pursues bloodshed with such abandon, something frowned upon by the major just war thinkers. The nobility of Horn's

¹²⁸ James Turner Johnson, *Just War Tradition and the Restraint of War: A Moral and Historical Inquiry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 135-36.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 134-35.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 137.

character that is stressed in the narrative is expressed not just in abstract moral qualities, but in his violent actions as well.¹³¹

Knighthood is an elevated calling in *KH* – as Anne Scott writes, *KH* intends “to illustrate pious, upright behavior through the presentation of its hero’s character.”¹³² And while, Scott argues, “in contrast to the Anglo-Norman version of the poem...the reinforcement of knightly codes play a relatively minor role”¹³³ in *KH*, nonetheless the author of the tale, when portraying Horn in his role as knight (a role which he occupies through most of the romance), demonstrates how Horn possesses every noble quality of knighthood.¹³⁴ The office of knighthood was a weighty one; in the twelfth century, the Church began to designate knights as “a social order ordained by God,”¹³⁵ Nigel Saul writes. Knighthood now had a new aura about it – it was an institution originating with God himself. “Since the Almighty,” Saul continues, “the source of chivalric honour, had given men the means to win fame and glory, the knight, in return, was expected to lead the life of a good, devout layman.”¹³⁶ This gave knighthood a sacred aspect, creating extremely high expectations of acceptable behavior for knights. Since God himself had

¹³¹ “Romance writing” is “a tradition that always drew upon very human and physical brave deeds and endurance as much as any spiritual dimension” (Richard Kaeuper, *Holy Warriors: The Religious Ideology of Chivalry* [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009], 134). “In King Horn, intricacies of chivalric behavior do not seem to be the primary focus; Horn is mostly concerned with fighting” (Carol Parrish Jamison, “A Description of the Medieval Romance Based Upon *King Horn*,” *Quondam et Futuris* 1.2 [1991]: 54). The noble deeds of *KH* are violent deeds, and Horn’s violent life is also a reflection of his righteous character – he seeks his fame slaying pagans on the battlefield. Horn’s nobility is made concrete in his slaughter of Saracens.

¹³² Anne Scott, “Plans, Predictions, and Promises: Traditional Story Techniques and the Configuration of Word and Deed in King Horn,” in Derek Brewer, ed., *Studies in Medieval English Romances: Some New Approaches* (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 1988), 44.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 55.

¹³⁴ Horn is “a role-model knight” (Jamison, “A Description of the Medieval Romance Based Upon *King Horn*,” 54). See also Scott, “Plans, Predictions, and Promises,” 42.

¹³⁵ Nigel Saul, *Chivalry in Medieval England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 199.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 200.

created knighthood, it should reflect his character, much as the religious orders and clergy strove to do as well.¹³⁷

In fact, according to one of the great medieval authorities on chivalry, Ramón Lull, chivalry is “an honorable office above all offices, orders and estates of the world,”¹³⁸ excepting the clergy. Furthermore, if a king does not “incorporate chivalry into his person...he would not be worthy to be a king.”¹³⁹ As was discussed in the previous chapter, Horn is a noble and righteous king, and consequently the author of *KH* integrates chivalric virtues into Horn’s character. Horn’s practice of chivalry validates the excellence of his character and enables his claim of the throne of Suddene. An essential part of chivalric and royal life in *KH* is the pursuit of arms: within the narrative of *KH*, “knighthood,” Susan Crane writes, “is presented as essentially military, worthier than nonmilitary life, and basic to social relationships.”¹⁴⁰ It is essential to recognize that for Horn to prove his credentials as knight and king, he must shed blood in bold, daring, and spectacular fashion, since his role as a knight is “essentially military.”

Knighthood does not come easily to Horn. The narrative of *KH* dwells momentarily on the happiness of Horn’s early life, his good father and beautiful mother, and Horn’s own fairness. But soon his homeland of Suddene is invaded and conquered by

¹³⁷ See Kaeuper, *Holy Warriors*, 145-47.

¹³⁸ Ramón Lull (c. 1232-1316?) , *The Book of the Order of Chivalry*, trans. Robert Adams (Huntsville: Sam Houston State University Press, 1991), 99. The translation is from William Caxton’s edition, translated “into late Middle English between 1483 and 1485” (ibid., viii).

¹³⁹ Ibid. “All thought chivalry was virtually equivalent to civilization, or at least stood as one of its essential components, certainly that it was the model for the lives of lay males” (Richard W. Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999], 123-24). A king, the ultimate symbol of lay manhood and civilization, would be expected to practice and promote chivalry.

¹⁴⁰ Susan Crane, *Insular Romance: Politics, Faith, and Culture in Anglo-Norman and Middle English Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 32.

Saracen pirates, his father murdered, and his mother forced into hiding. He himself is set adrift at sea with his twelve companions¹⁴¹ by the Saracens. Despite their captors' intentions, Horn and his friends escape drowning – but when their boat docks in Westernesse, Horn has nothing. His kingdom has been stolen from him, his father is dead – he is a homeless orphan, at the mercy of Westernesse's king, Aylmar. When Horn declines to marry Rymenhild later in the story, protesting that “ich am ibore to lowe.../ Ich am icode of thralle” (421, 423), while he is not “icode of thralle,” at the time he is speaking with her he *is* a serf,¹⁴² because he is completely dependent on the goodwill of his feudal lord. In that sense, he is a “fundling bifalle” (424). He cannot exercise any of the power of his office, and so is not a lord, but a thrall. He requires that he be knighted, and thus attain equal social standing to herself, before he can claim her hand in marriage (439-44).¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ The number of Horn's companions echoes the twelve disciples of Christ, which reflects other “parallels to Christ” (ibid., 38). See fn. 54 on p. 38 of Crane; L.O. Purdon, “*King Horn* and the Medieval Trope of Christ the Lover-Knight,” *Proceedings of the PMR Conference at Villanova* 10 (1985): 143; Georgianna Ziegler, “Structural Repetition in *King Horn*,” *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 81 (1980): 405 (including fn. 4).

¹⁴² I owe this insight to my advisor, Dr. Pfrenger. “The hero's weakness [in *KH* and *Havelok the Dane*] also arises from the fact that he is in exile. Since he is in a foreign land, his inherited rank means little, and he must make his way by means of work and natural abilities. Horn, in the two earlier romances [*KH* and *Horn et Rymenhild*] works as a serving boy for the king” (Lee C. Ramsey, *Chivalric Romances: Popular Literature in Medieval England* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983], 35). “The loss of the hero's hereditary rights is tantamount to a loss of self, for the hero finds himself displaced into a land where he is not known and a society where he has no rank” (43).

¹⁴³ Marilyn Corrie argues that Horn's refusal of Rymenhild based on the fact that he is supposedly “socially unequal...seems disingenuous, since although Horn is displaced from his heritage...the work nowhere suggests that he is ignorant of his true origins. On the one hand, in asserting the lowliness of his status, Horn appears to be testing Rymenhild's commitment to him; on the other, he uses his feigned humble birth to fast-track his way to knighthood” (Marilyn Corrie, “Kings and Kingship in British Library MS Harley 2253,” *The Yearbook of English Studies* 33 [2003]: 68). Horn also, however, is aware of how his exile has reduced his standing in society due to the fact that he cannot use the right he possesses by birth, and he wants to be invested with knighthood in order to reclaim that social standing and power. “It is hard not to feel...that Horn wants above all to be knighted, and is prepared to use Rymenhild's love as a lever to bring

Perhaps Horn also refuses to marry Rymenhild until he is knighted because he has been shamed.¹⁴⁴ Since he has lost his inheritance and been reduced to a serf, he must find a way to recover the honor he once had. Honor should be understood as, in Julian Pitt-Rivers' words, "the value of a person in his own eyes, but also in the eyes of his society. It is his estimation of his own worth, his *claim* to pride, but it is also the acknowledgement of that claim, his excellence recognized by society, his *right* to pride."¹⁴⁵ In Horn's circumstances, he has no "right to pride." He has accomplished nothing, but has lost everything.¹⁴⁶ How could he marry the daughter of the king when he has not yet attained the office of knighthood and proved his prowess in arms? Even after Horn has been knighted, he defers marrying Rymenhild until he has actually fought in a battle.

Horn reveals more about his thoughts on this matter when he returns from exile to Westernesse. He informs Aylmar that he will not wed Rymenhild "til I Suddene winne" (1290). First he will "funde / In to mine heritage" (1292-93). "That lond," he continues, "I schal ofreche / And do mi fader wreche" (1295-96). That accomplished, he will "beo

this about" (A.C. Gibbs, *Middle English Romances* [Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1966], 30). Jamison calls it a "polite excuse" ("A Description of the Medieval Romance Based Upon *King Horn*," 53). See also Ronald B. Herzmann, Graham Drake, and Eve Salisbury, eds., *Four Romances of England: King Horn, Havelok the Dane, Bevis of Hampton, Athelston*, TEAMS Middle English Text Series (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1999), 62-63 (on lines 423, 427-28).

¹⁴⁴ I appreciate my advisor Dr. Pfrenger suggesting this to me.

¹⁴⁵ Julian Pitt-Rivers, "Honour and Social Status," in *Honour and Shame. The Values of Mediterranean Society*, ed. J. G. Peristiany (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1965), 21. Quoted in Matthew Strickland, *War and Chivalry: The Conduct and Perception of War in England and Normandy, 1066-1217* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 99.

¹⁴⁶ "The plethora of kings in the poem are not just the gilt gingerbread figures of fairy-tale; they exemplify, positively or negatively, the condition to which Horn was born and for which circumstances require him to demonstrate his fitness, reflecting, perhaps, the original shaping of the folk-tale in the Viking age when royal birth could not secure the succession without outstanding personal qualities" (W.R.J. Barron, *English Medieval Romance* [New York: Longman, 1987], 66).

king of tune” (1297). Horn is arguing that he has much unfinished business to complete before he marries the princess.¹⁴⁷ He must regain his honor, the land he was robbed of, and the right to be called king and “bere kinges crune” (1298). He feels the need to vindicate his pride as the heir to Suddene, and is compelled to fulfill that mission before he can begin to enjoy the benefits and accolades of royalty. Knighthood is the first step Horn takes on the journey to recover his honor, and hence his knighting is of enormous significance to the narrative.

Once Athelbrus the steward proposes to Aylmar that Horn be knighted, and Aylmar enthusiastically concurs (475-96), Horn is able to attain knighthood. The next day – after, perhaps, the night-long vigil¹⁴⁸ – Horn appears before the king, and receives the accoutrements of knighthood. The ceremony not only transforms Horn’s status in Aylmar’s court, it also marks the beginning of Horn taking initiative as a warrior and leader. From now on, Horn’s place in the narrative shifts from a participant in the events he is caught up in to the warrior and questing king who takes the lead in confronting the forces arraigned against him – with a horse and sword, he has been outfitted with the gear of war.¹⁴⁹

Horn he dubbede to knichte
 With swerd and spures brighte
 He sette him on a stede whit:
 Ther nas no knight hym ilik.

¹⁴⁷ Barron writes that once Horn regains his kingdom, he “finally overcomes, now that he is a king in his own right, his persistent feeling that to marry a princess and become a king is a disloyal act against a reigning monarch” (ibid.). He also says that “discretion and loyalty to her [Rymenhild’s] father as his overlord will not allow him to accept [her love] until he has achieved knighthood and proved his valour in battle” (ibid.). Horn’s deference to King Aylmar is further underscored here.

¹⁴⁸ For information on the knighting ceremony, see Richard Barber, *The Knight and Chivalry* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1995), 29-37 (see pp. 32-33 on the nocturnal vigil).

¹⁴⁹ See Herzman et al., *Four Romances of England*, 63 (on lines 504-5).

He smot him a litel wight
And bed him beon a god knight. (503-8)

Horn has finally achieved knighthood. He is now a member of medieval society's elite, an elite charged specifically with the defense of the Church and fellow Christians – especially those who could not defend themselves.¹⁵⁰ However, this is not an abstract notion – Horn is given a horse and sword because the very definition of knighthood involves, as Saul puts it, “proving their expertise in arms.”¹⁵¹ Horn cannot simply, as a matter of honor, rest on the laurels of the title that has been bestowed upon him. He *must* go forth and prove himself in battle.¹⁵² To decline this task, or to attempt to claim its privileges without having first earned them, would be unbecoming to the exalted office he now occupies. The title of “knight” comes with new and specific responsibilities he is bound to fulfill.¹⁵³ As Saul notes, in the twelfth century, chivalry “transformed the knight from a mere warrior into an idealised figure”¹⁵⁴ – and thus a knight “was given a role to perform in a divinely ordained hierarchy, that of protecting the other two orders of

¹⁵⁰ “The knights were needed in hard times. Like kings, and even in place of kings who were failing to fulfill their function, they could defend the Church, keep the peace, protect the weak” (Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence*, 71). “The existence of military power was permitted by God only if it was used to defend the weak and sustain society at large” (Barber, *The Knight and Chivalry*, 30).

¹⁵¹ Saul, *Chivalry in Medieval England*, 181.

¹⁵² “The primary constituent in chivalry was prowess which wins honour, weapons in hand” (Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence*, 126; see also 129-30; 131; 135). See also Strickland, *War and Chivalry*, 99, 100 (on Richard the Lionheart), 105-6; Scott, “Plans, Predictions, and Promises,” 50. “...whereas in *Havelok* we have mainly an illustration of political virtues, such as the attributes of a perfect ruler and the loyalty of subjects, it is, in *King Horn*, above all the individual prowess and determination that have a decisive bearing on the train of events” (Dieter Mehl, *The Middle English Romances of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* [New York: Barnes & Noble, 1969], 51). As Mehl aptly notes, Horn’s character is active and militaristic.

¹⁵³ “[KH] also highlights the importance of Horn’s loyalty to received codes governing chivalric behavior” (ibid., 51).

¹⁵⁴ Saul, *Chivalry in Medieval England*, 38.

society, the clergy and the labouring classes.”¹⁵⁵ Horn will first and foremost fulfill the duties of an idealized knightly figure as he ought.¹⁵⁶

Horn informs Rymenhild of this when she says that Horn ought to fulfill his promise to marry her, since he now has attained a social standing comparable to hers (535-44). Horn declines, however, replying:

“Ich wulle don al thi wille,
Also hit mot betide.
Mid spere I schal furst ride,
And mi knighthod prove,
Ar ich thee ginne to woghe....
So is the manere:
With sume othere knichte
Wel for his lemman fighte
Or he eni wif take.” (546-49, 554-57)

Note Horn’s insistence that he must “prove” his knighthood. The way he will prove it is to “mid spere...ride” on Rymenhild’s behalf, for “his lemman.” Knighthood is something that must be realized in the midst of blood, sweat, and steel, even if it is conducted for the sake of romantic love. The connection between love and violence here is interesting as well. For a knight to be worthy of a lady’s love, he must kill other knights in her name. The knight qualifies for affection when he has successfully shed enough blood to be considered heroic and courageous. “As R.W. Hanning has concisely observed,” Richard Kaeuper writes, “a cycle is at work: prowess inspires love and love inspires prowess.”¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ “*King Horn* relies upon...a larger-than-life portrayal of its hero to assist in the task of teaching its audience about certain values” (Scott, “Plans, Predictions, and Promises,” 45). “As in other traditional stories, the hero of this romance is a ‘heavy’ character, one whose deeds are ‘monumental, memorable and commonly public’ (Ong, 70)” (ibid., 41, quoting Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* [New York: Methuen, 1982]).

¹⁵⁷ Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence*, 220 (Kaeuper is referring to Hanning, *The Individual in Twelfth-Century Romance* [New York, 1977], 4, 54). “Both [adulterous or legitimate love] served to enthuse the knight,

While Rymenhild is more taken with Horn's appearance than his prowess, Horn is certainly driven to partake in bold deeds in Rymenhild's name, and her love sustains him in the midst of his battles – "love inspires prowess" for him.

When Rymenhild gives him a ring with her name engraved on it, she tells him that he will "of nune dundes beon ofdrad" (577) if he "loke theran / And thenke upon thi lemman" (579-80). Before he engages the Saracens in his first battle, "he lokede on the ringe / And thoghte on Rimenilde" (617-18). He does the same before he kills the giant (881-82). The looming brutality Horn will engage in is partially motivated by his love for his lady, and essential to his romantic pursuit of her. This sheds some light on why Horn is so ruthless toward his enemies – his killing is fueled by a love that drives him to more spectacular deeds of bloodshed. He concludes his speech in this same vein of thought:

"Today, so Crist me blesse,
Ich wulle do pruesse,
For thi luve in the felde
Mid spere and mid schelde.
If ich come to lyve,
Ich schal thee take to wyve." (559-64)

Horn must fight for his lady before he can begin to court her – he "expresses his desire," as Scott puts it, "to establish his reputation through his bold, ostentatious displays of

inspiring him to deeds of prowess for his lady and filling him with the ambition to prove himself worthy of her love. It is the working out of this psychological dynamic which provides the link between the world of courtly love and the chivalric culture of valour. Geoffrey de Charny captured the linkage in a perceptive comment: it is good for a man-at-arms to be in love; it teaches him to seek higher renown to honour his lady" (Saul, *Chivalry in Medieval England*, 268). For the statement from Geoffrey de Charny, Saul references Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 116. See also Saul, 269; Ramsey, *Chivalric Romances*, 39; Gibbs, *Middle English Romances*, 11; Ziegler, "Structural Repetition," 405.

valour.”¹⁵⁸ As was noted above, knighthood is an intrinsically violent pursuit, and thus active.¹⁵⁹ It is not, ideally, simply a station in the social hierarchy, but a commission in service of king, kingdom, church, and lady. It is primarily a “service”¹⁶⁰ the knight performs for others, with potentially immense personal sacrifice: “*if ich come to lyve,*” Horn warns, “*ich schal thee take to wyve*” (564) – he may not survive, after all. The demands of knighthood could potentially cost participants their lives,¹⁶¹ but that is to be expected of such a high calling, and everything else must be subjected to this mission. As Lull says, “a Knight ought more to fear the rebuke of the people and his own dishonor than the perils of death itself.”¹⁶² Horn’s appreciation of this fact, and his refusal to shirk his duty,¹⁶³ once again demonstrates what an excellent example he is of a good knight, and how worthy his character is of emulation.

Another related area where Horn’s exemplary character shines forth is how he endures what all knights must endure: suffering in their task. Kaeuper writes:

At minimum, the quests in even the most pedestrian romances show knights gaining honor through suffering and tough physical exertions....If even third rate

¹⁵⁸ Scott, “Plans, Predictions, and Promises,” 55. Scott is referring to lines 1295-1300, but her statement applies equally well here.

¹⁵⁹ “As the story unfolds and Horn reaches maturity, we see that he is an outstanding knight-lover not only because he responds decisively but also because he acts” (Mary Hynes-Berry, “Cohesion in *King Horn* and *Sir Orfeo*,” *Speculum* 50.4 [1975]: 659).

¹⁶⁰ “The concept of service is...central to knighthood” (Barber, *The Knight and Chivalry*, 22). Interestingly, the English word “knight” is derived “from the Anglo-Saxon *cniht*, a servant” (Ricard Barber, *The Reign of Chivalry* [Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2005], 9).

¹⁶¹ Purdon points out Horn’s “prowess” and “consistent willingness...to fight unto the death” (“Christ the Lover-Knight,” 141).

¹⁶² Lull, *Book of the Order of Chivalry*, 54.

¹⁶³ “The knight must not neglect the duties of his profession” (Jamison, “A Description of the Medieval Romance Based Upon *King Horn*,” 51).

romances show knighthood proved at high personal cost, the most thoughtful and ambitious romances show knighthood truly transformed by hard, noble service.¹⁶⁴

At this point in his life, Horn has been orphaned and robbed of his kingdom. He will soon be falsely accused of seducing Rymenhild, exiled from Westernesse, and endure seven years' separation from Rymenhild. He must battle Saracens invading Ireland, rescue Rymenhild from a forced marriage to Mody, regain Suddene, and again rescue Rymenhild from Fikenhild. There is much "adversity"¹⁶⁵ Horn must suffer and surmount to attain his goals – he must undergo physical trials in battling threats to Christendom and threats to his betrothed, and emotional trials as he endures the shame of his exile, the need to avenge his father, and his separation from Rymenhild.¹⁶⁶ Through the midst of all his sufferings and difficulties, Horn conducts himself with honor and resolve. Each challenge is an opportunity for Horn to demonstrate his courtesy¹⁶⁷ and prowess. As Scott puts it, Horn "subjects himself to physical trials and tribulations, and gradually proves himself worthy to be the suitor of Rymenhild and the king of his native land."¹⁶⁸ The

¹⁶⁴ Kaeuper, *Holy Warriors*, 103. While Horn does not endure the physical harm many knights do (see ch. 6, "The Hero and the Suffering Servant" in Kaeuper), he nevertheless must undergo intense physical combat. The fact that he emerges untouched from them all only magnifies his strength and greatness. "These heroes [Horn and Havelok] do not have any great difficulty winning their battles" (Ramsey, *Chivalric Romances*, 41).

¹⁶⁵ Corrie, "Kings and Kingship," 70. There is in *KH*, like other romances, a "development of the hero's virtue through danger and hardship" (Herzman et al., *Four Romances of England*, 4). See also Gibbs, *Middle English Romances*, 11.

¹⁶⁶ "In *King Horn*...suffering is admitted (separations are painful, as Rymenhild's swooning reminds us)" (Scott, "Plans, Predictions, and Promises," 44).

¹⁶⁷ Purdon notes that Horn's "gentleness and courtesy" are "another aspect of Horn's character that the *Horn*-poet reminds us of frequently" ("Christ the Lover-Knight," 141). See also fn. 26 in his article for citations from *KH* about this quality of Horn.

¹⁶⁸ Scott, "Plans, Predictions, and Promises," 41.

reader's admiration of Horn continues to grow as each test¹⁶⁹ he is faced with, no matter how immense or severe, is triumphantly overcome.¹⁷⁰ In doing so Horn achieves, in L.O. Purdon's words, "the state of moral perfection...as the result of the numerous trials he undergoes."¹⁷¹ Horn does not begin the story completely qualified to be king – he must journey, fight, learn, fail, and succeed in order to become the complete, triumphant hero he is at the conclusion of the story.¹⁷²

"The ultimate vindication of honour," Pitt-Rivers notes, "lies in physical violence."¹⁷³ This is the code Horn lives by, and he will demonstrate this in his first clash with the Saracens. On the day he is knighted, Horn leaves Aylmar's court to prove his honor with the edge of his sword. When he reaches the coast of Westernesse he comes across a ship anchored there "with hethene honde" (602). When Horn asks them what they seek (603-4), one of the Saracens replies, "This lond we wullegh winne / And sle that ther is inne" (607-8). Horn promptly engages them in combat:

The Sarazins he smatte
That his blod hatte;
At evrech dunte
The heved of wente;
Tho gunnes the hundes gone
Abute Horn a lone:
He lokede on the ringe,
And thoghte on Rimenilde;
He slogh ther on haste

¹⁶⁹ KH "shows a king being tested" (Corrie, "Kings and Kingship," 73). In the context Corrie is comparing *Le Roi d'Angleterre* to *Vita Sancti Ethelberti* and *King Horn*, saying that *Le Roi* "shows a king being tested" like *Vita Sancti* and KH.

¹⁷⁰ See Hynes-Berry, "Cohesion in *King Horn* and *Sir Orfeo*," 658.

¹⁷¹ Purdon, "Christ the Lover-Knight," 137.

¹⁷² See Scott, "Plans, Predictions, and Promises," 41-42; Hynes-Berry, "Cohesion in *King Horn* and *Sir Orfeo*," 652-54; Barron, *English Medieval Romance*, 67.

¹⁷³ Pitt-Rivers, "Honour and Social Status," 29; quoted in Strickland, *War and Chivalry*, 100. See also Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence*, 143.

On hundred bi the laste. (611-20)

Horn overpowers superior enemy numbers and slaughters them to the last man. The narrator revels in the bloodbath, describing how “at evrech dunte / The heved of wente” (613-14). When Horn is finished, he takes the leader’s head back on the point of his sword to King Aylmar and recounts his confrontation with the Saracens. He concludes his account with the observation that “nu is thi wile iyolde, / King, that thu me knightly woldest” (647-48). Horn thus “demonstrates his knowledge of knightly, heroic, and feudal codes by performing physical acts of prowess, and by showing allegiance to both kings,”¹⁷⁴ as Scott observes. (The first king he shows allegiance to is Aylmar – the second is Thurston, king of Ireland, who appears later in the narrative). Horn views this defense of Westernesse against Saracen pirates not as something for which he deserves recognition or accolades so much as the repayment of a debt to the king who bestowed knighthood on him. His courage is not so much meritorious as owed, in his eyes. This demonstrates how deeply Horn is aware of the demands of knighthood, and how perfectly he fulfills the expectations of his office. As Saul writes, “a knight who performed brave deeds humbly and without arrogance was a knight who acted chivalrously.”¹⁷⁵ Horn’s honor has been vindicated by the corpses of his fallen foes,¹⁷⁶ and his gracious acknowledgement of Aylmar’s benevolence at knighting him implicitly acknowledges Aylmar’s authority. Thus, Horn’s righteous character is exhibited here both in his

¹⁷⁴ Scott, “Plans, Predictions, and Promises,” 57.

¹⁷⁵ Saul, *Chivalry in Medieval England*, 154. “[A knight’s] Order was founded on justice and humility” (Lull, *Book of the Order of Chivalry*, 38).

¹⁷⁶ It is in the “three fights against pagans in which Horn proves his fitness for his father’s role of defender of faith and nation” (Barron, *English Medieval Romance*, 67).

relationship with Aylmar and his repulsion of the Saracens. Whether the situation is violent or peaceful, slaying invaders or bowing before kings, Horn shows that he is possessed of great courage, wisdom, and honor. In peace and war he can be relied upon to defend what is right – in this case the borders and ruler of Westernesse – virtues essential to a good king and knight.

When Horn comes to Ireland after being unjustly exiled from Westernesse, he again exhibits the service aspect of knighthood. He meets up with King Thurston's sons, Berild and Harild, and Berild insists that "the king thu schalt serve" (782), reflecting a service-oriented understanding of knighthood. When Berild presents Horn to the king, he recommends that Thurston "bitak him thi lond to werie / Ne schal hit noman derie" (791-92). This indicates how the narrator views ideal knighthood – not as an institution that was potentially politically subversive (as it so often was), an institution that fed the ambitions and divisiveness of individuals, but one that was in the service of the king and the protection of Christendom. A strange knight does not pose a threat to Thurston, but rather is naturally integrated into his court, entrusted with the task of defending Ireland. Knighthood is "universal" here – wherever a knight goes, he must be prepared to protect Christians in need and honor the kings who rule over whatever kingdom he finds himself in.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁷ While Johnson is referring to "the fourteenth-century synthesis on noncombatancy" (Johnson, *Just War Tradition*, 144) in the quote here, his words could certainly apply to the late thirteenth-century knight Horn: "The knight owes protection not only to those who render him service or increase his prestige or can return the favor at some future date; he now owes protection to all members of Christendom" (145).

Horn's responsibility toward Ireland becomes real when a giant appears in Thurston's court "iarmed fram paynyme" (809) at Christmas, announcing that Saracens have landed on Ireland's shore and intend to take it. To decide the potential battle, one Saracen will fight against three Christian knights. If the knights prevail, Thurston retains Ireland – if not, it is the Saracens' (811-24). The giant departs, with the time for the duel set at dawn. Thurston decides to appoint Horn, Berild, and Harild. Horn advises against it, however, pointing out that such an arrangement is unbecoming for Christian knights – it violates the rules of chivalry. As a member of the fighting elite who protect Ireland, Horn reserves the right to differ from the king's choices for the duel, citing one of the principles that his chivalric class lived by.

“Sire King, hit nis no righte
 On with thre to fighte:
 Aghen one hunde,
 Thre Cristen men to fonde.
 Sire, I schal alone,
 Withute more ymone,
 With mi swerd wel ethe
 Bringhe hem thre to dethe.” (835-42)

A couple aspects of Horn's character are apparent here. First, Horn firmly abides by the rules of chivalry in regards to combat. For a knight to engage an enemy with an unfair advantage would contradict these rules, which emphasize fairness and honor.¹⁷⁸ As has been seen, however, Horn does *not* give quarter to his Saracen foes once they have been

¹⁷⁸ “The *chansons de geste* and romances....required that opponents be of equal strength and number and fight one against one or against only a few, for by that means a knight could achieve greater glory by overcoming a force larger than his own” (Bradford B. Broughton, *Dictionary of Medieval Knighthood and Chivalry: Concepts and Terms* [New York: Greenwood Press, 1986], 292). See also Ziegler, “Structural Repetition,” 405; Gary Lim, “In the Name of the (Dead) Father: Reading Fathers and Sons in *Havelok the Dane*, *King Horn*, and *Bevis of Hampton*,” *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 110.1 (2011): 29.

defeated. In the chivalric code, showing clemency to defeated foes was admired, however rarely such a principle was observed in actual life.¹⁷⁹ But in this battle and in the final, bloody liberation of Suddene, Horn slaughters the enemy army (and noncombatants) without mercy. It is part of the harsh code of existence in *KH* that Christian and Muslim antagonists both behave without mercy toward each other. Apparently Horn does not regard the Saracen knights as worthy of any special treatment – they are foes who would kill him and his men without mercy given the opportunity, and so he treats them accordingly. The Saracens do not merit the same tolerance a Christian knight potentially would (something that will be discussed further in the next chapter).

Horn's sacrificial, courageous offer stands out in this scene. Horn is not from Ireland. It would be expected that the king's sons would lead the charge in defense of their own country (and indeed they do fight and die in its defense). But Horn selflessly offers his sole services against the Saracens to protect Ireland. While he could very well lose his life, as well as his kingdom and Rymenhild, he does not avoid the task impressed upon him as a knight. His responsibility is not merely to himself, his betrothed, or Suddene, but to Christendom.¹⁸⁰ He must fight not only for narrowly national and personal interests (although he does both),¹⁸¹ but for every Christian kingdom. He could not be a Christian knight and do otherwise. In doing so Horn also demonstrates how equipped he is for kingship. Before Horn installs himself on the throne of Suddene at the

¹⁷⁹ See Strickland, *War and Chivalry*, 153 f.

¹⁸⁰ See fn. 51.

¹⁸¹ "Political interests [in matter of England romances] become universal goods as the hero's impulse toward personal achievements supports a broader, impersonal impulse toward social stability" (Crane, *Insular Romance*, 14; see also 23, 32).

end of the tale, he first ensures that other Christian kingdoms are in proper order. This broader concern for the welfare of other Christian states reflects the perspective of a king, one looking to ensure both the security of his own country and those of his allies around him. Though Horn is only a knight at the moment, he is concerned with more than his own realm – he also defends allies who share a common faith, cause, and threat. This reminds those who would be tempted to abuse their power and pursue their own narrowly personal interests, dividing Christendom,¹⁸² to remember the example of this powerful but generous man. Horn's honorable conduct contrasts with the bad example Lull describes.

The wicked Knight who will not aid his earthly lord and native country against an alien prince is a Knight without a legitimate role. . . . If such a Knight, then, pursues the practice of knighthood while turning away from his lord and refusing to aid him, he and his behavior will be wronging other Knights who fight to the death to preserve justice and to defend their lord.¹⁸³

While Ireland is not Horn's native country, Thurston is (for the time being) his lord, and he defends Ireland as he would his own land, which shows his concern for all Christian kingdoms (not just his own).¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² An all too common problem with knights; see chapter 1 ("The Problem of Public Order and the Knights") in Kaeuper's *Chivalry and Violence*.

¹⁸³ Lull, *Book of the Order of Chivalry*, 29. He writes earlier: "The duty of a Knight is to support and defend his earthly lord, for neither a king nor any high baron has the power to uphold righteousness among his people without aid and help" (26). And: "The knight ought to array himself and present his body before his lord when that lord is in peril, hurt or captured" (70). See also Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence*, 71-72.

¹⁸⁴ "Courage...[and] loyalty....exist as absolutes [in romances], not in significant relationship to any real political situation. This becomes plain when we look at the occasions in romances when such qualities are displayed. The knights reveal them, not in 'their lordes war', not in any realistically motivated political or religious cause, but in *aventure*, knightly adventure" (Gibbs, *Middle English Romances*, 8). In *KH Horn*

In her chapter on *KH* and *Havelok the Dane*, Crane observes (correctly, I think) that “none of their [i.e. matter of England romances] heroes is entirely a representative of his community, bent on winning its survival even at the price of his own life. The English hero is self-interested; his goals are personal, typically involving his protection of feudal rights and the honor of his family.”¹⁸⁵ Perhaps, then, Horn is far less selfless than I have described him above. Horn is undeniably self-interested,¹⁸⁶ and this is a major aspect of his character, but in the narrative he also transcends self-interest to become a guardian of the realms around him.¹⁸⁷ He is, in Scott’s words, “as much a young savior as an heroic knight.”¹⁸⁸ His placing of himself in danger in Ireland bespeaks a sacrificial courage that exceeds his immediate interests, even if the result of his adventure works to his advantage. Horn gives much to others even while he strives to recover what is his own. Recognizing Horn’s determined quest to regain his realm – his self-interest – accentuates his generosity in aiding fellow Christians in their struggles against invading pagans.

The day after the giant’s challenge, Horn duels him and his Saracen guards, the prelude to the carnage that Horn will soon wreak on the Saracen forces. After a request

fights for *aventure* (e.g., in *Westernesse*), but he also fights in his “lordes war.” Both are present in the story. Gibbs also observes that in *KH* “Horn is, in fact, engaged in realistic political activity, however much fantasticated the story is” (29). And while Horn does not fight for a “religious cause,” the restoration of true religion is an integral part of his goal for Suddene (see chapter 3). See also Barron, *English Medieval Romance*, 67; Ziegler, “Structural Repetition,” 405-6.

¹⁸⁵ Crane, *Insular Romance*, 14.

¹⁸⁶ Crane also writes: “Like epics, they [romances] tell the stories of whole careers; but unlike epics, they do not envision their heroes primarily in service to society’s collective need. Instead, romances contemplate the place of private identity in society at large. Their thematizations of stress and harmony between hero and world make this genre an eminently social one which nonetheless proposes that private identity exists somehow above and apart from collective life” (*ibid.*, 11). See also Scott, “Plans, Predictions, and Promises,” 58.

¹⁸⁷ Horn is a “scourge of pagans and protector of other kingdoms” (Barron, *English Medieval Romance*, 67).

¹⁸⁸ Scott, “Plans, Predictions, and Promises,” 51.

for rest from them (which Horn grants), they remark on how “hi nevre nadde / Of knightes dentes so harde / Bote of the King Murry” (869-71). Horn realizes that he is dueling “that driven him of lond / And that his fader slogh” (878-79). He looks at the ring Rymenhild had given him, and promptly “smot him [the giant] thuregh the herte” (883).¹⁸⁹ The rest of the “paens” (885) promptly flee. Horn and the rest of the army pursue and slaughter them before they can reach their ships and escape (889-90). The Saracens are annihilated, and thus Horn avenges his father’s blood on them (891-92). One should note the absolutely unrelenting tone of the battle. There is no hint of the possibility of surrender or clemency, nor are the Saracens given the avenue of retreat. Instead, the Irish knights chase after them to prevent them from reaching their ships and slaughter them to the last man. It is almost as if allowing any Saracen to live would compromise the knights’ mission, which is apparently not just to deflect an attack on Ireland, but to kill as many of their foes as possible and eliminate any future danger. This bloodlust, unrestrained slaughter, and unyielding approach are not exactly in accord with chivalric principles,¹⁹⁰ which valued restraint between knightly combatants; as Matthew Strickland explains, “in a rout most knights would not deliberately slay a noble opponent attempting to escape.”¹⁹¹ Is this behavior by Horn and the Irish – obviously treated as exemplary by the narrator – a violation of the rules of chivalry, or do the rules of chivalry simply fail to apply to the Saracens? It seems most likely that it is the latter – as Lull

¹⁸⁹ In the Harley and Laud MSS it is the giant specifically who confesses to killing Horn’s father (line 917 of Harley and Laud in George McKnight, ed., *King Horn, Floris and Blauncheflur, The Assumption of Our Lady*, o.s. 14 EETS [London: Oxford University Press, 1901, 1962], 39).

¹⁹⁰ See Saul, *Chivalry in Medieval England*, 90.

¹⁹¹ Strickland, *War and Chivalry*, 167.

says, “a Knight ought to destroy and utterly vanquish the enemies of the Cross by the sword; for chivalry exists to maintain justice.”¹⁹² This is an important question for Christian knighthood, and it will be explored further in this chapter when Horn invades Suddene.

Once Horn has returned from Ireland and saved Rymenhild from Mody, he departs to rescue the people of Suddene from pagan oppression, fulfilling his responsibility as a knight of Christ to save Christians from Muslim oppressors.¹⁹³ However, Horn is also planning to complete the task which he inherited from his father: to rule Suddene as its lawful king. Once he has claimed his “baronage” (1294) he will take Rymenhild as his bride – but only then. He must obtain this title and office before he can marry a king’s daughter. Once he does, however, no one may prevent him from doing as he wills – he has pledged himself to Rymenhild, and he will certainly fulfill his promise once he is ready (1299-1300). Horn acknowledges the binding nature of his promise, which reflects his righteous character. As Scott observes, “Horn exemplifies traditional, community values such as honesty and loyalty by honouring his promises.”¹⁹⁴

Once Horn and his Irish army arrive in Suddene, they proceed to unleash their ferocity on the unwitting Saracens, butchering them all in a shocking display of cruelty:

¹⁹² Lull, *Book of the Order of Chivalry*, 65. Similar harsh treatment of defeated invaders has historical precedent in medieval conflicts. For example, in 1124, in anticipation of a coming German invasion, Louis VI’s nobles were instructed to “attack, overthrow and slaughter them [the invading Germans] without mercy as if they had been Saracens” (Strickland, *War and Chivalry*, 165, quoting Abbott Suger, *Vita Ludovici grossi regis*, ed. H. Waquet [Paris, 1929], 222; trans. R. Cusimano and J. Moorehead, *Suger, The Deeds of Lewis the Fat* [Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1992], 129) – implying that Saracens were treated more harshly than Christian combatants. Invaders were to expect similar treatment (see Strickland, *ibid.*).

¹⁹³ See Kaeuper, *Holy Warriors*, 71.

¹⁹⁴ Scott, “Plans, Predictions, and Promises,” 58.

Hi sloghen and fughten
 The night and the ughten.
 The Sarazins cunde
 Ne lefde ther non in th'ende. (1389-92)

Horn responds to the Saracens' presence just as the Saracens acted when they landed on those shores years before: with unrelenting brutality. No one is spared, no one is warned, no quarter is given, no mercy is shown to any Saracen inhabitants – the Harley manuscript of *KH* adds that Horn and his men “mid speres ord hue stonge / þe olde ant eke þe 3onge” (1479-80 of Harley).¹⁹⁵ A broadly shared view in medieval thinking on war was that, as Saul explains, “if non-combatants supported their lord, then they were guilty of sharing in his wrong and were themselves open to punishment.”¹⁹⁶ Horn is also forever removing any hint of threat from the Saracens by annihilating every last one of them. Horn's tactics here seem strangely dissonant with the principles of chivalry (although unfortunately not so much the practice¹⁹⁷): as Lull writes, “to do wrong and violate the rights of women, of widows who need help, or of orphans who need custody – or to rob and destroy weak men who lack strength, and to take away that which belongs to them – these things may not possibly accord with the laws of chivalry.”¹⁹⁸ In other words, knights should not harm those who are defenseless, although Horn does exactly that to the Saracen populace. But this is not (in the medieval Christian understanding) a problem at all for the rules of chivalry, as will be discussed further below.

¹⁹⁵ See the corresponding lines in McKnight, *King Horn*, 62.

¹⁹⁶ Saul, *Chivalry in Medieval England*, 150.

¹⁹⁷ “Chivalry, while moderating some of the worst excesses of war, was an ethic which chiefly benefited the chivalric class itself” (ibid.). See also Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence*, 185; Kaeuper, *Holy Warriors*, 6. “The predictions and fulfillments concerning Horn's vengeance against the pagans emphasize most forcefully, perhaps, this exemplary quality of Horn's character” (Scott, “Plans, Predictions, and Promises,” 50). Horn's bloody revenge is honored, not condemned, in the story.

¹⁹⁸ Lull, *Book of the Order of Chivalry*, 35.

Horn is a character to admire and imitate in every way, from the narrator's perspective. His righteous character is exemplified in love and war. Yet Horn is also something of an anomaly to modern readers. Here is a man who studiously abides by the rules of chivalry in every aspect of his life – his courtship with Rymenhild, his respect of Christian kings, his refusal to unfairly duel enemy knights (risking his own life in doing so) – yet also fights in the heat of battle in a completely unsparing fashion. Horn yields nothing to Saracen soldiers, even cutting them off from the escape they seek in order to slay every single one. Knights are expected to only fight enemy soldiers, but Horn spills the blood of young and old in Suddene when he retakes it. Horn's actions are not criticized in the narrative, though – rather, they are celebrated.

These actions appear to clash with the norms of chivalry, which raises a question. How does one justify a Christian man so eagerly and so ruthlessly shedding blood? Even King David in the Old Testament (who had fought divinely sanctioned wars) was forbidden to build God's temple because of how much blood he had shed (1 Chronicles 22.7-8). In the New Testament Christians are exhorted to not seek personal vengeance (Romans 12.18-21). Horn is certainly a far cry from this ideal, and any kind of soul searching about the scale and frequency of Horn's brutality is entirely absent. This had not always been the case in church history. Christianity traditionally had a deep discomfort with violence, but it also accepted certain justifications for Christians deploying violence against evildoers – and some of these justifications appear in *KH*.

But as will be seen, Horn's actions go far beyond traditional justifications for war in Christian circles. He pursues violence with a zeal and abandon foreign to the traditional Christian understanding of war. This knight wages war with the blessing of God,¹⁹⁹ especially in the unrelenting manner in which he conducts it. As Lull writes, "the duty of a Knight is to support and defend the Holy Catholic Faith."²⁰⁰ In this he embodies something that had been practiced in Christendom for nearly two centuries – holy war, the pinnacle of which was the crusades. In fact, Horn's chivalrous exploits contain overtones of holy war because of the linkage of chivalry and holy war in English politics and culture at that time. As Saul explains:

The Church's involvement in chivalrous society accordingly had its roots in a view of war as justifiable if waged to uphold right or avenge injury. When knights were engaged in arms in a just cause, the use of violence was considered right and legitimate. In the early Middle Ages the Church had directed its endeavors to curbing the unruliness of those in the knightly class who were held to be bringing dishonour on their order. In the late Middle Ages, when strong national monarchies were emerging and the Church was validating national wars as just, there was a growing identification of clerical, and so religious, interests with those of the state. The English state itself took on a semi-religious guise, appropriating the idea of holy war and encouraging a view of the English as a chosen people fulfilling an appointed mission. By the fourteenth century England had

¹⁹⁹ See Kaeuper, *Holy Warriors*, 144.

²⁰⁰ Lull, *Book of the Order of Chivalry*, 21.

become a land sanctified, with a chivalric class fighting in a divine cause under divine protection.²⁰¹

Thus, in English culture, chivalry was bound up with holy war. The practices and perspectives of holy war affected the English chivalric ethos, which means that the bloody clashes Horn engages in with the Saracens – clashes that in their nature and motivation would be unlawful according to just war principles – are animated both by the prowess code of chivalry and the merciless practices of holy war. If Horn's deeds seem to align uneasily with chivalric principles, it should be kept in mind that these same chivalric principles were also intertwined with holy war thought, and thus must be interpreted through that lens.

Horn's unsparing brutality toward his enemies cannot be fully understood until the ideology of holy war – fighting “in a divine cause under divine protection” against a foe that is purely evil – underlying his warfare is uncovered. But recognizing the presence of chivalry in Horn's conflicts reveals much about the thirst for blood and combat that animates Horn. It is the law of his profession; it is his life calling. Holy warriors are invariably knights, because they alone, besides the king, are qualified to meet the foes of the faith in the field of battle. A knight must abide by a strict code of

²⁰¹ Saul, *Chivalry in Medieval England*, 218. See also Siobhain Bly Calkin, *Saracens and the Making of English Identity: The Auchinlek Manuscript* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 10; Geraldine Heng, *Empire of Magic: Medieval Romance and Politics of Cultural Fantasy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 72 (quoted in Calkin, *Saracens*, 10). Thomas J. Garbáty writes: “*Havelok the Dane* and *King Horn* are very early; the latter (c. 1250) even contains many Old English elements. That the oldest romances in England play up native heroes must speak for the nationalistic interest of those first nobles to accept the English language as their own” (*Medieval English Literature* [Lexington: D.C. Heath and Company, 1984], 26). While the audience may not have been nobles, the poem has nationalistic overtones, since (as Garbáty notes) it celebrates a distinctly English hero. See also Timothy O'Brien, “Word Play in the Allegory of *King Horn*,” *Allegorica* 7 (1982): 117-18.

conduct because of the sacred trust given to him – to defend his lord, his lady, and his land from unholy marauders like the Saracens. When a knight like Horn conducts himself properly in private and public, in personal relationships, political relationships, and matters of war, he represents all that knighthood is meant to be. Horn fights for “a land sanctified” (to quote Saul), and thus he himself possesses the sanctity expected of his office.

Chapter 3: Saracens, Crusades, and Genocide: Holy War in *King Horn*

While the type of warfare in *KH* is influenced by just war thought and chivalry, it is certainly not the restrained war that just war thinkers had promoted and which chivalry admired. Rather, Horn's conduct against the Muslim antagonists in the story fits solidly into the tradition of *holy war*, whose standards and expectations for Christian conduct in war were quite different than the standards of Augustine and other thinkers in the just war tradition. As James Turner Johnson explains: "The creation of an explicit category of just war unique to the Church pointed in a fundamentally opposite direction from the main course of Christian just war doctrine from Augustine on: permission with limitation."²⁰² This new category of war had little interest in significant limitations on its practitioners – it is actually meritorious,²⁰³ and hence it behooves Christians to participate in it wholeheartedly. This chapter will examine how Horn's behavior in battle mirrors historical events in the history of Christian holy war, and how expectations of a Christian knight fighting against the infidel are exemplified by Horn. Horn's behavior seems to clash with principles of just war and chivalry, yet it is viewed entirely positively in the narrative. The analysis below will show how Horn's brutality against the Saracens fits naturally into the medieval Christian perspective on war against infidels. I will begin with

²⁰² James Turner Johnson, *Just War Tradition and the Restraint of War: A Moral and Historical Inquiry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 168.

²⁰³ "In this one case Christians were not only commanded to fight; they received an advance remission of temporal punishment for their sins" (ibid.).

a brief background to medieval holy war, and then an examination of how this phenomenon is realized in the text of *KH*.

“The Christian glories in the death of the pagan, because Christ is glorified,”²⁰⁴ wrote Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) in his *In Praise of the New Knighthood*, a work celebrating the Knights Templar. The Templars were a newly founded military order that took monastic vows of poverty and celibacy, but fought to protect Christian pilgrims in the Holy Land. Statements like this lack Augustine’s restraint when discussing the problems of war. Bernard endorses killing the infidel as “the avenger of Christ towards evildoers” and “a defender of the Christians.”²⁰⁵ When in battle these *milites Christi* (soldiers of Christ) “fall violently upon the foe, regarding them as so many sheep.”²⁰⁶ The knight, commencing battle, “sets aside his previous gentleness, as if to say, ‘Do I not hate those who hate you, O Lord; am I not disgusted with your enemies?’”²⁰⁷ These descriptions aptly apply to Horn – he strives zealously for his cause, at one point fighting so furiously “that his blod hatte” (612).²⁰⁸

²⁰⁴ Bernard of Clairvaux, *In Praise of the New Knighthood*, trans. Conrad Greenia, in *The Works of Bernard of Clairvaux*, vol. 7 (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, Inc., 1977), 134.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 140.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., citing Psalm 139.21.

²⁰⁸ Although Bernard proscribes revenge (ibid., 131), Horn, interestingly, openly fights for revenge: *KH* “stresses the rewards of Christian vengeance” (Anne Scott, “Plans, Predictions, and Promises: Traditional Story Techniques and the Configuration of Word and Deed in *King Horn*,” in Derek Brewer, ed., *Studies in Medieval English Romances: Some New Approaches* [Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1988], 44). Thus, Horn’s behavior is not exactly in line with the ideal of holy war, at least according to Bernard. For discussion on Horn’s motive of revenge, see the sections on *KH* in Gary Lim, “In the Name of the (Dead) Father: Reading Fathers and Sons in *Havelok the Dane*, *King Horn*, and *Bevis of Hampton*,” *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 110.1 (2011): 22-52.

Bernard's tone and prescriptions for holy war clearly differ dramatically from Augustine. How did theologians progress from a cautious, qualified doctrine of war to this ardent endorsement of holy warfare in Jesus' name? While, as has been seen, the doctrine of war was thoroughly discussed in Christian theology by this point, the concept of holy war – a war fought for specifically Christian purposes – is somewhat different from just war. But it is important to note that for Christians a holy war was always just, and in the case of the crusades, fulfilled the criteria for a just war, as least according to many Christians in Western Europe.²⁰⁹ Horn's invasion of Suddene, too, is carried out by a proper leader, to reclaim stolen property, and to rescue the oppressed, all of which are aspects of a just war.

An example of this mentality can be found in Humbert of Romans' 1272 treatise answering objections to the crusades. He writes that "the lands the Saracens now hold were in the hands of Christians before the time of Muhammad; they seized the opportunity of taking them away from the Christians, and they never had a just cause to occupy them. So when Christians invade the lands in which they live, they are not invading other people's territory but rather intending to regain their own."²¹⁰ Clearly he sees the crusaders' campaigns as intended to regain stolen property and avenge injuries, which were acknowledged just causes for war since Augustine. For Humbert, fighting the Saracens was also just as much defensive as offensive – if Christians did not invade

²⁰⁹ Gregory M. Reichberg, Henrik Syse, and Endre Begby, eds., *The Ethics of War: Classic and Contemporary Readings* (Malden: Blackwell, 2006), 99-100; see also James Turner Johnson, *The Holy War Idea in Western and Islamic Traditions* (University Park: Pennsylvania University Press, 1997), 42-46, 50-51.

²¹⁰ Humbert of Romans, "Objections to Crusades Answered," *Christian History* 12.4 (1993): 20. 2 pages. Trans. Louise and Jonathan Riley-Smith. Accessed 6/28/12. <http://goo.gl/CxQf5> I used Google's URL shortener for web links in this thesis (<http://goo.gl/>)

Saracen territories, “the Saracens would already have overwhelmed almost the whole of Christendom.”²¹¹ Since, as Brundage explains, Muslims “were already persecuting Christians and driving them from their homes,”²¹² they needed to be resisted, according to medieval apologists.²¹³

Still, this is not the same thing as “advocating the sanctification of war,”²¹⁴ as Thomas Asbridge puts it. Holy war has some of its own distinctives. Johnson defines some of these:

...the war [must] have a transcendent authority, either given directly from God or mediated through the religious institution in some way; that the war have a purpose directly associated with religion, either its defense or its propagation or the establishment of a social order in accord with religious requirements; and that the war be waged by people who are in some sense set apart, whether cultically or

²¹¹ Ibid. See also Philippe Contamine, *War in the Middle Ages*, trans. Michael Jones (Malden: Blackwell, 1984, 1986), 279.

²¹² James A. Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law and the Crusader* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 21. He also notes that “a defensive war against attacking Saracens would, of course, constitute a just war if it were lawfully proclaimed, and under such circumstances a pope might consider it his duty as protector of his flock to authorize the use of force to protect them from attack” (ibid.). See also Innocent IV’s discussion of how the infidels “illegally possess” the Holy Land, since it was “conquered in a just war by the Roman emperor after the death of Christ,” and the pope has “obtained” the Roman Empire; additionally, the pope “may command the infidels to admit preachers of the Gospel to the lands under their jurisdiction” (Innocent IV, “On Vows and the Fulfilling of Vows,” in Reichberg et al., *Ethics*, 153, 154; trans. Robert Andrews and Peter Haggemacher).

²¹³ “I do not mean to say that the pagans are to be slaughtered when there is any other way to prevent them from harassing and persecuting the faithful, but only that it now seems better to destroy them than that the rod of sinners be lifted over the lot of the just, and the righteous perhaps put forth their hands unto iniquity” (Bernard of Clairvaux, *In Praise of the New Knighthood*, 135). Bernard sees the crusades as an unavoidable necessity.

²¹⁴ Thomas Asbridge, *The Crusades: The Authoritative History of the War for the Holy Land* (New York: HarperCollins, 2010), 15.

morally or simply by membership in the religious community, from those against whom the war is waged.²¹⁵

The war to reclaim Suddene fits all of these criteria: it has an authority “given directly from God” in King Horn and it does “have a purpose directly associated with religion,” i.e. the eviction of pagan rule and the restoration of the symbols and practice of true religion. The soldiers with him are also “in some sense set apart...from those against whom the war is waged” as participants in “the religious community” of Christendom. Clearly the holy war concept has a significant presence in *KH*. The story is further indebted to the ultimate holy war, the crusades – for the goal of the First Crusade was to be, as Reichberg et al. describe, a “defensive, humanitarian mission to help fellow Christians threatened with death and destruction,”²¹⁶ which the Christians of Suddene are. Horn’s return, as L.O. Purdon observes, “free[s] the Christians of Suddene who have been forced against their will to worship the fiend,” and his defeat of the Saracens “is presented as the freeing of Satan’s captives.”²¹⁷ The linking of Horn’s enemies with Satan puts them beyond the pale of mercy or reasoning – they are to be crushed, not parleyed with.

²¹⁵ Johnson, *Holy War Idea*, 45. It is important to note that the crusades were formally under the jurisdiction of the papacy, not secular rulers (see Tomaž Mastnak, *Crusading Peace: Christendom, the Muslim World, and Western Political Order* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002], 136-152; the exception being the excommunicated Frederick II’s crusade, discussed by Mastnak, pp. 148 ff.). However, this does not mean a prince could not lead a holy war – the revered Charlemagne had led campaigns with religious overtones (ibid., 69, 72), even if they were merely secular conflicts (67-73; they “do not seem to have had much in common with the crusades” [72]). In any case, the prince had a duty to shield true religion, and thus any conflict against those who opposed the faith would be a kind of holy war. See Johnson, *Holy War*, 56, and Johnson, *Just War Tradition*, 156.

²¹⁶ Reichberg et al., *Ethics*, 100.

²¹⁷ L.O. Purdon, “King Horn and the Medieval Trope of Christ the Lover-Knight,” *Proceedings of the PMR Conference at Villanova* 10 (1985): 142.

Furthermore, Horn as a king is uniquely qualified to carry out the defense of Christendom. Since, as Johnson writes, “retaking something wrongly taken was assimilated into defense of religion and punishment of wrong religious belief and/or practice,”²¹⁸ and since the king was given the right to rule by God,²¹⁹ then “the prince was expected to know God’s will as expressed in the natural order, to defend against violations of that order, and to punish such violations.”²²⁰ The “defense of religion” is connected to Horn’s retaking his stolen lands, and the destruction of Islam in his country is restoring the proper or “natural order” that was supposed to exist in a member of Christendom. Horn, as the rightful heir of Suddene, is fulfilling one of his duties as its monarch (though deposed) by liberating the people from Muslim dominance.²²¹ Religion is not the only reason Horn fights, but it is part and parcel of his goal for Suddene,²²² and it is supposed to be a significant concern of any Christian king.

Since holy war is not identical to just war, how did it emerge historically as a full-fledged theological concept that imports so many novelties into revered just war principles? As Asbridge notes, “the chasm separating these two forms of violence was only bridged after centuries of sporadic and incremental theological experimentation.”²²³

²¹⁸ Johnson, *Holy War*, 54.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Ibid. These ideas about the king’s responsibilities were derived from certain interpretations of Augustine’s *City of God*, specifically his advocacy of forcibly returning the heretical Donatists to the fold (ibid., 54-56). Augustine himself had recommended that the Roman government use force against the heretical Donatists (ibid., 56).

²²¹ Johnson writes: “In medieval theory the prince was conceived as having an obligation to act in defense of religion whenever his own judgment or that of church authorities told him that true religion was threatened, whether by ungodly behavior or deviant doctrine” (*Holy War*, 56).

²²² Horn “wants to restore his country to Christianity and himself to his proper rank” (Mary Hynes-Berry, “Cohesion in *King Horn* and *Sir Orfeo*,” *Speculum* 50.4 [1975]: 657).

²²³ Asbridge, *Crusades*, 15.

To understand this progression, one must dig into the story of Western Europe's Christianization, and Christianity's adjustment to the political and cultural ethos of the peoples who adopted it. "By the eighth century," writes Christopher Tyerman, "the ruling aristocracies of kingdoms in Italy, Gaul, Spain and the eastern British Isles had almost universally adopted orthodox Roman Christianity without radically altering their social assumptions and belief systems"²²⁴ about the glory of war. War, for the Germanic tribes before their conversion, was interwoven into their religious beliefs – they bore deities like bears and bulls, gods of war, into battle,²²⁵ and as Tyerman says, they "in one sense worshipped war."²²⁶ When, in the aftermath of the fall of Rome, barbarian kings converted, they retained their old views about the grandeur of war.²²⁷

The Church, which ministered to and was protected by these men, began to endorse kings' and warriors' campaigns in a variety of ways: for example, Pope Leo III crowned Emperor Charlemagne, who fought wars against unbelievers and imposed Christianity on them.²²⁸ Clergy would bless soldiers' swords and armor,²²⁹ and warrior saints like St. Oswald were memorialized.²³⁰ One sword-blessing ceremony asks God to "bless with the hand of Your majesty this sword" which will be used to "defend and protect churches, widows and orphans and all the servants of God against the cruelty of

²²⁴ Christopher Tyerman, *God's War: A New History of the Crusades* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2006), 35.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Peter Partner, *God of Battles: Holy Wars of Christianity and Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 63.

²²⁷ Asbridge, *Crusades*, 15.

²²⁸ Partner, *God of Battles*, 64.

²²⁹ Ibid.; Asbridge, *Crusades*, 15.

²³⁰ Tyerman, *God's War*, 36, 40-42; Asbridge, *Crusades*, 15.

the pagans.”²³¹ Another prayer for a knight reads, “grant that thy servant may use this sword...to repel the hosts who besiege God’s church.”²³² With increasing Muslim and Viking threats to Western Europe and the British Isles during the ninth century, warriors who defended the church against pagans were praised,²³³ even getting promises of salvation and indulgences from popes.²³⁴ Pope Leo IV (847-55), for example, according to Brundage “made a vital link between the act of fighting against the infidel in defence of the faith and the prospect of salvation”²³⁵ when he said that those who fell fighting Muslims “would find a reward laid up for them in heaven.”²³⁶

One can see in light of this how Horn, a man whose position as king and knight involves considerable bloodshed, can be lionized as he is. Protecting true religion, keeping order, and enforcing justice were some of a monarch’s responsibilities, and Horn fulfills all these requirements by forcibly reinstating himself on the throne which is his by right.²³⁷ Furthermore, as Nigel Saul points out, weak monarchs led the Church to increasingly turn to knights for protection and to keep the peace, which played an

²³¹ Contamine, *War in the Middle Ages*, 277.

²³² Richard Barber, *The Reign of Chivalry* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2005), 96.

²³³ Jean Flori, “Holy War,” in Alan V. Murray, ed., *The Crusades: An Encyclopedia*, vol. 4 (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006), 595. OhioLINK e-book. Accessed 6/29/12. <http://goo.gl/bGrNu>

²³⁴ Tyerman, *God’s War*, 38. While Tyerman describes John VIII (872-82) as offering “penitential indulgences,” Brundage disagrees with applying that term, saying it was a “general absolution, not an indulgence” (*Medieval Canon Law*, 23).

²³⁵ Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law*, 22.

²³⁶ Ibid. Brundage cautions that “the promise of eternal life...was certainly neither a proclamation of doctrine nor a remission either of sins or of the penalties of sin” (ibid.).

²³⁷ Lee C. Ramsey notes that “royal obligations” that can be seen in *Havelok the Dane* are “duty to the church and duty to aid the weak and needy, [which] are likewise commonplaces of medieval political thought” (*Chivalric Romances: Popular Literature in Medieval England* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983], 31). These can be seen in *KH* as well. Romances like *KH* and *Havelok* “[offer] assurances that the [royal] power is strong and good and divinely ordained” (ibid., 43).

important role in the sanctification of war – knights being warriors by definition.²³⁸ Horn, of course, is the antithesis of a weak monarch, and hence ideal.²³⁹ His additional role as a knight further enhances his credentials as a warrior fighting with the Church's blessing.

The progression to holy war in the medieval church sped up in the 11th century. The idea was fueled by the continuing militarization of the papacy (which increased greatly in the 10th century)²⁴⁰ as it sought to enforce its bold new claims to spiritual *and* temporal authority.²⁴¹ Spiritual benefits were granted to warriors fighting for the church. At first, these conflicts were confined primarily to Western Europe as popes dueled with their political foes. Gregory VII, however, expanded the vision of holy warriors, who were to be, as Tyerman puts it, “penitential, justified by legitimate rights, loyalty to a lord, protection of the vulnerable or defence of the church,”²⁴² and whose energies were channeled toward the primary foe: Islam. Gregory actually proposed heading an army to aid the Byzantine Christians against the Turks, and eventually to make their way to Jerusalem,²⁴³ saying that Christians were “daily being butchered like herds of cattle,”²⁴⁴ and “cry out in vain under the repeated assaults of the Saracens.”²⁴⁵ As is well known, Urban II used statements like this, and the promise of remission of sins,²⁴⁶ to start the

²³⁸ Nigel Saul, *Chivalry in Medieval England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 198-200.

²³⁹ The “central theme” of the story is “the glorification of the hero and the description of a perfect prince” (Dieter Mehl, *The Middle English Romances of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* [New York: Barnes & Noble, 1969], 51).

²⁴⁰ Partner, *God of Battles*, 65.

²⁴¹ Asbridge, *Crusades*, 16; Tyerman, *God's War*, 46-47.

²⁴² Tyerman, *God's War*, 47. Part of holy war is “protecting [God's rule] where it exists” (Johnson, *Holy War*, 131).

²⁴³ Tyerman, *God's War*, 49.

²⁴⁴ Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law*, 27.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 26.

²⁴⁶ Tyerman, *God's War*, 71-72.

First Crusade. With the advent of the crusades, Brundage writes, “laymen might fight in a holy war, not only licitly, but even with reasonable expectation that their labors would be blessed”²⁴⁷ – hardly how Augustine understood Christian participation in war. Because it was in the service of the church, this was not standard warfare which required penance and was morally dubious.²⁴⁸ This was for the defense of God’s people, and bore spiritual rewards for the soldiers.²⁴⁹

Horn takes on the mantel of holy warrior naturally in the story. When a band of Saracens land in Westernesse and threaten that “this lond we wullegh winne / And sle that ther is inne” (607-8), Horn responds in kind:

The Sarazins he smatte
 That his blod hatte;
 At evrech dunte
 The heved of wente;
He slogh ther on haste
 On hundred bi the laste
 Ne mighte noman telle
 That folc he gan quelle. (611-14, 619-22)

Afterwards Horn brings the leader’s head back to Aylmar, mounted on the point of his sword (625-46). Later in the narrative, when Horn has slain the giant who killed his father, he attacks the Saracen army:

Horn and his compaynye
 Gunne after hem wel swithe highe

²⁴⁷ Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law*, 28.

²⁴⁸ Remarkably, though the Norman invaders fought under a papal banner, they still had to perform penance for the killing in battle (Partner, *God of Battles*, 67).

²⁴⁹ Brundage, *Canon Law*, 28. See also David S. Bachrach, “Conforming with the Rhetorical Tradition of Plausibility: Clerical Representation of Battlefield Orations against Muslims, 1080-1170,” *The International History Review* 26.1 (2004): 1-19.

And sloghen alle the hundes
 Er hi here schipes funde.
 To dethe he hem alle broghte. (887-91)

This is not simply self-defense – Thomas Aquinas stipulated that a person must “repel force with moderation.”²⁵⁰ Yet Horn and his fellow warriors kill as many Saracens as possible while they are retreating – the goal appears to be to inflict as many casualties as they can. This type of warfare is quite remote from the controlled method of just war; it is, rather, an attempt to massacre the enemy. To not do so would mean being massacred in turn. Augustine’s ethic of love, which fosters restraint, is dispensed with in the atmosphere of holy war; as Tomaž Mastnak puts it, “that view [the Augustinian principle of love] was now obliterated. Augustinian love for one’s enemies might have tempered the violence.”²⁵¹ But, as he notes, “no love was shown, nor was required to be shown, to non-Christians.”²⁵² Horn’s blood burns with antagonism toward the Saracens, and his hatred is entirely acceptable to the narrator.

Already, recognizable differences are emerging between just war and this conflict portrayed between Horn and the Muslim villains. No quarter is given between the two sides in the course of the narrative, and the conflict between Christians and the Saracens reaches its pinnacle in the final battle to reclaim Suddene from Muslim rule. When Horn and his Irish army arrive in Suddene and find Athulf’s father, he tells them how he longs for Horn to come and “bringe hem [the Saracens] of live” (1348). When Horn’s identity is revealed, Athulf’s father asks him, “wulle ye this lond winne / And sle that ther is

²⁵⁰ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (II-II, Q. 64, Art. 7), cited in Margaret Adlum Gist, *Love and War in the Middle English Romances* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1947), 142.

²⁵¹ Mastnak, *Crusading Peace*, 126.

²⁵² *Ibid.*

inne?” (1371-72). Conquest means that extermination is inevitable – in order to restore political order and religious purity, a purging of the contaminating element must take place. When the crusaders captured Jerusalem, one of their goals was, as Penny Cole writes, to “cleanse the city through the force of arms and the extermination of the infidel Muslim polluters.”²⁵³ The same is seen here in *KH*, when Horn answers:

“We schulle the hundes teche
To speken ure speche.
Alle we hem schulle sle,
And al quic hem fle.” (1381-84)

This ominous threat is fulfilled after Horn blows his horn to summon the soldiers to his banner:

Hi sloghen and fughten
The night and the ughten.
The Sarazins cunde
Ne lefde ther non in th’ende. (1389-92)

The Saracens, including noncombatants, are slain indiscriminately. The editors of *KH* note that the description “ne lefde ther non in th’ende” is “a touch of realism...since after foreign invasions, the countryside is left desolate; the native people are left to starve.”²⁵⁴ Thus killing, pillaging, and ravaging of the surrounding areas all accompany the reclaiming of Horn’s kingdom. The Harley manuscript specifies that Horn and his men “mid speres ord hue stonge / þe olde ant eke þe 3onge” (1479-80 of Harley)²⁵⁵ – no

²⁵³ Penny J. Cole, “Christians, Muslims, and the ‘Liberation’ of the Holy Land,” *The Catholic Historical Review* 84.1 (1998): 4. See also Mastnak, *Crusading Peace*, 127-29.

²⁵⁴ Ronald B. Herzman, Graham Drake, and Eve Salisbury, eds., *Four Romances of England: King Horn, Havelok the Dane, Bevis of Hampton, Athelston*, TEAMS Middle English Text Series (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1999), 70.

²⁵⁵ See the corresponding lines in George McKnight, ed., *King Horn, Floris and Blancheflur, The Assumption of Our Lady*, o.s. 14 EETS (London: Oxford University Press, 1901, 1962), 62.

Saracen is spared in the cleansing of Suddene. The intemperance and vindictiveness of these actions clashes with the ideal of restraint in just war thought.

Such rhetoric about fighting pagans has deep historical roots, finding its most shocking expression in the conquest of Jerusalem in 1099. When the crusaders broke through into Jerusalem they set about indiscriminately slaughtering the inhabitants. In medieval siege warfare, “the besieged could make terms at any point until the actual storming of the walls,” Richard Barber explains, but if they refused, “the town lay at the besiegers’ mercy....Plunder and slaughter might be carried out in cold blood.”²⁵⁶ When the battle was against Muslims and not fellow Christians, a ferocious response was to be expected. As one crusader described it:

Some of the pagans were mercifully beheaded, others pierced by arrows plunged from towers, and yet others, tortured for a long time, were burned to death in searing flames. Piles of heads, hands and feet lay in the houses and streets, and men and knights were running to and fro over corpses.²⁵⁷

In Fulcher of Chartres’ (1059-1127) account, he writes how “your feet would have been stained up to the ankles in the blood of the slain....Not one of them was allowed to live. They did not spare the women and children.”²⁵⁸ After a group of Saracens taking shelter in Solomon’s temple were defeated, “our men seized many men and women in the temple, killing them or keeping them alive as they saw fit.”²⁵⁹ Jews did not escape either

²⁵⁶ Richard Barber, *The Knight and Chivalry*, rev. ed. (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1995), 239.

²⁵⁷ Asbridge, *Crusades*, 101.

²⁵⁸ E.K. Milliken, *Chivalry in the Middle Ages* (London: Macmillan, 1968), 10.

²⁵⁹ From the anonymous *Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hierosolimitanorum* (1101), in Reichberg et al., *Ethics*, 103. Originally published in R.G.D. Laffan ed., trans., *Select Documents of European History*, vol. 1: 800-1492 (New York: Henry Holt, 1929).

– they were “burnt inside their synagogue.”²⁶⁰ The crusaders entered Jerusalem on July 15; on July 18 Muslims were compelled to pile the carcasses of the slain and burn them, afterwards being killed themselves.²⁶¹

While there was hyperbole involved in describing the massacre – there were survivors and prisoners²⁶² – it nevertheless was a mass murder against defeated Muslims. This incident and others like it, which met with approval by Christian chroniclers, ensured that a reader or listener²⁶³ of *KH* nearly two hundred years later who had some familiarity with crusading history would not find Horn’s slaughter so much shocking as simply expected. When the narrator tells how “hi sloghen and fughten, / The night and the ughten” (1389-90), and “ne lefde ther non in th’ende” (1392), it carries overtones of crusading carnage. While the capture of Jerusalem or a particular crusade did not directly impact *KH*, the legacy of ruthless violence towards Muslims bequeathed by the crusades lives on in this text. Similar conduct was celebrated by the twelfth-century poet Ambroise, in his *The Crusade of Richard Lion-Heart*, describing a battle Richard is involved in against the Muslims. As can be seen, the language used in *KH* evokes other literary²⁶⁴ and historical parallels to battles with Muslims.

And then he charged into the troop
Of hostile Saracens to pierce
Them with an impetus so fierce

²⁶⁰ Tyerman, *God’s War*, 157-58.

²⁶¹ Ibid, 158.

²⁶² Cole, “‘Liberation’ of the Holy Land,” 3; Asbridge, *Crusades*, 102.

²⁶³ Medieval romances like *KH* were sometimes read silently, sometimes aloud to a gathering (Andrew Taylor, “Fragmentation, Corruption, and Minstrel Narration: The Question of the Middle English Romance,” *The Yearbook in English Studies* 22 [1992]: 42, 43).

²⁶⁴ See Mark Skidmore, *The Moral Traits of Christian and Saracen as Portrayed by the Chansons de Geste* (Colorado Springs: Colorado College Publications, 1935), 125, where he describes how the ideal Christian warrior in a *chanson de geste* should fight Muslims (in a manner that clearly parallels *KH*).

That if a thunderbolt had driven
 Clear through them it could not have riven
 Them more. He cut and smote and smashed
 Through them, then turned about and slashed
 And sheared off arm and hand and head.
 Like animals they turned and fled.²⁶⁵

Can this be described as proper conduct for Christians in warfare? Restraints imposed on Christians fighting Christians were simply not applied to pagans,²⁶⁶ and the silence of the Church on this matter contrasts with deeds done in battle by Christian soldiers. Though theoretically a knight should keep his emotions under control in battle, and never kill those unable to retaliate (women, children, the elderly),²⁶⁷ such ideals were only discussed in the context of Christian warfare.²⁶⁸ The Church did not intend to regulate soldiers' behavior against enemies who were already thoroughly dehumanized in Christian discourse.²⁶⁹ As Mastnak explains, "ideally, Christian holy war was genocidal, the ultimate victory in that war was genocide, and the peace achieved was the peace of the cemetery."²⁷⁰ Those outside the Church's fold "were regarded as outside the law and without rights because they did not have faith (that is, because they were not of the Christian faith)."²⁷¹ Christians had, furthermore, mostly given up on the possibility of

²⁶⁵ Ambroise, *The Crusade of Richard Lion-Heart*, ed. J.M. Hubert and J.L. La Monte (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941), 289 (lines 7352-60). Quoted in Saul, *Chivalry in Medieval England*, 180.

²⁶⁶ Reichberg et al., *Ethics*, 224.

²⁶⁷ Johnson, *Just War Tradition*, 135-36.

²⁶⁸ As noted in Johnson, *Holy War*, 102-12. See also Johnson, *Just War Tradition*, 169.

²⁶⁹ See *ibid.*, 106; Johnson discusses how efforts by the Church like the Peace of God turned the focus of Christian violence outward towards unbelievers (106-7; as does Mastnak, *Crusading Peace*, chapter 1); Reichberg et al., *Ethics*, 94.

²⁷⁰ Mastnak, *Crusading Peace*, 126-27.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 125. "It is significant that medieval Christians did not apply to infidels or heretics the provisions they arrived at for limiting war within their own culture: this underscores the ideological roots to which medieval just war doctrine was firmly attached" (Johnson, *Just War Tradition*, 149).

Muslim conversion a long time ago by the time of *KH*'s composition – so that was not a realistic option for Muslim enemies.²⁷²

But medieval Christians had to be acculturated to the scale and harshness of this type of violence. To understand how Horn can be celebrated as he is in *KH*, one must understand how the romance portrays the villainous Saracens, and the historical-cultural atmosphere it draws its inspiration from. The Saracens as characters in *KH* are derived from French *chansons de geste* like *The Song of Roland* (late 11th, early 12th century),²⁷³ where they are the definitive foes of Christian warriors. The crusades had also intensified Christian awareness and fear of Muslims,²⁷⁴ making them ideal enemies for a romance, representing the “externalized struggle between Christian Good and Infidel Evil,”²⁷⁵ as Matthew Hearn writes.

²⁷² Mastnak, *Crusading Peace*, 122. “[The Muslims] could not choose between conversion and death because...they were seen as inconvertible” (125).

²⁷³ Diane Speed, “The Saracens of King Horn,” *Speculum* 65.3 (1990): 568, 591; Ramsey, *Chivalric Romances*, 32. See also Skidmore, *The Moral Traits of Christian and Saracen* (especially pp. 124-28). The Saracens of *KH* have often been identified as being (or being based on) Vikings, since they attack English and Irish kingdoms in fleets of ships – it is believed that this picture is derived from the times of the Viking invasions (Ramsey believes that “the English popular mind had completely confused the Viking invaders of a century before with the Moslem enemies of France” [*Chivalric Romances*, 32]). McKnight thinks the story “had its origin in the turbulent times of the Danish invasion” (*King Horn*, xvi). It is better, however, to take the Saracens at face value as Muslims who are functioning as stereotypical opponents to the Christians in the narrative, fulfilling a literary rather than historical purpose (see Speed, “Saracens,” 594-95; Ramsey, *Chivalric Romances*, 32).

²⁷⁴ “Fear of [Saracens] was partly a carry-over from the *chansons de geste*, strengthened by the crusades...” Ramsey, *ibid.* “It has been suggested that the *Chanson de Roland* was influenced by the First Crusade in 1099; and there is certainly an idealised crusading ring to the battles between Franks and Saracens” (Barber, *The Reign of Chivalry*, 51). Interestingly, the Harley MS of *KH* calls it a “geste” (McKnight, *King Horn*, 1; see Marilyn Corrie, “Kings and Kingship in British Library MS Harley 2253,” *The Yearbook of English Studies* 33 [2003]: 65).

²⁷⁵ Matthew Hearn, “Twins of Infidelity: The Double Antagonists of King Horn,” *Medieval Perspectives* 8 [1993]: 83.

Saracens appear early in the *KH* narrative, when they invade Suddene. While King Murry, Horn's father, is out riding with two knights, a fleet of fifteen ships arrives bristling with Saracens. When Murry asks what they want, one "payn" (pagan)²⁷⁶ replies:

"Thy lond folk we schulle slon,
And alle that Crist luveth upon
And the selve right anon.
Ne shaltu today henne gon." (47-50)

Murry resists them "in defense of his land and Christianity"²⁷⁷ (like his son Horn does later) as Gary Lim notes, but the invaders prevail. These Saracens offer no quarter to their prospective subjects. Their objective is murder, both of the rightful king of the land and his subjects. But the Saracen speaker specifies that they will kill Christians in particular ("alle that Crist luveth upon"), which adds a layer of religious animosity.²⁷⁸ The Saracens are not just interested in plunder – they desire to shed Christian blood. The pagan speaker is unnamed, representing a mass of foes – "a murderous mob of anonymous monsters...almost subhuman,"²⁷⁹ as Hearn notes. The pagans further exemplify their barbarity by setting Horn and his child companions adrift at sea to die, lest he return to avenge his father (101-4).

The image of Muslims as ruthless conquerors echoes depictions of Muslims in literature like the *chansons*, but it also derives from the crusades. In Robert the Monk's account of Pope Urban II's call to arms at Clermont in 1095, the Muslims are described as "a strange people, a people wholly alienated from God," who "have invaded the lands

²⁷⁶ A common designation for Saracens in *KH*, and one applied to Muslims as well; see Tyerman, *God's War*, 61.

²⁷⁷ Lim, "In the Name of the (Dead) Father," 28.

²⁷⁸ They "define their targets as Christians" (Speed, "Saracens," 582).

²⁷⁹ Hearn, "Twins of Infidelity," 83.

of [eastern] Christians and depopulated them with sword, rapine and fire.”²⁸⁰ Urban attributed barbaric tortures and assaults on women to the Muslim rulers of Jerusalem as well.²⁸¹ This imagery struck a chord: two crusaders, the brothers Geoffrey and Guy, stated that they were going to the Holy Land “to exterminate the wickedness and unrestrained rage of the pagans by which innumerable Christians have been oppressed, made captive and killed.”²⁸² Such behavior was expected from, as Jonathan Riley-Smith puts it, “barbarians depraved in their morals....enemies of God, Christ, and Christianity.”²⁸³ Themes like these were propounded during the First Crusade and recycled in later campaigns – and they found a ready audience, especially one familiar with tales of Charlemagne and Roland’s battles with Muslims contained in the *chansons*. The Muslim presence in Spain and the Mediterranean additionally ensured that Western European Christians never forgot about their old foes.

The Saracens are also said to be “blake” (1333) in *KH*, which is a description of their complexion, contrasting them to the fair-skinned Europeans. The *Song of Roland* describes dark-skinned warriors²⁸⁴ with repulsion: “black as ink and whose faces / Have nothing white except the teeth.”²⁸⁵ Descriptions like this indicate that, as Jacqueline de Weever explains, “for writers in English and French the Saracens were defined by what they were not,”²⁸⁶ fulfilling the role of, as Hearn terms it, “fictional Others.”²⁸⁷ The

²⁸⁰ Qtd. in Reichberg et al., *Ethics*, 101. Originally published in Laffan, *Select Documents*.

²⁸¹ Asbridge, *Crusades*, 36-37.

²⁸² Tyerman, *God’s War*, 27.

²⁸³ Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), 111.

²⁸⁴ See Speed, “Saracens,” 580-82, for a discussion.

²⁸⁵ *The Song of Roland*, trans. C.H. Sisson (Manchester: Carcanet Press Ltd., 1983), 73. Lines 145-46.

²⁸⁶ Jacqueline De Weever, “Introduction: The Saracen as Narrative Knot,” *Arthuriana* 16.4 (2006): 6.

narrative strives to dehumanize and demonize the Saracens by stressing their murderous tendencies and their racial difference. This further identifies them with their false religion – vile appearance and vile beliefs go hand in hand.

Once the Saracens dispatch King Murry, they move on to conquer, kill, and oppress the people of Suddene.

The pains come to londe
 And neme hit in here honde
 That folc hi gunne quelle,
 And churchen for to felle.
 Ther ne moste libbe
 The fremde ne the sibbe.
 Bute hi here laye asoke
 And to here toke. (63-70)

The Saracens are presented not only as a political danger, but as a religious attack on a Christian society,²⁸⁸ able to enforce their paganism with the sword. Their first move is to kill many of the inhabitants as an intimidation tactic (“that folc hi gunne quelle”), and then destroy churches to demoralize the Christians and remove any trace of their faith. The destruction of sacred sites is intended to erase visible signs of Christianity in the society, thus making conversion (paired with the threat of death) more compelling to the frightened inhabitants. Perhaps too the demolition of the churches implies the might of the Saracen god; the Saracens themselves, Purdon writes, “are associated with Satan; they are the ones who ‘...leuede on þe fende’ (Laud 1480).”²⁸⁹ The problem here is not so

²⁸⁷ Hearn, “Twins,” 82.

²⁸⁸ Speed, “Saracens,” 583.

²⁸⁹ Purdon, “Christ the Lover-Knight,” 142. “Laud 1480” refers to a line in one of the three manuscript copies of *KH*. MS Laud is the earliest manuscript, dating to about the end of the 13th to the beginning of the 14th century (Joseph Hall, *King Horn: A Middle-English Romance* [Oxford: Oxford University Press,

much the use of power to enforce religious uniformity as it is that a *false faith* is being put upon the Suddene Christians. The terrible consequences of Islamic rule are personalized by Athulf's father, a knight forced to forsake Christ:

“Ich serve aghenes my wille
 Payns ful ylle.
 Ich was Cristene a while:
 Tho icom to this ille
 Sarazins blake
 That dude me forsake.
 On Crist ich wolde bileve.” (1329-35)

The only option for the faithful is flight or death – when the Saracens invade, Horn's mother can only serve God faithfully by hiding in a cave, where she survives until Horn's return: “Ther heo livede alone. / Ther heo servede Gode” (78-79). The Christians' unrelenting attack on the Saracens later in the narrative is a reaction to the Saracen persecution of Christians – it is not initiated by them. The Saracens invade Christians living peacefully, and attempt to foist their religion on the Suddene populace, something which justly elicits a forceful response from the defender of Suddene (its rightful king). A medieval reader would surely approve of the retributive justice exhibited here. Horn reacts to an assault on his kingdom, rather than initiating the violence.

Such is the terror of the invaders that the country as a whole converts to paganism, committing the sin of apostasy. Yet the reader is not intended to judge the Suddene people, but to feel revulsion at the barbarism of the Saracens. These fears of subjugation have an ancient lineage. Muslims “attempting to force their own religious

1901], ix; Rosamund Allen, *King Horn: An Edition Based on Cambridge University Library MS Gg. 4.27 (2)* [New York: Garland Publishing, 1984], 8). Hall dates it to around 1290.

practices on the Christians” and “destroying the visible symbols of Christianity,”²⁹⁰ as Speed says, appear in the *chansons*, but this imagery is also derived from rhetoric surrounding the crusades. Urban tells his Clermont audience that “the churches of God they [Muslims] have either entirely destroyed or appropriated for the rites of their own religion,”²⁹¹ and writes in a letter that “the Oriental churches” have been “devastated and ravaged by the barbarians”²⁹² (probably referring here to religious persecution as opposed to demolishing churches). The Muslims “have sold [Jerusalem] and her churches into abominable slavery”²⁹³ according to Urban, and with “barbaric fury” have “laid waste the Churches of God in eastern parts,”²⁹⁴ “destroying churches and laying waste to the kingdom of God.”²⁹⁵ An audience familiar with tales featuring villainous Muslims and aware of the Islamic presence in Spain would be primed to hear these horrific stories from the pope. While in practice Christians could live under Islamic rule (with heavy restrictions), and Muslim and Christians could coexist to a degree, as Speed notes, “religious attitudes are inevitably polarized for dramatic effect, and probably for propaganda”²⁹⁶ in the *chansons*, in public discourse, and in literary descendants of the *chansons* like *KH*. Certainly the romances are capable of nuance and complexity in depicting Saracens – see *Bevis of Hampton* and *Floris and Blancheflur*, for example – but *KH* is basic in its perspective on Saracens.

²⁹⁰ Speed, “Saracens,” 588-89.

²⁹¹ Reichberg et al., *Ethics*, 101.

²⁹² Cole, “‘Liberation’ of the Holy Land,” 7.

²⁹³ Tyerman, *God’s War*, 67.

²⁹⁴ H.E.J. Cowdrey, *Popes, Monks, and Crusaders* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1984), XVI.186.

²⁹⁵ Asbridge, *Crusades*, 36.

²⁹⁶ Speed, “Saracens,” 586.

In light of this, Horn can hardly be blamed (from the perspective of a medieval Christian reader) for treating the Saracens as he does. Once he has eradicated the pagan intrusion, however, Horn must also restore the symbols and practice of true worship. The narrative of *KH* specifies that Horn not only eliminates the pagans, but he also reinstitutes what the Suddene Christians were deprived of: the freedom to practice their religion without competition. In the aftermath of the bloodshed over Suddene, religious duties are performed as part of the cleansing process:

Horn let wurchen
Chapeles and chirche;
He let belles ringe
And masses let singe. (1393-96)

The war Horn is waging is a just war, reclaiming stolen property, but it is also a holy war with clear religious dimensions. Horn restores the true worship of God in Suddene by both removing the pagan intruders and rebuilding the damaged churches.²⁹⁷ Violence and piety are intertwined in this passage: violence serves religion, and religion fuels the violence. It is evident that the bloodshed Horn has been engaged in is not just a conflict over land, although it certainly is that – it is also a struggle to protect true religion with force, and to uncompromisingly eliminate those who oppose the faith. There is no option of conversion or death here, just like (as Mastnak says) broader Christian culture considered Muslims beyond hope, and thus worthy only of resistance.²⁹⁸ Both religions

²⁹⁷ “Here he [the *KH* poet] stresses the revitalizing of the Christian community through the opening of the Churches” (Georgianna Ziegler, “Structural Repetition in *King Horn*,” *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 81 [1980]: 406). “Heroes often build churches when they get to be kings” (Ramsey, *Chivalric Romances*, 34) – thus, Horn’s kingship is asserted through a display of piety before his subjects.

²⁹⁸ This does not mean that there was never diversity or nuance to Christian interactions with Muslims (as can be witnessed in the romances mentioned above). *KH* is simply an example of a popular, influential

utilize force to impose their religion on whoever comes under their rule. Any concept of toleration or coexistence is foreign to both faiths, because they assume that all people under their domain should be members of the righteous community.²⁹⁹ For Horn, the faith is Christianity, and he protects and promotes it with zeal. When a reader or listener would learn how Horn rebuilds churches and holds masses, they would recognize an attribute of a godly king, who was not perceived as simply a good secular ruler – he was also to be one who honored God and shielded the Church from foes within (heretics) and without (pagans). These pious deeds sanctify Horn’s battle for Suddene, elevating it into a sacred task that is for the glory of God and the peace of the Christian community.

Hearn argues that “Horn’s struggle with the Saracens has less to do with chivalric combat or holy warfare than with simple genocide.”³⁰⁰ But, as has been seen, the very nature of medieval holy war, in its ideal conception, was genocidal. Hence the genocidal aspect of Horn’s battles does not contrast with holy war – it exemplifies it.³⁰¹ The lack of standard just war limits for holy war in *KH* is intrinsic to the medieval conception of holy war – as Johnson writes, “where a holy cause is assumed to justify unrestrained violence to assert or maintain it, a tendency toward total war in practice is present.”³⁰² In medieval Christian practice of holy war, particularly the crusades, “unrestrained violence” was

aspect of Christian thought on Muslims, but not the only one. For a historical example of a more moderate Christian perspective on Muslims, see Rainer Christoph Schwinges, “William of Tyre, the Muslim Enemy, and the Problem of Tolerance,” in Michael Gervers and James M. Powell, eds., *Tolerance and Intolerance: Social Conflict in the Age of the Crusades* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2001), 124-32.

²⁹⁹ See Mastnak, *Crusading*, 119-25.

³⁰⁰ Hearn, “Twins of Infidelity,” 83.

³⁰¹ I appreciate my advisor Dr. Pfrenger pointing this out to me.

³⁰² Johnson, *Just War Tradition*, 237. See Johnson’s entire discussion on holy war (pp. 230-37) and its relationship to total war.

frequently “present” (as it is in *KH*) and promoted. Dispensing with accepted just war limits was standard procedure when fighting a crusade.

For all the disturbing moral questions it raises, though, medieval readers would have considered Horn’s genocidal battles just: his annihilation of the Saracens is either to repel attacks on Christian territory or to reclaim what was stolen from him, which were justifications for just wars, too. But Horn’s bloody tactics against the Saracens are also part of how holy war was depicted and often waged by medieval Christians. It seems fair to claim that the *choice of foes* (Muslims) and the *manner in which they are engaged* (unrelentingly) by Horn shows the distinct influence of holy war on this romance, and the real role holy war plays in the story. The composer of *KH* has evidently absorbed much of the rhetoric from the *chansons* and the crusades (including one that had happened very recently, led by an English king)³⁰³ and has incorporated widely shared sentiments and beliefs about holy war into his depiction of Horn, a Christian king who sheds the blood of his enemies without any sense of conflict or hesitation. Horn has a righteous complaint against the Saracens, and he would be justified in taking arms against them, according to general medieval consensus – but he also is opposing an enemy of God’s Church, which further intensifies and exalts his struggle against a godless foe. To accommodate this enemy in any way would be to taint the purity of his mission: the protection of Christian lands against heathen foes.

³⁰³ The crusades would have been a recent event for the author of *KH* – if, as is likely, it was composed in the 1270s, then the Ninth Crusade, led by an English king, would certainly be on people’s minds (Rosamund Allen, “The Date and Provenance of *King Horn*: Some Interim Reassessments,” in *Medieval English Studies Presented to George Kane*, ed. Edward D. Kennedy, Ronald Waldron, and Joseph Wittig [Wolfeboro: D.S. Brewer, 1988], 125). See the conclusion to this thesis.

Conclusion

Now that the various aspects of warfare in *KH* have been analyzed in full, a few observations will be made here about what has been covered, and some conclusions that can be drawn from it. I will reiterate that I do not think the author of *KH* is making theologically sophisticated points about the broad Christian understanding of war at this time in the Middle Ages. I agree with Anne Scott's assessment that "unlike saints' legends...*King Horn* has no religious axe to grind."³⁰⁴ The material from Augustine and Aquinas in chapter 1 reveals how the principles medieval Christians held about war (the "consensus" described by James Turner Johnson³⁰⁵) derived from theological traditions which they subsequently radically departed from, in certain respects – one major outcome being holy war. Holy war had emerged in full force with the inception of the crusades and would have been familiar to the Christian hearers or readers of *KH*, especially since their own king had recently returned from crusade (see below). Chivalry also exercised an enormous influence on medieval culture, and the warrior code that knights lived by had spillover effects on the wider Christian view of warfare.

One of these influences, holy war, has implications for how we date the tale. *KH* is distinctive in its absolute demonization of the Saracens. Some romances of the period, like the matter of England romance *Bevis of Hampton*, are less clear cut – Saracens are

³⁰⁴ Anne Scott, "Plans, Predictions, and Promises: Traditional Story Techniques and the Configuration of Word and Deed in *King Horn*," in Derek Brewer, ed., *Studies in Medieval English Romances: Some New Approaches* (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 1988), 44.

³⁰⁵ James Turner Johnson, *Ideology, Reason, and the Limitation of War: Religious and Secular Concepts 1200-1740* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), 58-59.

godless enemies, but they can also shelter a fleeing prince or convert to Christianity and marry the protagonist. The Saracens in *KH* lack any sympathetic characters or characteristics. As chapter 3 of this thesis demonstrated, the presentation of the Saracens in *KH* has overtones derived from the crusades. And as was mentioned in the introduction and the end of chapter 3, if *KH* was composed at the date accepted here – around the 1270s, per Rosamund Allen – then we must also note with Allen that “the political events of the 1270s”³⁰⁶ parallel *KH* in some ways. She points out that Edward I went on crusade in 1268, docking at Acre in 1271; he was absent when his father (Henry III) died in 1272; and he then returned to be crowned king in 1274. Thus, a story about “a prince returning to claim his kingdom after fighting Saracens would have a particular poignancy in the mid-1270s.”³⁰⁷ A tale formed in the context of crusade would naturally want to depict Muslims in the worst possible light, and glorify a Christian hero who crushed Muslims in spectacular fashion. Thus, the links I have described between crusading ideology and *KH* may further strengthen Allen’s case that *KH* was composed in the 1270s. Other romances, of course, feature villainous Muslims killed by Christian heroes; but if *KH* can be assigned to the late 13th century (as it probably should), then pinpointing it to the 1270s, in light of its concern with a returning king and Muslim antagonists, would be a fair deduction.

There are other conclusions to be drawn from the material discussed in this thesis. I argue that probing the practice and presentation of warfare in *KH* is not just an exercise

³⁰⁶ Rosamund Allen, “The Date and Provenance of *King Horn*: Some Interim Reassessments,” in *Medieval English Studies Presented to George Kane*, ed. Edward D. Kennedy, Ronald Waldron, and Joseph Wittig (Wolfeboro: D.S. Brewer, 1988), 122.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

in reviewing history and theology only tangentially related to *KH*. Instead, it sheds light on why Horn fights and how he does. The medieval synthesis strongly stressed the just war principles of right authority and just cause, while right intent toward the enemy was neglected in favor of the brutality practiced in holy war and, more often than not, knightly clashes. By plumbing the influence of just war thought on medieval conceptions of war, we can gain a clearer understanding of why Horn is portrayed as so justified in his retaliation against Saracen invasions; by taking note of the prominence of chivalry, Horn's noble defense of other Christian kingdoms and his zeal in seeking out battle are better understood; and by uncovering the influence of the crusades, Horn's harshness and cruelty towards the Saracens is explained. Horn *must* fight and wage war the way he does in the story; the religious and cultural milieu the author lived in would have expected Horn to wage war as he does, and the author gladly incorporates the general perspective on war in Western European Christendom. Therefore, a clearer picture of warfare in *KH* gives us a clearer picture of the text of *KH*.

KH was composed at a specific point in medieval English history. Thus, *KH* also functions as documentation of a time in medieval English thought when elements of just war thought, chivalry, and holy war all cohered into a unique synthesis. *KH* is a snapshot of a period in Christian thought about war, a reflection of the cultural and theological currents circulating in English and Western European society at that time. Drawing out the specific characteristics of warfare in *KH* does reveal more about *KH* itself, but it reveals even more than that: it gives the reader a window into a particular period of Western European Christianity. The ideas contained in just war thought,

chivalry, and holy war had permeated medieval Western European culture to such a degree that, whether or not the author of *KH* was aware of it, their influence lives in this text. The musings of academics and theologians, the code of knights waging war, or the practices of Christian soldiers in the Near East – all of these elements, diluted into the broader culture, hover beneath the surface of *KH*. Careful examination of the relevant passages in *KH* with theological and cultural movements in medieval Europe at the time sheds further light on this point in medieval Western European history, and thus further advances our knowledge of this text and this period.

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