

A TEXTUAL STUDY OF THE CAMBRIDGE AND LAUD MSS. OF THE
ENGLISH METRICAL ROMANCE, KING HORN

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PREFACE

The earliest known vestiges of the thirteenth-century English metrical romance known as King Horn are found in two Old Norse sagas of the ninth and tenth centuries. The tales of "Gunnlaug Serpent-tongue and Helga the Fair" as recorded in Gunnlaugs Saga and of "Olaf the Peacock" in the Laxdoela Saga both contain the basic and essential elements of the Horn story. As the Norsemen spread throughout Europe and the British Isles, they left their stories behind, and soon the story began to acquire elements of other legends and tales from the numerous areas of Norse conquest and settlement. The Germanic contributions to the story were the greatest, since they played a major role in the reshaping of the story in its later versions. The English story of Horn is based upon a twelfth-century French version, Horn et Rimenhild. A later English version entitled Horn Child and Maiden Rimnild appeared around 1325. Soon, the story appeared in many versions and in many countries, attested to by its longevity.

Only two of the three extant MSS. of King Horn, the Cambridge MS. and the Laud MS., were consulted in this investigation. The third MS., the Harleian MS., was, however, consulted frequently as a clarifying agent when the other two MSS. became confused or ambiguous. The many discrepancies between the MSS. with regard to rhyme, metre, and phraseology indicate that the extant MSS. of King Horn demand a

closer and more exact examination and investigation by scholars than has been accorded them in the past.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Dr. Charles E. Walton for his guidance and assistance in the course of this investigation, and for his valuable criticism of the material presented. I also deeply appreciate Mr. Richard L. Roahen's critical reading of this study, and for his valuable criticism. I am indebted to the concerned individuals connected with the interlibrary loan service at the University of Kansas and Kansas State University for their cooperation. Finally, I would like to express my deep gratitude to my parents and friends who encouraged me in my work, and whose suggestions were most helpful.

August, 1968

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TO MY PARENTS,
LOUIS AND MARGARET BROWN

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CHAPTER I

THE ORIGINS OF KING HORN: NORSE AND GERMANIC CONTRIBUTIONS

Because of the many versions of the Horn story, it is necessary, at the outset of this paper, to make a qualifying statement about them. The principal concern in this investigation is an English metrical romance written about 1250, and simply called King Horn (KH).¹ The source of this romance is a French redaction of a lost Anglo-Saxon version that was based upon an Old Norse saga.² This contention is based upon three observations:

. . . (1) the a priori deduction that Horn cannot be of native origin, since the English, who were especially dependent upon foreign sources in the field of epic literature, produced not one undoubtedly native romance; (2) the allegation that the popular tone and style of Horn do not prove native origin; (3) a metrical and etymological consideration of the proper names.³

Thus, ". . . the theory of purely native transmission is an assumption

¹Henry W. Schofield, "The Story of Horn and Rimenhild," PMLA, XVIII (1903), 81.

²Clark S. Northup, "King Horn: Recent Texts and Studies," JEGP, IV (1902), 540.

³Loc. cit.; cf. Laura A. Hibbard, Medieval Romance in England, "King Horn," pp. 83-96; Nathaniel E. Griffin, "The Definition of Romance," PMLA, XXXVIII (1922), 53-57.

dictated chiefly by desire."⁴ Since a comparison of some of the KH stories is essential to a discussion of its origins and later versions, a somewhat detailed summary of KH is also necessary to make the comparisons vivid and lucid. The following summary is based upon the Cambridge University MS., as it is the oldest and most complete of the three extant MSS. of KH.⁵ Subsequent quoted lines are also taken from this MS. unless otherwise noted.

King Murry of Sudene and his queen, Godhild, have a son named Horn, who was fifteen years old when his father was killed by invading Saracens. After taking complete control of the land, the Saracens put Horn and twelve of his companions in an open boat and set them out to sea. The next morning they sighted land and, upon coming ashore, were greeted by the king, Ailmer of Westernesse (Britain). They were received kindly by him and welcomed into his court. As time passed they all grew steadily in favor, with Horn especially distinguishing himself by his unusual beauty, accomplishments, and prowess. Gradually both he and the king's daughter, Rimenhild, fell in love and planned to be married; but they were betrayed by a treacherous friend, Fikenhild, who caused Horn to be banished from the land by King Ailmer. Before

⁴Schofield, op. cit., p. 52.

⁵George H. McKnight (ed.), King Horn, Floriz and Blancheflur, The Assumption of Our Lady, p. xxviii.

they separated the two lovers agreed to be faithful to each other for seven years, and Rimenhild gave Horn a gold ring as a keepsake and to give him inspiration and courage in battle.⁶

Leaving Britain, he went by boat to Ireland, where he was graciously received by King Thurston and his two sons, Harild and Berild. When asked his name, Horn replied, "Cutberd."⁷ He remained here in good service to the king, even driving all of the Saracens from the land. However, one day he heard of the impending marriage, against her will, of Rimenhild to King Modi of Reynes. He graciously left the court of Thurston and quickly returned to Westernesse with a group of his Irish followers. He gained entrance into the wedding feast in the disguise of a palmer and revealed himself to Rimenhild by putting the gold ring in a beaker of wine which she gave him to drink. Finding her still true, he assembled his men, killed Modi and his band, and rescued Rimenhild. However, they do not then marry because Horn next wanted to rid the Sudene of its Saracen captors, and to rule his native land as king with Rimenhild as his queen. While he was fighting in Sudene, Horn was again betrayed by Fikenhild, who carried Rimenhild to his castle, where

⁶Ibid., pp. 1-34.

⁷Laura H. Loomis, "The Athelstan Gift Story: Its Influence on English Chronicles and Carolingian Romances," PMLA, LXVII (June, 1952), 535. An interesting discussion is given in this article on the derivation of the name "Cutberd."

he prepared to marry her. Warned by a dream of this trouble, Horn returned to Westernesse with some of his men and gained admittance to Fikenhild's castle disguised as minstrels. Horn soon killed Fikenhild, married Rimenhild, and returned to Sudene as its rightful ruler.⁸

There can be little doubt that KH was

. . . originally an Old Norse saga recording what were possibly actual events of the tenth century, but in the guise of romance and with certain accretions of fancy which became attached to it in the course of a long period of varied fancy.⁹

The Old Norse saga in question is the saga of "Gunnlaug Serpent-tongue and Helga the Fair" as recorded in the Gunnlaugs Saga.¹⁰ This tale and another like it, the saga of the journey of "Olaf the Peacock," as recorded in the Laxdoela Saga, were written during the period in which Norse settlements flourished in the British Isles.¹¹ The term, Norse, as used here refers to Norwegian-Icelandic because of the profound influence each has had upon the other.¹² For the sake of comparison of similar elements in these two sagas with those in KH, there follows a summary of the two plots, as retold by Schofield, beginning with the

⁸McKnight, King Horn, pp. 35-69.

⁹Schofield, op. cit., p. 52.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 54.

¹¹Peter H. Blair, An Introduction to Anglo-Saxon England, pp. 62-66.

¹²Schofield, op. cit., p. 55.

journey of Olaf the Peacock.

Olaf was the son of Hoskuld, a famous Icelandic chieftain, whose mother was a captured Irish princess. Secretly she taught Olaf Irish and encouraged him to return to Ireland someday. She also gave him a gold ring that had been given to her by her father, the king of Dublin, which Olaf in turn was to give to him as a sign of kinship. When he reached his fifteenth birthday, Olaf was allowed to make a journey to the court of Harild in Norway. After staying in King Harild's court for three years, Olaf took sixty men and sailed for Ireland, where he went to the king's castle in Dublin, and there showed the king the gold ring which Olaf's mother had given him. The king was immediately convinced of their kinship, and ordered that a great feast be held. After graciously refusing the throne, Olaf returned to Iceland, where he married Thorgerd, a sister of Thornstein, the father of Helga, Gunnlaug's beloved.¹³

Gunnlaug was the son of Illugi, a prominent Icelandic chieftain who left his homeland at the age of fifteen and traveled to the land of Thornstein, a neighboring chieftain. There, he met and fell in love with Thornstein's daughter, Helga. When they planned to be married, Thornstein refused to allow the marriage, insisting that Gunnlaug leave the country at least for three years in order to seek distinction abroad.

¹³Ibid., p. 39.

In the meantime, Helga promised to remain Gunnlaug's betrothed and not to marry anyone else. Gunnlaug went to England, where Ethelred was king. After being graciously received into the English court and the king's service, he killed one of the king's worst enemies, a giant bearsark. He then sailed to Dublin, where Sigtrugg, son of Olaf Kvaran, was king. After staying in Ireland for several months, he left once more to visit the Orkneys and Sweden before returning to Iceland. In the meantime, a rival suitor, Hrafn the Raven, was planning to marry Helga, because no word had been received from Gunnlaug during his three-year absence. Unfortunately, Gunnlaug arrived too late, as the wedding ceremony had already begun and Hrafn and Helga were now married. He did, however, kill Hrafn but, unfortunately, he too died of wounds suffered in the fight. Throughout all of Gunnlaug's absence, Helga's devotion and loyalty to him had been above reproach.¹⁴

There can be little doubt about the validity of these sagas because of the very nature of the Norsemen themselves. These hearty people of the North placed great stock in truth and honor in all aspects of life; and, because of their devotion to these virtues, there is little reason to doubt the truthfulness of the Gunnlaugs and Laxdoela Sagas.¹⁵ The similarities between these two sagas and KH are obvious, but some are more important

¹⁴Ibid., p. 43.

¹⁵Northrup, op. cit., p. 536.

and demand attention. For example, the position, age, beauty, and accomplishments of the three heroes are remarkably similar, when Horn is described as a

Fayrer child þanne he was,
 Bric̃t so euere any glas,
 Whit so any lili flour,
 So rose red was his colur.
 He was fayr and eke bold
 And of fiftene winter hold.
 (Laud MS., 13-18)

Furthermore, all three heroes leave home at an early age and are welcomed by a neighboring lord: Horn was, unfortunately, exiled by the Saracens who invaded his land, but he too, was heartily welcomed by a neighboring king, Ailmer of Westernessee:

Whannes beo 3e, faire gumes,
 Ðat her to londe beoþ icume,
 Alle þrottene
 Of bodie swiþe kene?
 Bigod þat me makede,
 A swihc fair verade
 Ne sau3 ihc in none stunde
 Bi westene londe.
 Seie me wat 3e seche.
 (175-183)

The association of Gunnlaug with Helga, Thornstein's daughter, also closely parallels Horn's association with Rimenhild, Ailmer's daughter, even though this narrative element is entirely lacking in the story of Olaf the Peacock.¹⁶ In addition, opposition of Thornstein to the

¹⁶Schofield, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

marriage of Helga and Gunnlaug finds a counterpart in Ailmer's refusal to allow the marriage of Rimenhild and Horn, but, here, for a different reason: Horn is betrayed by his supposed friend, Fikenhild:

"Aylmar, ihc þe warne,
 Horn þe wule berne.
 Ihc herde whar he sede,
 And his swerd forþ leide,
 To bringe þe of lyue,
 And to take Rymenhild to wyue.
 He lip in bure,
 Vnder couerture,
 By Rymenhild, þi do3ter;
 And so he doþ wel ofte.
 And þider þu go al ri3t;
 Ðer þu him finde mi3t.
 Ðu do him vt of londe,
 Oþer he doþ þe schonde."
 (733-746)

Moreover, the necessity of Gunnlaug's departure "to seek distinction abroad" is contrasted with the reason for Horn's forced exile of seven years:

He fond horn in arme,
 On Rymenhilde borne.
 "Awei vt," he sede, "fule þerof,
 Ne wurstu me neuremore leof.
 Wend vt of my bure,
 Wiþ muchel messauenture.
 Wel sone bute þu flitte,
 Wiþ swerde ihc þe anhitte.
 Wend ut of my londe,
 Oþer þu schalt haue schonde."
 (751-760)

Before he leaves, Rimenhild gives Horn a gold ring as a love token. The Gunnlaug story contains no mention of a ring of any kind, but Olaf is given a ring by his mother as proof of his kinship with the Irish

king.¹⁷ In later Continental versions, the ring assumes important supernatural and mystical powers.¹⁸

Gunnlaug and Olaf's visits to foreign lands, particularly Gunnlaug's slaying of the giant bearsark in the English court of Ethelred, also parallel Horn's slaying of the Saracens in the court of Thurston in Ireland:

And slo3en alle þe hundes,
 Er hi here Schipes funde.
 To deþe he hem alle bro3te;
 Of alle þe kynges kni3tes,
 Ne scaped þer no wi3te.
 (949-954)

One must remember, at this point, that all three heroes visit Ireland, a narrative similarity which should not be overlooked.¹⁹ Gunnlaug's return home only to find Helga already married parallels Horn's return home to rescue Rimenhild from marriage to King Modi of Reynes, only to be betrayed by Fikenhild again.²⁰ Perhaps, the greatest affinity between the two stories is one which has only been indirectly alluded to; *i. e.*, the unwavering affection, devotion, and loyalty displayed by both Helga

¹⁷Ibid., p. 48; cf. Margaret A. Gist, Love and War in the Middle English Romances, pp. 11-26.

¹⁸Cf. Walter Oliver, "King Horn and Suddene," PMLA, XLVI (1931), 102-114; F. J. Mather, Jr., "King Ponthus and the Fair Sidone," PMLA, XII (1897), 1-150.

¹⁹Northup, op. cit., p. 538.

²⁰Schofield, op. cit., p. 54.

and Rimenhild toward their lovers.²¹ This show of devotion by both lovers does not, however, suggest even the slightest historical connection between the stories, but it does imply that the love between Gunnlaug and Helga was once recounted in Norse as the love between Horn and Rimenhild was once recounted in English.²²

There is no evidence to shed any further light upon Horn as an historical character, although Schofield states that ". . . the probability seems to me to favor the hypothesis that the story before us is fact plus fable rather than the reverse."²³

The only truly accurate historical character in either of these two Norse sagas is Gunlaug, born in 983 and died in 1009.²⁴ It is also known that he visited England in 1001, and Dublin in the following year, as part of his travels.²⁵

In addition to these many noted similarities in subject matter, there are also certain stylistic features which these two sagas, primarily those of Gunnlaug and Helga, and KH have in common. Chief among

²¹Ibid., p. 55.

²²Ibid., p. 56.

²³Ibid., p. 44; cf. Northup, op. cit., p. 537; Hibbard, op. cit. pp. 93-94.

²⁴Ibid., p. 48.

²⁵Ibid., pp. 49-50.

these is the device of dreams for the motivation of conduct.²⁶ For example, the whole career of Helga is outlined to Thornstein in a dream, even as Rimenhild dreams of the interruption of her happiness with Horn:

Me þoute in my metyng,
 Ðat ich rod on fischinge.
 To se my net ich keste;
 Ne Mict ich nowt lache
 A gret fys ate furste
 Mi net he made berste.
 (Laud MS., 699-704)

Hrafn also dreams of his approaching conflict with Gunnlaug, even as Horn dreams of Fikenhild's treachery:

Ðat ni3t horn gan swete,
 An heuie for to mete
 Of Rymenhild his make,
 Into schupe was itake.
 Ðe schup bigan to blenche;
 His lemman scholde adrenche.
 Rymenhild wiþ hire honde
 Wolde up to londe.
 Fikenhild a3en hire pelte
 Wiþ his swerdes hilde.
 (1521-1530)

Dreams are, indeed, characteristic of Old Norse storytelling.²⁷

One other major area of Norse influence in KH is the many proper names which bear Norse elements. Chief among these is the name of Horn, which appears in all of the primitive versions of the story. Other names include: Cutberd (Cuberd), Athulf (Aupulfr), Arnoldin (Arnaldr),

²⁶Griffin, op. cit., pp. 62-63.

²⁷Schofield, op. cit., p. 41.

Godhild (Gophildr or Gunnhildr), Thurston (Þorstein), Harild (Haraldr), Berild (Beraldr), and Rimenhild (Ragnhildr).²⁸ Above all, it is important for one to remember that primitive as they are, the basic elements of these sagas are to be considered as an artistic whole, much as one must consider the later KH stories.²⁹ The story that was popular in England at this time was the "exile and return" type which does much to insure the basic unity of these story versions.³⁰ Viewed in this light, then, it is not surprising " . . . to have heathen Vikings envisaged as pagan Saracens or their leaders as giants" in an age when Norsemen held control of Western waters around the British Isles, and when these islands were never safe from Viking invasions and raids.³¹

As the Norsemen left their homes to venture southward, the peoples in the British Isles were not the only ones to feel the brunt of Viking invasions.³² In all probability, some small kernel of genuine historical tradition concerning Horn was left with the Germanic peoples during the turbulent times of the Norse invasions.³³ The two most important

²⁸Ibid., pp. 33-36; cf. Northup, op. cit., pp. 539-540.

²⁹Ibid., p. 47.

³⁰McKnight, King Horn, p. viii.

³¹Schofield, op. cit., p. 49.

³²Blair, op. cit., pp. 56-58.

³³George H. McKnight, "Germanic Elements in the Story of King Horn," PMLA, XV (1900), 222.

Germanic elements in KH are Horn's forced exile from his homeland and subsequent return and avenging of his father's death, and the separation of the faithful lovers, Horn and Rimenhild, although this theme is subjugated to the more martial aspects of the first element.³⁴ McKnight explains this problem in the following way:

The story of the exiled prince seems to be especially Germanic. . . . The pious avengement of the death of a father or another relative, is one of the strongest family links in primitive Germanic society and forms an oft recurring theme . . . in Northern sagas and histories, where it produces continuous chains of murders.³⁵

Saxo Grammaticus, a twelfth-century Danish historian, records in his Gesta Danorum the stories of how Hadding, son of Gram, attacked and destroyed Swipdag, King of Norway, his father's slayer, and, thus, won back Denmark; how Athisl kills Frowin and how the latter's death is avenged by Frowin's two sons, Ket and Wig; how Ro was killed by Hodbrodd and avenged by his brother, Helge; how Ragnan set out for Norway to avenge the death of his grandfather, and how Amleth killed his uncle Feng, the murderer of Amleth's father, Horwendil.³⁶ These examples make clear that the avengement of the death of one's relative was, indeed, intrinsic to Germanic culture.

³⁴Loc. cit.; cf. Gist, op. cit., pp. 113-116.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 223-224.

³⁶Ibid., p. 225. The references to Saxo Grammaticus are from Eton's translation, 1894.

The separation of the faithful lovers is based upon a technique known as "duplication of climax," a familiar feature of Germanic metrical romances.³⁷ Two prominent Germanic romances which parallel Horn's two rescues of Rimenhild, the first from King Modi of Reynes (1309ff), and the second from the traitor, Fikenhild (1605ff), are Morolf and König Rother. Furthermore, in another, Orendel, the Queen Bride must be rescued, at least three times.³⁸ All of these tales are based upon a store of Germanic sagas known as "home-coming stories" that possess the following prominent elements:

A prince who is retarded (usually captured or shipwrecked) on a journey (nearly always to the Orient) learns that his wife is to marry again. In some miraculous wise, usually in humble, disguising attire, the prince returns after a certain time (often seven years), exactly on the day of the wedding. After he has made himself known (frequently through a ring), he enters again into his famous rights.³⁹

Several other traits of KH also seem to indicate a Germanic origin. For example, the formal challenge, on the part of a champion in an invading host " . . . to a duel upon the result of which shall depend the fate of a kingdom . . ." finds numerous parallels in other Germanic legends.⁴⁰ In KH the challenge, as it is given by a Saracen giant to

³⁷Loc. cit.; cf. Hibbard, op. cit., p. 89.

³⁸Ibid., pp. 226-227.

³⁹Ibid., p. 229; cf. Schofield, op. cit., pp. 4-5.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 230; cf. Margaret Ashdown, "Single Combat in English and Scandinavian Tradition and Romance," MLR, XVII (1922), 115-117; Gist, op. cit., pp. 137-143.

Thurston's court, is presented in the following manner:

On of hem wile fi3te
 A3en þre kni3tes.
 3ef oþer þre slen vre,
 Al þis lond beo 3oure;
 3ef vre on overcomeþ 3our þreo,
 Al þis lond schal vre beo.
 (876-872)

The challenge presented by the Saracen is somewhat of an insult, inasmuch as he wants to fight any three of Thurston's men for control of the kingdom. This type of a challenge is also recorded by Grammaticus in his Gesta Danorum as ". . . each of the two kings should either lose his own empire or gain that of the other, according to the fortune of the champion."⁴¹ Thus, one finds another prominent Germanic characteristic in the story of KH.

Another important Germanic characteristic in KH concerns itself with the actual time and place of combat. Each is to be determined beforehand and is recorded in KH as follows: "Tomore3e be þe fi3tinge / Whan þe li3t of daye springe" (873-874). The fact that it is not fair for several Christians, especially Harild, Berild, and Horn, to fight against one pagan Saracen is rectified by Horn in this way:

'Sire king, hit nis no ri3te,
 On wibe þre to fi3te;
 A3en one hundle,
 Ðre cristen men to fonde.
 Sire, ischal al one,

⁴¹Loc. cit.

Wipute more ymone,
 Wip mi swerd wel epe
 Bringe hem þre to depe.⁴²
 (885-892)

Thus, the story of the exiled prince and his return to avenge his father's death and the separation of the two lovers appear to be the major Germanic contributions to KH. These elements are strong evidence to show that KH may be an abridged version of an older Old Norse saga which is lost save in the Gunnlaugs Saga of Gunnlaug and Helga or the Laxdoela Saga of Olaf the Peacock.

Before considering later Continental versions of KH, one must determine the exact location of the action in the poem, probably the most perplexing problem in a study of KH. It is no wonder that the exact location has never been fully ascertained, because from the internal evidence very little help is given the scholar. First, one notes that, after being placed in an open boat and exiled from their homeland

Ðe se bigan to flowe
 And hornchild to rowe.
 Ðe se þat schup so fast drof,
 Ðe children dradde þu of.
 Of here lif to misse.
 Al þe day and al þe ni3t,
 Til hit sprang dai li3t.
 (127-134)

This passage indicates one full twenty-four period, but little more.⁴³

⁴²Loc. cit.

⁴³McKnight, King Horn, p. xviii.

On the return voyage to Sudene for the purpose of driving out the Saracens, one finds this recorded:

Ðat schup bigan to crude,
 Ðe wind him bleu lude.
 Biþinne daies fiue
 Ðat schup gan ariue,
 (1385-1389)

However, this passage too lends little to the location of the Sudene, except for the fact that the easiest way to get there is by water.⁴⁴

The oldest argument advanced for the location of the Sudene identifies it with the Subdene, or South Danes, a people mentioned Beowulf.⁴⁵ Thus, if one accepts this theory, then when Danish settlements on the east coast of England from the Humber to the Thames were numerous and influential, the Danes simply brought their legends with them and relocated the place names to suit their new homes.⁴⁶ The major flaw in this argument concerns Horn's voyages to Ireland and back in the relatively short time as suggested in the story. His possible routes to Ireland through Northern Scotland or the English Channel seem highly improbable in light of the time element involved.⁴⁷

⁴⁴Loc. cit.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. xix; cf. Schofield, op. cit., p. 47.

⁴⁶Blair, op. cit., p. 77.

⁴⁷Northup, op. cit., p. 540; cf. McKnight, King Horn, p. x; and "Germanic Elements in the Story of King Horn," pp. 223-224.

Another theory has been advanced which suggests that the probable place of action is Surrey, since it is referred to as "Sudeine" in Gaimer's History of the English (1147-1151).⁴⁸ The major objection to this theory is the fact that Surrey is inland, while all the places mentioned in KH are on or near the coast.⁴⁹ Thus, it would be impossible for Horn to have easy access to the sea if this theory were accepted.

Perhaps the most plausible theory is that of recent scholars concerning the Isle of Man in the Irish Sea as a possible location of Sudene.⁵⁰ From Man a northwest wind would blow a boat within twenty-four hours to the west coast of Britain (Westernesse).⁵¹ The distance from Douglas, in Man, to New Brighton, at the mouth of the Mersey, is about seventy miles. Schofield comments, "the Western-ness seems pretty certainly the peninsula of the Wirral (O. N. Westey(y)ar) where Ailmar of Westernesse ruled in the district about Chester and the Mersey."⁵² The term, "Western Isles," was the Norse designation for all of the British Isles, including Ireland.⁵³ Also, most Norse settlements

⁴⁸Northup, op. cit., p. 537.

⁴⁹Loc. cit.; cf. Oliver, op. cit., pp. 105-109.

⁵⁰Schofield, op. cit., p. 49.

⁵¹McKnight, King Horn, pp. xi-xii.

⁵²Schofield, op. cit., p. 24.

⁵³Hibbard, op. cit., p. 90; cf. Northup, op. cit., p. 540; Oliver, op. cit., p. 111.

in Britain were on the west from Carlisle to Chester.⁵⁴ Thus, if this theory is correct, an exiled Horn sails from Sudene (Isle of Man) to Westernesse (Britain) to Ireland, only to return to Westernesse again to save Rimenhild from an enforced marriage to Modi of Reynes. Horn, then, sails back to Sudene to drive out the Saracens who exiled him, only to return again to Westernesse to save Rimenhild from a marriage Fikenhild, and finally returning to Sudene as its rightful king. This theory is, at the present time, the most plausible of all of those offered; but even it is open to more research.

⁵⁴Blair, op. cit., p. 86.

CHAPTER II

KING HORN IN VERSE AND PROSE: LATER CONTINENTAL AND ENGLISH VERSIONS

There are numerous Continental and later English versions of KH, the two most important of which with regard to their affinity and development to KH being Horn et Rimenhild (HR), a twelfth-century French romance.⁵⁵ Other extant versions include: Ponthus et Sidoine, a French prose romance of the fourteenth century; Pontus, a German prose romance of the fifteenth century; Ponthus, an English prose romance of the fifteenth century; nine or ten Scottish ballads of the fifteenth century grouped under the general heading of Hind Horn; and Icelandic-rímur, a sixteenth-century Icelandic prose version of the Horn story.⁵⁶

Scholarly research indicates that HR was based upon a lost Anglo-Norman Chansons de Geste known as Aalof.⁵⁷ Research also indicates that KH was based upon HR, and McKnight concludes

. . . that the ballad-like version KH, simple, even primitive in matter, in manner, and in metrical form, should have been

⁵⁵McKnight, King Horn, p. iv.

⁵⁶Schofield, op. cit., p. 81; cf. William P. Kerr, Epic and Romance, pp. 275-284.

⁵⁷Loc. cit.; cf. Donald B. Sands (ed.), Middle English Verse Romances, pp. 3-5.

derived from the sophisticated, artificial romance, HR, deserves little consideration.⁵⁸

HR is preserved in three MSS. at Oxford, Cambridge, and London, and consists of approximately 5,250 lines of twelve syllables, arranged in laissez, or strophes, of about twenty lines bound together by a single rime.⁵⁹ This version is a full-fledged romance, with descriptions of rich adornments, great feasts, battles, games, and tournaments quite in the manner of contemporary romance in France or Norman England.⁶⁰

The two versions are essentially the same, but there are some notable differences which must be discussed in detail. For example, in HR, Horn is the son of King Aalof of Sudene. After invading Saracens have killed his father, they put Horn and twelve of his companions in an open boat at sea. Within a day, they arrive in Bretagne, where they are graciously received by King Hunlaf and his court. Horn falls in love with the king's daughter, Rigmenil, and the two plan marriage. However, they are betrayed by a traitorous friend, Wikele, and Horn is banished from the land by the king. Before Horn leaves, Rigmenil gives him a gold ring, and both lovers promise to be faithful to each other.⁶¹

⁵⁸McKnight, King Horn, p. xii; cf. George Wyndham, Essays in Romantic Literature, pp. 1-42.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. viii.

⁶⁰Griffin, op. cit., pp. 52-55; cf. Albert C. Baugh, A History of the English Language, pp. 139-141.

⁶¹McKnight, King Horn, p. ix.

Horn, next, sails to Westir (Ireland), where he enters into the service of King Godreche and his two sons. He distinguishes himself in all matters and even saves Westir from an African invasion. He quickly returns to Bretagne, however, when he learns that Rigmenil is to be married against her will to Horn's rival, Modun. He defeats Modun in a tournament and marries Rigmenil before returning to Sudene to drive out the Saracens who had killed his father and had exiled him many years ago. One night, he is warned in a dream of the treachery of Wikele and, consequently, returns to Bretagne in time to save Rigmenil from an enforced marriage to Wikele. The story ends with the establishment of Horn and Rigmenil as the rulers of Sudene.⁶²

In KH, Rimenhild is instrumental in bringing about the dubbing of Horn:

'Horn,' quap heo, 'vel sone
 Ðat schal beon idone.
 Ðu schalt beo dubbed kni3t
 Are come seue ni3t.'⁶³
 (475-478)

However, this event finds no counterpart in HR; Rimenhild's prophetic dream about the end of their blissful relationship in KH (697ff) is also lacking in HR. Other notable differences between the two versions

⁶²Loc. cit.

⁶³McKnight, "Germanic Elements in the Story of King Horn," pp. 224-226. McKnight explains why Horn had to be dubbed in order to marry Rimenhild.

include: Horn's charge to Athulf to care for Rimenhild in his absence:

He tok Apulf, his fere,
 Al abute þe swere,
 And sede, 'kni3t so trewe,
 Kep wel mi luue newe.
 Ðu neure me ne forsoke,
 Rymenhild þu kep and like.'
 His stede he gan bistrode,
 And forþ he gan ride.
 (795-802)

The drowning of the messenger sent by Rimenhild to Horn is also absent from HR:

Ðo fond heo þe knaue adrent
 Ðat he hadde for horn isent,
 And þat scholde horn bringe;
 Hire fingres he gan wringe.
 (1053-1056)

The palmer's account of Rimenhild's grief over her impending marriage to Modi of Reynes is another element peculiar to KH:

Awai igan glide;
 Ðat deol inolde abide.
 Ðe bride wipeþ sore,
 And þat is mucche delore!
 (1127-1130)

Athulf's soliloquy while watching for Horn from the castle tower also finds no counterpart in HR:

Apulf was in þe ture,
 Abute for to pure.
 After his comynge,
 3ef schup him wolde bringe.
 He se3 þe se flowe,
 And horn nowar rowe.
 He sede vpon his songe,
 'Horn, nt þu ert wel longe.

Rymenhild þu me toke,
 Ðat i scholde loke.
 Ihc habbe kept hure eure;
 Com nu oþer neure.
 I ne may no leng hure kepe;
 For soreþe nu y wepe.'
 (1171-1184)

Furthermore, Horn's fictitious tale to Rimenhild of his own death while disguised as a palmer is also missing from HR:

I fond horn child stonde,
 To schupeward in londe.
 He sede he wolde agesse
 To arive in westernesse.
 Ðe schip nam to þe flode,
 Wiþ me and horn þe gode.
 Horn was sik and deide,
 And faire he me preide,
 'Go wiþ þe ringe,
 To Rymenhild þe 3onge.'
 Ofte he hit custe,
 God 3eue his saule reste.
 (1265-1276)

All of these events in KH clearly demonstrate the numerous changes that tales of this sort go through.⁶⁴

Beside the many differences between the two versions regarding the subject matter of the narratives, the styles of the two versions are also vastly different.⁶⁵ The simple form of KH stands in a marked contrast to its sophisticated model, HR, the most obvious difference being that KH was intended for English-speaking people, and HR for

⁶⁴Schofield, op. cit., p. 82.

⁶⁵McKnight, King Horn, p. v.

French-speaking people.⁶⁶ In KH the author gives no direct evidence of himself; whereas in HR, the author, generally thought to be Thomas, continually addresses his public in the second person, and even interjects his own personal opinions.⁶⁷ The characterization of Rimenhild in KH is almost wild in its naturalness, and even suggests one of the female divinities in Germanic mythology.⁶⁸ Rigmenil, on the other hand, is as sophisticated and refined as Rimenhild is wild and coarse.⁶⁹

The luxury and refinement described in HR also contrasts sharply with the primitive manners and surroundings in KH. For example, Rimenhild shares her single sleeping-room with her six sisters, while Rigmenil has so many maids that all have private rooms, with Rigmenil only keeping one trusted maid in her room. Rimenhild has four maid attendants at her marriage, while Rigmenil has thirty. Ailmer has only five knights in her service; King Hunlaf has thirty. The list is almost endless.⁷⁰

⁶⁶Loc. cit.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. vi.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. vii; cf. McKnight, "Germanic Elements in the Story of King Horn," pp. 227-229.

⁶⁹Loc. cit.; for additional comments on the style of KH, cf. Hibbard, op. cit., pp. 84-87; Sands, op. cit., pp. 7-9; W. O. Sypherd, "Old French Influences on Middle English Phraseology," MP, V (July, 1907), 87-91.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. ix.

The other version of KH that merits attention is HC, written about 1325, and contained in the Auchinleck MS. in incomplete form.⁷¹

Because of its dissimilar features to KH than even HR, most scholars feel that it developed independently from either HR or KH because

. . . the likeness evinces a closer affinity with oral traditions popular at this time and shows certain marked differences from either the French HR or the English KH.⁷²

The main outline of HC is the same as in HR and KH; however, there are some significant changes and modifications, as McKnight points out in his retelling of the tale hereafter paraphrased for the convenience of future reference.

Hatheolf, king of "al Ingeland fram Humber norþ,"⁷³ has one son named Horn. To Horn he gives eight companions and forces them to swear fealty to Horn. When his kingdom is invaded by a Danish army, he destroys them, but within nine months is again attacked, this time by three Irish kings and, after an heroic fight in which he kills 5,000 of the enemy, is stoned to death, and "an erle of Northumberland,"⁷⁴ seizes Hatheolf's kingdom. When Horn and his eight friends escape,

⁷¹Schofield, op. cit., p. 81.

⁷²Walter R. Nelles, "The Ballad of Hind Horn," Journal of American Folklore, XXII (January, 1909), 43; cf. McKnight, King Horn, p. xi; Schofield, op. cit., p. 79.

⁷³Quoted in McKnight, King Horn, p. xiii.

⁷⁴Loc. cit.

they travel southward where they are welcomed into the court of King Houlac. Horn falls in love with Rinnild, the king's daughter, and they plan to marry. However, he is betrayed by two of his "friends," Wikard and Wikel, and is banished from the land by the king. Before he leaves, however, Rinnild gives him a ring with a magic stone:

When þe ston wexeþ wan
 Ðan changeþ þe þought of þi liman
 When þe ston wexeþ rede
 Ðan haue y lorn mi maidenhead.⁷⁵

Horn, then, leaves the court and changes his name to Godebunde (KH, Cutberd), and has many heroic adventures in the forest, including the winning of a great tournament at the court of Elidan in Wales. Then, he sets sail for Ireland to deliver King Finlak from Malkan, his enemy, the murderer of Horn's father. Atula, Finlak's daughter, loves Horn and tries to seduce him, but he remains true to Rinnild. On one occasion, he notices that the stone in his ring has turned pale and, with a hundred knights, leaves Ireland to return to England, where he arrives in time to save Rinnild from an enforced marriage to King Moïoun, whom he kills in a tournament. He then slays Wikard, and cuts out the eye of Wikel, Wikard's brother. He marries Rinnild and, after a huge wedding feast, prepares to return to the north to win back his father's kingdom,

⁷⁵Loc. cit. For a discussion of the magical powers of the ring, cf. Schofield, op. cit., pp. 77-78.

at which point the MS. suddenly ends.⁷⁶

The scene of the actions is clearer in HC than in either HR or KH. The obscure names of Sudene and Westir no longer appear, since the entire action takes place in clearly identified areas in the British Isles. The names of many of the characters are also different. In HR, Horn's father is Aalof, Murry in KH, and Hatheolf in HC; the king of Ireland in HR is Godreche, Thurston in KH, and Finlak in HC; the traitor in HR is Wikele, Finkenchild in KH, and there were two traitors in HC, the brothers Wikard and Wikel. In fact, the only names that are common to all three versions are those of Horn (exactly the same in all three), his faithful lover and eventual wife (Rigmenil in HR, Rimenchild in KH, and Rimnild in HC), and the name of the chief suitor (Modun in HR, Modi in KH, and Moïoun in HC).⁷⁷

The entire introduction of HC, dealing with the bravery and death of Hatheolf, is entirely strange to either HR or KH. Other important differences in HC include the following: Hatheolf's orders that the eight companions bear fealty to Horn (Horn has twelve friends in both HR and KH and none is forced to bear fealty to him); the manner of courtship wherein Horn no longer plays a reluctant part (in both HR

⁷⁶Ibid., pp. xiii-xiv.

⁷⁷McKnight, King Horn, pp. xv-xvi; cf. Schofield, op. cit., pp. 54-79; Nelles, op. cit., pp. 45-52.

and KH, he is shy and backward to the advances of Rimenhild, and in KH, he persuades Rimenhild to have him dubbed, an event lacking in either HR or HC); the departure of Horn's companions, Tebeared, Winwald, Garins, and Athelston for adventure in foreign lands (the only companion mentioned in either HR or KH, besides the traitors Wikele and Fikenhild is Athulf, whom Horn eventually makes king of Ireland after Thurston's death, (1627ff). There is also no account of a Saracen invasion in HC; in HC, the ring given Horn by Rinnild now has magical powers; only in HC is there an account of the heroic adventures of Horn in the forest; and the tournament at the court of Elidan in Wales, and all of Horn's experiences in Ireland are peculiar to HC.⁷⁸

The Horn story next appears in literature in the form of a French romance, Ponthus and the Fair Sidoine, about 1387.⁷⁹ This prose work was written by Geoffrey de la Tour Landry, a French knight, who intended to use the work to exalt his famous family.⁸⁰ In this version, the topography is altered slightly by Landry to include places especially familiar to his readers; in fact, the entire story takes place in France and England.⁸¹ The romance portrays the ideal knight of the fifteenth

⁷⁸Ibid., p. xvii.

⁷⁹Mather, op. cit., p. xvii.

⁸⁰Loc. cit.

⁸¹Ibid., p. xviii; cf. Schofield, op. cit., p. 78.

century, in character as well as achievement.⁸² Schofield comments:

It is important, however, to note that a totally different spirit animated this version of the Horn story than any of its predecessors. The interest of the book consists chiefly in its portrayal of an ideal knight in later chivalrous times. Ponthus is essentially a book of courtesy, fitted for the instruction of noble youth.⁸³

There are three extant MSS. of this version: MS. Royal 15, E. VI, in the British Museum, given to Margaret of Anjou in 1445 by the first Earl of Shrewsbury on the occasion of her marriage; MS. Hh., 3, 16, in the Cambridge University Library; and MS. Ff, 3, 31, also preserved in the Cambridge University Library.⁸⁴

A German version of the Horn story, Pontus, appeared in 1645, translated from the French Ponthus by a daughter of James I of Scotland, who was also the wife of Archduke Sigismund of Austria.⁸⁵ This version enjoyed a great popularity in Germany as was published in Low German and Dutch in the seventeenth century, while frequent German editions appeared throughout the eighteenth century.⁸⁶

In England a prose version entitled Ponthus appeared in 1450,

⁸²Ibid., p. xlvii.

⁸³Schofield, op. cit., p. 79.

⁸⁴Mather, op. cit., p. xlviiii.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. xxxiii.

⁸⁶Loc. cit.

written in the Northern dialect of its author, a Yorkshire scribe.⁸⁷
 The only extant MS. is Digby MS. 185, of the Bodleian Library.⁸⁸
 This version seems to have developed separately from the other English versions, an almost intrinsic characteristic of the English versions of the Horn story.⁸⁹ The nine or ten Scottish Ballads, previously mentioned and known as Hind Horn, are thought to have developed from HC, although this theory has never been fully established.⁹⁰ A distant relative of all of these versions in an extant sixteenth-century Icelandic version entitled Icelandic-rímur, preserved in ten MSS., seven of which are in the Arnamagnean collection in Copenhagen.⁹¹ This version, divided into seventeen fitts is thought to have been composed by Einarsson, even though very little research has been written upon it.⁹² One thinks it unique, however, that a Northern version of this story should have reappeared almost seven centuries after the sagas of Gunnlaug and Helga, and of Olaf the Peacock.

⁸⁷Schofield, op. cit., pp. 79-81.

⁸⁸Mather, op. cit., p. xlv.

⁸⁹Nelles, op. cit., pp. 46-48.

⁹⁰Ibid., pp. 49-50.

⁹¹Schofield, op. cit., p. 75.

⁹²Ibid., p. 76.

As the story of Horn has passed through many forms since its early origins in the Old Norse Gunnlaugs and Laxdoela Sagas of the ninth and tenth centuries, each version has become freer than the one preceding it. New elements have been added at every stage as motives for composition continually change. The heroes are altered from Norsemen to Englishmen or Frenchmen. Journeys by land replace those by sea. The action shifts, more and more, from the locale of the outlying islands of the North to the mainland of Europe and the East. Viking warriors become crusading knights as each generation adds to it their manners and sentiments. Schofield rather well summarizes the plight of such stories like KH as follows:

Few stories illustrate better the extraordinary transmutations that popular tradition is empowered to undergo. Saga lives long by repeatedly shifting its shape . . . The last is always a far fetch from the first.⁹³

⁹³Ibid., p. 83.

CHAPTER III

A TEXTUAL STUDY OF THE CAMBRIDGE AND LAUD MSS. OF KING HORN

The English version of the story of KH is preserved in three MSS. The oldest and most reliable of the three is the Cambridge University MS. Gg., 4. 27, 2 (C.) even though it is merely a fragment of fourteen folios.⁹⁴ It was written in a very plain book-hand around 1250 and contains 1530 lines.⁹⁵ The second MS., Laud Misc. MS. 108 (L.), is well known, because it contains one of the earliest collections of legends, sixty-one legends of the Southern Cycle, three religious poems, and the romances of King Horn (1569 lines) and Havelok the Dane.⁹⁶ This MS. was written in a fine book-hand about 1325, approximately seventy-five years after the composition of the C. MS.⁹⁷ The third text of KH, Harleian MS. 2253 (H.), is also well known to scholars of early English lyric poetry. The MS. was written in an informal, but legible hand of the early fourteenth

⁹⁴McKnight, King Horn, p. xxviii.

⁹⁵Loc. cit. For a discussion of Middle English handwriting, cf. Kenneth Sisam (ed.), Fourteenth Century Verse and Prose, pp. 274-275; John E. Wells, A Manual of the Writings in Middle English, 1050-1400, p. 7.

⁹⁶Wells, op. cit., pp. 292-301.

⁹⁷McKnight, King Horn, p. xxviii.

century, probably about 1325 and contains 1546 lines.⁹⁸ The author of the H. text was well acquainted with HR, the French version of the story, because of his substitution of Allof for Murry as the father of Horn; because the word geste appears in the first line of the poem; and because the French orthography used throughout strongly suggests that the scribe was probably an Anglo-Norman.⁹⁹

These three MSS. of KH consist of verses in short rhymed couplets known as "national rime verse"; i. e., short rhyming couplets that developed from the alliterative long line of earlier Anglo-Norman poetry.¹⁰⁰

Billings says of the rhyme and verse of KH:

. . . the rimes of KH are inextricably united with its style and tone, and its verse represents the final stage in the gradual change of the alliterative long line into the short riming couplet.¹⁰¹

The use of alliteration in KH is close to that used by Layamon's Brut, and strongly suggests that the original dialect of the romance was either

⁹⁸Ibid., p. xxix. Scholars cannot agree upon the exact date of the composition of this MS. Cf. Anna H. Billings, A Guide to the Middle English Metrical Romances, p. 7; Schofield, op. cit., pp. 76-78; Wells, op. cit., p. 9.

⁹⁹Loc. cit.; cf. Schofield, op. cit., pp. 29-32; Northup, op. cit., pp. 535-537; Billings, op. cit., p. 8.

¹⁰⁰Billings, op. cit., pp. 8-9.

¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 10.

Southeastern or Midland.¹⁰² These MSS. appear to be independent of one another, since no two form a group or MS. class.¹⁰³ The most generally accepted theory regarding the actual composition and transmission of the MSS. and the story of KH proposes that it was handed down orally from one singer or minstrel to another, and that no one person followed the original version very closely.¹⁰⁴ This concept in itself does much to explain the many inconsistencies and discrepancies that exist from one MS. to another.

The following textual study concerns itself with only two of the three extant MSS. of KH, the C. and the L.; however, the H. is used, upon occasion, to clarify confusing or ambiguous passages in the other two versions. A study of the C. and L. indicates very strongly that there were certain scribal tendencies at work in both MSS. With regard to the variants in each text, one finds that at least each is, nevertheless, consistent within itself. In C. directional information is more exact, generally reflecting the west or westernesse, whereas in the L., it is rather ambiguous or altogether lacking, but when it does give such information

¹⁰²Ibid., pp. 10-11; cf. McKnight, King Horn, pp. xxiv-xxviii; Sisam, op. cit., pp. 268-271.

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 12; cf. Northup, op. cit., p. 531.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., pp. 12-13; cf. Schofield, op. cit., pp. 10-12; McKnight, King Horn, pp. vii-xvi; Northup, op. cit., pp. 532-534.

it usually reflects the east or estnesse. C. also appears to be more religious in nature with frequent references to Christ ("And alle þat Crist luueþ vpon," 48), while L. consistently substitutes God for Christ in its "religious" references ("And al þat god leuet on.," 48). The use of Christ's name is always capitalized in C., but the use of God's name is seldom capitalized in L. The first person personal pronoun is ihc in C., an incorrect form, but in L., the correct form, ich, is used. There is also frequent confusion over characters' names in both texts, the most obvious example being l. 965 in both versions in which C. reads, "'Horn,' he sede, 'i seie þe,'" and L., "'Do, cuberd,' he seyde." The confusion, here, is more pronounced by the fact that these lines take place in Thurston's court in Ireland, with Thurston speaking in both cases. Horn has given his name as Cutberd and not Horn, so that when the king addresses him by the correct name, the C. scribe obviously makes an error, forgetting that Thurston does not know Horn by his proper name, but only as Cutberd. L., on the other hand, is consistent in referring to Horn as Cuberd. There are also frequent changes in number and person of pronouns; specified numbers vary from text to text; time is not always the same (L. seems to favor the past tense more than C.); head counts in groups of characters are not always the same; the L. text has the habit of adding an "h" to the beginnings of words like under—hunder, after—hafter; and rhyme, or a lack of it, constitutes a major variant in each text.

Currently, there are three theories which scholars generally espouse in explaining the origin and composition of the L. Text: (1) the L. text was copied down as the C. text was being read or sung in a hall or inn, much as a secretary would take dictation today, or as a student takes notes; (2) the L. text was reconstructed purely from memory by its author; or (3) the L. text was translated from a French version or text of KH, other than HR, which very possibly could have existed in the seventy-five-year span between the composition of the two MSS., a time in England when Anglo-Norman was prominent in the literary life of the country. All of these theories find support in C. and L., but, hopefully, a more probable one will emerge from this present investigation.

The case for the transcribing of the L. MS. while the C. was being dictated or sung is indeed a strong one. One must particularly notice the rhyme, or a lack of it, when considering this possibility. If someone were writing down his own version of the story from dictation, it would not be surprising to find that he has reversed some of the lines particularly regarding the end rhymes. Many examples of this kind are readily apparent in both texts, as the following samples reveal:

Cambridge

In none kinge riche
 Nas non his iliche.
 (19-20)

Whan þe kyng arise
 On a squieres wise.
 (377-378)

Laud

Was noman him yliche
 Bi none kinges riche.
 (19-20)

In a squieres wise
 Wan þe king aryse.
 (377-378)

Cambridge

Murie was þe feste,
 Al of faire gestes.
 (553-554)

For þi luue in þe felde,
 Mid spere and mid schelde.
 (589-590)

Today, after mi dubbing,
 So irod on mi pleing,
 (667-668)

Laud

Comen were þe gestes,
 Amorwe was þe feste.
 (553-554)

For þe lef syt schelde,
 In mideward þe felde.
 (589-590)

Der y rod on mypleying
 Sone hafter my dobbing.
 (667-668)

In one particular instance, two couplets in succession have rhymes reversed between texts:

Cambridge

Do nu þat þu er of spake, (a)
 To þi wif þume take. (b)
 Ef þu art trewe of dedes, (c)
 Do nu ase þu sedes. (d)
 (567-570)

Laud

Yf þou be trewe of dedes, (c)
 Do þat þou arre seydes (d)
 Do nou þat we speke, (a)
 To wif þou schalt me take. (b)
 (567-570)

Many other couplets could be cited, but these examples demonstrate how easy it would be for a scribe to miss an end rhyme, and then, in an attempt to compensate for it, slightly to rework the line and, as a result, reverse the end word to keep the rhyme in the couplet.

However, there are many times in the L. text in which rhyme is noticeably absent, even though the word order, metre, feet, are very close to the C. text. For example, in C., "Ofte heo him custe, / So wel so wel so hire luste," but in L., "Often hye him kiste, / So wel hire luste." There is a likely possibility, however, that kiste is a phonetic reconstruction of custe, which the scribe made in a futile attempt to rhyme his

couplet. The H. text for these same lines (425-426) reads as "ofte heo him custe, / so wel hyre luste." Other examples include: C., "Ne feolle hit þe of cunde / To spuse beo me bunde" (451-452), but in L., "Ich am nawt of kende / þe to spouse welde." There is obviously no rhyme, here, in the L. text. For the same lines, H. records "of kunde me ne felde / þe to spouse welde," thus, closely paralleling L., but with rhyme; C., "Armes heo gan bu3e"; L., "Armes hye nam boþe" (457). Here, the words gan—nam and bu3e—boþe are at odds with each other. The meaning is similar in each line, but the words are entirely different. H. reads, "armes bigon vnbowe," entirely different from either C. or L., and does not clarify the situation in this case.

Discrepancy in end rhyme recurs in many other occasions in the two texts, as follows: C., "Horn in herte was ful wo, / And tok hire on his armes two"; L., "Hor hire ofte wende, / And in hys armes trende" (459-460), while H. reads as "Horn hire vp hente; / ant in is armes trente"; C., "Rymenhild, þat swete þing, / Wakede of hire swohinge"; L., "Ðo reymyl þe 3enge / Com of hire swohinge." (473-474), and H. reads as "þo rymenild þe 3ynge / a-ros of hir swowenyng."; C., "And tolde him ful 3are / Hu he hadde ifare"; L., "He talde to him þere / hon he hauede hy fare." (497-498), while H. reads "ant tolde him þare / hou hede yfare."; C. "Ðe kni3t hyre gan to kesse, / And heo him to blesse"; L., "Ðe kni3t gan to kusse, / And reymyld him blisse." (617-618), and H. reads "þe knyht hire gan to cusse, / ant rymenild him to blesse."; C., "I smot hem

alle to grunde, / Oþer 3af hem dipes wunder," L., "Ich broute hem alto grunde / In one lite stounde" (677-678), and H. reads "y smot hem all to grunde / in a lutel stounde." Of the five examples given thus far, the H. text agrees with the L. text in the case of four:

<u>L.</u>		<u>H.</u>
<u>wende</u> - <u>trende</u>		<u>hente</u> - <u>trente</u>
<u>3enge</u> - <u>swohinge</u>		<u>3ynge</u> - <u>swowenyge</u>
<u>kusse</u> - <u>blisse</u>		<u>cusse</u> - <u>blesse</u>
<u>grunde</u> - <u>stounde</u>		<u>grunde</u> - <u>stounde</u>

The very fact that these two MSS. agree so readily in this respect deserves a great deal more scholarly research than has been done in the past.

In C., (807-808), "Ðat him scholde londe / In westerne londe," there seems to be something wrong with the rhyme of the end words londe and londe. L. records the same lines as "Ðat hym scholde wisse / Out of westnisse," while H. reads "þat him shulde passe / Out of westnesse." Here again the L. and the H. texts agree, but the C. text is completely different. The suggestion of phonetic spelling on the part of L.'s scribe makes its appearance again in these lines: C., "Ðat on him het harild, / And þat oþer berild,"; L., "Ðat on was hoten ayld, / And þat oþer byrild" (815-816), while H. reads "þat on wes hoten Abyld, / ant þat oþer beryld." If one pronounces harild and ayld, it seems as if the latter is a phonetic reconstruction of the former.

In one particular instance, not only has the end rhyme been changed but also the number and person of the pronouns used have also been

changed. Hereafter, the three texts and the lines in question follow:

Cambridge

3ef oþer þre slen vre,
Al þis lond beo 3oure;
3ef vre on ouercomeþ 3our þreo,
Al þis lond schal vre beo.
(869-872)

Laud

3yf þat houre felle þyne þre,
Al þis lond schal vre be;
3yf þyne þre fellen houre,
Al þys lond þanne be 3yure.
(869-872)

Harleian

3ef oure þre sleh oure on,
we shulen of ore londe gon;
3ef vre on sleh oure þre,
al þis lond shal vre be.

There are any number of examples in which end rhymes have been altered or altogether changed, but the more obvious ones include: C., "He smot him þure3 þe herte, / Ðat sore him gan to smerte"; L., "Myd gode dunt ate furste, / he smot him to þe herte" (933-934), and H. reads as "mid god suerd at þe furste, / he smot him þourh þe huerte"; C., "Asla3en beþ mine heirs, / And þu art kni3t of muchel pris" (here, again, the C. text is at odds on rhyme); L., "Dede deþ myn heyres, / And þou pe boneyres" (967-968), the H. text is missing for these lines;¹⁰⁵ C., "To wude for to schete, / A knaue he gan imete"; L., "To wode for to seche, / A page he gan mete" (1011-1012), and the H. text reads as "to wode forte shete, /

¹⁰⁵One of the most perplexing problems in a study of this kind is the frequent number of "breaks" or hiatuses in the MSS. None of the scholars consulted in this investigation has offered any explanation for these breaks, the reason for their occurrence, or their purpose or function, if any. McKnight is the only one who comments on the problem, and he merely says, "No gap in MS.," even though in some cases these "gaps" go on for five or six lines.

a page he gan mete." Seche in the L. text is probably a phonetic spelling for schete in the C. text. One notices the change in the following couplets as the MSS. vary: C., "Horn iherde wiþ his ires, / And spak wiþ bidere tires"; L., "Horn hyt herde with eren, / And wep with blody teren" (1033-1034). Not only is there a change from bitter (bidere) tears to bloody (blody) tears, but there is also an apparent shift in time (ires—tires—iren—teren). H. reads as "Horn hit herde wiþ earen, / ant spec wiþ wete tearen." The following two couplets also indicate that an attempt has been made by the author of L. to maintain the rhyme by resorting to phonetic spelling. C., "Ðe knaue þer gan adrinke, / Rymenhild hit mi3te of þinke"; L., "Ðe se hym to drenche, / Reymyld hyt my3t of þinche." (1045-1046). The word, þinche, is a corruption of the C. text's þinke. H. reads as "þe see him gon adrynke; / þat rymenil may of þinke"; D., "He dude writes sende / Into yrtonde"; L., "Horn sente hys sonde / In to eueryche londe" (1077-1078), while H. reads "he sende þo by sonde, / 3end al is londe."

A truly remarkable change in lines has occurred in the following three couplets:

<u>Cambridge</u>	<u>Laud</u>
And in strong <u>halle</u> , (a)	Mody myd strenþe hyre <u>hadde</u> (e)
Biþinne castel <u>walle</u> , (b)	And in to toure <u>ladde</u> , (f)
Ðer iwas atte <u>3ate</u> ; (c)	Into a stronge <u>halle</u> (a)
Nolde hi me in <u>late</u> . (d)	Whit inne kastel <u>walle</u> (b)
Modi ihote <u>hadde</u> (e)	Ðer ich was <u>attegate</u> ; (c)
To bure þat me hire <u>ladde</u> . (f)	Moste ich mawt in <u>rake</u> . (d)
(1121-1126)	(1121-1126)

Unfortunately, the H. text cannot be used, here, as it is "gapped" during these lines. In C., (1281-1282), there is no rhyme in the couplet, "Heo feol on hire bedde / Ðer heo knif hudde," even though the corresponding lines in the other two texts do rhyme. L. reads as "Hye fel adoun on þe bed / Ðer hye havede knyues leyd," and H. reads as "Hue fel adoun a bedde, / an after knyues gredde." The same situation also exists in these lines, C., "'King,' he seyde, "þu luste / A tale mid þe beste"; L., "He seyde, 'kyng so longe / My tale þou honderstonde" (1355-1356), and H. reads as "he seyde, 'kyng of londe, / mi tale þou vnderstonde.'" It is increasingly clear, therefore, that there is a greater degree of affinity between the L. and the H. texts than between the C. and the L. or between the C. and the H., explained in part by the fact that both L. and H. were composed within a few years of each other, with one possibly serving as the model for the other. In any case, though, there is room for more research on this aspect of the relationship between the two MSS.

Thus, the case for the Laud MS. as a dictated scribal version of KH rests chiefly upon two considerations: (1) the numerous couplets in which the end rhymes have been neatly reversed without changing the essential aspects of the line, and (2) the many instances in which words in both MSS. have been slightly altered to preserve their rhyme, even though this situation many times results in no rhyme at all. That this characteristic does not drastically alter the meaning of the lines involved has already been established, but it does occur with frequency and

regularity enough to warrant further investigation. For that matter, the relationship between the three MSS. has never fully been ascertained, and perhaps never will be, but the fact remains that there are any number of unanswered questions involved in this consideration.

The theory espoused by some scholars regarding the composition of the L. MS. as being related to a scribe's memory has credence, although evidence to support this theory is not as conclusive as that offered in support of the "dictation" theory. The greatest single piece of evidence to support this mnemonic theory is the fact that the major, and even crucial, elements of the story are basically the same in all three MSS. Horn's exile from his native Sudene (118-164), his journey to Westernesse and his life at the court of Ailmar there (175-728), his love for Rimenhild, his betrayal by Fikenhild, and his subsequent exile (733-808), his arrival and life at the court of Thurston in Ireland (811-1083), his return to Westernesse to save Rimenhild from marriage to Modi of Reynes (1088-1380), his return to Sudene to drive out the Saracens and to prepare for his reign there with Rimenhild as his queen (1381-1540), and his hurried return to Westernesse to save Rimenhild from marriage, this time to Fikenhild, and his eventual triumphant return to Sudene as its rightful king (1561-1644) are all narrated in about the same manner in the three MSS., especially in the C. and L. texts. It is only after "gaps" or "breaks" in either MS. or passages dealing with exact numbers, places, or dates that the two MSS. become at odds with each other. In such cases,

the H. MS. plays an important role as a clarifying agent of the lines in question. A good example occurs early in the narration. Lines 17-18 are missing in the C., but L. continues with "He was fayr and eke bold / And of fiftene winter hold." This situation occurs again in ll. 37-38 of the L. text which reads "With him riden bote tvo; / Al to fewe ware þo." This added information in the L. text in no way changes the meaning of the story.

Most of the divergent lines are, however, not as harmless or insignificant as those cited above. For example ll. 559-560 are missing in L., and when the two MSS. coincide again, one finds these lines: C., "Rymenhild on flore stod, / Hornes come hire þu3te god"; L., "He nam his felawe in hys honde, / And fonde Reymyld in boure stonde" (561-562). The H. text may not be used for clarification, here, because these corresponding lines are missing. Another discrepancy occurs in ll. 687-688, following a two-line break in the C. text:

Cambridge

At hom lefte ffikenhild,
 Ðat was þe wurste moder child.

Laud

Wyt hym rod fokenhil,
 Ðat alþe werste moder child.

Harleian

to þe wode syde,
 ant Fykenyld bi is syde.

Here, again, the H. text supports L. over C. Lines 803-804 are missing in C., but read in L. as, "Ayol wep wit heye, / And alle þat hym seys."

Even though these lines are missing in this particular place in C., they reappear in ll. 809-810 as "Apulf weop wip i3e, / And al þat him isi3e," while the L. reads as "Ðe why3t him gan stonde, / And drof tyl hirelonde" for these same two lines. H. reads in ll. 803-804, as "Apulf wep wip ey3en, / ant alle þat hit ysey3en" and "þe wynd bigon to stonde, / ant drof hem vp o londe" for ll. 809-810. Were someone constructing the L. MS. from memory and were conscientious in the endeavor, it would not be surprising for him occasionally to rearrange the couplets as he wrote from memory.

As the poem progresses, the differences between the two MSS. become more and more pronounced. What began as one- or two-line differences in the first half of the poem—then usually only after breaks in the MSS.—soon becomes three-, four-, or five-line differences which recur with greater frequency. For example, these following discrepancies in ll. 911-916 are extremely pronounced:

<u>Cambridge</u>	<u>Laud</u>
Ðeilke bataille	Cubert him gan asayle;
Cutberd gan assaille,	Wolde he nawt fayle.
He 3af dentes ino3e.	He keyte dundes ynowe;
His dent he gan wipdra3e,	Hys feren gonne hem wyt drawe,
For hi were ne3 asla3e.	Ðo here mayster wa slawe.

The H. text helps to clarify matters, reading as follows:

Harleian

Godmod hem gon asaylen;
 nolde he nout faylen.
 he 3ef dundes ynowe;

þe payen fel y swowe.
 ys feren gonne hem wiþ drawe,
 for huere maister wes neh slawe.¹⁰⁶

Another major discrepancy between the MSS. occurs in these lines as follows:

Cambridge

Alle þat were þerin,
 Biþute his twelf ferin
 And þe kyng Aylmare
 He dude hem alle to kare.
 Ðat at þe feste were
 Here lef hi lete þere.
 (1329-1334)

Laud

Hye þat ate feste heten,
 Here lyue he gonne þer leten
 And þe kyng mody
 Hym he made bloddy.
 And þe kyng aylmere
 Ðo hauede myche fere.
 (1329-1334)

Harleian

alle þat þer euere weren,
 wiþ-oute is trewe feren
 ant þe kyng aylmare,
 ywis he hade mucche care.
 monie þat þer sete,
 hure lyf hy gonne lete.
 (1329-1334)

The most puzzling part of these lines is the phrase, "kyng mody," which does not appear in the other two MSS. The H. MS. also agrees, here, more closely with the C. than with the L., a rather interesting development. Another rather prominent discrepancy occurs in ll. 1339-1342:

¹⁰⁶In the Cambridge MS., Horn is known as Cutberd in Ireland, as Cuberd in the Laud MS., and as Godmod in the Harleian MS. The name of Godmod closely links the Harleian MS. to HR and the French traditions of the Horn story.

Cambridge

Horn neure bitraie,
 Ðe3 he at dipe laie.
 Hi Runge þe belle,
 Ðe wedlak for to felle.

Laud

And ofte he sworn hopes holde,
 Ðat þere non ne scholde.
 No ware horn by wreyen
 Ðou he to deþe leyen.

Harleian

Horn neuer bytreye,
 þah he on deþe leye.
 þer hy ronge þe belle,
 þat wedlake to fulfulle.

Immediately following these lines is a four-line break in the C. text, during which the L. MS. continues with these lines:

He rongen þe bellen,
 Ðe wedding for to fullen,
 Of hor þat was so hende,
 And of reymyld þe 3onge.
 (1343-1347)

Lines 1343-1344 are similar to ll. 1341-1342 in the C. MS., again strongly suggesting that the author of the L. MS. was composing from memory, inasmuch as the narrative is still essentially the same, even with drastic changes in the arrangement of the couplets. For example, one may consider these couplets:

Cambridge

Strong castel he let sette,
 Mid see him biflette.
 Ðer ne mi3te li3te
 Bute fo3el wiþ fli3te;
 Bute whanne þe see wiþ dro3e,
 Mi3te come men yno3e.
 (1503-1508)

Laud

A kastel he dude feste
 Wit water alby sette.
 Mi3t no man hon on legge,
 By pape ne by brigge;
 Bote wan þe wit drowe,
 Ðer munthe come.
 (1503-1508)

Harleian

Castel he made sette,
 wiþ water by flette
 þat þer yn come ne myhte
 bote foul wiþ flyhte;
 bote when þe see wiþ-drowe,
 þer mihte come ynowe.
 (1503-1508)

Following an eight-line break in the L. MS., one finds these lines:

Cambridge

Er þane horn hit wiste,
 To fore þe sunne vpriste.
 His schup stod vnder ture,
 At Rymenhilde bure.
 Rymenhild, litel wenep heo
 Ðat Horn þanne aliuē beo.

Laud

Here schip bigan to terne
 By þe wateres sterne.
 Hys schip stod in store,
 Honder fikenildes boure.
 Ne wiste horn on liue.
 Whar he was a Ryue.

Harleian (ll. 1551-1552 are missing)

Hornes ship atstod in stoure,
 vnder fykenhildes boure,
 nuste horn a-lyue
 wher he wes aryue.
 (1551-1556)

Thus, a case for the Laud MS. as composed entirely from memory rests chiefly upon the greater number of instances in which entire couplets or groups of couplets are rearranged in sequence in comparison with order given in the C. MS., however, with no major changes in the story line.

The third theory regarding the composition of the L. MS. suggests that the L. MS. is the result of a translation of a French version of KH, other than HR.¹⁰⁷ This theory is much more difficult to support because

¹⁰⁷Billings, op. cit., pp. 6-7.

of the many subtleties involved. There are no reversed rhymes or massive rearrangement of couplets to offer as evidence as is the case for the previous two theories. What one finds, however, is an occasional extra foot in a line in the L. MS., or an elaboration in description of a feast or a wedding, or even a line marked through because it indicates a repetition. All of these cases rather subtly and indirectly point toward the possibility of a translation. For example, one notices the extra foot added to l. 652 in the L. text as opposed to the C., "And þo3te on rimenilde" becomes "And þoute on reymild þe yenge" in L. This situation also occurs many other times as, for example, l. 665, C., "'Kyng,' he sede, 'wel þu sitte'" becomes "He seyde, 'lemman, þin ore'" but, L. text; l. 695, C., "Horn sede, 'lef þinore'" but, instead, it reads, "He seyde, 'lemman, þin ore'" in the L. text; l. 920 of L. records, "nes honde," terms which are "underdotted" as a mistake, possibly caused by simple error in translation.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, l. 1170 in C. reads, "þat he cuþe knowe," but becomes "þat trewe was and ful of lawe" in the same line in the L. text. The line "Redi to fi3te," l. 1302 in C., reads, "Hyrische men so wy3te" in L. Between ll. 1399-1400 in the L. text there is an incomplete line "Horn hym gan m," which is again "underdotted" as a scribal error.¹⁰⁹ The C. MS. renders l. 1486 simply as "In

¹⁰⁸McKnight, King Horn, p. 39.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 59.

a roche walle," while L. renders it as "Wit inne euerich walle," with this same line repeated in the L. text.¹¹⁰ The description of Horn's disguised entry into Fikenhild's castle to rescue Rimenhild reads, "Hi sede hi were harpurs, / And sume were gigours" (1591-1592) in the C. text; but the same lines in L. read, "Men seyde hyt harperes, / Iogelours and fipelers." It is fairly obvious, therefore, that the author of L. was attempting to make this account of the wedding feast more elaborate and entertaining than it is in the C. text, for one notes that even H. records, "men seide hit were harpeirs, / iogelers and fypelers."

Many minor errors in the L. MS. also point to translation as their probable source of origin with a frequent mix-up of names of people and places and a noticeable lack of directional statements in the L. text. Admittedly, the evidence supporting this theory is not nearly as convincing as that for the other two theories; but, as one carefully reads the two MSS. with frequent clarifying references to the H. text, he concludes that this theory becomes more and more a reality than a mere possibility.

CHAPTER IV

THE STORY OF KING HORN: A NEW TEXTUAL ORDER

The development of KH from the time of its early Norse origins in the ninth and tenth centuries is, indeed, remarkable. As the Norsemen ventured southward throughout Northern Europe and the British Isles, they took their stories and legends with them. With the Norse invasions of Germanic lands came the basic elements of KH and other similar stories. It was, then, that these Norse elements became fused with many native characteristics, particularly those of the Germanic tribes. As the story spread further southward, each group of people added its own unique variants, much as did the English and French in their later versions of the story. Eventually, oral versions of the Horn story gave way to written ones, as evident in the earliest known recorded version, Horn et Rimenhild, a twelfth-century French romance. This version served as the model for the thirteenth-century English romance, King Horn, which is the subject of this present investigation. Even though both versions were composed by different authors and in different centuries, each is based upon the same ancient narrative, and each reveals its own peculiar native elements. Because of its popularity, the Horn story appeared in many forms throughout Europe and the British Isles. For example, there is a later English version, Horn Child and Maiden Rimnild (1325), as well as a later French version, Ponthus et Sidoine (1387). Other extant versions include Pontus,

a German prose romance composed about 1450; Hind Horn, a collection of nine or ten Scottish ballads of the late fifteenth century; and Icelandic-rímur, an Icelandic version composed in the sixteenth century. All of these versions of the story not only indicate its popularity but also emphasize its longevity. KH serves as a good example of the descent and development of Continental literature of the romance tradition.

This textual study was originally undertaken for the purpose of examining the Cambridge and Laud MSS. because of a supposed affinity. However, as the investigation proceeded, it became increasingly clear that this similarity was less apparent than had been thought in the past and, in many cases, altogether lacking. One reason for the development of such a false assumption may lie in McKnight's positioning of the three MSS. in his edition of the text of KH, which has served as the primary source for this study. He positions the Cambridge and Laud MSS. so that one naturally assumes that there exists a great deal in common between the two. He also places the Harleian MS. at the bottom of his page because of its apparent irrelevance to the problem at hand. Thus, it is a simple matter for even a casual reader to assume a non-existent relationship between the Cambridge and Laud MSS. Other scholars have, like McKnight, always considered these two MSS. to be greatly similar with regard to word order, metre, and rhyme. However, as this present study demonstrates, this assumption is merely based upon false information, because, time and time again, the Laud and Harleian MSS. follow

each other more closely with regard to these considerations than do the Cambridge and Laud MSS. The number of lines in which these similarities exist in the Laud and Harleian texts is far greater in number and more pronounced than between the Cambridge and Laud texts. One consistently finds a greater degree of affinity between the Laud and Harleian MSS., therefore, than between the Cambridge and Laud MSS.

Another textual problem presented by a study of the MSS. concerns the presently espoused theories related to the composition of the Laud MS. Even though the evidence presented in this present investigation strongly supports the two theories of composition by means of dictation or from memory, a third theory, concerning composition by translation, is most intriguing. However, it is entirely possible that none or all three of these theories is correct, but until more research is undertaken on the vital aspects of this romance, scholars will be seriously handicapped in their efforts to understand more fully the nature of the composition and transmission of the Horn story.

Previous scholars have also failed to take note of the fact that the composition dates of the Laud and Harleian MSS. are within a very few years of each other, if not exactly the same. Furthermore, there is a fifty or seventy-five year gap between the composition of the Cambridge and Laud MSS., leading one to expect a much closer affinity between the Laud and Harleian MSS. than between the Cambridge and Laud MSS. The truth is that previous scholars have been working from a false

assumption concerning the relationship between these three MSS. of KH.

Another problem surrounding a study of KH is that of hiatuses or "breaks" in the MSS., because none of the scholars has made any serious attempt to explain this mystery. In many cases, similar breaks occur in all three MSS., thus leaving the scholar at a loss to discover the reason. This textual problem demands a meticulous study, because it is basic to a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the story line of the romance. McKnight's comment, "No gap in MS.," can hardly be considered a satisfactory resolution of the problem in light of the vast amount of research that needs to be done in this area.

The problems discussed thus far have a definite relationship to those surrounding a textual study of KH. There has been little or no research undertaken upon this romance for approximately forty years. The earliest primary text was published in 1897, and the most recent one in 1931. Even those secondary sources which were consulted were written in the early part of this century or in the latter part of the last century. The lack of research upon this romance is appalling.

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