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Review Essay: Richmond, Velma Bourgeois. *The Legend of Guy of Warwick*

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defined sources. He should, however, be congratulated for having written a very appealing and readable volume.

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Richmond, Velma Bourgeois. *The Legend of Guy of Warwick*. Garland Studies in Medieval Literature, no. 14. Garland, New York, 1996. 632 pp., illustrated, index. $95.00.

Richmond has published previously on other topics in medieval English studies, namely the medieval *planctus* and Middle English romance. Richmond's exhaustive study *The Legend of Guy of Warwick* begins with Anglo-Saxon times and brings the reader down to the 1980s. Lavishly illustrated, the chronological survey covers the medieval period in three chapters (about 150 pages), then the Renaissance and early modern era (another 150 pages or so), and, to the last section, dealing with nineteenth- and twentieth-century retellings of the legend, the author devotes another one-hundred fifty pages. Notes and bibliography receive some twenty pages; the thirty page index makes the monograph very user-friendly. The extensive work offers literary and social history at its best, with a focus on changing genres and manuscript and book production through the ages. Richmond emphasizes cultural, political, and religious aspects of one of the most long-lived popular legends in England, that of Guy of Warwick. Named in chronicles and heraldic rolls, Guy entered history thanks in part to the powerful Earls of Warwick, and especially Richard de Beauchamp's co-opting of the legendary figure to advance political ends. As one of the Nine Worthies, Guy arose to his highest fame in the Renaissance, and his feats became the subject of ballads, theatrical productions, and numerous other textual allusions.

Though the legend was originally set in the tenth century, the hero enjoyed his first literary appearance in an early thirteenth-century Anglo-Norman romance. Centripetal development of folktale-like retellings can be found in two English translations that survived the Middle Ages, a new French prose romance, a didactic tale in the *Gesta Romanorum*, and late medieval versions in Celtic, German, and Catalan (*Tirant lo Blanc*, from Valencia, ca. 1490), as well as English. Edwardian children's stories featured Guy of Warwick, as did the Warwick Pageant, a historical extravaganza of 1906. An English champion from the period

of King Athelstan, Guy fought against the Danes, and a celebrated single combat at Bruneburgh, between Guy and Colebrant (King Anelaf's Saracen giant-champion), seems to provide the kernel of popular tradition. But the hero is not mentioned specifically in any written text until the 1230s, when he appears in the aforementioned Anglo-Norman text— probably composed in the region of Warwick (including Wallingford, Oxford, Buckingham, and especially the monastery of Oseney). This is the work that gets turned into French prose (ca. 1400–1450).

Richmond begins with antecedents in the Norman world—in Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman legendary sources—as well as drawing on elements from William Marshall, St. Alexis, William of Orange, and Chrétien de Troyes. Her Chapter Two was a gamble (in my view, it should have come first), for there we find a detailed outline of the narrative events, as found particularly in the 12,926 lines of the Anglo-Norman romance *Gui de Warewic*, last edited by Alfred Ewert in 1933 (two volumes in the Classiques français du Moyen Age series). The author argues that, like a family history or royal chronicle, this "ancestral romance" (Dominica Legge's term) belongs to "genealogical literature" (Georges Duby's category) for texts "written to present the lineage and remarkable deeds of a family who were patron to the author" (39). But unlike a chronicler, the medieval clerk (reminiscent of Hollywood's recent remakes) reconstructed "the past as it ought to have been" (39).

The third and fourth chapters cover mostly fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Middle English romances, as well as other national versions, such as the Irish and Catalan lives of Guy. Chapter Five, entitled "Renaissance Diversity," deals with a series of minor literary texts featuring the Guy of Warwick legend. Eighteenth-century literary treatments by writers such as Humphrey Crouch, Samuel Smithson, George Conyers, and several antiquarians form the matter of Chapter Six. The legend of Guy, as it appeared in nursery books, children's literature, skits, poems, and rewritten local histories is treated in Chapter Seven. The final chapter, quite a tour de force in itself, takes up the 1906 Warwick Pageant, as well as retellings by Andrew Lang and other children's authors, and details the incorporation of the legend into guidebooks and more recent local folktales. The very last topic is "Guy in Restaurant and Public House" (455–56), which explores the hero's appearance in folk art (depictions in pub decorations).

In its barest outline, the story consists of what I like to call a "gamma game," wherein the hero "dies" (symbolically), then returns to

enjoy a kind of apotheosis. Little Lisa Simpson of cartoon fame put it simply one time, "We leave those who love and need us to help those whom we think need our help." Strict-rule feminists, however, might counter, "Men don't leave." Like St. Alexis, Guy heads off to perform good works of charity and abandons his wife, who gratefully (?) receives him back after a long separation.

Now, we must express our gratitude to the author for digesting enormous chunks of material, from sixteenth-century chapbooks to dusty romances from the nineteenth and early twentieth century. She has pursued references and hints even down to long-forgotten post-romantic children's books, suggesting perhaps a link to the revival associated with Scott's *Ivanhoe* and other medievalizing trends. But, if anything, it is her quirky and quixotic style that one can fault.

"Guy of Warwick would be a great hero in the cinema. That is the way in which legends evolve" (456). Thus does the author's most apt curtain line bring this ponderous, sometimes garrulous tome to an end.

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Ruh, Kurt. *Geschichte der abendländischen Mystik.* Vol. III: *Die Mystik des deutschen Predigerordens und ihre Grundlegung durch die Hochscholastik.* Verlag C. H. Beck, Munich, 1996. 534 pp. DM 118.

After the completion of two previous volumes on the history of medieval theology and mysticism, Kurt Ruh, nestor of German medieval philology, here presents a third volume in which he discusses the scholastic foundation of mysticism in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Ruh sees his monograph not as a separate publication, but instead continues with the numbering of his chapters based on the last volume, that is, with chapter 30. Ruh does not seek to provide completely new insights and discoveries. This volume is more like a literary history in which the author has culled his information from a wide range of secondary and primary sources. In many respects, Ruh has created a summary and overview for his readers who are not sufficiently familiar with the philosophical concepts and ideas of high-medieval scholasticism.

Basically, Ruh introduces the individual thinkers from a biographical point of view, then examines their most important treatises and discusses