



Cultural Difference and Material Culture in Middle English Romance: Normans and Saxons (Routledge Research in Medieval Literature)

Dominique Battles

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This book explores how the cultural distinctions and conflicts between Anglo-Saxons and Normans originating with the Norman Conquest of 1066 prevailed well into the fourteenth century and are manifest in a significant number of Middle English romances including *King Horn*, *Havelok the Dane*, *Sir Orfeo*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, and others. Specifically, the study looks at how the material culture of these poems (architecture, battle tactic, landscapes) systematically and persistently distinguishes between Norman and Anglo-Saxon cultural identity. Additionally, it examines the influence of the English Outlaw Tradition, itself grounded in Anglo-Saxon resistance to the Norman Conquest, as expressed in specific recurring scenes (disguise and infiltration, forest exile) found in many Middle English romances. In the broadest sense, a significant number of Middle English romances, including some of the most well-read and often-taught, set up a dichotomy of two ruling houses headed by a powerful lord, who compete for power and influence. This book examines the cultural heritage behind each of these pairings to show how poets repeatedly contrast essentially Norman and Anglo-Saxon values and ruling styles.

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