

## **Appendix A      Summary of *King Horn*** **13<sup>th</sup> century, Middle English and Anglo-Norman**

Horn is the son of King Allof of Sudene and his queen. Of all his companions, Horn has a particular love for two: Athulf who is ‘the best’ and Fikenild who is ‘the worst’. King Allof is then killed by Saracen pirates, and Horn is set adrift with his two favourite companions, because the pirates are afraid that he will avenge his father. The boys land in a country called Westnesse and are received by King Aylmer. Horn’s royal birth is not made known, but Rymenild, the king’s daughter, falls in love with him, and tells him that he may marry her. Horn protests that he is only of low birth, saying that it would be no fair wedding between a thrall and the king. Rymenild faints at this response of his, but it is soon clear that Horn intends to accept the princess’s love. She persuades her father to knight him, and Horn undertakes to prove himself before marrying Rymenild. He soon distinguishes himself by killing a band of Saracen pirates. Meanwhile, Rymenild dreams that a fish has broken her net, and Horn interprets the dream as meaning that some ill-wisher will destroy their happiness. And, sure enough, Fikenild tells the king that Horn has seduced Rymenild and intends to destroy the king. The king believes Fikenild when he finds Horn and Rymenild in each other’s arms. Horn is exiled and sets sail for Ireland.

In Ireland, he adopts the name of Goodmind or Cutbeard (‘Godmod’ in the Harley text, ‘Cutberd’ in the Cambridge University text, ‘Cubert’ in the Bodleian text; ‘Gudmod’ in *Horn et Rymenild*; ‘Godebounde’ in *Horn Childe and Maiden Rimmild*). Here he serves as a knight under King Thurstan, and avenges his father’s death by killing an invading giant Saracen, who appears at Christmas and who, he knows, was the very man who killed his father. He remains at King Thurstan’s court for seven years, but refuses the hand of the princess in marriage, offered to him by the king.

Meanwhile, Rymenild is promised to King Mody of Reynis, and she sends a messenger to find Horn, but, while he manages to deliver the message, he is drowned before he can bring Rymenild the news that Horn will return. Horn returns, disguised as a beggar, his neck blackened with coal-dust, and gets into the castle. He makes himself known to Rymenild by making puns about drinking horns, by alluding to a fishing net which has been set for seven years, and by dropping into her cup a ring which she has given him. He finally wipes off the black disguise, as he asks her if she does not now recognise him. Then he kills the king to whom she is promised, and confronts her kingly father with his true identity and the assertion that he had been exiled because the king had believed the lies of Fikenild. Horn then announces that he is leaving the court to win back his heritage, and that he will return as a king to claim Rymenild as his queen. He sets off to do so, with his friend Athulf, and is successful in regaining his kingdom and restoring his mother. Meanwhile, however, Fikenild builds a castle and tries to force Rymenild into marrying him. The king does not dare forbid him to do so. Horn has a warning dream, enters the castle disguised as a harper and kills Fikenild. He then rewards the faithful, and gives Athulf in marriage to King Thurstan’s daughter in Ireland. He and Rymenild rule in his kingdom of Sudene.

