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0521843030 - Literature, Nationalism, and Memory in Early Modern England and Wales

Philip Schwyzer

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## LITERATURE, NATIONALISM, AND MEMORY IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND AND WALES

The Tudor era has long been associated with the rise of nationalism in England, yet nationalist writing in this period often involved the denigration and outright denial of Englishness. Philip Schwyzer argues that the ancient, insular, and imperial nation imagined in the works of writers such as Shakespeare and Spenser was not England but Britain. Disclaiming their Anglo-Saxon ancestry, the English sought their origins in a nostalgic vision of British antiquity. Focusing on texts including *The Faerie Queene*, English and Welsh antiquarian works, *The Mirror for Magistrates*, *Henry V*, and *King Lear*, Schwyzer charts the genesis, development, and disintegration of British nationalism in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. An important contribution to the expanding scholarship on early modern Britishness, this is the first study of its kind to give detailed attention to Welsh texts and traditions, arguing that Welsh sources crucially influenced the development of English literature and identity.

PHILIP SCHWYZER is Lecturer in Renaissance Literature and Culture at the University of Exeter. He is co-editor of *Archipelagic Identities: Literature and Identity in the Atlantic Archipelago, 1550–1800* (2004), and has published on early modern English and Welsh literature and identity in journals including *Representations*.

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*For Naomi*

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This book is dedicated to Naomi Howell, whose influence and ideas are felt on every page, and who, in our daily life together, proves some of its central arguments about beauty and nostalgia entirely wrong.

An earlier version of chapter 2 appeared as “The Beauties of the Land: Bale’s Books, Aske’s Abbeys, and the Aesthetics of Nationhood” in *Renaissance Quarterly* (2004). The first pages of chapter 3 rework sections of “British History and ‘The British History’: The Same Old Story?” in *British Identities and English Renaissance Literature*, ed. David Baker and Willy Maley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 11–23.

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### *Note on the text*

All quotations retain the spelling of the edition cited, but u/v and i/j have been regularized throughout. Punctuation and capitalization have been lightly modernized where appropriate.

All references to Shakespeare's works are to *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997). All references to Spenser's *Faerie Queene* are to Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (London: Longman, 1977).