Facts and Fictions: Chronicle, Romance and Arthurian Narrative in England, 1300-1470

by

Richard J. Moll

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Centre for Medieval Studies
University of Toronto

Thesis Abstract

Facts and Fictions:
Chronicle, Romance and Arthurian Narrative in England, 1300-1470
by
Richard J. Moll

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the Centre for Medieval Studies, University of Toronto, 1999.

This dissertation examines the relationship between chronicle and romance traditions of Arthurian narrative in England and Scotland in the late Middle Ages. Before Thomas Malory made large portions of the French Vulgate cycle of romances available to an English-speaking audience, Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britannie*, mediated through various translations and adaptations, was the major source of information regarding the Arthurian past. This narrative, which was generally considered to be an historically accurate record of events, interacted with romance traditions in a number of ways. It is therefore possible to examine late medieval attitudes towards the historicity of Arthur, and the relationship between facts and fictions in historical writing.

A variety of chronicle and historical narratives are examined, such as Robert Mannyng's *Chronicle*, John Trevisa's translation of the *Polychronicon*, and Andrew Wyntoun's *Original Chronicle of Scotland*. Complete chapters are devoted to Sir Thomas Gray's *Scalacronica* (c. 1355), the alliterative *Morte Arthure*, and John Hardyng's *Chronicle* (c. 1450-1463). By examining texts which seek to present a factual account of Arthur's reign, it becomes clear that a sharp distinction was drawn between the narrative found in the Galfridian tradition, and that which emerged from French romances. Chroniclers were careful to distance romance material from their historcial narratives, but some attempted to

employ romances in order to enrich the thematic concerns of their works. Transcriptions of the Arthurian portions of Thomas Gray's *Scalacronica* and the first version of John Hardyng's *Chronicle* are included.

Two romance texts are also explored, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and *The Awntyrs off Arthure*. These accounts of ficticious adventures do not claim to be accurate accounts of real events, but by using the chronicle account as the setting for romance narratives the poets utilized the themes of Arthurian history, and implied that their respective adventures have implications for the understanding of the British past. We see throughout these texts an early attempt to apply methods of critical scholarship to the distant past, and to distinguish between the fables which had accumulated around Arthur's court and what passed for the truth concerning Britain's greatest king.

Acknowledgments

No dissertation can be completed without the intellectual and moral support of a large group of people and this one is no exception. I would like to thank my committee who have generously given of their time and expertise throughout both the planning and writing stages. Professor Joanna Dutka's enthusiasm for the topic and the care with which he she read early drafts of the chapters have greatly improved the final product. Professor David Klausner not only made valuable suggestions during the writing of the dissertation, but led the graduate seminar on medieval romance in which I first developed the basic idea of the thesis. Professor Will Robins has forced me to pay more careful attention to the methodological assumptions with which I first approached the subject. Special thanks are due to Professor Patricia Eberle who has freely given of her time and insight, and who has the uncanny ability to make anything sound more intelligent than it actually is. Finally my supervisor Professor John Leyerle has provided not only the benefit of his knowledge of medieval literature, but also constant encouragement throughout the writing process which has been, I'm sure, longer than he first bargained for.

I would also like to thank those who sat on my defence committee. Both Professor A.G. Rigg and Professor James P. Carley made valuable suggestions which have corrected errors and clarified obscurities. Professor Edward Donald Kennedy acted as the external examiner, and I would like to express my gratitude for his careful and thorough reading of the text. The final draft is much improved for all of their input.

I would like to thank the staffs of the libraries which have made microfilm available to me, particularly the British Library and the Parker Library, Corpus Christi College,

Cambridge. The Inter-Library Loan department of Robarts Library has also searched the world to bring me many obscure volumes.

Finally I owe my greatest debt to Margaret, who not only read each chapter with a minimum of complaining, but also heard more about Arthurian literature than she ever wanted to know. Without this, and all manner of support, I could not have done it.

Table of Contents

A Note on Translations and Editions

Except where noted, all translations are my own. When citing the works of the Vulgate cycle, I have used the editions used in the recent translation of the romances (*Lancelot-Grail: The Old French Arthurian Vulgate and Post-Vulgate in Translation*. Ed. and tr. Norris J. Lacy *et al*. 5 vols. New York: Garland Publishing, 1992-1996).

Introduction: Geoffrey of Monmouth in Late Medieval England

> Now every wys man, lat herkne me;
> This storie is also trewe, I undertake,
> As is the book of Launcelot de Lake,
> That wommen holde in ful greet reverence.
> Geoffrey Chaucer, prologue to *The Nun's Priest's Tale*[1]

In typical Chaucerian fashion, the Nun's Priest, through an ironic comparison, maintains that his tale of the chickens Chauntecleer and Pertelote is nothing but fiction. The narrator's point of comparison is the *Livre de Lancelot del Lac* from the prose Vulgate cycle, and the ironic tone of the passage makes it clear that he thinks the story of Lancelot is fictitious.[2] It is equally clear, however, that Chaucer's fourteenth-century audience would have assumed that Arthur was a real historical figure. Arthur's continued presence in chronicles of the period, as well as the use to which he was put by political propagandists, indicates that the historicity of Arthur was generally accepted. King Arthur, therefore, presents the modern reader with an unusual proposition. A late medieval audience believed that Arthur existed, and yet the Lancelot story, probably the best known Arthurian story today, was considered a mere fable.

The existence of a sixth-century hero who might be identified as Arthur, whether he was a king or a *dux bellorum*, is a matter of ongoing scholarly debate. The evidence for an historical figure around whom the corpus of Arthurian literature grew is generally late and

---

[1] Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson, *et al.*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987) VII, 3210-3213.
[2] For Chaucer's knowledge of Arthurian material and his attitude towards it see Edward Donald Kennedy, "Gower, Chaucer, and the French Prose Arthurian Romance," *Mediaevalia* 16 (1993): 55-90.

may be the result, rather than the fountainhead, of a developing tradition.[3] The existence of an historical Arthur, however, is irrelevant to the examination of attitudes towards the figure of Arthur in late medieval histories. This study, therefore, is concerned not with what happened in dark-age Britain, but what fourteenth- and fifteenth-century readers and writers thought had happened. Late medieval authors did not have access to archaeological data, the subtleties of name and etymological studies, or even to many of the texts which are now used by scholars who examine the origins of Arthurian traditions. Historians of the later Middle Ages had only narrative texts with which to uncover the truth of the Arthurian period. Gildas and the *Historia Brittonum* (often attributed to Nennius) were available, but the events first described by Geoffrey of Monmouth furnished the basic narrative of Arthur's reign. Geoffrey and his translators, Wace and Laȝamon, therefore, provided the primary sources from which fourteenth- and fifteenth-century chroniclers constructed the Arthurian past. Despite the rather limited range of material within the chronicle tradition, disagreement did occur. Some twelfth-century chroniclers, most notably William of Newburgh, recognised that Geoffrey's *Historia regum Britannie*, was a tissue of lies and fabrications and denounced it as such. Later chroniclers, such as Ranulph Higden, had access to these early examples of peer review and continued to question the Galfridian narrative throughout the Middle Ages. To complicate matters, an entirely different tradition, consisting of romance material which originated in France, contained material which added to, and sometimes openly contradicted, the Galfridian account. French (and later English) romances, in both verse and prose, presented an alternate version of Arthur's reign which many English authors, like Chaucer,

---

[3] See, for example, O.J. Padel, "The Nature of Arthur," *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 27 (1994): 1-31, and John T. Koch, "The Celtic Lands," *Medieval Arthurian Literature: A Guide to the Recent Scolarship*, ed. Norris J. Lacy (New York and London: Garland, 1996) 239-322.

denounced as fictitious. As we shall see, chroniclers attempted to draw a distinction between the veracity of the Galfridian version of Arthur's reign and the mendacity of that contained in French romances.

Even before Geoffrey wrote the *Historia* there was some doubt about what was true concerning King Arthur. In an oft-quoted passage, William of Malmesbury complained that even as he wrote, in the early twelfth century, the history of Arthur was obscured in a cloud of fable. During his account of Ambrosius, William mentioned the bellicose Arthur and added

> Hic est Artur de quo Britonum nugæ hodieque delirant; dignus plane quem non fallaces somniarent fabulæ, sed veraces prædicarent historiæ...[4]

At a later point, William mentioned in passing that Gawain's tomb was uncovered in Wales during the reign of William of the Conqueror. The whereabouts of Arthur's tomb, however, remained unknown, "unde antiquitas næniarum adhuc eum venturum fabulatur."[5] William's comments point to two possibly related tales concerning Arthur: his expected return, and the British *nugæ*, which may have included adventures concerning the king. William, however, was content to ignore these tales and he simply reconciled his two sources (Gildas and pseudo-Nennius), and claimed that Arthur was the contemporary of Ambrosius, and that he had helped sustain his people during the Saxon invasion. William was unwilling to include any material beyond that.

Writing only a decade after William, Geoffrey of Monmouth added considerably to the amount of information available concerning Britain's ancient past. Geoffrey's *Historia*

---

[4] "This is Arthur, about whom the trifles of the British still chatter; one clearly worthy, not to be dreamed of in the lies of fables, but to be extolled in the truths of history." William of Malmesbury, *De Gesta Regum Anglorum*, ed. William Stubbs, RS. 90 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1887-1889) I. 11

regum Britannie, completed in 1138,[6] gives an account of events from the arrival of Brutus in Albion to the coming of the Anglo-Saxons. The *Historia* culminates with the reign of Arthur, Britain's greatest king. Although Geoffrey drew from the *Historia Britonum*, his narrative of Arthur's reign was greatly expanded beyond any existing written source, possibly utilizing the same *nugæ* that William of Malmesbury refused to credit with the name of history. Geoffrey includes an account of Arthur's wondrous birth and his rise to the throne. After subduing Britain and the Isles, Geoffrey's Arthur marries Guenevere and extends his control over most of Europe. Finally, he is challenged by the procurator of Rome, who views him as a vassal. Although Arthur meets and defeats the Romans in battle on the continent, he is unable to take the imperial throne. News of his nephew's treachery turns Arthur back to Britain where, in a final battle with Mordred, both the king and the usurper are killed.

Although this story is well known I summarize it here in order to emphasize certain aspects of Geoffrey's account. The Galfridian narrative contains no mention of Lancelot, nor any reference to Mordred's incestuous paternity. The tale is political and military in nature, and Arthur's fall is caused by political turmoil, not amorous entanglements. Modern scholars and Arthurian enthusiasts tend to come to Geoffrey of Monmouth by way of his successors. Weaned on the writings of T. H. White, Alfred Lord Tennyson, and Sir Thomas Malory, they often forget that the *Historia*'s narrative contains few of the characters found in these great works. Larry Benson recognised this handicap among critics who discuss the alliterative *Morte Arthure*. Although the poem recounts the Galfridian narrative "many of us come to the *Morte Arthure* with our ideas about Arthur and his court already formed on

---

[5] "whence ancient dirges falsely claim that he is yet to come." William of Malmesbury, *De Gesta Regum Anglorum*, II. 342

romances such as *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* or the works of Malory."[7] It is important, however, to remember that for an English audience before Malory, the Galfridian narrative was as well known as the romances of Lancelot which Chaucer derides. The *Historia* quickly spread over all of Europe, and still survives in at least 215 manuscripts.[8] Geoffrey's narrative, however, was even more widely disseminated than the impressive distribution of the text itself would indicate. The *Historia* was used as a source by many later authors and it survives in numerous translations and adaptations. The most popular vernacular version of Geoffrey's story is found in the anonymous prose *Brut*. Written early in the fourteenth century, the French text survives in at least fifty manuscripts, the English translation in over 180.[9] In addition to this work, Geoffrey's text was translated by Wace, Geoffrey Gaimar, Robert of Gloucester and many others. These texts were in turn translated and adapted by subsequent chroniclers. Robert Hanning asserts that "[u]ntil the sixteenth (and in some quarters the seventeenth) century, British history *was* Geoffrey's *Historia*, expanded, excerpted, rhymed, combined, or glossed."[10] Geoffrey's representation of Arthur,

---

[6] For the dating of the *Historia* see Neil Wright, introduction, *The Historia Regum Britannie of Geoffrey of Monmouth I: Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS 568*, ed. Neil Wright (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1984) ix-xvi.

[7] Larry C. Benson, "The Alliterative *Morte Arthure* and Medieval Tragedy," *Tennessee Studies in Literature* 11 (1966): 75.

[8] For a discussion of the dissemination of Geoffrey's work see Julia Crick, *The Historia Regum Britannie of Geoffrey of Monmouth IV: Dissemination and Reception in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1991) *passim*. Crick points out that simply in terms of surviving manuscripts, Geoffrey's work ranks among the five most popular histories, which include the works of Valerius Maximus, Orosius, Justinus and Josephus. Crick, *Historia*, 9.

[9] For a complete list of manuscripts of the Middle English *Brut*, see Lister M. Matheson, *The Prose Brut: The Development of a Middle English Chronicle*, Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, v. 180 (Tempe, Ariz.: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1998) xxi-xxxi, and *passim*. For bibliography of location lists of the Anglo-Norman *Brut*, see Matheson, *Prose Brut*, xviii-xx, *n.* 1. See also Lister M. Matheson, "King Arthur and the Medieval English Chronicles," *King Arthur Through the Ages*, ed. Valerie M. Lagorio and Mildred Leake Day (New York and London: Garland, 1990) I: 253-254, and Lister M. Matheson, "The Middle English Prose *Brut*: A Location List of the Manuscripts and Early Printed Editions," *Analytical and Enumerative Bibliography* 3 (1979): 254-266.

[10] Robert Hanning, *The Vision of History in Early Britain: From Gildas to Geoffrey of Monmouth* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1966) 174. See also Christopher Dean, *Arthur of England: English*

therefore, circulated with the many adaptations of his work and these chronicles "were the primary source of knowledge in medieval England concerning King Arthur and the Arthurian era."[11]

Reaction to Geoffrey's work was immediate. In 1139, only one year after its completion, Henry of Huntingdon was shown a copy of the *Historia* at Bec in Normandy. Henry, who had recently completed his own *Historia Anglorum*, was fascinated by the text and soon wrote to a friend, Warin. The *Epistola ad Warinum*, which was incorporated into later versions of Henry's *Historia Anglorum*, includes a summary of Geoffrey's work in which Henry speaks of "Artur ille famosus"[12] and briefly summarizes Geoffrey's account with only a few variations.[13] As Neil Wright has demonstrated, however, some of the changes that Henry made were designed to bring Geoffrey of Monmouth's text in line with his own *Historia Anglorum*. "The *Epistola*, then, is not simply a précis; Henry's modifications, however tentative, deserve to be recognised as a first, faint adumbration of the misgivings with which some medieval historians... received Geoffrey's *Historia*."[14]

The most serious misgivings were entertained by William of Newburgh. Although William's own *Historia Rerum Anglicarum*, written in the 1190s, begins with the Norman conquest, he still devotes most of his prologue to attacking Geoffrey's work. William

---

Attitudes to King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987) 11.

[11] Matheson, "King Arthur," 248.

[12] "The famed Arthur." Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, ed. and tr. Diana Greenway (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996) 578. English translations are on facing pages.

[13] Henry mentions the fact that the Bretons believe that Arthur will return, and his description of the final battle against Mordred contains scenes not found in Geoffrey. These will be discussed below, p. 114.

[14] Neil Wright, "The Place of Henry of Huntingdon's *Epistola ad Warinum* in the text-history of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britannie*: a preliminary study," *The British Isles in the Middle Ages and Renaissance: Essays by Members of Girton College, Cambridge, in Memory of Ruth Morgan*, ed. Gillian Jondorf and D. N. Dumville (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1991) 91. For the changes made by Henry see Wright, "The Place of Henry," 83-87.

complains that in his own time a writer has emerged who weaves *ridicula figmenta* with history.[15] William focuses on the figure of Arthur and questions his marvelous birth, the chronology provided by Geoffrey (William asserts that Ethelbert was the king at the time Geoffrey places Arthur on the throne), his extensive conquests and his establishment of archbishoprics when Bede clearly stated that there were only bishops in Britain before the arrival of Augustine.[16] William also notices that ancient authorities do not mention Arthur:

> Quomodo, inquam, vel nobiliorem Alexandro Magno Britonum monarcham Arthurum, ejusque acta, vel parem nostro Esaiæ Britonum prophetam Merlinum, ejusque dicta, silentio suppresserunt?[17]

Finally, William questions Geoffrey's account of Arthur's death and concludes that he was simply a liar who wrote in order to flatter the British.[18] William's attacks, although sarcastic, are not unthinking. The prologue "epitomizes William's major concerns as an historian: What is acceptable as a true or plausible account; how to deal with unlikely or quasi-divine phenomena; and how to detect fraud."[19]

Other twelfth-century authors denounced the *Historia*, but William of Newburgh's was the most detailed attack against Geoffrey's version of Arthurian history.[20] Despite this early reaction, however, Geoffrey's text survived. Nancy Partner suggests that "William's contempt helped to 'fix' Geoffrey of Monmouth's immortality... because he was just too

---

[15] William of Newburgh, *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II, and Richard I: Containing the First Four Books of the Historia Rerum Anglicarum*, ed. Richard Howlett, RS. 82 (London: Longman, 1884-1889) I. 11.

[16] William of Newburgh, *Chronicles of the Reigns*, I: 14-17.

[17] "How, I ask, did they suppress in silence either the British King Arthur and his acts, more noble than Alexander the Great, or the British prophet Merlin and his sayings, equal to our Isaiah?" William of Newburgh, *Chronicles of the Reigns*, I: 17.

[18] William of Newburgh, *Chronicles of the Reigns*, I: 18.

[19] Nancy Partner, *Serious Entertainments: The Writing of History in Twelfth-Century England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977) 67.

[20] On other early reactions to Geoffrey's text by Giraldus Cambrensis and Alfred of Beverly see Dean, *Arthur of England*, 15-18. Dean argues that Henry of Huntingdon's reaction was even more negative than Wright

interesting to ignore,"[21] while R. William Leckie argues that the *Historia* gained authority simply by growing older. He notes that by the end of the twelfth century "the Galfridian version of events had contributed so much to the image of Britain's past that the account was not generally seen as an overt challenge to prevailing views. The *Historia* had become part of Insular historical tradition to be treated with the same respect accorded Anglo-Saxon material."[22] In the fourteenth century, as we shall see, Ranulph Higden would again raise doubts about Geoffrey's account of Arthur, but the overwhelming majority of chroniclers accepted the *Historia*'s narrative without reservation.[23]

Today, of course, Geoffrey's narrative is considered fictitious and modern critics often refer to the *Historia* as a pseudo-history or a romance-history, even though contemporary readers and authors, even those who denounced it, accepted it as a earnest historical text. Both William of Newburgh and Higden argue against it as such, and later chroniclers adapted Geoffrey's text just as they did any other authority. Although the *Historia* is found in manuscripts which contain a wide variety of works, including hagiographic and prophetic texts, it tends to be bound with other historical works, both classical and medieval.[24] Recent criticism has attempted to demonstrate that the *Historia* was a parody of current historical models, or even a subversive text which sought to undermine the the principles of historical writing through its audacious fictions. Patterson, for example, describes it as "wildly parodic" and "a myth of origins that deconstructs the

---

suggests "Henry's reaction may not have been pure amazement at the discovery but rather indignation, tinged with some reluctant admiration for the clever fraud." Dean, *Arthur of England*, 16.

[21] Partner, *Serious Entertainments*, 65.

[22] R. William Leckie, *The Passage of Dominion: Geoffrey of Monmouth and the Periodization of Insular History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981) 100-101

origin."[25] As Julia Crick points out, however, "there is nothing to imply that this perceived subversiveness and ambiguity was communicated to the work's audience. It certainly did not impede the use of the *Historia* as a historical source."[26]

Crick's statement not only asserts that Geoffrey's text was received as an historical authority, but it also points to a medieval audience's ability to discriminate between varying authorities. Many modern critics tend to assume that readers in the Middle Ages lacked the ability to distinguish between historical fact and fiction. Tatlock, in his very influential study, writes:

> Since the question of truth or falsehood in the Middle Ages was always secondary, we may believe that those closest to Geoffrey realized that he was not writing proved history but merely extending out of what records existed an honorable and fascinating picture of the past....[27]

Similar attitudes toward medieval historical writing are abundant. Levine, for example, writes that "it was legend, not history, that mattered, and no one in the Middle Ages seems to have wanted it any other way."[28] For Levine, the medieval writer of history, as well as a writer of fiction, "promises faithfully to follow his authority, whether or not he has one and

---

[23] For the use of Geoffrey's *Historia* in Latin historiography see Laura Keeler, *Geoffrey of Monmouth and the Late Latin Chroniclers, 1300-1500* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1946). Higden's reaction to Geoffrey will be discussed below, p. 56.

[24] Crick, *Historia*, 218-226.

[25] Lee W. Patterson, *Negotiating the Past: The Historical Understanding of Medieval Narrative* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987) 201, 202.

[26] Crick, *Historia*, 222. For other "parody" arguments see Christopher Brooke, "Geoffrey of Monmouth as a Historian," *Church and Government in the Middle Ages*, ed. C. N. L. Brooke, *et al.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976) 77-91 and Valerie I. J. Flint, "The *Historia Regum Britanniae* of Geoffrey of Monmouth: Parody and its Purpose: A Suggestion," *Speculum* 54 (1979): 447-468. Concerning these two papers Christopher Dean notes that "[w]e should surely be sceptical of perspectives that tell us that all the contemporary readers of a medieval writer misunderstood him and that only now has the key been turned that reveals the true nature of his work." Dean, *Arthur of England*, 6.

[27] John S. P. Tatlock, *The Legendary History of Britain: Geoffrey of Monmouth's* <u>*Historia Regum Britanniae*</u> *and its Early Vernacular Versions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1950) 209.

[28] Joseph M. Levine, *Humanism and History: Origins of Modern English Historiography* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1987) 28.

whether or not it is reliable, and the reader is in no position to tell the difference."[29] Christopher Dean agrees with this assesment: "To a man, [medieval chroniclers] say nothing about what they conceived history to be, nor do they say how important they considered the establishment of factual accuracy. Certainly none of them tells us what steps he took to verify what he reports."[30] As we have seen, however, William of Newburgh attacked Geoffrey on the issue of factual veracity. Having compared sources, he found Geoffrey's narrative wanting. William's technique was simple, but it does reveal his understanding of the difference between factual history and legend. It also demonstrates that William was able to assign different levels of authority to different texts, and to detect an author's biases. William of Malmesbury also sought to establish a distinction between *fallaces fabulæ* and *veraces historiæ*, and for both authors the distinction was important. As we shall see, later chroniclers would attempt to establish facts concerning Arthur's reign using methods similar to William of Newburgh's. Much of the Arthurian information these chroniclers uncovered and presented as factual was incorrect, and modern historical methods and research techniques have, over time, dismissed the Galfridian narrative and vindicated William of Newburgh's conclusions. However, the fact that much (and some would say all) of the history written about Arthur between 1100 and 1500 was incorrect does not negate the efforts of those chroniclers who attempted to sift through the conflicting traditions. Not only those who argued against the authority of the Galfridian narrative, but also those who sought to reinforce it, approached the material with thoughtful, although unsophisticated, historical inquiry.

---

[29] Levine, *Humanism and History*, 20.
[30] Dean, *Arthur of England*, 13.

The honest fallibility of medieval chroniclers is often forgotten in modern discussions of historiography. Suzanne Fleischman, for example, lists "evaluating the *authenticity* of purportedly historical material" as her first criterion for approaching the question of medieval attitudes towards history and fiction.[31] Such a criterion, however, is based on the assumption that what actually happened in the past is more important than what authors of historical works thought had happened. Although this may be the case in some historical writing, it is certainly not a valid criterion when the author, rather than the person or event he describes, is under consideration. This assumption leads to Fleischman's surprise when a chronicler admits material into his chronicle which is "often as far removed from 'the facts' as those he rejects," or when some authors "invoke *fictional* characters as guarantors of the truth of their tales."[32] The fictional character to whom Fleischman refers is, in fact, Arthur, but the existence of a given character (whether Arthur or William the Conqueror), or the accurate record of an event (whether the battle of Camlan or the battle of Hastings), should not be at stake in a discussion of medieval attitudes towards that character or event. Rather, we should attempt to reconstruct the contemporary author's and audience's beliefs about those persons and events. This may sometimes lead us to treat as historical persons and events which we now recognise as fictitious. Fleischman's criterion, on the other hand, makes it impossible for her to consider her text's use of Arthur as an earnest citation of source material. Similarly, Christopher Dean confuses a medieval understanding of historical events with his own modern preconceptions. He notes that Arthur is often portrayed as an historical figure in accounts of the Nine Worthies, but he adds, "if he is not

---

[31] Suzanne Fleischman, "On the Representation of History and Fiction in the Middle Ages," *History and Theory* 22 (1983): 281. Emphasis is hers.
[32] Fleischman, "On the Representation of History," 301. Emphasis is hers.

thought of as a chronicle figure, Arthur is remembered for his romance-style deeds of killing giants."[33] In both of the examples Dean provides, the Scottish *Buik of Alexander* and *Ane Ballet of the Nine Worthies*, Arthur's battles with the giant of St. Michael's Mount and the giant with a cloak of beards are described.[34] As we shall see, both of these combats figure prominently in the chronicle tradition, and both are part of the king's historical persona.

Distinguishing fact from fiction, however, was not always easy. Nancy Partner points to the "inevitable confusion of fiction and nonfiction in an age when fiction was routinely prefaced by claims of historicity that, however conventional and artful, were often quite artlessly believed."[35] Indeed, Geoffrey's work benefited from his own liberal use of conventional techniques designed to substantiate and authenticate his suspect narrative. The *Historia* is written "in Latinum sermonem" and is not adorned with "ampullosis dictionibus."[36] The straightforward Latin prose provides its own authority and gives an air of respectablitity to Geoffrey's work. Geoffrey employed a number of conventional "truth claims" designed to lend authenticity to the *Historia*.[37] The dedication and prologue, in addition to mentioning that the author could find no record of the kings of Britain in either Bede or Gildas, asserts that "gesta eorum digna eternitate laudis constarent."[38] The *Historia* also contains many of the historical set pieces which characterized medieval historiography. Morse discusses the use of elaborate speeches (such as Arthur's speech before the final battle against Mordred), but elaborate descriptions of places or people (such as the description of

---

[33] Dean, *Arthur of England*, 160.
[34] Quoted as items L and LI in Dean, *Arthur of England*, 139-140.
[35] Partner, *Serious Entertainments*, 190-191.
[36] "... in Latin language... [without] rhetorically-coloured words" Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The Historia Regum Britannie of Geoffrey of Monmouth I: Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS 568*, ed. Neil Wright (Cambridge: D. S Brewer, 1984) ch. 1. Except where noted, all references to the *Historia* will be to this edition.

Arthur's armour) are also found in Geoffrey's text.[39] Other elements also add to the appearance of veracity in Geoffrey's work. Careful attention to the dating of events throughout the *Historia* adds to the verisimilitude of the narrative, and this is reinforced by the prophecies of Merlin. Not only were most of the prophecies fulfilled within the work (Geoffrey, of course, was writing with the benefit of hindsight), but the vague vocabulary of Merlinic prophecy made them easily adaptable to later events. Julia Crick writes that "Geoffrey was certainly skilled as a prophet, but he was also lucky. As readers saw individual prophecies fulfilled in the course of time, the status of his work increased."[40] Both Crick and Richard Southern stress the fact that Merlinic prophecy was of great interest to learned intellectuals,[41] and Crick goes so far as to claim that the presence of the prophecies at the heart of Geoffrey's *Historia* "can only have enhanced the historical credentials of his work."[42] Finally, the *Historia* relies on ancient and unassailable authorities. Not only does Geoffrey refer to the works of Gildas, Bede and "Nennius,"[43] but he also claims to derive his basic narrative from a "quendam Britannici sermonis librum uetustissimum."[44] Modern critics have generally dismissed Geoffrey's assertion that he had such a book, but medieval audiences readily accepted the ancient book and the narrative which Geoffrey supposedly drew from it.

---

[37] For a discussion of a variety of truth claims, see Ruth Morse, "'This Vague Relation.' Historical Fiction and Historical Veracity in the Later Middle Ages," *Leeds Studies in English* n.s. 13 (1982): 95-96.
[38] "...their deeds stand worthy of eternal praise." Geoffrey, *Historia*, ch. 1.
[39] For Arthur's speech and the description of his arms see Geoffrey, *Historia*, ch. 174 & ch. 147. For a discussion of set pieces, such as speeches, see Morse, "'This Vague Relation'," 95-95.
[40] Julia Crick, "Geoffrey of Monmouth, prophecy and history," *Journal of Medieval History* 18 (1992): 371.
[41] See Crick, "Geoffrey of Monmouth, prophecy and history," *passim*, and R. W. Southern, "Aspects of the European Tradition of Historical Writing: 3. History as Prophecy," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 5th ser. 22 (1972): *passim*
[42] Crick, "Geoffrey of Monmouth, prophecy and history," 371.
[43] Geoffrey, *Historia*, chs. 202, 22, 34, 39, 53, etc.
[44] "...a certain very ancient book in the British language." Geoffrey, *Historia*, ch. 1.

While some early critics, such as William of Newburgh or Ranulph Higden, remained unconvinced, these techniques persuaded many of Geoffrey's readers.[45] Vernacular chroniclers, however, did express doubts concerning the historicity of Arthur, but these were quite different from the complaints voiced by William of Newburgh. William and Higden doubted Geoffrey, and they questioned the narrative found in the *Historia*. Other chroniclers accepted Geoffrey's account, but entertained doubts about other Arthurian material outside Geoffrey's text. Concern arose about the relationship between Geoffrey's Arthurian narrative and the many other narratives which involved Arthur and his knights. One of the most important places for this discussion to be carried out was unwittingly established by Geoffrey himself, and it was immediately capitalized upon by his translator Wace.

Like many medieval chronicles, Geoffrey's *Historia* is primarily concerned with military actions. Isidore of Seville had said that "Historia est narratio rei gestae,"[46] and in most medieval historiography the *res gesta*, or *geste*, as it would be called in both English and French, almost always involved military deeds. Times of peace, therefore, are often ignored. During the reign of Arthur, Geoffrey mentions two extended periods of peace. The first occurs after Arthur subdues Britain and conquers Ireland and the Scottish Isles. Geoffrey simply states that "Emensa deinde hyeme reuersus est in Britanniam statumque regni sui in firmam pacem renouans moram .xii. annis ibidem fecit."[47] The next time of peace occurs after the defeat of Frollo and the conquest of Western Europe. Geoffrey states that Arthur ravaged Europe with fire and sword and then "Emensis interum .ix. annis, cum

---

[45] Although Higden disagreed with Geoffrey's account of Arthur he did use other sections of the *Historia*, sometimes citing the existence of the British book as proof of its veracity. See below, p. 60

[46] "History is the narrative of a thing done." Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiarum sive originum*, ed. W.M. Lindsay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911) I. xli. Cited by book and chapter.

totius Gallie partes potestati sue summisisset, uenit iterum Arturus Parisius tenuitque ibidem curiam ubi conuocato clero et populo statum regni pace et lege confirmauit."[48]

The seemingly precise chronology of both of these periods of peace allows Geoffrey to bring verisimilitude to the events he describes and is designed to lend credibility to his narrative. History, however, abhors a vacuum and vernacular adapters of Geoffrey's text were obliged to explain what happened during these periods of supposed inactivity. Wace first addressed the issue of Geoffrey's periods of peace in his *Roman de Brut*, which includes the earliest surviving appearance of King Arthur in vernacular historiography. Written in the mid-twelfth century, Wace's history is a verse translation of the *Historia*. Faced with a twelve-year period of inaction in the *Historia*, Wace makes two significant additions to his source. The first is to note the establishment of the Round Table, a passage which has attracted much scholarly attention.[49] The second is to express his own concerns over the historicity of the varied Arthurian traditions which had already begun to accumulate around the figure of the king. He writes:

> En cele grante pais ke jo di,
> Ne sai si vus l'avez oï,
> Furent les merveilles pruvees
> E les aventures truvees
> Ki d'Artur sunt tant racuntees
> Ke a fable sunt aturnees.
> Ne tut mençunge, ne tut veir,
> Tut folie ne tut saveir.
> Tant unt li conteür cunté
> E li fableür tant flablé [*sic*]

---

[47] "Winter having passed, [Arthur] returned to Britain and established all of his kingdom in a firm peace and remained there for the next twelve years." Geoffrey, *Historia*, ch. 153.
[48] "Nine years having passed, when he had subdued all parts of Gaul to his power, he came again to Paris and held a court there where, having called the clergy and the people, he established the state of the kingdom peacefully and legally." Geoffrey, *Historia*, ch. 155.
[49] For a review of critical opinion on this passage see Beate Schmolke-Hasselman, "The Round Table: Ideal, Fiction, Reality," *Arthurian Literature* 2 (1982): 41-75.

> Pur les cuntes enbeleter,
> Que tut unt fait fable sembler.[50]

For Wace, the period of peace contains events which have been so exaggerated that he can no longer distinguish between the *veraces historiæ* and the *fallaces fabulae*. Unable to distinguish fact from fiction, Wace draws attention to the difficulties inherent in the period and passes over it in silence. The significance of this passage has recently been blurred by literary critics quoting sections of Wace's discussion out of context. Gabrielle Spiegel erroneously asserts that Wace views his own work as neither entirely truth nor falsehood. By claiming that Wace's statement refers to the whole of the *Roman*, rather than the twelve years alone, she sets up an opposition between prose historiography and the verse chronicles of Wace and Benoît de Sainte-Maure:

> Both Benoît de Sainte-Maure's *Roman de Troie* and Wace's *Roman de Brut* locate their tales within a literary space suspended between history and fable, where, Wace proclaimed, the reader will find 'ne tut mencunge, ne tut veir'.... Neither wholly a lie nor wholly true, the image of the past offered in the *romans* of Benoît and Wace is a fiction that purports to tell the truth about past facts, and thus is a fiction implying that its fiction is not simply a fiction. By means of this 'fictional factuality' the *roman* formulates its own reality, which exists somewhere in the interstices between fable and history.[51]

---

[50] "In this great peace of which I speak (I don't know if you have heard) there were marvels proved and adventures found, which have been so often told about Arthur that they have been turned into fables, neither all falsehood, nor all truth, neither all foolish, nor all wise. So much have the story tellers told stories, and so much have the fablers told fables, in order to embellish their stories, that everything has been made to seem like a fable." Wace, *Roman de Brut*, ed. I. Arnold (Paris: Société de anciens texts français, 1938-1940) 9787-9799. Cited by line number. Johnson adds that the passage "poses certain problems of translation because Wace plays off the language of events and happenings with those of their literary report: thus 'truvees' (9,790), for example, may mean either 'happened' or 'composed.'" Lesley Johnson, "Robert Mannyng's History of Arthurian Literature," *Church and Chronicle in the Middle Ages*, ed. Ian Wood and G.A. Loud (London and Rio Grande: The Hambledon Press, 1991) 130, *n.* 21.

[51] Speigel, *Romancing the Past*, 62. Speigel may have translated *pais* as "country", rather than "peace". One medieval translator of the passage makes this mistake (see below p. 27), but since Speigel does not quote the opening lines of the passage it is unclear how she arrives at her interpretation. The context of the passage, set within the twelve years in which "Regna Artur paisiblement" ["Arthur reigned peaceably"], Wace, *Brut*, 9731, makes it clear that the passage refers to the great peace, rather than to the great country.

The purpose of Wace's digression, however, is to indicate that he will not include the adventures which occurred during the twelve years of peace, and it is these narratives which are "Ne tut mençonge, ne tut veir."[52] By denying the veracity of these tales, Wace seeks to establish himself as a careful historian and assure the authority of the material which he does include. As Lesley Johnson rightly asserts, "Wace validates his narrative by developing the image of his narrating persona as a discriminating clerkly figure who alerts the attention of his audience to material beyond his knowledge, and outside his text."[53] Rather than formulating a "reality" in which the entire narrative takes place, the *Roman de Brut*'s discussion of the twelve years creates a narrative space within the chronicle tradition in which dubious narratives could exist, albeit without any claim to historical veracity. Exactly what kind of narratives Wace is referring to, however, is a matter of conjecture. It is likely that he is aware of a body of Arthurian narratives which supplements the narrative found in Geoffrey, possibly the sort of *nugæ* to which William of Malmesbury referred. The tone of his statements indicates that these narratives have been so elaborated that they now involve wonders and great deeds which are beyond belief.

For Wace, then, the narrative found in Geoffrey was distinct from the marvelous adventures which he relegated to the twelve years of peace. We might speculate that these adventures involved knights, and that they were similar to the tales which typically make up the matter of romances. Early readers of Wace certainly felt that he was referring to romances; one ambitious scribe of the *Roman de Brut* inserts all five romances of Chrétien

---

[52] Compare the discussion by Lesley Johnson who concludes that the "*Roman de Brut*, according to the narrator's own remarks here, clearly does not belong to the category of literary fiction." "Robert Mannyng's History," 140. For a similar opinion see Ad Putter, "Finding Time for Romance: Medieval Arthurian Literary History," *Medium Ævum* 63 (1994): 3-4

[53] Johnson, "Robert Mannyng's History," 139.

de Troyes in the middle of Wace's renunciation of extra-Galfridian material. The addition is not haphazard, however, and the scribe introduces the romance material with the statement "Mais ce que Crestiens tesmogne / Porés ci oïr sans alogne."[54] The romances are included without prefaces, thus minimizing the intrusive nature of the texts (the preface of *Cligés* is, however, included), and the scribe concludes his digression and returns to the *Brut* by altering the epilogue of the *Charrete*, the last romance included: "Segnor, se jo avant disoie, / Ce ne seroit pas bel a dire, / Por ce retor a ma matire."[55] For Wace, however, the adventures that he describes as "Ne tut mençonge, ne tut veir" are distinct from history. He has taken advantage of the period of peace described by Geoffrey to find a place for exaggerated tales, but while those tales are set within history, they are not of history.

The influence of Wace's reflections on Arthurian narrative were far-reaching. As we shall see, many chroniclers writing within the Galfridian tradition adapted Wace's comments to their own age. The growth of Arthurian romance narratives, most significantly the French prose Vulgate cycle, meant that a more standardized romance narrative conflicted with the chronicle account. Historians and chroniclers followed Wace's lead and repeatedly used the twelve years of peace, and to a lesser extent the nine years of peace which followed the conquest of France, to consider the implications of conflicting Arthurian narratives.

---

[54] "But you can hear Chrétien's testimony here without delay." BN fr. 1450, f. 139v. Quoted and translated in Sylvia Huot, *From Song to Book: The Poetics of Writing in Old French Lyric and Lyrical Narrative Poetry* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1987) 30.

[55] "Lords, if I said more, it wouldn't be worth saying, and so I'll return to my subject." BN fr. 1450, f. 225. Quoted and translated in Huot, *From Song to Book*, 31. The manuscript presents a vision of British history which begins with Troy and the scribe has included *Le Roman de Troie*, *Le Roman d'Eneas*, *Le Roman de Brut* (with the Chrétien romances inserted), and a shortened version of the *Sept Sages de Rome* in the same manuscript. The various works have all been modified, particularly in their prologues and epilogues, to create a single continuous narrative. For a discussion of this manuscript, see Jerome E. Singerman, *Under Clouds of Poesy: Poetry and Truth in French and English Reworkings of the Aeneid, 1160-1513* (New York: Garland, 1985) 129-134, and Huot, *From Song to Book*, 27-32.

These two periods of peace also had a narrative potential which was used by authors of both historical and fictional works. Authors of individual adventures saw in the periods of peace a narrative space which could easily be adapted to act as the setting of chivalric adventures. Chroniclers could also use these periods to import material from outside the Brut tradition. Although set within an historical time and place, such an adventure was implicitly distanced from the historical narrative, as the tradition demanded that these were times about which little was known, and what was known was neither truth nor falsehood. Freed from the constraints of historical veracity, chroniclers and romance authors utilized the years of peace as periods in which to explore a wide variety of themes and concerns against the backdrop of the reign of Britain's greatest king.

This state of affairs, in which alternate accounts of historical events were openly debated in an ongoing tradition of historical writing, is virtually unparalleled in medieval historiography.[56] The attitudes towards Arthurian narratives displayed by medieval authors, therefore, have a great deal of interest as they relate to the medieval concept of historical truth and the development of methods of historical research. John E. Housman correctly noted that "one could think of worse starting-points for a general theory of the relationship between poetry and history than Arthurian criticism."[57] The present study, however, is far less ambitious than Housman's proposed project. While he called for a discussion of medieval attitudes toward poetry and history which utilized Arthurian literature, this study seeks to examine attitudes toward Arthurian narrative through the perspective of the relationship between poetry and history. In the process, I hope to bring to light the surprising

---

[56] The closest comparable debate may be medieval reactions to the historicity of the *Aeneid*. See Singerman, *Under Clouds of Poesy*, *passim*.

uniformity with which educated readers and authors approached the relationship between chronicle and romance traditions surrounding the reign of King Arthur.

Housman's comparison of poetry and history implies a generic distinction between the two literary forms. Much has been written about the relationship of verse to historical writing, often beginning with Nicolas of Senlis' famous statement that "Nus contes rimes n'est verais."[58] As we shall see, however, many chroniclers in England wrote in verse and yet considered their narratives to be accurate representations of history. In fact, many of the genre distinctions common in modern discussions of medieval literature, such as history, chronicle, romance and epic, require substantial modification in order to accommodate the various forms of English historical writing. Historical texts in England were composed according to a medley of models. They could be written in either prose or verse, rhyme or alliteration, Latin or either of the vernacular languages, and they could deal with themes of personal achievement and honour, as well as national and religious concerns. Arthurian history alone encompassed all of these categories and more. It is perhaps more useful, therefore, to think of traditions based on narrative rather than to draw distinctions based on rigid concepts of genre.[59] The alliterative *Morte Arthure*, for example, has the outward appearance and form of a romance, yet its narrative conforms to the chronicle tradition established by Geoffrey's *Historia*, rather than to the romance tradition established by the

---

[57] John E. Housman, "Higden, Trevisa, Caxton, and the Beginnings of Arthurian Criticism," *Review of English Studies* 23 (1947): 215, *n.* 2.

[58] "No rhymed tale is true." B.N. fr. 124 fo. 1. Quoted and translated in Spiegel, *Romancing the Past*, 55. Nicolas makes this bold statement in the prologue to his translation of the pseudo-Turpin *Chronicle*. For a discussion of the relationship between prose and verse historiography, Spiegel, *Romancing the Past*, 55ff.

[59] Ruth Morse points to the benefit of ignoring modern preoccupations with genre and focusing on medieval conventions and intentions in historical writing. "The result of identification of medieval conventions and intentions will be that we cease to criticize these works for being on the one hand unpoetic, flat, and essentially boring, and on the other hand, fantasies which wreak havoc with the facts of the historical past." Morse, "'This Vague Relation'," 94.

French prose Vulgate cycle.

Such a distinction has the apparent benefit of being easy to delimit. The chronicle tradition, sometimes refered to as the Brut tradition, is limited to those narrative elements found in Geoffrey of Monmouth, while the romance tradition encompasses all Arthurian narratives which include material not found in Geoffrey's text. This differentiation, however, is not absolute. Early adapters of Geoffrey's text added elements which are as much a part of the Brut tradition as anything in the *Historia*. The most obvious example is the Round Table which was first introduced by Wace, but which was included by almost every subsequent chronicler who discussed Arthur's reign. The phrase "romance tradition" is also deceptively simple. The story of Arthur in the prose Vulgate cycle, as in the Brut narrative, begins with Arthur's conception and ends with his death at the hands of Mordred. The Vulgate, however, presents an alternative narrative of Arthur's career and the adventures of his knights. The cycle, with its tales of amorous affairs, family feuds and adulteries, is often unfavourably compared to Geoffrey's *Historia* by late medieval historians. In addition to the Vulgate, episodic adventures of individual knights, written in French, English and Latin, were also popular and augmented the account in the prose romance cycle. The romances, therefore, contain often contradictory material, and their various narratives formed an ongoing tradition which evolved over time.

These caveats deal only with the internal stability of the traditions, but romance and chronicle traditions also influenced one another. Romance narratives, whether drawn from the lengthy French prose cycle or from individual romances and lais, could be utilized by chroniclers who were aware that the narrative elements they employed were not part of the historical tradition. As we shall see, chroniclers who sought to maintain the integrity of the

historical account of Arthur's reign could not resist the temptation to introduce and adapt material from outside that tradition, even while attempting to present it as something other than history. Conversely, authors of individual romances sometimes used the larger narrative of the historical Arthur as a backdrop for a knight's adventures. Although the individual work makes no claims to historical veracity, such encounters between history and romance had implications for the audience's consideration of the British past. It is at these points, where romance and chronicle traditions meet, that the author's attitudes toward the material he combines can be detected.

This study leads us to some lesser-known authors who wrote Arthurian narratives in a variety of forms. The study is limited to texts written in England and, to a smaller extent, Scotland, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. While Arthur does appear in continental histories, the political implications of Arthur's reign, and the need to establish an accurate account of that reign, are simply outside the interests of most continental authors. For insular historians, however, the reign of Arthur had continuous political and social currency and it was in the early fourteenth century that translations of Geoffrey's work, in both of the vernaculars of England, started to make Arthurian history widely available to a reading public which was also familiar with French romance traditions. The conflict between these two traditions is suggested in earlier texts, such as Wace's *Roman de Brut*, but it is only in the later Middle Ages that chroniclers begin to discuss at length the relationship between Arthurian romances and their own works.

Many of the texts examined in this study are not generally considered in current scholarship, and few of them were influential even in their own day. What makes these texts fascinating, however, is not how widely they were read in the Middle Ages, but how widely

read their authors were. As we shall see, chroniclers such as Sir Thomas Gray and John Hardyng display a breadth of learning and reading which is remarkable. Gray and Hardyng, the two lay authors to be considered, not only had an extensive knowledge of the chronicle traditions of late medieval England, but they were fully conversant with romance narratives and forms. Unlike their better-known contemporaries, both of these chroniclers also discussed the very process of writing historical narrative. As such, they give unexpected insight into the reception of Arthurian narratives and the task of writing history.

Thomas Gray and John Hardyng, along with the several chroniclers discussed in the first chapter and the author of the alliterative *Morte Arthure*, are presented as case studies of educated writers and readers who considered the many conflicting traditions which circulated around the figure of King Arthur. The two romances discussed in chapter four show the other side of the coin. The authors of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and *The Awntyrs off Arthure* both discuss the historical Arthur from the vantage point of romance adventure. Each of these writers confronts the Arthurian world with a slightly different attitude, and their reactions to the conflict between the facts and the fictions surrounding Arthur's court reveal not only their own preoccupations, but also the many interpretive options open to educated and intelligent readers of Arthurian histories and romances. They also share many assumptions concerning the events which happened during Arthur's reign, and it is to these assumptions that Chaucer appeals when he cites the "book of Launcelot de Lake" as a guarantor of the veracity of his beast fable.

Chapter 1: The Limits of the Brut Tradition

In the 1280s the Flemish chronicler and poet Jacob van Maerlant composed the *Spiegel Historiael* at the request of Floris V, Count of Holland and Zealand. The work is essentially a translation of Vincent of Beauvais' universal chronicle, the *Speculum Historiale*, but in the treatment of Arthurian Britain, Maerlant deviates from his source.[1] Although Vincent had repeated the standard narrative of Arthur's reign, he added that "Cuius mirabiles actus etiam ora linguæque personant populorum, licet plura esse fabulosa videantur."[2] Maerlant, however, is much more precise and states that he will not add any material which he cannot find within the chronicle tradition:

> Van Lancelote canic niet scriven,
> Van Perchevale, van Eggraveine;
> Maer den goeden Waleweine
> Vindic in sine jeesten geset,
> Ende sinen broeder den valseen Mordret,
> Ende van Eniau den hertoge Keyen,
> Daer hem die Walen mede meyen.[3]

Maerlant begins his assault on non-historical Arthurian narratives as early as his general prologue where he writes that:

> Dien dan dei boerde vanden Grale,
> Die loghene van Perchevale,
> End andere vele valscher saghen

---

[1] For a valuable discussion of Maerlant's use of Vincent of Beauvais and Geoffrey of Monmouth see Willem P. Gerritson, "Jacob van Maerlant and Geoffrey of Monmouth," *Arthurian Tapestry: Essays in Memory of Lewis Thorpe*, ed. Kenneth Varty (Glasgow: British Branch of the International Arthurian Society, 1981) 368-388. The following discussion is indebted to Gerritson's work. I would like to thank Frank Brandsma for bringing Maerlant's text to my attention and Judith Deitch for her assistance with the translation.

[2] "His marvelous acts resound in the mouths and tongues of the people, although many seem to be fictions." Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum Historiale, Speculum Quadruplex* (Graz, Austria: Akademische Druck-u. Verlagsantalt, 1965) IV: 799.

[3] "I cannot write about Lancelot, nor about Percival, nor about Agravain. But I find recorded the deeds of Gawain the good, and of his wicked brother Mordred, and the duke of Hainault, Kay, of whom the French make a mockery." Jacob van Maerlant, *Spiegel Historiael* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1863-1879) bk. V, ch. 49, vv. 18-24.

Vernoyen ende neit en behaghen,
Houde desen Spiegle Ystoriale
Over die truffen van Lenvale;
Want hier vintmen al besonder
Waerheit ende menech wonder,
Wijsheit ende scone leringhe,
Ende reine dachcortinghe...[4]

Throughout the text, Maerlant draws attention to aspects of the Arthurian romance tradition which Vincent did not include and which he chooses not to add. Concerning Joseph of Arimathea, Maerlant dismisses the liars who have written of the Grail which he considers to be nothing,[5] and he makes similar dismissals of other romance characters:

Van Perchevale, van Galyote,
Van Egraveine, van Lancelote,
Vanden conine Ban van Benowijc
Ende Behoerde dies ghelijc,
Ende van vele geveinseder namen,
Sone vandic altesamen
Cleene no groot inden Latine:
Dies docht mi verlorne pine,
Dat ict hier ontbinden soude.[6]

It is not surprising that Maerlant shows such detailed knowledge of Arthurian romance. Twenty years earlier he had translated large portions of the prose Vulgate as *Die historie van den Grale*. Gerritson believes that Maerlant's insistent dismissal of romance material represents his disillusionment with the material that he had translated as a youth. Gerritson describes the chronicler as feeling cheated: "Much of what the French poets had written (and consequently much of what he, Maerlant, had transmitted in good faith) now

---

[4] "It would serve whoever is annoyed and displeased by the silly fiction of the Grail, the lies about Percival, and the many other false tales, to prefer this *Spiegel Historiael* over the trifles of Lanval, for here one finds truth especially, but also many marvels, both wisdom and pure doctrine, as well as moral recreation." Maerlant, *Spiegel Historiael*, bk. I, ch. 1, vv. 55-64.
[5] Maerlant, *Spiegel Historiael*, bk. VII, ch. 39, vv. 61-64.
[6] "Of Percival, of Galahad, of Agravain, of Lancelot, of Kings Ban of Benoic, and of his equal Bohors, and of many other made-up names, I have found nothing either small or large in the Latin. Still, it troubles me to lose

proved to be only a pack of lies."[7] Gerritson asserts that when Maerlant "wrote his *Historie van den Grale* he obviously did not know the *Historia Regum Britanniae*,"[8] but this is by no means certain. The difference in narrative material merely demonstrates that by the 1280s Maerlant was aware that conflicting Arthurian narratives existed. Whether he was aware of this when translating the Vulgate romance is unknown,[9] but when writing history he was certain to assure his readers that he had excluded all material which did not qualify as historically accurate. In this, Maerlant is unusual. Continental authors rarely comment on which Arthurian material could be included in a chronicle and which excluded. Even fewer wrote about specific romance characters and events which were omitted.

The situation was slightly different for late medieval insular chroniclers. Although it was rare, even in Britain, for a specific character or event to be singled out as unhistorical (Mordred's incestuous conception being a notable exception), insular historians were much more careful to distinguish the historical Arthur from the character found in romances than their continental counterparts. Many of these chroniclers used the twelve-year period of peace as a place to discuss the relationship between chronicles and romances, but for those who followed Wace, the question of the veracity of Arthurian stories had become much more complex. So far as we know, there were no standard Arthurian romances at the time Wace wrote his digression on the twelve years of peace, and the narratives to which he refers cannot now be traced, if they ever existed in written form. Chrétien de Troyes and the prose

---

these, that I should separate them from the tradition." Maerlant, *Spiegel Historiael*, bk V, ch. 55, vv. 51-59. See Gerritson, "Jacob van Maerlant," 379-382, for a discussion.

[7] Gerritson, "Jacob van Maerlant," 376.

[8] Gerritson, "Jacob van Maerlant," 383.

[9] It seems unlikely that Maerlant, well read and interested in Arthurian narrative, could have been ignorant of Geoffrey's very popular chronicle in the 1260s. Julia Crick notes that "[t]he largest single concentration of *Historia*-manuscripts anywhere... is, surprisingly enough, in the Low Countries." Julia C. Crick, *The Historia*

Vulgate popularized a version of the Arthurian story which not only added new elements, such as the Grail quest or Yvain's adventures, but fundamentally altered Geoffrey's narrative. In Geoffrey, Arthur is waging a campaign against Rome when he hears of Mordred's treachery; in the Vulgate the adultery of Lancelot and Guenevere is ultimately responsible for the fall of the Round Table. When English chroniclers adapted and translated Wace, the relationship between "fable" and "history" had therefore become more complicated. Fables not only added to the narrative, they at times contradicted it.

Many English chroniclers made use of Wace's *Roman de Brut*, but not all discussed the relationship between romance and history. Some chroniclers, such as Robert of Gloucester, Peter Langtoft or Thomas Castleford, merely adapted the story found in Geoffrey of Monmouth without commenting on the historicity of narrative material outside that basic text. This is not to say that these vernacular authors were not influenced by extra-Galfridian narrative. Both Robert of Gloucester and Peter Langtoft, for instance, emphasized Merlin's role as an enchanter and Gawain's dominant trait of courtesy.[10] Langtoft also turned to Henry of Huntingdon to elaborate his account of Arthur's death.[11] These, however, are matters of detail, and they do not affect the basic narrative, nor do they demonstrate that the chronicler had any interest in the nature of Arthurian narratives outside the chronicle tradition. Others merely translated Wace's passage on the twelve years of peace, as did an anonymous chronicler in English prose:

> ...on þat grete contray þat Y of sygge—Y not wat ȝe haueþ yhurde—þer were þe mervelous ydo and iproued, and þe auentures yfounde, þat of Arthur was ytolde, þat

---

Regum Britannie of Geoffrey of Monmouth IV: Dissemination and Reception in the Later Middle Ages (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 1991) 210.

[10] See Robert Huntington Fletcher, *The Arthurian Material in the Chronicles*, 2nd ed. (New York: Burt Franklin, 1973) 196-201, for further examples concerning these two authors.

[11] See Fletcher, *Arthurian Material*, 202.

> buþ to fables yturned; ne alle lesyng ne alle soþe, ne alle foly ne alle wysdom, wat þat þuse tellerys tellyþ and wat þat þus fabeleres fableþ for to fayre hyre tales, þat alle yleche semed fables.[12]

This chronicle, which survives in a unique manuscript in the College of Arms, is a close translation of Wace's text, and the chronicler's rendering of this passage does not indicate any original thought or opinion.

Some authors who were not translating Wace were influenced by his conception of the twelve years and made a conscious decision to comment on the period. Another manuscript in the College of Arms, Arundel 58, is a fifteenth-century redaction of Robert of Gloucester's metrical *Chronicle*. The text not only modernizes Robert's vocabulary, but it also includes several lengthy interpolations. One of these occurs during the twelve years of peace. Robert does not comment on the period, but the anonymous redactor included the following:

> In this ilke xij yer of his restynge
> Wondres fele ther byfelle and many selcouth thynge
> [Which] in the boke of seint Graal one may rede and se
> But that [thes] clerkis holdeth noght as for auctoryte
> for much fel by sorcerie and enchauntement also
> thurgh Merlyn so that lettrede men take non hede ther to.[13]

The redactor saw in the twelve years a time not simply set aside for wonderous tales, but specifically for tales contained "in the boke of seint Graal." This appeal to the Vulgate cycle

---

[12] "The Middle English 'History of the Kings of Britain' in College of Arms Manuscript Arundel 22," ed. Laura Gabiger, diss., U. North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1993, 103-104. Note that this manuscript translates Wace's *pais* as "contray" rather than the more common "peace". For a discussion of this manuscript see Robert A. Caldwell, "'The History of the Kings of Britain' in College of Arms MS. Arundel XXII," *PMLA* 69 (1954): 643-654.

[13] College of Arms MS Arundel 58, fo. 62v. The text remains unedited. Passages in square brackets represent tentative readings. Unfortunately I have not had the opportunity to examine this manuscript personally and the microfilm available to me is of poor quality. I hope to do a full study of this manuscript at a later date. For a description of the manuscript see Thomas Duffus Hardy, *Descriptive Catalogue of Materials Relating to the History of Great Britain and Ireland*, RS. 26 (London: Longman, 1862-1871) III: 182-187 (incorrectly referred

(and the reference may indicate a single work, whether the *Estoire* or *La Queste del Saint Graal*, or it may indicate the entire cycle) clearly establishes the prose romance as a text which has no historical authority. The redactor also implies that he is not merely recording his own conclusions. Other "lettrede men take non hede ther to," and the redactor appears to agree with this learned opinion.

One of the most popular vernacular chronicles in England, the Anglo-Norman *Brut*,[14] also paraphrases Wace's discussion of the twelve years of peace. After the establishment of the Round Table it claims that knights "de toutz lez terres qe honor de chiualerie vendront a quere, vindrent a la Court Arthur. En mesme cele temps qil regna issint en pees furent les merueilles prouez & les auentures trouer dont homme ad souent counte & oie."[15] When the *Brut* was translated into English, however, this passage was removed and the chapter ends with the praise of the Round Table and the claim that knights "of alle þe landes þat wolde worshipe and chyualry seche, comen to Kyng Arthurus court."[16] Again, however, individual redactors of the work demonstrate that the twelve years of peace were seen as a locus of romance, even though the text they transcribed did not specifically say so. A copy of the English prose *Brut*, now in Lambeth Palace, contains several lengthy interpolations which were added to the text over a period of many years. During the twelve years of peace the anonymous fifteenth-century redactor includes an account of Arthur's adventure with the wildcats of Cornwall:

---

to as Arundel 57) and Gisela Guddat-Figge, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Middle English Romances* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1976) 215-217.

[14] Lister M. Matheson, "The Middle English Prose *Brut*. A Location List of the Manuscripts and Early Printed Editions," *Analytical & Enumerative Bibliography* 3 (1979): 254.

[15] "... of all lands, who wished to seek the honour of chivalry, came to the court of Arthur. In this time that the reign passed in peace were the marvels proved and the adventures found about which one often tells and hears." Lambeth Palace MS 504, fo. 30v. The Anglo-Norman *Brut* remains unedited.

> And tho he cam ayen, & dwellyd in his owne lande xij yerys in reste & pees, and werryd vpon no man, nor no man vpon him.
>
> And tho kyng Arthure destroyed þe wylde cattys þat were in a parke in Cornwayle, and in þat parke were wylde cattis þat woolde ouercome & sle men of armys, and therfore ther dyrste no man walke ther-in....[17]

This version of the prose *Brut* is a composite text which was compiled in stages in the late fifteenth century.[18] The adventure of the cats, which is found only in this manuscript, continues with Arthur himself slaying the beasts. While the compilor makes no claims concerning the veracity of the story, he does add that "sum sey þat he [i.e. Arthur] was slayne with cattys, but þat seyng is nat trewe."[19] While Lister Matheson proposes several analogues for the tale,[20] the fact that the scribe has relegated the adventure to the period of peace is also significant. As we shall see, adventures of individual achievement were often placed in this period by conscientious chroniclers, thus freeing them from the demands of historical veracity.

Matheson characterizes the Lambeth manuscript, "both *Brut* text and interpolations, ...as the considered historical view of Arthur of an intelligent, widely-read Englishman",[21] and this description could also be applied to the anonymous adapter of Robert of Gloucester's *Chronicle*. These widely-read Englishmen were not isolated examples, and this chapter will examine four English chronicles which briefly discuss the relationship between historical and romance Arthurian narratives. Two versions of the anonymous *Short Metrical Chronicle* have undergone radical scribal adaptations which demonstrate the adapters'

---

[16] *The Brut; or, The Chronicles of England*, ed. Frederic W. D. Brie, EETS, os. 131 & 136 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1906, 1908) 78.
[17] Lambeth Palace Library MS 84, fo. 41v, quoted in Lister M. Matheson, "The Arthurian Stories of Lambeth Palace Library MS 84," *Arthurian Literature* 5 (1985): 86.
[18] For a discussion of the manuscript and its production see Matheson, "Arthurian Stories," 70-72.
[19] Lambeth Palace Library MS 84, fo. 41v quoted in Matheson, "Arthurian Stories," 86.
[20] Matheson, "Arthurian Stories," 86-89.

knowledge of romance material, while Robert Mannyng of Brunne and John Trevisa both attempt to preserve the integrity of the chronicle tradition. Finally, Andrew of Wyntoun's defence of the poet Huchown's Arthurian narrative demonstrates his willingness to accept alterations to Arthurian narratives within certain styles of historical writing. Maerlant was very explicit in his denial of the historicity of certain characters and events. Percival, Lanval, Lancelot and their respective adventures had no place in his historical account. While none of the insular authors are as detailed in their dismissal of romance narrative, they all, with the exception of the Auchinleck *Short Metrical Chronicle*, share Maerlant's concern that romance narratives and chronicle narratives should remain distinct.

Two Versions of the Anonymous *Short Metrical Chronicle*

The anonymous *Short Metrical Chronicle* survives in five complete copies, one fragment and an Anglo-Norman prose paraphrase. The original text of some nine hundred lines seems to have been composed in Warwickshire shortly after the death of Edward I in 1307.[22] According to Zettl's reconstruction of the text, the Arthurian portion of the original chronicle was comprised of only a dozen lines, and contained no unusual information.[23] Two of the surviving manuscripts, however, contain extensive additions to the bare account originally provided. BL Royal MS. 12 C.XII, a manuscript completed between 1320 and 1340, contains a copy of the *Short Metrical Chronicle* which extends into Edward II's reign and ends with the beheading of Piers Gaveston in 1312.[24] The Auchinleck Manuscript in the

---

[21] Matheson, "Arthurian Stories," 91.
[22] Edward Zettl, introduction, *An Anonymous Short Metrical Chronicle*, EETS, os. 196 (London: Oxford University Press, 1935) cv.
[23] See the reconstruction provided by Zettl, introduction, lxiii-lxiv, *n.* 2.
[24] For a discussion of the manuscript and the dialect of this version of the text see Zettl, introduction, xiv-xvi, cvii-cx.

National Library of Scotland, Adv. MS. 19.2.1, no. 155, contains the most radically altered version of the text and extends to 2370 lines. The chronicle concludes with the death of Edward II in 1327 and a prayer for his successor. The manuscript itself was compiled in the 1330s.[25]

Of the two variants, the Royal version presents the more typical Arthurian narrative. While the original form of the chronicle merely stated that Arthur had fought as far as the gates of Rome, the Royal version gives a brief description of the war with "Luces,"[26] Arthur's betrayal by "Moddred," who is called "his cosyn,"[27] and his final campaign to regain England.[28] Oddly, the Royal version asserts that Arthur lived ten years after the final battle.[29] Apart from Arthur's unexpected longevity, these passages are too general and well known to be ascribed to any individual source, but other additions seem to point to Wace. The Arthurian section of the Royal version opens with a passage of praise for Arthur. It continues:

> ¶ Whyl kyng Arthur wes alyue
> Jn Bretaigne wes chyualerie
> Ant þe in Bretaigne were yfounde
> Þis gret auentures ich onderstonde
> Þat ȝe habbeþ yherd her þis
> Ofte siþes & sothe hit ys
> Wyth kyng Arthur wes a knyht
> Wel ychot Eweyn he hyht
> Þer nes mon in al þe londe
> Þat durste in fith aȝein him stonde.[30]

---

[25] For a discussion of the manuscript and the dialect of this version of the text see Zettl, introduction, xvi-xviii, cxviii-cxxiii.
[26] *An Anonymous Short Metrical Chronicle*, ed. Edward Zettl, EETS, os. 196 (London: Oxford University Press, 1935) 69/283-289. All references to both the Royal and Auchinleck versions are to Zettl's edition by page and line numbers.
[27] *Short Metrical Chronicle*, 69/290-296.
[28] *Short Metrical Chronicle*, 70/297-301.
[29] *Short Metrical Chronicle*, 70/302-303. See Zettl, introduction, lxiii, *n.* 1, for a discussion of this passage.
[30] *Short Metrical Chronicle*, 69/271-280.

Wace, of course, also alluded to tales that were "yherd" (*Ne sai si vus l'avez oï*) which concerned adventures that were "yfounde" (*Furent les merveilles pruvees E les aventures truvees*).[31] The mention of Yvain, although he is found in both Wace and Geoffrey, may also be related to the association between Wace's *aventures* and the romances of Chrétien. However, while Wace rejected these tales, the Royal adapter seems to have accepted not only the existence of Yvain, but also his reputation as a great knight, as "sothe." In the end, the Royal version of the text remains rather vague. It seems likely, however, that like the adapter of Robert of Gloucester, the author was aware of Wace's addition to Geoffrey, and turned to it during the period of peace.

The adaptation in the Auchinleck version presents a much different picture of Arthur's reign. Here, Arthur is not Uther's son, but is summoned from Wales to free the British from Fortiger, who has seized the crown after Hine's death. The account opens with a passage of praise for the king, and then begins to describe a civil war in Britain:

> ¶ Þerafter aros wer strong
> Þurch þe quen in þis lond
> Launcelot de Lac held his wiif
> Forþi bitven hem ros gret striif.[32]

Lancelot builds Nottingham castle to house the queen and a system of caves under the castle to protect her in case Arthur attacks.[33] After Arthur attempts to banish Lancelot, the two men meet at Glastonbury to discuss the situation and hold a Round Table.[34] With no resolution to the fate of the queen, the passage ends when Caradoc arrives with a magic mantle:

> A Messanger to þat fest was come
> Þate hete Cradoc Craybonis sone

---

[31] See p. 15 for full quote.
[32] *Short Metrical Chronicle*, 70/1071-1074.
[33] *Short Metrical Chronicle*, 70-71/1075-1084.
[34] *Short Metrical Chronicle*, 71/1085-1102.

He hadde a mantle wiþ him brouȝt
To no cokkewold wiif nas it nouȝt
Who so wil to Glastingesbiri gon ariȝt
Þat mantle he mai se wele ydiȝt.[35]

After the arrival of Caradoc, the text announces Arthur's death and moves on to the next king, Aþelberd.

The Auchinleck text has obviously been heavily influenced by romance material. The Lancelot story, although too brief and vague to be associated with any one source, may have its origins in either Chrétien de Troyes or the prose Vulgate. Turville-Petre assumes that the mention of Nottingham has contemporary relevance to the adapter. The additions to the text, he claims, merge "a recollection of the French *Mort Artu*, in which Lancelot protects Guenevere in Joyeuse Garde, with a much more recent memory of Roger Mortimer and Queen Isabella in 1330 barricading themselves into Nottingham Castle, from which Mortimer was ignominiously dragged and sent to London to be hanged."[36] Other texts, however, hint at an association between Lancelot and Nottingham. During its account of King Ebrauke, *Le Petit Bruit* states that he founded a city called "Sidemound Dolorous." This is the town "qe homme appelle ore le chastel de Notyngham."[37] John Hardyng also claims that one of Ebrauke's foundations, a tower in Bamburgh castle, was called Dolorous Garde in memory of a lady who died for the love of Lancelot.[38] These few confused references may be evidence of a tradition which associated Ebrauke's foundations with the

---

[35] *Short Metrical Chronicle*, 71/1103-1108.

[36] Thorlac Turville-Petre, *England the Nation: Language, Literature, and National Identity, 1290-1340* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996) 111. Turville-Petre argues that the Auchinleck *Short Metrical Chronicle* has been adapted by the compiler of the manuscript and that it "has a structural function within the context of the miscellany. It is the backbone to which the 'historical' texts [in the manuscript] are attached...." Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*, 112.

[37] "which men now call the castle of Nottingham." Rauf de Boun, *Le Petit Bruit*, ed. Diana B. Tyson. Anglo-Norman Text Society, Plain Text Series, 4 (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1987) 6.

Dolorous Garde of Arthurian romance.[39]

Although Turville-Petre does not mention the story of Caradoc's mantle, it may serve the same contemporary political purposes. The story of Caradoc's mantle was popular both as an individual lai and as an episode set within other narratives, but here the mantle which identifies unfaithful wives has been placed in apposition to the Lancelot and Guenevere affair. In this context, the story's sexual innuendo reflects the romance narrative's tale of infidelity and highlights the disruptive influence of sexual politics at court.[40]

Although the Auchinleck adapter had included a great deal of romance material in his text, these additions must be read within the context of the version of English history that this variant presents. The Auchinleck adapter added many passages to the chronicle, some of which are entirely conventional. The opening story of Albina and her sisters, for example, is found in numerous other chronicles, such as the prose *Brut*.[41] The Auchinleck text, however, also contains many idiosyncratic narrative elements. According to the Auchinleck chronicle Hingist, not Lear, succeeds Bladud on the throne. He founds cities, institutes laws and sets down rules for the treatment of messengers. Most peculiar is Hingist's plan to use demons to build a bridge across the English Channel. When the bridge is half completed (with a keep in the middle of the channel to house an army marching across), the king of France sues for

---

[38] John Hardyng, *First Version*, 20v-21. For a complete citation of this source see below p 241, *n.* 2. For a discussion of Hardyng's use of this tradition see below p. 257.

[39] An early sixteenth century genealogy also associates Ebrauke with Nottingham, but as in Hardyng, Mount Dolorous is associated with Bamborough. The text claims that Ebrauke "made also Notyngham Castell and Bamborogh Castell that aftyrward was callid the Castell of Mountdolours." College of Arms MS Arundel 53, fo. 8. For a description of the Arundel genealogy see C. M. Kauffmann, "An Early Sixteenth-Century Genealogy of Anglo-Saxon Kings," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 47 (1984): 209-216.

[40] For a discussion of this popular tale, see below, pp. 121ff.

[41] Cf. *Short Metrical Chronicle*, 46-55/7-352 with *Brut*, 1-4. For the Albina episode's association with the prose *Brut*, see Lesley Johnson, "Return to Albion," *Arthurian Literature* 13 (1995): 19-40, and James P. Carley and Julia Crick, "Constructing Albion's Past: An Annotated Edition of *De Origine Gigantum*," *Arthurian Literature* 13 (1995): 41-114.

peace with Hingist on the condition that he cease construction. Only after the death of Hingist does the chronicle return to Lear.[42] This passage, which Turville-Petre describes as "a dreamlike allegory of the vexed dispute with the French over Gascony,"[43] is certainly motivated by the adapter's contemporary political concerns, rather than any attempt at historical veracity. Although the text is presented as a chronicle, there is no evidence that it was read as such and no later historical work makes use of its unusual additions. Despite this early use of the story, no other insular chronicle includes an account of the affair between Lancelot and Guenevere. The Auchinleck *Short Metrical Chronicle*, therefore, points to a narrative possibility which is rejected by other English works. The Royal version adds a conventional note that other tales exist, but the Auchinleck's use of those tales remains unique.

Robert Mannyng's *Story of Inglande*

Almost all that we know about Robert Mannyng of Brunne is provided in the prologues to his two surviving works, *Handlyng Synne* and the *Chronicle* (also known as the *Story of Inglande*).[44] He was a native of Bourne (or Brunne) in Lincolnshire and possibly a canon in the Gilbertine order. In the prologue to *Handlyng Synne* he states that he was in residence at the Gilbertine house in Sempringham where, in 1303, he began to translate the Anglo-Norman *Manuel des Pechiez*.[45] Although his status among the Gilbertines is unclear,

---

[42] *Short Metrical Chronicle*, 58-64/635-872.
[43] Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*, 110.
[44] For Mannyng's biography see Ruth Crosby, "Robert Mannyng of Brunne: A New Biography," *PMLA* 57 (1942): 15-28, and Idelle Sullens, introduction, *The Chronicle*, by Robert Mannyng, Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, v. 153 (Binghamton: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1996) 13-22. The following discussion is indebted to these two sources.
[45] Robert Mannyng, *Handlyng Synne*, ed. Idelle Sullens, Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, v. 14 (Binghamton: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1983) 60-76. Cited by line number.

he seems to have been employed as a poet and translator while living at the priory for fifteen years.[46] In the prologue to the *Chronicle* he tells us more about himself:

> Of Brunne I am if any me blame,
> Robert Mannyng is my name.
> Blissed be he of god of heuen
> þat me, Robert, with gud wille neuen.
> In þe thrid Edwardes tyme was I
> when I wrote alle þis story.
> In þe hous of Sixille I was a throwe;
> Danȝ Robert of Malton þat ȝe know
> did it wryte for felawes sake
> when thai wild solace make.[47]

In the conclusion to the work Mannyng apologizes for running out of material, and tells us that he finished the work in 1338.[48] As far as can be told, therefore, Mannyng's writing career spanned the years 1303 to 1338, during which time he was associated with the Gilbertines, first at Sempringham, then at Sixhills. Various scholars have attempted to identify Mannyng further, but these studies remain inconclusive.[49]

Mannyng's literary output is considerable. *Handlyng Synne*, a collection of *exempla* dealing with various sins, totals 12,678 lines. The *Chronicle* is almost twice as long. Unlike *Handlyng Synne*, which survives in three complete manuscripts and seven fragments and excerpts, Mannyng's *Chronicle* does not seem to have been tremendously influential and survives in only two manuscripts and a single fragment.[50]

---

[46] Sullens, introduction, 16.
[47] Robert Mannyng, *Chronicle*, ed. Idelle Sullens, Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, v. 153 (Binghamton: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1996) 1.135-144. Cited by line number. Except where noted, all references will be to the Petyt manuscript with corrections from the Lambeth manuscript in square brackets [...].
[48] Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 2.8353-8358.
[49] See Ethel Seaton, "Robert Mannyng of Brunne in Lincoln," *Medium Ævum* 12 (1943): 77 and Matthew Sullivan, "Biographical Notes on Robert Mannyng of Brunne and Peter Idley, the Adaptor of Robert Mannyng's *Handlyng Synne*," *Notes and Queries* 239 (1994): 302-304. For Sullens' cautious reaction to these studies, see her introduction, 16-19.
[50] On Mannyng's influence see Sullens, introduction, 64-71.

The *Chronicle* is divided into two parts, although it is conceived of as a single work. The second part (which follows the death of Cadwallader) is a translation of Peter Langtoft's *Chronicle*, but for the first part, which traces British history from Troy to its last king, Mannyng uses Wace as his primary source. Mannyng chose Wace because his translation of Geoffrey is more accurate than Langtoft's:

> and ryght as mayster Wace says
> I telle myn Inglis þe same ways,
> ffor mayster Wace þe Latyn alle rymes
> þat Pers ouerhippis many tymes.[51]

Mannyng departs from his source on several occasions. After a lengthy genealogical introduction, for example, he begins the *Chronicle* with a detailed account of the judgment of Paris and the ensuing Trojan war which he attributes to "Dares þe Freson."[52] Often Mannyng will refer to another source, such as Geoffrey of Monmouth or Bede, to add authority to the narrative he is telling,[53] and the years following Arthur's death have been largely rewritten using a combination of Wace, Bede and Peter Langtoft.[54]

Both Mannyng's verse and his vocabulary are intentionally simple. He opens his prologue by describing the intended audience of the *Chronicle*:

> Lordynges þat be now here,
> if ȝe wille listene & lere
> alle þe story of Inglande
> als Robert Mannyng wryten it fand
> & on Inglysche has it shewed,
> not for þe lerid bot for þe lewed,
> ffor þo þat in þis land won

---

[51] Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1.61-64.
[52] Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1.145. Mannyng is probably not using Dares, and his citation of the Trojan historian is entirely conventional. For a discussion of the sources for Mannyng's Troy story, see Elmer Bagby Atwood, "Robert Mannyng's Version of the Troy Story," *Texas Studies in English* 18 (1938): 5-13. For his account of the war see Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1.429-726.
[53] Sullens, introduction, 56-57.
[54] Sullens, introduction, 57.

> þat þe Latyn no Frankys con,
> ffor to haf solace & gamen
> in felawschip when þai sitt samen.[55]

As Turville-Petre points out, the word "lewed" did not necessarily carry negative connotations. "The word could be used pejoratively, but usually was not: it referred to a lack of knowledge of languages, a lack that was expected and appropriate among lay people."[56] Later in the prologue Mannyng reinforces the point when he compares his work to his sources:

> Als þai haf wryten & sayd
> haf I alle in myn Inglis layd
> in symple speche as I couth
> þat is lightest in mannes mouth.[57]

For Turville-Petre, "...there is no element of condescension [in Mannyng's prologue]: the *lewed* have chosen to be simple, and the poet who has followed them in this choice shares this virtue with them, writing 'in symple speche as I couthe'."[58]

Mannyng's *Chronicle*, therefore, is intended for a lay audience whose primary language is English. At several points Mannyng departs from his narrative to address alternate narratives which he expects this lay English audience to know. As he begins to the tell the famous story of Vortigern and Rowena, the daughter of Hengist, he adds an aside concerning an alternate version of the tale:

> Þis lewid men seie & singe,
> and [telle þat hit was mayden Inge]:
> writen of Ingge no clerk may ken
> bot [of] Hengest douhter [R]onewenne.[59]

---

[55] Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1.1-10.
[56] Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*, 31. For a complete discussion of the word "lewed" see pp 28-31.
[57] Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1.71-74.
[58] Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*, 36. Turville-Petre discusses the use of "lewed" and "symple" in Mannyng's prologue on pp. 34-37.
[59] Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1 7427-7430.

The version of the tale in which Inge gives Vortigern a drink and teaches him the Saxon word *wassaille* is not found in either Wace or Geoffrey of Monmouth, but Mannyng's comments indicate that it was a popular tale which explained the change of name from Britain to England (or Inge-land). The Lambeth reviser, apparently also aware of the story, foreshadows the change of Britain's name at this point, adding the lines:

> ffro Angle a Contre in Saxonye
> Comen alle Hengistes compaynie
> So þat for Angle y vnderstond
> Bretayne was cald Engelond.[60]

Mannyng, however, did not recount the change of name until the coming of Engle saying that "for þis Engle þe lond þus wan, / England cald it ilk a man."[61] At this late stage in British history, Mannyng again returns to the false story of Inge, saying:

> Bot of Inge sauh I neuer nouht
> in boke writen ne wrouht:
> bot lewed men þer of crie
> & maynten þat ilk lie.[62]

For the "lewed" men, the story of Inge, which associated the change of the name of Britain with Vortigern's betrayal and the introduction of the English word *wassaille*, held a strong enough pull that Mannyng denounced it twice. The stort of Inge had some currency, and one of the adapters of the *Short Metrical Chronicle* also includes an account of the maiden. The *Short Metrical Chronicle*'s account, however, seems to be a late variant as the Royal manuscript does not contain it.[63] Mannyng was either unaware of, or failed to give

---

[60] Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1. addition in Lambeth following 7432.
[61] Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1.14197-14198.
[62] Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1.14215-14218.
[63] Zettl argues that the story of Inge was substituted in the lost exemplar *x* in place of the story of Hengist, as found in the Royal manuscript. Zettl, introduction, lxviii.

credence to, this version of the tale.[64] In all likelihood, however, Mannyng, who says that "lewid men seie & singe" of Inge,[65] knew the tale from an oral source. The *Short Metrical Chronicle* also alludes to the tale being sung:

> In þat tyme wite ȝe wel
> Com wesseil & drynkheil
> Into þis lond withoute wene
> Þoru a maide bryȝt & schene
> He was icluped maide Inge
> Of hure can many man rede & synge.[66]

Mannyng also alludes to the tale of Havelok which he expects his English audience to know. After telling the story of Alfred and Gunter, Mannyng enters upon a short digression on Havelok:

> Bot I haf grete ferly þat I fynd no man
> þat has writen in story how Hauelok þis lond wan:
> noiþer Gildas, no Bede, no Henry of Huntynton,
> no William of Malesbiri, ne Pers of Bridlynton
> writes not in þer bokes of no Kyng Athelwold[67]

---

[64] The *Short Metrical Chronicle*'s story of Inge is a compressed version of the story of Hengist and Rowena (Mannyng's *Ronewene*) in which the character Inge plays both roles. After announcing that "Þis lond haþ hadde names þre," (B. 13/282) BL Add. MS 19677 (which is typical of the four versions which include the tale) outlines the career of Inge. After the reign of Arthur the maiden Inge arrives in Britain from Saxony and asks for a plot of land which can be surrounded by a bull's hide. By cutting the hide into a thin thong she is able to gain enough land to build a castle. After the castle is completed, she invites the king and his men to a feast. When Inge offers the king a drink and says "Wassail," her men slaughter the guests and Inge takes possession of the island, which she renames after herself: "& after hure name ich vnderstond / He cluped þis lond Engelond" (B. 14/319-320). The three other manuscripts that relate the story agree (cf. pp. 75-78) while the Royal manuscript tells the more traditional story of "Hengistus" and "Rowenne" (R. 75/331-340). For a comparison of the five versions of the period, see Zettl, introduction, lxviii-lxxiii. Inge's resemblance to Hengist (the trick of the bull's hide, the slaughter of guests) indicates that some confusion has occurred between the two characters. "Inge" may in fact be a misreading of "Henist" (often spelt "Hingist", as in the Auchinleck manuscript (A. 58/653, 59/671, etc.)) with the "H" omitted.

[65] Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1.7427.

[66] *Short Metrical Chronicle*, B. 13/275-280. Higden also includes a story of a Saxon woman for whom England is named. He states that the island might be called England for the Angles, "...sive ab Angela regina, clarissimi ducis Saxonum filia, quae post multa tempora eam possedit." ["... or from Queen Angela, daughter of the most famous duke of the Saxons, who possessed it afterwards for a long time."] Ranulph Higden, *The Polychronicon*, ed. Churchill Babington and Joseph Rawson Lumby, RS. 41, (London: Longman, 1865-1886) II: 24.

[67] Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 2.519-523.

After mentioning some of the key elements of the story (the stone at Lincoln castle, Havelok's wife Goldeburgh, the fisher Gryme) Mannyng complains that he is unable to ascertain the truth of what "þise lowed men vpon Inglish tellis"[68] and concludes:

> Of alle stories of honoure þat I haf þorgh souht,
> I fynd þat no compiloure of him tellis ouht.
> Sen I fynd non redy þat tellis of Hauelok kynde,
> turne we to þat story þat we writen fynde.[69]

Unable to corroborate the story of Havelok with established authorities, Mannyng remains faithful to the history found in Peter Langtoft. Havelok remains, in Mannyng's account, a popular tale without the weight of history. The Lambeth reviser again shows his knowledge of the popular tales to which Mannyng refers. Instead of the explanation as to why the *Chronicle* does not include Havelok, the Lambeth text contains an interpolation of 82 lines which tells the Havelok story as history.[70]

In this way Mannyng presents himself as a chronicler attempting to preserve an accurate historical record according to the authorities available to him. In the case of Inge, the Lambeth reviser attempts to reinforce Mannyng's refutation of the tale by including an alternate account of the renaming of Britain. In the case of Havelok, the reviser works against Mannyng, excising his doubts about the tale and inserting the story which Mannyng apparently knew, but rejected.[71]

As with Inge and Havelok, Mannyng is aware of additional material about Arthur and he begins his Arthurian section by hinting at the exaggerations which had become part of Arthurian tradition:

---

[68] Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 2.527.
[69] Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 2.535-538.
[70] Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 2. addition in Lambeth following line 538. The Lambeth interpolation, lines 1-82, replace lines 519-538 of the Petyt manuscript.

Som of his thewes I wille discrie
(I trowe I salle not mykelle lie).[72]

Throughout the narrative of Britain's greatest king Mannyng attempts to assert the authority of the chronicle narrative over romance elements. This is not to say that Mannyng is uninfluenced by romance narratives and forms, for he shows a knowledge of them in his description of the battle between the red and white dragons. Here Mannyng slips into uncharacteristic alliterative verse:

What þei had long togidir smyten,
spouted sperkes, bolued & biten,
wipped with wenges, ouerwarpen & went,
kracchid with clawes, rombed & rent,
þe battle lasted day & night
vnto þe toþer day light[73]

Fletcher speculates that this passage "may be taken from some other [romance] poem" but there is no reason to assume that this was an Arthurian work.[74] Mannyng demonstrates his knowledge of Arthurian romance conventions through his descriptions of Gawain. Arthur's nephew is consistently described as "þe curtais,"[75] a characteristic emphasized in romance.[76] Upon Gawain's return to Britain from Rome Mannyng alludes to additional independent tales about Gawain:

Now is Wawan home
& Loth is fayn of his come;
noble he was & curteis

---

[71] Although likely, it is not, of course, certain that the two passages were altered by the same reviser.
[72] Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1.9612-9613. Mannyng is here translating "Les thecches Artur vus dirrai, / Neient ne vus en mentirai." ["I will show you the faults and virtues of Arthur, for I would not lead you astray with words."] Wace, *Le Roman de Brut*, ed. Ivor Arnold (Paris: Société des Anciens Français, 1940) 9015-9016. Cited by line number
[73] Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1.8081-8086.
[74] Fletcher, *Arthurian Material*, 206.
[75] Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1.10243.
[76] For a discussion of Gawain's reputation for courtesy see B. J. Whiting, "Gawain: His Reputation, His Courtesy and His Appearance in Chaucer's *Squire's Tale*," *Mediaeval Studies* 9 (1947): 189-234.

honour of him men rede & seis.[77]

Mannyng also mentions the tradition that Gawain killed the Emperor Lucius, but it is a tradition for which he can find no authority.

> Þe emperour was slayn o chance
> þorgh þe body with a lance.
> I kan not say who did him falle,
> bot Sir Wawayn, said þei alle.[78]

Mannyng likewise provides Yvain with a larger role than either Wace or Geoffrey of Monmouth had given him. In the *Chronicle* Yvain is mentioned at Arthur's coronation feast,[79] and his resistance to Mordred is increased. Both Wace and Geoffrey mention Yvain only once. After the death of Angusel, Yvain succeeds to the throne of Scotland and performs great deeds in the battle with Mordred.[80] In Mannyng's account, however, Yvain has been fighting with Mordred even before Arthur's return:

> He [Arthur] gaf Iwein in heritage
> & he mad Arthur homage.
> Iwein had lauht grete honour,
> agayn Modred he stode in stoure.[81]

The Lambeth reviser, however, goes beyond Mannyng's statement that Yvain had already received honour against Mordred in battle. He adds:

> & dide & seyde Moddred gret schonde
> Þe while Arthur was out of londe.[82]

---

[77] Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1.10479-10482. Cf. passage in Wace, *Brut*, 9820ff.

[78] Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1.13403-13406. This detail may be drawn from Peter Langtoft, *The Chronicle*, ed. and tr. Thomas Wright, RS. 47 (London: Lomgmans, 1866-1868) 218, or the Vulgate *Lestoire de Merlin*, *The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances*, ed. H. Oskar Sommer, vol. II. (Washington: Carnegie Institution, 1908) 440.

[79] Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1.10883.

[80] Cf. Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The Historia Regum Britannie of Geoffrey of Monmouth I: Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS 568*, ed. Neil Wright (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1985) ch. 177, and Wace, *Brut*, 13189-13200.

[81] Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1.13639-13642.

[82] Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1.addition in Lambeth following line 13642. In Mannyng's account Mordred and Guenevere began their affair before Arthur left Britain, as Mannyng tells us at the departure scene:

Gawain and Yvain appear in both Geoffrey and Wace, and, as shown by Maerlant and the Royal *Short Metrical Chronicle*, were considered historical by conscientious chroniclers. Mannyng's *Chronicle* shows how both characters underwent considerable expansion in later historical texts, presumably under the influence of their popular romance appearances.

Despite Mannyng's knowledge of romance forms and material, he does not allow Arthurian romance to alter his narrative. The establishment of the Round Table marks the beginning of the tension between the chronicle and romance narratives, and when Mannyng reaches the passage about the twelve years of peace following the conquest of Britain he goes beyond Wace and discusses the state of Arthurian narrative in his own time. Mannyng claims that Arthur did "... ordeyn þe rounde table / þat [ȝit] men telle of many [a] fable"[83] but it is after the establishment of the table that Mannyng directly addresses the question of alternative narratives. Following Wace, Mannyng writes about the twelve years of peace:

> [I]n þis tuelue ȝeres tyme
> felle auentours þat men rede of ryme;
> in þat tyme wer herd & sene
> þat som say þat neuer had bene;
> of Arthure is said many selcouth
> in diuers landes, north & south,
> þat man haldes now for fable,
> be þei neuer so trew no stable.
> Not alle is sothe ne alle lie,

> Arthure had a cosyn,
> Modrede hight þat traitour fyn;
> noble knyghte he was in stoure,
> bot to his eame was he traitoure.
> He betauht him his lond to kepe;
> him had bien better haf liggen to slepe,
> for he lufed þe quene priuely,
> Arthure wife, & lay hir by;
> was nouht percyued bituex þam tuo,
> who wild haue wend it had bien so.

Mannyng, *Chronicle*, l.11745-11754. Cf. Wace, *Brut*, 11173-11189.

[83] Mannyng, *Chronicle*, l.10359-10360.

> ne alle wisdom ne alle folie;
> þer is of him no þing said
> þat ne it may to gode laid.[84]

The passage is a rough translation of Wace's original, but Mannyng has added a few details. First, the tales that are half truths are written in "ryme". It would be easy to draw the simple conclusion that Mannyng distinguishes between the veracity of prose and the mendacity of verse, but it must be noted that both Mannyng's history and his sources are verse chronicles. Ad Putter, in fact, errs in the opposite direction when he states that "[w]here Wace had talked scornfully of unreliable rumours, Mannyng thought of verse romances, put down in writing (men *read* them), and consequently endowed with an authority that, while doubted by 'somme,' goes unquestioned by the author himself."[85] Putter's argument, however, conveniently ignores the last four lines of the passage quoted above (though not quoted by Putter) in which Mannyng, like Wace, characterizes alternative narratives (whether oral rumours or romances written in verse) as half-truths.

The second addition is Mannyng's willingness to accept that even tales which are not true "may to gode laid." According to the prologue, Mannyng's purpose in writing the *Chronicle* is to set forth history as a series of *exempla*:

> And gude it is for many thynges
> for to here þe dedis of kynges,
> whilk were foles & whilk were wyse,
> & whilk of þam couth mast quantyse,
> & whilk did wrong & whilk ryght,
> & whilk mayntend pes & fyght.[86]

Tales of Arthur which are untrue, claims Mannyng, could also be used as *exempla* and therefore put to the same good use. Mannyng's other major work, *Handlyng Synne*, also

---

[84] Mannyng, *Chronicle*, l.10391-10403. Cf. passage in Wace quoted above, p. 15.

contains many tales which are not true and yet he expects his readers to use them for the benefit of their souls.[87] As we shall see in the following chapters, Arthurian romances did carry a didactic tone of which Mannyng would have approved.

Mannyng also adds a short passage, suggested by the preface to the *Historia Regum Britanniae*:

> Geffrey Arthur of Menimu
> wrote his dedis þat wer of pru
> & blames boþe Gildas & Bede,
> whi of him þei wild not rede...[88]

Geoffrey had complained of Gildas, Bede and Latin authors in general,[89] but as Lesley Johnson points out, Mannyng's habit of citing sources is one of his methods of establishing his own authority. "Whether or not Mannyng's quotation of Geoffrey's observations is itself a fabrication, this citation in the *Chronicle* allows Mannyng to register the discrepancy over Arthur's historical subjectivity without thereby undermining Geoffrey of Monmouth's authoritative status and therefore the version of British and Arthurian history which he supplies."[90] Like Wace, therefore, Mannyng takes advantage of Geoffrey's historical gap to bolster the veracity of his own narrative. He concludes that:

> In alle londes wrote men of Arthoure;
> his noble dedis of honoure,
> in France men wrote & ȝit write;

---

[85] Ad Putter, "Finding Time for Romance: Mediaeval Arthurian Literary History," *Medium Ævum* 63 (1994): 7.
[86] Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1.15-20.
[87] Mannyng refers to the *exempla* in *Handlyng Synne* as "Talys", "chauncys" and "Merueylys." Mannyng, *Handlyng Synne*, 131-133.
[88] Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1.10405-10408.
[89] Cf. Geoffrey, *Historia*, ch. 1.
[90] Lesley Johnson, "Robert Mannyng's History of Arthurian Literature," *Church and Chronicle in the Middle Ages*, ed. Ian Wood & G. A. Loud (London and Rio Grande: The Hambledon Press, 1991) 142. Geoffrey's complaint is that Gildas and Bede had written very little about British kings and other chroniclers had not written anything about them. The prologue to the anonymous fifteenth-century prose translation of Geoffrey and Wace in College of Arms MS. Arundel 22, also confuses Geoffrey's reference to Gildas and Bede. For an edition of the prologue see the excerpted portions in Caldwell, "The History of the Kings of Britain," 645.

here haf we of him bot lite.[91]

Mannyng does not, at this point, describe the Arthurian texts written in France. Instead, the passage merely commiserates with Geoffrey of Monmouth that Gildas and Bede, both insular historians, wrote little about British kings and that other insular historians had written even less. Apart from Geoffrey and his translators, the English reader interested in Arthurian history was forced to read continental accounts of the king.

Mannyng's most innovative change, however, is to elaborate on the second period of peace in which adventures happened. As we saw from Geoffrey, Arthur settles in Paris for nine years after the defeat of Frollo. Wace, in a close translation of Geoffrey, merely stated that "Mainte merveille" happened to Arthur during this time,[92] but in Mannyng the scene is expanded. After establishing peace Arthur sends home his older trusted knights, but keeps the young knights in France:

> Þo þat were ȝong & wilde
> & had noiþer wife ne childe
> þat lufed to bere helm & shelde,
> nyen ȝere in France he þam helde.[93]

The youth that accompany Arthur in this time of peace seem to be a specific social group. Georges Duby discusses such a group in twelfth-century France, and many of his comments apply to Arthur's companions. The group described individually by the adjective *juvenis* (young) or collectively by the substantive *juventus* (youth) is generally noble, knighted, and without children, although a youth could be married. Duby states that the "stages of 'youth' can therefore be defined as the period in a man's life between his being dubbed knight and

---

[91] Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1.10415-10418.
[92] "Es neuf anz que il France tint,/ Mainte merveille li avint." ["In the nine years which he spent in France many marvels came to him."] Wace, *Brut*, 10143-10144.
[93] Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1.10757-10760.

his becoming a father."[94] This period of life is characterized by impatience, turbulence and instability. As Duby states:

> The youth is always on the point of departure or on the way to another place; he roams continually through provinces and counties; he 'wanders over all the earth'. For him the 'good life' was 'to be on the move in many lands in quest of prize and adventure'....[95]

For Mannyng, this group of youth form the fighting force of Arthur's conquests. As Arthur departs for Denmark he is accompanied by "[ȝ]outh þat couth ouht of fight, / þat lufed more were þan pes."[96] Similarly, when Arthur sets out to conquer Ireland he summons "all þe ȝongest bachelers / þat wele myght & best couth / stand in were & were of ȝouth."[97]

In this second period of peace, Arthur surrounds himself with the "ȝong & wilde," and another period of adventures ensues. Mannyng briefly describes not only the adventures of Arthur's court, but also the codification of their achievements:

> Many selcouth by tyme seres
> betid Arthur þo nyen ȝeres.
> Many proude man lowe he brouht,
> to many a felon wo he wrouht.
> Þer haf men bokes, alle his life,
> þere ere his meruailes kid fulle rife;
> þat we of him here alle rede,
> þer ere þei writen ilk a dede.
> Þise grete bokes, so faire langage,
> writen & spoken on France vsage,
> þat neuer was writen þorgh Inglis man;
> suilk stile to speke no kynde can.
> Bot France men wrote in prose,
> als he did, him to alose.[98]

---

[94] Georges Duby, "Youth in Aristocratic Society" *The Chivalrous Society*, trans. Cynthia Postan (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980) 113. For a definition of *juvenis* and *juventus* see pp. 112-113.
[95] Duby, "Youth in Aristocratic Society," 113. Duby's quotes are from *L'Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal*.
[96] Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1.10492-10493.
[97] Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1.10268-10270.
[98] Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1.10761-10774.

Mannyng, therefore, presents a scheme for reading all of Arthurian literature. Verse romances, which are not trustworthy, are located in the first period of peace, while deeds described in prose romances (the "grete bokes" in prose possibly being the Vulgate cycle) were performed in France and are therefore situated in the second period of peace. Both Johnson and Putter assume that Mannyng accepts the French prose narratives as historical. For Johnson, "Mannyng's reference to the intersection between these French prose narratives and his own work... suggests that their contents cannot be separated from the tradition in which he was working."[99] Putter adds that "[r]omance and history are thereby made to complement rather than contradict each other."[100] Apart from a few stylistic matters discussed above, however, Mannyng's Arthurian narrative is a close translation of Wace with no additional narrative material from either verse or prose romances. Mannyng himself makes no claims concerning the veracity of the later group of narratives, but his failure to include any tales drawn from these sources, and their parallel to the earlier fables, at least implies that Mannyng questions the truth of these "selcouth" stories. Putter argues that "the nine years are specifically designed for romances in *prose*, a point on which Mannyng insists in the couplet [that follows line 10774]."[101] The couplet that Putter refers to, however, is an addition found in the Lambeth manuscript and it merely indicates that the French chose to write in prose rather than verse because prose is more easily understood:

> In prose al of hym ys writen
> Þe bettere til vnderstande & wyten.[102]

Mannyng's opinion of French romance material remains uncertain. He clearly

---

[99] Johnson, "Robert Mannyng's History," 145.
[100] Putter, "Finding Time," 8.
[101] Putter, "Finding Time," 8.
[102] Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1. addition in Lambeth following line 10774.

undermines the veracity of verse romances in the twelve years of peace by asserting that they are "Not alle... sothe ne alle lie". The French prose works receive no such condemnation, but he has chosen to treat them in the same way he treated Havelok and Inge, through silence. Turville-Petre offers an interpretation of the nine years of peace which is not concerned with the historicity of the narratives, but rather the politics of their creation. "Two things are happening here," he claims:

> One is that Arthur's victory over the French is being associated with current anxieties over Anglo-French relations and the dominance of the French [in England]. The other is that Mannyng is laying claim... to Arthur as a hero of 'þys lond', and not to be appropriated by the French.[103]

In both periods of peace Mannyng stresses that most Arthurian material is written outside Britain. Mannyng's emphasis on the language of Arthurian material outside the Brut tradition (it is written in French) implies that his lay English audience may not have access to it, and his silence is a tacit rejection of it. Rather than providing authority for the material that he relegates to the periods of peace, the descriptions of events in both periods remain nothing more than allusions to vaguely defined narrative forms. As we shall see, some other chroniclers were not so willing to leave such large lacunae within their accounts of Arthurian history.

John Trevisa's *Polychronicon*

Like Robert Mannyng, John Trevisa is best known as a translator, but of Latin, rather than vernacular texts. Both authors wrote in order to bring popular historical works to a wider lay audience. Mannyng, as we have seen, translated the verse chronicles of Wace and Peter Langtoft. John Trevisa's major historical translation is of Ranulph Higden's Latin

Polychronicon.

Although John Trevisa was possibly the most prolific translator of his day, very little is actually known about him. He was born in Cornwall about the year 1342, possibly at Trevisa in the parish of St. Enoder.[104] He entered Exeter College, Oxford, in 1362. In 1369 Trevisa moved to Queen's College, presumably with the intention of going through the course required for a doctorate in divinity. Trevisa's time at Queen's was not without incident and he was briefly expelled under uncertain circumstances from 1378-1382.[105] It is possible that his expulsion was due to his association with John Wycliff, who was also at Queen's at the time, and with Nicholas Hereford and William Middleton, both involved in biblical translation.[106] During the 1380s Trevisa seems to have divided his time between Berkley and Oxford. He became vicar of Berkley in about 1390 and probably died in 1402.

Almost all of Trevisa's literary output was translation. The *Polychronicon* is his earliest datable work and he tells us that he completed the translation on April 18, 1387.[107] Trevisa's other major translation, Bartholomaeus Anglicus' popular *De Proprietatibus Rerum*, can also be precisely dated. He finished this work, he says, on February 6, 1398.[108] These two texts alone, both massive encyclopedic works, attest to Trevisa's industry, but he also produced translations of *De Regimine Principum* of Aegidius Romanus, the *Gospel of*

---

[103] Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*, 84.
[104] David C. Fowler, *Life and Times of John Trevisa, Medieval Scholar* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995) 23. The following account of Trevisa's life is drawn from this work. See also David C. Fowler, *John Trevisa* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1993) *passim*, and A. S. G. Edwards, "John Trevisa," *Middle English Prose: A Critical Guide to Major Authors and Genres*, ed. A. S. G. Edwards (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1984) 133-146.
[105] Fowler, *Life and Times of John Trevisa*, 27-32.
[106] For a discussion of Trevisa's expulsion, see Fowler, *Life and Times of John Trevisa*, 221-225.
[107] John Trevisa, tr., *The Polychronicon*, by Ranulph Higden, ed. Churchill Babington and Joseph Rawson Lumby, RS. 41 (London: Longman & Co., 1865-1886) VIII: 352
[108] John Trevisa, tr., *On the Properties of Things: John Trevisa's Translation of Bartholomæus Anglicus De proprietatibus rerum: A Critical Text*, ed. M. C. Seymour, *et al.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975) II: 1396.

Nicodemus, Richard Fitzralph's *Defensio Curatorum* and William of Ockham's *Dialogus inter Militem et Clericum*.[109]

About half of the manuscripts of Trevisa's *Polychronicon* are prefaced by two original pieces, the *Dialogus inter dominum et clericum* and a short *Epistola*.[110] In the *Epistola* Trevisa addresses Sir Thomas Berkely who commissioned the translation:

> ... ȝe speke and seyde þat ȝe wolde haue Englysch translacion of Ranulf of Chestre hys bokes of cronikes. Þarvore Y wol vonde to take þat trauayl and make Englysch translacion of þe same bokes as God graunteþ me grace.[111]

The *Dialogus* is a fictional representation of the moment when Sir Thomas requested the translation from his vicar. Although it is the implied conceit of the work that Dominus and Clericus are Berkely and Trevisa, it would be a mistake to regard the work as a record of an actual event. Rather, the *Dialogus* is a free literary composition which dramatizes the moment of conception of the translation for the reader.[112] The discussion, however, is less about the translation of this work than about translation in general. The *Dialogus* is an argument, in the form of a disputation, between Dominus, who argues that the book should be translated so that more men may read it and learn what it contains, and Clericus, who argues against translation. When Clericus argues that "ȝe cunneþ speke and rede and vnderstonde Latyn. Þann hyt nedeþ noȝt to haue such an Englysch Translacion," Dominus responds:

---

[109] For a discussion of the Trevisa canon and the relationship between these texts see Fowler, *Life and Times of John Trevisa*, 118-212.

[110] Trevisa's *Polychronicon* survives in fourteen manuscripts. For a discussion of these manuscripts and their relationship to one another see Arthur C. Cawley, "The Relationships of the Trevisa Manuscripts and Caxton's *Polychronicon*," *London Medieval Studies* 1.3 (1939/1948): 463–48 and Ronald Waldron, "Manuscripts of Trevisa's Translation of the *Polychronicon*: Towards a New Edition," *Modern Language Quarterly* 51 (1990): 281-317.

[111] John Trevisa, "Trevisa's Original Prefaces: A Critical Edition," ed. Ronald Waldron, *Medieval English Studies Presented to George Kane*, ed. Edward Donald Kennedy, Ronald Waldron and Joseph Wittig (Woodbridge. D.S. Brewer, 1988) 294.

> *Dominus*: Y denye þys argument, forþey Ich cunne speke and rede and vnderstonde Latyn þer ys moche Latyn in þeus bokes of cronyks þat Y can noȝt vnderstonde, noþer þou wiþoute studyinge and auysement and lokyng of oþer bokes.[113]

As Clericus continues to argue the discussion degenerates into name calling. When Clericus argues that the "lewed" could simply ask what is in the book, Dominus responds that "Þou spekst wonderlych, vor þe lewed man wot noȝt what a scholde axe."[114] When Clericus argues that the Latin book "ys boþe good and fayr" Dominus responds that "Þis reson ys worþy to be plonged yn a plod and leyd in pouþer of lewednes and of schame,"[115] but when Clericus persists with this reason Dominus is his most insulting:

> *Dominus*: A blere-yȝed man, bote he were al blynd of wyt, myȝte yseo þe solucion of þis reson; and þey a were blynd a myȝte grope þe solucion, bot ȝef hys velyng hym faylede.[116]

Clericus finally agrees to translate the work, but he still has only question: "Wheþer ys ȝow leuere haue a translacion of þeuse cronyks in ryme oþer yn prose?" Dominus answers simply: "Yn prose, vor comynlych prose ys more cleer þan ryme, more esy and more pleyn to knowe and vnderstonde."[117] Like Mannyng, who wrote of the need to write in "symple speche", Trevisa's primary goal is clarity of understanding. He continues the discussion of translation in the *Epistola* and again his concern is that the work be easily understood:

> For to make þis translacion cleer and pleyn to be knowe and vnderstonde, in som place Y schal sette word vor word and actyue vor actyue and passiue vor passyue arewe ryȝt as a stondeþ withoute changyng of þe ordre of wordes. But yn som place Y mot change þe rewe and þe ordre of wordes and sette þe actyue vor þe passiue and aȝenward. And yn som place Y mot sette a reson vor a word to telle what hyt meneþ. Bote vor al such chaungyng, þe menyng schal stonde and noȝt be ychanged.[118]

---

[112] Ronald Waldron, "John Trevisa and the Use of English," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 74 (1988): 174.
[113] Trevisa, "Original Prefaces," 290.
[114] Trevisa, "Original Prefaces," 291.
[115] Trevisa, "Original Prefaces," 291.
[116] Trevisa, "Original Prefaces," 291.
[117] Trevisa, "Original Prefaces," 293. Cf. the Lambeth reviser's statement on prose quoted above, page 50.
[118] Trevisa, "Original Prefaces," 294.

Trevisa is largely successful in achieving his goals and produces a text which is "generally intelligible, idiomatic, and accurate."[119]

Despite Trevisa's assumed role of the faithful translator, he does divert from Higden's text to comment on methodology and the material that Higden includes. This is not unusual in medieval translation, but "Trevisa's translation of the *Polychronicon* differs dramatically from all his other translations in the number and magnitude of the notes that he has inserted."[120] An example is the oft-quoted passage in which Trevisa describes the change from the use of French in grammatical instruction to the use of English.[121] Trevisa, however, does not merely explain Higden's text, he also argues with some of Higden's, or his sources', statements. When, for instance, Higden records Alfred of Beverley's division of England into thirty-six shires, Trevisa takes offense that Cornwall is omitted and complains: "Hit is wondre why Alfred summeth the schires of Engelond somdel as a man þat mette," and concludes that if Alfred would not recognise Cornwall "he wot nouȝt what he maffleþ."[122] Trevisa is always careful to set these personal observations off from the text he is translating by prefacing them with his own name, just as Higden had done for his personal comments.

Trevisa's views of Arthurian history are revealed twice in his comments on Higden's text. In the first instance Higden, quoting Giraldus Cambrensis, describes Caerleon. He writes: "Hic magni Arthuri, si fas sit credere, magnam curiam legati adiere Romani."[123]

---

[119] Traugott Lawler, "On the Properties of John Trevisa's Major Translations," *Viator* 14 (1983): 274. For a general discussion of Trevisa's translation of the *Polychronicon* see, 268-274

[120] Fowler, *Life and Times of John Trevisa*, 178.

[121] Trevisa, *Polychronicon*, II: 159-161.

[122] Trevisa, *Polychronicon*, II: 91.

[123] Ranulph Higden, *The Polychronicon*, ed. Churchill Babington and Joseph Rawson Lumby. RS. 41 (London: Longmans, 1865-1886) II: 76. The expression of doubt in this passage ("si fas sit credere") is an interpolation of Higden's and not found in Giraldus' text. Trevisa, however, obviously believed that Giraldus Cambrensis doubted that Arthur's court was at Caerleon and that Higden has faithfully used Giraldus' text. Higden again

Trevisa translates the passage as "Þere þe messangers of Rome come to þe grete Arthurus curt, ȝif it is leeful for to trowe," but he adds a personal comment on Giraldus' doubts:

> *Trevisa.* ȝif Gerald was in doute where it were leful for to trowe þis oþere noo, it was nouȝt ful greet reedynesse to write hit in his bookes; as som men wolde wene. For it is wonder sweuene i-mette for to write a long storie, to haue euermore in mynde, and euere haue doute ȝif it be amys byleue. ȝif alle his bookes were suche, what lore were þerynne, and nameliche while it makeþ non euidens for neiþer side, noþer telleþ what hym meueþ so for to seie?[124]

Trevisa's annoyance with Giraldus is evident, but his reasons are less obvious. The choice to object to a doubt raised concerning Arthurian history is significant, but it is Giraldus' method that draws the translator's reproach. Why, asks Trevisa, should the reader believe anything that Giraldus says if he provides no argument or evidence to support his doubt? By drawing attention to Giraldus' methodological flaws Trevisa establishes himself as an authority on historical method and, by implication, reaffirms the truth of the Arthurian court's presence at Caerleon. Trevisa will utilize this role during his translation of Higden's Arthurian history. Disagreeing with Higden's account, Trevisa enters upon a second digression in defense of Arthurian history.

Higden's Arthurian section is a complex mixture of William of Malmesbury, Henry of Huntington and Geoffrey of Monmouth. He lists the twelve battles fought by Arthur in Britain and quotes William of Malmesbury's statement that Arthurian history deserves to be praised in true accounts rather than exaggerated in the false tales of the British.[125] Then,

---

represents Giraldus as anti-Galfridian in his discussion of Cadwallader. Under the rubric "*Giraldus, distincione prima, capitulo xvii*" Higden writes "Sed et opinionem Walensium qua dicunt se denuo reges rehabere cum ossa Cadwalladri a Roma fuerint reportata, fabulosam reputo, sicut et historiam Gaufridi in fine." Higden, *Polychronicon*, VI: 160. Cf. "Walsche men telleþ þat þey schulde eft have kynges whan Cadwaldrus his boones beeþ i-brouȝt from Rome, but I holde þat but fable, as I doo þe storie of Gaufridus in þe ende." Trevisa, *Polychronicon*, VI: 161. Higden's editor, however, was unable to trace the source of this chapter.

[124] Trevisa, *Polychronicon*, II: 77.

[125] Higden, *Polychronicon*, V: 330. Cf. William of Malmesbury, quoted above p. 7.

preceded by "*Ranulphus*", to indicate his personal opinion, Higden adds that "In quibusdam chronicis legitur quod Cerdicus cum Arthuro sæpius confligens, si semel vinceretur, alia vice acrior surrexit ad pugnam."[126] This version of events, in which Arthur eventually grants Cerdric Wessex, is found in "quibusdam chronicis" and in "chronicis Anglorum." Higden contrasts this with events depicted "secundum historiam Britonum" in which Arthur battles against Mordred and is buried in Avalon.[127] After a brief statement concerning the exhumation of Arthur at Glastonbury (drawn from Giraldus Cambrensis), Higden expresses his own doubts about the extent of Arthur's conquests.

Higden's doubts about the Galfridian narrative are based on a comparison with other texts. Geoffrey alone (*solus Gaufridus*) states that Arthur conquered thirty kingdoms. In addition, Geoffrey states that Arthur slew Lucius Hiberius in the time of Emperor Leo, but there is no other record of a procurator named Lucius, nor of a king of France named Frollo.[128] Even Geoffrey admits that it is surprising that Gildas and Bede do not mention Arthur, but, says Higden "immo magis mirandum puto cur ille Gaufridus tantum extulerit, quem omnes antiqui veraces et famosi historici pœne intactum reliquerunt."[129] Higden can only conclude that, like other historians who write of Charlemagne or Richard, the Welsh Geoffrey exaggerated the deeds of his nation's hero.

Higden's doubts are not emotional reactions to Geoffrey's *Historia*, but are based on carefully reasoned comparisons with other chronicles that comment on the period. Trevisa

---

[126] "In some chronicles it is read that Cerdric often fought with Arthur, and if he was overcome once, the next time he rose to the fight stronger." Higden, *Polychronicon*, V: 330.
[127] Higden, *Polychronicon*, V: 332. The earlier version of this passage (represented by CD in the Rolls Series edition) makes it clear that this is a reference to Geoffrey of Monmouth: "Hoc anno secundum Diniensem et secundum Gaufridus...." ["In this year, according to Diniensem and according to Geoffrey...."]
[128] Higden, *Polychronicon*, V: 334.
[129] Higden, *Polychronicon*, V: 336. Cf. "but I holde more wondre why Gaufridus preyseþ more so moche oon

dutifully translates all of Higden's Arthurian section, including both the narrative and the personal comments on the reliability of Geoffrey of Monmouth. After the section, however, Trevisa includes his longest personal digression in the translation. Trevisa's stance is argumentative, and he attacks not only William of Malmesbury's opinion, but also Higden's reasoning:

> *Trevisa.* Here William telleþ a magel tale wiþ oute evidence; and Ranulphus his resouns, þat he meveþ aȝenst Gaufridus and Arthur, schulde non clerke moove þat can knowe an argument, for it followeþ it nouȝt.[130]

As in the case of Giraldus Cambrensis' doubts about Arthur's court at Caerleon, Trevisa looks for "evidence" and an argument that "meveþ" the historian to a given opinion. The Oxford-trained cleric treats the interpretation of historical material as a disputation (just as he had treated the argument about translation in the *Dialogus*) and he evaluates Higden's argument by applying it to scriptural interpretation:

> Seint Iohn in his gospel telleþ meny þinges and doynges þat Mark, Luk, and Matheu spekeþ nouȝt of in here gospelles, ergo, Iohn is nouȝt to trowynge in his gospel. He were of false byleve þat trowede þat þat argument were worþ a bene.... So þey Gaufridus speke of Arthur his dedes, þat oþer writers of stories spekeþ of derkliche, oþer makeþ of non mynde, þat dispreveþ nouȝt Gaufrede his storie and his sawe, and specialliche of som writers of stories were Arthur his enemyes.[131]

Omission, argues Trevisa, does not prove non-existence, and the argument is especially faulty when the authors who fail to mention Arthur are his "enemyes." Presumably Trevisa is referring here to Bede and continental authors, historians of the Saxons and the French whom Arthur had conquered.[132] Fowler argues that "the armour of scriptural inerrancy is

---

þat al þe olde famous, and sooþ writers of stories makeþ of wel nyȝ non mencioun." Trevisa, *Polychronicon*, V: 337.

[130] Trevisa, *Polychronicon*, V: 337.

[131] Trevisa, *Polychronicon*, V: 337.

[132] Trevisa may also be thinking of Gildas as one of the enemies of Arthur. Giraldus Cambrensis had related the story in which Gildas is Arthur's chaplain. After Arthur kills Gildas' brother, however, Gildas turns against

employed in the defense of Arthurian tradition,"[133] but the choice may not be purely theologically motivated. Trevisa, as we have seen, complained of Giraldus' historical method and his doubts about the narrative contained in Geoffrey of Monmouth. Trevisa may have known Giraldus' famous story of the monk who was plagued by demons. According to Giraldus, the monk's companions experimented with the demons:

> Contigit aliquando, spiritibus immundis nimis eidem insultantibus, ut Evangelium Johannis ejus in gremio poneretur: qui statim tanquam aves evolantes, omnes penitus evanuerunt. Quo sublato postmodo, et Historia Britonum a Galfrido Arthuro tractata, experiendi causa, loco ejusdem subrogata, non solum corpori ipsius toti, sed etiam libro superposito, longe solito crebrius et tædiosius insederunt.[134]

Trevisa's use of the Gospel of John exactly mirrors Giraldus'. Where Giraldus had set the veracity of scripture, represented by the Gosepl of John, in apposition to the mendacity of Geoffrey's narrative, Trevisa uses scripture, and in particular the narrative elements found only in John, to reaffirm the veracity of Geoffrey's unique version of Arthurian history.

Trevisa also wonders that Higden complains that Frollo and Lucius do not appear in other histories for "ofte an officer, kyng oþer emperour haþ many dyvers names, and is

---

Arthur and the Britons. "...dicunt [B]ritones, quod propter fratrem suum Albaniæ principem, quem rex Arthurus occiderat, offensus hæc scripsit. Unde et libros egregios, quos de gestis Arthuri, et gentis suæ laudibus, multos scripserat, audita fratris sui nece, omnes, ut asserunt, in mare projecit. Cujus rei causa, nihil de tanto principe in scriptis authenticis expressum invenies." ["...the Britons say that on account of his brother the prince of Albania, whom king Arthur killed, he wrote these invectives. Whence, as they assert, having heard of the death of his brother, he threw into the sea the many excellent books which he had written concerning the deeds of Arthur and the praises of his people. This is the reason that nothing is found recorded of such a prince in authentic writing."] Giraldus Cambrensis, *Descriptio Kambriæ*, *Opera*, ed. J.S. Brewer and James F. Dimock, RS. 21 (London: Longman, 1861-1898) VI: 208. Housman argues that "Pretty clearly this last shaft is aimed at William of Newburgh, and other writers hostile to the 'British hope'." John E. Housman, "Higden, Trevisa, Caxton, and the Beginnings of Arthurian Criticism," *Review of English Studies* 23 (1947): 213. I think this unlikely, however, since Trevisa himself admits that stories of Arthur's return are "magel tales" and his argument here concerns more ancient authorities.

[133] Fowler, *Life and Times of John Trevisa*, 187.

[134] "Once when evil spirits were fiercely attacking him, a copy of the Gospel of John was set in his lap; and the demons all vanished instantly, like birds to the wing. Then they took away the Gospel and replaced it with a copy of Geoffrey Arthur's *History of the Britons*, just to see what would happen; the demons settled more numerously and more loathsomely than ever, not only over his whole body but even on the book too." Giraldus Cambrensis, *Itinerarium Kambriae*, *Opera*, ed. J.S. Brewer and James F. Dimock, RS. 21 (London: Longman, 1861-1898) VI: 58.

diversliche i-nempned in meny dyvers londes."[135] Housman speculates that this argument may refer to the "similarities between Gilda's [*sic*] and Bede's account of Aurelius Ambrosianus and Geoffrey's Arthur" or to "characters both in history (Octavianus-Augustus) and in romance to whom this remark applies."[136] It is also possible that Trevisa is thinking of the practice of providing alternate names for interpretative purposes. Higden himself had written of the practice as it was used with the Trojans, and Trevisa translated the passage:

> Ofte names beeþ i-sette for a manere of doynge. As when we wole mene þat þe Troians beeþ feerful, we cleped hem Frigios; and ȝif we wole mene þat þey beeþ gentil and noble, we clepeþ hem Dardanis; ȝif we wil mene þat þey beeþ stronge, we clepeþ hem Troians; ȝif hardy, we clepeþ hem Hectores.[137]

Trevisa also uses Higden's own chronicle to argue against him. William of Malmesbury, as Higden himself had said, had not seen Geoffrey of Monmouth's source, the ancient British book:

> ...and in þe þridde book, capitulo nono, he [ie. Higden] seiþ hymself þat it is no wonder þey William Malmesbury were desceyved, for he hadde nouȝt i-rad þe Brittische book....[138]

The passage that Trevisa is referring to concerns the hot springs at Bath and the discrepancy between Geoffrey of Monmouth and William of Malmesbury.

> *Ranulphus*. Sed Gaufridus Monemutensis in suo Britannico libro asserit regem Bladud hujus rei fuisse auctorem. Forsan Willelmus, qui Britannicum librum non viderat, ista ex aliorum relatu aut ex propria conjectura, sicut, et quaedam alia, minus scripsit exquisite.[139]

---

[135] Trevisa, *Polychronicon*, V: 337.
[136] Housman, "Higden, Trevisa, Caxton," 213.
[137] Trevisa, *Polychronicon*, II: 255.
[138] Trevisa, *Polychronicon*, V: 339.
[139] Higden, *Polychronicon*, II: 58. Trevisa, of course, translated this passage: "R. But Gaufre Monemutensis in his Brittische book, seiþ þat Bladud made þilke bathes. Vppon caas William, þat had nouȝt i-seie þat Brittisshe book, wroot so by tellynge of oþere men, oþer by his owne gessynge, as he wroot oþer þinges somdel vnwiseliche." Trevisa, *Polychronicon*, II: 59. Higden makes the same argument when faced with conflicting account of a standing stone in Westmorland. William, says Higden, is deceived, "nec mirum, cum ipse Britannicum librum non legisset." ["nor is it a wonder, since he had not read the British book."] Higden, *Polychronicon*, IV: 416.

Trevisa's argument is simple. Geoffrey's source, the ancient British book, confirms his version of Arthurian history. Since historians who contradict Geoffrey did not have access to the book, their narratives do not disprove Geoffrey's account.

Trevisa's final argument is also his most vague. He merely states that "ȝit þey Gaufridus had nevere i-spoke of Arthur, meny noble naciouns spekeþ of Arthur and of his nobil dedes."[140] Like Mannyng, therefore, Trevisa is aware of Arthurian narrative from other countries, but he is too vague to give us any indication of what those narratives are. He is also aware, however, of Arthurian narratives which he does not consider historical, but he argues that the lies told about Arthur do not discredit the truth of the historical narrative:

> But it may wel be þat Arthur is ofte overpreysed, and so beeþ meny oþere. Soþ sawes beeþ nevere þe wors þey madde men telle magel tales, and some mad men wil mene þat Arthur schal come aȝe and be eft kyng here of Britayne, but þat is a ful magel tale, and so beeþ meny oþere þat beeþ i-tolde of hym and of oþere.[141]

By denying the British hope of Arthur's return Trevisa is following the historiographical trend of the fourteenth century,[142] but the other "magel tales" that are told about Arthur are distinct from the historical tradition and are also not to be believed.

John E. Housman, who first drew attention to this passage, argues that Trevisa "tended to confuse history and romance much more than Higden." He continues:

> It seems pretty certain that Trevisa took Arthurian romance, not only of the Brut family but also of the 'Mort Artu' class, considerably more seriously than Higden.[143]

Although it is clear that Trevisa accepted the narrative found in Geoffrey of Monmouth ("the

---

[140] Trevisa, *Polychronicon*, V: 339.
[141] Trevisa, *Polychronicon*, V: 339.
[142] For fourteenth-century reactions to the "British hope", see Christopher Dean, *Arthur of England: English Attitudes to King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1987) 27-28.
[143] Housman, "Higden, Trevisa, Caxton," 213.

Brut family"), his attitude towards the prose Vulgate ("the 'Mort Artu' class") is less obvious. Trevisa admits that Arthurian stories are exaggerated and that the true historical narrative has been transformed into "magel tales," and in this he is in agreement with Wace and Mannyng. The "meny oþere" tales told of Arthur that are "magel tales" could be either in verse or prose (Trevisa does not distinguish), but there is nothing to indicate that Trevisa accepted as fact any Arthurian narrative beyond "the Brut family."

Trevisa's reasons for defending Arthurian narrative have been the subject of some debate. Housman assumes that the Cornish Trevisa has a "Celtic axe to grind" and that this led him "to defend the authenticity of Geoffrey and, by implication, that of Arthur against belittling Englishmen."[144] This argument has been tacitly accepted by Fowler, who states that "our Celtic translator appends one of his longest notes" to Higden's Arthurian section.[145] Ronald Waldron, however, has convincingly argued that Trevisa's Celticism is doubtful at best. For Waldron, "[w]hat Trevisa is advocating... is a cautious acceptance even of conflicting accounts, because rational explanations can sometimes be found to reconcile apparent contradictions...."[146]

While Waldron is correct in stating that Trevisa does not act out of an emotional sense of Celtic pride, his interpretation of Trevisa's argument is too neutral. Trevisa's arguments favour Geoffrey of Monmouth's narrative, and we may assume that he preferred the Brut tradition to the narrative Higden provides. His method is to build on the image he has established for himself as a careful historian. Comparison of sources provides evidence

---

[144] Housman, "Higden, Trevisa, Caxton," 214. See also Housman's erroneous speculations concerning Trevisa's birthplace, which he believes to be Carados, 212, *n.* 3.
[145] Fowler, *Life and Times of John Trevisa*, 187.
[146] Ronald Waldron, "Trevisa's 'Celtic Complex' Revisited," *Notes and Queries* 234 (1989): 307. For Waldron's discussion of Trevisa's Celticism see pp. 303-307.

that supports Geoffrey's narrative (the "Brittische book" and the histories of "meny noble naciouns") while the omission of Arthurian history in other sources (such as Bede and continental writers) is easily explained. As he had done when Giraldus Cambrensis doubted Arthurian history, Trevisa has looked for evidence and the reasons that "meveþ" the historian, and he finds Higden's method to be faulty.

Trevisa, therefore, can be seen as Robert Mannyng's kindred spirit. Both translators hope to bring popular historical texts to a wider, lay audience and both show a desire to preserve the integrity of Arthurian history as it is found in Geoffrey of Monmouth. For both authors this involves not only the comparison of historical material, and the affirmation of Geoffrey's narrative, but also the rejection of "magel tales" which exaggerate the deeds of Arthur and his knights.

Andrew of Wyntoun's *Original Chronicle of Scotland*

Andrew of Wyntoun's *Original Chronicle of Scotland*, written shortly before 1424, also addresses the distinction between historical and literary representations of Arthurian narrative. Almost everything that we know of Wyntoun is derived from his *Chronicle*.[147] He was a canon-regular in the Augustinian Priory of St. Andrew's and in 1393 or shortly thereafter he was made Prior of St. Serf's in Lochleven. He began writing the *Chronicle* at the suggestion of Sir John Wemyss of Leuchars and he was still writing in 1420. He died some time before 1424 at an advanced age.

The *Original Chronicle* is a universal history which, like Higden's *Polychronicon*, begins with creation and ends with contemporary affairs. As with most universal chronicles,

the early books deal with world history while the later books are primarily concerned with national, in this case Scottish, affairs. Like Mannyng and Trevisa, Wyntoun's primary aim is to bring history to an audience that does not read Latin, and he seeks to accomplish this through a plain style. In the prologue to Book I, Wyntoun states that all men enjoy listening to historical works either in metre or in prose, and he compares two types of historical writing. The first type is ornate:

> As Gwydo de Calumpna quhile,
> The pohete Omere and Virgile,
> Fairly formyt there tretyß,
> And curiously dytit there storyis.
> Sum vsit bot in plane maner
> Off aire done dedis thar mater
> To writ, as did Dares of Frigy,
> That wrait of Troy all þe story,
> Bot in till plane and opin stile,
> But curiouse wordis or subtile.[148]

Wyntoun begs the forgiveness of his audience in a typical modesty *topos* and apologizes for the "sempilnes" of the work,[149] finally pleading that "simpilly I maid at þe instance of a larde / That has my seruice in his warde, / Schir Iohne of Wemys be rycht name."[150]

After a brief discussion of patronage, Wyntoun apologizes again, not only for the simplicity of his style, but also for the limited range of his material, and he invites his readers to add to his text:

> For few writtis I redy fand
> That I couth draw to my warand.

---

[147] For a brief biography of Andrew of Wyntoun, see F. J. Amours, introduction, *The Original Chronicle*, by Andrew of Wyntoun, Scottish Text Society 63, 50, 53-57 (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood, 1903-1914) I: xxx-xlii. The brief account which follows is based on Amours.
[148] Andrew of Wyntoun, *The Original Chronicle*, ed. F. J. Amours, Scottish Text Society 63, 50, 53-57 (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood, 1903-1914) I, prol. 15-24. Cited by book and line numbers. Amours printed the Wemyss and Cotton MSS on facing pages; except where noted all references are to the Wemyss text.
[149] Wyntoun, *Original Chronicle*, I, prol. 47-51.
[150] Wyntoun, *Original Chronicle*, I, prol. 54-57.

> Part of þe Bibill with þat at Peris
> Comestor ekit in his ȝeris,
> Off Crosyus and Frere Martyne,
> With Scottis and Inglis storyis syne....[151]

Despite its brevity this is an accurate description of the main sources used by Wyntoun. Frere Martyne is Martinus Polonus, who compiled his *Chronicon Pontificum et Imperatorum* in the 1270s. The work enjoyed great popularity in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries both on the continent and in Britain.[152] The *Chronicon* is a schematic work that briefly outlines world history. The work is usually in parallel columns, or on facing leaves, with one column containing a list of popes and events relating to the church, while the second column contains a list of Roman emperors and political events. Wyntoun utilizes the *Chronicon* throughout his *Original Chronicle*, but it is the dominant source for Book V, which includes the account of Arthurian history.[153]

The impetus for Wyntoun's history of Arthur is found in Martinus where, under Pope Hylarius (the contemporary of Emperor Leo I), a brief account of the British king is included:

> Per idem tempus, ut legitur in historia Britonum, in Britannia regnabat Arthurus, qui benignitate et probitate sua Franciam, Flandriam, Norvegiam, Daciam ceterasque marinas insulas sibi servire coegit. In prelio quoque letaliter vulneratus, secedens ad curandum vulnera in quandam insulam, deinceps Britonibus de vita eius usque hodie nulla certitudo remansit.[154]

---

[151] Wyntoun, *Original Chronicle*, I, prol. 115-120. "Crosyus" is apparently a scribal error for "Orosyus."
[152] William Matthews, "Martinus Polonus and Some Later Chronicles," *Medieval Literature and Civilization: Studies in Memory of G.N. Garmonsway*, ed. D. A. Pearsall and R. A. Waldron (London: The Athlone Press, 1969) 275. Martinus (also known as Martin of Trappau) was born in Silesia but he spent most of his life in Rome where he became papal chaplain and apostolic penitentiary. For a brief biography, see Peter J. Lucas, introduction, *Abbreuiacion of Cronicles*, by John Capgrave, EETS, os. 285 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983) lxxiii. Taylor includes Martinus among the chroniclers who "formed the basis of a historical consciousness which lasted until the end of the Middle Ages." John Taylor, *English Historical Literature in the Fourteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987) 53.
[153] For a discussion of Wyntoun's use of Martinus see Matthews, "Martinus Polonus," 276-277.
[154] "At this time, as is read in the history of the British, in Britain reigned Arthur, who kindly and mildly brought together France, Flanders, Norway, Denmark and other islands in the sea into his service. Also, mortally wounded in battle, he retired to a certain island to heal his wounds. From then until now, the Britains remain uncertain concerning his life." Martinus Polonus, *Chronicon Pontificum et Imperatorum*, ed. Ludwig Weiland,

A variant version of Martinus' *Chronicon* shows the influence of Wace and specifically mentions the knights associated with Arthur's court. The single entry under Emperor Leo I reads: "Per hec tempora fuerunt viri famosi milites tabule rotunde ut dicitur."[155] This brief notice of Arthur was enough for some chroniclers. John Capgrave did not elaborate on Martinus, but actually condenses his source as he translates the Arthurian entry:

> In þese dayes was Arthure kyng of Bretayn, þat with his manhod conqwered Flaunderes, Frauns, Norwey, and Denmark, and aftir he was gretely woundid he went into an ylde cleped Auallone, and þere dyed. The olde Britones suppose þat he is o-lyue.[156]

For Wyntoun, however, the history of Arthur provided by Martinus was insufficient, and he looked outside his main source for a complete account of the king's reign.

Instead of the brief notice of Arthur, Wyntoun includes a lengthy description of Arthur's reign which he derives from "the Brute" and the "Gestis Historiall" of "Huchone of þe Auld Ryall."[157] Wyntoun's descriptions of "the Brute" are too vague to direct the reader to any one version of British history. Obviously he is referring to a Galfridian narrative, and it is likely that he is using one of the vernacular redactions rather than the *Historia Regum Britanniae*.[158] The figure of "Huchone", or Huchown as he is better known, is even more obscure. Although Huchown's Arthurian work is lost, it is still possible to analyze

---

Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptorum, Tomus xxii (Hanover: Imprensis Bibliopolii Avlici Hahniani, 1872) 419.

[155] "In this time, as is said, famous men were knights of the round table." Martinus Polonus, *Cronica Summorum Pontificum Imperatorumque*, ed. Taurini, 1477. Quoted in Fletcher, *Arthurian Material*, 174. Unfortunately, the editorial state of the *Chronicon* does not make it possible to ascertain which version of the text Wyntoun used. It should be noted that Higden's Arthurian passage was prompted by the same text.

[156] John Capgrave, *Abbreuiacion of Cronicles*, ed. Peter J. Lucas, EETS, os. 285 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983) 69.

[157] Wyntoun, *Original Chronicle*, V. 4309-4310.

[158] MacCracken lists the "[a]t least six extensive passages taken by Andrew from the *Brut*." He also dismisses the notion, based on a misreading of Wyntoun, that John Barbour had translated a version of the *Brut* into Scots. Henry Noble MacCracken, "Concerning Huchown," *PMLA* 25 (1910): 511, *n.* 1.

Wyntoun's attitude towards his fellow poet.

The vast majority of scholarship on this passage has been concerned with identifying Huchown and the texts that he wrote. The poet has been identified as Sir Hew of Eglington, mentioned by William Dunbar, but with no corroborating evidence the identification remains tentative. As for the corpus of Huchown's work, Wyntoun names three texts:

> He maid þe gret Gest of Arthure,
> And þe Anteris of Gawane,
> The Episitill als of Suete Susane.[159]

The final text listed by Wyntoun can be firmly identified as the alliterative *Pistill of Suete Susane*, but the other two titles have drawn the most attention. Based on these attributions and similarities with Wyntoun's description of Arthurian history, the "gret Gest of Arthure" was confidently identified as the alliterative *Morte Arthure* in the late eighteenth century. Further attributions followed: the "Anteris of Gawane" was obviously *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (and therefore Huchown also wrote the other three poems in the *Pearl* manuscript), and it was equally obvious that it was also *The Awntyrs off Arthure* and *Golagros and Gawain*. The attributions continued to accumulate until Huchown was credited with writing almost every piece of alliterative verse, with the exception of *Piers Plowman* (which, thankfully, had a named author). The various theories and conjectures were finally and forcibly laid to rest by Henry Noble MacCracken in 1910.[160]

When we put the question of Huchown's identity, and the identity of his works, aside, the passage does not lose its interest. Wyntoun's Arthurian passage begins by listing

---

[159] Wyntoun, *Original Chronicle*, V. 4332-4334.
[160] This is not the place for a detailed discussion of the Huchown controversy. For an entertaining and biting critique of the various theories see MacCracken, "Concerning Huchown," 507-534.

seventeen countries conquered by Arthur.[161] These countries "And all þe Ilis in þe se / Subiect were till his pouste."[162] Arthur, however, refuses to give tribute to Rome and this prompts the empire to send a message to the British king:

> Quharfor þe stait of þe empyre,
> That muffit were in to gret ire,
> The hawtane message till him send
> That in Arthuris Gestis is kend,
> That Huchoun of þe Auld Ryall,
> Maid his Gestis Historiall,
> Has tretit fere mare cunnandly
> Than sufficient to tell am I.[163]

This is the first mention of Huchown, and it causes Wyntoun to digress from his own chronicle and discuss the reliability of Huchown's work.

> Bot in our mater to proceid,
> Sum þat hapnis þis buke to reid
> Will call þe autour to rekles,
> Or may fall argw his cunnandnes,
> Sen Huchone of þe Auld Ryall,
> In till his Gestis Historiall,
> Callit Lucyus Hyberius emperour
> Quhen king of Brettane was Arthour.[164]

Wyntoun admits that other chroniclers do not mention an Emperor Lucius and he lists Orosius, Martinus, Innocent and Josephus as authorities who contradict Huchown.[165] Wyntoun excuses himself, however, by appealing to the *Brut*:

> Bot of the Brute þe story sais
> That Lucyus Hyber in his dais
> Wes of þe empyre procuratour,
> And nouthere callit him king, na emperour.
> Fra blame þan is þe auctour quyte,

---

[161] Wyntoun, *Original Chronicle*, V. 4281-4286.
[162] Wyntoun, *Original Chronicle*, V. 4287-4288.
[163] Wyntoun, *Original Chronicle*, V. 4297-4304.
[164] Wyntoun, *Original Chronicle*, V. 4305-4312.
[165] Wyntoun, *Original Chronicle*, V. 4317-4322. "Innocent" is probably a scribal error. The Cotton MS reads "Wyncens" (i.e., Vincent of Beauvais).

As he befor him fand to write.
And men of gud discretion
Shuld excuß and loif Huchoun.[166]

Thus Wyntoun, the faithful translator and chronicler, has simply written what he found, and he should not be blamed for the faults of his sources. Wyntoun also excuses Huchown, but his reasons are different. Huchown "cunnand wes in litterature"[167] and his task in writing was different from Wyntoun's own:

He wes curyouß in his stile,
Faire and facund and subtile,
And ay to plesance and delite,
Maid in meit metyre his dite,
Litell or ellis nocht be geß
Wauerand fra þe suthfastnes.[168]

In terms which he had used to describe Guido delle Colonne, Homer and Virgil,[169] Wyntoun argues that Huchown is more concerned with poetics than exact historical accuracy, and this distinction allows him to excuse the inaccurate title that Huchown gives to Lucius:

Had he callit Lucyus procuratour,
Quhare he callit him emperour,
It had mare grevit the cadens
Than had relevit the sentens;
For ane emperour, in properte,
A commandoure may callit be;
Lucyus sic mycht haue bene kend
Be þe message at he send.[170]

Huchown's "curyouß" style is contrasted with Wyntoun's own simplicity, and the laboured couplet with which he opens this defence of Huchown is testimony to the fact that the chronicler Wyntoun will sacrifice poetics for factual accuracy.

---

[166] Wyntoun, *Original Chronicle*, V. 4323-4330.
[167] Wyntoun, *Original Chronicle*, V. 4331.
[168] Wyntoun, *Original Chronicle*, V. 4335-4340.
[169] See above p. 64.

Chaucer reveals a similar attitude in the invocation to the third book of the *House of Fame*. As the dreamer begins to tell of the House of Fame itself, he reflects on the conflict between the demands of poetry and the demands of accurately relating events:

> O God of science and of lyght,
> Appollo, thurgh thy grete myght,
> This lytel laste bok thou gye!
> Nat that I wilne, for maistrye,
> Here art poetical be shewed,
> But for the rym ys lyght and lewed,
> Yit make hyt sumwhat agreable,
> Though som vers fayle in a sillable;
> And that I do no diligence
> To schewe craft, but o sentence.[171]

For the dreamer describing his vision, it is not the craft of poetry but the accurate description which is of importance, and he will sacrifice metrical perfection for factual accuracy. The irony, of course, is that the "sentence" of *The House of Fame* is that accurate transmission of knowledge is a near impossibility. For Wyntoun, however, accuracy is a hallmark of the chronicler's "sentence", and the simple style, complete with faulty verses, is as much a guarantee of that accuracy as the citation of venerable authorities.

MacQueen also sees Wyntoun's digression on Huchown as a discussion of literary style, but he argues that Wyntoun sees himself writing within the same tradition as Huchown:

> A 'curious' style to give pleasure by its complexities, a metre appropriate to the subject, an eye for truth which nevertheless within reason was subordinated to the cadence of the verse - these are the qualities singled out by Wyntoun as characterizing the good narrative or historical poet, and he is obviously writing for an audience prepared to discuss and accept such distinctions.[172]

---

[170] Wyntoun, *Original Chronicle*, V. 4341-4348. This is also reminiscent of Trevisa's argument that historical characters may have different names and titles.
[171] Geoffrey Chaucer, *House of Fame*, *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry Benson, *et al.*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987) 1091-1100. Cited by line number.
[172] John MacQueen, "The Literature of Fifteenth-Century Scotland," *Scottish Society in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Jennifer M. Brown (New York: St. Martin's, 1977) 187.

What MacQueen fails to recognise, however, is that Wyntoun is not identifying his work with Huchown's, but that he is establishing a distinction between his own chronicle and the narrative history of Huchown.

Gervase of Canterbury articulates this distinction in his discussion of chronicles and histories: "Forma tractandi varia, quia historicus diffuse et eleganter incedit, cronicus vero simpliciter graditur et breviter."[173] For Gervase, both the chronicle and the history seek to relay truth, but the history uses "ampullas et sesquipedalia verba" in order to persuade its hearers or readers.[174] John Lydgate praises the *Historia Destructionis Troiae* of Guido delle Colonne, for just this trait:

> For he enlvmyneth by crafte & cadence
> This noble story with many fresche colour
> Of rethorik, and many riche flour
> Of eloquence to make it sownde bet.[175]

The addition of rhetorical colours, therefore, was not only accepted by Lydgate, but anticipated and appreciated. It will be remembered that Wyntoun includes Guido among his ancient authorities who "curiously dytit there storyis."[176] Wyntoun's digression on the poet Huchown demonstrates that he expects the same rhetorical colours in this vernacular author, but he also sets those embellishments apart from his own project. The passage, therefore, is not a "literary manifesto,"[177] nor is it an "apology for poetry."[178] Wyntoun employs the

---

[173] "The form of writing is varied, since the historian proceeds diffusely and elegantly, but the chronicler proceeds simply and briefly." Gervase of Canterbury, *The Chronicle of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II, and Richard I, Opera Historica*, ed William Stubbs, RS. 73 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1879-1880) I: 87.

[174] "...bombast and foot-and-a-half-long words." Gervase of Canterbury, *The Chronicle*, I: 87.

[175] John Lydgate, *Troy Book*, ed. Henry Bergen, EETS, es. 97, 103, 106, 126 (London: Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1906-1935) prol. 362-365. Cited by line number.

[176] Wyntoun, *Original Chronicle*, I, prol. 18. On the use of rhetorical embellishment in historical writing see Ruth Morse, *Truth and Convention in the Middle Ages: Rhetoric, Representation and Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) 148-189.

[177] MacQueen, "Literature of Fifteenth-Century Scotland," 187.

modesty *topos* and begs that the faults of his own verse be excused, but in praising the poetry of Huchown's "Gest Historial", he also establishes the accuracy of his own text as "chronicle."

Wyntoun concludes his discussion of historical writing and Arthurian narrative by summarizing the "Gestis" of Huchown.[179] The description is a paraphrase of Galfridian history and it ends with Arthur's final battle against Mordred, his sister's son "Quhare he and his Round Tabill quyt / Wes vndone and discomfyt."[180] Wyntoun then leaves Huchown and states that he can find no information about Arthur's death.

> Sen I fand nane at þar of wrait,
> I will say na mare na I wait.
> Bot quhen at he had fochtin fast,
> Efter þat in ane Ile he past,
> Saire woundit, to be lechit þare,
> And eftir he wes sene na mare.[181]

This passage marks Wyntoun's return to Martinus Polonus[182] and, after a brief mention of Constantine, the chronicle continues with its list of popes and emperors. The digression on Huchown not only provides Wyntoun with an Arthurian narrative more complete than that provided by his main source, Martinus Polonus, but it also allows him to define more clearly his own historical project. Unlike Huchown, Wyntoun is not concerned with metrical perfection. His concerns are more prosaic: the orderly, careful and factual record of events from the past. More like Martinus' *Chronicon* than Huchown's "gret Gest," the *Original Chronicle*, claims Wyntoun, will not sacrifice "sentens" in favour of "cadens".

---

[178] R. James Goldstein, "'For He Wald Vsurpe Na Fame': Andrew of Wyntoun's Use of the Modesty Topos and Literary Culture in Early Fifteenth-Century Scotland," *Scottish Literary Journal* 14 (1987): 8.
[179] Wyntoun, *Original Chronicle*, V. 4353-4372.
[180] Wyntoun, *Original Chronicle*, V. 4371-4372.
[181] Wyntoun, *Original Chronicle*, V. 4377-4382.
[182] Cf. the passage from Martinus Polonus, quoted on p. 65.

Wyntoun, like Mannyng and Trevisa, uses Arthurian history as a test of accuracy. Unlike the earlier translators, however, Wyntoun recognizes degrees of accuracy within historical writing. The Brut tradition, whether represented by Geoffrey or by one of his vernacular redactors, remains the authority for all three authors, and each author comments on material which exists outside that tradition. Mannyng rejects verse romances, and Trevisa admits that "magel tales" have been associated with Arthur's court. Prose romances do not receive overt condemnation, but they remain outside the chronicle narrative. Finally Wyntoun accepts that, in some historical writing, liberties can be taken with details to conform with the demands of poetics. Despite their differences, the three authors share a willingness to subject Arthurian narrative to critical inquiry. Their acceptance of Geoffrey's history is not based on blind faith, but on the reasoned application of the critical method of the day.

Chapter 2: The *Scalacronica* of Sir Thomas Gray of Heton

Even as Robert Mannyng rejects Arthurian romances, he provides some evidence of the popularity of these works in England. The romances of Arthur that "France men wrote in prose" are works that Mannyng says "we of him here alle rede."[1] Mannyng, however, like the other chroniclers discussed in the previous chapter, was a member of a religious order and not, presumably, a member of the primary audience for romance material. In contrast, Sir Thomas Gray of Heton was a member of courtly society and, as we will see, an avid reader of romance literature. As the first layman to write a vernacular chronicle of England, Gray demands our attention, yet his work has received almost no critical notice. Sir Thomas Gray began his chronicle in 1355, and the *Scalacronica* displays an impressive knowledge of both romance and historiographical traditions. Gray's integration of these traditions in the Arthurian portion of his chronicle provides rare insight into the attitudes towards Arthurian narrative in English aristocratic society.[2]

---

[1] Robert Mannyng of Brunne, *The Chronicle*, ed. Idelle Sullens, Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, v 153 (Binghamton: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1996) 1 10765-10774.

[2] Thomas Gray, *Scalacronica*, ed. J. Stevenson (Edinburgh: Printed for the Maitland Club, 1836). Stevenson's edition of the *Scalacronica* was a limited edition of 75 copies. Stevenson prints only the prologue and the portion of the text following the year 1066 (fos. 145ff). Excerpts from the Arthurian portion of the text have been edited by Maria Luisa Meneghetti, *I Fatti di Bretagna: Cronache Genealogiche Anglo-Normanne dal XII al XIV Secolo* (Padova: Editrice Antenore, 1979) 50-51, 67-71, and Thomas Wright, "Influence of Medieval Upon Welsh Literature: The Story of the Cort Mantel," *Archæologia Cambrensis: The Journal of the Cambrian Archæological Association* 3rd ser. 9 (1863) 10. A transcription of the complete Arthurian portion of the text has been included in this study as Appendix A. Citations to the *Scalacronica* will be by folio and column and, where possible, page number in Stevenson's edition. The complete text exists in a single manuscript, Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133. For a description of this manuscript see Montague Rhodes James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912) 305, Nigel Wilkins, *Catalogue des manuscrits français de la bibliothèque Parker (Parker Library) Corpus Christi College, Cambridge* (Cambridge: Parker Library Publications, 1993) 55-59, and J. C. Thiolier, "La *Scalacronica*: Première Approche (MS 133)," *Manuscrits français de la bibliotheque Parker*, ed. Nigel Wilkins (Cambridge: Parker Library Publications, 1993) 121-124. Cambridge, Jesus College Q.G.10 is listed as an incomplete copy of the *Scalacronica* by Montague Rhodes James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of Manuscripts in the Library of Jesus College* (Cambridge and London: C. J. Clay & Sons, 1895) 92-93, and J. Vising, *Anglo-Norman Language and Literature* (London: Oxford University Press,

Gray was not the first author to mingle the chronicle and romance traditions, and despite Mannyng's rejection of material from prose and rhymed romances, both the prose Vulgate and verse romances did influence English historiography. The Auchinleck version of the *Short Metrical Chronicle*, as we have seen, sketches the story of Lancelot and Guenevere and draws on the story of Caradoc's mantle.[3] The very confused narrative of Rauf de Boun's *Le Petit Bruit* also shows the influence of romance.[4] According to this version Uther and Arthur are Anglo-Saxon kings who follow Adeluf I (one of the three incarnations of Ethelwulf). In addition to the chronicle's emphasis on the marvelous, it names "Perseval" and "Gawayne" as examples of knights of great renown, citing "l'autre Bruit" as a source.[5] Morgan also appears as Morgan le Noir, Arthur's second son.

The Vulgate also influenced English historiography in ways which are only tangentially related to Arthur. John of Glastonbury's *Cronica sive Antiquitates Glastoniensis Ecclesie* makes use of the first book of the Vulgate, the *Estoir de Saint Graal*, which tells of Joseph of Arimathea's journey from the Holy Land to England.[6] John cites his source for this material and has no qualms about associating his work with the Vulgate:

1923) 95, but, as Meneghetti points out, this manuscript is, in fact, a copy of the Anglo-Norman *Brut* (*I Fatti di Bretagna*, 49). J. C. Thiolier's discussion of the text is inconclusive and he concludes that the number of manuscripts "n'a pas encore été fixé de façon définitive." Thiolier, "La *Scalacronica*," 122. BL Harley MS 905 also contains extracts from the *Scalacronica* transcribed by the sixteenth-century antiquarian Nicolas Wotton. These extracts, however, contain material after the Arthurian period. For a description of the manuscript and a list of the portions extracted see *A Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts in The British Museum* (London: G. Eyre and A. Strahan, 1808-1812) I. 470.

[3] See above, p. 33.

[4] This short history was written in 1309 by Rauf de Boun for Henry de Lacy. Nothing is known about the author although he may have belonged to the Bohun family. See Diana B. Tyson, introduction, *Le Petit Bruit*, by Rauf de Boun, ed. Diana B. Tyson, Anglo-Norman Text Society, Plain Text Series, 4 (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1987) 1-2. For the Arthurian portion of this chronicle see, Rauf de Boun, *Le Petit Bruit*, ed. Diana B. Tyson, Anglo-Norman Text Society, Plain Text Series, 4 (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1987) 11-13.

[5] Rauf de Boun, *Le Petit Bruit*, 12 & 13.

[6] For a discussion of John's use of the Vulgate see James P. Carley, introduction, *The Chronicle of Glastonbury Abbey: An Edition, Translation, and Study of John of Glastonbury's Cronica sive Antiquitates Glastoniensis Ecclesie*, ed. James P. Carley, tr. David Townsend, rev. ed. (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1985) l-lii.

> Ioseph ab Arimathia nobilem decurionem cum filio suo Iosephes dicto et aliis pluribus in maiorem Britanniam que nunc Anglia dicta est venisse et ibidem vitam finisse testatur liber de gestis incliti regis Arthuri.[7]

John states that the story of Joseph's travels is retold in the book at the beginning of Lancelot's, Gawain's and Galahad's quest for the vessel "quod ibi vocant Sanctum Graal."[8] In John's *Cronica*, however, it is not the Grail, but vials of the blood and sweat of Christ that Joseph brings to England, and although the narrative embedded within the Grail quest is presented, John does not include any elements of the quest itself. John was not the first person to associate Joseph of Arimathea with Glastonbury, but his use of the Vulgate in the early 1340s comes only shortly after Mannyng's warnings against romance material.[9] The monks at Glastonbury had already demonstrated their aptitude for adapting romance material to historical texts. A copy of Geoffrey's *Historia* composed at Glastonbury early in the fourteenth century is preceded by a brief Arthurian adventure. The "Quedam narracio de nobili Arthuro" is a Latin translation of the Chapel Ride episode from the French *Perlesvaus*. The same episode was later incorporated by John of Glastonbury in his own *Cronica*.[10] The interests of the monastery, it seems, helped the monks to blur the distinction between fact and fiction.

---

[7] "The book of the deeds of the glorious King Arthur bears witness that the noble decurion Joseph of Arimathea came to Great Britain, which is now called England, along with his son Josephes and many others, and that there they ended their lives." John of Glastonbury, *The Chronicle of Glastonbury Abbey: An Edition, Translation, and Study of John of Glastonbury's Cronica sive Antiquitates Glastoniensis Ecclesie*, ed. James P. Carley, tr. David Townsend, rev. ed. (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1985) 52. The translation, by David Townsend, is on facing pages.

[8] "...which is there called the Holy Grail." John of Glastonbury, *Cronica*, 54.

[9] For the development of this association see Valerie M. Lagorio, "The Evolving Legend of St. Joseph of Glastonbury," *Speculum* 46 (1971): 209-231. The story is also contained in the *Magna Tabula* kept at Glastonbury. See Jeanne Krochalis, "*Magna Tabula*: The Glastonbury Tablets (1)," *Arthurian Literature* 15 (1997): 140. For the dating of John of Glastonbury's *Chronicle* see Carley, introduction, xxv-xxx.

[10] For a discussion of this episode and its various uses at Glastonbury see James P. Carley, "A Glastonbury Translator at Work: *Quedam Narraco de Nobili Rege Athuro* and *De Origine Gigantum* in Their Earliest Manuscript Contexts," *Nottingham French Studies* 30.2 (1991): 5-12.

The popularity of the Vulgate cycle and other romance literature among the nobility is well attested by surviving wills and book lists. Juliet Vale discusses the widespread ownership and circulation of books in and around the household of Edward III.[11] Queen Isabella, for example, owned at least ten romances at the time of her death. These include Arthurian romances ("de gestis Arthuri", "de Tristram et Isolda", "de Perceual et Gauwayn") as well as *chanson de geste* and material on the Trojan war.[12] Among the 160 books mentioned by John Fleet, keeper of the privy wardrobe at the Tower from 1322-1341, "59 were listed as *libri de romanciis*."[13] It was not only royalty, however, who took an interest in romance literature. The will of Margaret Courtenay, Countess of Devon, lists a "livre appelle Tristram... et un livre appelle Artur de Bretaigne...et un livre appelle merlyn," while the will of Isabel, Duchess of York, lists, among her other books, a "launcelot".[14] Elizabeth Darcy, daughter of the chronicler Thomas Gray, also lists romances in her will, which is dated 1412. Among the books to be given to Thomas Grey de Heton (her nephew, by her brother Thomas) are a "librum voc' Sainz Ryall, and alterum librum voc' Lanselake."[15] Interest in romance material was not limited to those who spoke French, and the fourteenth century also saw the first English translations of portions of the prose Vulgate cycle. *Arthour and Merlin*, translated in the first half of the century, presents the Vulgate *Merlin* to an English reading

---

[11] Juliet Vale, *Edward III and Chivalry: Chivalric Society and its Context 1270-1350* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1982) 48-51.
[12] Vale, *Edward III*, 50. Quoting PRO E101/393/4, fo. 8.
[13] Vale, *Edward III*, 49.
[14] K. B. McFarlane, "The Education of the Nobility in the Later Middle Ages," *The Nobility of Later Medieval England: The Ford Lectures for 1953 and Related Studies* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997) 236, *n* 5. The wills are dated 1390/1 and 1392 respectively. See also pp. 235-237.
[15] Alfred Gibbons, *Early Lincoln Wills: An Abstract of all the Wills & Administrations Recorded in the Episcopal Registers of the Old Diocese of Lincoln* (Lincoln: James Williamson, 1888) 118. The book called "Sainz Ryall" is certainly a "Holy Grail". For studies on the ownership of French romance material see the bibliography provided by Edward Donald Kennedy, "Gower, Chaucer, and the French Prose Arthurian Romances," *Mediaevalia* 16 (1993): 79, *n*. 3.

audience.[16] It may be significant that this romance is found in the Auchinleck manuscript, which also contains the version of the *Short Metrical Chronicle* most influenced by romance. The stanzaic *Le Morte Arthur*,[17] an adaptation of the last book of the Vulgate, was written in the third quarter of the century, as was the alliterative *Joseph of Arimathea*.[18]

The appeal of the Vulgate and of romance literature in general is reflected not only in the literature of the fourteenth century, but also in its influence on chivalric practice. Aristocratic society expressed its own identity as a nobility based on military prowess through chivalric display. The quintessential display of chivalric pageantry, the tournament, drew many of its forms and customs from Arthurian romance. Tournaments modelled on the age of Arthur had been held since the thirteenth century. Often referred to as a round table,[19] the tournament held numerous possibilities for the dramatic recreation of Arthurian chivalry. The term "round table" appears in England as early as 1242 when Henry III forbade participation in a round table that he was unable to attend,[20] while as early as 1235 the phrase was used to describe a tournament in Flanders. Ulrich von Lichtenstein was particularly fond of romance themes in tournaments, and in 1240 he jousted in the arms of Arthur while his retainers wore the costumes of various knights of Arthurian romance, such

---

[16] *Arthour and Merlin*, ed. O.D. Macrae-Gibson, EETS, os. 268 & 279 (London: Oxford University Press, 1973-1979). For this work's adaptation for an English audience see Elizabeth S. Sklar, "*Arthour and Merlin*: The Englishing of Arthur," *Michigan Academician* 8 (1975-6): 48-57.
[17] *Le Morte Arthure: A Romance in Stanzas of Eight Lines*, ed J. Douglas Bruce, EETS, es. 88 (London: Oxford University Press, 1903).
[18] *Joseph of Arimathea*, ed. David A. Lawton (New York: Garland, 1983).
[19] A "round table" was generally fought with blunted weapons.
[20] Unfortunately, the nature of the first two round tables is not known, but "the later association of the sport with Arthur leaves little doubt that these tables were of Arthurian origins." Ruth H. Cline, "The Influence of Romances on Tournaments of the Middle Ages," *Speculum* 20 (1945): 204. On the influence of romances on tournament practice see also Roger Sherman Loomis, "Edward I, Arthurian Enthusiast," *Speculum* 28 (1953): 117-121, E. Sandoz, "Tourneys in the Arthurian Tradition," *Speculum* 19 (1944): 389-420, Vale, *Edward III*, 25-41, 57-75, Lisa Jefferson, "Tournaments, Heraldry and the Knights of the Round Table: A Fifteenth Century Armorial with Two Accompanying Texts," *Arthurian Literature* 14 (1996): *passim*, and Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1984) 93-94.

as Lancelot, Yvain and Tristan.[21] A spectacular round table was held by Roger Mortimer at Kenilworth in 1279. Thomas Gray mentions the tournament and the number of knights that attended:

> Et Roger Mortimer teint la Roundtable, se centisme dez chiualers a Kenlynworth; a quel reuel d'armes de peise vindrent lez cheualers errauntz de plusours estranges pays.[22]

Edward I was also an enthusiastic supporter of tournaments with Arthurian themes. Lodewijk van Velthem, writing in 1312, describes an elaborate festival which Edward supposedly held in the mid-thirteenth century. According to this account, Edward and his knights adopted Arthurian titles and costumes. Each knight jousted against representations of the wrongs he had suffered from certain towns, and while most were successful, the knight who portrayed Kay became an object of jest, as his saddle girths were cut for the amusement of the spectators. The meal that followed was interrupted between each course by messengers describing adventures in Ireland, Wales and Cornwall.[23] As Loomis has shown, this narrative is highly suspect and may refer to the festivities surrounding Edward's marriage to Margaret in 1299, rather than his marriage to Eleanor of Castile in 1254.[24] Whatever the occasion, van Velthem's description of such elaborate Arthurian festivities demonstrates not only the acceptance, but also the expectation of such spectacles at the time Van Veltham wrote.

Van Ventham's account implies that the expectation of Arthurian themes not only influenced the actual performance of chivalric spectacle, but also the recording of such

---

[21] Cline, "Influence of Romances on Tournaments," 208.
[22] "And Roger Mortimer held the Round Table, one hundred knights at Kenilworth, to which revel of arms of peace came knights errant of many foreign lands." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 192; p. 109.
[23] An English paraphrase of the festivities described by Lodowijk van Veltham is provided by Loomis, "Edward I, Arthurian Enthusiast," 118-119.

events. The *Annales Angliae et Scociae*, written early in the fourteenth century, also describes the marriage of Edward and Margaret. After an elaborate description of the marriage rite in the cathedral of Canterbury, the author includes a description of the entertainments which followed. Rather than provide an original account of the events, however, the author simply transcribes Geoffrey of Monmouth's description of Arthur's Pentecost festivities. Names of characters have been changed, but otherwise "there is almost no alteration in the sentences selected from Geoffrey's imaginative twelfth-century report of a sixth-century festivity."[25] While Geoffrey's account of Arthur's court may have been imaginative, it was not taken as such by the author of the *Annales*. The decision to draw the description of a contemporary event from Geoffrey's *Historia*, therefore, reflects not only the chronicler's desire to associate Edwardian with Arthurian pagentry, but also the chronicler's recognition that the Arthurian past acted as a model for contemporary courtly activity. The chronicler turns to the authoritative account of Arthur's reign as though to a script of chivalric performance.

Edward III, like his grandfather, had a taste for Arthurian round tables. At the tournament held at Dunstable in 1334 Edward fought incognito in the arms of Sir Lionel. Vale speculates that the choice of Lionel, knight of the Round Table and cousin of Lancelot, "was perhaps determined by the presence of 'lions' (technically leopards) on the royal arms of England."[26] The round table held at Windsor in 1344 also demonstrates Edward III's fondness for Arthurian themes. The Cotton manuscript of Adam Murimuth's chronicle tells how Edward resolved to found a new order of the Round Table. At the conclusion of a

---

[24] Loomis, "Edward I, Arthurian Enthusiast," 120. See also Vale, *Edward III*, 14-15.
[25] Laura Keeler, *Geoffrey of Monmouth and the Later Latin Chronicles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1946) 55. Keeler reprints the two passages in parallel at pp. 56-57.

successful tournament Edward appeared in a mantle "et coronam regiam in capite positam."[27] After mass the king announced his intention by swearing on the gospel and on relics that "mensam rotundam inciperet, eodem modo et statu quo eam dimisit dominus Arthurus quondam rex Angliæ...."[28] Although plans were made for the order, and construction begun on a hall to house the 300 knights who would be its members, the idea was eventually abandoned, presumably in favour of the Order of the Garter. This occasion, however, has often been associated with the establishment of the Garter, and the *Scalacronica*, written within two decades of the event, makes this connection. Unfortunately, this portion of Gray's chronicle has been removed from the manuscript, but the gap can be filled with Leland's English paraphrase:

> King Edward made a great fest at Wyndesore at Christemes, wher he renewid the Round Table and the name of Arture, and ordenid the order of the Garter, making Sanct George the patrone thereof.[29]

Events such as these bound the chivalric activities of contemporary aristocratic society to the pageantry of the Arthurian past and emphasized the position of Arthurian history as a precedent for both the leisure and military activities of English and European nobility. Less spectacular deeds also show the influence of romance literature outside the carefully orchestrated performance of the tournament. Froissart tells the story of the English knights at Valenciennes who wore a patch over one eye, thus fulfilling vows that each man would see

---

[26] Vale, *Edward III*, 68.
[27] "and the royal crown placed on his head." Adam Murimuth, *Continuatio Chronicarum*, ed. Edward Maunde Thompson, RS. 93 (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1889) 231.
[28] "he would establish a round table in the manner and state which the lord Arthur, once king of England, had established it." Murimuth, *Continuatio Chronicarum*, 232.
[29] Leland's paraphrase of Gray is printed by Stevenson as an appendix, John Leland, "Notable Thinges," *Scalacronica*, by Thomas Gray, ed. J. Stevenson (Edinburgh: Printed for the Maitland Club, 1836) 300. A gap of some twelve folios occurs in the manuscript between folios 222 and 223. Leland may have seen this manuscript before the text was excised or he may have had access to a different text. Thiolier claims that marginalia in the manuscript is in Leland's hand. Thiolier, "La *Scalacronica*," 151, *n.* 47.

out of only one eye until he had achieved some deed of arms worthy of his lady.[30] In 1398, seven French knights who had vowed to wear a diamond for three years challenged seven English knights to a series of combats *à outrance*.[31] Any knight who defeated one of the French knights would receive the diamond, but a defeated knight was obliged to give a golden rod to each member of the French group as a token for their ladies.[32] Thomas Gray's own grandson was involved in individual challenges and jousts. He and Richard de Ledes challenged two Scottish knights to six courses on horseback, with lances. They were granted licence to fulfill their challenges before the king's brother, Ralph, Earl of Westmorland, in June 1404.[33]

Perhaps the most chivalric example of a vow fulfilled is provided by Thomas Gray himself. Gray tells the story of Sir William Marmion which, as his editor comments, "breathes a spirit of chivalry and is narrated with a force which competes with the glowing pages of Froissart."[34]

> En quele hour a vn graunt fest dez seignurs et dames en le counte de Nichol, vn damoisel faye aportoit vn healme de guere od vn tymbre de vn cel endorez a Willam Marmyoun, cheualer, od vn letre de comaundement de sa dame q'il alast en la plus perillous place de la graunt Bretaigne et q'il feist cel healme estre conuz.[35]

The gathered lords agree that Norham castle is the most dangerous place in the country so Marmion sets out for the castle, which has been beseiged for four days by Alexander

---

[30] For further examples see Keen, *Chivalry*, 117.
[31] i.e. using ordinary weapons of war.
[32] Richard Barber and Juliet Barker, *Tournaments: Jousts, Chivalry and Pageants in the Middle Ages* (New York: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1989) 125.
[33] George Edward Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage*, ed. H. A. Doubleday, *et al.* (London: St. Catherine's Press, 1910-1940) VI: 136. Citing *Patent Rolls*, 5 Hen IV, p. 2, m. 8.
[34] J. Stevenson, introduction, *Scalacronica*, by Thomas Gray (Edinburgh: Printed for the Maitland Club, 1836) xxii.
[35] "In that time at a great feast of lords and ladies in the county of Lincoln, a fairy damsel carried a helm of war with a gilt crest on the same to William Marmion, knight, with a letter, commanding from his lady that he should go to the most dangerous place in Great Britain and that he should make that helm known." Gray, *Scalacronica*,

Moubray. The warden of the castle is Sir Thomas Gray, father of the chronicler.

> Le dit Thomas auoit bien entendu la maner de sa venu, si ly dist en haute, 'Sire cheualer, vous y estez venuz cheualer erraunt pur faire cel healm estre conuz, et si est meutz seaunt chos qe cheualery en soit fait a cheual qe a pee, ou couenablement ceo purra faire, mountez uostre cheual, veez la voz enemy, si ferrez cheual dez esperouns, va assemblere en my lieu dez eaux, si renay ieo Dieux si ieo ne rescouroi toun corps viue ou mort, ou ieo murrery.'[36]

Although Marmion is badly beaten, Gray does sally forth from the castle to save him, and "Lez femmes du chastelle enamenerent lez cheueaux a lours homs, qi mounterent, firent la chace, abaterent ceaux q'ils purroint ateindre."[37]

The scene is a striking one. The fairy damsel who interrupts the feast, and the demand that feats of arms be performed for a beloved, are the stock in trade of chivalric romance. Even the elder Gray's reaction to the event, which he "bien entendu le maner," displays an understanding of the chivalric exploit which is best performed on horseback. Similarly, his vow to rescue the knight demonstrates his own willingness to participate in the chivalric ethos. The story may be exaggerated (it undoubtedly comes to the chronicler from his father), but, like Van Velthem's account of Edward's tournament, it does show a willingness to accept this level of intrusion of the themes and motifs of romance literature into contemporary life.

It was within this environment of chivalric display that the *Scalacronica* was written, and its author was a member of the chivalric nobility which looked to romance for models of

---

210.1; p. 145.

[36] "The said Thomas well understood the manner of his coming, so he said to him aloud, 'Sir knight, you have come here, a knight errant, in order to make that helm known, and since it is more proper that chivalry should be performed on horse than on foot, where conveniently it can be done, mount your horse, see your enemy there, strike the horse with spurs, charge into their midst, I will renounce God if I do not rescue your body, dead or alive, or I will die'." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 210.2; p. 146.

[37] "The women of the castle brought out horses to their men who mounted and entered the chase, striking down those whom they could overtake." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 210.2; p. 146.

conduct. Sir Thomas Gray's decision to write the chronicle in Anglo-Norman indicates that he intended it to be read by an aristocratic audience, an audience different from the one both Mannyng and Trevisa sought to reach. Although the *Scalacronica* does not appear to have influenced other medieval texts, what we know of the history of the manuscript seems to indicate that it continued to circulate in aristocratic society. The will of Elizabeth Darcy, the daughter of the chronicler, contains a reference to "unum librum de romans vocat' Leschell de Reson."[38] The title *Leschell de Reson* is otherwise unknown, and it is possible that it refers to the *Scalacronica*. The title may be a corrupted version of *Leschel d'histoire*, or *Leschel de cronique*, or it may simply indicate that the text was meant to be read as a repository of lessons in *reson*. The book was left to Philip, son and heir of John late lord Darcy, possibly her nephew, on the condition that he assist the executors of her will. Otherwise the book passed to Sir Thomas Grey of Heton, the son of her brother Thomas. This Thomas Grey was executed in 1415 for conspiring to kill Henry V.[39] Unfortunately, the record of Grey's chattels, which would have been seized after his execution, does not survive. If he did come into possession of the *Scalacronica* it is likely that it passed back into the family of his aunt after his death. The surviving manuscript is a late fourteenth-century copy and possibly contemporary with the author. One of the ownership marks in it is a short poem and signature:

> Si dieu plet
> A moy cest livre partient

---

[38] "a book of romance (i.e. written in French?) called The Ladder of Reason." Gibbons, *Early Lincoln Wills*, 118

[39] Grey's co-conspirators were Richard, Earl of Cambridge (father of Richard, Duke of York) and John Lord Scrope. The most detailed examination of the plot is found in James Hamilton Wylie, *The Reign of Henry the Fifth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914-1929) I: 515-538. The conspirators were eventually confronted by Henry in a scene dramatized by William Shakespeare in *Henry V* act II, scene i.

G. vst kyldare[40]

M.R. James suggests that this may be Gerald, 8th Earl of Kildare, who succeeded to that title in 1477.[41] There is no reason to assume this, however, as many of the Earls of Kildare were named Gerald, including Gerald fitz Morice who married Agnes Darcy, daughter of Elizabeth and Philip Darcy, before 18 November, 1397.[42] The manuscript, therefore, likely passed from the author to his daughter, Elizabeth Darcy, and from her, whether directly or indirectly, to her own daughter, and hence into the family of the Earls of Kildare. Either this Gerald fitz Morice, or any of the succeeding earls may have inscribed the book with the ownership poem.[43]

The *Scalacronica* has long been recognised as a work written in the chivalric mode and as such it precedes both Froissart and the Chandos Herald. Among works written in England, John Taylor claims that "the *Scalacronica* is chivalrous history at its best and its most representative."[44] Although there is no record of Gray's participating in tournaments personally, we may well assume that he is "a knight into whom had been instilled the principles of the chivalric code."[45] Sir Thomas Gray, like his father, was the warden of Norham castle and distinguished himself in military affairs, both on the Scottish border and

---

[40] "If it please God / this book belongs to me, G vicomte Kyldare." The inscription appears on one of the several folios which precede the chronicle, *Scalacronica*, *iiiv*.
[41] James, *Descriptive Catalogue of Manuscripts in the Library of Corpus Christi College*, 306.
[42] For this genealogy see G. W. Watson, "Ormond and Kildare," *Miscellanea Genealogica et Heraldica* 5th ser. 8 (1932-34): 229-231.
[43] Nigel Wilkins claims that a cryptogram on fo. *ir* is that of Philippa, daughter of Henry IV. This, however, results from Wilkins' misreading of James' catalogue. James merely identifies the cryptogram as a "mark" and it remains anonymous. In James' catalogue a footnote refering to Philippa is printed under the cryptogram, but the note refers to an entry in MS 132. Wilkins seems to have mistaken this footnote for a caption. Cf. Wilkins, *Catalogue des manuscrits*, 55, and James, *Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Corpus Christi College*, 305.
[44] John Taylor, *English Historical Literature in the Fourteenth Century* (Oxford. Clarendon Press, 1987) 172.
[45] Taylor, *English Historical Literature*, 172.

on the continent.[46] It is, however, through Gray's extensive reading that we can best judge his participation in courtly culture.

Taylor describes Gray as "no *littérateur*,"[47] but the *Scalacronica* reveals that its author was a widely-read man in touch with the tastes of his time. In addition to standard historical works,[48] Gray also made use of material from various romance traditions. The chronicle contains a detailed account of the Trojan war which is drawn ultimately from Benoit de Saint Maure's *Roman de Troie*.[49] This is followed immediately by a description of the wanderings of Aeneas, drawn from the *Roman d'Eneas*.[50] Gray also makes extended use of romances dealing with Alexander the Great[51] and Scota, the eponymous founder of Scotland.[52] Both canonical and apocryphal scriptures are incorporated into Gray's history, which opens by translating the first chapters of *Genesis*,[53] and includes an extended biography of Judas.[54] Also of interest is Gray's detailed account of the Havelok story which attempts to harmonize several different versions of the tale.[55] In addition to this material, as we will see, Gray's Arthurian narrative relies on a wide variety of historical and romance

---

[46] For a sketch of Gray's career, see Stevenson, introduction, xxvii-xxxii.
[47] Taylor, *English Historical Literature*, 172.
[48] To be discussed below.
[49] A complete edition of the *Scalacronica* would be necessary before undertaking a detailed discussion of Gray's sources and the following attributions are tentative. Gray may be using an intermediate source, such as Guido delle Colonne. For Gray's description of the Trojan war see *Scalacronica*, 8v-11v.
[50] Gray, *Scalacronica*, 12-15v, 28-29v. A complete gathering (fols. 16-27v) has been misbound and deals with Caesar's conquest of Britain. It properly follows 51v. Gray's text follows the pattern typical of compilations of these three complete works. For a discussion of this pattern, see Jerome E. Singerman, *Under Clouds of Poesy: Poetry and Truth in French and English Reworkings of the Aeneid, 1160-1513* (New York: Garland, 1985) 129-134.
[51] Gray, *Scalacronica*, 41-45.
[52] Gray, *Scalacronica*, fols. 49v-50v. Gray tells this story again during his account of the Great Cause. Here he inserts the complete text of "lez cronicles d'Escoce" which traces Scottish history from its foundation to the end of the thirteenth century. Gray, *Scalacronica*, 193ff; pp. 112ff.
[53] Gray, *Scalacronica*, 5.
[54] Gray, *Scalacronica*, 21v-22v.
[55] Gray, *Scalacronica*, 83r-84v.

narratives including both verse and prose romances,[56] and French lais.

The literary nature of Gray's enterprise is affirmed at the very beginning of the chronicle by the elaborate prologue which both outlines the purpose of the *Scalacronica* and describes its own creation. Writing in the third person, the chronicler prefers to keep his identity elusive:

> Et sy ne voet pas au plain nomer soun noune, qe cest cronicle translata de ryme en prose, mais prisoner estoit de guer al hour q'il comensa cest tretice.[57]

He does, however, provide his name in an acrostic poem.

> Soit viij. ioynt apres xixme,
> Si mettez xij. apres xiiij.^{me}
> Vn & xviij. encountrez,
> Soun propre noun ensauerez,
> Vij. a xvij. y mettez,
> Le primer vowel au tierce aioignez,
> Soun droit surnoun entrouerez,
> Solunc l'alphabet.[58]

Thus the author identifies himself as 'Thomas Grai'. He also tells us that

> il fust prisoner en le opidoun Mount Agneth, iadys Chastel de Pucelis, ore Edynburgh, surueist il liuers de cronicles en rymaiez et en prose, en Latin, en Fraunceis, & en Engles, de gestez dez auncestres, de quoi il se meruailla....[59]

Gray was, in fact, a prisoner at the time he began to compose the chronicle. As warden of Norham Castle in 1355, he spotted a Scottish raiding party, led by William of Ramsay,

---

[56] It will be remembered that Gray's daughter, Elizabeth Darcy, included books called "Sainz Ryall" and "Lanselake" in her will. The fact that she is free to dispense of these books at her death implies that she brought them into the marriage. This, along with the fact that they were left to her nephew, suggests that they were family volumes, perhaps left to her by Gray himself. See above, p. 77.

[57] "And thus he who translated this chronicle from rhyme into prose does not wish to name his name openly, but he was taken a prisoner of war at the time that he began this treatise." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 1.1, p. 1.

[58] "Let the eighth [h] be joined after the nineteenth [T], / So place the twelfth [m] after the fourteenth [o] / The first [a] and the eighteenth [s] encounter; / you know his proper name. / Place the seventh [G] to the seventeenth [r], / The first vowel [a] join to the third [i]; / you have found his right surname, / according to the alphabet." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 1.1-2; p. 1-2.

[59] "... he was a prisoner in the fortress of Mount Agneth, once called the Castle of Maidens, now called Edinburgh, and he surveyed the books of chronicles in rhyme and in prose, in Latin, in French and in English, of

carrying booty back to Scotland. Leading a small force against the Scots, Gray and his companions were ambushed by William, Lord of Douglas, and captured. John Fordun includes a record of the skirmish in his *Chronica Gentis Scotorum*, refering to Gray as "miles nobilis".[60] According to this account, the English were surprised by the sight of Douglas' men, and "fugere cum honore non valentes, animas suas in propriis manibus committebant, Scotos viriliter debellando."[61] Andrew Wyntoun also describes the fight, and characterizes Gray a "þis stout knycht Schir Thomas."[62] When Gray spots the ambush he knights his son (here mistakenly named William) and encourages his men:

> Syne sayd he: 'Fallowis, we mon fycht;
> Forthy beis of gud comfort all;
> Lat nane repruf quhat euer befall.
> To fecht is mensk and schame to fle:
> Ilk man help oþer in neid,' quod he.[63]

Gray spent almost two years as a captive while waiting for his ransom to be paid. He spent his time well, however, and obviously had access to an impressive library. He found the history of Britain "en escript en diuers liuers en Latin et en Romaunce,"[64] and, surprised at how little he had considered the history of Britain, Gray determined "a treter & a translater en plus court sentence lez cronicles del Graunt Bretainge, et lez gestez des Englessez."[65]

The chivalric nature of Gray's undertaking is emphasized by his representation of

---

the deeds of ancestors, of which he marvelled...." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 1.2; p. 2.

[60] "a noble knight." John Fordun, *Chronica Gentis Scotorum Chronicle of the Scottish Nation*, ed. William F. Skene, tr. F.J.H. Skene (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1871-1872) I: 372. Translations are my own.

[61] "... not able to flee with honour, they committed their lives to their own hands, manfully fighting the Scots." Fordun, *Chronica Gentis Scotorum*, I: 372.

[62] Andrew of Wyntoun, *The Original Chronicle*, ed. F.J. Amours, Scottish Text Society 63, 50, 53-57 (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood, 1903-1914) VIII. 6361. Cited by book and line number.

[63] Wyntoun, *Orygínal Chronicle*, VIII. 6366-6370. Unfortunately, the portion of the *Scalacronica* which included the events surrounding Gray's capture and imprisonment is lost.

[64] "... in writings in diverse books in Latin and in French." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 1.1; p. 1.

[65] "... to treat and to translate in more concise sentences [i.e. to paraphrase] the chronicles of Great Britain and the deeds of the English." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 1.2; p. 2.

autobiographical details. The poem in which Gray hides his name in an acrostic also includes a description of his coat of arms. It begins by affirming his status as a knight.

> Se estoit del ordre enlumine de bons morez,
> As veues, as pucelis, et a saint eglise succours;
> Soun habite, sa droit vesture,
> Estoit autre tiel de colour,
> Com est ly chape du Cordeler,
> Teynt en tout tiel maner.
> Autre cote auoit afoebler,
> L'estat de soun ordre agarder,
> Qe de fieu resemble la colour;
> Et desus, en purturature,
> Estoit li hardy best quartyner
> Du signe teynt de la mere;
> Enviroun palice un mure,
> De meisme peynt la colour.[66]

As Stevenson states, "[t]he account which is here given of his armorial bearings is too indefinite to be reduced, with certainty, to the terms of modern heraldry,"[68] but it bears sufficient resemblance to the arms recorded for Sir Thomas Gray to be reconstructed: gules, a lion rampant and a border engrailed argent.[69]

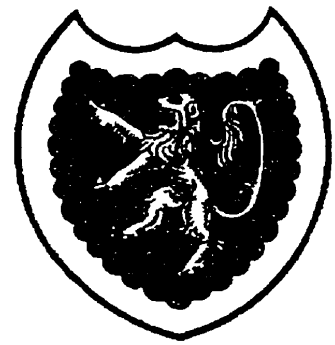

Figure 1: Heraldic Device of Thomas Gray of Heton[67]

Gray identifies himself as a member of an order

---

[66] "Thus he was enflamed of the order of good conduct, and of aid to widows, to maidens, and to Holy Church. His habit, his right clothing, was otherwise of the same colour as is the cope of the Franciscan [i.e. gray], dyed completely in this manner. Another coat he had pulled over to uphold the status of his order, which resembled the colour of fire and on it, in illustration, was the hardy beast quartyner, dyed in sign of the mother; around the border a wall, painted with the same colour." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 1.1; p. 1. I have chosen to translate "mere" as "mother" rather than "sea". Gray's father wore the same arms as the chronicler, with the exception that the lion and border were in gold. It is possible that the chronicler's arms were changed to silver in response to the arms of his mother's family. Gray's mother was Agnes de Beyle, but I have, unfortunately, been unable to find a record of her family's heraldic device.

[67] Image from Thomas Gray, *Scalacronica: The Reigns of Edward I, Edward II and Edward III*, ed. & tr. Herbert Maxwell (Glasgow: J. Maclehose 1907) frontispiece.

[68] Stevenson, introduction, xxxv.

[69] Joseph Foster, *Dictionary of Heraldry: Feudal Coats of Arms and Pedigrees* (London: Bracken Books, 1989) 100.

devoted to the protection of widows, maidens and the Church. This is typical of discussions of the nature of knighthood, and it is offered, with only slight variation, by the Lady of Lake as she instructs Lancelot in a knight's obligations:

> '...il doit Sainte Eglize garantir et defendre et maintenir. Ch'est li clergiés par quoi Sainte Eglize doit estre servie, et les veves et les orphenins....'[70]

Gray may not be thinking of the Lady's speech in particular, but his vocabulary invokes an image of knighthood which is concerned with religious affairs as well as military. The comparison of the colours in his own heraldic device with the Franciscan habit emphasizes the parallels between the religious life and knighthood as a secular order.

His coat of arms is described not in the language of heraldry, but in the language of exploits and adventure. Gules (red) is the colour "de fieu" while the lion rampant is "li hardy best quartyner." This image of knighthood, as represented by his coat of arms and described in the obligations of the military order, is an ideal of courtly behaviour inspired by romance conventions. Military service, of the sort which Gray performed on the Scottish borders, is only a small part of this image. Even the description of his place of captivity binds Gray not to contemporary military affairs along the Scottish marches, but to the golden age of chivalry surrounding Arthur's court.

Gray does not simply state, as was the case, that he was held in Edinburgh Castle. Rather, he is held "en le opidoun Mount Agneth, iadys Chastel de Pucelis, ore Edynburgh."[71]

---

[70] "... he ought to guard and defend and maintain Holy Church. That is, the clergy, by whom Holy Church is served, and widows and orphans...." *Lancelot: roman en prose du 13e siecle*, ed. Alexandre Micha, Textes littéraires français (Genève: Droz, 1978-1983) VII: 253.

[71] "... in the castle of Mount Agneth, once [called] the Castle of Maidens now Edinburgh." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 1.2; p. 2. Gray again associates the Castle of Maidens with Edinburgh in his account of the reign of Ebrauke. "il edifia dieus Cites & vn chastel devers Albanye. or Escoce. L'un Euerwik, la autre Clud, qe puis out a noun chastel de puscelis, ore Edynburgh, & Dunbretayne." ["he built two cities and a castle next to Albany, now Scotland. The one [was] Everwick, the other Clud, which once had the name Castle of Maidens, and is now called Edinburgh, and Dunbreton."] Gray, *Scalacronica*, 32.1.

Geoffrey of Monmouth, who provides "Castellum Puellarum" as an alternative name for the "oppidum montis Agned,"[72] does not associate the site with any particular city, but Edinburgh quickly became associated with the Castle of Maidens. In 1142 King David I began to use *Castellum Puellarum* as an official designation for Edinburgh in his charters. The title was also used by the authors of the Breton lai of *Doon* and the romance of *Fergus*.[73] By invoking this apparently ancient name for the city, Gray ties his literary project to the past through the very geography of his captivity. The Castle of Maidens also ties the *Scalacronica* directly to the chivalry of the Arthurian court. In the prose romances it is the site of the great tournament at which Lancelot is reunited with Hector and his cousin Lionel. As Lancelot arrives at the castle "li tornoiemens estoit ja tos pleniers, si faisoit l'en de molt beles jostes et de molt perilloses...."[74] The romance tradition also associates the castle with captivity. In the *Queste* Galahad frees the castle from seven brothers who imprison passing maidens. After it was prophesied that a single knight would defeat the brothers, one of them established the custom that "ne passeroit il ja mais damoisele par devant cest chastel que il ne detenissent jusqu'a tant que li chevaliers vendroit par qui il seroient vencu. Si l'ont einsi fait jusques a ore, si a peis li chastiax esté apelez li Chastiax as Puceles."[75] As the site of one of the great tournaments recorded in the prose Vulgate, and a site associated with captivity, the Castle of Maidens resonates with both the *Scalacronica*'s chivalric atmosphere, and the

---

[72] Geoffrey of Monmouth. *The Historia Regum Britannie of Geoffrey of Monmouth I: Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS 568*, ed. Neil Wright (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1985) ch. 27.

[73] Roger Sherman Loomis, "From Segontium to Sinadon- The Legends of a *Cité Gaste*," *Speculum* 22 (1947). 531.

[74] "... the tournament was already underway; there were performed the most splendid and dangerous joustes." *Lancelot*, II: 123.

[75] "... no lady would pass before the castle whom he would not detain until the arrival of such a knight by whom they would be defeated. And this they did until today, and so from then on the castle was called the Castle of Maidens." *La Queste del Saint Graal*, ed. Albert Pauphilet (Paris: Libraire Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1923) 50.

captivity of its author.[76]

The appropriateness of Gray's creative activity within the chivalric ethos is supported by the literary nature of the prologue. Not merely an autobiographical account of the author's captivity, the prologue also shows a great deal of literary sophistication as Gray turns from discussing the state of his captivity to his inspiration for undertaking his historical project:

> Et com estoit du dit bosoigne plus pensiue, ly estoit auys vn nuyt en dormaunt qe Sebile la sage ly surueint, et li dist q'el ly moustra voi a ceo q'il estoit en pense; et ly fust auys q'el ly amena en vn verger, ou encountre vn mure haut, sur vn peroun, trouerent vn eschel de v. bastouns adressez, et sur le peroun desoutz l'eschel ij. liuers au coste....[77]

With the introduction of the dream-vision, the *Scalacronica* connects itself to a long line of consolation literature. The *Scalacronica*'s allegorical prologue has its ultimate origins in Boethius's *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, but this was not necessarily Gray's immediate exemplar. Apart from the prologue, the text does not appear to show any first-hand familiarity with Boethius' work. At the appropriate point in his history, Gray does mention that "Boicius de concelacioun fist sez liuers,"[78] but this brief note is simply drawn from Higden's *Polychronicon*.[79] Like Gray, Boethius seeks instruction as a means of coping with captivity, but other chivalric figures, both historical and fictional, also wrote while imprisoned. In the prose Vulgate, for example, Lancelot spends his time composing a history of his love affair with Guenevere while imprisoned by Morgan le Fay. After Lancelot is

---

[76] For John Hardyng's use of this material see below, p. 257.

[77] "And as he was very pensive concerning the said need, it seemed to him one night while sleeping that Sybil the sage surveyed him, and said to him that she had shown him the path that he had thought on; and it seemed to him that she led him in an orchard where, against a high wall, on a stone, they found a ladder set with five rungs, and on the stone, under the ladder, [they found] two books on their sides...." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 1.2; p. 2.

[78] "Boethius *de consolatio* made his books." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 68v.1.

[79] Ranulph Higden, *The Polychronicon*, ed. Churchill Babington and Joseph Rawson Lumby, RS. 41 (London:

captured by Morgan, he chances to see a man painting a mural.

> Il oevre la festre et voit leanz .I. home qui poingnoit .I. ancienne estoire et desus chascunne ymage avoit letres, se connoist que c'est l'estoire d'Eneas, comment il s'anfoui de Troie. Lors se porpense que se la chambre ou il gisoit estoit portraite de ses faiz et de ses diz, moult li plairoit a veoir les biaux contenemenz de sa dame et moult li seroit grant alegement de ses maux.[80]

Other knight prisoners who turned to writing include King James I of Scotland, who composed the *Kingis Quair* while held captive at the English court; Edward, Duke of York, who translated *The Master of Game* while a prisoner as Pevensey Castle; Charles d'Orleans, whose writing career flourished while he was a captive in England from 1415-1440; and, of course, Sir Thomas Malory who identifies himself as a prisoner knight in the *Morte D'Arthur*.[81] Although Gray stands at the head of this list chronologically, it may be argued that Gray's decision to occupy his captivity in literary pursuits was based on an understanding of his role as a knight prisoner which was influenced by literary models. Just as Marmion and Sir Thomas Gray senior well understood the roles that they should play in the adventure of the helm, so the chronicler submits to a chivalric model which suggests that writing is a suitable pastime for a captive knight.

Gray's use of the place of his captivity emphasises the chivalric nature of his narrative, and his choice of a guide through his dream vision is also appropriate for his historical undertaking. It is not Boethius' Lady Philosophy who comes to instruct the captive knight, but the Sybil, a figure who held an important place in the prophetic literature of the

---

Longman, 1865-1886) V: 318-22.

[80] "He opened the window and saw there a man who painted an ancient history and over each picture he had letters, and he knew that it was the history of Aeneas and how he had fled Troy. Then he thought that if his chamber, where he resided, was painted with his deeds and his words it would be very pleasing to him to see the fair deeds of his lady and it would be a great comfort against his sufferings." *Lancelot*, V: 52.

[81] For a brief discussion of knight prisoners see William Matthews, *The Ill-Framed Knight: A Skeptical Inquiry into the Identity of Sir Thomas Malory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966) 138-141. Thomas Usk,

Middle Ages. Sybilline prophecy claimed to predict the birth of Christ, and as such it "met a widely felt need for a bridge between Christian and pagan revelation."[82] The revelation of prophecy not only provided clues to the prognostication of the future, but made possible the understanding of any distant knowledge, including the distant past. Historical knowledge, therefore, from the story of creation to an account of Arthurian Britain, was as much a product of prophetic revelation as the writings of Merlin or Thomas of Ercildoun. Thus Richard Southern argues that prophecy "was the chief inspiration of all historical thinking."[83] By invoking the Sybil Gray makes explicit the link between the historical and the prophetic.[84] The poem which hides the author's identity in a letter puzzle may indicate Gray's familiarity with the elaborate acrostic poems common in Sybilline prophecy.[85]

Having thus established the appropriateness of his place, and of his guide, Gray completes the prologue with a description of the chronicle's goals and sources. As previously mentioned, the dreamer and his guide approach a wall against which rests a ladder. The legs of the ladder rest on two books.

> 'Moun amy,' ceo dist la viel Sebile, 'veiez cy sen et foly, le primer liuer la bible, le secounde la gest de Troy, queux ne greuerount a toun purpos a surueoir.'[86]

Gray's ladder of history rests on a foundation of both ecclesiastical and secular history, as the Bible and the "gest de Troy" combine to tell the history of European Christendom. The Sybil

---

although not a knight, composes his *Testament of Love*, an allegorical dream vision, while imprisoned in 1387.

[82] Richard W. Southern, "Aspects of the European Tradition of Historical Writing: 3. History as Prophecy," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 5th ser. 22 (1972): 166.

[83] Southern, "History as Prophecy," 166.

[84] For a discussion of the prologue's use of the Sybil, see Francis Ingledew, "The Book of Troy and the Genealogical Construction of History: The Case of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*," *Speculum* 69 (1994): 665-668.

[85] See for example, Augustine, *The City of God Against the Pagans*, ed. and tr. George E. McCracken, *et al.*, Loeb Classics (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann, 1963-1972) XVIII. xxiii. Cited by book and chapter.

[86] "'My friend,' the old Sybil said to him, 'see here wisdom and folly, the first book the Bible, the second the gest

encourages Gray to see in these sources both the "sen et foly" in history. Francis Ingledew argues that Gray's image "evidences the ambivalence the issue of Troy could provoke when the Sybil describes the Trojan scripture as a story of 'foly' and opposes it to the 'sen' of the Bible."[87] Lee Patterson makes the same mistake, as he too implies that "sen" modifies "la bible," while "foly" modifies "la gest de Troy," and that they should be translated as truth and falsehood respectively:

> And in his *Scalacronica*... Sir Thomas Gray began with a vision of the ladder of history resting upon two books, the Bible and 'la gest de Tory.' But once having established this familiar equivalence, Sir Thomas hastily revised it: according to the Sibyl who is his guide, 'veiez cy sen et foly, le primer livre la bible, le secounde la gest de Troy.'[88]

Gray, however, is not opposing the two texts, as both Ingledew and Patterson assume. History, as represented by the ladder, rests on both books, and both books contain examples not of truth and falsehood, but of wisdom and of folly. Hence both books (notice the plural 'queux' in the clause omitted by both critics) will prove useful in Gray's historiographic task. This is, in fact, a common theme of prologues and prefaces to medieval chronicles. Mannyng, for example, claims "And gude it is for many thynges / for to here þe dedis of kynges, / whilk were foles & whilk were wyse...."[89] The image of the ladder, therefore, encourages Gray to view history as a collection of *exempla*, some of which are to be

---

of Troy, which would do your purpose no harm to survey." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 1.2 - 1v.1; p. 2.

[87] Ingledew, "Book of Troy," 668.

[88] Lee Patterson, *Chaucer and the Subject of History* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991) 94-95.

[89] Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1.15-18. William Caxton makes a similar claim in his prologue to Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*, even though he questions the historical accuracy of the text. "For herein may be seen noble chyualrye, curtoyse, humanyte, frendlynesse, hardynesse, loue, frendshyp, cowardyse, murdre, hate, vertue, and synne. Doo after the good and leue the euyl, and it shal brynge you to good fame and renomme." William Caxton, prologue, *Caxton's Malory: A New Edition of Sir Thomas Malory's Le Morte D'Arthur*, ed. James Spisak (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987) 3. For a brief discussion of the exemplary nature of history as expressed through this rhetorical convention, see Robert W. Hanning, *The Vision of History in Early Britain: From Gildas to Geoffrey of Monmouth* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1966) 124-126.

followed, others are to be avoided.

The ladder itself has five rungs. The dreamer begins to climb the ladder and as he steps on each rung he is able to see a different chronicler at work. As he steps on the first rung he sees "escriuaunt vn mestre":

> 'Beaux amy,' ceo dist Sebille, 'veez ycy Gauter erchedeken de Excestre, qe le Brut traunslata de Bretoun en Latin par ditz de Keile & de Gildas, de ditz de qi poez auoir ensampler com de le Bruyte, lez gestz de Bretouns, le primer liuer de cronicle de cest isle.'[90]

As Gray continues to climb the ladder he sees three other chroniclers: Bede, the monk of Cestre who wrote the *Polychronicon* (i.e. Ranulph Higden), and the vicar of Tilmouth who wrote the *Historia Aurea*.[91] Gray is not allowed to step on the final rung, "qar il signify lez auenementz futurs,"[92] and the Sybil recommends that he read divines, particularly the work of Thomas of Otterburne,[93] to learn of future events.

Walter of Exeter is a mistaken name for Walter, archdeacon of Oxford, whom Gray correctly identifies later in the chronicle.[94] The name is a veiled reference to Geoffrey of Monmouth and the Brut tradition. Geoffrey claimed that "Walterus Oxinefordensis archidiaconus, vir in oratoria arte atque in exoticis historiis eruditus, quendam Britannici sermonis librum uetustissimum... proponebat."[95] There seems to be a small tradition of referring to Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia* by referring only to this Walter. Geffrei

---

[90] "'Good friend,' said the Sybil to him, 'see here Walter, archdeacon of Exeter [i.e. Oxford], who translated the Brut from British into Latin according to the writing of Keile and of Gildas, from the writings of whom you can have an exemplar as of the Brut, the gestes of the British, the first book of chronicles of this island.'" Gray, *Scalacronica*, 1v.1; pp. 2-3.
[91] Gray, *Scalacronica*, 1v.1-2; p. 3.
[92] "'... because it signifies future events....'" Gray, *Scalacronica*, 1v.2; p. 3.
[93] Thomas of Otterburne is depicted in the dream as a Franciscan monk standing beside the ladder, supporting it as Gray climbs. Often confused with the fifteenth century Thomas of Otterburne, the work of this Thomas is now lost. On the lost work of Thomas of Otterburne see Taylor, *English Historical Literature*, 21-22.
[94] Gray, *Scalacronica*, 82.1 and 96.2.
[95] "Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford, a man learned in both the art of public speaking and the history of foreign

Gaimar, in the epilogue to his *Estoire des Engleis* (c. 1135-1140), claims that he had access to "Le bon livere de Oxeford / Ki fust Walter l'arcediaen...."[96] An anonymous translator of the *Historia* into English also identifies Walter as the author of the work.[97] The other sources for the history of British kings are also obscure. Gildas' reputation as an historian expanded throughout the later Middle Ages and far surpassed the meagre historical information provided by the *De Excidio*. Geoffrey's *Historia* cites Gildas on several occasions, and Gray himself refers to him as an authority on the story of Albina and her sisters.[98] In all likelihood, however, Gray is reacting to Gildas' name and reputation rather than to any particular text. The work of Keile is also based on a mistaken identity. Stevenson suggests that "we are probably to understand the work of Walter Calenius, the individual archdeacon of Oxford referred to."[99] This seems unlikely, however, since everything Gray knows about Walter of Oxford probably comes from the prologue to Geoffrey's work. It is also likely that Keile is the same figure whom, with the spelling "Quyle," Gray lists along with Merlin and the Sybil as diviners who predict the eventual return of British rule.[100]

---

countries... presented him with a certain very ancient book in the British language." Geoffrey, *Historia*, ch. 23.

[96] "... the good book of Oxford that belonged to Archdeacon Walter." Geffrei Gaimar, *L'Estoire des Engleis by Geffrei Gaimar*, ed. A. Bell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960) 6458-6459. Cited by line number. For a discussion of the epilogue's relation to Geoffrey of Monmouth, see Ian Short, "Gaimar's Epilogue and Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Liber vetustissimus*," *Speculum* 69 (1994): 323-343.

[97] "For of þe story of þe kyngys of Brytayne þat now yclepyd [ys] Englond y wol ȝow telle, wyche þat Walter, Archedene of Oxenforde, a worthy clerk 7 a man wel ylernyd in olde storyes of Englond [fond], 7 he dede hyt translaty out of spech of Brytonys into Latyn." College of Arms MS. Arundel 22, fo. 8, quoted in Robert A. Caldwell, "The 'History of the Kings of Britain' in College of Arms MS. Arundel XXII," *PMLA* 69 (1954): 645. Although Geoffrey of Monmouth is never mentioned in the prologue, which is derived or adapted from the *Historia*, Walter is named as the translator of the work three times. Jehan de Waurin, the Flemish chronicler, also refers to "Gaultier de Oxenee" for material relating to Arthur's fall. Jehan de Waurin, *Recueil des Croniques et Anchiennes Istoires de la Grant Bretaigne, present Nomme Engleterre*, ed. William Hardy, RS 39 (London: Longman, 1864-1891) I: 438. For Hardyng's use of Walter of Oxford, see below, pp. 283ff.

[98] Gray, *Scalacronica*, 32v.

[99] Stevenson, introduction, v.

[100] Cadwallader has a dream which he describes to the King of Little Britain, Alanus. The king searches his books and finds that the dream "concordauntz as ditez Merlyn, et auxi as ditez de Quyle, le bon deuynour, et a ceo qe Sebile escript." ["...agreed with the sayings of Merlin, and also with the sayings of Quyle, the good diviner, and with what the Sybil had written."] Gray, *Scalacronica*, 95v.2. Gray has confused Wace's French to

Having instructed Gray on the sources he should use to compile his chronicle, the Sybil tells him to name it the *Scalacronica*. The name obviously evokes the central image of the dream vision, the ladder of history. John Leland, in his paraphrase of the text, speculates that the title may have a more personal meaning. In identifying the author he writes, "I gesse, that one of the Greys of Northumbreland was autor of it by the imagination of the dreame that he showith of a ladder yn the prologe. The Grayes give a lader in their armes."[101] Although there is no record of Thomas Gray bearing a ladder in his coat of arms, by the reign of Henry V his descendants were wearing gules, a lion rampant azure, a border engrailed of the last, with a crest of a scaling ladder argent (i.e. a silver lion rampant on a red field, encircled by a waving border, with a gold ladder mounted on top).[102] This is essentially the coat of arms described by Gray in his prologue with the addition of the ladder crest. It is possible that the crest was added later in reaction to the composition of the *Scalacronica*, but this is by no means a necessary conclusion. Although crests were worn throughout the fourteenth century, the recording of crests was sporadic before the fifteenth century. Thomas Gray, therefore, may have included a crest in his heraldic device which was simply not recorded.

The prologue of the *Scalacronica* thus describes the creation of the text and the four

---

produce the name of "Quyle". In Wace, the dream "Se concordot as diz Merlin / E Aquile le bon devin / E a ço que Sibille escrit." ["... agreed with the sayings of Merlin, and the Eagle, the good diviner, and with what the Sybil wrote."]. Wace, *Le Roman de Brut*, ed. Ivor Arnold (Paris: Société des Anciens Français, 1940) 14813-14815. This is the eagle who prophesied at Shaftsbury, cf. Geoffrey, *Historia*, ch. 206.

[101] Leland, "Notable Thinges," 259.

[102] Bernard Burke, *The General Armory of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales* (London: Harrison & Sons, 1884) I: 428. Leland's paraphrase includes a description of Thomas Gray's coat of arms as "barry of 6 arg. & azure, a bend gobony, or and gueules" (six horizontal bars, alternating blue and silver, with a diagonal bar alternating gold and red). Leland "Notable Thinges," 259. This device, however, seems to have been added by Leland's earlier editor, Thomas Hearne. Although many Grays did wear the coat which featured a field barry in the fourteenth century, the chronicler is not listed with this device. Cf. John Leland, *De Rebus Britannicis Collectanea*, ed. Thomas Hearne (London: Benj. White, 1772) I: 509.

authorities from which Gray draws the four *livers* of his own history. Although the division into four books is not visually represented in the manuscript,[103] Gray does repeat this scheme again before beginning his account of the Trojan war: "Hom doit sauoi qe cest cronicle est contenu en qatre liuers. Le primer est le Bruyt du primer venu de Brutus tanqe le temps Cadwaladre, le darayn Roy dez Bretouns. Le secound liuer est de lez gestes dez Saxouns...."[104] Gray even refers to the scheme at the end of the Arthurian section of the chronicle, saying that he will return to the question of reliable sources "en la fine du darain chapitre de cest Bruyt, procheigne deuaunt le lyuer de gestis Anglorum."[105] Despite the repetition of this simple scheme, Gray's method is much more complex. The chronological framework for Gray's Brut section is not a version of Geoffrey of Monmouth, as suggested by the reference to Walter of Oxford, but the short version of Higden's *Polychronicon*.[106] Gray paraphrases Higden's text, paying particular attention to details relating to England, but he makes use of more extended narratives outside Higden to treat material which is of special interest to him. As noted above, Gray relies on romances of Troy and Aeneas early in

---

[103] Large drop capitals of seven or eight lines do divide the chronicle into distinctive sections, but they do not correspond to Gray's four books. See, for example, the large "Q" with which the Arthurian section begins. *Scalacronica*, 68v.2.

[104] "One ought to know that this chronicle is contained in four books. The first is the *Brut* from the first coming of Brutus until the time of Cadwallader, the last King of the Britons. The second book is the *gestes dez Saxouns*...." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 9v.2.

[105] "... at the end of the last chapter of this *Brut*, immediately before the book of the *gestes Anglorum*." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 82v.1.

[106] Gray does not refer to Higden by name, calling him only "le moigne de Cestre" (Gray, *Scalacronica*, 1v.2). Higden's name was not associated with the *Polychronicon* until the second, intermediate version of the text began to circulate in the 1340s. V. H. Galbraith has shown that the short version of the *Polychronicon* (CD versions in the Rolls Series edition) did not contain the acrostic by which Higden identified himself. See V. H. Galbraith "An Autograph MS of Ranulph Higden's *Polychronicon*," *The Huntington Library Quarterly* 23 (1959): 14. The *Scalacronica* contains information drawn from the *Polychronicon* which is only found in the CD versions. Gray, for example, mentions that "Johan Mercurius fust pape 2 aunz apres Boneface" ["John Mercurius was pope for two years after Boniface"] before his account of Arthur. This passage translates the CD version of Higden which reads "Johannes papa, qui et Mercurius, successit post Bonefacium annis duobus..." ["Pope John, who also was called Mercurius, succeeded after Boniface for two years"]. In the longer version of Higden this passage comes after the history of Arthur and the name "Mercurius" is not mentioned. Cf. Gray, *Scalacronica*, 68v.1-2 with Higden, *Polychronicon*, V: 338-340.

the chronicle and he borrows from the Anglo-Norman *Brut* for his account of Havelok. Like Trevisa, Gray was unsatisfied with the Arthurian history provided by Higden, and he turns to several sources, including both chronicles and romances, to create a composite history of Arthurian Britain.

Gray's Arthurian narrative is basically that found in the Brut tradition. Although Gray knew the Anglo-Norman *Brut* and used it later in his own chronicle, it does not exercise much influence on the Arthurian section.[107] Instead, Gray's Arthurian history is drawn from several chronicle sources, principally Wace's *Roman de Brut* and the vulgate version of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia*. The two texts are mixed freely, and neither version has priority. The speech delivered by Dubricius before the battle of Bath, for example, seems to be drawn from Geoffrey of Monmouth,[108] as is the list of knights present at the Pentecost tournament.[109] On the other hand, Gray agrees only with Wace when he states that the returning Saxons ravaged "Somerset et Dorset,"[110] and his description of Mordred's treachery echoes Wace's account.[111] Although Gray states that Guenevere's father, the King of Briscay, had established the Round Table,[112] he still follows Wace when providing an explanation for its shape. Each of the king's knights was so excellent that they were equal to kings, and "pur

---

[107] For a discussion of the Anglo-Norman *Brut*'s influence on Gray's account of Henry III and Edward I, see Thiolier, "La *Scalacronica*," 123.
[108] Cf. Gray, *Scalacronica*, 70v.1 and Geoffrey *Historia*, ch. 147.
[109] Cf. Gray, *Scalacronica*, 73v.1-2 and Geoffrey, *Historia*, ch. 156.
[110] Cf. Gray, *Scalacronica*, 70.2 and Wace, *Brut*, 9245-9246.
[111] Cf. Gray, *Scalacronica*, 79v.2 ("q'il auoit pris a soun lice la Royne Genoire, la femme soun vncle, com sa espouse" ["that he had taken to his bed the Queen, Guenevere, the wife of his uncle, as his spouse"]) and Wace, *Brut*, 13028-13029 ("Prist a sun lit femme du rei, / Femme sun uncle e sun seignur" ["He took to his bed the wife of the king, the wife of his uncle and lord"]).
[112] Fletcher describes this innovation as "a monstrous romance or ballad idea" but offers no explanation as to where the detail originates. Robert H. Fletcher, *The Arthurian Material in the Chronicles*, 2nd ed. (New York: Burt Franklin, 1973) 225. John Stow, apparently following Gray, has the same detail. See Fletcher, *Arthurian Material*, 266.

ceo fit il sa table round, qe nul seast plus haut d'autre."[113] In Wace, Arthur institutes the table to establish equality among his own knights so that "Nuls d'els ne se poeit vanter / Qu'il seist plus haut de sun per."[114] In general, however, Gray's method of paraphrasing his sources does not allow the reader to determine which source he is following, and his integration of the two chronicles is virtually seamless.

Proper names, especially those of minor characters, are often confused. Thus when Gray describes Arthur's generosity following the conquest of France he states that "a Borel dona il Le Maine & le pays de Auinoun, a Cosdyn dona il Burgoin,"[115] which translates Wace's "Le Mans a Borel sun cusin, / Buluine duna a Ligier."[116] Gray also has a fondness for locating major events according to contemporary nomenclature. Arthur's first battle is at the river Douglas "qe ore est apel le Done,"[117] and after the defeat of the Saxons Cheldrik flees to Calidon wood, "ou pris est ore Barlinges."[118] These brief asides, which may be drawn from local tradition rather than any written source, emphasize the fact that Arthurian history and chivalry were performed across the landscape of (northern) Britain and, similar to his use of the site of his captivity, bring the deeds of the past closer to his contemporary readers. Gray's conception of that past, however, is not based on historical works alone, and several romance narratives and conventions find their way into his Arthurian history.

---

[113] "for this reason he made his round table, so that none might sit higher than another." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 71v.1.
[114] "None of them could boast that he sat higher than his peer." Wace, *Brut*, 9757-9758.
[115] "To Borel he gave Le Mans and the land of Avignon, to Cosdyn he gave Burgoin." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 73.2.
[116] "Le Mans was given to Borel his cousin, Boulogne to Ligier." Wace *Brut*, 10164-10165. Cf. also Gray, *Scalacronica*, 77v.1 and Wace, *Brut*, 11971ff, where Bos is divided into two characters by Gray, called Bort and Boese. See also p. 97 above for Gray's confusion concerning the prophet Keile.
[117] "... which now is called the Don." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 69v.1.
[118] "... where now is situated Barlinges." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 70.2. Note that both Mannyng and Peter Langtoft associate this wood with Fiskerton, Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1.9792, Peter Langtoft, *The Chronicle*, ed. and tr. Thomas Wright, RS. 47 (London: Longman, 1866-1868) I: 150.

Gray deals with romance conventions freely, referring to individual romances and to common romance motifs. Like Wace and Mannyng, Gray discusses the two distinct periods of peace in which marvelous adventures happened to Arthur's knights. The first twelve-year period follows the establishment of the round table:

> En quel temps apparust en bretaigne tauntz dez chos fayez, qe a meruail, de quoy sourdi les grauntz auentures qe sount recordez de la court Arthur. Com cely q'auiot delit de oyer de chevaleries q'en auindrent en acomplicement, de les et de lez fair meismes, com plus playnement oyer pust hom en le graunt estoir de ly![119]

The *chos fayez* that Gray refers to are available to his audience as written texts, just as Mannyng indicated that deeds of Arthur's knights were recorded in "ryme."[120] Gray also agrees with Mannyng, who said that all Arthurian literature could "to gode laid,"[121] when he implies that listening to these tales of wonders helps to inspire the listener to similar feats.

Gray then outlines several romance motifs as he describes the type of story to which he is referring:

> Hom dit qe Arthur ne seoit ia a manger deuaunt q'il auoit nouels estrangers. Hom le pooit bien dire, qar taunt venoient espessement, qe a payn estoint tenuz estraungers.[122]

Like Mannyng, Gray also implies that it is the young bachelor who participates in adventures when he makes reference to another typical romance motif:

> Lez iuuenceaux qi queroient la viaunde de la cosyne alafoitz trouerent tiel auenture entre la sale et la cosyne qe, deuaunt acomplicement de eles, ils qestoient saunz barbes, lez auoint parcruez, et bons cheualeres estoint deuenuz deuaunt lour reuenu.[123]

---

[119] "In this time wondrously appeared in Britain many fairy-wonders, from which arose the great adventures which are written down of the court of Arthur. How he who delights to hear of chivalrous deeds, which arise in the accomplishment of those things, also performs those very things, as one may more plainly hear in the great history of them!" Gray, *Scalacronica*, 71v.1.

[120] See above, p. 45.

[121] Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1.10403.

[122] "It is said that Arthur would not eat before he had strange news. This may well be said because they came with such numbers that they barely considered them strange." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 72.1

[123] "The youths who fetched food from the kitchen at the same time found such adventure between the dining room and the kitchen that, before the completion of them, they set out beardless, the adventures developed, and

Gray's conception of these adventures is in accordance with romance conventions. Arthur's refusal to eat before he sees or is told a wonder is a common literary motif which appears in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*[124] and elsewhere.[125] The convention, however, is not merely a literary artifact. Gray's own account of the adventure of William Marmion and Van Velthem's account of Edward I's tournament, both of which include meals which are interrupted by adventures, demonstrate the use to which the convention could be put in contemporary courtly society. The serving squire who becomes a great knight is also the stock in trade of the "fair unknown" story. Gray's rather vague reference to a source, which amounts to popular report ("Hom dit qe..."), along with his use of the phrase "chos fayes," implies that he does not take these narratives too seriously as historical records. The inclusion of the material, however, clearly sets the origins of these chivalric models in the Arthurian past. Contemporary knights and ladies who participate in tournaments and adventures modelled on romance literature are therefore placed within a tradition going back to the golden age of British chivalry.

The second period of peace is treated rather differently. After the defeat of Frollo, Gray includes a romance style adventure in which Arthur encounters the giant Rinin. During the nine years of peace the giant sends messengers demanding that Arthur shave his beard and send it to him so that it might be added to his cloak "qil auoit fait dez barbes dautres

---

they became good knights before their return." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 72.1.

[124] *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, eds. J.R.R. Tolkien and E.V. Gordon, 2nd ed. rev. by Norman Davis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967) 90-99. Cited by line number. The first *Perceval* continuation also employs this device before the beheading match in the Caradoc episode. In the short version, Arthur comments that he will not eat "Devant que estrange novele" ["before strange news"] is brought to him. *The Continuations of the Old French Perceval of Chretien de Troyes*, ed. William Roach, *et al.* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press; Philadelphia: American Philisophical Society, 1949-1983) III.i: 142.

[125] See Gerald Bordman, *Motif-Index of the English Metrical Romances* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1963) 76-77.

Roys qil auoit conquys."[126] Instead of delivering his beard, Arthur agrees on a time and a place for single combat and defeats the giant, thus saving his honour and his beard.[127] The story is drawn from Wace (or possibly directly from Geoffrey) but it does not happen at this point in either of their narratives. In these earlier chronicles the story is told after Arthur has defeated the giant of St. Michael's Mount. Arthur comments that he has fought no stronger opponent except for the giant Rithon. He then briefly describes the adventure.[128] The fight with the giant of St. Michael's Mount occurs at the beginning of the Roman campaign which follows the second period of peace, but Arthur does not say when he fought with Rithon. The story is found outside the chronicle tradition and was included by Jacques de Longuyon in the Alexandrian romance *Les Voeux du Paon*. Jacques pauses from the action of the poem to include an account of the Nine Worthies with Arthur among them:

> D'Artus qui tint Bretainge va le bruit tertoingnant
> Que il mata Ruiston .j. jaiant en plain champ,
> Qui tant par estoit fort, fier et outrecuidant
> Que de barbes a roys fist faire .i. vestemany,
> Liquel roy li estoient par force obeïssant;
> Si volt avoir l'Artus, mais il i fu faillant![129]

Following *Les Voeux du Paon*, *The Parlement of the Thre Ages* also includes an account of Rithon as an independent adventure:

> Than Roystone þe riche kyng, full rakill of his werkes,

---

[126] ".. which he had made of the beards of other kings whom he had conquered." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 73.1.
[127] Gray, *Scalacronica*, 73.1.
[128] Cf. Wace, *Brut*, 11561-11591 and Geoffrey, *Historia*, ch. 165.
[129] "Of Arthur who held Britain, the Brut testifies / that he overcame Ruiston a giant in open field, / who was so strong, fierce and insolent / that he had made a cloak of the beards of kings. / Each king was made obedient to him by force. / He wished to have Arthur's [beard], but he failed in that!" Jacques de Longuyon, *Les Voeux du Paon*, *The Buik of Alexander*, ed R.L. Graeme Ritchie, Scottish Text Society, ns. 17, 12, 21, 25 (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1921-1929) 7548-7553. Cited by line number. The Scottish *Buik of Alexander*, a translation of *Les Voeux du Paon*, also contains the story at lines 9981-9988 (printed on facing pages). The story of the giant with the beards dominates Jacques' description of Arthur, and even the tale of the giant of St. Michael's Mount receives only one line in his account of the king. It is possible that a complete version of the tale circulated separately.

He made a blyot to his bride of berdes of kynges,
And aughtilde Sir Arthures berde one scholde be;
Bot Arthure oure athell kynge anoþer he thynkes,
And faughte with hym in the felde till he was fey worthen.[130]

This version of the tale agrees with Gray's in that the giant is said to be a king, but no other version mentions a bride who will be the recipient of the "blyot" or mantle. As we shall see, however, there are other similarities between *The Parlement* and the *Scalacronica* which indicate some form of textual relationship.

Whatever Gray's source for this episode, he has rearranged his material to fit the demands of his text. Faced with another period of peace in which adventures occurred, Gray looks for an enterprise to include, but one which is already part of the chronicle tradition. The Rithon story, complete with monstrous giant and single combat, is a near perfect fit. Gray does adapt the narrative to provide the story with an appropriate setting. Rinin is not only a giant, but also a king whom they encounter in "haut Saicsne,"[131] and after the defeat of the giant Arthur has his beard carried back to his army as a trophy.[132] The scene has also taken on new meaning in the context of Arthur's first continental campaign. By claiming Rinin's beard, Arthur asserts his own sovereignty over his European foe. The battle for beards, therefore, is transformed from a romance interlude into a serious episode which emphasizes Arthur's own authority over newly conquered lands.

The adventures of the second period are not limited to Gray's attempt to transform historical record into a romance form. While Arthur "demure hors de Bretaigne ix. aunz"[133] he holds several courts at which he rewards his followers:

---

[130] *The Parlement of the Thre Ages, Alliterative Poetry of the Later Middle Ages: An Anthology*, ed. Thorlac Turville-Petre (London: Routledge, 1989) 481-485. Cited by line number.
[131] "... upper Saxony." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 73.1
[132] "... qe le fist aporter al ost" ["which he made to be carried to the host"]. Gray, *Scalacronica*, 73.1.

> Il reguerdona touz qe bien ly auoint seruy, qe trope serroit a tout counter, et de touz ses auentures la maner, qe plusours ly auindrent, qe ne sount pas en cest recountez.[134]

Here, however, Gray focuses on conventional deeds performed in tournaments:

> Arthur teint graunt court ou graunt mervailles en avyndrent, qe nul temps solaient faire, qe bien plust au Roy. De queux Gauwayn s'entremist fortement, qe tresseouent tres bien ly auenit, com recorde est en sez estoirs.[135]

The marvels alluded to here seem to be nothing more than exemplary feats of arms performed at court. This description actually accords well with the events in both Geoffrey and Wace, in which a tournament follows the period of peace, and Gray's description does not represent a major addition.[136] Like Mannyng, however, Gray does allude to an *estoir* which contains a full account of the court's continental exploits.

Despite Gray's refusal to include these tales in the *Scalacronica*, his version of Arthurian history is infused with a chivalric mood through the constant references to courtly activity. These include details drawn from Wace, such as the Pentecost tournament where the knights participate in sports and jousts while "Lez dames furount as kirnels, qe graunt deduyt y ont le iour."[137] Other details are also introduced by Gray himself. Immediately before Arthur's army sets out against Lucius, Gray pauses to comment on the chivalric conduct of Arthur's court. "En le temps Arthur," says Gray, "auindrent maintz meruaillis de

---

[133] "... remained outside of Britain for nine years." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 73.2.

[134] "He rewarded all who had served him well, which would be too long to record completely, and the manner of all the adventures which some of them carried out, which are not recounted in this work." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 73.2. The syntax of the passage is confused. It translates Wace's "A ses humes rendi lur pertes / E quereduna lur deserte; / Sun servise a chescun rendi / Sulunc çe qu'il aveit servi" ["To his men Arthur reimbursed their losses and rewarded their deserts; he gave to each his service according to that which he had performed"]. Wace, *Brut*, 10149-10152.

[135] "Arthur held a great court where great marvels occurred which were not accustomed to happen at any time, which well pleased the king. In which Gawain stood out above the rest, which he repeatedly did very well, as is recorded in his histories." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 73v.1.

[136] Cf. Wace, *Brut*, 10147ff and Geoffrey, *Historia*, ch. 155.

[137] "The ladies were on the battlements, where they had great pleasure that day." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 74.2. Cf. Wace, *Brut*, 10525ff.

enchauntementz & chos fayez."[138] The peace of Arthur's kingdom, argues Gray, allowed each knight to desire nothing "fors a cheualery, qe chescun s'ensocilla a fair chos desconuz, qe portasent renome."[139] Through these deeds a knight not only gained rewards of gold and gems, but he also could prove his virtue, "et pur ceo furount appellez lez cheualers erraunz."[140] Gray singles out Gawain for special praise, but Arthur is also the model of a chivalric knight. "L'estoir deuise qe Arthur estoit beaux, amyable & bien formiz...."[141] The passage, which is largely conventional, continues in the same vein, following Wace's account of Arthur's attributes.[142] At the establishment of the Round Table, however, Gray adds that Arthur was also comfortable as the leader of a chivalric court: "il daunsa, chaunta, iousta & tournya, festia lez dames."[143]

Chivalric activity, however, is not reserved for times of peace, and even after the defeat of Lucius, Arthur sojourns in Burgundy for the winter before marching on Rome itself:

> En quel soiourn il tenit court real de la table round, ou auindrent graunt auentures, qe acomplis furount des cheualers erraunz, ou Gawayn s'entremist fortement.[144]

Gray's only statement praising a purely military form of chivalry, however, comes during his account of the first battle between Arthur and the Romans. The battle is unexpected and only mounted knights are able to reach the field in time:

> Se entre attasserent, qe a plus bele tourney n'estoit vnqes vieu, qar nuls n'estoit fors

---

[138] "In the time of Arthur there happened many marvels of enchantment and fairy wonders." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 75v.1.

[139] "...except chivalry, in which each would excersie his ingenuity to do some unknown deed which might carry renown." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 75v.1.

[140] "... and for this reason they were called knights errant." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 75v.1. The passage may be inspired by Gawain's famous defence of peace in reaction to the challenge from Rome. Cf. Wace, *Brut*, 10765-10772.

[141] "The history relates that Arthur was handsome, amiable and well formed...." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 69v.1.

[142] Cf. Wace, *Brut*, 9013ff.

[143] "... he danced, sang, jousted, tourneyed, dallied with the ladies." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 71v.1.

[144] "In which sojourn he held a royal court of the Round Table, where great adventures happened which were accomplished by knights errant, where Gawain stood out above the rest." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 79v.1-2.

chiualer & esquier, saunze archier ou petouns.[145]

Not surprisingly, Gray's concept of nobility is intimately tied to the military order with which he identifies. Chivalric conduct throughout the *Scalacronica*, whether in the court or on the field, is the purview of aristocratic society. In his Arthurian history Gray creates a both a courtly and a military model for knights, like William Marmion, who were the contemporary *cheualers erraunz*.

Gray's reliance on romance convention and mood is not, however, restricted to vague allusions to literary motifs and chivalric behaviour. Unlike the chroniclers discussed in the previous chapter, Gray makes extended use of both prose and verse romance material even while claiming that he cannot include it. Prose Arthurian romances first appear in Gray's chronicle immediately following the death of Uther. In the account found in Geoffrey and Wace, Arthur is chosen king after his father's death. In Gray, the barons resist Arthur's coronation because of the mystery surrounding his conception:

> ...vnqor lez grauntz du realme enauoit dout, pur ceo qe le temps de soun neisement estoit trop pres la solempnete du matremoin le Roy, & pur ceo qe l'auenture n'estoit pas discouert pur l'onour la royne, viuaunt le roy.[146]

Arthur is therefore compelled to prove his heredity and his right to the throne. As in the prose *Merlin*, the test of kingship is the sword in the stone. Dubricius says mass while the barons attempt to settle the question of succession. Those leaving the monastery discover the stone.

> issu de monster, cum tesmon ascun cronicle, ils trouerent vn graunt peroun adresse al huis del eglise, & dedenz fiche vn espey clere od letres eneymalez desus, qe disoit,

---

[145] "They pressed together, and a more worthy melee was never before seen, because there were none except knights and squires, with no archers or footmen." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 77v.1.

[146] "... yet the great men of the realm had doubt because the time of his birth was too close to the solemnity of the marriage of the king, and because the adventure [of his conception] was not revealed for the honour of the queen, while the king lived." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 68v.2.

'Escaliburne ay a noun. Qi me ostera du peroun serra Roys de Bretaign.'[147]

Gray's description of the tournament which follows is reduced; he omits all mention of Kay, and there is no sermon. Verbal similarities between the account found in the *Scalacronica* and in the Vulgate *Merlin* are indeed loose, but they do indicate that the scene is ultimately based on the prose romance:

> qui sen issirent hors del monstier ou il ot vne place wide & il fu adiourne si viernt j. perron deuaunt le monstier si ne porent onques sauoir de quel piere cestoit & ou milieu de cel piere auoit vne englume de fer...[148]

In the *Merlin* Dubricius is called to see the sword which is in the stone. He discovers that it has writing on it, but here it is only reported, not quoted:

> si disoient les letres que cil qui osteroit ceste espee seroit rois de la terre par lection ihesu crist.[149]

In Gray's account, each of the "seignours et chiualers" attempt to draw the sword, but only Arthur, who "soun primer enarmer estoit," is able to pull it free.[150] The young knights continue to murmur until "fust descouert de Vrsyne la maner de soun naisement."[151] The final intervention of Ursyne is found in the *Merlin*, but not in either Wace or Geoffrey.[152] The memory of Ursyne, who was present at Uther's seduction of Igerne, confirms the legitimacy of Arthur and serves to re-enforce the miracle of the sword in the stone.

---

[147] "... coming out of the monastery, as some chronicles testify, they found a great stone set before the hall of the church, and stuck in it a beautiful sword with letters enameled on it, which said, 'I have Excalibur as a name. Who pulls me from the stone will be King of Britain'." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 69.1.

[148] "Some people went outside the monastery where there was an open place and it was dawn. They saw a stone before the monastery and they could not tell what kind of stone it was, and in the middle of it was an iron anvil." *Lestoire de Merlin*, *The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances*, ed. H. Oskar Sommer (Washington: Carnegie Institution, 1908-1916) II: 81.

[149] "The letters said that who pulled this sword out would be king of the land by the choice of Jesus Christ." *Merlin*, 81

[150] "... was armed for his first time." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 69.1.

[151] "...the manner of his [i.e. Arthur's] birth was revealed by Ursyne." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 69.2.

[152] Cf. *Merlin*, 89-90.

Material drawn from prose romances does not appear again in Gray's account until the end of Arthur's reign. In the Brut tradition Gawain dies in the first battle against the traitor Mordred. According to the Vulgate cycle's *La Morte le Roi Artu*, Gawain dies immediately before this battle as a result of wounds caused by Lancelot. As Gawain languishes in bed before the battle, he calls Arthur to him to say his last goodbyes. Arthur asks if Lancelot has killed him:

> 'Sir, oil, par la plaie qu'il me fist el chief, et si en fusse ge touz gueriz, mes li Romain la me renouvelerent en la bataille.'[153]

In the Brut tradition, however, there is no Lancelot, and Gawain is not wounded seeking revenge for the deaths of his brothers. In Gray's account the two versions are mixed. Gawain does not fight against Lancelot, but he is wounded in the final battle against Rome. Bedivere, Kay, Heldyn and Ginchars are listed among the dead, and with them "Gawayn nawferez malement."[154] The list of the dead is drawn from Wace, but neither Wace nor Geoffrey mentions Gawain at this point.[155] The wound to Gawain, however, makes possible his death which, although reminiscent of his death in the Vulgate *La Mort le Roi Artu*, comes after the first battle against Mordred,

> ou Angusel de Escoce fust mort & Gawain ly vaillaunt, com fust dist, de vn auyroun desus la coste de la test, qe ly creuast la play, q'il out receu a la batail ou l'emperour fust mort, q'estoit sursane.[156]

Gray's emphasis on the head wound suffered by Gawain may also be responsible for his

---

[153] "'Sire, yes, by the wound that he gave me to the head, and I would have been all healed, but the Romans rewounded me in the battle.'" *La Mort le Roi Artu: Roman du XIIIe siècle*, ed. Jean Frappier, 3rd ed. (Genève: Droz, 1964) 221.

[154] "... Gawain, badly wounded." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 79.2.

[155] Cf. Wace, *Brut*, 12995-13009 and Geoffrey, *Historia*, ch. 176.

[156] "... where Angusel of Scotland was killed, and Gawain the valiant, as was said, by an oar on the side of his head, which broke open the wound that he had received at the battle where the emperor was killed, which was not healed." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 81.1. In both Wace and Geoffrey Gawain's death is merely recorded without any description of the cause. Cf. Wace, *Brut*, 13100-13103 and Geoffrey, *Historia*, ch. 177.

relocation of the final battle "au port de Douyre."[157] Both Wace and Geoffrey state that Arthur landed at Richborough upon his return to Britain, while the Vulgate *Morte* claims that he landed "souz le chastel de Douvre."[158] In the later Middle Ages Gawain's skull was preserved at Dover, as attested by Caxton and Raimon de Perillos, and it is possible that the relic showed evidence of a head wound.[159]

The most extended borrowing from prose romance, however, comes at Arthur's own death. The most peculiar element of Arthur's death in the *Scalacronica* is the part played by Yvain. In the Brut tradition, Yvain plays a very small role. After the death of Angusel, Yvain, son of Urien, is crowned king of Scotland and gains renown in the final battle. Yvain's actions are never described.[160] In the Vulgate *Morte* he is one of the last surviving major characters and he performs numerous feats in the last battle before finally being killed as he helps Arthur remount.[161] The final battle in Gray's account follows Geoffrey of Monmouth, but the role of Yvain has been significantly augmented.

> Hiwain se payna molt de bien fair. Arasa le baner Mordret, le presenta au Roy.... Hiwain se aforsa taunt qe Mordret fist murriere, qe ly monstra a Roi, qi le fist decoler et enporter la test sur vn launce parmy la batail, purponaunt qe la melle serroist tost finy del hour qe le cheuetaigne fust confoundu.[162]

Instead of fleeing, however, Mordred's army fights more boldly after the death of their leader:

---

[157] "... to the port of Dover." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 79v.2.
[158] "... under the castle of Dover." *La Morte le Roi Artu*, 219. CF. Wace, *Brut*, 13079 and Geoffrey, *Historia*, ch. 177.
[159] Caxton, prologue, 2 and Raimon de Perillos, *Viatage*, cited in C. Brunel, "Le *Viatage de Raimon de Perillos al Purgatori de sant Patrici* et la légende du Mantel mauntaillé," *Mélanges de linguistique de littérature romanes à la mémoire d'István Frank* ([s.l.]: Universität des Saarlandes, 1957) 88.
[160] Cf. Wace, *Brut*, 13189-13200 and Geoffrey *Historia*, ch. 177.
[161] *La Morte le Roi Artu*, 232-243.
[162] "Yvain exerted himself greatly in deeds of arms. He took the banner of Mordred and presented it to the king.... Yvain pressed so much that Mordred was killed, and he showed him to the king. The king ordered him [i.e. Mordred] beheaded and he ordered that the head be carried on a lance throughout the battle, thinking that

> Mais la parti Mordret ne enpristrent gard, mes recomencerent si cruelment qe, de toutez lez melles ou Arthur auoit este, n'estoit vnqes en tiel fraiour, que deuaunt q'il lez auoit descoumfist, auoit perdu la flore de sa cheualery, apoy touz ceaux de la table round qi illoqes estoit, et la iuuent de bretaigne, par queux il auoit sez victoirs.[163]

The passage is a skillful mingling of Geoffrey, who does not moralize, with Wace, who does not describe the battle. Thus the rally of Mordred's troops is drawn from the *Historia*: "nec tamen ob causum eius diffugiunt certi sed ex omni campo confluentes quantum audacia dabatur resistere conantur,"[164] while the lament for the loss of Arthur's knights comes from the *Roman de Brut*:

> Dunc peri la bele juvente
> Que Arthur aveit grant nurrie
> E plusurs terrs cullie,
> E cil de la Table Rounde
> Dunt tiel los est pur tut le munde.[165]

The resulting passage is a poignant reminder of Gray's own involvement in military life. The violence of the battle is not, as in Wace, divorced from the honour gained by its participants. Gray's understanding of military chivalry is based on the cruel truth that honour is often gained through death. In order to maintain the title *flore de cheualery* Arthur's knights must stand in the face of overwhelming odds. If the accounts of Gray's own capture are accurate, the chronicler accepted this ethos wholeheartedly. Gray constructs his image of militaristic chivalry not by inventing material, or even by adding material from outside the Brut tradition. Rather, a careful selection of material from within the Brut tradition harmonizes

---

the melee would be all over from the time the chief was dead." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 80v.1.

[163] "But Mordred's army were not seized by fear, but recommenced so cruelly that, of all the melees where Arthur had been, he was never before in such a tumult, so that before he had overcome them he had lost the flower of his chivalry, almost all those of the Round Table who were there and the youth of Britain through whom he had his victories." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 80v.1-2.

[164] "Not, however, for this reason [i.e. the death of Mordred] did those remaining flee, but drawing together from all the field, they tried to resist as much as courage allowed." Geoffrey, *Historia*, ch. 178.

[165] "There perished the beautiful youth whom Arthur had nourished and who had conquered many lands, and also those of the Round Table, for whom such praise is throughout the world." Wace, *Brut*, 13266-13270.

the two points of view presented by Geoffrey and Wace, and creates, in Gray's retelling, an episode which illustrates warfare's potential for both chivalric glory and bitter loss.

Yvain's role in the chronicle does not end with the final battle. In both Wace and Geoffrey, Arthur travels to the Isle of Avalon after the final battle in order to heal his wounds. In Gray's account Arthur leaves the field "et, od Hiwayn soulement, se trey en l'ile de Aualon."[166] Once there:

> com ascuns cronicles tesmoignaunt, comanda Hiwayn aler a la lay pur veoir s'il poait aparceyuoir ascun rien, et qe il portast Askaliburn soun espey et le gestat en la lay. Qi ly reuenit dysaunt q'il auoit aparsu vn bras braundisaunt meisme l'espy amount l'eaw, dedenz la ryuer.[167]

The scene, so well known to modern readers, is not part of the Brut tradition, but is ultimately drawn from the Vulgate *Mort*. In the prose romance it is Griflet who travels from the field with Arthur and, after failing to follow Arthur's orders twice, finally throws the sword into the water.

> ...il vit une main qui issi del lac et aparoit jusqu'au coute, mes del cors dont la mein estoit ne vit il point; et la mein prist l'espee parmi le heut et la commença a brander trois foiz ou quatre contremont.[168]

When Yvain returns with the news, Arthur asks to be taken to the shore where the sword disappeared. Yvain travels with the king to the shore where "ils aparceurent vn batew venaunt fortement ou ils estrurent, ou estoit vn veille femme au gouernail et autres .ij. femmes a ministres le batel."[169] Arthur commends Yvain to God and boards the boat, never

---

[166] "... and, with Yvain only, he went to the Isle of Avalon." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 80v.2.

[167] "... as some chronicles say, he ordered Yvain to go the the lake to see if he could see anything, and that he should carry Excalibur his sword and throw it in the lake. [Yvain] returned to him saying that he had seen an arm brandishing that sword above the water in the middle of the river." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 80v.2.

[168] "... he saw a hand issue from the lake and it appeared up to the elbow, but of the body to which the hand belonged he saw none; and the hand seized the sword by the hilt and brandished it three or four times in the air." *La Morte le Roi Artu*, 249.

[169] "they saw a boat coming quickly to where they were, in which there was an old woman at the helm and two other women as crew for the boat." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 80v.2.

to be seen again.

Yvain's various roles in the final events of Arthur's reign are significant alterations to the Brut tradition which do not have a known source. Other texts, however, do share some aspects of Gray's narrative. The decapitation of Mordred was first described by Henry of Huntingdon in his *Epistola ad Warinum*.[170] In this précis of Geoffrey's *Historia*, written only one year after Geoffrey, Henry gives an unusual account of Mordred's death. After chasing Mordred, Arthur finally catches him in Cornwall:

> ...dixit 'Vendamus socii mortes nostras. Ego enim iam caput nepotis et proditoris mei gladio auferam. Post quod mori deliciosum est.' Dixit. Et gladio per aciem uiam sibi parans in medio suorum Modredum galea arripuit, et collum loricatum uelut stipulam gladio resecauit.[171]

Robert of Gloucester also describes Mordred's decapitation and Arthur's speech to his men. After the death of many of his knights, Arthur addresses his men:

> To þe lutel folc þat he adde he spac atte laste.
> "Sulle we," he sede, "vre lif dere ar we be ded
> & icholle sulle min dere ynou, wanne þer nis oþer red.
> Habbe iche aslawe þe false suike, þe luþer traytour,
> Hit worþ me þanne vor to deye gret ioye & honour."
> He drou calibourne is suerd & in eyþer side slou
> & vorte he to þe traytour com mad him wey god ynou.
> He hente verst of is helm, & suþþe, mid wille god,
> Anne stroc he ȝef him mid wel stourdy mod,
> & þoru hauberc & þoru is coler, þat nere noþing souple,
> He smot of is heued as liȝtliche as it were a scouple.
> Þat was is laste chiualerye, þat vaire endede ynou.[172]

---

[170] On Henry's *Epistola* see above p. 6.

[171] "... he said, 'Companions, let us put a high price on our deaths. I will now cut off the head of my nephew and betrayer with my sword. After that, death will be sweet.' Thus he spoke, and using his sword to make a way through the enemy line, he took hold of Modred's helmet, in the midst of his men, and severed the armoured neck with one stroke of his sword as if it were a head of corn." Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, ed. and tr. Diana Greenway (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996) 580.

[172] Robert of Gloucester, *The Metrical Chronicle*, ed. William Aldis Wright, 2 vols. RS 86 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1887) 4568-4579. Cited by line number. Punctuation has been added.

Arthur does not survive the battle, but dies from the wound incurred during this final attack:

> Vor þat folc so þikke com, þe wule he hor louerd slou,
> Aboute him in eche half, þat among so mony fon
> He aueng deþes wounds, & wonder nas it non.[173]

The coincidence of events, including Arthur's speech, the beheading of Mordred and the fact that his neck was severed as easily as corn (*scouple*), indicates that Robert's description was drawn from the *Epistola*, or from a copy of Geoffrey's *Historia* which contained the account.[174] One version of Robert of Glouceter's *Chronicle*, however, bears even closer resemblence to the account found in the *Scalacronica*.

Extensive interpolations were added to Robert of Gloucester's *Metrical Chronicle* by an anonymous redactor in 1448.[175] Many of the later additions are in prose, but during Arthur's reign several additions are written in the same verse form used by Robert. One such interpolation involves Yvain's role in the final battle against Mordred, and it begins after Mordred kills the King of Denmark. It deserves quotation at length:

> Mordred much peple slegh, and his men that tyde,
> Eslaf, king of Denemarch he slegh in Arthures route.
> So aft Ywan afterward he gan to chace a boute,
> that was is [i.e. Mordred's] cosyn germayn, and forto sle hym there,
> concertede wel the more for armes that he ber.
> Such a strok he hym yaf euen vppon the sheld
> that the bokeles of gold flogh in to the felde.
> Ywayn smot hym ayen, in that ilke stounde,
> that he fel of his hors doun to the grounde.
> Thanne com ther on renne of Arthures menne,

---

[173] Robert of Gloucester, *Metrical Chronicle*, 4580-4582.

[174] It is not clear if Henry invented the scene of Mordred's death, or whether the copy of the *Historia* which he used contained such a scene. If the scene was in his exemplar, it would represent a very early variant which does not survive in an extant manuscript. See Neil Wright, "The Place of Henry of Huntingdon's *Epistola ad Warinum* in the text-history of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britannie*: a preliminary study," *The British Isles in the Middle Ages and Renaissance: Essays by Members of Girton College, Cambridge, in Memory of Ruth Morgan*, ed. Gillian Jondorf and D. N. Dumville (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1991) 81-82.

[175] For the date of the manuscript see Lister M. Matheson, *The Prose Brut: The Development of a Middle English Chronicle*, Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, v. 180 (Tempe, Ariz. : Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies) 1998.

& as he was vpwarde with a sper gurd hym thurgh thenne.
Nathales yitt vp he ros and venged hym self tho,
that his hed fro the body he gurde ther a two.
Mordred fel doun [ayen] to deye on the grounde.
"Alas" sayde sire Iwayn "cosyn, this ilke stounde,
that euer the shape was to se that ilke foule synne
thurgh which so many man is loste, & destrayd is our kynne.
Much sorwe & sorynesse is ther thurgh falle
the knyghtes of the table thurgh the vnde[?] alle."
Mordred thenne for sor & sorwe deide in the stede.
Iwayn rod to Arthur sone & this eydyng hym sede.
Arthur let smyte of his hed & let bere hit aboute
& shewe hit that hure enemyes hadde the more doute.
But for al that, the Saxones stifly gonne with stonde.
Arthure euer leide on faste with Calibourne an honde.
Certik Saxones kynge dude euer his power
to haue a do with Arthur & dregh hym ner & ner.
So this Certik his sper so to hym bar,
that vppon Arthures body hit al tobrak thar.[176]

This passage replaces the scene from Robert of Gloucester quoted above.[177] While it shares some details with Robert of Gloucester's account, most notably the decapitation of Mordred, several aspects of this version are unique. The adaptor has stressed the relationship between Yvain and Mordred who are "cosyn germayn." This element is drawn from the prose romances, where Yvain's mother is one of Igerne's daughters, rather than from the chronicle tradition. The pathos which this adds, especially as Yvain laments the destruction in his family, and Mordred dies "for sor & sorwe," is dramatic. The role of Cerdric is also expanded, as he strikes the blow which apparently kills Arthur. Cerdric is usually seen as an ally of Mordred in the Brut tradition, but his role here is otherwise unknown.

In addition to these original features, the passage also shares many characteristics with Gray's account: the prominence of Yvain, the decapitation of Mordred at Arthur's order,

[176] College of Arms MS. Arundel 58, fo. 75v. Punctuation and capitalization have been modernized. For a discussion of this manuscript see above p. 28, note 13.

and the rally of the Saxons after Mordred's head has been displayed by Arthur are all found in the *Scalacronica*. As we have seen, the rally of the Saxons may be drawn from Geoffrey's *Historia*, but the role of Yvain in the episode is apparently unknown outside these two accounts.[178] The Arundel manuscript also contains an interpolation which provides a detailed account of the sword in the stone scene by which Arthur proves his right to the throne.[179] This episode is otherwise unknown in a chronicle, except for Gray's *Scalacronica*. Both of these scenes are much more detailed in the Arundel manuscript than in Gray's accounts, and they are, therefore, unlikely to be dependent on the *Scalacronica*. Since Gray predates the Arundel interpolations it is clear that influence did not travel the other direction either. Rather, it seems likely that both chronicles rely on an unknown source for these, and possibly other, similarities.

Unfortunately, the Arundel manuscript is imperfect, and the account of Arthur's death has been removed. If the Arundel manuscript shared Gray's account of Yvain throwing Excalibur into the lake, it has been lost. The passage quoted above ends at the bottom of a leaf and is followed by the catch-phrase "Arthur smit." Instead of any record of Arthur's final actions, however, two folios are wanting, and the manuscript continues in prose with the prophecy of the six kings, drawn from the English prose *Brut*, before returning to Robert

---

[177] The interpolated passage replaces material in Robert of Gloucester, *Metrical Chronicle*, 4566ff. Because of the incomplete state of the manuscript it is unclear where the the interpolation ends.

[178] Since I first read the Arundel manuscript near the completion of this study, I am hesitant to state that the scene is only found in Gray and in the Robert of Gloucester adaptor. Thomas Hearne's edition of Robert of Gloucester claims to include variants from the Arundel manuscript, but citations are restricted to linguistic variants. Hearne seems to have been interested only in linguistic changes, and whole scenes which were added by the adaptor, including this scene involving Yvain, go unnoticed in Hearne's edition. Robert of Gloucester, *Chronicle*, ed. Thomas Hearne, *The Works of Thomas Hearne* (Oxford: Printed at the Theatre, 1810) I: 223-224.

[179] College of Arms MS. Arundel 58, fos. 53v-58v.

of Gloucester's chronicle with the reign of Constantine.[180] Despite this loss, Gray's unusual account of Arthur's death, in which Yvain again plays a central role, is found in another source. *The Parlement of the Thre Ages* contains a brief account of Arthur's reign which is heavily influenced by romance. Arthur and Mordred meet at a moor near Glastonbury:

> And ther Sir Mordrede hym mett be a more syde,
> And faughte with hym in the felde to alle were fey worthen
> Bot Arthur oure athell kyng and Ewayne his knyghte.
> And when the folke was flowen and fey bot thaymseluen,
> Than Arthure Sir Ewayne athes by his trouthe
> That he swiftely his swerde scholde swynge in the mere,
> And whatt selcouthes he see the sothe scholde he telle;
> And Sir Ewayne swith to the swerde and swange it in the mere,
> And ane hande by the hiltys hastely it grippes
> And brawndeschet that brighte swerde and bere it awaye;
> And Ewayne wondres of this werke and wendes bylyue
> To his lorde there he hym lefte, and lokes abowte,
> And he ne wiste in alle this werlde where he was bycomen.
> And then he hyghes hym in haste and hedis to the mere,
> And seghe a bote from the banke and beryns thereinn;
> Thereinn was Sir Arthure and othire of his ferys,
> And also Morgan la Faye that myche couthe of sleghte;
> And there ayther segge seghe othir laste, for sawe he hym no more.[181]

The scene is obviously similar to the account in the *Scalacronica*. Yvain throws the sword into the water, and, unlike Griflet in the prose romance, he does so the first time. The slight verbal parallels, such as the *Parlement*'s use of the word "brawndeschet," are of no consequence, however, since they could be drawn from either Gray's account, or from that of

---

[180] Medieval foliation at the bottom of the leaves jumps from lxxx to lxxxiii, while the modern foliation, at the top right-hand corner, continues without a break from 75 to 76. It therefore seems certain that two leaves are missing between 75v and 76. The prophecy of the six kings is not found in Robert of Gloucester's *Chronicle*, but it is drawn from the English prose *Brut*, where it is added following an account of a lake in Scotland with sixty wonderous rivers. The fragmentary version in the Arundel manuscript begins "and shall the dragon & he bynde hure [tailes] to gedre, and than shal come a [lyon] out of Irelond," and continues to the end of the prophecy "and thenne this lond shal be clepid the lond of Conquest, and so shullen the rightfull eyris of Engelond endy." College of Arms MS. Arundel 58, fo. 76. Cf. *The Brut; or, The Chronicles of England*, ed. Frederic W. D. Brie, EETS os. 131 & 136 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1906, 1908) 75-76. The text of the original chronicle resumes with the reign of Constantine at Robert of Gloucester, *Metrical Chronicle*, 4598. On the prophecy, see Thomas M. Smallwood, "The Prophecy of the Six Kings," *Speculum* 60 (1985): 571-592.

the prose *Mort*. The *Parlement* has been tentatively dated to the end of the fourteenth century,[182] so again, it is unlikly that this is a source for Gray. Rather, it is possible that the *Parlement* shares the same source with the *Scalacronica* and the Robert of Gloucester adaptor. Such a source would portray Yvain in a greatly expanded role in the final battle, and may have included his role in the final moments of Arthur's life.[183]

Sir Thomas Gray, however, indicates that he is using a variety of sources. The scene at the boat may be drawn from the suggested source, but it is ultimately based on the Vulgate *Mort*, where again Griflet plays the role usurped by Yvain. The *Mort* also identifies the woman at the helm as "Morgan, la sereur le roi Artu,"[184] as does the *Parlement*, but Gray offers a different authority for his version of Arthur's death:

> Ascuns cronicles tesmoignount qe Huweyn recorda en cest maner le departisoun de Arthur. Ascuns gestez de Arthur recordount qe ceo estoit Morgu la fay, sore Arthur, qe plain esoit de enchauntementez. Mais touz lez cronicles recordount qe Merlin prophetiza de Arthur qe sa morte serroit doutous.[185]

The source which focuses on Yvain is here contrasted with "Ascuns gestez" which name the woman in the boat as Morgan le Fay. There may be some confusion here, as the *Parlement*, as we have seen, focuses on Yvain and names the woman as Morgan. The *Parlement*'s description of Morgan, "that myche couthe of sleghte," also seems to echo Gray's own assertion that other texts describe Morgan "qe plain esoit de enchauntementez." The reference to Morgan, however, is presented here as an alternative version of events and

---

[181] *Parlement of the Thre Ages*, 495-512.
[182] R. E. Lewis, "The Date of the *Parlement of the Thre Ages*," *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 69 (1968): 380-390. Lewis uses the descriptions of clothing as a means of dating the poem.
[183] It is possible that the missing folios from the Arundel manuscript contained an account of Yvain throwing the sword into the lake.
[184] Gray's version is much abbreviated. Cf. *La Morte le Roi Arthu*, 250.
[185] "Some chronicle testify that Yvain recorded in this manner the departure of Arthur. Some gestes of Arthur recorded that it was Morgan le Fay, sister of Arthur, who was full of enchantment. But all the chronicles record that Merlin prophesied of Arthur that his death would be in doubt." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 81.1.

stands in contrast to the authoritative version provided by Gray. In this way Gray attempts to distance his chronicle from the romance narrative which seems to underlay his account.

The *Scalacronica*, therefore, represents a departure from the chronicles of Wace, Mannyng or Trevisa. Those authors knew episodes relating to Arthur which they did not consider historical, and they chose not to include them. Gray, however, did mine extra-Galfridian sources for additional Arthurian material. Throughout these additions, however, Gray is careful to borrow only episodes which do not conflict with the Brut tradition. When a conflict arises, Gray modifies his material in order to harmonize his various sources. Gawain's head wound, for example, is received in the final battle against Rome, not in a single combat with Lancelot. Lancelot is thus removed from the episode and remains outside of history. Gray's citation of sources for these episodes also indicates his uneasiness concerning the romance material. The popular report of Arthur's feasting habits, the sword in the stone episode, the establishment of the Round Table before Arthur's reign, Arthur's order to throw Excalibur into the lake, and the episode with the three ladies are all attributed to "ascuns cronicles."[186] The phrase is used on one other occasion in Gray's Arthurian history when referring to an error in Peter Langtoft's *Chronicle*.[187] It is also used in Gray's defence of the Brut tradition, as we shall see, as a means of dismissing chronicles which conflict with the Brut tradition. The use of "ascuns chronicles" as questionable sources allows Gray to make use of material from outside the Brut tradition without giving it the full weight of historical veracity. The themes and atmosphere of romance narratives are thus

---

[186] Gray, *Scalacronica*, 69.1, 71v.1, 80v.2 & 81.1.

[187] When Gray first identifies Frollo he states that he "out a noun Frolle, en ascuns cronicles Tumas Fulon" ["... had Frollo for a name, in some chronicles Thomas Fulon."] Gray, *Scalacronica*, 72v.1. Langtoft states that the realme of France was "en garde de sir Thomas Foloun" ["... in the care of Sir Thomas Foloun."] Langtoft, *Chronicle*, 162. For a discussion of Langtoft's error see Fletcher, *Arthurian Material*, 183, 200, *n.* 9 and 212.

allowed to colour the interpretation of Arthur's historical character, but those narratives are themselves denied the status of history. Like Wace's marvels within the twelve years of peace, Gray's use of romance material brings these narratives within history, but they are not of history.

The additions from the prose romance cycle serve two basic functions. First, they emphasize the roles of two popular knights, Gawain and Yvain. Gawain was particularly popular in the north of England, and all four alliterative Arthurian romances use Gawain as the central figure. As we have seen, Gray portrays him as the best of Arthur's knights and the story of his head wound adds pathos to his death. Yvain is another popular knight from romance who figures in the historical record. Gray's choice to follow a source which augments his exploits enhances the chivalric nature of Arthur's reign. Gray's romance additions also emphasize the image of Arthur's sword, Excalibur. Again, Gray chooses to adapt a narrative in which the sword figures prominently. Emphasized at the beginning and end of Arthur's reign, the sword acts a symbol of sovereignty, and its mysterious appearance and disappearance also adds to the chivalric mood of the reign.

The last romance element included by Gray is also used for thematic development. The story of Caradoc's mantle is inserted into the *Scalacronica* following the challenge from Rome. After Arthur sends the senators back to Rome, "Meisme la nuyt estoit enuoie en la court od vn damoysele iolyue le mauntil Karodes."[188] The story of Caradoc's mantle was widely known in the Middle Ages. The story is found in a French lai, and in both Norse and Icelandic sagas; it was translated into English, German and Czech. Variants of the story also figure in larger romances, such as the German *Lanzelet*, the *Percival* continuations and in the

Welsh triads.[189] The version of the story in the *Scalacronica* does not seem to be drawn from any single source, although there are slight verbal similiarities with the French *Lai du Cort Mantel*.[190] In the *Lai*, Arthur refuses to eat until he has seen some adventure. The table is set,

> mes au roi Artus n'est pas bel
> que il ja menjast ne beust,
> por ce que haute feste fust,
> ne que ja nus s'i aseist,
> desi que a la cort venist
> aucune aventure nouele.[191]

The king does not wait long, and a valet arrives carrying a mantle which all of the ladies of the court will try on. The mantle, however, has a magical property.

> La dame qui l'ait afuble
> se ele a de rien meserre
> vers son bon seignor, s'ele l'a,
> li manmeaus bien ne li serra.
> Et de puceles autresi:
> cele qui vers son bon ami
> aura mespris en nul endroit,
> ja puis ne li serra a droit,
> qu'il ne soit trop lonc ou trop cort.[192]

The test then proceeds with each lady of the court revealing her indiscretions. In Gray's

---

[188] "That same night the mantle of Caradoc came into the court with a pretty maiden." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 75.2.

[189] For discussions of the extent of the story see Wright, "Influence," *passim*, Francis James Child, "The Boy and the Mantle," *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, ed. Francis James Child (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1885-1898) V: 257-274, and Marianne E. Kalinke, introduction, *Mǫttuls Saga*, ed. Marianne E. Kalinke (Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzels Forlag, 1987) xxi-xxxiii.

[190] The French *Lai* is dated to approximately 1200. See Philip Bennett, introduction, *Mantel et Cor: Deux lais du XIIe siècle*, ed. Philip Bennett (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1975), xx-xxii, and Emmanuele Baumgartner, "A propos du *Mantel Mautaillé*," *Romania* 96 (1975): 315-332.

[191] "... but it was not agreeable to the king either to eat or to drink, because it was a high feast, nor even might he sit before some new adventure had come to the court." *Le Lai du cort mantel*, ed. Philip E. Bennet, *Mǫttuls Saga*, ed. Marianne E. Kalinke (Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzels Forlag, 1987) 90-95. Cited by line number. On Arthur's habit of not eating until he had seen an adventure, see above, p. 102.

[192] "The lady who puts it on, if she has sinned in any way against her good lord, if she has one, the mantle will not be good for her. And towards damsels also: she who against her good lover has erred in any way it will never be right for her afterwards, but it will be too long, or too short." *Lai du cort mantel*, 203-211.

account, the description of the mantle and the test itself are both radically abbreviated. In the *Scalacronica* the mantle is brought to the court:

> qe out tiel vertu qe il ne voroit estre de droit mesure a nul femme qe vousait lesser sauoir a soun marry soun fet & pense. De quoi en out graunt rise, qar y ny out feme nul en la court a qei le mauntil estoit de mesure: ou q'il estoit trop court, ou trop long, ou trop estroit outre mesure, fors soulement al espous Karodes. [193]

The test, according to Gray, is contrived by the father of Caradoc, in order to prove the faithfulness of his son's wife.[194] This fact seems to be drawn from the first *Perceval* continuation which contains a similar test involving Caradoc.[195] In the end, the mantle is deposited in Glastonbury where it is made into a priest's robes: "de meisme le mauntel fust fet vn chesible puscedy, com est dit, qe vnqor est a iour de huy a Glastenbery."[196]

The abbreviated description of the adventure, which has similarities with several surviving versions of the tale, implies that Gray is writing from memory and not from a written source. His authority for the role of Caradoc's father is popular report ("com est dit"), and he relies on the same authority for the location of the mantle. There seems to have been a tradition which placed the mantle in Glastonbury, and the author of the Auchinleck version of the *Short Metrical Chronicle* makes the same claim.[197] It is not difficult to

---

[193] "... which had such virtue that it would not be the right fit for any woman who [did not] wish to allow her husband to know her deed and thought. From which there was great laughter, because there were no women at all in the court on whom the mantle was a proper fit: it was too short or too long or too tight beyond measure, except only on the wife of Caradoc." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 75.2.

[194] "pur qoi, com fust dit, estoit enuoye a la court depar le pier le dit Karodes, qi fust dit vn enchaunteour, de prouer la bounte la femme soun fitz." ["because, as it was said, he was sent to the court by the father of the said Caradoc, who was called an enchanter, in order to prove the goodness of his son's lady."] Gray, *Scalacronica*, 75.2

[195] In the Caradoc episode, Caradoc is the son of an enchanter who figures prominently in several adventures. For the complete story of Caradoc see the short version in *The Continuations of the Old French* Perceval, III.i: 131-205. In this account the chastity test is a horn from which the men must drink. None of the men of the court can drink from the horn without spilling wine, "Fors Caradué tot solement" ["except Caradoc alone"]. *The Continuations of the Old French* Perceval, III.i: 202.

[196] "Of this same mantle was afterwards made a chasuble, as is said, which is still preserved at this day in Glastonbury." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 75.2 - 75v.1.

[197] See above, p. 33.

understand why Glastonbury became associated with the mantle. The *Lai* simply claims that it is "en Gales en une abaie",[198] and Glastonbury already had significant Arthurian associations. Another cloak within Arthurian tradition was also made into a chausible, and may account for this unique feature in Gray's version of the story. In Beroul's *Tristan* Iseut goes to the church of St. Samson in Cornwall after her reconciliation with Mark. Dinas gives her "un riche paile fait d'orfrois."[199]

> Et la roïne Yseut l'a pris
> Et, par nuen cur, sor l'autel mis.
> Une chasublë en fu faite,
> Qui ja du tresor n'iert hors traite
> Se as grans festes anvés non.
> Encore est ele a Saint Sanson:
> Ce dïent cil qui l'ont venüe.[200]

Gray's chasuble at Glastonbury may be his own invention, or a tradition may have developed in imitation of the St. Samson robe, but by the fifteenth century the mantle was believed to be at Dover, as both Caxton and Raimon de Perillos attest.[201]

The function of the mantle story is similar to that of the other romance elements. In the French *Lai* the story borders on the fabliaux, as Kay comments in a bawdy fashion on the sins of the ladies who cannot wear the cloak. As such, the *Lai* is a humorous narrative which highlights the foibles of courtly society, and particularly the conventions of *fin amour*. The joke is not simply at the expense of Arthur and his court, but the many courts to which the valet has brought the mantle. The warning which ends the poem, that the mantle has been

---

[198] "in Wales in an abbey." *Lai du cort mantel*, 889.
[199] "... a rich cloth embroidered in gold." Béroul, *The Romance of Tristran*, ed. and tr. Norris J. Lacy (New York and London: Garland, 1989) 2987. Cited by line number.
[200] "The queen Iseut took it / and placed it reverently on the altar. / It was later made into a chasuble, / which never left the treasure / except on feast days. / It is still at St. Samson's- / those who have seen it say so." Béroul, *The Romance of Tristran*, 2989-2995.
[201] Caxton, prologue, 2. Raimon, *Viatage*, cited in Brunel, "Le *Viatage de Raimon de Perillos*," 88. For a

found and is again traveling throughout the land, is aimed not at the past, but at the present.[202] In this context of courtly dalliance it is easy to read Guenevere's own failure to wear the mantle as a comment on her affair with Lancelot. Certainly the author of the Auchinleck *Short Metrical Chronicle* understands the tale in this light. There, when Caradoc arrives with the mantle, he interrupts the Round Table at which Arthur and Lancelot are to be reconciled.[203] Gray's version of the tale, however, is not set within such a context and this affects the way in which the episode is understood. Although Guenevere is not mentioned by name during Gray's mantle episode, the position of the story highlights her infidelity over all others. The story, it will be remembered, occurs after the challenge from Rome has been delivered, but before Arthur and his knights embark on the campaign. Before leaving Britain:

> Le roy bailla a Mordret, soun neuew, soun realm et sa femme Genoire a garder, com en qy il se bien assoit, de quoy enauenit graunt mal.[204]

The mantle story, placed in the middle of the preparations for the Roman campaign, must be read as a warning of the consequences of that campaign. Guenevere's infidelity is not, in this context, an occasion for polite dalliance, but it is a serious breach of trust between the king and queen, a breach of oaths between Mordred and his uncle and lord. Although Arthur and his knights find only humour in the adventure ("De quoi en out graunt rise"), the message of the mantle in this historical setting is one of betrayal and impending disaster.

---

discussion of these traditions see Kalinke, introduction, xxviii, and Brunel, "Le *Viatage de Raimon de Perillos*," 87-88.

[202] *Lai du cort mantel*, 891-896.

[203] *An Anonymous Short Metrical Chronicle*, ed. Edwald Zettl, EETS, os. 196 (London: Oxford University Press, 1935) 71/1085-1108. Cited by page and line numbers.

[204] "The king entrusted to Mordred, his nephew, his realm and his wife Guenevere to protect, in whom he placed his trust, from whom came a great evil." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 76.1.

The romance elements of the *Scalacronica*'s Arthurian narrative, despite their variety, all perform much the same functions. They add to and influence the mood of the work, instilling in the historical Arthurian world an image of chivalry and adventure which can act as a model for contemporary courtly society. Taylor argues that "chivalrous writings invariably had a didactic purpose. By their record of heroic deeds they sought to inculcate in the readers a taste for virtue and the chivalric qualities."[205] The romance episodes inserted into the *Scalacronica* reinforce this didactic purpose. They also act as interpretive tools, through which meaning is emphasized or added. Mordred's breach of trust is foreshadowed in the story of Caradoc's mantle, while the loss of the flower of chivalry is highlighted through the augmentation of Gawain's reputation for courtesy and military excellence. While serving these thematic ends, the romance material is carefully distanced from the historical tradition. The story of the mantle, like the other romance motifs alluded to, is denied authority and attributed only to popular report ("com est dit"), while the passages from the Vulgate are modified so as not to conflict with the historical tradition and are similarly attributed to vague sources ("ascuns cronicles"). Gray's critical awareness of the problems surrounding Arthurian narrative continues after the completion of his Arthurian history, as he includes a lengthy defence of the Brut tradition against the doubts raised by Ranulph Higden in the *Polychronicon*.

Perhaps what is most striking about Gray's defence of the Brut tradition is his willingness to rationalize his source material. This begins in his account of the British Hope. The doubt surrounding the death of Arthur has led to tales of his return and "lez Bretouns &

---

[205] Taylor, *English Historical Literature*, 156.

lez Galoys ount creaunz q'il reuendra."[206] Unlike most chroniclers of the fourteenth and fifteenth century, however, Gray does not simply dismiss this belief but attempts to provide a plausible interpretation of the prophecy that Arthur would return.

> Par auenture cest parol purra estre pris en figure; ceo est a entendre qe ascun de condicioun de Arthur purra vnqor venir, qe hom purra comparer a ly, qe ceo soit autrefoitz Arthur en valour.[207]

A similar willingness to find rational explanations is also present in Gray's discussion of historiographic traditions.

Gray begins his discussion by admitting that "Ascuns cronicles ne fount mensioun de Arthur."[208] The defence of the Brut tradition which follows is a reaction to Higden's Arthurian narrative and the doubts that he expressed about the extent of Arthur's conquests. Like Trevisa, who would approach the same subject a generation later, Gray's refutation of Higden is based on the comparison of historical texts.[209] Throughout the defence of the Brut tradition Gray focuses on the *Historia Ecclesiastica* of Bede. Learned clerks, he claims, "pensent qe ceo ne soit de Arthur fors chos controuez & ymaginez pur ceo qe Bede, ly venerent doctour, et puscedy qi de soun dit enout pris ensaumple de lour tretice, com le *Historia Aurea* & le *Polecraton* n'en parlent rien de ly...."[210] Gray's defence is uncharacteristically disorganised and repetitive, but he sets out to prove that in almost "toutes cronicles de touz Chrestiens de touz pays" Arthur's name is recorded among the

---

[206] "... the British and the Welsh believe that he will return." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 81.1.
[207] "Perhaps this speech can be taken figuratively; it is to be understood that someone of the condition of Arthur might yet come, that one could compare with him, that he would be, at this time, an Arthur in valour." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 81.1.
[208] "Some chronicles do not make mention of Arthur." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 81.1.
[209] For Trevisa's defence, see above pp. 57ff.
[210] "... thought that there was nothing of Arthur except contrived and imagined deeds because Bede, the venerable doctor, and the others afterwards who took example from his writings in their treatise, such as the *Historia Aurea* and the *Polychronicon*, do not speak of him...." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 81.1-2. The *Polychroncion* does, of course, speak of Arthur and "*Polecraton*" may be the *Policraticus* of John of Salisbury.

"plus allose [et] vaillaunt dez roys Chrestiens."[211]

The defence is organised in parallel passages providing a series of brief arguments in favour of the Arthurian narrative which Gray has provided. Only occasionally are the arguments related to one another. He begins by speculating as to why Bede did not mention Arthur: "Et par auenture en cas Bede ne tenoit pas Arthur pur roys pur ceo q'il estoi engendre en auowtri, pur quoi a regner en heritage ne luy fust auys."[212] Gray does not refute this claim except to say that the status of Arthur is established by

> la graunt mervail qe a iour de huy dure: du Karole dez Geaunz, qe hom appele le Stonhinge, meruaillous peres de graundour qe sount sur lez playns de Salisberis, qe Merlin fist aporter par sez enchauntementz hors de Ireland en le temps Aurilius et de Uter, le pier Arthur.[213]

Stonehenge, of course, bears no relation to the legitimacy of Arthur's rule. In the Brut tradition it is associated with Arthur's father, Uther. It is, however, an irrefutable fact that the impressive monument exists and that, at the time, there was no other explanation for its presence. The monument, therefore, adds authority to Uther and, by extension, his son.

The second argument against the tradition is the strangeness of the tale itself: "y ne plust a Bede a faire mencioun ne memoir de sez gestez pur ceo qe touz resemblonit chos fayes, vayns & fantasies."[214] Gray responds that the chroniclers of France, Spain and Germany marvellously describe his behaviour, "par quoi meutz est a nous privez a croir sa

---

[211] "... all chronicles of all Christians in all countries...the most praised and vailiant of Christian kings." Gray, *Scalacroncia*, 81.2.

[212] "And perhaps Bede did not consider Arthur a king because he was conceived in adultery, on account of which he did not recognise that he reigned lawfully." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 81v.1. Bede, of course, does not make such an argument and neither does Higden. On the use of this argument by Scottish chroniclers, see below, pp. 248ff.

[213] "... the great marvel which endures to this day: the Giant's Dance, which is called Stonehenge, marvellous stones of great size which are on Salisbury Plain, which Merlin made to be carried by his enchantments out of Ireland in the time of Aurilius and of Uther, the father of Arthur." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 81v.1.

[214] "it did not please Bede to make mention or memory of his [i.e. Arthur's] deeds because all resembled fairy tales, vanities and fantasies." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 81v.1.

noblesce pusqe lez estraungers le rementivent en lour gestes memoriales auctentiqement."[215] He concludes by arguing simply that more chronicles include Arthur than omit him, and where the majority is, there is "la verite, par reson."[216] In addition to foreign chronicles, Gray also cites the "gestis de Bretaigne" which state that Arthur was the most renowned king of Britain and, according to some, that he killed 370 men in one battle "et si combaty xij. foitz en ost batail."[217]

Gray also argues that Bede did not mention King Arthur because he was only concerned with the Saxons: "purra bien estre qe il ne auoit talent de recorder lez noblescez dez Bretouns, qe par auenture ne lez conysoit my, pur ceo qe meismes estoit Saxsoun, entre queux ny out vnques graunt amour."[218] Trevisa would make the same argument twenty-five years later, suggesting that it is no surprise that a few authors did not mention Arthur when "some writers of stories were Artur his enemyes."[219] Gray goes on to argue, however, that some Saxon chroniclers did mention Arthur, but they refused to name him.

> vncor en ascuns de lour gestez ils tesmoignerount qe vn y estoit Arthur, qe ils appellerount, en lour ditez, vn bataillous dustre du cheualery bretoun, qe par auenture en case ne voloint ils en taunt blemer par mencioun memorial l'estat lour Roys com de affermer & nomer par noume reale l'estat lour aduersairs.[220]

The phrase "bataillous dustre" translates *dux bellorum*, first used in the *Historia Brittonum*.

---

[215] "... on account of which it is more fitting for us to believe in his nobility, since the foreigners recount it authentically among their memorable deeds." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 81v.2.
[216] "... the truth, by reason." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 81v.2.
[217] "... and fought the host twelve times in battle." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 81v.2. Cf. "qui contra Saxones duodecies victor fuit" ["who was victor against the Saxons twelve times."] Higden, *Polychronicon*, V: 328.
[218] "It could well be that he did not have the talent to record the nobility of the British, that perhaps he did not know them because he himself was a Saxon, between whom there was no great love." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 81v.2.
[219] John Trevisa, tr. *The Polychronicon*, by Ranulph Higden, ed. Churchill Babington and Joseph Rawson Lumby, RS. 41 (London: Longman & Co., 1865-1886) V: 339.
[220] "... yet in some of their gests they testify that there was an Arthur, whom they call, in their writings, a warlike duke of British chivalry, who, perhaps, in case they did not in any way wish by an historical mention to blemish the state of their kings, so as to affirm and name by the royal name the state of their adversaries." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 81.1.

The author, sometimes refered to as Nennius, describes the twelve battles in which Arthur fought, but he does not call him a king. Rather "ipse dux erat bellorum."[221] Like many medieval readers, Gray seem to have thought that the *Historia* was written by Gildas. While describing the seven kingdoms of the Heptarchy, Gray mentions that it was during the reign of Cerdric that Arthur ruled:

> Cest cronicle tesmigne q'en cest hour estoit Arthure, qe ils appellent vn bataillous Duk du chualery de Bretaigne, qe solom Gildas se combaty xii foitz oue Saxsouns. Mais solom le Bruit cesti Arthur descoumfist Cerdic, enchasa lez Saxsouns pur soun temps.[222]

The Saxons, claims Gray, refered to Arthur as a warleader, and thus denied his royal title and failed to record the dominant position he held in Britain. Gray does seem to be confused about the author of the work. Bede is his primary source, but he does not mention Arthur. The *Historia* does mention Arthur and identifies him as a "bataillous Duk," but Gildas, the supposed author, is most certainly British.

Gray does acknowledge that Bede is an accurate historian (he will, after all, follow Bede for his account of the seven kingdoms), but he also states that Bede did not have the ability to deal accurately with the history of the British. Bede, like every other historian, relied on the sources available to him and "estoint ditz en Latin, ou la gest Bretoun estoit dit en Breton, tanqes Gauter, Archedeken de Oxenfordre, le traunslata en Latin, com est troue en

---

[221] "He was [the] leader in battle." Nennius, *Historia Brittonum*, *British History and the Welsh Annals*, ed. and tr. John Morris (London and Chichester: Phillimore, 1980) ch. 56. Not all manuscripts of the *Historia Brittonum* agree. The Vatican recension reads: "dux belli fuit victorque bellorum." ["he was a war leader and a victor of battles."] *The Historia Brittonum: 3 The 'Vatican' Recension*, ed. David N. Dumville (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1985) 103.

[222] "This chronicle testifies that at this time Arthur flourished, whom they call a warlike Duke of British chivalry, who according to Gildas, fought twelve times with the Saxons. But according to the Brut this Arthur overcame Cerdric, [and] harassed the Saxons throughout his time." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 115v.2.

sez ditez."[223] Why then, asks Gray, should it be a marvel "si Bede ne en fist mencioun, pusqe du dit langage n'auoit conisaunce."[224] As we have seen in Trevisa's arguments against Higden,[225] Geoffrey's ancient British book, although unseen by later choniclers, was used as an assurance of the veracity and antiquity of the narrative which Geoffrey supposedly drew from it.

Finally Gray raises his last argument against Saxon chroniclers:

> Qe lez entrepretours saxsouns ne remencinerent en lour cronicles apoy rien de noblesce de gestez dez roys Bretouns apres la venu de Hengist, mais soulement la prosces de sa conquest & la successioun de sez saxsouns. Ou le Bruyt fet mencioun dez regnes dez roys Bretons linielement tanqe le temps Cadwaladre lour darayne roy qe ne especify geres deuaunt cel temps de nul principal regne de rois Saxsouns tout. Soint ascuns roys Saxsouns nomez en cest Bruyt, pur acompler la prosces, vncor en le dit bruyt n'estoint tenuz fors subreguli.[226]

Gray delays completing this argument until "la fine du darain chapitre de cest Bruyt, procheigne deuaunt le lyuer de gestis Anglorum."[227] The conclusion of the argument is fairly repetitive, stating again that the *Brut* fails to mention the names of Saxon kings and that Saxon historians ignore the British kings. It concludes, however, that:

> ... est a sauoir qe le temps de regne de cesty Cadwaladre, le darain Roy de Bretaouns solom le Bruyt, estoit bien longment apres le comencement de primer regne des Saxouns. Coment qe lez cronicles varient & desacordent en le temps, especifiaunz chescun lour roys, qi enemys estoint![228]

---

[223] "... they were written in Latin, whereas the British geste was written in British, until Walter, archdeacon of Oxford, translated it into Latin, as is found in his writings." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 82.2.

[224] "... since Bede did not have an understanding of the said language." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 81.2.

[225] Trevisa, *Polychronicon*, V: 339.

[226] "The Saxon historians do not record in their chronicles almost any of the nobility of the deeds of the British kings after the coming of Hengist, but only the process of his conquest and the succession of the Saxons. At the same time the *Brut* makes mention of the reigns of British kings lineally until the time of Cadwallader, their last king, and does not mention before that time any principal reign of the Saxon kings at all. Some Saxon kings are named in this *Brut* [i.e. the *Scalacronica*] in order to complete the process, yet in the said *Brut* they do not hold anything except sub-kingdoms." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 82.2 - 82v.1.

[227] "... the end of the last chapter of the *Brut*, immediately before the book *de gestis Anglorum*." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 82v.1.

[228] "... it should be noted that the time of the reign of this Cadwallader, the last king of the British according to the *Brut*, was a long time after the beginning of the first reign of the Saxons. How the chronicles vary and conflict in this time, especially with each other's kings, who were their enemies!" Gray, *Scalacronica*, 96v.1.

Gray's solution, therefore, is a political one. The British and the Saxons co-existed after the arrival of Hengist, with the Saxons holding only subkingdoms. As radical as this solution sounds, Gray had actually set it up earlier in the chronicle. After the betrayal of Vortigern by Hengist, Gray states that Hengist established the seven kingdoms and invited his subjects to join him from the continent, "as quex estoit assigne a chescun vn pays a regner."[229] After naming the seven kingdoms he then states "Et coment qe le Bruyt deuise qe lez Saxsoins furount enchacez apres lour primer venu par Aurilius, par Vter & par Arthure, et par autres lour successours, la verite est."[230] The Saxons and the British co-existed within Britain with the British as overlords until the death of Cadwallader, when the Saxons finally completed their conquest. Evidence of this co-existence comes after the death of Arthur. Gray includes the tale of Havelok which, according the the Anglo-Norman *Brut*, occurs during the reign of Constantine.[231] Gray repeats the episode but, like Mannyng, is uncertain of its historical veracity, saying that it is "apocrophum."[232] Despite this disclaimer, Gray attempts to provide a possible explanation for the fact that two kings who are not part of the historical record are ruling in Northumbria and Lincoln. It could be, argues Gray, that Athelbright and Edelsy followed the usage of Germany, so that all the sons of nobles "departerount le heritage, et

---

[229] "... to whom was assigned each a country to rule." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 60.2.
[230] "And it is the truth as the *Brut* describes that the Saxons were harrassed after their first coming by Aurilius, by Uther and by Arthur and their other successors." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 60.1.
[231] For the text of the Anglo-Norman *Brut*'s version of the Havelok story, see G. V. Smithers, introduction, *Havelok the Dane*, ed. G. V. Smithers (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987) xxv-xxvi.
[232] Gray, *Scalacronica*, 84v.1. At 83.1 Gray calls the story "apocrosum." On Mannyng's doubts concerning the story see above p. 41. Turville-Petre argues that "it is clear that the story of Havelok, although wholly fictional, was unhesitatingly accepted as a history in the early fourteenth century" but this ignores the doubts of both Mannyng and Gray. See Thorlac Turville-Petre, *England the Nation: Language, Literature, and National Identity, 1290-1340* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996) 144.

chescun portera le noun de duke ou count apres discese lour piers."[233] Because of this there were many petty lords in Britain who were not mentioned in chronicles "en ascun parcel del heritage lours piers, com en cest cas, par auenture firent ceux dieus roys."[234] This practice of inheritance explains how the petty kingdoms of the Saxons continued even during the final years of British rule. It is worth noting that this practice, called Gavelkind, continued in Kent into the sixteenth century. Kent was the first county given to Hengist by Vortigern, and Gray's association of the practice with the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons may be related,.

Gray's defence of the Brut tradition is not a carefully reasoned argument. It is repetitive and disorganized but it does demonstrate his willingness to subject historical sources to a kind of critical inquiry. Like Trevisa, Gray has only narrative chronicles for sources, but when they conflict he applies a critical method similar to that found in the later translator. When he returns to Higden's text there are only two remaining issues. Higden had commented that there was no Emperor Lucius or French king Frollo.[235] Gray responds that "purra estre qe l'emperour auoit en Latin autre noun qen en Bretoun, com en Flemenk, Johan est apelle Hankin."[236] Gray is also left with the abbreviated Arthurian narrative which Higden had provided. Before returning to Higden's list of emperors and popes, Gray includes Higden's own account of Arthur's reign, dismissing it with his familiar "Ascuns

---

[233] "... divided the inheritance and each carried the name of duke or count after the death of their father." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 83.2.

[234] "... in some parcel of the inheritance of their fathers, as perhaps happened in this case to the two kings." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 83.2. Gray's willingness to rationalize is also demonstrated in his treatment of Havelok's wife. Gray knows at least two version of the story in which her name varies. He states that she "auoit a noun Argentile en Bretoun, Goldesburgh en Saxsoun" ["... had for a name Argentile in British, Goldesburgh in Saxon."] Gray, *Scalacronica*, 83.2. For a discussion of the variants in the names of characters see Smithers, introduction, xxxi. Gray's version of the story has not been noticed by earlier critics.

[235] Higden, *Polychronicon*, V: 334.

[236] "... it could be that the emperor had another name in Latin than in British, as in Flemish John is called Hank." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 82v.1. Cf. "ofte an officer, kyng, oþer emperour haþ many dyvers names, and is diverseliche i-nempned in meny divers londes." Trevisa, *Polychronicon*, V: 339.

cronicles":

> Ascuns cronicles tesmoignent qe Cerdrik le Saxsoun comensa a regnere en Westsex en le temps Arthur, et en le temps Justician l'emperour, et qe Mordret relessa au dit Cerdrik Wilkschir, Somerset, Dorset, Deuenschir. et Cornewaill.[237]

Higden's Arthurian narrative, never named and merely alluded to, is not allowed to conflict with the narrative that Gray has chosen to substitute.

Sir Thomas Gray's refutation of doubts surrounding the veracity of Arthurian history is more developed than any other medieval chronicler. Despite John Trevisa's extensive defence of the Brut tradition, we must look as late as John Leland's *Assertio Arturi* to find a similar document. Yet little that Gray has to say is unique, and similar arguments would be made by Trevisa, Fordun and Caxton. These writers were working independently, and it is unlikely that a common source underlies their texts. Nor is it likely that Gray stands at the head of a textual tradition of historical inquiry. Thomas Gray was not widely read in the Middle Ages, and his influence seems to be restricted to the sixteenth century when antiquarians like Leland and Wotton extracted his text. Rather, the arguments that Gray raises seem to be part of the learned culture of Arthurian historiography. Like Trevisa, Gray demonstrates a willingness to subject Arthurian traditions to critical inquiry, although the methods he employs are generally unsophisticated. But Gray does recognise the biases and limitations of his fellow chroniclers, and we see in his defence of Arthur a critical attitude toward his authorities. Gray is willing to discuss points of view, political bias and linguistic limitations, all in an attempt to extract the truth from among conflicting historiographic traditions. But Gray's defence of the place of Arthur in British history is not an assertion of a

---

[237] "Some chronicles testify that Cerdric the Saxon began to reign in Wessex in the time of Arthur, and in the time of Justician the emperor, and that Mordred granted to the said Cerdrik Wiltshire, Somerset, Dorest, Devonshire and Cornwall." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 82v.1. Cf. Higden, *Polychronicon*, V: 330-332.

static tradition. Gray himself adapts Arthurian material to support his social and didactic ends, but while he may alter the narrative to fit his social agenda, he is always careful to place those alterations outside the authority provided for the Brut tradition.

Chapter 3: History as Adventure: The Alliterative *Morte Arthure*

And thou faire ymp, sprong out from English race,
How euer now accompted Elfins sonne,
Well worthy doest thy seruice for her grace,
To aide a virgin desolate foredonne.
But when thou famous victorie hast wonne,
And high emongst all knights hast hong thy shield,
Thenceforth the suit of earthly conquest shonne,
And wash thy hands from guilt of bloudy field:
For bloud can nought but sin, and wars but sorrowes yield.
Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*[1]

As Spenser's Red Cross Knight stares at the vision of the heavenly Jerusalem, Contemplation directs him to return to earthly exploits and fame, even though participation in his quest involves sin. The Knight, later identified as Saint George, is assured that he will have time for repentance, and that his place in the heavenly city is prepared. The alliterative *Morte Arthure*, recognised as one of the great works of the fourteenth-century alliterative revival, also addresses the relationship between sin and worldly achievement. But while Spenser's Red Cross Knight is promised a place in the heavenly city, the alliterative poem's Arthur has been blamed by modern critics for his worldly conduct.

Despite the widely varying interpretations of the *Morte Arthure*, modern criticism has focused on two issues which have been seen as central to the poem's meaning: the genre of the poem and the extent to which Arthur is culpable for the fall of the Round Table. William Matthews, in the only book-length study of the poem to date, recognised that modern generic distinctions do not easily fit the poem, and he noted that "Chronicle, romance, heroic poem, [and] epic, are some of the terms applied to it, often in hyphenated pairings."[2] Matthews

[1] Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (London and New York: Longman, 1990) I.x.60.
[2] William Matthews, *The Tragedy of Arthur* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1960) 94

settles on the term "tragedy" to describe the work's genre, and, after some modification of Matthews' terminology, Larry Benson agrees with this generic description.[3] H.A. Kelly, however, argues that the concept of tragedy was unavailable to the fourteenth-century author and therefore dismisses both Benson and Matthews.[4] One of the most prolific critics to examine the poem, John Finlayson, consistently argues that in its depiction of heroism and religious themes the poem should be seen as a *chanson de geste*.[5] The preoccupation with issues of generic distinction can also be seen in the work of both Britton Harwood and James L. Boren, each of whom begins his study of the *Morte* with an extended survey of the various attempts to label the poem.[6]

Connected with the question of genre is the question of Arthur's culpability. In most readings of the poem, Arthur's fall is viewed as a punishment for his sins. Matthews is the most severe critic of the character of the king and argues that Arthur's actions are blameworthy from the very beginning, while Finlayson believes that only after the death of Lucius do Arthur's wars become unjust, and hence sinful.[7] Michael Twomey attempts to

---

[3] Larry D Benson, "The Alliterative *Morte Arthure* and Medieval Tragedy," *Tennessee Studies in Literature* 11 (1966): 75-87.

[4] H. A. Kelly, "The Non-Tragedy of Arthur," *Medieval English Religious and Ethical Literature: Essays in Honour of G.H. Russell*, ed. Gregory Kratzmann and James Simpson (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 1986) 92-114. Kelly's argument is based primarily on the use of the word "tragedy" in fourteenth-century England and not the themes which are now considered tragic (see esp. 92-96). Kelly does give a useful, though polemic, description of the many critics who have applied the term "tragedy" to the poem (pp. 108-110.).

[5] See, for example, John Finlayson, "The Concept of the Hero in *Morte Arthure*," *Chaucer und seine Zeit: Symposion fur Walter F. Schirmer*, ed. Arno Esch (Tubingen: Niemeyer, 1968) 249-274; "*Morte Arthure*: The Date and a Source for the Contemporary References," *Speculum* 42 (1967): 624-638; and "Arthur and the Giant of St. Michael's Mount," *Medium Ævum* 33 (1964): 112-120. Finlayson's position is presented in brief in the introduction to his edition of the work, *Morte Arthure*, ed. John Finlayson, York Medieval Texts (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1967) 5-19.

[6] Britton J. Harwood, "The Alliterative *Morte Arthure* as a Witness to Epic," *Oral Poetics in Middle English Poetry*, ed. Mark C. Amodio (New York: Garland, 1994) 248-252; James L. Boren, "Narrative Design in the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*," *Philological Quarterly* 56 (1977): 310-311.

[7] See also Karl Heinz Göller, "Reality versus Romance: A Reassessment of the *Alliterative Morte Arthure*," *The Alliterative Morte Arthure: A Reassessment of the Poem*, ed. Karl Heinz Göller (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1981) 15-29.

have it both ways. Agreeing with Finlayson that the siege of Metz represents a change in Arthur's character, he locates the seeds of that change earlier in the text: "If Arthur's *de jure* fall begins when he turns from just to unjust war, the reasons for this turn lie much further back, in the character of the king and in the ethos by which he defines himself as King Arthur of the Round Table."[8] Benson argues that the poem presents two conflicting ideals of action, the Christian and the chivalric, and that Arthur cannot be found guilty for failing to negotiate a course of action acceptable to both.[9] At the other end of the spectrum, some critics have argued that the distaste with which modern readers receive the harsh realities of medieval warfare has clouded critical judgment. For these critics, Arthur's wars against both the emperor and his own contumacious vassals in Lorraine and northern Italy are justified according to medieval law and custom.[10] Finally, Lee Patterson and Martin Ball deny the fact that Arthur's culpability is a major theme of the work at all. For Patterson, the poem is an examination of historical writing and the historical process itself, while Ball applies narrative theory to arrive at the rather banal conclusion that Arthur falls because he left Mordred in charge.[11]

The widely divergent interpretations of the poem, often supported by the same group of quotations and external sources, suggests that the questions being asked of the alliterative

---

[8] Michael W. Twomey, "Heroic Kingship and Unjust War in the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*," *Acta* 11 (1986): 143

[9] Benson, "Alliterative *Morte Arthure*," *passim*.

[10] See Juliet Vale, "Law and Diplomacy in the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*," *Nottingham Mediaeval Studies* 23 (1979): 31-46; Wolfgang Obst, "The Gawain Priamus Episode in the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*," *Studia Neophilologica: A Journal of Germanic and Romance Languages and Literature* 57 (1985): 9-18; and Elizabeth Porter, "Chaucer's Knight, the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*, and Medieval Laws of War: A Reconsideration," *Nottingham Mediaeval Studies* 27 (1983): 56-78.

[11] Lee W. Patterson, "The Historiography of Romance in the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 13 (1983): 1-32, and chapter 6 ("The Romance of History and the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*") of Lee W. Patterson, *Negotiating the Past: The Historical Understanding of Medieval Narrative* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987) 197-230; Martin Ball, "The Knots of Narrative:

Morte Arthure may not be indicative of the author's own concerns. The question of genre, in particular, seems to be a non-starter, as there is simply no modern term for a medieval text which tells an historical story using a style which we are more accustomed to see in romance fictions. As E.D. Kennedy observes, "the author probably did not have the interest in genre that postmedieval readers have had."[12] Commenting on English romance in general, W.R.J. Barron wisely noted that:

> If the function of classification is to aid literary comprehension and if the traditional categories have not proved helpful in that respect, it might be more fruitful... to look for literary community between groups of texts rather than thematic, metrical or other 'external' bases.[13]

The "literary community" to which the *Morte Arthure* belongs is elusive. It is obviously related to *The Awntyrs off Arthure* and Thomas Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*, since both of these texts use the poem as a source.[14] The immediate community of the poem, however, is the large body of chronicles based on the Brut tradition, and its relation to these works is uncertain. Although the exact source of the alliterative *Morte* has not been firmly established, it is obviously derived from some version of the Brut narrative, and Wace's *Roman de Brut* is one of its ancestors.[15] The *Morte* also shares some scenes with sources

---

Space, Time, and Focalization in *Morte Arthure*," *Exemplaria: A Journal of Theory in Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 8 (1996): 355-374.

[12] E.D. Kennedy, "Generic Intertextuality in the English *Alliterative Morte Arthure*: The Italian Connection," *Text and Intertext in Medieval Arthurian Literature*, ed. Norris J. Lacy (New York and London: Garland, 1996) 41.

[13] W. R. J. Barron, "Arthurian Romance: Traces of an English Tradition," *English Studies* 61 (1980): 5.

[14] *The Awntyrs off Arthur* will be discussed below in chapter 4. One of the four copies of *The Awntyrs off Arthure* is also in the Thornton manuscript, Lincoln Cathedral MS 91, which contains the only surviving copy of the *Morte Arthure*.

[15] Branscheid argued that Geoffrey of Monmouth was the primary source, augmented by numerous vernacular accounts, most notably Wace and Laȝamon (P. Branscheid, "Uber die Quellen des stabreimenden *Morte Arthure*," *Anglia* 8 (1885): 179-236) while Imelmann supported Wace as the primary source, with additions from Geffrei Gaimar and the French prose Vulgate (Rudolph Imelmann, *Laȝamon: Versuch über seine Quellen* (Berlin: Weidmannsche, 1906). More recently, Finlayson has claimed that Wace alone served as the primary source (introduction, *Morte Arthure*, 31-32). Matthews has suggested a lost French verse adaptation of Wace (*Tragedy of Arthur*, 179-192) and Mary Hamel lists Geoffrey, Wace, Laȝamon and Robert Mannyng as sources

which have not been previously examined. Yvain's boast that he will touch the emperor's standard "Þat borne es in his banere, of bright golde ryche, / And raas it from his riche men and ryfe it in sondyre," and his eventual fulfillment of that vow,[16] echoes the similar scene in the *Scalacronica* where, in the battle against Mordred, "Hiwain se payna molt de bien fair, arasa le baner Mordret."[17] Both the *Scalacronica* and the *Morte Arthure* also include references to Caradoc. In Gray, as we have seen, Caradoc arrives before Arthur embarks against the Romans, while in the *Morte*, Caradoc delivers the news of Mordred's treachery after the Romans have been defeated.[18] Gray also points to the period between the defeat of the Romans and the arrival of news from Britain as a period of further adventures:

> En quel soiourn il tenit court real de la Table Round, ou auindrent graunt auentures, qe acomplis furount des chualers erraunz, ou Gawayn s'entremist fortement.[19]

The alliterative *Morte* poet uses this period to add the siege of Metz and the campaign in northern Italy, but he also inserts the Gawain-Priamus episode, in which Gawain "weendes owtt... wondyrs to seke."[20]

These similarities are vague, and it is unlikely that the *Scalacronica* should be

---

(introduction, *Morte Arthure: A Critical Edition*, ed. Mary Hamel (New York: Garland, 1984) 34-38). Sullens, however, in her edition of Mannyng's *Chronicle*, questions the assertion of Mannyng's influence (introduction, *The Chronicle*, by Robert Mannyng of Brunne, ed. Idelle Sullens, Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, v. 153 (Binghamton: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1996) 68-70, esp *n*. 91).

[16] *Morte Arthure: A Critical Edition*, ed. Mary Hamel (New York: Garland, 1984) 361-362, 2066-2072. Cited by line number. I will cite Hamel's edition throughout in comparison with Krishna and Brock. Hamel's tendency to emend the text based on the Winchester MS of Malory's *Morte D'Arthur* has led some reviewers to question her method. Finlayson, in his generally favourable review of the edition, characterizes about half of Hamel's emendations as "either unnecessary to sense or rhythm or based on questionable hypotheses." John Finlayson, rev. of *Morte Arthure: A Critical Edition*, ed. Mary Hamel *Speculum* 63 (1988): 938. The emended lines do not affect my reading of the poem.

[17] "Yvain exerted himself well [and] seized the banner of Mordred." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 80v.1. See above p. 74, note 2 for a note on the citation of this text.

[18] Gray, *Scalacronica*, 75.2, *Morte Arthure*, 3487-3517.

[19] "During this sojourn he [King Arthur] held a royal court of the Round Table where happened great adventures which were accomplished by knights errant, where Gawain exerted himself strongly." Gray *Scalacroncia*, 79v.1-2.

[20] *Morte Arthure*, 2513-2514.

thought of as a source for the alliterative poem. They do, however, indicate that the *Morte Arthure* may be related to the *Scalacronica* in some fashion. It is possible that the author of the *Morte* had access to the same Brut narrative which was used by Thomas Gray, the adaptor of Robert of Gloucester's chronicle, and, perhaps, the author of *The Parlement of the Thre Ages*. This suggested source, as we have seen, emphasized the role of Yvain in the latter stages of Arthur's career, and might explain the verbal similarities between the *Scalacronica* and the *Morte*.

The hypothesis that both authors had access to this narrative assumes a widely disseminated text. We have already seen that manuscripts which contained romances, and Arthurian romances in particular, were owned and passed from generation to generation among the English nobility and gentry, and the same can be said for historical works. Arthurian manuscripts could also, of course, circulate laterally as they were certainly loaned among friends and peers. An excellent example of this method of manuscript circulation is provided by Angus McIntosh in his discussion of the provenance of the alliterative *Morte Arthure*. A letter from the second or third quarter of the fifteenth century is found in the margin of a medical manuscript:

> Praying ȝow yat ȝe will resayfe and kepe to we speke samyn of Syr William Coke preste of Byllesbe ane Inglische buke es cald Mort Arthur, as ȝe may se wrytten of my hand in ye last end of ye buke. Also if ȝe will ony word send vnto me at ony tyme, send itt be trew and tristy persons to John Salus house of Lyn, on of ye four and twenty wonyng in ye schekir. And if yar come ony tristy frendis of ȝouris be-twise, I wold pray ȝow to send me ye forsaid Inglische buke.... And if yor none come, kepe yaim styll ȝour selfe to we speke samyn.[21]

McIntosh optimistically observes that "We cannot of course be sure even that the 'Inglische

[21] MS Cambridge, University Library Dd.XI.45, fo. 142. Quoted in Angus McIntosh, "The Textual Transmission of the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*," *Middle English Dialectology: Essays on Some Principles and Problems*, ed. Margaret Laing (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1989) 182.

buke' was a copy of the *alliterative* poem. But it seems to me highly probable that it was."[22] Even if we take a more cautious approach and merely identify the text as an Arthurian work, we can still make significant observations. This single record of a loaned book places the Arthurian text in at least five sets of hands: the writer (presumably the owner of the manuscript), the recipient, the priest, John Salus, and the "tristy frendis" who act as courier.[23] The event is localized in Lincolnshire where, according to linguistic evidence, McIntosh places the ancestor of Thornton's copy text of the alliterative *Morte Arthure*.[24] Lincolnshire and the surrounding area begins to look like a significant area for Arthurian manuscripts.

We have already seen that several chronicles share certain characteristics, especially as they relate to the figure of Yvain. Yvain's role in the final battle against Mordred is strikingly similar in both Thomas Gray's *Scalacronica* and in the anonymous fifteenth-century adaptation of Robert of Gloucester. These features are loosely echoed in the alliterative *Morte*'s account of Yvain's participation in the war against Rome. The accounts of Arthur's death in both the *Scalacronica* and the *Parlement of the Thre Ages* are also obviously related, and since it is unlikely that the authors of these four texts had access to each other, these similarities suggest a shared lost source which includes an account of the death of Arthur in which Yvain plays a significant role.

Three of these four texts also share a geographical range, as they are localized in and around Lincolnshire. Sir Thomas Gray may have begun writing the *Scalacronica* in

---

[22] McIntosh, "Textual Transmission," 182.
[23] Mary Hamel has pointed to this letter's possible associations with the family of Lion, sixth Baron Welles. Hamel argues for an relationship between the borrowed book and "Aboke cald mort artho" mentioned in a booklist written on the flyleaf of a manuscript belonging to the Welles family (BL Royal Ms. 15.D.II). Mary Hamel, "Arthurian Romance in Fifteenth-Century Lindsey: The Books of the Lords Welles," *Modern Language Quarterly* 51 (1990): 341-361.
[24] McIntosh, "Textual Transmission," *passim*.

Edinburgh, but he completed the text after his release, and his family's prinicpal holdings were in Heton, just east of Lincolnshire. Gray's knowledge of several versions of the Havelok story, which is closely associated with the town of Lincoln, also demonstrates his interest in Lincolnshire material. The *Parlement of the Thre Ages* contains few dialectical clues to localize it, but it is generally thought to be from west of Lincolnshire in the North Midlands. One of the two surviving copies of the poem, however, is found in a manuscript transcribed by Robert Thornton, the Lincolnshire scribe who also copied the alliterative *Morte*.[25] Of the four texts, only the redaction of Robert of Gloucester's chronicle seems not to be of northern origin. Based on the variants in the manuscripts copy of *Richard Couer de Lion* it has been localized near Wiltshire.[26] The area from which these texts emerged is indeed large. Since three of them, however, can be localized in the vicinity of Lincolnshire it seems likely that the suggested lost source circulated in and around Lincolnshire during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

More than narrative elements, however, these four texts also demonstrate a shared chivalric ethos which colours their depiction of Arthur's reign. As we have seen, Thomas Gray makes significant alterations and additions to enhance the chivalric atmosphere of the *Scalacronica*'s Arthurian history, and the Arundel interpolator also adds details, such as the sword in the stone scene and Yvain's final speech, which highlight Arthurian chivalry. The *Parlement*, which includes references to the Seige Perilous and Arthur's disposal of Excalibur, also displays a chivalric mood which is lacking in the standard Brut narrative. As

---

[25] The alliterative *Morte Arthure* may also draw on the *Parlement* for its description of the Nine Worthies. See Hamel, introduction, 43–44.

[26] Angus McIntosh, *et al.*, *A Linguistic Atlas of Late Medieval English* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1986) 1:117, 3:547. It is not certain that the *Richard* is representative of the whole manuscript, and a full study of the text is needed.

we shall see, the alliterative *Morte* also adapts the Brut narrative in such a way as to increase the chivalric nature of Arthur's reign. The conception of a chivalric atmosphere, however, certainly does not require textual existence to circulate, and it is quite possible that this attitude toward Arthurian history was conveyed orally and informally.

George R. Keiser has traced the extensive literary network surrounding Robert Thornton, scribe of Lincoln Cathedral Library MS 91, which contains the only surviving copy of the *Morte Arthure*. Keiser concludes that Thornton's activities brought him "into contact with a wide range of clergy, lawyers, and gentry who might well have provided him direct or indirect access to books from the libraries of clerics and educated laymen from both York and rural Yorkshire."[27] Although it is tempting to draw direct lines of influence through the kinds of relationships Keiser reveals, the web of associations may simply suggest a literate community based on land and familial relationships in which tales and attitudes towards popular narratives could circulate both orally and in textual form. We have already seen how Gray's defense of the historical Arthur shares many features with Trevisa and Caxton, neither of whom makes direct use of Gray's text. Although it may seem a romantic notion, it is easy to suppose that Arthurian history was a popular topic of conversation, and that social occasions, such as the feast William Marmion was serving before it was interrupted by a fairy messenger, provided an easy medium for attitudes towards popular narratives to circulate. Thomas Gray stresses the usefulness of retelling tales of adventure in his Arthurian history,[28] and John Hardyng specifically states that such tales are "Full

---

[27] George R. Keiser, "Lincoln Cathedral Library MS. 91: Life and Milieu of the Scribe," *Studies in Bibliography: Papers of the Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia* 32 (1979): 176. See also George R. Keiser, "More Light on the Life and Milieu of Robert Thornton," *Studies in Bibliography: Papers of the Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia* 36 (1983): 111-119.
[28] See above, p. 102.

meruelous to yonge mennes wytte" and that the Arthurian hero told the court his adventures "To cause his felaws to do eke the same / Thair auenture to sek and gete a name."[29] Both Gray and Hardyng seem to be superimposing contemporary practice on the Arthurian world, and it is at just such scenes of informal tale-telling that attitudes and information about Arthurian history could circulate and be discussed.

John Barbour certainly felt that the adventures of Robert Bruce would act as a catalyst for discussion. After an adventure in which Bruce fights 200 men at a narrows (one at a time), Barbour tells the story of Thedeus of Thebes, who fights a similar battle:

> ȝe yat yis redys, cheys yhe
> Quheyer yat mar suld prysit be
> Ye king, yat with awisement
> Wndertuk sic hardyment
> As for to stynt him ane but fer
> Ye folk yat twa hunder wer,
> Or Thedeus, yat suddanly
> For yai had raysyt on him ye cry
> Throw hardyment yat he had tane
> Wane fyfty men all him allane.[30]

Barbour reminds his audience that both fought at night, and that both had only moonlight, but while Bruce fought more men, Thedeus actually killed more of his adversaries:

> Now demys queheyer mar lowing
> Suld Thedeus haiff or ye king.[31]

Barbour's digression recognizes his audience's interest, not only in chivalric exploits, but also in the subtleties involved in determining the various degrees of chivalric honour. The digression may be merely conventional, but in it we see the poet's expectation that his

---

[29] Hardyng, *First Version*, 71, 72. See below, p. 241, note 2 for the citation of this source
[30] John Barbour, *Barbour's Bruce: A fredome is a noble thing!* ed. Matthew P. McDiarmid and James A. C. Stevenson, Scottish Text Society, 4th ser. 15, 12, 13 (Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society, 1980-1985) VI. 271-279. Cited by book and line number
[31] Barbour, *Bruce*, VI. 285-286.

audience is willing to entertain such questions. Similar discussions of Arthurian chivalry would necessarily involve Arthurian narrative, and much of the circulation of Arthurian narrative may be irrecoverable simply because it took place during such informal exchanges.

Although the known chronicles do not provide an exact source for all the material in the alliterative *Morte Arthure*, it shares with them the basic Arthurian narrative which, as we have seen, was generally considered an historically accurate account of Arthur's reign. Many critics, however, have actually attempted to minimize the historical nature of the narrative. Göller, apparently unaware of the sources of the poem, states that "the opening boudoir scene of the stanzaic *Morte Arthur*... has been replaced by the battlefield",[32] and Peck asserts that the poet idiosyncratically "takes his story from the chronicles of Wace and Layamon, rather than the later, more popular romances." He concedes that "Perhaps his reason is that he wants the story to seem more like history."[33] Matthews complains that the poem's "chronicle-like versions of battles and campaigns and its tendency toward episodic digressions might be excused by the nature of its sources or justified by medieval fashions in narrative and rhetoric, but they still tend to divert attention from the main narrative and from the principal theme."[34] He does allow, however, that the poem's use of precise dates and its attention to topography, armor and shipping are "all indications that the poet intended his story to be taken as historical truth."[35] Other critics do not allow even this. Patterson,

---

[32] Göller, "Reality versus Romance," 16. In her review of this volume, Hamel raises similar complaints about Göller's reaction to the poem. Mary Hamel, "The Regensburg *Morte Arthure*," rev. of *The Alliterative Morte Arthure: A Reassessment of the Poem*, ed. Karl Heinz Göller, *Review (Charlottesville)* 5 (1983): 159.
[33] Russell A. Peck, "Willfulness and Wonders: Boethian Tragedy in the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*," *The Alliterative Tradition in the Fourteenth Century*, ed. Bernard S. Levy and Paul E. Szarmach (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1981) 156.
[34] Matthews, *Tragedy of Arthur*, 178.
[35] Matthews, *Tragedy of Arthur*, 96.

commenting on the poet's call to "Herkenes now hedyr-warde and herys this storye,"[36] states that "The point is not to make a claim for veracity -although based on Wace's translation of Geoffrey, the poem includes, as we shall see, large chunks of ostentatiously fictive material- but to insist that its focus is upon the historical world and its meaning."[37] Similarly, Hamel claims that "Unlike earlier redactors..., the [*Morte Arthure*]-poet must surely have viewed his material as fictions (or quasi-fictions) to be shaped to his own *conjointure* and themes."[38] Modern criticism, in other words, recognizes the poem's reliance on the chronicle narrative, but has failed to recognise the implications of this decision. This has led to serious misunderstandings of elements of the text, such as the relationship between Mordred and Arthur. Lee Patterson's argument, that the past provides an uncertain legitimacy to the present, is largely based on the mistaken belief that Mordred is Arthur's own son through incest,[39] and Russell A. Peck seems to believe that even Wace and Laȝamon considered Mordred to be the child of incest: "They would obscure the blood tie, if possible, for it seems embarrassing. Our poet stresses it, for it seems honorable."[40] Charles Lionel Regan, however, has shown that there is not "as much as a hint, from either the poet or a character, that the traitor is Arthur's son,"[41] a point which is emphasized by Hamel.[42]

What we see in these reactions to the historical nature of the *Morte Arthure*'s narrative is a failure to recognise the "literary community" to which the poem belongs. This

---

[36] *Morte Arthure*, 25.
[37] Patterson, "Historiography of Romance," 14.
[38] Hamel, introduction, 36.
[39] Patterson, "Historiography of Romance," 23, 30; Patterson, *Negotiating the Past*, 217, 222, 229.
[40] Peck, "Willfulness and Wonders," 161. See also pp. 173-174, 177.
[41] Charles L. Regan, "The Paternity of Mordred in the Alliterative Morte Arthure," *Bulletin Bibliographique de la Société Internationale Arthurienne* 25 (1973): 154.
[42] Hamel addresses this issue in her review of *The Alliterative Morte Arthure: A Reassessment of the Poem*. Several of the contributors to the volume fall victim to this fallacy, and Hamel includes a lengthy discussion of

is not to argue that the source of the poem can be found in any one Brut text. Rather, it suggests that the poet's handling of the historical Arthurian narrative may be constructively compared to contemporary authors who deal with the same topics. Authors like Thomas Gray or Andrew Wyntoun are not sources for the *Morte Arthure*, but they participate in the intellectual and literary environment within which the alliterative poem was created. Although based on the Galfridian narrative, the *Morte Arthure* does deviate from the surviving chronicles both in tone and in the addition of several narrative episodes. These deviations from the Brut tradition do not imply, as both Hamel and Patterson seem to suggest, that the author of the poem considered his narrative to be fictitious. The treatment of extra-Galfridian material by Thomas Gray, and Andrew Wyntoun's attitude towards stylistic concerns in the work of Huchown, may shed light on the *Morte Arthure*-poet's use of episodic digressions from the Brut narrative.

Andrew Wyntoun, writing a generation after the composition of the alliterative poem,[43] was willing to allow that minor details within Huchown's historical narrative could be changed to conform to the demands of poetry without discrediting the author. Despite Huchown's deviation from the Galfridian narrative, Wyntoun allowed that he "cunnand wes in litterature,"[44] but that he was not a chronicler. It is not necessary to argue that Huchown's "Geste Historiale" is the *Morte Arthure* in order to recognise that the alliterative poet also

---

the topic, "in an effort to scotch this apparently unkillable snake once again." Hamel, "The Regensburg *Morte*," 170-171.

[43] Although the dating of the poem is not significant for the argument of this chapter, I have accepted Benson's date of 1399-1402. See Larry D. Benson, "The Date of the *Alliterative Morte Arthure*." *Medieval Studies in Honor of Lillian Herlands Hornstein*, ed. Jess B. Bessinger, Jr., and Robert R. Raymo (New York: New York University Press, 1976) 19-40.

[44] Andrew of Wyntoun, *The Original Chronicle*, ed. F. J. Amours. Scottish Text Society 63, 50, 53-57 (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood, 1903) V. 4331. Cited by book and line number.

"wes curyouß in his stile, / Faire and facund and subtile."[45] Minor deviations may simply demonstrate that the poet, like Huchown, was more concerned with "cadens" than "sentens."[46] The distinction that Gervase of Canterbury makes between chronicles and histories accurately describes the stylistic differences between a work like that of Geoffrey of Monmouth and the *Morte Arthure*.[47]

The minor divergences from the accepted tradition, which Wyntoun was willing to forgive in Huchown's *geste*, do not, however, describe all the additions that the *Morte Arthure*-poet made to the Galfridian narrative. The alliterative poem is not the only work that expands on an historical source and yet claims accurately to retell history, but discussions of literary additions are rare in medieval histories. The early twelfth-century *Vita Sancti Malchi* by Reginald of Canterbury provides an extraordinary discussion of historical *amplificatio*. The life is based on St. Jerome's *Vita Malchi*, but, writing in Leonine hexameters, Reginald's verse is significantly longer than Jerome's austere prose. The differences are not merely stylistic, as Reginald has added numerous episodes drawn from a wide range of secular and religious literature. He explains these additions in a letter which is included with a copy of the work sent to a friend at Rochester named Baldwin:

> Item rogat auctor multumque precatur lectorem ne in singulis versibus aut verbis aucupetur historiae veritatem. Minimum plane aut omnino nichil referre arbitratus est utrum ea quae ostendere intendebat per vera an per veri similia ostenderet.[48]

---

[45] Wyntoun, *Original Chronicle*, V. 4335-4336.
[46] Wyntoun, *Original Chronicle*, V. 4343-4344. For Wyntoun's reaction to Huchown, see above pp. 67ff.
[47] For Gervase of Canterbury's description of "chronicle" and "history" see above, p. 71.
[48] "Further, the author begs and earnestly beseeches the reader not to search in each verse or word for the truth of history. In the author's opinion, it matters little or nothing whether he shows what he intends to show by means of the truth or the probable." Reginald of Canterbury, *The Vita Sancti Malchi of Reginald of Canterbury*, ed. Levi Robert Lind (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1942) 40. For a discussion of this work and the English translation see A.G. Rigg, *A History of Anglo-Latin Literature, 1066-1422* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) 24-30. I would like to thank Professor Rigg for bringing this text to my attention.

Reginald goes on to say that a stubborn reader may wish to distinguish between truth and falsehood in his account. In that event, he directs his readers to Jerome's narrative as the authoritative version.

> Cucurrit ille via regia nec ab alveo declinavit historiae. Nos instar rivuli currentes, modo ripas tenuimus, modo arva rigavimus, dum ea quae per historiam non erant, per artem edidimus.[49]

Reginald concludes by stating that when writing of the character of Malchus he has told the truth, "At in reliquis, multa nos ut suum est versificantium confinxisse non negamus."[50] For Reginald, the additions to his account "are all directed to making it a more entertaining and diverting story,"[51] but the basic narrative and the truth of that narrative remain the same. Reginald recognizes that versifiers were accustomed to add to their stories, but he accepts this habit as part of the literary process.[52]

Wyntoun and Gervase of Canterbury demonstrate that *amplificatio* was an accepted part of some kinds of historical writing, and Reginald shows that this amplification could go beyond mere rhetorical flourishes to include the addition of entire episodes or scenes. As

---

[49] "He [Jerome] ran along the royal way and did not diverge from the channel of history. I run along like a stream, sometimes keeping to the banks, sometimes watering the fields; things that did not exist in history I produced by art." Reginald of Canterbury, *Vita Sancti Malchi*, 40.

[50] "But in other matters, I do not deny that, as is the custom of versifiers, I have invented much." Reginald of Canterbury, *Vita Sancti Malchi*, 41.

[51] Rigg, *History of Anglo-Latin Literature*, 27.

[52] While most writers recognised that *amplificatio* was part of historical writing in verse, not all saw it as historically valid. Benoît's *Roman de Troie* was not accepted by Jean Flixcourt who retranslated Dares and Dictys in 1262. In his prologue he writes: "Pour che que li roumans de Troies rime continet molt de coses que on ne treuve mie ens u latin car chis quie fist ne peust autrement belement avoir trouvee se rime, je, Jehans de Fliccicourt, translatai sans rime l'estoire des Troiens et de Troies de latin en roumans mot a mot ensi comme je le trouvai en un des livres de libraire Monseigneur Saint Pierre de Corbie." ["Because the rhymed romance of Troy contains many things which are not to be found in the Latin (because he who made it could not otherwise beautifully have made his rhymes), I, Jean of Flixecourt, translated without rhyme the history of the Trojans and of Troy from Latin into Romance, word for word, just as I have found it in one of the books of the library of my lord St. Peter of Corbie."] "*Li Romans de Troies*: A Translation by Jean de Flixcourt," ed. G. Hall, diss. University of London, 1951, 2, as quoted and translated by Ruth Morse, *Truth and Convention in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 228 & 286. For a discussion of attitudes towards verse

Reginald's imagery of a river overflowing its banks makes clear, the elaboration of source material was in the service of meaning, and it was accepted that authors of historical material could and would expand on their sources to emphasize thematic concerns. We have seen how Thomas Gray includes material from outside the chronicle tradition in order to highlight the chivalric nature of Arthur's reign, but whereas Gray consistently undermines the authority of his additions by invoking unreliable and vague sources, the author of the alliterative *Morte Arthure* seamlessly joins additional material to the Galfridian narrative. The purpose of these additions, however, is the same as Gray's or Reginald's, in that they act as interpretive tools which augment and direct the meaning of the narrative provided. This is not to argue that the *Morte Arthure* is Huchown's "gret Gest of Arthure," nor that a new generic designation, Gervase's *historia*, should be applied to the work, nor that the work is in some sense hagiographic. Rather, such a reading simply recognizes that the *Morte Arthure* is essentially an historical poem, like Barbour's *Bruce* or Blind Hary's *Wallace*,[53] and that the decisions that a poet makes when writing an historical work have different implications than if the work were recognised as pure fiction. Thomas Gray and Reginald of Canterbury seem to agree that episodes which are introduced into an historical narrative are in the service of existing meaning. The story of Caradoc's mantle emphasizes the theme of betrayal; the sword in the stone emphasizes Arthur's legitimacy and the chivalric nature of his reign.

---

and prose see Gabrielle Spiegel, *Romancing the Past: The Rise of Vernacular Prose Historiography in Thirteenth-Century France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993) 55-69.

[53] Caroline Eckhardt excludes these poems from her definition of "chronicle" which she claims is "an extensive account of events regarded as historical. However, I will exclude heroic poems on the exploits of individual kings, such as the alliterative *Morte Arthure* or Barbour's *Bruce*. In genre, works like those are more appropriately classed with epics and romances and other hero tales than with chronicles." Caroline D. Eckhardt, "The Presence of Rome in the Middle English Chronicles of the Fourteenth Century," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 90 (1991): 190-191. Although the *Morte* should not be considered a chronicle (i.e. an episodic narrative of a vast historical period) Eckhardt's definition does not take into account the historical nature of the poem.

These themes were present in the narrative before the additions were made, and in the same way the author of the alliterative *Morte* reinforces his themes of the glory and transience of sovereignty through strategic alterations and augmentations to the Brut narrative.

The alliterative *Morte Arthure* begins in the middle of Arthur's reign with the coronation feast which follows the nine years of peace. With minor alterations, it follows the chronicles' account of the challenge from Rome, Arthur's crossing to the continent and his battle with the giant of St. Michael's Mount. The war with Lucius also follows the established pattern of Gawain's embassy to the emperor and the resulting battle, followed by the attempt to convey prisoners to Paris and the resulting battle. Finally, Arthur's forces engage and defeat Lucius' main army. Before Arthur hears news of Mordred's treachery, however, there are major additions, including the siege of Metz, Gawain's adventure with Priamus, a briefly-described campaign in northern Italy, and Arthur's elaborate dream of the wheel and the Nine Worthies. The poem then picks up the basic narrative and describes the news of Mordred's usurpation of the throne, Arthur's return to Britain, and the loss of his knights and his life in the final battles.

The theme of mutability, so common in Arthurian narratives, pervades the *Morte Arthure*. This theme was established by the first great Arthurian narrative, Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britannie*. Robert Hanning convincingly argues that while "recounting the successive reigns of the British monarchs, [Geoffrey] repeatedly inserts variants of several basic situations—feuds among brothers, British expeditions to Rome, the illicit loves of kings, etc.—which have far-reaching national consequences."[54] These

---

[54] Robert W. Hanning, *The Vision of History in Early Britain: From Gildas to Geoffrey of Monmouth* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1966) 141.

recurring patterns, argues Hanning, emphasize the cyclical nature of British history in the *Historia* as the actions of individual kings lead to the continual rise and fall of British sovereignty. Arthur, the greatest king in the *Historia*, participates in many of the patterns described by Hanning. Most significantly for the alliterative *Morte Arthure*, Arthur's greatest achievement is his struggle against Rome. That conflict, however, echoes earlier conflicts within the *Historia*. Hanning writes:

> Yet, because the Arthurian climax [of the *Historia*] comes during a trip to Rome—that is, during an episode which has cyclically repeated itself throughout British history—the immediate response to it which Geoffrey elicits from the reader is also both prepared and heightened by knowledge of the earlier segments of British history.[55]

The reader, aware of the similar conflicts between Britain and Rome involving Brutus, Brennius and Belinus, Constantine, and Maximianus "suddenly perceive[s] with greater clarity the entire pattern of British history."[56] It is no coincidence that the author of the *Morte Arthure* begins his poem with the challenge from Rome, and he expects his reader to be familiar with the importance of this event within British history.[57] The poem accentuates this theme, however, by portraying Arthur as the greatest of conquering kings and his court as the epitome of chivalry. The poet has achieved this result through a combination of techniques. Certain scenes have been modified or intensified, but entire episodes have also been added to highlight Arthur's regal bearing and the courtly behaviour of his knights. The fall of Arthur and his knights is not the result of his sins, but, as in other chronicle accounts, results from the fickle nature of Fortune's wheel and the cyclical nature of British history.

---

[55] Hanning, *Vision of History*, 148.
[56] Hanning, *Vision of History*, 149. See Hanning, *Vision of History*, 144-149, 162-170 for a full discussion of the importance of Rome in the *Historia*.

Although the poem makes it clear that Arthur does sin, there is no indication that Arthur's sins have caused the fall of the Round Table.

Benson states that the Arthur of the alliterative poem is

> ...undimmed by the chivalric mist in which the romancers enclosed him. This is an Arthur who is pre-eminently heroic, a king whose most noble title is 'conqueror,' who knows little of tournaments but a great deal about war and nothing of courtly love but everything of friendship and loyalty.[58]

Although the uni-dimensionality of Benson's portrait could be questioned (his departure from Guenevere, for example, is influenced by the conventions of courtly love),[59] it is clear that Arthur is concerned primarily with affairs of state. A courtly mood does exist in the poem, but it falls to Arthur's knights to provide examples of individual chivalry. Despite Göller's belief that "it is safe to say that the idea of warfare based on chivalric laws was recognised as outdated by the fourteenth century,"[60] we have already seen that Sir Thomas Gray and his contemporaries were not only avid readers of chivalric exploits, but also attempted to apply the models of chivalry to their own conduct in court and on the field. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that the *Morte Arthure* claims both that its words will be "Plesande and profitabill to the pople þat them heres,"[61] and that knights of the Round Table:

> ...chefe ware of cheualrye and cheftans nobyll,
> Bathe ware in thire werkes and wyse men of armes,

---

[57] Patterson argues that the appearance of Frollo in the dream of Fortune (*Morte Arthure*, 3345-3346, 3404-3405) "bespeak[s] a poem in process." Patterson, "Historiography of Romance," 12, *n.* 36. I think it more likely, however, that this indicates that the poet's confidence in his audience's knowledge of the Brut narrative.
[58] Benson, "The Alliterative *Morte Arthure*," 75-76.
[59] *Morte Arthure*, 693-716. In 1967 Finlayson stated that the scene "is more likely to have been inspired by some particular exemplar which had a strong influence on the poet, than to have been occasioned merely by the general influence of the form which he seems deliberately to have eschewed" (Finlayson, "*Morte Arthure*," 636), but in 1968 he claimed that the "very presence of such a scene, totally unnecessary in a *chanson de geste*, is owed to the pervasive influence of romance" (Finlayson, "Concept of the Hero," 256). For a discussion of the importance of the scene see George R. Keiser, "Narrative Structure in the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*, 26-720," *The Chaucer Review: A Journal of Medieval Studies and Literary Criticism* 9 (1974): 139-141.
[60] Göller, "Reality versus Romance," 21.
[61] *Morte Arthure*, 11.

Doughty in theire doyngs and dredde ay schame,
Kynde men and courtays and couthe of courte thewes.[62]

The Round Table is praised as an example of both military and courtly excellence, and characters from romance literature appear at the very beginning of the tale. After Arthur receives the challenge from Rome, he and his knights retire to council. Various knights encourage Arthur to wage war, and several of them, such as Cador and Hoel, make elaborate vows.[63] Among the vowers, Yvain asserts that he will touch the standard of the emperor, a vow which he more than fulfills:

Thane sir Ewayne fytz Vriene full enkerlye rydez
Onone to the emperour, his egle to towche;
Thrughe his brode bataile he buskes belyfe,
Bradez owt his brande with a blythe chere,
Reuerssede it redelye and away rydys,
Ferkez in with the fewle in his faire handez
And fittez in freely one frounte with his feris.[64]

Yvain's role is expanded beyond both the chronicle narrative and the pattern of vowing. As in the prose Vulgate, he plays an important part in the final battle and he is one of the last of Arthur's knights to die.[65] Erec, presumably the hero of Chrétien de Troyes' *Erec and Enide*, is associated with Yvain throughout the latter stages of the poem, and this further emphasizes Yvain's association with romance conventions. "Sir Ewayne and sir Errake, þes excellente beryns," appear together across the battlefield until Arthur discovers them both among the

---

[62] *Morte Arthure*, 18-21.
[63] This scene may be modelled on the *Voeux du Paon*, but Finlayson has argued that a more direct source may be the intermediary *Vows of the Heron*. See John Finlayson, "Two Minor Sources of the Alliterative 'Morte Arthure'," *Notres & Queries* 207 (1962): 132-133, and Hamel, introduction, 44-46. Maureen Fries suggests that the scene may be loosely based on a episode from the prose *Lancelot*. See Maureen Fries, "The Poem in the Tradition of Arthurian Literature," *The Alliterative Morte Arthure: A Reassessment of the Poem*, ed. Karl Heinz Göller (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1981) 34-35.
[64] *Morte Arthure*, 2066-2072.
[65] *Morte Arthure*, 4161-4173.

dead.[66] Eric, in fact, appears only when tied to Yvain through alliteration.

Yvain is a knight from the chronicle tradition, and although he is associated with Chrétien's Erec his appearance in the poem is entirely expected. The knight who speaks after him at the council, however, is firmly associated with the romance tradition and his appearance is surprising:

> 'By Oure Lorde' quod sir Launcelott 'now lyghttys myn herte—
> I loue Gode of þis lone þis lordes has avowede!
> Now may lesse men haue leue to say whatt them lykes
> And hafe no lettyne be lawe.'[67]

Lancelot's role is conspicuously small in the poem. He refers to himself as one of the "lesse men" before making his own vow that he will personally joust with the emperor.[68] His contribution to the war effort, "sex score helmes,"[69] also points to his diminished status in the poem, and through the reduction of Lancelot's status the poet asserts that his is not a tale of adultery. He does allow Lancelot to maintain his reputation for personal honour as Cador refuses to retreat from superior Roman forces, saying that "'Sir Lancelott sall neuer laughe, þat with þe kyng lengez, / That I sulde lette my waye for lede appon erthe!'"[70] Yvain's increased role and the appearances of Lancelot and Erec in the poem serve the same function as Gray's vague allusions to literary motifs. They remind the reader of the more explicitly chivalric narratives found in the romances of Chrétien and the prose Vulgate, but at the same time those romance narratives are held to the margins of the historical text.

---

[66] *Morte Arthure*, 4161. See also 4075 and 4262. The same alliterative pairing is found in *The Parlement of the Thre Ages* *Alliterative Poetry of the Later Middle Ages*, ed. Thorlac Turville-Petre (London: Routledge, 1989) 476. Cited by line number.
[67] *Morte Arthure*, 368-371. Hamel glosses line 369 as "I praise God for this contribution." For the textual difficulties associated with this line see Hamel's notes, *Morte Arthure*, p. 268-269.
[68] *Morte Arthure*, 371-381. This vow is fulfilled at 2073-2080.
[69] *Morte Arthure*, 380.
[70] *Morte Arthure*, 1720-1721.

Another of Chrétien's knights, Cligés, also appears in a rather striking role. Although *Cligés* was probably the least known of Chrétien's works, the hero of the romance appears throughout the *Morte Arthure*. His most significant scene takes place as he escorts Roman prisoners to Paris. Cador, who is in charge of the party, sends three knights forward as scouts. The three scouts spot a Roman ambush in their path:

> Fyndez them helmede hole and horsesyde on stedys,
> Houande on þe hye waye by þe holte hemmes.
> With knyghttly contenaunce, sir Clegis hym selfen
> Kryes to þe companye and carpes thees wordez:
> 'Es there any kyde knyghte, kaysere or oþer,
> Will kyth for his kynge lufe craftes of armes?'[71]

Cligés continues with his challenge, saying:

> 'We seke justynge of werre, ȝif any will happyn,
> Of þe jolyeste men ajugged be lordes,
> If here be any hathell man, erle or oþer,
> That for þe emperour lufe will awnteres hym selfen.'[72]

The Romans respond that Arthur will regret that he has tried to take the "renttez of Rome,"[73] and Cligés capitalizes on the reply to question the nobility of his adversaries:

> 'A' sais sir Clegis þan 'so me Criste helpe,
> I knawe be thi carpynge a cowntere þe semes!
> Bot be þou auditoure or erle or emperour thi selfen,
> Appon Arthurez byhalue I answere the sone:'[74]

Cligés' insulting dialogue continues, as he addresses the leader of the Romans, the King of Surry, in the language of markets and exchange, claiming that Arthur has "araysede his accownte" and that "þe rereage" which the Romans owe will "be requit."[75] He then challenges them to prove their knighthood:

---

[71] *Morte Arthure*, 1647-1652.
[72] *Morte Arthure*, 1657-1660.
[73] *Morte Arthure*, 1667.
[74] *Morte Arthure*, 1671-1674.

'We crafe of ȝour curtaisie three coursez of werre,
And claymez of knyghthode; take kepe to ȝour selfen!
ȝe do bott trayne vs to-daye wyth trofelande wordez—
Of syche trauaylande men, trecherye me thynkes.'[76]

Although the challenge of a joust of war (i.e. with ordinary weapons) is declined by the King of Surry, the challenge alone places Cligés in a tradition of individual chivalry which seems at odds with the military situation. The King of Surry refuses to participate in single combat, and he returns Cligés' insult by questioning whether his arms are recognizable, thus challenging Cligés' own status as a knight:

'...þou bees noghte delyuerede
Bot thow sekerly ensure with certayne knyghtez
Þat þi cote and thi creste be knawen with lordez,
Of armes of ancestrye entyrde with londez.'[77]

Cligés declares that the Romans are stalling out of cowardice. His arms are readily recognizable:

'Myn armez are of ancestrye enueryde with lordez
And has in banere bene borne sen sir Brut tyme,
At the cité of Troye, þat tyme was ensegede,
Ofte seen in asawtte with certayne knyghttez,
Fro þe Brute broghte vs and all oure bolde elders
To Bretayne þe braddere within chippe-burdez.'[78]

By appealing to the siege of Troy as the origin of his own heraldic device Cligés traces his descent back to the origins of heraldry itself. The knights of Troy are often referred to as the first to employ coats of arms, as in an anonymous poem on the Nine Worthies in which Hector places the origins of heraldry at Troy: "Ther were armys first ordenyt with honour and

---

[75] *Morte Arthure*, 1675-1680.
[76] *Morte Arthure*, 1681-1684. Krishna glosses *trauaylande* as "vexing" while Hamel glosses it as "wayfaring". The latter seems more likely as it supports the mercantile metaphor of the dialogue.
[77] *Morte Arthure*, 1688-1691.
[78] *Morte Arthure*, 1694-1699.

Joye / Vnto the ordyr of knyghthode to bere in all londys."[79] Cligés' nobility, and the nobility of the British in general, is assured through this illustrious pedigree.[80] The originary moment of heraldry, however, is the unstable moment of the greatest disaster in medieval historiography. As surely as the Trojans represent the highest achievement of chivalric society, so too they represent the greatest fall, and while Cligés asserts his own nobility through his Trojan ancestry he also evokes the cyclical pattern of British history, a pattern in which Arthur likewise participates.

The knight who receives the fullest treatment in the *Morte Arthure* is undoubtedly Sir Gawain. Maureen Fries claims that Gawain's increased role is "totally unprecedented in the chronicles where he had been a minor figure without importance",[81] but as we have seen, Gawain's popularity as a figure of romance had increased his prominence in the chronicles of both Robert Mannyng and Sir Thomas Gray. It is true, however, that the Gawain of the *Morte Arthure* is not the typical model of courtesy that he is in earlier chronicles and the romance tradition. In the *Morte Arthure*, Gawain's reputation for amorous affairs has been eliminated, and with it his contribution to the initial council scene, a praise of peace and the

---

[79] "A Poem on the Nine Worthies," ed. Thorlac Turville-Petre, *Nottingham Mediaeval Studies* 27 (1983): ll. 3-4. According to *The Boke of Saint Albans*, printed in 1486, Japhet first devised a heraldic device, which was "a ball in token of all the world," but "Cote armure was made and figurid at the sege of troye where in gestys troianorum it telleth thatt the first begynnyng of the lawe of armys was, the wiche was effugured and begunne before any lawe in the worlde, bott the lawe of nature, and before the .X. commawndementis of god." Juliana Berners, *The Boke of Saint Albans* (Amsterdam and New York: Da Capo Press, 1969), no pagination. A heraldic treatise composed c. 1454 states that "þe begynyng and grownde of armez was furst fownde at þe gret assege of nobyll Troye bothe with in þe cyte & with owt," where it was agreed "þat euery man þat dyde a grete acte of armys shulde ber vp on hym a marke in tokyn of hys dowghtyness þat þe pepyll myght haue þe mor knowlege of hym." After the seige "þe lords went forthe in to dyuers londs som to seke mo aduenturys. And in to [Eng]lond came brute & hys knyghtys with her marcys & inhabytes þe londe & aftyrwarde be cause þe name of markes was rude thay torned yt in to armes & called hem armys be cause þat markys wer getyn thorowgh myght of manys armys in as muche as the name was fayrer. A cote of armys ys callyd an habyt of worshyppe." BL Harley MS. 2259, fos. 11-11v. Abbreviations have been expanded silently. For "[Eng]lond" the manuscript appears to have "piglond". For a brief discussion of the position of Troy in the history of heraldry see Sylvia L. Thrupp, *The Merchant Class of Medieval London* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948) 295-297.

[80] In Chrétien's *Cligès*, the hero is in fact Greek and not, therefore, a descendant of the Trojans.

delights of court, has also disappeared.[82] Instead, Gawain is concerned with the chivalric goal of gaining military renown or "wirchip". Thus in the foraging scene Florent cedes command of the party to Gawain so that his "wirchipe" will not be wounded.[83] Even in Gawain's final battle against Mordred he attempts to establish a beach head so that he might win "wirchipe... for euer"[84] and he performs in such a way as to "wrekys at his wirchipe."[85]

Gawain's presence in the early portions of the poem is actually reduced from the chronicle sources. Although he still participates in the embassy to Lucius, it is in the major addition of the Priamus episode that Gawain's chivalry is displayed. The episode has received a great deal of attention, and critical attitude is divided. Göller believes that the scene attempts to debunk the "clichés of romance" and that by "bringing romance fiction into a strongly realistic context, the author is confronting the audience with the idea that chivalric jousting was nothing more than a ridiculous game."[86] This reading is supported by Fichte, who claims that the episode represents the "meaninglessness" of heroic endeavor,[87] while Finlayson states that the episode is used "to contrast the purposeless ritual of the typical romance combat with the serious *chanson de geste* preoccupation of the rest of *Morte Arthure*."[88] In contrast, Christopher Dean sees Gawain in a more positive light. He characterizes the episode as "pure romance" in which Gawain "must not be thought of as a

---

[81] Fries, "The Poem in the Tradition," 36.
[82] B. J. Whiting accurately summed up Gawain's reputation from earlier prose and verse romances: "Gawain is the casual, good-natured and well-mannered wooer of almost any available girl. If she acquiesces, good; if not, there is sure to be another pavilion or castle not far ahead." B. J. Whiting, "Gawain: His Reputation, His Courtesy and His Appearance in Chaucer's *Squire's Tale*," *Mediaeval Studies* 9 (1947): 203.
[83] *Morte Arthure*, 2739.
[84] *Morte Arthure*, 3769.
[85] *Morte Arthure*, 3821.
[86] Göller, "Reality versus Romance," 23.
[87] Jörg O. Fichte, "The Figure of Sir Gawain," *The Alliterative Morte Arthure: A Reassessment of the Poem*, ed. Karl Heinz Göller (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1981) 116.
[88] Finlayson, "Concept of the Hero," 208.

soldier on a military campaign, but as a chivalric knight seeking adventures."[89]

Despite these divergent opinions, critics share a belief that the Priamus episode is placed apart from the larger military concerns of the poem. During the siege of Metz Arthur sends out a foraging party. They arrive in a meadow which is "full of swete floures"[90] where the party stops to rest:

> Thane weendes owtt the wardayne, sir Wawayne hym selfen,
> Alls he þat weysse was and wyghte, wondyrs to seke.[91]

The use of the word "wondyrs" implies that the episode will be an *aventure*, and, separated from his companions, Gawain encounters the knight Priamus. As in the exchange between Cligés and the King of Surry, Priamus' nobility is established by the lengthy description of his coat of arms, the chief of which apparently invites other knights to "chalange who lykes."[92] Gawain greets the sight of the as yet unnamed knight "with a glade will"[93] and after a brief exchange they joust. The knights are evenly matched, and on the first pass "Bothe schere thorowe schoulders a schaftmonde large. / Thus worthylye þes wyes wondede ere bothen."[94] The combat continues until Priamus is wounded in the side and Gawain cut by an envenomed blade. Only then does Gawain ask who his opponent is. Priamus gives his name and claims that his father is a great king:

> 'He es of Alexandire blode, ouerlynge of kynges,
> The vncle of his ayele sir Ector of Troye,
> And here es the kynreden that I of come—
> And Judas and Josue, þise gentill knyghtes.'[95]

---

[89] Christopher Dean, "Sir Gawain in the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*," *Papers on Language and Literature: A Journal for Scholars and Critics of Language and Literature* 22 (1986): 120.
[90] *Morte Arthure*, 2508.
[91] *Morte Arthure*, 2513-2514.
[92] *Morte Arthure*, 2521-2524. For a discussion of the textual problems with the passage see Hamel's notes (*Morte Arthure*, p. 337-338).
[93] *Morte Arthure*, 2525.
[94] *Morte Arthure*, 2546-2547.
[95] *Morte Arthure*, 2602-2605.

Here again, nobility is tied to Troy, this time through Hector. Even the name of the Greek knight echoes Priam, the father of Hector. In fact, in the final lines of the poem Priam is referred to as "sir Pryamous."[96] Priamus' genealogy is even more impressive as he includes Alexander, Judas Maccabee and Joshua among his ancestors. Like Cligés' appeal to Troy, however, the four Worthies that Priamus mentions (two pagan and two Hebrew) recall the larger theme of rise and fall which operates throughout the poem. The association with the earlier scene is emphasized as Gawain denies his own nobility, claiming "...knyghte was I neuer, / [Bot] with þe kydde Conquerour a knafe of his chambyre."[97] Priamus responds:

> 'Giffe his knaves be syche, his knyghttez are noble!
> There es no kynge vndire Criste may kempe with hym on;
> He will be Alexander ayre, that all þe erthe lowttede,
> Abillere þan euer was sir Ector of Troye!'[98]

Finally Gawain abandons the romance convention of concealing his identity and, like Priamus, admits his relationship to Arthur, one of the Worthies:

> 'My name es sir Gawayne, I graunt þe for sothe;
> Cosyn to þe Conquerour, he knawes it hym selfen.'[99]

The episode ends happily. Both knights are cured by the magic waters which Priamus carries; he and his followers, who have been working as mercenaries for the Romans, join the British; and the combined forces gain a major victory over the Duke of Lorraine. The scene, however, remains unsettling as the chivalry of Gawain and Priamus has been measured against the failed projects of Hector and the other Worthies. As in the Cligés episode, the poet's point of comparison for chivalric prowess is an ancestry whose own

---

[96] *Morte Arthure*, 4344.
[97] *Morte Arthure*, 2620-2621.
[98] *Morte Arthure*, 2632-2635.
[99] *Morte Arthure*, 2638-2639.

chivalric achievements failed to maintain lasting sovereignty. That Arthur's own sovereign position shares this unstable foundation is made clear by Priamus, who predicts that Arthur "will be Alexander ayre." Arthur's own association with the Worthies will be emphasized throughout the rest of the poem.

While Arthur's knights accentuate the chivalric nature of his reign, he remains a king whose primary concern is political expansion and military conquest. This image of the king is emphasized in the opening passage of the poem as Arthur holds a Round Table after he has settled his realm.

> Qwen that the Kynge Arthur by conqueste hade wonnyn
> Castells and kyngdoms and contreez many,
> And he had couerede the coroun of the kyth ryche,
> Of all that Vter in erthe aughte in his tym[100]

The list of countries that Arthur has subdued includes more than thirty lands throughout all of Europe.[101] Arthur's own character is similarly impressive. Having received the message of the Roman ambassadors:

> The kynge blyschit on the beryn with his brode eghn,
> Þat full brymly for breth brynte as the gledys;
> Keste colours as kyng with crouell lates,
> Luked as a lyon and on his lyppe bytes.[102]

The ambassadors "for radnesse ruschte to þe erthe, / Fore ferdnesse of hys face."[103] When they attend the sumptuous feast of the Round Table, Arthur claims that "We knowe noghte in þis countré of curious metez" and apologizes for "syche feble" fair.[104] The senators ignore Arthur's false modesty and proclaim that "There ryngnede neuer syche realtee within Rome

---

[100] *Morte Arthure*, 26-29.
[101] *Morte Arthure*, 30-47.
[102] *Morte Arthure*, 116-119.
[103] *Morte Arthure*, 120-121.
[104] *Morte Arthure*, 223-225.

walles!"[105] Even after the ambassadors return to Rome their praise of Arthur and his kingdom is great:

> 'He may be chosyn cheftayne cheefe of all oþer,
> Bathe be chauncez of armes and cheuallrye noble,
> For whyeseste and worthyeste and wyghteste of hanndez,
> Of all the wyes þate I watte in this werlde ryche.'[106]

This is the image of Arthur presented throughout the poem. He is primarily a king who maintains a regal bearing and does not participate in individual chivalric exploits. The obvious exception to this rule is the episode involving the giant of Saint Michael's Mount, but even here the poet has altered his sources to transform the scene from a simple battle between a heroic king and a giant into a defense of Arthur's sovereignty.

As Arthur crosses the English channel he dreams of a terrible battle between a dragon and a bear. The dragon is victorious, and upon awakening Arthur asks his philosophers to interpret the dream. They say that the dragon represents Arthur himself, while the bear is given two possible significations.

> 'The bere that bryttenede was abowen in þe clowdez
> Betakyns the tyrauntez þat tourmentez thy pople;
> Or ells with somme gyaunt some journee sall happyn
> In syngulere batell by ȝoure selfe one,
> And þow sall hafe þe victorye, thurghe helpe of oure Lorde'[107]

The meaning of the dream becomes clear only as the poem progresses. After landing in Normandy a Templar approaches Arthur to tell him of trouble in the land:

> 'Here es a teraunt besyde that tourmentez thi pople,
> A grett geaunte of Geen engenderde of fendez.'[108]

---

[105] *Morte Arthure*, 228.
[106] *Morte Arthure*, 530-533.
[107] *Morte Arthure*, 823-827.
[108] *Morte Arthure*, 842-843.

The appearance of the giant and the near repetition of the phrase "tyrantez þat tourmentez thy pople," associates the coming adventure with both interpretations of Arthur's dream.

The giant has laid waste to the countryside and abducted the "Duchez of Bretayne" who is Guenevere's cousin.[109] He has also robbed the area of its wealth, and

> 'Mo florenez in faythe than Fraunce es in aftyre,
> And more tresour vntrewely that traytour has getyn
> Than in Troy was, as I trowe, þat tym þat it was wonn.'[110]

The poet emphasizes the damage that the giant has done to Arthur's realm, and the king decides to seek him out not only for the sake of the Duchess of Britanny, but "for rewthe of þe pople."[111] In both Geoffrey of Monmouth's and Wace's account of the scene there is little mention of the people. It is the abducted woman, Helena, who prompts Arthur's involvement.[112] By broadening the impetus for action beyond the damsel in distress the poet minimizes the appearance of a chivalric *aventure*. This tendency continues as Arthur first ascends the mountain. The king meets an old woman who is lamenting over the grave of the murdered duchess. The woman does not believe that Arthur can be victorious and compares him to figures who are known for their individual feats of arms:

> 'Ware thow wyghttere than Wade, or Wawayn owthire,
> Thow wynnys no wyrchipe, I warne the before!'[113]

Indeed Arthur is neither Wade nor Gawain, and his purpose is not to gain individual "wyrchipe." The major modifications of the scene highlight the political ramifications of the

---

[109] *Morte Arthure*, 852.
[110] *Morte Arthure*, 885-887.
[111] *Morte Arthure*, 888.
[112] Cf. Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The Historia Regum Britannie of Geoffrey of Monmouth I: Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS 568*, ed. Neil Wright (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1985) ch. 165; Wace, *Le Roman de Brut*, ed. Ivor Arnold (Paris: Société des Anciens Français, 1940) ll. 11309-11316. Wace does mention the suffering of the peasants, but he too focuses on Helena.
[113] *Morte Arthure*, 964-965.

episode.

The Giant of St. Michael's Mount has been transformed in a number of notable ways. Unlike the chronicles, the poem focuses on the atrocities that the giant has committed, such as the eating of Christian children.[114] Finlayson argues that the poet's emphasis on this aspect of the giant's character overshadows the rape and murder of the duchess and that "we can dispose of the idea that the episode is simply to be a romance interlude in a heroic poem: it is obviously more in keeping with the serious religious tone of the *chanson de geste*."[115] Although Finlayson is right to downplay the importance of the duchess in the scene, his emphasis on the religious overtones is largely based on a single line of description, "Cowles full cramede of crysmede childyre,"[116] and two lines from Arthur's fifteen-line challenge:

> 'Because that thow killide has þise cresmede childyre,
> Thow has marters made and broghte out of lyfe.'[117]

Rather than establishing the religious nature of Arthur's actions, however, the destruction of the children of Arthur's realm is reason enough for him to defend those under his sovereign authority. That the combat between Arthur and the giant should be read as one over sovereignty is clearly indicated by the other major alteration to the scene.

In the accounts of both Geoffrey of Monmouth and Wace, Arthur defeats the Giant of St. Michael's Mount and then comments that he had never fought a more difficult opponent except for the giant Ritho who possessed the cloak of beards. We have already seen how

---

[114] *Morte Arthure*, 1045-1052.
[115] Finlayson, "Arthur and the Giant," 114.
[116] *Morte Arthure*, 1051.
[117] *Morte Arthure*, 1065-1066. The description of the children as "cresmede" may, as Finlayson assumes, mean that they are baptised, but it may also indicate that they are of royal descent, thus emphasizing the theme of sovereignty in the episode. The religous overtones throughout the episode largely rely on the running joke of the giant as saint. Finlayson, like many other critics, takes pains to compare the *Morte Arthure* to *Beowulf* and his attempt to associate the giant with Grendel is unconvincing. See Finlayson, "Arthur and the Giant," 114-115.

Thomas Gray used the story of Ritho to emphasize Arthur's sovereign control over Europe during the nine years of peace.[118] The alliterative poet does not present the Ritho story independently, but he superimposes the major trait of Ritho, the cloak of beards, onto the Giant of St. Michael's Mount. The lamenting woman warns Arthur that the giant is not interested in rents or gold. The giant desires only to live outside the law, "as lorde in his awen."[119] His expression of his own sovereignty bears quoting at length:

> 'Bot he has kyrtill one, kepide for hym seluen,
> That was sponen in Spayne with specyall byrdez
> And sythyn garnescht in Grece full graythly togedirs;
> It es hydede all with hare hally al ouere
> And bordyrde with the berdez of burlyche kyngez,
> Crispid and kombide, that kempis may knawe
> Iche kynge by his colour, in kythe there he lengez.
> Here the fermez he fangez of fyftene rewmez,
> For ilke Esterne ewyn, howeuer that it fall,
> They sende it hym sothely for saughte of þe pople,
> Sekerly at þat seson with certayne knyghtez:
> And he has aschede Arthure all þis seuen wynntter.
> Forthy hurdez he here to owttraye hys pople,
> Till þe Bretouns kynge haue burneschete his lyppys
> And sent his berde to that bolde with his beste berynes.
> Bot thowe hafe broghte þat berde, bowne the no forthire,
> For it es butelesse bale thowe biddez oghte ells.'[120]

The combat between Arthur and the giant is no random *aventure* but has been orchestrated by the giant himself. Arthur's refusal to pay the "fermez" (i.e. royal rents) of his beard has brought the giant into the land in an attempt to collect. Arthur responds to the woman that he is prepared to fight and defend his beard:

---

[118] See above, p. 103. In the *Morte Arthure* Arthur does mention the earlier fight, but the second giant is unnamed and no longer associated with the cloak of beards, 1174-1177. For Finlayson this transformation simply concentrates "the best elements of the two adventures" and diminishes the possibility of "boring repetitions" and of "reducing Arthur from a real monarch to a rather monontonous giant-killer." Finlayson, "Concept of the Hero," 255.
[119] *Morte Arthure*, 997.
[120] *Morte Arthure*, 998-1014.

> 'ȝa, I haue broghte þe berde' quod he 'the bettyre me lykez,
> Forthi will I boun me and bere it my seluen.'[121]

The combat itself is described in detail, and Arthur, of course, wins in the end. He orders that the giant's head be sent to his army and shown to Hoel and that the treasure be gathered together:

> 'If thow wyll any tresour, take whate the lykez;
> Haue I the kyrtyll and þe clubb, I coueite noghte ells.'[122]

Arthur himself keeps only the cloak of beards and the giant's iron club, the symbol of his usurped sovereignty and the means through which he maintained his tyrannous authority. When Arthur returns to his army their greeting further emphasizes his position as king:

> 'Welcom, oure liege lorde! to lang has thow duellyde.
> Gouernour vndyr Gode, graytheste and noble,
> To wham grace es graunted and gyffen at His will,
> Now thy comly come has comforthede vs all.
> Thow has in thy realtee reuengyde thy pople.'[123]

This transformation is striking for several reasons. The episode can now be associated with both interpretations of the dream of the dragon and bear. Not only does it involve a giant that Arthur fights in single combat, but that giant is also a "tyrauntez þat tourmentez" the people. The interpretation, however, also applies to Lucius, and the alterations to the episode encourage the reader to compare the giant with the emperor. In both cases, the conflict is over sovereign rights. The giant seeks Arthur's beard as a symbol of his submission; Lucius seeks Arthur's presence in Rome. The issue of sovereignty in both cases also involves the payment of rents. The old woman says of the giant that "the fermez he fangez of fyftene rewmez," while Arthur, in response to Lucius, states that he plans to reside in France and

---

[121] *Morte Arthure*, 1033-1034.
[122] *Morte Arthure*, 1190-1191.
[123] *Morte Arthure*, 1200-1204

collect the rents owed to him. He will:

> 'Regne in my realtee and ryste when me lykes,
> Be þe ryuere of Roone halde my Rounde Table,
> Fannge the fermes in faithe of all þa faire rewmes
> For all þe manace of hys myghte and mawgree his eghne.'[124]

Michael Twomey, in his brief discussion of the passage, argues that the "justness of Arthur's war against Lucius is demonstrated symbolically in Arthur's single combat with the giant...."[125] Using the facts that the opponent is a giant, a tyrant and "engendrede of fendez,"[126] Twomey claims that "Defeating the giant is not a chivalric *aventure* but an important step in just war against Lucius",[127] but this is true of all versions of the episode. The originality of the alliterative poem lies in the poet's decision to focus the thematic significance of the scene on the issue of sovereignty. The combat is not simply a first step in a just war, rather the giant has been transformed to foreshadow Arthur's relationship with an emperor who would usurp his kingly rights.

From its outset the war with Lucius is presented as one of competing notions of sovereignty. The ambassadors begin their message to Arthur by proclaiming his subordinate position:

> 'Sir Lucius Iberius, the Emperour of Rome,
> Saluz the as sugett vndyre his sele ryche.'[128]

Arthur's response is to proclaim his own superior claim to be ruler of Rome:

> 'I haue title to take tribute of Rome:
> Myne ancestres ware emperours and aughte it þem seluen—
> Belyn and Brenne, that borne were in Bretayne,
> They ocupyed þe Empyre aughte score wynnttyrs,

---

[124] *Morte Arthure*, 423-426.
[125] Twomey, "Heroic Kingship," 137.
[126] *Morte Arthure*, 843.
[127] Twomey, "Heroic Kingship," 137.
[128] *Morte Arthure*, 86-87.

Ilkane ayere aftyre oþer, as awlde men telles.'[129]

Gawain's impolite embassy to Lucius continues the debate about which claimant holds title to Rome:

> 'And þe fals heretyke þat emperour hym callez,
> That ocupyes in errour the empyre of Rome,
> Sir Arthure herytage, þat honourable kynge,
> That all his auncestres aughte bot Vter hym one—
> That ilke cursynge þat Cayme kaghte for his brothyre
> Cleffe on þe, cukewalde, with crounne ther thow lengez,
> For the vnlordlyeste þat I on lukede euer!'[130]

After the battle with Lucius two surviving senators appear before Arthur and recognise his position as sovereign. They arrive without armor, bow before him "and biddis hym þe hiltes," thus abandoning their war against him.[131] They also address the king:

> 'Twa senatours we are, thi subgettez of Rome,
> That has sauede oure lyfe by þeise salte strandys,
> Hyd vs in þe heghe wode thurghe þe helpynge of Criste,
> Besekes the of socoure as soueraynge and lorde...'[132]

The two are shaved in recognition of their submission:

> Thane the banerettez of Bretayne broghte þem to tentes
> There barbours ware bownn with basyns on lofte;
> With warme watire, iwys, they wette them full son:
> They shouen thes schalkes schappely theraftyre
> To rekken theis Romaynes recreaunt and ȝolden,
> Forthy schoue they them to schewe for skomfite of Rome.[133]

The shaving scene is apparently unique in accounts of Arthur's war with Lucius and it recalls the cloak of beards gathered by the Giant of St. Michael's Mount. In her notes, Hamel asserts that the scene demonstrates Arthur's decline. "The culmination of this episode," she

---

[129] *Morte Arthure*, 275-279.
[130] *Morte Arthure*, 1307-1313.
[131] *Morte Arthure*, 2310.
[132] *Morte Arthure*, 2314-2317.
[133] *Morte Arthure*, 2330-2335.

claims, "is the shaving of the suppliant senators, for no other reason than to humiliate them and Rome.... Arthur has indeed become the giant's alter ego."[134] The humiliation of the senators, however, is not the only point of the scene. Just as Arthur recognised the significance of the cloak of beards and so requested it, along with the club, as his share of the giant's treasure, so here he emphasizes his position as sovereign over Rome by accepting the swords and beards of the suppliant senators. Arthur had accepted the giant's imagery of the beard as tribute and now applies that imagery to the war with Rome.

Following the defeat of the Romans the poem contains a large section of episodes which have been added to the chronicle narrative, namely, the siege of Metz, Gawain's foraging expedition, the campaign in Italy and the dream of Fortune. As we have seen, Gray implies that the period between the battle with Lucius and the news of Mordred's treachery included untold adventures. There was also "some lead in the fourteenth-century tradition that Arthur carried his campaign into Italy."[135] Robert Mannyng writes that after the defeat of Lucius Arthur remained in Burgundy:

> Alle þe wynter duellid þer in,
> tounes he did many bigyn;
> in somer he þouht to Rome haf gone
> if he had lettyng of none.
> He was passed þe mountayns playn
> bot Modrede did him turne agayn.[136]

John of Glastonbury also includes a record of Arthur's activity between the final battle and his march on Rome. In this account, Arthur crosses to Gaul when challenged by Rome:

---

[134] Hamel, *Morte Arthure*, p. 328.
[135] Matthews, *Tragedy of Arthur*, 132.
[136] Robert Mannyng of Brunne, *The Chronicle*, ed. Idelle Sullens, Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, v. 153 (Binghamton: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1996) 1.13463-13468. Cited by line number. In John Hardyng's fifteenth-century *Chronicle* the battles with Lucius actually take place in Italy. Hardyng, *First Version*, 81v.

> ...multasque alias prouincias subiciens bellum cum Romanis habuit et post subsequentem hiemem in partibus illis moratus multas ciuitates subiugare uacauit. Redeunte uero estate Arthurus uersus Romam tendens cum suo excercitu eam sibi subiugare affectauit.[137]

It is in these additional campaigns that most critics see the decline of Arthur's justifications for war. For Finlayson, the siege of Metz marks the turn from just to unjust war, while Twomey places the turn slightly later, at the battle for Como.[138] As Porter points out, however, the decision to invade these territories is not based on a sudden enthusiasm for imperialistic expansion. "It has in fact been announced at the very beginning of the poem in Arthur's formal reply to the Roman ambassador where he rejects the Roman claim to overlordship and states his own hereditary right to be Emperor of Rome."[139] Arthur proclaims that he will not only meet the emperor in open combat, but that he will continue the fight to reclaim his inheritance.

> 'In Lorrayne ne in Lumberdye lefe schall I nowthire
> Nokyn lede appon liffe þat þare his lawes ȝemes,
> And turne in to Tuschayne whene me tyme thynkys,
> Ryde all þas rowme landes wyth ryotous knyghttes...'[140]

Before laying siege to Metz, Arthur announces that the Duke of Lorraine "renke rebell has bene vnto my Rownde Table."[141] Lorraine and the towns in northern Italy "are all clearly depicted in the poem as parts of the Roman Empire to which Arthur lays claim",[142] and in the

---

[137] "he subdued many other provinces as well while he made war with the Romans, and after the following winter, since he had remained in those territories, he spent some time in the conquest of many cities. But when the summer returned, Arthur turned with his army towards Rome with the intention of subjugating it to himself." John of Glastonbury, *The Chronicle of Glastonbury Abbey: An Edition, Translation, and Study of John of Glastonbury's Cronica sive Antiquitates Glastoniensis Ecclesie*, ed. James P. Carley, tr. David Townsend, rev. ed. (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1985) 80. Translation is on facing pages.
[138] See Finlayson, introduction, 12-13; Finlayson, "Concept of the Hero," 265-266; and Twomey, "Heroic Kingship," 139.
[139] Porter, "Chaucer's Knight," 60.
[140] *Morte Arthure*, 429-432.
[141] *Morte Arthure*, 2402.
[142] Porter, "Chaucer's Knight," 60.

battles against these towns Arthur asserts his sovereignty over contumacious vassals. The severity of the campaign has often been cited as proof of Arthur's moral decline, particularly the passage describing his movement through Italy:

> Walles he welte down, wondyd knyghtez,
> Towrres he turnes and turmentez þe pople;
> Wroghte wedewes full wlonke, wrotherayle synges,
> Ofte wery and wepe and wryngen theire handis,
> And all he wastys with werre thare he awaye rydez.[143]

As Porter points out, however, "contemporary accounts of the laws governing the conduct of war hardly bear out these conclusions."[144] In fact, Arthur is less severe than was allowed by contemporary practice, accepting the submission of the duchess after Metz has been taken by arms,[145] and ordering the good treatment of the people of Como:

> That no lele ligemane that to hym lonngede
> Sulde lye be no lady ne be no lele maydyns,
> Ne be no burgesse wyffe, better ne werse,
> Ne no biernez mysebide that to þe burghe longede.[146]

Commenting on these scenes, Juliet Vale asserts that "[b]y the standards of the law of arms which the poet seems to have in mind Arthur is very far from the cruel and covetous tyrant that he has been held to be."[147]

The poem, therefore, portrays an Arthur who asserts his sovereign rights against the challenge from Rome and over his own rebellious vassals in Lorraine and Italy. Arthur's greatest achievement comes at the end of the Italian campaign as he rests near Viterbo. A cardinal comes to him and offers him the imperial crown, asking him to come to the pope:

> In the ceté of Rome as soueraynge and lorde,

---

[143] *Morte Arthure*, 3152-3156.
[144] Porter, "Chaucer's Knight," 62. See, generally, pp. 61-65.
[145] *Morte Arthure*, 3044-3061.
[146] *Morte Arthure*, 3124-3127.
[147] Vale, "Law and Diplomacy," 39. For a similar opinion see Kelly, "Non-Tragedy," 110-111.

> And crown hym kyndly with krysomede hondes,
> With his ceptre, [forsothe] as soueraynge and lorde.[148]

At this moment Arthur sits at the height of his majesty, but he will not be recognised as the sovereign of Rome. Rather, he is visited by a dream of Fortune before he rides triumphantly into the city, and the events that the dream predicts overtake his imperial ambition.

Arthur describes the dream of Fortune to his philosophers. He has dreamed that he was in a wild wood, filled with wolves, wild boar and lions who licked their teeth, "All fore lapynge of blude of my lele knyghtez."[149] Afraid, Arthur flees to a meadow filled with vines of silver and grapes of gold. A beautiful duchess descends from the heavens and "Abowte cho whirllide a whele with hir whitte hondez".[150] Although the woman is never named, her wheel identifies her as Fortune. Eight kings cling to the wheel: six of them have fallen from its heights while two others attempt to climb. The fallen Worthies, as they will be identified, collectively lament:

> 'That euer I rengned on þi rog, me rewes it euer!
> Was neuer roye so riche that regnede in erthe;
> Whene I rode in my rowte, roughte I noghte ells
> Bot reuaye and reuell and rawnson the pople,
> And thus I drife forthe my dayes whills I dreghe myghte;
> And therefore derflyche I am dampnede for euer!'[151]

As H.A. Kelly points out, the phrase "dampned for euer" cannot indicate that all the kings are damned to Hell, for the three Hebrew Worthies are traditionally freed during the harrowing.[152] The dream must be viewed as a-temporal, and as such the laments of the Worthies refer only to their positions on the wheel, not the salvation or damnation of their

---

[148] *Morte Arthure*, 3184-3186.
[149] *Morte Arthure*, 3235.
[150] *Morte Arthure*, 3260.
[151] *Morte Arthure*, 3272-3277.
[152] Kelly, "Non-Tragedy," 100.

souls according to Christian theology. The phrase, therefore, is properly understood in the light of Caesar's statement that he is "dampnede to þe dede."[153] In the individual descriptions of the Worthies there is little to suggest that their falls were caused by anything other than the fickle nature of Fortune. The six fallen Worthies, three Hebrew and three pagan, each give additional brief personal statements of regret that they had put their trust in the wheel. Of the six, only Joshua blames his fall on personal sin:

> 'Now of my solace, I am full sodanly fallen,
> And for sake of my syn ȝone sete es me rewede!'[154]

It is hard to understand why Joshua, the man who led the Israelites into the promised land, should be singled out for his sin. Kelly argues that Joshua is the victim of "character assassination by alliteration" and that the line should be ignored,[155] while Hamel also views the phrase as anomalous.[156] Despite Joshua's self-condemnation, the image of the Worthies is generally neutral as they simply describe their former greatness and lament their fall. Hector's speech is typical:

> 'On ȝone see hafe I sitten als souerayne and lorde,
> And ladys me louede to lappe in theyre armes;
> And nowe my lordchippes are loste and laide foreuer!'[157]

The depiction of David is genuinely positive, as he clings to a Psalter, a harp and a sling.

> 'I was demede in my dayes' he said 'of dedis of armes
> One of the doughtyeste that duellede in erthe.
> Bot I was merride one molde on my moste strenghethis
> With this mayden so mylde þat mofes vs all.'[158]

---

[153] *Morte Arthure*, 3299.
[154] *Morte Arthure*, 3314-3315.
[155] Kelly, "Non-Tragedy," 101. Kelly maintains the view that "the poet is rather crude in his priorities," 102.
[156] Mary Hamel, "The Dream of a King: The Alliterative *Morte Arthure* and Dante," *Chaucer Review* 14 (1979-80): 302.
[157] *Morte Arthure*, 3291-3293.
[158] *Morte Arthure*, 3320-3323.

The pattern of rise and fall which the wheel represents assumes that the two climbing Worthies, the Christians, Charlemagne and Godfrey de Bouillon, will also be thrown down. The fallen Worthies, therefore, present a cross-section of those who place their trust in the wheel, much like the victims of tragedy in *The Monk's Tale*, all of whom do not deserve to have "yfallen out of heigh degree."[159] Those who choose to ride the wheel, whether the wicked (if we believe Joshua's statement), the neutral or the good, are all abandoned by Fortune in the end. As Judas Macabeus says in another poem of the Nine Worthies, "And yit botles hit is with dethe for to fyght, / For dethe dowtles is herytage to eueryche a man."[160]

After the laments of the Worthies, Arthur approaches the duchess. She greets him, saying that "all thy wirchipe in werre by me has thow wonnen."[161] Fortune has aided Arthur not just throughout the events told in the poem, but earlier in his career as well, during his campaigns in France and against Frollo.[162] The duchess further honours Arthur by placing him at the top of her wheel:

> 'Scho lifte me vp lightly with hir leue hondes
> And sette me softely in the see, þe septre me rechede;
> Craftely with a kambe cho kembede myn heuede,
> That the krispan[d]e kroke to my crowne raughte,
> Dressid on me a diademe that dighte was full faire
> And syne profres me a pome pighte full of faire stonys,
> Enamelde with azoure, the erth thereon depayntide,
> Serkylde with the salte see appone sere halfes,
> In sygne þat I sothely was souerayne in erthe.'[163]

---

[159] Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry Benson, *et al.*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987) VII. 1976.
[160] "A Poem on the Nine Worthies," 39-40.
[161] *Morte Arthure*, 3342.
[162] *Morte Arthure*, 3343-3346 The appearance of Frollo here, and again at line 3404 clearly indicate the poet's familiarity with the Arthurian narrative that preceeds the events described in the poem. It also implies that his audience was expected to be familiar with these events as well.
[163] *Morte Arthure*, 3349-3357.

Arthur's position in the dream mirrors his position in life. He holds sovereignty over Rome and plans to conquer the rest of the world. The sceptre and the orb that the duchess give him represent his regal authority. Arthur walks through the meadow with the duchess in this state of splendour until noon. At midday, however, the duchess' mood changes and she grows angry with her most recent favorite. Saying that Arthur has enjoyed her favour enough: "Aboute scho whirles the whele and whirles me vndire, / Till all my qwarters þat whille whare qwaste al to peces."[164]

Upon hearing the dream Arthur's philosopher immediately explains its significance. "'Freke' sais the philosophre 'thy fortune es passede'."[165] Rather than condemning Arthur for his campaigns, however, the philosopher simply encourages the king to prepare for his imminent death:

> 'Thou arte at þe hegheste, I hette the forsothe—
> Chalange nowe when thow will, thow cheuys no more!
> Thow has schedde myche blode, and schalkes distroyede,
> Sakeles, in cirquytrie, in sere kynges landis.
> Schryfe the of thy schame and schape for thyn ende!'[166]

The philosopher recognizes that Arthur is now at his greatest state of achievement and that he will prosper no longer. He also recognizes that Arthur's conquests have involved the deaths of innocents and that Arthur should atone for those deaths. There is nothing in the philosopher's speech except proximity which indicates that the deaths of innocents have caused Arthur's fall. Joshua, it will be remembered, does see his sin as justification for his fall and says that "for sake of [his] syn" he is denied his once high place, but his lament is unique and not echoed by either Arthur or the interpreter of his dream. Arthur's place has

---

[164] *Morte Arthure*, 3388-3389.
[165] *Morte Arthure*, 3394.
[166] *Morte Arthure*, 3397-3400.

been in the world, and regardless of the justice of his cause his wars have brought him into sin, the "rewthe werkes" of which the philosopher encourages him to repent.[167] Only after he has given up the pursuit of earthly conquest can he, like the Red Cross Knight, wash his hands "from guilt of bloudy field." Critics who claim that the philosopher condemns Arthur's conquests are forced to acknowledge an inconsistency in the poet's attitude toward the king. Höltgen writes that

> now the poet shows himself to be a Janus figure: his Christian piety must condemn Arthur's bloody acts of war; his nationalistic enthusiasm for heroic and chivalric achievements must glorify the same deeds. Two hearts beat in his breast: the one predicts eternal damnation..., the other eternal fame.[168]

Arthur's fall, however, need not be seen as a condemnation of his earthly achievement, only its necessary outcome. Like Troy, the Arthurian world can be looked upon as the pinnacle of chivalric glory and as an example of fortune's mutability.

After encouraging Arthur to found abbeys in France as penance, the philosopher identifies the kings in the dream and tells Arthur to "Take kepe ȝitte of oþer kynges, and kaste in thyne herte, / That were conquerours kydde and crownnede in erthe."[169] The adjectives used to describe the Worthies are uniformly positive: "conquerours kydde," "cheualrous," "jentill," "full nobill," "joly," "þe dere." Charlemagne and Godfrey are also praised for the recovery of Christian relics and the Holy Land itself.[170] Far from condemning the Worthies, the philosopher praises them and includes Arthur among their number:

> 'Forethy Fortune þe fetches to fulfill the nowmbyre,
> Alls nynne of þe nobileste namede in erthe.
> This sall in romance be redde with ryall knyghttes,

---

[167] *Morte Arthure*, 3453.
[168] Karl Joseph Höltgen, "King Arthur and Fortuna," tr. Edward Donald Kennedy, *King Arthur: A Casebook*, ed. Edward Donald Kennedy (New York and London: Garland, 1996) 131.
[169] *Morte Arthure*, 3406-3407.
[170] *Morte Arthure*, 3407-3437.

> Rekkenede and renownde with ryotous kynges,
> And demyd one Domesdaye for dedis of armes
> For þe doughtyeste þat euer was duelland in erthe—
> So many clerkis and kynges sall karpe of ȝoure dedis
> And kepe ȝoure conquestez in cronycle euer!'[171]

Although the philosopher points to the place that the Worthies hold in historical tradition, they remain significant in the poem not so much for their deeds or their achievements, but rather for the magnitude of their falls.[172]

As individual examples of the transience of this life the Worthies recall the *memento mori* tradition popular in England at the end of the fourteenth century. The *memento mori* encourages the listener to contemplate the fleeting nature of this life and prepare for the next world. Edward the Black Prince was perhaps the greatest example of military chivalry in the fourteenth century, but in the end Edward prepared for his death and contemplated the next life. His tomb in Canterbury Cathedral, erected about 1376, bears an epitaph which is composed in the first person. It demands that passers-by listen to what the 'corps' has to say, and that:

> Tiel come tu es autiel je fu,
> Tu seras tiel come je su.[173]

The epitaph continues and contrasts the Prince's existence on and in the earth saying:

---

[171] *Morte Arthure*, 3438-3445. This is the second reference to possible source material in the text. The first also uses the terms "romawns" and "cronycles" (3200, 3218) but there is not enough context to determine if the poet distinguishes between the two terms. Thus Patterson's assertion that the poem "recognizes that there are two streams of Arthurian writing, 'romaunce' (lines 3200, 3440) and 'cronycle' (lines 3218, 3445), but locates itself at the source of both by designating them as later developments and calling itself a history" is an interesting but unprovable suggestion. Patterson, *Negotiating the Past*, 213. There is absolutely no evidence for Britton Harwood's assertion that the poem "calls one of its sources, Wace's *Brut*, 'romawns'... and another of its sources, Laȝamon's version of Wace, a 'cronycle'" Harwood, "Witness to Epic," 248.

[172] For a similar argument, see Patterson, *Negotiating the Past*, 224-227. Patterson's reading of the poem, I feel, over-estimates the futility of historical action and is molded by a desire to exhibit a false ambiguity by constructing conflicting points of reference within the poem. For example: "Participation in the historical world is simultaneously proscribed and required, both revealed as without value and imposed as a duty. But for this duty to be taken up, the poem suggests, the emptiness of the historical process must be simultaneously acknowledged and repudiated. It is just this double act of recognition and evasion that the dream of Fortune both records and, in its reception, occasions." Patterson, *Negotiating the Past*, 227.

[173] "As you are, I once was / As I am, you will be." "Epitaph of the Black Prince," quoted by John Cammidge, *The Black Prince: An Historical Pageant* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1943), 454.

> En terre avoy graunt richesse,
> Dount je y fis graunt noblesse,
> Terre, mesons et graunt tresor,
> Draps, chivalx, argent et or;
> Mais je suys or poevre et cheitifs,
> Parfond en la terre ou je gis.[174]

The epitaph of the Black Prince, which he himself commissioned, does not condemn his chivalric activities. Rather, it recognises that individual chivalry and achievement end with death, and that every man, including the heir to the English throne, must prepare for that eventuality. In the same way, the philosopher's directive to prepare for death does not condemn the life that Arthur has led.

In addition to the personal message of the *memento mori* the Worthies also recall the larger pattern of British historiography which has its origins at Troy and in which Arthur fully participates. It is the tragedy of Arthur that his claim to sovereignty is based on British history, the pattern of which includes not only great rises to power, but also dramatic declines. Arthur's claims to the sovereignty of Rome are based on conquerors long since dead, Cligés' claim to noble arms is through Brutus and Aeneas, both fugitives from lost lands, and even Priamus' assertions that Arthur will be "Alexander ayre," or that he will be "Abillere þan euer was sir Ector of Troye," are not auspicious foundations for a lasting reign. Indeed, the turn of Arthur's fortune has already deprived him of his sovereignty, and even as he recounts the dream "some wikkyd men" have begun to ravage his realm.[175]

The news of Mordred's treachery arrives the next day. Arthur, dressed in royal finery, wanders away from his men. In the chronicle tradition, no messenger is named, but in the

---

[174] "On earth I had great riches, / There I had great nobility, / Land, homes and great wealth, / Clothing, horses, silver and gold; / But now I am poor and a catiff, / For in the earth I now lie." "Epitaph of the Black Prince," 454.
[175] *Morte Arthure*, 3447.

alliterative poem Arthur meets a pilgrim, on his way to Rome, who is identified as "sir Cradoke."[176] Arthur warns the pilgrim that he should not travel in an area torn by war, but Caradoc will visit the pope:

> 'Thane sall I seke sekirly my souerayne lorde,
> Sir Arthure of Inglande, that auenaunt byerne.'[177]

Arthur recognizes that the pilgrim is British by his speech and asks how he knows the king. Caradoc answers:

> 'Me awghte to knowe þe kynge; he es my kidde lorde,
> And I, calde in his courte a knyghte of his chambire.
> Sir Craddoke was I callide in his courte riche,
> Kepare of Karlyon vndir the kynge selfen.'[178]

James L. Boren argues that "In this case (as with the extreme case of the giant) the physical seems to mirror the spiritual, and Cradock's failure to recognize Arthur may be indicative of his (Arthur's) spiritual degeneration."[179] Caradoc's failure to recognize the king, however, is not due to Arthur's moral decline, but his political decline. Caradoc states that he is looking for his "souerayne lorde" but now, abandoned by Fortune, Arthur no longer maintains his sovereign dignity. Arthur still has the dress of a king, but his authority is no longer recognised.

Caradoc's message is unwelcome. Mordred "es wikkede and wilde of his dedys":

> 'He has castells encrochede, and corownde hym seluen,
> Kaughte in all þe rentis of þe Rownde Tabill.'[180]

---

[176] *Morte Arthure*, 3487.
[177] *Morte Arthure*, 3499-3500. Leslie Johnson argues that the episode contrasts the two ways by which one may go to Rome. Caradoc the pilgrim, in this interpretation, stands in contrast to Arthur the crusader. Leslie Johnson, "King Arthur at the Crossroads to Rome," *Noble and Joyous Histories: English Romances, 1375-1650*, ed. Eiléan Ní Cuilleanáin and J. D. Pheifer (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1993) 87-111.
[178] *Morte Arthure*, 3509-3512.
[179] Boren, "Narrative Design," 316.
[180] *Morte Arthure*, 3523, 3525-3526.

Not only has Mordred usurped the throne, he has formed alliances with Arthur's enemies to defend the realm. Even these are not his worst crimes:

> 'He has weddede Waynore and hir his wieffe holdis,
> And wonnys in the wilde bowndis of þe weste marches,
> And has wroghte hire with childe, as wittnesse tellis.'[181]

It is appropriate that Caradoc should deliver this message. We have seen how both Thomas Gray and the Auchinleck *Short Metrical Chronicle* made use of the story of Caradoc's mantle to emphasize the theme of betrayal in their Arthurian narratives. Here, Caradoc has been relieved of his mantle, but his presence carries the same message.[182] As in the *Scalacronica*, the appearance of Caradoc evokes images of treachery and deceit which mingle the sexual with the political. Mordred has committed adultery with his king and uncle's wife, but he has also betrayed his oath to care for the country and he has usurped his king's royal rights. Arthur himself focuses on the issue of sovereignty:

> 'I am with treson betrayede for all my trewe dedis,
> And all my trauayle es tynt— me tydis no bettire.
> Hym sall torfere betyde, þis tresone has wroghte,
> And I may traistely hym take, as I am trew lorde!'[183]

After the dream of Fortune and the arrival of Caradoc there is nothing left but to follow the narrative to its terrible conclusion.

Arthur returns to Britain to fight his rebellious warden. The first skirmish with Mordred, a sea battle, is followed by Gawain's attempt to establish a beach-head, but the

---

[181] *Morte Arthure*, 3550-3552.
[182] The scene of Caradoc's arrival has attracted a great deal of critical attention, but no one has noticed the significance of Caradoc himself. Matthews notes Caradoc's association with the mantle story, but draws no conclusions. Matthews, *Tragedy of Arthur*, 100, *n.* 45. Hamel, in her notes, simply points out that both Laȝamon and the *Mort Artu* contain references to Caradoc at different points in the narrative. Hamel, *Morte Arthure*, p. 368. Martin Ball does speculate about why such a minor character is introduced so casually, but concludes that "it is a narrative device which acts to establish a familiarity between the narratee and Craddoke." Ball, "Knots of Narrative," 364.
[183] *Morte Arthure*, 3565-3568.

chivalry of Arthur's knights can no longer sustain his sovereign authority. In his attempt to win "wirchipe... for euer"[184] Gawain and his men are surrounded and outnumbered.[185] Gawain works only in the service of Fortune now as he addresses his enemy:

> 'Fals fosterde foode, the fende haue thy bonys!
> Fy on the, felone, and thy false werkys!
> Thow sall be dede and vndon for thy derfe dedys,
> Or I sall dy this daye, ȝif destanye worthe![186]

Finally Gawain faces Mordred on the field and the two engage in single combat, but Gawain is unable to kill the traitor:

> Alls his grefe was graythede, his grace was no bettyre!--
> He shokkes owtte a schorte knyfe schethede with siluere
> And scholde haue slottede hym in, bot no slytte happenede:
> His hand sleppid and slode o slante one þe mayles,
> And þe toþer slely slynges hym vndire.[187]

Mordred gets the upper hand and strikes Gawain "on þe brayne. / And thus sir Gawayne es gonn, the gude man of armes."[188] The significance of the loss of Gawain is emphasized by the eulogy delivered by the traitor Mordred. When asked by King Froderike who he has killed, Mordred answers:

> '...Beknowe now þe sothe:
> Qwat gome was he, this with the gaye armes,
> With þis gryffone of golde, þat es one growffe fallyn?
> ~
> He was makles one molde, mane, be my trow[t]he!
> This was sir Gawayne the gude, þe gladdeste of othire
> And the graciouseste gome that vndire God lyffede;

---

[184] *Morte Arthure*, 3769.
[185] Clark argues that the action of Gawain's landing is modelled on the Battle of Hastings while Johnson, arguing against a written source, claims that the scene is based on the oral formulaic theme of the Hero on the Beach. See George Clark, "Gawain's Fall: The Alliterative *Morte Arthure* and Hastings," *Tennessee Studies in Literature* 11 (1966): 89-95, and James D. Johnson, "'The Hero on the Beach' in the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*," *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 76 (1975): 271-81.
[186] *Morte Arthure*, 3776-3779.
[187] *Morte Arthure*, 3851-3855.
[188] *Morte Arthure*, 3857-3858. Note that as in the *Scalacronica* Gawain dies of a head wound after a sea battle. See above p. 110.

Mane hardyeste of hande, happyeste in armes."[189]

Mordred's appeal to heraldry, as in the scenes with Cligés and Priamus, acts as an affirmation of Gawain's nobility.[190] Gawain is also identified as the man who had been the "happyeste in armes." The adjective "happyeste," of course, is a cognate of "hap" which the MED defines as "A person's lot (good or bad), luck, fortune, fate." As an adjective, however, it implies good fortune and the Middle English "happi" is defined as "Favored by fortune, fortunate...." The designation "happyeste in armes," applied here to Gawain recognizes that his success in battle has resulted from his good fortune.[191] The fact that Gawain's fortune has passed is further alluded to during the battle with Mordred through repeated use of "hap" cognates. When Gawain decides to attack Mordred's forces the poet remarks:

> Oure men merkes them to, as them myshappenede;
> For hade sir Gawayne hade grace to halde þe grene hill,
> He had wirchipe, iwys, wonnen for euer![192]

In his final battle with Mordred, as quoted above, he "scholde haue slottede hym in, bot no slytte happenede." Other aspects of the scene emphasize Gawain's loss of good fortune. Despite his frenzied attack, he will lose the battle because "Fell neuer fay man siche fortune

---

[189] *Morte Arthure*, 3867-3869, 3875-3878.

[190] Note that Mordred's own nobility is called into question as he attempts to disguise himself, "Because of his cowardys" by changing his arms in the final battle (*Morte Arthure*, 4180-4186). Previously, when Arthur named Mordred as regent, Mordred asked that he be allowed to accompany Arthur to the continent because those who go will be "wyrchipide hereaftyre" (*Morte Arthure*, 685).

[191] Beverly Kennedy provides an overview of the use of "hap" cognates in Thomas Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*. She argues that a "happy" knight is one favoured by God, and that the "unhappy" knight has lost God's favour because of his sinful actions. See Chapter five, "Happy and Unhappy Knights", in Beverly Kennedy, *Knighthood in the Morte Darthur*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1992) 214-275, *esp.*, 230-244. This providentialist point of view, as Kennedy points out, is only one possible meaning of "happy", and it does not seem to be at work in the alliterative *Morte Arthure*. It will be remembered that as Arthur boldly walks before the walls of Metz he proclaims "Sall neuer harlotte haue happe, thorowe helpe of my Lorde, / To kyll a corownde kynge with krysom enoynttede." *Morte Arthure*, 2446-2447. Arthur, of course, is mistaken and it may be significant that he characterizes Mordred's followers as "harlotes halfe." *Morte Arthure*, 3643.

[192] *Morte Arthure*, 3767-3769.

in erthe!"[193] Later we are told that although he fights like a lion, "ȝit sir Wawayne for wo wondis bot lyttill."[194] Arthur also uses "hap" in his lament for his fallen knight:

> 'Dere kosyn o kynde, in kare am I leuede,
> For nowe my wirchipe es wente and my were endide.
> Here is þe hope of my hele, my happynge of armes;
> My herte and my hardynes hale one hym lengede—
> My concell, my comforthe þat kepide myn herte!'[195]

For the *Morte Arthure*-poet, Fortune alone has caused the fall of Arthur and his Round Table. In the final battle, as in other conflicts in the poem, Arthur's knights defend his sovereignty. This time, however, abandoned by Fortune, they are unsuccessful:

> 'Kyng comly with crowne, in care am I leuyde!
> All my lordchipe lawe in lande es layde vndyre,
> That me has gyfen gwerdouns, by grace of Hym seluen,
> Mayntenyde my manhede be myghte of theire handes,
> Made me manly one molde and mayster in erthe!'[196]

As Arthur encounters Mordred he repeats the phrase he uttered upon hearing the news of Mordred's usurpation. He will fight the traitor "alls I am trew lorde!"[197] The combat is not simply between a lord and his contumacious vassal. As Arthur wields Excalibur and Mordred wields Clarent, a sword not mentioned in any other version of the tale, the issue of sovereignty is highlighted again in this final battle. Clarent, an alternate symbol of regal authority, has been stolen from Arthur's own wardrobe. Mordred has ransacked the "cofres enclosede þat to þe crown lengede, / With rynges and relikkes, and þe regale of Fraunce, /

---

[193] *Morte Arthure*, 3828.
[194] *Morte Arthure*, 3833.
[195] *Morte Arthure*, 3956-3960. Arthur's lament for Gawain has often been taken as an indication of his guilt, particularly Arthur's line "He [i.e. Gawain] es sakles, supprysede for syn of myn one." *Morte Arthure*, 3986. In the passage, however, the issue is not Arthur's guilt, but Gawain's innocence. Arthur twice asserts that Gawain is "sakles" and that his blood should be "schrynede in golde." The image of Gawain as a martyred saint, I feel, overshadows any attempt by Arthur to accept the blame for his death. (See *Morte Arthure*, 3980-3996.) Even if Arthur's words are to be taken at face value (including his statement that his kingdom "Was wonnen thourghe sir Wawayne and thourghe his witt one!" *Morte Arthure*, 3964) it is not at all clear what sin Arthur is confessing.
[196] *Morte Arthure*, 4275-4279.

That was fownden on sir Froll."[198] The symbols of sovereignty that Arthur won through conquest have been, in turn, taken from him in Mordred's attempted usurpation. Arthur's own attempt to regain sovereignty is, as he seems to realize by the poem's end, doomed to failure. Fortune will no longer aid him, and his knights are no longer the "happyeste in armes." All Arthur can do is care for his own soul and salvage the kingdom for his heir.

Realizing that he is to die, Arthur asks that his surviving knights, "Doo calle me a confessour with Criste in his armes! / I will be howselde in haste, what happe so betyddys."[199] Arthur also attends to the state of his kingdom, naming Constantine as his successor and ordering that Mordred's children be killed and left unburied. Finally, he forgives Guenevere for her actions and dies:

> He saide 'In manus' with mayne one molde whare he ligges,
> And thus passes his speryt, and spekes he no more.[200]

Arthur dies with his kingdom in shambles, but his sins confessed.

Despite his fall, and the fall of the Round Table, the poem consistently praises the king's efforts to attain and maintain sovereignty. In her review of William Matthews' book, Helaine Newstead writes of "the poet's evident enthusiasm for the great king, whose heroic exploits constantly arouse his sympathetic admiration. Arthur is 'oure kynge,' his knights are 'oure chualrous men'."[201] The failure of Arthur's ambition in no way diminishes his stature, nor does the disintegration of the Round Table invalidate Cligés' claim to nobility, or Gawain's desire for "wirchip." It is not necessary, therefore, to condemn Arthur's imperial

---

[197] *Morte Arthure*, 4192.
[198] *Morte Arthure*, 4206-4208.
[199] *Morte Arthure*, 4314-4315.
[200] *Morte Arthure*, 4326-4347.
[201] Helaine Newstead, rev. of *The Tragedy of Arthur: A Study of the Alliterative 'Morte Arthure'*, by William Matthews, *Romance Philology* 16 (1962): 119.

project in order to recognise the tragic elements of the poem. In defining medieval tragedy Benson writes that the "hero, like all men, will inevitably fall to death or wretchedness even though he be flawless, for the lesson of medieval tragedy is simply that man is not the master of his own destiny."[202] In the alliterative *Morte Arthure*, the British king is presented as the greatest example of a Christian sovereign and his Round Table as the pinnacle of chivalry, but neither the king, nor the court over which he presides, is exempt from the mutability of history. The message that echoes throughout the poem is that a king's sovereignty, and the chivalry required to maintain it, are by their very nature transient.

This theme is not unique to the alliterative poem, and the author relies on an audience familiar with the cyclical pattern of British history. Robert Hanning, despite his convincing examination of the cyclical pattern of history in Geoffrey's *Historia*, argues that the theme was not repeated. "Of course, it was one thing to copy Geoffrey's narrative," he writes, "and quite another to understand or emulate the premises of his historiography. Of the latter phenomenon there are few, if any, examples in the later medieval centuries."[203] But the author of the alliterative *Morte Arthure* does emulate Geoffrey's thematic concerns. The poet prompts his audience's response by employing several strategies which emphasize this aspect of Arthurian history. The challenge of Cligés and the Gawain-Priamus episode both augment the chivalric quality of Arthur's reign while invoking the failed chivalric enterprises of the Nine Worthies and the British past. That past is again recalled in the final lines of the poem:

> Thus endis Kyng Arthure, as auctors alegges,
> That was of Ectores blude, the kynge son of Troye,

---

[202] Benson, "The Alliterative *Morte Arthure*," 79.
[203] Hanning, *Vision of History*, 174.

> And of sir Pryamous the prynce, praysede in erthe:
> For thethen broghte the Bretons all his bolde eldyrs
> Into Bretayne the brode, as þe Bruytte tellys. *& explicit*[204]

At the same time, the transformation of the Giant of Saint Michael's Mount, the additions of the seige of Metz and the Italian campaign, and the dream of Fortune all emphasize the fact that the successes of the Roman campaign have placed Arthur "at þe hegheste,"[205] and that his fall is imminent. Like the chronicler Sir Thomas Gray, or the redactor of Robert of Gloucester's *Chronicle*, the alliterative poet has used episodes from outside the Galfridian tradition to enhance the thematic concerns of his poetry while maintaining the integrity of his narrative. All three authors, therefore, demonstrate a willingness to manipulate the historical matter within the the Brut tradition in order to enrich the interpretive options of the Arthurian past.

---

[204] *Morte Arthure*, 4342-4346.
[205] *Morte Arthure*, 3396.

Chapter 4: Adventures in History

The influence of romance on Arthurian chronicles was not random or haphazard. As we have seen, chroniclers often consciously employed romance material for thematic embellishment in order to enrich the Galfridian narrative. Influence, however, was exerted in both directions, and the chronicle narrative affected the representation of Arthur in English romances. In his study of the stanzaic *Morte Arthur*, for example, E.D. Kennedy has argued that even when translating French romance material, an English poet "would surely have considered the chronicles which the English accepted as part of their history."[1] The poet's familiarity with English chronicles, according to Kennedy, accounts for the generally positive image of Arthur found in the poem.[2] Specific changes made to his source, such as the series of battles between Arthur and Mordred rather than the single battle at Salisbury, as in the French *Le Mort le Roi Artu*, reflect the poet's knowledge of Galfridian narrative. Kennedy points out that the pattern of multiple battles is drawn from the chronicle tradition's three battles which originated with Geoffrey of Monmouth.[3]

Despite the influence of the chronicle tradition, the stanzaic *Morte Arthur* is firmly located in the romance narrative of the prose Vulgate, retelling the story of Guenevere's adultery with Lancelot and the subsequent fall of the Round Table. Unlike the stanzaic *Morte Arthur* and its alliterative counterpart, however, most romances do not deal with the major events of Arthur's reign, but instead focus on a single knight and his adventures. In these cases, casual references to an Arthurian setting often do not clearly indicate which

---

[1] Edward Donald Kennedy, "The Stanzaic *Morte Arthur*: The Adaptation of a French Romance for an English Audience," *Culture and the King: The Social Implications of the Arthurian Legend*, ed. Martin B. Shichtman and James P. Carley (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994) 93.
[2] Kennedy, "Stanzaic *Morte Arthur*," *passim*.

Arthurian narrative the romance employs as a background. The romance of *Sir Degrevant*, for example, uses Arthur and his court as a backdrop for a story which is independent of either the chronicle or romance Arthurian narrative. The reader cannot tell in which tradition the story belongs, and it probably does not matter.[4] In contrast, the setting of Chaucer's *Wife of Bath's Tale* is a self-consciously a-historical one:

> In tholde dayes of the Kyng Arthour,
> Of which that Britons speken greet honour,
> Al was this land fulfild of fayerye.
> The elf-queene, with hir joly compaignye,
> Daunced ful ofte in many a grene mede.[5]

This fanciful opening is far removed from the serious reckoning of conquests, lands and rents with which the alliterative *Morte Arthure* begins, and may indicate that the romance's account of sexual politics is to be read not against the history of the chronicle tradition, but against the fictions of the prose Vulgate cycle.

Despite the popularity of the Vulgate cycle among readers of French, it is unclear to what extent its narrative was known among English speakers. As we have seen, "chronicles were the primary source of knowledge in medieval England concerning King Arthur and the Arthurian era,"[3] and most chronicles included the Galfridian narrative. It is not surprising, therefore, that English romances of individual adventure could also use the narrative found in the Brut tradition as a background. This is not to say that the authors of romances sought to present the adventures of individual knights as historically factual; rather, an author could

---

[3] Kennedy, "Stanzaic *Morte Arthur*," 92.
[4] *Sir Degrevant* opens by stating "With Kyng Arthure, I wene, / And Dame Gaynore þe quene, / He was knawen for kene, / Þis commly knyghte." Arthur's court seems to be used simply as a setting which evokes a chivalric atmosphere. *The Romance of Sir Degrevant*, ed. L. F. Casson, EETS, os. 221 (London: Oxford University Press, 1970) 17-20. Cited by line number.
[5] Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry Benson, *et al.*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987) III. 857-861.

enrich a romance by implying a relationship between the hero's individual adventure and the larger narrative of Arthur's reign. We have already seen how the story of Caradoc's mantle takes on added meaning when placed within the chronicle narrative. On its own, the significance of the adventure is unclear, but when placed within the *Scalacronica* the adventure contains a serious lesson about the value of "troth". The queen's adultery, a matter of polite dalliance in isolation, reveals within the framework of Arthurian history not only a weakness in Arthur's court, but also the court's unwillingness to recognize its own shortcomings.

The authors of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and *The Awntyrs of Arthure* also direct their readers to consider the respective adventures of Gawain within the chronicle narrative. In both of these works the larger narrative of Arthur's reign is not retold, but the poet uses subtle allusions to direct his reader to consider the adventure within the context of the Brut tradition. The emphasis placed on the historical Arthur seems to be a tendency of the fourteenth-century alliterative revival, of which both poems, like the alliterative *Morte Arthure*, are products. Barron claims that the poets of the revival viewed Arthur in a manner distinct from their French contemporaries. For the English alliterative poets,

> ... [Arthur's] fundamental role as the once and future king - founder of a Britain that had been great and would be great again, firmly rooted in history as part of a dynastic succession stretching from Aeneas to Cadwalader, one-time conqueror of England's continental rivals - informed and coloured his every appearance, in chronicle or romance, dignifying trifling actions and obscuring ignoble ones.[7]

Unlike the alliterative *Morte*, these two adventures focus on Sir Gawain, rather than Arthur himself. The poems have undergone a great deal of critical scrutiny, and *Sir Gawain* in

---

[6] Lister M. Matheson, "King Arthur and the Medieval English Chronicles," *King Arthur Through the Ages*, ed. Valerie M. Lagorio and Mildred Leake Day (New York and London: Garland, 1990) I: 248.
[7] W.R.J. Barron, "Arthurian Romance: Traces of an English Tradition," *English Studies* 61 (1980): 22-23.

particular has been the subject of arguably more scholarly prose than any other poem of the revival. Rarely, however, do critics carefully consider either poem in relation to the larger Arthurian narrative. Modern critics, more familiar with the romance tradition, have generally read these two poems as oblique comments on the adultery of Lancelot and Guenevere. As we shall see, this interpretation implies a narrative background which the poet did not intend, and has thus led to significant misrepresentations of both works.

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

The few critics who have studied *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* in its Arthurian context have focused on its relationship to the Vulgate cycle.[8] This line of inquiry has centered on the various Arthurian characters who populate Camelot throughout the poem. Richard C. Griffith argues that Bertilak is to be identified as Bertolais, a character from the Vulgate who conspires to place the false Guenevere on the throne.[9] According to this theory, Bertilak's Lady is, in fact, the false Guenevere, thus providing a rationale for the adventure beyond Morgan's animosity. As suggestive as this theory is, the sinister and dangerous Bertolais bears little resemblance to the good-natured host or even to the Green Knight who, despite his aggressive appearance, obviously does not intend real harm to Gawain since he does not kill him when he is both entitled and able to do so. If the audience is expected to identify Bertilak with his Vulgate namesake, the association is loose at best, possibly suggesting manipulation and trickery.

---

[8] For a survey of this scholarship see Robert L. Kelly, "Allusions to the Vulgate Cycle in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*," *Literary and Historical Perspectives of the Middle Ages: Proceedings of the 1981 SEMA Meeting*, ed. Patricia Cummins *et al.* (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 1982) 183-184.
[9] Richard R. Griffith, "Bertilak's Lady: The French Background of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*," *Machaut's World: Science and Art in the Fourteenth Century*, ed. Madeleine Pelner Cosman and Bruce

Robert Kelly presents one of the most extended attempts to situate the adventure within the Vulgate narrative. Kelly distinguishes between the romance and chronicle traditions and states that *Sir Gawain* "appears to take place in Vulgate time."[10] Accepting Griffith's theory, Kelly focuses on the names of minor characters who appear in the tale and argues that an elaborate system of allusions ties the story to the larger issues of the Vulgate cycle. The first list of names in the poem gives details of the seating arrangement at the Round Table and includes "Gawan," "Gwenore," "Agrauayn a la dure mayn," "Bischop Bawdewyn," and "Ywan, Vryn son."[11] Kelly argues that the appearance of the brothers Gawain and Agravain evokes the final scenes of the Vulgate when Agravain, against the advice of Gawain, reveals the queen's adultery.[12] The brothers are also cousins of Yvain whose mother, in the Vulgate, is one of the daughters of Igerne. These implied relationships, claims Kelly, evoke Arthur's own conception through the device of Igerne's deception.[13] Similar allusions are detected for the group of knights who attend Gawain's departure from Camelot,[14] and Bertilak's revelation of Morgan le Fay's involvement in the adventure.[15] Although Kelly's study is suggestive, the names included could easily represent a random sampling of Arthurian characters. In all, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* includes nineteen names (Bertilak's Lady is never named). Gawain, Guenevere and Arthur, as well as Merlin and Uther, who are mentioned at the end of the poem in association with Arthur's

---

Chandler, *Annals of the New York Acad. of Sciences*, 314 (New York: New York Acad. of Sciences, 1978) *passim*.

[10] Kelly, "Allusions to the Vulgate," 184.

[11] *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, ed. J.R.R. Tolkien and E.V. Gordon, 2nd ed. rev. by Norman Davis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967) 107-113. Cited by line number. Hereafter *SGGK*.

[12] Kelly, "Allusions to the Vulgate," 185-186.

[13] Kelly, "Allusions to the Vulgate," 185.

[14] *SGGK*, 551-555. Cf. Kelly, "Allusions to the Vulgate," 186-188.

[15] *SGGK*, 2444-2464. Cf. Kelly, "Allusions to the Vulgate," 188-190.

conception,[16] are characters who belong equally to the chronicle and romance traditions. Bishop Bawdewyn (Baldwin) and Errik (i.e. Chrétien's Erec) do not appear in the Vulgate. Many of the remaining names are regularly found in formulaic lists. *Sir Launfal*, for example, contains a lengthy list which names characters who are also found in *Sir Gawain* including "Gawayn," "Agrafrayn," "Launcelet du Lake," "Ewayn," and "Bos."[17] The alliterative *Morte Arthure*, a poem obviously set in the chronicle tradition, contains many of the same names, often in the same alliterating pairs: *Sir Gawain* mentions "Launcelot, and Lyonel" while the *Morte* includes "sir Lyonelle, sir Lawncelott";[18] *Sir Gawain* has "Sir Boos and Sir Byduer" and the *Morte* states that "The kynge biddis sir Boice, 'buske the belyfe / Take with the sir Berille, and Bedwer the ryche'";[19] and just as *Sir Gawain* names "Aywan and Errik" so the *Morte* includes "Sir Ewayne and sir Errake."[20] *The Parlement of the Thre Ages* also includes the alliterative pair "Sir Ewayne, Sir Errake" and a brief account of Morgan le Fay.[21] As Kelly himself admits, many of the characters found in *Sir Gawain*, such as Dodinal and the Duke of Clarence, regularly appear in lists in the Vulgate cycle.[22] In short, the names are no sure way to extract meaning, as they are varied and possibly random. The collection of characters in *Sir Gawain* could easily be interpreted as representing the chronicle tradition of Arthur's court. Gawain and Yvain, two knights of importance in the

---

[16] *SGGK*, 2448 & 2465.
[17] Thomas Chestre, *Sir Launfal*, ed. A.J. Bliss (London and Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1960) 13-19. Cited by line number.
[18] *SGGK*, 553; *Morte Arthure: A Critical Edition*, ed. Mary Hamel (New York: Garland, 1984) 4266. Cited by line number. See also *Morte Arthure*, 3637-3638 for the same two characters.
[19] *SGGK*, 554; *Morte Arthure* 1263-1264. See also *Morte Arthure*, 1605-1606 for the same two characters.
[20] *SGGK*, 551; *Morte Arthure*, 4075. See also *Morte Arthure*, 4161 for the same two characters.
[21] *The Parlement of the Thre Ages*, *Alliterative Poetry of the Later Middle Ages: An Anthology*, ed. Thorlac Turville-Petre (London: Routledge, 1989) 511. Cited by line number.
[22] Kelly, "Allusions to the Vulgate," 187 and 196, *n.* 20.

chronicles, sit on either side of the king and queen.[23] Lancelot, who could evoke the romance tradition of adultery and betrayal, is named but his role, as in the alliterative *Morte*, is diminished to the point that he is indistinguishable from the other knights of Arthur's court. Kelly's assertion that "[o]ne can be certain that the author has the French romance in mind and not the chronicle-history tradition because Agravain does not appear at all in Geoffrey of Monmouth"[24] is also suspect. Not only does this logic necessarily defeat his own argument (Bawdewyn and Errik do not appear in the Vulgate), but many characters from romance found their way into chronicles which are ultimately based on Geoffrey's *Historia* without compromising the historical narrative. The adapted version of Robert of Gloucester's *Chronicle* actually lists the sons of Lot as "Mordred & Gawayn, / Gaheres and Guerrecs and also Aggrauayn."[25]

Like Kelly, M. Victoria Guerin has argued that the association of characters in *Sir Gawain* encourages the audience to read the poem against the narrative of the Vulgate. For Guerin, Arthur's personal sin of incest is evoked throughout the poem and shapes our interpretation of Gawain's adventure.[26] Guerin begins her chapter on the poem stating that "[b]y the late fourteenth century, the approximate date of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*'s composition, Mordred's parentage was no longer a guilty secret in the Arthurian corpus."[27] As we have seen, however, Mordred's incestuous origin is not a part of the chronicle tradition, despite Guerin's attempts to find a reference to it in Geoffrey of Monmouth's

---

[23] *SGGK*, 107-113.
[24] Kelly, "Allusions to the Vulgate," 185.
[25] College of Arms MS Arundel 58, fo. 53.
[26] M. Victoria Guerin, *The Fall of Kings and Princes: Structure and Destruction in Arthurian Tragedy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995) 196-232.
[27] Guerin, *Fall of Kings and Princes*, 196.

Historia.[28] Most chroniclers, such as Robert Mannyng, simply call Mordred Arthur's "sistir sonne,"[29] while some, such as John Fordun or John Hardyng, specifically deny the story of Arthur's incest.[30] It is possible that some members of a fourteenth-century English-speaking audience may have been ignorant of the tradition. The contemporary stanzaic *Le Morte Arthur* is the only English work to mention Mordred's incestuous origins, although the concern which both Fordun and Hardyng display in their denunciation of the tradition implies that the story had some currency, even if it was not accepted. Any attempt to read the poem against a backdrop of incest must demonstrate that this was a well-known and accepted aspect of the Arthurian tradition in England, and Guerin's attempt to argue that the appearance of Morgan, Gawain's aunt, implies incest within the wooing scenes is simply untenable. Larry Benson correctly states that "there is no hint of the adultery, incest, and treachery that finally brought ruin to the Round Table, and familiar characters whose names might serve as allusions to these vices are carefully omitted" from *Sir Gawain and the Green*

---

[28] Guerin's evidence for Mordred's incestuous conception in the *Historia* is Geoffrey's authorial aside that he will not comment on Mordred's usurpation of the throne and marriage to Guenevere. Guerin follows Griscom's edition of Cambridge, University Library. MS Ii.1.14 (1706) which reads: "De hoc quidem, consul auguste, galfridus monumotensis tacebit." ["Concerning this matter, noble duke, Geoffrey of Monmouth will remain silent."] Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The Historia Regum Britanniae*, ed. Acton Griscom (London, New York, Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co., 1929) 496. Guerin argues that here "Geoffrey offers one enigmatic remark which suggests a secret that he chooses not to reveal." She goes on to state: "Whatever Geoffrey's unspoken reference, it must be sufficiently well known to be surmised by his readers, so that he must acknowledge its existence, yet there must be some factor which causes him to omit it from the *Historia*. The legend of Arthur's incestuous begetting of Mordred would meet both of these requirements." Guerin, *Fall of Kings and Princes*, 10. The passage, however, obviously does not refer to an extra-textual secret, but merely indicates Geoffrey's uneasiness over a story which includes Mordred taking his uncle's wife to bed. Since Geoffrey has just recounted Mordred's own usurpation and incest we can assume that this in itself fulfills Guerin's conditions, being a sufficiently well known and delicate narrative element. The point, however, may be moot, as the Bern manuscript, reported as a variant in Griscom's edition and used as a base-text by Wright, reads: "Nec hoc quidem, consul auguste, Galfridus Monemutensis tacebit" ["Concerning this matter, noble duke, Geoffrey of Monmouth will not remain silent"]. Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The Historia Regum Britannie of Geoffrey of Monmouth I: Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS 568*, ed. Neil Wright (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1985) ch. 177. A complete textual history of the work needs to be completed before it is decided which reading is authorial. In either case, however, Guerin's interpretation seems to be untenable.

[29] Robert Mannyng of Brunne, *The Chronicle*, ed. Idelle Sullens, Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 153 (Binghamton: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1996) 1.13475. Cited by line number.

Knight.[31] If the poem is read within the French Vulgate romance context, the wooing scene between Gawain and Bertilak's lady does provide an uncomfortable parallel to the romance of Lancelot and Guenevere. The text itself, however, gives no indication that we should read the scene against that interpretive backdrop.

The names of Arthurian characters in *Sir Gawain*, therefore, cannot be used to determine against which tradition of the Arthurian court the adventure is set. They suggest an Arthurian backdrop of courtly splendor, but the reader must look to other material to define that backdrop more specifically. The *Gawain*-poet provides an elaborate introduction to the tale which directs the audience to read the poem within the context of British historical traditions. The lengthy allusion to the fall of Troy suggests that the poem is concerned with the larger issues of British history. The passage merits quotation at length:

> Siþen þe sege and þe assaut watz sesed at Troye,
> Þe borȝ brittened and brent to brondez and askez,
> Þe tulk þat þe trammes of tresoun þer wroȝt
> Watz tried for his tricherie, þe trewest on erthe
> Hit watz Ennias þe athel, and his highe kynde,
> Þat siþen depreced prouinces, and patrounes bicome
> Welneȝe of al þe wele in þe west iles.
> Fro riche Romulus to Rome ricchis hym swyþe,
> With gret bobbaunce þat burȝe he biges vpon fyrst,
> And neuenes hit his aune nome, as hit now hat;
> [Ticius] to Tuskan and teldes bigynnes,
> Langaberde in Lumbardie lyftes vp homes,
> And fer ouer þe French flod Felix Brutus
> On mony bonkkes ful brode Bretayn settez
> wyth wynne,
> Where werre and wrake and wonder
> Bi syþez hatz wont þerinne
> And oft boþe blysse and blunder
> Ful skete hatz skyfted synne.[32]

---

[30] See below, pp. 254ff.
[31] Larry D. Benson, *Art and Tradition in* Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1965) 98.
[32] *SGGK*, 1-19.

The opening lines are repeated in the last full line of the poem:

> Syþen Brutus, þe bolde burne, boȝed hider fyrst,
> After þe segge and þe asaute watz sesed at Troye,
> iwysse,
> Mony aunterez here-biforne
> Haf fallen suche er þis.[33]

Such a careful and extended rhetorical device merits close attention, as it establishes a tone within which the rest of the adventure unfolds. What has been called the Troy frame, however, is often examined in isolation from the rest of the poem. Burrow, who dismisses the stanza, claims that it merely "introduces an adventure which has no significance at all for the history of the kings of Britain."[34] Finlayson suggests that the frame is significant, but that it is intended to distract the reader through a purposely deceptive scheme which is designed to confuse. "The formal opening of *Sir Gawain*," he claims, "is quite unusual for a courtly adventure romance, and its 'historical material' (whatever its ultimate significance) might be expected to lead its hearers to anticipate a 'chronicle' romance, such as *The Destruction of Troy*, *The Wars of Alexander*, or the alliterative *Morte Arthure*."[35] Silverstein sees the passage not as deceptive, but as significant in itself and argues that it "places the story in a familiar and serious context and suggests to its knowledgeable hearers the nobility of its line."[36] In a similar vein Patterson notes that through the cyclical nature of the events outlined in the first stanza the poet intends "to tell us that his story's range of relevance

---

[33] *SGGK*, 2524-2528.
[34] J. A. Burrow, *Ricardian Poetry: Chaucer, Gower, Langland and the Gawain Poet* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971) 96. For comparisons to analogous passages in other alliterative poetry see Malcolm Andrew, "The Fall of Troy in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and *Troilus and Criseyde*," *The European Tragedy of Troilus*, ed. Piero Boitani (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989) 76.
[35] John Finlayson, "The Expectation of Romance in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*," *Genre* 12 (1979): 4-5.
[36] Theodore Silverstein, "*Sir Gawain*, Dear Brutus, and Britain's Fortunate Founding: A Study in Comedy and Convention," *Modern Philology* 62 (1965): 191.

includes the pattern of British history as Geoffrey [of Monmouth] described it."[37] A closer look at the Troy frame, and its relationship to Gawain's encounter with the Green Knight, will support both Silverstein's and Patterson's theories and show how the adventure participates in a pattern of associations in which meaning is created through the recollection of the historical narratives of Troy and Arthur.

What is most striking in the opening stanza is the cyclic nature of history which it establishes in its brief account of Trojan migrations. The fall of Troy, brought about by the treachery of Aeneas, is barely completed when that same traitor is transformed into "þe athel and his highe kynde" who travel to the west isles.[38] The treason at Troy stands in stark contrast to the "bobbaunce" with which Romulus builds Rome. Other lands grow out of the ashes of Troy as Ticius founds Tuscany and Langaberde establishes Lombardy. Finally Brutus, the exiled patricide, here designated as Felix,[39] established Britain "wyth wynne." The fall of Troy has been instrumental in the growth of nations in the west as new people rise out of the catastrophes of others. The poet implies that the pattern of fall and rise continues in Britain as he concludes the stanza, "And oft bo þe blysse and blunder / Ful skete hatz skyfted synne." The first stanza thus places Britain within the context of European history, but it is a representation of history "which envisages civilization as alternating between 'bliss' and 'blunder'."[40] Even as the poet extends the pattern of bliss and blunder back into the past, to the chivalric achievements of pre-lapsarian Troy, so the pattern continues towards

---

[37] Lee W. Patterson, "The Historiography of Romance in the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 13 (1983): 10.
[38] On Aeneas as the "tulk" of line 3 see Alfred David, "Gawain and Aeneas," *English Studies* 49 (1968): *passim*. and J. D Burnley, "'Sir Gawain and the Green Knight', Lines 3-7," *Notes and Queries* 218 (1973): 83-84.
[39] Compare Hardyng's statement upon Brutus' arrival: "Into this londe he came so fortunate." Hardyng, *First Version*, 15. See below p. 241, note 2 for the citation of this source.
[40] Andrew, "Fall of Troy," 79.

the Arthurian period, which is introduced in the second stanza.[41]

The second stanza continues to describe Britain after the arrival of Brutus and his followers. The Trojans, we are told, were a quarrelsome people who loved strife:

> Ande quen þis Bretayn watz bigged bi þis burn rych,
> Bolde bredden þerinne, baret þat lofden,
> In mony turned tyme tene þat wroȝten.[42]

The poem quickly leaves the violent Trojans, however, and gets to the matter at hand, the wonders of Arthurian Britain:

> Mo ferlyes on þis folde han fallen here oft
> Þen in any oþer þat I wot, syn þat ilk tyme.
> Bot of alle þat here bult, of Bretaygne kynges,
> Ay watz Arthur þe hendest, as I haf herde telle.[43]

As Andrew comments, while there is nothing specifically negative in the stanza, the juxtaposition of elements is unsettling. He suggests "that the logic of a progression from the enjoyment of causing harm to the noblest of British kings is apt to be at least potentially problematic."[44] Indeed, the cyclic nature of the opening stanza suggests that Arthur's

---

[41] If *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* is intended to be read against the backdrop of the chronicle tradition, the seed of Arthur's downfall may have already been alluded to in the list of post-Trojan foundations. The establishment of Rome by Romulus is a straightforward allusion to the history of Troy, but the other two Italian foundations mentioned are more troublesome. Langaberde is the well-known eponymous founder of Lombardy, but he was not considered a Trojan, while the identity of Ticius is less certain. Silverstein speculates that Ticius is a mistake for one of two possible founders, Tuscus or Tirius (Silverstein, "*Sir Gawain*," 194-196). He still questions, however, why Langaberde and Ticius, "Trojans only tenuously at best, are placed together with Romulus the Trojan" (Silverstein, "*Sir Gawain*," 205). He concludes that the references to these characters echo the alliterative *Morte Arthure*'s treatment of these Italian lands. After the defeat of Lucius, it will be remembered, Arthur continues his campaign in Italy. Upon hearing of Mordred's treachery he entrusts the campaign to Howel and Hardolf. "Sir Howell and sir Hardolfe here sall beleue / To be lordes of the ledis that here to me lenges: / Lokes into Lumbardye, þat thare no lede chaunge, / And tendirly to Tuskayne take tente alls I byde; / Resaywe the rentis of Rome qwen they are rekkenede" (*Morte Arthure*, 3583-3587). For Silverstein it is the Italian claim, which is "especially characteristic of the *Morte Arthure*, which seems to be reflected in *Gawain*'s Trojan foundings" (Silverstein, "*Sir Gawain*," 205). As suggestive as Silverstein's argument is, recent studies on the dating of the alliterative *Morte* make direct allusion to the text unlikely. Some fourteenth-century chroniclers, such as Robert Mannyng, (Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1.13467) do push Arthur as far as northern Italy, but no earlier text specifically names Lombardy and Tuscany as Arthurian conquests.

[42] *SGGK*, 20-22.

[43] *SGGK*, 23-26

[44] Andrew, "Fall of Troy," 80.

nobility is as susceptible to fall as the nobility of Troy, and this is supported by the audience's foreknowledge of the king's fate. This suspicion is further enforced by the third stanza which provides details of the state of Arthur's court. The "gentyle kniȝtes" of the the Round Table and "þe louelokkest ladies" engage in the festivities of a Christmas feast.[45] The joy and vigour of the scene is firmly established by the youth of the court for "al watz þis fayre folk in her first age."[46] The youth and vitality of the Round Table stands in comparison to the bliss of earlier foundations, but the cyclical pattern established by the opening stanzas predicts that this "first age" of bliss will be followed by subsequent ages of blunder.

The poem's opening stanzas encourage the reader to place the scene within the time frame and the thematic pattern of Galfridian history, and as such it would have to be placed within the twelve years of peace which follow Arthur's initial successes. Arthur and Guenevere are married and the Round Table has been established. It is in this period that Wace sets the adventures which he claims have been exaggerated beyond belief. Robert Mannyng, as we have seen, also describes these adventures told in rhyme:

> in þat tyme were herd & sene
> þat som say þat neuer had bene;
> of Arthure is said many selcouth
> in diuers landes, north & south,
> þat man haldes now for fable.[47]

The *Gawain* poet seems to point to this period when he states that his own narrative is a fable set within British history:

> Forþi an aunter in erde I attle to schawe,
> Þat a selly in siȝt summe men hit holden
> And an outtrage awenture of Arthurez wonderez.[48]

---

[45] *SGGK*, 37-59.
[46] *SGGK*, 54.
[47] Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1.10393-19397. For Wace's comments on this period see above p. 15.
[48] *SGGK*, 27-29.

Whether the poet is specifically invoking the passage in either Mannyng or Wace is uncertain. Many chroniclers, as we have seen, included similar statements at this point in the narrative, and the twelve years of peace seems to have become a period specifically reserved for adventures outside the Galfridian tradition. We have already seen how one scribe includes all of Chrétien's romances in this period, and the scribe of the Lambeth Palace *Brut* uses the narrative space as a suitable place to insert his adventure of Arthur and the wildcats.[49] Sir Thomas Gray also makes use of this time which is distinct from the historical account. He not only stresses the youth of Arthur's court but claims that "En quel temps apparust en bretaigne tauntz dez chos fayez, qe a meruail, de quoy sourdi les grauntz auentures qe sount recordez de la court Arthur."[50] He goes on to say that during this period "Hom dit qe Arthur ne seoit ia a manger deuaunt q'il auoit nouels estrangers"[51] and indeed the *Gawain* poet tells us that

> ... [Arthur] wolde neuer ete
> Vpon such a dere day er hym deuised were
> Of sum auenturus þyng an vncouþe tale,
> Of sum mayn meruayle, þat he myȝt trawe,
> Of alderes, of armes, of oþer auenturus,
> Oþer sum segg hym bisoȝt of sum siker knyȝt
> To joyne with hym in iustyng, in jopardé to lay,
> Lede, lif for lyf, leue vchon oþer[52]

The localization of the narrative within history is supported by the fifteenth-century stanzaic poem *The Greene Knight*. This less sophisticated retelling of the adventure does not include the elaborate Trojan frame, but its place in history is established by paraphrasing the Brut

---

[49] See above, p. 17 and p. 29.

[50] "In this time wondrously appeared the many enchanted things, from which arose the great adventures which are recorded of the court of Arthur." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 71v.1. See above, p. 74, note 2 for the citation of this source.

[51] "It is said that Arthur would not eat before he had strange news." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 72.1

narrative:

> List! wen Arthur he was King,
> He had all att his leadinge
> The broad Ile of Brittaine.
> England and Scottland one was,
> And Wales stood in the same case,
> The truth itt is not to layne.
>
> He drive allyance out of this Ile,
> Soe Arthur lived in peace a while.[53]

This period of peace in which the adventure of *The Greene Knight* takes place is certainly the same as Wace's twelve years. The poet also describes the foundation of the Round Table in accordance with chronicle tradition:

> As men of mickle maine,
> Knights strove of their degree,
> Whiche of them hyest shold bee;
> Therof Arthur was not faine;
>
> Hee made the Round Table for their behove,
> That none of them shold sitt above,
> But all shold sitt as one.[54]

In addition, *The Greene Knight* does not include any of the elements which have been used to associate *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* with the Vulgate cycle. The lists of names used by Kelly are all wanting in the later work, and even Bertilak has been renamed Sir Bredbeddle, a name with no particular associations. The author of the stanzaic poem, in other words, clearly situates the adventure within the chronicle tradition and encourages his readers to interpret the poem in light of the Galfridian narrative.

The Trojan introduction and the early scenes of Arthur's court thus establish a

---

[52] *SGGK*, 91-98.
[53] *The Greene Knight*, *Sir Gawain: Eleven Romances and Tales*, ed. Thomas Hales (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1995) 1-8. Cited by line number.
[54] *The Greene Knight*, 9-15.

disturbing pattern against which the audience is invited to read Gawain's adventure. The "bliss" of Camelot in its first age has been compared not only to the equally joyful foundations in Italy, but also to the "blunder" of Troy's fall. The logic of this pattern implies not only the fall of Camelot, but the failure of Gawain, its representative knight. The cyclical pattern which stresses the transience of worldly achievement is established in the opening stanzas of the poem and reemphasized throughout the work. Not only is the very structure of Gawain's adventure based on the cycle of a single year, but the elaborate rhetorical descriptions of the seasons and the two ladies also reenforce the repetitive structure of British history and Gawain's adventure.

The cyclical structure of the beheading game has been the topic of considerable critical attention,[55] but it need be considered only briefly here. The game of exchanged blows frames the action of the poem and encompasses one complete year, from the Green Knight's arrival at Camelot during New Year festivities to Gawain's own arrival at the Green Chapel. Within this cycle the adventure's structure is complicated by the three days at Hautdesert which contain their own pattern of repeated wooing, hunting and the game of exchanged gifts. The design of Gawain's adventure, with its expectation of the hero's decapitation, easily coincides on a smaller scale with the Troy frame's pattern of "bliss" and "blunder" in British history. The ominous nature of this pattern is invoked by the description of the seasons which opens Fitt II.

Although the knights of the Round Table resume their Christmas games, "A ȝere ȝernes ful ȝerne"[56] and the changing of the seasons overcomes the festivities of the "ȝonge

---

[55] For bibliography see Martin B. Shichtman, "*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*: A Lesson in the Terror of History," *Papers on Language and Literature* 22 (1986): 3, *n.* 2.
[56] *SGGK*, 498.

ȝer."[57] Lent causes men to dine on harsh food until "þe weder of þe worlde wyth wynter hit þrepez."[58] With spring comes "þe rayn in schowrez ful warme"[59] and eventually the "solace of þe softe somer."[60] The description of summer recalls the pattern of history as one is allowed "To bide a blysful blusch of þe bryȝt sunne."[61] Finally, harvest time warns of the return of winter and the completion of the cycle:

> Þe leuez lancen fro þe lynde and lyȝten on þe grounde,
> And al grayes þe gres þat grene watz ere;
> Þenne al rypez and rotez þat ros vpon fyrst,
> And þus ȝirnez þe ȝere in ȝisterdayes mony
> And wynter wyndez aȝayn, as þe worlde askez.[62]

The movement from the barrenness of winter to the full bloom of summer and back to winter, when the fruits of the harvest lie rotting, is a moving metaphor for the mutability of worldly glory and a poor omen for Gawain's adventure. Andrew remarks that the poet "creates a powerful impression of threat and foreboding, partly through the poignancy with which the general fact of mutability is suggested, partly through his shaping and manipulation of the narrative."[63] Themes of abstract mutability, represented here by nature's progression through the seasons, coincide with the poem's vision of history, in which human achievement, including Gawain's adventure, is transitory.

The theme of mutability is recalled later in the poem at Bertilak's castle, when Gawain is introduced to the two ladies of the house. The host's wife, who is "þe fayrest in

---

[57] *SGGK*, 492.
[58] *SGGK*, 504.
[59] *SGGK*, 506.
[60] *SGGK*, 510.
[61] *SGGK*, 520.
[62] *SGGK*, 526-530. For an examination of the rhetoric of this passage see Derek A. Pearsall, "Rhetorical 'Descriptio' in 'Sir Gawain and the Green Knight'," *Modern Language Review* 50 (1955): 131-132.
[63] Andrew, "Fall of Troy," 91.

felle,"[64] is presented with a second lady, "an auncian hit semed,"[65] at her side.

> Bot vnlyke on to loke þo ladyes were,
> For if þe ȝonge watz ȝep, ȝolȝe watz þat oþer;
> Riche red on þat on rayled ayquere,
> Rugh ronkled chekez þat oþer on rolled.[66]

The description continues, comparing the youth and beauty of the one lady with the age and decrepitude of her companion.[67] Derek Pearsall has pointed out the conventional nature of this description by contrast,[68] but the passage also has significant thematic importance as it presents "a forceful illustration of the homiletic theme that age is a mirror of the frailty of the flesh."[69] The description of the ladies, however, is not an isolated piece of *amplificatio*. All three of the elaborate amplifications –the account of the fall of Troy and the westward movement of Trojan *imperium*, the description of the changing seasons and the digression on the two ladies– present images of mutability: the bliss and blunder of history, the harvest and rot of nature, the youth and old age of mortal man. It is within a thematic framework established by these images of mutability that Gawain journeys out of the youthful court of King Arthur to fulfill the pattern of his beheading game.

We have already seen how the alliterative *Morte Arthure* combines the theme of transience inherent in the Nine Worthies with the concept of fortune. The *Gawain*-poet invokes a similar concept in his poem which is filled with images of mutability. It is Gawain himself who appeals, not to random fortune, but to inscrutable destiny, often citing his own

---

[64] *SGGK*, 943.
[65] *SGGK*, 948.
[66] *SGGK*, 950-953.
[67] *SGGK*, 954-969.
[68] Pearsall, "Rhetorical 'Descriptio'," 131.
[69] Malcolm Andrew and Ronald Waldron, introduction, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, The Poems of the Pearl Manuscript*, ed. Malcolm Andrew and Ronald Waldron, York Medieval Texts (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982) 23.

"destiné" or "wyrde". Gawain resigns himself to his fate before setting out in search of the Green Chapel, in a passage which comes immediately after the description of the changing seasons. Arthur's knights attempt to keep good cheer, Gawain among them:

> Þe knyȝt mad ay god chere,
> And sayde, 'Quat shuld I wonde?
> Of destinés derf and dere
> What may mon do bot fonde?'[70]

Despite the adventure that Gawain has undertaken, he seems willing to seek out and face his destiny, whatever the outcome.

Gawain's willingness to encounter his destiny, whatever it might be, is reflected throughout the poem. On the lady's third visit to his bed she finds Gawain muttering in his sleep, "As mon þat watz in mornyng of mony þro þoȝtes, / How þat destiné schulde þat day dele hym his wyrde."[71] Despite this apparent unease, Gawain is determined to meet his fate, even when offered an opportunity to avoid the Green Knight. His guide to the chapel advises him to flee, but Gawain refuses to take advantage of the offer:

> 'Bot I wyl to þe chapel, for chaunce þat may falle,
> And talk wyth þat ilk tulk þe tale þat my lyste,
> Worþe hit wele oþer wo, as þe wyrde lykez
> hit hafe.'[72]

Even after he has presented his neck to the Green Knight and flinched at the first stroke, Gawain impatiently demands that his fate be fulfilled:

> 'Bot busk, burne, bi þi fayth, and bryng me to þe poynt.
> Dele to me my destiné, and do hit out of honde.'[73]

Gawain expects that his destiny is to receive a blow from the Green Knight, thus

---

[70] *SGGK*, 562-565.
[71] *SGGK*, 1751-1752.
[72] *SGGK*, 2132-2135.
[73] *SGGK*, 2284-2285.

fulfilling the cyclic nature of the beheading game and the patterns which have been established by the poem's imagery. But, unbeknownst to Gawain, his actions have altered that pattern. The beheading game, as is suggested from the outset, is actually a test of Gawain's "trawþe". In framing the rules of the game the Green Knight demands that Gawain should participate in a game of exchanged blows:

> 'And þou hatz redily rehersed, bi resoun ful trwe,
> Clanly al þe couenaunt þat I þe kynge asked,
> Saf þat þou schal siker me, segge, bi þi trawþe,
> Þat þou schal seche me þiself...'[74]

Gawain agrees to these terms and swears to abide them "for soþe, and by my seker traweþ."[75] The court feels that he should break his oath, and that 'Warloker to haf wroȝt had more wyt bene,'[76] but Gawain remains true despite the danger and the guide's last minute offer of escape. Even after flinching, in the scene quoted above, Gawain reaffirms his resolve to maintain his "trawþe", demanding that the Green Knight strike:

> 'For I schal stonde þe a strok, and start no more
> Til þyn ax haue me hitte: haf here my trawþe.'[77]

While Gawain has remained faithful to the exchange of blows in the beheading game, he has been less successful in the seemingly less important game of the exchange of winnings. Like the beheading game, this game is entered into with the language of a formal contract:

> 'Ȝet firre,' quoþ þe freke, 'a forwarde we make:
> Quat-so-euer I wynne in þe wod hit worþez to yourez
> And quat chek so ȝe acheue chaunge me þerforne.
> Swete, swap we so, sware with trawþe,
> Queþer, leude, so lymp lere oþer better.'
> 'Bi God,' quoþ Gawayn þe gode, 'I grant þertylle.'[78]

---

[74] *SGGK*, 392-395.
[75] *SGGK*, 403.
[76] *SGGK*, 677.
[77] *SGGK*, 2286-2287.
[78] *SGGK*, 1105-1110.

The same "forwardez"[79] are settled for the second day and again Gawain fulfills the bargain:

> 'Now, Gawayn,' quoþ þe godmon, 'þis gomen is your awen
> Bi fyn forwarde and faste, faythely ȝe knowe.'
> 'Hit is sothe,' quoþ þe segge, 'and as siker trwe,
> Alle my get I schal yow gif agayn, bi my trawþe.'[80]

On the third day the bargain is struck again because, as the host says, "I haf fraysted þe twys, and faythful I fynde þe."[81]

Gawain agrees to the third exchange of winnings, but his attention has been on the lady, against whose advances he has been defending himself. On the third day of wooing, he is resolved to remain faithful to his host. He does not want to seem churlish to the lady, but he cares "more for his meschef ȝif he schulde make synne, / And be traytor to þat tolke þat þat telde aȝt."[82] Barron remarks that "[i]n the context of the formally established relationship between Gawain and Bertilak as guest and host..., the use here of *traytor* seems to me exact, a technical term for one who breaks his feudal troth, and, if by adultery, with his lord's wife, doubly a sinner, both against *clannes* and against the Christian basis of the feudal oath."[83] Gawain, however, does not commit adultery with the lady and thus upholds part of his obligations to his host. But the wooing has been a distraction, both for the hero and the audience, and Gawain, apparently relieved to escape with his chastity, ignores his other obligation to Bertilak. When the lady explains the protective property of her green girdle

---

[79] *SGGK*, 1405.
[80] *SGGK*, 1635-1638.
[81] *SGGK*, 1679.
[82] *SGGK*, 1774-1775.
[83] W. R. J. Barron, *Trawthe and Treason: The Sin of Gawain Reconsidered: A Thematic Study of* Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (Manchester: Manchester University Press; Totowa, N.J.: Barnes and Noble Books, 1980) 67.

Gawain sees it as "a juel for þe jopardé þat hym iugged were",[84] and accepts it as a love token, despite the fact that he will need to conceal it from his host.

The emphasis on "trawþe" with which each of these bargains is established is reiterated at the end of the poem as the Green Knight explains the significance of Gawain's various adventures. After receiving a nick in the neck, Gawain prepares to fight, but the Green Knight is satisfied that the terms of the agreement have been fulfilled:

> 'Ne kyd not as couenaunde at kyngez kort schaped.
> I hyȝt þe a stroke and þou hit hatz, halde þe wel payed.'[85]

The two feints and the third nick to the neck are also explained in terms of their contractual agreements:

> '...with ryȝt I þe profered
> For þe forwarde þat we fest in þe fyrst nyȝt,
> And þou trystyly þe trawþe and trwly me haldez,
> Al þe gayne þow me gef, as god mon schulde.'[86]

The same was true for the second agreement, but "At þe þrid þou fayled þore, / And þerfor þat tappe ta þe."[87] While the Green Knight admits that Gawain refused his wife, and praises him as "þe faultlest freke þat euer on fote ȝede,"[88] he knows that Gawain failed to exchange the green girdle.

> 'Bot here yow lakked a lyttel, sir, and lewté yow wonted;
> Bot þat watz for no wylyde werke, ne wowyng nauþer,
> Bot for ȝe lufed your lyf; þe lasse I yow blame.'[89]

The light judgment which the Green Knight passes on Gawain is mirrored in the reaction of the court upon the hero's return. When Gawain tells his story and displays the girdle, which

---

[84] *SGGK*, 1856.
[85] *SGGK*, 2340-2341.
[86] *SGGK*, 2346-2349.
[87] *SGGK*, 2356-2357.
[88] *SGGK*, 2363.

he sees as "þe token of vntrawþe þat I am tan inne,"[90] the knights do not condemn their companion. Rather:

> Þe kyng comfortez þe knyȝt, and alle þe court als
> Laȝen loude þerate, and luflyly acorden
> Þat lordes and ladis þat longed to þe Table,
> Vche burne of þe broþerhede, a bauderyk schulde haue,
> A bende abelef hym aboute of a bryȝt grene.[91]

The laughter of the court at Gawain's failure recalls the story of Caradoc's mantle in the *Scalacronica*. In Gray's account, the mantle, which will not fit an unchaste woman, fits only one woman of the court. Gray places the sexual infidelity which is revealed by the test of the mantle in apposition to Mordred's breach of "trawþe." The comparison is highlighted by both the sexual nature of the test and its proximity to Arthur's departure, and it reflects on Mordred's usurpation of both queen and crown. Instead of pausing to consider the implications of this situation, the court breaks into "graunt rise"[92] before beginning preparations for their encounter with the Roman emperor. Similarly, Gawain's companions view his adventure as a success, because he has escaped with his head. While the Round Table laughs, Gawain judges himself more harshly, and accuses himself of "cowarddyse and couetyse boþe!"[93] He further rebukes himself as one who formerly had been the model of knighthood:

> 'Lo! þer þe falssyng, foule mot hit falle!
> For care of þy knokke cowardyse me taȝt
> To acorde me with couetyse, my kynde to forsake,
> Þat is larges and lewté þat longez to knyȝtez.
> Now am I fawty and falce, and ferde haf ben euer
> Of trecherye and vntrawþe: boþe bityde sorȝe

---

[89] *SGGK*, 2366-2368.
[90] *SGGK*, 2509.
[91] *SGGK*, 2513-2517.
[92] "great laughter," Gray, *Scalacronica*, 75.2.
[93] *SGGK*, 2374.

and care!'[94]

The disparity between these reactions is largely one of perspective. The Green Knight and the court view the adventure as the test of a single knight, and as such Gawain has performed well, if not perfectly. Gawain, however, sees his adventure in light of the larger historical process. His misogynist speech, in which he compares himself to Adam, Samson and David, points to men from the past who have been led into sin by the temptation of women.[95] That the audience is intended, at least partially, to share Gawain's perspective is indicated by the poet. When Morgan le Fay is identified as the instigator of the adventure, the poet provides a brief synopsis of one scene in Arthurian history, the deception through which Arthur was conceived:

> Ho is euen þyn aunt, Arþurez half-suster,
> Þe duches doȝter of Tyntagelle, þat dere Vter after
> Hade Arþur vpon, þat aþel is nowþe.'[96]

By identifying Igerne as the Duchess of Tintagel, a title apparently unique to *Sir Gawain*,[97] the poet economically invokes both her unwitting adultery and the place of her deception. The passage also contrasts the dubious origins of King Arthur with his current status, for despite the treachery of his birth, he "aþel is nowþe." If this were not enough to remind the reader of the opening passages of the poem in which the traitor, "Ennias, þe athel," flees Troy, the poet returns to that scene less than one hundred lines later in the final long lines of the poem:

> Þus in Arthurus day þis aunter bitidde,
> Þe Brutus bokez þerof beres wyttenesse;

---

[94] *SGGK*, 2378-2384.
[95] *SGGK*, 2414-2428.
[96] *SGGK*, 2464-2466.
[97] Igerne is the wife of Gorlois, Duke of Cornwall, and is usually identified as the Ducjess of Cornwall. Tintagel is the castle in which Uther deceives Igerne, but it is one of two castles owned by the duke.

> Syþen Brutus, þe bolde burne, boȝed hider fyrst,
> After þe segge and þe asaute watz sesed at Troye,
> iwysse,
> Mony aunterez here-biforne
> Haf fallen suche er þis.[98]

Arthur and Aeneas are both historical figures who overcome treacherous beginnings to prove themselves noble in the end. The *Gawain*-poet invokes both Arthur and the Troy story at the beginning and the end of the poem and thus reminds the reader of these examples of a movement from "blunder" to "bliss." These allusions emphasize the rotation of history and its inevitable turn back to "blunder."

For Alfred David, "Gawain's story is 'an outtrage awenture of Arthurez wonderez', a product of romance and fantasy, an adventure in a different category from the fall of Troy, which to men of the Middle Ages was one of the great human catastrophes. But for the *Gawain* poet the pattern of greater events is figured in the lesser, even as the cycle of the seasons symbolizes the human condition on earth."[99] David is careful to point out that the relationship between Gawain and Aeneas is one of vague association rather than direct parallel, and the same can be said of Gawain's adventure and Arthurian history itself. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* focuses on treachery and a breach of "trawþe" between a knight and his lord, and as such it resonates with various episodes from British history. The poet invokes Aeneas' betrayal of Troy and the fortunate outcome of that great fall, but this merely establishes the pattern. Gawain's adventure necessarily associates the hero's "vntrawþe" with the sexual innuendo of Bertilak's lady, and it is difficult not to interpret the romance in light of the fall of the Round Table. Just as Sir Thomas Gray used the romance

---

[98] *SGGK*, 2522-2528.
[99] David, "Gawain and Aeneas," 408.

of Caradoc's mantle to comment on Mordred's usurpation of the throne, so the *Gawain*-poet has mingled images of adultery with issues of "trawþe" in a work which encourages its readers to consider the individual adventure of Gawain within the larger patterns of Arthurian history. Gawain is no precursor of Mordred, nor is he the heir to Aeneas' treachery, but all three, claims the *Gawain*-poet, participate in the "bliss and blunder" which plagues British history.[100]

The beheading game is, in the end, an insignificant interlude in the Arthurian reign. As such it is aptly relegated to the twelve years of peace where "Not alle is sothe ne alle lie, / ne alle wisdom ne alle folie."[101] But Gawain's adventure has pointed to a flaw in the Round Table, a weakness of "trawþe" in the court, and if Arthur's knights had learned something from this adventure, rather than merely laughing at Gawain's self condemnation, they too might have been able to affect their destiny.

The Awntyrs off Arthure

If *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* relies on allusion and thematic resonances to associate its adventure with the larger narrative of an historical Arthur, *The Awntyrs off Arthure* clearly establishes its relationship with the chronicle tradition. In the *Awntyrs*, Arthur not only frames the action of the poem's two episodes, but the entire narrative of Arthur's fall is retold by Guenevere's dead mother in an ominous prophecy. The lessons of the poem, therefore, not only reflect upon the immediate action of the romance, but on the entire Arthurian world and the values that it perpetuates.

---

[100] Burnley notes that Aeneas' appearance in the poem "is especially appropriate, for in the courtly tradition, the values of which are to be questioned by the ensuing story, the subsequent career of Aeneas and his treatment of Dido, would make him an outstanding example of the lack of faith." Burnley, "'Sir Gawain'," 84.
[101] Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1.10400-10401.

Ralph Hanna III's assertion that the *Awntyrs* is actually two poems has been adequately refuted by A. C. Spearing's studies of the unity of the work,[102] but the poem remains structured around two distinct adventures. In his work Spearing stresses the fact that the *Awntyrs* must be viewed as a diptych, in that the actions in one episode comment on the other.[103] A close study of the iconography of death which is evoked by the poet in the first half of the work, and the poem's use of the *Morte Arthure*, will undermine the seemingly optimistic pattern of a lesson which is first learned and then applied.

The two sections of *The Awntyrs off Arthure* are of roughly equal length. In the second section Gawain engages in a fairly typical adventure involving a challenge and combat. The first adventure involves a visit from Guenevere's dead mother. Phillippa Tristram notes that it is "very rare to find the macabre in Arthurian romance at any date," and she notes *The Awntyrs of Arthure* as the one exception.[104] The ghastly depiction of the ghost, although placed in an unusual literary setting, is a conventional representation of death. Douglas Gray associates this convention with narrative necessity:

> There were two ways in which the *memoria* of death could be made vivid so that the reader might be shocked into penitence. The poet could stress the physical facts of the decay of the body, and he could present man's encounter with death in a dramatic way. The two are, naturally enough, sometimes combined. There are poems in which the dead man 'speaks' to us and tells us the gruesome details of decomposition, and we sometimes find worm-covered skeletons accompanied by

---

[102] See A. C. Spearing, "*The Awntyrs off Arthure*," *The Alliterative Tradition in the Fourteenth Century*, ed. Bernard S. Levy and Paul E. Szarmach (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1981) *passim*; A. C. Spearing, "Central and Displaced Sovereignty in Three Medieval Poems," *Review of English Studies* 33 (1982): 247-261. These studies have been largely superseded by Spearing's study of the poem in A. C. Spearing, *Medieval to Renaissance in English Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985) 121-142. See also Helen Phillips, "*The Awntyrs off Arthure*: Structure and Meaning. A Reassessment," *Arthurian Literature* 12 (1993): 63-71.

[103] Spearing, *Medieval to Renaissance*, 129-131.

[104] Philippa Tristram, *Figures of Life and Death in Medieval English Literature* (London: Paul Elek, 1976) 237, *n.* 22.

tituli, as if they were speaking to the beholder.[105]

The *Awntyrs*' use of one *memoria* of death, the *Trentalle Sancti Gregorii*, is well known and mentioned by most editors of the poem.[106] David Klausner has expanded this theory and demonstrated that a large body of "adulterous mother" exempla also influenced the *Awntyrs* poet. He concludes that it is "clear that the author of the *Awntyrs* has based his tale to a considerable extent on the *Trentalle*. It is also evident that he was familiar with some exemplar of the family of sermon tales which lay behind the *Trentalle*."[107] Klausner's theory could be expanded even further to include the large body of literature which Douglas Gray examines.

As Gray shows, the depiction of death in religious lyrics became highly formulaic in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[108] This iconography reflected the growing preoccupation with death which Huizinga notes as a characteristic of the age.[109] It will suffice to discuss a single representation of this iconography: the well-known legend of the Three Living and the Three Dead. The legend in which three men come upon the ghosts of their three dead fathers is represented in English by the early fifteenth-century *De Tribus Regibus Mortuis*.[110] Like the *Awntyrs*, the poem is written in thirteen-line stanzas which employ a complicated pattern of rhyme and alliteration. The poem involves a hunt in which

---

[105] Douglas Gray, *Themes and Images in the Medieval English Religious Lyric* (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972) 190-191.
[106] George Neilson first mentioned the borrowing from the English A-version of the *Trentalle*. See George Neilson, "Crosslinks between *Pearl* and the *Awntyrs off Arthure*," *Scottish Antiquary* 16 (1902): 67-78.
[107] David N. Klausner, "Exempla and the *Awntyrs of Arthure*," *Mediaeval Studies* 34 (1972): 316.
[108] Gray, *Themes and Images*, 190ff.
[109] "No other epoch has laid so much stress as the expiring Middle Ages on the thought of death. An everlasting call of *memento mori* resounds through life." J. Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, tr. F. Hopman (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1987) 134.
[110] *The Three Dead Kings, Alliterative Poetry of the Later Middle Ages: An Anthology*, ed. Thorlac Turville-Petre (London: Routledge, 1989). Cited by line number. The *Lazarus* play in the mid-fifteenth century *Towneley*

three kings, separated from the hunting party by a sudden change in weather and a thick fog, are surprised by the sudden appearance of their dead fathers. The first episode of the *Awntyrs* shares many of these characteristics. The poem opens with a hunt. Gawain and Guenevere are separated from the hunting party when a sudden storm rises and the ghostly apparition of Guenevere's dead mother appears. Turville-Petre has noted the similarities between the *Awntyrs*, the poem *Somer Soneday*, and *De Tribus Regibus Mortuis*. Although he admits the difficulties in determining direct borrowing among alliterative poetry, he argues that these structural and thematic similarities indicate some form of close connection.[111]

The portrayal of the dead visitors is also conventional. Literary portrayals of the didactic dead tend to emphasize several traits. First is the tendency to describe the process of decomposition in graphic detail. In *De Tribus Regibus Mortuis*, for example, the first dead king speaks of the vermin that infest his grave and his tattered funeral clothes:

> 'Lo here þe wormus in my wome! Þai wallon and wyndon.
> Lo here þe wrase of þe wede þat I was in wondon!'[112]

The second dead king commands his son to "Lokys on my bonus þat blake bene and bare!"[113] Similarly, the ghost in the *Awntyrs*, who appears in physical form, is described in grisly

---

plays shares many of the characteristics discussed below. See *The Towneley Plays*, ed. Martin Stevens and A. C. Cawley, EETS, ss. 13 & 14 (London: Oxford University Press, 1994) I: 425-431.

[111] *Somer Soneday* is also written in a complicated thirteen-line alliterative stanza and also involves a hunting party. In this case, the main character is separated from the party and has a vision of Fortune's wheel. Turville-Petre writes that "Even if it is impossible to be certain that the connection between the three poems is a direct one, the similarities are too many to be fortuitous, and they show the existence of a 'school' of poets using the thirteen-line stanza to express similar themes." Thorlac Turville-Petre, "'Summer Sunday', 'De Tribus Regibus Mortuis', and 'The Awntyrs off Arthure': Three Poems in the Thirteen-line Stanza," *Review of English Studies* n.s. 25 (1974): 12.

[112] *Three Dead Kings*, 98-99.

[113] *Three Dead Kings*, 106.

detail. We are told that "Bare was þe body, and blake to þe bone."[114] Later the vermin that infest the body are also described:

> Skeled withe serpentes alle aboute þe sides;
> To telle þe todes þereone my tonge were fulle tere.[115]

The ghost herself even describes her state, complaining of "...þe wilde wormes, þat worche me wrake...."[116]

The talking dead also demonstrate a preoccupation with commemorative masses as a means to shortening their time in purgatory. In literary representations, the dead often rebuke the living for not having the necessary masses said. In *De Tribus Regibus Mortuis*, the first dead king laments the fact that the three living have been raised to the royal seat:

> 'Bot we haue made ȝoue mastyrs amys,
> Þat now nyl not mynn vs with a mas.'[117]

The *Awntyrs* ghost also asks that masses be said for her. When Guenevere asks how she may ease her mother's suffering, the ghost answers:

> 'Were thritty trentales done,
> By-twene vnder and none,
> Mi soule socoured withe sone,
> And broughte to þe blys.'[118]

As the ghost departs she repeats her request for masses, saying that:

> 'Masses arne medecynes to vs þat bale bides;
> Vs þenke a masse as swete

---

[114] *The Awntyrs off Arthure, Scottish Alliterative Poetry in Riming Stanzas*, ed. F J. Amours, Scottish Text Society, 27 & 38 (London: Johnson Reprint Corp., 1966) 105. Except where noted, all references will be from the Douce manuscript (D) by line number. Because of the textual difficulties of the poem, the Thornton manuscript (T, on facing pages) and the Princeton manuscript (P), formerly known as the Ireland manuscript, are occasionally referred to. For an edition of the Princeton manuscript see *Ywain and Gawain, Sir Percyvell of Gales, The Anturs of Arther*, ed. Maldwyn Mills (London: Everyman, 1992) 161-182. The Lambeth manuscript provides no useful variants and has not been recorded here. Note that line numeration in Mills' edition of the Princeton text is slightly different from the other editions used here.
[115] *Awntyrs*, 120-121.
[116] *Awntyrs*, 216.
[117] *Three Dead Kings*, 103-104.
[118] *Awntyrs*, 218-221. The reference to 'thritty trentales' obviously recalls the *Trentalle Sancti Gregorii*. Many of the exempla drawn together by Klausner also display these common characteristics.

As eny spice þat euer ye yete."[119]

Finally, the talking dead portray themselves as examples for the living. The example is valid, they claim, because the living will soon be among the dead themselves. In *De Tribus Regibus Mortuis*, the third dead king commands, "Makis ȝour merour be me! My myrþus bene mene."[120] Guenevere's mother makes a similar warning during her conversation with the queen:

> 'For al þi fresshe foroure
> Muse one my mirrour,
> For, king and Emperour,
> Thus shul ye be.'[121]

By emphasizing the fact that the dead are a "mirrour" for the living, all of the talking dead stress the transience of life itself. The grisly details of decomposition and the concern for masses also force readers to reflect on their own mortality. Although the *Awntyrs* ghost is unusual in that she also implores Guenevere to be kind to the poor (advice which Guenevere does not seem to notice), her representation is otherwise conventional.[122]

This literary construct appears to have been well established by the time the *Awntyrs* was composed in the early fifteenth century,[123] but these elements are not confined to literature alone. Many of the same concerns are displayed in funerary practices of the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The epitaph of William and Beatrice Chichele of Northamptonshire, for example, contains many of the elements found in literary

---

[119] *Awntyrs*, 321-323. Given the conventions of the talking dead, Guenevere may be being chastised for not having the masses said for her dead mother.
[120] *Three Dead Kings*, 120.
[121] *Awntyrs*, 166-169.
[122] The ghost begs "... haue pite one þe poer, þat pleses heuen king; / Siþene charite is chef...." *Awntyrs*, 251-252. See also lines 172-178, 319. In *De Tribus* the third dead king laments the fact that he was cruel to the poor while alive, but it is not as insistent as in the *Awntyrs* (*Three Dead Kings*, 121).

representations of the talking dead:

> Such as ye be such wer we
> Such as we be such shall ye be
> Lerneth to deye that is the lawe
> That this lif now to wol drawe.
> Sorwe or gladnesse nought letten age
> But on he cometh to lord and page.
> Wherfor for us that ben goo
> Preyeth as other shall for you doo
> That God of his benignyte
> On us have mercy and pite
> And nought remember our wykedness
> Sith he us bought of hys goodnesse.[124]

The *memento mori* which opens this epitaph was used extensively throughout the later Middle Ages, as in the famous epitaph of Edward the Black Prince, "Tiel come tu es autiel je fu, / Tu seras tiel come je su."[125] The theme of transience became associated with medieval tombs in an even more surprising way. "In the last years of the fourteenth-century, a new and strikingly different type of sepulchral monument, the transi-tomb, appeared in several places in Northern Europe. On these tombs the traditional idealized portrayal of the deceased was replaced by a gruesome depiction of the physical ravages of death."[126] The transi-tomb is a graphic representation of the transitory nature of existence:

> Above on the tomb slab lies the effigy in the glorious panoply of bishop or knight. Below, the walls of the tomb and coffin are cut away to reveal the emaciated corpse within, naked on its winding sheet. Sometimes the stomach lies hollow and empty, eviscerated by the embalmer's knife, sometimes worms creep about the body upon their busy occasions.[127]

---

[123] For the dating of the poem see Ralph Hanna, introduction, *The Awntyrs off Arthure*, ed. Ralph Hanna III (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1974) 1, and Spearing, *Medieval to Renaissance*, 122-123. Neither critic attempts to refine the dating of the poem beyond the limits 1400-1430.
[124] The epitaph is mid-fifteenth century. Quoted by Gray, *Themes and Images*, 200.
[125] "As you are, I once was / As I am, you will be." "Epitaph of the Black Prince," quoted by John Cammidge, *The Black Prince: An Historical Pageant* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1943) 454. See above p. 179 for the full epitaph.
[126] Kathleen Cohen, *Metamorphosis of a Death Symbol: The Transi-Tomb in the Late Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973) 1.
[127] Lawrence Stone, *Sculpture in Britain: The Middle Ages* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1955) 213.

The earliest known transi-tomb, that of Franiçois de la Sarra (d. 1363), depicts the body being devoured by toads and worms.[128] The first transi-tomb in England was built by Henry Chichele, Archbishop of Canterbury, in 1424 in Canterbury cathedral. He was interred in the tomb after his death in 1440.[129]

The iconography of the transi-tomb, the epitaphs that speak to passers-by, and the representation of the talking dead in literature, all emphasize the natural progression from living to dead. They invite the reader or viewer to consider the fleeting nature of life and to prepare for death by realizing that worldly achievements are ephemeral. The *Awntyrs* ghost shows a similar concern for the passing of riches. She asserts that "Quene was I some wile, brighter of browes",[130] and lists the "palaies", "parkes", "townes", and "toures" over which she once ruled.[131] Her possessions in life, however, do her no good, as "Nowe ame I cauȝte oute of kide to cares so colde."[132] The ghost's comparison of her former high estate and her present fall from that position, reminds us of the laments delivered by the fallen kings in the *Morte Arthure*'s dream of Fortune. "On ȝone see hafe I sitten als souerayne and lorde...," complained Hector, "And nowe my lordchippes are loste and laide foreuer!"[133]

Unlike the transi-tomb, or the tomb-stone epitaph, the ghost in the *Awntyrs* is not simply a mirror for any passer-by. Within the narrative she is placed specifically in apposition to Guenevere, and the poet goes to great lengths to demonstrate their association.

---

[128] The tomb was constructed in La Sarraz, Switzerland. See Cohen, *Metamorphosis of a Death Symbol*, figs. 31 & 32.
[129] Cohen, *Metamorphosis of a Death Symbol*, 15. Henry Chichele was the brother of William Chichele (whose epitaph is quoted above). For an illustration of Chichele's tomb, see Cohen, *Metamorphosis of a Death Symbol*, fig. 13.
[130] *Awntyrs*, 144.
[131] *Awntyrs*, 148-150.
[132] *Awntyrs*, 151
[133] *Morte Arthure*, 3291-3293. For a similar opinion see Phillips, "*Awntyrs off Arthure*," 81-82.

The most obvious affinity between the two is their relationship by blood. The ghost twice states that she is Guenevere's mother. When she first addresses Guenevere she cries "Lo! how delful dethe has þi dame diȝte!"[134] and later she laments, "I bare þe of my body; what bote is hit I layne?"[135] The effect of this relationship is striking. As Speirs put it, "each is confronted with herself in the other - the daughter as she will be, and the mother as she once was."[136] The ghost also directly compares herself to her daughter, saying that she was once "Gretter þene dame Gaynour."[137] At the same time she warns Guenevere to prepare for her end, saying, "Þus dethe wil ȝou diȝte, thare you not doute."[138] The women are also associated by their respective positions in society. Guenevere is the present queen, while her mother also was "Cristenede and Krysommede, withe kynges in my kyne."[139]

These outward parallels and associations are also more subtly emphasized by the poet's use of his complicated stanza form. Throughout the poem stanzas are linked together by means of verbal repetition. At times, as Klausner notes, this iteration can be very effective and ominous.[140] The poet's use of concatenation not only binds the work together by linking stanzas, it also helps to draw close parallels between Guenevere and her dead mother, as words and phrases are applied to either character at stanza breaks. The first use of this device occurs at the appearance of the apparition, as the ghost approaches Gawain and

---

[134] *Awntyrs*, 160.
[135] *Awntyrs*, 204. In T the ghost states her relationship a third time: "'I ame the body þat þe bare,'" 89.
[136] John Speirs, *Medieval English Poetry: The Non-Chaucerian Tradition* (London: Faber and Faber, 1957) 257.
[137] *Awntyrs*, 147.
[138] *Awntyrs*, 170.
[139] *Awntyrs*, T, 138. The reading here is from T. D's "'Cristened and knowene...'" is not supported by P, nor does it provide the parallel at 224, where Guenevere repeats the phrase. I follow Mills, who glosses the passage as "Christened and annointed...." Helen Phillips' detailed argument concerning the theology of baptism seems unnecessary to explain the passage. The ghost would have to be baptized in order to enter the Christian dispensation, she was 'Krysommede' at the time that she ascended the throne. See Helen Phillips, "The Ghost's Baptism in the *Awntyrs off Arthure*," *Medium Ævum* 58 (1989): 54.
[140] Klausner, "Exempla," 318-319.

the queen:

> 'Alas! now kindeles my care,
> I gloppen and I grete!'
>
> ¶ Then gloppenet and grete Gaynour the gay[141]

The next use of the technique is more effective, as the ghost addresses Gawain:

> 'I ame comene in þis cace
> To speke with your quene.
>
> ¶ Quene was I some wile, brighter of browes'[142]

Throughout their conversation, words and phrases of the one are repeated by the other at stanza breaks and at the wheel of the stanza. Often the grammatical sense of the phrase has changed, as in this exchange between the queen and her mother:

> 'If þou be my moder, grete wonder hit is
> That al þi burly body is brouȝte to be so bare!'
> 'I bare þe of my body; what bote is hit I layne?'[143]

Through these devices the poet carefully draws the association between Guenevere and her mother, the talking dead. Unlike the description of the two ladies in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, this is more specific than a general statement about the transience of human life. Despite her position as queen of the realm at the height of her power, Guenevere herself will be just as her mother is now, a rotting corpse whose riches will be of no use.

The theme of transience and metamorphosis continues in the second half of the adventure with the apparition.[144] Gawain interrupts the ghost to ask a question. The form his

---

[141] *Awntyrs*, 90-92.
[142] *Awntyrs*, 142-144.
[143] *Awntyrs*, 202-204. For further examples of this practice see also lines 195-196, 208-209, 221-222, 229-230, 234-235, 247-248.
[144] The conversation with Gawain (which is actually a monologue) appears to have been seen as a separate section of the poem by the scribe of P who wrote 'a fytte' in the margin beside line 260. For a discussion of the structure of the poem based on this scribal division into fitts, see Phillips, "*Awntyrs off Arthure*," *passim*.

question takes implies that he already knows the answer:

> ¶ 'How shal we fare,' quod þe freke, 'þat fondene to fighte
> And þus defoulene þe folke, one fele kinges londes,
> And riches ouer reymes with outene eny righte,
> Wynnene worshippe in werre þorghe wightness of hondes?'[145]

The ghost answers Gawain's question by prophesying the destruction of the Round Table. Unlike most medieval prophecies, her narration is not cloaked in the obscure animal imagery which often seeks to hide meaning.[146] Rather, the prophecy is a simple, straightforward exposition of the Arthurian story.[147] Her narrative, however, is not based on the romance tradition, but on the chronicles, and this must be a conscious decision of the poet. The reader, therefore, is not presented with an image of Gawain's revenge pushing the Round Table to ruin. Rather, another image of mutability, the Wheel of Fortune, is blamed for Arthur's fall.

The ghost's short monologue achieves its ominous effect through a careful attention to temporality. She begins by describing the present situation:

> 'Your king is to couetous, I warne þe, sir knizte;
> May no mane stry him withe strength, while his whele stondes;'[148]

The ghost then turns to the past, retelling the achievements of the Round Table:

> ¶ 'Fraunce haf ye frely with your fight wonnene;
> Freol and his folke fey ar þey leued;'[149]

---

[145] *Awntyrs*, 261-264.
[146] See, for example, Merlin's prophecies in Geoffrey, *Historia*, chs. 112-117.
[147] There is no indication as to why the ghost has the power of prophecy. Dante, in the tenth canto of the *Inferno*, speculates that the damned are granted only the vision of the future, so that as time comes to an end their intellect will cease to exist. This theory, however, is not specifically analogous since the the *Awntyrs* ghost is in purgatory, not hell. See Ralph Hanna III, "*The Awntyrs off Arthure*: An Interpretation," *Modern Language Quarterly* 31 (1970): 288.
[148] *Awntyrs*, 265-266.
[149] *Awntyrs*, 274-275. Cf. the reading in T: 'The Frollo and þe Farnaghe es frely by-leuede;' This line, supported by P, indicates that the poem relies on the alliterative *Morte Arthure*. Cf. "Fore Froill and Ferawnt, and for thir ferse knyghttis...." *Morte Arthure*, 3404. For the textual difficulties of this line see Hamel's notes, *Morte Arthure*, p. 365.

Next, she turns to the future:

> 'Yet shal þe riche remayns with one be aure-ronene,
> And with þe rounde table þe rentes be reued.'[150]

Arthur's success, however, will be short lived, and she begins to describe the fall of the Round Table,

> 'Gete þe, sir Gawayne,
> Turne þe to Tuskayne;
> For ye shul lese Bretayne,
> With a king kene'[151]

and Gawain's own death,

> 'Gete þe, sir Gawayne,
> The boldest of bretayne;
> In a slake þou shal be slayne,
> Siche ferlyes shulle falle.'[152]

The prophecy, in total, traces Arthur's war with Lucius, his approach to Rome, and his return to England at the news of Mordred's treachery. Although the ghost never mentions the traitor by name, a brief description of the final campaign against Mordred is included which ends, as though full-circle, in the present:

> 'Þei shullene dye one a day, þe doughety by-dene,
> Suppriset with a surget; he beris hit in sable,
> With a sauter engreled of siluer fulle shene.
> He beris hit of sable, soþely to say;
> In riche Arthures halle
> The barne playes at þe balle,
> Þat outray shalle you alle
> Delfully þat day.'[153]

Reiteration again serves to link the wheel of the stanza, which depicts the present situation,

---

[150] *Awntyrs*, 280-281.
[151] *Awntyrs*, 283-286.
[152] *Awntyrs*, 296-299.
[153] *Awntyrs*, 305-312.

to the earlier lines, which depict events in the future. Mordred's heraldic description also links the traitor of the future to the innocent child of the present.

As William Matthews has shown, elements of the ghost's prophecy, such as the reference to Frollo and Mordred's heraldic device, indicate that the *Awntyrs* poet knew and borrowed from the alliterative *Morte Arthure*.[154] But Matthews goes on to say that the "details that prove the indebtedness of this prophecy ... are less significant than the echo of motifs in which *Morte Arthure*'s originality chiefly lies, the tragedy of fortune and the theme of penitence...."[155] Indeed, the ghost goes beyond the alliterative *Morte* and states that the fall of the Round Table is a result of Arthur's actions. Unlike the philosopher in the alliterative *Morte*, the ghost in the *Awntyrs* accuses Arthur of being "to couetous," and it is this ambition that will lead to the turning of Fortune's wheel. The ghost makes a direct appeal to the Wheel of Fortune in her description of Arthur's fall:

> 'May no mane stry him withe strength, while his whele stondes;
> Whane he is in his mageste, moost in his miȝte,
> He shal lighte ful lowe one þe se sondes'[156]

Fortune is described as false for her influence which is felt by all nations. Arthur's rise on her wheel has necessitated the fall of other rulers:

> 'Thus ȝour cheualrous kynge chefe schalle a chaunce;
> False fortune in fyghte,
> That wondirfulle whele wryghte:
> Mase lordis lawe for to lyghte.
> Takes witnes by Fraunce.
>
> Fraunce hafe ȝe frely with ȝour fyghte wonnene
> The Frollo and þe Farnaghe es frely by-leuede.'[157]

---

[154] William Matthews, *The Tragedy of Arthur: A Study of the Alliterative 'Morte Arthure'* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1960) 156-158.
[155] Matthews, *Tragedy of Arthur*, 160-161.
[156] *Awntyrs*, 266-268.
[157] *Awntyrs*, T, 269-275. The reading from T, supported by P, has been accepted.

In this way the apparition of Guenevere's mother appeals to Fortune, another image of mutability and change, to explain Arthur's fall.[158] Just as the ghost complains that once she was a queen and now "in a lake loȝ am I lighte,"[159] so she warns that although Arthur is now king, "He shal lighte ful lowe one þe se sondes."[160]

This warning is made more ominous by its careful adherence to the chronicle tradition. A fifteenth-century audience would have recognised the ghost's narrative as authentic Arthurian history. Although certain particulars correspond only to the alliterative *Morte Arthure*, the prophecy carefully avoids romance elements, and thus the authenticity of the ghost's narrative is assured. Failure to recognise this fact has caused some critics to lay undue emphasis on the ghost's warning against "luf paramour."[161] A reading of the poem which relies on the story of Lancelot, however, assumes that the Arthurian setting for the poem is drawn from the Vulgate cycle.[162] In the *Awntyrs* the events of Arthur's fall conform

---

[158] It will be remembered that *Somer Soneday* has many thematic similarities with the *Awntyrs* and with *De Tribus Regibus Mortuis*. In that poem, however, the image of transience is not a dead parent but Fortune's Wheel. See Turville-Petre, "Three Poems," *passim*.

[159] *Awntyrs*, 164. Compare also "Listes and delites, / Þat has me liȝte and laft loȝ in a lake." *Awntyrs*, 213-214.

[160] *Awntyrs*, 268.

[161] *Awntyrs*, 213.

[162] It has been argued that the ghost's reference to "'luf paramour, listes and delites'" (*Awntyrs*, 213) is intended to draw a further parallel between Guenevere and her dead mother. Klausner states that "the implications of that example could not be missed" (Klausner, "Exempla," 320) while Hanna is more specific, saying that it is the "involvement in adulterous love as the widest extension of one's interest in dalliance and chivalric service [which has] sent Guinevere's mother to Hell. In this warning must be implied a judgment upon the famous love of the queen for Lancelot, a love which leads to the weakening and dismemberment of the chivalric company" ("An Interpretation," 290). Even Takami Matsuda, who recognizes the historical elements of the text, states that "the figure of the ghost has an explicit connection with the sins of pride and lechery..., which in turn becomes an implied criticism of Guinevere whose illicit relationships with the knights of the Round Table precipitate the destruction of the kingdom." Takami Matsuda, "The *Awntyrs off Arthure* and the Arthurian History," *Poetica: An International Journal of Linguistic-Literary Studies* 19 (1984): 51. As I have argued above, however, the *Awntyrs* is placed within an historical setting in which the Guenevere/Lancelot story did not exist. If there is an association to be made, it is to Guenevere's lechery in marrying Mordred, her husband's sister's son. In the historical tradition Guenevere is a willing participant in Mordred's treachery. Peter Korrel speaks of "Geoffrey [of Monmouth]'s choice to put a stain on Guinevere's character, which unfortunately for her, developed into a permanent trait, essential to her characterization ever since." Peter Korrel, *An Arthurian Triangle: A Study of the Origin, Development and Characterization of Arthur, Guinevere and Modred* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1984) 124.

to the Brut tradition, and the prophecy relies on the audience's knowledge of the historical Arthur not only for its narrative, but also for its theme of the cyclical nature of history. In this context the prophecy of Arthur's Roman campaign and its outcome takes on added significance, as the careful attention to historical detail helps to place the actions of the romance within Arthurian history. Matthews notes that:

> ...the ghost's prophecy in [*The Awntyrs off Arthure*] is imagined as occurring after the conquest of France and before the campaign against Lucius: this timing and the association of the events with Carlisle and its social pleasures might mean that [the *Awntyrs*] was conceived as a prologue to [the *Morte Arthure*], the events taking place some time before Lucius' challenge.[163]

Arthur, the ghost tells us, has already defeated Frollo and conquered France. The adventure, therefore, takes place in the nine year period of peace before the challenge from Rome. This temporal space, as we have seen, had already been established as a period in which wonders could occur. Like the twelve years of peace at the beginning of Arthur's reign, English chroniclers identified the nine-year period of peace which followed the conquest of France as a time of chivalric adventures. Following a hint in Geoffrey and Wace, Robert Mannyng had stated that "Many selcouth by tyme seres / betid Arthur þo nyen ȝeres."[164] For Mannyng, these adventures happened in France and were recorded in prose texts,[165] but for Sir Thomas Gray, the adventures were more general. Gray merely stated that Arthur held a royal court "De queux Gauwayn s'entremist fortement, qe tresseouent tres bien ly auenit, com recorde est en sez estoirs."[166] Like the *Gawain*-poet, therefore, the *Awntyrs* author seems to have taken advantage of time within the historical tradition which was set apart for feats of

---

[163] Matthews, *Tragedy of Arthur*, 209, *n.* 6.
[164] Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1.10761-10762.
[165] For a discussion of Mannyng's use of this period see above, p. 49
[166] "In which Gawain stood out above the rest, which he repeatedly did very well, as is recorded in his histories." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 73v.1. For Gray's discussion of the nine year period of peace see above, p. 106.

individual chivalry. The period he has chosen immediately precedes the challenge from Rome with which the alliterative *Morte Arthure* begins.

Even if the adventure is not specifically thought of as a prologue to the *Morte*, it is clearly set within an historical time and place. Arthur's realm has been extended across the known world. The challenge from Rome, as predicted by the ghost, will lead Arthur to participate in the cyclical pattern of history which we saw expressed in the alliterative *Morte Arthure*. His fall, in other words, is close at hand, but at the moment of the adventure his sovereignty is at its greatest. Thomas Gray emphasized Arthur's position by transferring the account of the giant Rinin to this period of peace. In the *Scalacronica* the cloak of beards, the physical manifestation of European sovereignty, is won by Arthur during the nine years of peace.[167] The author of the *Morte Arthure* also uses the cloak as a symbol of sovereignty, but he transfers it to the Giant of St. Michael's Mount. Arthur demonstrates his position on the wheel by winning the cloak and thus affirming his authority over the fifteen realms of Europe, at the very beginning of the Roman campaign.[168] Phillips notes that if the *Awntyrs* "is a work written in the shadow of the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*, dependent on its readers' familiarity with the pattern of Arthur's career as the *Morte Arthure* portrays it..., then that shared and relatively narrow vision of Arthur might be seen to inform and unify all parts of the *Awntyrs*."[169] The prophecy in *The Awntyrs off Arthure* serves much the same function as the cloak of beards in both the *Scalacronica* and the *Morte Arthure*. It establishes the moment at which Arthur is "moost in his mizte."[170]

---

[167] See above, p. 103 for an account of Gray's use of this adventure.
[168] See above, p. 167 for an account of the alliterative *Morte*'s use of this adventure.
[169] Phillips, "*Awntyrs off Arthure*," 79.
[170] *Awntyrs*, 267.

In both accounts of the cloak of beards, Arthur's status is established within an ongoing narrative. In the *Scalacronica*, it represents the culmination of Arthur's career; in the *Morte*, it is the starting point of Arthur's fall. In *The Awntyrs off Arthure*, however, the entire adventure takes place during a critical moment in Arthurian history, and that moment is encompassed by two powerful representations of mutability. The ghost of Guenevere's mother, whose representation is based on the same conventions utilized by the transi-tomb and the legends of the talking dead, and her appeal to the Wheel of Fortune both emphasize the transience of worldly achievement at the very moment that Arthur's sovereignty is at its height.

After completing her recitation of future history the ghost retreats, reminding Guenevere to remember the poor and have masses said for her soul.[171] The weather clears and the hunting party reassembles. Klausner, who follows the Thornton text, notes that the court's reaction to the adventure is less than enthusiastic. Guenevere "tells them of her experience, but it is passed over in a line; they wonder at it but do not take it to heart."[172] Alternate readings of the line are even more shocking. After hearing of the adventure, the Douce manuscript describes the courtiers' reaction, saying "The wise of þe weder for-wondred þey were".[173] Rather than heed the message of the transience of life, the Arthurians wonder at the changeable weather of Northern England. The court retires to Carlisle and the second adventure begins without warning.

In the second episode Guenevere has the opportunity to act on the ghost's admonitions to show charity and be less covetous. As the knights retreat to Carlisle for a

---

[171] *Awntyrs*, 319-325.
[172] Klausner, "Exempla," 322
[173] *Awntyrs*, 334. T reads, "The wyes on swilke wondirs a-wondirde þaire were", while P agrees with D.

feast they are again interrupted in their courtly pursuits by an unexpected challenge. These intruders, the knight Galeron and his lady, are more familiar to the court, and their own courtly aspect is emphasized in a lengthy description.[174] The lady is "þe worþiest wighte þat eny wede wolde,"[175] while "The knighte in his colours was armed ful clene, / Withe his comly crest, clere to be-holde."[176] They come with a challenge, however, and accuse Arthur of stealing the knight's lands in an unjust war, thus displaying the same covetousness of which the ghost also accused him:

> 'Þou has wonene hem in werre, with a wrange wille,
> And geuen hem to sir Gawayne, þat my hert grylles.'[177]

The case will be decided by combat, and the trial is delayed until the following day. As Arthur and his knights decide who will meet the challenge, the moral implications of the fight are immediately called into question. Gawain offers to defend his claim, saying:

> 'I wolle fight with þe knighte,
> In defence of my riȝte.'[178]

Arthur agrees but with hesitation, because "I nolde, for no lordeshippe, se þi life lorne."[179] Gawain then reassures the king, invoking both the divine nature of trial by combat, and the courtly ideal that a challenge should not go unanswered:

> 'Let go,' quod sir Gawayne, 'god stond with þe riȝte!
> If he skape skaþelese, hit were a foule skorne.'[180]

The battle itself is described at length and in detail. Although both knights are sorely wounded, the poet takes as much time to describe the damage done to their arms and armor:

---

[174] *Awntyrs*, 365-403.
[175] *Awntyrs*, 365.
[176] *Awntyrs*, 378-379.
[177] *Awntyrs*, 421-422.
[178] *Awntyrs*, 466-467.
[179] *Awntyrs*, 470.

¶ Hardely þene þes haþelese one helmes þey hewe,
Þei betene downe beriles, and bourdures bright;
Shildes one shildres, þat shene were to shewe,
Fretted were in fyne golde, þei failene in fighte;
Stones of Iral þey strenkel and strewe,
Stiþe stapeles of stele þey strike done stiȝte.[181]

Spearing argues that the battle "perfectly expresses the nature of the aristocratic life, which consists in a generous willingness to waste those material possessions that seem to be its essence."[182] More specifically, however, those possessions are wasted in a battle the purpose of which is to defend Arthur's covetous actions.

The conflict is finally resolved just as Gawain gains the upper hand. As Galeron is seized by the collar, his lady appeals to Guenevere to "Haf mercy one yondre kniȝte."[183] Guenevere, apparently having learned the lesson of the ghost, implores Arthur to "Make þes knightes accorde...."[184] Before Arthur can act, however, Galeron admits defeat and freely gives up his claims:

'Here I make þe releyse, renke, by þe rode,
And by rial reysone relese þe my righte'[185]

He then turns to Arthur and makes a similar release: "Of rentes and richesse I make þe releyse."[186] Arthur, a little late, commands peace between the knights. He gives Gawain a reward of treasures and grants him several more lands,[187] on the condition that Gawain settle with the knight "And relese him his riȝte, / And graunte him his londe."[188] Gawain, in return,

---

[180] *Awntyrs*, 471–472.
[181] *Awntyrs*, 586-591.
[182] Spearing, *Medieval to Renaissance*, 139.
[183] *Awntyrs*, 622.
[184] *Awntyrs*, 635.
[185] *Awntyrs*, 640-641.
[186] *Awntyrs*, 646.
[187] *Awntyrs*, 664-671.
[188] *Awntyrs*, 675-676.

gives Galeron back his lands, saying: "I shall refeff him in felde, in forestes so faire."[189] The poem concludes as Galeron joins the Round Table, and Guenevere, like the three living kings in *De Tribus Regibus Mortuis*, remembers her promise and provides that "a mylione of masses" are said for her mother's soul.[190]

To Matthews, the plot is neatly circular and fulfilling. He describes the poem as containing two strands. The first, which concerns Guenevere's luxury and pride, is resolved through her pity for the wounded knights and the masses said for her mother's soul.[191] The second strand is concerned with Arthur's covetousness, but even here, Matthews sees resolution:

> Imperial conquests, won with wrong, are canceled out in a display of Christian charity, so that one might believe that the troubled ghost could have taken almost as much comfort from the effect of her moral advice as from the masses with which the poem ends.[192]

Spearing agrees with Matthews' conclusion,[193] but remembers the unresolved prophecy of the first adventure. Although he believes that the poem "celebrates a noble way of life,"[194] he also realizes that the prophecy of Arthur's fall must be held in the audience's consciousness. It was, therefore, "a stroke of genius to make the glorification of what was doomed come after the prophecy of doom."[195] For all this, he still feels that medieval poets, and the *Awntyrs* poet in particular, "saw in courtly civilization, for all its limitations, an admirable

---

[189] *Awntyrs*, 685
[190] *Awntyrs*, 706. Cf. "A mynster þai made with masse / Fore metyng þe men on þe mosse...." *Three Dead Kings*, 139-140.
[191] Matthews, *Tragedy of Arthur*, 160.
[192] Matthews, *Tragedy of Arthur*, 161.
[193] "The pattern is formally completed by the admission of Galeron to the Round Table, and Guenevere's arrangement for the 'mylion of masses' (706) that she had promised to her mother's ghost." Spearing, *Medieval to Renaissance*, 141. See also Spearing, "*Awntyrs*," *passim*. In his later study he adds several qualifications which will be discussed below.
[194] Spearing, *Medieval to Renaissance*, 132.
[195] Spearing, *Medieval to Renaissance*, 141.

resilience, which enabled it to continue the game even while knowing that it was only a game, and it must come to an end."[196] Phillips also sees the second half of the poem as genuinely positive, but she denies that there are moral lessons to be learned from the ghost. The ghost's preoccupation with penitence and the feeding of the poor does not, according to Phillips, imply that the poet values good works for their own sake. Rather, "the text presents spiritual and moral values as if their chief rationale is the protection of the aristocratic soul after death."[197] The ghost's prophecy, therefore, recognizes that military conquests are subject to the vagaries of fortune, but it does not condemn them. The prophecy's references to "rentes" that are gained and lost by the Round Table are, according to this reading, echoed in Galeron's successful attempt to regain his feudal rights.[198]

There are, however, indications throughout the poem that the message of transience and mutability pervades the second episode more fully than either Spearing or Phillips would allow. As Galeron and his lady enter Arthur's hall, the lady addresses Arthur as "Mone makeles of mighte."[199] The line recalls the ghost's grim prediction that "Whane he is in his mageste, moost in his mi3te, / He shal lighte ful lowe...."[200] Indeed, the image of Arthur in majesty atop the Wheel of Fortune is recalled by the stanza which follows the lady's challenge:

> The mane in his mantylle syttis at his mete,
> In paulle purede with pane, fulle precyousely dyghte,
> Trofelyte and trauerste wythe trewloues in trete;
> The tasee was of topas þat þer to was tyghte.

---

[196] Spearing, *Medieval to Renaissance*, 141.
[197] Phillips, "*Awntyrs off Arthure*," 84.
[198] For Phillips, "The *Awntyrs* poet sees military activity, not as quests and adventures in a political vacuum, but as a constant contest for territorial lordship...." Phillips, "*Awntyrs off Arthure*," 72.
[199] *Awntyrs*, 348.
[200] *Awntyrs*, 276-278. The parallel is even stronger in T, where the lady refers to Arthur as "Mane moste of myghte."

He glyfte vpe withe hys eghne, þat graye ware and grete,
Withe his burely berde, one þat birde bryghte.
He was the soueraynestе sir, sittande in sette,
Þat euer any segge soughe, or sene was with syghte.
Thus the kyng, crowned in kythe, carpis hir tille:
'Welecome, worthyly wyghte!
Thou salle hafe resone and ryghte;
Whytherne es this comly knyghte,
If it be thi wille?'[201]

This stanza not only establishes Arthur as a mighty and opulent king, it also has a crucial structural significance.

Following Alastair Fowler's lead,[202] Spearing discovered that, in accordance with an established pattern in Renaissance poetry, the *Awntyrs* has as its central stanza a passage which describes the king sitting in sovereignty. This stanza (the twenty-eighth out of fifty-five) clearly describes the king in a central position. The central line of the stanza (and of the entire poem) emphasizes that position: "He was the soueraynestе sir, sittande in sette."[203] "We have then an exact symmetry, with the king enthroned in his full majesty as ruler, host, and judge at the precise centre of a poem...."[204] The circularity of the narrative is also accentuated by the repetition of the phrase "In the tyme of Arthur ane aunter by-tydde"[205] at the beginning and ending of the poem, and this pattern is reinforced by the apparent resolution of both strands of the narrative, the covetousness of Arthur and the masses necessary for the ghost's peace. At the centre of this narrative sits Arthur, both literally and structurally. The very structure of the poem, therefore, mirrors the wheel of fortune, as

---

[201] *Awntyrs*, T, 352-364. D is missing a line and employs direct speech at the beginning of this stanza. The reading from T, supported by P, has therefore been adopted.
[202] Alastair Fowler, *Triumphal Forms: Structural Patterns in Elizabethan Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 21-25.
[203] *Awntyrs*, T, 358.
[204] Spearing, *Medieval to Renaissance*, 129. Spearing uses this information only to establish the structural integrity and unity of the poem. See also Spearing, "Central and Displaced Sovereignty," *passim*.

Arthur sits in majesty, the "mone makeles of mighte," completely unaware of the prophesied fall which is approaching.

With this view the resolution of the poem begins to look less stabilizing and the question of Galeron's integration into Arthurian society remains vexed.[206] Galeron freely releases his lands before Arthur orders the two knights to be reconciled. It is therefore not clear what Gawain means when he says that he will "refeff him in felde, in forestes so fair."[207] First appearances indicate that Galeron now holds his lands as a fief from Gawain. Even Galeron's new status as a knight of the Round Table seems small compensation. The audience last hears of Galeron in a passage with troubling implications:

> Þei made sir Galerone þat stonde
> A knizte of þe table ronde,
> To his lyues ende.[208]

Phillips argues that the passage represents a sense of closure and permanence,[209] but the audience need not remember that Galeron appears in the boat with Gawain, in the ill-fated sea battle at the close of the *Morte Arthure*,[210] to recognise that Galeron's "lyues ende" is not far away. As the prophecy reminds the reader, the knights of the Round Table, with Galeron now among them, "shullen dye one a day" in the final battle with Mordred.[211]

Gawain's reward for the adventure presents a similar problem. He is granted a large amount of land to make up for the land he has returned to Galeron. Spearing speaks of

---

[205] *Awntyrs*, 1. Cf. *Awntyrs*, 714-715.
[206] Hanna believes that Guenevere's concern for proper religious authorities (ie: the masses said for her mother), rather than practical charity, indicates that she has failed to learn the lesson of contrition and self discovery: "The queen's failure to comprehend the ghost's message of Christian relevance clearly should be understood as one of the elements which eventually produce the fall of the round table." Hanna, "An Interpretation," 290.
[207] *Awntyrs*, 685.
[208] *Awntyrs*, 700-702.
[209] Phillips, "*Awntyrs off Arthure*," 81.
[210] "... he [Arthur] cryes one lowde, / To Gawayne, to Galyran, thies gud mens bodyes." *Morte Arthure*, 3635-3636.

Arthur's generosity in that "he now voluntarily gives up great tracts of land in Wales, Ireland, and Brittany in order to bring peace with honour to the two warring knights."[212] To an early fifteenth-century audience, however, these gifts did not come without a price. Owen Glendower led an active rebellion in Wales from 1400 to 1408 in a vain attempt to throw off English subjection. Richard II had been constantly busy in Ireland throughout the final years of his reign, and England's holdings in Brittany were challenged continually throughout the Hundred Years War. Even the poet's choice of Galeron, the Scottish knight, as the antagonist of the poem, reflects the general weariness with the long-standing border warfare between the two countries.[213] It will be remembered that, upon his entrance to the court, Galeron's Frisian horse "...was a-fered, for drede of þat fare, / For he was seldene wonte to se / The tablet flure...."[214] Mills glosses this as a "table decorated with fleurs-de-lis": an ostentatious reminder of Arthur's foreign conquests.

The *Awntyrs*-poet, therefore, presents a pessimistic view of the benefits to be gained from foreign expansion, as the images of fortune and mutability pervade the seemingly optimistic adventure of the second half of the poem. Through these images the reader is forced to be ever aware that Arthur's military achievements, although impressive, were subject to the cyclical nature of worldly affairs. Like *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, *The*

---

[211] *Awntyrs*, 305.
[212] Spearing, *Medieval to Renaissance*, 140-141.
[213] Spearing believes that here we have an ideal English resolution to the Scottish problem: the Scottish knight accepting the feudal overlordship of the British/English king. Spearing, *Medieval to Renaissance*, 140. I tend to disagree. The debate between Galeron and Arthur has nothing to do with the lengthy historiographical debates which revolved around Arthur in the fourteenth century. If anything, they reflect the Scottish belief that Arthur's conquests were unjustified and not legally binding. See below p. 250. John Barnie comments that, in the contemporary debate surrounding the act of war, "educated men tended to be more concerned with the failings of society as a whole. It was the general rather than the particular which concerned them, and it led them to debate contemporary problems within a more abstract and theoretical context." John Barnie, *War in Medieval Society: Social Values and the Hundred Years War 1337-99* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1974) 120-121.
[214] *Awntyrs*, 399-401.

Awntyrs off Arthure revels in the elaborate descriptions of the "bliss" of Arthurian chivalry, but it also evokes the inevitable "blunder" of the fall of the Round Table. For the authors of both romances, the Round Table was the most noble example of chivalric achievement in Britain. With the advantage of hindsight, however, these poets were keenly aware that all chivalric achievement was subject to mutability and the final approach of death. Both poets discuss the theme of mutability in a single, fictional adventure which is set within a larger, historical narrative, but the concept varies significantly. Sir Gawain fails in his adventure with the Green Knight because of a breach of "trawþe," a flaw which has serious implications for Arthurian society. He also succeeds in some measure by refusing the advances of Bertilak's lady and is thus able to avoid the personal "blunder" of decapitation. In the *Awntyrs*, Gawain fares better, but his success is in support of the king's imperial expansion and covetousness, and it is these characteristics, the poem claims, which will lead to the downfall of Arthur's kingdom.

In both *Sir Gawain* and the *Awntyrs* the Arthurian world is used as a context within which to examine the personal achievements of the court's representative knight. That Arthurian context, however, does not merely provide a chivalric setting for the adventure: Arthurian history brings with it interpretive baggage which both poets exploit to full advantage. Arthur is the greatest British king, but the cyclical pattern inherent in the history of which he is only a part condemns his chivalric project to failure. Arthur's glory is a subject for admiration, but in both poems it is overshadowed by the flaws in his society and the audience's sure knowledge of the Round Table's fate. Both poets teach this lesson of history through a fictional romance, an "outtrage awenture of Arthurez wonderez," and both poets, along with Robert Mannyng, expect that their audience will accept that although their

tales of Arthur are not historically true "þer is of him no þing said / þat ne it may to gode laid."[215]

[215] Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1.10402-10403.

Chapter 5: Making History: John Hardyng's *Metrical Chronicle*

"But his Authority may be supposed to be as bad as his Verses...."
Aylett Sammes on John Hardyng, 1676[1]

The two adventures discussed in the previous chapter display a complex interplay between the romance and chronicle traditions of Arthurian narrative. The subtleties of this relationship were not lost in either Sir Thomas Gray's *Scalacronica* or the alliterative *Morte Arthure*, but in the mid-fifteenth century a chronicler approached the Arthurian material with a far less sophisticated pen. The two versions of John Hardyng's *Chronicle* combine the chronicle and romance traditions of Arthurian narrative with a zeal rarely found in medieval historiography. Hardyng sees in the reign of Arthur an historical precedent for his pressing political concern: the need for England to assert its sovereign authority over Scotland. Hardyng's concept of precedent, however, is slightly different from that of Thomas Gray. In the *Scalacronica* Gray used subtle allusion and inference to portray an ideal courtly world which could act as an model for his contemporaries' chivalric pursuits. In Hardyng's *Chronicle* the Arthurian world is presented as the direct lineal ancestor of contemporary chivalric orders and society. The relevance of Arthur's reign to contemporary issues is stressed throughout Hardyng's text in apostrophes directed at his audience. After the death of Uther, for example, Hardyng addresses Henry VI as "O souerayn lorde," and instructs him to

> Thynke of this poynte / in all your' dygnyte

[1] Aylett Sammes, *Britannia Antiqua Illustrata: or, The Antiquities of Ancient Britain* (London: Printed by Tho. Roycroft for the Author, 1676) I: 212. Sammes is referring to a passage in which Hardyng cites Nennius as a source of information about Joseph of Arimathea.

And lette no sleuthe / disteyne your' soueraynte
Bot euer' fresshe / and grene for to defende
The peple hole / whiche god hath to you sende.[2]

In addition to this direct approach, Hardyng also demonstrates a relationship between the chivalric practices of the past and those of the present by associating the fellowships of the Grail and the Round Table with contemporary military orders. The distinction between the political and the chivalric blurs in Hardyng's account of the distant past and in his reflections on the present. In Hardyng's text the possibility of a unified Britain, which includes Scotland, becomes inextricably intertwined with the chivalric pursuits of the knightly class.

Despite the lack of craft which Hardyng displays in setting forth his political and social agenda, he does display an acute awareness of the incompatibility of the material that he attempts to combine. The romance elements of Hardyng's text are not presented as mere thematic embellishments which the audience is free to recognize as fictive. In order to be politically useful it was necessary that Hardyng's Arthurian narrative be accepted as historically accurate, and thus, while his additions to the chronicle account are ostensibly similar to those found in the *Scalacronica*, his attitude towards the authority of his alterations is radically different from Gray's ambiguous appeal to "ascuns cronicles".[3]

---

[2] Hardyng, *First Version*, 67v. The first version of Hardyng's *Chronicle* survives in a unique copy, BL Lansdowne MS 204. The Arthurian portions of both versions of Hardyng's *Chronicle* have recently been edited by Christine Marie Harker, "John Hardyng's Arthur: A Critical Edition," diss., University of California, Riverside, 1996. My transcription of the first version, which is included here as Appendix B, was completed before I was able to examine Harker's thesis and corresponds to lines 420-2279 of her edition. It has since been compared with Harker's work and I include it for the convenience of the reader. Variants in Harker's text have been noted, and any errors which remain are, of course, my own. In the notes, the longer version of Hardyng's text will be referred to as the *First Version*, by folio number. Harker's thesis also includes a much needed edition of the Arthurian portion of the second version of Hardyng's text using all of the available manuscripts. Because of its greater availability, however, I will maintain the practice of referring to Ellis' edition: John Hardyng, *The Chronicle of Iohn Hardyng*, ed. Henry Ellis (London: G. Woodfall, 1812). Contractions retained by Ellis have been expanded without notice. Citations of this text in the notes will simply be to the *Chronicle*.

[3] See above, pp. 120ff, for a discussion of Gray's use of this phrase.

John Hardyng's perception of the history of Britain was primarily shaped by the appeal to history which grew out of the Great Cause, and his political views are the result of his life on the Scottish border. He was born in 1378 to a respectable northern family, and at the age of twelve he entered the household of Henry Percy, known as 'Hotspur' to the Scots.[4] While in the service of Percy, he fought against the Scots at Homildon, Cocklaws and, as he tells us, "at divers rodes and feeldes."[5] In 1403 he fought beside Percy at Shrewsbury in the ill-fated revolt against Henry IV. After Percy's death at Shrewsbury, Hardyng received a royal pardon and entered the service of Sir Robert Umfraville. While in his service, Hardyng continued his military career along the Scottish border and later in France with Henry V where he fought at Agincourt. His career as a soldier ended in 1418 when, at the request of Henry V, he made his first journey north in an attempt to collect evidence regarding England's overlordship of Scotland.

English claims to sovereignty over Scotland were first seriously pressed by Edward I. The opportunity to develop this claim presented itself in 1286 when King Alexander III died, leaving no one but his infant grand-daughter Margaret as heir-apparent to the Scottish crown. Her death in 1290, while en route to Scotland from Norway, left the throne of Scotland vacant and the realm in a perplexing position. In a state of confusion, the nobility of Scotland asked Edward I to referee a contest among twelve claimants to the throne in a debate now known as the Great Cause. Edward decided to take this opportunity to assert his

---

[4] The most complete biography of Hardyng is found in Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974-1982) II: 274-287. Still valuable, however, is Charles L. Kingsford, "The First Version of Hardyng's *Chronicle*," *English Historical Review* 27 (1912): 462-69. Except where noted, the following account is drawn from these sources. Felicity Riddy adds considerably to our knowledge of Hardyng's life, particularly late in his writing career, in Felicity Riddy, "John Hardyng's Chronicle and the Wars of the Roses," *Arthurian Literature* 12 (1993): 93-97.

[5] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 351.

own claims to Scottish sovereignty, and he forced the claimants to swear homage to him as the overlord of Scotland. He based his claim to this position on historical precedent.

In March 1291, two months before the beginning of the Great Cause, Edward sent letters to various monastic houses asking for chronicle evidence concerning the relationship between the crowns of England and Scotland.[6] The first appeal to history in the debates between Scotland and England was a hurried, unorganized affair, and Edward's proof consisted of some papal bulls and English chronicle extracts from 901 to 1252. By the end of the decade the Scots retaliated, both through force and by appealing to Pope Boniface VIII who, in 1299, issued the letter *Scimus fili* in which he rebuked Edward and advised him that sovereignty over Scotland did not belong to England but rather to the papacy.[7] Edward, in turn, wrote to the pope in 1301 outlining the reasons why he believed that the king of England should be the overlord of Scotland. He refined the original arguments of the Great Cause and, as an afterthought,[8] attempted to strengthen his case by including an account of the British founding narrative, complete with both Brutus and Arthur.

Having received a copy of Edward's letter from Boniface, the Scots replied in kind with the *Processus*, written by Baldred Bisset, which was probably given to Boniface late in 1301 or 1302.[9] This document refutes Edward's letter point by point, appealing to natural

---

[6] The most complete accounts of the origin of the "appeal to history" are found in E. L. G. Stones, "The Appeal to History in Anglo-Scottish Relations between 1291 and 1401: Part I," *Archives* 9 no. 41 (1969): 11-21, and *Edward I and the Throne of Scotland*, ed. E.L.G. Stones and Grant G. Simpson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978) I: 137-162. An excellent assessment of the literary and historiographic impact of the Great Cause is found in R. James Goldstein, *The Matter of Scotland: Historical Narrative in Medieval Scotland* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1993) 57-108.

[7] Printed as document number 28 in *Anglo-Scottish Relations: 1174-1328*, ed. and tr. E.L.G. Stones (London: Nelson, 1965) 82-87.

[8] Stones, "The Appeal to History," 20.

[9] The Scots also produced a document known as the *Instructiones*, but it is unlikely that it was intended to be used in a public forum. For a full discussion of the purposes of these two documents see R. James Goldstein, "The Scottish Mission to Boniface VIII in 1301: A Reconsideration of the Context of the *Instructiones* and

and canon law. But, more importantly for the study of British historiography, it also includes the Scottish version of the founding of Britain, in which Scota and Gaythelos settle Scotland before Aeneas left Troy, and a refutation of English claims based on King Arthur.

This historical polemic influenced chronicle writing throughout the fourteenth century in both England and Scotland. In England, Ranulph Higden's *Polychronicon* repeated many of the familiar claims relating to Brutus, while in Scotland, John Fordun developed the legend of Scota and Gaythelos to greater lengths than had any previous Scottish writer.[10] Goldstein argues that this debate continued to be a dominant motivating force in Scottish historiography throughout the Middle Ages.[11]

It was against the backdrop of this ancient debate that Hardyng began his own search for evidence of England's historical sovereignty over Scotland. He was in some ways successful, and he delivered three documents to Henry V in 1422, including a series of homages done by the claimants to the Scottish throne during the Great Cause.' In 1440, possibly after a subsequent trip to Scotland, seven more documents were delivered to Henry VI. It was also in the 1440s that Hardyng began writing the first version of his chronicle, and in 1457 he presented it, along with six more documents, to Henry VI. After failing to receive a sufficient reward for either the chronicle or the documents from the Lancastrian king, Hardyng rewrote the chronicle with a pro-Yorkist bias, planning to present it to Richard of York. Although he did deliver several documents to Richard's son, Edward IV, in 1463, it is unlikely that he actually completed the second version of the *Chronicle* before his own

---

Processus," *Scottish Historical Review* 70 (1991): 1-15.
[10] Goldstein, *Matter of Scotland*, 108.
[11] Goldstein, *Matter of Scotland*, 6.

death.[12] There are no records of John Hardyng beyond 1463, and it is assumed that he died soon after; he was at least 84 years old.

Many of Hardyng's documents are still extant. With the exception of the homages done by the claimants to the throne, they are all forgeries. The way in which they were doled out is suspicious enough, but many errors in the documents, such as post-conquest armorial bearings decorating a pre-conquest charter, clearly betray their origins.[13] Francis Palgrave described them as being "in a character not properly belonging to any age or time" in a style "as would result from an individual possessing archæological knowledge, and yet using it according to the uncritical character of his age."[14] Hardyng's modern editor, Henry Ellis, suggested that he was deluded into buying these forgeries,[15] but most scholars agree that Hardyng himself was the forger. Almost all of the documents appear within the *Chronicle* in some form, usually as proof that Scotland is subject to England.

Both versions of the *Chronicle* begin with the arrival of Albina and end in the fifteenth century. The first version is found in a unique copy of approximately 19,000 lines, while the second, a little shorter at just over 12,000 lines, is found in fifteen manuscripts and fragments as well as a printed edition of 1534.[16] They are both written in English rhyme-

---

[12] Several lacunae in the second version of the *Chronicle* indicate that it remained uncompleted. See A. S. G. Edwards, "The Manuscripts and Texts of the Second Version of John Hardyng's *Chronicle*," *England in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Daniel Williams (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1987) 75-84. For a discussion of the circumstances of the composition of the second version, see Riddy, "John Hardyng's Chronicle and the Wars of the Roses," 91-108.

[13] Francis Palgrave, introduction, *Scotland. Documents and Records Illustrating the History of Scotland*, ed. Francis Palgrave (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1837) ccxvi.

[14] Palgrave, introduction, *Scotland*, ccxvi, ccxxiii.

[15] See Henry Ellis, introduction, *The Chronicle of Iohn Hardyng*, ed. Henry Ellis (London: G. Woodfall, 1812) viii-ix.

[16] For a list of the manuscripts of the second version, see Edward Donald Kennedy, "John Hardyng and the Holy Grail," *Arthurian Literature* 8 (1989): 191, *n.* 16.

royal stanzas, and both include descriptions of the best routes for invading Scotland.[17] Hardyng also drew detailed maps of Scotland, and copies of these are appended to the first version and several manuscripts of the second version.[18] Although the unique manuscript of the first version of the *Chronicle* may be the only copy ever made, the second version, as the number of extant copies suggests, was very influential, and it was used as a source by Holinshead and other chroniclers, as well as by literary figures such as Sir Thomas Malory, Edmund Spenser and William Shakespeare.[19]

The surviving copies of the *Chronicle* not only demonstrate Hardyng's interest in documentary evidence,[20] but also show his knowledge of the appeal to history which grew out of the Great Cause. Edward I's letter to Boniface is appended to the first version of the text, as is the letter prepared by the barons of England in support of Edward's claims.[21] This may have been suggested by John Fordun's *Chronica Gentis Scotorum*. Fordun not only included a complete account of the Scota legend, but he too was interested in the Great Cause and appended a copy of Bisset's *Processus* to his work. It is even possible that

---

[17] Hardyng, *First Version*, 223v ff.; Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 422.

[18] Several of these maps are reproduced in *Facsimiles of National Manuscripts of Scotland*, ed. Cosmo Innes (Southampton: Ordnance Survey Office, 1867-1871) II: 68-70.

[19] See, for example, Edward Donald Kennedy, "Malory's use of Hardyng's Chronicle," *Notes and Queries* 214 (1969): 167-170; Robert H. Wilson, "More Borrowings by Malory from Hardyng's 'Chronicle'," *Notes and Queries* 215 (1970): 208-210; P. J. C. Field, "Malory's Minor Sources," *Notes and Queries* 224 (1979): 107-110; Edward Donald Kennedy, "Malory and His English Sources," *Aspects of Malory*, ed. Toshiyuki Takamiya (Cambridge: Brewer; Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Littlefield, 1981) 27-55; Carrie Anna Harper, *The Sources of the British Chronicle History in Spenser's Faerie Queene* (Philadelphia: John C. Winston, 1910) *passim*; Gillian West, "Hardyng's *Chronicle* and Shakespeare's Hotspur," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 41 (1990): 348-351. Despite its influence, Hardyng's *Chronicle* has only recently received scholarly attention. Modern historians have studied the *Chronicle* as an historical document but they have tended to be pejorative of the legendary material. Charles Kingsford wrote that "here, where the author of necessity reproduces the material of older writers with little colouring of his own... the Chronicle is of least interest." Kingsford, "Hardyng's *Chronicle*," 470. Recently, however, Hardyng has undergone something of a revival as literary scholars have recognised his unique and important version of the Arthurian narrative.

[20] Throughout the *Chronicle* Hardyng draws attention to his own attempts to retrieve documents. When describing Malcolm's homage to William Rufus he writes that the oath of fealty was "By letter wrytten and sealed I vnderstand / Whiche Hardyng gaue in to kyng Henryes hand, / Without reward or any recompence, / Of mayne labour, his costagis and expence." Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 239. See also 21, 240, 247, 292, 305, 317.

Hardyng had read Walter Bower's more nationalistic *Scotichronicon*, though this is by no means assured. Hardyng's use of source material also indicates a detailed familiarity with the historical debate. Throughout the *Chronicle* he incorporates the English arguments into his text, and includes some Scottish material which he uses to his own ends. For the most part, however, the arguments of the Scots are denounced without direct reference to the Scots themselves. Perhaps most significantly, he also adds totally new material to the debate.

As mentioned above, Edward's letter of 1301 had relied on the Galfridian narrative's account of Arthur to support English claims to sovereignty over Scotland. The letter did not give a detailed account of Arthur's deeds. It stated only that "Arthurus rex Britonum princeps famosissimus Scociam sibi rebellem subjecit, et pene totam gentem delevit et postea quemdam nomine Anguselum in regem Scocie prefecit...."[22] Baldred Bisset had found major flaws in Edward's use of the Arthurian narrative, and these are outlined in his *Processus*:

> Quod dicit de Arthuro non procedit. Arthurus de adulterio fuit genitus, nec cuiquam successit; sed quicquid optinuit in variis locis per potenciam et violenciam acquisivit. Per quam nedum Scociam, sed eciam Angliam, Walliam, Hiberniam, Galliam, Norwegiam et Daciam occupavit. Quo per Modredum filium Loth regis Scocie et heredem Britannie interfecto, Scocia sicut alia regna sibi subjugata ad statum pristinum redierunt, et ad propriam libertatem.[23]

---

[21] Hardyng, *First Version*, 227v-230.

[22] "Arthur, king of the Britons, a prince most renowned, subjected to himself a rebellious Scotland, destroyed almost the whole nation, and afterward installed as king of Scotland one Angusel by name." "Letter of King Edward I," *Anglo-Scottish Relations, 1174-1328*, ed. and tr. E.L.G. Stones (London: Nelson, 1965) 98.

[23] "What he says about Arthur is not valid. Arthur was born in adultery and did not [lawfully] succeed anyone; but whatever he won in various places he acquired by force and violence. By these means he occupied not just Scotland, but also England, Wales, Ireland, Gaul, Norway and Denmark. When he was killed by Modred son of Loth, king of Scotland, the heir to Britain, Scotland (just like the other kingdoms subjected to him) returned to its former state and to liberty of its own." Baldred Bisset, "*Processus* Baldredi contra figmenta regis Anglie," Walter Bower, *The Scotichronicon*, ed. and tr. D.E.R. Watt, *et al.* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1990-1998) VI: 184. All citations from the *Processus* give page references to the Latin text. English translations are on facing pages. Although attested by the *Instructiones* and the *Processus* as found in manuscripts of Bower's *Scotichronicon*, Lot is not referred to as the "king of Scotland" in copies of the *Processus* found in surviving manuscripts of Fordun. Instead Lot is called the "brother of the king of Scotland" and there is no mention of Mordred as "heir to Britain". See Bisset, "*Processus*," 184 & 286 notes.

Three points are stressed by the Scottish argument: first, Arthur's illegitimacy made him an unlawful ruler; second, his power was expanded by conquest and force; and third, after his death, without an heir, all of the conquered territories returned to their former states of liberty. The bulk of Hardyng's history of Arthur is drawn from a comparative use of both Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia* and Wace's *Roman de Brut*. In addition to these sources, as Harker points out, he had access to other chronicles including the prose *Brut* and, possibly, Robert Mannyng's *Story of Inglond*.[24] Hardyng answers each of the points in the Scottish argument by stressing certain aspects of the traditional Arthurian narrative and by inventing relevant information. These alterations to the Brut tradition, however, merely modify the received narrative, and no material is introduced which is in conflict with Geoffrey's *Historia* or its successors.

Bisset's first statement, regarding Arthur's illegitimacy, was picked up by later Scottish historians. Fordun writes that "Cum enim Vther... perisset, filius ejus Arthurus factione quorundam in regno successit, quod tamen illi debitum de jure non fuerat, sed Annæ sorori potius vel suis liberis."[25] Fordun goes on to say that Anna was "procreata legitimo, consuli Loth Scoto... nupta fuit: ex qua duos filios genuit Galwanum nobilem et Mordredum...."[26] Fordun uses Geoffrey of Monmouth as his source for this section, but

---

[24] For Hardyng's use of Geoffrey and Wace see Harker's discussion of sources ("John Hardyng's Arthur," 9-18) and her notes, *passim*. See also Harker's more speculative discussion of Hardyng's use of the alliterative *Morte Arthure* in her Appendix B ("John Hardyng's Arthur," 383-386).

[25] "when Uther had died... his son Arthur, through the efforts of certain men, succeeded to the kingdom, which was not owed to him by law, but rather to his sister Anna, or her sons." John Fordun, *Chronica Gentis Scotorum Chronicle of the Scottish Nation*, ed. and tr. William F. Skene (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1871-1872) I: 109.

[26] "... conceived legitimately, and married to Loth, a Scottish consul... and he had two sons by her- Gawain the noble and Mordred." Fordun, *Chronica Gentis Scotorum*, I: 109.

while Geoffrey speaks of the *necessitas* of placing Arthur on the throne,[27] he never mentions that the throne was contested in any way. Fordun believed that Geoffrey's use of the word *necessitas* implied that the nobility of Britain were forced to elect Arthur because, at the age of fifteen, he proved a better candidate for the position than his younger cousins, Gawain and Mordred. Fordun never states why he feels that Arthur's claim is illegitimate, but two facts lead the reader to conclude that Arthur was a bastard. First, Uther, unlike most other kings mentioned in Fordun's chronicle, is never said to have married, despite the long-standing tradition that he had wed Igerne. Second, the description of Anna, who was *procreata legitimo*, seems extraneous unless it is placed in apposition to Arthur, who was not. Later historians would elaborate on Bisset's statement and Fordun's implications. Concerning the crown of Britain, Walter Bower adds "...quod tamen illi debitum de jure non fuerat quemadmodum natus in adulterio de Igerna conjuge Gorlois ducis Cornubie in castro Tintagol inaudita arte Merlini vatis...."[28]

In response to these attacks, Hardyng treats Arthur's birth in great detail. He stresses the fact that Uther and Igerne were married before the birth of Arthur, thus making him a legitimate heir under both English common law and canon law.[29] He also states that "at the

---

[27] "Arguebat enim eos necessitas ..." Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The Historia Regum Britannie of Geoffrey of Monmouth I: Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS 568*, ed. Neil Wright (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1984) ch. 143.

[28] "... [that it] was not strictly his by right since he had been born out of wedlock, the son of [I]gerna wife of Gorlois duke of Cornwall in the castle of Tintagel by the unheard-of art of the prophet Merlin." Walter Bower, *The Scotichronicon*, ed. and tr. D.E.R. Watt, *et al.* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1987-1998) II: 65. For a comparison of Fordun's and Bower's treatment of Arthur see Susan Kelly, "The Arthurian Material in the *Scotichronicon* of Walter Bower," *Anglia* 97 (1979): 431-8. The nationalistic *Chronycle of Scotland in a Part* goes further, claiming that "Arthur was gottyn on ane othir mannis wyf, be the Duk of Carnwell Vter; and sa was Arthur, spurius and a huris sone." *The Cronycle of Scotland in a Part, Bannatyne Miscellany* (Edinburgh: Bannatyne Club, 1827-1855) III: 39.

[29] Part of the problem of Arthur's illegitimacy arose from a difference between English common law and canon law. The differences between the legal systems were expressed in "an ordinance of Pope Alexander III (pope 1159-1181) wherein it was decreed that 'children born before solemnization of matrimony, where matrimony followed, should be as legitimate to inherit unto their ancestors as those that are born after matrimony.' Glanville, who wrote just after Alexander's decree, states the common law view that 'neither a bastard nor a

daye he wedded hir and cround, / And she ferforth with childe was then begonne..."[30] and later that "at hir tyme the quene had borne a sonne" that was "to bee his fathers heyre."[31] These statements, although not in conflict with Geoffrey, are added to his account and stress Arthur's legitimacy.

Hardyng also allows Arthur to defend his own blood line. In Geoffrey's *Historia*, following the challenge from the Roman senators, Arthur retreats into council with his lords where he relates his ancestral claim to independence from Rome in several long speeches.[32] This information is also found in Hardyng's *Chronicle*, but material has been added to Arthur's account. In the *Chronicle* Arthur begins his defense by describing Brutus' original state of freedom in Britain, despite the fact that Brutus is not mentioned in his source at this point. Most significantly, Hardyng changes the format of Arthur's reply. Instead of giving a speech before his nobility, Arthur traces his ancestry in a letter which he sends to Rome.[33] The appeal to history in letter form, and the inclusion of the Brutus myth in that letter is reminiscent of Edward's letter to Boniface in 1301, and here Hardyng may be borrowing material directly from the appeal.[34]

The Scots' second defense, that Arthur had become lord of Scotland through force, and not through law, was part of a larger anti-Arthurian tradition in Scotland. The Scottish alliterative poem *Golagros and Gawain* presents Arthur as a conquering oaf. Written about

---

person not born in lawful wedlock can be, in the legal sense of the term, an heir.'" Joseph Jackson, *The Formation and Annulment of Marriage*, 2nd ed. (London: Butterworth and Co., 1969) 42.

[30] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 120.

[31] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 120.

[32] See Geoffrey, *Historia*, chs. 158-159.

[33] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 140-2. Hardyng may be following the prose *Brut*, in which Arthur also sends a letter to Rome outlining his ancestry. In the *Brut*, however, Arthur's letter includes only Constantine and Maximian, and does not mention Brutus. *The Brut; or, The Chronicles of England*, ed. Friedrich W.D. Brie, EETS, os. 131 & 136 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1906, 1908) I: 66.

[34] Cf. "Letter of King Edward I," 97-98.

1470, the poem depicts Arthur on pilgrimage. The king decides to subdue Sir Golagros when he learns that the knight has no lord. When Arthur's knights attempt to talk him out of the rash plan, he exclaims that Golagros will pay homage to him "Or ellis mony wedou / Ful wraithly sal weip."[35] As in the two alliterative poems discussed in the previous chapter, it falls to Gawain to defend Arthur's claims. Even in defeat, however, Golagros will not yield. He states:

> 'Me think farar to dee,
> Than schamyt be, verralie,
> Ane sclander to byde.
>
> 'Wes I neuer yit defoullit, nor fylit in fame
> Nor nane of my eldaris, that euer I hard nevin.'[36]

This scene is even more striking when it is remembered that in the source, the French *Chastel Orgueilleus*, Arthur attacks the castle "in order that [a comrade] may be set free, whereas in the Scottish poem his purpose is to exact allegiance from the lord of the castle."[37] Similarly, *The Cronycle of Scotland in a Part*, written in the reign of James II, describes Arthur as "that tyrant [who] maid us were agayne his faith...."[38] At the time that Hardyng was composing his *Chronicle*, therefore, there was a tradition in Scottish historiography and romance literature which depicted Arthur as a cruel, conquering king.

Scottish writers had good reason to view Arthur in this light. Edward I had written that Arthur *subjecit* the Scots and *pene totam gentem delevit*, and Geoffrey of Monmouth had

---

[35] *The Knightly Tale of Golagros and Gawain, Scottish Alliterative Poems in Riming Stanzas*, ed. F.J. Amours, Scottish Text Society, 27 & 38 (London: Johnson Reprint Corp., 1966) 297-298. Cited by line number.
[36] *Golagros and Gawain*, 1035-9.
[37] Flora Alexander, "Medieval Scottish Attitudes to the Figure of Arthur: A Reassessment," *Anglia* 93 (1975): 29. Alexander argues that, although there was an anti-Arthurian movement in Scotland, it is overly simplistic to describe all Scottish Arthurian material as negative towards him. It will be remembered that Andrew Wyntoun and John Barbour depict Arthur in a generally favourable light.
[38] *The Cronycle of Scotland in a Part*, III: 38.

described Arthur's wars with the Scots and Picts who were allied with the Saxon invaders.[39] Hardyng maintains this image in the first version of the *Chronicle*, where Arthur is forced to fight against the "Scottes and peghtes that euer' wer' fals and fell."[40] In the second version, however, he chooses to ignore this element of Geoffrey's account. In Hardyng's shorter version, Arthur "sought the Saxons in Scotland"[41] but a major conflict with the Scots is avoided. The Scots, in fact, are shown among Arthur's most devoted followers. Hardyng increases the importance of several Scottish knights, not for their own sakes, but rather as vassals of Arthur. The first of these knights is Lot of Lothian. Hardyng writes that, after Uther had married Igerne and established the Round Table,

> The king sent forth Loth of Lowthian,
> A worthy prince, hardy and bounteous,
> ~
> The first knight that was electe, right fortunous,
> Of the table round, that ofte with them did fight.[42]

Both Geoffrey and Wace recount that Lot married Arthur's sister Anna and that he commanded the British army, but only Hardyng links him with the Round Table. Lot's role is expanded further when Arthur is in need of military assistance:

> Of Scotlande, then of Lothyan by ryght,
> The king was then, that [L]oth of Lowthian hight,
> The firste knyght was so of the table round,
> To Arthur true & also his lyegeman founde.[43]

Arthur is given such a firm hold over Scottish territory that he chooses who should succeed to the throne of Lothian when Lot departs for Norway. Arthur makes "Gawayne the king [of

---

[39] Geoffrey, *Historia*, chs. 148-149.
[40] Hardyng, *First Version*, 69.
[41] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 123.
[42] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 120.
[43] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 124.

Lothian], to hold of him by homage."[44]

In addition to the increased importance of Gawain and Lot, other aspects of Hardyng's narrative indicate the control that Arthur had in Scotland. The first three knights of the Round Table are all Scottish knights, including King Angusell of Albany. According to Edward I, Angusell was placed on the throne by Arthur, but Hardyng's King Angusell willingly submits to the benevolent Arthur.[45] This is reinforced in a rubric of the first version: "Note how Arthure toke of the kynges of Albany homage."[46] Hardyng also emphasizes that Arthur was free to hold court anywhere in Scotland he wished.[47] In short, Hardyng establishes Arthur as the unquestioned ruler of Scotland, a position which he gained without conquest.

The third Scottish attack on Arthur concerned heredity. Bisset claimed that, since Arthur had no heir, Scotland returned to its former state of freedom after his death. Bisset goes so far as to claim that Mordred was in fact the "heredem Britannie."[48] Fordun also states that Mordred had a claim to the British throne "et hac forte de causa movebat bellum Mordredus contra Arthurum in quo alteruter fatis cessit."[49] Mordred's claim to the throne is through his mother Anna, the legitimate child of Igerne.[50] It is unlikely that either Fordun or Bisset seriously intended to argue that the Scots (for Mordred was the son of Lot) had a

---

[44] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 126.
[45] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 124.
[46] Hardyng, *First Version*, 69v.
[47] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 124-126.
[48] Bisset, "*Processus*," 185. On the use of the phrase "heredem Britannie" in the *Processus*, see above, note 23.
[49] "...and on account of this reason Mordred brought the war against Arthur in which both died." Fordun, *Chronica Gentis Scotorum*, I: 110. Fordun seems to have had difficulty with this section and he composed several different versions. In one version he quotes William of Malmesbury, Henry of Huntingdon and most of Higden's account of Arthur, including his doubts concerning the extent of Arthur's conquests. Fordun, *Chronica Gentis Scotorum*, I: 111-112, note.
[50] Fordun was confused by Geoffrey's account of Anna's ancestry and ends his Arthurian account with an unfavorable assessment of Geoffrey's skills. Bower agrees with Geoffrey and contradicts Fordun on the question

contemporary claim to the throne of Britain, but this claim does help to ennoble Mordred's war against Arthur. The claim also helps to ennoble Mordred himself. Fordun was aware of the alternate version of Mordred's birth, in which Arthur is Mordred's father through incest. He writes that "quem aliter ex adverso genitum nonnulli tradunt, sed non tenet."[51] For Fordun, Mordred is something of a hero and therefore cannot have been the product of incest. For just the opposite reason Hardyng also omits this story. In the first version of the *Chronicle* he writes that "som bokes sayne Arthur was so vnwyse / That he hym [Mordred] gatte on his syster dame Anne."[52] Later in the *Chronicle*, however, Hardyng dismisses this claim.

> Bot dethes wounde / As cronycle doth expresse
> Modrede hym gafe / that was his syster' sune
> And as some sayne / his own' sonne als doutlesse
> Bot certaynte / thar' of no bokes kune
> Declare it wele / that I haue sene or' fune
> Bot lyke it ys / by all estymacioun'
> That he cam neuer' / of his generacion'[53]

The revised version of the *Chronicle* has no mention of this account of Mordred's birth, thus freeing Arthur from the stigma of incest.

Bisset's second claim was that Scotland returned to its state of freedom after Arthur's death, and in order to counter this argument Hardyng provides Arthur with a legitimate heir. He claims that Cador, the duke of Cornwall, was Arthur's half-brother, since both were the sons of Igerne. According to Hardyng, upon Arthur's death the crown passed to Constantine, Cador's son:

---

of Anna's birth but repeats the condemnation of Geoffrey's skills as an historian. See Kelly, "Arthurian Material," 435.

[51] "...some hold that [Mordred] was born in another manner, but that does not hold." Fordun, *Chronica Gentis Scotorum*, I: 109.

[52] Hardyng, *First Version*, 71v.

> And [Arthur] gaue Britayne that was full solitarie,
> To Constantyne, duke Cador sonne on hye,
> His neuewe was, for Cador was his brother,
> As well is knowen they had but one mother.[54]

This, in fact, was not well known. Hardyng and Thomas Gray are the only English chroniclers to claim that Arthur had a half-brother or a legitimate heir. In the *Scalacronica* Arthur "bailla soun realme a Costentin, le fitz Cador de Cornwail soun freir, a garder tanqe il reuenist."[55] After Arthur's death we are again reminded that Constantine is the nephew of Arthur, "fitz Cador de Cornewail, soun frere depar sa mere."[56] Both Gray and Hardyng seem to be taking advantage of the quandary which confused Fordun and other chroniclers. Geoffrey's ambiguous description of Constantine's relation to Arthur (he is called his *cognatus*) allowed Hardyng to interpret the passage in the most favourable light.[57]

Through these minor alterations Hardyng defends Arthur, and English claims based on his reign, against the claims of Scottish polemicists and chroniclers. In the *Chronicle*, Arthur is portrayed as a legitimate king who ruled peacefully and left his kingdom to his

---

[53] Hardyng, *First Version*, 86.

[54] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 146. See also Cador's earlier appearances in the text, when he arrives to help Arthur in his wars, and in a list of knights. In both of these instances Cador is called Arthur's brother. Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 122 & 137.

[55] "entrusted his realm to Constantine, the son of Cador of Cornwall, to guard until he returned." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 80v.2.

[56] "son of Cador of Cornwall, his [i.e. Arthur's] brother by his mother." Gray, *Scalacronica*, 82v.2. This identification is made on two other occasions in the *Scalacronica*, when Cador is sent against Baldulf and at the battle of Bath. Gray, *Scalacronica*, 69v.2 & 70v.2. Unlike Gray's sources, Cador is also named as one of the dead in the first battle at Dover, thus clearing the way for Constantine to inherit. Gray, *Scalacronica*, 80.1. In the alliterative *Morte Arthure* Cador is named as heir after the skirmish on the road to Paris. This explains why Constantine inherits the crown, but Cador is said to be Arthur's nephew, not his brother: "Thow arte apparant to be ayere, are one of thi childyre; / Thow arte my sister sone, forsake sall I neuer." *Morte Arthure: A Critical Edition*, ed. Mary Hamel (New York: Garland, 1984) 1944-1945. Cited by line number.

[57] Hardyng may have been genuinely confused by the complex relationships described by Geoffrey. Geoffrey is not clear what he means by *cognatus* and his statement that Gorlois and Igerne had only one daughter, Anna, seems to undermine any attempt to call Cador the brother of Arthur. In his additional notes to Fletcher's *Arthurian Material*, R.S. Loomis suggests that, as Duke of Cornwall, Cador may be the successor, and hence son, of Gorlois. The Welsh *Brut Tysilio* agrees with Hardyng and calls Cador the son of Gorlois and Igerne, but it is unlikely that either Hardyng or Gray had access to this material. See Robert H. Fletcher, *The Arthurian Material in the Chronicles*, 2nd ed. (New York: Burt Franklin, 1973) 117-8, 251 & 282-283.

nephew. Hardyng systematically refuted Scottish attacks by adding material to the debate, such as Arthur's legitimate heir, and by emphasizing traditional aspects of the narrative, such as Arthur's own legitimacy. These modifications to the chronicle tradition support Hardyng's political agenda, but they do not represent any major deviation from the accepted account. In only one instance does Hardyng attempt to reinforce the legitimacy of his claims by citing a source: the possibly invented fact that Cador and Arthur were half brothers is accompanied by the weak tag, "As well is knowen." Other references to source material serve to dismiss unsavoury details drawn from alternate traditions. "Som bokes sayne" that Arthur was Mordred's father, but our well-read chronicler has seen or found "no bokes" that support this allegation with certainty. The Brut tradition remains unscathed by this minor intrusion of romance material.

Hardyng's careful attempt to distinguish between the historical and fictive accounts of Mordred's paternity is, however, betrayed by his own text, which does include a great deal of romance material. Like the modifications to the Brut tradition, the material drawn from romance traditions serves to increase the glory of Arthur's reign and reinforce Hardyng's basic thesis of the unity of Britain under the English king. Unlike the modifications to the Brut narrative, the inclusion of lengthy episodes from prose romances introduces conflict within the Arthurian narrative. The romance episodes, like the stories of Gawain discussed in the previous chapter, were not considered historical events. Hardyng therefore provides supposed authority for much of the material that he introduces to his historical account. The additions that Hardyng makes to his *Chronicle* are treated rather differently in the two versions and we should look at each independently.

Hardyng first displays his knowledge of Arthurian romance well before the Arthurian period. The first version's account of Ebrauke's foundation of York and Edinburgh includes several lengthy digressions into Arthurian romance. The passage is unique to the chronicle tradition and bears quoting at length:

> A cyte than / he made that hight Ebrauke
> After' his name / whiche now that Yorke so highte
> A castell stronge / sette on the north se banke
> Whiche he dyd calle / Mounte Dolorouse so wighte
> That now Bamburgh / ys castell of grete myght
> In whiche ther' ys / a toure hatte Dolorouse Garde
> Bot by what cause / I can nought wele awarde
>
> Bot thus I haue / in olde bokes red and sene
> That Ebrauke whan / he was put to the flight
> For' his socoure / than thydyr came I mene
> By other bokes / I haue eke sene be sight
> For' Launcelot loue / a lady dyed fulle bright
> Whiche in a bote / enchaunted for' the nones
> Drofe vp thar' / so named he tho wones.
>
> And in the londe / for' sothe of Albany
> The Mayden Castell / strongly than dyd he make
> Callynge it so / on his language for' thy
> That he had thar' / his luste with maydens take
> In yowth whan that / hym lyste with thaym to wake
> Whiche now so hatte / Edynburgh ryghte by name
> All Scotland thurgh / it hath now alle the fame.
>
> High on þe mounte / Agneth so was it sette
> A castell stronge / and of grete altitude
> To whiche thar' were / thre score maydens sette
> By a geant / for' his solycitude
> Agayn thair' will / for thair' grete pulcritude
> And bewte als / that hym liste with thaym play
> Whom for' thair' sake / Syr Ewayn slew men say
>
> And thaym he dyd / delyver' of that seruage
> And put that place / so fulle in obeyssance
> Of Kynge Arthur' / it was his heritage
> As souereyn lorde / and so for' þat myschaunce
> That maydens wer' / ther' kepte to ther greuaunce

So was it calde / mayden castell aftir' warde
Many a day / ful longe by that awarde[58]

The establishment of these cities and castles is ultimately drawn from Geoffrey of Monmouth, and most chroniclers in the Brut tradition include some statement about Ebrauke's city-building activities. The material relating to Lancelot and Yvain, however, has been added by Hardyng. The story through which Hardyng explains name of the tower Dolorous Garde is drawn from the Vulgate *La Mort le Roi Artu*, but in this source it is not associated with any Scottish city. In the French romance, the Maid of Escalot dies for love of Lancelot and floats down a river to Camelot where her body is discovered by Arthur and Gawain.[59] The alternate explanations for the name of the Castle of Maidens is more complex. As we have seen, Edinburgh was identified as the Castle of Maidens shortly after Geoffrey first mentioned the location, and the appellation seems to have been well known.[60] Yvain, however, is only marginally associated with the castle in the Vulgate, where it is Galahad who puts an end to the custom of imprisoning ladies there. The Latin romance *De Ortu Waluuanii* does include an episode in which Gawain frees ladies who are besieged in the castle, and it is possible that "Ewayn" is a scribal mistake for "Gawayn".[61] Neither of these alternate eponymous stories is provided with substantial authority. The "other bokes" which tell the Lancelot story are not presented as any more authoritative than the "olde bokes" which say that Ebrauke sought refuge in his own city. Similarly, Yvain's rescue of the

---

[58] Hardyng, *First Version*, 20v-21.
[59] *La Mort le Roi Artu: Roman du XIIIe siècle*, ed. Jean Frappier, 3rd ed. (Genève: Droz, 1964) 87-92. Although Lancelot's castle in the Vulgate is called Dolorous Garde, the name is not associated with this event. For a discussion of Lancelot's association with cities founded by Ebrauke see above p. 33.
[60] See above p. 90.
[61] For this episode, see *The Rise of Gawain, Nephew of Arthur (De ortu Waluuanii nepotis Arturi)*, ed. and tr. Mildred Leake Day, Garland Library of Medieval Literature, ser. A, v. 15 (New York and London: Garland, 1984) 112-120.

maidens is attributed to popular opinion ("men say") rather than to any written text. The stories, therefore, merely suggest that Arthur's realm extended into Scotland, and they do not insist that they be taken as serious history. This digression into Arthurian romance is not common in Hardyng's text and all other references to Arthurian romance are set within the Arthurian period. The entire digression into alternate names has been omitted in the second version of the text.[62]

Within the Arthurian period, Hardyng's interest in romance material is extensive and he integrates a great variety of romance detail, episodes and characters. As in many other chronicles, material from outside the Brut tradition is focused in the two extended periods of peace in Arthur's reign, and the twelve-year period of peace is used to locate the individual adventures which characterize both French and Middle English romance. Arthur reestablishes the Round Table after his initial wars to secure Britain:

> The table Rounde / of knyghtes honorable
> That tyme was voyde / by grete defycience
> So few thay wer' / thurgh werres fortunable[63]

Arthur renews the Round Table and enlists a collection of knights. Hardyng's list of knights is largely drawn from Geoffrey's *Historia*.[64] These knights live by a rule which defines their

---

[62] Following this passage Hardyng includes another bizarre anecdote about one of Ebrauke's foundations which does not involve Arthurian characters, but which demands quotation:

> The Cyte als / he made than of Alclude
> Whiche bare that tyme / the fame of Albany
> A Castell by / was of grete fortitude
> Whiche dunbretayne / now hight ful notably
> Whar' saynt Patrike / by came man natifly
> For' whiche in itte / neuer' seth was sene vermyn
> Ne yit non horse / that ought myght donge ther' In

Hardyng, *First Version*, 21. It is unclear if Hardyng intends his readers to associate the name Dunbretayne with his story of horse dung.

[63] Hardyng, *First Version*, 69v.

[64] CF. Hardyng, *First Version*, 70 with Geoffrey, *Historia*, ch. 156. The list has been borrowed, out of sequence, from Geoffrey's account of the plenary court which follows the nine years of peace in France. For a discussion of all the names in this list see Harker, "John Hardyng's Arthur," 238-246.

chivalric conduct and it is briefly outlined:

> Thar' reule was than / all wronges to represse
> With thar' bodyse / where law myght not redresse[65]

At this point Hardyng includes a lengthy digression, similar to Wace's reflections on events during the period of peace, in which he explains how material about the Arthurian period survives into his own day. Under the rubric, "How knyghtes of the table Rounde sought and acheved auentures," he writes:

> Whiche knyghtes so / had many auentur'
> Whiche in this boke / I may not now compile
> Whiche by thaym selff / in many grete scriptur
> Bene tytled wele / and better' than I thys while
> Can thaym pronounse / or' write thaym with my style
> Whose makynge so / by me that was not fayred
> Thurgh my symplesse / I wold noght wer' enpayred
>
> For alle thare actes / I haue not herde ne sene
> Bot wele I wote / thay wolde all comprehende
> More than the Byble / thrise wryten dothe contene
> Bot who that wyll / labour' on itte expende
> In the grete boke / of all the auentures
> Of the Seynte Grale / he may fynde fele scriptures
>
> Whiche specyfy / full mony auenture
> Full meruelouse / to yonge mennes wytte
> Of whiche myne age / ow now to haue no cure
> Bot rather' thaym / to leuen and omytte
> To my maysters / that can thaym Intermytte
> Of suche thynges / thurgh thair' hiegh sapience
> Mor' godelily / than I can make pretence[66]

Like Wace before him, Hardyng acknowledges a body of Arthurian material that he does not feel that he can include. Hardyng claims that it is inappropriate for a man of his advanced

---

[65] Hardyng, *First Version*, 70.

[66] Hardyng, *First Version*, 70v-71. In Hardyng's account Lot is made King of Norway immediately before this passage and the first campaign in France follows. In Wace's account both of these events follow immediately after the passage in which he questions the veracity of adventures which occurred during the twelve years of peace. Wace's passage is quoted above p. 15. Hardyng's passage may have been inspired by an intervening

years to write about chivalric adventures, but he does not address the historical accuracy of these tales, only his own literary ability. He also cites two different sources for these tales: individual stories which are contained in books "by thaym selff" and the "grete boke" of the "Saynte Grale". It is unclear to which individual stories he is referring, but as they are single adventures, and since he alludes to their being heard, it is likely that he is referring to romances of individual achievement like *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. The authoritative source for tales, however, and Hardyng's major source for romance material, is the book of the "Saynte Grale". The citation of this text must refer in part to the Vulgate *Queste del Saint Graal*, and Hardyng would turn to the *Queste* for a great deal of narrative material. "The grete boke... Of the Seynte Grale", however, is obviously more than simply the *Queste*. Richard Roos uses the same term in his will made March 1481/82. He left his "grete booke called saint Grall bounde in boordes couerde with rede leder and plated with plates of laten" to his niece Alianore Haute.[67] Carol Meale has pointed out that this manuscript, signed by Roos, Alianore Hawte, and E. Wydville, the next owner, still survives.[68] It is BL MS Royal 14. E. III, and in addition to the *Queste* it contains the *Estoire* and the *Morte*.[69] Hardyng's use of the phrase "grete boke... Of the Seynte Grale", like Roos',

---

version of the narrative, possibly Robert Mannying's.

[67] The will is transcribed in Ethel Seaton, *Sir Richard Roos, c. 1410-1482: Lancastrian Poet* (London: R. Hart-Davis 1961) 547-550.

[68]

[69] See Carol Meale, "Manuscripts, Readers and Patrons in Fifteenth-Century England: Sir Thomas Malory and Arthurian Romance," *Arthurian Literature* 4 (1985): 103, 103, *n.* 32. Meale believes that "E. Wydevyll" is the signature of Elizabeth, but Sutton and Visser-Fuchs argue that this is in fact her brother, Edward. Anne F. Sutton and Livia Visser-Fuchs, *Richard III's Books: Ideals and Reality in the Life and Library of a Medieval Prince* (Phoenix Mill, Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1997) 35, *n.* 59. Malory also uses this term to refer to the books of adventures produced at Arthur's court. After Bors returns from the Grail quest his adventures are recounted, and "there Launcelot told the aduentures of the Sancgreal that he had seen. All this was made in grete bookes and put vp in almeryes at Salysbury." Thomas Malory, *Caxton's Malory: A New Edition of Sir Thomas Malory's Le Morte D'Arthur*, ed. James Spisak (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987) I: 505. This passage is inspired by the conclusion of the Vulgate *La Queste del Saint Graal*, ed. Albert Pauphilet (Paris: Libraire Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1923) 279-280. It may refer simply to any large volume which contains

appears to refer simply to a large volume which contained various books from the Vulgate cycle.

Despite the references to written sources, Hardyng also discusses the oral transmission of adventurous stories. As in Thomas Gray's *Scalacronica*, the *Chronicle* stresses that the telling of tales before meals was a popular pastime at Arthur's court. Hardyng writes:

> And euery day / afore the kynge at mete
> Amonge his prynces / in open audience
> An auenture / of armes / and a fete
> Reported was / so for' his reuerence
> That dyd that dede / by suche experyence
> And forto moue / his yonge knyghtes corages
> Suche auenturs / escheuen in theyr' viage[70]

The purpose of tale telling is the encouragement of young knights, and Hardyng lays emphasis on the fact that "specualy all knyghtes of luuentude / Drew to his courte and his excelsitude."[71] The youth of Arthur's court are also named by Hardyng as he includes a second list of knights who were inducted into the Round Table fellowship throughout the twelve years of peace. Under the rubric "how he made new knyghtes of þe Rounde table for cause many wer' spent in þe werr'," Hardyng includes a number of Arthurian characters

---

numerous adventures, rather than to a collection of books specifically from the Vulgate cycle. For a discussion of the use of the term "grete boke" in the fifteenth century see Karen Cherewatuk, "'Gentyl' Audiences and 'Greate bookes': Chivalric Manuals and the *Morte Darthur*," *Arthurian Literature* 15 (1997): *passim*, esp. 208-209. An interpolation added to Robert of Gloucester's *Metrical Chronicle* also refers to the "boke of Seint Graal" in a passage inspired by Wace's twelve years of peace. Unlike Hardyng, this anonymous author dismisses the authority of the book, and claims "that lettred men take non hede ther to." College of Arms MS Arundel 58, fo. 62v. Rauf de Boun, in *Le Petit Bruit*, tells the story of Ebrauke's foundation of the Castle of Maidens and Mount Dolorous. According to Rauf, Ebrauke's two sons were killed and his wife ravished in Mount Dolorous (hence the name), and he was forced to flee to the Castle of Maidens in Scotland. Rauf gets this information "a la testemoinaunce Seint Graal, qi de cel article fait ascun mencion, dount celuy autour prent cel auctorité." ["... from the testimony of the Saint Grail, which makes some mention of this affair, from which this author takes his authority."] Rauf de Boun, *Le Petit Bruit*, ed. Diana B. Tyson, Anglo-Norman Text Society, Plain Text Series, 4 (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1987) 6. What is particularly odd about this passage is that neither the *Queste*, nor any other part of the Vulgate, contains any information about Ebrauke or his sons.

[70] Hardyng, *First Version*, 71. Cf. Gray, *Scalacronica*, 72.1 and see above p. 102.

drawn from both prose and verse romances:

> Syr' Gawen' sonne / to Lothe of Louthian
> Who kynge was than / of Louthian' throughoute
> And Syr Launcelot / Delake that noble man
> And Kynge Pelles / of Northwales than was stoute
> Syr Persyuall / whom mony men dyd doute
> Lybews Dysconne / and Syr' Colygrenaunt
> Syr Leonell / Degre and Degreuaunt
>
> Bors and Etcor / Syr' Kay and Bedwer'
> Guytarde / and Bewes / of Corbenny so wyse
> Syr' Irelglas / and Mordrede als in fer'
> Who Gawayns brother' / was of ful grete emprise[72]

These knights also participate in the adventures of Arthur's court:

> In whiche tyme so / of reste and grete soiorne
> The knyghtes all / of the Table Rounde
> Grete auenturs / cheved and dyd perfourne
> And brought tyl ende / thurgh out all bretayne rounde[73]

Many of the knights listed, such as Lancelot, King Pelles, Percivall and Bors, figure prominently in the prose Vulgate, but Lybeus Disconnus and Degrevaunt are better known for their own romance narratives. Calogrenant appears in Chrétien's *Yvain*, and "Degre" may refer to the hero of either the romance *The Squire of Low Degree* or *Sir Degarre*.[74] This group of knights, therefore, differs significantly from the first group, not simply because the list is not drawn from the Brut tradition, but because the list is specifically made up of knights who are renowned in popular romance. This second group of knights is subject to the same rule as the first, including the provision that they should meet each year to retell their adventures:

---

[71] Hardyng, *First Version*, 70v.
[72] Hardyng, *First Version*, 71-71v. The importance of lists of chivalric figures in Hardyng's text can be seen on fo. 83. Prior to the battle against Lucius, Hardyng lists the commanders of Arthur's knights. Each of the six stanzas on this folio begins with a large gold capital letter. This does not happen elsewhere in the manuscript.
[73] Hardyng, *First Version*, 71v.

And at that feste / the reule and ordynance
Was so that thay / shulde tell thayr' auenture
What so thaym fell / that yere and what kyns chaunce
That myght be sette / in romance or' scripture
And none auaunt / acounted bot nurture
To cause his felaws / to do so eke the same
Thair auenture / to seke and gete a name[75]

The second version of the *Chronicle* does not allude to individual tales during the twelve years of peace, nor does it include a list of knights drawn from the Vulgate cycle and popular verse romances.[76] Rather, this version includes an abbreviated set of the rules of Arthur's court, including the fact that his knights fought against enchantment. Each knight was expected

Agayne enchauntmentes his body for to wage,
Agayne whiche crafte of the deuelles rage,
Theim to destroye, and all kinde of sorcerye,
Of whiche were many that tyme in Brytayne.[77]

The rule in the second version is also more concerned with the courtly aspects of the knight's vocation. Young knights are encouraged "of dyuerse landes to learne the language, / That elles wolde lyue at home in ydylnesse."[78] These courtly pursuits, claims Hardyng, not only increase a knight's military reputation, but also increase his stature in the eyes of courtly ladies, "For doute it not ladies ne gentylwemen / No cowardes loue."[79] As in the first version, Arthur's knights are required to tell their adventures, "how hym byfell / In his trauayle, or of his misauenture, / The Secretorye should put it in scrypture."[80] This practice is

---

[74] This may be the same character as Degore whose name is now on the Winchester Round Table.
[75] Hardyng, *First Version*, 72.
[76] The two lists of the first version have been combined in the second version at a later point in the narrative, following the Grail quest and before the arrival of the Roman ambassadors. Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 136-138.
[77] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 125. Harker notes that the three aspects of the Round Table's rule may derive from the *Estoire de Merlin*. Harker, "John Hardyng's Arthur," 248-249.
[78] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 125.
[79] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 125.
[80] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 125.

again intended "to steare & moue yonge knightes corage, / To seche armes and warrys of worthynesse."[81]

The telling of individual tales at Arthur's court serves the same function as the dissemination of historical narratives, Hardyng's own text included. In the prologue to the second version of the *Chronicle*, Hardyng turns to Chaucer's *Parlement of Fowles* for an image to describe the benefits of historical knowledge:

> As oute of olde feldes newe corne groweth eche yere,
> Of olde bokes, by clerkes newe approued,
> Olde knyghtes actes with mynstrelles tonge stere
> The new corage of yonge knightes to be moued:
> Wherefore, me thinketh, old thinges shuld be loued,
> Sith olde bokes maketh young wittes wise,
> Disposed well with vertues exercyse.[82]

Both of Hardyng's accounts of the first period of peace, therefore, focus not simply on the chivalric achievements of Arthur's court, but also on the necessity of retelling those deeds for the benefit of younger generations of knights. The adventures themselves, however, remain untold.

While Hardyng does not draw heavily from individual romances for his Arthurian history, he does make extensive use of the prose Vulgate cycle. *Lestoire del Saint Graal* is

---

[81] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 125.

[82] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 32. Cf. "For out of olde feldes, as men seyth, / Cometh al this newe corn from yer to yere, / And out of olde bokes, in good feyth, / Cometh al this newe science that men lere." Geoffrey Chaucer, *Parlement of Fowles*, *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry Benson, *et al.*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987) 22-25. Cited by line number. Hardyng uses this same passage from Chaucer to explain why he has changed his political allegiances. In the second version, after he has recounted the genealogy of the Yorkist claim to the throne, Hardyng asserts that further research has led him to this revised opinion. He writes:

> All these titles, the Chronicles can recorde
> If they be seen by good deliberacion;
> Many of theim to these full wele accorde.
> As I haue seen with greate delectacion,
> By clerkes wrytten for our informacion.
> As in olde feldes, cornes freshe and grene grew,
> So of olde bookes commeth our cunnynge newe.

Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 22. Hardyng's debt to Chaucer in these lines has been noted by J.C. Maxwell and Douglas

used in both the Arthurian portion of the *Chronicle* and earlier at the arrival of Joseph of Arimathea at Glastonbury. Hardyng also makes use of the Vulgate in his account of the founding of the Round Table. While most texts in the Brut tradition follow Wace, who maintained that Arthur established the Round Table in celebration of his marriage, Hardyng states that Uther established the Table at his wedding to Igerne:

> A feste riall / he made at his spousage
> And by advyse / of Merlyne ordynance
> The rounde table / amonge his baronage
> By gan to make / for' fygure and remembrance
> Right of the table / with all the Cyrcumstance
> Of the saynte Grale / whiche longe tyme so a fore
> Ioseph made in / Aramathy was bore[83]

This passage echoes the *Merlin* in which Merlin instructs Uther on the significance of the Table. "[N]ostre sire," claims Merlin "[Joseph] commanda que il feist une table" in signification of Christ's last supper.[84] Now, "vous establires la tierces table el non de la trinite."[85] Hardyng again turned from the standard Brut narrative at the end of his Arthurian history and drew details of Arthur's passing from the Vulgate *La Mort le Roi Artu*, again referred to as the "Seynt Grale":

> Bot of his dethe / the story of seynt Grale
> Sayth that he dyed / in Aualon' full fayr'
> And byried ther' / his body was all hale
> With in the blake / Chapell whar' was his layr'
> Whiche Geryn made / whar' than was grete repayr'
> For seynt Dauyd Arthurs vncle dere
> It halowed had / in name of Mary clere[86]

Gray, "An Echo of Chaucer," *Notes and Queries* 214 (1969): 170.
[83] Hardyng, *First Version*, 66v.
[84] "Our Lord commanded [Joseph] that he should make a table...." *Lestoire de Merlin, The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances*, ed. H. Oskar Sommer (Washington: Carnegie Institution, 1908-1916) II: 54.
[85] "...you will establish the third table in the name of the Trinity." *Merlin*, II: 54. This entire scene contains further echoes from the *Merlin*. See Harker, "John Hardyng's Arthur," 227-228.
[86] Hardyng, *First Version*, 86v. Cf. *La Mort le Roi Artu*, 246ff.

In the shorter version we are told that Arthur is buried at the Black Chapel at Glastonbury, where Gerin becomes a monk. Then:

> ... Launcelot Delake came, as he rode
> Vpon the chace, with trompette and clarion;
> And geryn tolde hym ther, [all] vp and downe,
> Howe Arthure was there layde in sepulture,
> For whiche with hym to byde he hight full sure.
>
> And so they abode together in contemplacion...[87]

The Vulgate *Mort Artu* does say that Arthur was buried in the black chapel, but it is Griflet who chooses to become a monk by the tomb,[88] while Lancelot chooses to live as a hermit with his cousin Bliobleris and the Archbishop of Canterbury.[89] The inclusion of this material presents a problem. Lancelot's role in Arthurian romance contradicts a great deal of the material of Arthurian chronicles, and, like other chroniclers, Hardyng minimizes his appearances. As we have seen, Lancelot appears during the digression on the building of the city of York, and during this conclusion. Apart from a reference to Galahad's conception, Lancelot is otherwise mentioned only in lists throughout the *Chronicle*. Hardyng, however, is able to incorporate this material from the Vulgate without compromising the narrative integrity of his history. In fact, by placing Lancelot in a monastery with his dead king, rather than in a hermitage bewailing his love for the queen, Hardyng gains control over the episode and uses it for his own narrative ends.[90] Arthur's reign, which has revolved around Glastonbury and its association with the Grail, comes to an end at the site of Joseph of

---

[87] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 146.
[88] Griflet lives only eighteen days after making this decision. See *La Mort le Roi Artu*, 252. Gerin, Earl of Chartres, is mentioned in several other Arthurian works, including Geoffrey of Monmouth, as part of the embassy to Lucius. See Fletcher, *Arthurian Material*, 143, 232, 282.
[89] *La Mort le Roi Artu*, 258ff.
[90] On the relationship between the final stanzas of Hardyng's Arthurian history and the Vulgate *Mort* see Harker, "John Hardyng's Arthur," 311-313.

Arimathea's burial.

The one text from the Vulgate that Hardyng does not make extensive use of is the *Lancelot*. Harker speculates that he simply did not know the work. "At the risk of argument *ex silencio*," she writes, "Hardyng seems not to have been familiar with the *Lancelot del Lac*."[91] It seems unlikely, however, that a man as well read in Arthurian literature as was Hardyng should be unfamiliar with a text so central to the romance canon. Rather, the adventures of the *Lancelot* are either the kind of individual achievements which he cites but refuses to include in the twelve years of peace, or they deal with Lancelot's love of the queen. In either case, they have no place in Hardyng's historical text and it is possible that he knew the work, but chose not to draw from it.

The majority of Hardyng's borrowings from the prose Vulgate come from the *Queste del Saint Graal*. The Grail quest is situated in the second, nine-year period of peace,[92] and it is the most elaborate alteration to the Brut tradition in Hardyng's *Chronicle*. Edward Donald Kennedy has convincingly argued that Hardyng incorporates the Grail material as another response to the Anglo-Scottish historiographical debate. For Kennedy, Hardyng's inclusion of the Grail "appears to have resulted from his anti-Scottish sentiments and his consequent desire to enhance the spiritual authority of Arthur's reign."[93] During the Great Cause and in the years that followed, the Scots had based their ecclesiastical independence on the legend of St. Andrew. According to this story, a monk in Greece, Reguli, was instructed by an angel to steal certain relics of the saint and carry them to Scotland where he would found a church.

---

[91] Harker, "John Hardyng's Arthur," 15.
[92] Ad Putter remarks on the similiarity between Mannyng's attempt to place French prose romances in the nine years of peace and Hardyng's own use of the *Queste*. Ad Putter, "Finding Time for Romance: Mediaeval Arthurian Literary History," *Medium Ævum* 63 (1994): 8-9.
[93] Kennedy, "John Hardyng and the Holy Grail," 205.

The legend of St. Andrew placed the establishment of Christianity in Scotland in the fourth century.[94] Edward I attempted to demonstrate God's favour for his cause by citing the miraculous intervention of St. John of Beverly during a battle with the Scots, but as Kennedy points out, this "was hardly a match for the Scots legend of St Andrew."[95] In the early fourteenth century the legends of the Grail "lacked the presumed authenticity of the Scottish story of Andrew's relics" and Edward I did not make use of them.[96] By the fifteenth century, however, some Grail material had entered historical tradition, and Glastonbury was claiming that it had been established by Joseph of Arimathea in apostolic times. Hardyng was anxious to demonstrate that York had ecclesiastical jurisdiction over Scotland,[97] and the history of the Grail lent spiritual authority to both Arthur's reign and England itself.

Both of the major elements of the history of the Grail, Joseph of Arimathea's journey to Britain and Galahad's subsequent quest, are added to both versions of the *Chronicle*. Hardyng was not the first author to include references to either aspects of the Grail material in an historical work. We have already seen how the story of Joseph of Arimathea entered historical texts such as John of Glastonbury's *Cronica*,[98] but the Arthurian elements of the Grail were also being told in an historical context. *The Parlement of the Thre Ages* contains

---

[94] For the use of this legend in the Great Cause and John Fordun's *Chronica Gentis Scotorum* see Kennedy, "John Hardyng and the Holy Grail," 193-197.
[95] Kennedy, "John Hardyng and the Holy Grail," 197.
[96] Kennedy, "John Hardyng and the Holy Grail," 197.
[97] Beside the rubric "How the Archebisshop of Yorke shulde bene primate and metropolitane of Scotland" Hardyng includes two stanzas outlining Arthur's attempt to restore the Church in Scotland following the Saxon invasions. Hardyng, *First Version*, 69v.
[98] The story of Joseph of Arimathea had a slow development as accepted history after a thirteenth-century monk added a reference to Joseph in William of Malmesbury's twelfth-century history of Glastonbury Abbey. For a discussion of the development of the Joseph story within historical writing, see Valerie M. Lagorio, "The Evolving Legend of St. Joseph of Glastonbury," *Speculum* 46 (1971): 224-225, and Kennedy, "John Hardyng and the Holy Grail" 186-7, 197-9. The adapted version of Robert of Gloucester's *Chronicle* mentions the arrival of Joseph of Arimathea at Glastonbury, but dismisses the story as not authentic. College of Arms MS Arundel 58, fo. 28. Hardyng adapts much of his version of the early history of the Grail from the Vulgate *Lestoire del Saint Graal*, although he seems to have drawn additional information from a variety of sources.

a brief account of the Siege Perilous, wherein Merlin establishes the Round Table,

> And sett the Sege Perilous so semely one highte,
> There no segge schold sitt bot hym scholde schame tyde,
> Owthir dethe within the thirde daye demed to hymseluen,
> Bot Sir Galade the gude that the gree wan.[99]

John Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* also includes a brief description of the Siege Perilous. Like Hardyng, Lydgate tells how "A clerk ther was to cronicle al ther deedis," and how these adventures, when "Rad & songe, to folk gaff gret confort."[100] Arthur's knights, according to Lydgate, take their seat at the Round Table according to rank:

> Oon was voide callid the se pereilous,
> As Sang Real doth pleynli determyne,
> Noon to entre but most vertuous,
> Of God prouided to been a pure virgyne,
> Born bi discent tacomplisshe & to fyne,
> Al auentures of Wales & Breteyne.[101]

As in Hardyng, Lydgate's "Sang Real" certainly refers to the *Queste del Saint Graal*. *The Parlement of the Thre Ages*, as we have seen, contains a great deal of romance material and it is not surprising that it would turn to the Vulgate *Queste* to augment its vision of British history. Lydgate's Arthurian narrative, although greatly expanded from the brief account of Arthur found in Boccaccio's *De Casibus*, is basically drawn from the Brut tradition. This small inclusion of Grail material in the *Fall of Princes*, a text with which Hardyng was probably familiar, may have opened the way for Hardyng's extensive use of the *Queste del*

---

[99] *The Parlement of the Thre Ages*, *Alliterative Poetry of the Later Middle Ages: An Anthology*, ed. Thorlac Turville-Petre (London: Routledge, 1989) 470-473. Cited by line number.

[100] John Lydgate, *The Fall of Princes*, ed. Henry Bergen, EETS, es, 121-124 (London: Oxford University Press, 1967) VIII, 2780-2783. Cited by book and line numbers.

[101] Lydgate, *The Fall of Princes*, VIII. 2787-2793. Cited by book and line number. Several critics have suggested that Hardyng was familiar with Lydgate's *Fall of Princes*. See A.S.G. Edwards, "The Influence of Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* c. 1440-1559: A Survey," *Medieval Studies* 39 (1977): 436; John Withrington, "The Arthurian Epitaph in Malory's *Morte Darthur*," *Arthurian Literature* 7 (1987): 131, *n.* 82; Clifford Petterson, "John Hardyng and Geoffrey of Monmouth: Two Unrecorded Poems and a Manuscript," *Notes and Queries* 27 (1980): *passim*.

Saint Graal.

Unlike his predecessors, Hardyng does not merely allude to the Grail and the adventures associated with it. His far-reaching use of the *Queste* within an historical text required a great deal of care. The story of the quest, as presented in the prose Vulgate, is largely self-contained, but by incorporating such a large narrative block into the life of Arthur, Hardyng risked altering the structure of his Arthurian history. He avoids this by carefully altering some of the Grail material to make it compatible with the chronicle tradition. The first alteration that Hardyng makes to the prose Vulgate relates to Galahad's parentage. In the *Lancelot*, Lancelot is tricked into sleeping with King Pelles' daughter, and Galahad is conceived through their union. This trick is possible because Lancelot believes himself to be with Guenevere, who is his true love. After being drugged, Lancelot is told that the queen has summoned him, and he is led to Pelles' daughter's room "...et cil connut ceste em pechié et en avoutire et contre Deu et encontre Sainte Eglyse."[102] Hardyng alters this episode so that upon Galahad's arrival at court we are told that he was:

> The godelyest wyght / afore that men had sene
> Whom Launselot gat / by hole and full knowlage
> Of Pelles doughter'...[103]

Hardyng's reference to "hole and full knowlage" may be a poetic translation of *connut* but he has avoided any mention of *pechié* or *avoutire*. At first reading the passage simply distances Galahad from the sin of adultery committed by his parents in the Vulgate version of the tale.

---

[102] "...[and he] knew her in sin and adultery and against God and against Holy Church." *Lancelot: roman en prose du XIIIe siecle*, ed. Alexandre Micha. Textes littéraires français (Geneve: Droz, 1978-1982) IV: 210. Harker argues that this passage is drawn from the *Lestoire del Saint Graal*. Harker, "John Hardyng's Arthur," 272. The *Lestoire*, however, does not contain the echo of the word *connut*. Cf. *Lestoire del Saint Graal*, *The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances*, ed. H. Oskar Sommer (Washington: Carnegie Institution, 1908-1916) I: 290-291.

[103] Hardyng, *First Version*, 76.

The shorter version of the *Chronicle*, however, is more clear. In the second version of his text Hardyng claims that Galahad was

> The goodlyest afore that men had seen,
> Whom Launcelot gat, in very clene spousage,
> On Pelles doughter....[104]

The change from "hole and full knowlage" to "very clene spousage" implies that Lancelot is aware of his actions during the conception of Galahad. Indeed the first version's reference to "full knowlage" may simply indicate that Lancelot knew who he was with. For Hardyng, this is a narrative necessity, as logic dictates that Lancelot could not have been tricked into believing that he is with the queen, because in the chronicle he has no amorous relationship with Guenevere. By representing Lancelot and Pelles' daughter as married, or at least aware of their actions, Hardyng eliminates the amorous relationship with Guenevere and ensures the integrity of the chronicle tradition.

The second and major alteration to the Vulgate changes the very nature of the quest for the Grail. This not only entailed transforming the details of the text to fit an English audience's expectations,[105] but it meant incorporating the quest for the Grail into Hardyng's own social agenda. As Kennedy has noted, the Vulgate *Queste* unfavourably compares the earthly chivalry of Arthur's court with the spiritual chivalry of the Grail. In Hardyng's *Chronicle*, however, the quest is an adventure which is "creditable to Arthur and his court."[106] The chivalry of the Grail is not placed in opposition to the worldly chivalry of the

---

[104] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 131

[105] Avalon is consistently portrayed as Glastonbury throughout Hardyng's text, both in the Grail section and, as quoted above, at Arthur's death. Since Arthur's body was exhumed at Glastonbury in 1191, Avalon was felt to be synonymous with Glastonbury. Riddy notes that the Cistercians, who in the Vulgate meet Galahad at Avalon, have been transformed into Benedictines, but I can find no evidence in the text that Hardyng portrays the monks as anything other than generic religious. Riddy, "John Hardyng in Search of the Grail," 425.

[106] Kennedy, "John Hardyng and the Holy Grail," 203.

Round Table, but is virtually indistinguishable from it. Unlike the Grail quest in the Vulgate, which signals the decline of Arthur's realm, Arthur receives only honour in Hardyng's version, and, following the quest, Arthur holds yet another feast at which he displays his "hyghe knyghthode, household, and all largesse."[107] The inclusion of the Grail material, therefore, serves much the same function as Hardyng's other modifications to the Arthurian section of his history. It increases the honour of Arthur and, by implication, argues against Scottish attacks on the legitimacy of his reign.

The *Chronicle* achieves its positive image of the Grail quest by focusing on a genealogy of British chivalry and heraldry which goes back to Joseph of Arimathea, thus tying together the various borrowings from prose romances. Joseph of Arimathea's creation of the heraldic device known as Saint George's cross is explicitly tied to Galahad's quest when he first takes up the shield. Upon arriving at Avalon Galahad finds the shield and weapons and encounters a group of monks who explain their significance:

> Bot than thay sayde / in bokes thay founde it wreton'
> Kynge Eualache / the shelde of olde there lefte
> Whiche is all white / as ye shall se and wyton'
> With crosse of blode / fro losep nose byrefte
> Who sayde ther' shulde / no wyght than ber' it efte
> With outen deth / Mayme or' aduersite
> Bot oon that shulde / leue in vyrgynyte[108]

Galahad, however, is able to wield both shield and sword because of his virginity and his birth. Because of his ancestry, he alone is the one who

> ... shulde Acheue / the seynte Graall worthyly
> And kynge so be / of Sarras with outen doute
> Of Orboryke / also duke verryly
> By heritage / of Auncestry thrugh oute

---

[107] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 136.
[108] Hardyng, *First Version*, 77.

And cheue he shulde / amonges all the route
The sege perilouse / in the table rounde
That neuer' myght knyght / withouten dethes wounde[109]

Having connected Galahad to the original Grail guardians, Hardyng quickly passes over the bulk of the Grail quest itself. In the first version Hardyng is content with the prophesy delivered by Joseph that Galahad would achieve the Grail. "What shuld I more say of thys worthy knyght," asks Hardyng, "That afterward acheued this prophecy / For' as it spake so was he after' right / And verifyed."[110] Hardyng reconsidered his brevity in the second version and expanded the Grail quest to two lines:

But when that he had laboured so foure yere
He founde in Walys the Saintgraal full clere.[111]

Even the adventures in the Grail castle are merely alluded to. After Perceval returns to court he tells

¶ Howe Galaad had acheued the auenture
In kyng Pellis householde with great honoure,
That called was þe saint Graal by scrypture.[112]

Instead of dealing with the mysteries of the Grail, Hardyng moves Galahad directly into the Holy Land where he becomes King of Sarras and establishes a new order of the Saint Grail:

Whar' he sette vp / the table of seynte Grale
In whiche he made an ordre vyrgynale
Of knyghtes noble / in whiche he satte as chefe
And made suche brether' / of it as wer' hym lefe

Syr' Bors was oon / an other' syr' percyuall
Syr' claudyus / a noble knyght of Fraunce
And other' two / ner' of his blode with all
Thre knyghtes als / withouten variaunce
Of danmarke so / of noble gouernaunce

[109] Hardyng, *First Version*, 77v.
[110] Hardyng, *First Version*, 77v.
[111] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 135.
[112] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 135.

And thre knyghtes / als of Irelonde excelente
Whiche twelue were all / of noble regymente[113]

The list of knights who join Galahad's new order is drawn from the Vulgate *Quest*, but there the nine anonymous knights (the three knights from Gaul remain unnamed) merely supply the bodies necessary to reenact the Last Supper and receive the Eucharist directly from Josephus.[114] Hardyng's table of the Saint Grail is much more mundane, and the rule of the order closely resembles the secular rule of Arthur's own Round Table. Only the demand of chastity separates Arthur's Round Table from Galahad's Grail fellowship:

Whose reule was this / by Galaad Constytute
To leue euermore / in clennesse Virginall
Comon profyte / alway to execute
All wronges redresse / with batayll corporall
Whar' law myght nought / haue course iudiciall
All fals lyuers / his londe that had infecte
For' to distroy / or of thair' vice correcte

The pese to kepe / the laws als sustene
The fayth of Criste / the kyrke also protecte
Wydows maydyns / ay whare for' to mayntene
And chyldre yonge / vnto thar' age perfecte
That thay couthe kepe / thaym selfe in all affecte
Thus sette it was / in hole perfeccioun'
By gode advise / and full cyrcumspeccion'[115]

Harker speculates that the *Queste*'s mention of Galahad's silver table may have suggested to Hardyng the establishment of a new chivalric order.[116] The table of the Saint

---

[113] Hardyng, *First Version*, 77v.
[114] Cf. *Queste*, 267.
[115] Hardyng, *First Version*, 78.
[116] Harker, "John Hardyng's Arthur," 279. There is evidence of a belief that the Round Table still hanging at Winchester, which Hardyng mentions in the second version of the chronicle, at one time had a silver covering. John Rous, writing shortly after Hardyng, alludes to such a belief when making the unlikely claim that Gwydo Beauchamp killed Piers Gaveston on account of the Round Table: "This sir pers then despisid the lordis of England and set all there hartes a geyn hym he solde also owt of the land the rownd table of siluer that was kyng arthurs with the trestyls the quantite is yot in the castel of Wynchestre. he was therefore by hedyd by syr Warrewik...." John Rous, *The Rous Roll*, ed. Charles Ross (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1980) ch. 46. The "quantite" probably refers to the bulk of the wooden table, which does not now have legs, or "trestyls." A

Grail, however, is no random foundation, but is designed to knit together an ongoing tradition of British chivalry. Hardyng explains this tradition following the death of Galahad, whose heart is returned to Britain to be buried at Glastonbury beside Joseph of Arimathea:

> And ther' to sette / his shelde that Iosep made
> Whiche was the armes / that we seynt Georges call
> That aftir' thar' / full many yer' abade
> And worshypt wer' / thurgh out this Reme ouer all
> In so ferre forthe / that kynges in especiall
> Thaym bare alway / in batayle whar' thay wente
> Afore thaym euer' / for' spede in thar' entente[117]

By creating an association between Joseph's creation of the Saint George cross and the heraldic practice of English kings Hardyng implies a relationship between the chivalry of the Arthurian world and contemporary knights. That association is made abundantly clear in the stanzas which follow:

> Of whiche Ordre / of seynte Graal so clene
> Wer' after' longe / founded than the templers
> In figur' of it / writen' as I haue sene
> Oute of the whiche / bene now hospitulers
> Growen vp full hiegh / at Rodes with outen' peres
> Thus eche ordre / were founded vpon' other'
> All as on / and echone others brother'
>
> So was also / the table Rounde araysed
> In remembrance / all of the worthy table
> Of the seynte Grale / whiche Josep a fore had raysed
> In hole fygure / of Cristes souper' comendable
> Thus eche ordour' / was grounded resonable
> In grete vertu / and condygne worthynesse
> To goddes plesyr' / and soules heelfulnesse[118]

---

similar story is told in one of the interpolations added to Robert of Gloucester's *Metrical Chronicle*. "And þan þis sayde Perys went in to þe kynges tresorie in þe Abbey of Westminster & þer toke away a table of goold wiþ þe trestell and many oþer ryche iuwell þe which were sum tyme kyng Arthurys & hem he toke to a marchaunt þat het Aymery of Fris [comband?] & bar hem ouer þe see in to sascoygne & þay were neuer brought ayen þat was a gret harm to þe Reme." College of Arms MS Arundel 58, fo. 312.

[117] Hardyng, *First Version*, 78v.

[118] Hardyng, *First Version*, 78v.

By implication the English kings of Hardyng's own time are included in this genealogy of chivalric orders. It was widely believed that the Order of the Garter was the culmination of Edward III's decision to refound the Round Table. The Order, of which Hardyng's lord Umfraville was a member, had as its device the Saint George cross surrounded by a blue garter.

While the short version of the text does not mention the Templars nor the Hospitalers, it does create a tradition of British heraldry and imply a relationship with contemporary knighthood. The account of Galahad's journey to the east is much abbreviated:

> Where thenne he made . xii. knightes of the order
> Of saynt Graal, in full signifycacyon
> Of the table whiche Ioseph was the founder,
> At Aualon, as Mewyn made relacyon;
> In token of the table refyguracyon,
> Of the brotherhede of Christes souper & maundie
> Afore his death, of hyghest dignytee.[119]

In this abbreviated account, Hardyng does not explicitly re-associate the Round Table with either the Grail table or Joseph's table at Glastonbury,[120] nor does he reassert the contemporary relevance of the Saint George cross. The heraldic practice of British kings is instead asserted throughout the second version of the *Chronicle*. Hardyng affirms the contemporary significance of the Saint George cross when listing the arms carried by Uther. In addition to the dragon and the arms of Brutus, Uther also bears the arms of King Lucius,

> The same armes that kyng Constantynus,
> At his batayll against Maxencius,
> So bare alwaye, þat saynt George armes we call,
> Whiche Englyshemen nowe worshippe ouer all.[121]

---

[119] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 136.
[120] The Round Table has already been compared to Joseph's table at its establishment by Uther, and the Saint George cross has been listed as one of Arthur's banners. Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 120, 122.
[121] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 117.

The arms are also mentioned during the account of Constantine. The pseudo-British emperor adopts the device during his battle to seize Rome.[122] The antiquity of the arms is stressed at the very moment of their creation by Joseph of Arimathea. Hardyng describes the "shelde of siluer white, / A crosse endlong and ouerthwhart full perfect," which Joseph first gave to Arviragus:

> ¶ These armes were vsed through all Brytain
> For a common signe, eche manne to knowe his nacion
> Frome enemies, whiche nowe we call, certain,
> Sainct Georges armes, by [Mewyns] enformacion:
> And thus this armes, by Iosephes creacion,
> Full long afore sainct George was generate
> Were worshipt heir of mykell elder date.[123]

The continuity of British chivalry is thus woven into the very fabric of history as the Saint George cross acts as a banner around which successive generations of British kings and knights rally. The order of the Round Table is the high point of British chivalry, but its example remains in a very concrete form for Hardyng's contemporary audience. Although Arthur will chase Mordred into Cornwall, the last major encounter takes place at Winchester, and Hardyng laments the end of Arthur's court during the penultimate battle against the king's nephew:

> Of the round table, that longe had been afore,
> Many worthy knightes there were spended,
> For Arthures loue, that might not been amended.
>
> The rounde table at Wynchester beganne,
> And there it ended, and there it hangeth yet;
> And there were slayn at this ilke battayl than,
> The knightes all that euer did at it sitte.[124]

---

[122] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 99
[123] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 85. Ellis follows the practice of Grafton's printed edition and prints "Nenyus" for "Mewyns"
[124] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 146.

The effect of both versions of the *Chronicle* is to imply a direct lineal relationship between the Arthurian world and chivalry in Hardyng's own day. Whether that line is represented by the genealogy of chivalric orders, as in the first version, or by the physical survival of Arthur's Round Table, the Arthurian world becomes an exemplary yardstick against which Hardyng's contemporaries should be measured. That yardstick measures both social and political spheres, just as Arthur's achievement was to create an ideal chivalric society within a united Britain. Hardyng stresses that at his death Arthur "gaue Britayne that was full solitarie, / To Constantyne, duke Cador sonne on hye."[125] The united Britain, which included England, Wales, the islands and, most significantly, Scotland, soon disintegrates under Constantine's weak rule. Only when the king and the nobility live by the rule established for their order can Britain survive united.

Hardyng's vision of Arthurian history is unique, and despite his attempts to integrate the Grail material its inclusion seriously blurs the distinction between history and fiction throughout the *Chronicle*. Unlike the *Scalacronica*, however, the *Chronicle*'s romance intrusions are designed to be accepted as authentic and to carry the full weight of historical precedent. Hardyng's social concerns are obviously related to the civil unrest which characterized England during the later years of his life, and he looked to the past for models which could be applied to the turbulent present. In order to recapture the spiritual authority and the national unity which distinguished Arthur's reign, contemporary knights are encouraged to return to the principles of the chivalric rules encoded in the Round Table and the Grail fellowship. It was important, therefore, that the Grail material be accepted as history, and Hardyng goes to great lengths to provide authentication for his version of the

---

[125] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 146.

Arthurian story.

As we have seen, one of Hardyng's strategies is to explain how information about the quest survives to his own day. Hardyng repeatedly mentions the telling of tales, and states that the adventures of the knights were recorded by a scribe in Arthur's court. During the quest for the Grail, he writes:

> That every yere / the knyghtes at Whissonday
> To Arthur' came / so by his ordynance
> And tolde hym all / thair' Auentures ay
> Whiche he did putte / in boke for' remenbrance.[126]

An impetus for this preoccupation with tale-telling can be found in the prose Vulgate *Queste del Saint Graal*, as the conclusion of the *Queste* contains a record of its own creation. After Bors returns from the Holy Land, Arthur asks to be told about the adventure and its successful completion:

> Et quant Boorz ot contees les aventures del Seint Graal telles come il les avoit veues, si furent mises en escrit et gardees en l'almiere de Salebieres, dont Mestre Gautier Map les trest a fere son livre del Seint Graal por l'amor del roi henri son seignor, qui fist l'estoire translater de latin en françois.[127]

In Hardyng's account, however, Bors does not return and it is therefore Perceval

> Who tolde hym all / the wonder' auentures
> That neuer' man myght / acheue bot he alone
> Whiche kynge arthur / than putte in hole scriptures
> Remembred euer' / to be whan he wer' gone[128]

Dspite Hardyng's continued references to oral tales delivered and recorded at Arthur's court, the rubrics of the first version of the *Chronicle* make repeated references to

---

[126] Hardyng, *First Version*, 77v.
[127] "And when Bors told them the adventures of the Seint Graal, as he had seen them, they were put down in writing and kept in the library at Salisbury, where Master Walter Map extracted them in order to make his book of the Seint Graal for love of King Henry, his lord, who had the story translated from Latin into French." *Queste*, 279-280.
[128] Hardyng, *First Version*, 78.

more traditional source material. Many of the references to written texts within the Grail section, however, are particularly problematic. The first such rubric, like the references to tale-telling, leads us back to the epilogue of the prose Vulgate and Walter Map:

> How whan his knyghtes of the Rounde table wer' present that Galaad sette and acheued the sege perilouse in the Rounde table *as the grete story of þe Saynt Graal proporte wiþ þe story of the grete auentures of Arthure and his knyghtes contene after Waltier of Oxenford þat put in wrytynges in policraticon þat he made of Cornewail and Wales.*[129]

The italicized portion of the rubric has been added by a second hand.[130] The original rubric has been partially scraped away in order to facilitate this addition. Corrected rubrics such as this appear sporadically throughout the manuscript but they are relatively rare.[131] All other references to source material in the rubrics of the Grail section of the *Chronicle*, however, conform to this pattern. The five altered rubrics on the three folios which contain the Grail quest clearly demonstrate the corrector's interest in this episode of Hardyng's history. The next rubric reads:

> How the Seynte grale appered in kynge Arthur hows at souper and how Galaad made avowe to seke it to he myghte knowe it clierly To whom his felaws gafe thair' seruyce a ȝere *as is contened in þe storie of the seint Grale writen by Giralde Cambrense in his Topographic of Wales and Cornwail.*[132]

The next rubric, which precedes the chapter in which Galahad wins his arms, also refers to

---

[129] Hardyng, *First Version*, 76. Italics added.

[130] The second hand is heavy and shaky compared to the original rubrics and the letter forms "r" and "w" vary considerably. For a description of these rubrics see Withrington, "Arthurian Epitaph," 118-123.

[131] A full edition of the whole manuscript would be necessary to accurately count the number of corrected rubrics which are not always apparent from microfilm alone. The corrector has added numerous complete rubrics, some of which include references to source material, but he actually adds to existing rubrics relatively infrequently. In approximately sixteen instances he adds source citations to existing rubrics, including references to "Trogus Pompeus" as a source of information about Albina, "Martyne Romayn" as a source for the legend of Constantine, the "Policronica" by "Seynt Columbe", which tells of the Norman invasion, miscellaneous references to Bede, and of course the five references to sources of information concerning the Grail. See, for example, Hardyng, *First Version*, 15, 16, 42, 47v, 48v, 49, 52v, 53, 88v, 93, 148. The corrections are clustered around two episodes, the story of Constantine, another addition from outside the Brut tradition (fos. 47-49), and the story of the Grail (fos. 76-78).

[132] Hardyng, *First Version*, 76v.

Giraldus,[133] as does a later rubric which describes Perceval's return to court.[134] The final rubric to have been altered is even more surprising:

> What the Reule of ordour' of Saynt Graal was her' is expressed and notifyed *as is contened in þe book of Josep of arymathie and as it is specified in a dialoge þat Gildas made de gestis Arthur*'.[135]

These altered rubrics present the reader with several problems of interpretation. It is unclear if these additions are authorial. James Simpson claims that the second hand is contemporary with that of the rest of the manuscript,[136] and Felicity Riddy assumes that the additions are at least approved by Hardyng, if not written by Hardyng himself. "Whoever was responsible for the last-minute glossing", she observes, "was an obsessive tinkerer who knew the kinds of material that Hardyng had been reading or should have read, and who was forgetful, careless or a manufacturer of evidence. Hardyng seems to have been all three...."[137] The suspicion that the corrector is in fact Hardyng is supported by the fact that he shows knowledge of Arthurian material beyond that contained in the *Chronicle*. In a rubric which has been added by the corrector, Arthur's arms are described:

> Arthur' bare a baner of Sable a dragoun of golde, and a baner of Oure Lady, and the thrid baner of Seynt George þat wer' Galaad armes, for remembrance of Galaad, and þe fourt baner of goules thre corouns of golde[138]

---

[133] Hardyng, *First Version*, 77.
[134] Hardyng, *First Version*, 78.
[135] Hardyng, *First Version*, 78. Below this rubric a third hand writes "Gildas de gestis Arthur." The same hand has corrected the text throughout the Grail section. In an earlier section of the *Chronicle* Joseph of Arimathea receives the Grail from Christ and brings it to Britain. In the margin, beside Hardyng's "The dysshe in whiche that Criste did putte his honde / The saynte Grale he cald of his language...," the same annotator has glossed "ye seynte grale- what it is." Hardyng, *First Version*, 66v. These corrections and marginalia indicate that at least one early reader turned to Hardyng for information on the Grail.
[136] James Simpson's opinions are expressed in Riddy, "Glastonbury, Joseph of Arimathea and the Grail in John Hardyng's *Chronicle*," *The Archaeology and History of Glastonbury Abbey*, ed. Lesley Abrams and James P. Carley (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 1991) 318, *n.* 6.
[137] Riddy, "Glastonbury," 318, *n.* 6. For a similar opinion see Withrington, "Arthurian Epitaph," 118-123.
[138] Hardyng, *First Version*, 83.

At this point in the text only the banner with a dragon is mentioned. Although the devices of three crowns and the significance of the Saint George Cross are discussed elsewhere in the text,[139] the *Chronicle* does not otherwise mention the tradition that Arthur wore a depiction of Mary. Other rubrics written by the corrector also point to Hardyng. One rubric late in the *Chronicle* presents the lesson "that honoure & ese wylle noght bene to gidir, þerfore who wille haue honour laboure contynuly and cese for no distresse and lette noght sleuth bene ȝour guyde." The reader is encouraged to look to "Syr Robert Vmfreuile my lorde" as an example.[140] The rubric appears to have been written by the same hand as the corrections mentioned above, and Hardyng, as we have seen, served under Umfraville both in the Scottish marches and in France. Finally, the very state of the manuscript suggests that the corrections were made by Hardyng himself, or under his direction. The surviving manuscript was in all likelihood the presentation copy which Hardyng oversaw through its final production. Although it is therefore likely that Hardyng is responsible for the corrections, their purpose is obvious whether or not he is their author.[141] They appeal to supposedly venerable names in an attempt to authenticate the romance material in the *Chronicle*.

The "Waltier of Oxenford" of the first altered rubric is probably Walter Map, Archdeacon of Oxford from 1196/7 until his death in about 1209 and the supposed author of the Vulgate *Queste* and the *Mort Artu*.[142] The anonymous author of the *Chronycle of Scotland in a Part*, a contemporary of Hardyng, also refers to the Vulgate cycle as the work of Walter Map, but in this anti-Arthurian account neither it, nor the Brut tradition, is given any authority:

---

[139] The device of the three crowns is depicted in the margin of the manuscript. Hardyng, *First Version*, 67v.
[140] Hardyng, *First Version*, 192.
[141] I will assume throughout this discussion that Hardyng himself is the corrector.

> And sekirly thare is mekle thing said of this Arthur quhilk is not suth, and bot fenȝeit, as thai say that he slew Frello King of France, and als Lucius the procuratour of Rome: for in his dayis thar was nane sik, as all storyes of France beris witnes; and sik mony othir besynes ar maid of him, as Maister Walter Mape fenȝeit, in his buke of ane callit Lanslot the Lake.[143]

Hardyng, however, has already mentioned a Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford, earlier in the *Chronicle*, and in this instance he could not be referring to Walter Map. He includes the story of Bladud, father of Lier, who kills himself by attempting to fly from a tower with artificial wings. He writes that:

> ...by his crafte / he dyd devyse a werke
> A Fedyrhame / with whiche that he wold fly
> And so he dyd / as Waltier sykyrly
> The Archedeken / of Oxenford ful graythe
> In story whiche / he drewe so gates saythe.[144]

A similar reference is found in the second version of the *Chronicle* at the death of Brutus.[145] This is obviously not Walter Map, but it could be an obscure reference to Geoffrey of Monmouth, who is Hardyng's ultimate source for both of these stories.[146] As we have seen, several chroniclers, including Gray and Gaimar, mistakenly cite Walter of Oxford when they are in fact using Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia*.[147] This may also explain the problematic reference to the "policraticon" of Cornwall and Wales. The *Historia* is primarily concerned with events in Cornwall and Wales and could plausibly be referred to as a 'Polychronicon of Cornwall and Wales'. That the title *Polychronicon* is open to scribal error is clearly shown

---

[142] See above p. 280.
[143] The *Cronycle of Scotland in a Part*, III: 39–40
[144] Hardyng, *First Version*, 22v.
[145] When recording Brutus' death, Hardyng provides several different versions of the length of his reign:

> Walter of Oxforde hath confessed,
> Foure and twenty yere as he hath impressed;
> And other sayne he reigned thre and fourty yere;
> But Marian saith thre score he reigned here.

Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 44.
[146] For the stories of Bladud's and Brutus' deaths see Geoffrey, *Historia*, chs. 30 & 23.

by Thomas Gray, who calls Higden's history the "Polecraton".[148] Since both Walter Map and Geoffrey's Walter were archdeacons of Oxford in the twelfth century, and since both had strong Arthurian associations it seems likely that Hardyng has confused the two figures in an attempt to establish authoritative sources. Indeed, the author of the *Chronicle of Scotland* also mixes material primarily associated with Geoffrey of Monmouth (i.e. Frollo and Lucius) with Walter Map's supposed authorship of the Vulgate cycle.

Hardyng's three references to Giraldus Cambrensis seem more straight forward but are just as confusing. Giraldus twice wrote at length on the exhumation of Arthur at Glastonbury, but there is no surviving record of any interest in the Grail on his part.[149] It is possible that Hardyng was aware that Giraldus' work contained information relating to Glastonbury and that the rubrics are based on this. Hardyng's reference to the "Topographic of Cornwail and Wales" probably indicates the *Descriptio Kambriae* which contains very little Arthurian material. One of Giraldus' most famous Arthurian passages, however, comes from the *Itinerarium Kambriae* in which he describes a man who was plagued by demons. When the gospels are given to the man the demons fly away, but when Geoffrey's *Historia* is placed in his lap, the demons return more loathsomely than ever.[150] A worse authority could hardly have been chosen, since Giraldus' Arthurian interests are slight and he is outwardly hostile to Geoffrey of Monmouth, the ultimate source for much of Hardyng's information. It can only be assumed that Giraldus Cambrensis was chosen as a source based on the

---

[147] See above p. 96.
[148] Gray, *Scalacronica*, 81.2.
[149] See Giraldus Cambrensis, *Speculum Ecclesiae*, *Opera*, ed. J.S. Brewer and James F. Dimock, RS. 21 (London: Longman, 1861-1898) IV: 47-51, and *De Principis Instructione Liber*, *Opera*, ed. J.S. Brewer and James F. Dimock, RS. 21 (London: Longman, 1861-1898) VIII: 126-9.
[150] Giraldus Cambrensis, *Itinerarium Kambriae*, *Opera*, ed. J.S. Brewer and James F. Dimock, RS. 21 (London: Longman, 1861-1898) VI: 58.

reputation of the name, or on faulty research, rather than any detailed knowledge of his work.

The final authorities mentioned in the rubrics are "þe book of Josep of arymathie" and "a dialogue þat Gildas made de gestis Arthur." Felicity Riddy speculates that the reference to Gildas may be a confused citation of pseudo-Nennius. She notes that the "*Historia Brittonum* is frequently attributed to Gildas in medieval manuscripts; the dialogue 'de gestis Arthur' is conceivably 'de gestis Brittonum', an alternate title for the *Historia Brittonum*."[151] This explanation is possible, but it seems more likely that the reference to Gildas is the product of another poor reading of Giraldus Cambrensis. In the *Descriptio Kambriae*, Giraldus tells why Gildas did not mention Arthur in his *De Excidio Britonum*. Giraldus explains that Gildas wrote unflatteringly about the British because of his strained relationship with Arthur:

> ...dicunt [B]ritones, quod propter fratrem suum Albaniæ principem, quem rex Arthurus occiderat, offensus hæc scripsit. Unde et libros egregios, quos de gestis Arthuri, et gentis suæ laudibus, multos scripserat, audita fratris sui nece, omnes, ut asserunt, in mare projecit.[152]

A similar story is found in the twelfth-century *Vita Gildae*,[153] but it too is a poor choice for a source. Both records of Gildas' supposed work concerning the deeds of Arthur also describe the destruction of the work itself. John of Glastonbury's *Cronica* tells part of the story in its account of Arthur, but there is no mention of a work by Gildas. He is merely referred to as

---

[151] Riddy, "Glastonbury," 322, *n.* 17.

[152] "...the Britons say that, offended on account of his brother, the prince of Albania, whom king Arthur had slain, [Gildas] wrote these things. Whence (as they assert), having heard of the death of his brother, he threw all the excellent books, many of which he wrote concerning the deeds of Arthur (*de gestis Arthuri*) and the praises of his countrymen, into the sea." Giraldus Cambrensis, *Descriptio Kambriae*, VI: 209.

[153] Caradoc of Llancarfan, *Vita Gildae*, *Two Lives of Gildas*, ed. and tr. Hugh Williams (Felinfach: Llanerch, 1990) 90-93.

"Britonum historiographus" and after Arthur kills his brother the two are reconciled.[154] It is also possible that Gildas' name is attached to this piece of information simply because of its authority. Gildas is regularly cited throughout the *Chronicle* as a source for the most unlikely information: the rebuilding of Troy by Hector's son, the death of Brutus Grenesheeld (son of Ebrauke), Bladud's skill in necromancy, the length of Dunwallo's reign, the arrival of Vespasian, and the conversion of Britain in the time of Lucius.[155]

The other source mentioned in the last rubric is "þe book of Josep of arymathie." The *Chronicle* cites a similar source when Joseph arrives in Britain in a rubric which reads "How Joseph of Arymathy cam in to bretayn... as it is contened in the book of Joseph of arymathi lyfe and of his gouernaunce."[156] This citation could easily refer to any of the sources which recount the popular Glastonbury legend. The story is told in the Vulgate *Estoir del Saint Graal*, but it is also possible that the reference is drawn from John of Glastonbury's *Cronica*, which tells of Joseph's arrival and his establishment of a religious community at Glastonbury.[157]

It is tempting to suppose that an elaborate joke has been designed. Contemporary literary criticism could easily argue that through these rubrics Hardyng is "subverting the

---

[154] John of Glastonbury, *The Chronicle of Glastonbury Abbey: An Edition, Translation, and Study of John of Glastonbury's Cronica sive Antiquitates Glastoniensis Ecclesie*, ed. James P. Carley, tr. David Townsend, rev. ed. (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1985) 72.

[155] Hardyng, *First Version*, 17, 22, 22v, 27, 39, 41v. Hardyng even points out when Gildas does not mention something of note. When he comes to write of Emperor Constantine he says:

> Bot now to speke / mor' of this Constantyne
> Of whom Gyldas / ne henry huntyngdon'
> In thair' Cronycles / lyste not to inclyne
> His lyfe fully / to putte in mencion'
> I wote not what / was thair' intencion'
> Seth he and thay / wer' all of bretons kynde
> To hyde his actes / me thynke thay wer' vnkynde.

Hardyng, *First Version*, 49.

[156] Hardyng, *First Version*, 39v.

[157] This rubric, and its possible association with John of Glastonbury's *Cronica*, will be discussed fully below.

notion of authority," but there is nothing in Hardyng's text to indicate such subtleties. Given his reputation as an historian and forger, it is more likely that the contradictions and mistakes in the altered rubrics are the result of his own attempts, late in the production of the manuscript, to provide authority for his suspect history.

The second version of the *Chronicle* varies considerably from the first, both in its treatment of romance material and in its appeal to authorities. The nine-year period of peace is significantly curtailed. After a brief account of the campaign in France to defeat Frollo, Hardyng writes:

> ¶ Nine yere he helde his throne riall in Fraunce,
> And open hous, greately magnified
> Through all the world, of welthe and sufisaunce
> Was neuer prince so highly gloryfied:
> The round table with princes multiplied,
> That auentures then sought cotidianly,
> With greate honoure, as made is memory.[158]

The assertion that adventures occurred daily during Arthur's nine years in France recalls Robert Mannyng's claim that it was during this period that the adventures found in French prose romances transpired.[159] In Hardyng, however, the vague allusion to the memory of these adventures is in sharp contrast to both Mannyng's specificity and the first version's attempts to supply concrete citations for material added to the Brut tradition. The vagueness which characterizes the second version's description of adventures in the two periods of peace is reflected throughout the rest of the revised version of Hardyng's Arthurian history,

---

[158] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 128. A similar passage is found in the first version beside the rubric "How kynge Arthur' dwelled Nyne yer' in Fraunce in whiche tyme the knyghtes of þe Rounde table sought and acheued many auentures." Hardyng, *First Version*, 73.

[159] Robert Mannyng, *Chronicle*, ed. Idelle Sullens, Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, v. 153 (Binghamton: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1996) 1.10761-10774. See above p. 49, for a full quotation.

which tends to refer only to anonymous "chronicles."[160] It is further compounded in his revised Grail quest. The short version of the chronicle names none of the sources cited in the rubrics of the long version. Rather, it relies solely on the authority of the mysterious Mewyn, "the Britayn chronicler."[161]

Mewyn is named twice in the Arthurian portion of Hardyng's second version. He is first associated with Joseph of Arimathea's foundation of the Round Table and the Siege Perilous:

> ¶ Whiche Ioseph sayd afore that tyme ful long,
> In Mewyns booke, the Britayn chronicler,
> As writen is the Britons iestes emong,
> That Galaad the knight, and virgyne clere,
> Shuld it acheue and auentures in all fere
> Of the seynt Graale and of the great Briteyn.[162]

Mewyn is again associated with Joseph in the other Arthurian passage which cites him. Here he is used as a source for the fact that Joseph established a fellowship at Avalon:

> Where thenne he [i.e. Galahad] made. xii. knightes of the order
> Of saynt Graall, in full signifycacyon
> of the table whiche Ioseph was the founder,
> At Aualon, as Mewyn made relacyon;
> In token of the table refyguracyon,
> Of the brotherhede of Christes souper & maundie
> Afore his death of highest dignytee.[163]

Mewyn's appearance in Hardyng's *Chronicle* has elicited a great deal of speculation. This mysterious author has long been associated with the prophet Melkin, who appears in John of Glastonbury's *Cronica*. John Leland first proposed that Hardyng's Mewyn was in fact

---

[160] For example: "the soothe to sayne," "by all writyng," "as chroniclers wryten thus," and "as chronicles expresse." Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 128, 129, 138, 147. Sometimes Hardyng appeals to such a source at the moment he deviates from the Brut tradition. Thus Arthur's coronation in Rome is "wroughte in greate storie," his burial at Glastonbury is related "As chronycles can tell." Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 144, 147.
[161] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 132.
[162] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 132.

Melkin in his description of Glastonbury's library, and W.W. Skeat seconds that opinion.[164] More recently, James Carley has argued for this identification in several articles and in his edition of the *Cronica*.[165]

Felicity Riddy, however, believes that a number of individual mistakes resulted in the five separate citations to Mewyn in Hardyng's text.[166] The references in the Arthurian section, claims Riddy, are in error for Merlin, since Merlin prophesies the arrival of Galahad in the prose Vulgate. Riddy also questions whether an earlier reference to Mewyn, in which he is cited as the source of information concerning the legendary foundation of Scotland, can be attributed to an actual source. Hardyng's discussion of the origins of the Scots comes after the arrival of Joseph of Arimathea. He begins his account of Scottish origins with the story of Marius, king of the Britons, and his battle with Rodrik, king of the Picts. He agrees with Geoffrey who describes the arrival of the Picts under Rodrik (or Sodric as Geoffrey names him). Geoffrey states that after the battle with the Britons the surviving Picts were given Caithness by Marius, but the Britons refused to give them wives:

> At illi ut passi fuerunt repulsam, transfretauerunt in Hyberniam duxeruntque ex patria illa mulieres ex quibus creata sobole multitudinem suam auxerunt. Sed hec hactenus, cum non proposuerim tractare historiam eorum siue Scotorum qui ex illis et Hibernensibus originem duxerunt.[167]

---

[163] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 136.

[164] John Leland, *Commentarii de Scriptoribus Britannicus*, ed A. Hall (Oxford, 1709) I: 42. Quoted in James P. Carley, "Melkin the Bard and Esoteric Tradition at Glastonbury Abbey," *Downside Review* 99 (1981): 4-5; W. W. Skeat, introduction, *Joseph of Arimathie*, ed. W. W. Skeat, EETS, os. 44 (London: Oxford University Press 1871), xl.

[165] Carley, "Melkin the Bard," 3-4; James P. Carley, introduction, *The Chronicle of Glastonbury Abbey: An Edition, Translation, and Study of John of Glastonbury's Cronica sive Antiquitates Glastoniensis Ecclesie*, ed. James P. Carley, tr. David Townsend, rev. ed. (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1985) liii-liv.

[166] Riddy's discussion of the identity of Hardyng's various Mewyns is found in Riddy "Glastonbury," 319-324.

[167] "But they [the Picts], since they had suffered this rebuff, crossed into Ireland and married women from that country by whom they augmented their numbers with offspring. But so much for this, since I do not propose to treat their history, nor that of the Scots who trace their origin from them and from the Irish." Geoffrey, *Historia*, ch. 70.

Hardyng uses this mention of the Scots to propose his own account of Scottish origins. His version of the story closely follows Geoffrey's:

> Then to the peightes left a liue, he gaue Catenese,
> To dwell vpon and haue in heritage,
> Whiche weddid wher with Irish as I gesse,
> Of whiche after Scottes came on that linage:
> For Scottes bee, to saie their langage,
> A collection of many into one,
> Of whiche the Scottes were called so anone.[168]

Hardyng cannot let this etymology stand alone. The story of Scota was by this time widely used by the Scots as a defense against claims to sovereignty based on the Brutus legend. He therefore mentions the Scota story, but in an unflattering light:

> BVt Mewynus, the Bryton chronicler.
> Saieth in his chronicles orther wise;
> That Gadelus and Scota in the yere
> Of Christ seuenty and fiue, by assise,
> At Stone inhabitte as might suffise,
> And of hir name that countre there aboute,
> Scotlande she called that tyme with outen doubt.
>
> This Scota was, as Mewyn saieth the sage,
> Doughter and bastarde of king Pharo that daye[169]

Riddy believes that Mewyn is a misreading for Nennius, who does mention the Scota legend.[170] Hardyng's date of 75 AD, however, differs from both pseudo-Nennius and Scottish versions of the tale. Fordun, for example, claims that Gaythelos left Egypt 336 years before Aeneas left Troy, thus giving the Scottish hero precedence over Brutus, his English counterpart.[171] Kennedy argues that Hardyng includes this story in order to place the arrival

---

[168] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 86.
[169] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 86
[170] See: Nennius, *British History and the Welsh Annals*, ed. and tr. John Morris (London: Phillimore, 1980) ch. 15. Although not all manuscripts mention Scota by name, pseudo-Nennius does claim that her people left Egypt at the same time as the Israelites.
[171] Fordun, *Chronica Gentis Scotorum*, II: 10-11.

of the pagan Scots in apposition to the arrival of the evangelizing Joseph of Arimathea.[172] This story does follow the story of Joseph, and the citation of Mewyn further reinforces the contrast between the Christian foundation of Glastonbury and the pagan foundation of Scone. Hardyng highlights the political aspect of the Scota legend by reminding his readers that the Stone of Scone was removed by Edward I. Hardyng tells how Scota brought the stone to Scone and how, as he says, "Scottish kynges wer brechelesse set" on it during their coronation.[173] He then states that Edward brought it away to Westminster where it was placed under the feet of English kings during their coronation "In remembraunce of the kynges of Scottes alway, / Subiects should bee to kynges of Englande all waye."[174]

The two other instances Riddy cites where Mewyn is named both deal specifically with Glastonbury. In one, Mewyn is credited with identifying Saint George's arms. The red cross on a white field, as we have seen, is first made by Joseph of Arimathea at his death and left to the British king Arviragus. It is this device "whiche nowe we call, certain, / Sainct Georges' armes, by [Mewyns] enformacion."[175] Hardyng is the only chronicler to associate Joseph's arms with the Saint George cross, and Riddy believes that Hardyng's own imagination is responsible both for the information and for the reference to Mewyn. She points out that all of the manuscripts and early printed texts of Hardyng agree in citing Mewyn in the text. All also agree in citing "Marian the Skotte," or "Marian the profound cronicler" in marginal rubrics. Based on this discrepancy, Riddy argues that the reference to

---

[172] Kennedy, "John Hardyng and the Holy Grail," 199.
[173] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 87.
[174] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 87. Edward was aware of the powerful ideological force that the Stone of Scone provided. When he learned that Bruce had been crowned at Scone, even though the Stone had been removed, he sought papal authorization to remove the entire abbey. See Goldstein, *Matter of Scotland*, 74-75.
[175] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 85. Ellis, following the Grafton printed text, prints "Nenyus" for "Mewyns" but the manuscripts all read "Mewyns."

Marian, most likely Marianus Scotus, indicates that very early in the textual tradition the name Mewyn caused confusion, and that the rubricator wrote Marian in "an attempt to make sense of a name that must have sounded peculiar even to a reader of the *Historia regum Britannie*, that repository of strange names."[176] Marian, however, has already been established in the *Chronicle* as a source of information on British heraldry. When Brutus arrives in Britain:

> He bare of goulis two liones of golde
> Countre rampant with golde onely crouned,
> Whiche kynges of Troie in bataill bare ful bolde,
> To whiche from Troye was distroyed & confounded,
> Their children slain, the next heire was he founde.
> And in tho armes this Isle he did conquere,
> As Marian saieth, the veray chronicler.[177]

It is not surprising, therefore, that Marian is invoked at this later point in the *Chronicle* when Hardyng again deals with British heraldry. In fact, while Mewyns is the source of the name "Saint George cross" and the information concerning Joseph, Marian is cited as the source for the significance of the device:

> And as Marian, the profounde chronicler, saieth, he bare of siluer, in token of clennes, a crosse of goules, significacion of the bloodde that Christe bleedde on þe crosse.[178]

Mewyn is again associated with Joseph's red cross shield in the reign of Lucius, Arviragus' son. Hardyng returns to the shield as a device carried by the British king. There is great lamentation at the death of Lucius,

> Who bare before the baptyme of propertee,
> His auncestres armes, and after with consolacion,
> He bare the armes, by his baptizacion,
> Whiche Ioseph gaue vnto Aruigarus

---

[176] Riddy, "Glastonbury," 321. See also Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 84-85.
[177] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 39.
[178] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 84.

As the Briton saith, that hight Mewynus.[179]

For Hardyng, therefore, Marian is seen as an authority on British heraldry and his name is invoked in that capacity. Mewyn, however, is an authority on Joseph of Arimathea, and those two interests coincide with Joseph's creation of the St. George cross.[180] The fact that their names are vaguely similar would seem to be nothing more than chance.

Finally, Mewyn is also cited as the source for the fact that Joseph converted King Arviragus.[181] Riddy states that Arviragus does not convert in John of Glastonbury and that the conversion story must be Hardyng's own.[182] Hardyng's account, however, is similar to the prose Vulgate, in which Agrestes takes the place of Arviragus. In both the *Estoire* and the *Lancelot*, Agrestes pretends to convert to Christianity before returning to paganism.[183] Hardyng appears to have combined the accounts found in John of Glastonbury and the Vulgate. In his *Chronicle*, Arviragus converts, but Agrestes, presented as a separate character, repudiates his conversion.[184] Riddy does not take into account the Vulgate version

---

[179] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 90.

[180] John of Glastonbury does include an account of Arthur changing his heraldic device to an image of Mary, but Mewyn is not named at that point. Until Arthur changed his arms "erant argenta com tribus leonibus rubeis capita ad terga uertentibus, a tempore aduentus Bruti." ["they had been silver with three red lions turning their heads over their backs, as they had been from Brutus' time."] John of Glastonbury, *Cronica*, 78. Hardyng is using a different tradition in which Hector's arms are the same as those which he attributes to Brutus (two lions or, counter rampant both crowned or). Hardyng seems to be stating that as a surviving heir of the Trojan royal line Brutus has the right to bear them. For a description of Hector's arms see Jacques d'Armagnac, "Armorial des Chevaliers de la Table Ronde," ed. Lisa Jefferson, "Tournaments, Heraldry and the Knights of the Round Table: A Fifteenth-Century Armorial with Two Accompanying Texts," *Arthurian Literature* 14 (1996): 154 (the illumination on fo. 65v is reproduced among the collection of plates which follows p. 88). John Rous (who had read Hardyng and copies his list of Round Table knights) depicts King Guithelin, a descendent of Brutus, bearing these same arms. See Rous, *The Rous Roll*, ch. 1. For the tradition that Brutus brought Trojan heraldry to Britain see above p 159, note 79.

[181] "Ioseph conuerted this kyng Aruirgarus, / By his prechyng, to knowe ye lawe deuine, / And baptized hym, as writen hath [Mewyns], / The chronicler, in Bretain tongue full fyne." Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 85. Ellis emends "Mewyns" to "Neninus" based on the usage elsewhere in Grafton's printed edition of 1534.

[182] Riddy, "Glastonbury," 321.

[183] See *Lestoire del Saint Graal*, 244-246 and *Lancelot*, II: 321ff.

[184] There is a textual problem with this section of the second version. Harley 661 includes the passage which speaks of Agrestes' repudiation, but other manuscripts, according to Ellis, do not. The first version of the text

of the episode, but assumes that 'Mewynus' is inserted here to provide a rhyme word for Arviragus. In total Riddy argues that

> the five passages in which 'Mewynus' is cited as the authority derive from different sources: from Hardyng's own fertile imagination, from a Scottish chronicler and from a conflation of the *Queste del Saint Graal* and *Prophetie Merlini*. 'Mewynus' may be a misreading of Nennius or Merlin or both.[185]

It is clear, however, that Mewyn is not invoked randomly, but that he is always closely associated with events at Glastonbury, events which often deal specifically with Joseph of Arimathea.

Riddy's unwillingness to accept Melkin as the actual source for the figure of Mewyn derives from her belief that "'Mewynus' is not mentioned in the Long Chronicle where, if he were Melkin, he might be expected to occur."[186] But Mewyn is in fact mentioned in the first version of Hardyng's text, a fact which seems to have gone unnoticed by all commentators on the figure. In Hardyng's earlier version Mewyn does not appear in either the Arthurian section or in the early history of Joseph's mission to Britain. He does, however, emerge much earlier in the text, and is again associated with Glastonbury. After the death of Brutus, Hardyng writes that the land was divided between Brutus' three sons. The younger brothers, Camber and Albanact, owed allegiance to their elder brother Locrine. This arrangement is in accordance with Trojan law:

> And alle Resorte / so shuld euer' apperteyne
> To the elder' / by superyoryte
> Iff the yongar' / non issu haue to reyne
> The elder shuld / by alle priorite
> Haue alle his parte / to his posteriorite
> Thus Brute by lawe / of Troy and consuetude

---

contains the complete story, but an edition of this section which uses all available manuscripts of the second version is necessary to settle the issue. Cf. Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 84-85, Hardyng, *First Version*, 39v-40.

[185] Riddy, "Glastonbury," 324.

[186] Riddy, "Glastonbury," 320.

Thurgh Bretayne made / the same by Rectitude

At Mewytryne / some tyme a place of fame
In Bretons tyme / in whiche was oon Mewyne
So wyse poete / that tyme was non of name
That florisht so / ful longe afore Merlyne
Who in his boke / so wrote for dissiplyne
The lawes of Troy / to this day Vnreuersed
Amonges the whiche / is that I haue rehersed[187]

That Mewytryne is in fact Glastonbury is affirmed later in the text when Joseph of Arimathea arrives:

To whom the kynge / than gaffe a dwellynge place
Mewytryne than / it hight and had a name
Of Breton tonge / that tyme it had no fame

Twelue hydes of londe / to hym he gaffe ther' wyth
To leue vpon' / and gete his sustynaunce
Whiche Byggyd ys / and wele reparailde syth
To goddes worshyp / and his holy plesaunce
Which is a place / of worthi suffishaunce
That men calle nowe þe house of Glassynbyry
Whar' that he lyeth / men say and hath his byry[188]

The name Mewytryne seems to be a misreading of the Welsh Inis-witrin, with *m* being mistaken for *in* due to minim confusion, and *e* for *is*. The end of the word, *-wytryne*, remains essentially unchanged. This spelling survives into the second version of the *Chronicle*. At the early establishment of Glastonbury all manuscripts agree with the spelling Mewytryne (or some minor variant) except Harley 661, where a knowledgeable scribe has corrected the word to "Insewetryne."[189] This raises the possibility that the name Mewyn does not simply result from a source's misread name. Rather, the mistaken place name "Mewytryne" might have inspired the name "Mewyn," possibly implying an onomastic

[187] Hardyng, *First Version*, 18.
[188] Hardyng, *First Version*, 39v.
[189] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 83. See also Riddy, "Glastonbury," 329, *n.* 34.

relationship. This is a favorite device within the Brut tradition and one of which Hardyng was also very fond. This does not, of course, disprove the theory that Mewyn may also be associated with John of Glastonbury's Melkin. As Riddy admits, an anglicana *lk* could easily be misread as *w*. What seems most likely is that the *Mewytryne - Mewyn - Melkin* associations result from two related reading errors. Having read "Iniswitrin" as "Mewytryne," Hardyng was predisposed to find an individual with a similar-sounding name. Reading "Mewyn" for "Melkin" was a mistake which easily followed. The error could, of course, have occurred in the opposite order. "Melkin" was read as "Mewyn", thus making the "Mewytryne" error more likely. What seems certain, however, is that these errors occurred while reading passages found in John of Glastonbury's *Cronica*.

Riddy argues that, even if Hardyng were familiar with Melkin's name, "it was probably not from John of Glastonbury, since there is no clear evidence from Hardyng's version of the Joseph of Arimathea legend that he had read the *Cronica*."[190] Recently, however, James Carley has pointed out that one of the altered rubrics from the first version of Hardyng's *Chronicle* may rely on John of Glastonbury's *Cronica*. Chapter eighteen of the *Cronica* opens with the rubric "Incipit tractatus de Sancto Ioseph ab Arimathia," and chapter twenty includes the rubric "Hec scriptura reperitur in gestis incliti regis Arthuri."[191] John tells us that the book of the deeds of Arthur recounts the legend of Joseph at the beginning of the quest for the Holy Grail "vbi albus miles exponit Galaat filio Lancelot misterium cuiusdam mirabilis scuti quod eidem deferendum commisit quod nemo alius sine graui

---

[190] Riddy, "Glastonbury," 325.

[191] "Here begins the treatise of St Joseph of Arimathea"; "This passage is found among the deeds of the glorious king Arthur." John of Glastonbury, *Cronica*, 46, 52.

dispendio ne vna quidem die poterat portare."[192] In the first version of Hardyng's text, immediately after Galahad receives his shield at Glastonbury, the rubric discussed above appears:

> What the Reule of ordour of Saynt Graal was her' is expressed and notifyed *as is contened in þe book of Josep of arymathie and as it is specified in a dialoge þat Gildas made de gestis Arthur* '.[193]

This is one of the altered rubrics, and Carley notes that the references to "þe book of Josep of arymathie" and "a dialoge þat Gildas made de gestis Artur" bear a striking resemblance to the citations in John of Glastonbury's rubrics to the "tractatus de Sancto Ioseph ab Arimathia" and the book "de gestis incliti regis Arthuri."[194] A further parallel may be added to those noted by Carley. In chapter twenty-one of John of Glastonbury's *Cronica*, prophecies of Melkin are introduced with the rubric "Ista scriptura inuenitur in libro Melkini qui fuit ante Merlinum."[195] The final clause of this passage could easily be translated "That florisht so ful longe afore Merlyne," a phrase which Hardyng includes at the first appearance of Mewyn in the first version of the *Chronicle*.[196] That this phrase relies on a written source seems likely, since there is no reason to draw a comparison with Merlin at this point in the *Chronicle*. Merlin will not appear for another forty folios, or over 2000 years. Hardyng's

---

[192] ". . . where the White Knight explains to Galahad, son of Lancelot, the mystery of a miraculous shield which he enjoins him to carry and which no one else can bear, even for a day, without great loss." John of Glastonbury, *Cronica*, 52. In the body of the text, John refers to the "liber de gestis incliti regis Arthuri." *Cronica*, 52.
[193] Hardyng, *First Version*, 78.
[194] Carley's opinions are expressed in a forthcoming article "Arthur in English History," *Arthur of the English*, ed. W.R.J. Barron [expected 1999]. I would like to thank Professor Carley for kindly supplying me with a draft copy of this paper. Carley argues that Hardyng's citations of Mewyn suggest the existence of a separate text attributed to Melkin from which both John of Glastonbury and Hardyng drew. Such a text, argues Carley, may have circulated, along with excerpts from John of Glastonbury's *Cronica*, as a florilegium of Glastonbury lore, and material which Hardyng attributes to Mewyn, such as the Scota or Galahad stories, may be drawn from this collection. It is, of course, possible that Hardyng's knowledge of John of Glastonbury was limited to the material contained in such an anthology, but I hesitate to use Hardyng as evidence for the composition of such a text.
[195] "This passage is found in the book of Melkin who preceded Merlin." John of Glastonbury, *Cronica*, 54.
[196] Hardyng, *First Version*, 18. For the full quote, see above p. 295

Chronicle, therefore, has strong parallels with John of Glastonbury's text in three different citations of sources, and it seems likely that he had access to these passages, either within John of Glastonbury's *Cronica*, or in some florilegium of Glastonbury lore.

Although Hardyng knows other Grail traditions, he follows John of Glastonbury who states that Joseph brought "duo fassula alba et argentea cruore prophete Ihesu et sudore perimpleta."[197] In Hardyng's first version, Joseph brings two relics with him when he first establishes a house at Glastonbury:

> And two fyels / full of the swete to sayne
> Of Jhesus Cryste / as rede as blode of vayne
> Whiche he gadered / and brought with hym away
> And layd in Erth / with hym at his laste day[198]

This fact, drawn from the Glastonbury *Cronica*, contradicts the Vulgate version of the tale which Hardyng includes later in the work when the Round Table is established by Uther. There the Grail is described as

> The dysshe in whiche / that Criste dyd putte his honde
> The Saynte Grale / he cald of his language
> In whiche he kepte / of Cristes blode he fonde
> A parte alway / and to his hermytage
> In Bretayne Grete / it brought in his viage
> The whiche was thar / to tyme of Kyng Arthure
> That Galaad / escheued his auenture[199]

The two vials of Christ's blood and sweat were John of Glastonbury's attempt to transform the Holy Grail into a "completely respectable and highly venerable Christian relic."[200] Hardyng, who was familiar with both versions of the foundation story, either did not

---

[197] "... two white and silver vessels, full of the blood and sweat of the prophet Jesus." John of Glastonbury, *Cronica*, 54.
[198] Hardyng, *First Version*, 39v.
[199] Hardyng, *First Version*, 66v. Cf. *Merlin*, 334-335, in which the Grail is described as the vessel in which Joseph collected Christ's blood.
[200] Carley, introduction, *The Chronicle of Glastonbury Abbey*, lii.

associate the vials with the Grail or simply forgot that he had already included an alternate version of the story by the time he came to associate the Round Table with Joseph of Arimathea's mission.

These similarities suggest that Hardyng had direct access to portions of John of Glastonbury's *Cronica*, and that Mewyn, as he appears in both the first and the second versions of Hardyng's text, is drawn from the same source. With the exception of the Scota legend, each of Mewyn's appearances associates him closely with Glastonbury in general, and often with Joseph of Arimathea in particular. Even in the Scota material Mewyn is used to draw comparisons between the Scottish pagan foundation at Scone and the British Christian foundation at Mewytryne, or Glastonbury.

All of the material attributed to Mewyn, however, is not derived from Melkin's surviving prophecies or even from other sections of John of Glastonbury's *Cronica*. It appears as though the references to Mewyn in the second version share many characteristics with the references to Giraldus Cambrensis in the rubrics of the first version. Like Giraldus, Mewyn is an author associated with Arthurian traditions at Glastonbury. This seems to have been enough for Hardyng to attribute all manner of information to a particular source. The name Mewyn, and its association with Glastonbury, seems to have been drawn from John, but the material attributed to Mewyn derives from a number of sources. Unlike Giraldus, however, Mewyn had the advantage of antiquity, since he "florisht so ful longe afore Merlyne," and he wrote "in Bretain tongue full fyne."[201] The obscure author Mewyn allows Hardyng to integrate the Grail material into his *Chronicle* with the full authority of his very own *quendam Britannici sermonis librum uetustissimum*.

Both versions, therefore, employ elaborate strategies to authenticate the romance interpolations. The first version of the *Chronicle* relies on a scattershot approach, with the abundance of varying sources establishing authority for Hardyng's eclectic Arthurian history. The second version of the text relies on the mysterious and inaccessible Mewyn to sanction its narrative. Both strategies of authorization focus on the Grail material which Hardyng introduced to the Brut tradition. The altered rubrics, as we have seen, are concentrated around the material borrowed from the Vulgate *Queste* and the early history of Glastonbury, as are the references to Mewyn. The attention which is paid to the Grail narrative in both versions of the text highlights the suspect nature of the tale as an historical record and points to Hardyng's own anxiety over the mingling of romance and historical records. In John of Glastonbury the story of Joseph of Arimathea and the Grail were adapted to the history of the abbey for immediate and local political gain. In Hardyng, that material was readapted into a national history, not only increasing the prestige of Glastonbury Abbey, but also providing an historical precedent for English political and ecclesiastical domination of the British Isles.

The effect of these alterations to the Brut narrative is to produce a uniformly positive image of King Arthur. In Hardyng's account Arthur is so successful that he achieves his greatest ambition, the conquest of Rome, before hearing of Mordred's treachery.[202] The invariably positive image of Arthur is most clearly shown after his death. Hardyng delivers a lengthy lamentation in which he blames Fortune alone for Arthur's fall. Hardyng was aware of the tradition which represented Fortune as a punishing force. Indeed, in the second version of the *Chronicle* he appeals to this image of Fortune when the British finally lose

---

[201] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 85.
[202] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 144-145. The first version follows the Brut tradition, and Arthur hears of Mordred's treachery after the defeat of the Roman army, but before he receives the imperial crown.

Britain to the Saxons:

> Behold Bochas what princes haue through pride,
> Be cast downe frome all their dignitee,
> Wher sapience and meekenes had bee guyde
> Full suerly might haue saued bee,
> And haue stand alwaye in might & greate suertee
> If in their hartes meekenes had bee ground
> And wisedome also thei had not be confound.[203]

"Bochas" is almost certainly not Boccaccio's *De Casibus*, but rather Lydgate's *Fall of Princes*, a text which does promote the image of a punishing Fortune.[204] When Hardyng writes his lamentation for the death of Arthur, however, he does not turn to Lydgate for his image of Fortune, but to Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*. He thus presents an image of capricious Fortune which strikes at those who do not always deserve to fall:

> O thou' fortune / executrice of werdes
> That euer' more so / with thy subtylite
> To all debates so strongly thou enherdes
> That men that wolde / ay leue in charite
> Thou dooste perturbe / with mutabilite
> Why stretched so / thy whele vpon Modrede
> Agayne his Eme / to do so cruell dede
>
> Whare thurgh that / hiegh and noble conquerour'
> With outen' cause / shulde so gates perisshit be
> With so fele kynges / and prynces of honour'
> That all the worlde / myght neuer thar' bette se[205]

---

[203] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 181-182.

[204] On Hardyng's knowledge of Lydgate see Edwards, "The Influence of Lydgate's *Fall of Princes*," 436. Edwards points out that Caxton's similar citation of Bochas in his prologue to Malory also refers to Lydgate, rather than "Boccaccio's very summary treatment of Arthur." Edwards, "The Influence of Lydgate's *Fall of Princes*," 434.

[205] Hardyng, *First Version*, 87. In Chaucer's poem the narrator, like Hardyng, laments the influence of Fortune on the lives of his characters: "But O Fortune, executrice of wierdes, / O influences of thise hevenes hye!" Geoffrey Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*, *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry Benson, *et al.*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987) III. 617-618. This borrowing was first noted by A.S.G. Edwards. In a later article Edwards draws attention to other borrowings from the *Troilus* outside the Arthurian period. See A.S.G. Edwards, "Hardyng's *Chronicle* and *Troilus and Criseyde*," *Notes and Queries* 229 (1984): 156; A.S.G. Edwards, "*Troilus & Criseyde* and the First Version of Hardyng's Chronicle," *Notes and Queries* 233 (1988): 12-13. Although Hardyng's verbal debt to the *Troilus* extends over only one line at this point, it is clear that he was familiar with the whole work. On several other occasions in his Arthurian history he draws on the *Troilus*: he appeals to the mutability of worldly affairs after years of peace: remarking, "But euer' as next / the valey is the

Using the same "hap" cognates found in the alliterative *Morte Arthur*, he next turns his attention to Mordred:

> Bot O Modrede / that was so gode a knyght
> In grete manhode / and proudely ay approued
> In whom thyne Eme / the nobleste prynce of myght
> Putte all his truste / so gretely he the loued
> What vnhappe so / thy manly goste hath moued
> Vnto so foule / and cruell hardynesse
> So fele be slayne / thurgh thyne vnhappynesse[206]

Fortune has turned against both the king and his knights, but in John Hardyng's idealized past even the arch-villain Mordred is merely the instrument of random Fortune. The "vnhappynesse" of Arthur's kingdom expressed itself in civil war, and as Hardyng watched the internal discord of contemporary England escalate it is easy to see why he sought reconciliation above all else. The civil war which destroyed Arthur's kingdom continued until the weakened British eventually lost the island to the invading Saxons. After the death of Aurelius Conan, the successor of Constantine, Hardyng warns his contemporaries of the dangers inherent in civil war and Fortune's turning wheel:

---

hill", a proverb possibly drawn from Chaucer's "And next the valeye is the hil o-lofte" (Cf. Hardyng, *First Version*, 72, Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*, I. 950, this borrowing is noted by Harker, "John Hardyng's Arthur," 256); his sympathetic description of Igerne as a woman "Whiche of nature / tendre was of corage" seems to reflect Chaucer's famous description of Criseyde who was "Tendre-herted, slydyne of corage," (Cf. Hardyng, *First Version*, 65v, Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*, V. 825); and his description of Guenevere, "Whiche for' passynge / all others dyd excelle" and "So Aungellyke / and so celestiall," is also drawn from Chaucer's description of Criseyde, "Nas non so fair, forpassynge every wight / So aungelik was hir natif beaute" (Cf. Hardyng, *First Version*, 73, Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*, I. 101-102, this borrowing is noted by Harker, "John Hardyng' Arthur," 261). It is possible that Hardyng's familiarity with the *Troilus* suggested to him his short Boethian debate between predestination and fortune. His complaint at the death of Arthur begins by questioning God's role in the fall of the king, before turning to his attack on Fortune herself:

> O gode Lorde god / suche treson And vnrightes
> Whi suffred so /// deuyne omnipotence
> Whiche had of it / precyence and forsightes
> And myght haue lette / that cursed violence
> Of Modredes pryde...

Hardyng, *First Version*, 87. Cf. Chaucer *Troilus and Criseyde*, IV. 960ff.

[206] Hardyng, *First Version*, 87.

> Be warre ye lordes / that ben in hygh estates
> And thynke vpon' / this worldes transmutacion'
> And cherisshe not / contenciouns no debates
> In youre Countrese / lesse it be your' confusion'
> For fals fortune ' with hyr' permutacion'
> Full lyghtely will / caste doun' that ys aboue
> Whose nature is / to chaungen' and remoue.[207]

The Percies, the Umfravilles, Henry VI, and Richard of York were all successive patrons of the soldier with literary aspirations, and each of them fell victim to Fortune's spinning wheel. The rules of both the Round Table and the Grail fellowship commanded those who belonged to the order of knighthood "The common profyte euer more to sustene",[208] and only by returning to this basic precept of chivalry could Britain be reunited, and a true order of the Round Table reestablished.

---

[207] Hardyng, *First Version*, 88.
[208] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 125.

Conclusion

> Yet blazing *Arthur*, as haue some, I might be ouer-seene:
> He was victorious, making one amongst the worthies neene:
> But (with his pardon) if I vouch his world of Kingdomes wonne,
> I am no poet, and for lacke of pardon were vndonne.
> His *Scottish*, *Irish*, *Almaine*, *French*, and *Saxone* Battels got.
> Yeeld fame sufficient: these seeme true, the rest I credit not.
> William Warner, *Albions England*, 1612.[1]

The authors of Arthurian works shared a received narrative of Arthurian history which existed beside, and was informed by, material which was ostensibly fictive. The authors we have examined share not only a narrative, but also several important characteristics of interpretation, among them a tendency to view Arthurian history as an *exemplum* of mutability. At the same time, all of these authors also stress the central position that Arthur holds in the depiction of Britain's chivalric past. From Sir Thomas Gray to *The Awntyrs off Arthure*, Arthur's court is a model for contemporary knights and the pinnacle of chivalric grandeur. Like the image of Troy, the Arthurian world contains a double resonance for these authors. At once an exemplar to be emulated, the history of Arthur's court also teaches that worldly glory must come to an end. The cyclical view of British history, established so forcefully by Geoffrey of Monmouth, informs all subsequent interpretations of the Arthurian world.

With very few exceptions, authors of Arthurian history in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century England also share a surprisingly uniform interpretation of the relationship between the Brut tradition and romance narratives. Most chroniclers simply ignore information from

outside the Brut tradition, but those who do discuss the relationship between the two traditions reject romance material.[2] Very few authors make use of romance material, but even among their texts the perception of a distinction between the traditions can be detected. Thomas Gray distances his romance additions from his Brut narrative and thus denies them historical authority, while John Hardyng's attempts to provide authority for his borrowed episodes betray his own anxiety about the veracity of his material. Both of these chroniclers, however, share a conviction that fictive material can be used to direct a reader's interpretation of Arthurian history. Not simply a truthful recorder of things done, the medieval chronicler is able to shape his audience's understanding of the past, and the implications of the past for the present, through the amplification of history with material drawn from romance. While manipulating the relationship between history and romance, the chronicler relies on his reader to recognise the subtle play between fact and fiction, and to distinguish between the events of the past and the thematic embellishments of the author. For the authors of individual romances the relationship is even more complex. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and *The Awntyrs off Arthure* interweave fictive adventures with the narrative of the Brut tradition in order to utilize the interpretive conventions of British history within an individual romance. The lines of influence, however, work in both directions, and both *Sir Gawain* and *The Awntyrs* encourage the reader to reevaluate Arthurian history in light of an Arthurian fiction.

Despite their many differences, therefore, the chronicles and adventures examined in this study exhibit thematic similarities which hint at a community of writers sharing basic

---

[1] William Warner, *Albions England*, Anglistica & Americana 131 (Hildesheim and New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1971), 90.
[2] The Auchinlech *Short Metrical Chronicle* and *Le Petit Bruit* are the exceptions to this rule.

assumptions concerning Arthurian material. These authors also share the expectation of an audience willing to engage Arthurian history on a critical level which recognizes the distinction between an historical narrative and a fictive amplification. More textually-oriented similarities reinforce the impression of a literary community. It is unlikely that John Hardyng read Gray's *Scalacronica*, but both authors shared a similar reading list, which included not only other chroniclers, such as Wace, Geoffrey and Higden, but also romance texts, such as the prose Vulgate cycle, and individual romances like *Lybeus Disconus* and *Sir Degrevaunt*. Harker argues that Hardyng also read Robert Mannyng's *Chronicle* and "some member of the Alliterative *Morte Arthure* / Malory complex."[3] While many of the borrowings that Harker points to may be the result of coincidence rather than direct borrowing, the fact remains that Hardyng's reading in Arthurian literature is extensive,[4] and not atypical.

A contemporary of Sir Thomas Malory, Hardyng's reading habits are of interest to scholars who have attempted to establish how the better-known Arthurian writer composed his lengthy, composite book. Apart from the *Tristan*, every major French text that Malory incorporated into the *Morte D'Arthur* was also used by Hardyng. In fact, it can be demonstrated that Hardyng's use of Arthurian literature was more extensive. Discussions of Malory's access to his sources usually begin with William Matthews' statement that no contemporary library in England could have provided Malory with all of the material he

---

[3] Christine Marie Harker, "John Hardyng's Arthur: A Critical Edition," diss. University of California, Riverside, 1996, 16. See also Harker's discussion of Hardyng's "Composition Context" in Appendix B, pp. 383-386.
[4] This, of course, does not take into account the many texts that Hardyng must have consulted in order to write the rest of his lengthy *Chronicle*

required.[5] Carol Meale, however, has noted that our knowledge of contemporary libraries, whether monastic or private, is very poor. Inventories and wills, although useful, are imperfect methods of gauging either the size or the composition of book collections. Meale also shows the relative ease with which a single book could circulate among a group of literate men and women. She points to the Lambeth Palace copy of *The Awntyrs off Arthure*, which "contains the names of several individuals who seem to have formed a kind of literary circle amongst the Essex gentry in the early sixteenth century."[6] The letter of a Lincolnshire book owner attempting to secure the return of his "Inglische buke... cald Mort Arthur"[7] also demonstrates the ease with which a single work, in both of these cases an Arthurian work, could circulate among a large number of individuals. With such easy movement of the material, it becomes clear how John Hardyng, a minor retainer in several different great families, could have gained access to the manuscripts he needed to compose his lengthy *Chronicle*, the Arthurian portion of which amounts to approximately one tenth of the whole work. Sir Thomas Malory, we can assume, could have had at least equal access to the necessary texts.

Thomas Malory and John Hardyng, it seems, were members of a literary community which shared not only certain knowledge of and assumptions concerning Arthurian history, but also the physical texts necessary to gain that knowledge. By literary community I mean

---

[5] William Matthews, *The Ill-Framed Knight: A Sceptical Inquiry into the Identity of Sir Thomas Malory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966) 141. For a discussion of libraries in England and on the continent see Matthews, *The Ill-Framed Knight*, 52-57, 141-145.

[6] Carol Meale, "Manuscripts, Readers and Patrons in Fifteenth-Century England: Sir Thomas Malory and Arthurian Romance," *Arthurian Literature* 4 (1985): 106. The manuscript referred to is Lambeth Palace MS 491.

[7] MS Cambridge, University Library Dd XI.45, f. 142. Quoted in Angus McIntosh, "The Textual Transmission of the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*," *Middle English Dialectology: Essays on Some Principles and Problems*, ed. Margaret Laing (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1989) 182. For a discussion and quotation of this letter see above p. 141.

something less formally defined than Brian Stock's notion of a "textual community," and more unified than Felicity Riddy's use of Stock's phrase.[8] The literary community I propose is made up of men (and possibly women) who read historical texts and romances in such a way as to be engaged in an act of informed interpretation as they read. Such a community includes not only the men who turned from reading to the active creation of texts (men such Sir Thomas Gray, John Hardyng and Thomas Malory), but also those who confined themselves to the consumption of narrative matter. Members of this community may be associated with one another through formal educational institutions such as the monastery or the university, but the associations would also be based on loose networks of textual transmission, often involving familial and land relationships of the sort uncovered by Keiser's studies of Robert Thornton's literary contacts. The community is also not uniform, and we have seen how certain elements of Arthurian narrative can be geographically localized. The expanded role of Yvain in Arthur's final campaign, for example, seems to be an element peculiar to the area surrounding Lincolnshire. It may only be chance survival, but both of the lengthy medieval chronicles written by English laymen, Thomas Gray's *Scalacronica* and John Hardyng's *Chronicle*, are also of northern origin. The four alliterative Arthurian poems, three of which originate in northern England, while the fourth, *Golagros and Gawain*, is of Scottish origins, also share an historical backdrop to their fictive adventures. Temporally, this community may be said to begin with Henry of Huntingdon's early surprise at finding a copy of Geoffrey's *Historia* at Bec. It is with the popularization of vernacular historiography in the fourteenth century, however, that Geoffrey's narrative came

[8] Riddy uses "textual community" to signify "the community of people who read the same text, who are brought together simply by the act of reading (or hearing); a community which the text itself creates insofar as it seeks an

to an audience large enough to create a dynamic reading community.

Our understanding of such a community is necessarily limited to those members who left written traces of their attitudes toward their reading material. Few readers turn from being consumers of historical material to creating their own text based on their readings. Vestiges of this community, however, can be found in the surviving manuscripts of historical works. John Hardyng's attempts to provide authority for his version of Arthurian history were only partially successful. As mentioned earlier, the second version of the *Chronicle* was not completed in Hardyng's life time, and the manuscript tradition reveals numerous lacunae in the second half of the rhyme royal stanzas.[9] These omissions are most common in the fifth line, "the point in the rhyme royal stanza that is most tricky in terms of rhyme, the third *b* rhyme."[10] This pattern leads A. S. G. Edwards to conclude "that Hardyng, in his twilight years (he was over eighty), was unable to complete his work in these localized respects before his death."[11] Given this situation, scribes either ignored the missing lines or simply inserted appropriate lines to complete the stanza. These lines provide some insight into the manner in which Hardyng's text was received, and there are several such lacunae in the Arthurian section of the *Chronicle*.[12]

The missing lines rarely affect the sense of the stanza and usually the scribal additions are purely descriptive. Two such descriptions, however, indicate that the scribes

---

audience." Felicity Riddy, "Reading for England: Arthurian Literature and National Consciousness," *Bibliographical Bulletin of the International Arthurian Society* 43 (1991): 315

[9] Edwards estimates about two hundred such omissions occur in Ashmole 34, a manuscript which seems to be relatively close to the original text. A.S.G. Edwards, "The Manuscripts of the Second Version of Hardyng's *Chronicle*," *England in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Daniel Williams (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1987) 79.

[10] Edwards, "Manuscripts," 83.

[11] Edwards, "Manuscripts," 83.

[12] Ellis' edition collates only three versions of the text: Grafton's 1543 edition, Harley 661 and Selden B. 10. Edwards identifies six families of manuscripts, providing six variant possibilities (including blanks) but a complete study cannot be undertaken until a proper edition of the text is completed.

were unsure to which tradition Hardyng's *Chronicle* belonged. When describing the first knights of the Round Table, Grafton's printed text reads:

> ¶ The thre kynges foresayde of Scotlande,
> Two kynges also of Walys, full chyualrous,
> Howell, the kyng of lesse Briteyne lande,
> And duke Cador of Cornewayle corageous,
> *And worthy Gawen, gentyll and amarous...*[13]

This reading is shared by the Egerton and University of Illinois manuscripts, but the italicized line does not appear in other manuscripts and is not authorial. Harley has substituted "*Knyghtes of the Rounde Table were made aunterouse*" while the Garret manuscript reads "*Thouȝt with all his myȝt to do victorious.*" Other manuscripts simply leave the line blank, or shorten the stanza to six lines.[14] There is more behind Grafton's scribal reference to Gawain, however, than the need to fill a blank line. The scribe who inserted a passage about Sir Gawain was responding to the popularity of the knight in English romance, and the adjectives with which he chose to describe Gawain ("gentyll and amarous") indicate an awareness of his dominant characteristics, characteristics which remained more common in romance than in chronicle.[15] A later passage illustrates the same point. At Arthur's coronation feast Hardyng describes Sir Kay, the king's steward. The Grafton, Egerton and University of Illinois manuscripts again share their reading:

> His stewarde was, that had with mekell ioye,
> A thousande knightes *to serue early and late*
> *Ententyfly, not feynt, wery ne mate.*[16]

Again, the italicized lines are not authorial. The Garrett manuscript follows Grafton for the second line quoted, but the third line reads "*Soche a kyng was Arture yn his estate.*" The Harley scribe, however, includes a line that acts as a corrective to the romance tradition that

---

[13] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 124 (page numbered 142). Italics added.
[14] For manuscript variants see Harker "John Hardyng's Arthur," 162. Italics added.
[15] For a discussion of Gawain's character in medieval romance and chronicle, see B.J. Whiting, "Gawain: His Reputation, His Courtesy and His Appearance in Chaucer's *Squire's Tale*," *Mediaeval Studies* 9 (1947): 189-234.

many readers would have known. His lines read: "A thousande knightes *with hym consociate Manlie iauntill louynge no debate*".[17] This scribe seems to be aware of the romance tradition that Kay is known for his foul tongue. It will be remembered that Jacob Van Maerlant also includes Kay among the historical characters from Arthurian tradition, but he notes that "hem die Walen mede meyen."[18] The Harley scribe's description of the steward "louynge no debate" makes little sense without this background information.

The scribes of Hardyng's incomplete exemplar are participating in a tradition of negotiation which dates back to the scribe of BN fr. 1450. Just as that scribe incorporated Chrétien's romances into his copy of the *Roman de Brut*,[19] so Hardyng's scribes attempt to reconcile their own conception of the Arthurian past with the chronicler's idiosyncratic text. The scribes are reacting not only to Hardyng's text, but also to a body of Arthurian material which contains certain well known characteristics, such as Gawain's amorous reputation and courtesy, or Kay's lack of these noble traits. These scribes, in other words, perform in miniature the same process of conjoining and reconciliation which has characterized the various chroniclers and poets discussed throughout this study.

The same process is carried out by the owner/scribe of the Lambeth Palace prose *Brut*, but on a much larger scale. As mentioned above, this scribe continued to add material to his history as new manuscripts and, eventually, printed sources became available to him.[20] The adventure of the wildcats, drawn from outside the Brut tradition, is placed, like Chrétien's romances, within the twelve year period of peace. The same period is used by the

---

[16] Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 129. Italics added.
[17] For manuscript variants see Harker "John Hardyng's Arthur," 171. Italics added.
[18] "of whom the French make a mockery." Jacob Van Maerlant, *Spiegel Historiael* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1863-1879) bk. 5, ch. 49, vv. 24.
[19] On this manuscript see above p. 17.

scribe of the Arundel Robert of Gloucester as a place to dismiss the romances "in the boke of seint Graal."[21]

We also see the reading members of this community in marginalia. One reader seems to have taken a special interest in the Grail sections of the first version of Hardyng's *Chronicle*. Not only does this reader correct the Grail portion of the text, he also writes "ye seynte grale- what it is"[22] beside Hardyng's account of the last supper, and he notes Hardyng's citation of a source of information about the Grail, "Gildas de gestis Arthur."[23] This reader thus engages in interpretation as he reads, noting the description of the Grail and the undoubtedly surprising piece of information that Gildas wrote about Galahad's achievement of the adventure. A reader of BL Egerton MS 1992, a manuscript of the second version of Hardyng's *Chronicle*, also leaves evidence of his interpretation of Hardyng's text. He scribbles "False" beside both of the rubrics which deal with Lancelot's arrival at Arthur's tomb,[24] an episode borrowed from the prose Vulgate. This same reader was apparently a proponent of Ranulph Higden's version of Arthurian history, and he writes "False" beside each rubric which deals with the Roman campaign.[25] These marginalia indicate that both of these readers interpreted Hardyng's text with reference to material from outside the *Chronicle* itself. The reader of the first version used Hardyng to shed light on his knowledge of the Grail, a knowledge which was presumably gained primarily through romance. The reader of the second version read Hardyng with a more critical eye and found Hardyng's

---

[20] See above p. 29.
[21] College of Arms MS Arundel 58, fo. 62v. See above p. 28.
[22] Hardyng, *First Version*, 66v.
[23] Hardyng, *First Version*, 78.
[24] BL, Egerton MS 1992, fo. 55v.
[25] BL, Egerton MS 1992, fos. 51v, 52, 53, 54, 54v. Unfortunately, these examples are not long enough to give an idea of when these readers handled the books.

narrative to be in conflict with another text that he knew and with which he seemingly agreed. These two readers would doubtless disagree with one another, as the romance additions to Hardyng's text, so interesting to the first reader, seem to be dismissed, along with much of the Galfridian account, by the second. But the method with which they approach the act of reading an historical text is essentially the same.

Other marginalia demonstrate readers' interest in the British hope of Arthur's return. A reader of the alliterative *Morte Arthure* was unsatisfied with the finality of Arthur's death and adds "Hic jacet Arthurus rex q[u]ondam rexque futurus" at the end of the poem.[26] Readers of Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* also include the epitaph as a marginal gloss. Lydgate ends his Arthurian section by describing the tradition that Arthur will return. He concludes:

> The Parchas sustren sponne so his fate;
> His epitaphie recordeth so certeyn:
> Heer lith kyng Arthour, which shal regne ageyn.[27]

Four of the manuscripts of the *Fall* include the Latin epitaph as a marginal gloss beside this passage. The gloss is in a variety of forms. Withrington concludes that since these epitaphs are all in scribal hands "they are manifestly part of a manuscript tradition."[28] What is not clear, however, is whether the epitaph is authorial, or whether it was originally added as a gloss on Lydgate's English version. Finally, we see the epitaph added in the late stages of the production of the first version of Hardyng's *Chronicle*. After Arthur's death, Hardyng writes that he was buried at Glastonbury, "Nought wythstondynge Merlyn seyde of hym thus / His deth shuld be vnknow and ay doutous." Beside this line the correcting scribe has written

---

[26] *Morte Arthure: A Critical Edition*, ed. Mary Hamel (New York: Garland, 1984) p. 251.
[27] John Lydgate, *Fall of Princes*, ed. H. Bergen, EETS, es. 121-124 (London. Oxford University Press, 1964) VIII.3120-3122.
[28] John Withrington, "The Arthurian Epitaph in Malory's *Morte Darthur*," *Arthurian Literature* 7 (1987): 132.

"Hic iacet Arthurus rex quondam rexque futurus."[29] As with the other altered rubrics in Hardyng's text, it is uncertain if Hardyng is the author. What the rubric demonstrates, however, is that someone, whether the author or a later scribe, incorporated this piece of information late in the production of the manuscript.[30] The epitaph seems to have circulated in a variety of textual milieu, and may have also circulated orally.

Lister Matheson describes the additions to the Lambeth *Brut* as "the considered historical view of Arthur of an intelligent, widely-read Englishman."[31] Similarly, Christine Harker points to John Hardyng's "wide-ranging literary knowledge and taste."[32] These men, along with the other authors discussed in this study, may be the exception, in that they applied their literary and historical interests in a creative effort, but they may also be typical, in that they had access to, and made use of, such diverse material. The critical attitude with which Thomas Gray approached Arthurian history is shared by many of his fellow chroniclers. Fictive romances are held to the margins of historical narrative, but knowledge of romances colours the authors', and presumably the readers', understanding of Arthur's reign. The romance narratives, in other words, are interpretive tools available to these authors and readers, just as the cyclical nature of British history and the transience of human achievement are tools through which Arthurian history is read and understood. These tools are shared by the literary community, and the author of an Arthurian work can rely on an audience willing to apply them to both chronicles and romances.

---

[29] Hardyng, *First Version*, 86v. For a discussion of this passage see Withrington, "The Arthurian Epitaph," 119-121. Withrington includes an illustration of the added rubric as figure 1.
[30] For a general discussion of the epitaph and its variants, see Withrington, "The Arthurian Epitaph," *passim*.
[31] Lister M. Matheson, "The Arthurian Stories of Lambeth Palace Library MS 84," *Arthurian Literature* 5 (1985) 91.
[32] Harker, "John Hardyng's Arthur," 385.

It is with such a literary community in mind that William Caxton chose to print a new narrative of Arthur's reign. Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte D'Arthur* represents a shift away from the differentiation between factual and fictive representations of Arthur's reign. Instead, Malory offers a unified vision of the Arthurian past in which the historical record of the alliterative *Morte Arthure* has been fully integrated into a narrative which conforms to the pattern established by the French prose romance cycle. Caxton was familiar with a wide variety of Arthurian material even before he printed Malory's text. In his prologue to *Godeffroy of Boloyne* Caxton compares Godfrey to the other Christian worthies:

> But in especial, as for the best and worthyest, I fynde fyrst the gloryous / most excellent in his tyme / and fyrst founder of the round table / Kyng Arthur, kyng of the brytons, that tyme regnyng in this Royamme / of whose retenue were many noble Kynges, Prynces / lordes and knyghtes, of which the noblest were knyghtes of the round table, of whos actes and historyes there be many large volumes, and bookes grete plente and many / O blessyd lord, whan I remembre the grete and many volumes of seynt graal / ghalehot, & launcelotte de lake / Gawayn, perceual / Lyonel / and tritram, and many other, of whom were ouer longe to reherce / and also to me vnknown! But thystorye of the sayd Arthur is so gloryous and shynyng, that he is stalled in the fyrst place of the mooste noble / beste and worthyest of the cristen men.[33]

Caxton's prologue, written in 1481, reveals not only the printer's wide knowledge of Arthurian material, despite his claim to ignorance, but also his willingness to accept a wide variety of material as authentic. By the time Caxton wrote the prologue to the *Morte D'Arthur* he was more cautious.

Caxton's prologue to the *Morte D'Arthur* begins with an account of a meeting between the printer and a select group from his audience:

> many noble and dyuers gentylmen of thys royame of Englond camen and demaunded me many and oftymes, wherefore that I haue not do made and enprynte the noble

[33] William Caxton, prologue, *Godeffroy of Boloyne, or, The Siege and Conqueste of Jerusalem*, by William, Archbishop of Tyre, tr. William Caxton, ed. Mary Noyes Colvin, EETS, es. 64 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1893) 2.

> hystorye of the Sayntgreal and of the moos renomed Crysten kyng, fyrst and chef of the thre best Crysten and worthy, Kyng Arthur, whyche ought moost to be remembred emonge vs Englysshemen tofore al other Crysten kynges.[34]

Again, Caxton outlines Arthur's position among the Nine Worthies, and he concludes that "The sayd noble ientylmen instantly requyred me t'emprynte th'ystorye of the sayd noble kyng and conquerour Kyng Arthur...."[35] These gentlemen appeal to Caxton's sense of nationalism, claiming that he should be willing to print Arthur's deeds before Godfrey of Bouillon "consyderyng that he was a man borne wythin this royme and kyng and emperour of the same, and that there ben in Frensshe dyuers and many noble volumes of his actes and also of his knyghtes."[36] Caxton's response, however, is surprising:

> To whome I answerd that dyuers men holde oppynyon that there was no suche Arthure, and that alle suche bookes as been maad of hym ben but fayned and fables, bycause that somme cronycles make of hym no mencyon ne remembre hym noothynge ne of his knyghtes.[37]

Levine is correct to assert that "the skepticism was unexpected and peculiar," but not because "[t]o raise a question of fact and examine it in close detail as though it mattered was not... the ordinary impulse of the Middle Ages."[38] As we have seen, medieval authors were concerned with the veracity of their historical records. What is surprising in Caxton's response is that he expresses a doubt about Arthur's very existence. Ranulph Higden had also noted that continental historians did not mention Arthur, but he only uses this evidence to cast doubt on the extent of Arthur's conquests. Thomas Rudborn, the anonymous author of the *Chronicle of Scotland*, and the other chroniclers who followed Higden, also accepted

---

[34] William Caxton, prologue, *Caxton's Malory: A New Edition of Sir Thomas Malory's Le Morte D'Arthur*, ed. James Spisak (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987) 1.
[35] Caxton, prologue, *Morte D'Arthur*, 1.
[36] Caxton, prologue, *Morte D'Arthur*, 1.
[37] Caxton, prologue, *Morte D'Arthur*, 1.

Arthur as a real figure from British history, even though they rejected the wild claims of the Brut tradition. Caxton, who had printed John Trevisa's translation of the *Polychronicon*, certainly was familiar with this tradition of measured skepticism.[39]

As quickly as Caxton raises the question of Arthur's existence, he dispels it. The gentlemen "answerde, and one in specyal sayd, that in hym that shold say or thynke that there was neuer suche a kynge callyd Arthur myght wel be aretted grete folye and blyndenesse."[40] This defender of Arthur lists several proofs of his existence and his prominence: the physical survival of his tomb at Glastonbury is mentioned first, and Higden's *Polychronicon* is cited as proof that the body was "founden and translated into the sayd monasterye."[41] Other appeals to textual authority follow: "Ye shal se also in th'ystory of Bochas, in his book De Casu Principum, parte of his noble actes and also of his falle; also Galfrydus in his Brutysshe book recounteth his lyf."[42] Caxton's appeal to venerable Latin authorities, although he almost certainly knew Boccaccio via Lydgate,[43] is a typical authorizing technique. Finally, Caxton appeals to the physical remains of Arthur's court: his seal in beryl at Westminster Abbey, Gawain's skull and Caradoc's mantel at Dover, Lancelot's sword, and the only relic which survives to this day, "at Wynchester, the Round Table."[44]

It has been suggested that this meeting is a fiction, designed by Caxton to suggest a

---

[38] Joseph M. Levine, *Humanism and History: Origins of Modern English Historiography* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1987) 41.
[39] As Lister M. Matheson points out, Caxton "had twice printed the standard historical account of Arthur in the *Chronicles of England*." Lister M. Matheson, "King Arthur and the Medieval English Chronicles," *King Arthur Through the Ages*, ed. Valerie M. Lagorio and Mildred Leake Day (New York and London: Garland, 1990) I: 264.
[40] Caxton, prologue, *Morte D'Arthur*, 2.
[41] Caxton, prologue, *Morte D'Arthur*, 2.
[42] Caxton, prologue, *Morte D'Arthur*, 2.
[43] A.S.G. Edwards, "The Influence of of Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* c. 1440-1559: A Survey," *Mediaeval Studies* 39 (1977): 427-428.
[44] Caxton, prologue, *Morte D'Arthur*, 2.

noble, educated audience's interest in the publication of an Arthurian work. As Christopher Dean reminds us, the printer had a vested interest in the book, and his comments should not be accepted at face value.[45] But the evidence that is brought forward in defense of Arthur, whether it is devised by one of the "noble ientylmen" or by Caxton himself, accords well with the sort of evidence we have seen used by other defenders of the Brut tradition. Both Thomas Gray and John Trevisa appealed to textual authorities in their attempts to refute Higden's doubts, and Gray even resorted to citing the physical evidence of Geoffrey's story, the survival of Stonehenge on Salisbury plain. It should also be noted that, even if Caxton is the author of this defense, it is the sort of argument that the printer expected from his audience of gentlemen, and one which he felt his readers would accept and understand. Levine feels that Caxton's proof demonstrates that "the distinction between history and fiction did not really make much difference" in late medieval England. Caxton's attempt at historical analysis "failed, of course, because the evidence was counted, not weighed. But what else could Caxton do?"[46] Levine, however, is too hard on the printer. Caxton's method is unsophisticated, but it is nevertheless an attempt to evaluate history in light of the available testimony, and it displays Caxton's critical awareness of the importance of marshaling evidence, however uncritical his acceptance of that evidence may be.

Within the narrative of the prologue, the printer is convinced by the method and agrees that "I coulde not wel denye but that there was suche a noble kynge named Artur."[47] Like Robert Mannyng, over 150 years earlier, Caxton seems annoyed that the British king (or, indeed, the English king) was praised in French and Welsh literature rather than in

---

[45] Christopher Dean, *Arthur of England* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 102-103.
[46] Levine, *Humanism and History*, 41.
[47] Caxton, prologue, *Morte D'Arthur*, 2.

English:

> And many noble volumes be made of hym and of his noble knyghtes in Frensshe, which I haue seen and redde beyonde the see, which been not had in our maternal tongue. But in Walsshe ben many, and also in Frensshe, and somme in Englysshe, but nowher nygh alle.[48]

Convinced by the defense which is mounted in favour of an historical Arthur, and inspired by a patriotic zeal (however contrived) which seeks to make all of the Arthurian volumes available to an English-speaking audience, Caxton agrees to print a history of the king.

Caxton's comments participate in the ongoing commentary on Arthurian narrative. His appeal to Latin authority and his references to the relics of the Arthurian past are reminiscent of other authors and historians who defended the Brut tradition. In Caxton, however, there is something new. The first half of the prologue establishes an opposition between "dyuers men," who claim that Arthur did not exist, and "one in specyal," who defends all Arthurian narrative. By listing Lancelot's sword alongside Gawain's skull and the Round Table at Winchester, the gentleman attributes historical authority to both chronicle and romance traditions. The prologue, therefore, initially presents a simplistic dichotomy: Arthur is either a myth, or both romance and chronicle traditions are true. In this, the presentation of the debate is at variance with English historiography. Only near the close of the prologue does Caxton present a more nuanced option to his readers. Relying on the critical skills of his audience, Caxton suggests that belief in Arthur need not be absolute. Although all Arthurian narrative is useful, not all of it is necessarily historically accurate. Caxton relies on his audience's participation in a literary community which is prepared to examine Arthurian narrative in a critical and informed manner, as he invites his readers to

---

[48] Caxton, prologue, *Morte D'Arthur*, 2.

examine his book and distinguish the facts from the fictions:

> And for to passe the tyme thys book shal be plesaunte to rede in, but for to gyue fayth and byleue that al is trewe that is conteyned herin, ye be at your lyberte.[49]

[49] Caxton, prologue, *Morte D'Arthur*, 3

Appendix A: Thomas Gray's *Scalacronica*

This transcription of the Arthurian portion of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133 (fos. 66v-83) is provided for the convenience of the reader. In conformity with Appendix B, I have attempted to represent the text as it appears in the manuscript. Contractions have been expanded silently. Portions of the text have appeared in print, and variant readings are recorded in the notes which follow the text. *W*, *M* and *St.* refer to the excerpts of the Arthurian portion printed by Wright, Meneghetti and Stevenson.[1] I have not noted diferences resulting from their normalization of spelling conventions (*v* for *u*, *i* for *y*, etc.). The tilds [~] are in the ms., but may be by a later hand.

[66v, col. 2]

DE illoeqes se trey le R~
oy Vter a Loundres.
ou il fist somoundre touz lez
grauntz de soun Realme par sez
lettres. qils venissent illoeqes
a la saint Johan od lour femmes
& feilles a maryer en honour
de la fest. ou il pensoit apor~
ter coroune en loenge de deu
pur sa victoir. Ils vindrent
a la maner au mandement
le Roy. Et le iour de la fest.
la messe celebre deuotement:
le Roy fust assys a deise. co~
roune au test. et bien pres

[67, col. 1]

deuaunt ly seoit le Count de
Cornewail & Igerne sa fem
delee ly. lez barouns sount assi
entour. chescun en lordre de
soun honour. Vter le Roy ne
auoit pas vieu Igerne la
Countes de Cornewail. mes
bien de sa beaute enauoit oy
parler. Il estoit au primer
vieu si rauy de la beaute la
dame: qil ne sauoit autre
countenaunce. fors toutdiz
de la regarder. de vn oyle. A
mours qe rien veoit. & dez au
tres trop leger a veoir : en
meistria ensi sa pense. qe il
nauoit parol od cloigner
del oyle. fors de Igerne sou
lement. Gelousy qe souent
pursu beaute. surmounta la
pense du Count soun marry
par la fole countenaunce le Roy:
si sailly de table. prist sa fe
me. mounteret al huse de la
sale. lour cheueaux aparaillez
sen alerent lour chemyn. Vter
le Roy qi tost ceo aparceust.
maunda au Count qil ne
departist my en la maner en
despite de sa court. et qe sil
le fesoit: qil se gardoit de ly
com de soun enemy mortel. od
playns defiaillis. Le Count
respoundy qe pur meschef nul
il ne remaindroit. si disoit.
qe meutz vousist mile lyuere
de damage. qe pesaunce de vn
ounce de diseise de quer. noun
recouerable. Testousement il
tenit sa voy en Cornewaill.
ou il enmyst Igerne en Tyn
cagell. vn chastel sur Roche
de mere. si fort lieu & si gar
ny. qil ne doutoit assaute

[67, col. 2]

ne assege. Il meismes se a
dressa a vn autre chastell.
qe Dymilioc out a noun.
au trounter de soun pays.
qe bien le fist garnir. Le
Roy Vter estoit si marry
pur la departire Igerne: qe
tout la ioy de la fest ly tour
na en anuy en aparsaiuaunz
de touz. Il fist somoundre
soun ost: passa Leawe de
Tambre. se trey deuers Cor
newail. assist Dimilioc.
le chastel ou le count estoit.
il ne le pooit prendre de as
saute. de quoi il auoit tris
tour. Meisme le temps de
cest assege: Octa & Oza. qe
prisoners estoient a Loun
dres. en purpos le Roi perpe
tuel: coueynerent od lours
gardeyns. qe pur couartise lez
lesserent eschaper. Ils ses
treierent en Ireland au fiz
Gillemarus. qe tost furount
allyes pur guerroier Vter.
sez arrayerent afforciement.
Endementers Vter al auant
dit assege estoit si assotte
de Igerne: qil ne pooist
manger. boir. ne dormirer.
le fee de receuaunce damours
qe plus volountiers aueint.
ou est desparaunz. qen au
tre temps. Il se regretoit a
Vrsyn. vn baroun soun priue.
en demaundaunt soun counsail.
qe ly dist. qil ne sauoit rien.
mais ly counsailla qil feist
quer Merlyn. qe de maynt
art estoit sachaunt. Mer
lyn qestoit venuz al ost. e
stoit amenez au Roi. Merlin
ceo disoit le Roy. saunz ceo

[67v, col. 1]

qe tu me eidez: ieo morge. si
ly reioy la destresce de soun
quer. priaunt qil preist de
soen quanz ly pleroit. et qil
ly eydast. Sire disoit Merlyn.
ieo te serray acomplir toun
desire. preignez vn de tes
priuez ouesqez toy. si venez
od moy bien matin. Le Roi
fist bailler la gard de soun ost
au Count de Glowcestre. qy
estoit joues et apert. et se
moua od Merlyn. saunz plus
de compaigny. fors de Vrsyn
soun priue. si tindrent le
chemyn a Tyncagel. qe qaunt
ils vindrent pres: Merlin
dist au Roy. Jeo chaungerai
votre figure au semblaunce le #
Count. de facound & counte
naunce et si prendroi mei
smes la figure Bercel. et Vr
syn auera la figure Jordane.
qe bien conisez sez counsailers.
Il dist sez enchauntementz. lour
semblaunce fust al hour mue.
Ils entrerent en la vespre
le chastel de Tyncagel. furo
unt rescenz pur lour seignour
et sez priuez. Le Roy fust tot
nuyt od Igerne a soun vo
loir. si conceust la dame en
faunt meisme la nuyt. qy
puis fust Arthur ly vailla
unt. Qe qaunt lez comuns del
ost aparsceurent labsence le
Roy: sez douterent de long
demurer. sez armerent. assaille
rent testousement le chas
tel de Dimilioc. au quel as
saute. le Count estoit tue.
dun sete. et endementers lez
gentz del ost mounterent lez
mures com lez gentz dedenz

[67v, col. 2]

estoient corious a rescoure
lour seignour. qe pur dolour
nenpristrent gard. Lez pay
senes enuyroun sez hasterent
a Tyncagel. counterent no~
uels du mort le count. & du
pris du chastel. de quoy ils
auoint graunt marrement. mes
de lour seignour estoint ils
recounfortez. qe ils penserent li
en soun lite. Vter oy lez no~
uels: sailly en peis. si se atour~
na. si disoit as ceaux du chas~
tel. qe lez nouels nestoint pas
verrais. mais il se voroit ha
ster a sez gentz. en braunce a
treterer od le Roy. qar il se dou~
toist de rescous du Roy de I~
reland. qe lour auoit premys. a
cest counsail sa acorda Igerne
qe toutdiz doutoit le Roy. cest
auenture nestoit pas descouery.
viuaunt Vter. Le Roy se trei
a soun ost. enmerciant Merlyn.
qi lez nouels troua verrays.
Il se delogea. se trey deuaunt
Tyncagel. qe tost ly fust ren~
dur sur condicioun profitable. del
hour qils sauoint la mort lour
sire. Merlyne atreast quain~
tement la volounte Igerne.
Le Roy Vter la prist en espou~
se. la fist Royne. El enauoit
graunt mervail. supposaunt bien
fantem qe ceo nestoit pas soun
marry. qele auoit delee luy
en Tyncagel. mais el ne sa~
uoit my le poynt. viuaunt
Vter. Il vesqy od Igern. X.
aunz. Il deuenit maladis de
vn langour. qil ne se pooist #
bouger. sez barouns sez en
tremellerent chescun a autre.
pur feblesce le Roy. Octa & Oza

[68, col. 1]

& Ebiza. od le Roy Gus de I
reland. ariuerent en la mar
che Descote. suppristrent chas
tels et viles. et graunt party de
bretaigne. lez barouns ne sez
entreuustrent rien pur debates.
qe rien ne acounterent lour so
mouns. Le Roy aparceust la
maner de sez barouns. si se fist
adresser vn liter. et se fist iu
ettre dedenz. Fist somoundre sez
barouns. qe touz vindrent. la
maner le Roy aparsu: Octa
od lez autres estoient a Vero
lam. adonqes vn bon cite.
ou saint Martyn estoit mar
tirize. Le Roy Vter lour assist de
uaunt. Lez payens enauoint
graunt despite. qun craumpise
gesaunt en litere. lour deueroit
asseger. si isserent vn matin
en counroy de batail. assaille
rent lost en orgoil. le Roi fust
arme en soun litere. lost es~
toit tost prest. sez combaterent
cruelement. Mais Octa. Oza
& Ebiza furount descoumfitz et
occis. et sez qe eschaperent deuer Es
cote firent lour cheuetayn.
Colgrin le cosyn Octa. Vter
enioy de la victoir. se adressa
en soun esteaunt. disaunt
a sez barouns. qe meutz volo
it en bere. langour. od victoir.
qe sayn & hertes estre venqus.
ou deshonourez. si voroit auoir
pursuy lez fuauntz. qaunt les
barouns ly firent remanoir.
pur sa gref malady dedenz
la dit cite. Colgrin od les
autres saxsouns & danoys
qestoient eschapez de la batail
qaunt ils estoient venuz a sau
nete: sez purpensoient. qe viuant

[68, col. 2]

le Roy Vter. ils ne auendro
ient ia au chef de lour desirer.
si compasserent mal engi
ne. et treierent couyn dez #
clerks de lour pays. qi enginour
estoient & artilious. si lez al
luerent pur trouer engyne
a tuer le Roy. qe lenpristrent.
et sez mistrent au chemyn
deuers la court le Roy. com
gentz bien enloquinez de
diuers patois. Le Roy Vter
gist en langour. nuls ne apar
cherent sa presence. fors sez
priues. Lez faux traitours
aparsceurent. qe le Roy ne #
goustat autre licour. fors
eaw froid dun fountayn
clere dehors la cite: si le ale
rent enuenymer saunz a
parsayuaunce de nuly. Le
Roy enbust. com acoustome
estoit. si enflist & morust.
et graunt multitude dez coumes[2].
qen burent de la fountain.
la quel aparsu: fust estope
& defait pur touz iours. Le
Roy Vter fust enterre a lez
Stonhengis de lee souns frer
Aurilius. com meismes auncez
auoit deuise.[3]

EN quel hour
de Vter fust Hormis
da pape .8. aunz apres
Simathus. qi recouncila lez
Greioys. fist graunt chos a la
clergy. deuisa graunt tresor a
Leglis saint Pier. Il enuoy
a sez letres a Lemperour Anastasia
qi euerdaunt estoit al errour
Euticien. monestaunt qil se
amendast. A qi Lemperour res~
poundist par sez letres. qil luy.
voroit comaunder. & noun pas

[68v, col. 1]

de ly estre comaunde.

JVstinus solonc Bede fust Emperour. 28. aunz. apres A nastasius. qe morust de coup de fondre. Justinus reapel la saunt Germain de chaum paigne & plusours autres Euesqes qi exiles estoint de soun predecessour.

JOhan fust pape. iii. aunz apres Hormisda. en temps de qy. Boicius de concelacioun fist sez liuers. . Et sa femme El phes feil le Roy de Cezile fist en le loenge Pere & Pol le ympne. "Felix parrens festum mundi cardines. &c."

APres Johan fust Felix pape. 4. aunz. En quel temps theodoricus le tirant de Itail morust sodeigne ment.

JVstianus neuew Justinus regna Emperour. 38. aunz. qe fist grauntz liuers de iugementz de Emperours. qe sount apellez lez vns Justician. lez autres degest. qi apres exila Sil uerius le pape.

BOneface fust pape. 2. aunz apres Felix. qe ordeina qe lez clerkes hussent habit diuers de layis a la messe. si ordei na estatut. qe lez papes puroynt constituer en lour vie. qi ser roit lour successour. Mes cel ordenaunce repella en plain constoir. pur ceo qe cely qil auoit choise. estoit noundig ne Johan mercurius fust pape

[68v, col. 2]

. 2. aunz apres Boneface.

AGapitus fust pap. i . ane apres Johan. qi conuerty Lemperour Justician de eresy arrian. si ordena lez processions le iour de dimange. Il y out en Constantinoble en le hour graunt pestilence. pur qoy fust ordene la fest du Purificacion notre dame. si cessa cel morta lite.

SIluerius fust. i. an pape apres Agapitus qi fust ex cile ou morust. pur ceo qe au comaundement del Emperour Justician & de Augusta Theo dora ne voloit recounceiller Antmun euesqe de Costantin noble. qi depose estoit pur heresy de Agapitus soun prede cessour.

QAunt le Roy Vter fust trespasse du siecle: lez prelates Countes & barouns estoient en graunt difficoulte de qi ils ferroint lour Roys. qar tot tenoit le Roy Vter. Arthur soun fitz: vnqor lez grauntz du Realme enauoint dout. pur ceo qe le temps de soun neisement estoit trop pres la solemp nete du matremoin le Roy. & pur ceo qe lauenture nestoit # pas discouert pur lonour la Royne. viuaunt le Roy. Lez ditez barouns debaterent de qi ils ferroint lour cheuetain. qe ne sez acorderent my par graunt temps. Dubrices le Er ceuesqe de Carlioun od les prelates et la clergie sez as

[69, col. 1]

semblerent a Carlioun. par co
mune assent entrerent le
graunt eglise en vn aube du iour
pur orer & prier. qe dieux lour
espirast qil voloit de sa grace
qi enfust Roys de bretaigne.
qe demurerent en graunt penaunce
& deuocioun enclos dez coumes[4]
tanqe a haut midy. ou a lour
issu de mouster. cum tesmoin[5]
ascun cronicles. ils trouerent
vn graunt peroun adresse al hus[6]
del eglise. & dedenz fiche vn es
pey clere od letres eneymalez
desus. qe disoit.[7] Escaliburne
ay a noun. qi me ostera du pe
roun. serra Roys de bretaign
nuls ne le purroit boger. qe
enmist la mayn. Lez barons
qe cel meruail oyerent. firent
crier vn tournayment en m[8]
meisme la cite en espoir. qe
illoeqes vendroit qe lauenture
escheueroit. Lez seignours et
chiualers vindrent au iour as~
signe de touz partz. et com ils
venoient adressez deuers les #
chaumps: chescun enmyst ma
yn a lespey. qe rien nenfirent.
Arthur qi passe estoit. xvij.
aunz. a soun primer enarmer
estoit uenuz a tournayer. ben
arayez a soun estat: il estoit
amenez au peroun. si mist
la mayn a lespey. apayn ne
le toucha. qe ne le osta du pe
roun. et se mist as chaumps
ou le tournayment estoit ia
comencez. il fery cheual des
esperouns. lespey extendi en
sa mayn. en my la plus graunt
rout. qe mervaillous coupes do
na de touz costes. qe meruails
enfist de soun age. Les seig

[69, col. 2]

nours qe bien conustrent
lespey. enauoit graunt
meruail. qi ceo fust qi les
pey enauoit oste du peroun
qi demaunderent de soun estre.
Et qaunt ils le sceurent: si ly
reamenerent au peroun. &
firent remettre lespey. ou
nuls ne le pooit bouger fors
Arthur. qi le reprist saunz force
faire. touz enfirent ioy. fors
lez juuenceaux. qi par enuye
disoient. qe ceo nestoit qe par
enchauntement. si firent la
tierce foitz reficher lespeye
lui peroun. qe touz lour enforce
rent de le oster. qe nuls ne
le poait mouoir fors Arthur
soulement. qe au toucher #
du heut le enracha. adonqes
fust descouert de Vrsyne[9]
la maner de soun naisement.
Lez prelates. lez barouns od les
couns qi cest miracle aparsu~
rent. firent coroner Arthur
a Wincestre od graunt solemp~
nite. qi ioyous estoient qe
ils auoint cheuetain. qe lour
purra maintener countre
lez saxouns. successours Hen~
gist & de lez soens. qe toutdiz
a lour point firent graunt per~
secucioun as bretouns. Et
si est assauoir[10] qe lez saxsouns
estoint plus tenuz a desotz
en bretain en le temps de
Arthur. qe ils nestoint puis
lour primer venu. deuauntz
ou apres. Mais vnqes si
nettement enchacez: qe touz
iours ne gopillerent. & en
tapisoun gaiterent la mes~
chief dez bretons[11]. Et si a
uoit Arthur grauntement a

[69v, col. 1]

fair oue eaux. mais taunt
estoit gracious: qen soun
temps ne purroint estat
tenir qe soit acounter. mes
tost apres ly. reuigourerent.
LEstoir deuise qe Ar
thur estoit beaux. a~
myable & bien fourniz.
fort. deliuers. et de lee quer.
loyaux. hardy. larges. tra
uailaint & pitous. ourous.
douce & beauparlers. donoist
largement & ou doun fail~
loit. de[12] bel acoil. de quoi lez
gentz saulloit. sage & atem
pre. a demesure. coraious.
uertuous & glorious. qi vo
lountiers vst iuste tournoie
& festie entre lez dames. en
reuelle de pes iues des io
nes gentz. bon signe com
est dit. ou chescun quert sa
seisoun.[13] Mais ceo ne poat
fair pur lez pices. danoys
& Saxons. qe guerroient
la tere de nouel. mort le
Roy Vter soun pier. qe che~
uetain auoint fait de Col
gryn. qe tout sez tenoient
adesus. pur le nouel age du
Jouen Roy Arthur. Ils auo
ient sutzpris la terre. iesqes
Euerwik. et la cite gaigne.
Arthur qi ceo oy. com ioues
gentz tost enpregnent. as
sembla le poair qil poait
enuyroun. se trey laundroit.
Colgryn qe ceo aparceust.
ly encountra. xxx. lieus hors
de la cite. pur le nounchaler qe
il vst del ioue Roy. qe ses
combaterent ensemble sur leau
de Douglas. qe ore est apel
le Done. Arthur par eide de

[69v, col. 2]

sez iones gentz auoit la vic~
toir. Colgryn sen fuy a Euer~
wick. ou Arthur ly assist
Baldulf le freir Colgryn
qi sage & prus estoit. oy la
discoumfiture soun freir. ou il
estoit sur maryn de mere. pur
attendre la venu Cheldrik
Roy de Germain. qi lour ve~
noit eyder: se dressa deuers
Euerwik od. vij. mile armas
pur la rescoure. ou de la en~
trer de nuyt. si se enbussa a
. vij. lieus pres pur espier
le point. qe ceo fust descouery
a Arthur. qi fist Cador de
Cornewail soun freir. oue
vij.C armas de fere-treunter
sur eaux. qi lez trouerent a des~
couert. si lez descoumfirent toz
Baldulf se eschapa soul. qi
graunt doel out. qi touz iours se
purpensa coment il purroit
venir au presence soun freir:
si se fist toundre au gise de
vn fole. si prist vn harp a
dose. se mist dedenz lost. coun~
trefist le ministral. tanqe il
estoit assurez. gaita soun po~
ynt. se mist au mure de la
cite. et eyuz tret. saunz ceo
qe nul del ost li poat destour
ber. Procheignement Ar~
thur auoit nouels de Chel~
drik Roy de Germayn estoit
aryue en Escoce. par quoi
de counsail dez sages gentz
entour ly: se delogea. & se trey
a Loundres pur ly meutz en
forter encountre cest payen
gent. maunda par tout pur.
lez soens. enuoya a Hoel soun
neuew. Roy de la petit bretain
par sez letres. qe parlerent ensy.

[70, col. 1]

AHoel Roi de la petit bre
taigne saluez. Beau
cosyn. sachez qe Cheldrik
Roy de Germayn est seur nous
aryues en purpos de nous defairer
par conquest. Et puis la de
moustaunce de droit amyste
& sanginite. ne prist adroit
estre aparscieu. tanqe le grey
nour bosoigne soit auenu.
le droit nurour de cel proprete:
pur ceo venez. hastez. ne car
gez. auxi afforciement com vous
poez. com vous vodriez qe nous
vous feissoins. Qaunt Hoel
auoit entendu lez letres. com
cely qi desiroit a fair soun vn
cle recous. se adressa igniel
ment od. xij. mile gentz dar
mes. si aryuerent a Hamtoun.
sez treierent a Loundres. ou
estoient assemblez la iuuent
de bretaigne. et com oeure
le dona. touz lez seignours & les
plusours du chiualery. estoit
ionez al hour. as queux Arthur
enfist bon cher. et sur touz estoi
et leez de Hoel. soun neuew. et
de lez soens estraungers. Ils sez
reuiuerent deuers lez enemys.
ou Arthur auoit nouels:
qils auoint assys Nichole
de touz partz. il chey si sodei
nement sur eaux qestoient lo
gez. vn matyn del vn part
la vile deuers le suc: qe deuaunt
qe lez autres sez purroient en
tremettre: qe touz lez auoist
discoumfist & mort. et entree
la vile. qe od lez comuns de la
cite. qestoint desiraunz a sur
coure lez assegeours. com fame
lous lows a manger. com
souent sount tiel maner de

[70, col. 2]

gent. issi de autre coste. se
combaty od le graunt ost. qe lez
descoumfist. lez comuns toz
mortz. ceaux qi pooint es~
chaper oue Cheldrik lour Rois
furount enchacez a vn bois
ou pris est ore Barlinges.
ou Arthur lez fist enuyroner.
& ou plus graunt mister enfust
enfist couper lez chemes. #
groses. qe nul a chiual po~
ait passer. au tierce iour.
com gentz a meschief de
famyn: maunderent au Roi
pur condicioun. qe de sa grace
il les voloit lesser departire
hors du pays desarmez.
saunz dener nul. dore. ou
dargent. et iurez qe iames
ne repairerount a nul iour.
ne counsaillerount a male
faire. Arthur le lour graunta.
Ils sen alerent a pee en lour
purponis mistrent lez os~
tages. trouerent lour nefes
au procheyn maryn. Qaunt
ils estoint aloignez de la
terre. chaungerent purpos.
seglerent le long de la merre
a Totenes sez aryuerent.
lez pays de Somerset. et
Dorset ou corou & destent
& sez sunt purchacez armas
draps & cheueaux. & saint
Saumpsoun assegerent.
LE Roy Arthur qi de
la descoumfiture de Ni~
chol estoit departy
en Escoce. pur destruyer
sez enemys. qe touz iours
prest estoient[14] a leuer. od
qi qe venoient. picis. danoys.
ou saxsouns. oy lez nouelis
qe Cheldrik oue lez soens

[70v, col. 1]

estoit rearyues encountre co
uenant & lour serement en
sa terre. si fist al hour comander
a pendre lour ostages. & lessa
Hoel soun neuew de la petit
bretaigne a Alclud en Es
coce maladez. qi ne se poat
bouger. si se hasta vers lez
foriurez quanqe il poait. qe lez
troua al auauntdit assege.
qe aparceurent la venu Ar
thur. si estoient tretz au so
met dun mountayn. pres
vn[15] graunt forteresce. endemen
tres[16] qe Arthur se armoit:
Lerceuesque Drubrice de Car
lioun sarmouna le poeple
en monestaunt com par le co
maundement du souerayn.
qils defendissent lour pays.
la souerayne charite. aumoi
ne & hommesce au profite du
comune generalement & sin
gulerement. si lour garny de
le meschief aparaunt. si ils
ne ceo feissent peniblement
pur murrir. qe plus uau
droit qe viure a ceo voire.
com quaunt nul est digne da
uoir honour. qi ne le vaut a
defendre. si lour moustra come
nt pur a reachater lygne
humaigne. dieu morust
pur nous. pur quoy. ils ses
buteroint le plus de gree
en auenture pur defendre
sa loy encountre sez enemys.
qe ceo enuoroint abatre &
lez destruyer en captiuisoun.
Arthur od soun ost prist la
forteresce du mountayn. si
se auaunsa deuaunt touz
en tiel maner. qe a touz do
noit baudour de tost assem

[70v, col. 2]

bler lez vns a porter pris.
lez autres pur eschuer hount
Arthur enfist de sa mayne
tiel pruesce: par qoy lez ene~
mys estoint touz desaroutez
qe pristrent a fuyr. le Roy
chargea Cador soun freir. de
Cornewail a pursuyr lez fu~
auntz. qar il se voroit retreir
deuers Hoelle soun neuew. qe
en le hour ly veint message
qil estoit assys de lez Escocez.
Cador sauoit vn plus pres
chemyn deuers lour nefes: si lour
forcloa. si lour encoutra en my
le vice. qe touz lour fist decouper
en pece lez cheuetayns et
Colgryn & lez comuns touz.
et se hasta deuers le Roy. qe ly
troua a Alclud. qe deuaunt ly
estoit venuz. ou il auoit tro~
ue Hoelle sayn & haytez. lez
enemys departys. sceu la
venu le Roy. qe sez estoient
retreitez a Caumfer en Mur
ref. ou Arthur lez pursuy.[17]
et outre en Lisle de Dumeloi.
ou par autre noun Loghlunloc.
vn graunt estank. en qoy des~
cenderent. xl. ryueris. ou
sount dedenz. L. Isls. hautes
Roches. ou solaient lez Eglez[18]
ayreir. qe acoustomez estoint
a faire signes encoutre[19] guere.
par queux lez gentz du pays
enpristrent graunt signifians.
dedenz quel isle. Arthur auo~
it lez Escocz assys. qe fist feir
barges. bateaux & flotes pur
lez surcoure.[20]

QAunt nouels ly vindr~
ent qe Gillemarus Roy
de Ireland estoit illo~
qes pres aryuez pur recoure

[71, col. 1]

lez Escocez[21]. Arthur se delogea
se trey deuers[22] ly. qe auoit apar
su la maner dez enemys. qe
nestoient pas armez. mais
launsours dez launces & dartez.
mais graunt poeple furount.
Arthur fist mounter dereire
chescun de sez gentz darmes
vn archier. se cheuaucha le
petite pas. et pres le assembler.
fist descendre lez Archers. qe
saunz aparsayuaunz dez enemis
lez lardisoint dez setes. qe ils
ne sez pooint eyder. et oue
ceo. qils sez meruaillerent de
ou lour venoit cel encombrer.
fery cheueaux dez esperouns
& touz al assembler. qe touz lez
porterent a terre fiches oue
launces par my lez corps. com
gentz desarmes. ceaux qi pur
roint. fuerent oue lour cheue
taigne as nefes. qi ses remi
strent en lour pays. Arthure
repaira a Lestank. qi en graunt
carouce de eaux. se enforsa par
touz lez engynes qil poait
de lez greuer. qe graunt occision
enfist faire. Les escocez qe a
parsceurent la descoumfiture
dez Irroys. et le graunt purpos
& ire le Roy: maunderent a ly
lour Euesqes & prelates. portantz
lour corps sayntes. et od femmes
et enfauntz pluraunts qeraunt
sa mercy. qi lez resceut com hom
playn de pite. Arthur enqist
de eaux lez meruails du pays.
qe ly counterent dez isles qesto
ient remuauntz de vn lieu
en autre oue le vent en le
estank. et dez pessouns de di
uers maners. lez vns saunz
bowail. qe conuersoient en di

[71, col. 2]

uers lieus saunz entreapro
cher dedenz lestank. si luy
counterent dun maner dez
oyseaux qe cressent sur arbres
dedenz lez roches de mere
qe qaunt ils sount mures. che~
ount en mere. uolount a~
uaunt, ceaux qe cheoint
sure sek terre. enuentisount[23] a
ueint[24] ceaux oyseaux sount
appellez bernakes. Hoel
Roy de la petit bretaigne
qe oy lez meruailles du pays
enauoit meruail. qi bien
lez recorda. Arthur prist lez
homages de lez Escoces. qe
enuice le firent. com tesmoi~
gne Bede. qe meutz voloint
murrir. qe estre sutzgis. Ar~
thur repaira a Euerwik ou
il fist redresser par assent dez
prelatez. le deray qe fust fest
a saint eglis. de ruyne de
Eglis. qi bien lez fist repa~
railler. et fist rebailler as
touz espirituels & temperales
touz lour possessiouns droi~
turelis. et lour bon auncien
loy. bien garder il fist. Er~
ceuesqe illoeqes Adam Piran
soun cosyn. bon saint hom
religious. lez. iij. freirs. fitz
Rahu: loth. Anguysel. et
Vrien. y furount. as queux
le Roy rendy plus de terre. qe
lours auncestres nauoint.
a Anguisel dona Escoce. a
Vrien. Murref. a Loth:
Lownesse. a cely dona il sa
sore eyne. de qey. il engendra
. ij. fitz. neuews le Roi. Ga~
wayn ly prus. & Mordret
ly malerous. Hoel se trey
en soun pays.

[71v, col. 1]

ARthur repaira a Loun
dres ou il prist en #
matremoigne vne
bele queynt meschene Geno
uer cosyn & norie Cador de
Cornewail. qe estret estoit
dez gentiles Romayns. et
feil du Roy de Briscay de
heritage. de qey Arthur cha
langea la round table. qar
com est dit. en ascuns cro
nicles. cesti Roys de Biscai
estoit si graunt compaignouns
qil fesoit lez chivalers. qy
pris auoint conquys en ar
mes: sere owelis od ly. qi
disoit. qe paringaux estoint
a honourer com Roys. pur ceo
fist il sa table round. qe nul
seast plus haut dautre. mes
nuls ne assist. fors ceaux
qi. xiii. foitz auoint porte
pris en armes de guerre. qe di
soit. qe tiels chiualers purroint
auoir lour healmes coroner.
Le Roy Arthur estoit gaillars
& la Royne auxi. il estoit #
glious & bacheler desirous
il daunsa. chaunta. iousta.
& tournya. festia lez dames.
Il reestably la round table.
mais nuls ne assist deuant
qe meutz estoient assayez
en armes. Arthur qi cora
geous estoit auoit touz
iours en pense a rendre as
irroys lour guerdoun. fist as
sembler sa nauy. et od ses
chivalers ariua en Ireland
ou il se coumbaty od Gillem
arus le Roy. oue sez irroys
qe ly venquist en chaumps lez
soens mortez. Gillemarus
fust pris. par force du corps

[71v, col. 2]

Arthur meismes et tenu
en prisoun. tanqe par tretice
& condicioun. il deuenit hom
a Arthur. et soun tributare.
sa tere a tenir de ly par bons
ostages. Apres cest conquest
Arthur passa en Ireland. qe
tout la conquist. et endemen~
tres lez Roys de lointesme
Isles. Galand & Gounayns
de Orcany. & Deldanoun de
Gotland et Vmares de Cate~
nes. oyerent la renome de
Arthur: si ly vindrent oberere
et devindrent sez homs de
ly seruir en touz sez gueres.
Lez vns de eaux repairerent
oue ly en bretaigne. qe de~
uindrent mult prus & com~
paignouns de la table round.
ARthur apres cest veage
demura a lostel coy. en
bretaigne. saunz enprise
de nul forain guere. deme~
naunt si graunt nobley. qe tot
ly mound enparla. de ioustes.
En quel temps il assist pri~
mes en la table round a qoy
aparceuoit taunt de honour
& noblesce: qe par touz pays
lez chivalers endesiroint a
valoir destre compaignouns
de cel court. En quel temps
apparust en bretaigne #
tauntz dez chos fayez. qe a
meruail. de quoy sourdi les
grauntz auentures. qe sount re~
cordez de la court Arthur.
com cely qauoit delit de oy~
er de chevaleries. qen auin
drent en acomplicement de
eles. et de lez fair meismes
com plus playnement oyer pu~
st hom en le graunt estoir de ly.

[72, col. 1]

il demenoit tiel vie. qe nul
chiualer se tenoit hoonoure
nul part. sil ne fust de la #
court Arthur. qoy par nobles
quoi pur profite de sa largesce
qoi par bele acoil du Roy & de
la Royne Geneuour. & de lez
dames de sa coumpaignye. qe
taunt estoint nobles de lour
part. com le Roy de soen. qe taunt
sauoint cherier lez chiualers
en bienfair. de quoy lez che
ualers maint foitz enpris
trent bon encharnisement.
Hom dit qe Arthur ne seoit
ia a manger. deuaunt qil a
uoit nouels estraunges. hom
le pooit bien dire. qar taunt
venoient espessement. qe a
payn estoint tenuz estraun
ges. Lez iuuenceaux qi que
roient la viaunde de la co
syne. alafoitz trouerent tiel
auenture entre la sale et la
cosyne. qe deuaunt acomplice
ment de eles. ils qestoient
saunz barbes. lez auoint par
cruez. et bons cheualeres
estoint deuenuz deuaunt
lour reuenu. En cel temps
nestoit chery nul. fors pur
vertu soulement. losenge
ry. couartise. ne engine
nul. ne pooit auauncere
nuly en cel hour. fors de~
cert soulement. & nomiem
ent en lez armes. et pur ceo
chescun y endesiroit a va
loir en eles. pur queux les
gentz estoient honourez
& cheriez du Roy. ensaumple
as touz autres.
ARthur de cest vie fust
saule. si pensa de ariuer

[72, col. 2]

en Gaule de la conquer.
Qaunt Loth soun freir en
loy. ly venoit requer suc
couse. qe ly disoit. qe Gyn
selyns Roi de Norway soun
vncle estoit mort. qe luy
auoit estably soun heyre.
qe point ne out de soun
corps. et si ne voloint con~
scentir lez Norways. qun
estrange dautre pays soit
lour soueraigne. Le Roi ly
premist eyde. mais deuant
soun dep[ar]tir[25]: enuoya Ga~
wayn soun neuew. et fitz
de Loth. qe ia estoit de .xij.
aunz. a Supplices Lapos~
toil a nuryre. qestoit leez de
sa venu. Arthur assembla
sa cheualery. se mist sure
mere aryua en Norway.
ou il troua Ricoulf le #
graunt Riche baroun. qi les
norways auoint leuez en
Roys. en Bercher. adonqes
la greignour cite de la terre qi
soun ost auoit assemble qe
cheualerousement surcurry
Arthur. demoustraunt a defen
dre lestate. en quo~[26] estoit
enhauncez. ou ils sez comba~
terent ensemble cruele
ment. mais au daraine
fust Ricoulf mort. et de~
scoumfist lez soens. com
fort chos est. acountreester
vn ost. ou touz sount bons
comuns & cheuetaignes.
Arthur conquist Norwai
si seisy Loth dedens la tere.
de la tenyr de ly. Le Roi se
remist sure mere. et ariua
en Denemark ou Achilly
Roy de la terre enuoya a Ar~

[72v, col. 1]

thur pur pese. qi vist lez mer
uails qil fesoit: si deuenit
sez homs. qe ly resceust en
se grace. com cely. qe a merci
queraunt estoit houmblez.
as orgoillous estout. Ar
thur prist le fitz le Roy de
Denemarc. vn ioen bachi
ler oue ly. od lez meilliours
gentz du Realme soun pier.
se mist parmy saxsoin. ou
lez bretouns reguerdonoy
ent vn party lez faitez Hen
gist. si passa illoeqs parmy
vn pays. ou lez gentz de y
cel auoint a noun Enig-
gil. Il conquist Frise. qe en
sa merci sez mistrent. se trey
deuers fraunce adonqes Gaule
parmy Flaundres & Bulonois
ou fist defendre. qe nuls nen
prist bien. fors viaunt et
prouend. ne nuls ne ardist
mesoun. et sils le trouas
sent a vendre: qe hom endo
nast le beau doner. et ceo
fesoit il. pur ceo qil y pen
soit a demurrere.

EN ceo temps estoit
Gaule a la subieccion
de Rome. ou vn Se
natour lauoit en gard. qe
rendy la truage au sene.
qi out a noun Frolle en as~
cuns cronicles Tumas
fulun. Cesti Frolle estoit
pussaunt & vaillaunt de
soun corps. assembla soun
poair. se combaty od Arthur.
mais il estoit descoumfist.
qi sen fuy en Parys. et
maunda quer touz qe lui
pays estoient obeisaunt
a Rome. en purpos de re

[72v, col. 2]

combatre. le poair assemble:
mais aunces auoit Arthur
assys la cite de touz partz.
Frolle qi del lour qil estoit vn
moys assege. aparceust le
mischef du comune en defa
ute de vitail: maunda a #
Arthur. qil se voroit personal
ment combatre od ly. corps
pur corps. et qi poait au
tre vencre: vst quit la seig-
noury. et lobeisaunce du co~
mun. Arthur encontre gre
des soens. conscenty as co~
uenauntez. qe assurrez esto~
int de touz partz et iour mys.
Au quel iour. le Roy & Frolle #
furount mountez et armez
& amenez en vn Isle dedenz
la ryuer. cost la cite. ou ils
sez combaterent si chiualerous
ment. qe a meruail. la quel
dura si tresmeruaillousement
longement: qe chescun part
hurent dout de lour seignour
del hour qe lour cheueaux fu
rount mortz. lours armurs
estoint ensi defolez. descirez
& depesse: qe nuls mist choi
se le lour seignour. qe si
mist este qils estoit si fort
uirez: ils se hussent enne~
mys au darayn. lun estoit
abatuz. qi plus ne se poait
sustener. taunt auoit per~
du du sank. Arthur hucha
si comaunda oster la carom.
par parol de qy. estoit conuz
dez soens. Lez comuns de la
cite enporterent Frolle qi
ia estoit mort. li firent en
terrer. si sez actournerent touz
a Arthur. lez seignours et les
comuns de pays tout. qe

[73, col. 1]

leez estoint destre ostez du
seruitude as Romayns.
ARthur estably sez loys
en Gaule: maunda Ho
el soun neuew ou gr
aunt poair a guerroyere
Gascoigne & Tolousan Au
uerne & Pettoun. Burgoin
& Lorain. et Guychart. #
queins de Paiters. qe molt
estoit prus chiualers. Si
se mist meismes en Ger
main. ou or est dit Alma
yn. ou plusours Roys eirt
de diuers countrees. qe toz
furount conquys al obei~
saunz de Arthur. Il tenit son
chemyn deuer haut Saicsne
ou le Roy Rinin vn Ge
aunt dez mountayns de
Aramim ly maunda par sez
messages. qil ly maundat
sa barbe escorche. pur fair
oirle a sa pellisoun. qil a
uoit fait dez barbes dautres
Roys qil auoit conquys.
depusqe il estoit le plusvail
launt de touz: sa barbe ser
roit la purfile. Et si a ceo
ne se agreast: qil venyst
combatre od ly soul. si lui
noma temps & place. Ar
thure qi du maundement
auoit dedeigne: ly assur
ast de la iourne. qi ceo ne vo
loit lesser sauoir a lez soens.
mais le couery as eaux. qe
se feigna. et priuement
se aloigna au iour & lieu li
mitez. qi se combaty oue cest
glot. qe ly venqy. qe fist es
corther sa barbe: ou bien
enuyroun le pele. qe le fist
aporter al ost. Il establist

[73, col. 2]

le pays. et repaira a Pa
rys. ou Hoel ly encounta
qi bien auoit esploite. &
amene Gichart de Pay~
ters a pese le Roy. qe molt
fust priue de ly apres cel hour.
Arthur y auoit demure hors
de Bretaigne. ix. aunz en
cest conquest. si fist somon~
dre a Parys touz sez obey~
sauns de celes parties. ou
il pensoit a tenir graunt
court. Qe a lour venir. la
fest parfourny: il departist
de sa conquest largement
a lez soens. a Keu la Se~
neschal dona Paitow et
Humayne. a Beduer le
boteler dona Neustri qe
hom appele or Normendy.
a Bozel dona il le meine
& le pays de Auinoun. a #
Cosdyn dona il Burgoin.
Il reguerdona touz qe bien
ly auoint seruy. qe trope
serroit a tout counter. et
de touz ses auentures la
maner. qe plusours ly auin~
drent. qe ne sount pas en
cest recountez. Meisme #
cel hour. reuenit Gawain
de Rome. apert bachilere
& renomez. a qy le Roy de
maunda nouels. Sire
fesoit il. al hour qe ieo estoi
a Rome. il y out graunt
renoum de vous. com de cely.
de qy ils enseroint voloun
tiers vengez. qe grauncement
auez enlesez lour seignourye
mais ieo nestoy my. ceux
dieus auns. Arthur coman
da lez soens du pays a #
dieux. si se retrey en bre

[73v, col. 1]

taigne. ou de ly & dez soens
ount graunt fest. Lez meres
baiserent lour fitz. lez espou
ses lour marrys. la sore
le freir. le fitz la mere.
Arthure tenit graunt court
ou graunt mervailles en a
vyndrent. qe nul temps
solaient faire. qe bien plu
st au Roy. de queux. Gau
wayn sentremist forte
ment. qe tressouent tres
bien ly auenit: com recor
de est en sez estoirs. tout
ly mound repairoit a
cel court. com saunz qoy
nul se tenoit honourez
et ou plusours derays fu
rount peiez: qe en autre
lieu ne poaint estre estan
chez. Le Roy qi bon pece
auoit soiourne auoit
graunt desir. de veoir sez a
mys. sez sutzgiz et sez ba
rouns: fist somoundre
sa court real a la Pente
coust a Carlioun. ou il pen
soit a porter coroun. man
da sez letres par touz pays
pur lez soens. enpriaunt
qils ne sez feynassent:
qe a poy touz vindrent.
ou le aray le Roy fust fet
si noblement. qe meutz
ne couenit estre. lez cors
dez seignours furount
herbisez dedenz la cite. qe
al hour estoit la meilliour
du Realme. lour meigne
as chaumps en tentes &
pauillouns. tiel prese
de gent estoit a lasemble.
lez bretouns vindrent
touz. Angucel descoce #

[73v, col. 2]

Roys. Urien Roys Murref.
Cadwalamer Roy de North
wales. et Stater de Soutz
wales Roy. et Cador Roi de
Cornewail. lez .iij. Ercheue
sqes. de Euerwik de Carlioun
& de Loundres. ou see de Er
ceuesqes estoit. tanqes par les
Engles fust destructe la cri~
stianicte com apres apara.
Les Euesqes vindrent. si vin~
drent Abbes & Priours. et
touz lez barouns de prise.
si vindrent lez countes. #
Morwid de Glowcestre. et
Mauroun de Wyncestre. Aue~
ral de Salisbirs & Argal de
Warwik. et Iweyn de Lay~
cestre & Cursale de Cestre. et
Rimar de Cantorbires &
Vrbgenus de Bae. & Jona~
ton de Dorcestre. & Bosoun
de Oxenford. & Argal de Euer
wik. et Gongout de Her
ford: et Balduk de Cicestre.
cestes estoint touz Countes.
et si estoient autres barouns
de poy de memdre estat de
eaux. Donald ab papo.
Etheneus ab coil. Peridur
ab Peridus. Griffin ab no~
gorin. Claud ab Zeledin.
Regun ab Eledan. Kinkar
ab libongan. Gimmer. ab
Gorbodian. moultes des
autres. peres as countes.
Et si estoint lez Roys des
Isles. Gillemarus de Ireland.
Maunoysis de Ireland. Dou
dalme de Gotland. Gounaius
de Orkenay. Loth de Norw~
ay. Aschal de Denemark.
De outre mere vindrent.
le Count de Burgoyn. qy

[74, col. 1]

out a noun Ligers. & Beldi
de Flaundres. et Geryn de
Chartres. Kew le Seneschal
amena od ly. lez. xij. piers
de Gaule. Guychard de Pai
ters. Beduer de Normendi
& Burel de Maunse. et si ve
nit Hoel Roy de la petite
bretaigne. qe touz furount
apparez en lour meillour gise.
a veoir la maner de cel haut
court. a conustre lez barons.
LE iour de la penteco
ust lez. iij. Erceuesqes
coronerent Arthure
lez. ij. ly amenerent au mo
uster. le tierce oue lez autres
Euesqes & Abbes. alerent de
uaunt noblement reues
tuez. ou fust vieu maint
riche myter & croice. Le Roi
Descoce & de Northwales.
et cely de Southwales. et
Cador de Cornewail. ceaux
.iiij. Roys apparaillez en
draps dore. porterent deuant
Arthur. iiij. espeys. Dereir
le Roy venoit. Hoel. od toz
lez autres Roys. Dukes et
Countes richement aournez.
La Royne Genoyre fust tot
ala gise corone. et quatre
Roynes portauntz quatre
columbes blaunkes deuaunt
soy. qe en cest gyse alerent
au mouster. Qaunt la
messe fust celebre. le Roy
reuenit au palays. seu
fust assys a dese. lez Roys
entour ly. chescun en soun
degre. La Royne tient vn
autre palays. y ne fait pas
a demaundre la noblesce.
qar vnqes deuaunt. napres

[74, col. 2]

nestoit Roys en cest terre
de taunt de richesce. ne de
si haut quer a despendre.
ne qe meutz le sauoit de~
uiser. ne qe meillours seruatz
out. de le ordener. Arthur
tenit court real. iiij. iours.
Le primer iour apres manger.
daunserent lez dames. et
chiualers karoillerent. de
duerent a iuys dedens me~
soun. Lendemain lez che
ualers iousterent et tournoy~
erent. Lez Iuuenceaux bour~
derent & eskirmiserent. #
touz autres maners de gentz
sez deduerent de touz Iuys
qils estoient acoustomez
getterent le pere. launce~
rent dartez. luterent. cur~
rerent. saillerent. et quy
out le pris de nes vn ieu
ont beau doun du Roy. so~
lounc soun estat. Lez da~
mes furount as kirnels.
qe graunt deduyt y out le iour.
Arthur donoit as toutes
gentz de valu solonc lour
estates. qe moult estoit pri~
sez. Il donoit solom qils
auoint deseruy. chasteaux.
Cites. Forestes. et beaux
manoirs. monay. Vessai
lement & Iueux. dras. ar~
murs et cheuaux. chenes.
bestes estraunges. & oyseaux de
pray. si lour fist si bele cher
qe touz estoint de lours
desires estaunches. Il do
noit as clerks grauntz dig
netez a soun vncle depar
sa mere. qi out a noune
dauid. dona il le Erceuesche
de Carlioun. qe Dubrices

[74v, col. 1]

ly bon Erceuesqe auoit en
le hour guerpy. qe se mist
en Ermitage.

LE tierce iour com le Roy
seoit entre lez hautes
princes a manger:
entrerent la sale. xij. homs
chaunz. richement apa
raillez. chescun vn raym
de oliue en sa mayn. deus
& dieus en main ensemble
vindrent le pas deuers le
Roy. qi reuerentement ly
sount enclinez. si ly pre
senterent vns lettres depar
Lemperour de Rome. qi les
fist lire en audience. qe parle
rent ensi.

LVcius Iberius Cesar
Emperour dez Romains
touz iours augustus: a
Arthur de bretaigne escri
uoms. en purpensaunt nous
meruailloms par quel fole
counsail. vous y fustes sy
hardy a cloigner del oyle
encountre ceaux del maie
ste de Rome. qe touz gentz
enbaundonount a countre
fair nul regaute. deuaunt
qe vostre estat vst este ac
cepte de nous. et qe vous y
fussez atournez de vostre ser
uice. treuage et tribute.
com vassail & sutzgis dust
a soun liege seignour. vous
maundoms. et en maun
daunt vous amonestomes
& en amonestaunt vous co
maundoms depar nous &
tout la Rome sene sure
peril qapperit. qe le primer
iour daust. soiez a Rome
en propre persoun deuaunt nous

[74v, col. 2]

en plain constoir prest et
aparaillez a faire redresce &
restiticiouns en biens ou
en punycement du corps
a la grace de nostre counsail dez
touz lez tortez & desobeisaunz
qe vous et vor besailes auez fet
a nous de Rome de reteni[?][27]
de nor seruices. truage et
tribute. prus le temps Gra~
ciane. et de ceo qe tu nous as
tollu fraunce et Germain. et
touz lez Isles enuyroun bre~
taigne. qe soleient estre nor
tributeres. et nomement
qe tu nous as mort Frolle
nostre vaillaunt baroun. et
nous as disseisy dez nor pos~
sessiouns. qe nor predecessours
ount este droiturelement
seisez par lour real cheualery
souent perillousement en pe~
nyblete de lour graunt frece
et trauail. et si ceo ne voilez
la verge de nostre souerayne
te defy. lespey de reddour qe
vous chastira. Escript a Ro~
me. le primer iour Daueril.

Qaunt la letre fust lieu. lez
bretouns crierent com aragez
de meruail. sur lez messagers.
qi osast tiel message maun~
der. ou le fair. si estoint en
point de lez cour sur. qaunt le
Roy sailly en pes. qe lez fist
teyr. qi disoit qe messagers
nauerount si bien noune.
si lour comaunda bien her~
biser. qe lendemain auerount
lour respouns.

ARthur aloit a counsail
entre touz sez Roys. et
princes & Dukes. & sez
autres barouns. qe lour ad mer~

[75, col. 1]

cier. qe parlour decert. il estoit
enhauncez. qi rien fust de
poair saunz eaux. par quoi
il lour requist de lour coun
sail dez bosoignes entre m
ayns. qe nestoit pur le curroi.
mais pur tout le quyre.
Cador de Cornewail Roys.
parlast primers. qi dist. qe
cel bosoigne venit en bon
sesoun. qar nous touz sumes
deuenuz si perscons. qe pur delit
de ese a festoier lez dames. a
nom vblie lez honours. par qoi
nous estoioms enhauncez. si di
soit. qe y nauoit autre coun
sail. fors de eaux arayer. qe
tost fussent au melle des
Romayns. si premist au roi
de ly seruire. od. ij. Mile chi
ualers & od bons comunes
apurcenauntez. Lez autres di
soint auteil de gros quers.
qe touz sez enforcerount de
adressiement venir. Et si
fust le noumbre de sez cheua
lers. C. & Lx. Millers. hors
pris archiers & comuns. Ho
el le Roy de la petite bretain
dist. qe bien estoit troue en
lez ditz Sebile la sage. qe. iij.
isserount de bretaigne. qi
Rome enconquerount. Be
lyus estoit vn. Constauns
le secound. si quidoms Ar
thur estre le tierce. qar Max
imian ne parfist my la con
quest. qe tuez estoit en con
queraunt. si serra la prophe
cy acomply en vous si dieux
plest. par le orgoil des Ro
mayns. qar droit est. qe
qi couait tout: tout perd.
par comune counsail est acorde

[75, col. 2]

la guere. et qe le Roy re~
maunde respouns par sez
letres par meismes lez mes~
sagers. as queux le Roy
enfist graunt honour. qi lar~
gement lour fist donere.
si lour chargea de bouche
a dire a lour seignour. qe il
vendra a Rome. qaunt il ver~
ra le point pur truage de~
maundre. nounpas de la
aporter. si lour bailla letres[28]
directis a lour Emperour. qe sen
departerent de Carlioun. a qel
hour estoint acordez de coun~
sail. le iour & lieu de lassemble
de lour ost. si demenerent le
iour od graunt reuel. Meis~
me la[29] nuyt. estoit enuoie[30]
en la court od vn damoy~
sele iolyue le mauntil Ka~
rodes. qe out tiel vertu. qe il
ne voroit estre de droit
mesure a nul femme. qe vou~
sait[31] lesser sauoir a soun
marry. soun fet & pense.
de quoi en out graunt rise.
qar y ny out feme nul[32] en
la court . a qei[33] le mauntil
estoit de mesure. ou qil e~
stoit trop court. ou trop
long. ou trop estroit. ou~
tre mesure. fors soulement
al espous karodes. pur qoi[34]
com fust dit. estoit en~
uoye a la court depar le pier
le dit Karodes. qi fust dit
vn enchaunteour.[35] de prouer
la bounte la femme soun fitz
qe vn dez plus mouer estoit
de la court. de meisme le
mauntel fust fet vn chesi~
ble puscedy. com est dit. qe
vnqor est a iour de huy a Gla~

[75v, col. 1]

stenbery. En le temps Arthur
auindrent maintz mer~
uaillis de enchauntementz
& chos fayez. et solace as
chiualers hu pays. qe en
soun temps estoient si
richis. et en si graunt tran~
quillite de nul gref de es~
traungers. qils nauoint
desire fors a cheualery. qe
chescun sensocilla a fair
chos desconuz. qe portasent
renome. pur ceo furount
lez perouns & lez geys
awardez a cheualers a pro
uer lour vertu. et pur ceo
furount apellez lez cheua
lers errauntz. qe toutez partz
furount resceus. com en
temps. qe nul neu demaun
da fors noblesce. taunt esto
it le pays riche. et tiels af
fairs si plesauntz au Roi.
& taunt cheriez de la Royn
Genoir. et de sez dames.
LEs messages de
Rome reuindrent
al Emperour. qe li troue
rent seaunt entre ses se
natours en Capitoil. qe
ly recorderent la noblesce
Arthur. meruaillous a eux
a croir. qe lour disoint lour
credence. et presenterent lez
letres. qe parlerent ensy. Ar
thure vn des maindres
dez bretouns a Lucius Iberius
maundoms. Voz letres aue
oms vieuz. et la sentence
entenduz. et si nous est
tresgrauntement mesconuz
tiel poair en vous. de nous
destourber le cloigner del
oyl. qe saunz deite serroit

[75v, col. 2]

trop graunt pussaunce hu~
mayn. qe nest pas a dou~
ter en vous. qe si le clerk
nust hu plus de poair
de le auoir escript. qe vous
nauez de le destourber. ia
nust este mensioun. Vous
nous demaundez tribut
& seruage. qe vous dioms. qe
vous nauiez vnqes nul de
terre nul part. si par force
noune. qe par meisme la caus
nous le vous dedioms pur
tiel demaunde final respouns
Et si vous demaundoms en
meisme la gyse. nor droi~
tures. com successour en
heritage. de Bren. Belin.
Maximian. et Costantin
nor auncestres. Roys de Bre~
taigne. qi par pruesce con~
quistrent Rome. nous ne
auoms pas taunt de sapi~
ence. com vous auez. mais
notre foly suffist. si dieu plest
acountre ester votre sen en
tiels voloirs deuers nous. et si
est la notre cause meilliour qe
la votre. qe rien nauez fors
par boidy. com qaunt Julius Cesar
ne le conquist. fors par eide
de gentz du pays. Andro~
gius. qi en autre maner
ne se poait eider du Roy
Cassibolan soun vncle & pur
ceo au chaunge du siecle.
nous vous demaundoms trua~
ge. la quel nous rendroms
quer. soit: a qy plus tost
la purra conquer. Escrit
en notre cite de Carlioun
le tierce iour de Pentecost.
// Qaunt la sene de Rome
entenderent cest letre: sy fi~

[76, col. 1]

rent somoundre lour ost. Les
Roys de Grece. de Perce. de
Tartery. de Hungery. de
Ras. de Russy. de Turky. de
Assy. de Babiloigne. et lez
Roys de Barbary. lez Rois
de Espayn & Cascile de Mur
see. & Cordo del Andelosy.
del Grenat. de Portengal
de Nauer. de Maillogre. de
Aragoun & de Cesille. lez prin
ces & Dukes enuyroun Ro
me. qi touz sez adresserent
& iour hurount de lour assembler.
le noumbre de lour cheualerye:
.CCCC. Millers. estre archers
& comuns. saunz noumbre.
acounteir.
ARthur estoit departiz
entres lez autres prin
ces pur eaux araier. qi pre
stes furount a iour nomez.
Le Roy bailla a Mordret soun
neuew. soun realme. et sa
femme Genoire a garder. com
en qy. il se bien assioit. de
quoy enauenit graunt mal.
passerent mere. aryuerent
a Barflet. ou ils soiournerent
tanqe lour ost depar dela fur
rount arayez. Arthur auoit
sounge la nuyt. qil vist
vn Ourse venir volaunt
deuer lorient gettaunt fiew.
qe le pays destruyt enuy
roun. si vist countreuenir
com ly fust auys de bretai
gne. vn dragoun. qe out lez
oyles si cleres. qe tout la me
re enuyroun resplendisoit.
qe se combaty od le ours. et
ly estrangly. de quoi Arthur
enprist a penser. quoi ceo
poait signifier. En quel

[76, col. 2]

hour vindrent lez nouels a
Arthur. qe vn Geaunt hors
dez mountaignes despayn
estoit venuz al mount saint
Michel. qe le pays enuiroun
destruyoit. et auoit rauy
le nece Hoel de la petite
bretaigne. Le Roy auoit
graunt desire de y aler. prist
Kew le seneschal. et Bedu~
er le boteler. et .ij. vadletis.
seu departy priuement del
ost. cheuaucherent le iour et
la nuyt. et au matin vin~
drent au mount saynt
Michel. qest entre Normen~
dy. et la petit bretaigne.
ou ils aparceurent dieus
fumes surre lez .ij. mountai~
gnes. qe y sount. qe pur meuz
estre ensense: maunda le
Roy Beduer pur assaier la
maner. qi issist du batele.
com couendroint passer vn
russew de mere. mounta.
si troua pres vn veutz fem
chanu. seaunt sur vn sepul~
ture nouel. fesaunt le plus
graunt doel du mound. qe ly
disoit en affray. Fuez eut
de cy. mal en mistez le pee.
Dame fesoit il. aunces #
me couenit sauoir. pur qoi
tu plurrez ensy. Sire fesoit
le veille. bien doy ploreir.
qe voi enterrez la bele puscel.
qe ieo nurry a ma mamel.
Elyne. nece Hoel. qe le Ge~
aunt rauy. qe taunt lad de~
fole: qe lad morte. & si ven~
dra en le hour. pur en moy es~
tauncher sa luxurre. Oue
cestez parolis enuenit le
Roy. qi aparceust ou le Ge~

[76v, col. 1]

aunt seoist rostaunt char
de pork. qe le mengea de
my cru. se trey laundroit.
fist lez soens remanoire
od la veille. se aprochea a le
Geaunt. qe ly aparsceu. sail
ly en peez. prist sa masu.
fery deuer Arthur si ferement
qi bien ly quidoit auoire
defait. qaunt il cheuchist. le
coup descendy a terre. la ma
su hors de sa mayn. Arthur
ly fery oue escaliburn en
my la test. qe le sank reia
aual sez oyles. qil ne po
ait veoir a reprendre la
masu. Arthur ly fery graunz
coupes. il sailly a Arthure
si ly enbrasa. et ly estreint
si tresfortement: qil luy
enfoundra desoutz ly. Ar
thur oue le point de les
pey ly fery acoste. qil gen
chi du coup desur ly cerche
aunt sa masu de lun ma
yne. endementres Arthur
resailly de ly sur sez pees. qe
de raundoun ly donoit tiele
coupes. qil ne poait ia re
lener. si ly tua mort. fist
couper la test. et enporter
al ost. du graundour de qoi
touz enmeruaillerent & du
qoy Arthur enportoit #
graunt pris. Son ost fust
ia assemblez. il passa Gaul.
& Burgoyn. ou il auoist
nouelis qe Lemperour od soun
graunt ost: estoit passe les
mountez. qauoit od lui
plusours des Roys de Assy
& de Aufrik. et touz plain
de Europe. od tout le po
air dez Romayns. qe al hour

[76v, col. 2]

nestoit pas petite. Arthur
fist redresser le chastel de
Aubefort. sur la riuer de Al
be sore. qe tost fust edifie.
pur la forteresce du lieu qe
taunt fust fort de eau & de
Roche. ou getta dauoire
soun attreit de touz ses es~
tuffers de illoeqes pris. en~
uoya en message a Lucius
Lemperour. Gerins de Chartres
& Bort de Oxinford. sagez
prus & enloquynez. et od
eaux soun neuew Gawain
qi la parlure dez romains
sauoit au plain. qi ly maun~
da par eaux de sauoit la ma~
ner. et quoi il demaunda.
et de ly nouncier. qe Fraunce
il tindroit a soun poair. par
quoi saunz plus de dama~
ge. meutz ly serroit a re~
tourner. Les messagers es~
toint mountez & armez:
tindrent lour chemyn. ou
vn graunt rout dez iones ba~
chilers. desirauntz melle
lez counuaierent. qi graunte~
ment presserent Gawain
a fair ou dire tiel riote.
de quoi poait sourdre #
melle en freindre du treti~
ce. Les messagers aparsceu~
rent lerbigage del ost. qe
tost y enuyndrent. qe par
le enseigne du graunt Egle
dor sur la tent de Lemperour.
aparsceurent soun herbigage
qi descenderent au pauili~
oun. estoint amenez de~
uaunt ly. del hour qils es~
toint conuz pur messa~
geris. qe ly trouerent entre
lez princes en counsaille

[77, col. 1]

qi ly obeierent reuerentement.
si ly disoint lour message. qe
courtement en mokesoun
fust pris. Gawayn qi ceo a
parsceu. qi conisoit lour ma
ner. comensa a parler. si di
soit al Emperour. qe aunces
qil acompleast soun purpos
qil troueroit ascuns en con
trairs. qe li ferrount mar
rementz. Vn prince de Ro
me. neuew lemperour. Quin
tinius qi hauteigne estoit
& surquiderous. disoit a ⁜
Gawayn. qe touz bretouns
sount auaunteours de parol.
& en fait assertz mole. pur
quoy ny gist graunt acount
dez queles parolis: Gawain
mounta en ire. sacha lespei.
sodeignement coupa la test
Quintinius a trauers en
my lieu du counsail. somon
nast sez coumpaignouns a m
ounter lour cheueaux. qy
voy lour firent de lour es
peys parmy lez tentes a lour
destrers. mounterent escues
a coles. launces hu poyne.
ou en tout lost. nestoit fors
huyne as armes & cheuax
disauntz. allase. lez leires nus
eschaperount. Les messagers
tyndrent lour chemyn. ascu
nes dez Romains lour presse
rent fortement. Gerins
qi aparsceiuoit vn Romain
trop pres aprocher: retour
na le freyne: si ly abaty de
ioust mort a terre. Bort qi
ceo vist: seu forcea de fer~
rir au tiel poindre: encoun
tra vn autre romain. de
qi il fesoit meisme la cour.

[77, col. 2]

Marcel vn noble romain
qi germain estoit Quin~
tinius. qi si hastiue estoit
a pursuire lez messagers.
qil auoit vblie sa launce
qi durement pressa tout~
diz Gawayn. qe taunt ce
auaunsa. qil arenat. Ga~
wayn. qi bien ly soeffra
fair. tanqe il vist soun
point. qi ly fery du brank
tiel coup. qil ly tolly le es~
paule oue le branse tout
qil tenit le freyne. qe le a~
baty mort. et au passere
outre ly disoit. qil saluoit
Quintinus par tiels ensi~
gnes. qe lez bretouns sount
alafoitz autres qe auauncers
soulement. touz iours com lez
Romayns atindrent lez
messagers: ils sez retourne~
rent. si abaterent. chescun
le soen plusours foitz. a~
launt belement lour chemyn.
fesauntz meruailles darmez.
qe au darain furount outre
chargez. de si graunt noumbre
dez Romains. qils ne pur~
roient endureir. Mes com
auenture le dona: Arthur a~
uoit enuoye. vij. Mile de
gentz darmes a rewarder
lez messagers. qe taunt demur~
erent. et pur espier la maner
& le estre du pays. qy ses
enbusserent en vn boys
od la coumpaigny qauoit
conuaye Gawayn et les
messagers. qi tost aparsceu~
rent le maner du reuenu
des messagers. qi lez lessoi~
ent venir. qi sodeignement
lez desenbusserent a vne

[77v, col. 1]

foitz. ferrerent cheueaux
dez esperouns. abaterent
lez Romains. pristrent
et tuerent graunt party. les
descoumfirent outriement.
& pres lost les enchacerent
Peterius vn noble Rom~
ain. qauoit aparsceu la me
schief de lour gent: estoit
mountez od. x. Mile armurs
de fere. si seu aloit rescourer
le lour gent. qi reliast lez
fuauntz. se hasta deuers lez
bretouns. qe ia estoint re
tournez. pur le trop apro
cher del ost. qi fortement
lez pursuoit au boys: ou
fust lour primer enbusse
ment. et outre. ou lez bre
touns retournerent a vn
foitz. qe touz sez iousterent.
porterent chescun autre
a terre. se entre attasserent.
qe plus bele tournay nes
toit vnqes vieu. qar n
uls nestoit fors chiualer
& esquier. saunz archier.
ou petouns. Ider vn no
ble bretoun. venoit od sa
coumpaignie. qi moult en
baudist lez bretouns. Bo
ese vn sage chiualer des
bretouns. disoit a Gaw~
ayn & a Bort. qe saunz
encoumbrer de Peterius le
Romayn. qi touz lez au~
tres enbaudist: ne auen~
drount iames honourable
ment dez chaumps. saunz
graunt meschief de la
querel lour seignour arthur.
a quoi ils doint auoir gr
aunt rewarde. Bort qy
ceo auoit entendu: se af

[77v, col. 2]

forcea taunt. qil se aprocha
si pres Peterius: qil ly a
colast du brase. et liu tera
si fort deuers ly: qe de gree. il
se lessa meismes cheoir de
cheual. et tenit Peterius
si fort. quoi par pesaunty de ly.
et terire qil fist. il ly trey a
tere en my lieu de sez gentz.
Gawayn qi ceo auoit aper
sceu. fery cheual dez esperouns
descendy en my lieu de eaux
a rescoure Bort. ou beissez
bretouns descendre. fesaunt
meruailles. com encountre
gentz qi enuice sauderoint
lour cheuetaigne. Gerins
qi a le my boute del route
estoit: oy le hustine: se trei
laundroit oue Ider qy no~
uelment estoit venuz del
ost: aparsceurent Gawain
& Bort a pee: fererent che~
ueaux dez esperouns. abaterent
dieus Romayns. pristrent
lour cheueaux par force. lez a~
menerent parmy la route
a lez descenduz. qe maugre
lez Romains lez remoun~
terent. et amenerent Pete~
rius. ou ils ly baillerent en
en sauf garde. hors du tac
as bons gardeyns. si reco~
mencerent la melle. qe escri~
erent les enseignes Arthur
qe touz lez bretouns enbau~
disoit. Les romains qauoi~
ent perdu lour cheuetaigne.
estoint si suppris de coun~
tenaunce: qe lour escute
guerper le chaump. qe plu~
sours furount mortz & pri~
ses. ceaux qe eschaperent & sa~
uoint counter lez nouels.

[78, col. 1]

LEs bretouns od lour priso
ners. retournerent a lour
ost. qi presenterent au
Roy lour prisoners. qi grauntz
merciez lour rendy. de lour bon
fait. qe meisme la nuyt prist
purpos par auys de soun coun
sail: de enuoyer lendemain
a Parys lez prisoners. si lour
dona a conuaier a Cador de #
Cornewail. a Borel. a Ri
cher. et a Beduer. Lemperour
meisme la nuyte aparsu par
sez espies le maundement dez
prisoners le matin a Paris.
si fist aparailler. xv. Mile dez
chiualers. oue bons cheue
taignes de Asiens & Aufrica
nes. quatre Roys a trenuy
ter tout nuyt a matyn. de
rescourer lez prisoners. Ils
cheuaucherent tout nuyt:
ou en laube de iour sez en
busserent. par ou deueroist
passer ly messager. qe vin
drent le matin touz assu
rez. saunz rien douter les e
nemys. ils lez lesserent ve
nir tanqe a lour point. qe
sodeignement sez desenbus
serent. fererent cheueaux
dez esperouns en graunt
affray dez bretouns. mais
com gentz encharnez sez re
lierent en couray de batail.
sez tindrent se diu. qe leger
ment ne purroint estre
desacoutez. qe cheualerouse
ment sez contenoioent. #
mes graunt perd enauoint
de le lour. qar. v. de lours
cheuetaignes furont tuez.
Borel. & Hirneglas. Mo
rice de Cadorcas. Ere fitz

[78, col. 2]

Yweider. & Aliduk de Tin~
caiuel. et Bouriauns. Count
de Manse qi fust tuez de ey~
cader. qi plusours auoint
perdu. si lez Romains sez
vssent de tout entremys
a la melle: mais plusours
sez entremistrent a rescour
lour prisoners. qe touz partz
sez cercherent. qi ne lez tro
uerent. qar deuaunt lassem
ble. lez auoint baille a lour
vadletes. qestoient genchez
au boys. ou ils attenderent
auoir lissu. Lez bretouns
sez contindrent cheualer
ousement. mais ils ne
hussent pas endurez lon~
gment. qe touz iours estoi~
ent. vi. Romains encontre
vn bretoun. qaunt Ginchars
de Paiters. qi le iour auoit
en garde lez foraiers esto~
it trete en fure aukes pres
ou estoit la melle. qy a~
parseuiaunce auoit qe lez
conuaiours dez prisoners
estoint assaillez. qy se
hasta laundroit. qy ve~
noit prissuaunt [?] tancom
cheuaux purroint courer
od. iij. Mile chiualers. oue
graunt comune dez forai~
ours. Les romayns apar~
sceurent sa venu: quy de~
rent qe Arthur od tout
lost hust venu sur eaux.
si pristrent a fuyre. mes
ils estoint si loinz de lour
ost. qe moltz de eaux furo~
unt prisez & mort. qe ne
purroint eschaper. Les
cheuetaignes mortz toz.
Lez bretouns enuoierent

[78v, col. 1]

lez prisoners de valu od
lez autres a Parys. sy re~
tournerent as chaumpes
enpristrent lez corps de
lour barouns mortz. les
aporterent al ost. de qoi
Arthur enfist graunt doel.
& graunt ioy de la descom
fiture. qe durement mercia
sez barouns. et Ginchars
soueraynement.
LEmperour qaunt il oy
de la descoumfiture. & de
la mort Ewander.
estoit si dolent & si descom
forte. qe apoy hust perdu
countenaunce. si prist pur
pos par touz lez soens. qe
la ne fussoit plus a demur
er. tanqe meutz poait e
stre araie. depusqe tauntz:
de meschefes ly estoint
venuz. en si breue temps.
mauneis seignal a le hour
a lour auys. si se delogea
seu ala a Longres. qi se her
bisa dedens la cite. en pur
pos lendemain a treir a
Ostoun. ou il serroit a
sanete pur la forteresce
du pays enuyroun. tan
com ly pleroit. Arthur
oy cestes nouels: fist toz
lez soens deloger & trus~
ser & mouoir en la vesper.
qe tout nuyt cheuauche
rent. qe Longres ad en~
viroune a main deistre.
tanqe il vint a Soese.
vn valay. entre Logres
& Ostoun. par ou Lemperour
coueuoit passer. ou il
ordeigna. ix. eschelis dez
soens. a chescun dieus

[78v, col. 2]

cheuetaignes. en cas qe lun
fust quasse. le primer huront
Augusel Descoce. et Cador
de Cornewaille. Bort & Ge~
rins hurent lautre. Acile
le Danoys. et Loth ly Nor~
ways. le tierce. Hoel & Ga~
wayn le quart. Kew le Se~
neschal & Beduer le boteler
le quynt. Heldin de Flaun
ders & Ginchars ly Paiteun[36]
le. vi. Yweyn de Cestre & Jo
netas de Dorcestre. le. vij.
Cursal de Laicestre. Vrgi
nius de Bae. le. viij. Le Roi
meismes le. ix. En quel e
schel il auoit ordene surfetiz[37]
Roes vn chos bataillez. ou
.xx. homs purroint eynz
ester. auxi leger a treir. com
vn chariot. en quoi il fist
atacher le dragoun dore.
lenseigne soun pier. lestan
dard. ou il comaunda qe touz
lez enlacez & quassez ne a~
lasent nul part. fors qe
la soint amenez. ou meis~
mes serrai troue si dieux #
plest votre refuyt & chastel.
Si ordeyna qe la morte de
chescun batail soit a pee
a tuer lez cheueaux. et pur
enboweler lez cheuxs. il or
deigna qe tout le cariage.
od les cheuaux de gentz de
scenduz fussent en vn ba
tail sur vn tertre bien aray
ez a fair le mouster. Il or
deina Nennius le queyns
de Gloucestre oue vn graunt
batail de estre enbussez de
soutz le tertre pur garder
le point & surtour lez Roma
yns graunt temps le mouster.

[79, col. 1]

qi bien auoit conceu la vo
lounte & deuis le Roy. qi
disoit as touz lez soens.
Mes cheres coumpaignouns
& amys. moult manez
honoure et voz meismes.
& pur ceo a cest graunt bosoine
ent briez vos a bien faire.
en regard de graunt honour qe
vous auendra. et du graunt
profite qe ensuera. en souei
gnaunce du grauntz contrai
res. qe ceaux de Rome en
firent as noz auncestres.
& le mal qils pensent de
nous faire lour seruice &
tributers. et a nous desho
noureir & destruyer pur toz
iours. qe ne pust estre escheu
saunz moustraunce de droit
homesce. qe chescun eyde
autre. si ne espoir nuly.
en fait dautry. qe chescun
ne face sa part: lez Roma
yns eschuerent a lour gre
la melle. Et pur ceo le meuz
nous est la sesoun. com gentz
encharmes encountre ceaux
qe lez doutount. pur ceo pur
suoms nous le temps. tancom
le eyoms. qe nul autre for
teresce ne auoms. fors es
cues. launces. & bons espe
yes. Touz respounderent a
vn foitz. qe si dieux plest
ils ferrount lour deuoir. &
qe mult lour agreast le or
deignement.
Lemperour oue soun
ost estoit departys
le matins de Logres deuers
Ostoun. ou en cheminant
soun auaunt gard recoi
ly affrayauntement. qi lui

[79, col. 2]

venoient dire. qe la voy
estoit purpris. ou ne pur~
roint passer saunz batail.
Qaunt il auoit ceo entendu:
si fist assembler lez Roys.
princes & Dukes. qi lour
ad moustre le bosoigne
qi lour ad dit. qe saunz
batail ne pust lour honour
estre saune. si lour soueig~
noit dez grauntz honours
de lour auncestres. qe lour
somonoit de bien fair de
eaux venger de lour despi~
tes. et de ceo qe si surquide~
rousement lez auoint en
despite purpris le chemin.
qe touz fesoint semblaunt
de combatre. Lemperour ordei~
na. xii. escheles dez soens.
de queux estoint cheuetai~
nes Roys & Princes de di~
uers naciouns. qe baude~
ment prist le chaumpe.
lez bretouns venoint de
autre part. ou fort fust
lassemble. maint homme
mort de touz partz. Lez bre
touns enauoint graunt
perde. qar Beduer & Kew
surount mortz. Heldyn
de Flaundres. Ginchars
ly paiteneins. le Quenis
de Buloine autresi. & Ga~
wayn nawferez malement.
qe entre Hoel & ly. enauoint
fait le iour maint cheua~
lery. Arthur qi vist ses
gentz maubaillez aloit
assembler. eseriaunt soun
seigne. qi fesoit tiels mer~
uailles. qe legers ne serroint
a croir. qe tout rebaudy lez
bretouns. Il tua. vi. Roys

[79v, col. 1]

de sa mayn. Angusel et
Cador & Hiwain. bien sez
contenoint. mais nuls
no poait aparsceuioir. qi
aueroit la victoir. tanqe
li Quins de Gloucestre
se descouery del enbusse
ment. a tiel descoumfort
dez enemys. et coumfort
dez amys. qi venit assem
bler a trauers. qen soun
venir abaty tauntez dez
Romayns. qe lez comuns
de eaux pristrent a fuire
adonqes veissez lez bretons
enforcer a suyr Arthur lour
cheuetaigne. qe touz iours
seu baty deuaunt eaux.
qe ny out romayn qil com
scent. qi vst mister de me
dicine. tauntz estoint mor
tez. qe nuls ne poait noum
brer. et outriement descom
fitz. Lemperour estoit mort
troue as chaumps. Arthur
fist enuoier le corps ho~
nourablement a Rome. &
disoit. qe autre truage ne
enuoierat al hour. mais
esperoit autre quere. il fist
aporter lez corps des seig
nours en lour pays dez
sez amys. lez autres des
soens honourablement se
ueiller. Arthur soiourna
tout cel yuer en burgoin
en biaunce en le este. de
passer mount guy deuer
Rome. en quel soiourn:
il tenit court real de la
table round. ou auindr
ent graunt auentures. qe
acomplis furount des che
ualers erraunz. ou Gaw

[79v, col. 2]

ayn sentremist fortement.
AL issu de yuer en my
Marce. qaunt Arthure
estoit araiez depasser
mont guy deuers Rome:
ly vindrent nouels. qe
Mordret auoit enbrase a
soun ops propre. la regance
de bretaigne. et homages
Royaux pris. soy disaunt
Roys. et lez seignouryes depar~
tys as gentz estraungez. & qil
auoit pris a soun lice. la
Royne Genoire. la femme
soun vncle. com sa espous.
De quoi. Arthur prest graunt
marrement. et disoit as les
soens. qe meutz voloit a
desporter la conquest de
Rome: qe a perdre bretaine.
qe touz counsaillerent de re
tourner. Arthur baillast
Gaule. Burgoin. et Ger~
mayn. a Hoel en garde.
se trey a Qwhitsand. fist
assembler nauy. en desi~
raunt & touz lez soens de
eaux. venger. Mordret qi
sauoit le repair le Roy. a~
uoit maunde Cedrik. duk
de Saxsoin. qe ly amena. v.
.C. nefes od gentz darmes.
qe ly auoit done tout outre[38]
Hombre en Escoce. et tout
Kent. qe Hengist out. sy e
stoit venuz a Douer od
soun poair. pur destourber le
aryuage le Roy. qi ia es
toit mountez sur mere & ve~
nuz au port de Douyre.
Lez soens voleint auoir a~
ryuez. qaunt estoint destourbez
dez gencz Mordret. mais
com ceaux qi la terre vorroint

[80, col. 1]

auoir. ou murrir. launcerent
dez nefes. Roy & touz pris
trent terre. ou Angusel de E
scoce fust mort. & Gawain
ly vaillaunt. com fust dist
de vn auytoun desus la cos~
te de la test. qe ly creuast la
play. qil out resceu a la #
batail. ou Lemperour fust mort
qestoit sursane. Arthure
se coumbaty a pee. arusa sez
enemys. oue graunt occisioun
de eaux. tanqe lez cheueaux
estoint deseschippez. il moun
ta a cheual. seu ala combatre.
qe outriement lez descoumfit
qe si la nuyt mist suruenu:
nul mist eschape apayne.
Mordret se trey a Loundres.
mais lez citezeins ne luy
voroint lesser entreir la ci
te. Il se trey a Wincestre. ou
il relya sez amys. qe molt
de eaux sez auoint taunt for
fait deuer Arthur. qils ne sa
uoint autre pleet. fors a
pendre le auenture od luy.
a qy. ils estoint donez. La
Royne Genoire qe a Euer
wik soiourna auoit oy de
la venu le Roy. et de la des
coumfiture Mordret. sy se de
meinti a la gise. qe nuls ne
enhust pite. qi le hust oy.
si se trey a Karlioun. ou el
entra en Religioun. qe apres
vnqes ne vora veoir hom.
ARthur demora a Do
uyr. tanqe il auoist
fest enterrer Gawayn
& Angusel. et Cador. et lez
autres dez soens. pur queux
il vst assectz de tristour:
il se trey apres Mordret

[80, col. 2]

qi se auoit bote dedens
Wincestre. si la assist de
touz partz. Mordret qy
taunt doutoit le Roi. ne
se tenit adresse pur atten~
dre vn assege: issist de la
cite en counrai de bataille.
se combaty od soun vncle.
ou estoit graunt perd de toz
partz. mais ne poaist
endureir. encountre la che~
ualery le Roy. si prist de
sez priues. et endementres
qe lez autres sez combatoint.
se mist au fuyt. sen fuy
a Porchestre. se purchasa
vn nef. qi par mere se mist
en Cornewaille. de ou. il
maunda apres lez soens.
qestoint eschapez de les. ij.
bataille. ou touz playn li
vindrent. dez saxsoins.
des danoys. dez pices. et
touz plain dez bretouns
qil auoit enhauncez dez
seignouries as autres genz.
qe meutz voroint murrire
qe desporter lour estat. si
maunda apres touz qe terre
voroint auoir. qe touz lez
ferra riche.
ARthur qi nouels a~
uoit ou Mordret e~
stoit apres ceo qe Win~
cestre auoit estably. et
done Escoce a Hywayn.
com al plus prochem eyre.
& soun homage resceu:
se mist deuer Cornewail.
promettant a qi. qe luy
poait amener le traitor
Mordret: vn bon Counte.
Mordret qi aparsceu la
venu le Roy: disoit as

[80v, col. 1]

soens. qil ne fueroit mi
plus pur mourir. mais #
prendroit lauenture. les
soens sez acorderent bien.
qe uilte pur lor profite desi
roint la victoir. il prist
chaump ioust leawe de
Tembre. ou il attendy le
Roy. qi tost auoist no~
ueles. qe od graunt hast se
esploita. Arthur se apro
chea oue graunt poair assai
ly Mordret. ou il auoist
pris chaump. ou la ba
tail estoit molt cruele.
Hiwain se payna molt
de bien fair. arasa le ba
ner Mordret. le presenta
au Roy. qe volounteres
vst melle od ly. si auenture
le boza lesser encountreir.
loccisioun fust graunt de toz
costez. Hiwain se aforsa
taunt. qe Mordret fist mur
rire. qe ly monstra a Roi.
qi le fist decoler. et enpor
ter la test sur vn launce
parmy la batail. purponaunt
qe la melle serroist tost
finy. del hour. qe le cheue
taigne fust confoundu.
Mais la parti Mordret ne
enpristrent gard, mes
recomencerent si cruelment
qe de toutez lez melles. ou
Arthur auiot este. nesto
it vnqes en tiel fraiour.
que deuaunt qil lez auoit
descoumfist. auoit perdu
la flore de sa cheualery.
apoy touz ceaux de la ta
ble round. qi illoeqes e
stoint. et la iuuent de
bretaigne par queux il a

[80v, col. 2]

uoit hu sez victoirs. et ly
meismes naufres mor~
telement. qi bien le sency.
PUr ceo lendemain en
presence de touz bail
la soun realme a Cos
tentin le fitz Cador de Cor
newail soun freir. a gar
der. tanque il reuenist. qar
ceo disoit qil irroit en lile
de Avaloun a cureir sez pl
ayes. il fist lez barouns at
tourner a Costantin. si ly
enseigna coment il se doit
regner. si prist counge de
eaux. et od Hiwayn soule
ment. se trey en lile de Aua
loun. Le tierce iour qil y venit
com touz iours estoit enpi
raunt[39] encountre la vespre.
com ascuns cronicles tes
moignount. comaunda Hi
wayn aler a la lay. pur veoir
sil poait aparceyuoir ascun
rien. et qe il aportast askali
burn soun espey. et le getast
en la lay. qi ly reuenit dy
saunt qil auoit aparsu
vn bras braundisaunt mei-
sme lespey amount leaw[40]
dedenz la ryuer. Hiwayn
fesoit il. amenez moy cel
part. ou vous veistez lespey
braunder. qi ly amenast
malement com il poat
aler. et qaunt ils vindrent
cel part. ils aparceurent vn
batew venaunt fortement
ou ils esturent. ou estoit
vn veille femme au gouer
nail. et autres. ij. femmes
a ministres[41] le batel. qy
tout droit vindrent au
ryue. ou ils esturent. Arthur

[81, col. 1]

enmist le pee. comaunda
Hiwayn a dieux. qi al hour[42]
fust bien aloigne en leau-
qi sen alast. ou Hiwayn
ne aparceiuioist. qar il es
toit anuytez. Ascuns croni
cles tesmoignount qe Hu
weyn recorda en cest maner
le departisoun de Arthur. As
cuns gestez de Arthur recor
dount. qe ceo estoit Morgu
la fay sore Arthur qe plain
estoit de enchauntementez.
mais touz lez cronicles re
cordount. qe Merlin prophe
tiza de Arthur. qe sa morte
serroit doutous. par qoy
toutdiz puis lez bretouns
& lez Galoys. ount creaunz
qil reuendra. pur ceo qil dit
a Costantin soun neuew
qil gardast soun reaume:
tanqe il reuenist. par auen
ture cest parol purra estre
pris en figure. ceo est a en
tendre. qe ascun de condi
cioun de Arthur. purra
vnqor venir. qe hom purra
comparer a ly. qe ceo soit
autrefoitz Arthur en valour.
Il regna xxvi aunz et iij.
moys en le .v.C.&.xlij an
del Incarnatioun[43] fust il a
mene en Aualoun.

AScuns cronicles ne
fount mensioun de
Arthur. et pur ceo les
vus dez grauntz clerkes de di
uinite pensent qe ceo ne
soit de Arthur. fors chos
controuez & ymaginez pur
ceo qe Bede. ly venerent[44] doc
tour. et autres puscedy.
qi de soun dit enount pris

[81, col. 2]

ensaumple de lour tretice.[45] com
le historia aurea & le pole
craton nen parlent rien
de ly. nen[46] touchent me
moir. vnqor pur cela. ne
fest pas a douter soun noun
estre. qar a poy en toutes
cronicles de touz chrestiens
de touz pays enest recor
dez: qe Arthur estoit vn
dez plus allose[47] vaillaunt
dez Roys chrestiens. fors sou
lement en lez auaunt no
mez treticez. qi geris rien
nentouchent de sez gestez
en queuz[48] autres dez Rois
de la graunt bretaigne. qe sont
autentiqes sount vbliez
saunz mensioun fair plus
qe de ly. pur ceo ne fait
plus a douter de ly. qe des
autres. qe bien pust estre.
qe Bede ne voloit remen
tovier sez gestez. pur ceo
qe tauntz estoient vayns
fayes & meruaillous. qe au
tres nen prissent ensaum
ple ne creascent tiels fan
tasies. qe plus cheierent
en soun temps. qe nule
autre foitz. Lez queux sont
meruaillous & doutous a
croir as tiels saintz gentz.
Et pur ceo en cas. ne lez
voloit mettre en memoir
en ensaumple dez tiels fan
tasyes moundayns noun
croiables en nostre loy. issi
qe nul nenprist cure. ne
encharnicement dez tiels
vanites & vayns gloires.
pur ceo ne ly dedeignoit
entremettre. rien de luy a
recorder pusque sez gestes.

[81v, col. 1]

ne sount pas prouables
a croier par resoun. com
de soun neissement et du
processe du contenement de
sa vie. od la meruaillous
fyn qil out. Et par auenteur
en cas. Bede ne tenoit
pas Arthur pur Roys.
pur ceo qil estoit engen
dre en auowtri. pur quoi
a regner en heritage ne
luy fust auys. qil out en
droit. pur ceo ne ly vo
loit apeller Roys. Mais
est vn prouable resemble
able proue de lestat de
Arthur. la graunt meruail
qe a iour de huy dure. du ka
role dez Geaunz. qe hom
appele le stonhinge. mer
uaillous peres de graundour
qe sount sur lez playns
de Salisberis. qe Merlin
fist aporter par sez enchaun
tementz. hors de Ireland
en le temps Aurilius et de
Uter le pier Arthur. a qi
Merlin dist lez predestines
qe plus toucha la noblesce
Arthur. qe de nul autre qe
fust auenir. dez queux toz
Bede ne fait mencioun.
Mais bien rementise au
tres qen le temps Arthur
estoint. par quoy meutz
resemble la proue de ly.
mais qe y ne plust a bede
a faire mencioun ne me
moir de sez gestez. pur ceo
qe touz resemblonit chos
fayes. vayns & fantasies.
mes toutes gestez de france
Espayne. Germain et de
Allemain enfount meruail

[81v, col. 2]

lous mencioun de sez conte
nementz. par quoi meutz
est a nous privez a croir
sa noblesce. pusque lez estraun
gers le rementivent en
lour gestes memoriales
auctentiqement.[49] Et puisque
lez greignours partys de cro
nicles lez tesmoignount. qe
ou est la greignour partye.
la doit meutz estre cru la
verite par resoun. Mais solom
lez entrepretours. qi de gestis
de bretaigne. sez sount entre
mellez. Arthur estoit vn
de plus alosez Roy.[50] qe vnqes
fust de bretaigne. et solon
ascuns[51] de lour ditez: Arthuur
tua de sa mayn a vn soul[52]
batail. CCC.lxx. homs. et
si combaty. xij. foitz en ost
batail chaumpestre. hors
pris[53] maint singuler fet
en queux il se dilitoit. com
est recordez de ly. et de sez
chivalers. en plusours gestiz.
Tout ne rementivoit bede
lez gestez de Arthur: vnqor
purra bien estre. qe il ne
auoit talent. de recorder
lez noblescez dez bretouns.
qe par auenture ne lez cony
soit my. pur ceo qe meis
mes estoit saxsoun. entre
queux ny out vnqes graunt
amour. qe bien resemble
par sez ditez. qil ny enmist
graunt cure. pusque apoy
tout parla dez gestez des
Engles. du temps. qe lez
.vij. Regnes y furount dez
saxsouns. Jutys. & Picis.
qe apoy rien especifia. fors
de lour gestes. Et si est a

[82, col. 1]

sauoir qe maint diuers chos
memorialis precedentz y
enuindrent deuaunt la
venu dez saxsouns. qi les
voroit auoir note. de qels
il ne pooist touz toucher.
qar le regne de saxsouns
endure de experience de tens.
ny est rien a regard. enuers
le temps dez bretons. mes
touz iours sount lez countes
finez. com els sount amez.
Qe tout ne nomerent pas
lez entrepertours saxsouns
Arthur pur Roys: vncor
en ascuns de lour gestez ils
tesmoignerount. qe vn y
estoit Arthur. qe ils appel
lerount en lour ditez. vn ba
taillous dustre[54] du cheua
lery bretoun. qe par auenture
en case ne voloint ils en
taunt blemer par mencioun
memorial. lestat lour Roys.
com de affermer & nomer par
noume reale. lestat lour aduer
sairs depusqes meismes lour
Roys. de ceo lour tenoient en
le hour. possessioners. Mes
tout soient lez ditz de Bede
autentiqes: vncor dez chos
preteriz deuaunt soun temps
ne poait naturelement
auoir entendement. mes par
enseignement dez ditz des
autres sez predecessours
entrepretours en lour estoirs
lez queux com saxsouns est a
supposer a bretouns. qe ben
purroint en cas desporter
par la caus susdit la loenge
dez bretouns. de quel naci
oun. Arthur estoit Roys.
qe plus auaunt ne pooit

[82, col. 2]

Bede tesmoigner de gestes
al hour preteriz. qe lez[55] estoi
res ne firent. qe ensaumples
estoient de sez ditz. lez qels
bien est supposables. estoint
ditz en latin. ou la gest
bretoun. estoit dit en breton.
tanqes Gauter Archedeken
de Oxenfordre. le traunslata en
latin. com est troue en sez
ditez. par quoi le manir[56] a
meruailler. si bede ne en
fist mencioun. pusqe du
dit langage nauoit co
nisaunce. ne cure en cas
de soi entremettre. ne tes
moignaince creable a ly
autentiqe. qe plusours chos
sount verrays. qe devaunt
soun temps auindrent
dez queux. il nenfist men
cioun. qe trop serroit a tot
counter & impossible.
Qe lez entrepretours sax~
souns ne remencinerent
en lour cronicles apoy
rien de noblesce de gestez
dez Roys bretouns apres la
venu de Hengist: mais
soulement la prosces de
sa conquest. & la successi~
oun de sez saxsouns. ou
le bruyt fet mencioun dez
regnes dez Roys bretons.
linielement. tanqe le temps
Cadwaladre lour darayne
Roy. qe ne especify geres
deuaunt cel temps de nul
principal regne de Rois
saxsouns. tout soint as~
cuns Roys saxsouns no~
mez en cest bruyt. pur a
compler la prosces. vncor
en le dit bruyt. nestoint

[82v, col. 1]

tenuz fors subreguli.
Et plus playnement la
cause. pur quoy lez entre
pretours saxsouns ne
especifierent pas curiou
sement ne autentiqement
en lours estoirs. les no
blescez dez Roys bretouns
apres la venu de Hengist.
serra apres plus clerement
determine. en la fine du da
rain chapitre de cest bru
yt. procheigne deuaunt le
lyuer. de gestis Anglorum.

SOlonc lez gestes de
Rome & lez ditez de
Bede de gestis anglo
rum. lez aunz noumbre
par lour ditez del incarna
cioun. par lez ditz Geffray.
Arthur regna sur lez bretons
en le temps Lioun Lemperour
lez auaunt ditz aunz noum
brez . tout soit troue en le
bruyt. qe le dit Arthur tu
a en batail Lucy hibernum
Lemperour: purra estre. qe
lemperour auoit en latin
autre noun. qen en bretoun.
com en Flemenk. Johan
est apelle Hankin. As
cuns cronicles tesmoig
nent. qe Cerdrik le sax
soun comensa a regnere
en Westsex en le temps
Arthur. et en le temps Jus
tician Lemperour. et qe Mor
dret relessa au dit Cerdr
ik. Wilkschir. somerset
Dorset. Deuenschir. et
C*orn*ewaill[57]. issint qil li
fust en eide encountre Ar
thur. qen le hour estoit ou
tre mere.

[82v, col. 2]

EN quel temps. Vigi~
lius fust pape apres
siluerius. 18. aunz
qi fust tourmentez et hors
trete vileniement de leglis
saint sophie en Costan~
tinoble. par excitacioun de
Augusta theodora. et ceo
fust arette pur venge[...][58]
qil estoit ascentaunt qe sil
uerius fust enchacez. pur
ceo qe meismes desiroit a
estre pape. En cel temps
auenit le miracle de Thi
ophil en Cezile. qe notre
dame ly fist reauoir le #
chartre qil auoit fait au
deable de homage. escrit
de soun sank.

EN cel hour Chilpericus
fitz Lothair regna
en Fraunce. 18.aunz
En quel hour comensa
realment le regne de Nor~
thumbreland de saxsons
solonc lez entrepretours
Saxsouns. Bede & autres
lez queux du regne Ar~
thur. ne firent graunt men~
cioun. en lour estoirs. ne
de nul autre Roi bretoun.
puis la venu de Hengist.

APres Arthure: soun
neuew Costantin.
fitz Cador de Corne~
wail soun frere depar sa
mere: regna sur lez bretons
com tesmoigne le bruyt
Dieus fitz bastardes de
Mordret. enauoint envi
qe Costantin enfust Roie:
assemblerent Escocez. pi
ces. saxsoins. & danoys.

[83, col. 1]

qi enherdauntz estoint a
lour pier Mordret. et es
chapez de la batail. et ses
firent seiser de graunt party
de bretaigne. et sez clame
rent Roys. Le vn seisi Loun
dres. lautre Wincestre. Co
stantin trenuta sur eaux.
primes fist tuer lun. qy
fuez estoit en vn eglis a
Loundres. et puis lautre
a Wyncestre en meisme
la manur. et lour saxsouns au
xi. com ils sez voroint a
uoir mussez en lez mon
stres. Costantin fust tue
apres en batail dez saxoins
il ne regna fors. iij. auns
et fust entere a Stonhenge.

[1] See Thomas Wright, "Influence of Medieval Upon Welsh Literature: The Story of the Cort Mantel." *Archæologia Cambrensis: The Jounral of the Cambrian Archæological Association* 3rd ser. 9 (1863): 10, *n.* 1; Maria Luisa Meneghetti, *I Fatti di Bretagna: Cronache Genealogiche Anglo-Normanne dal XII al XIV Secolo* (Padova: Editrice Antenore, 1979) 49-51, 67-71; Thomas Gray, *Scalacronica*, ed. J. Stevenson (Edinburgh: Printed for the Maitland Club, 1836) 317-319.
[2] *comunes* ?
[3] in margin: "Sire pape Horonius".
[4] M. *couvens*
[5] M. *tesmoin ent*.
[6] M. *huis*
[7] M. *disoi n t*.
[8] *m* has been marked for erasure
[9] M. *Urfine*.
[10] M. *a savoir*.
[11] M. *Bretou n s*
[12] M. *les doun s faillor en t estoit de*
[13] M. *setsun*
[14] St. *estoint*
[15] St. *un*
[16] St. *Endrementres*
[17] St. *purssuy*
[18] St. *egles*
[19] St. *encountre*
[20] Second half of line blank.
[21] St. *Escoces*
[22] St. *deurs*
[23] St. *emientissount*
[24] St. *avemt*
[25] no abbreviatoin mark on "p"
[26] A errasure, and the cap in reverse obscures line.
[27] in crease.
[28] W. *lettres*
[29] W. *le*.
[30] W. *estoit envoye*.
[31] W. *[ne] vouloit*
[32] W. *femme nulle*.
[33] W. *qui*
[34] W. *quoi*.
[35] W. *enchanteor*.
[36] [?] in crease
[37] [?] in crease
[38] in crease
[39] M. corrected to *espiiaunt*.
[40] M. *leaus*.
[41] M. corrected to *minustrer*.
[42] M. *alhour*
[43] M. *de l'Incarnatioun*.
[44] M. *vinerent*.
[45] M. *tretice z*.
[46] M. *n<i> en*.
[47] M. *allose <et> vaillaunt*.
[48] M. *queuz treticez*.
[49] M. *autentiqement*.
[50] M. *roi s*.
[51] M. *alcuns*.
[52] M *sul*.
[53] M. *pus*.
[54] M. corrected to *bataillus dus*.
[55] M. corrected to *sez*.
[56] M. corrected to *quoi ne m'aviz*
[57] *orn* attempted erasure, but still readable
[58] A correction renders this unreadable.

Appendix B: John Hardyng's *Chronicle*

This transcription of the Arthurian portion of BL Lansdowne MS 204 (fos. 65-87) is provided for the convenience of the reader. The emendations to the text are important for my argument, and an attempt has been made to preserve the appearance of each folio as much as possible. Accordingly, rubrics are printed as they appear in the manuscript, with the exception that rubrics on the left of the page have of necessity been printed on the right. This is will be noted in the notes which follow the text. Contractions are expanded silently, with the exception of the flourish on final *r*, which may or may not represent *re*, and the flourish on final *n*, which may or may not represent either *ne* or *un*. These reproduced as *r*' and *n*'. Places where the rubrics have undergone correction will be printed in italics..

Variants from Christine Harker's dissertation have been noted with the following exceptions: Harker is inconsistent in her treatment of the flourish on final *r*, final *n*, and final *ll*, and I have not noted expansion of these features; Harker is inconsistent in her treatment of *i* and *j*, and I have not noted variants; Harker has modernized capitalization and word separation, and she has emended some passages, none of which are noted here.[1]

[65]

He comaunde than / thurgh out all hole bretayne
That euery lorde / shulde bene with hym at passhe
That solempne feste / to worship and obayne
lyke cristen folke / with joy and all solace
In london' than / that was his hiegh palace
And euery lorde / to brynge with hym his wyfe
This was his charge / and will infynytife.

How kyng Vter made
his feest Rial at whiche
he was take with louynge
of duke Gorloys wife
on wham he gatte Arthur'

Amonges other' Gorloys duke of Cornewayle
his wyfe dyd brynge / dame Igerne Fressh and pure
Whose beute thar' / all others made to fayle
So full and hole / auysed was nature
hyr' shappe and forme / excede all creature
In so ferr' forth / thof nature wold haue wrought
The bewte more / hyr' kunnynge[2] stretched nought

Of whose bewte / and hyr' godelyhode
The kynge so foule / ouer' come was and ouer' sette
That it dyd chaunge / his myght and his manhode
And made hym seke / for whiche withouten lette
The duke hyr' had / a way sodenly than sette
Parseuynge wele / the kynges chyldelynesse
Was sette for' loue / of hyr' and wantonesse

And put hyr' in / a castell stronge and wight
Tyntagell hight / vpon the sees coste
For whiche the kynge / was Irefull day and nyght
And hight to fette / hyr' thens a way with hoste
Wharfore he came / with power' and with boste
To dymyoke / whar' that the duke than lay
And seged it / with strengh bothe nyght and day

So segynge thar' / he dyd hym self dyskure
To oon' wlfyn / and Merlyne pryualy
how bot he had / the loue of Igerne pure
he myght not leue / withoute hyr' company
Wharfor' Merlyne / by crafte and Iuglary
The kynge and hym / and also Syr vlfyne
Dyssymylde than / in other' lykenesse to enclyne

He made the kynge / vnto duke Gorloys lyke
And hymselffe lyke / in all symylite
To bretell was / the[3] dukes pryuey[4] myke
And vlfyne lyke / withouten diuersite
Vnto Iordan / that knew the dukes pryuyte
Thus wer' thay thurgh / his dissymylacion
Lyke to the duke / and his in symylacion

This done thay sette / a reule the sege to holde
And pryualy / thise thre to gedyr' wente
To Tyntagell / the lady to by holde
Whom at the yate / the porter' in dyd hente
The kepers all / and als the lady gente
Ful fayne wer' of / of his come and hys presence
As plese hym thar' / with all thar diligence

So than to bed / he and that lady fayre
Wer' brought to reste / bot he with besy cure
No lenger wold / of hyr' be in dispayre
Bot toke anone / his cely auenture
In Armes with that / womannysshe creature
Whiche of nature / tendre was of corage
Trustynge it was / so done in clene spousage

[66]

That nyght he gatte / on hyr' the kynge Arthure
Who after' his decese / thurgh worthynesse
Redouted was / aboue all creature
That tyme leuynge / in honour' and noblesse
Bot than the kynge / after' this besynesse
Gan take his leue / and right so came message
That Gorloys dede / was and his vassalage

The lady couth / nought so truste that message
For' wele she sawe / hym thar' so corporaly
his two seruantz / brought vp of tendre age
Thar' wer' with hym / and came in company
By all lykenesse / and all gode polycy
Thar' couthe no man / fully haue trusted other'
So lyke thay wer' / echone of thaym the tother'

The kynge herynge / thus lovgh and made gode cher'
And in his armes / hyr' kyste enbrasynge faste
Thus sayand than / gode wyfe I am yit her'
Thof I be dede / be ye no thynge agaste
For' all the harme / ouer' gone is and ouer' paste
That ye of me / fro thys day forth shall haue
And fare well nowe / I pray to god yow saue

My castell loste / and als my men so slayne
I drede me sore / the kynge will hyder' prese
I wyll hym mete / and trete to turne agayne
And by som way / to trete and gete his pese
And if I may / hys ire and wrath not cese
I shall submytte / me lowly to his grace
And so I truste / I shall his loue purchase

With that vnto / his hoste he came full fayne
Vlfyn and als / thys wyse Merlyne prophete
Befygurde newe / in thar' likenesse agayne
As thay wer firste / and spake with wordes swete[5]
Vnto his men / in that skarmyse and hete
And wan that place / as made is remembrance
And slew the duke / to haue his wyfe perchaunce

With all hys hoste / so cam he to that place
Of tyntagell / whar' Igerne dyd abyde
And hyr' thar' / with ioy and grete solace
Hyr' womannyshe / sorows[6] to layne and hyde
Whiche by processe / was so wele modifyde
That nought in haste / it dried vp at ones
Bot lyte and lyte / as it wer' for' the nones

[66v]

¶How þe[7] kynge bigan the Rounde Table in Figure of the ordour of þe saint grale þat Iosep made at Aualon in bretayne[8]

A feste riall / he made at his spousage
And by advyse / of Merlyne ordynance
The rounde table / amonge his baronage
By gan to make / for' fygure and remembrance
Right of the table / with all the Cyrcumstance
Of the saynte Grale / whiche longe tyme so a fore
Ioseph made in / Aramathy was bore

For' right as Criste / in Symonde leprous house
his souper' made / amonge Apostels twelue
At his table / that was so plentyuouse
At whiche he had / the mayster' sege hym selue
In fygure so / of it Iosep gane delue
Thurgh oute his wytte / of his Fraternyte
To rayse aborde / of the saynte Grale shuld be

þe saynte grale what it is[9]

The dysshe in whiche / that Criste dyd putte his honde
The saynte Grale / he cald of his language
In whiche he kepte / of cristes blode he fonde
Aparte alway / and to his hermytage
In bretayne grete / it brought in his viage
The whiche was thar' / to tyme of kynge Arthure
That Galaad / Escheued his auenture

For' Fygure so / and hole remenbrance
Of that table / of hole fraternyte
The table Rounde / the kynge dyd so enhaunse
Of nobleste knyghtes / in all his Regalte
In knyghthode beste / and all fortuyte
Approued ofte / in werr' and turnament
In batayls als / that had grete regyment

Syr' Octa than / and Oysa bathe in fere
Thar' kepers als / dyd breke oute of the toure
Of london so / and home thay yede full clere
In Germany / to gete thaym ther' socoure
And toke on thaym / agayne a new laboure
With power' grete / this londe to haue and wynne
And Albany / distroyed er' that thay blynne

The kynge was seke / and no thynge myght he ryde
For' whiche he made Syr loth of louthianne
With hoste to fyghte / with thaym and fell ther' pryde
Who wedded had / his doughter' hight dame Anne
That duke was of / all louthianne called than
A myghty prynce / hardy and corageouse
Right wyse and fayre / and ther' to bountyuouse

Who with thaym faught / by dyuerse tymes sere
Some tyme / the better' / and some tyme had the worse
For' whiche the kynge / dyd ordeyne hym a bere
On whiche he was / caried so as a corse
With all his hoste / aboute hym with grete forse
And founde thaym than / lyggynge in Verolame
A walled toune / was that tyme of grete fame

Verolome. vb nowe S. Albans[11]

Now heght it so / seynte Albans verryly
Whar' that the kynge / thaym seged with his hoste
And dange right don' / the walles myghtyly
For whiche anone / thay toke the felde with boste
And faught with hym / by halfe a day almoste
Bot at the laste / Octa and Oysa right
Wer' slayne bothe two / thar' party put to flight

Bot sertayne men / ther' were in this mene while
Saw whare the kynge / had water' to hym brought
Right of a well / by syde his hall som while
To drynke with other' licours for' hym wrought
For' hys sekenesse / to helpe and brynge to nought
It envenymde / with poyson' and corupte
Thurgh whiche his lyfe / was waste and interrupte

¶ How the kynge Vter was poysond of þe water of a well þat[12] he vsed to drynk medled with wyne & other licours

And dyed so / in grete and sore distresse
And byried was / in the karoll besyde
His brother' than / with honour' and noblesse
As conquerrour' / so fully glorifyde
In riall wyse / wele wrought and artyfyde
That wondyr' was / the werke aboute to se
So was it wrought / with all nobilite

Afore his dethe / a Castell yit[10] he made
Vpon the marche / of Scotland stronge and fayr'
Pendragon hight / in whiche he dwelte and bade
In that Contre / whan that he wolde repayr'
Of which place now / the Clifford is his hayr'
And lorde in fe / of all the Shyre aboute
And Shiriff als / of Westmerlonde thurghoute

Allas for' reuthe / so gode a prynce shulde de
That in sekenesse / nought letted for' distresse
Vpon his fose / on bere to caried be
Thaym to distoy / he fonde non Idelnesse
Whiche to acounte / was suche a worthynesse
As in my dome / he aught of right be shryned
That fro his fose / in werres neuer' declyned

¶ How the maker' of þis commendeth this kynge Vter pendragoun of worthy nesse for to bene myrour and remenbrance to other kynges and prynces

He myght be shryned / als for' worthynesse
Amonges alle these noble Conquerours
For his labour' / loued none Idelnesse
To helpe his londe / and men with all socours
In tyme of nede / agayne stonde turmentours
The comyn profyte / that wasted and destroyed
Or'[13] his comons / vexid or' yit anoyed

O souerayn' lorde / to whom god hath so dygned
The gouornayll / with all the regalte
Of Englonde hole / to you and youres assigned
Thynke on this poynte / in all your' dygnyte[14]
And lette no sleuthe / disteyne your' soueraynte[15]
Bot euer' be fresshe / and grene forto defende
The peple hole / whiche god hath to you' sende.

¶ xvi chapitle of
Arthur' kynge of Br

Arthurs Armes[17]

Arthure his son / vp growynge than pierlesse
Thurgh oute the worlde / approued of his age
In wytte and strength / bewte and als largesse
Of person hiegh / and fayre of his visage
And able in all / to holde his heritage
At Cyrcestre / than called Caercyry
And Caersegent som called it wytterly

Who was that tyme / bot fyftene yer' of age
Whanne dubrike so / Archebysshop of Caerlyon'
With all estates / of all his hole homage
Assembled thar' / duke Erle lorde and baron'
By hole advise / of all the Regioun'
Vpon his hede / dyd sette the dyademe
In riall wyse / as dyd hym wele byseme[16]

Fortune was so / frendly at his byrthe
That of all folke / he was euer' wele beloued
And Rychesse als / so comforte euer' his myrth
That with pouerte / he was neuer' sore amoued
And through corage / his herte was ay commoued
To sette the londe / in dewe obedience
By all his wytte / and hole intelligence

And sodenly / the youth of all knyghthode
For' his largesse / and his liberalite
Approched so / and came to his manhode
To bene subgyttes / vnto his soueraynte
So hole fortune / hyr' werdes in proprete
Vnto his helpe / and honour' execute
That all his will / was sped and insecute

[68]

¶ How kynge Arthur' avowed to werray þe Saxons oute of Bretayne and on þe water of douglas discomfyte thaym

He made a Vowe / atte His Coronacioun'
That Saxons neuer' / his londe shulde enhabyte
Whiche slew hys Eme / by poyson' and toxicacioun'
his fadyr' als / that knyghtes were perfyte
Whose dethes so / he thought reuenge and quyte
To Scotlonde than / with all his hole power'
He spede hym faste / as seyth the Cronycler'

Whan Colgrym knew / that was the Capitayne
Of all Saxons / he gatte hym Scottes and peghtes
With his saxons / and mette the kynge to sayne
Vpon the water' / of douglas with grete feghtes
Whare the Saxons / wer' slayne anone don' reghtes
And Colgrym fled / away in pryuyte
Tyll that he cam / to yorke the stronge Cyte

Whither' the kynge / cam than and seged itte
Bot baldulf thanne / his brother' ner' by was londe
With sex thousonde / of men of armes fytte
Vpon the kynge / to fall he toke on' honde
Of whiche the kynge / was done to vndurstonde
Warefore he sente / Cador' duke of Cornewayle
To feght with hym / who vencoust his batayle

Wharefore Baldulf / his berde and hede dyd shaue
Feynynge hym than / to bene abordiour'
Arayed full lyke / a fole or' els a knaue
With harpe in honde / full lyke a losengeour'
Amonges the hoste / he yede as fals Faytour'
And with his lapes / so ner' the walles went
That thay within / hym knew and vp hym hent

¶ How Cheldryke with multi tude of Saxons londed in Albany whar' Arthure discomfyte thaym and after warde sone discomfyte thaym agayne

So cam worde to / the kyng by his espy
how duke cheldrike[18] / with payens multitude
Was comen oute / than new fro Germany
With sexe hundre / shyppes ful of Iuuentude
Of Armed men / and Archers multitude
And londed was / that tyme in Albany
And brente the londe / ther' thurgh his tyrany

For' whiche the kynge / by all his hole counsayle
To london' wente / and to kynge howel sente
his syster' sonne / that was with outen fayle
Kynge of lytyll Bretayne / so fayr' and gente
And prayd[19] hym / of helpe and socour'ment
For' whiche / he came / with fiftene thousond knyghtes
To helpe his Eme / with all his force and myghtes

At Hampton' Londe / he than with his meyne
Ressaued fayre / as dyd hym wele be seme
like his degre / in alkyn rialte
That men couthe wytte / or' els by reson deme
With that anone / assembled thare hostes breme
In days few / thay cam to Caer'lud courte
That lyncolne now / ys called in euery courte

And lindcolyne / dyd some men than it call
In Cronycles / as made is mencioun'
Whare Coligrym / and baldulf his brother' with all
Seged the toun' / with all intencyon'
Brennynge the londe / with strengh and subuencion'
Vnto the tyme / the kynges two ryght thore
Dyd with thaym feght / in batayle stronge and sore

And venquyste thaym / with grete humanyte
leuynge the sege / thay fled at all thar' myght
Vntyl a wode / nere by that same Cyte
hight Calidon' / with grete defence to fight
Whare than the kynges / two thay came full right
And seged thaym / by all the wode aboute
That on no syde / thay myght nowre whare breke oute

Whar' thay so war' / hungred and for' famysht
Tyll thay dyd graunte / oute of thare londe trewage
Vnto the kynge / so were thay almost ramyssht
And prayed hym so / that he wolde take hostage
And lete thaym passe / so home to thar' lynage
And neuer' more / agayn hym ought offende
To whiche Arthure / consent and made an ende

So than Cheldrike / Baldulf and Colgrym
Who Capteyns wer' / to all the saxons hoste
By thayr' letters / and seles assured hym
Hys men to bene / euer' more with outen boste
And germany / also thrugh all thar' coste
To bene his men / and yelde hym hole trewage
And thar' vpon' / delyuere hym hostage

¶ How Cheldryke Bal dulfe and Colgrym bicam kynge Arthurs men and[20] after werred on hym agayn at Bathe whar' he discomfyte thaym in bataill[21]

And whan thay wer' / vpon the se with sayle
As fals men shulde / at Toteneys londe agayne
And to seuerne / the countrey dyd assayle
And so to bathe / and seged it certayne
Whan it was tolde / the kynge he was not fayne
Thar' hostage than / with hym he led anone
To the Cyte / of bathe full faste gan gone

He hanged thar' / the hostage for dispyte
Right in thair' sight / and than to batayle wente
And many slew / that day with oute respyte
Tyll Saxons all / wer' sore for'hurte and shente
Wher'fore an hyll / thay toke for' strengh and hente
The whiche the kynge / with myght vpon' thaym' wan
And slew thaym doune / by many thousand than

Wher'fore thay fled / away in multitude
Vnto thar' shyppes / Colgryme and balduf slayne
By Arthurs myght / and by his fortitude
So with his swerde / he dalte his strokes gayne
That foure[22] hundred / he felled on the playne
That neuer' seth / on' grounde myght stonde ne ryse
his own' persone / so gretely dyd suffyse

Than sente he forth / Cador' that duke worthy
To folow on' / the Chace who with thaym mette
And slew / cheldrike / and all his saxony
Who brente / and waste / and strongly had ouersette
Deueshyre dorset / and also somersette
For' whiche he quytte / thaym than so full thayr' mede
That fro thens forthe / to ryde thay had no nede

¶ How whar' Scottes and peghtes biseged howell kynge of lasse bretayne in Alclude kynge Arthur' hym reskowed with hoste and droue thaym in to þe oute Iles

In this mene tyme / Arthur' herde how howell
His neuew was / be seged in Alclude
By Scottes and peghtes / that euer' wer' fals and fell
But whils thay were / holde lowe in seruytude
Wer'fore he wente / with myght of multitude
To Alclude so / his cosyn to reskowe
Delyuerde hym / as he had made avowe

He drofe thaym oute / into a loughe so grete
That fourty Iles / with in it dyd contene
From Ile to Ile / thay fled and had no mete
And sexty flodes / partyng tho yles be twene
And euery Ile / a Roche so had full clene
Of whiche watyrs / went none than to the se
Bot oon alone / in boke that I can se

¶ How the kynge of Irelonde with saxons cam in to Scotlond wham Arthur' discomfyte

In whiche tyme than / Sir Guyllomer' the kynge
Of Irelonde so / with grete power' dyd londe
In Scotlonde hole / the saxons into brynge
Whom Arthur' than / so fully gan with stonde
With batayle grete / that thay wer' Fayne to fonde
To Irelonde than / agayn' and forto fle
For' all thair' pryde / and contumacyte

Than came the lordes / and alle the hiegh estates
Bysshops prelates / and all the comonte
With relykes / and with cros full desolates
Besekynge hym / of his humylite
On thaym so sore / oppreste to haue pyte
Whom than he sawe / for' mercy crie and knele
Pyte hym made / to graunte thaym euery dele

¶ How the Archebisshop of Yorke shulde bene primate and metropolitane of Scolond[26]

To yorke he wente / and helde his Cristenmesse
Sorowynge for' / the chyrches desolacion
Whiche saxons had / distroyd thurgh cursydnesse
Whan seynt sampson / by malignacion'
The Archebysshop / was put fro Mynystracion'
Out of the se / was metropolitane
From humbre northe / all Albany in tane

In whiche he sette / pyrame his Chapelayne
To reule the chyrche / in alkyn' holynesse
With all the rightes / of Metropolitane
And kyrkes waste / agayne he gan redresse
Religeouse place / amendyd was I gesse
All folke exilde / and fro thar' right expelled
Agayne restored / whiche payenis had doun' felled

¶ Note how Arthure toke of the kynges of Albany homage[27]

Thre persones wer' / that tyme of blode riall
In Albany / Syr loth of louthione
That kynge was than / of louthian' ouer all
That is be south / the Scottisshe se allone
Syr' Agusell / of Albanactes echone
And Vrian / of murrefs was that day
Whiche of Arthur' / thar' londes had holden ay

¶ Arthur' wed Gaynore and raysed the Rounde Table of knyghtes worthy[28]

This kynge Arthur' / than wedded to his wyfe
Dame Gwaynor' / come of worthy blode Romayne
With duke Cador' / broughte vp fro byrth natyfe
Whose bewte[23] so / all others dyd dystayne
So excelent / the sothe of hyr' to sayne
And for' passynge / she was all creature
Hyr' to amende / than stretched noght nature

The table Rounde / of knyghtes honorable
That tyme was voyde / by grete defycience
So few thay wer' / thurgh werres fortunable
Thay[24] kept no reule / ne yit obedience
Wherfore the kynge / than by his sapience
The worthieste / of euery Reme aboute
In it[25] that tyme / he put withouten doute.

[70]

That tyme was / Syr Morvyde Erle of Gloucestre
And Manron[29] / Erle of Worcestre so stoute
Syr' Barent Erle / was than of Circestr'
Syr' Harand[30] Erle / of Shrewsbyry that men doute
Syr' Iugence Erle / of leycestre in Route
Syr' Argall Erle / of Warrewyke of grete prise
And Erle Curson / of chester' that was so wyse

names[35] of the knyghtes
of the Rounde table
and the Reule of the
same ordour'[36]

Kynmar' that tyme / Erle of Caunterbyry
Vrgen the Erle / was than so of Bathe
Galluc the Erle / was than of Salesbyry
Erle Ionatall / of dorchester' so rathe
Gurgoyne / the Erle / of herford dyd no skathe
And Syr Bewes Erle / of Oxenforde so wyse
Amorawde Erle / of Excestre of pryse

Kynge Agusell / that was of Albany
Kynge Vrian / of Murref with Ewayne
his sonne who was / than corageouse and manly
Kynge Loth þat was / than kynge of Louthiayne
Of demery[31] the kynge Syr Vriayne
That south wales / men now call and endoce
The kynge also / of North Wales called Venedoce

Cador' the duke / of cornewayle so plentyuous
Donand[32] Mapcoyl / Peredour' and Clenyus
Maheridour' / Mapclaude Griffud harageus
Gorbonyan' / Esidour'[33] and Heroyus
Edlem / Masgoyd . Kymbelyne and Cathleus
Mapcathel / Mapbangan and Kynkar'
Colflant[34] Makeclauke / Gorbodyan Kynmar'

These were the knyghtes / fully than acounted
That friste he made / of the table rounde
Two and fourty / persounes that amounted
That tyme no mo / was to that ordre bounde
Bot as oon' dyed / the kynge a nother' founde
Thar' reule was than / all wronges to represse
With thar' bodyse / whare law myght not redresse

no^w

Than was no knyght / acounte of hiegh empryie
Bot he wer' thrise / in Armes wele approued
Or' in batayll / had grete excercyse
With ladyse els / he was no thynge be loued
With whiche for' thay / wold not ben vnbyloued
So caused thaym / to haunten' chyualry
To wynne honour' / and thanke of thayr' lady

no^w[37]

¶ How kynge Arthure conquerde Irelonde Iselonde Gotlonde orcades danmark Freslond with many other londes & Iles[42]

The somer' nexte / he wente into Irelonde
And with batayle / and tryumphe it conquerde
And made the kynge / of hym to holde that londe
That wan it so / wit Caliburne his swerde
With whiche he made / all londes than so ferde
That they were yolde / to his subieccioun'
In his seruyce / to byde with affeccion

Iselonde Scotlonde / and also Orcadese
With all the Iles / aboute in Cyrcuyte
Danmarke freselonde / and norway is no lese
All wanne he so / than with his sworde perfyte
Whar' all his knyghtes / and prynces had delyte
To proue thaym selff / in batayles full sor' smyten'
As memory / of thaym is made and wryton[38]

So rose of hym / aboue all prynces fame
Of Conqueste grete / and all nobilite
Ther' was no prynce / that had so gode a name
For' whiche all folke / obeyed his souereynte
Aboue all other' / prynces in Cristynte
And specialy / all knyghtes of Iuuentude
Drew to his courte / and his excelsitude

Syr' loth he made / the kynge of all Norway
Hys syster' Anne / had wed in trew spousage
And crouned hym / with dyademe ful gay
To holde of hym / as for' his heritage
As Cosyn nexte / of kynge Sychelme[39] lynage
That of Norway / dyed kynge and to him gafe
hys Reme all hole / perpetualy to hafe

¶ How knyghtes of the table Rounde sought and acheved auentures[43]

Kynge Arthur' than / helde the[40] gretteste hous of name
Of Cristen kynges / was none so plentyuouse
That thurgh the world / of it than rose the fame
Whiche tyme his knyghtes / that wer' full Corageouse
Of the table rounde / thayr' reule so vertuouse
To execute / thay sought thayr' auenture
Thurgh londes fele / to proue what wer' thair' valure[41]

Whiche knyghtes so / had many auentur'
Whiche in this boke / I may not now compile
Whiche by thaym selff / in many grete scriptur
Bene tytled wele / and better' than I thys while
Can thaym pronounse / or' write thaym with my style
Whose makynge so / by me that was not fayred
Thurgh my symplesse / I wold noght wer' enpayred

[71][48]

For alle thare Actes / I haue not herde ne sene
Bot wele I wote / thay wolde all comprehende
More than the byble / thrise wryten[44] dothe contene
Bot who that wyll / labour' on itte expende
In the grete boke / of all the auentures
Of the Seynte Grale / he may fynde fele scriptures

Whiche specyfy / full mony auenture
Full meruelouse / to yonge mennes wytte
Of whiche myne age / ow now to haue no cure
Bot Rather' thaym / to leuen and omytte
To my maysters / that can thaym Intermytte
Of suche thynges / thurgh thair' hiegh sapience
Mor' godelily / than I can make pretence

¶ How Arthur' made al his knyghtes of þe Rounde table to telle hym al thair' auen tures whiche he[49] putte in writyng for Remembrance and for noon auaunt be accounted

Bot whan the kynge / longe tyme had so soiorned
In welthes grete / and hiegh prosperite
And all his knyghtes / wer' home agayn' retorned
To his howshold / full of all felicite
he made echone / to write his fortuyte
how hym by fell / in armes in his absence
To tyme he came / agayne to his presence

And euery day / afore the kynge at mete
Amonge his prynces / in open Audience
An Auenture / of Armes / and a fete
Reported was / so for' his reuerence
That dyd that dede / by suche experyence
And forto moue / his yonge knyghtes corages
Suche auenturs / escheuen in thayr' viage

¶ how he made new knyghtes of þe Rounde table for cause many wer' spent in þe werr'

By cause that in / his werres longe contened
The table Rounde / by gan a parte to fayle
For' som wer' slayne / in batayll mekel moued
And som by age / whan deth dyd thaym assayle
Wer' dede away / for' whiche by hole counsayle[45]
The kynge dyd make / knyghtes new for' comforte
Of it to kepe / the honour' and comporte

Syr' Gawen' sonne / to Lothe of Louthian
Who[46] kynge was than / of louthian' throughoute
And Syr launcelot / delake that noble man
And kynge Pelles / of northwales than was stoute
Syr Persyuall / whom mony men dyd doute
Lybews dysconne / and syr' Colygrenaunt[47]
Syr Leonell / degre and degreuaunt

Bors and Etcor / Syr' Kay and Bedwer'
Guytarde / and Bewes / of Corbenny so wyse
Syr' Irelglas / and Mordrede als in fer'
Who Gawayns brother' / was of ful grete Emprise
Bot som bokes sayne / Arthur' was so vnwyse
That he hym gatte / on his syster' dame Anne
Of louthiane / that was the quene so thanne

¶ Whar' kynge Arthur' helde moste vsualy his housholde in Bretayne[53]

In whiche tyme so / of reste and grete soiorne
The knyghtes all / of the table rounde
Grete auenturs / cheved and dyd perfourne
And brought tyl ende / thurgh out all bretayne grounde
By enchauntementz / that made wer' firste and founde
Whiche tyme so than / the kynge Arthur' riall
hys housholde helde / thurgh oute grete bretayne all

At Edynburgh / Stryuelyn' and dunbretayne
At Cumbyrnalde / dundonalde and at Perte
At Bamburgh als / at yorke the sothe to sayne
And at Carlele / with knyghtes manly and perte
And open house / he kepte ay in aperte
The table rounde / abowte he dyd remewe
In Euery place / whare that he remewed[50] newe

At london' als / Carnarvan and Cardyfe
At herforde als / Wynchester' and Carlyon'
In Cornewayle ofte / and dover' als ful ryfe
And ofte with in / the Ile of Aualon'
That Glasenbyry now is of Religion'
Thise wer' his places / and his habitacions
In whiche he had / his hertes consolacions

¶ The Reule of þe knyghts of þe Rounde Table[54]

The reule so of / that ordour' excellent
In londes all / for' passynge moste desyred
Was to distroye / sorsery and enchauntement
And rebellyon' / agayne the fayth conspyred
The kyrke wedows / and maydens that required
That wronged wer' / with batayle to redresse
Agayn al men that dyd thaym ought oppresse

Devourours als / of the comon' profyte
Rebelles agayne / the kynges dygnyte
Extorsioners / that poremen disheryte
Of londes or' gude / by myght or' subtylite
Whar' suche so wer' / with in any contre
If law myght noght / thay shuld make resistence
With batayll and / chyualrouse[51] defence

And euery yere / Vpon Whisson Euen
Thay shulde come all / vnto the kynges presence
And all that feste / in his courte byleuen
Bot if grete cause / that tyme made his absence
And who cam noght / his felows with grete feruence
That yer' shulde seke / and helpe hym at thar' myght
All seueraly / echone by hym selff right

And at that feste / the reule and ordynance
Was so that thay / shulde[55] tell thayr' auenture
What so thaym fell / that yere and what kyns chaunce
That myght be sette / in Romance or' scripture
And none auaunt / acounted bot nurture
To cause his felaws[56] / to do so eke the same
Thair auenture / to seke and gete a name

How Arthur' conquerde Fraunce with all londes longyne to it and slew kyng Froll and kynge offe Fraunce corounde[58]

But euer' as next / the valey is the hill
After' longe reste / so comyth sharpe labour'
Kynge Arthur' so / fermely had sette his will
To conquerre Fraunce / as his progenitour'
Maximyan / had done with grete honour'
Wharfore he sente / thurgh oute his homagers
Prynces and lordes / till come with thayre powers

And so Anone / to Fraunce full faste he spedde
Whiche was that tyme / a ful noble provynce
By Senatours / of Rome that power' hedde
To Frolle commytte / that was a manly prynce
Whom Arthur' sought / oute of this londe from hynce
To fyght with hym / or els to haue all Fraunce
For' euermore / in his high gouernaunce

Frolle fro hym fled / and myght not with hym dele
And helde hym in / the Cyte of parise
Whom Arthur' than / dyd sege with folke ful fele
And thought he shuld / hym hungre and enfamyse
For' fere of whiche / kynge Frolle by hole advyse
To Arthur' sente / that he wolde with hym fight
With honde for' honde / to Iugen' all the right

Off whiche profre / kynge Arthur' was ful light
At day assyned / right in an Ile thay mette
With oute the toune / bothe Armed wele and bright
And strokes sore / ayther' on other' sette
Bot in affecte / kynge Frolle so sore was bette
That dede he was / the tale forto abbregge
Arthur' hym slew with Caliburnes egge

So was the toune / of Parise to hym yolde
And entred yn / with all his hole power'
And kynge was thar' / and had it as he wolde
And gafe Howell / that was his neveu dere
A grete parte / of his hoste with hym in fere
To werr' vpon' / the duke of Aquytayne
Whiche Guyen is / and Paytow eke certayne

Kynge Howell so / sore faught with duke Guytarde
Of Guyen so / and made it all obay[59]
To kynge Arthure / and stonde at his awarde
Seruyce[60] to do / to his highnesse alway
And Arthur' with / his power' euery day
Hostayed the londe / and with knyghthode conquerde
All Fraunce thurgh out / with Caliburne his swerde

¶ What prynces obeyed to Kynge Arthur' & did hym homage & seruice[61]

To whom Howell / kynge of lesse bretayne
And Geryn Erle / of Chartes and Orlience
And duke Guytarde / also of Aquytayne
And all the lordes / of Fraunce to his presence
Came and obeyed / his hiegh magnyficence
The kynges als / of Nauerne and Arrogoyne
Of portyngale / Castele and Cateloyne

The duke of Sauoy / and the duke of Burgoyne
With all the prynces / in cyrcuyte aboute
Of Ostryche eke / the duke with oute essoyne
Who to hym cam / his lordshyp forto loute
The duke also / of loreyne with outen' doute
The dukes all / and prynces of Almayne
Of Saxony / and als of all Germayne

The dukes als / of Braban and Gellerlonde
The duke of Bayre / with riall company
The Erles also / of flaunders and holande
With mekyll folke / and grete Chyualry
Of whiche he made / knyghtes so than in hy
The worthyeste / of worship and knyghthode
In the table Rounde than of worthihode

And festayde thaym / by fourty days right
In paryse than / with all grete rialte
And Coronde was / in all the peples sight
And quene Gaynore / with hiegh nobilite
Corounde also / was in that same Cyte
At that same tyme / with all seruyce riall
That couthe be done / till estate imperiall

With Iustes eche day / for' loue of Ladyse speciall
Whiche with the quene / wer' dwellynge in seruyse
Whose bewte was / high in vniuersall
Some wedows / were / full womanly and wyse
Some wyfes wer' / of bewte bare emprise
And some virgyns / als Fresshe as rose in may
Some deflorate / whiche semed maydyns gay

Bot for' to speke / of Gaynores grete bewte
Whiche for' passynge / all others dyd excelle
And fourmed was / in all femynyte
Als ferr' as couthe / nature wyrke and expelle
Of womanhode / she was the flour' and welle
So Aungellyke / and so celestiall
That no bewte / myght hirs in ought appall

¶ How kynge Arthur' dwelled Nyne yer' in Fraunce in whiche tyme the knyghtes of þe Rounde table[63] sought and acheued many auentures

Nyne yere he helde / his riall se in Fraunce
And open howse / gretly magnifyde
Thurgh oute the worlde / of welth and suffisshaunce
Was neuer' prynce / so hieghly glorifyde
In whiche tyme so / the Rounde table multiplyde
And auenturs / dyd seke cotydialy
With grete honoure / as made his memory

And whan he had / so bene in Fraunce Nyne yer'
He toke purpose / to passe home to bretayne
At Caerlyon' / his Cyte fayre and clere
At pentecoste / to holde and to contayne
His Feste riall / thar' to be crounde agayne
For' whiche he made / somouns to euery prynce
And lordes all / of euery hole provynce

At it bene / and euery worthy knyght
He sente his lettre / thedyr' forto come
To his Cyte / that Carlyon' so hight
To whiche all men / that dwell of North halfe Rome
In seuerne myght / arrife both all and some
So uianigall[62] / that Ryuer' is of streme
That shyppes thar' / myght londe of euery Reme

And in that tyme / Arthur' helde his counsayle
At parisse than / pese and lawes to conferme
And ordynaunce / ther' made and gouernayle
And all customes / of olde he dyd afferme
His londes sette / for' tribute and for' ferme
By his balifs / and shirrifs all aboute
Thurgh his Regence / that tyl hym than dyd loute

He gaffe Bedwer' / that was his botyler'
The duchy so / all hole of Normandy
And kay he gaff / that than was his panter'
Of all Aungoy / the noble riche duchy
And other' prouynce / to men that wer' manly
He gaff full faste / in all that myght suffise
For' whiche his name / thurgh oute the worlde gan ryse

¶ How kynge Arthur' came to Bretayn coronde at Carlioun *aftir he departe oute of þe Reme of Fraunce*[65]

This noble kynge / to bretayne gan retorne
And at his terme / assigned so afore
At Carlyon' / he cam ther' to soiorne
His feste to holde / to prynces lesse and more
To lordes also / prelates and clerkes of lore
Knyghtes and squyers / with all the comonte
As Ordeyned was / by his hiegh mageste

On whissonday that hight so pentecoste
Kynges and prynces / thrugh his domynacion'
Compered thar' / of euery Reme and coste
To se that feste / and that solempnyzacion'
And seruyce Als / at his Coronacioun'
And of the quene / as for' hyr' corounement
That same day sette / togedyr' by oon assent

Archebysshops thre / at that feste dyd apere
Two hundreth als / of phlosophres[66] wyse
In astronomy / approued clerkes were
Thurgh whiche of thynge / to come thay couth provyse
And tell that shulde / byfall and on what wyse
Suche was thayr' witte / and als thair' grete doctryne
Of thynge to come / the certayn' to diffyne

Whiche kynges and prynces / euerychone
And Erles als / with other' noble knyghtes
Of the table Rounde / wer' knyghtes made anone
Whiche presed wer' / in batayle and in fyghtes
For' passynge other' / that moste had sene by sightes
Of honour' and / trauayle of knyghtlyhode
Of nurtur' als / worshyp and worthyhode

Whiche prynces so / it nede no mor' reherse
For' all that I / haue named so aboue
By syde prynces / that wer' his offycerse
That bounden' wer' / by homage and by loue
To serue hym thar' / or' whar' that he remoue
Whiche wer' two kynges / of wales that wer' manly
And kynges thre / also of Albany

Kynge Guyllomar' / that kynge was of Irelonde
And Gunuase als / the kynge of Orcadese
Kynge Malvase als / that than was of Iselonde
And doldayn[66] kynge / of Gothlonde was no lese
And Aschill kynge / of denmarke proude in prese
And loth also / that kynge was of Norway
And duke Cador' / of Cornewayle redy ay

The kynge of Man / the dusze piers all of Fraunce
And of bretayne / all hole the baronage
With prouostes all / that Cytese gouernaunce
In bretayn' had / by Auncyen pryuylage
To maken Ioy / and also sure plausage
Of his tryumphe / and coronacion'
That than shuld be / with grete solempnyzacion'

Whom seynte Dubrike / the Archebisshop so wyse
Of Caerlyon' / that than was hyegh prymate
The kynge corounde / in alkyns riall wyse
As longed to / his hyegh and dygne estate
And as of olde / it was preordynate
With Coron' riche / of golde and dyademe
That neuer' prynce / it dyd so wele be seme

The Archebysshop / of london' helde so than
The kynges right Arme / that was so his seruyce
The Archebysshop of yorke the lefte vp wan
That tyme so was / his dette and excercyse
The seruyce all / and als the obsequyse
Seynt dubrike dyd / so in that mynster' fayre
Of seynte Aron / whar' than was all repayre

Whiche was the se / than Metropolitane
Foundyd fully of gode religion'
Whar' byried was / seynt dubrike not to layne
To whom the folke / in thar' opynyon'
For' all desese / had grete deuosion'
To seke hym ofte / and make thair' offerynge
So gloryus / was he in all wyrkynge

How the kynges of Albany of Wales & þe duke of Cornwaill bar' four' swerdes at his coronacioun afore hym[68]

Kynge Agusell / of Albanyse provynce
The kynge of demecy[67] that south wales hight
The kynge of Venodoce / that worthy prynce
That now north wales / men call it so full right
The duke Cadour' / of Cornewayle prynce of myght
Four' swerdes of golde / afore kynge Arthur' bare
As for' thar' londes / so holdyn of hym ware

It was seruyce / of thayr' Londes of right
Whiche thayr' Elders / of longe Antiquyte
Afore had done / till his Auncesters of myght
At all suche festes / of grete solempnyte
Thus fro the chyrche / that was the prymates se
Thay worshyp hym / so in that humble wyse
Of olde dute / hym doynge that seruyce

Many thousond / knyghtes homward so wente
Afore hym than / to his palays riall
Fresshely arayed / in clothes of Ryche extente
With thousondes fele[69] / of Mynstrals pryncipall
The noyse of whiche / was so celestiall
Thar' couthe no wight / it fro ioy of heuen'
Dyscerne in ought / so wer' thay lyke and euen'

And fro the chyrche / of seynt Iuly that tyde
The quene Gaynore / the godeliest on lyue
With kynges led / in riall clothes and syde
Corounde with golde / richely as his wyfe
With maydens fele / to nombir' infynytife
That no wyght couthe / thaym tell ne yit discryue
Ne yit in boke / no clerke that couth subscryue

The quenes of Northe / Wales and of Albany
Of South Wales als / than dyd hyr' that seruyce
The duchesse with / of Cornewayle certanly
The fourth she was / whiche dyd that obsequyse
Thay bare afore / hyr' than as was the gyse
Four' doufes white / with knyghtes multitude
And Mynstralsy / so full of dulcydude

¶ How the quenes of South Wales North Wales & þe duchesse of Cornwayll bar' four' whyte culuers afore the quene Gaynore[70]

The kynge was sette in se imperiall
So was the quene / with prynces of dygnyte
And serued wele / at that high feste riall
Duke kay Stewarde / was than by hole decre
For' his wysdome / and his habilite
Afore the seruyce / came with a yerde in honde
Of syluer' fyne / afore the kynge dyd stonde

A thousond knyghtes / with hym to serue the hall
Bothe he and thay / clothed all in Ermyne
From the dressour' / the mete to ber' ouer' all
With squyers Marshals / and vsshers gode and fyne
And ay afore / a lady femynyne
A worthy knyght / was sette for' grete comforte
Hyr' for' to chere / with daliance and disporte

And duke Bedwer' / Was chefe buteler
A thousond knyghtes / had clothed in a sute
In clothe of golde / as fyne as myght affer'
Whiche serued so / the drynkes of refute
Of dyuerse wynes / ther' spente and distribute
So plentyvouse / that wonder' was to se
The grete foyson' / of wynes and dyuersite

Thetys that was / of waters chefe goddesse
Thar' had of thaym / that tyme no Regyment
For Bachus so / thar' regned with all fulnesse
Of myghty wynes / to euery mannys intente
Shad oute plente / so at that Corounemente
To all estates / that ther' wer' moste and leste
For' honour' so / and worshyp of the feste

The tyme so of / that feste imperiall
Eueriche a day / Iustes and turnament
Thik folde thay made / for' ladyse in speciall
With all maystrise / prouynge in thair' entente
That longed so / to knyghthode and appente
And Musycanes / songe notes musicall
And poetes shewed / thair' muse poeticall

The myrth and Ioy / the richesse and aray
The fare the feste / the worshyp and seruyse
The nurtur' and / the bewte of ladyse gay
Ther' couth no wyght / with all his wytte suffise
To tell it all / by ought he couth devyse
So riall was / it all in generall
And for passynge / estate imperiall

And euery day / the quene yede sertanly
To that Mynster' / with many worthy man
Of seynte Iuly / who Aarons felaw bodyly
Was whan Maxence / had sent Maximyan
Into this londe / whare he dystroyed than
The Cristen' fayth / and slewe than seynte Iuly
And seynte Aron / thurgh his fals Tyrany

Whiche Mynster' than / a Nuniry was deuoute
Of vyrgyns clene / with out any vyce
That serued god / full wele bothe in and oute
In prayers and in all devyne seruyce
Whiche she vp helde / alway of hiegh emprice
And thought ther' in / to haue hyr' sepultur'
Whan that hyr' lyfe / no lengar' myght endur'

[75v]

But seynte Dubrike / that than Archebysshop stode
Cesed mekely / and hole for' soke his cure
Purposynge than / in holy lyfe and gode
In Ermytage / whils that he myght endure
All solitary / for' any auenture
To plesen god / in prayer' wache and excuby
Fastynge penaunce / and leue his prymacy

¶ Whan Saynt dubrike dyed seynt dauid was made Archebisshop of Caerlyoun[72]

In whose stede so /dauyd the kynges Eme
Was sette whose lyfe / ensample of all godenesse
Was after' than / as sonne doth sprede his beme
After' mystes foule / and grete derkenesse
Who after' wardes / seynt dauyd was doutlesse
An holy saynt / and canonysed
By all the chyrche / and autorised

The Ile that was / of Alclude than I gesse
Whiche dunbretayn / hatte now and is named
That tyme was voyde / and also bysshoplesse
Whiche se for' sothe / full gretely than was famed
Whiche at Glaskowe / translate ys and hamed
The kynge gafe than / estate pontificall
To Elidenne / of that se Cathedrall

¶ Elyden was þan made bisshop of Alclude the whiche som say it is a litil fro Carlele at ende of the Peghte Walle & som say it is Carlele & other som say it is dunbretayne *Bot aftir Policronica*[73] *it is at ende of þe peght wall and aftir Bede also*[74]

And whan that feste / riall was dissolued
That euery prynce / homwarde wolde retorne
With in his mynde / he thought and faste reuolued
With plesance howe / he myght shorte his soiorne
And to his londe / agayne for'to attorne
For' whiche thay sought / to his magnyficence
All holyly / with all thair' diligence

The kynge than dyd / the grete estates rewarde
As dyd acorde / to thair' nobilite
So dyd he other' / by gode and hole awarde
Londes thaym gafe / of grete sufficiente
Acordynge to / thair' oportumyte
So largely / that thurgh the world his name
Of liberalte / than rose and spronge the fame

He thonked thaym / of thair' comynge so ferr'
Prayand thaym all / eche prynce in his estate
To se his welfare / was no thynge to hym derr'
Than thair' persons / with hym resociate[71]
And heuy was / of cher' and desolate
Whan thay departe / so fro his hiegh presence
Whiche dyd excede / all prynces regymence

[76]

¶ How whan his knyghtes of the Rounde table wer' present: that Galaad sette and acheued the sege perilouse in the Rounde table *as the grete story of þe saynt Graal proporte wiþ þe story of the grete auentures of Arthure and his knyghtes contene after Waltier of Oxenford þat put in wrytynges in policraticon þat he made of Cornewail and Wales*[77]

And at that feste / than next of Whissonday
His knyghtes all / than of the table Rounde
With in bretayne / that wer' reseant ay
Appered hool / afore the kynge that stounde[75]
As by the reule / of it thay wer' sore bounde
At his Cyte / of Carlyon so Fayre
Whar' than his courte / riall dyd repayre

Whare Galaad / of fiftene yer' of age
The godelyest wyght / afore that men had sene
Whom launselot gat / by hole and full knowlage
Of pelles doughter' / that longe the kynge had bene
Of Venodoce / after' whome she shuld be quene
Came sodenly / at mete in to the hall
Ariued[76] full clene / obayed the kynge in all

And after' warde / the quene with hyegh honour'
The lordes all / and knyghtes of worthynesse
And ladyse fayre / and fressh of thar' colour'
And than he yede / vnto the sege doutelesse
Of the Rounde table / with full grete hardynesse
And sette hym doune / whiche was the sege perilouse
Whar' neuer' none satte / bot Arthur' redoutouse

For' all other' / that it had presumed
All vtterly / were shamed and mescheued
Or' brente ther' in / or' other' wyse consumed
Saufe he allone / that had it wele escheued
For' whiche the knyghtes / echone hole beleued
He was the same / persone of whom Merlyne
Sayde shulde descende / of Nacyan by lyne

The tente persone / fro hym lynyaly
Who shulde acheue / and fully brynge to ende
The auenturs / as made is memory
Of the seynte Graal / whiche no man ther' than kende
For' whiche thay all / anone to hym attende
In all worshyp / to do hym high plesaunce
As he in whom / thay truste grete gouernaunce

At Souper' als / on' whissonday at euen'
Vnto his sege / he wente with grete constance
And sette hym doun' / his fortune forto preuen'
Whiche wele he cheued / with cherefull countenance
To all the knyghtes / full hyegh and grete plesance
Trustynge fully / he shulde do grete honour'
To all knyghthode / that was in that ordour'

¶ How the Saynt grale appered in kynge Ar thur[82] hows at souper' and how Galaad made avowe to seke it to he myght knowe it clierly[83] To whom his Felaws gafe thair' seruyce a ȝer'[84] *as is contened in þe storie of þe seint Grale writen by Giralde Cambrense in his Topographie of Wales and Cornwail*[85]

At whiche souper' / the wyndows all dyd spere
And dores als / with noyse full merveillouse
Right by thaym selff / of whiche all men had fere
Trustynge ther' came / som case auenturouse
And with that so / the Saynte Graall[78] preciouse
Flawe all aboute / with in the hall full ofte
Flyghtrande full faste / aboue thaym all on lofte

And sodenly the wyndows / gan to opyn'
The dores also / as sayth the Cronycler'
And forth it wente / and eche man gat his wopen'
Bot more of it / thay couth not se ne here
Bot on the morowe / Galaad dyd appere
Afore the kynge / at mete and made a vowe
To seke it euer' / till that he fynde it mowe

Wyth that the knyghtes / that wer' auenterouse
Of the rounde table / thar' graunted hym that yer'
Thair' seruyce hole / his vow so corageouse
For to acheue / and also to conquere
To whiche thay made / avowes synguler'
Praynge the kynge / Galaad to make knyght
The whiche he dyd / and gaffe[79] hym armes right

To whom he sayde / I shall no shelde me take
Afore I haue / it gete by auentur'
Ne two nyght ligge / in o place for' your' sake
Whils I may ryde / and with trauayll endur'
Tyll I haue founde / this thynge in all fygur'
And fully know / fro whyne it came and howe
And what it is / here make myne avowe

With that he toke / his leue and forth he rode
And all the knyghtes / of the table rounde
Toke[80] leue echone / no lengar' ther' abode
But forth with hym / thay rode as thay wer' bounde
By thar' avowes / whiche thay had made that stounde
For whiche the kynge / morned with dolefull herte
At thar' partynge / with wepynge teres and smerte[81]

¶ How kynge Arthure made his compleynt At thaire departynge[86]

Saynge allas / what shall I do or' say
My knyghtes all / that wer' my Ioy and hele
The membres eke / to kepe my body ay
My soules ese / and all my hertes wele
My londes helpe / in nede full trew and lele
Thus sodenly / from me to passe thys stounde
Vnto myne herte / it is the dethes wounde

O god seth deth / wolde briste myne herte in tweyne[87]
Who shall meyntene / my Coroun[88] and my rightes
I trow no more / to se thaym efte agayne
Thus hole to gedyr' / and so godely knyghtes
Wold god I myght / make myne a vowe and hyghtes
To folow thaym / in what londe so thay go
And take my parte / with thaym in wele and wo

¶ How Syr Galaad had hys sheelde[90] swerde[91] and his speer' at Aualon and how he acheued the saynte grale and made was kynge of Sarras and made knyghtes of the ordour of Saynt grale in significacoun of the Fraternite that Ioseph of Arymathy had made afor' *as Girald aforsaide specifieth in his saide topographie of Wales and Cornwall*[92]

With that Galaad / rode forthe so with his route
At euery way / he made a knyght departe
To tyme thay all / seuerally so wer' gone oute
And none lefte than / so had echone thair' parte
And iff on mette / an other' in any arte
His reule was so / he shulde his felawe tell
His Auenturs / what so that hym be fell

And als sone / as thar' way lay sondry wyse
Thay shulde departe / and mete no more agayne
Bot auenture / it made thurgh excercyse
Of grete laboure / that thaym did so constrayne
By dyuerse stretes / whiche to gedir' layne
And whan he had / his felawes all convayed
He chese his way / full like a knyght arayed

Bot so Galaad / than came to Aualone
Whar' holy men / he founde of grete perfeccion'
Whiche wer' full glad / of hym than euerychone
And made hym cher' / with all affeccion'
Thay shewed hym thar' / thynges in thayr' subieccion'
A shelde a spere / a sworde as thar' was breued
Whiche neuer' man bare / bot he wer' sone mescheued

Bot than thay sayde / in bokes thay founde it wreton'
Kynge Eualache / the shelde of olde there lefte
Whiche is all white / as ye shall se and wyton'[89]
With crosse of blode / fro Iosep nose byrefte
Who sayde ther' shulde / no wyght than ber' it efte
With outen deth / Mayme or' aduersite
Bot oon that shulde / leue in vyrgynyte

The spere the swerde / was by duke Seraphe
Ther' lefte that tyme / who after hight Nacyen
Of whiche thay founde / writen of Antiquyte
The same periles / who bare thaym after then
Sauf he allone / that wer' amonge all men
A vyrgyn knowe / and in vyrgynyte
Shulde de at laste / and of his blode laste be

And shulde Acheue / the seynte Graall worthyly
And kynge so be / of Sarras with outen doute
Of Orboryke / also duke verryly
By heritage / of Auncestry thrugh oute
And cheue he shulde / amonges all the route
The sege perilouse / in the table rounde
That neuer' myght knyght / withouten dethes wounde

What shuld I more / say of thys worthy knyght
That afterward / acheued this prophecy
For' as it spake / so was he after' right
And verifyed / full hole and openly
As written had / Iosep off Aramathy
That holy knyght / with god full well beloued
As by his werkes / it is welle sene and proued

The shelde he hange / vpon his shulder' than
And gyrde hym with / that swerde of grete emprise
The spere in honde / he toke full lyke a man
And toke his horse / right on a knyghtly wyse
The holy men / he prayed withoute fayntyse
To pray for' hym / with besy herte and pure
And forthe he rode / to seke his auenture

That euery yere / the knyghtes at Whissonday
To Arthur' came / so by his ordynance
And tolde hym all / thair' Auentures ay
Whiche he dyd putte / in boke for' remenbrance
So dured thay / and kepte that gouernance
By yeres fele / and ay agayn retorned
At that same feste / whare that the kynge soiorned

Bot so it fell / Galaad was than kynge
Of Sarras and / of Orberike all hale
Vpon' his queste / bysyly pursuynge
Whar' he sette vp / the table of seynte Grale
In whiche he made an ordre vyrgynale
Of knyghtes noble / in whiche he satte as chefe
And made suche brether' / of it as wer' hym lefe

Syr' Bors was oon / an other' syr' percyuall
Syr' claudyus / a noble knyght of Fraunce
And other' two / ner' of his blode with all
Thre knyghtes als / withouten variaunce
Of danmarke so / of noble gouernaunce
And thre knyghtes / als of Irelonde excelente
Whiche twelue were all / of noble regymente

[78]

¶ What the Reule of ordour of Saynt Graal was her' is expressed and notifyed *as is contened in þe book of Josep of arymathie and as it is specified in a dialoge þat Gildas made de gestis Arthur'*

Whose reule was this / by Galaad Constytute
To leue euermore / in clennesse Virginall
Comon profyte / alway to execute
All wronges redresse / with batayll corperall
Whar' law myght nought / haue course iudiciall
All fals lyuers / his londe that had infecte
For' to distroy / or of thair' vice correcte

The pese to kepe / the laws als sustene
The fayth of Criste / the kyrke also protecte
Wydews maydyns / ay whare for' to mayntene
And chyldre yonge / vnto thar' age perfecte
That thay couthe kepe / thaym selfe in all affecte
Thus sette it was / in hole perfeccioun'
By gode advise / and full cyrcumspeccion'

So endurynge full / longe and many yer'
To fate of dethe / made perturbacion'
And toke his soule / vnto the blisse ful clere
Ther' in euermore / to haue his habitacion'
Eternaly / with outen lamentacion'
Whiche tyme than so / he made Syr Borse ther' kynge
That ordre forthe / to kepen' ouer' all thynge

Gildas de gestis arthur[93]

¶ How Percyuall broughte kynge Galaad hert closed in gold to biry at Aualon and all the auentures of þe Saint Graal wryten to þe kynge Arthur' whiche he[94] made bene Remembred in bretayn *in grete wrytynges and notable as Giraldus Cambrenn[95] wryteþ in hys Topographie of Cornwail and Wales[96]*

So after' his deth / agayne the whissonday
Syr' percyuall / came into grete bretayne
And dyuerse knyghtes / that wer' with Galaad ay
Of that ordour' / so cam with hym agayne
At whiche tyme so / the kynge of thaym was fayne
And asked how / kynge Galaad his compere
Dyd far' of hele / full faste he dyd enquere

Who tolde hym all / the wonder' auentures
That neuer' man myght / acheue bot he alone
Whiche kynge arthur / than putte in hole scriptures
Remembred euer' / to be whan he wer' gone
Whiche meruelouse / so wer' and many one
Fro tyme he wente / so fro his heigh presence
Vnto his deth / in knyghtly diligence

And to the kynge / his herte in golde preserued
As Galaad had / comaunde he than presente
Besekynge hym / for' that he had hym serued
It to entere / at Aualon anente
The sepultur' / and verry monument
Whare Iosep lyeth / of Aramathy so gode
By syde Nacien / that ner' was of his blode

And ther' to sette / his shelde that Iosep made
Whiche was the armes / that we seynt Georges call
That aftir' thar' / full many yer' abade
And worshypt wer' / thurgh out this Reme ouer all
In so ferre forthe / that kynges in especiall
Thaym bare alway / in batayle whar' thay wente
Afore thaym euer' / for' spede in thar' entente

Whose hole requeste / the kynge anone dyd spede
With all his knyghtes / in honorable wyse
His herte enteerde / at Aualon' I rede
Whar' wen sayde than / that Nacyen' so lyse
With dirige / and deuoute exequyse
In all suche wyse / as longed to a kynge
And als his shelde / a boue hym ther' he hynge

¶ How templers and hospi
tulers wer' founded in
figur' & significacoun of
the Fraternyte & ordour'
of the Saynt Grale
And the table Rounde
was made in significacoun
of the Saynte Grale[100]

Of whiche Ordre / of seynte Graal so clene
Wer' after' longe / founded than the templers
In figur' of it / writen' as I haue sene
Oute of the whiche / bene now hospitulers
Growen vp full hiegh / at Rodes with outen' peres
Thus eche ordre / were founded vpon' other'
All as on / and echone others brother'

So was also / the table Rounde araysed
In remembrance / all of the worthy table
Of the seynte Grale / whiche[97] Iosep a fore had raysed
In hole fygure / of Cristes souper' comendable
Thus eche ordour' / was grounded resonable
In grete vertu / and condygne worthynesse
To goddes plesyr' / and soules heelfulnesse

¶ How Arthur' helde hys
Feest at Carlioun whar'
the Ambassatours off
Rome toke hym lettres fro
lucyus Emperoure[101]

At pentecoste / than nexte ther' after' folowynge
The kynge wyllynge / with hertes sore desyre
To sene his knyghtes / olde also and ȝynge
Dukes and erles / thurghoute his hole Empyre
And barons all / and knyghtes he dyd requyre
To ben with hym / than at his feste riall
At Carlyon' / that Camalot some dyd call[98]

The kynges and prynces / and prelates sprittuall
Of wales Irelonde / and Iles of Orchades[99]
Of denmarke als / and Norway than with all
Of Albany / and of Gothlonde no lese
Of Iselonde als / he loued so wele grete prese
The dusze piers all / thurghoute the Reme of Fraunce
Of lesse bretayne / the kynge with all plesaunce

Whiche came all hole / at his high comaundemente
In grete aray / for' worshyp of his feste
At whiche feste thanne / was redde by his comaundente
Eche day at mete / whanne serued wer' moste and leste
Feel Auentures / of knyghtes whiche had preste
In batayls sore / and had grete worthynesse
In thair' labour' / and knyghtly besynesse

This feste so dyd / by fourty days endur'
With myrthe and Ioy / with songe and mystralsy
Iustes euery day / for' ladyse fresshe and pure
At tournament / his knyghtes to magnyfy
And Entyrludes / played full coriously
Reuell daunsynge / and louynge paramours[102]
Romauns and gestes / redynge of grete honours

The metes and drynkes / wer' ther' so plentyuouse
That all men were amervelde of the feste
The kynge also / of gyftes bountyuouse
The quene also / to alle men moste and leste
Grete gyftes gafe / and many men encreste
So godely was / hyr cher' and daliance
To euery wight / it was a suffisshance

So at that feste / whils that he helde the dese
Twelue knyghtes came / of Romayns gode and wyse
With olyfe braunche / in honde withouten' prese
An esy pase / as legates dyd suffise
Vpon' thayr' knes / with dew and hole advise
Delyuerd hym / the letters to hym sente
By Iucyus / Emperour' whiche thus mente

¶ The Emperours lettre
For truage & tribute[103]

Iucyus of / Rome the Emperour'
And procuratour' / for' all the hole senate
Of the publyke / profyte chieff gouernour'
By hole Senate / made and denomynate
To Arthur' kynge / of bretayne inordinate[103]
Sendyth gretynge / as thou haste deserued
Now late in Fraunce / whiche was to vs preserued

Meruelynge myche / of wronges whiche thou haste done
With in oure londe / of Fraunce by grete rigoure
With outen' right / that better' had ben vndone
Bot if thy wytte / amende that foule erroure
Of whiche seth tyme / that thou was gouernoure
No tribute payed / bot as thyne own' conqueste
Haste holden' it / euer' vndr' thyne arreste

And for˙ thou haste / no wyll it to amende
Or˙ was so proude / to do that cruell dede
Kynge Frolle / to sla till vs that dyd apende
And mekyll mor˙ / for˙ that thou˙ takes none hede
Of the estate / imperiall we lede
To whiche all londes / tribute pay and trewage
Sauf thou˙ allone / gaynstondest of thyne outrage

Wharfore straytely / we byd the and comaunde
That From Auguste / now next with in a yer˙
Thou come to vs / and pay all our˙ demaunde
And trewage whiche / thou˙ haste of thy power˙
Of bretayne longe / with holden so in fere
And thy defautes / amende thou dyd in Fraunce
By sentence of / thy lordes and ordynaunce

And els we shall / approche to thy countre
And what so that / thy wodenesse hath vs refte
With swerdes we shall / it make restored be
To our˙ Senate / as friste we wer˙ enfefte
The lyfelode that / thy Fadyr˙ so the lefte
Thou arte full lyke / for˙ thyne intrusion˙
To lese and brynge into confusion˙

Written˙ At Rome / in the Consistory
By hole advyse / of all the wyse Senate
At paske laste paste / to byde in memory
Remembred ther˙ / and fully approbate
Lesse thou forȝette[105] / our˙ lettre and the date
And lay it so / in all forȝetilnesse
Trustynge in vs / the same defaute I gesse

With that the kynge / wente to the Geantz tour˙
With barons that / wer˙ ther˙ of his counsayll
To haue advyse / how to the emperour˙
He shulde than wryte / agayn˙ for˙ his avayll
Of whiche so wyse / wold not for˙ yet ne fayll
So wer˙ thay made / to Lucyus and endyte
Whiche spake right thus / for˙ answer˙ infenyte

¶ The lettre and answer˙
of kynge Arthure to
the same Emperoure
and how he titled hym
of right to be Emperour˙[107]

Arthur˙ the kynge / of all the grete bretayne
And Emperour˙ of Rome / by alkyns right
With wronge / deforced by lucyus Romayne
Pretendynge hym / for˙ Emperour˙ of myght
To the same Syr / lucyus of his vnright
Vsurpour˙ / of the se imperiall
Sendyth gretyng / as enmy moste mortall[106]

To the Senate of Rome / it is wele knowe
How that Cesar' / Iulyus with maystry
Had trewage here / bretayne than was so lowe
By treson / of Androges / and trechery
That brought hym in / by his grete policy
With outen right / or' tytle of descente
All full agayne / the barons hole consente

Agayne all right / he had it by maystry
And what so he / with wronge so dyd possede
Lefull to vs / is to withstonde for' thy
That lawe wyll so / to it who takyth hede
What thynge by man / with wronge is had in dede
Fro hym that Aughte / it hole and skyllfully
By none other' / had may be lawfully

¶ Quicquid iniuste ab aliquo rapitur numquam ab alio iuste possidetur vt in lege ciuili & Imperatoria patet[108]

By whiche pretence / thy wronge we shall defende
And holde oure Reme / so in oure friste estate
Of seruage fre / as it to brute appende
Who had it fre / a fore that Rome bar' date
Whose right to vs / is nowe determynate
And by suche right / as thou doste now pretende
We may clayme Rome / and to the empyr' ascende

For' kynge belyne / that was our' auncestre
And brenny als / the kynge of Albany
Thay fully wan / and hole dyd sequestre
The londes hool / so vnto Romany
Whiche after' / thay had by victory
And satte right in / the se imperiall
Whar' no prynce / was / that tyme to thaym egall

the first title by Belyne and Brenny[109]

the seconde title by Constantyne & *maximian* [110]

Whose whole estate / is now till vs descende
Bot yit we haue / a better' tytle of right
Tyll the Empyre / whiche that we wyll pretende
To sette so by / all wronge conqueste and myght
Constantyne / seynt Elyne sone so wyght
By right of blode / of Constance doun' descent
Emperour' was / by Romaynes hole consent

¶

cui descendebat in e[...] tam per mortem patris[111] quam per eleccionem[112] senatoram quam per eleccionem totius comunitatis Romane

Maximyan' / was hole the emperoure
Also by ful / decre of the sanate
Who next heyr' was / to constantynes honoure
Whose bothe estates / by law preordynate
We haue wherefore / of Rome we clayme estate
Of the Empyre / the se imperiall
By iuste title / of law iudiciall

Wharfore we wylle / to Rome come and aproche
By that same day / whiche that thou haste prefyxte
The tribute whiche / thou wolde to the Acroche
Nought forto pay / as thou haste sette and fyxte
Bot of the thar' / with Senate intermyxte
To takeTribute / and holde the Souereyn' Se
In all that longe / to the the Emperialte

And iff[113] thou like / me sonner'[114] forto seke
Brynge Romany / with the what day thou will
With me I shall / so than brynge bretayn' eke
And whiche so of / vs two may other' kyll
Bere Rome away / and bretayne bothe ful still
Writon' at our' / Cyte of Carlyon'
By hole advyse / of all our' region'

He gafe vnto / that hiegh Ambasshiate
Full riche gyftes / and golde ynough to spende
And bade thaym bere / thar' lordes in hool Senate
His letters so / whiche he than to thaym sende
And bade thaym say / that sonner'[115] than thay wende
He shulde thaym se / and bade thaym nought thynke longe
For' in shorte tyme / he shulde bene thaym amonge

¶ How Arthur' toke his viage
To Feght with þe Emperour'
lucius hiberus assocyed with
Emperoure leo[118]

This noble kynge / Arthur' / than forth prevyde
For' his vyage / agayne the Emperour'
His letters oute / he made and sygnyfyde
To all the londes / of whiche he was protectour'
Chargynge thaym all / to come for' hys honour'
On thair' beste wyse / hym to acompany
Of Rome forto / conquer' the Monarchy

Whiche by processe / of tyme as thay myght come
Thay mette Arthur' / ay whar' in place aboute
To tyme thay were / of myght to go to Rome
So grete hys hoste / was sembled and so stoute
And at Barbflete / in Normandy no doute
Thay londed all / with wyndes prosperouse
Whare more power / thaym mette full bataylouse

Thar' came the kynges / of Spayne and portyngale
Of Nauerne als / the kynge of Aragoyne
The dusze piers / all / of Fraunce thurghoute full hale
The dukes also / of Guyen and Burgoyne
Of Braban Gelre / Sauoy and loroyne[116]
The Erles also / of Fla[und]ers[117] and Selonde
And dukes all / of Almayne and holonde

[81]

¶ How Arthur' faughte with a Geant at Seynte Mighell mounte in Bre tayne and slew hym in hys viage to Rome

Than was it tolde / to kynge Arthur' full right
A Geant grete / for' waxen' and horrible
Thanne ravyssht had / Elyne his nece so bright
Whiche for' bewte / than was full possyble
For' any prynce / haue wed and admyttible
Kynge Howell Syster' / she was to Arthur' ner'
In lesse bretayne / that tyme she had no per'

Whiche Geant so / ther' durste no man assayle
Bot he thaym slewe / or' other wyse dyd devour'
Halfe quyke he ete / thaym so it was mervayle
For' whiche the folke / aboute made grete murmour'
Who on the heght / of Myghelmount dyd bour'[119]
Whar' he that mayde / with in his Armes had slayne
His luste to do / so dyd he hyr' constrayne

Right so ther' came / bedwer' by Arthur' sente
Vnto the hyll / whar' he a woman fonde
Compleynynge sore / that seyde hym hyr' entente
How Elene was / brought so ouer' the sonde
And she also / right by a Geantz honde
A how he had / so by hyr' lady layne
That she was dede / and by that Tyrant slayne

And so she sayde / he will do now with me
At his comynge / als faste he is so grym
Ther' fore ye byde / no lenger' her' bot fle
He is so ferse / cruell als and brym
He wyll yow Ete / and rife fro lymme to lym
So huge he is / ther' may no wyght with stonde
his cruelte / so hath he stroyed this londe

Syr' Bedwer' than / till Arthur' wente agayne
And tolde hym all / the case how was befall
For' whiche Arthur' / wolde thedyr' soth to sayne
To feght with hym / with hande for' hand at all
Syr' Bedwer' than / and Kay dyd with hym call
And to the mounte / thay rode with right gode spede
Whan that the se / was ebbe as it was nede

Thre[120] men with thaym / thar' horse to kepe and holde
A voydynge thaym / and wente vp to the hyll
Whar' Bedwer' than / and Kay that wer' so bolde
He lafte and bad / thaym byde hym ther' full still
Tyll with that fende / he had done all his will
And to hym wente / with all the ire he myghte
With Caliburne / his sworde hym stroke full righte

[81v]

Suche strokes thay gafe / that wounder' wer' to here
Syr' Bedwer' and / Syr Kay myght here and Se
And were full ferde / the Geantz grete power'
Ouer' com shulde than / thayr' lorde thurgh grete pouste
So huge he was / and horrible on to se
That Arthur' was / bot lyke a childe to hym
So large he was / and ther' to stoute and grym

So longe thay faught and sore with strokes hatouse
That Arthur' had / hys will and victory
And slew hym thare / that was so vigorouse
Than wente he to / to bedwer' and kay on hy
And bade thaym ther' / for' sygne and memory
Of his tryumphe / and batayle Conquerouse
Strike of the hede / of that foule fende hydouse

And rode so forthe / vnto his hoste agayne
Bryngand the hede / with thaym for' grete meruayle
Of whiche the hoste / were all full glad and fayne
And thankynge god / gretely for' that batayle
Bot Elenes deth / full sore thay dyd by wayle
For' whom howell / ouer' hyr' tombe dyd make
A chapell fayre / whiche stonte yit for' hir' sake

Whiche yit so hight / Elene tombe so named
On Myghelmount / with in lytill Bretayne
Whiche is now thar' / a strengh full gretly famed
Envyrounde with / the se aboute certayne
Marchynge right nere / to Normandy vnbayne
And enmy euer' / as it may be of myght
To take oure shyppes / in pese withouten' right

¶ How Arthurs Ambassetors with Romayns in Itayll dyd Feghte in batayll[122]

Arthur' his hoste / assembled and forth wente
Tyll that he came / till Awbe[121] a ryuer' fayr'
In Italy / whiche fro the Occidente
Renneth este warde / whare that he wolde repayr'
His tentes gan sette / whare was full holsom ayr'
With woddes by / and medews Fresshe and grene
With Flowres fayre / of dyuers colours sene

Whare he had worde / the Emperour' was nere
To whom he sent / Erle Bews of Oxenforde
Geryn of Chartres / the Erle that was hym der'
And Syr Gawayne / his nevew on whose worde
He truste highly / whom he at bed and borde
Vp Brought had ay / who kinge of louthien
For' sothe was than / as sayth the historien

Whiche Messengers / and wyse Ambasiate
Wente so at ouer' / that Ryuer' Fresshe and pure
Whare themperour' / with all the hole senate
Than logged was / nought ferr' fro kynge Arthure
Bade hym remewe / to Rome as he myght dure
And come none ner' / vnto the Reme of Fraunce
Elles on the morowe / to fight for' full fynaunce

Syr' lucyus / than sayde / that wer' grete shame
To turne agayne / I wyll noght in no wyse
It wer' reprefe / and shamynge[123] of my name
To Fraunce I will / now as I may suffyse
And haue it all / right at myne own' devyse
With that his own' / neveu Quytylian[124]
To Gawayne sayde / this Scornefull wordes than

Þe[125] Bretons all / in bragge and boste ben mor'
Than your' knyghthode / euer' was or' hardymente
Whom Gawayne ther' / right with his swerde therfor'
Than slew anone / and so homwarde faste he wente
With his felaws / togedyr' by hole consente
Arthur' to warne / of batayll and no reste
The Emperour' / had made thaym so to treste

For whiche Romayns / folowed vpon' thaym sore
Thaym to haue slayne / for' vengeance of that dede
Bot fleynge so / who myghte than comme afore
Was slayne right doune / thurgh wytte and grete manhede
At laste thaym sewed / so fele of Romanhede
Thay wyste not howe / escapen in no wyse
Bot faught agayne / full sore on thar' enmyse

Out of a wode / faste By Sex thousond men
Of bretons bolde / vpon' the Romayns fell
And slew thaym don' / chasynge vpon thaym then
Whiche Gawen' / and his men / recomforte well
Bot Petro than / the Senatour' full fell
With ten thousond / Romayns / of grete valour'
On Gawen fell / full proudely in that stour'

And on a playne / he gafe hym grete batayle
That he and his / vnto a wode gan fle
Defendynge thaym / and whan thay saw a vayle
Came oute ay whar' / and slew grete quantyte
Of Romayns ay / thrugh manly Inperite
And at the laste / thay isshed oute full light
And toke Petro / and slew his men don' right

Than in thar˙ way / whare as thay shulde passe hame
Two senatours / with Captayns mo in fere
Kynges that were / lay busshed as thay came
With fytene thousonde / men of Armes clere
Trustynge thaym haue / rescowed with grete power˙
Bot in suche pride / with outen reule on brede
Thay came and of / the batayle toke non hede

Tyll that bretons / thaym slew and toke ay whare
And discomfyte / were putte vnto the flight
And kynges thre / with Captaynes wyse and ware
And nombre grete / of Romayns party right
The bretons slewe / and helde the felde that nyght
And on the morow / came homward glad and fayne
Thay had so sped / and of thayr˙ syde few slayne

So with thar˙ pray / and all thar˙ prisoners
Thay came vnto / kynge Arthur˙ home agayne
Of whiche that had / so faught with smale power˙
Agayne so fele / he was full glad and fayne
Welcome my knyghtes / for˙ me ye had grete payne
Bot than he sente / Petro the Senatoure
Vnto Parise / ther˙ to be holde in toure

Wyth other˙ kynges / and many grete Capteyne
That taken were / in these grete batayls ser˙
Of whiche Gawen / Bewes also and Gereyne
Syr˙ Percyuall / Ewayn Estor˙ ther˙ wer˙
Cador˙ Guytarde / Ireglas and Bedwer˙
That knyghtes were / of the table rounde
And prynces gode / that sore wer˙ hurte and wounde

Lucyus so / acerteyned / of these dedes
Estened was / if in Augustudon˙
He shulde abyde / for˙ power˙ that hym nedes
Of his felawe / that called was leon˙
Or˙ to langres / he shulde his hestes bon˙
Whiche by espies / was laten˙ Arthur˙ wete
Wharfore he thought / how he shuld[126] with hym mete

With in that nyght / he busshed in his way
Whar˙ he shulde comme / right in a valey fayre
That seysy hight / in eght batayls full gay
To feght with hym / he made ther˙ his repayre
The Emperour˙ he putte / oute of dyspayre
That passe a way / he shulde than in no wyse
With outen batayle / or els a foule supprise

Kynge Agusell that was of Albany
And Cador' duke / that was of Cornewayle
The friste batayle / togedyr' in company
Had than al hole / of men that myght avayle
That couth right wele / defende and eke assayle
To Bewes also / and Geryn of grete myght
An other' batayle / he toke bothe stronge and wight

Aschill the kynge / of denmarke stronge and wyse
And to kynge lothe / of Norway vygorouse
The thrid batayle / he gafe of grete emprise
Kynge howel so / and Gawayn fortunouse
The fourth batayll / had than full corregeouse
Bedwer' and Kay / the fyfte batayle dyd holde
Of myghty men / that hardy wer' and bolde

Syr' holdyne / and Guytarde the sexte batayle
Syr' Iugens / and Ionathas so famouse
The seuent batayle / than had withouten' fayle
Cursale of chester' / and Vrgen' corageuse
The eght batayle / had so full harageouse
In eche batayle / a legion' of knyghtes
Arrayed were / all redy forthe fyghtes

The nynte batale / the kynge Arthur' dyd lede
In whiche the Erle / of Gloucester' so wyse
A legion' / thay had and dyd possede
Of knyghtes gode / that were of high emprise
In whiche batayle / he bare as myghte suffise
In a baner' / a dragon' all of golde
The Castell so / to ben for' younge and olde

Arthur' bare a baner of Sable a dragoun of golde . and a baner of oure lady . and the thrid baner of seynt George þat wer' Galaad armes. for remembrance of Galaad . and þe fourt baner of goules thre co rouns of golde[128]

The Emperour' / with legions fully twelue
Come thrugh that vale / right as than was his way
Of Romayns fele / ful stoute right with hymselue
In batayls twelue / redy to fight that day
With that eyther' parte / by skurours herde well say
That bothe partes / so nere that tyme wer' mette
That fyght thay muste / or' els to deth be bette

Kynge Arthur' / bade his knyghtes to make gode cher'
Sayinge right thus / my knyghtes ye wete well all
Your' manhode grete / and conqueste synguler'
And ȝour'[127] knyghthode / that neuer yit dyd appall
So myghty was / in euery place ouer' all
Haue wonne and gote / in thretty Remes by myght
Whiche with your honde / ye haue conquerd ful right

[83v]

¶ How comforte his knyghtes to the Batayll

Stonde now on fete / And all your' right defende
That ye haue wonne / so lette it neuer' doun' fall
Lete not this day / thise Romayns vs transcende
Iff thay ouercome / vs nowe / it wyll befall
That we muste euer' / in seruytute ben' thrall
And tribute pay / to thair domynacion'
Rather de we / than thaym do mynystracion'

¶ How the Scottes kynges and other knyghtes recom forte[129] kynge Arthur' thar'

With that the kynge / agusel so vigoriouse
My lorde he sayde / seth tyme ye thought to fight
With Romayns friste / my wyll so couetouse
Hath bene that woundes / whiche in your' seruyce right
That I shall take / for' loue of you I hight
Than hony so / to me shalbe swetter'
And ouer' all mete / and drynke shall lyke me better'

So thruste my soule / thar' blode by holde and se
And Germayns als / that hath vs done offence
That ofte hath putte / vs from Felicite
Thurgh thar' cruell / and cursed violence
For whiche I shall / this day thaym recompense
With all myne hertes / labour' and besynesse
Vs to reuenge / of all thar' wykydnesse

Me thynke full longe / than seyde kynge Vrian
Of Murrefe that / was fully lorde and Syre
Vnto that houre / whiche day myght sende so than
My soule dothe brenne / right as it wer' in fyre
I had leuer' now / than haue the hole Empyre
With thaym be mette / in felde wher' I myght fight
Thayr' pride to fell / that bene so stronge and wyght

¶ How kynge Howell of lasse bretayne comforte þe kynge to batayll

Kynge howel sayde / to kynge Arthur' anone
This taried tyme / me thynke ys fully tynte
Of yow thay aske / no right bot wronge allone
Why stonde ye thus / go to thaym er' ye stynte
And for' thayr' wronge / desyre with strokes dynte
Dyscomfyt shall / thay be and superate
Bothe lucyus / and als his hole Senate

¶ Howell kynge of litill Bretayne[130]

Thus euery knyght / right of the table rounde
Thair' counsayle gafe / to strike sone the batayle
And seueraly / made ther' avowes that stounde
Thay shuld neuer' spare / thar' enmemyse to assayle
For' hurte nor' deth / and thought full grete mervayle
Why that thay wer' / holden so longe in soundr'
So longe thay thought / to se who shulde ben vndr'

[84]

¶ How kynge Arthur' and þe Emperour lucyus faughte in grete bataill in Itayll whar' lucius was slayne and Arthur' had þe victory

Thanne to that vale / whare kynge Arthur' so lay
The Emperoure came / holy with his hoste
And thar' thay faught / whils thousandes dede that day
On ayther' parte / wer' bot of Romayns moste
Many thousonde / Romayne thare yelde the goste
Bot duke Bedwere / and als duke Kay were slayne
In that batayle / and suffred dethes payne

Whose corses so / brought wer' to the dragon'
By Agusell / and duke Cador' with myght
And of Romayns / two kynges that bare the croun
And prynces four' / that Senatours wer' wight
Wer' slayne that houre / that manly wer' in fight
With thair' Fresshe hostes / layde on all new full faste
Was no wyght ther' / of deth that was agaste

Now her' now thar' / on' euery syde aboute
Thay stroke men doum' / to deth ay as thay mette
Some tyme Romayns / the worse had ther' thurgh oute
Some tyme Bretons / with Romayns wer' ouer[151] sette
On ayther' parte / so wer' thay all wele bette
Than kynge Howell / and Gawen' Corageouse
With thair' batayll / came bretons to rescouse

A sore batayle / was than on' euery syde
Whare holdyne Erle / of Flaunders than was slayne
The Erle also / of boloyne in that tyde
Syr' Cursale Erle / of chester' sothe to sayne
Of Salisbyry / Erle Gwaluk nought to layne
Vrgen of Bathe / that was full bataylouse
All slayne were than / in that stoure dolorouse

And of Romayns / wer' dede foure prynces grete
With thousondes fele / of other' low estate
So gawen and / howel thaym gan rehete
And thre knyghtes / than thay slewe of the senate
Whiche for' manhode / myght haue ben' socyate
Tyll kynges degre / for' noble regyment
And ben lyfte vp / to estate excellent

Than came Arthur' / right with his grete dragon'
The emperour' als / with his Egle of golde
Thar' myght men se / fele knyghtes stryken doun'
On bothe sydes / that wer' full stoute and bolde
Ayther' on other' / that day than sought thyk folde
And faughte full sore / whanne they to geder' mette
And many knyghtes / thay bothe to dethe doun' bette

Bot at the Laste / to passe Vnto an ende
The bretons so / vpon' the Romayns hewe
With comynge of / Morvyde to thaym full hende
Behynde Romayns / and at thar' bakkes theym slew
As kynge Arthur' / hym bade and layde on' newe
Tyll Romayns faste / began to waxen thynne
And lucyus slayne / and many of his kynne

Bot who hym slew / ther' wyste no wyght so than
Bot Syr Gawayne / of it dyd bere the name
For ayther' of thaym / hurte other' ay whan and whan
By dyuers tymes / as thay to gedyr' came
Whanne thay departe / ayther' gafe other' fame
For' worthyest / that euer' he dyd with mete
Suche ennemyse loue / eyther'[132] other' dyd be hete

Of whose dethe so / the Romayns wer' dismayed
And fled full faste / on' euery syde aboute
Some vnto tounes / and some to wodes strayed
And some to toures / and castels in grete route
Grete multitude / ther' slayne with outen doute
Ther' was neuer' prynce / that dyd so manly fight
As kynge Arthur' / thar' dyd in all mennes sight

So dyd his kynges / and prynces for' his right
His bretons all / thurgh out all hole his hoste
His knyghtes hole / also that wer' full wight
Right of the Rounde / table withouten boste
Ful doughtly / thaym bare with myghtes moste
His ennemyse so / to fell and wyn the felde
With all honour' / and vyctory to weelde

Than sente he forth / the corse of lucyus
To Rome that was / Emperour' than doutelesse
Who called was / lucyus hiberus
Associate with leo as I gesse /
To holde hym / in imperiall worthynesse
Of whiche in youthe / and tendre innocence
He was putte oute / by myghty violence

He bade thaym take / that corse for' thar' truage
And holde thaym payed / and be nought daungerouse
And iff thay wyll / haue all the supplusage
He shulde thaym pay / of corses preciouse
Of Senatours / and princes gloriouse
In that same wyse / and prayed thaym it alowe
For with suche gode / he shulde thaym well endowe

For' fere offe whiche / thay dyd Hym than relese
The trewage all / and seruyce euery dele
Renounsynge it / of suche payment to cese
Thay prayed hym so / gode lordeship thay myght fele
And iff he wolde / the publike vnyuersele
With all thar' hertes / the hole Imperialte
Thay wolde hym graunte / with all the dygnyte

Kynge Arthur' thanne / vnto thayr' graunte consente
And Bedwer' sente / to bery at Bayon'
And Kay vnto Chynon' / his Castell gente
Whare beried was / his corse with deuocioun'
In an Abbay / ther' by of religioun'
And euery lorde / vnto thayr' sepultur'
He sente so home / whare was thar' kynde natur'

Bot he abode / in Italy so thanne
That wynter' helde / his men in dyuerse place
Tyll Somer' came / at whiche tyme he beganne
To passe to Rome / on leo for' to chace
The Empire hole / vnto hym selfe enbrace
And leon putte / in reule of his regence
As myght acorde / so with his Innocence

How kynge Arthur' had[133] worde of Modrede that proposed[134] to bene kynge of Bretayne wharfore he came home and slew Modrede and had his dethes wounde[135]

Bot tythandes cam / thanne oute of grete bretayne
To kynge Arthur' / how Modrede had aspyred
To haue the croune / of bretayne for certayne
And wedden wold / the quene and had conspyred
With duke Cheldrike / fully bysyly requyred
To helpe hym so / with all his payenhede
And Albany / he gafe hym to his mede

For' whiche to kynge / howell his neveu der'
His hoste he toke / on that syde on the Se
And bade hym ride / the romayns to conquer'
And he wolde with / his Insulans pouste
To bretayne wende / to chastyse that contre
The fals Modrede / whom he had made Regent
As traytour' / honge and draw by Iugyment

Whar' Arthur' faughte first with Modrede atte Whytsonde[136]

In this mene while / the traytour' Modrede
And Cheldrike als / who came with grete power'
Assembled wer' / with cristen' and payenhede
Four' score thousonde / of men of Armes cler'
Whar' kynge Arthur' / and his hoste londed wer'
At porte Rupyne / whar' whitesonde is full ryght
Thay faught with hym / in batayle stronge and wight

[85v]

Bot Agusell the Kynge of Albany
And Syr Gawayn' / the kynges neveu dere
Of louthian' / kynge than by Auncetry
With many other' / wer' slayne that day in fer'
Bot Arthur' had / the felde with his power'
And putte thaym to / the flight and made grete chace
In whiche he slewe / grete peple with outen' grace

¶ How Arthur' faught with Modrede at Wynchestr' and putte Modrede to the Flyghte[138]

Bot Modrede thanne / to wyncheste so fledde
With grete peple / to whom Arthur' came right
With all his hoste / whom Modred batayll bedde
And redy was / anone with hym to fight
Bot ther' Modrede / was putte vnto the flight
And fled full faste / to Cornewayle with power'
Whom in that Chace / kynge Arthur' sought so nere

¶ How Arthur' faught with Modrede the thryd tyme by syde Camblayne in Cornewayll[139]

That he sawe whare / he lay with his power'
Vpon a water' / that called is Camblayne
With Sexty thousonde / Cristen and payenis cler'
That with hym were / redy to fight agayne
With whom Arthur' / with all his hoste full fayne
Thar' faught and slewe / full mekyll multitude
Thurgh power' / of his hoste and fortitude

Bot Arthur' was / in herte so sore anoyed
For' Gawayns dethe / and of kynge Agusell
Whiche were afore / by Modrede slayne and stroyed
And myght not mete / with swerdes for to dele
His foule treson / and falsede to cansele
And his persone / to hangen' and to drawe
As hyegh traytoure / by Iugyment of his lawe

For' Ire of whiche / he faughte so in that stour'
That thousondes fele / he slew ther' and his knyghtes
Thar' was neuer' kynge / nor' prynce no conquerour'
That dyd so wele / as thay in any fightes
Bot Arthur' / thar' / at laste with all his myghtes
Slew Modred thanne / wyth Caliburne his swerde
And duke Cheldrike / so fortune made his werde

Than fled thay faste / thair' Captayns wer' all slayne
The Saxons hole / and all the payenhede[137]
And Arthur' / helde / the felde and was full fayne
With vyctory of all his fose / I rede
So hole fortune / was his frende at nede
That Mars the god / of Armes and of batayle
No better' myght / haue done withouten fayle

[86]

Bot dethes wounde / As cronycle doth expresse
Modrede hym gafe / that was his syster' sune
And as some sayne / his own' sonne als doutlesse
Bot certaynte / thar' of no bokes kune
Declare it wele / that I haue sene or' fune[140]
Bot lyke it ys / by all estymacioun'
That he cam neuer' / of his generacion'

The quene Gaynor' / whanne she persayued wele
That Modrede so / discomfyt was and slayne
Fro yorke dyd fle / by nyght than euery dele
Tyll that she came / to Carlyon' with payne
Whar' she hyr' made / a nonne the soth to sayne
In pryuyte / thar' hyd for' fere of deth
For' shame and sorow / almoste she yalde the brethe

In the temple / of seynte Iuly martyr'
Whar' she corounde / was with solempnyte
Amonges nunnes / fro whom none shulde departe hir'
She toke hyr' lyfe / with all stabilite
Thar' to abyde / and leue in chastyte
Hyr' synne to clenge / to god and yelde hyr' goste
Whiche eternaly / ay is of myghtes moste

In whiche batayle / the floure of all knyghede
Dede was and slayne / on Arthurs syde so dygne
The knyghtes all / that wer' of worthihede
To kynges egall / and compers wer' condygne
Whiche for' Arthur' / thar' lyfe did ther' resygne
That knyghtes were / right of the table Rounde
That wer' all slayne / echone with dethes wounde

For' whiche Arthur' / for' merred in his thought
Neuer' after' had / comforte ne yit gladnesse
To thynke on thaym / so dere his loue had bought
Full fayne he wolde / so than haue be lyfelesse
Whyche he byried / with grete and high noblesse
With herte full sore / his sorows to complayne
His dethes woundes / full sor' hym gan dystrayne[141]

He gafe his Reme / and all his domynacioun'
To Constantyne / the sonne of duke Cador'
Whiche Cador' slayne / was in that aduersacion'
With Arthur' so / at Camblayne than afore
Whose brother' he was / all of a moder' bore
Bot Gorloys sonne / that duke was of Cornewayle
He was sertayne / and heyr with outen fayle

Kynge Arthur' thanne / so wounded mortaly
Was led forth thanne / to Aualon' full sore
To lechen' thar' / his woundes pryuely
Whar' thanne de dyed / and byried was right thor'
As yit this day / ys sene & shall euermore
With in the chirche and Mynster' of Glastynbyry
In tombe riall / made sufficiantly

Who dyed so / in the yer' of Cristes date
Fyue hundred was / a counted than in fer'
And fourty more / and two associate
As Cronyclers / expressed haue full cler'
Fro whiche tyme forth / he dyd no more aper'
Nought wythstondynge / Merlyn seyde of hym thus
His deth shuld be / vnknow and ay doutous[142]

¶ de quo Merlinus dicit
inter prophetias suas quod exitus
eius erit dubius Et quidam
propheta britonnu fecit pro[144] epita
phio super tumbam suam versum istum
Hic iacet Arthurus rex quondam rexque
futurus[145]

Bot of his dethe / the story of seynt Grale
Sayth that he dyed / in Aualon' full fayr'
And byried ther' / his body was all hale
With in the blake / Chapell whar' was his layr'
Whiche Geryn made / whar' than was grete repayr'
For seynt Dauyd Arthurs vncle dere
It halowed[143] had / in name of Mary clere

Whar' Geryn' so / abode than all his lyfe
Aboute his tombe with deuoute exequyse
So was he thanne / ay forth contemplatife
He lyste no more / the worlde to excercyse
Bot only ther' / to serue at his advyse
All myghty god / whils he on lyfe myght dur'
Of his Erledome / he had none other' cure

¶ Note how Geryn went
with Arthur' in to Aualon
to whom Syr launcelot
de lake cam of auentur'
folowyng on þe chace
and þay toke ordere of
preest and wox recluses
þer to pray for Arthure
terme of þair' lyves[146]

And as that same / Story aftyr' doth contene
That Syr launcelot / de lake theworthy knyght
Of the Rounde table / full longe a knyght had bene
Folowynge on / the saxons in that flight
Thar' foonde the tombe / of kynge Arthur' so wyght
And fro the tyme / that Geryn had hym tolde
Of Arthurs tombe / his herte be gan to colde

Of seynt Dauyd archebisshop of Carlyon'
Ordres of preste / with gode deuocyon'
He toke and als / sone as he myght be bon'
His seruyce hole / gostely withoute remocion'
He made his lorde / of his own' commocion'
In that Chapell / with Geryn his comper'
In penaunce grete / Recluses wer' four' yere

[87]

¶ *The compleynt of the maker' For the dethe of kynge Arthur' and of hys noble prynces and knyghtes of þe Rounde table*

O gode Lorde god / suche treson And vnrightes
Whi suffred so /// deuyne omnipotence
Whiche had of it / precyence and forsightes
And myght haue lette / that cursed violence
Of Modredes pryde / and all his exsolence
That noble kynge / for' passynge conquerour'
So to dystroy / and waste thurgh his errour'

O thou' fortune / executrice of werdes
That euer' more so / with thy subtylite
To all debates so strongly thou enherdes
That men that wolde / ay leue in charite
Thou dooste perturbe / with mutabilite
Why stretched so / thy whele vpon Modrede
Agayne his Eme / to do so cruell dede

Whare thurgh that / hiegh and noble conquerour'
With outen' cause / shulde so gates perisshit be
With so fele kynges / and prynces of honour'
That all the worlde / myght neuer thar' bette[147] se
O fals Fallace / of Modredes proprete
How myght thou so / in Gaynor' haue suche myghtes
That she the dethe / caused of so fele knyghtes

Bot O Modrede / that was so gode a knyght
In grete manhode / and proudely ay approued
In whom thyne Eme / the nobleste prynce of myght
Putte all his truste / so gretely he the loued
What vnhappe so / thy manly goste hath moued
Vnto so foule / and cruell hardynesse
So fele be slayne / thurgh thyne vnhappynesse

The highnesse of / thyne honour' had a fall
Whanne thou be ganne / to do that Iniury
That grete falshode / thy prowesse dyd apall
Alsone as in / the entred periury
By consequent / treson' and traytory
Thy lorde and Eme / also thy kynge souerayn'
So to bytrayse / thy felaws als sertayn'

¶ xvii. Ca. of þe kynge Constantyne þe son of Cador of Cornewayll[148]

Kynge Constantyne / his brother' son' was crounde
Duke Cador' sonne / a knyght full auentrorise
And chosen' was / oon of the table Rounde
In Arthur' tyme / for' knyght ful corageouse
In trone riall / was sette full preciouse
With dyademe / on his hed signyfyde
At Trynouaunt / whar' no wight it replyde

[1] Christine Marie Harker. "John Hardyng's Arthur: A Critical Edition." diss. University of California, Riverside, 1996. Variants from Harker's text are noted with an *H*.
[2] H. *kunynge*
[3] H. *the the*
[4] H. *pryuy*
[5] H. *swet*
[6] H. *sorowe*
[7] *þis* inserted superscript.
[8] This rubric on left side.
[9] This rubric on left side, in later hand.
[10] H. *þat*
[11] In a later hand.
[12] H. *at*
[13] H. *of*
[14] H. *soueraynte*
[15] H. *dygnyte*
[16] H. *beseme*
[17] This rubric on left hand side
[18] H. *Cheldryke*
[19] H. *prayed*
[20] H. *&*
[21] This rubric on left hand side.
[22] H. *some*
[23] H. *bewtee*
[24] H. *That*
[25] H. *at*
[26] This rubric on left hand side.
[27] This rubric on left hand side. H. omits rubric
[28] This rubric on left hand side.
[29] H. *Mauron*
[30] H. *Haraud*
[31] H. *Demety*
[32] H. *Donaud*
[33] H. *Eldour*
[34] H. *Colflaut*
[35] H. *[illegible]*
[36] This rubric on left hand side.
[37] Both of these rubrics on left hand side
[38] H. *wryten*
[39] H. *Sychelmes*
[40] *the* added superscript
[41] H. *vre*. The word has been corrected, and the abbreviation is unclear.
[42] This rubric on left hand side.
[43] This rubric on left hand side.
[44] H. *wryton*
[45] H. omits whole line.
[46] Superscript *t* following *who*.
[47] H. *Colgreuaunt*
[48] H. *70v*
[49] *he* supercript.
[50] H. *renewed*
[51] H. *chyualruose*
[52] H. *71r*
[53] This rubric on left hand side.
[54] This rubric on left hand side
[55] H. *shuld*
[56] H. *felawe*
[57] H. *71v*
[58] H. *crounde*. This rubric on left hand side.
[59] H. *obey*
[60] H. *seruyse*
[61] This rubric on left hand side.
[62] H. *maingall*. Harker speculates that this may mean mighty, my reading implies navigability. In either case the word in unclear.
[63] *table* written superscript.
[64] H. *philosophres*
[65] This rubric on left hand side.
[66] H. *Doldayne*
[67] H. *Demety*
[68] This rubric on left hand side. It appears to be written by the corrector.
[69] H. *feld*
[70] This rubric on left hand side.
[71] H. *resonate*
[72] This rubric on left hand side
[73] H. *Policronicon*
[74] This rubric on left hand side. Two different hands, indictaed by italics, wrote this rubric.
[75] H. *stonde*
[76] H. *Armed*
[77] The folio has been trimmed, thus losing some material on the right.
[78] H. *Graal*
[79] H. *gafe*
[80] H. *Take*
[81] There is no space between this stanza and the one following. A line has been drawn between the two
[82] H. *Arthurs*
[83] H. *cherly*
[84] H. *yere*
[85] H. places rubric after first stanza. This rubric on left hand side.
[86] This rubric on left hand side, perhaps in the hand of corrector.
[87] H. *twayne*
[88] H. *corone*
[89] H. *wyten*
[90] H. *sheolde*
[91] *swerde* written superscipt
[92] This rubric on left hand side.
[93] H. omits rubric. In a later hand (the same that comments earlier on the Grail).
[94] *he* superscript.
[95] H. *Cambrensis*
[96] This rubric on left hand side. *he* superscript.
[97] H. om. *whiche*

[98] Note that this is the first use of the location "Camalot" in an historical work. Cf. Fletcher, who says that it first appears in Stow (p. 266). Stow apparently had access to this version of Hardyng's chronicle, as his debate with Grafton indicates.
[99] H. *Orchedes*
[100] This rubric on left hand side.
[101] This rubric on left hand side.
[102] H. *peramours*
[103] H. *innordinate*
[104] This rubric on left hand side.
[105] H. *foryette*
[106] The entire stanza is heavily corrected. Catch phrase, "To the Senate" at bottom of leaf.
[107] This rubric on left hand side. The whole rubric in corrector's hand.
[108] H. *Quucqua[m] cuius[ ] ab aliquo rapitur iniquit[ate] ab alio iuste possidetur vt in lege eum [ ] & Imperatoria patet.*
[109] This rubric on left hand side.
[110] This rubric on left hand side, opposite stanza "Whose whole estate."
[111] H. *principis*
[112] H. *electionem*
[113] H. *yf*
[114] H. *sonner*
[115] H. *sonner*
[116] H. *Coroyne*
[117] Word partially erased
[118] This rubric on left hand side
[119] H. *lour*
[120] H. *The*
[121] H. *Albe*
[122] This rubric on left hand side
[123] H. *shamyng*
[124] H. *Quyntylian*
[125] H. *Ye*
[126] H. *shuld*
[127] H. *youre*
[128] In the hand of the corrector
[129] H. *re(turn) for the*
[130] This rubric on left hand side, opposite "King Howell sayde."
[131] H. *on*
[132] H. *ayther*
[133] H. *has*
[134] H. *purposed*
[135] This rubric on left hand side
[136] This rubric on left hand side.
[137] H. *payonhede*
[138] This rubric on left hand side.
[139] This rubric on left hand side.
[140] *sune*, *kune*, and *fune* each have a symbol, ⁊, drawn above them, apparently to indicate that the three corrected words all rhyme.
[141] H. hym gan dystrayne] *bygan dystreyne*
[142] H. *douteus*
[143] H. *hallowed*
[144] H. *per*
[145] H. printed above second stanza. Epitaph on single line.
[146] This rubric on left hand side.
[147] H. *better*
[148] This rubric on left hand side.

Bibliography

Primary

Manuscript:

Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 133.

London, British Library, Harley MS 2259.

London, British Library, Lansdowne MS 204.

London, College of Arms MS Arundel 53.

London, College of Arms MS Arundel 58.

London, Lambeth Palace MS 504

Printed sources:

The Alliterative Morte Arthure. Ed. V. Krishna. New York: Burt Franklin, 1976.

The Anglo-Norman Text of Le Lai du Cor. Ed. C.T. Erickson. Anglo-Norman Texts, 24. Oxford: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1973.

An Anonymous Short Metrical Chronicle. Ed. Edwald Zettl. EETS, os. 196. London: Oxford University Press, 1935.

The Anturs of Arther. Ywain and Gawain, Sir Percyvell of Gales, The Anturs of Arther. Ed. Maldwyn Mills. London: J.M. Dent Ltd., 1992. 161-182

Arthour and Merlin. Ed. O.D. Macrae-Gibson. 2 vols. EETS, os. 268 & 279. London: Oxford University Press, 1973-79.

Augustine, *The City of God Against the Pagans*. Ed. and tr. George E. McCracken *et al*. Loeb Classics. Cambridge: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann, 1963-1972.

The Awntyrs off Arthure. Scottish Alliterative Poems in Riming Stanzas. Ed. F.J. Amours. Scottish Text Society, 27 & 38. London: Johnson Reprint Corp., 1966.

The Awntyrs off Arthure. Ed. Ralph Hanna III. Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1974.

Barbour, John. *Barbour's Bruce: A fredome is a noble thing'* Ed. Matthew P. McDiarmid and James A. C. Stevenson. 3 vols. Scottish Text Society, 4th ser. 15, 12, 13. Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society, 1980-1985.

Berners, Dame Juliana. *The Boke of Saint Albans*. Amsterdam and New York: Da Capo Press, 1969.

Béroul. *The Romance of Tristran*. Ed. and tr. Norris J. Lacy. New York and London: Garland, 1989.

"The Boy and the Mantle." *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*. Ed. Francis James Child. 5 vols. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1885-1898. V: 257-274.

Bower, Walter. *The Scotichronicon*. Ed. and tr. D.E.R. Watt, *et al.* 9 vols. Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1990-1998.

The Brut; or, The Chronicles of England. Ed. Frederic W. D. Brie. 2 vols. EETS, os. 131 & 136. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1906, 1908.

Capgrave, John. *Abbreuiacion of Cronicles*. Ed. Peter J. Lucas. EETS, os. 285. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983.

Caradoc of Llancarfan. *Vita Gildae. Two Lives of Gildas*. Ed. and tr. Hugh Williams. Felinfach: Llanerch, 1990.

Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Riverside Chaucer*. Ed. Larry Benson, *et al.* 3rd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987.

The Continuations of the Old French Perceval of Chretien de Troyes. Ed. William Roach, *et al.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press; Philadelphia: American Philisophical Society, 1949-1983.

The Cronycle of Scotland in a Part. Bannatyne Miscellany. 3 vols. Edinburgh: Bannatyne Club, 1827-1855. III: 35-43.

Eulogium (Historiarum sive Temporibus). Ed. Frank Scott Haydon. 3 vols. RS. 9. London: Longmans, 1858-1863.

Facsimiles of National Manuscripts of Scotland. Ed. Cosmo Innes. 3 vols. Southampton: Ordnance Survey Office, 1867-1871.

Fordun, John. *Chronica Gentis Scotorum Chronicle of the Scottish Nation*. Ed. William F. Skene. Tr. F.J.H. Skene. 2 vols. Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1871-1872.

Gaimar, Geffrei. *L'estoire des Engleis by Geffrei Gaimar*. Ed. A. Bell. 3 vols. Anglo-Norman Text Society, 14-16. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960.

Geoffrey of Monmouth. *The Historia Regum Britanniae*. Ed. Acton Griscom. London, New York, Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co., 1929.

-----. *The Historia Regum Britannie of Geoffrey of Mounmouth I: Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS 568*. Ed. Neil Wright. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1985.

Gervaise of Canterbury. *Chronicle of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II, and Richard I. Opera Historica*. Ed. William Stubbs. Vol. 1. RS. 73. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1879-1880.

Giraldus Cambrensis. *Opera*. Ed. J.S. Brewer and James F. Dimock. 8 vols. RS. 21. London: Longman, 1861-1898.

Gray, Thomas. *Scalacronica*. Ed. J. Stevenson. Edinburgh: Printed for the Maitland Club, 1836.

-----. *Scalacronica: The Reigns of Edward I, Edward II and Edward III*. Ed. and tr. Herbert Maxwell. Glasgow: J. Maclehose, 1907.

The Greene Knight. Sir Gawain: Eleven Romances and Tales. Ed. Thomas Hales. Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1995. 309-336.

Hardyng, John. *The Chronicle of Thon Hardyng*. Ed. Henry Ellis. London: G. Woodfall, 1812.

-----. "Extracts from the First Version of Hardyng's Chronicle." Ed. Charles L. Kingsford. *English Historical Review* 27 (1912): 462-482.

Havelok the Dane. Ed. G. V. Smithers. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987.

Henry of Huntingdon. *Historia Anglorum*. Ed. and tr. Diana Greenway. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.

Higden, Ranulph. *The Polychronicon*. Ed. Churchill Babington and Joseph Rawson Lumby. 9 vols. RS. 41. London: Longman, 1865-1886.

The Historia Brittonum: 3 The 'Vatican' Recension. Ed. David N. Dumville. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1985.

Isidore of Seville. *Etymologiarum sive originum*. Ed. W.M. Lindsay. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911.

Jacques d'Armagnac. "Armorial des Chevaliers de la Table Ronde." Ed. Lisa Jefferson. "Tournaments, Heraldry and the Knights of the Round Table: A Fifteenth Century Armorial with Two Accompanying Texts." *Arthurian Literature* 14 (1996): 69-157.

Jacques de Longuyon. *Les Voeux du Paon. The Buik of Alexander.* Ed. R.L. Graeme Ritchie. 4 vols. Scottish Text Society, ns. 17, 12, 21, 25. Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1921-1929.

Jehan de Waurin. *Recueil des cronicques et anchiennes istoires de la Grant Bretaigne, present nomme Engleterre.* Ed. William Hardy. 5 vols. RS. 39. London: Longman, 1864-1891.

John of Glastonbury. *The Chronicle of Glastonbury Abbey: An Edition, Translation, and Study of John of Glastonbury's Cronica sive Antiquitates Glastoniensis Ecclesie.* Ed. James P. Carley. Tr. David Townsend. Rev. ed. Woodbridge: Boydell, 1985.

Joseph of Arimathea. Ed. David A. Lawton. New York: Garland, 1983.

Joseph of Arimathie. Ed. W. W. Skeat. EETS. os. 44. London: Oxford University Press 1871.

The Knightly Tale of Golagros and Gawain. Scottish Alliterative Poems in Riming Stanzas. Ed. F.J. Amours. Scottish Text Society. 27 & 38. London: Johnson Reprint Corp., 1966. 1-46.

Le Lai du cort mantel. Ed. Philip E. Bennett. *Møtuls Saga.* Ed. Marianne E. Kalinke. Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzels Forlag, 1987.

Lancelot: roman en prose du XIIIe siecle. Ed. Alexandre Micha. 8 vols. Textes littéraires français. Genève: Droz, 1978-1983.

Lancelot-Graal: The Old French Arthurian Vulgate and Post-Vulgate in Translation. Ed. and tr. Norris J. Lacy *et al.* 5 vols. New York: Garland Publishing, 1992-1996.

Langtoft, Peter. *The Chronicle.* Ed. and tr. Thomas Wright. 2 vols. RS. 47. London: Longmans, 1866-1868.

Leland, John. *De Rebus Britannicis Collectanea.* Ed. Thomas Hearne. London: Benj. White, 1772.

Lestoire de Merlin. The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances. Ed. H. Oskar Sommer. Vol. 2. Washington: Carnegie Institution, 1908-1916.

Lestoire del Saint Graal. The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances. Ed. H. Oskar Sommer. Vol. 1. Washington: Carnegie Institution, 1908-1916.

Lydgate, John. *Fall of Princes*. Ed. Henry Bergen. 4 vols. EETS, es. 121-124. London: Oxford University Press, 1964.

-----. *Troy Book*. Ed. Henry Bergen. 4 vols. EETS, es. 97, 103, 106, 126. London: Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1906-1935.

Maerlant, Jacob van. *Spiegel Historiael*. Ed. M. de Vries and E. Verwijs. 4 vols. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1863-1879.

Malory, Thomas. *Caxton's Malory: A New Edition of Sir Thomas Malory's Le Morte D'Arthur*. Ed. James Spisak. 2 vols. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987.

-----. *The Works*. Ed. Eugene Vinaver. 3rd ed. rev. by P.J.C. Field. 3 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Mannyng, Robert, of Brunne. *The Chronicle*. Ed. Idelle Sullens. Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 153. Binghamton: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1996.

Mantel et cor: deux lais du XIIe siècle. Ed. Philip Bennett. Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1975.

Martinus Polonus. *Chroncon Pontificum et Imperatorum*. Ed. Ludwig Weiland. *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptorum*. Tomus xxii. Hanover: Imprensis Bibliopolii Avlici Hahniani, 1872. 377–475.

"The Middle English 'History of the Kings of Britain' in College of Arms Manuscript Arundel 22." Ed. Laura Gabiger. Diss. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1993.

Morte Arthure. Ed. John Finlayson. York Medieval Texts. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1967.

Morte Arthure: A Critical Edition. Ed. Mary Hamel. New York: Garland, 1984.

Le Morte Arthur: A Romance in Stanzas of Eight Lines. Ed J. Douglas Bruce. EETS, es. 88. London: Oxford University Press, 1903.

La Mort le Roi Artu: roman du XIIIe siècle. Ed. Jean Frappier. 3rd ed. Genève: Droz, 1964.

Mǫttuls Saga. Ed. Marianne E. Kalinke. Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzels Forlag, 1987.

Murimuth, Adam. *Continuatio Chronicarum*. Ed. Edward Maunde Thompson. RS. 93. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1889.

Nennius [pseud.]. *Historia Brittonum. British History and the Welsh Annals*. Ed. and tr. John Morris. London and Chichester: Phillimore, 1980. 9-43, 50-84.

Otterbourne, Thomas. *Chronica Regum Angliæ. Duo Rerum Anglicarum Scriptores Veteres, viz. Thomas Otterbourne et Johannes Whethamstede*. Ed. Thomas Hearne. 2 vols. Oxford: E Theatro Sheldoniano, 1732.

The Parlement of the Thre Ages. Alliterative Poetry of the Later Middle Ages: An Anthology. Ed. Thorlac Turville-Petre. London: Routledge, 1989. 67-100.

"A Poem on the Nine Worthies." Ed. Thorlac Turville-Petre. *Nottingham Mediaeval Studies* 27 (1983): 79-84.

La Queste del Saint Graal: roman du XIIIe siècle. Ed. Albert Pauphilet. Paris: Libraire Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1923.

Rauf de Boun. *Le Petit Bruit*. Ed. Diana B. Tyson. Anglo-Norman Text Society, Plain Text Series, 4. London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1987.

Reginald of Canterbury. *The Vita Sancti Malchi of Reginald of Canterbury*. Ed. Levi Robert Lind. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1942.

The Rise of Gawain, Nephew of Arthur (De ortu Waluuanii nepotis Arturi). Ed. and tr. Mildred Leake Day. Garland Library of Medieval Literature, ser. A, v. 15. New York and London: Garland, 1984.

Robert of Gloucester. *The Chronicle. The Works of Thomas Hearne*. Ed. Thomas Hearne. Vols. 1 & 2. Oxford: Printed at the Theatre, 1810.

-----. *The Metrical Chronicle*. Ed. William Aldis Wright. 2 vols. RS. 86. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1887.

The Romance of Sir Degrevant. Ed. L. F. Casson. EETS, os. 221. London: Oxford University Press, 1970.

Rous, John. *The Rous Roll*. Ed. Charles Ross. Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1980.

Sammes, Aylett. *Britannia Antiqua Illustrata: or, The Antiquities of Ancient Britain*. London: Printed by Tho. Roycroft for the Author, 1676.

Scotland. Documents and Records Illustrating the History of Scotland. Ed. Francis Palgrave. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1837.

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. Ed. J.R.R. Tolkien and E.V. Gordon. 2nd ed. rev. by Norman Davis. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967.

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. The Poems of the Pearl Manuscript. Ed. Malcolm Andrew and Ronald Waldron. York Medieval Texts. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982. 207-300.

The Three Dead Kings. Alliterative Poetry of the Later Middle Ages: An Anthology. Ed. Thorlac Turville-Petre. London: Routledge, 1989. 148-157.

The Towneley Plays. Ed. Martin Stevens and A. C. Cawley. 2 vols. EETS, ss. 13 & 14. London: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Trevisa, John, tr. *The Polychronicon*, by Ranulph Higden. Ed. Churchill Babington and Joseph Rawson Lumby. 9 vols. RS. 41. London: Longman, 1865-1886.

Trevisa, John, tr. *On the Properties of Things: John Trevisa's Translation of Bartholomæus Anglicus De proprietatibus rerum: A Critical Text.* Ed. M. C. Seymour, *et al.* 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975.

Trevisa, John. "Trevisa's Original Prefaces on Translation: A Critical Edition." Ed. Ronald Waldron. *Medieval English Studies Presented to George Kane.* Ed. Edward Donald Kennedy, Ronald Waldron and Joseph Wittig. Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 1988. 285-299.

Vincent of Beauvais. *Speculum Historiale. Speculum Quadruplex.* Vol. 4. Graz, Austria: Akademische Druck- u.Verlagsantalt, 1965.

The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances. Ed. H. Oskar Sommer. 7 vols. Washington: Carnegie Institution, 1908-1916.

Wace. *Le Roman de Brut.* Ed. Ivor Arnold. 2 vols. Paris: Société des anciens textes français, 1940.

William, Archbishop of Tyre. *Godeffroy of Boloyne, or, The Siege and Conqueste of Jerusalem.* Tr. William Caxton. Ed. Mary Noyes Colvin. EETS, es. 64. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1893.

William of Malmesbury. *De Gesta Regum Anglorum.* Ed. William Stubbs. 2 vols. RS. 90. London: Kraus Reprint, 1964

William of Newburgh. *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II, and Richard I: Containing the First Four Books of the Historia Rerum Anglicarum.* Ed. Richard Howlett. 4 vols. RS. 82. London: Longman, 1884-1889.

Wyntoun, Andrew. *The Original Chronicle.* Ed. F.J. Amours. 6 vols. Scottish Text Society 63, 50, 53, 54, 56 & 57. Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood, 1903-1914.

Secondary

Albano, Robert A. *Middle English Historiography*. New York: Peter Lang, 1993.

Alexander, Flora. "Late Medieval Scottish Attitudes to the Figure of King Arthur: A Reassessment." *Anglia* 93 (1975): 17-34.

Andrew, Malcolm. "The Fall of Troy in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and *Troilus and Criseyde*." *The European Tragedy of Troilus*. Ed. Piero Boitani. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989. 75-94.

Anglo-Scottish Relations, 1174-1328. Ed. and tr. E.L.G. Stones. London: Nelson, 1965.

Atwood, Elmer Bagby. "Robert Mannyng's Version of the Troy Story." *Texas Studies in English* 18 (1938): 5-13.

Ball, Martin. "The Knots of Narrative: Space, Time, and Focalization in *Morte Arthure*." *Exemplaria: A Journal of Theory in Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 8 (1996): 355-374.

Barber, Richard, and Juliet Barker. *Tournaments: Jousts, Chivalry and Pageants in the Middle Ages*. New York: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1989.

Barnie, John. *War in Medieval Society: Social Values and the Hundred Years War 1337-99*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1974.

Barron, W.R.J. "*Golagros and Gawane*: A Creative Redaction." *Bibliographical Bulletin of the International Arthurian Society* 26 (1974): 173-85.

-----. "Arthurian Romance: Traces of an English Tradition." *English Studies* 61 (1980): 2-23.

-----. *Trawthe and Treason: The Sin of Gawain Reconsidered: A Thematic Study of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Manchester: Manchester University Press; Totowa, N.J.: Barnes and Noble Books, 1980.

Baswell, Christopher. *Virgil in Medieval England: Figuring the Aeneid from the Twelfth Century to Chaucer*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Baumgartner, Emmanuele. "A propos du *Mantel Mautaillé*." *Romania* 96 (1975): 315-332.

Beer, J.M.A. *Narrative Conventions of Truth in the Middle Ages*. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1981.

Benson, C. David. *The History of Troy in Middle English Literature: Guido delle Colonne's Historia Destructionis Troiae in Medieval England.* Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 1980.

Benson, Larry D. "The Source of the Beheading Episode in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight.*" *Modern Philology* 59 (1961-2): 1-12.

-----. *Art and Tradition in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight.* New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press. 1965.

-----. "The Alliterative *Morte Arthure* and Medieval Tragedy." *Tennessee Studies in Literature* 11 (1966): 75-87.

-----. "The Date of the *Alliterative Morte Arthure.*" *Medieval Studies in Honor of Lillian Herlands Hornstein.* Ed. Jess B. Bessinger, Jr. and Robert R. Raymo. New York: New York University Press, 1976. 19-40.

Besamusca, Bart and Orlanda S.H. Lie. "The Prologue to 'Arturs doet', in the Middle Dutch Translation of 'La Mort le Roi Artu' in the 'Lancelot Compilation'." *Medieval Dutch Literature in its European Context.* Ed. Erik Kooper. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1994. 96-112.

Bietenholz, P.G. *Historia and Fabula: Myths and Legends in Historical Thought From Antiquity to the Modern Age.* Leiden and New York: Brill, 1994.

Bloomfield. Morton W. "History and Literature in the Vernacular in the Middle Ages." *Medieval English Studies Presented to George Kane.* Ed. Edward Donald Kennedy, Ronald Waldron and Joseph Wittig. Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 1988. 309-315.

Bordman, Gerald. *Motif-Index of the English Metrical Romances.* Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1963.

Boren, James L. "Narrative Design in the Alliterative *Morte Arthure.*" *Philological Quarterly* 56 (1977): 310-319.

Brandt, William J. *The Shape of Medieval History: Studies in Modes of Perception.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966.

Branscheid, P. "Uber die Quellen des stabreimenden *Morte Arthure*" *Anglia* 8 (1885): 179-236

Brooke, Christopher. "Geoffrey of Monmouth as a Historian." *Church and Government in the Middle Ages.* Ed. C. N. L. Brooke, *et al.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976. 77-91.

Brooks, Nicholas. *History and Myth, Forgery and Truth.* Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 1986.

Brunel, C. "Le *Viatage de Raimon de Perillos al Purgatori de sant Patrici* et la légende du mantel mauntaillé." *Mélanges de linguistique de littérature romanes à la mémoire d'István Frank.* [s.l.]: Universität des Saarlandes, 1957. 87-90.

Buda, Matilda. *Medieval History and Discourse: Toward a Topography of Textuality.* New York: Peter Lang, 1990.

Burke, Bernard. *The General Armory of England, Scotland, Irelancd and Wales.* 2 vols. London: Harrison & Sons, 1884.

-----. *A Genealogical and Heraldic Dictionary of the Peerage and Baronetage.* London: Harrison & Sons, 1904.

Burnley, J. D. "'Sir Gawan and the Green Knight', Lines 3-7." *Notes and Queries* 218 (1973): 83-84.

Burrow, J. A. *Ricardian Poetry: Chaucer, Gower, Langland and the Gawain Poet.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971.

Caldwell, Robert A. "'The History of the Kings of Britain' in College of Arms MS, Arundel XXII." *PMLA* 69 (1954): 643-654.

Cammidge, John. *The Black Prince: An Historical Pageant.* London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1943.

Carley, James P. "Melkin the Bard and Esoteric Tradition at Glastonbury Abbey." *Downside Review* 99 (1981): 1-17.

-----. "A Glastonbury Translator at Work: *Quedam Narracio de Nobili Rege Arthuro* and *De Origine Gigantum* in Their Earliest Manuscript Contexts." *Nottingham French Studies* 30.2 (1991): 5-12.

Carley, James P., and Julia Crick. "Constructing Albion's Past: An Annotated Edition of *De Origine Gigantum.*" *Arthurian Literature* 13 (1995): 41-114.

A Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts in The British Museum. 2 vols. London G. Eyre and A. Strahan, 1808-12.

Cavanaugh, Susan. "A Study of Books Privately Owned in England: 1300-1450." Diss. University of Pennsylvania, 1980.

Cawley, Arthur C. "The Relationships of the Trevisa Manuscripts and Caxton's *Polychronicon*." *London Medieval Studies* 1.3 (1939/1948): 463-482.

Cherewatuk, Karen. "'Gentyl' Audiences and 'Greate bookes': Chivalric Manuals and the *Morte Darthur*." *Arthurian Literature* 15 (1997): 205-216.

Clark, George. "Gawain's Fall: The Alliterative *Morte Arthure* and Hastings." *Tennessee Studies in Literature* 11 (1966): 89-95.

Clein, Wendy. *Concepts of Chivalry in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Norman, OK: Pilgrim Books, 1987.

Cline, Ruth H. "The Influence of Romances on Tournaments of the Middle Ages." *Speculum* 20 (1945): 204-211.

Cokayne, George Edward. *The Complete Peerage*. Ed. H. A. Doubleday, *et al.* 13 vols. London: St. Catherine's Press, 1910-1940.

Cohen, Kathleen. *Metamorphosis of a Death Symbol: The Transi-Tomb in the Late Middle Ages and the Renaissance*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973.

Coss, P.R. "Aspects of Cultural Diffusion in Medieval England." *Past and Present* 108 (1985): 35-79.

Crane, Susan. *Insular Romance: Politics, Faith and Culture in Anglo-Norman and Middle English Literature*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986.

Crick, Julia C. *The Historia Regum Britannie of Geoffrey of Monmouth IV: Dissemination and Reception in the Later Middle Ages*. Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 1991.

-----. "Geoffrey of Monmouth, Prophecy and History." *Journal of Medieval History* 18 (1992): 357-371.

Crosby, Ruth. "Robert Mannyng of Brunne: A New Biography." *PMLA* 57 (1942): 15-28.

David, Alfred. "Gawain and Aeneas." *English Studies* 49 (1968): 402-409.

Dean, Christopher. "Sir Gawain in the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*." *Papers on Language and Literature: A Journal for Scholars and Critics of Language and Literature* 22 (1986): 115-125.

-----. *Arthur of England: English Attitudes to King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*. Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1987.

Dickerman, Mary E. "The Tale of King Arthur and the Emperor Lucius." *Malory's Originality*. Ed. R.M. Lumiansky. Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1964. 67-90.

Doyle, A.I. "English Books In and Out of Court from Edward III to Henry VII." *English Court Culture in the Later Middle Ages*. Ed. V.J. Scattergood and J.W. Sherborne. London: Duckworth, 1983. 163-181.

Duby, Georges. "Youth in Aristocratic Society." *The Chivalrous Society*. Tr. Cynthia Postan. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980. 112-122.

Dwyer, R.A. "Some Readers of John Trevisa." *Notes and Queries* 212 (1967): 291-292.

Eadie, John. "The Alliterative Morte Arthure: Structure & Meaning." *English Studies: A Journal of English Language and Literature* 63 (1982): 1-12.

-----. "Two Notes on the *Awntyrs of Arthure*." *English Language Notes* 21: 2 (Dec. 1983): 3-7.

Eckhardt, Caroline D. "The Presence of Rome in the Middle English Chronicles of the Fourteenth Century." *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 90 (1991): 187-207.

Edward I and the Throne of Scotland. Ed. E.L.G. Stones and Grant G. Simpson. 2 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978.

Edwards, A.S.G. "The Influence of Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* c. 1440-1559: A Survey." *Mediaeval Studies* 39 (1977): 424-439.

-----. "The Influence and Audience of the *Polychronicon*: Some Observations." *Proceedings of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society* 17.6 (1980): 113-119.

-----. "John Trevisa." *Middle English Prose: A Critical Guide to Major Authors and Genres*. Ed. A.S.G Edwards. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1984. 133-146.

-----. "Hardyng's *Chronicle* and *Troilus and Criseyde*." *Notes & Queries* 229 (1984): 156-158.

-----. "The Manuscripts of the Second Version of Hardyng's *Chronicle*." *England in the Fifteenth Century*. Ed. Daniel Williams. Woodbridge: Boydell, 1987. 75-84.

-----. "*Troilus & Criseyde* and the First Version of Hardyng's Chronicle." *Notes and Queries* 233 (1988): 12-13.

Ellmer, W. "Über die Quellen des Reimchronik Robert's von Gloucester." *Anglia* 10 (1887): 1-37, 291-322.

Fein, Susanna G. "The Ghoulish and the Ghastly: A Moral Aesthetic in Middle English Alliterative Verse." *Modern Language Quarterly* 48 (1987): 3-19.

Fewster, Carol. *Traditionality and Genre in Middle English Romance*. Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 1987.

Fichte, Jörg O. "The Figure of Sir Gawain." *The Alliterative Morte Arthure: A Reassessment of the Poem*. Ed. Karl Heinz Göller. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1981. 106-116.

Field, P.J.C. *Romance and Chronicle: a Study of Malory's Prose Style*. London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1971.

-----. "Malory's Minor Sources." *Notes and Queries* 224 (1979): 107-110.

Field, Rosalind. "The Anglo-Norman Background to Alliterative Romance." *Middle English Alliterative Poetry and its Literary Background*. Ed. David Lawton. Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 1982. 54-69.

-----. "Romance as History, History as Romance." *Romance in Medieval England*. Ed. M. Mills, J. Fellows and C. Meale. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1991.

Finlayson, John. "Two Minor Sources of the Alliterative 'Morte Arthure'." *Notes and Queries* 207 (1962): 132-133.

-----. "Arthur and the Giant of St. Michael's Mount." *Medium Aevum* 33 (1964): 112-120.

-----. "*Morte Arthure*: The Date and a Source for the Contemporary References." *Speculum* 42 (1967): 624-638.

-----. "The Concept of the Hero in *Morte Arthure*." *Chaucer und seine Zeit: Symposion fur Walter F. Schirmer*. Ed. Arno Esch. Tubingen: Niemeyer, 1968. 249-274.

-----. "The Alliterative *Morte Arthure* and Sir Ferumbras." *Anglia* 92 (1974): 380-386.

-----. "The Expectation of Romance in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*." *Genre* 12 (1979): 1-24.

-----. Rev. of *Morte Arthure: A Critical Edition*, ed. Mary Hamel *Speculum* 63 (1988): 936-939.

Finley, M.I. "Myth, Memory and History." *History and Theory* 4 (1964-5): 281-307.

Fleischman, Suzanne. "On the Representation of History and Fiction in the Middle Ages." *History and Theory* 22 (1983): 278-310.

Fletcher, Robert H. *The Arthurian Material in the Chronicles*. 2nd ed. New York: Burt Franklin, 1973.

Flint, Valerie I. J. "The *Historia Regum Britanniae* of Geoffrey of Monmouth: Parody and its Purpose. A Suggestion." *Speculum* 54 (1979): 447-468.

Foster, Joseph. *The Dictionary of Heraldry: Feudal Coats of Arms and Pedigrees*. London: Bracken Books. 1989.

Fowler, Alastair. *Triumphal Forms: Structural Patterns in Elizabethan Poetry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970.

Fowler, David C. *John Trevisa*. Aldershot: Variorum. 1993.

-----. *Life and Times of John Trevisa, Medieval Scholar*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995.

Fries, Maureen. "The Poem in the Tradition of Arthurian Literature." *The Alliterative Morte Arthure: A Reassessment of the Poem*. Ed. Karl Heinz Göller. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1981. 30-43.

Galbraith, V.H. "Nationality and Language in Medieval England." *Transaction of the Royal Historical Society* 23 (1941): 113-128.

-----. "An Autograph MS of Ranulph Higden's *Polychronicon*." *The Huntington Library Quarterly* 23 (1959): 1-18.

Gerould, Gordon H. "King Arthur and Politics." *Speculum* 2 (1927): 33-51.

Gerritson, Willem P. "Jacob van Maerlant and Geoffrey of Monmouth." *Arthurian Tapestry: Essays in Memory of Lewis Thorpe*. Ed. Kenneth Varty. Glasgow: British Branch of the International Arthurian Society, 1981. 368-388.

Gibbons, Alfred. *Early Lincoln Wills: An Abstract of All the Wills & Administrations Recorded in the Episcopal Registers of the Old Diocese of Lincoln*. Loncoln: James Williamson, 1888.

Gillingham, John. "The Context and Purposes of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain*." *Anglo-Norman Studies* 13 (1990): 99-118.

Goldstein, R. James. "'For He Wald Vsurpe Na Fame': Andrew of Wyntoun's Use of the Modesty Topos and Literary Culture in Early Fifteenth Century Scotland." *Scottish Literary Journal* 14 (1987): 5-18.

-----. *The Matter of Scotland: Historical Narrative in Medieval Scotland.* Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1993.

Göller, Karl Heinz. "König Arthur in den schottischen Chroniken." *Anglia* 80 (1962): 390-404.

-----. "Reality versus Romance: A Reassessment of the *Alliterative Morte Arthure.*" *The Alliterative Morte Arthure: A Reassessment of the Poem.* Ed. Karl Heinz Göller. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1981. 15-29.

Gransden, Antonia. *Historical Writing in England.* 2 vols. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974-1982.

-----. "Antiquarian Studies in Fifteenth-Century England." *Antiquaries Journal* 60 (1980): 75-97.

Gray, Douglas. *Themes and Images in the Medieval English Religious Lyric.* London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972.

Green, Richard Firth. *Poets and Princepleasers: Literature and the English Court in the Late Middle Ages.* Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1980.

Griffith, Richard R. "Bertilak's Lady: The French Background of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight.*" *Machaut's World: Science and Art in the Fourteenth Century.* Ed. Madeleine Pelner Cosman and Bruce Chandler. *Annals of the New York Acad. of Sciences*, 314. New York: New York Acad. of Sciences, 1978. 249-266.

Grindley, Carl James. "An Early Paper Copy of John Hardyng' *Chronicle.*" *Notes and Queries* 242 (1997): 24-26.

Guddat-Figge, Gisela. *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Middle English Romances.* Munich: Wilhem Fink, 1976.

Guenée, Bernard. *Histoire et culture historique dans l'Occident médiéval.* Paris: Aubier Montaigne, 1980.

Guerin, M. Victoria. *The Fall of Kings and Princes: Structure and Destruction in Arthurian Tragedy.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995.

Haines, Victor Yelverton. *The Fortunate Fall of Sir Gawain: The Typology of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight.* Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1982.

Hamel, Mary. "The Dream of a King: The Alliterative *Morte Arthure* and Dante." *Chaucer Review* 14 (1979-80): 298-312.

-----. "The Regensburg *Morte Arthure*." Rev. of *The Alliterative Morte Arthure: A Reassessment of the Poem*, ed. Karl Heinz Göller. *Review (Charlottesville)* 5 (1983): 155-182.

-----. "Adventure as Structure in the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*." *Arthurian Interpretations* 3:1 (1988): 37-48.

-----. "Arthurian Romance in Fifteenth-Century Lindsey: The Books of the Lords Welles." *Modern Language Quarterly* 51 (1990): 341-361.

Hanna, Ralph, III. "*The Awntyrs off Arthure*: An Interpretation." *Modern Language Quarterly* 31 (1970): 275-297.

Hanning, Robert W. *The Vision of History in Early Britain: From Gildas to Geoffrey of Monmouth*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1966.

Harper, Carrie Anna. *The Sources of the British Chronicle History in Spenser's Faerie Queene*. Philadelphia: John C. Winston, 1910.

Hardy, Thomas Duffus. *Descriptive Catalogue of Materials Relating to the History of Great Britain and Ireland*. 3 vols. RS. 26. London: Longman, 1862-1871.

Harker, Christine Marie. "John Hardyng's Arthur: A Critical Edition." Diss. University of California, Riverside, 1996.

Harwood, Britton J. "The Alliterative *Morte Arthure* as a Witness to Epic." *Oral Poetics in Middle English Poetry*. Ed Mark C. Amodio and Sarah Gray Miller. New York : Garland, 1994. 241-286

Hay, Denys. "History and Historians in France and England During the Fifteenth Century." *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 35 (1962): 111-127.

-----. *Annalists and Historians: Western Historiography from the Eighth to the Eighteenth Centuries*. London: Methuen, 1977.

Höltgen, Karl Joseph. "King Arthur and Fortuna." Tr. Edward Donald Kennedy. *King Arthur: A Casebook*. Ed. Edward Donald Kennedy. New York and London: Garland, 1996. 121-138.

Hooper, A.G. "'The Awntyrs of Arthure': Dialect and Authorship." *Leeds Studies in English and Kindred Languages* 4 (1935): 62-74.

Housman, John E. "Higden, Trevisa, Caxton, and the Beginnings of Arthurian Criticism." *Review of English Studies* 23 (1947): 14-217.

Howard, Douglas. "Kinship and Conquest: Tragic Conflict in *Morte Arthure*." *Indiana Social Studies Quarterly* 31 (1978): 29-38.

Huizinga, J. *The Waning of the Middle Ages*. Tr. F. Hopman. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1987.

Huot, Sylvia. *From Song to Book: The Poetics of Writing in Old French Lyric and Lyrical Narrative Poetry*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1987.

Imelmann, Rudolph. *Lazamon: Versuch über seine Quellen*. Berlin: Weidmannsche, 1906.

Ingledew, Francis. "The Book of Troy and the Genealogical Construction of History: The Case of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae*." *Speculum* 69 (1994): 665-704.

Jack, R.D.S. "Arthur's Pilgrimage: A Study of Golagros and Gawane." *Studies in Scottish Literature* 12 (1974): 3-20.

Jackson, Joseph. *The Formation and Annulment of Marriage*. 2nd ed. London: Butterworth and Co., 1969.

James, Montague Rhodes. *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Jesus College, Cambridge*. Cambridge and London C. J. Clay & Sons, 1895.

-----. *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912.

Janssen, Anke. "The Dream of the Wheel of Fortune." *The Alliterative Morte Arthure: A Reassessment of the Poem*. Ed. Karl Heinz Göller. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1981. 140152.

Jeffrey, David L. "Literature in an Apocalyptic Age: or, How to End a Romance." *Dalhousie Review* 61 (1981): 426-446.

Johnson, James D. "'The Hero on the Beach' in the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*." *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 76 (1975): 271-281.

Johnson, Lesley. "Robert Mannyng's History of Arthurian Literature." *Church and Chronicle in the Middle Ages*. Ed. Ian Wood and G.A. Loud. London and Rio Grande: The Hambledon Press, 1991. 129-147.

-----. "King Arthur at the Crossroads to Rome." *Noble and Joyous Histories: English Romances, 1375-1650.* Ed. Eiléan Ní Cuilleanáin and J. D. Pheifer. Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1993. 87-111.

-----. "Return to Albion." *Arthurian Literature* 13 (1995): 19-40.

Kaeuper, Richard W. and Elspeth Kennedy. *The Book of Chivalry of Geoffroi de Charney: Text, Context, and Translation.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996.

Keeler, Laura. *Geoffrey of Monmouth and the Later Latin Chronicles.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1946.

Keen, Maurice. "Chivalry, Heralds, and History." *The Writing of History in the Middle Ages: Essays Presented to Richard William Southern.* Ed. R.H.C. Davis and J.M. Wallace-Hadrill. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981.

-----. *Chivalry.* New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1984.

Keiser, George R. "Edward III and the Alliterative *Morte Arthure.*" *Speculum* 48 (1973): 37-51.

-----. "Narrative Structure in the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*, 26-720." *The Chaucer Review: A Journal of Medieval Studies and Literary Criticism* 9 (1974): 130-144.

-----. "Lincoln Cathedral Library MS 91: Life and Milieu of the Scribe." *Studies in Bibliography* 32 (1979): 158-179.

-----. "More Light in the Life and Milieu of Robert Thornton." *Studies in Bibliography* 36 (1983): 111-119.

Kellogg, Alfred L. "Chronicles of England." *Journal of the Rutgers University Libraries* 29 (1966): 52-55.

Kelly, H.A. "The Non-Tragedy of Arthur." *Medieval English Religious and Ethical Literature: Essays in Honour of G.H. Russell.* Ed. Gregory Kratzmann and James Simpson. Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 1986. 92-114.

Kelly, Robert L. "Allusions to the Vulgate Cycle in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight.*" *Literary and Historical Perspectives of the Middle Ages: Proceedings of the 1981 SEMA Meeting.* Ed. Patricia Cummins, *et al.* Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 1982. 183-199.

Kelly, Susan. "The Arthurian Material in the *Scotichronicon* of Walter Bower." *Anglia* 97 (1979): 431-438.

Kennedy, Beverly. *Knighthood in the Morte Darthur*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer. 1992.

Kennedy, Edward Donald. "Malory's use of Hardyng's Chronicle." *Notes and Queries* 214 (1969): 167-170.

-----. "Malory and His English Sources." *Aspects of Malory*. Ed. Toshiyuki Takamiya and Derek Brewer. Cambridge: Brewer; Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Littlefield, 1981. 27-55.

-----. *Chronicles and Other Historical Writing. A Manual of the Writings in Middle English, 1050-1500*. Vol 8. New Haven: Archon Books, 1989.

-----. "John Hardyng and the Holy Grail." *Arthurian Literature* 8 (1989): 185-206.

-----. "Gower, Chaucer, and the French Prose Arthurian Romances." *Mediaevalia* 16 (1993): 55-90.

-----. "The Stanzaic *Morte Arthur*: The Adaptation of a French Romance for an English Audience." *Culture and the King: The Social Implications of the Arthurian Legend*. Ed. Martin B. Shichtman and James P. Carley. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994. 91-112.

-----. "Generic Intertextuality in the English *Alliterative Morte Arthure*: The Italian Connection." *Text and Intertext in Medieval Arthurian Literature*. Ed. Norris J. Lacy. New York and London: Garland, 1996. 41-56..

Kennedy, Elspeth. "The Knight as Reader of Arthurian Romance." *Culture and the King: The Social Implications of the Arthurian Legend*. Ed. Martin B. Shichtman and James P. Carley. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994. 70-90.

Kingsford, Charles L. "The First Version of Hardyng's Chronicle." *English Historical Review* 27 (1912): 462-482.

-----. *English Historical Literature in the Fifteenth Century*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913.

Klausner, David N. "Exempla and *The Awntyrs off Arthure*." *Mediaeval Studies* 34 (1972): 307-325.

Korrel, Peter. *An Arthurian Triangle: A Study of the Origin, Development and Characterization of Arthur, Guinevere and Modred*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1984.

Knight, Stephen. *Arthurian Literature and Society*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983.

Krochalis, Jeanne. "*Magna Tabula*: The Glastonbury Tablets (I)." *Arthurian Literature* 15 (1997): 93-184.

Lagorio, Valerie M. "The Evolving Legend of St. Joseph of Glastonbury." *Speculum* 46 (1971): 209-231.

Lawler, Traugott. "On the Properties of John Trevisa's Major Translations." *Viator* 14 (1983): 267-288.

Lawton, David A. "The Unity of Middle English Alliterative Poetry." *Speculum* 28 (1983): 74-94.

-----. "The Diversity of Middle English Romance." *Leeds Studies in English* n.s. 20 (1989) 143-172.

Leckie, R, William. *The Passage of Dominion: Geoffrey of Monmouth and the Periodization of Insular History*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981.

Legge, M. Dominica. *Anglo-Norman Literature and Its Background*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963.

Levine, Joseph. *Humanism and History: Origins of Modern English Historiography*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987.

Levy, M.L. "'As myn auctour seyth'." *Medium Evum* 12 (1943): 25-39.

Lewis, Bernard. *History: Remembered, Recovered, Invented*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975.

Lewis, R. E. "The Date of the *Parlement of the Thre Ages*." *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 69 (1968): 380-390.

Loomis, Roger Sherman. "From Segontium to Sinadon- The Legends of a *Cité Gaste*." *Speculum* 22 (1947): 520-533.

-----. "Edward I, Arthurian Enthusiast." *Speculum* 28 (1953): 114-127.

Lowe, Virginia A.P. "Folklore as a Unifying Factor in *The Awntyrs of Arthure*." *Folklore Forum* 13 (1980): 199-223.

Lumiansky, Robert M. "The Alliterative *Morte Arthure*, the Concept of Medieval Tragedy, and the Cardinal Virtue Fortitude." *Medieval and Renaissance Studies: Proceedings of the Southeastern Institute of Medieval and Renaissance Studies Summer, 1967*. Ed. John M. Headley. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1968. 95-118.

Luttrell, Claude.: "*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and the Versions of *Caradoc*." *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 15 (1979): 347-360.

McCarthy, Terence. "Malory and the Alliterative Tradition." *Studies in Malory*. Ed. James W. Spisak. Kalamazoo: Medieval Inst. Pubs., Western Michigan Univ., 1985. 53-85.

MacCracken, Henry Noble. "Concerning Huchown." *PMLA* 25 (1910): 507-534.

McFarlane, K.B. "The Education of the Nobility in the Later Middle Ages." *The Nobility of Later Medieval England: The Ford Lectures for 1953 and Related Studies*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997. 228-247.

Machan, Tim William. "Textual Authority and the Works of Hoccleve, Lydgate, and Henryson." *Viator* 23 (1992): 281-299.

McIntosh, Angus. "The Textual Transmission of the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*." *Middle English Dialectology: Essays on Some Principles and Problems*. Ed. Margaret Laing. Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1989. 179-187.

McIntosh, Angus, *et al*. *A Linguistic Atlas of Late Medieval English*. 4 vols. Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1986.

MacQueen, John. "The Literature of Fifteenth Century Scotland." *Scottish Society in the Fifteenth Century*. Ed. Jennifer M. Brown. New York: St. Martin's, 1977. 184-208.

Matheson, Lister M. "The Middle English Prose *Brut*: A Location List of the Manuscripts and Early Printed Editions." *Analytical and Enumerative Bibliography* 3 (1979): 254-266.

-----. "Historical Prose." *Middle English Prose: A Critical Guide to Major Authors and Genres*. Ed. A.S.G. Edwards. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1984. 209-249.

-----. "The Arthurian Stories of Lambeth Palace Library MS 84." *Arthurian Literature* 5 (1985): 70-91.

-----. "Printer and Scribe: Caxton, The *Polychronicon*, and the *Brut*." *Speculum* 60 (1985): 593-614.

-----. "King Arthur and the Medieval English Chronicles." *King Arthur Through the Ages*. Ed. Valerie M. Lagorio and Mildred Leake Day. Vol. 1. New York and London: Garland, 1990. 248-274.

-----. *The Prose Brut: The Development of a Middle English Chronicle*. Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, v. 180. Tempe, Ariz. : Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1998.

Matthews, William. *The Tragedy of Arthur: A Study of the Alliteratire 'Morte Arthure'* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1960.

-----. *The Ill-Framed Knight: A Skeptical Inquiry into the Identity of Sir Thomas Malory*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966.

-----. "Martinus Polonus and Some Later Chronicles." *Medieval Literature and Civilization: Studies in Memory of G.N. Garmonsway*. Ed. D.A. Pearsall and R.A. Waldron. London: The Athlone Press, 1969. 275-288.

Matsuda, Takami. "The *Awntyrs off Arthure* and the Arthurian History." *Poetica* (Tokyo) 19 (1984): 48-62.

Maxwell, J.C., and Douglas Gray. "An Echo of Chaucer." *Notes and Queries* 214 (1969): 170.

Meale, Carol. "Manuscripts, Readers and Patrons in Fifteenth-Century England: Sir Thomas Malory and Arthurian Romance." *Arthurian Literature* 4 (1985): 93-126.

Mehl, Dieter. *The Middle English Romances of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. 1969.

Meneghetti, Maria Luisa. *I Fatti di Bretagna: Cronache Genealogiche Anglo-Normanne dal XII al XIV Secolo*. Padova: Editrice Antenore, 1979.

Minnis, A.J. "Late-Medieval Discussions of *Compilatio* and the Role of the *Compilator*." *Beitrage zur Geschichte des deutschen Sprache und Literatur* 101 (1979): 383-421.

-----. *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages*. London: Scolar Press, 1984.

Morse, Ruth. "'This Vague Relation:' Historical Fiction and Historical Veracity in the Later Middle Ages." *Leeds Studies in English* 13 (1982): 85-108.

-----. *Truth and Convention in the Middle Ages: Rhetoric, Representation and Reality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Neilson, George. "Crosslinks Between *Pearl* and *The Awntyrs off Arthure*." *Scottish Antiquary* 16 (1902): 67-78.

Newstead, Helaine. Rev. of *The Tragedy of Arthur: A Study of the Alliteratire 'Morte Arthure'*, by William Mathews. *Romance Philology* 16 (1962): 118-122.

Nichols, Stephen G. *Romanesque Signs*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974.

Obst, Wolfgang. "The Gawain-Priamus Episode in the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*." *Studia Neophilologica: A Journal of Germanic and Romance Languages and Literature* 57 (1985): 9-18.

Parson, A.E. "The Trojan Legend in England." *Modern Language Review* 24 (1929): 263-280.

Partner, Nancy F. "Making Up Lost Time: Writing on the Writing of History." *Speculum* 61 (1986): 90-117.

-----. *Serious Entertainments: The Writing of History in Twelfth-Century England*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1977.

Patterson, Lee W. "The Historiography of Romance in the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*." *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 13 (1983): 1-32.

----. *Negotiating the Past: The Historical Understanding of Medieval Narrative*. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987.

-----. *Chaucer and the Subject of History*. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991.

Pearsall, Derek A. "Rhetorical 'Descriptio' in 'Sir Gawain and the Green Knight'." *Modern Language Review* 50 (1955): 129-134.

-----. "The Origins of the Alliterative Revival." *The Alliterative Tradition in the Fourteenth Century*. Ed. Bernard S. Levy and Paul E. Szarmach. Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1981. 1-24.

Peck, Russell A. "Willfulness and Wonders: Boethian Tragedy in the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*." *The Alliterative Tradition in the Fourteenth Century*. Ed. Bernard S. Levy and Paul E. Szarmach. Kent: Kent State University Press, 1981. 153-182.

Petterson, Clifford. "John Hardyng and Geoffrey of Monmouth: Two Unrecorded Poems and a Manuscript." *Notes and Queries* 27 (1980): 202-203.

Phillips, Helen. "The Ghost's Baptism in *The Awntyrs off Arthure*." *Medium Ævum* 58 (1989): 49-58.

-----. "*The Awntyrs off Arthure*: Structure and Meaning. A Reassessment." *Arthurian Literature* 12 (1993): 63-90.

Pickering, Frederick P. "Historical Thought and Moral Codes in Medieval Epic." *The Epic in Medieval Society: Aesthetic and Moral Values*. Ed. Harald Scholler. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1977. 1-17.

Porter, Elizabeth. "Chaucer's Knight, the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*, and Medieval Laws of War: A Reconsideration." *Nottingham Mediaeval Studies* 27 (1983): 56-78.

Putter, Ad. "Finding Time for Romance: Mediaeval Arthurian Literary History." *Medium Ævum* 63 (1994): 1-16.

Reeves, Marjorie E. "History and Prophecy in Medieval Thought." *Medievalia et Humanistica* 5 (1974): 51-75.

Regan, Charles L. "The Paternity of Mordred in the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*." *Bulletin Bibliographique de la Société Internationale Arthurienne* 25 (1973): 153-154.

Reynolds, Susan. "Medieval *Origines Gentium* and the Community of the Realm." *History* 68 (1983): 375-390.

Riddy, Felicity. "Glastonbury, Joseph of Arimathea and the Grail in John Hardyng's *Chronicle*." *The Archaeology and History of Glastonbury Abbey*. Ed. Lesley Abrams and James P. Carley. Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 1991. 317-331.

-----. "John Hardyng in Search of the Grail." *Arturus Rex*. Ed. Willy Van Hoecke, Gilbert Tournay and Werner Verbeke. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1991. 419-429.

-----. "Reading for England: Arthurian Literature and National Consciousness." *Bibliographical Bulletin of the International Arthurian Society* 43 (1991): 314-332.

-----. "John Hardyng's Chronicle and the Wars of the Roses." *Arthurian Literature* 12 (1993): 91-109.

Rigg, A. G. *A History of Anglo-Latin literature, 1066-1422*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Rondolone, Donna Lynne. "*Wyrchipe*: The Clash of Oral Heroic and Literate Ricardian Ideals in the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*." *Oral Poetics in Middle English Poetry*. Ed. Mark C. Amodio and Sarah Gray Miller. New York: Garland, 1994. 207-240.

Salter, Elizabeth. *English and International: Studies in the Literature, Art and Patronage of Medieval England*. Ed. D. Pearsall and N. Zeeman. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Sandoz, E. "Tourneys in the Arthurian Tradition." *Speculum* 19 (1944): 389-420.

Scanlon, Larry. *Narrative, Authority and Power: The Medieval Exemplum and the Chaucerian Tradition.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Schmolke-Hasselmann, Beate. "The Round Table: Ideal, Fiction, Reality." *Arthurian Literature* 2 (1982): 41-75.

Seaton, Ethel. "Robert Mannyng of Brunne in Lincoln." *Medium Evum* 12 (1943): 77.

-----. *Sir Richard Roos, c. 1410-1482: Lancastrian Poet.* London: R. Hart-Davis 1961.

Shepherd, Goeffrey. *The Nature of Alliterative Poetry in Late Medieval England.* London: Oxford University Press, 1971.

Shichtman, Martin B. "*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*: A Lesson in the Terror of History." *Papers on Language and Literature* 22 (1986): 3-15.

Shklar, Judith. "Subversive Genealogies." *Daedelus* 101 (1972): 129-154.

Short, Ian. "On Bilingualism in Anglo-Norman England." *Romance Philology* 33 (1980): 467-479.

Silverstein, Theodore. "*Sir Gawain*, Dear Brutus, and Britain's Fortunate Founding: A Study in Comedy and Convention." *Modern Philology* 62 (1965): 189-206.

Singerman, Jerome E. *Under Clouds of Poesy: Poetry and Truth in French and English Reworkings of the Aeneid, 1160-1513.* New York: Garland, 1985.

Sklar, Elizabeth S. "*Arthour and Merlin*: The Englishing of Arthur." *Michigan Academician* 8 (1975-6): 48-57.

Smalley, Beryl. *English Friars and Antiquity in the Early Fourteenth Century.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1960.

Smallwood, Thomas M. "The Prophecy of the Six Kings." *Speculum* 60 (1985): 571-592.

Southern, R.W. "Aspects of the European Tradition of Historical Writing 1. The Classical Tradition for Einhard to Geoffrey of Monmouth." *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 5th ser. 20 (1970): 173-196.

-----. "Aspects of the European Tradition of Historical Writing 2. Hugh of St Victor and the Idea of Historical Development." *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 5th ser. 21 (1971): 159-179.

-----. "Aspects of the European Tradition of Historical Writing 3. History as Prophecy." *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 5th ser. 22 (1972): 159-180.

-----. "Aspects of the European Tradition of Historical Writing 4. The Sense of the Past." *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 5th ser. 23 (1973): 243-263.

Spearing, A.C. "*The Awntyrs off Arthure*." *The Alliterative Tradition in the Fourteenth Century*. Ed. Bernard S. Levy and Paul E. Szarmach. Kent: Kent State University Press, 1981. 183-202.

-----. "Central and Displaced Sovereignty in Three Medieval Poems." *Review of English Studies* 33 (1982): 247-61.

-----. *Medieval to Renaissance in English Poetry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Spiegel, Gabrielle M. "Genealogy: Form and Function in Medieval Historical Narrative." *History and Theory* 22 (1983): 43-53.

-----. "History, Historicism, and the Social Logic of the Text in the Middle Ages." *Speculum* 65 (1990): 59-86.

-----. *Romancing the Past: The Rise of Vernacular Prose Historiography in Thirteenth-Century France*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.

Spiers, John. *Medieval English Poetry: The Non-Chaucerian Tradition*. London: Faber and Faber, 1957.

Stepsis, Robert P. "The Manuscripts of Robert Mannyng of Brunne's 'Chronicle of England.'" *Manuscripta* 13 (1969): 131-141.

-----. "Pierre de Langtoft's Chronicle: An Essay in Medieval Historiography." *Medievalia et Humanistica* n.s. 3 (1972): 51-73.

Stone, Lawrence. *Sculpture in Britain: The Middle Ages*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1955.

Strohm, Paul. "*Storie, Spelle, Geste, Romaunce, Tragedie*: Generic Distinctions in the Middle English Troy Narratives." *Speculum* 46 (1971): 348-59.

-----. "The Origin and Meaning of Middle English *Romaunce*." *Genre* 10 (1977): 1-28.

Sullivan, Matthew. "Biographical Notes on Robert Mannyng of Brunne and Peter Idley, the Adaptor of Robert Mannyng's *Handlyng Synne*." *Notes and Queries* 239 (1994): 302-304.

Sutton, Anne F. and Livia Visser-Fuchs. *Richard III's Books: Ideals and Reality in the Life and Library of a Medieval Prince*. Phoenix Mill, Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1997.

Tatlock, John S.P. *The Legendary History of Britain: Geoffrey of Monmouth's* Historia Regum Britanniae *and its Early Vernacular Versions*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1950.

Taylor, John. *The Universal Chronicle of Ranulph Higden*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966.

-----. "The French Prose Brut: Popular History in Fourteenth-Century England." *England in the Fourteenth Century: Proceedings of 1985 Harlaxton Symposium*. Ed. W. M. Ormrod. Woodbridge: Boydell, 1986. 247-254.

-----. *English Historical Literature in the Fourteenth Century*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987.

Thümmif, Max. "Über die altenglische Üersetzung der Reimchronik Peter Langtoft's durch Ronert Manning von Brunne." *Anglia* 14 (1892): 1-76.

Thiolier, J.C. "La *Scalacronica*: Première Approche (MS 133)." *Manuscrits français de la bibliotheque Parker*. Ed. Nigel Wilkins. Cambridge: Parker Library Publications, 1993. 121-155.

Thrupp, Sylvia L. *The Merchant Class of Medieval London*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948.

Tristram, Phillippa. *Figures of Life and Death in Medieval English Literature*. London: Paul Elek, 1976.

Turville-Petre, Thorlac. "'Summer Sunday', 'De Tribus Regibus Mortuis', and 'The Awntyrs off Arthure': Three Poems in the Thirteen-Line Stanza." *Review of English Studies* n.s. 25 (1974): 1-14.

-----. *The Alliterative Revival*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1977.

-----. "Politics and Poetry in the Early Fourteenth Century: The Case of Robert Manning's *Chronicle*." *Review of English Studies* n.s. 39 (1988): 1-28.

-----. *England the Nation: Language, Literature, and National Identity, 1290-1340*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.

Twomey, Michael W. "Heroic Kingship and Unjust War in the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*." *Acta* 11 (1986): 133-151.

Tyson, Diana B. "King Arthur as a Literary Device in French Vernacular History Writing of the Fourteenth Century." *Bibliographical Bulletin of the International Arthurian Society* 33 (1981): 237-257.

-----. "Les manuscripts du *Brut* en prose française (MSS 50, 53, 98, 133, 469)." *Les manuscrits français de la bibliothèque Parker*. Ed. Nigel Wilkins. Cambridge: Parker Library Publications, 1993. 101-120.

Vale, Juliet. "Law and Diplomacy in the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*." *Nottingham Mediaeval Studies* 23 (1979): 31-46.

-----. *Edward III and Chivalry: Chivalric Society and its Context 1270-1350*. Woodbridge: Boydell, 1982.

Vising, J. *Anglo-Norman Language and Literature*. London: Oxford University Press, 1923.

Waldron, Ronald. "John Trevisa and the Use of English." *Proceedings of the British Academy* 74 (1988): 171-202.

-----. "Trevisa's 'Celtic Complex' Revisted." *Notes and Queries* 234 (1989): 303-307.

-----. "The Manuscripts of Trevisa's Translation of the *Polychronicon*: Towards a New Edition." *Modern Language Quarterly* 51 (1990): 281-317.

Waswo, Richard. "Our Ancestors, the Trojans: Inventing Cultural Identity in the Middle Ages." *Exemplaria: A Journal of Theory in Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 7 (1995): 269-290.

Watson, G.W. "Ormond and Kildare." *Miscellanea Genealogica et Heraldica* 5th ser. 8 (1932-34): 229-231.

West, Gilian. "Hardyng's *Chronicle* and Shakespeare's Hotspur." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 41 (1990): 348-351.

White, Hayden. "The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality." *Critical Inquiry* 7 (1980): 5-27.

Whiting, B.J. "Gawain: His Reputation, His Courtesy and His Appearance in Chaucer's *Squire's Tale*." *Mediaeval Studies* 9 (1947): 189-234.

Wilcox, D.J. *The Measure of Times Past*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1987.

Wilkins, Nigel. *Catalogue des manuscrits français de la bibliothèque Parker (Parker Library) Corpus Christi College, Cambridge*. Cambridge: Parker Library Publications, 1993.

Wilson, R.M. *The Lost Literature of Medieval England*. London: Methuen & Co., 1952.

Witherington, John. "The Arthurian Epitaph in Malory's *Morte Darthur*." *Arthurian Literature* 7 (1987): 103-144.

-----. "King Arthur as Emperor." *Notes and Queries* 233 (1988): 13-15.

Wolf, Ferdinand Joseph *Über die Lais, Sequenzen und Leiche: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der rhythmischen Formen und Singweisen der Volkslieder und der volksmässigen Kirchen- und Kunstlieder im Mittelalter*. Heidelberg: C.F. Winter, 1841.

Wright, Neil. "The Place of Henry of Huntingdon's *Epistola ad Warinum* in the text-history of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britannie*: a preliminary study." *The British Isles in the Middle Ages and Renaissance: Essays by Members of Girton College, Cambridge, in Memory of Ruth Morgan*. Ed. Gillian Jondorf and D. N. Dumville. Woodbridge: Boydell, 1991. 71-113.

Wright, Thomas. "Influence of Medieval Upon Welsh Literature: The Story of the Cort Mantel." *Archæologia Cambrensis: The Journal of the Cambrian Archæological Association* 3rd ser. 9 (1863): 7-40.

Wylie, James Hamilton. *The Reign of Henry the Fifth*. 3 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914-1929.

Ziolkowski, Jan. "A Narrative Structure in the Alliterative *Morte Arthure* 1-1221 and 3150-4346." *The Chaucer Review: A Journal of Medieval Studies and Literary Criticism* 22 (1988): 234-245.