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The Minor Sources of Sir Thomas Malory's Morte Darthur

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The Minor Sources of Sir Thomas Malory's <u>Morte Darthur</u>

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ABSTRACT

"The Minor Sources of Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte Darthur*" explores the possible minor sources of the *Morte Darthur*. Scholarship has long been aware that Malory adapted the eight tales recognized in the standard edition each from one or more older sources in French and English. Scholarship has more recently recognized that Malory also used minor sources. For example, it has been noted that Malory habitually named characters that his major sources left anonymous and that Malory displayed knowledge from the very beginning of the *Morte Darthur* of a number of English Arthurian romances that were not among his primary sources. However, although over fifty years of work has gone into the question of Malory's minor sources, no one has yet surveyed the field to try to evaluate the strength of these various suggestions and to see, once the balance is taken, what conclusions may be drawn of Malory's life, work, and mental furnishings. This dissertation is an attempt to do so.

ABBREVIATIONS

<u>BBSIA</u>	<u>Bulletin Bibliographique de la Société Internationale Arthurienne</u>
EETS	Early English Texts Society
e.s.	Extra Series
HMSO	Her Majesty's Stationery Office
n.s.	New Series
o.s.	Original Series
<u>PMLA</u>	<u>Publications of the Modern Language Association of America</u>
s.s.	Special Series
STC	Short Title Catalogue
STS	Scottish Text Society

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Serious academic study of the sources of medieval Arthurian literature began in the nineteenth century, when two scholarly camps argued whether medieval Arthurian literature developed primarily from Celtic mythology or evolved mainly through the imaginative efforts of individual literary geniuses.[1] This discussion, which eventually led to a general consensus that took the strongest points of both sides, was just one use of source study, which has had a long tradition for students of medieval literature in general and has had a special importance to the study of medieval Arthurian literature in particular. Source study is a natural part of medieval literary investigation because of the medieval culture's high regard for authority and relatively low regard for originality, as that has been understood since the Romantic movement. It has often been used to chart the development of various stories in the Arthurian legend and to clarify the nature and extent of the contributions of individual authors.

In one notable example, Roger Sherman Loomis devoted a major study to the attempt to establish the nature of the Celtic tradition that informed the work of Chrétien de Troyes, although none of Chrétien's sources has survived. In his first chapter, Loomis justified his project:

> It has been wisely said that the best way to understand a work of art is to watch it grow. There are aspects of Chrétien's art which one cannot fully comprehend until one perceives that the poet has gone to school to Ovid and the medieval writers of poetics. [. . .] No sound interpretation of Chrétien's matière, his choice and handling of narrative patterns, is possible until one has studied all the pertinent evidence, internal and external, no matter in what

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[1] For representative works on each view, see R. S. Loomis, Celtic Myth and Arthurian Romance (New York: Columbia UP, 1926) and J. D. Bruce, Evolution of Arthurian Romance, 2 vols. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1923) respectively.

language, no matter what its date.[2]

Scholars now reject many of Loomis's conclusions, which often depended on reconstructions of hypothetical lost sources, but they do agree with Loomis that Chrétien did not invent Arthurian romance ex nihilo, that he used sources that are now lost and that much of the material in question was based to varying degrees on Celtic legend.[3]

In addition to clarifying the development of a story, source study has also often been used to examine the nature and extent of an author's contribution to a story, and thus it often shows his individual character. In the case of Sir Thomas Malory's Morte Darthur, a comparison with his sources has been said, for example, to reveal him to have had a more practical cast of mind than his predecessors: as one distinguished critic observed, "Malory's text naturalizes, negatively, by the omission of wonders, and positively, by introducing practical, mundane details."[4]

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, justification for this kind of scholarship was usually left implicit. The prevailing critical theory of the time, which was in effect Historicist, suggested that knowing as much as possible about the artistry of individual authors was self-evidently desirable. Much of this information could only be provided by source study. However, despite its usefulness in this regard, the value of source study was sometimes questioned even before the rise to prominence of theory in literary studies. Even in the early twentieth century, some argued that source study distracted scholars from the

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[2] R. S. Loomis, Arthurian Tradition and Chrétien de Troyes (New York: Columbia UP, 1949) 5.

[3] E. g. Keith Busby, "The Characters and the Setting," The Legacy of Chrétien de Troyes, eds. Norris J. Lacy, et al. 2 vols. (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1987) 1:57-89.

[4] C. S. Lewis, "The English Prose Morte," Essays on Malory, ed. J. A. W. Bennett (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963) 11.

texts that should be their primary concern.[5] Others, however, argued that source study offers

a perspective on the way that different authors contributed to traditional stories, which,

especially for literature created in societies that value authority more than originality, should

lead a student back to the masterpiece with new appreciation.

Although some early scholars felt that source study received too much emphasis, none

of them professed to doubt its usefulness within proper limits. In the second half of the

twentieth century, however, the assumptions implicit in source study were challenged when

the rise of literary theory placed unprecedented focus on criticism as opposed to scholarship.

The insistence of the New Critics that the text is a discreet cultural artifact and the arguments

of post-structural theorists for the endless deferral of literary meaning meant that their

adherents saw source studies as a dead end. Other schools of literary thought that analyse

literature in political contexts, such as Marxism, Feminism, and Post-Colonialism concern

themselves with the discussion of single issues in existing texts and therefore are rarely

interested in the information provided by source study.

These diverse theories are all either hostile or indifferent to source study, and their

prominence in literary studies may make source study seem irrelevant. Literature even within

a single period, however, surely cannot be convincingly confined to the single issues on

which each of these theories focus.[6] The very diversity of literature leaves it resistant to any

one literary theory. No theory yet proposed adequately sets exclusive guidelines for the study

and analysis of all literature while maintaining useful distinctions between literature, sub-

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[5] E. g. George Saintsbury, The English Novel (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1913), and W. Lewis Jones, King Arthur in History and Legend (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1912).

[6] For a critique of Marxist, feminist, and post-colonial theory see John M. Ellis, Literature Lost (New Haven: Yale UP, 1997).

literature, and non-literature. Even the more modest goal of a comprehensive theory that does justice to the diversity of the literature of a single period, such as the Middle Ages, is elusive.

Source study is not a theory but a scholarly method of investigation that attempts to illuminate authors and their works and thereby to add to the body of knowledge at the disposal of scholars and critics. Although its use was most prominent before the rise of most currently popular literary theory, the knowledge that it can provide will be of use to all scholars and critics whose theoretical bases allow for the importance of the development of a story and an author's role in that development.

The methods and assumptions of source study itself have only rarely been analysed. A notable exception to this is an article by a scholar who himself uses source study. A specialist in Renaissance drama, Richard Levin, recently criticized source study as "under theorized," and he argued that because of that, source study has no reliable basis for examining the evidence that it admits or for evaluating the conclusions that it draws.[7] He compares his conception of a typical source study specialist to Captain Fluellen from Shakespeare's Henry V. As Levin notes, Fluellen proves that King Henry is like "Alexander the Pig" because, "there is a river in Macedon, and there is also moreover a river in Monmouth [birthplaces of Alexander and Henry] [. . .] and there is salmons in both."[8] Levin says that,

> This exemplifies the three basic techniques of the Fluellenist: he selects only the similarities between two objects and ignores all of their differences (there are many kinds of fish in one river that are not in the other); he ignores the presence of these similarities in other objects (there are salmon in a great many rivers); and he breaks down each object into a number of isolated points of

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[7] Richard Levin, "Another 'Source' for The Alchemist and Another Look at Source Studies," English Literary Renaissance 24 (1998): 210-30.

[8] Henry V 4.7.26-31.

comparison that seem to be on the same level (the salmon are just as important as the personalities and actions of Henry and Alexander). These techniques never fail, but that is precisely the problem, because they will produce 'parallels' between any two objects.[9]

These are certainly dangers that any scholar should be aware of. They are not, however, discoveries of Levin's but commonplaces of good advice, hardly worth the space that Levin gives them. As one specialist in Arthurian literature has put it earlier and more succinctly, students of sources needs to beware of "those twin bugbears [. . .] coincidence and contamination."[10]

Levin does not claim to be answering the need for a theory of source study, so he dwells on problems rather than on solutions. He does, however, suggest that a ranking system would help critics evaluate the importance of sources to primary works. He calls the primary source of a piece of literature a Class Alpha Source.[11] Further, "Class Beta Sources would be those that have the same kind of close relationship to the [primary work], but are somewhat less important because they were only used for part of it." Levin continues,

> Then would come sources of Class Gamma, Delta, Epsilon, etc., ranked on the basis of the decreasing magnitude or significance of the part or aspect of the [primary work] that draws on them (a particular situation or episode, a single character, even a speech) or the decreasing specificity of the relationship (a general dramatic form or plot device, and so on). And at the bottom would be the Class Nu Sources (here I take my cue from my ancestral tongue, wherein the word means, roughly, So What?) [. . .] which, I argued, would not make any difference to our understanding of the [primary work] because they do not involve a meaningful causal connection in the [author's] creative process.[12]

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[9] Levin 221.

[10] P. J. C. Field, "Malory and Chrétien de Troyes," Malory: Text and Sources (Rochester: Boydell and Brewer, 1998) 236-45.

[11] In following quotations, I have replaced the terms "play" and "playwright" with "primary work" and "author," as the ideas that Levin discusses are equally relevant to all literary genres.

[12] Levin 227.

Levin's criticisms of what he calls Fluellenisms are sound enough, but his ranking system of sources seems impractical. The boundaries between classes other than Alpha and Beta are necessarily inexact. Further, Levin is too dismissive of what he calls Class Nu Sources, those that "do not involve a meaningful causal connection in the [author's] creative process." In the absence of a method to test causal connections to creative processes, which Levin does not offer, calling a reasonably established source Class Nu seems mere invective. He asserts Class Nu Sources "are dead because they do not lead to anything (except to the article making the claim) – they give us no new information that can be used to interpret the [work] or to generate further research and so they simply do not matter."[13] That is surely too sweeping. Once a scholar has established that a source has been used, he has extended, if only minutely, knowledge of an author's mental life. The fact that the additional knowledge is minute is not an argument against such research, because minute details may be crucial in scholarly discussion. One would expect literary scholars to agree that anything that can be shown to have influenced the creation of a literary work is worth knowing. Even a negative result in which a scholar shows that a minor source probably did not influence a piece of literature, as Levin's does in the primary example in his essay, a possible source for a scene in Ben Johnson's The Alchemist, can be valuable. For his source magnitude scale, Levin borrows terms from astronomy; he might have done better to have also borrowed from the physical sciences the idea of the value of the acquisition of knowledge for its own sake and for the sake of knowing all that is knowable about a phenomenon.

Source study can of course be misused. Early specialists in medieval romance, for instance, were often guilty of creating hypothetical sources and character archetypes that they

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[13] Levin 228.

seemed to prefer to the stories and characters in the extant texts. These hypothetical recreations, which were usually more logical and more in accordance with modern aesthetic standards, depended on the scholar's own interpretation of minimal evidence and were unverifiable.[14] Colleagues who used the same methods and assumptions were often unable to agree on each others' conclusions.[15] However, ambitious attempts to recreate lost sources are no longer common in academic source study, and the discussion of lost sources that does continue tends to be much more restrained and to claim more modest conclusions.[16]

Therefore despite the rise of critical theories that run counter to its assumptions, and despite internal criticism, source study, sometimes now reclassified as an aspect of intertextuality, has remained an important endeavour for students of medieval literature.[17] This is so partly because some of the assumptions that governed the creation of medieval literature were different from those of most of modern literature. D. G. Scragg's comments about the usefulness of source study for scholarship in Old English literature apply equally well to most medieval literature:

> Nowadays originality in art is considered a desirable quality, but in earlier centuries it was less significant. From ancient times artists consciously borrowed one another's ideas, a practice endorsed by critics from Aristotle onwards. The study of an author's sources has for two centuries been a widely accepted means of understanding the workings of his or her mind, for in selecting, reorganizing, and modifying ideas from earlier writers, authors

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[14] For a typical example of a recreated source, see W. J. Gruffydd, Math vab Mathonwy (Cardiff: U of Wales P, 1928).

[15] E. g., R. S. Loomis and D. D. R. Owen, "The Development of Arthurian Romance," Forum for Modern Language Studies 1 (1965): 64-77.

[16] For a more restrained and fairly recent study of a lost source, see Roger Middleton, "Chwedl Geraint ab Erbin," The Arthur of the Welsh, eds. Rachel Bromwich et al. (Cardiff: U of Wales P, 1990) 147-58.

[17] E.g., Norris J. Lacy, ed., Text and Intertext in Medieval Arthurian Literature (New York: Garland, 1996).

display their own particular cast of thought. [18]

Scragg, writing in 1997, thus echoes the assumptions of source study scholars from before the rise of literary theory.

Just as with the authors of Old English literature, most authors of medieval Arthurian literature, including Sir Thomas Malory, considered textual authority to derive from older sources rather than from originality. The authors of all of Malory's major sources claimed to be recreating earlier works, and, although scholars usually reject these claims, this universal insistence on sources clearly shows their importance to medieval Arthurian authors. The words of Malory's first publisher, William Caxton, show that Malory's fifteenth-century readers would have expected his book to be an accurate recreation of the earlier versions for the benefit of English readers.[19] In fact, Malory was so concerned to be seen following older sources that he obscured many of his own changes to the traditional story by source citations that modern scholars have found to be illusory.[20] In this, Malory was not only typical of Arthurian authors but also of fifteenth-century authors in general. In an age in which textual authority derived from adherence to older sources, no author wished to appear as an innovator and originality was to be disguised.

Some of the merits of the study of Malory's sources have been set out in a work devoted to Malory's relationships with his major sources:

The chief advantage of source study, however, is that it furnishes a valuable

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[18] D. G. Scragg, "Source Study," Reading Old English Texts, ed. Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997) 39.

[19] All citations of the Morte Darthur are from The Works of Sir Thomas Malory, ed. Eugène Vinaver, 3rd ed. rev. P. J. C. Field, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990). "Caxton's Preface," cxlii-cxlvii.

[20] R. H. Wilson, "Malory's 'French Book' Again," Comparative Literature 2 (1950): 172-81.

approach for the assessment of a literary work. Once a student can believe - as a result of factual comparison - that Malory used the alliterative <u>Morte Arthure</u> as source for his "Tale of King Arthur and the Emperor Lucius," he can then examine Malory's handling of this source with an eye for patterns which point towards that interpretation of the "Tale" which Malory intended. In such an examination we must observe what Malory borrowed <u>verbatim</u> from the source, what he altered, what he omitted, and what he added. The fundamental assumption is that in each of these aspects of his work Malory was consciously aware of his handling of the source. He controlled the source; it did not control him, for he could have handled it in an infinite number of ways had he so desired.[21]

One need not agree that all of Malory's creative changes were conscious to admit the general validity of this position.

Analysis of Malory's sources can therefore again be shown to reveal facts about his creative process and literary talent that a critic would be unable to observe by reading his text alone. For example, in the last part of Malory's work, Lancelot saves the queen from charges of treason three times: first when she is unjustly accused of poisoning one of the Round Table knights (1045-60), secondly when she is only technically innocent of the charges of adultery as brought against her by the ignoble Meleagant (1119-40), and finally when she is about to be burned at the stake after she and Lancelot have been caught and are clearly guilty (1161-78). In order to achieve this interesting pattern, which shows the pressure building against Guenevere and Lancelot especially and against Arthurian society generally, Malory radically altered the structure of the episodes that he found in his sources. Although the threefold pattern is often found in traditional literature, in this case it is Malory's innovation, and although the pattern is clearly there for readers to see without reference to Malory's sources, knowledge of those sources allows the critic to appreciate the skill with which composed this tale. This example is just one that confirms Eugène Vinaver's assertion that "Comparisons of

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[21] R. M. Lumiansky, "Introduction," <u>Malory's Originality</u>, ed. Lumiansky (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1964) 5-6.

Malory's text with that of the sources he used reveal many [. . .] important facets of his genius."[22] Readers of Malory's <u>Morte Darthur</u> are fortunate, in fact, to be able to draw such insights. They, unlike some of their Arthurian colleagues, have sources for most of Malory's work available for scholarly analysis, and this has helped them to make great progress in critical appreciation of the <u>Morte Darthur</u> during the past century.

Source study has provided valuable information for a number of important aspects of literary study. Malory's version of the Arthurian story became the definitive version in English,[23] so Malory's reliance on and departure from his sources has had tremendous impact on how King Arthur's story has been told in the English-speaking world up to the present day. In terms of literary biography, the more closely scholarship can define the extent of Malory's sources, the more closely it can recover the conditions under which Malory wrote, whether he had only limited access to books from a sort of prison librarian or, as is increasingly coming to seem more likely, whether he worked under more favourable conditions of some kind.[24] And obviously the heavy alliteration and almost verse style of Malory's "Tale of Arthur and Lucius" would be inexplicable without the analysis of that work in comparison with the alliterative <u>Morte Arthure</u> that can only be provided by source study. In fact, in the case of Malory's work, source study has been of essential practical use in helping to establish even the text that ought to be read.

Vinaver's edition of Malory's work, which has been the standard edition since its first

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[22] Eugène Vinaver, "Sir Thomas Malory," <u>Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages,</u> ed. R. S. Loomis (Oxford: Clarendon, 1959) 546.

[23] See Marylyn Jackson Parins, <u>Malory: The Critical Heritage</u> (London: Routledge, 1988)

[24] For the arguments, see Field, <u>The Life and Times of Sir Thomas Malory</u> (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1993) 126-47; and Anne Sutton, "Malory in Newgate: A New Document," <u>The Library</u> 7th Series, 1.3 (2000): 243-62.

appearance in 1947, is primarily based upon the Winchester Manuscript but also uses

Caxton's printed version and Malory's major sources in combination to correct scribal

corruption in the Winchester.[25] Vinaver give a characteristic example of how source study

can solve mysteries in the text:

> In describing preparation for a tournament, C [Caxton] remarks (Book VI, ch
> 6) that there were scaffoldis and holes that lordes and ladyes myghte beholde.
> This has usually been taken as a hopelessly corrupt passage, and when Dr.
> Oakeshott first disclosed some of the features of the Winchester MS. he
> claimed to have found the correct reading of it: scaffoldis and towrys instead
> of scaffoldis and holes. [...] All 'rational' conjectures as to this, however, are
> made unnecessary by the reading found in F [Malory's French source]. The
> French prose writer states that on the occasion of the tournament stands were
> erected and windows (fenestres) made (presumably in the woodwork) so as to
> enable the ladies to watch the fighting. [. . .] That C's holes is Malory's
> rendering of fenestres is evident; and this is confirmed by the fact that the
> Catholicon Anglicon gives holes as an equivalent of fenestra. The seemingly
> corrupt reading thus turns out to be Malory's and the seemingly 'better' one a
> corruption. (cxv-i)

This process can produce a text that is much closer to Malory's original autograph than would

otherwise be possible. In fact, there are instances in which recourse to source study is

necessary to correct unintelligible readings found in both Caxton and the Winchester:

> Another interesting case is the remark thou hast resembled in to thynges,
> alleged to have been made by Josephe, son of Joseph of Arimathea, to
> Galahad. The sense clearly requires the insertion of me after resembled, and it
> is arguable that the word may have dropped out before in owing to the likeness
> between m and in. But the emendation would not be certain without the
> support of the corresponding reading in F: tu m'as resemblé en deus choses.
> (cxvii).

Source study, therefore, as a method of illuminating more precisely the relationship of

an author to his work fills at least four important functions: it is an aspect of literary history, it

often can aid in literary biography, it can at times elucidate otherwise puzzling features of a

text, such as the style of Malory's second tale, and it is often helpful and at times essential in

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[25] Works c-cxxvi.

textual studies.

The literary tradition from which Malory's work eventually grew began to take shape around the year 1138,[26] when Geoffrey of Monmouth gave King Arthur an official biography in his Historia regum Britanniae.[27] This work introduced many of what were to become the major Arthurian themes, such as the obsession of Arthur's father Uther for the wife of the Duke of Cornwall, Arthur's continental warfare against the Roman Empire, and Arthur's tragic defeat at the trecherous hands of Mordred, here described only as Arthur's nephew, not yet his incestuous bastard son. This work gave rise to what is often called the chronicle tradition of Arthurian literature. The romance tradition began a few decades later when Chrétien de Troyes became the first important poet to use the Arthurian legend. Chrétien's poems include the oldest surviving work to tell the story of Lancelot and Guenevere's love affair and the oldest surviving work about the Grail. Chrétien's work inspired many continuators and imitators, but during the course of the following century prose romances began to displace poetic romances in popularity and importance.[28]

The idea of linking together various romance motifs into a comprehensive history of King Arthur's realm was begun by the poet Robert de Boron and taken over by the authors of the thirteenth-century cyclic prose romances. This trend influenced the French prose Grail

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[26] For more detailed discussions of these works and their place in the Arthurian tradition, see Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages, ed. Loomis, and for the English tradition in particular, including Geoffrey of Monmouth, see The Arthur of the English, ed, W. R. J. Barron (Cardiff: U of Wales P, 1999).

[27] Geoffrey of Monmouth, Historia regum Britanniae, ed. Neil Wright (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1985).

[28] Beate Schmolke-Hasselman, The Evolution of Arthurian Romance: The Verse Tradition from Chrétien to Froissart, trans. Margaret Middleton (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998).

romance <u>Perlesvaus</u>[29] and culminated in what is today usually called the Vulgate Cycle or sometimes the Lancelot-Graal Cycle.[30] Scholars generally explain the increasing elaboration of Arthurian material, from individual stories such as those told by Chrétien de Troyes and his successors to complex narrative cycles as caused by the desire of thirteenth-century audiences for clarification of what was left unexplained in the early stories.[31] In its final form, the Vulgate Cycle begins with the story of the Grail from the time of Christ, tells the story of the birth of Merlin, continues to tell the story of the birth of Arthur, the birth of Lancelot, on through several long volumes of interwoven adventures, through the quest of Arthur's knights for the Grail, to reach the death of Arthur, and ends with the deaths of Lancelot and Guenevere.

The Vulgate romances, like Chrétien's poems earlier, were popular enough to inspire imitation. The Prose <u>Tristan</u>, written in at least four stages, is an extended imitation of the Prose <u>Lancelot</u>. It puts Tristan and Isolde into the world of the Vulgate Cycle, and in its fullest version, includes a modified version of the Grail quest and the death of Arthur.[32] Later, another author, who perhaps began as a scribe copying the Vulgate Cycle, dramatically

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[29] <u>Le Haut Livre du Graal: Perlesvaus</u>, eds. William A. Nitze and T. Atkinson Jenkins, 2 vols. (New York: Phaeton, 1932-37).

[30] <u>The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances</u>, ed. H. Oskar Sommer, 8 vols. (Washington: Carnegie Institution, 1908-16). For the Malory student, Alexandre Micha, ed. <u>Lancelot: Roman en prose du XIIIe siècle</u>, 9 vols. (Geneva: Droz, 1978-83), <u>La queste del Saint Graal: Roman du XIIIe siècle</u>, ed. Albert Pauphilet (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1999), and <u>Mort Artu: An Old French Romance of the XIIIth Century</u> ed. J. D. Bruce (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1910) are better editions of the "Lancelot" "Grail," and "Mort Artu" sections of the cycle. For a discussion of this cycle, see Carol Dover, ed., <u>A Companion to the </u>Lancelot-Grail Cycle (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2003).

[31] Eugène Vinaver, <u>The Rise of Romance</u> (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971).

[32] Emmanuèle Baumgartner, <u>Le Tristan en prose: essai d'interpretation d'un roman médiéval</u> (Geneva: Droz, 1975).

reworked the story into a shorter version, which scholars today call the Post-Vulgate Cycle or Romance of the Grail.[33] The author of the Post-Vulgate, by focussing more on Arthur himself and on the Grail, and less on the adventures of Lancelot and Arthur's other leading knights, produced a work with greater unity of theme than the Vulgate Cycle. In this respect, the Post-Vulgate Cycle represents the ultimate expression of the thirteenth-century impulse to connect and to elucidate the various adventures of the Arthurian world into a coherent whole.

The final important development of this tradition for students of Malory was the use of Arthurian characters and themes by Middle English poets, particularly in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. Some, such as the author of the alliterative Morte Arthure, used the chronicle tradition.[34] Others reworked the French romance tradition. The most important of them for readers of Malory rendered the Mort Artu, the final romance of the Vulgate Cycle, into a stanzaic poem called La Morte Arthur.[35] Still others, like the author of Ywain and Gawain, returned to the episodic type of romance originally made popular by Chrétien.[36] Although Malory may not have used all of the above-named works, they made up the native Arthurian tradition that existed in his day.

The standard edition of Malory's work divides the Morte Darthur into eight tales, and modern scholars recognize the following major sources for them:[37] "The Tale of King Arthur" is derived from part of the Vulgate Merlin and its Post-Vulgate Suite. "The Noble

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[33] Fannie Bogdanow, The Romance of the Grail (New York: Manchester UP, 1966).

[34] Morte Arthure, ed. Mary Hamel (New York: Garland, 1984).

[35] Le Morte Arthur ed. P. F. Hissinger (The Hague: Mouton, 1975).

[36] Ywain and Gawain, ed. Maldwyn Mills (London: J. M. Dent, 1992).

[37] The following paragraph is based on Field, "Sir Thomas Malory's Le Morte Darthur," The Arthur of the English 225-46.

Tale of Arthur and Lucius" comes mainly from the alliterative <u>Morte Arthure</u>, although the story is here altered end in triumph for Arthur. "The Tale of Sir Launcelot" is based on episodes drawn from the Vulgate <u>Lancelot</u> and a scene from the <u>Perlesvaus</u>. "The Tale of Sir Gareth" has no known surviving source, and many theories have been devised about a lost source for it. Many eminent scholars once believed that Malory must have adapted a French romance, although a consensus was never reached on which romance he might have used; today scholarship increasingly believes that he actually used a lost English poem. "The Tale of Sir Tristram de Lyonesse" is an adaptation and abridgement of the fullest version of the Prose <u>Tristan</u>. "The Tale of the Sangreal," despite a shift in tone caused by many omissions, is a faithful rendering in what it does translate of the Vulgate <u>Queste del Saint Graal</u>. "The Book of Launcelot and Guenevere" is an interesting combination of the first half of both the Vulgate <u>Mort Artu</u> and the English stanzaic <u>Morte Arthur</u>, and elements probably taken from the Vulgate <u>Lancelot</u>. Finally, "The Morte Arthur" combines the remainder of the stanzaic <u>Morte</u> and the <u>Mort Artu</u>.

In successive editions from Caxton's first edition of the <u>Morte Darthur</u> in 1485 until the end of the nineteenth century, Malory's text became increasingly corrupted and bowdlerized, and by the end of the eighteenth century, scholars were becoming increasingly aware of the need for an authoritative edition.[38] The study of Malory's sources became associated early with the attempt to edit a standard edition in 1817, when Robert Southey based his edition on Caxton. Southey began his project with impressive goals, as Marylyn Jackson Parins notes:

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[38] Larry D. Benson, "Sir Thomas Malory's <u>Le Morte Darthur</u>," <u>Critical Approaches to Six Major English Works: Beowulf through Paradise Lost</u>, ed. R. M. Lumiansky and Herschel Baker (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1968) 89.

> Letters of this period indicate ambitious plans for a history of Arthur drawn from Welsh sources as well as a chapter-by-chapter source study using the French romances. The introduction and notes that appear in the edition of 1817 did not fulfill these aims.[39]

Despite this, however, and despite the fact that the Post-Vulgate Suite du Merlin had not been rediscovered when he wrote, Southey's notes are the first real step forward in the identification and analysis of Malory's sources.

Later in the century and on the other side of the English channel, the manuscript that would become known as the Huth manuscript of the Suite du Merlin was identified by Paulin Paris and F. J. Furnivall, who quickly realized that it represented a version of one of Malory's sources.[40] In their introduction to their edition of this manuscript, Gaston Paris and Jacob Ulrich discuss Malory's debt to the Suite and correctly recognize it as the source for the first four books of Caxton's Morte Darthur, equivalent to Vinaver's "Tale of King Arthur." They assume, however, that Malory ended his adaptation where he did because, "Le rédacteur de la Morte Darthure [sic] ne semble pas avoir eu sous les yeux la troisième partie de notre compilation."[41] This is an assumption that modern scholars, who generally have a higher estimation of Malory's ability to adapt his sources to suit his own aesthetic purposes, would be slower to make.

In 1891, H. Oskar Sommer made notable advances in the study of Malory's sources in the third volume of his landmark edition of the Morte Darthur. In a published letter that preceded the appearance of the volume, he stated,

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[39] Parins 95.

[40] See Gaston Paris and Jacob Ulrich, eds., Merlin: Roman en prose du XIIIe siècle (Paris: Librairie de Firmin Didot, 1886) ii-iv. This manuscript is now British Museum Ms. Add. 38117.

[41] Paris and Ulrich lxxii.

> The result of my researches surpasses all my anticipations. I have been
> enabled to determine exactly Malory's position in the history of English
> literature. I can clearly show what were the versions of the sources he used,
> and how he altered and added to them to suit his purpose.[42]

Despite this confident assertion, Sommer's was not the last word, and indeed some of his

conclusions quickly came under attack. In particular Sommer's unclear statements about the

relationships between the French Mort Artu, the English stanzaic Morte Arthur, and Malory's

last tale[43] drew fire from J. D. Bruce in an article in Anglia,[44] and Sommer's hypothesis of a

"Suite de Lancelot,"[45] which he believed accounted for the differences between Malory's

work and the French sources as they survive, was disproved by Eugène Vinaver in an early

monograph.[46]

In that book, Malory, Vinaver helpfully summarized all that was then known about

Malory's major sources, which was by then very close to modern views. Probably the only

point that modern scholarship would reject outright is Vinaver's theory that Malory translated

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[42] Sommer, "The Sources of Malory's 'Le Morte Darthur,'" Academy 37 (1890): 273-74.

[43] E.g. "A close examination of the last portion of Malory's compilation shows that he cannot have derived his account from the Prose-Lancelot [the Mort Artu], or from a common original. In the English metrical romance 'Le Morte Arthur' [. . .] we possess a version which stands in the same relation to Malory's source as that does to the Prose-Lancelot; and of this Malory was aware, for in the last two books, he often makes use of the very words of the English poem" (220). Sommer later denied, during a sometimes heated discussion with Bruce, that he claimed the poem as one of Malory's sources: "On Dr Douglas Bruce's Article: 'The Middle English Romance "Le Morte Arthur", Harl. MS. 2252.' etc." Anglia 29 (1906): 529-38.

[44] J. D. Bruce, "The Middle English Metrical Romance 'Le Morte Arthur' (Harleian MS. 2252): Its Sources and its Relation to Sir Thomas Malory's 'Morte Darthur'," Anglia 23 (1901): 67-100.

[45] Sommer, commentary, Le Morte Darthur by Syr Thomas Malory, 3 vols (London: David Nutt, 1891) 3: 272-79.

[46] Vinaver, Malory (Oxford: Clarendon, 1929) 128-9.

a "a single French ms. divided into three or four volumes."[47]

Vinaver's point of view was typical of early assumptions about Malory and his sources, which often led critics to imagine lost manuscripts of the Arthurian story rather than to credit Malory with the ability to make creative changes himself. J. D. Bruce, for instance, said of the difference in the narrative structure between the end of Malory's story and its sources that the change, "seems to me to be quite beyond Malory's capacity for independent invention."[48] In fairness to these pioneering critics, Malory often speaks of a "Frenche boke" in the singular, and only once in plural, and there only negatively: "Thus of Arthur I fynde no more wrytten in bokis that bene auctorysed" (1242.3-4).[49] Increasing awareness of Malory's closeness to his major French sources, however, has led modern scholars to assume that what Malory calls his "Frenche boke" is more likely to be the French source he is using, or claiming to use, for the passage in question than an unknown and enormous single French work that gathered all of his French sources within one set of covers.

The last incontestable addition to the list of Malory's major sources occurred in 1932 when Robert H. Wilson showed that Malory had used the Perlesvaus for parts of his "Tale of Sir Launcelot."[50] In light of then-current ideas, this episode was originally thought to have been interpolated into Malory's copy of the Lancelot. This idea now looks unlikely, as it seems instead that Malory probably knew the entire Perlesvaus and not only the parts he used.[51] Although two known manuscripts of the Vulgate Queste interpolate sections from the

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[47] Vinaver, Malory 153.

[48] Bruce, "Metrical Romance" 71.

[49] Wilson 172-81.

[50] Wilson, "Malory and the Perlesvaus," Modern Philology 30 (1932): 13-22.

[51] Field, "Malory and Perlesvaus," Texts and Sources 224-35.

Perlesvaus as an introduction, this highly eccentric piece of Arthurian literature is inconsistent with much of the Vulgate and Post-Vulgate cycles, and the odds are greatly against interpolation of as much of it as Malory seems to have known into any manuscript of either cycle.[52]

Eugène Vinaver played a further role in the advancement of scholarly understanding of the Morte Darthur as editor of a new edition of Malory's work based on the Winchester Manuscript, which W. F. Oakshott discovered in Winchester College in 1934.[53] Vinaver, like Sommer before him, devoted a large part of his edition to an analysis of Malory's sources, and with the publication of this work, the study of Malory's major sources essentially reached its current state, though the debate continues. For example, the source of "The Tale of Sir Gareth" remains a matter of conjecture, and scholars still disagree on such issues as to which of the surviving manuscripts of Malory's sources most closely resembles the version that Malory actually used.

Just as scholarly understanding of Malory's relationship to his sources has advanced since the nineteenth century, so has critical appreciation of Malory's work. Nineteenth-century critics tended to view Malory as merely a translator or compiler because of his heavy reliance on sources for his plots and characters. Sir Walter Scott famously called the Morte Darthur a collection "containing great part of the history of the Round Table, extracted at hazard, and without much art or combination, from various French prose folios on that favourite topic."[54]

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[52] See Perlesvaus, eds. Nitze and Jenkins 3-14.

[53] W. P. Oakshott, "The Finding of the Manuscript," Essays on Malory, ed. J. A. W. Bennett (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963) 1-6.

[54] Sir Walter Scott, introduction, Sir Tristrem (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable, 1811) lxxix-lxxx.

F. J. Furnivall's comment that Malory's work was a "most pleasant jumble and summary of the Arthur Legends" was also characteristic of scholars sympathetic to Malory throughout most of the nineteenth century.[55] The advances that the nineteenth century made in the study of Malory's relationship with his sources, however, led to a reassessment of Malory's status as an artist. George Saintsbury spoke for an increasing number of scholars when he said of Malory, "in what he omits, as well as in his treatment of what he inserts, he shows nothing short of genius. Those who call him a mere, or even a bad compiler [. . .] have not duly considered the matter."[56]

In the twentieth century, study of the Winchester Manuscript led Vinaver to argue on the bases of certain inconsistencies and of differences in tone between the tales, and on the basis of the explicits at the end of each tale that the Morte Darthur was not a single work at all but a collection of eight prose romances. This led to decades of debate between those who agreed with Vinaver and those who held Malory's work to be essentially a single work.[57] Today most scholars seem to agree that, although inconsistencies do exist between some of the tales and although a consistent and realistic chronology is impossible to establish, Malory's work is essentially what he called it, "the hoole book of kyng Arthur and of his noble knyghtes of the Rounde Table" (1260.16-17).[58]

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[55] F. J. Furnivall, introduction, La Queste del Saint Graal (London: Roxburghe Club, 1864) iii.

[56] Saintsbury, The Flourishing of Romance (New York: Scribner, 1897) 105.

[57] For Vinaver's argument see his introduction in Works xli-li. For opposing arguments see R. M. Lumiansky, ed, Malory's Originality, and for a notable compromise between the two views see Stephen Knight, The Structure of Sir Thomas Malory's Arthuriad (Sydney: Sydney UP, 1969).

[58] R. M. Lumiansky, "Sir Thomas Malory's Le Morte Darthur, 1947-1987: Author, Title, Text," Speculum 62 (1987): 878-96.

Scholarly and critical understanding of Malory's major sources has thus progressed in a fairly

direct way. Over much of the same time, scholars have also come to realize that the major

sources listed above are not the only works that provided material for the <u>Morte Darthur</u>.

Recognition and analysis of these minor sources, however, has not advanced as steadily as

work with the major sources has. This is largely due to the nature of the problem. In the early

years of Malory source study, critics often assumed that all the differences between Malory's

work and his major sources resulted from differences between surviving manuscripts and

Malory's copies of those sources. Some differences are doubtless due to this, but knowing

when this is the case can be difficult. Further, even when this is probably not the case, tracing

a minor source can be difficult. For example, once the <u>Suite du Merlin</u> was discovered and

compared with Malory's "Tale of King Arthur," no one could reasonably argue that Malory

had not used some version of it. On the other hand, the differences between Malory's version

of a fight between a giant and a knight and the corresponding fight in Malory's major source

for the passage might or might not indicate the presence of a minor source that accounts for

these differences, and even when a possible minor source is identified that could explain

Malory's changes, there will still be a chance, greater or smaller, that the differences reflect

Malory's independent creativity. This is not to say, however, that scholarship has made no

progress in this area. It is merely that, as has been said, because some of Malory's minor

sources are extremely minor, they are often hard to identify.[59]

The first scholar to recognize that Malory had used minor sources was Robert H.

Wilson. He noted that Malory habitually named characters that his major sources left

anonymous and that these names are often not to be found in Malory's major sources, even

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[59] Field, "Malory and Chrétien," <u>Texts and Sources</u> 237.

when several manuscripts of the source were compared.[60] Wilson also argued convincingly

that Malory displayed knowledge from the very beginning of the Morte Darthur of a number

of English Arthurian romances that were not among his primary sources.[61] Wilson's

observations were an invitation to others to try to find more, and since that time scholars have

suggested more than two dozen minor sources, including John Hardying's Chronicle and

Chrétien de Troyes's Le chevalier au Lion.[62] Although over fifty years of work has gone into

the question of Malory's minor sources, no one has yet surveyed the field to try to evaluate

the strength of these various suggestions and to see, once the balance is taken, what

conclusions may be drawn of Malory's life, work, and mental furnishings. This thesis is an

attempt to do so.

However, because the diverse elements of the Arthurian story are traditional, it will

often be impossible to distinguish sources from analogues. For example, when Malory adds

small pieces of information, as when he names minor characters that are anonymous in his

major sources, the information may survive in a number of works. In such cases, there is

often no evidence upon which to base an opinion of which of the surviving sources may have

contributed to Malory's version or whether the information may have come to Malory through

untraceable avenues of oral tradition or lost manuscripts.

On the other hand, in cases in which Malory's wording or phrasing has a close parallel

in an older work, the natural conclusion will usually be that Malory is indeed borrowing from

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[60] Wilson, "Malory's Naming of Minor Characters," Journal of English and Germanic Philology 42 (1943): 364-85 and "Addenda on Malory's Minor Characters," Journal of English and Germanic Philology 55 (1950): 563-87.

[61] Wilson, "Malory's Early Knowledge of Arthurian Romance," University of Texas Studies in English 29 (1950): 33-50.

[62] Field, "Malory and Chrétien" 237.

that work. It will also be possible, however, that phrases from sufficiently influential works, such as the Bible or The Canterbury Tales may have entered Malory's mind in such a way that he may not always have been conscious of his borrowing, just as the Bible and Shakespeare are often unconsciously quoted in the English-speaking world of today.

A due consideration of these difficulties shows that this study, like all such studies, can only aspire to determine probable lines of influence, and often we will have to content ourselves with discussions of mere possibilities. And yet we shall often find that small pieces of evidence scattered throughout the text of the Morte Darthur will tend to point towards the same conclusion, and their cumulative power will therefore strengthen conclusions that would otherwise be far more tentative.

Ideally, a study of Malory's sources would examine the eight tales of the Morte Darthur in the order that Malory composed them. This would show whether Malory's relationship to his sources changed consistently as his writing matured, or whether Malory's differing treatment of each of his sources was otherwise inspired. Any patterns that emerged would be interesting to see, whether Malory's use of minor sources increased or decreased as his work developed, or which minor sources most attracted him at different points during the development of his career as far as we have evidence for it. This, however, cannot be done because the order of composition of the tales is far from certain.

The eight tales of Malory's Morte Darthur follow the same order in both of the medieval versions of the text, the Winchester Manuscript and Caxton's first edition of 1485, but, as Eugène Vinaver pointed out, Malory need not have composed the tales in this order.[63]

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[63] The Winchester Manuscript is now B. M. Ms. Add. 59678 and the British Library prefers to call it the Malory Manuscript by. A photographic facsimile was published as The Winchester Malory, ed. N. R. Ker (London: EETS, 1976). For Caxton's version see Caxton's Malory, eds. James Spisak and William Mathews, 2 vols. (Berkeley: U of California P, 1983).

Vinaver, in fact, argued that Tale II "The Tale of Arthur and Lucius" was composed before

Tale I, "The Tale of King Arthur." He saw Marholt's fight against a giant in "The Tale of

King Arthur," which is not in Malory's main source for the tale, as modelled on King

Arthur's battle with the giant of Mont St Michel in Malory's own second tale. Vinaver

speculated that apart from that the tales were written in the order that they appear.[64] Vinaver's

conclusions were once widely accepted, but over time they have been treated with more

scepticism. As J. A. W. Bennett pointed out in his review of The Works, the parallels that

Vinaver finds between the two episodes in Tale II and Tale I are conventional and therefore

cannot prove that Tale I was written before Tale II.[65]

Terence McCarthy suggested that Malory might have composed the tales in

descending order of fidelity to his major sources, and on those grounds he provisionally

proposed the order VI, II, V, I, III, IV, VII, VIII.[66] In adapting both Tale VI and Tale II, "The

Tale of the Sankgreal" and "Arthur and Lucius," McCarthy thought that Malory "surrenders

his own style."[67] He contrasts Malory's stylistic "surrender" in these two tales to the relative

freedom with which Malory treats the sources of Tales VII and VIII. McCarthy argued that

his posited order of composition would not be an unnatural result of an author working in

prison with limited and irregular access to books.

A photographic facsimile of the Pierpont Morgan copy of Caxton's version was published as
Le Morte Darthur Printed by William Caxton 1485, ed. Paul Needham (London: Scolar,
1976).

[64] Vinaver, Works li-lvi.

[65] J. A. W. Bennett, review of The Works of Sir Thomas Malory, Review of English
Studies 25 (1949): 161-64.

[66] Terence McCarthy, "The Order of Composition in the Morte Darthur," Yearbook of
English Studies 1 (1971): 18-29.

[67] McCarthy 22.

Given McCarthy's assumptions, his argument is plausible, but, as McCarthy himself admits, his assumptions are arbitrary. First of all, he uses verbal fidelity as his only criterion to measure Malory's independence from his major sources and thus ignores, for example, that from the point of view of abridgement of narrative, Tale III, "The Tale of Sir Launcelot" is at least as radical a departure from its primary source, the Vulgate Lancelot, as any of Malory's other tales. In addition, the fact that Malory also used the Perlesvaus as a major source for this tale suggests a similar level of creative freedom to Tale VIII, in which Malory also uses more than one major source. And if P. J. C. Field is correct in suggesting that Malory based the Phelot episode in the "Tale of Sir Launcelot" on L'Atre Périlleux,[68] the degree of freedom with which Malory composed Tale III may have been even greater than Malory used in Tale VIII. Further, when McCarthy's cites "The Tale of Sankgreal" as Malory's most derivative effort, he does not allow sufficiently for the important change in tone between Malory's version and his source. In addition to these objections, Malory treats each of his major sources differently from the others, and the fact that he follows the wording of some sources more closely than others may have been dictated by factors other than artistic inexperience. There is clearly a possibility that some of his various sources may have needed less change because they fitted his conception of the Arthurian story better than others.

Subsequently, Toshiyuki Takamiya argued that Tales II, III, and IV were written in the order that they appear in the Morte Darthur.[69] Takamiya believed that the two names that appear only in Tales II and IV, the English hero Wade and Gotelake, and the northern form of the present participle dryvande in "The Tale of Sir Gareth" show the influence of "The Tale of

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[68] Field, "Malory and Sir Phelot," BBIAS, 54 (2002): 345-61.

[69] Toshiyuki Takamiya, "'Wade,' 'Dryvande,' and 'Gotelake:' Three Notes on the Order of Composition in the Morte Darthur," Studies in English Literature (1974): 131-48.

Arthur and Lucius" and indicate that Malory had recently written that tale, that is with only the time taken to write the brief "Tale of Sir Launcelot" between them. Although it is clearly difficult to estimate how long it may have taken Malory to extract his material and compose his third tale, Takamiya's conclusion may still be correct. However, his argument is weakened by evidence that suggests that the lost major source of "The Tale of Gareth" was an English poem,[70] which could explain both the name Wade and the verb form dryvande. This leaves the appearance of Sir Gotelake as the only unquestionable piece of evidence for this theory, which can hardly be conclusive on its own.

In the absence of an agreed, objective method of determining the order in which Malory composed his tales, the method which demands the fewest assumptions must be preferred, and that seems to be to discuss the tales in the order in which they appear in both medieval versions of the Morte Darthur. This method will allow each tale to be examined as impartially as possible, without preconceived notions of what Malory's relationship to his sources ought to be at a given stage in his development as an author. For the same reason and in the interests of consistency, the minor sources of the various incidents of the tales will be discussed as far as possible in their order of their first appearance in each tale.

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[70] Field, "The Source of Malory's 'Tale of Gareth,'" Texts and Sources 246-60.

CHAPTER TWO: "THE TALE OF KING ARTHUR"

Malory's "Tale of King Arthur" is based on the Prose <u>Merlin</u> and its Post-Vulgate <u>Suite</u>, which, like Malory's tale, includes an account of the early days of Arthur's reign.[1] Malory begins his story with the lovesickness of King Uther for Igraine, the wife of the duke of Cornwall. With Merlin's help, this leads to Arthur's conception, and once Uther dies and Arthur proves his right to rule by drawing the famous sword from the stone, the young king has a brief, unwittingly incestuous affair with his sister Morgause, wife of King Lot, defeats the rebellion of his vassal kings, and deals with the supernatural treachery of another of his sisters, Morgan le Fay. After various adventures, including the story of the ill-fated Sir Balin, Malory ends his adaptation of the <u>Suite</u> with a series of adventures of Gawain, Ywain, and Marhalt.

Characteristically, Malory's version is not a straightforward translation of the French text; Malory begins his story at a point that corresponds to roughly two-thirds of the way into the standard edition of the Prose <u>Merlin</u>, omitting the birth and early life of Merlin as well as

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[1] The <u>Suite</u> survives most fully in British Museum Ms. Add. 38117, still often called the Huth Manuscript, and in Cambridge University Ms. Add. 7071. The Huth ms. has been edited by Paris and Ulrich (Paris1886) and more recently by Gilles Roussineau, <u>La Suite du roman de Merlin</u>, 2 vols. (Geneva: Droz, 1996). Fragments of the <u>Suite</u> are found in ms. Paris B. N. fr. 112 and in unnumbered manuscripts in the State Archives of Sienna, Italy and in Italian libraries such as of Imola and Bologna. Two early printed editions survive of a Spanish translation of the <u>Suite, El Baladro del sabio Merlin con sus profecias</u> (Burgos 1498) and <u>El Baladro del sabio Merlin: Primera parte de la Demanda del Sancto Grial</u> (Seville 1535); a small section of the Castilian version survives in Ms. 1877 of the Biblioteca de la Universidad de Salamanca, and a fragment of a Galician-Portuguese version survives in ms. 2434 of the Biblioteca de Catalonia.

the long stories of Uther's predecessors, Vortigern and Pendragon.[2] Further, although Malory

carries his story beyond the points at which the Huth and Cambridge manuscripts break off,

he omits a great deal of material from the end of the romance that can be reconstructed from

the surviving fragments. Malory also rearranges the order of some of the events in the

various plot strands and largely untangles the interlaced narrative structure that the Suite has

in common with all of the Old French Arthurian prose romances, thus making his story much

more of a series of partially independent episodes, one tending to end before another begins.

A measure of the freedom that Malory allowed himself in his version of this story may be

easily seen in comparison with two near contemporaries of similar interests and ambition.

Around 1450 an unknown translator rendered the Vulgate Merlin into "a close and almost

servile [English prose] translation of the French Merlin ordinaire."[3] Henry Lovelich's English

verse Merlin also of circa 1450 is an almost equally slavish adaptation of the same Old

French text.[4]

In addition to these changes, Malory also seems to have used material from sources

other than the Suite. He appears to have already been fairly well read in Middle English

Arthurian romances when he wrote "The Tale of King Arthur."[5] Even though Malory

generally preferred to adapt the French prose romances for his major sources, he based two

and possibly three of his tales on English sources, and there are strong indications that he

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[2] Merlin: Roman du XIIIᵉ siècle, ed. Alexandre Micha, (Paris: Droz, 1980) 72.

[3] William Edward Mead, introduction, Merlin, or The Early History of King Arthur: A Prose Romance, ed. Henry B. Wheatley, EETS o.s. 10, 21, 36, 112 (1865-99) ccxlii.

[4] Lovelich, Merlin, ed. Ernst A. Kock, 3 vols. (London: Oxford UP, 1904-30). For discussions of this and the English Merlin, see Karen Hodder et al., "Dynastic Romance," in Arthur of the English 71-112.

[5] Wilson, "Malory's Early Knowledge of Arthurian Romance," University of Texas Studies in English 29 (1950): 33-50.

used English minor sources throughout the <u>Morte Darthur</u>.

Several scholars have argued that Malory knew the metrical <u>Chronicle</u> of John Hardyng and used it extensively as a minor source, not just to provide details such as names of characters and places, but as his model for the structure and narrative method of his whole book.[6] If this is correct, then Hardyng's work is unique in its scope of influence among the minor sources and deserves to be examined first. Further, because Hardyng's work has been credited with supplying Malory with several details throughout his first tale, these will all be considered together, rather than in the order of their appearance in that tale.

Hardyng's work, which survives in two versions, is a fifteenth-century English poem in the chronicle tradition that began in the twelfth century with Geoffrey of Monmouth.[7] The first version is found in only one manuscript and was completed by 1457 to be presented to Henry VI. A second version in about 12,600 rhyme royal lines was written for Richard Duke of York and revised for Edward IV by 1464. Although Malory could theoretically have used either version or both as a source, scholars have tended to assume that Malory used the second version because this is the one that became prominent, judging from the number of surviving manuscripts. The most recent biographical study of Sir Thomas Malory suggests that he wrote the <u>Morte Darthur</u> between the years 1468-70,[8] and if this is correct then the

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[6] Vinaver, <u>Works</u> 1405; William Matthews, <u>The Tragedy of Arthur: A Study of the Alliterative Morte Arthure</u> (Berkeley: U of California P, 1960) 172; Kennedy, "Malory's Use of Hardyng's Chronicle," <u>Notes and Queries</u> 214 (1969) 167-70; Wilson, "More Borrowings by Malory from Hardyng's Chronicle," <u>Notes and Queries</u> 215 (1970) 208-10; Field, "Malory's Minor Sources," <u>Malory: Texts and Sources</u> (Cambridge: Boydell and Brewer, 1998) 27-32.

[7] Kennedy, "Malory and his English Sources," <u>Aspects of Malory</u>, eds. Toshiyuki Takamiya and Derek Brewer (Cambridge: Boydell and Brewer, 1980) 27-46.

[8] Field, <u>The Life and Times of Sir Thomas Malory</u> (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1993) 143.

later publication date of Hardyng's Chronicle means that it would have only recently made its impression on Edward IV's court at the time when Malory was writing.

Like Geoffrey's Historia, Hardyng's Chronicle begins with the founding of Britain by the legendary Brutus, and both works also feature substantial sections devoted to King Arthur. Hardyng retells Arthur's story closely following the chronicle tradition, including Arthur's succession to Uther's throne, Arthur's battles against the Saxons, his continental conquests, his betrayal by Mordred, and his downfall.[9] Unlike earlier chroniclers, however, Hardyng includes characters and themes from the romance tradition such as Lancelot, Galahad, and the Grail quest. Hardyng ends his book in the reign of Edward IV, apart from an epilogue detailing how Scotland could best be invaded.

The chronicle method of storytelling is by definition more direct than the intricate, interlaced narrative structure that the Old French prose romances use. Malory's style of storytelling is also more straightforward than that of the French prose romances that make up most of his major sources, and his use of interlacing is far less extensive than theirs. These features, Edward Donald Kennedy has argued, might have been derived from Hardyng's own narrative style. Kennedy also argued that Hardyng's narrative line may have influenced Malory's own, as both Hardyng and Malory narrate Arthur's birth and coronation and present a version of Galahad's Grail quest that precedes the account of Arthur's fall.[10] He concludes from this that Hardyng "could have initially influenced Malory's narrative method and suggested the overall framework for his Morte Darthur."[11]

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[9] John Hardyng, The Chronicle of Iohn Hardyng, ed. Henry Ellis (New York: AMS Press, 1974).

[10] Kennedy, "Malory's Use of Hardyng's Chronicle" 169-70.

[11] Kennedy 169-70.

This may be so, and it would be difficult to disprove. But it is also well to recall that the differences between the narrative structures of the two works are also very striking. Despite the elements of romance mentioned above, Hardyng follows the chronicle tradition in excluding the Tristan story and Lancelot and Guenevere's relationship, and he makes the Roman War the climax of the Arthurian story. Also, in line with the chronicle tradition, Hardyng's story is mainly about wars and conquests, with very little of the adventures of individual knights that Malory makes so much of. In contrast to the Arthurian section of Hardyng's Chronicle, Malory clearly follows the cyclic structure of his major French prose sources. Thus, while Hardyng might have shown Malory a more direct way to tell the story of Arthur, Malory's narrative style and the structure of his work, despite his lesser use of interlacing, owe far more to his major French cyclic sources than to Hardyng.

A more probable point of connection between Malory's work and Hardyng's is the starting point of Malory's story.[12] The first appearance of Arthur's name in Hardyng is in a marginal rubric that becomes the title of Chapter 72 in the printed edition. This is the same point in the story at which Malory begins his version, deep into his first major source. Most versions of the Arthurian story that include accounts of Uther's reign, in both chronicle and romance traditions, give his story at length. Hardyng's Chronicle, however, severely abridges Uther's traditional story, the account of the intrigue of Arthur's conception and birth taking roughly half of Uther's section. Malory treats Uther's reign in a very similar way. In the Morte Darthur, Uther's reign is dealt with very briefly and is solely a prologue to Arthur's kingship. As we shall see, however, the omission of material from major sources that would detract from his focus on Arthur and his knights is characteristic of Malory's method. Yet it

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[12] Field, "Minor Sources" Texts and Sources 107.

seems that Hardyng and Malory are both unusual in this regard, and this fact adds strength to the theory that Malory used Hardyng's work as his model in this instance.

In addition to influencing the starting point of the Morte Darthur, Hardyng may have supplied Malory with several points of detail. The locations of three sites early in the Morte Darthur that are left unspecified in the Suite have been suggested as contributions of Hardyng's Chronicle to Malory: the location of Tintagel in Cornwall, the location of Camelot as Winchester, and the location of Uther's last battle at St. Albans.[13] The location of Tintagel, however, as the author of this suggestion, admits, cannot be proved to come from Hardyng, because the Prose Tristan, one of Malory's major sources, also locates Tintagel in Cornwall, and Malory's depiction of Gawain later in this tale suggests that he may well have read that romance before he began this tale. Were scholars more certain of Malory's order of composition, guessing which source Malory had read first would be easier, but it would remain a guess even then. Also, Hardyng does not explicitly identify Camelot as Winchester, as Malory does; again following the norm of the chronicle tradition, Hardyng does not mention Camelot at all. He does, however, say that Uther set up the Round Table in Winchester and makes it the city where Arthur is usually said to hold court. Malory, therefore, could have inferred from Hardyng that Winchester was Arthur's capital, and was thus the English name for Camelot. However, Kennedy acknowledges that Malory could also have learned the identification from the popular tradition of the day. One such tradition held that the Round Table that has hung in the Winchester Great Hall since before Malory's time was the actual table of King Arthur,[14] and this could easily have led people of Hardyng and

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[13] Kennedy, "Malory's Use of Hardyng" 168.

[14] Sue Ellen Holbrook, "Malory's Identification of Camelot as Winchester," Studies in Malory, ed. James W. Spisak (Kalamazoo: Western Michigan UP, 1985) 13-27.

Malory's time to equate Winchester and Camelot.

On the other hand, Kennedy's suggestion that the identification of Uther's final battle as St Albans is based on Hardyng has a firmer basis. Although Kennedy points out that Geoffrey of Monmouth, Wace, and Layamon make the same identification as Hardyng, he also points out that given the other evidence that Malory knew Hardyng's Chronicle, and the lack of evidence that Malory knew the older chroniclers, the principle of conservation of hypotheses suggests that Malory took this detail from Hardyng. The extant copies of the Post-Vulgate Merlin, and thus presumably Malory's copy, do not specify the location of Uther's last battle, and therefore in assigning this to St Albans, Malory was probably following Hardyng's lead.

Another probable influence of Hardyng on Malory's work involves Uther's admission to Igraine that he is Arthur's father.[15] Uther's obsession with the wife of the Duke of Cornwall is an old part of the story, and no medieval author omits it from his account of Arthur's birth. Uther is rarely shown, however, to express the concern for his new wife's feelings that he shows in Malory's version. In the Merlin, in fact, Merlin warns Uther not to tell Igraine that he is the father of her yet-unborn child. Her shame over this inexplicable pregnancy, Merlin says, will make it easier for him to take the child away from her for fostering. Uther agrees, and after their marriage, when Uther confronts her and Igraine truthfully tells him all that she knows about the conception, Uther says,

> Belle amie, gardez que nul home ne nule femme nou saiche cui vos le puissoiz celer, que vos seroiez hounie, se l'en le savoit. Et je voil bien que vos sachiez que cist oirs qui de vos naistra n'est ne miens ne vostres raisnablement, no vos ne je ne l'avrons ja a nostre oes, ainz vos pri, si tost com il naistra, qu'il soit

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[15] Field, personal communication, September 2000.

bailliez celui cui je le comenderai si que jamais n'oie l'en de lui nouveles.[16]

Malory follows the events of the <u>Merlin</u> closely in this section; however, he omits Merlin's

earlier discussion with Uther. And so during the confrontation between husband and wife,

Uther instead says,

> "That is trouthe [. . .] as ye say, for it was I myself that cam in the lykenesse.
> And therfor desmay you not, for I am fader to the child," and ther he told her
> alle the cause how it was by Merlyns counceil. (10.28-31)

Uther thus behaves very differently from his counterpart in Malory's major source. The

conduct of Merlin and Uther at this point in the <u>Merlin</u> reflects poorly on them both, as they

take additional advantage of the untenable situation in which they themselves have placed

Igraine. Malory presumably preferred to show these two close associates of Arthur's in a

better light.

In Hardyng's <u>Chronicle</u>, Uther is also unusually compassionate to Igraine:

> The duke was slayne, with all his moste repayre,
> Of whiche the kyng glad is not to layne:
> To Tyntagell, with all his hoste full fayne
> He came anone, and had it at his wyll;
> He comforted hir and bad her hold it styll.
>
> But then betwene theim two he did discure,
> The priuetee in all, as it was wrought,
> And sette his daye to wed hir, and to cure
> Of heuynes, that she was then in brought.[17]

Despite Hardyng's economy of words, Uther clearly tells her the truth about his and Merlin's

machinations. Her reaction is not recorded as it is in Malory's work, but the fact that Malory

again agrees with Hardyng against his major source, as he did in abridging the more common

version of Uther's reign, strongly suggests that Malory is following his older contemporary.

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[16] <u>Merlin</u> 246.

[17] Hardyng 119-20.

A final suggested correspondence between "The Tale of King Arthur" and Hardyng is no mere point of detail but one of Malory's most often-quoted additions to his version of King Arthur's younger days: the Round Table Oath that Arthur's knights swear at his wedding and every year at Pentecost thereafter, which is unique to Malory. Hardyng's Chronicle has been suggested as the inspiration for this innovation.[18] These passages from Malory, in particular, might be related to Hardyng:

> the kynge stablysshed all the knyghtes and gaff them rychesse and londys; and charged them never to do outerage nothir mourthir, and allwayes to fle treson and to gyff mercy unto hym that askith mercy, uppon payne of forfiture of their worship and lordship of kynge Arthure for evirmore; and allwayes to do ladyes, damesels, and jantilwomen and wydowes socour: strengthe hem in hir ryghtes, and never to enforce them, uppon payne of dethe. Also, that no man take no batayles in a wrongefull quarell for no love ne for no wordis goodis. So unto thys were all knyghtis sworne for the Table Rounde, both olde and yonge, and every yere so were they sworne at the hyghe feste of Pentecoste. (120.15-27)

This, Kennedy felt, may have been influenced by Hardyng's lines,

> theyr rule was wronges to oppresse
> With their bodyes, where lawe myght not redresse,
> The fayth, ye church, maydens, & widowes clene,
> Chyldren also that were in tender age,
> The common profyte euer more to sustene.[19]

Kennedy acknowledges that "Ideas such as serving ladies and righting wrongs would, of course, be included in any statement of chivalric aims, and these similarities do not necessarily point to Hardyng's influence upon Malory."[20] Kennedy believed, however, that the fact that Malory's knights swear "never to enforce" ladies is unusual and might have been inspired by Hardyng's statements that Arthur's knights were "vertuous and clene of life" and

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[18] Kennedy, "Malory's Use of Hardyng" 169.

[19] Hardyng 124.

[20] Kennedy 169.

that the maidens lived in "perfite chastitee." The similarity of spirit behind the two passages

is clear, but the two passages have no real verbal parallels. Of course, Malory may have been

working from a memory of the content of Hardyng's passage, with which he was sure to have

sympathized, but this remains no more than a possibility.

A much closer parallel to this part of Malory's work, however, was proposed more

recently by Richard Barber.[21] Citing the passage that Kennedy had quoted earlier, Barber

finds strong correspondences between it and the charges read to the initiate Knights of the

Bath:

> I as a knyght declare un to you certeyne poyntis that longith un to this hye
> worshipfull order of knyghthode ye schall love god above all thinge and be
> stedfaste in the feythe and sustene the chirche and ye schall be trewe un to
> yowre sovereyne lorde and trewe of yowre worde and promys and sekirtee in
> that oughyte to be kepte also ye schall sustene wydowes in ther right at every
> tyme they wol requere yow and maydenys in ther virginite and helpe hem and
> socoure hem with yowre good that for lak of good they be not mysgovernyd.
> Also ye schall sitte in noo plase where that eny iugement schulde be gevyn
> wrongefully ayens eny body to yowre knowleche. Also ye schall not suffir noo
> murdreris nor extorcioners of the kyngis pepill with in the Contre there ye
> dwelle but with yowre power ye schall lete doo take them and put them in to
> the handis of Justice and that they be punysshid as the kyngis lawe woll.[22]

Barber says of the parallels between the two passages, "Malory has rephrased the oath more

vigorously, but the conduct prescribed and the concern for justice, loyalty and mercy, defence

of the weak are very similar."[23]

He might have claimed more. As Kennedy noted above, such prescribed conduct and

such concerns would be common to any chivalric oath, but the parallels between the charges

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[21] Richard Barber, "Malory's Le Morte Darthur and Court Culture Under Edward IV," Arthurian Literature 12, eds. James P. Carley and Felicity Riddy (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1993) 133-56.

[22] Harold Arthur, Viscount Dillon, "On a MS. Collection of Ordinances of Chivalry of the Fifteenth Century, Belonging to Lord Hastings," Archaeologia 57.i (1900): 27-70 on 67-8.

[23] Barber 149.

to the Knights of the Bath and Malory's Round Table Oath are more specific. The Bath oath enjoins its fellows to "sustene wydowes in ther right [...] and maydenys in ther virginite and help hem and socoure hem [...] that for lak of good they be not mysgovernyd," while the Round Table Oath commands the knights "allwayes to do ladyes, damesels, and jantilwomen and wydowes socour: strengthe hem in her rights, and never to enforce them, uppon payne of dethe." This identical concern for the virtue of maidens is expressed in very similar terms, the knights of both orders required to give "socour" and to "sustene" or "strengthe" these women "in her rights." The very next injunction is also virtually the same in both oaths: to not tolerate, in the one oath, or participate, in the other, in the ascendancy of the unjust over the just. The Knights of the Bath must "sitte in noo plase where that eny iugement schulde be gevyn wrongefully ayens eny body to yowre knowleche," which is nearly the same mandate as "that no man take no batayles in a wrongefull quarell."

Given the similarity of the language, especially in the maidens and widows clause and in the progression from that idea to the idea of wrongful quarrel, Malory seems almost certain to have drawn on the oath of this historical order for his literary one. The differences between the two oaths, however, are also interesting. One may well agree with Barber that "Malory has rephrased the oath more vigorously," in part because he has phrased it more economically. Such close but inexact correspondence might have more than one cause. Malory rarely produces verbatim quotations from his sources, and he may not have wanted his Round Table Oath to be identical to the oath of the historical order. The first part of the charges of the Bath, however, enjoining the knights to be true to the church and to their sovereign, is missing from the Round Table oath. Malory surely would have agreed that those topics formed part of the Arthurian ethos, which opens the possibility that he was working from memory of an oath that he knew well but not by rote. It is entirely possible that

Malory knew these words from personal experience and never saw them written. It is also

possible that Malory deliberately removed the reference to the Church, as he often reduced

the connection between Christianity and chivalry that he found in many of his sources.

Although the wording of Malory's Round Table Oath seems to come from that of the

Knights of the Bath, the idea that all of the Knights of the Round Table swear an oath is

found in a section of the Vulgate Lancelot that Malory used for his "Tale of Sir Lancelot."

When King Bademagu becomes a member of the Round Table, the romance says,

> Celui jor fu li rois Bademaguz asis a la Table Reonde par l'otroi a touz cels de
> laienz et fist autel sairement comme li autre font que jamés a dame veve ne a
> demoiselle ne a povre gentil home desherité ne faudroit d'aide por qu'il en fust
> requis et qu'il en eust mestier.[24]

The wording here is not as close to Malory's as that of the Oath of the Bath is, and the points

that they have in common, concern for widows and maidens, are commonplace chivalric

concerns. However, this scene in the Lancelot takes place a mere few pages away from

Lancelot's fight against Sir Tericam, which is one of the stories that Malory adapts in his

"Tale of Sir Lancelot." Given this proximity, Malory probably read this passage, and so the

Lancelot was probably the origin of Malory's idea that the Round Table knights all swear an

oath, even if he took most of the substance of his version of the oath from another source.

The evidence of "The Tale of King Arthur" seems to suggest, then, that even though

Malory's Morte Darthur might not owe as much to Hardyng as some have thought, Malory is

very likely to have read Hardyng's work and followed it in some of his deviations from his

French major sources. If that is true, Malory is also likely to have used this source to add to

other tales of the Morte Darthur, as will be argued in subsequent chapters. The fact that

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[24] Lancelot: Roman du XIIIe siecle, ed. Alexandre Micha 9 vols. (Geneva: Droz, 1978-83) 5: 7.

Hardyng added the romance elements of the Grail story to his Chronicle is likely to have

made it, of all the chronicle works that might have been available in fifteenth-century

England, particularly attractive to Malory, who himself combines a chronicle style with the

romance material that he derived from his major sources.[25]

Malory's probable use of Hardyng's Chronicle may be seen as an example of Malory's

interest in realism, for until the Enlightenment, the chronicle tradition of medieval Arthurian

literature was often regarded as based to a greater or lesser degree on fact. C. S. Lewis's

comment on Malory's tendency towards realism, quoted in Chapter One, may be recalled

here: "Malory's text naturalizes, negatively, by the omission of wonders, and positively, by

introducing practical, mundane details."[26] This naturalization is especially apparent to readers

who compare Malory's depictions of Arthur's battles to their counterparts in the Old French

romances. The realism and pragmatism that characterize Arthur's conduct in these military

encounters has led some scholars to wonder if Malory had read an English translation of an

important late classical military treatise, De re militari.

Flavius Vegetius Renatus wrote De re militari, also sometimes called Epitoma rei

militaris, during the fourth or early fifth century A.D. as a handbook for such military matters

as selecting and training soldiers, the composition of a legion, battle strategy, fortified

defense, and naval warfare. Vegetius's work was translated, paraphrased, and adapted into

English a number of times, beginning in 1408.[27]

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[25] See Field, Romance and Chronicle: A Study of Malory's Prose Style (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1971).

[26] Lewis 11.

[27] Geoffrey Lester, introduction, The Earliest English Translation of Vegetius' De Re Militari (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1988) 7-44.

One might well think that Malory would be interested in such a work if he had known

about it. Diane D. Bornstein sees many instances in the <u>Morte Darthur</u>, especially in the

"Tale of King Arthur," in which Arthur and his knights use the type of sound strategy and

tactics that Vegetius suggests, which tends to replace help from Merlin's magic as the battles'

decisive factor.[28] She argues that these instances are evidence of Malory's reliance on the

Roman author.

Bornstein's first example is typical of her case and concerns Malory's account of

Arthur's night-time attack on the camp of the eleven rebel kings, in which Arthur's forces

attack the rebels at midnight by Merlin's advice (26-7). In his commentary, Vinaver notes

that in Malory's French source, Arthur owes his success to Merlin, who summons a wind that

blows all of the tents and pavilions on the heads of Arthur's foes (1291). Bornstein quotes a

passage from the 1408 English translation of Vegetius that she believes is behind Malory's

alteration:

> þer is no better metynge wiþ enemys þan whan þey ben feynted & weried of
> longe iorneye þat þey haue ymade, or when þey ben at þe passage of ryueres
> and wateres and somme ben on þe oon side and summe on þe oþer side, or
> whan þey ben besiliche ocupied aboute hey makynge or otus repinge, for þan
> ben þey vnarmed, summe or alle, or when þey trauaille on hie hilles toppes or
> when þey ben in playn feeld disperbuled & schatred abroad, or when þey ben
> in here logginges faste on slepe, as it were all siker and noþing dreding.[29]

Because Malory uses surprise attacks again in the section that Vinaver calls "War with the

Five Kings," Bornstein believes that he was especially attracted to the idea.[30] She notes that

in Cambridge manuscript of the <u>Suite,</u> Arthur's forces attack at dawn rather than at night.

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[28] Diane D. Bornstein, "Military Strategy in Malory and Vegetius' <u>De re militari</u>," <u>Comparative Literary Studies</u> 9 (1972): 123-29.

[29] <u>The Earliest English Translation of Vegetius' </u>De Re Militari, ed. Geoffrey Lester, 142.

[30] Bornstein 128.

Bornstein cites further examples, all sharing the same strength and weakness, from within

"The Tale of King Arthur" and also from other parts of the Morte Darthur that show Arthur's

tendency in warfare to be more realistic, more opportunistic, and less dependent on Merlin's

magic than in Malory's major source.

That Malory naturalizes his source as Bornstein claims is irrefutable. Bornstein,

however, offers no real evidence that Malory took these ideas from Vegetius's treatise. She

claims that

> it was almost proverbial to cite Vegetius when discussing war. It seems
> impossible that Sir Thomas Malory, a fifteenth-century knight with an interest
> in literature and war, would not have been familiar with De re militari.[31]

However, Malory does not seem to have had the same intellectual cast of mind as had John

Lydgate and Thomas Hoccleve, poets whom Bornstein cites as discussing Vegetius.

Bornstein points to no verbal parallels between the two authors, just the similarity between

Vegetius's lessons and the actions of Malory's characters. To paraphrase Edward Donald

Kennedy's caveat about the Round Table Oath,[32] advice such as Vegetius gives might occur

to any soldier thoughtful enough to consider strategy and tactics.

Because of this lack of verbal evidence and because no other kind of evidence exists

to link the two authors together, one should try to explain Malory's alterations without

postulating a familiarity with Vegetius. As Bornstein observes, Malory was a knight, and he

had direct experience of strategy and tactics of medieval warfare, including major campaigns

such as the seiges of Alnwick and Bamburgh.[33] In addition to his direct experience, he would

have listened to stories of campaigns in which he did not participate. This alone might be

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[31] Bornstein 124.

[32] Kennedy, "Malory's Use" 169.

[33] Bornstein 124. For Malory's career as a knight see Field, Life and Times.

thought to account for his more realistic approach to knightly combat than his sources, which were probably written by clerics with little practical knowledge of battle. Bornstein's observations about Malory's military realism are, however, only part of Malory's realism in general. C. S. Lewis lists a number of points that show that Malory was concerned with realism in ways that have nothing to do with Vegetius's treatise:

> King Anguysh, sending Marhaus to Cornwall, assures him that his expenses will be amply covered. When Tristram bleeds over the lady's bed [. . .] we are told the extent of damage almost as if Malory had made up the laundry list [. . .] Mordred explains at length, and very sensibly why young knights are at a disadvantage on horseback. Lancelot's habit of talking in his sleep is noted. Best of all, we are told exactly how much it had cost the Queen (£20,000) to send out knights in search of him.[34]

In light of this often-noticed general tendency towards realism and naturalization, and in light of the fact that no verbal parallels exist between Malory's work and Vegetius, none of Malory's knights nor his narrator, for example, say anything that seems to have come from Vegetius, there seems no reason to conclude that Malory had read the earlier author. Certainly the further conclusion that Bornstein draws that Malory held a "critical attitude toward the knight errantry of the Round Table"[35] seems completely insupportable.

Trying to find the source of Malory's pragmatism in a book is probably futile. Less elusive, but only just so, are names of minor characters that Malory's sources left unnamed. One of the most consistent differences between Malory's Morte Darthur and its various major sources is Malory's persistent naming of anonymous characters.[36] In "The Tale of King

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[34] Lewis 12.

[35] Bornstein 124.

[36] Wilson, "Malory's Naming of Minor Characters," Journal of English and Germanic Philology 42 (1943): 364-85; and "Addenda on Malory's Minor Characters," Journal of English and Germanic Philology 55 (1950): 563-87.

Arthur," four Arthurian names appear within thirty pages of one another that are not in the

Post-Vulgate Suite du Merlin. Two, Bawdewyn of Bretayne and Collgrevaunce, are names

that Malory gives to anonymous characters; the other two, Gryflet and Gareth, are Malory's

adaptation of their names in the Merlin and its Suite, Gifflet and Gaheriet. Robert Wilson has

observed that Malory could have taken Bawdewyn's name from The Avowing of King

Arthur, and Larry Benson notes that "Calogrenant of French romance becomes Colgrevaunce

(as in Ywain and Gawain and Arthour and Merlin), Girflet becomes Gryflet (as in Lybeaus

Desconus), and even Gaheriet becomes Gareth, much closer to the Garret of Sir Launfal and

The Wedding of Sir Gawain than to the French form."[37]

Although Wilson is correct that Bawdewyn of Britain does appear in The Avowing of

King Arthur,[38] a character with that name also appears in the alliterative Morte Arthure, the

major source of Malory's second tale.[39] The simplest explanation, then, is that Malory took

the name from the alliterative Morte, rather than the Avowing, whose editor dates it to the

period from the last quarter of the fourteenth century to the last quarter of the fifteenth,[40]

making its priority to the Morte Darthur far from certain.

Even if Malory were not able to read the Avowing, both seem to be connected to an

older tradition concerning a character named Bawdewyn. In the Avowing, Bawdewyn, Kay,

and Gawain are companions, and in "The Tale of King Arthur," Bawdewyn is always named

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[37] Wilson, "Malory's Early Knowledge," and Larry Benson, Malory's Morte Darthur (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard UP, 1976) 41.

[38] The Avowing of King Arthur, ed. Roger Dahood (New York: Garland, 1984).

[39] Morte Arthure: A Critical Edition, ed. Mary Hamel (New York: Garland, 1984) lines 1606, 1744, and 2384.

[40] The Avowing 29.

along with Sir Kay and usually with Sir Gawain.[41] This situation is typical of other Middle

English Arthurian poems that feature a character named Bawdewyn, although in those poems

he is said to be a bishop and is not called "of Britain." In the poems <u>Syre Gawene and the</u>

<u>Carle of Carelyle</u>, and <u>Carle off Carlile</u>, Bishop Bawdewyn is the companion of Sir Gawain

and Sir Kay.[42] Because these are Bawdewyn's primary attributes, Bawdewyn of Britain and

Bishop Bawdewyn were either originally the same character or were so easily confused that

they became in effect the same character.[43] Bawdewyn's appearance as a hermit, albeit not as

a bishop, at the end of the <u>Morte Darthur</u> might show Malory's awareness that some

traditions depict Bawdewyn as a cleric.[44]

Collgrevaunce, to an even greater extent than Bawdewyn, is little more than a name in

a list. Indeed, that is all that he is in his sole appearance in the "Tale of King Arthur," and

that is all that he is later in the <u>Morte Darthur</u>, except when he is killed by Lionel in the "Tale

of the Sankgreal" (973) and when he is killed again by Lancelot in "The Deth of Arthur"

(1167).[45] In "The Tale of King Arthur," Collgrevaunce is the last name in a list of the knights

who fought against King Lot's rebel alliance, a list that is not in Malory's major source.

Collgrevaunce appears in <u>Arthour and Merlin</u> and <u>Ywain and Gawain</u> in addition to Malory's

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[41] <u>Works</u> 16, 18-19.

[42] <u>Sir Gawain and the Carl of Carlisle in Two Versions</u>, ed. Auvo Kurvinen (Helsinki: Academiæ scientiarum Fennicæ, 1951).

[43] Robert W. Ackerman, <u>An Index of Arthurian Names in Middle English</u> (New York: AMS, 1952) lists Bishop Bawdewyn as a character in <u>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</u>, <u>The Turke and Gowin</u>, <u>Syre Gawene and the Carle of Carelyle</u>, and <u>Carle off Carlile</u>, s.v. Bawdewyn of Britain and Bawdewyn, Bishop.

[44] See infra 178-79.

[45] For a discussion of discrepancies such as this see Field, "Author, Scribe and Reader in Malory: The Case of Harleuse and Peryne," <u>Texts and Sources</u> 72-88.

work. Both are thought to antedate the Morte Darthur, and so either could conceivably be Malory's source for the name. Of the two, the form of the name in Ywain and Gawain, "Colgrevance," is much closer to Malory's version than any of the variants in Arthour and Merlin, which include Calogreuaunce, Kalogrenant.[46]

Sir Gryflet is a more interesting case. In an inconsistency that may reveal a seam between two of Malory's major sources, Sir Gryflet is introduced and takes an honorable part in battle as a knight some twenty pages before he is introduced again as a squire seeking to be knighted by Arthur. His first introduction corresponds to his first appearance in the Vulgate Merlin.[47] His second introduction corresponds to his first appearance in the Post-Vulgate Suite.[48] Clearly Malory took this character from his major sources and failed to reconcile this discrepancy between them. Yet, Malory's form of the name does not seem to come from any of his French sources, in which it is spelled "Gifflet" or "Girflet." This led Benson to suggest that Malory obtained this form of the name from Lybeaus Desconus.[49] However, although Lybeaus Desconus does have a Sir Gyfflette, the hero's squire, this form of the name is no closer to Malory's than is the version from his French major sources.[50]

When first introduced in "The Tale of King Arthur" Gryflet is given his full name, "sir

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[46] Arthour and Merlin, ed. O. D. Macrae-Gibson, EETS o. s. (268, 279) 1973, 1979; Ywain and Gawain, ed. Maldwyn Mills (London: J. M. Dent, 1992).

[47] The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances Volume II: Lestoire de Merlin, ed. Sommer (Washington DC: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1908) 103.

[48] Suite 29.

[49] Benson, Malory's Morte Darthur 41.

[50] Lybeaus Desconus, ed. M. Mills, EETS, o.s. 261 (1969) 1458, 1513, 1748.

Gryfflet that was the son of God of Cardal" (22.33),[51] and a Gryflet, so spelt, does appear in Arthour and Merlin in addition to Malory's work.[52] The fact that Gryflet appears in Arthour and Merlin might be taken as evidence of a rather weak kind that Malory took both Gryflet and Collgrevaunce from this source, despite the closer version of Collgrevaunce's name found in Ywain and Gawain.

Sources of names of minor characters, however, cannot be settled with anything close to certainty. Characters such as Gryflet and Collgrevaunce are never much more than names in any Arthurian source, so finding distinguishing features to confirm Malory's source is difficult to do. The most that anyone can say with confidence is that when such a name appears in a work that Malory could have known, that work may indeed be Malory's source.

Sir Petipace of Wynchilsee is another minor character who is given a name by Malory. He appears later in "The Tale of King Arthur," but he is most conveniently discussed now. It is not unusual for Malory to give a name to an anonymous character from his major source, but in this case Malory made one unnamed knight into two knights, Phelot of Langeduke and Petipace of Winchelsea. Petipace's only other appearance in medieval literature is in Gawain and the Carl of Carlisle.[53] The Morte Dathur is the only surviving text to contain a character named Phelot, so the source of his name must remain a mystery.[54] On the other hand, Petipace's appearance in Gawain and the Carl of Carlisle reaffirms the connection between

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[51] "Girfles le fil Do" from the Merlin does not mean "Girfles the son of God." Do (or Dou) is Uther's forester: he appears infrequently in the Vulgate Cycle. G. D. West speculates in his Index of Proper Names in French Arthurian Prose Romances (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1978) that the name might be related to a "Doon" from the chansons de geste.

[52] Arthour and Merlin, Gryflet's first appearance is in line 3595.

[53] Wilson, "Malory's Early Knowledge" 56.

[54] Ackerman s.v. Phelot and Felot.

these two Middle English romances. In Gawain and the Carl, Petipace is more obscure than

in Malory. In Malory, Petipace at least takes part in single combat, but in Gawain and the

Carl he is only a name in the roll call of the Round Table. The manuscript of the older

version of Gawain and the Carl is thought to date from about 1400, and so Malory could have

known it and used it, but he would have found the name with almost nothing to distinguish it.

In such cases, conclusions can only be speculative.

The sources of the names of such minor characters might not seem to be worth the

trouble of tracing, might seem to be "Class Nu" sources. The fact that each source for each

name is trivial in itself is clear. There are, however, important implications for the larger

question of Malory's conception of the Arthurian story. Taken together, these names show

Malory's familiarity with English Arthurian romances beyond those that he used as major

sources.

Most of the characters that Malory names from minor sources are obscure, but Sir

Gareth is a very notable exception. No mere supernumerary, Gareth has his own tale, and his

death will be an important motivator at the end of the Morte Darthur. The source of Gareth's

name is, therefore, a particularly interesting question. As Gaheriet, he is to be found in most

of Malory's major sources, but scholars have long debated the source of Malory's unique

form of this name. According to Benson, this character is called "Garret" in Sir Launfal and

in The Wedding of Sir Gawain, and Benson implies that this form of the name influenced

Malory.[55] However, Benson's citations are again incorrect. Gawain's youngest brother is

called "Gyheryes" on line 15 and "Gyeryes" on line 638 of Launfal, never "Garret."[56] The

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[55] Benson, Malory's Morte Darthur 41.

[56] Sir Launfal, ed. A. J. Bliss (London: Nelson, 1960).

form of the name "Garret" appears, not in The Wedding of Sir Gawain but in "The Marriage

of Sir Gawain," and Malory could theoretically have found it there. This ballad may date

from the late Middle Ages, despite surviving only in a single seventeenth-century manuscript.

However, evidence that it is old enough to have influenced Malory is very slight, and, in fact,

the form "Garret" from the "Marriage" could well have been influenced by Malory.[57] If,

however, Malory had read the "Marriage" he would have further changed the name "Garret,"

and he would have had to recognize that character as the same as the Gaheriet from his major

sources and as the same character under whatever form of the name he might have found in

the presumed lost source of his tale of Gareth. A more economical theory would be that

Malory took the name Gareth in that form from his source for "The Tale of Sir Gareth." This

may not ever be provable, but if true would suggest that this episodic romance, unique as

such among Malory's major sources, was one of a number of other Middle English romances

that Malory knew when he wrote his first tale.

Another example of the sources of names of minor characters having larger

implications is found in the names that Malory gives to two characters, the sworn brothers

Meliot of Logres and Bryan of the Isles (117), where, as above, the Suite has a single

anonymous character. These names, as have long been recognized, are also to be found in the

Old French prose romance Perlesvaus.[58] The rarity of the name Bryan of the Isles has led

most scholars to conclude that the Perlesvaus was Malory's source for these names.

However, in the Perlesvaus, Brien des Illes is implacably Arthur's enemy and could not be

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[57] "The Marriage of Sir Gawain," eds. John W. Hales and F. J. Furnivall, Bishop Percy's Folio Manuscript: Ballads and Romances, 3 vols in 4. (London: Trübner, 1867) 1: 103.

[58] Le Haut Livre du Graal: Perlesvaus, eds. William A. Nitze and T. Atkinson Jenkins, 2 vols. (New York: Phaeton, 1932-37).

thought to be a sworn brother to Meliot, who is depicted as devoted to Gawain. The

inconsistency between these characters in Malory and in Perlesvaus might suggest that

Malory had read the Old French work before writing "The Tale of King Arthur" but did not

have a copy of that romance in front of him.[59] This is a plausible sequence of events, but it

has also been noted that a Brian des Illes also appears in Renault de Beaujeu's Le Bel

Inconnu,[60] a version of the Fair Unknown story type.[61] As we shall see, Malory's lost source

for his "Tale of Sir Gareth" is also a version of this type,[62] and this raises the possibility that

Bryan was a minor character in that lost romance as well, which might then be the source for

Malory's conception of Bryan at this point. As seen above, the fact that Malory calls

Gawain's youngest brother Gareth throughout the Morte Darthur strongly suggests that he

was already familiar with the source for "The Tale of Gareth" before writing the "Tale of

King Arthur." Even if Malory was influenced by this lost source to consider Bryan of the

Isles to be friendly to the Round Table, however, the appearance of the name Meliot and the

fact that these two characters appear together still shows Malory's probable dependence on

Perlesvaus at this point. Also, further indications that Malory was already familiar with this

romance will be shown in his adaptation of the quests of Gawain, Ywain, and Marhalt.[63]

The alliterative Morte Arthure is the major source of Malory's second tale and is by far

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[59] Field, "Malory and Perlesvaus," Texts and Sources 224-35.

[60] Renaut de Beaujeu, Le Bel Inconnu, ed. G. Perrie Williams (Paris: Champion, 1929) lines 5549, 5697, 5701, 5715, 5750, 6091, and 6161.

[61] Wilson, "The Fair Unknown in Malory," PMLA 63 (1943): 1-21on 14.

[62] Infra 129-31.

[63] Infra 83-87.

Malory's most important English source. Malory seems to have known this poem before he

had written his first tale.[64] Malory, therefore, could have used the alliterative <u>Morte Arthure</u>

as a minor source in his other tales if he believed that he found authoritative details there that

were missing from his primary source, as we shall see that he does at several other points.

Arthur's war against the Roman Empire will be the main theme of Malory's second tale, but

just as the Post-Vulgate <u>Suite</u> recounts the threatening preliminary embassy from Emperor

Lucius to Arthur, so Malory includes it in this tale. Arthur's response to the ambassadors in

"The Tale of King Arthur" suggests that Malory had already read the alliterative <u>Morte</u>

<u>Arthure</u>.

In the Post-Vulgate <u>Suite</u> Arthur is very polite to the ambassadors. He explains his

position calmly before making an understated threat:

> Signeur, je ne tieng onques de Roume nule chose, ne ja ne quier que j'en
> tiegne. Et chou que je tieng, je le tieng de Dieu seulement, qui en ceste poesté
> et en ceste grasce me mist, au destruisement de m'ame se je n'i faich chou que
> je doi et au sauvement se je i tieng le peule comme peres le doit tenir. [. . .]
> Pour coi je voel bien que vous dites a vostre empereour qu'il ne fu mie sages
> quant il tel parole me manda, que je sui chius qui riens ne li renderoie ne reins
> ne terroie de lui, ains vous di bein que s'il estroit demain entrés en ma terre
> pour occoison de guerroiier, il ne revoerroit jamais a Roume, se Diex ne me
> nuisoit trop durement. Et gardés que vous ne soiiés jamais si hardi que vous
> en ma terre entrés pour teuls paroles anonchier, que mal vous en porroit venir
> de fesisse honnir, ne ja n'en eussiés autre chose, fait li rois.[65]

In Malory, Arthur puts the personal threat to the ambassadors first, states that he owes

nothing to Rome, and then threatens war:

> "Well," seyde kynge Arthure, "ye ar messyngers: therefore ye may sey that ye
> woll, othir ellis ye sholde dye therefore. But thys ys myne answere: I owghe
> the Emperour no trewage, nother none woll I yelde hym, but on a fayre fylde I
> shall yelde hym my trwage, that shall be with a sherpe spere othir ellis with a

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[64] Wilson, "Malory's Early Knowledge" 36.

[65] <u>Suite</u> 33-4.

sharpe swerde." (48)

Arthur's answer is therefore more vivid and more aggressive, just as his response is in the alliterative <u>Morte Arthure</u>. There are no strong verbal parallels between Malory and the alliterative poem at this point, but if Malory had already read the <u>Morte Arthure</u>, the fierce Arthur whose very countenance forces the ambassador to his knees could very easily have influenced Malory's depiction of Arthur here. As we shall see, Malory's version of this same scene in his second tale shows signs of influence from the Vulgate <u>Suite du Merlin</u>, and that fact raises the possibility that Malory considered several versions of this scene in the course of his writing.[66]

Another possible instance of influence from the alliterative <u>Morte Arthure</u> involves Mordred. In Malory's <u>Morte Darthur</u>, as in the earlier cycles, Mordred is almost invisible during most of the action until he usurps Arthur's throne during the crises caused by Arthur's war with Lancelot.

The development of Mordred's story is a good example of the tendency of medieval storytellers to elaborate on existing structures.[67] Mordred begins his literary career, apart from a few ambiguous references in early Welsh sources, in Geoffrey of Monmouth's chronicle. There, Mordred is the son of Lot and Arthur's sister Anna and is Gawain's only brother. The treachery of Geoffrey's Mordred has no motive, but it is logical in the context of Geoffrey's narrative, which portrays the Saxon conquest as the result of internecine struggle and squandered glory on the British part. The empire that Arthur builds in Geoffrey's

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[66] Infra 94-95.

[67] This tendency is discussed in Vinaver, <u>The Rise of Romance</u> (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), 53-67.

chronicle is the climax of British achievement and is too great to fall to outside forces.

The next development of Mordred's story occurs in the Vulgate Cycle. Here in the Merlin, Mordred's conception appears to be a burlesque of that of Arthur. As a young squire, Arthur enters the bed of Lot's here-unnamed wife, who, half-asleep, believes that she is with her husband.[68] Lot's wife discovers her error, but she is later mollified when she learns that Arthur has become king. She never discloses these events to her husband or to Mordred, who consequently grows up ignorant of his true heritage. Only years later is the truth about Mordred's shameful begetting and treacherous future revealed, by a hermit whom Mordred then kills in a disturbing episode of the Lancelot. The proof of the hermit's words is a fresco that Arthur has had painted to represent a dream he has had about a serpent that issued from his body and destroyed him.[69]

This story is developed further in the Post-Vulgate Suite.[70] In this version, Arthur is already king at the time of his seduction of Lot's wife, and she willingly sleeps with Arthur. None of the earlier versions of the story have anything to say about Mordred's fostering, and the reader is therefore left to assume that Mordred grew up uneventfully in Orkney, as did Gawain and his other brothers. The Post-Vulgate Suite introduces a part of the story that is familiar to readers of Malory: Arthur's attempt to avert the prophecy that a child about to be born is destined to destroy him. Although Merlin warns Arthur in advance that he will not succeed, Arthur orders all of the children born in the prescribed month to be delivered to him. Arthur's subjects comply, and Arthur puts the children in a tower. The ship that carries Mordred, however, never arrives at Arthur's court but is destroyed en route, and Mordred is

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[68] Vulgate Version 2: 128-9.

[69] Lancelot 5: 222-4.

[70] Suite 1.

its only survivor. A fisherman finds Mordred and takes him to be raised in the household of

the reigning duke. Arthur, believing that he has the fatal child, initially intends to have all of

the children killed, but when he is rebuked in a dream, he relents. Following instructions

from this dream, Arthur has the children put into a pilotless ship, which divine providence

guides to safety. Merlin explains to the aggrieved parents both that Arthur had the good of

the country at heart in his actions and that their children are in fact safe.

Malory makes a small but important change in the story of Mordred's fostering as he

found it in the Post-Vulgate. Malory's version runs thus:

> Than kynge Arthure lette sende for all the children that were borne in May-
> day, begotyn of lordis and borne of ladyes; for Merlyon tolde kynge Arthure
> that he that sholde destroy hym and all the londe sholde be borne on May-day.
> Wherefore he sente for hem all in payne of dethe, and so there were founde
> many lordis sonnys and many knyghtes sonnes, and all were sente unto the
> kynge. And so was Mordred sente by kynge Lottis wyff. And all were putte in
> a shyppe to the se; and som were foure wekis olde and som lesse. And so by
> fortune the shyppe drove unto a castelle, and was all to-ryven and destroyed
> the moste party, save that Mordred was caste up, and a good man founde hym,
> and fostird hym tylle he was fourtene yere of age, and than brought hym to the
> courte, as it rehersith aftirward and towarde the ende of the Morte Arthure.
> So, many lordys and barownes of thys realme were displeased for hir
> children were so loste; and many putte the wyght on Merlion more than on
> Arthure. So what for dred and for love, they helde their pece. (55-6)

Malory has compressed the story so that Mordred arrives at Arthur court and is placed in the

ship along with the other children. Curiously, Malory does not say whether the ship is piloted

or not or whether Arthur plans for the children to be killed or whether, as in the Post-Vulgate,

he is merely trying to keep them out of the way. Malory then relates that "by fortune," which

may or may not imply the opposite of intention, the ship was mostly destroyed when it struck

a castle, which we should no doubt visualise as on a fortified sea-shore site, like Harlech and

other Edwardian castles in Wales. The only survivor mentioned is Mordred, which seems to

imply that he was the sole survivor, as he was of the ship that went down on its way to

Arthur's court in the Post-Vulgate.

Although Malory's language is unclear, the impression created is surely that Arthur is trying to kill the children while keeping his own hands technically clean. This presentation of Arthur as a king who kills a large number of babies to further his own interests represents one of the few times that Malory alters the story of his major sources in a way that is not to the credit of Arthur's character.[71] Not only do Arthur's actions momentarily show him as contemptible, they irresistibly remind the reader of the infamous King Herod's similar attempt to have destroyed the child who was destined to become King of the Jews in his place.[72]

None of Malory's surviving predecessors shows Arthur attempt to rid himself of Mordred as ruthlessly as Malory's version does, and even the version in Malory's major source for "The Tale of King Arthur" is far less detrimental to Arthur's character. One could go so far as to say that in the Post-Vulgate Suite, Arthur acts in direct contrast to Herod because Arthur abandons his proposed slaughter of the innocents and shows himself willing to trust God. Because this type of change is so uncharacteristic of Malory, he is more likely to have made it under the influence of an authoritative source than to have conceived of it on his own. Also the allusion to Mordred's coming to Arthur's court "as it rehersith aftirward and towarde the ende of the Morte Arthure" is another piece of evidence that may point to a source other than the Post-Vulgate Suite. The only source that has been suggested is a group of possible lost lines from the alliterative Morte Arthure.[73]

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[71] See Wilson, Characterization in Malory: a Comparison with his Sources (Chicago: U of Chicago Libraries, 1934) 65-79.

[72] Field, "Malory's Mordred and the Morte Arthure," Malory: Texts and Sources 89-102.

[73] Field, "Malory's Mordred" 95.

P. J. C. Field believes that the slaughter of innocents episode adds little to the story except to make Arthur a less admirable character and to add a potential motive for Mordred's malice, but that neither of these possibilities is ever exploited either by Malory or by his predecessors and that Malory would possibly have omitted it from his version unless he felt that it was part of the authorized story.[74] However, the Post-Vulgate author must have invented this episode and Malory may have retained it simply to explain how, given Merlin's ability to see the future, Mordred was allowed to grow to adulthood. Often the irony of such literary prophecies is that the very attempt to thwart the prophecy brings it about. That itself, of course, does not explain Malory's handling of the story, and here is where the possible connection to the alliterative Morte Arthure is useful. The fact that the only surviving version of the alliterative Morte Arthure does not contain a reference to Mordred coming to court is not a serious problem because scholars have long thought that the sole surviving manuscript of the alliterative Morte Arthure to be an abbreviated version of the poem and have generally believed Malory worked from a fuller version.[75]

In the alliterative Morte Arthure, Arthur is stern conqueror who is much less sympathetic than he is in most Arthurian literature, including most versions of his war against the Roman Empire, which has also been an important part of Arthur's legend since Geoffrey of Monmouth's work. On the other hand, Mordred, although a rebel and a villain, appears more sympathetic than he is usually portrayed. For example, although he is still responsible for creating the circumstances that lead to the death of his brother Gawain, Mordred is saddened by his brother's death and gives a touching threnody for Gawain that is the basis for

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[74] Field, "Malory's Mordred" 93.

[75] Works, commentary 1366; and Morte Arthure, introduction 3-17.

Ector's lament for Lancelot at the end of Malory's story.[76] Perhaps this more sympathetic

view of Mordred either led to or was itself based on a version of the story in which Mordred

himself is to some extent sinned against by Arthur.

Indirect evidence that the alliterative Morte Arthure may have once contained lines

alluding to Mordred's fostering is found in the Anturs of Arthur, which contains lines that

imply that Mordred was raised in Arthur's household. The ghost of Guenevere's mother says

to Guenevere and Gawain,

> In kyng Arthers halle
> The child playes atte the balle,
> That outray schall yo alle
> Derfely that daye.[77]

These lines are too vague to be Malory's source for this idea, but the lines that come

immediately before them are based on the alliterative Morte, and so these lines may be based

on a fuller version of the alliterative poem.[78] Yet the image that Guenevere's mother suggests

is of a child younger than Malory's fourteen years. While the ghost may mean the word

"child" in the archaic sense of a (well-born) offspring rather than an infant, this discrepancy

makes the argument that Malory and the author of the Anturs took the idea of Mordred's

fosterage from the same source a little harder to accept. Also, although scholars generally

agree that the single surviving manuscript of the alliterative Morte Arthure is defective, it is

hard to imagine that it is missing an episode as long as the "slaughter of the innocents."

The plausible alternative is that when Malory compressed the episode from the Post-

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[76] Works 1259.9-12n.

[77] Ywain and Gawain, Sir Percyvell of Gales, The Anturs of Arthur, ed. Maldwyn
Mills (London: J. M. Dent, 1992) lines 308-11.

[78] Field, "Mordred" 95, and Mills 202 (note to lines 305-11) cited in Field.

Vulage Suite, he was unconscious of the impression that he was creating of Arthur as a ruthless child murderer. Field discusses this possibility and finds it also to be improbable. He notes the care that Malory took to understand the episode from the Post-Vulgate and to compress the two journeys by ship into one and the two characters who help Mordred, the fisherman who finds him and the duke who raises him, into one in a way that makes sense. According to Field, "The number of things that Malory would have had to fail to notice or refuse to respond to in order to create his child-killing episode accidentally is so large as to make the idea difficult to credit."[79] Both alternatives, therefore, seem improbable, yet a rational solution must exist.

Looking again at Malory's passage, it is oddly elliptical. This may suggest that Malory himself found the episode unpleasant but unavoidable and was therefore rushing towards the end, and this in turn may suggest that he considered it unavoidable because he had found it in more than one source. It could also suggest a haste may have caused him "to fail to notice or refuse to respond to" the overall impression that he was creating. However, other alternatives cannot be excluded.

One of the pieces of evidence that appears to point towards a supplemental source Malory's allusion to the "Morte Arthure" is, in fact, far from clear. Of course, it is possible that it is a reference to the alliterative poem, the only surviving manuscript of which begins with the lines "Here begynnes Morte Arthure."[80] Malory does occasionally refer to his sources, often as "the French book" and sometimes more specifically.[81] However, if he is

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[79] Field, "Mordred" 93.

[80] Morte Arthure 103.

[81] He usually names them specifically to explain what he is omitting: e. g. "Here endyth the Secunde Boke off Syr Trystram [. . .] here is no rehersall of the Third Booke;" "And so I leve here of this tale, and overlepe grete bookis of sir Launcelot" (845.27-31;

here alluding as the narrator to an event in his source that does not appear in his own story, it is the only time that he does so.[82] When Malory refers to the "Morte Arthure" elsewhere in his book, he is referring to his own version of the story, and it may be that he is doing so here as well. Malory may have planned to remind his readers of Mordred's upbringing at some point close to the final crisis, perhaps during the "Healing of Sir Urry" episode.[83] Although this line of reasoning would suggest that he is not citing a fuller version of the alliterative poem when he refers to the end of the "Morte Arthure," the evidence is too weak to support firm conclusions.

One appealing possibility, admittedly highly speculative, is that the archetype of the Winchester manuscript and Caxton's print text was damaged at this point. This hypotheses could explain both Malory's elliptical accounting of this episode and the allusion to the "Morte Arthure." A missing clause might have explained Arthur's intended destination for the ship of children and perhaps his motive. Also, if a clause explaining that Mordred would prove treacherous and cause the downfall of Arthur's kingdom were missing between "and a good man founde hym, and fostird hym tylle he was fourtene yere of age, and than brought hym to the courte," and "as it rehersith aftirward and towarde the ende of the Morte Arthure," Malory could have intended to refer either to his own work, as the "Morte Arthure" often does, or to any other of the medieval works that could be called by that name. This hypotheses would have great explanatory power at the price of no greater assumptions than Field's theory.

1154.1-2).

[82] It is true that characters occasionally recall incidents that are recorded in Malory's sources but not in the Morte Darthur: e. g. Gawain's allusion to the fact that Lancelot rescued him from Caradoc of the Dolorous Tower (1162).

[83] Field, "Malory's Mordred" 99-101.

However, since neither this hypothesis nor Field's theory can be tested, then matter will remain uncertain. The most than can be said with confidence is that if Malory had indeed read the alliterative Morte early in his acquaintance with the Arthurian corpus, long influence by the alliterative Morte's more ruthless and warlike Arthur could provide an explanation for a more ruthless Arthur in this episode.

The changes Malory makes to the episode that follows the slaughter of the innocents in both the Morte Darthur and the Post-Vulgate Suite du Merlin are more characteristic, in that they show the protagonist as a more sympathetic character than he is in the major source. In the middle of Malory's "Tale of King Arthur" is the fascinating story of Balin le Sauvage. Malory found this story in the Suite, and most of the differences between the two versions can be explained by Malory's typical compression of the narrative.[84]

When a damsel arrives in Arthur's court with a sword that can only be drawn by a knight who is "a passynge good man of hys hondes and of hys dedis, and withoute velony other trechory and withoute treson," all of Arthur's knights try to draw it without success (61-2. 34-2). When Balin asks to try, the damsel criticizes him as too poor and obscure to have a credible chance. Balin replies that

> worthynes and good tacchis and also good dedis is nat only in araymente, but manhode and worship ys hyd within a mannes person; and many a worshipfull knyght ys nat knowyn unto all peple. And therefore worship and hardynesse ys nat in araymente. (63.23-27)

This contrasts with Balin's attitude in the Suite, in which it is said,

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[84] Laura Hibbard Loomis, "Malory's Book of Balin," Adventures in the Middle Ages: A Memorial Collection of Essays and Studies (New York: Columbia UP, 1962). Similarly in Elizabeth Edwards, The Genesis of Narrative in Malory's Morte Darthur (Boydell and Brewer 2001) chapter 2, and Mann "Taking the Adventure," cited by Edwards.

> il est tous honteus, si respont par courouch: 'Damoisiele, ne m'aiiés en despit pour ma povreté: je fui ja plus riches.'[85]

This change of characterization does not necessarily need any other source than Malory's imagination, but the sentiments of Malory's Balin come close enough to another famous character in Middle English literature to raise the possibility of another source.

Malory's work has been compared to that of Geoffrey Chaucer a number of times. Often the two are presented as opposites, or when they are shown to have similarities, these are usually presented as surprising.[86] Evidence that Malory had ever read the earlier poet has been elusive. However, by Malory's time Chaucer was generally regarded as the greatest poet of England, and so there is therefore a prima facie chance that Malory would have read him.[87] The fact that "The Wife of Bath's Tale" has an Arthurian theme makes it the most likely of Chaucer's work to have caught Malory's attention.[88]

Suggestive similarities exist between Malory's story of Sir Balin and Chaucer's "Wife of Bath's Tale." "The Wife of Bath's Tale" follows the traditional plot of the Loathly Lady transformed.[89] In stories of the Loathly Lady type, the protagonist is forced to wed a hideous hag who reveals herself on her wedding night to be in reality a beautiful woman. The husband is then given a choice of the conditions by which his wife will be beautiful or

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[85] Suite 69.

[86] E. g. Peter Schroeder, "Hidden Depths: Dialogue and Characterization in Chaucer and Malory," PMLA 98 (1983): 374-87.

[87] See Derek Brewer, Chaucer: The Critical Heritage, 2 vols. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978) Vol 1, 2 and extracts 1-18.

[88] Geoffrey Chaucer, "The Wife of Bath's Tale," The Riverside Chaucer, ed. Larry D. Benson, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1987) 116-22.

[89] For a study of the Loathly Lady stories, see Sigmund Eisner, A Tale of Wonder (Wexford: John English, 1957).

loathsome. The husband leaves the choice to his wife, and this is then revealed to be the only response that will allow the wife to be beautiful at all times, or, in the case of "The Wife of Bath's Tale," beautiful and yet faithful.

At the end of Chaucer's version of this story, after the Wife of Bath's unnamed hag and her unnamed knight have wed, the knight criticizes his wife for her advanced age and for the fact that she is a commoner. The Loathly Lady replies at far greater length than Balin does in Malory's story, and much that is at issue for her is not relevant to Balin's situation. However, lines from her lesson on nobility express virtually the same point that Balin makes in Malory's story:

> But, for ye speken of swich gentillesse
> As is descended out of old richesse,
> That therfore sholden ye be gentil men,
> Swich arrogance is nat worth an hen.
> Looke who that is moost vertuous alway,
> Pryvee and apert, and moost entendeth ay
> To do the gentil dedes that he kan;
> Taak hym for the grettest gentil man.
> Crist wole we clayme of hym oure gentillesse,
> Nat of oure eldres for hire old richesse. (1109-1118)

There is no real question of Malory working with a copy of Chaucer's work before him: this passage has no strong verbal parallels to the passage in the Morte Darthur that would suggest direct borrowing. The two situations, however, have general similarities that might have recalled Chaucer's passage to Malory's mind. In both cases an Arthurian knight is or has been in a legal jeopardy, although Chaucer's knight's crime of rape is very different to Balin's crime of killing Arthur's cousin, and they are more or less at the mercy of a mysterious woman. In both cases this knight is in a position to redeem himself. Four lines in "Wife of Bath's Tale" would be especially relevant to Balin:

> Looke who that is moost vertuous alway,
> Pryvee and apert, and moost entendeth ay

> To do the gentil dedes that he kan;
> Taak hym for the grettest gentil man. (1113-6)

A recollection of the highly rhetorical Wife of Bath might also explain Balin's rhetorical

"And therefore," which does not really seem justified by his two bare assertions.

This is not to say that any of Malory's characters or Malory himself would have

agreed with the the position of Chaucer's hag that "gentilesse" has nothing to do with birth.

If Malory had read these lines, he will have adapted the ideas to his own world view, in which

poor knights can have as good "tacchis" as rich ones. The evidence of Malory's life suggests

that his income was about half the conventional income a knight was supposed to have,[90] so

he may well have had reason for lines of poetry about the nature of nobility and the lack of its

connection to wealth to have stuck in his mind.

The possibility that Malory wrote the Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell

makes the question of whether "The Wife of Bath" is a minor source complex.[91] The

Wedding is a version of the Loathly Lady story that appears to date from the middle of the

fifteenth century, in which Gawain plays the part of Chaucer's unnamed knight.[92] The

question of attribution is relevant in other ways, because the Wedding is almost certainly one

of Malory's minor sources whether Malory was its author or not.

An early article concerning the Wedding notes verbal similarities between lines 925-8

of the "Wife of Bath" and lines 408-13 of the Wedding.[93] When the consensus of what

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[90] Field, Life and Times 84.

[91] Field, "Malory and The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell," Texts and Sources 284-94.

[92] The Weddyng of Sir Gawen and Dame Ragnell, ed. Laura Sumner, Smith College Studies in Modern Languages 5: 4 (1924).

[93] Robert W. Ackerman, "English Rimed and Prose Romances," Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages 480-519.

women most desire is taken in "Wife of Bath,"

> Somme seyde wommen loven best richesse,
> Somme seyde honour, somme seyde jolynesse,
> Somme seyde riche array, somme seyden lust abedde,
> And oftetyme to be wydwe and wedde.

In the Wedding, when Arthur and Gawain try to find the answer to the same question,

> Somme sayd they lovyd to be well arayd;
> Somme sayd they lovyd to be fayre prayed;
> Somme sayd they lovyd a lusty man
> That in theyr armys can clypp them and kysse them than.[94]

Robert Ackerman believed that these verbal similarities add force to his conclusion that

Chaucer could have worked with an earlier version of the Wedding, although he also points

out that "a glance at several analogues suffices to indicate that he was following a

development of the tale quite different from that represented in the romance [i. e. the

Wedding]."[95] Obviously, Chaucer adapted an earlier version of this traditional story for his

poem, yet it is by no means certain that Chaucer would have borrowed lines from that source

so closely. Since the Wedding has been dated from around 1450-1500, the earlier date being

the probable date of composition and the later being the probable date of the sole surviving

manuscript and is so clearly a part of the fourteenth-century tradition of Middle English

Arthurian poetry, the more natural conclusion is that the author of the Wedding worked with

a copy of Chaucer. This theory also gives the more expected situation of a lesser poet

borrowing from a greater, rather than the reverse.

    The Wedding and the Morte Darthur have some minor elements in common. The

most compelling argument for the common authorship of the Wedding and the Morte Darthur

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[94] Field notes these lines, and he also cites lines 309 and 316 of the Wedding as being similar to line 269-70 of the Wife of Bath's prologue.

[95] Ackerman 502.

is that the two works are unique in having a character called Gromer Somer Joure and therefore must be related in some way. Further, because Gromer Somer Joure is merely a name in a list of knights associated with Sir Gawain in the Morte Darthur but is integral to the story of the Wedding, the Wedding is more likely to be the donor and the Morte Dathur the debtor.[96] Additionally, it has recently been persuasively argued separately that the Wedding and the Morte Darthur each have a minor source in the French verse L'Atre Périlleux.[97] The use of minor sources in English Arthurian romance is rare enough, but for two fifteenth-century English Arthurian authors to use this relatively obscure French verse romance would be a remarkable coincidence.

Another similarity exists between the two texts. In passages made famous since the discovery of the Winchester Manuscript, Malory laments his captivity and prays for release in the explicits of many of his tales. For example, the explicit to "The Tale of King Arthur" reads,

> Here endyth this tale, as the Freynshe booke seyth, fro the maryage of kynge Uther unto kyng Arthure that regned aftir hym and ded many batayles. And this booke endyth whereas sir Lancelot and sir Trystrams com to courte. Who that woll make ony more lette hym seke other bookis of kyng Arthure or of sir Lancelot or sir Trystrams; for this was drawyn by a knyght presoner, sir Thomas Malleorré, that God sende hym good recover. (180.1524)

The Wedding closes with these lines:

> And Jhesu, as thou were borne of a virgyn,
> Help hym oute of sorowe that this tale dyd devyne –
> And that nowe in alle haste –
> For he is besett with gaylours many,

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[96] Field, "Malory and The Wedding" 285.

[97] For the influence of L'Atre Périlleux on the Wedding see Karen Hunter Trimnell, "'And Shold Have Been Oderwyse Understond': The Disenchanting of Sir Gromer Somer Joure," Medium Ævum 71 (2002): 294-301; and for its influence on the Morte Darthur see Field "Malory and Sir Phelot." BBSIA 54 (2003): 345-61; see also infra 125.

That kepen hym full sewerly,
With wyles wrong and wraste.

Nowe God, as thou art veray Kyng royall,
Help hym oute of daunger that made this tale,
For therin he hath bene long.
And of greatt pety help thy servaunt –
For body and soull I yeld into thyne hand –
For paynes he hath strong.

Here endyth The Weddyng of
Syr Gawen and Dame Ragnell
For helpyng of Kyng Arthoure.[98]

Other explicits in the Morte Darthur parallel the end of the Wedding: "for hym that this wrote, that God send hym good delyveraunce sone and hastely;" "Sir Thomas Malleoré, Knight. Jesu, ayede ly pur voutre bone mercy;" and "Jesu helpe hym [Malory] for Hys grete myght, as he is the servaunt of Jesu bothe day and nyght." (363.19, 1154.19, 1260.27). In addition to the general similarity of a prayer for deliverance from prison, the two works are also alike in addressing their prayers to God and Jesus and not, for example, to Mary or the Trinity.

If the Wedding had been written after the Morte Darthur, then the author of the Wedding could have taken the name of Gromer Somer Joure from Malory and could be deliberately mimicking him with a Malorian explicit. But because Gromer Somer Joure is so obscure in the Morte Darthur, likelihood seems to be against a later author finding and choosing this name. If this is granted, then only two possibilities remain: that Malory borrowed the name and perhaps the style of explicits from a slightly earlier author who was also in prison, or that the same man wrote both works. Although the idea that two imprisoned English authors wrote Arthurian romances within fifty years of each other is not so

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[98] Wedding lines 841-55.

improbable as to constitute proof of common authorship, it is another piece of evidence to suggest that the two authors were either the same man or that if they were not, at least they had a great deal in common.

The issue could be easily settled in the negative if the two works could be shown to be in different dialects; however, study of dialect and vocabulary leaves this issue inconclusive,[99] and therefore, the only serious argument against common authorship concerns the discrepancies between the two works. The Morte Darthur is a high tragedy that treats its sources with respect, but the Wedding is a low comedy that has been seen as informed by "a deliberate intention on the part of the author to subvert the genre by use of allusion, hyperbole, and frustrated expectation."[100] Proponents of this view believe that the poem's echoes of other works are a key to its humour, and that its clever author expected his audience to be familiar with both the "Wife of Bath's Tale" and with the Morte Darthur.[101] Although exponents of this view do not say so, this theory could be used to explain Gromer Somer Jour's presence in the poem. The author of the Wedding would have been unlikely to have taken this obscure name at random,[102] but, according to the theory of referential humour, the author of the Wedding would deliberately have taken an obscure character with an absurd name and given him a large role, just as T. H. White was to do in the twentieth century when he made a comic character out of the equally obscure Grummor Grummorson, who may be

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[99] Field, "Malory and The Wedding" 284.

[100] John Withrington, "The Weddynge of Sir Gawen and Dame Ragnell and The Marriage of Sir Gawaine," The Arthur of the English 207-10.

[101] Stephen H. A. Shepherd, "No Poet Has His Travesty Alone: The Weddynge of Sir Gawen and Dame Ragnell," Romance Reading on the Book: Essays on Medieval Narrative presented to Maldwyn Mills eds. Jennifer Fellows et al. (Cardiff: U of Wales P, 1996) 112-28.

[102] Field, "Malory and The Wedding" 286.

the same character as Gromer Somer Joure.[103] Also this theory explains the ending lines that

relate the death of Dame Ragnell and that echo Malory's explicits as humorous.

The idea that the author of the <u>Wedding</u> was familiar with Malory's work but was not

Malory himself is encouraged by the contrast between the portrayal of Arthur and Gawain in

the <u>Wedding</u> and their counterparts in the <u>Morte Darthur</u>. Malory has long been seen to

portray his major characters with a good degree of consistency throughout the <u>Morte</u>

<u>Darthur</u>.[104] The Arthur of the <u>Morte Darthur</u> has been described in an authoritative account as

shown to be "a just, unselfish, strong ruler, and father of his people, his virtues far

outweighing his one weakness of undue partiality to his nephew Gawain."[105] This is not how

Arthur appears in the <u>Wedding</u> to many critics. Arthur here appears to be a "hapless and

helpless king" given to "unheroic anxiety."[106]

Yet despite this appraisal, the difference in Arthur's character in the two works is not

necessarily as great as it appears. Whoever wrote the <u>Wedding</u> was limited in his

characterizations by the traditional plot, and within the requirements of this storyline, Arthur

is not so different from his counterpart in the <u>Morte Darthur</u>. Gromer Somer Joure's

complaint is that Arthur has given some of Gromer's land to Sir Gawain. Arthur does not

dispute the claim and therefore seems to verify it, a common situation in Middle English

Arthurian poetry, but he offers to make amends. Certainly other interpretations are possible,

but this sequence of events need not contradict the idea that Arthur is a just ruler aside from

his partiality to Gawain.

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[103] <u>Works</u>, Index of Proper Names; infra 214-16.

[104] Wilson, <u>Characterization in Malory</u>.

[105] Wilson, <u>Characterization</u> 79.

[106] Withrington 208-9.

The plot of the <u>Wedding</u> does not allow Arthur to fight Gromer for his life, but Arthur's initial response, that they are unfairly matched since the giant is armed for battle and Arthur is not, involves no serious loss of dignity. Malory's Lancelot says as much to Sir Phelot (283). It is true that Arthur, unlike Lancelot, is quickly reduced to crying, "Save my lyfe, and whate thou wolt crave,/ I shalle now graunt itt the," and then interrupts Gromer to agree before Gromer has set out all the conditions.[107] The effect here is humorous and unheroic, but it is not so different from Lancelot's suggestion to Sir Phelot, who has Lancelot unarmed and up a tree, "take myne harneys with the and hange my swerde there uppon a bowghe that I may gete hit, and than do thy beste to sle me and thou can" (283.19-22). In both cases, unarmed and weaponless knights are forced to desperate bargaining. Nor is this the best example of Lancelot, often thought to be Malory's favorite character, temporarily losing his dignity. Arthur's portrayal here is not, therefore, a serious objection to the theory of Malory's authorship of the <u>Wedding</u>.

If Arthur's dignity seems to suffer in the <u>Wedding</u>, Gawain's character also looks different to many critics, in much the same way that Arthur's does, and these objections could be met with much of the same evidence from Malory as above. In fact, the continuity between Gawain and his family in the two works is a strong argument in favour of their common authorship. The <u>Wedding</u> refers to Gawain and Ragnell's son, Gyngalyn, who appears in the <u>Morte Darthur</u> three times, each time referred to as Gawain's son and once distinguished from Gawain's other two sons, Florence and Lovell, who are the sons of Sir Braundeles's sister.[108] The use of Gromer's name may be explicable as deliberate absurdity,

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[107] <u>Wedding</u> lines 80-1.

[108] Gyngalyn appears on pages 494-5, 1147, where he is set apart from his half-brothers, and 1164.

but if this detailed correspondence with the Morte Darthur is supposed to be part of the referential humour, it is obscure.

Also puzzling from this point of view are the reference to Gawain's sorrow over Ragnell's death and the Malorian explicit. One critic has said, "To feel sad or perturbed here at the death of Ragnell risks missing the joke,"[109] and that,

> where Malory's admission [that he is in prison] achieves considerable gravity amid his grand nostalgic evocation of (among other things) the ethical superiority of Arthurian civilization, the Weddyng poet's admission rounds off a near-anecdotal and amusingly knowing account of ethical deficiency and ineptitude – and has been an account which could easily make the imprisonment of its ostensible 'author' seem a laughable and not inappropriate fate.[110]

The problem with this theory is that neither the death of Ragnell nor the narrator's prayer for deliverance is very funny. The Wedding has comic moments, but the ending is sombre. For about an hundred lines before reporting her death, the poet has stressed Gawain's immoderate love for Ragnell in ways that recall Chrétien's Erec et Enide.[111] This is immediately followed by the lines about the care of the characters' souls and the prayer for deliverance. If this is humour, it seems too subtle for the author of a work of such uneven quality as the Wedding.

Apart from the Wedding and the Morte Darthur, Middle English Arthurian literature knows only one appearance of the name "Gromer." A character of that name is the antagonist in "The Turk and Gowin." Gromer appears at Arthur's court and issues a challenge that Gawain accepts, like Bercilak in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. In the end, Gawain beheads Gromer, who then, disenchanted, becomes a Knight of the Round Table. "The Turk"

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[109] Shepherd, "Travesty" 121.

[110] Middle English Romances, ed. Stephen Shepherd (New York: W. W. Norton, 1995), note to The Wedding, 380.

[111] Chrétien de Troyes, Erec et Enide, ed. Mario Roques (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1966) lines 2430-2520 and Wedding lines 715-38.

has been dated to around 1500,[112] and if this is correct, then this poem probably takes the name from the Wedding or the Morte Darthur. Another possibility is that the Wedding and "The Turk" may reflect a common tradition in which the name "Gromer" was an obvious name for one of Arthur's enemies. However, it is certainly easier to imagine a later author shortening the mysterious "Gromer Somer Joure" to "Gromer" than a later author augmenting "Gromer" so strangely. In any case, the name seems unlikely to have originated in "The Turk."

Most likely, the issue of the Wedding's author will never be settled with certainty. The following, however, seems clear: the Wedding is related to the Morte Darthur by the uncommon name of Gromer Somer Joure, by the fact that they were apparently both influenced by L'Atre Périlleux, by the concern they show for their characters' souls, and by the explicits that pray for the author's release from prison. Even if the author of the Wedding picked out the obscure name of his antagonist who becomes Sir Gawain's brother-in-law from the Morte Darthur's long list of friends of Gawain's family as a deliberate attempt at absurdity, it is hard to imagine him concluding with a prayer for release were he not really in prison. The Wedding cannot be much more than twenty years earlier or later than the Morte Darthur, and while two Middle English Arthurian authors in the same generation may have written while in prison, influencing each other's works and sharing common sources, the alternative that Malory wrote both works seems more likely.

The author of the Wedding, whoever he was, as we have seen, is almost certain to have read Chaucer's "Wife of Bath's Tale." The Balin story in "The Tale of King Arthur" may also echo Chaucer's tale. The two theories, each a little less than certain, strengthen

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[112] David Griffith, "The Turke and Gowin," Arthur of the English 199-201.

each other, because, if Malory and the author of the Wedding were both influenced by "The Wife of Bath's Tale," that would be another connection between them, and if Malory were the author of the Wedding, the echo of Chaucer from Balin's story would be natural.

In this context, it is interesting to note the presence of another possible echo of The Canterbury Tales in the section of the Morte Darthur immediately following the Tale of Sir Balin, this time "The Clerk's Tale."[113] The section titled "The Wedding of King Arthur,"[114] opens with a discussion between Arthur and Merlin in which Arthur remarks that his barons are putting pressure on him to marry and that he has chosen Guenevere. Merlin expresses his misgivings about Guenevere but remarks, "But thereas mannes herte is sette he woll be loth to returne" (97.26-7). This echoes the line "Ther as myn herte is set, ther wol I wyve" in "The Clerks Tale."[115] Not only is the wording similar, the situation is too. Chaucer's line is spoken by the Marquis of Saluces, who is also under pressure from his subjects to marry. He is discussing this demand with his subjects' spokesman, who was chosen for his wisdom. Although the echo is too brief to be conclusive, in the context of the similar situation in both tales, it is arresting. This conclusion will be strengthened by other indications that Malory had read Chaucer, as will be shown later.[116]

Finally, before leaving the story of Balin altogether, there is another possible minor source in that story, this one involving Malory's conception of the Holy Grail. Balin's quest for revenge against Garlon the invisible knight leads him to the castle of Garlon's brother, King Pellam. Balin slays Garlon but then has to defend himself against a vengeful King

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[113] Field, personal communication, March 2004.

[114] This section is called "Torre and Pellinor" in Vinaver's first two editions.

[115] Chaucer, "The Clerk's Tale," Riverside Chaucer 138-53, line 173.

[116] Infra 192-93.

Pellam. Balin flees from chamber to chamber searching for a weapon until he finds a marvellous spear, and using this spear Balin strikes Pellam down. In this Malory is following his major source, the Post-Vulgate Suite.

Malory adds to the account of the Suite, however, to say,

> And kyng Pellam lay so many yerys sore wounded, and myght never be hole tylle that Galaad the Hawte Prynce heled hym in the queste of the Sankgreall. For in that place was parte of the blood of Oure Lorde Jesu Cryste, which Joseph off Aramathy brought into thys londe. And there hymselff lay in that ryche bedde. And that was the spere whych Longeus smote Oure Lorde with to the herte. (85.21-27)

Although in the Vulgate, the Grail is said to have caught Christ's blood at the crucifixion and is a vessel of the Eucharist, which, of course, also links it to the blood of Christ,[117] Malory seems to state that the Grail still contains the blood of Christ in Arthurian times, and this conception of the Grail as containing a blood relic appears to be part of a tradition peculiarly strong in the British Isles.[118]

Other English versions of the Grail romances also add the explicit connection between the Grail and Christ's blood. An early verse translation of the Vulgate Estoire del Saint Graal adds the detail of "the dish with the blood, and a gold vessel between them" to the original's description of the Grail ark. Henry Lovelich's History of the Holy Grail calls the Grail the "Sank Ryal" or "Seint Graal, " which recalls Malory's usual term, the Sankgreal.[119] Rather than examples of direct borrowing from one another, these three English authors appear to

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[117] In the Vulgate Queste, blood drips from the Lance of Vengeance into the Grail, from which the celebrants later drink as part of the Grail liturgy. La queste del Saint Graal: Roman du XIIIᵉ siècle, ed. Albert Pauphilet (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1999) 269.

[118] Richard Barber, The Holy Grail: Imagination and Belief (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard UP, 2004) 213-14.

[119] Barber, Holy Grail 214-15.

reflect an English oral tradition that linked the Grail with the relic of the holy blood. If this is

so, it is another example of Malory using unwritten sources to supplement the story as it came

to him from his literary sources. As we shall see, Malory adds this conception of the Grail to

his version of the Prose Tristan,[120] although when he comes to translate the Vulgate Queste,

he appears to abandon it in favour of a more faithful translation of his major source.[121]

In his mastery study, Robert H. Wilson describes Gawain in the Morte Darthur as "a good

knight save for his one tendency towards revenge of injuries to his family – a tendency which

he holds in check as long as possible, but which finally overmasters him."[122] That is a fair

summary of a complex character who is the product of unusually disparate sources which, as

Wilson admits, Malory was not able to unite into complete consistency.

Displaying the family loyalty that Wilson spoke of, Gawain leaves with his cousin

Ywain when King Arthur banishes Ywain on suspicion that he may be in league with his

treacherous mother, Morgan le Fay. The two meet Marhalt, who battles against Gawain

before joining the two knights. During the battle, it is said of Gawain,

> But sir Gawayne, fro hit was nyne of the clok, wexed ever strenger and
> strenger, for by than hit cam to the hower of noone he had three tymes his
> myght encresed. [. . .] So whan hit was past noone, and whan it drew toward
> evynsonge, sir Gawayns strength fyebled and woxe passyng faynte, that
> unnethe he myght dure no lenger. (161.5-12)

Malory takes both the battle and the reference in it to Gawain's supernatural strength from his

major source, the Post-Vulgate Suite. However, there the terms of Gawain's strength gain are

different:

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[120] Infra 164-65.

[121] Barber, Holy Grail 215.

[122] Wilson, Characterization 41.

> Quant heure de miedi fu venue et il se furent un poi reposé, Gavains, qui estoit de tel maniere que en toutes saisons li doubloit sa force entour heure de miedi et crois soit et amendoit plus qu'a nul autre homme, si tost comme miedis fu venus, et il se senti legier et viste autant ou plus qu'il n'avoit esté au commenchement.[123]

In Malory Gawain's strength gradually increases three fold from nine in the morning till noon, while in the French, Gawain's strength suddenly doubles at noon. Although Malory's word "noone" was often used in Middle English to mean the canonical hour of none, which corresponds to approximately 3:00pm,[124] the recurrence of "miedi," midday, in the various French versions makes it more likely that Malory means for his readers to understand that Gawain's strength increased until midday.

Gawain's waxing and waning strength is a traditional feature of his character, but Malory's version of this attribute is not precisely like that in any other version among his known or probable sources. In the Prose Lancelot, for example, Gawain's strength is said to ebb at noon but to return suddenly doubled after that.[125] The Vulgate Suite du Merlin is closer to Malory's version than the Post-Vulgate Suite or the Lancelot in its presentation of the conditions of Gawain's increase in strength:

> Et quant [Gauvains] se leuoit au matin il auoit la force al millor cheualier del monde . & quant vint a eure de prime si li doubloit & a eure de tierce ausi . & quant ce vint a eure de midi si reuenoit a sa premiere force au il auoit au matin . & quant uint a eure de noune & a toutes les eures de la nuit estoit il toudis en sa premiere force.[126]

Malory does not follow these terms either, but Malory could have interpreted them to mean that Gawain's strength waxes and wanes gradually, although here starting at prime, reaching

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[123] Suite 376.

[124] OED s. v.

[125] Lancelot 8: 181, 416.

[126] Vulgate Version 2: 129-30.

its apex at tierce, which corresponds to about 9:00 am, and waning back to normality at noon.

Malory may perhaps be combining the Post-Vulgate in which Gawain's strength doubles and

the Vulgate in which it doubles at prime and doubles again at tierce. Vulgate author's

reference to the "eure de tierce" may also explain why Malory depicts Gawain's strength

increase as "three tymes his myght encresed:" in Malory's adaptations, near homophones

sometimes take the place of literal translations.[127]

Although reference to the Vulgate Suite du Merlin may help explain why Gawain's

strength more than doubles, it does not explain why it does so for the three hours between

tierce and noon. This detail seems to come from the stanzaic Morte Arthur,[128] which is one of

Malory's major sources for his two final tales. In this poem, the mechanics of Gawain's

increase of strength are portrayed somewhat inconsistently. However, one of the poem's

conflicting descriptions says that,

> Than had Syr Gawayne suche a grace,
> An holy man had boddyn that bone,
> Whan he were in any place
> There he shuld batayle done,
> Hys strength shulld wex in suche a space
> From the undyrtyme tylle none.[129]

"Undyrtyme" can mean any time until midday,[130] and here "none" could mean either midday

or midafternoon. The poet's precise meaning is therefore unclear, but Malory seems to

understand him to say that Gawain's strength increased through the morning till midday, as

shown in his version of these lines:

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[127] Vinaver, Works lvii-lxiv.

[128] R. M. Lumiansky, "Gawain's Miraculous Strength: Malory's Use of Le Morte Arthur and Mort Artu," Etudes Anglaises 2 (1957): 97-108.

[129] Le Morte Arthur, ed. P. F. Hissiger (The Hague: Mouton, 1975) lines 2802-07.

[130] MED s. v., noted in Lumiansky 104.

> Than had sir Gawayne suche a grace and gyffte that an holy man had gyvyn
> hym, that every day in the yere, frome undern tyll hyghe noone, hys myght
> encresed tho three owres as much as thryse hys strength. (1216.31-34)

Malory therefore seems to have used this major source of his final tale as a minor source in

his first. The stanzaic poem, however, is non-committal about the level of Gawain's strength,

so Malory could not have taken his version of this attribute from there.

Although his version of Gawain's miraculous strength is unique, Malory seems to

combine ideas from various sources. The most straightforward is the term of Gawain's

strength, which comes from the stanzaic Morte Arthur. The idea that Gawain's maximum

strength is three times his normal strength is not to be found in any other version, but Malory

may have taken it from the ambiguous language of the Vulgate Suite du Merlin.

After the battle in which Gawain shows his strength, Marhalt befriends Gawain and

Ywain, and the three are taken on separate quests by three women. Gawain eventually comes

upon a knight named Pelleas who is lamenting the fact that Ettard, the lady whom he loves,

does not love him in return. Gawain offers to

> ryde unto hir castell and tell hir that I have slayne you, and so shall I com
> within hir to cause hir to cheryshe me. And then shall I do my trew part, that
> ye shall not fayle to have the love of hir. (168.27-30)

Strange as this plan seems to modern readers unfamiliar with the medieval convention of an

intermediary speaking on behalf of the lover, Pelleas is glad to accept. Gawain duly presents

himself to Ettard as Pelleas's slayer and undertakes to woo her.

> Than sir Gawayne sayde that he loved a lady and by no meane she wolde love
> hym.
>   "Sche is to blame" seyde Ettarde, "and she woll nat love you, for ye that be
> so well-borne a man and suche a man of prouesse, there is no lady in the
> worlde to good for you."
>   "Woll ye," seyde sir Gawayne, "promyse me to do what that ye may do be
> the fayth of your body to gete me the love of my lady?"
>   "Yee, sir, and that I promyse you be my fayth."
>   "Now," sayde sir Gawayne, "hit is yourself that I love so well; therefore

holde your promyse."

   "I may nat chese," seyde the lady Ettarde, "but if I sholde be forsworne."
And so she graunted hym to fulfylle all his desyre. (169.17-30)

This exchange is not in the Post-Vulgate Suite, but a surprising source has been suggested for

this scene: Chrétien de Troyes's Le chevalier au lion.[131] A scene similar to this one appears in

the twelfth-century French poem.[132]

   Yvain, the knight of the lion, returns after many trials to the lady whom he loves but

whose trust he has betrayed. This lady owes her gratitude to the knight of the lion without

knowing his true identity. The lady's handmaiden, Lunete, is Yvain's ally and asks her lady

to do what she can to reunite the knight of the lion with his lady:

> Et la dame dit: "Je sui preste,
> einz que vos entroiz an la queste,
> que je vos plevisse ma foi
> et jurerai, s'il vient a moi
> que je, sanz guile et sanz feintise,
> li ferai tot a sa devise
> sa pes, se je feire la puis." (6605-11)

   When she learns that Lunete has tricked her into promising to reconcile herself with
Yvain,

> A cest mot la dame tressaut
> et dit: "Se Damedex ma saut,
> bien m'as or au horquerel prise!
> Celui qui ne m'ainme ne prise
> me feras amer mau gré mien.
> Or sa tu esploitié molt bien!
> Or m'as tu molt an gré servie!
> Mialz volsisse tote ma vie
> vanz et orages endurer,
> et s'il ne fust de parjurer
> trop leide chose et trop vilainne
> ja mes a moi, por nule painne

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[131] Field, "Malory and Chrétien de Troyes," Texts and Sources 236-45.

[132] Chrétien de Troyes, Le chevalier au lion, ed. Mario Roques (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1968).

pes ne acorde ne trovast.
Toz jorz mes el cors me covast,

si con li feus cove an la cendre
ce don ge ne voel ore aprendre
ne ne me chaut del recorder
des qu'a lui m'estuet acorder." (6749-66)

The verbal similarities between the two works is undeniable. "Yee, sir, and that I promyse you be my fayth [. . .] I may nat chese [. . .] but if I sholde be forsworne" corresponds closely to "je vos plevisse ma foi et s'il ne fust de parjurer."

The tone of the two situations is very different, however. Yvain is sincere, but Gawain is flippant. Yvain's lady is the love of his life, and the happy ending of the romance depends on their reconciliation; Ettard is a stranger whom Gawain is, at least supposedly, wooing only for the benefit of another. Yvain and his lady, the reader is told, do live happily ever after,[133] but Ettard is condemned to unrequited love for Pelleas, who marries the Lady of the Lake, and Pelleas maintains an enduring enmity for Gawain (179-80).

An author who was well read in Arthurian romance with an appreciation of irony might allude to the earlier romance and might even expect his reader to be in on the joke. Although Malory nowhere else shows any such appreciation for irony, there are indications in "The Tale of Sir Lancelot" that Malory had read Chrétien's Le chevalier au lion, as will be discussed in the chapter devoted to that tale.[134] Furthermore, despite Yvain and Lunete's sincerity in Chrétien's poem, they are, in effect, tricking Yvain's lady into taking him back. Chrétien, with his rather light sense of humour, may have thought little about the implications of a marriage renewed on this basis, but to Malory, it might have seemed a base trick.

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[133] Le chevalier au lion lines 6789-98.

[134] Infra 118-23.

If he did think so and had, consciously or unconsciously, borrowed it from Chrétien, perhaps his distaste influenced his version of the rest of the episode. In the <u>Suite</u>, the young Gawain falls in love with Arcade despite himself, and this real feeling somewhat mitigates his blame. Malory gives his Gawain no such excuse, and in the absence of such, the reader is left to conclude that this is one of the casual relationships that Gawain has almost always been famous for.

The portrayal of Gawain's moral stature underwent a general decline in medieval literature.[135] The earliest depictions of him in Latin and French literature are almost wholly laudatory. The degradation begins in Chrétien's poems and continues in the prose romances until in the Prose <u>Tristan</u> and Post-Vulgate Grail quest Gawain is essentially a villain. On the other hand, Middle English authors generally depicted Gawain as Arthur's best knight, perhaps because they preferred to glorify a knight that they saw as a fellow-countryman rather than French knights such as Lancelot. Despite Malory's use of some of the body of Middle English literature, he more closely follows the French tradition, and the ambiguous character of his Gawain is a product of this.

This alone does not explain Malory's treatment of Gawain in this scene, however. In most of Old French literature, Gawain is still an admirable character, and in Malory's major source for "The Tale of King Arthur" Gawain's actions are much less reprehensible. Because Malory alters his French source to Gawain's discredit, this conception of Gawain, therefore, must have fitted Malory's own vision of the Arthurian story. The simplest explanation for this conception would seem to be that Malory had already read and been influenced by the Prose <u>Tristan</u> and was familiar with Gawain's character at its worst before writing this tale.

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[135] Keith Busby, <u>Gauvain in Old French Literature</u> (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1980).

However, it has been argued that Gawain's ambiguous nature is a result of Malory's paratactic style.[136] This style of prose is characterised by strong reliance on coordination, in contrast to hypotaxis, which relies more on subordination.[137] According to this argument, Malory's heavy use of parataxis causes an emphasis on events and a neglect of analysis of the meaning of these events, which forces readers to choose between imposing meanings themselves or confronting the meaninglessness of the Morte Darthur.[138] The readers' choices will, naturally, have great implications for the morality of the characters and events in Malory's work According to this view, Gawain is an excellent example of Malory's "uneasiness about the capacity of language to shape reality."[139] The fact that "[f]ew if any of the Round Table knights problematize the discontinuity of 'self' as radically as does Sir Gawain,"[140] however, amply shows that Malory's characterization of Gawain is by no means the inevitable consequence of his paratactic style. Therefore, Malory's interpretation of Gawain is likely to be the result of his understanding of that character from his sources, and his source here is probably the hostile depiction of Gawain from the Prose Tristan. If this is so, the Prose Tristan is a very minor source for Malory's first tale.

Malory ends Gawain's quest differently than does the author of the Suite, and he also drastically changes Marhalt and Ywain's quests, although he does not denigrate their

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[136] Bonnie Wheeler, "Romance and Parataxis and Malory: The Case of Sir Gawain's Reputation," Arthurian Literature XII, eds. James P. Carley and Felicity Riddy (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1993) 109-132.

[137] See Field, Romance and Chronicle 35.

[138] Wheeler 111-13.

[139] Wheeler 118.

[140] Wheeler 119.

characters. In the Suite the three quests are interlocked, but in Malory each is separate.

In the Suite, Marhalt, his maiden, and his squire first meet King Pellinor, for whom Marhalt refuses to stop, and then they encounter the Perron du Cerf, which is one of the adventures of the Grail. Writing on the Perron du Cerf warns that anyone who witnesses the adventures of the stone will be killed or maimed. The three see a strange vision in which a stag is attacked on the stone by a pack of dogs; a dragon appears and eats the dogs, revives the stag, and finally vomits out the dogs alive. That night the maiden and the squire are killed by an unseen agency and Marhalt is wounded. Marhalt is thus alone, as is Gawain, when the two meet again. Gawain's maiden had deserted him, as in Malory, but unlike in Malory, she has come to regret it and sues unsuccessfully to be allowed to return. The two knights are eventually captured by twelve women in the Roche aux Pucelles.[141]

Malory's version of Marhalt's quest is very different. Malory omits the Perron du Cerf episode and leaves only the merest hint of the Roche aux Pucelles story. Instead Malory has Sir Marhalt fight against six brothers and their father, the Duke of the South Marches. This family attacks every knight of the Round Table that comes its way because Sir Gawain killed their seventh son. Marhalt defeats them, and then he saves the Earl Fergus from a giant named Taulurd, and, unlike his counterpart in the Old French story, ends his series of adventures still with his damsel.

Scholars have suggested three different sources for Marhalt's adventure with the giant. Vinaver was the first to suggest a source: Malory's own second tale, "The Tale of Arthur and Lucius." Larry Benson thought that Malory invented Marhalt's quest from romance clichés, and Edward Donald Kennedy thought that Malory took it from the Middle

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[141] Suite 430-63.

English romance Torrent of Portyngale.

The scene from the Morte Darthur in which Marhalt kills the giant runs thus:

> So on the morne sir Marhaute prayde the erle that one of his men myght
> brynge hym where the gyaunte was, and so one brought hym where he syghe
> hym sytte undir a tre of hooly, and many clubbis of ironne and gysernes about
> hym. So this knyght dressed hym to the gyaunte and put his shylde before
> hym, and the gyaunte toke an ironne club in his honde, and at the fyrste stroke
> he clave syr Marhautis shelde. And there he was in grete perell, for the
> gyaunte was a sly fyghter. But at the laste sir Marhaute smote of his ryght
> arme aboven the elbow. Than the gyaunte fledde and the knyght affter hym,
> and so he drove hym into a watir; but the gyaunte was so hyghe that he myght
> nat wade aftir hym. And than sir Marhaute made the erle Fergus man to
> fecche hym stonys, and with tho stonys the knyght gave the gyaunte many sore
> strokis tylle at the laste he made hym falle downe in the watir, and so was he
> there dede. (175-6)

Vinaver was the first to consider the order of composition of Malory's tales, and he believed

that this battle showed signs of the influence of "The Tale of Arthur and Lucius," which must

have therefore antedated "The Tale of King Arthur." Vinaver believed, in other words, that

Malory had used his own second tale as the source of Marhalt's battle with the giant.[142] He

argued that the passage above was based on the following one.

> Than he [Arthur] paste forth to the creste of the hylle and syghe where he sate
> at his soupere alone [. . .] by the bryght fyre [. . .] he [the giant] sterte uppon
> his leggis and caughte a clubbe in his honde all of clene iron. Than he swappis
> at the kynge with that kyd wepyn. He cruysshed downe with the club the
> coronal doune to the colde erthe. The kyng coverde hym with his shylde and
> rechis a boxe evyn infourmede in the myddis of his forehede, that the slypped
> blade unto the brayne rechis. Yet he shappis at sir Arthure, but the kynge
> shuntys a lytyll and rechis hym a dynte hyghe uppon the haunche [. . .] With
> that the warlow wrath Arthure undir and so they waltyrde and tumbylde over
> the craggis and busshys [. . .] and they never leffte tyll they fylle thereas the
> floode marked. (202-3)

As Vinaver observes, these two passages are similar in the following four ways: Arthur

"coverde hym with his shylde" and Marhalt "put his shylde before hym;" Arthur "sygh where

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[142] Works, introduction li-liv.

he [the giant] sate at his soupere alone [. . .] by the bryght fyre" and Marhalt "sygh hym sytte undir a tre of hooly;" Arthur's giant "caughte a clubbe in his honde all of clene iron" and Marhalt's has "many clubbis of irrone and gysernes about hym;" and Arthur and the giant "fylle thereas the floode marked" just as Malhalt "drove hym into a watir."

Kennedy, however, later showed that features such as these are common to many other battles between knights and giants, and therefore their appearance cannot prove that Malory based Marhalt's fight on Arthur's.[143] Kennedy does, however, find closer correspondence between Marhalt's adventure and other battles between knights and giants. His two best suggestions are from the Old French prose Perlesvaus and the Middle English poem Torrent of Portyngale.

In the Perlesvaus, Gawain is the guest of King Gurgaran and learns that a giant has captured the king's son.[144] After spending the night, Gawain sets forth to rescue the prince. Before reaching the giant, Gawain is forced to dismount his horse. The first part of his battle with the giant corresponds with Marhalt's with Taulurd exactly: in both versions, the giant reaches for his weapon, he strikes at the knight, who dodges and ripostes by cutting off the giant's arm. Here the two accounts diverge. In Perlesvaus the giant retaliates by killing his royal captive and then tries to strangle Gawain. However, while carrying Gawain the giant stumbles, and Gawain manages to behead him.

The initial situation of this episode is much closer to Marhalt's story than any yet discussed. Marhalt is visiting an earl who needs help against the giant, as Gawain is the guest of a king. This and the blow for blow correspondence with the first half of the battle are

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[143] Kennedy, "Malory and his English Sources," Aspects of Malory 27-56.

[144] Perlesvaus 102-5.

strong indications that Malory, searching for a replacement to the Perron du Cerf and Roche aux Pucelles episodes, remembered scenes from Perlesvaus in much the same way as he was to do when making his tale of Lancelot. Malory's version of Ywain's quest also seems to echo this eccentric prose romance.

Kennedy did not think that the scene from Perlesvaus was as close to Malory as the fourteenth-century non-Arthurian romance, Torrent of Portyngale. The second half of Marhalt's fight does have a strong similarity to an episode in Torrent. Torrent fights several giants, and Kennedy notes that Marhalt's fight with Taulurd has several points in common with Torrent's fourth giant fight. Torrent wishes to marry the daughter of the King of Portugal and so must fight in single combat against a giant who is the champion of the King of Aragon. Torrent defeats the giant, driving him into the sea:

> The theff couth no better wonne,
> Into the see rennyth he sone,
> As faste as he myght ffare
> Sir Torrent gaderid cobled stonys,
> Good and handsom ffor the nonys,
> That good and round ware;
> Meny of them to hym he caste,
> He threw stonys on hym so faste,
> That he was sad and sare.
> To the ground he did hym fett,
> Men myght here the fend yett,
> Halfe a myle and mare.[145]

This is a strong parallel to the way that Marhalt killed his giant by throwing stones. Scholars have proposed a number of non-Arthurian romances as sources for Malory over the years, and for the most part, these claims have been met with scepticism. This suggestion, however, is one of the most convincing. It may be added that Malory may have been influenced again by Torrent of Portyngale, although to a much smaller degree in his Roman War story where he

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[145] Torrent of Portyngale, ed. E. Adam, EETS e.s. 51 lines 1295-1306.

makes the King of Portugal an ally of the Roman Emperor.

In the Suite, Yvain has a series of adventures that include the Perron du Cerf and culminate when Yvain, unable to free Gawain and Marhalt from the Roche aux Pucelles and hearing that Arthur has repented banishing him, returns to Arthur's court alone. The other two knights are eventually released by Gawain's younger brother Gaheriet. Malory again omits those plot lines and again seems to borrow from the Perlesvaus instead. Malory's Ywain visits an elderly lady named the Lady of the Rock, whose castle is threatened by two brothers: Edward of the Red Castle and Hugh of the Red Castle. Ywain fails to resolve the dispute by parlay and so battles against the two brothers, killing Edward and defeating Hugh. The lady is, therefore, restored to all of her lands (176-79).

This episode may be based on a conflation of two distinct episodes from the Perlesvaus. In the first one, Gawain comes upon the castle of Kamaalot, which is held by a widow, Perlesvaus's mother. A tournament has been called in which two brothers, the Sire des Mores and Cahot le Roux, also called the Chevalier au Vermeil Escu, intend to take the castle from the widow. Gawain defeats the two knights and breaks the collar bone of Cahot le Roux, and so the lady retains all of her lands. In both stories, a lady's castle is threatened by two brother knights. In Malory, both of these brothers are "the red" and are "of the Red Castle" and in Perlesvaus, one of the brothers, Cahot the Red, is called the Knight of the Red Shield.

The relationship between the Malory's adventure and the Perlesvaus is a little more confused in the second instance. Later in Perlesvaus, Lancelot meets a knight with a green shield who is the brother of Gladoain, a knight to whom Lancelot feels a debt of gratitude. The knight of the green shield tells Lancelot that one of Gladoain's castles has been stolen by the Sire de la Roche. Lancelot regretfully tells the knight that his brother is dead but offers to

restore the castle in honor of Gladoain. Lancelot duly kills the Sire de la Roche by beheading

him.

If these two episodes indeed form the basis for the adventure of Ywain in Malory's

work, he would have had to change the Lord of the Rock, a villain, to the Lady of the Rock, a

victim, and changed the names of the attackers as well as the name of the hero. Improbable

as this may seem, it would not be uncharacteristic of Malory's treatment of Perlesvaus

elsewhere in the Morte Darthur. For example, Malory's inconsistent use of Brien of the Iles

and Meliot, characters he took from the Perlesvaus, has been attributed to Malory's faulty

memory.[146] Such could be the case here, and Malory's well-established use of the Perlesvaus

elsewhere makes it more likely.

Malory preferred retelling existing stories to inventing his own, yet for some reason he

decided to omit the Perron du Cerf and La Roche aux Pucelles from his story. Having

borrowed details from Gawain's fight with a giant for his Marhalt adventure from Perlesvaus

he may have sought another episode from the same source. He would probably not have

wanted to introduce Perceval's widowed mother at this point if he had already decided to

follow the version of Perceval's story told by the Vulgate, the Prose Tristan and the Post-

Vulgate, in which Pellinor was Perceval's father. This episode could easily become confused

in the memory with Lancelot's rescue of a castle from the Lord of the Rock. Because "the

Rock" that the enemy knight is lord of is, in fact, the castle in dispute, whoever was holding it

could be described as Lord of the Rock, or Lady of the Rock. Perhaps the death of Gladoain

inspired Malory to have one of the besieging brothers be killed. This would be consistent

with Malory's other uses of Perlesvaus as a romance to be used as a supplemental resource

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[146] Field, "Malory and Perlesvaus" 227.

rather than as one whose version of the Arthurian story Malory wanted to tell.

Therefore, until a source that offers closer parallels can be found, the best explanation is that Malory invented this episode out of romance commonplaces, as Benson has said. Even if this were the case, Malory had read Perlesvaus before writing "The Tale of King Arthur," and commonplace details from that story must have lain, if even dimly, in his memory.

Malory ends "The Tale of King Arthur" with an explicit that has aroused much academic discussion since its discovery:

> Here endyth this tale, as the Freynshe booke seyth, fro the maryage of kynge Uther unto kyng Arthure that regned aftir hym and ded many batayles. And this booke endyth whereas sir Lancelot and sir Trystrams com to courte. Who that woll make ony more lette hym seke other bookis of kynge Arthure or of sir Launcelot or sir Trystrams; for this was drawyn by a knyght presoner, sir Thomas Malleorré, that God sende hym good recover. Amen. Explicit. (180.15-25)

One of features of this explicit that has received attention is the indication that Lancelot and Tristram arrive at court at the end of this book. Vinaver, Fanni Bogdanow, and Edward Donald Kennedy have all noted that Lancelot and Tristram do not come to court at the end of Malory's tale and that Malory should therefore be referring to his source.[147] Bogdanow believed that this means that Malory's source for the first tale ended at the point in the Post-Vulgate at which Lancelot returns to Arthur's court after his stay of the Isle of Joy with Galahad's mother.[148] Kennedy, on the other hand, believed that Malory's source continued on to end at the beginning of the Post-Vulgate Queste, in which Tristan leaves Iseult for Arthur's

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[147] Works 180n.

[148] Bogdanow 87.

court to celebrate Galahad's feast.[149]

None of these scholars seem to consider that the statement of Malory's narrator, "And this booke endyth whereas sir Launcelot and sir Trystrams com to courte," means that Lancelot and Tristram both do come to court at the end of Malory's tale. Yet, these scholars are certainly on the right track when they suggest that Malory took this idea from later in the Post-Vulgate. The Post-Vulgate Suite narrates the end of Gawain and Marhalt's adventure on the Roche aux Pucelles with Gawain and Gaheriet bidding farewell to Marhalt as he returns to Ireland. Here the story makes an explicit reference to Marhalt's eventual death at the hands of Tristan.[150] The next adventure in the Post-Vulgate leads to Arthur's war in Gaul against Frollo and Claudas, which leads to Lancelot's first appearance in the Post-Vulgate. Tristan's first appearance is not until later, at the beginning of the Post-Vulgate Quest, as Kennedy noted.[151] Because these two knights arrive at different times to Arthur's court in the Post-Vulgate Cycle, any theory which seeks to locate Malory's source or inspiration for this comment must choose the first appearance of either Lancelot or Tristan to the exclusion of the other.

There are good reasons for choosing Lancelot's first appearance rather than Tristan's. The allusion to Marhalt's fatal battle with Tristan occurs at the end of the quests of the three knights, which is in fact where Malory ends his tale, and in both Malory and the Post-Vulgate Suite the three quests are followed by continental wars. In the Post-Vulgate Suite, Lancelot does not appear until after the war is over, by which time Lancelot is already Galahad's

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[149] Kennedy, "Malory's 'Noble Tale of Sir Lancelot du Lake,'" Arthurian and Other Studies presented to Shunichi Noguchi, eds. Takashi Suzuki and Tsuyoshi Mukai (Cambridge: Boydell and Brewer, 1993) 107-29.

[150] Suite 567.

[151] Kennedy 113.

father.[152] This obviously did not suit Malory's overall scheme of events for his "whole book,"
so he would have found it easy enough to mention Lancelot's arrival before the continental
war and at an earlier point in his Lancelot's career. Tristram's arrival would have been
suggested both by the allusion to him in the Post-Vulgate Suite and by the fact that the Post-
Vulgate Suite often mentions Lancelot and Tristan together.

In "The Tale of King Arthur," Malory adapted the Prose Merlin and its Post-Vulgate Suite
freely by omitting a substantial part of the beginning and altering the adventures at the end,
and he also added details from the widest range of minor sources of any of his tales. If
Malory wrote this tale first, he must have begun with a highly original conception of the
Arthurian story. Although none of the other tales of the Morte Darthur match the sheer range
of minor sources found here, many of the characters and conceptions borrowed from minor
sources in this tale recur in later tales. Malory's innovative use of minor sources in this tale,
therefore, makes a foundation upon which the following tales build.

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[152] La Folie Lancelot: A Hitherto Unidentified Portion of the Suite du Merlin
Contained in Mss. B. N. fr. 112 and 12599, ed. Fanni Bogdanow (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer,
1965) 20-1.

CHAPTER THREE: "THE TALE OF ARTHUR AND LUCIUS"

"The Tale of Arthur and Lucius" derives from Malory's most important English source, the alliterative Morte Arthure.[1] Both Malory's tale and the alliterative poem are large-scale developments of the story of Arthur's war against the Roman Empire. Malory's version opens with the arrival of Roman ambassadors in Britain to rebuke Arthur for failing to pay tribute to the empire. Arthur holds a war council and then decides to press his own claim to be the Emperor of Rome. He appoints Baldwin of Britain and Constantine to rule jointly in his absence, and then he leads his army onto the continent to engage the Roman forces. On the way he fights the giant of Mont St Michel. After several battles, he defeats the Romans, punishes rebellious European vassals, is crowned Emperor of Rome, and returns to Britain in triumph.

The story of the Roman War originated in Geoffrey of Monmouth's Historia, and most of the chronicles that followed Geoffrey include this episode. This tradition, of which the alliterative poem is a part, makes the Roman War Arthur's final and greatest achievement and closely links it to his downfall, as it is his absence that makes Mordred's rebellion possible. The romance tradition also contains versions of the Roman War. The first appearance of it there is close to the end of the Vulgate Lancelot, in which it is connected to Arthur's war to liberate the lands of Lancelot and Bors from Claudas.[2] It appeared next in the

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[1] Morte Arthure: A Critical Edition, ed. Mary Hamel (New York: Garland, 1984). Morte Arthure survives in a single manuscript, Lincoln Cathedral Library Ms. 91, often called the "Thornton Manuscript."

[2] Lancelot: roman du XIIIᵉ siecle, ed. Alexandre Micha 9 vols. (Geneva: Droz, 1978-83), 6: 62-170.

Vulgate Mort Artu, in which it is anticlimactically subordinate to Arthur's war with Lancelot.[3] The original significance of the Roman War is partially restored in the Vulgate Suite du Merlin, in which, although it is relatively brief, it is not subordinate to any other endeavour.[4] The Roman War motif thus occurs three separate times in the Vulgate Cycle, in the Suite du Merlin, Lancelot, and Mort Artu branches.

In the first tale, Malory had begun his adaptation about two-thirds into the Prose Merlin and ended it by substituting a simpler narrative for that at the end of the Post-Vulgate Suite du Merlin. Although in the second tale Malory followed the story line of his major source from the beginning and changed very little of the first three-fourths of the poem, he again provides a different ending to his major source. The final fourth of the alliterative Morte Arthure tells the story of Arthur's downfall, but Malory removes Mordred's regency and revolt and its consequences and thus makes this episode Arthur's supreme victory. Important knights who die in the Morte Arthure are therefore only wounded in Malory's version, and Malory also makes less dramatic changes to harmonize this episode with his conception of the Arthurian story, such as enlarging Lancelot's role and reducing Gawain's.

Despite the freedom with which he treated his major sources, however, Malory seemed to prefer to have the support of minor sources for his alterations. Although he apparently did not use as great a variety of sources here as he did in "The Tale of King Arthur," Malory continues to supplement his major source with elements from minor sources. Examining details that Malory may have taken from minor sources in their order of first appearance would be more difficult here than with the "Tale of King Arthur" because the

[3] La mort le roi Artu, ed. Jean Frappier, 3rd ed. (Geneva: Droz, 1996) 205-9.

[4] Vulgate Version 2: 424-50.

bulk of supplementary details that Malory borrowed seems to come from only two sources: the Vulgate Suite du Merlin and Hardyng's Chronicle.

Although Hardyng's Chronicle was the single most important minor source in "The Tale of King Arthur," the single most important minor source of his second tale seems to be the Vulgate Suite du Merlin. The first point in which the Vulgate Suite seems to have influenced Malory is the placement of the Roman War in his version of the Arthurian story. The fact that he placed the Roman War so early and that it does not lead to Arthur's downfall was once seen as a radical departure from sources, but several scholars have since noted that the Vulgate Suite also places the Roman War in Arthur's early years as king.[5] Whereas the Post-Vulgate Suite du Merlin follows the Prose Merlin with a set of courtly adventures, the Vulgate Suite continues with a series of large-scale battles and wars, chiefly of Arthur's forces against rebel vassals and invading Saxons. Towards the end, the Vulgate Suite relates a version of the Roman War story that would have looked to Malory like a condensed version of the story that he found in the alliterative poem.

It is also possible that Malory, who followed the Post-Vulgate Suite du Merlin in his first tale, was influenced by Arthur's war against Frollo and Claudas in the Post-Vulgate Cycle, an episode that closely follows the end of the three quests of Gawain, Ywain, and Marhalt.[6] A conflict with Frollo and Claudas is not, of course, the same as a war with the Roman Empire, but the two have important similarities.

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[5] Wilson, "Malory's Early Knowledge," 46-7; Benson, "Sir Thomas Malory's Le Morte Darthur," Critical Approaches to Six Major English Works 97; and Kennedy, "Malory's English Sources" 30-1.

[6] La Folie Lancelot: A Hitherto Unidentified Portion of the Suite du Merlin Contained in Mss. B. N. fr. 112 and 12599, ed. Fanni Bogdanow (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1965) 20-1.

The Post-Vulgate <u>Suite</u> describes the ultimatum of the Roman Ambassadors,[7] but actual war does not occur until the <u>Mort Artu</u> section of the Post-Vulgate Cycle, where, as in the Vulgate <u>Mort Artu</u>, it follows Arthur's siege of Lancelot. The Post-Vulgate also relates a version of Arthur's continental battle against Frollo and Claudas, corresponding to the Vulgate version in which the Romans are also involved. Furthermore, in most chronicle versions, including Hardyng's <u>Chronicle</u>, Arthur conquers Gaul from Frollo, and attracts Roman attention partly because of this.[8] Malory does not mention Frollo or narrate this earlier continental war, but in this tale he does mention an earlier war in which Arthur seized Claudas's lands (194.9-10). The Post-Vulgate war against Frollo might have reminded Malory of the Roman War because the alliterative <u>Morte Arthure</u> alludes to the same story: Arthur says he has "fellid down sir Frolle, with frowarde knyghtes," and the poem says that Roman aggression is partly in response to this (3345).

Another reason for thinking that Malory may have been inspired by the Post-Vulgate Cycle here is the appearance of Lancelot. In the Vulgate <u>Suite du Merlin</u>, the Roman War occurs before Lancelot's birth. In the Post-Vulgate, although Lancelot is not said to take part in the battle against Frolle and Claudas, he first appears as an adult immediately after this episode.[9] Lancelot's first appearance in "The Tale of Arthur and Lucius" is also virtually his first appearance in the whole <u>Morte Darthur</u>. In this, Malory seems to be following the Post-Vulgate version more closely than the Vulgate. In fact, R. H. Wilson's comments about the relationship between Malory's placement of the Roman War and the versions in the Vulgate

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[7] <u>Suite</u> 33-4.

[8] E.g. Geoffrey of Monmouth, <u>Historia regum Britanniae</u> 113; Hardyng, <u>Chronicle</u> 127-30.

[9] <u>Folie Lancelot</u> 21.

Suite du Merlin and Lancelot would also apply to the Post-Vulgate: "[Malory] compromises

on the time at which the war occurred by making Lancelot a grown participant in the battles,

[. . .] yet inserting descriptions of him as young and, like his cousins, a newly made knight."[10]

Of course, Malory's possible use of the Post-Vulgate version does not preclude use of the

Vulgate.

The next probable instance of this is the initial reaction of Arthur's knights to Rome's

ultimatum:

> Than somme of the yonge knyghtes, heryng this their message, wold have ronne on
> them to have slayne them, sayenge that it was a rebuke to alle the knyghtes there
> beyng present to suffre them to saye so to the kyng. And anone the kynge
> commaunded that none of them upon payne of dethe to myssaye them ne doo them
> ony harme. (186-7)

Although this scene would not have been out of place in the alliterative poem, in which

Arthur is a stern, intimidating ruler, it is not in the Morte Arthure as it survives in the

Thornton manuscript. However, because the Thornton manuscript's copy of the alliterative

Morte Arthure may itself be an abbreviated version of the original, a similar scene could

possibly have been in Malory's copy.[11] The lack of alliteration in this passage, however,

discourages this theory. Malory seems to follow the poem closely here, but he adds this

passage between his rendition of lines 155 and 156.

There is a very similar passage in the Vulgate Suite du Merlin.[12] At an equivalent

point, the Merlin relates,

> Quant li archeuesques ot leues les letres en tel maniere comme vous aues oi . si ot el
> palais grant bruit & grant noise des barons qui les entendu lauoient . si dient & iurent

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[10] Wilson, "Malory's Early Knowledge" 47.

[11] See Works, commentary 1366; and Morte Arthure, introduction 3-17.

[12] Vinaver, Works 186-7; William Matthews, "Question of Texts," The Malory
Debate, ed. Bonnie Wheeler et. al. (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2000) 82-3.

quil deshoneureront les messages qui les lettres auoient aportees si lor eusent fait
asses de honte & de laidure se li roi artus ne fust qui lor dist moult doucement . biaus
signeur laisies les il sont messagier & i sont enuoie de par lor signor . si doiuent faire
& dire tot ce que on lor a encargie ne il ne doiuent auoir doutance de nului .[13]

Because these two scenes are so close in content, it seems probable that Malory has taken this
exchange from the Vulgate Suite du Merlin and assimilated it to the mood of the English
poem.

Shortly after this comes the first of a small group of passages involving Sir Lancelot
that scholars have thought may also have been inspired by the Vulgate Suite. Like most
Middle English Arthurian poetry, the alliterative Morte Arthure portrays Lancelot as a minor
character, but Malory enlarges Lancelot's part in anticipation of the important role that he is
to play later. In Lancelot's first appearance in Malory's tale, he agrees to support Arthur
against the Romans "Thoughe my londis marche nyghe thyne enemyes" (189-90). When the
story narrates Lucius's response to Arthur's defiance, the emperor's forces are said to march
though lands in Gaul "that Arthure had wonne before of the myghty kynge Claudas" (194.9-
10). Finally, after the war is over, Arthur gives to Lancelot and Bors the lands that he had
earlier won from Claudas (245.13-23). None of these passages are in the alliterative poem as
we have it. Long ago, R. H. Wilson argued that these references to Claudas and to Lancelot's
lands were evidence of Malory's acquaintance at this stage with the Vulgate Lancelot,[14] but
William Matthews subsequently argued that it was not necessary to assume that Malory had
read the Lancelot at this time in his career and that the final pages of the Vulgate Suite alone
could account for these references.[15]

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[13] Vulgate Version, 2: 425.

[14] Wilson, "Malory's Early Knowledge" 45-7.

[15] Matthews 76.

Because Matthews's theory appears to require fewer assumptions, it is the more attractive at first sight, but this appearance is specious. Matthews quotes the end of the Middle English translation of the <u>Merlin</u> as giving a precis of the conflict between Claudas and Lancelot's family.[16] From the end of the <u>Merlin</u>, Malory could have guessed that Claudas would not be ultimately successful against Arthur and Lancelot. In addition, although both "The Tale of Arthur and Lucius" and the <u>Lancelot</u> have scenes in which Arthur invests Lancelot's family with the Gaulish lands, the two scenes are very different. In the latter, Lancelot, his brother, and their two cousins all refuse to accept their lands, preferring to remain knights errant.[17] In "The Tale of Arthur and Lucius," however, "Sir Lancelot and sir Bors de Gaynys thanked the kynge fayre and sayde their hertes and servyse sholde ever be his owne" (245.24-5). Matthews also points out that Lancelot, Bors, and Lionel are given a close relationship that is not in the <u>Morte Arthure</u>.[18] They were all knighted together (216.19-25); Cador compares their excellence as knights (217.10-4); and they fight together against Lucius's giants (221.12-8). Matthews again believed that these statements were based on the last pages of the Vulgate <u>Suite du Merlin</u>.

The weight of evidence, however, suggests that Malory did know the <u>Lancelot</u> when he wrote "The Tale of Lucius." The very fact that Malory was sufficiently aware of Lancelot's importance to want to expand the role that he and his kinsmen play in the Roman War shows that he knew more about Lancelot than could be reasonably inferred from the <u>Merlin</u> alone. Of course, Malory could have known that Lancelot was an important member

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[16] <u>Merlin, or The Early History of King Arthur: A Prose Romance</u>, ed. Henry B. Wheatley, EETS o.s. 10, 21, 36, 112 (1865-99) 698-9.

[17] <u>Lancelot</u> 6: 169.

[18] Matthews 76.

of Arthur's court without having read the Vulgate Lancelot. The expanded role of Lancelot

and his kinsmen, however, adds little to the Roman War and so makes sense only as a

foreshadowing of Lancelot's importance in the larger Arthurian story. Although the Claudas

story-line appears at the end of the Vulgate Suite du Merlin, it is one of the major themes in

the Vulgate Lancelot. This, in addition to the fact that "The Tale of King Arthur" also shows

evidence of knowledge of the Lancelot[19] and the fact the third tale is mostly derived from the

Lancelot, all suggest that the natural assumption is that Malory had read the Lancelot by this

point in his career.

Once again, the Post-Vulgate Cycle might have also influenced Malory to add the

Claudas plot-line to the Roman War. As noted above, the Post-Vulgate version of Arthur's

war against Claudas and Frolle takes place soon after the return of Gawain, Yvain, and

Marhalt, and it is therefore quite likely that Malory had read it before writing his first tale.

Not only could the Post-Vulgate story have given Malory another reason for placing the

Roman War where he did, it would also explain Lancelot's arrival at court at the end of "The

Tale of King Arthur" and at the beginning of "The Tale of Lucius," and it might throw light

on Malory's choice of episodes for his "Tale of Sir Lancelot." As we shall see in the next

chapter, Malory took the episodes from the Lancelot for his next tale from the section of that

work just preceding the war against Claudas and Frolle.

Although Matthews seems to be incorrect about Malory's lack of knowledge of the

Lancelot when writing "The Tale of Lucius," he is almost certainly correct about details that

he suggests that Malory borrowed from the Vulgate Suite. One example of this is the single

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[19] Supra 38-39.

philosopher who interprets Arthur's dream on the way to Mont St Michel.[20] Arthur's dream

about the battle between a dragon and a bear is in most versions of the Roman War story,[21]

and, in the Morte Arthure, the king consults two philosophers rather than the one in Malory.[22]

As Matthews notes, in the Vulgate Suite Arthur sends for only one philosopher, Merlin

himself.[23]

Other details that seem to be based upon the Vulgate Suite are the serious but non-

fatal wounding of Kay and Bedivere.[24] In the alliterative poem, these two knights are killed at

the Battle of Sessye, Kay by a lance through the ribs (lines 2165-78) and Bedivere by a sword

wound also into the chest (lines 2234-41). Malory recounts the same encounters but leaves

both knights alive (221-3). Naturally it would not have suited Malory's conception of the

Arthurian story for these two to be killed so early, and this is also similar to the situation in

the Vulgate Suite, in which Bedivere is wounded first, also with a sword to the chest, and Kay

is dealt a head-wound with a sword.[25] Malory seems to compromise between the two. In

Malory, Kay is wounded first and with a lance in the chest, as in the poem, but his assailant

misses all of his vital organs, just as the Vulgate Suite says of Bedivere's wounds, "poi plus

bas mort leust."[26] Bedivere is borne "to the cold erth, and with a ranke swerde he was

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[20] Matthews 74.

[21] Caxton changes the bear to a boar as a piece of topical political symbolism. See Field, "Caxton's Roman War" 133.

[22] Morte Arthure 807; Works 197.10-2.

[23] Vulgate Version 2: 428.

[24] Wilson, "Malory's Early Knowledge" 49.

[25] Vulgate Version 2: 439.

[26] Vulgate Version 2: 439.

merveylously wounded" (223.4-5).

However, when Malory states that "within a whyle, as tellyth the romaynes, they [Lancelot and Bors] had slayne of the Sarazens mo than fyve thousand," (261.10-11) rather than 50,000 as in alliterative Morte Arthure, there is no reason to believe, as has been argued, that "as the romance says" is an oblique reference to the Vulgate Suite, which puts the number at 2,000.[27] For one thing, numbers in manuscripts are so easily mutated by scribes that they cannot be counted on to be the original work of an author. As for the reference to a romance, there is no reason to think that Malory meant for it to be a reference to the Vulgate Suite. Malory uses the word "romaynes" twice in the whole Morte Darthur, both times in this tale (216.10, 245.6).[28] Malory's second use of this word is in reference to Arthur's coronation as Roman Emperor, which is not recounted in the Vulgate Suite, and which, as we shall see, Malory probably took from Hardyng's Chronicle.[29] The fact that Malory uses this term exclusively in this tale is intriguing. Perhaps to Malory the word indicates an English rather than French source, or perhaps the many references to the "Romaynes," in this tale brought this otherwise unused word to Malory's mind.

The idea that Malory took the scene in which Arthur has the casualties cared for after the Battle of Sessoyne from the Vulgate Suite is a little more solid.[30] Malory's version states

> And than relevys the kynge with his noble knyghtes and rensaked over all the feldis for his bold barouns. And tho that were dede were burryed as their blood asked, and they that myght be saved there was no salve spared nother no deyntés to dere that myght be gotyn for golde other sylver. (224.24-7)

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[27] Matthews 74-5.

[28] Tomomi Kato, A Concordance to the Works of Sir Thomas Malory (Tokyo: U of Tokyo P, 1974).

[29] Infra 111-13.

[30] Matthews 75.

The alliterative <u>Morte Arthure</u> says of Arthur,

> He bydes for þe beryenge of his bolde knyghtez
> That in batell with brandez ware broughte owte of lyfe.
> He beryes at Bayouse sir Bedwere þe ryche;
> The cors of Kayous þe kene at Came es beleuefede,
> Koueride with a crystall clenly all ouer;
> His fadyre conqueride þat kyth knyghtly with hondes.
> Seyn in Burgoyne he bade to bery mo knyghttez --
> Sir Berade and Bawdwyne, sir Boyce þe ryche --
> Bot gud sir Cayous at Came, as his kynde askes. (2377-85).

Here Arthur burries his dead but is not said to make provisions for the wounded.

In the Vulgate <u>Suite du Merlin</u>, Arthur

> puis reuint el camp ou la bataille auoit este & fist enterrer les mors es
> moustiers & es abeies del pais . & les naures fist il emporter & garir .[31]

These lines could explain this feature of Malory's version. The main objection to this theory

is that Malory's lines "there was no salve spared nother no deyntés to dere that myght be

gotyn for golde other sylver" contain a possible echo of lost alliterative lines from the <u>Morte</u>

<u>Arthure</u>. In having the wounded cared for, Malory may have been following this example

from the Vulgate <u>Suite</u> or he might have been simply reproducing what he found in his major

source.

Finally, the last element of the story that Malory seems to take from the <u>Merlin</u> is

Arthur's peaceful return to England and welcome from Guenevere.[32] The alliterative poem

follows the chronicle tradition in which Arthur returns to Britain to his fatal battle against the

rebellious Mordred. "The Tale of Arthur and Lucius," however, relates,

> And so kyng Arthure passed over the see unto Sandwyche haven. Whan quene
> Gwenyvere herde of his commynge she mette with hym at London, and so dud
> all other quenys and noble ladyes. For there was never a solempner metyng in

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[31] <u>Vulgate Version</u> 2: 441.

[32] Wilson, "Malory's Early Knowledge" 49; Matthews 74.

one cite togedyrs, for all maner of rychesse they brought with hem at the full. (246-7).

In the Vulgate <u>Suite,</u> Arthur's return trip involves more stops than Malory includes, but the reception at home is similar:

> & errerent tant quil uindrent a logres . Illuec trouua li roys la roine genieure . qui le rechut a moult grant ioie . si li conta que ses peres estoit mors . Et li rois le comforta au plus bel quil pot . [33]

For the author of the Vulgate <u>Merlin</u> as well as for Malory, the story of the Roman War was not a tragedy but an episode to be followed by the majority of the Arthurian story. It is natural that Malory would have used this version of the story as a guide and for supplementary details if he had known it, and the cumulative weight of these several points clearly suggests that he did know it.

Hardyng's <u>Chronicle</u> contains a version of the Roman War, in its more usual position as the prelude to Arthur's fall. Malory seems to have liked many aspects of Hardyng's version of the Arthurian story, and just as he almost certainly used the <u>Chronicle</u> to supplement the Post-Vulgate <u>Suite du Merlin</u> when writing "The Tale of King Arthur," so he seems to have used it in "The Tale of Emperor Lucius" as well.

The first example is from the opening section of Caxton's Book V, in a passage which Vinaver did not accept into his edition but which is probably authentic Malory.[34] The Caxton version of Malory's tale begins

> Whanne Kyng Arthur had, after longe werre, rested and helde a ryal feeste and Table Rounde with his alyes of kynges, p003rynces, and noble knyghtes, all of the Round Table, there cam in to his halle, he syttynge in his throne ryal, xii

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[33] <u>Vulgate Version</u> 2: 450.

[34] Field, "Caxton's Roman War" 146-8, 159-67.

auncyen men, berynge eche of them a braunche of olyue, in token that they cam as Embassatours and messagers fro the Emperour Lucyus, whiche was called at that tyme Dictatour or procurour of the publyke wele of Rome. Whiche sayde messagers, after their entryng and comyng in to the presence of Kynge Arthur, dyd to hym theyr obeyssaunce in makyng to hym reuerence and said to hym in this wyse: the hyghe and myghty Emperour Lucyus sendeth to the kyng of Bretayne gretyng.[35]

This is very different from the corresponding passage in the alliterative Morte Arthure:

> Bot on the Newȝere Daye at þe none euyne,
> As the bolde at the borde was of brede seruyde,
> So come in sodanly a senatour of Rome
> Wyth sexten knyghtes in a soyte sewande hym one.
> He saluȝed the souerayne and the sale aftyr,
> Ilke a kynge aftyre kynge, and mad his enclines;
> Gaynour in hir degre he grette as hym lykyde,
> And syne agayne to þe gome he gaffe vp his nedys:
> "Sir Lucius Iberius, the Emperour of Rome,
> Saluz the as sugett." (lines 78-87)

Malory's version is closer to Hardyng:[36]

> Bvt whyles the kyng sate in his trone royal,
> His prynces all, and knyghtes of dignite,
> About him, there thambassade imperyall
> Were fayre brought vnto his roialte;
> Whiche princes twelue were of authoryte,
> Of [moste] rype age and reuerende chere,
> With olliffe braunchies in their hondes clere.
>
> Otokyn[37] of message and legacye,
> A stately pase vnto his hye presence,
> Where they offered of Lucius Heberye
> The letters then, on knees with reuerence,
> ....
> "Lucius of Rome, the emperoure,

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[35] Caxton's Malory: A New Edition of Sir Thomas Malory's Le Morte Darthur, ed. James W. Spisak (Los Angeles: U of California P, 1983) 121.

[36] Wilson, "More Borrowings by Malory from Hardyng's 'Chronicle'" Notes and Queries, 215 (1970): 208-10.

[37] "In token."

> Procurator for all the hole senate,
> Of [the] publyke profyte chiefe gouernoure,
> By hole senate made and denominate;
> To Arthure kyng of Britayne procreate,
> Sendeth gretyng, [lyke] as thou haste deserued."[38]

The verbal parallels between these two passages are clear. Hardyng's "trone royal" is

mirrored in Malory's "throne Ryal," "His prynces all, and knyghtes" in "kynges prynces and

noble knyghtes," "With olliffe braunchies in their hondes clere./ Otokyn of message" in

"berynge eche of them a braunche of Olyue in token that they cam as Embassators and

messagers," "on knees with reuerence" in "in makyng to hym reuerence," "To Arthure kyng

of Britayne procreate,/ Sendeth gretyng, [lyke] as thou haste deserued." in "Emperour Lucyus

sendeth to the kyng of Bretayne gretyng." This makes particularly good sense since for

Hardyng this episode was the beginning of a new chapter, just as it was the beginning of a

new tale for Malory. This gave Malory a way to introduce this tale without using the

beginning of the alliterative poem, which introduces the story as an autonomous unit. Other

versions of the chronicle tradition also include many of these details, but the number of verbal

parallels between Hardyng and Malory provides good evidence that Malory was following

Hardyng rather than one of the older chronicles. Also, the strong evidence found in the last

chapter of Malory's use of Hardyng in "The Tale of King Arthur" supports the contention that

this passage, although absent from the Winchester Manuscript, was written by Malory.

Another feature that scholars have thought Malory may have borrowed from Hardyng

is part of Arthur's basis for claiming the right to rule the Roman Empire.[39] In Malory, Arthur

says that many of his line have been rulers of the Empire "aftir Constantyne, oure kynnesman,

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[38] Hardyng 138-9.

[39] Wilson, "More Borrowings" 210.

conquerd hit, and dame Elynes son, of Ingelonde, was Emperoure of Roome" (188.9-10).

The alliterative poem does not contain this reference to Constantine being the son of Helen,

whom legend made British:

> Seyn Constantyne our kynsmane conquerid it aftyre,
> Þat ayere was of Ynglande and Emperour of Rome. (282-3)

Hardyng's text reads,

> But yet we haue a better title of right
> To thempire whiche nowe we will pretende;
> For Constantyne, sainct Elyn soonne of right,
> By right of bloodde, of Constaūce down disce<u>nd</u>e.[40]

Despite the similarity of "sainct Elyn soonne" to Malory's "dame Elynes son,"

however, this case is more likely than any other yet examined to derive from a missing or

corrupted line in the Morte Arthure. Malory follows his major source closely here.

Malory writes,

> aftir Constantyne, oure kynnesman, conquerd hit, and dame Elynes son, of
> Ingelonde, was Emperoure of Roome; and he recoverde the Crosse that Cryste
> dyed uppon.

And that is very close to the Morte Arthure's

> Seyn Constantyne our kynsmane conquerid it aftyre,
> Þat ayere was of Ynglande and Emperour of Rome
> He þat conquerid þe Crosse be craftez of armes
> That Criste was on crucifiede.

Malory's line "and dame Elynes son, of Ingelonde, was Emperoure of Roome;" has the

correct number of stressed alliterating syllables. In the absence of a fuller manuscript of the

alliterative poem, this can never be proven, but it must remain a strong possibility.

However, an echo of Hardyng seems to have influenced Malory's version of the

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[40] Hardyng 141.

departure of the embassy.[41] Again, in the Caxton version, Arthur, "commaunded his tresorer

to gyue them grete and large yeftes and to paye alle theyr dispencys" (191). Because the rest

of the sentence "and assygned syre Cador to conueye them" restores the alliterative line of the

Morte Arthure that the Winchester version had lost, Malory is more likely than Caxton to

have written it.[42] The Morte Arthure does not relate Arthur's generosity to the ambassadors

who are sent on their way with a limited period of safety and no gifts (445-78). In Hardyng,

however, Arthur,

> gaue unto y[e] hie ambassate,
> Full Riche giftes & golde enough to spend. (142)

In his translating, Malory often substitutes a word that sounds similar but has a different

meaning for the original word.[43] By that process, Hardyng's spend could have yielded

Malory's dispencys.

After the return of the ambassadors, Emperor Lucius sends a summons to all of his

allies. Malory follows the alliterative poem closely here and includes most of the allies

named by the poem. At the end of the listas given in the surviving manuscript of the

alliterative Morte Arthure, however, Malory adds, "and the kynge of Portyngale with many

thousande Spaynardis" (193.17-8). Three suggestions have been made to explain the source

of this addition.

Matthews believed that this was based on Hardyng.[44] When Hardyng lists Arthur's

muster, he includes,

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[41] Wilson, "More Borrowings" 210.

[42] Wilson, "More Borrowings" 210.

[43] See Works 1568-9

[44] Matthews 75.

> The kynges all, of Portyngale and Spain
> Of Nauerne also, and eke of Catheloyne.[45]

Given the weight of evidence that Malory had read Hardyng, this is certainly a possibility, but it does not explain why the Portugese and Spanish appear as Lucius's allies rather than Arthur's.

The second possibility is that Malory might have used the Middle English poem Torrent of Portyngale.[46] The last chapter showed that Malory probably used this poem as a source of Marhalt's fight against the giant, Taulurd.[47] In Torrent, the King of Portugal is a villain who has dealings with the Roman Emperor, and Malory could therefore have felt that this king was out of place as an Arthurian ally in Hardyng and so made him an ally of Lucius.

The third theory would make the above superfluous. This theory states that Malory took "and the kynge of Portyngale with many thousande Spaynardis" from a line in the Morte Arthure that the Thorton text has lost.[48] Because Spain is listed in the four chronicles that make up the Morte Arthure's own sources as well as in Malory,[49] the theory called the Vinaver Principle would suggest that Spain was in the original form of the poem and was omitted by either the scribe of the Thornton manuscript or by a predecessor. The Vinaver Principle states that, barring evidence of coincidence and corruption, elements that appear in

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[45] Hardyng 143.

[46] Kennedy, "Malory and his English Sources" 38.

[47] Supra 86-88.

[48] Field, "The Empire of Lucius Iberius," Texts and Sources 162-83.

[49] Historia regum Britannie, 116; Wace lines 10175; Lawmon lines 662-3 Robert Mannyng The Story of England by Robert Manning of Brunne, ed. F. J. Furnivall (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1887) 418.

the source of a work and in a witness to the work will be authentic to that work.[50] Here "The Tale of Arthur and Lucius" is treated as a witness to the Morte Arthure, and its agreement with the chronicle sources of the alliterative poem in including the King of Spain among Lucius's allies suggests that a better manuscript of the Morte Arthure would too. This is a very strong case, but it only applies to Spain; none of the Morte Arthure's chronicle sources mention the king of Portugal.

To explain the presence of the King of Portugal, a reference to Hardyng and to Torrent may be useful. If Malory had noticed that Portugal was listed as an ally of Arthur in Hardyng, he might have reassigned it to Lucius because he associated the King of Portugal with the Roman Empire from Torrent. He might, however, have done so merely because he thought that Spain and Portugal would be more credibly on a single side.

Malory does not seem to borrow from Hardyng again until close to the end of the tale. Arthur's successful campaign is followed in Malory by his coronation as Emperor in Rome (245.4-8). Although all versions of the Roman War portray Arthur as victor, in nearly all of them Arthur receives news of Mordred's rebellion, which forces him to return to Britain before he can be crowned. In Malory's version, of course, there is no rebellious regent and therefore no reason for Arthur to return home before he is crowned.

Hardyng's Chronicle and Jean d'Outremeuse's Li Myreur des Histors are the only other extant versions of the Roman War that depict Arthur's coronation, and, as there is no evidence that Malory had read Jean d'Outremeuse but copious evidence that he had read Hardyng, Hardyng's Chronicle is the more likely source.[51]

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[50] Vinaver, "The Method of Editing," Works c-cxxxvi.

[51] Vinaver, Works, commentary 1405; Matthews 75.

> At [the] Capytole, in [the sea] imperiall,
> They crowned hym with crownes thre of golde
> As emperoure most principall,
> And conquerour that daye moste worthy holde;
> Wher then he fested the citee manyfolde,
> [Of Rome the byshop, and al his cardinals,]
> The senatours, with other estates als.
>
> The lxxxiii. Chapiter.
> [. . .]
> ALl that wynter at Rome he did soiourne,
> In palays of Mayns palacium.[52]

Malory depicts the scene like this:

> When the senatours had this answere, unto Rome they turned and made rydy
> for his corownemente in the moste noble wyse. And at the day assigned, as
> the romaynes me tellys, he was crowned Emperoure by the Poopys hondis,
> with all the royalté in the worlde to welde for ever. There they suggeourned
> that seson tyll aftir the tyme. (245.4-9)

In the alliterative Morte Arthure, Arthur plans "And at þe Crystynmesse daye be

crownned theraftyre" (3213), so this part of Malory's story might be seen as a logical step in

his narrative that needs no additional source. The fact, however, that both authors have

Arthur crowned by the Pope and that Malory apparently echoes Hardyng's word soiourne

suggests that Malory is again following Hardyng.

However, it has been noted that Hardyng is not Malory's the only possible source for

the notion that Arthur was an emperor.[53] The list of alternative possibilities is a series of nine

lights in the North window of St Mary's Hall, Coventry,[54] Lydgate's Fall of Princes, and the

copy of Arthur's seal, cited by Caxton as evidence of Arthur's historical reality. In the series

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[52] Hardyng 145.

[53] John Withrington, "King Arthur as Emperor," Notes and Queries 35 (233) (1988): 13-15.

[54] Mary Dormer Harris, "Arthur and Constantine," Notes and Queries 158 (1930): 147.

of lights, which was in place by 1414,[55] Arthur is depicted as wearing an imperial crown and holding the True Cross. The Emperor Constantine is also depicted in this series with an imperial crown and holding the True Cross. In The Fall of Princes, Arthur's court is described during the plenary court as the light of chivalry, the well of honour, and as an "imperial court al wrongis to redresse."[56] Finally, Arthur's seal as described by Caxton reads "Patricius Arthurus Britannie Gallie Germanic Dacie Imperator."[57]

Any of these sources could theoretically have been available to Malory, but there is no evidence that any of them were. As we shall see, there is evidence that Malory had read Lydgate's "A Pageant of Knowledge,"[58] but there is none that suggest that he had read The Fall of Princes. Coventry was Malory's county seat, but it does not follow that he would therefore have known about the lights at St Mary's Hall,[59] nor is there any evidence that he had seen Arthur's seal. Of course, Malory could have been familiar with all three of these possible sources without it leaving discernable evidence, but in the light of the abundant evidence that Malory knew Hardyng's work these alternatives are not convincing.

Malory's use of Hardyng's Chronicle in this tale, as in "The Tale of King Arthur," is rendered almost certain by the number of small but detailed correspondences between the two texts. The cumulative effect of the evidence from the last chapter also points to the same conclusion.

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[55] Withrington 13.

[56] John Lydgate, Fall of Princes, ed. Henry Bergen 4 vols. EETS e.s. 121-24. 1924-27. 3:903, line 2854.

[57] Works cxliv.

[58] Infra 200-01.

[59] See Field, The Life and Times of Sir Thomas Malory (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1993).

The Vulgate Suite du Merlin and Hardyng's Chronicle are natural minor sources for this tale because they both contain versions of the Roman War. Other minor sources that Malory might have used in this tale make a small set: the French prose romance Perlesvaus, and some version of the story of Gawain and the sister of Sir Brandelis.

Malory certainly seemed to have remembered one character from the Perlesvaus when he was writing his "Tale of Arthur and Lucius." The alliterative Morte Arthure mentions a knight named Sir Bryane twice (lines 1606, 1744). Malory retains one of these references but expands the name to Bryan de les Ylyes (212.8). In the last chapter we saw that Malory added this character to "The Tale of King Arthur" from the Perlesvaus.[60] Apparently Malory decided that the Bryan of the alliterative poem was the same character as the Bryan of "The Tale of King Arthur," and this reference is the first instance of Malory's tendency to in effect use his earlier tales as minor sources.

The name of another minor character might have derived from the Perlesvaus. The Morte Arthure, like the chronicles, calls Arthur's sword Caliburn. Malory recognized this name and changed it twice to Excalibur. Surprisingly, however, a Caliburn also appears in Malory's version, not as a variation of the name of Arthur's sword, but as a knight: "He threste into the prece of kyng Arthures knyghtes and fruysshed downe many good knyghtes, and he was called Calleborne, the strengyste of Pavynes Londis" (208.13-15). In the only surviving manuscript of the Morte Arthure, this character is unnamed (line 1377). Because "he was called Calleborne" could be a fragment of an alliterative line, the possibility will have to stand that Malory adapted a name that he found in his manuscript. Yet it seems inherently unlikely that the author of the Morte Arthure would have given a character a name

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[60] Supra 50-51.

so close to the name of Arthur's sword.

On the other hand, one of Malory's most characteristic habits is the naming of anonymous characters from his major sources, and Malory knew a source that had a character named Calobrus, Perlesvaus. In this work, Calobrus is not a pagan, nor is he said to be of exceptional strength. He is Perlesvaus's cousin, the son of his paternal uncle, Calobrutus.[61] The two characters have nothing in common except for similar names, but we have seen that Malory seemed to be working with an imperfect memory of the Perlesvaus, and that similar sounding words often reminded Malory of each other, even if their meanings were far apart. Malory therefore could easily have been reminded of Calobrus as the name of a knight by the Morte Arthure's use of Caliburn. The appearance of Bryan from the Perlesvaus makes the theory that the otherwise puzzling appearance of Caliburn as the name of a knight is based on a character from the same romance more likely. The possibility of a lost source will, of course, remain. However, the Perlesvaus is the only surviving romance to include a character with a name even close to "Caliburn."[62]

One last detail that Malory must have been taken from a minor source concerns the begetting of Sir Gawain's son Sir Florens. During a description of a battle, Malory's narrator lists that

> Than sir Cadore, sir Clegis, they caughte to her swerdys, and sir Lancelot, sir Bors, sir Lyonel, sir Ector de Marys, they whyrled thorow many men of armys. And sir Gawayne, sir Gaherys, sir Lovell and sir Florens, his brother that was gotyn of sir Braundyles systir uppon a mountayne, all these knyghtes russhed forth. (224.5-10)

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[61] Perlesvaus 393.

[62] G. D. West, Index of Proper Names in French Arthurian Prose Romances (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1978); and Robert W. Ackerman, An Index of Arthurian Names in Middle English (New York: AMS, 1952).

This list and the scene that it introduces replaces a shorter, less detailed passage in the poem.

The alliteration in Malory's passage again raises the suspicion that differences between

Malory's copy and the Thornton manuscript may account for at least some of these

differences. The clause detailing Florens's origin, however, contains no alliteration and is the

kind of detail that Malory liked to add, and this detail can be traced to two possible sources.[63]

The first continuation of Chrétien de Troyes's Perceval relates Gawain's meeting with Sir

Brandelis's sister, but this is said to have occured in a "lande," "plain," or "praerie," rather

than on a mountain.[64] Brandelis's sister gives birth to a son as a result of this union, but that

son is named Lieons, not Florens.[65] The Middle English "The Jeaste of Syr Gawayne" tells

part of the same story. Here the scene is located clearly on a mountain, but no son is

mentioned.[66] The beginning of this poem in the surviving Elizabethan print is missing, and so

it must remain a possibility that the opening lines mentioned that a son named Florens would

be born. This version, however, focuses on Gawain's single combat with the lady's father

and a succession of her brothers and ends without any indication of whether the lady became

pregant. The date of "The Jeaste" is uncertain; Malory's apparent reference to it is an

important part of the evidence that scholars use to date it to the fifteenth century,[67] but clearly

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[63] Wilson, "Malory's Early Knowledge" 44-5.

[64] The Continuations of the Old French Perceval of Chrétien de Troyes ed. William Roach 5 vols. (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1952-83). The manuscripts of the first continuation vary greatly in many respects, but in no extant version is the pavilion of the Damoisele de Lis said to be on a mountain. See 1: 69-74, 267-84; 2: 181-86, 410-29; 3: 101-12, 278-94.

[65] Continuations 1: 376; 2: 538; 3: 511-14.

[66] "The Jeaste of Syr Gawayne," Syr Gawayne: A Collection of Ancient Romance-Poems, ed. Sir Frederic Madden (1971; London: Richard and John Taylor, 1839) 207-23 see especially lines 50-3.

[67] Maldwyn Mills, "The Jeaste of Syr Gawayne," The Arthur of the English 162.

this is uncertain.

It is still possible to argue that Malory had read the First Continuation and that just as Malory seems to sometimes misremember details from other sources, so he misremembered Florens as the son of the sister of Sir Brandelis. However, it seems at least as likely that Malory took this information from either a full version of "The Jest" or another source that has not survived.

Malory uses far fewer minor sources in "The Tale of Arthur and Lucius" than in "The Tale of King Arthur." As we shall see, this will be Malory's usual practice when using a major source such as the alliterative Morte Arthure, with a straightforward plot line and few anonymous characters. The evidence shows that Malory used the few minor sources of "The Tale of Arthur and Lucius" in much the same way that he did the much larger number in "The Tale of King Arthur." He used them to add details that let him fit the story of his major source into the larger Arthurian story as he wanted to tell it, including the addition of characters and the naming of anonymous characters.

CHAPTER FOUR: "THE TALE OF SIR LAUNCELOT"

Malory's "Tale of Sir Launcelot" is mainly based on the Vulgate <u>Lancelot</u> but represents a departure from the way Malory adapted the sources of the previous two works.[1] Instead of following most of his major source as in his first two tales, Malory unravelled a single narrative strand from a small part of the <u>Lancelot,</u> and he took an episode from another Old French prose romance, the <u>Perlesvaus,</u> to make this tale. "The Tale of Launcelot" is therefore not a redaction of a large part of a single source but a composite.

"The Tale of Launcelot" is episodic and so is difficult to summarize. It opens with a short introduction that connects it to the previous tale, and follows with a series of Lancelot's adventures as a knight errant, initially accompanied by his cousin Lionel. These two are separated when Lionel is captured by Sir Terquin while Lancelot sleeps. Lancelot is himself captured by four queens, but he is soon rescued by the daughter of King Bagdemagus, when he agrees to fight for her father in an upcoming tournament. After a brief encounter, Lancelot arrives at Bagdemagus's tournament and triumphs on his behalf. Next he frees Lionel and other captive knights from Sir Terquin. Lancelot then undertakes a series of adventures, in which he fights two giants and a number of knights. This series includes the mysterious episode of the Chapel Perilous and the battle against the ignoble Sir Phelot. In the end, he returns to court where his deeds are recounted.

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[1] The Vulgate <u>Lancelot</u> survives in over 120 manuscripts. The most recent edition is <u>Lancelot: roman du XIIIe siecle</u> ed. Alexandre Micha 9 vols. (Geneva: Droz, 1978-83). For a catalogue of the <u>Lancelot</u> mss., see the introduction to Micha's edition; for a study of the <u>Lancelot</u> mss. and their relationship to Malory, see Field, "Malory and the French Prose <u>Lancelot</u>," <u>Texts and Sources</u> 199-223.

The surviving manuscripts of the <u>Lancelot</u> are so numerous and contain so many variant readings that differences between Malory's story and Micha's standard edition might derive from Malory's innovations or from the manuscript that Malory worked from. Also, barring the possible exception of "The Tale of Sir Gareth" with its unknown source, this tale represents Malory's most independent working from any major source. These two factors doubtlessly explain why only a very few minor sources have been proposed for this tale.

"The Tale of Launcelot" appears in approximately the same relative place as the <u>Lancelot</u> does in the Vulgate Cycle: after the <u>Merlin</u> and immediately after the Roman War. Yet in other respects, Malory's tale and the Vulgate version are very different. The Vulgate romance tells the story of Lancelot's birth and youth, the usurpation of his father's lands by Claudas, his upbringing by the Lady of the Lake, his knighting, and the beginning of his love affair with Guenevere. The <u>Lancelot</u> also tells interlaced adventures of several of Arthur's knights, the preparations for the Grail quest, and it finally relates Claudas's defeat at the hands of Arthur's forces. This wealth of material makes the <u>Lancelot</u> several times larger than any other branch of the Vulgate Cycle.

Malory's "Tale of Launcelot," however, is the shortest of his tales and says nothing of Lancelot's youth or any details about the beginning of the love between Lancelot and Guenevere. The introductory section may be read as a brief summary of the earlier part of the Vulgate <u>Lancelot</u>, but, because it gives no specifics, it could only be recognized as such by someone who had also read the Vulgate <u>Lancelot</u>. Instead of focussing on these earlier parts, Malory's tale takes its adventures from a small part of the <u>Lancelot</u>'s third and final section, the "Agravain."

Just as the Post-Vulgate Cycle might have influenced Malory's Roman War, the size

and scope of this tale also may have been influenced by the Post-Vulgate Cycle.[2] Like

Malory, the author of the Post-Vulgate choose to include only a few of Lancelot's adventures

when he reworked the earlier, larger cycle. He uses a description of a magical ring that the

Lady of the Lake had given to Lancelot to explain why he included so few of Lancelot's

adventures:

> Et cel anelet li avoit douné la Damoisiele del Lac, si coume la grant hystore de Lanscelot le devise, cele meisme ystoire qui doit estre departie de mon livre, ne mie pour chou qu'il n'i apartiegne et que elle n'en soit traite, mais pour chou qu'il convient que les .III. parties de mon livre soient ingaus, i'aussi grant coume l'autre. Et se je ajoustaisse cele grant ystore, la moienne partie de mon livre fust au tresble plus grant que les autres deus. Pour chou me couvient il laissier celle grant ystoire qui devise les oevres de Lanscelot et la naissance, et voel deviser les .IX. lignies de Nasciens tout ensi coume il apartient a la haute escriture del Saint Graal, ne n'i conterai ja chose que je ne doie, ains dirai mains assés que je ne truis escrit en l'ystoire dou latin.[3]

Also like Malory, the Post-Vulgate author moved the emphasis away from Lancelot's early

life and his love affair with Guenevere, and selected Lancelot's adventures from the

"Agravain" section. Although the two authors choose different episodes from the "Agravain"

section, the earlier author's lead could have been Malory's inspiration for making his "Tale of

Launcelot" brief and for taking the emphasis off the relationship between Lancelot and

Guenevere.

The Post-Vulgate Cycle seems also to have influenced some changes in detail

between Malory's tale and the Vulgate Lancelot. That is, Malory seems to have changed the

story to provide continuity between his earlier tales that were based on the Post-Vulgate and

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[2] Edward Donald Kennedy, "Malory's 'Noble Tale of Sir Launcelot du Lake', the Vulgate Lancelot and the Post-Vulgate Roman du Graal," Arthurian and Other Studies Presented to Shunichi Noguchi, eds. Takashi Suzuki and Tsuyoshi Mukai (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1993) 107-29.

[3] La Suite du Roman de Merlin 194.

this one. An example of this is found in the tale's first episode (256-9). As Malory tells the story, the sleeping Lancelot is discovered by a retinue led by four queens: Morgan le Fay, the Queen of North Gales, the Queen of Estlonde, and the Queen of the Out Isles. Of these four, Morgan is clearly the dominant figure. It is she who conceives and carries out the plan to enchant and imprison Lancelot, so that he must choose one of them as a paramour. In the French story, there are only three queens: la reine de la terre de Sorestan qui marchisoit a Norgales, Morgue la Fee, and Sedile la roine.[4] In this version, Morgue plays a less commanding role, and the three queens seem to be equals. Morgue proposes the abduction, as in Malory, but here it is offered as a suggestion rather than a statement of intent. Also "les dames firent lor anchantement,"[5] working together in a way not implied in Malory (256-7). Morgan's dominance may well have been added by Malory taking his cue from her role in the Post-Vulgate Suite du Merlin. In that work and in Malory's adaptation of it, Morgan is too powerful in personality as well as in magic to be merely one of a group. This is another example of Malory's use of an earlier tale as a minor source.

The queen of Sorestan "qui marchisoit a Norgales" seems to be the equivalent of Malory's queen of North Galys. The absence of Sorestan from her domains would also be a change typical of Malory's tendency to simplify, since the King of North Galys had already appeared in his work. Some of the differences between the two versions of the story are easier to credit to Malory than others, and in many cases differences of detail may result from the manuscript of the Lancelot that Malory used. On the other hand, taking a named character such as Sedile and making her into two anonymous characters would be very unusual for

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[4] Lancelot 4: 173-9.

[5] Lancelot 4: 175.

Malory and therefore it is possible that this feature was in Malory's manuscript.[6]

Among the few minor sources that scholars have proposed for "The Tale of Launcelot" are Chrétien de Troyes's <u>Le Chevalier au lion</u> or its Middle English translation <u>Ywain and Gawain</u> and Chrétien's <u>Erec et Enide</u>.[7] Near the beginning of Malory's tale, Sir Ector encounters "a man was lyke a foster" while questing for Lancelot (254.31). Ector asks this man if he knows of any adventures nearby. The forester replies,

> this countrey know I well. And hereby within this myle is a strong maner and well dyked, and by that maner on the lyffte honde there is a fayre fourde for horse to drynk off, and over that fourde there growys a fayre tre. And thereon hongyth many fayre shyldys that welded somtyme good knyghtes, and at the bo[le] of the tre hongys a basyn of couper and latyne. And stryke uppon that basyn with the butte of thy spere three tymes, and sone aftir thou shalt hyre new tydynges; and ellys haste thou the fayreste [grace] that ever had knyghte this many yeres that passed thorow this foreste. (255.1-11)

Ector follows the forester's directions and upon striking the basin is confronted and defeated by Sir Tarquin, who had earlier captured Ector's brother Sir Lionel.

This is very different from what Malory found in the Vulgate. There Hector meets a damsel on the road who warns him that Tericam has captured Lionel. Instead of a copper and pewter basin hanging from a tree limb, Hector finds a spring that issues from a lead pipe onto a marble slab. Hector does not need to summon Tericam, who appears and defeats and captures Hector, as in Malory.

Malory's distinct features may be a rationalization of one of the most memorable

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[6] G. D. West does not list a "Sedile" in his <u>Index of Proper Names in French Arthurian Prose Romances</u>. This character is instead named "Sebile"after the Classical seer.

[7] Field, "Malory and Chrétien de Troyes," <u>Texts and Sources</u> 236-45.

scenes from Chrétien's Le chevalier au lion.[8] In that romance, Calogrenant meets a "vilains" who is lord of animals. He is scornful and uses the insulting singular form of the second person pronoun, but he directs Calogrenant to a magical fountain over which hangs a basin. Calogrenant pours water from the basin onto a magical stone, and this summons a terrifying thunderstorm, which in turn summons the huge knight Escaldos le Ros, who defeats Calogranant. There is no magical thunderstorm in Malory's story, and the forester is now a churl rather than a monster. However, the hero searching for adventures, the encounter with a woodsman, the woodsman's ironic, mocking tone, his impolite use of singular form of the second person pronoun, the hanging basin, and the defeat of the hero at the hands of a summoned opponent are all the same.

The episode in the Lancelot and that in Le chevalier au lion have enough similarities between themselves that Malory could easily have been reminded of the one by the other. In the Vulgate Lancelot, the water of the spring spills onto a marble slab; in Le chevalier au lion the slab is "plus froide que marbres."[9] In the Lancelot, three great pine trees overshadow the spring, and in Le chevalier au lion the spring is overshadowed by one, which is said to be the finest pine tree in the world. The marble slab onto which water pours in the Prose Lancelot corresponds to the basin in Le chevalier au lion that hangs from the tree is used to pour water onto a stone, a huge emerald. In the Prose Lancelot, the knight who defends the spring like the antagonist knight in Le chevalier au lion, is formidably large.[10]

More evidence of Malory's use of Chrétien's Le chevalier au lion involves Lancelot's

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[8] Chrétien de Troyes Le chevalier au lion, ed. Mario Roques (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1968).

[9] Le chevalier au lion line 381.

[10] Field, "Malory and Chrétien" 241.

battle against two giants later in the tale. In Malory's story, Lancelot comes to a castle and enters it against the warnings of the townspeople. Inside he battles against and kills two club-wielding giants and thereby frees the inhabitants of the castle: sixty ladies and damsels. They explain to Lancelot,

> The most party of us have been here this seven yere theire presoners, and we have worched all maner of sylke workys for oure mete, and we ar all grete jentylwomen borne. And blyssed be the tyme, knyght, that ever thou were borne, for thou haste done the moste worshyp that ever ded knyght in this worlde; that woll we beare recorde. (272.4-10)

This episode corresponds to a similar one in the Lancelot. In the Vulgate, Lancelot also defeats the two giants. Just as the giants there are "armé an guise de champion qui doivent escremir, car il orent les testes nues,"[11] Malory's giants are "Well armed all save there hedys" (271.31). This correspondence of detail is interesting because although Malory describes his giants as attacking with clubs, the giants in the Lancelot each have a good, sharp sword. Also in the Vulgate, when Lancelot liberates the castle from the giants, he is greeted by "dames et damoiseles et chevaliers,"[12] rather than only ladies and damsels, and none of them are either said to be prisoners or to be doing manual labour of any kind. Also unlike the situation in Malory's version, the inmates of this castle declare Lancelot their new lord and try to prevent him from leaving.

The motif of noblewomen labouring to make silk appears most famously in medieval literature in Chrétien's Le chevalier au lion.[13] Because this idea is so uncommon, Malory's use of it alone is very strong evidence that he had read that poem. Chrétien and Malory also

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[11] Lancelot 5: 43.

[12] Lancelot 5: 44.

[13] Vinaver noted this in Malory 49-50 and in the Commentary of Works 1422 but draws no conclusion; Field notes the similarity and draws the natural conclusion "Malory and Chrétien de Troyes" 239.

agree against the Vulgate in the detail of the giants fighting with clubs rather than swords.
Just as the similarities between Hector's fight against Tericam and Calogrenant's fight against
Esclados may have drawn Malory's mind towards Le chevalier au lion, the fact that the
people of castle try to detain Lancelot could have reminded Malory of the attempts of the lord
of the castle to marry Yvain to his daughter after Yvain's triumph in Chrétien. Yvain resists
this honour just as Lancelot resists becoming lord of the castle that he has liberated. In
another of Chrétien's romances, Perceval ou le count du graal, Gawain becomes lord of the
Castle of Maidens and is forbidden to leave.

The evidence from this chapter accumulates with the evidence discussed in the
chapter that analysed the minor sources of "The Tale of King Arthur" of Malory's use of
Chrétien's poem there.[14] In all of these instances, however, Malory may have been borrowing
from Chrétien or he may have been borrowing from the English translation of Chrétien,
Ywain and Gawain.[15] Because the English poem also contains almost all of the elements
common to Chrétien and Malory, it or Le chevalier au lion could have been Malory's source,
and because most of Malory's minor sources are in English, Ywain and Gawain has a greater
a priori chance of being Malory's source than Chrétien's poem. The evidence, however,
suggests that Malory drew upon the French rather than the English poem.

Field has argued that Malory's description of the giants' clubs suggest that Malory
was probably adapting Chrétien's poem instead of its English adaptation.[16] In Le chevalier au
lion the clubs are described as

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[14] Supra 79-82.

[15] Ywain and Gawain, Sir Percyvell of Gales, The Anturs of Arthur, ed. Maldwyn
Mills (London: Everyman, 1992).

[16] Field, "Malory and Chrétien" 240.

> Baston cornu de cornelier
> Qu'il orent fez apareillier
> De cuivre, et puis lier d'archal.[17]

In Malory's story the giants' clubs are merely described as "horryble." Field has argued that Malory regularly abbreviated description from his French sources, that Malory would likely have preferred to abbreviate Chrétien's complex description, and that "horryble" would be attractively vague to Malory whose French was less than perfect. Yet because Malory is not a literal translator, it would be rash to conclude that Malory could not have transformed the description of the giants' clubs in Ywain and Gawain, as "ful grete and lang" into horryble. The most compelling point of Field's argument is that the assertion that several other knights have fought the giants and died is common to Chrétien and Malory but not to Ywain and Gawain.[18]

Furthermore, in another passage in "The Tale of Launcelot" that has no counterpart at all in the Prose Lancelot, Lancelot and a damsel discuss the role of love in the life of a knight. She criticizes Lancelot as having no wife or paramour. Lancelot answers in part,

> But for to be a weddyd man, I thynke hit nat, for than I muste couche with hir and leve armys and turnamentis, batellys and adventures. (270.29-30)

This sentiment echoes one of the major conflicts in another of Chrétien's romances, Erec et Enide.[19] In that romance, after Erec weds Enide,

> Mes tant l'ama Erec d'amors
> Que d'armes mes ne li chaloit
> Ne a tornoiemant n'aloit
> N'avoit mes soing de tournoier:
> A sa fame volt dosnoier,

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[17] Le chevalier au lion lines 5509-11.

[18] Field, "Malory and Chrétien" 240.

[19] Field, "Malory and Chrétien" 244.

Si an fist s'amie et sa drue.[20]

Erec's situation fits Lancelot's words perfectly, and when taken with the evidence for

Malory's use of Yvain's story, makes a strong case for Chrétien rather than the English poem.

If Malory had read Erec et Enide he is more likely to have read Le chevalier au lion rather

than "Ywain and Gawain."

This evidence also tallies with the appearance of this very same idea from Erec et

Enide in The Wedding of Sir Gawain, which, as discussed earlier, Malory very likely wrote.[21]

These pieces of evidence are all inconclusive singly, but their cumulative effect makes very

strong evidence that Malory used Chrétien's Le Chevalier au lion both in "The Tale of King

Arthur" and in "The Tale of Sir Launcelot," and Chrétien's Erec et Enide both in The

Wedding of Sir Gawain and in "The Tale of Sir Launcelot."

A final episode of "The Tale of Sir Launcelot," Lancelot's encounter with Sir Phelot, has

attracted scholarly attention because it too has no counterpart in the Vulgate Lancelot. In this

episode, Lancelot sees a falcon fly from a castle and get caught in an elm tree. A lady comes

out of the castle and says "A, Launcelot, Launcelot! as thow arte floure of all knyghtes, helpe

me to get my hauke; for and my hauke be loste me lorde wolde destroy me" (282.22-4).

Lancelot disarms, climbs the tree, and rescues the hawk. The lady's husband, Sir Phelot,

appears from where he had been hiding, waiting for this chance to fight Lancelot at a

disadvantage. Lancelot, however, triumphs and kills Phelot, and, fearing reinforcements from

the castle, arms himself and rides off (282-4).

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[20] Chrétien de Troyes, Erec et Enide ed. Mario Roques (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1966) lines 2430-5.

[21] Supra 64-73.

As we have seen, Malory occasionally takes adventures from one knight in a minor source and gives it to another knight in his story. Often, though by no means always, he takes Gawain's adventures and gives them to Lancelot, and scholars have thought that Malory might be doing something similar here. A logical first place to look was in the Vulgate Lancelot itself, since it is a compendium of adventures of almost all of Arthur's knights.

Larry Benson cited two episodes from that work that he thought might have been Malory's inspiration.[22] In the first, Yvain encounters a damsel whose hawk has been stolen by a nearby knight. She says that she cannot go home without the hawk because it belongs to her lover. Yvain fights and kills the antagonist knight and is himself wounded. In the second, Bohort meets a damsel whose hawk has flown into a nearby castle. When her brother tried to retrieve it, he was captured by two knights. Bohort jumps the moat, and inside the castle meets the two knights. One of them calls for six knights to help, but Bohort kills him and three of his auxiliaries. The survivor of the original two knights returns the hawk and the prisoner to Bohort, who returns them both to the damsel.[23]

Both of Benson's passages have about the same level of general similarity to Malory's story. The similarities are insufficient to prove that Malory specifically based his story on one or the other but that damsels, hawks, and hostile knights were common motifs that Malory could have found together in a number of places.

Another proposed inspiration is a little closer.[24] In Girart d'Amiens's thriteenth-

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[22] Larry Benson, Malory's Morte Darthur, (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1976) 89n.

[23] Lancelot 4: 280-84.

[24] Field, "Hunting, Hawking, and Textual Criticism in Malory's Morte Darthur," Texts and Sources 103-13.

century Escanor, a sorceress decoys and traps Gawain with a goshawk.[25] Gawain escapes

only after fighting two ambushes of armed knights. If this were Malory's source, he would

have had to transfer the episode from Gawain to Lancelot, remove the sorcerous element, and

simplify the two ambushes into an ambush by a single knight. As we have seen, Malory was

capable of doing all these things. If a source could be found that offered more parallels than

this one, however, it must be preferred, and a much closer parallel than any of these, in fact,

does exist.[26]

In the thirteenth-century verse romance, L'Atre Perilleux,[27] Gawain encounters a lady

who has allowed her lover's sparrow-hawk to escape and become caught by its leash on a tall

oak tree. Gawain disarms and climbs the tree. At this moment, the lady's lover appears and

accuses her of infidelity to him with Gawain. He rides off with Gawain's horse as well as his

own and his lady's. Eventually, Gawain encounters him again and defeats him, forcing him

to be reconciled with his lady.

This is the most plausible source for the Phelot story yet proposed. It has several

features in common with Malory's story: the lady, the hawk in the tree, the knight removing

his armour to retrieve it, and the battle between the hero knight and the lady's lover. If this

was Malory's source, he would have changed the hero from Gawain to Lancelot, turned the

eventual battle between the two knights into Sir Phelot's cowardly attack, and he would have

renamed Codrovain le Rox from L'Atre Perilleux, Sir Phelot. Although Malory rarely

changes the names of characters he finds in his major sources, he may well have done it with

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[25] Girart d'Amiens, Escanor, ed. Richard Trachsler (Geneva: Droz, 1994), lines 1898-2982.

[26] Field, "Malory's Sir Phelot and the Problems of Minor Sources," BBSIA 54 (2003): 345-61.

[27] L'Atre Périlleux, ed. Nancy B. Black (New York: Garland, 1994) lines 2537-2760.

Sir Edward and Sir Hugh of the Red Castle, and he certainly could easily have done all these other things. And in this case, this source would really be closer to an initial impetus, so he might have felt less reluctance to change the antagonist's name.

"The Tale of Sir Launcelot" probably represents Malory's most radical handling of a major source, and, because Malory took a single plot line out of the tightly interwoven fabric of the Lancelot, there are numerous differences between Malory's version and the Vulgate that go unmentioned here. These, such as removing the begetting of Galahad from the events that immediately follow Lancelot's victory at Baudemagus's tournament and turning the fatal battle against the knight in whose pavilion Lancelot sleeps into a non-fatal wounding, seem to result mainly from Malory's independent vision of Arthurian history rather than from minor sources. Other instances that in other tales might signal the use of a minor source, such as the change from three to four queens who capture the sleeping Lancelot are complicated by the complexity of the manuscript tradition of the Vulgate Lancelot. However, the unexpected influence of Chrétien de Troyes's Erec et Enide and Le chevalier au lion show that Malory did continue his usual practice of using minor sources. In this tale especially, there could well be minor sources yet to be discovered. The difficulties in determining the scope of minor sources caused by Malory's relationship to his primary source are multiplied in the tale that follows.

CHAPTER FIVE:"THE TALE OF SIR GARETH"

"The Tale of Sir Gareth" is the only one of Malory's tales that does not have a surviving

major source, and naturally this greatly complicates the analysis of minor sources. Of extant

romances, Malory's tale most closely resembles those of the Fair Unknown type,[1] which

include Renaut de Beaujeu's French Le Bel Inconnu, the Middle English Lybeaus Desconus,

Wirnt von Gravenburg's German Wigalois, the Italian Carduino, the French and English

versions of Ipomedon, and the "Cote Mal Taile" episode of the Prose Tristan.[2] It does not,

however, resemble any of these romances closely enough for any of them to be taken as

Malory's primary source.

Malory's story opens on a Pentecost, when Arthur, according to his custom, awaits a

marvel or adventure before going to the feast. His custom is satisfied by the appearance of

three men and a dwarf. One of the men, the yet unidentified Gareth, asks Arthur for three

boons. The first is for a year's food and lodging, and he asks to be allowed to specify the

final two at the end of the year. Arthur tells Gareth that food and lodging are available to all

and that he should ask for something greater, but Gareth holds to his request. When asked,

he will not reveal his name, and Kay therefore names him Beaumains, turning Gareth's fair

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[1] Robert H. Wilson, "The 'Fair Unknown' in Malory," PMLA 63 (1943): 1-21.

[2] Renaut de Beaujeu, Le Bel Inconnu, ed. G. Perrie Williams (Paris:Champion, 1929); Lybeaus Desconus, ed. Maldwyn Mills, EETS o.s. 261 (1969); Wirnt von Gravenburg, Wigalois, der Ritter mit dem Rade, ed. J. M. N. Kapteyn (Bonn: Klopp, 1926); Cantari di Carduino giuntovi quello di Tristano & Lancillotto quando combattettero al petrone di Merlino, ed. Pio Rajna (Bologna: Romagnoli, 1873); Hue de Rotelande, Ipomadon, ed. Rhiannon Purdie, EETS n.s. 316 (2001); "La Cote Mautailliee," Le Roman de Tristan En Prose, ed. Renée Curtis, 3 vols. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976), 637-42, 646-61, 663, 665-70, 673.

hands into a cause for derision. Kay then puts him to work in the kitchens.

At the end of the year, a lady named Lynet arrives and asks for a champion to raise the siege of the castle of her sister, Lady Lyonesse. Beaumains now asks for his two remaining boons. He asks to be knighted by Sir Lancelot and to be given this quest. Arthur agrees, to the dismay of the damsel, who is outraged to have her sister's rescue assigned to a kitchen knave. Before Gareth departs on this quest, he is challenged by and defeats Kay in single combat. He asks Lancelot to knight him, who agrees after Gareth reveals his name to him. During the journey to the lady's castle, Beaumains battles against a series of opponents who are all brothers. He kills the first one, but the rest surrender to him and are sent back to Arthur's court. Although Beaumains is consistently successful against all adversaries, Lynet continues to be scornful until close to the end of their journey.

When the pair finally arrive at the besieged castle of Lady Lyonesse, Gareth succeeds in ending the siege and winning Lyonesse's love. Lyonesse insists, however, that Gareth prove his love for her for a year before she will accept him. Gareth departs on this quest, but Lyonesse contrives to have Gareth stay in her brother's castle, where he meets and falls in love with her a second time without recognising her. Their night-time assignation is frustrated by a knight whom Gareth beheads and whom Lynet restores to life. At Gareth's direction, Lyonesse travels to Arthur's court and requests a tournament at which knights will compete for the right to marry her. Gareth arrives in secret and, magically disguised in succession as a white, red, black, and yellow knight, wins the tournament. Before claiming his bride, however, he rides off for another series of adventures, which culminate in a fight against his brother Gawain. The two are revealed to each other by Lynet before either is seriously wounded. The tale ends with the brothers' return to Arthur's court where Gareth and Lyonesse, Gaheris and Lynet, and Agravain and a Dame Laurell wed.

During the controversy caused by Vinaver's theory that Malory had written eight separate romances rather than a single, unified work, some scholars argued that the lack of an extant major source implied that Malory independently created this tale by taking motifs from various romances, essentially that it is a tale built solely of minor sources.[3] That theory, although intriguing, raises more difficulties than it resolves, among them the unique form of the name of the main character.[4] Further, "The Tale of Gareth," whether Malory had a specific major source for it or not, is a variant of the Fair Unknown story modified by elements from other sources.

Like the hero of many versions of the Fair Unknown, Gareth has an older relative at Arthur's court, to whom he must prove himself to be worthy. In this version, Gareth's worthiness is emphasised by a fight to a draw against his older brother Gawain at the end of the story. The eventual battle against the older knight and the subsequent revelation of their kinship loses its meaning if the older knight is not worthy of emulation. In Malory's version, however, Gawain's own worthiness is regularly undercut, primarily through the narrator's comments, and he is virtually superseded as Gareth's mentor by Lancelot. If Malory had invented "The Tale of Gareth," Gareth's duel with Lancelot would have more naturally replaced the climactic battle with Gawain rather than occurring near the beginning. Also, it is difficult to see why Malory would include Agravain's marriage to Dame Laurel, which seems pointless in Malory's story, unless he was following his source.

Obviously because "The Tale of Gareth" has no surviving major source, what can be deduced

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[3] See especially Wilfred L. Guerin, "'The Tale of Gareth': The Chivalric Flowering," Malory's Originality 99-117, and Larry D. Benson, Malory's Morte Darthur 92-108.

[4] See infra 135-37.

about its possible minor sources is limited. However, because scholars have been able to infer some of the major source's attributes, it may be possible to make informed speculations about possible minor sources by considering Malory's more typical alterations.

The Fair Unknown was evidently a very popular medieval story type. In addition to the various versions of the story noted above, it also left its influence on the enfances of almost every Arthurian knight for whom an enfances has been written, including Gawain, Lancelot, and Perceval.[5] A summary of the typical features of the Fair Unknown romance reveals the similarity to "The Tale of Gareth." A youth arrives at Arthur's court, who either does not know his own name or else simply refuses to reveal it. In the versions in which he does not know his name, he replies that his mother called him "bel fils," and Arthur gives him a name meaning "fair unknown." In versions in which he merely withholds his name, Kay gives him a name designed as an insult. Upon the arrival of a damsel seeking aid for her lady, the Fair Unknown requests and receives the adventure. The damsel is initially sceptical of the Fair Unknown's ability but is convinced by his ability to deal with threats on the journey to the lady's castle. In some versions, the hero has an affair with an enchantress on this journey, which delays him and causes complications later. Eventually, however, he reaches the object of his travels and rescues her, usually from besiegers or enchanters. Here in versions in which he does not know who he is, the Fair Unknown learns his identity from a supernatural agency. The hero often leaves after the rescue, and the lady of the castle then travels to Arthur's court in search of her rescuer's identity. A tournament is called which lures the hero back to court. There his identity is revealed to the court, where he takes his place and marries

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[5] Cf. De ortu Waluuanii nepotis arturi, ed. Mildred Leake Day (New York: Garland, 1984); Lancelot; Ulrich von Zatzighoven, Lanzelet Eine Erzählung, ed. K. A. Hahn (Frankfurt: Brönner, 1845); Chrétien de Troyes, Perceval ou li conte du graal, ed Keith Busby (London: Grant and Cutler, 1993).

the lady. In several of the versions, the hero is the son of Gawain.

No single story includes all of these motifs, and Malory's major source for "The Tale of Gareth" was not an unmodified version of the Fair Unknown. It seems to have been influenced by folktale elements, as well as by an episode in Chrétien de Troyes's Erec et Enide.[6] Unfortunately, no surviving folktale seems to be the source of these elements in "The Tale of Gareth." Other possible sources, however, are not quite so intractable.

Malory's form of the name "Gareth" is unique. All of Malory's major sources that contain this character call him by some variation of "Gaheriet," and the source of the form "Gareth," which first appears in "The Tale of King Arthur," is a mystery.[7] The Oxford Dictionary of English Christian Names lists Malory's work as its earliest occurrence of this name and suggests that the mutation from "Gahariet" (sic) resulted from Malory's misreading or mis-hearing of a Welsh name, although it does not speculate on which Welsh name it might have been.[8] It does not list another occurrence of "Gareth" until 1593, by which time it could well have been inspired by Malory's work.

Scholars have tried to deduce the source of the form Gareth for almost a hundred years. An early theory by R. S. Loomis suggested that Gareth might have derived from a hypothetical Garet, which would have been an incorrectly formed oblique case of Guares or Gares in the subjective case. He further hypothesises that Garet could have been turned into

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[6] Field, "The Source of Malory's 'Tale of Gareth,'" Texts and Sources 246-60; and Wilson, "The 'Fair Unknown' in Malory" 15-21.

[7] Supra 48-9.

[8] E. G. Withycombe, The Oxford Dictionary of English Christian Names, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977).

Gareth by an Anglo-Norman poet or scribe.[9] Although today most scholars treat Loomis's

derivations from hypothetical lost forms with scepticism, this one still meets with tentative

general agreement for want of anything better.[10]

A recent study, however, noting that "Gareth" has become a fairly common Welsh

personal name, finds improbable the implied route that the name would have taken from its

Celtic origin through a French form and Anglo-Norman adaptation into Malory's English and

back to become common in Wales.[11] Paul Taylor believes instead that "Gareth is an original

Celtic form, transformed into French Gaher[i]et, which Malory turned back into a Welsh

form with which he was already acquainted."[12] This idea would make oral traditions about

the "authentic" Welsh name of Gawain's brother one of Malory's minor sources. This,

however, seems unlikely, although, as we shall see, Malory is thought to have used oral

tradition elsewhere in the Morte Darthur. In order to persuade Malory to reject the combined

agreement of the Vulgate, the Post-Vulgate, the Prose Tristan, and, apparently, his own major

source of this tale, oral tradition would have to be pervasive indeed, and such a tradition

would be expected to leave traces elsewhere. The theory that requires the fewest assumptions

seems to be that Malory probably took the name Gareth from his major source for this tale,

because he would have been unlikely to change the name as given so often elsewhere without

an authorized source.

However, Taylor correctly observes that a piece of medieval English literature would

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[9] Loomis, Celtic Myth and Arthurian Romance 84.

[10] See Field, "Source of Gareth" 256.

[11] Paul Beekman Taylor, "Myths and Etymologies behind Malory's Gareth," English Studies 6 (1997): 506-12, on 511-2.

[12] Taylor 508.

be a surprising source for a popular Welsh given name. The fact is more surprising because, unlike such characters in the Morte Darthur as Lamorak and Perceval, Gareth is said to come not from Wales but from the Orkney Isles. Perhaps Gareth was already a Welsh personal name before Malory's source was written. If so, it could have influenced the name that Malory found there.

Another indication that Welsh tradition influenced Malory's primary source for "The Tale of Gareth" is the fact that the story opens and closes in Arthur's castle of Kyng Kenadon, "uppon the sondys that marched nyghe Wales" (293.7). This name is a variant of a name common to most of the Fair Unknown stories, Sinadon. In an influential article, Loomis argued that Sinadon was the Roman fort of Segontium above the modern city of Caernarfon on the edge of the Snowdonia mountain range.[13] Although this identification is widely accepted, Loomis's chain of evidence is slender. He begins plausibly enough by equating Segontium with Caer Segeint, found in Nennius's list of cities in his Historia Britonum and in Geoffrey of Monmouth's Vita Merlini where it is called "urbs Sigeni."[14] He then quotes Geoffrey Gaimar's Estorie des Engles:

> En Wales ot plusur citez
> Ke mult furent renomez;
> Cum Karrewein e Karliun
> E la cite de Snauedun.[15]

Loomis pointed out that Cair Segeint, Cair Legeion, and Cair Guent appear one after the other

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[13] Loomis, "Segontium, Caer Seint, and Sinadon," Wales and the Arthurian Legend (Cardiff: U of Wales P, 1956), 1-18.

[14] Nennius, British History and The Welsh Annals, ed. John Morris (London: Phillimore, 1980) 80, and Geoffrey of Monmouth, Vita Merlini, ed. Basil Clarke (Cardiff: U of Wales P, 1973) lines 235 and 616.

[15] Geoffrey Gaimar, Estorie des Engles solum la translacion Maister Geoffrey Gaimar, 2 vols. (London: Printed for HMSO by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1888-9) 1: 285.

in the lists of cities in Nennius. He argued therefore that "la cité de Snauedun" could only be

Caer Segeint or Segontium. Segontium is not on Snowdon but could be thought to be close

enough to the Snowdonia range to be called "la cite de Snauedun," and this too is permissible.

Loomis's next step, however, is to assume without giving reasons that "la cite de Snauedun"

is identical to Sinadon, and later he identifies Sinadon with Malory's Kenadon.[16]

However, Segontium does not match the description that Malory gives to Kenadon.

Kenadon is described once as "uppon the sondys" (293.7) and twice as "by the seesyde"

(360.16 and 20). Segontium lies on a hill overlooking the Menai Straits and could never be

described as upon the sands or by the seaside. Nor could it be said that the sands near

Segontium "marched nyghe Walys" (293.7), since Segontium is located deep into Wales.

Malory's description is better fit by a site that John Leland called

> Sinnodune a mile from Conwey. The fundation of a greate thing yet remayne
> there.[17]

That structure overlooks the sands of the Conwy estuary. It is an iron-age stone-walled fort

that contains about fifty stone huts with a smaller citadel on its west side.[18] Although it is

high above the coast, the sandy beach is clearly visible from the site, unlike at Segontium,

from which no sands can be seen. It is also in Wales rather than near Wales, but unlike

Segontium, Sinnodune is not far into the Welsh border. Therefore, although neither are on

the sands that "marched nyghe Walys," scribal error could have at some point changed

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[16] Loomis 14.

[17] John Leland, The Itinerary in Wales of John Leland in or about the Years 1536-1539, ed. Lucy Toulmin Smith (London: George Bell and Sons, 1906) 84. This idea was originally proposed by Richard Griffith in an unpublished paper. I am grateful to Professor Field for acquainting me with it.

[18] Frances Lynch, A Guide to Ancient and Historic Wales: Gwynedd (London: HMSO, 1995) s.v. Castell Caer Lleion, Conwy.

Figure 1 "Kynke Kenadoune, uppon the sondys that marched nyghe Wales" (293.6-7). Photo credit: Vanessa Field. Copyright 2004
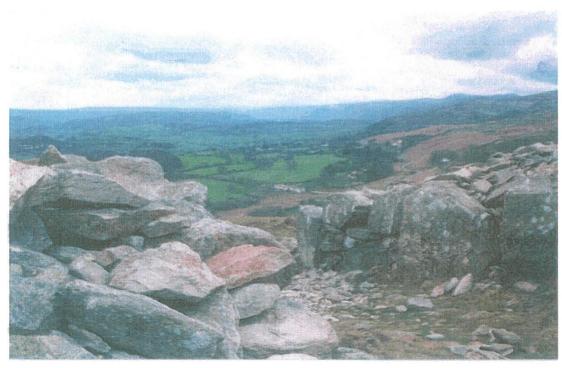

Figure 2 "Kyng Kenadowne [. . .] for there is a plenteuouse contrey" (360.15-6). Photo credit: Vanessa Field. Copyright 2004

"nyghe the marches of Walys" to "marched nyghe Walys," which would be an apt description of Sinnodune. This is speculation, but it fits the observable facts. If this is indeed the solution, then Malory or his source would likely have had, as Leland did later, access to local Welsh tradition. Probably "Kyng Kenedon" was in his major source since "Kenedon" is a clear variation of "Sinadon," a name which occurs in most of the Fair Unknown stories.

Under the name "Gaheriet," Malory's Gareth had long been a member of Arthur's court, and Malory was not the earliest surviving author to chronicle his first adventures. The Vulgate Merlin continuation describes how Gawain and his brothers perform heroic deeds in order to reconcile their father, King Lot, to King Arthur. Gawain, Agravain, Guerrehet, and Gaheriet work as a team and are knighted together.[19] In the Post-Vulgate Suite du Merlin, Gaheriet has a larger role as the hero of his own adventure, which forms part of the interlaced structure of the Suite.

The Gaheriet section of the Post-Vulgate Suite has been suggested as the main source of Malory's "Tale of Gareth."[20] Thomas Wright observed that "Gaheriet's Beginning," as he has named it, is connected to the three quests of Gawain, Yvain, and Morholt, which Malory had adapted in "The Tale of King Arthur." He argued that Malory, although he decided to simplify the ending of the adventures of the three knights, was inspired to adapt the material from "Gaheriet's Beginning" into his "Tale of Gareth."

In the Post-Vulgate Suite, the quests of Gawain and Morholt have resulted in their capture in the Roche aux Pucelles. Merlin's final prophecy is that only Gaheriet will be able

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[19] Vulgate Version 2:133-41, 180-6, 191-206, 243-56.

[20] Thomas Wright, "On the Genesis of Malory's Gareth," Speculum 57: 3 (1982): 569-82.

to rescue them. Gaheriet is therefore knighted before his older brother Agravain, who is then overcome with bitterness. Gaheriet begins his quest of rescue on the day after Christmas, pursued by the jealous Agravain. Gaheriet frees an innocent man from a castle prison, defeats Agravain twice, and rescues Baudemagus, who has been bound beside a river. Because he does not wish his chivalrous deeds to become known, Gaheriet changes armour. Shortly thereafter, he meets a damsel to whom he has promised a gift, which she now requests: the head of the lady who has seduced her lover. Gaheriet agrees to this against his will because the damsel promises to help him find Gawain and Morholt. The damsel, however, then releases Gaheriet from this demand and then leads him to the Roche aux Pucelles. On the way, they are captured at Castle Tarquin, where Gaheriet kills a giant named Aupatris. At last reaching the Roche aux Pucelles, Gaheriet induces the women to release Gawain and Morholt when he challenges their brother to combat. Morholt returns to Ireland, and Gaheriet and Gawain return to Arthur's court.[21]

Obviously, the events in this story and in Malory's are far more different than alike. Gaheriet's personality is consistent with Malory's portrayal, especially his attractive appearance and his modesty, which leads him to disguise himself, but the stories share little else that does not come from the stock situations of romance. Wright admits this but believes that "[e]vidently in composing the Gareth Malory used several different romances known to him, including the English Lybeaus Desconus, the story of La Cotte Mal Taillée from the French prose Tristan, and [. . .] some version of Ipomedon."[22] In this last suggestion he is concurring with an earlier critic who specifies several plot elements that he believes Malory

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[21] Suite 513-62.

[22] Wright 577.

took from either the French or the English version of <u>Ipomadon</u>.[23]

 <u>Ipomadon</u> is a twelfth-century Anglo-Norman romance written by Hugh de Rotelande that became popular enough to be translated into English three times in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[24] In the final section of the romance, Ipomadon learns that the woman he loves, the Lady of Calabria, is under siege by Sir Lyolyne of Inde Major. He disguises himself as a fool in the court of his uncle, King Meleager, who mockingly promises him the first adventure to appear. He patiently endures mistreatment from all members of the court, but eventually the sister of the Lady of Calabria, Lady Imane, arrives with a dwarf seeking a champion to rescue her sister. Ipomadon claims the adventure, and Imane departs in anger. Ipomadon rides after her until they are confronted by a knight in black armour, Sir Maugis, Lyolyne's cousin, who demands Imane. Ipomadon defeats Maugis, takes his armour, and gives his horse to the dwarf. Imane says that Ipomadon has won simply by luck and, to the dwarf's surprise, refuses to eat with him. The next day, they are confronted by Maugris's cousin Greon who also demands Emane. She tries to convince Ipomadon not to fight, but he does and defeats Greon. The lady then acknowledges Ipomadon's worthiness, and that night she offers him her love, which he rebuffs by acting like a madman. The next day they are confronted by Lyolyne's brother, Lyander, and Ipomadon kills him. That night Imane tries again to seduce him, but he sends her away gently, giving her only two kisses. The next day Ipomadon, wearing Lyander's armour, defeats and kills Lyolyne. The lady of Calabria mistakenly believes that Lyolyne has won and flees by ship. A knight named Capaneus challenges Ipomadon, thinking that he is Lyolyne. During the battle, the two recognize one

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[23] Benson 94-101.

[24] Hue de Rotelande, <u>Ipomadon</u>, ed. Rhiannon Purdie, EETS n.s. 316 (2001).

another and learn that they are long-lost brothers. Ipomadon marries the lady of Calabria and Capaneus marries Imane.

Clearly "The Tale of Gareth" has much more in common with this romance than with "Gaheriet's Beginning." Especially reminiscent of "The Tale of Gareth" are the abuse that Ipomadon takes from Meleager's court, his confrontations on his journey with knights who are related to the lady's besieger, the damsel's attribution of his success to luck, his sexual temptation and his polite resistance, the fact that the lady is besieged by formidable but ordinary knights rather than by brother enchanters, as in the Fair Unknown stories, and finally the marriage of Ipomadon and his brother to the Lady and to Imane. Given all of these parallels, it was natural for Benson to conclude, as Wright also does, that "The Tale of Gareth" is a composite, and that one of the versions of Ipomadon was among Malory's sources.

This conclusion, however, does not fit the evidence of "The Tale of Gareth" itself. As stated above, internal inconsistencies, such as the disappearance of Gareth's disability at the beginning of the tale, strongly suggest that Malory was working with a major source, aspects of which he failed to fully integrate.[25] Consequently, until such time as Malory's lost source is found, it will be impossible to say with any confidence which of those elements that appear in cognate romances, such as Ipomadon and Lybeaus Desconus, Malory might have taken from those romances and which come directly from the lost source. For example, Malory would probably have preferred the story in Ipomadon of the lady under siege to the story in Lybeaus Desconus of the lady enchanted by two brothers if he knew both versions, but changing an enchantment into something like capture by an non-magical knight is the sort of

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[25] Field, "Source of Gareth" 250.

thing that might have occurred to Malory without a specific source.

In his commentary Vinaver described some of Gareth's adventures as "a curious mixture of literary reminiscences, among which the romances of Chrétien de Troyes figure prominently."[26] Vinaver never considered that Chrétien's romances could have influenced Malory directly, but, as we have seen in the pervious chapters, more recent work has suggested that Malory may have read Chrétien.[27] With this possibility comes the further possibility that any echoes of Chrétien's work in "The Tale of Gareth" could have been taken by Malory from Chrétien's romances.

The "Joie de la Cort" episode from Chrétien's Erec et Enide offers the closest parallel to Malory's tale.[28] Erec agrees to undertake the adventure of the "Joie de la Cort," which involves travelling to a garden enclosed with magical walls of air and fighting a huge knight, Mabonagrain. On the way to the castle, Erec is confronted with the sight of rows of knights' heads on pikes.[29] On his way to battle Sir Ironside, the Red Knight of the Red Lands, Gareth "aspyed on grete trees, as he rode, how there hynge full goodly armed knyghtes by the necke, and their shyldis about their neckys" (319.34-6). In Erec, Mabonagrain battles all knights in the custom of the "Joie de la Cort" because of a promise to his lady:

> que ja mes de ceanz n'istroie,
> tant que chevaliers i venist

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[26] Works 1428.

[27] Field, "Malory's Minor Sources;" idem, "Malory and Chrétien;" and supra 79-82, 122-27.

[28] Chrétien, Erec et Enide lines 5319-6357.

[29] Erec lines 5730-33.

qui par armes me conqueïst.[30]

In "The Tale of Gareth," Ironside has promised his lady "to laboure in armys dayly untyll that I had mette with one of [Arthur's knights], and all that I myght overcom I sholde put them to vylans deth" (325.5-7). Mabonagrain and Ironside also have in common that they wear red and that their strength waxes and wanes with the sun. Finally, Erec and Gareth both triumph over their foes. Erec's victory brings joy to the court of King Evrain, and Gareth's ends Ironside's siege of Lyonesse's castle.

Mabonagrain's solar characteristics, the first element of his name, and his connection with a character named Evrain recall characters from the Fair Unknown stories, and because the connection between the surviving Fair Unknown romances and Malory's major source remains unclear, we must be content with possibilities. If Malory had adapted the "Joie de la Cort" according to his usual conventions, it would look much like much like this episode in Gareth's adventures. Most of the supernatural elements, such as the walls of air and the mysterious horn, have been removed, and Mabonagrain's counterpart, Ironside, is compelled by a promise rather than under the power of an enchantress. Such changes could be compared to changes that Malory seems to have made when he adapted the scene from Yvain in his "Tale of Launcelot."[31] This is far from proof, of course, but given other evidence that Malory knew Chrétien's romances and may have taken an element in his "Tale of Launcelot" from Erec in particular, it is a clear possibility.

Other echoes of Chrétien's romances that Vinaver notes are less likely to result from Malory's direct borrowing. Vinaver points out that Lyonesse's rejection of Gareth after he

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[30] Erec lines 6026-8.

[31] Supra 122-27.

has rescued her from Ironside is similar to Guinevere's rejection of Lancelot after he has rescued her from Meleagant. In Malory's story, Gareth sets out on the year's journey that Lyonesse requires but is interrupted by the schemes of Lyonesse herself. This leads to an encounter between Gareth and Lyonesse in which he falls in love with her again without recognizing who she is. Because Lyonesse's rejection of Gareth affects the rest of the story, it probably featured in Malory's major source.

Vinaver also cites several point of similarity between "The Tale of Gareth" and Chrétien's <u>Conte del Graal</u>.[32] In that work, Gawain rides in the company of Orgueilleuse de Logres Lady Misdisant, who like Lynet in "The Tale of Gareth" is scornful of her knightly companion in spite of his constant success and civility. Gawain in <u>Conte del Graal</u> is interrupted in an assignation with the sister of the King of Escavalon, just as Gareth is similarly interrupted by Lynet. Probably neither of these examples are evidence of direct borrowing from Chrétien. Both instances derive from the Fair Unknown stories where they are important to the structure and could not have been borrowed from another source.

Elements that are not crucial to the structure of a story are always more likely to have been borrowed from another source, and as we have seen many times, Malory commonly introduces names of characters from minor sources for his minor. Sir Ironside is one of Malory's odder names, and it is also found in <u>Sir Gawain and the Carl of Carlisle</u>.[33] <u>Sir Gawain and the Carl of Carlisle</u> has already been considered a possible source for the name "Bawdewyn" in "The Tale of King Arthur," and it could therefore be a source in "The Tale of

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[32] Vinaver, <u>Works</u> 1429.

[33] Benson 41.

Gareth" as well.[34]

Another theory, however, proposes that Malory's major source for "Gareth" was the source for the name "Ironside" in Sir Gawain and the Carl of Carlisle.[35] In "The Tale of Gareth," Sir Ironside, who is also called The Red Knight of the Red Lands, has the solar characteristics of dressing in red and having strength that waxes and wanes with the passing of the day that both are usually associated with Gawain and with many Arthurian adversaries. Robert Ackerman has argued that Ironside in Gawain and the Carl of Carlisle also shows solar characteristics, and he concludes from this that the character could not originate in Gawain and the Carl of Carlisle and must therefore come from an earlier romance, presumably Malory's lost source.

The only solar characteristic that Ironside displays in Gawain and the Carl of Carlisle, however, is the fact that,

> I-armyd he wolde ryde full clene
> Wer Þe sonn nevyr so hoot;
> In wyntter he wolde armus bere.[36]

This odd description might be a remnant of other more definitive solar characteristics but is too vague to count as strong evidence. The name "Ironside," therefore, could have come to Malory from The Carl of Carlisle, as his Bawdewyn might also have, and the solar characteristics, perhaps simply under the name "Red Knight of the Red Lands," which Malory could well have considered insufficient, from Malory's lost source.[37] This is far from certain, but it would have been quite typical of Malory's method.

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[34] Supra 45.

[35] Ackerman "Malory's 'Ironside,'" Research Studies 32 (1964): 125-33.

[36] Gawain and the Carl of Carlisle, lines A 74-6.

[37] Field, "Source of Gareth" 255.

Most of the names that Malory might have added from minor sources are of common Arthurian characters, and Malory could have gotten most of them from many sources, including, of course, his lost major source. Most of the names that scholars have thought Malory took from minor sources occur in the tournament scene, which itself is generally thought to have been augmented by Malory.[38] Carados of the Dolorous Tower, Agglovale, Tor, Percivale, Lamerok Bagdemagus, Mellyagant, Lionel, Ector, Bors, Bleobrys, Blamour, Galyhodyn, Galyhud, Sagramor, and Dodinas all are in the Vulgate Lancelot and in the Prose Tristan, and any or all could have come from either or both. At this point, Malory was probably familiar enough with both works to make it impossible to say which one was really the source of any of these names. Another name, however, Terquin, is not found in the Prose Tristan and must have come, as did Malory's "Tale of Sir Launcelot," from the "Agravain" section of the Vulgate Lancelot.[39] This fact may imply that Malory took other names from the Lancelot. On the other hand, some names almost certainly came from the Prose Tristan: Tristram, Epynogrys, Palamides, Safere, Segwarides, Malegryne, Dinas, Dinadan, Saduk, Safere, La Kote Male Tayle, the Browne Knight Saunte Pyté as Brunis sans Pité, Anguish, and Gauter are not found in the Lancelot, and so most likely came from the Tristan.

Bryan de les Yles does not come from the Lancelot or Tristan and may have come from another minor source. Bryan de les Yles is a character that we have met before in "The Tale of King Arthur," where we saw that he derives from the Perlesvaus.[40] If the major source for "The Tale of Gareth" was an English poem, it would be unlikely to contain Bryan

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[38] Works 1432-3, and Field, "Source of Gareth" 247-8.

[39] Lancelot 9 "Index des Noms propres et des Anonymes."

[40] Supra 50-1.

de les Yles, since Malory is the only English author whose work survives who mentions this character.[41]

With a final name, Grummor Grummorson, it is impossible to say much with confidence. The name of the character appears in different forms in the two medieval versions of Malory's work, as shown in the table below:

WINCHESTER	CAXTON
138[v]: Grūmor & Grūmorson	o 7[v]: Grummore Grummursom
140[r]: Grūmor and Grūmorson	o 8[v]: Grummore grummorssum
NO READING	Gromere Gromerson
446[v]: Grūmor & Grūmorson	aa 3[r]: Gromere grummorssone

As we see, in the Caxton, this character appears as Grummor Grummorson, but, in the Winchester Manuscript, we consistently find two characters, Grummor and Grummorson. Although it is easier to imagine the compositor of the Caxton missing an ampersand than to imagine the Winchester scribe adding one, it is hard to imagine any single mistake that could have been repeated three times and given the fairly consistent but divergent readings of both versions. The Winchester scribe apparently did consciously alter the name Garlon to Garlonde in the first tale,[42] and so may be thought to have consciously altered this one too.

Clearly, the form of this name is much more stable in the Winchester, whereas no two instances of this name are identical in the Caxton text.[43] Given that the Winchester scribes

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[41] Ackerman, Index.

[42] Works 80-4.

[43] Some of the instability of the name in the Caxton is likely due to the scribal habit of spelling u as o, especially, as here, in poximity to minims.

were capable of altering the name of at least one other character, the lack of uniformity in the Caxton suggests that the Winchester scribes may have altered this name and imposed a consistency that was not in the archetype. If in this case the Caxton is a better representative of the archetype, then Malory is just as likely to have intended the name to be <u>Gromer Grummersom</u> as <u>Grummerson</u>. On the other hand, if one factors in the Winchester readings, then in seven out of nine occurrences, the name is given as <u>Grommerson</u>. However, the Winchester readings cannot be considered to be three independent occurrences. The name as the Winchester scribes found it must have allowed the interpretation <u>Gromerson</u>, which they used to create their apparent father and son pair, but that itself does not mean that their copy was not confusing or inconsistent, as the Caxton copy-text apparently was.

Given that the character appears twice in the Caxton as Grummor Grummorsom, it seems possible that the unfamiliar name of Gromer somer Joure was intended and that this name became garbled early in the textual tradition.[44] Perhaps early in the textual tradition <u>Gromer</u> was duplicated through some accident and <u>Gromersomer</u> was misread, and this accident was regularized throughout, which would have produced the Caxton reading. Then a conscious emendation could have resulted in the Winchester reading. This theory is highly speculative, but, until and unless further evidence is discovered, any theory on this matter is bound to be.

If it is a corruption of Gromer somer Joure, the name was unlikely to have been in the major source of "The Tale of Gareth." Malory most likely took Gromer somer Joure from <u>The Wedding of Sir Gawain</u>, in which it appears probably itself a corruption of another

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[44] For Gromer somer Joure, see infra 218-20.

name.[45] If, however, Grummor Grummorson is a character in his own right, then Malory may

have found him in his major source for this tale. Grummor Grummorson appears nowhere

else in surviving medieval literature,[46] and therefore the theory that he derives from the lost

major source would eliminate the necessity of multiplying hypothetical lost sources.

In the absence of Malory's major source for "The Tale of Gareth," discussion of the minor

sources of this tale must be limited. However, the existent evidence is consistent with

Malory's usual habits of composition. Just as in the three tales that precede this one, Malory

worked from an existing romance and added details and perhaps entire episodes from minor

sources, a procedure that he was to continue in his next tale.

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[45] Supra 64-73 and infra 218-20.

[46] A character named Sir Gromer appears in the English poem The Turk and Gowin, but this poem is thought to be too late to be a source for Malory. Sir Frederick Madden, Syr Gawayne (London: Bannatyne Club, 1839) 243-55.

CHAPTER SIX: "THE TALE OF SIR TRISTRAM"

The major source of Malory's "Tale of Sir Tristram" is the thirteenth-century Old French

prose <u>Roman de Tristan</u>.[1] The Prose <u>Tristan</u>, written apparently in emulation of the Prose

<u>Lancelot</u>, is a massive romance in which the tragic love story of Tristan and Iseult is

interlaced with a version of the history the knights of the Round Table. The Prose <u>Tristan</u> has

the most complex textual history of all of Malory's known sources. More than eighty

manuscripts preserve four primary versions of this romance as well as several single-

manuscript versions.[2] Early scholarship recognized two versions, the original, shorter version

and an extended version, which included, also in emulation of the Prose <u>Lancelot</u>, a version

of the Grail quest.[3] Subsequent scholarship has distinguished Versions III and IV, which each

grew independently out of the longer second version.[4]

No single surviving manuscript represents Malory's version, which apparently

combined parts of Versions II and IV.[5] The first part of Malory's tale closely follows ms.

B.N. fr. 103, which is one of the single-manuscript versions that is a modification of Version

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[1] Vinaver, <u>Le Roman de Tristan et Iseut dans l'œuvre de Thomas Malory</u> (Paris: Champion, 1925); and <u>Works</u> 1443-1533.

[2] Emmanuèle Baumgartner, <u>Le Tristan en prose: essai d'interprétation</u> (Geneva: Droz, 1975) 63-87; and Field, "The French Prose <u>Tristan</u>: A note on some manuscripts, a list of printed texts, and two correlations with Malory's <u>Morte Darthur</u>," <u>Malory: Texts and Sources</u>, 261-75.

[3] Vinaver, <u>Le Roman de Tristan</u>, and idem, "The Prose <u>Tristan</u>," <u>Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages</u>, ed. R. S. Loomis (Oxford: Clarendon, 1959) 339-47.

[4] Baumgartner, <u>Le Tristan en prose</u> 67-76.

[5] Field, "The French Prose <u>Tristan</u>."

II.[6] Vinaver believed that this manuscript ceases to be representative of Malory's source on page 513 of his three-volume edition, in the section that he entitled "Tristan's Madness and Exile." By this point, ms. B.N. fr. 334 is the closest known manuscript to Malory's source. This is an incomplete manuscript that comes to an end before the point at which Version IV distinguishes itself from Version II and could have therefore originally belonged to either. It ends at the point corresponding to page 626.19, in the section Vinaver calls "King Mark," and scholars use a third manuscript, ms. B.N. fr. 99, which is of Version IV, from this point to the end of the tale.

Malory adapts this source in a way similar to his earlier work. As he did when he adapted the Prose Merlin and its Post-Vulgate Suite, Malory omits the first part of his major source for this tale and begins "The Tale of Sir Tristram" with the birth of his hero.[7] Also, as he did when he adapted both the Merlin and the alliterative Morte Arthure, Malory concluded his tale significantly before his major source, and, as before, he did so because he chose elsewhere in his book to give a version of the story that he considered more accurate. In this case he omits the "Third Book of Sir Tristram," which contains its version of the quest for the Grail and the death of the lovers, in order to follow the Vulgate Queste del Saint Graal and Mort Artu.

"The Tale of Sir Tristram" is by far Malory's longest tale. It is more than twice as long as any other tale, occupying 481 pages in Vinaver's standard edition. Although "The Tale of Tristram" begins with Tristram's birth and follows him through his early development

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[6] Tristan 1489, Introductory note by C. E. Pickford (London: Scolar, 1976). This is a facsimile of the first edition, which was printed from a manuscript very closely related to B.N. fr. 103.

[7] Tristan 1489 sig. c viii^v.

as a knight, it does not have a plot in the modern sense. Rather it follows its large cast though complex interlaced adventures that resemble the variety of life, narrating the deeds of Arthur's greatest knights during the middle years of his reign. As in the Prose <u>Tristan</u>, fairly discrete stories such as that of "La Cote Male Tayle," "Alexander the Orphan," and "The Red City" interlace with tournaments and jousts against the backdrop of the story of Tristram, Isode, and King Mark. However, the larger story of the <u>Morte Darthur</u> also advances in this tale. The quest for the Grail is foreshadowed by the birth of Galahad, and the rise of factions loyal to the families of Sir Gawain or to Sir Lancelot leads to the murder of Lamorak by Gawain and his brothers. These factions will contribute to the fall of the Arthurian realm. Malory ends the tale with the baptism of Sir Palomides, Tristram's rival for Isode's love. As with his previous tales, Malory uses minor sources to add such things as characters' names, episodes, and occasionally a different tone to his rendition.

Because the textual tradition is so complex and because Malory's version is different in many particulars from all extant manuscripts, and because the numerous manuscripts themselves often differ in detail from one another, the usual caveat about possible differences between the copies of Malory's sources and the surviving versions should be emphasised. As always, the conclusions reached here can only be valid so far as we can rely on the assumption that Malory's sources resembled the manuscripts used as a basis for comparison, in this case mss. B.N. fr. 103, 334, and 99.

On this assumption, the first addition that Malory makes in his adaptation of the Prose <u>Tristan</u> is typical of the changes that he has made to his earlier tales.[8] In the beginning of the tale,

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[8] In a recent article, which appeared too late for me to consult for this dissertation, Phillipa Hardman argues that Malory may have used the Middle English <u>Sir Tristrem</u> for

Malory places the marriage of Tristram's father Meliodas to Elizabeth, King Mark's sister in

a specific setting:

> And at that tyme kynge Arthure regned, and he was hole kynge of Ingelonde, Walys, Scotland, and of many other realmys. Howbehit there were many kynges that were lordys of many contreyes, but all they helde their londys of kynge Arthure; for in Walys were two kynges, and in the Northe were many kynges, and in Cornuayle and in the Weste were two kynges; also in Irelonde were two or three kynges, and all were undir the obeysaunce of kynge Arthure; so was the kynge of Fraunce and the kyng of Bretayne, and all the lordshyppis unto Roome. (371.10-19)

This statement would be largely true of the Prose Tristan, which is set in the world of the

Vulgate Cycle. However, the prologue of the Prose Tristan says no more than that the story is

set "au temps du tres noble roy Artus."[9] Malory is apparently anxious lest readers assume

that Mark holds Cornwall independently, and he uses the example of characters from his

earlier sources, such as the eleven kings of the North, and the kings of North and South

Wales, to reassure his readers. In this case Malory is clarifying rather than altering his source,

although in the part of the Vulgate Cycle equivalent to the beginning of the Tristan, Arthur

has not yet conquered King Claudas on the continent and must fight a war against Galeholt

before apparently gaining lordship over all of the British Isles.[10] Such a setting fits fairly well

with the idea that the beginning of "The Tale of Tristram" represents a flashback to the time

in "The Tale of King Arthur" after Arthur has quelled the rebel kings.[11] Although the

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various details. Phillipa Hardman, "Malory and Middle English Verse Romance: The Case of Sir Tristrem," Arthurian Studies in Honour of P. J. C. Field, ed. Bonnie Wheeler (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2004) 215-22.

[9] Tristan 1489 sig. a i[r].

[10] See Elyn Olesky "Chronology, Factual Consistency, and the Problem of Unity in Malory," Journal of English and Germanic Philology 68 (1969): 57-73.

[11] Field, "Sir Thomas Malory's Le Morte Darthur," The Arthur of the English, ed. W. R. J. Barron (Cardiff: U of Wales P, 2001) 225-46, on 236.

statement that Arthur rules "all the lordshyppis unto Roome" seems to imply a situation that did not exist until the end of the second tale, such inconsistencies are a part of Malory's work and need no special explanation.[12] Here, however, we again see Malory using his own earlier tales as a minor source in an attempt to create a consistent vision of the Arthurian story.

Malory's next apparent addition from a minor source also occurs early in the story. In Malory's version, as in the Prose Tristan, Tristram and his mentor Governayle remove to Gaul. In the Prose Tristan they are fleeing persecution following the death of Tristan's father. While in Gaul, Tristram begins the training that will eventually lead to his becoming a knight:

> [H]e growed in myght and strength, he laboured in huntynge and in hawkynge – never jantylman more that ever we hede rede of. And as the booke seyth, he began good mesures of blowynge of beestes of venery and beestes of chaace and all maner of vermaynes, and all the tearmys we have yet of hawkynge and huntynge. And therefore the booke of venery, of hawkynge and huntynge is called the booke of sir Tristrams. (375.15-22)

In his commentary, Vinaver notes that "M's description of a gentleman's education is to a large extent original, and the phrase 'as the booke sayth' is used merely to conceal a departure from the source."[13] He quotes Malory's source as saying only,

> tant des eschez et des tables tant que nul ne l'en peult mater[, et de l'escremie plus que nul]. Et cheuauchoit si bien que nul plus.[14]

Vinaver is, therefore, correct in saying that Malory's description is mostly original. However, Malory is not departing from his source when he says that Tristram "laboured in huntynge and in hawkynge." Near this point, the Prose Tristan says of its hero,

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[12] See Field, "Author, Scribe, and Reader in Malory: The Case of Harleuse and Peryne," Malory: Texts and Sources 72-88.

[13] Works 1456.

[14] Tristan 1489 sig. d iii^r. Emendation supplied from Vinaver Works 1456.

> Ung iour alla a le roy chasser a grant compagnie si y fut Tristan et Gorvenal
> pour aprendre maniere de chasser.[15]

And later Tristan is said to be absent from King Mark's court when Iseult is abducted by

Palamides because he is hunting.[16] These references are given more fully in the modern

standard edition,[17] and they may have been in Malory's manuscript as well. In either case

they attest that the tradition of Tristan as an expert huntsman was present in the French

tradition and was not an addition of Malory's.

The tradition of Tristan as an expert on the rules of the hunt appears in the English

tradition in romances such as Thomas of England's twelfth-century Roman de Tristan, and it

also appears in Sir Tristrem,[18] an English romance that follows Thomas's storyline and dates

from the beginning of the fourteenth century.[19] Neither work states that Tristan defined the

terms of hunting, but they both make clear Tristan's excellence in that knightly pursuit.

Because Malory never seems to prefer the story of the Thomas tradition to that which he

found in the prose tradition, there is no reason to believe that he attributed a book of hunting

to Sir Tristram under the influence of either work: rather these romances attest to the currency

of this tradition in England before Malory's time.

This tradition is also found in the fifteenth-century treatise called The Boke of Saint

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[15] Tristan 1489 sig. d iii[r-v].

[16] Tristan 1489 sig. h iii[v].

[17] Le Roman de Tristan en prose, ed. Renée L. Curtis vol.1 (Warsaw: Max Hueber, 1963) 135, and vol. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 1976) 102.

[18] François Remigereau, "Tristan 'Maître de vénerie' dans la tradition anglaise et dans le roman de Thomas," Romania 58 (1932): 218-37.

[19] Sir Tristrem, ed. George P. McNeill (Blackwood: London, 1886).

Albans, attributed to Dame Juliana Berners.[20] The section of this work that is devoted to

hunting begins,

> Wheresoeuere ye fare by fryth or by fell
> My dere chylde take hede how Tristram dooth you tell.[21]

The Boke of Saint Albans was published in 1486, at least sixteen years after Malory

completed the Morte Darthur and a year after Caxton printed it. It is therefore unlikely to

have been Malory's source. The various sections of The Boke of Saint Albans may have an

earlier separate circulation, but no evidence has been put forward to support this hypothesis.[22]

In any event, this brief and ambiguous reference does not seem to be sufficient to

explain Malory's numerous references to the role that Tristram played in the establishment of

this art. The reference to Tristram in Saint Albans could more reasonably be thought to have

resulted from Malory's influence than the other way around, but this too appears unlikely.

Although there was certainly at least one manuscript and probably at least two or three

between Malory's autograph and both the Winchester and the Caxton, scholars have found

little else to indicate how widely Malory's book might have circulated before Caxton's

printing. The current state of knowledge would, therefore, seem to suggest that the citations

in Morte Darthur and The Boke of Saint Albans refer to a common tradition that had begun to

develop by the time Thomas of England wrote and that could have come independently both

to Dame Juliana and to Malory.

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[20] Rachel Hands, "Juliana Berners and The Boke of St. Albans," The Review of English Studies 18 (1967): 373-86, on 374-5.

[21] Dame Juliana Berners, The Boke of Saint Albans, STC 3308-16 (Amsterdam: Da Capo, 1969) sig. e i^r.

[22] Hands 383.

As in other tales, Malory names characters in "The Tale of Tristram" that his major source

leaves anonymous. Two anonymous knights who are defeated in combat by La Cote Mal

Tayle in the Prose Tristan are given two of Malory's oddest names, Sir Playne de Amoris and

Sir Playne de Fors (472.15-19). These two knights appear only once in this tale, and only

once more in the Morte Darthur, in the list of knights who try to heal Sir Urry (1150.24-5).[23]

Because they appear together and because their names seem to be allegorical complements,

they probably derive from the same source. Playne de Fors is otherwise unknown in

surviving literature, but Playne de Amoris appears in a list of heroes in Chaucer's "Tale of Sir

Topas:"[24]

> Of Horn and of Ypotys,
> Of Bevis and of Gy,
> Of sir Libeux and Pleyn-damour
> But sir Thopas, he bereth the flour
> Of royal chivalry.[25]

As we have seen, there is evidence that Malory had read at least one of The Canterbury Tales

and that he may have read others.[26] Malory might, therefore, have taken Playne de Amoris

from Chaucer and invented Playne de Fors as a suitable companion.

    If, as Larry Benson speculates, Chaucer invented the name Pleyn-damour,[27] Malory

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[23] Playne de Amoris is supplied in "The Healing of Sir Urry" by Field in his revision.

[24] Field, "Malory's Sir Phelot," 348, also noticed by Skeat. "Plena d'Amors" is said to be an anagram of Romadanaple, the heroine's name in the late twelfth-century romance Florimont, by Aimon de Varennes, cited in Field. This situation is so different from Chaucer's reference and Malory's character that derivation from Florimont would be a hypothesis of last resort.

[25] Geoffrey Chaucer, "The Tale of Sir Thopas," The Riverside Chaucer, ed. Larry Benson (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1988) lines 898-902.

[26] Supra 64-74 and infra 189-90.

[27] Benson, Explanatory Notes, Riverside Chaucer, "The Tale Sir Thopas," note to line 900.

must have invented Playne de Fors. Despite the fact that the other five heroes in the list derive from known romances, Chaucer was surely capable of inventing a burlesque knightly name, and it is hard to be sure that Malory could not or did not ever invent any names. Inventing personal names, however, goes against his usual practice. Malory clearly borrowed most of the names that he adds from various sources, and the few that he seems to have invented all fit common Arthurian patterns.[28] It seems particularly unlikely that he would invent an allegorical name like Playn de Fors, since he never seems to show any interest in allegory or even awareness that these characters appear to be allegorical. The evidence, therefore, is inconclusive but may point to a lost source for Chaucer and Malory.

Another minor character, Sir Gyngalyn, is himself less distinctive than Playne de Amoris and Playne de Fors but has a little more substance because he is a son of Sir Gawain. In Gyngalyn's first appearance in the Morte Darthur, he jousts with Sir Tristram, is defeated, and receives comfort from King Mark (494-95). This scene, including Gyngalyn, is taken from the Prose Tristan, where the character's name is spelled "Giglain."[29] Malory's spelling, which is consistent in both the Caxton and Winchester versions, is virtually the same that Malory found or used earlier in The Wedding of Sir Gawain: Gyngolyn.[30] This implies that Malory was familiar with this character from another source before he read the Tristan. If Malory is the author of The Wedding of Sir Gawain, then he might have found the character

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[28] Wilson, "Malory's Minor Characters" and "Addenda on Malory's Minor Characters."

[29] Tristan 1489 sig. n iv[v]. In the standard edition, the name is spelled Gynglains, which is much closer to Malory's spelling. Le Roman de Tristan, ed. Renée L. Curtis, vol. 3 (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1985) "Index des Noms Propres."

[30] Wedding of Sir Gawain, ed. Laura Sumner (Hampton: Smith College, 1924) line 799.

with that spelling in his source for that work, or he might have found the name in <u>Lybeaus</u>

<u>Desconus</u> under such variant spellings as Gingelein, Ginglaine, Gingglaine.[31]

This same character also appears in French romance.[32] He is a character in the Second

Continuation of Chrétien's <u>Perceval</u>, in which his name is spelt with such variations as

Ginglains and Guinglain,[33] and he is the hero of Renaut de Beaujeu's <u>Le Bel Inconnu</u>, in

which his name is spelled Guinglans.[34] Both of these are closer to Malory's spelling than that

of the Prose <u>Tristan</u>, but neither are as close as either English poem. If this form of the name

came from a surviving romance, then the <u>Wedding</u> is the most likely candidate. The amount

of Arthurian material in his minor sources suggests, however, that Malory was an avid reader

of Arthurian romance, and so the possibility of another lost source will always remain.

Tristram's attack on Gyngalyn is caused by his madness. When Tristram misinterprets a letter

that Isode had sent to Sir Keyhydyus to mean that she loves Keyhydyus, Tristram flees into

the wilderness and lives there, sometimes aided and sometimes tormented by local shepherds.

One of his few comforts is his harp, which is brought to him by a damsel (495-502). Malory

took this episode from his major source, and the most noticeable difference between Malory's

version and the Prose <u>Tristan</u> is that Malory, as often, abbreviates the story.[35]

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[31] <u>Lybeaus Desconus</u>, ed. Maldwyn Mills, EETS o.s. 261 (1969). Robert Ackerman <u>Index of the Arthurian Names in Middle English</u> lists <u>The Wedding</u> and <u>Lybeaus</u> as the only two romances to contain <u>Ginglain</u> s. v.

[32] G. D. West, <u>Index of Proper Names in French Arthurian Prose Romances</u>.

[33] <u>The Continuations of the Old French Perceval of Chrétien de Troyes</u> ed. William Roach 5 vols. (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1952) 4: lines 31070, 31104.

[34] Renaut de Beaujeu, <u>Le Bel Inconnu</u>, ed. G. Perrie Williams (Paris: Champion, 1929).

[35] <u>Tristan 1489</u> sig. n iii^v-o i^r.

The theme of a knight's love-madness and his subsequent retreat into the wild is, however, a fairly common motif in medieval literature, and Malory may have been aware of it from several sources. This same motif is found applied to Lancelot later in a part of the Tristan that was itself adapted from the Vulgate Lancelot and which Malory adapts near the end of his "Tale of Sir Tristram." He may also have been aware of the versions of this motif in Chrétien de Troyes's Le chevalier au lion and in the Post-Vulgate Cycle, in which the victims of madness are Yvain and Lancelot respectively. This theme is also present in the Middle English romance Sir Orfeo.[36] Sir Orfeo is an English adaptation of an otherwise unrecorded Breton lai that tells a version of the Classical story of Orpheus and Euridice that had apparently assimilated a great deal of Celtic legend. When Orfeo's wife is abducted by faeries, he abdicates his kingdom and lives in the wild among the animals. Like his Classical counterpart and like Sir Tristram, Orfeo's only solace is the music he plays for himself on his harp.

These stories obviously deal with similar themes, but Vinaver has suggested that Malory might have borrowed directly from Sir Orfeo.[37] He argued that Orfeo could have suggested "the two essential elements of [Malory's] account: the hero's life in the wilderness and the solace he finds in listening to the harp."[38] These lines especially are said to have influenced Malory:

> His harp, where-on was al his gle,
> He hidde in an holwe tre,
> & when þe weder was clere & briȝt
> He toke his harp to him wel riȝt
> & harped at his owhen wille.

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[36] Sir Orfeo, ed. A. J. Bliss (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1954).

[37] Vinaver, commentary, Works 1471-2.

[38] Vinaver, commentary 1472.

> In-to alle þe wode þe soun gan schille,
> Þat alle þe wilde bestes þat þer beþ
> For ioie abouten him þai teþ,
> & alle þe foules þat þer were
> Come & sete on ich a brere,
> To here his harping a-fine
> – So miche melody was þer-in
> & when he his harping lete wold,
> No best bi him abide nold.[39]

These lines, however, although they describe a situation similar to Tristram's, do not contain any common elements with the <u>Morte Darthur</u> that Malory could not have taken from the Prose <u>Tristan</u>.

In fact, it is hard to see just what Vinaver believes Malory to have taken from <u>Sir Orfeo</u>. He states that "<u>M</u> had no access to any of the early versions of the [Tristan] story, but he seems to have recaptured something of the original spirit of the story," and that "[Tristram's] madness thus ends with a return to what had caused it, a realization of his tragic fate. The whole story has an unusual quality for which one would look in vain in the <u>Lay Mortel</u> inserted in the corresponding place in the Prose Romance."[40] These statements may be true, and Tristram's outburst at seeing Isode again, "go from me, for much angur and daunger have I assayed for youre love" (502.20-1), which Vinaver cites, perhaps captures "something of the original spirit of the story" more vividly than any single sentence of the Prose <u>Tristan</u>, but the tragic spirit that Malory emphases is at least implicit in his major source.

Therefore, because there are no clear verbal parallels nor are there any elements that are unique to the two stories, there seems to be no reason to conclude that Malory drew upon

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[39] <u>Sir Orfeo</u> lines 267-80.

[40] Vinaver, commentary 1471-2.

<u>Sir Orfeo</u>. Certainly, Malory would not have had to look farther than the Prose <u>Tristan</u> for

"the two essential elements of his account: the hero's life in the wilderness and the solace he

finds in listening to the harp."

The next potential instance of borrowing from a minor source occurs after the point that

Malory's exemplar seems to have left ms. B.N. 103 and now resembles ms. B.N. 334. It is

another element possibly borrowed from an English poem, the names Hew de la Mountayne

and Madok de la Mountayne (516.31-2), which Malory gives when he makes one of the

innumerable anonymous knights in the Prose <u>Tristan</u> into two knights.[41] These knights from

Norgales are defeated by Lancelot at a tournament at the Castle of Maidens. A knight named

Hew appears in a late fifteenth-century Scottish poem <u>Golagros and Gawane</u>.[42] This poem

combines two unrelated episodes from the First Continuation of Chrétien's <u>Perceval</u>.[43] In

<u>Golagros and Gawane</u>, Hew is a knight of Arthur's opponent, Golagros, but by the end of the

poem Golagros and Arthur are reconciled by Gawain's courtesy. It may be that the poem is

too late to have influenced Malory, but until <u>Golagros and Gawane</u> has been the subject of

more academic study, this will remain uncertain. In any case, the Hew of <u>Golagros and

Gawane</u> is not called "of the Mountain," is not said to be from Wales, and does not have an

associate named Madok.

   Madok is also an unusual name for an Arthurian character, only appearing only in

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[41] <u>Le Roman de Tristan en prose</u>, ed. Marie-Luce Chênerie and Thierry Delcourt, vol.
2 (Geneva: Droz, 1990) 322.

[42] "The Knightly Tale of Golagros and Gawane," <u>Syr Gawayne</u>, ed. Frederic Madden
(London: Bannatyne Club, 1839) lines 742 and 768.

[43] <u>Continuations of the Old French</u> Perceval 1: lines 2166-2545 and 8765-12706.

two other Arthurian texts.[44] A Madoc appears in Laymon's <u>Brut</u> in a roll call of Arthur's

"eorles."[45] And in the <u>Merlin</u> continuation called the <u>Livre D'artus</u>, Madoc le Noir de l'Isle

Noire engages Gawain in single combat.[46] Although it would be intriguing to be able to

establish a connection between the <u>Morte Darthur</u> and the earliest English Arthurian poem or

between Malory and the third known <u>Merlin</u> continuation, the occurrence of this name in

these works does not establish it. In neither of these works is Madoc called "of the

Mountain," nor does he have an associate named Hew.

     More likely in this instance is that Malory took two names that he thought would be

appropriate for knights from North Wales. <u>Hew</u> is the typical Welsh variation of the

Germanic name Hugh, and <u>Madoc</u> is a native Welsh name that derives from <u>mad,</u>

"fortunate."[47] Both names are adequately attested long before Malory's time.

One of the interlaced stories that Malory found in the Prose <u>Tristan</u> and adapted was that of

"Alixandre l'orphelin." In this interpolation, King Mark treacherously slays his own brother,

Bodwyne, Alexander's father, out of jealousy. Alexander grows up to become a knight and

seeks revenge against his uncle. In the end, Alexander is slain by Mark (633-48). The

presence of this story is one of the elements that distinguishes Version IV from Version II.

Malory's exemplar therefore no longer resembled ms. B. N. 334, a Version II manuscript.

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    [44] Robert Ackerman, <u>Index of Arthurian Names</u>, (New York: AMS, 1952); and G. D. West, <u>Index of Proper Names</u> (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1978).

    [45] Layamon, <u>Brut</u>, ed. G. L. Brook and R. F. Leslie, 2 vols. EETS o. s. 277, 1963, 1978) line Caligula 12155.

    [46] "Le Livre D'Artus," <u>The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances</u>, H. O. Sommer, vol. 7 (Washington D. C.: Carnegie Institution, 1916) e. g. 62.

    [47] <u>Oxford Dictionary of Christian Names</u>.

Scholars use ms. B. N. 99 to investigate the portion of Malory's tale that conforms to Version IV. In the extant Version IV manuscripts, however, Bodwyne is not named,[48] nor is Bodwyn found elsewhere in French or English Arthurian romance.[49] However, a character named Count Bedoin, Lord of the Castle la Marche, appears near the end of the Prose Tristan, and in the Post-Vulgate Queste. Bedoin is an unpleasant character who disinherits his widowed sister but who is forced to make amends by Galahad.[50] Although Count Bedoin does not have much in common with "good prynce Bodwyne" (633.2-3), he does have character traits in common with King Mark, and if Malory were searching his memory for a suitable name for King Mark's brother, he might have come upon the imperfectly remembered name of this count, more likely from the final section of the Tristan than from the Post-Vulgate.

Another episode that distinguishes Version IV from Version II of the Prose Tristan is "The Tournament at Surluse," which follows "Alexander the Orphan." In Malory's version, Palomedes kills two minor characters, Gomoryes and his brother Archade in this tournament (655-8). In the Prose Tristan, Gomoryes is called Gorois and his brother is left anonymous. It is at least an oddity that the name Archadés appears as the nephew of the duke of Saxonne in another Arthurian romance, the Prose Cligés.[51] This adaptation of Chrétien's verse romance survives in a single fifteenth-century Burgundian manuscript, and because this

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[48] Vinaver, commentary 1500.

[49] Ackerman, Index of Arthurian Names in Middle English, and West, Prose Index.

[50] Le Roman de Tristan en prose 9:213-6; 218-22, and La Version Post-Vulgate de la Queste del Saint Graal et de la Mort Artu: Troisième Partie du Roman du Graal, ed. Fanni Bogdanow, 4 vols in 5. (Paris: Anciens Textes Français, 2000) 3: 519, 528.

[51] Le livre de Alixandre Epereur de Constantinoble et de Cligés son filz: roman en prose du XVᵉ siècle, ed. Maria Colombo Timelli (Geneva: Droz, 2004).

adaptation does not seem to have circulated very widely it would be surprising to find that Malory had read it.

A more likely possibility is that Malory took the name of a knight Archaus, who attempts to carry off a damsel and is killed by Blioberis, from another episode of the Prose Tristan that he did not intend to use.[52] The change in form from Archaus to Archade is less drastic than the change from Gorois to Gomoryes.

The section that Vinaver titled "Launcelot and Elaine" comes near the end of "The Tale of Tristram." Malory took this section from the Prose Tristan, whose author took it from the Vulgate Lancelot. This same section was also taken before Malory's time by the author of the Post-Vulgate Cycle.[53] A number of details, therefore, could potentially come to Malory from any or all of his three predecessors.

In his Commentary, Vinaver lists proper names that were added by Malory to anonymous places and people in the Prose Tristan. One of these, Castel Blanke, to which Blyaunte and his brother Selyvaunte take Lancelot in his madness, is probably not really Malory's invention (819). In the standard edition of this part of the Tristan and in the Vulgate Lancelot this castle is called "Blanc Castel,"[54] and in the Post-Vulgate Folie Lancelot it is called Blant Recet.[55] A castle with the same name, "Chastell Blanke" is said to be between

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[52] Eilert Löseth, Le roman en prose de Tristan le roman de Palamède et la compilation de Rusticcien de Pise: analyse critique d'après les manuscrits de Paris, 3 vols. (Paris: Emile Bouillon, 1890-1924) 1: 226.

[53] Lancelot: Roman en prose du XIIIe siècle, ed Alexandre Micha, 9 vols. (Geneva: Droz, 1979-83) 6: 210; and La Folie Lancelot 38.

[54] Le Roman de Tristan en prose, ed. Philippe Ménard et al., 8 vols. (Genevia: Droz, 1987-1995) 6: 187, and Lancelot 6: 210.

[55] La Folie Lancelot 38.

Barfleur and Burgundy in the alliterative <u>Morte Arthure</u>.[56] Clearly this is a name that Malory

could have been aware of from many sources. Even though the castle is not given a name in

ms. B.N. fr. 99, it could well have been called Blanc in Malory's manuscript, or if Malory's

manuscript resembled 99 in this, Malory could have easily have taken the name from the

<u>Lancelot</u>, where it occurs in between two of the episodes that he adapted for his "Tale of Sir

Launcelot."

     Castle Case presents a similar situation. This castle, in which Galahad is conceived, is

listed in the first and second edition of Malory's <u>Works</u> in the list of proper names added by

Malory but removed by Field in the third edition. Field points out that Sommer shows that

Castle Case is a corruption of "Castle de la Quasse."[57] Once again the standard edition of this

part of the <u>Tristan</u> and the Vulgate <u>Lancelot</u> both give this name,[58] and therefore once again,

Malory could have taken this name from his manuscript of the <u>Tristan</u> or from the <u>Lancelot</u>.

Another proper name that could have come to Malory from the Vulage Cycle is Bartelot,

brother of Breunis sans Pité (819-20). During his madness, Lancelot sees Blyaunte, his

benefactor, attacked by two knights, Breunis sans Pité and Bartelot. In the both the Vulgate

<u>Lancelot</u> and the <u>Tristan,</u> the two knights are unnamed. Breunis sans Pité is an infamous

malefactor who seems to ride through both the Prose <u>Tristan</u> and Malory's version of it

causing trouble. It therefore makes sense that Malory, who preferred even minor characters

to have names, would identity this unnamed knight with Breunis sans Pité. Breunis sans Pité,

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[56] <u>Morte Arthure: A Critical Edition</u>, ed. Mary Hamel (New York: Garland, 1984) line 1225.

[57] Personal communication, February 2003. H. Oscar Sommer, "Perceval and Galahad," <u>Modern Philology</u> 5 (1907): 55-84.

[58] <u>Roman de Tristan</u> 6: 21, and <u>Lancelot</u> 4: 207-8, 213, 5: 140.

however, is never said anywhere else to have a brother. Malory could have derived the name

Bartelot from Bertelay, the knight who raises and later sponsors the false Guenevere in the

Vulgate <u>Suite du Merlin</u> and <u>Lancelot</u>.[59] Bertelay is also thought to have lent his name to a

much more familiar character in English literature, Bertilak de Hautdesert, the Green Knight

of <u>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</u>.[60]

In principle, Malory could have taken this name from any of these three romances.

However, it is probably most likely to have come from the Vulgate <u>Suite du Merlin</u>.

Although Malory used the <u>Lancelot</u> as the basis of his third tale, scholars debate whether he

had access to the beginning of that romance, and no scholar has produced evidence to suggest

that Malory was aware of the work of the <u>Gawain</u>-poet.

One of the functions of "The Tale of Tristram" is to set the stage for the quest for the Holy

Grail, which will be the focus of Malory's next tale, and much of this is done in the section

that Vianver entitled "Launcelot and Elaine." In addition to recounting the birth of Galahad,

the knight destined to achieve the Grail, this section also contains the final pre-quest

appearance of the Grail. When Perceval and Ector de Marys meet in a forest and joust each

other, they wound each other severely. The Grail appears and heals them completely.

Perceval does not understand the nature of the Grail, so Ector explains,

> Hit is an holy vessell that is borne by a mayden, and therein ys a parte of the
> blood of Oure Lorde Jesu Cryste. (817.6-8)

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[59] <u>The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances</u>, 2: 310-3, and <u>Lancelot</u>, see vol. 9
"Index des noms propres et des Anonymes" s.v. Bertholai.

[60] <u>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</u>, ed. J. R. R. Tolkien and E. V. Gordon, rev.
Norman Davis, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967) line 2445 and <u>n</u>; see also Richard R.
Griffiths, "Bertilak's Lady: The French Background of <u>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</u>,"
<u>Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences</u> 314 (1978): 249-66.

This description is a departure from Malory's source, in which Hector describes the Grail as

> est uns vaissiaus ou nostre sires ihesu crist manga laignel le iour de pasques avec ses disciples.[61]

This change is in accord with the conception of the Grail as containing a relic of Chirst's blood that we saw in Chapter Two.[62] It would appear that Malory is again responding to what has been theorized as a British popular tradition.[63] It is particularly interesting that Malory is still willing to amend information from his major source about the Grail in this way, for, as we shall see, he is apparently unwilling to do so in his next tale, "The Quest for the Holy Grail."

The final section of Malory's "Tale of Sir Tristram" deals with the resolution of the long-standing feud between the noble antagonists Tristram and Palomides. This episode is largely an innovation of Malory's. On his way to the feast at Arthur's court that celebrates the return of Lancelot, Tristram again encounters Palomides, the Saracen knight. Although they are well-established adversaries, Palomides declines to fight because Tristram is unarmed. Tristram remarks that because Palomides is so noble it is a shame that he is not a Christian, and Palomides replies that he will be baptised after he has fought one more battle. Borrowing arms from the defeated Sir Galleron, Tristram gives Palomides his final battle and fights Palomides to a draw. Palomides is duly baptised at Carlisle, with Tristram and Galleron as godfathers.

At the beginning of this episode, Isode declines to accompany Tristram to Arthur's

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[61] Ms. B. N. fr 99 f. 538ᵛ.

[62] Supra 74-5.

[63] Richard Barber, The Holy Grail: Imagination and Belief (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard UP, 2004) 213-14.

court but insists that he go anyway, fearing that if he does not,

> than shall I be spokyn of shame amonge all quenys and ladyes of astate; for ye that ar called one of the nobelyste knyghtys of the worlde and a knyght of the Rounde Table, how may ye be myssed at that feste? For what shall be sayde of you amonge all knyghtes? "A! se how sir Tristrram huntyth and hawkyth, and cowryth wythin a castell wyth hys lady and forsakyth us. Alas!" shall som sey, "hyt ys pyté that ever he was knyght or ever he shulde have the love of a lady." Also, what shall quenys and ladyes say of me? "Hyt ys pyté that I have me lyff, that I wolde holde so noble a knyght as ye ar frome hys worshyp."
> (839-40)

This is the second time that we have encountered this notion in the Morte Darthur, the first being in the "Tale of Launcelot."[64] In that discussion we raised the possibility that this idea came to Malory from Chrétien de Troyes's romance Erec et Enide. The recurrence of this idea, now associated with the other great lover of Malory's book, again independently of his major source, shows that it stayed in his mind over the course of hundreds of pages. This second instance of this idea may be thought to strengthen the conclusion that Malory had read Erec et Enide.

The presence of Galleron at the baptism of Palomides is surprising. No knight of this name appears in the Prose Tristan or in any other French romance.[65] A Galeron does appear, however, in The Anturs of Arthur and Gawain and the Carl of Carlisle.[66] Because Palomides is baptised in Carlisle, Malory is, perhaps, more likely to have been thinking about Gawain and the Carl of Carlisle in this instance.

The key element of this episode is Palomides's baptism. This does not occur in the part of the Prose Tristan that Malory used in his adaptation. However, Palomides is baptised

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[64] Supra 126-27.

[65] West, Prose Index; and idem, Verse Index.

[66] Ackerman, Index. Larry Benson, Malory's Morte Darthur (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1976) also notices that Galleron appears in Anturs of Arthur 41.

after Tristan's death in the Prose <u>Tristan</u>.[67] The baptism of Palomides is also related in the

Post-Vulgate <u>Queste del Saint Graal</u>.[68] The different versions of this event are interesting. In

the <u>Tristan,</u> Tristan and Iseut have both been killed by King Mark, and the knights of the

Round Table are on the quest for the Grail. Palomides, unaccompanied, asks to be baptised,

following a battle with Lancelot.[69] In the Post-Vulgate, Palomides's father is alarmed to learn

that Palomides has been challenged to a duel with Galahad and encourages Palomides to

become a Christian. Palomides agrees to do so should he survive. When he is defeated but

not killed by Galahad, true to his word, he receives baptism, accompanied by Galahad.[70]

Malory's version, in which the two bitter rivals resolve their conflict, could easily be

an intelligent reworking of the <u>Tristan</u> version. However, it is interesting that Malory's

Palomides is baptised in the presence of the knight who has bested him, just as in the Post-

Vulgate version. If Malory had read the Post-Vulgate version, Galleron's presence could be

explained as an extension of Malory's often-noticed tendency to use near homophones in his

adaptations that change the meaning of his original. In either case, by taking this episode

from the Grail quest and using it to conclude his "Tale of Tristram" Malory shows that he had

read the "Third Book of Sir Tristram," whose story he so emphatically declined to relate

(845.31). He also shows that he was not as reluctant to use religious material as has

sometimes been suggested.

Malory's adaptation of the Prose <u>Tristan</u> in this tale similar to his adaptation of the <u>Merlin</u>

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[67] Benson 117 <u>n</u>.

[68] I am grateful to Professor Field for directing me to this reference.

[69] <u>Le Roman de Tristan en prose</u> 9: 248-50.

[70] <u>La Version Post-Vulgate</u> 3: 261-86.

and its Post-Vulgate <u>Suite</u> in "The Tale of King Arthur." He begins both tales with the birth of his hero rather than at the beginning of the romance and ends both tales long before the end of the source romance, and he adds details from a number of minor sources. The number of minor sources, however, is small given the great size of this tale. In his next tale, however, Malory will use even fewer minor sources.

CHAPTER SEVEN: "THE TALE OF THE SANKGREAL"

Malory's sixth tale is a close adaptation of the Vulgate Queste del Saint Graal.[1] At Pentecost,

454 years after the Passion, Galahad arrives at Arthur's court. He achieves the adventures of

the sword in the stone and of the Siege Perilous, adventures which no knight previously could

achieve. The Grail appears in Arthur's court covered in white samite, feeds each person the

food that he likes best, and vanishes. The knights of the Round Table, lead by Gawain, vow

to search until they can see the Grail openly. On the quest, each knight's spiritual worthiness

is revealed by the adventures that he encounters. Most of the knights are either killed or

return to court without gaining a glimpse of the Grail. Lancelot, trying to repent his

adulterous relationship with Guinevere, receives a partial vision of the Grail, but of Arthur's

knights only Galahad, Perceval, and Bors see the Grail fully. After Galahad heals the wound

of the Maimed King, these three knights take the Grail to the city of Sarras in the Holy Land,

where Galahad becomes king. After a short time, Galahad requests his bodily death, which

he receives. The Grail is borne up to Heaven. Perceval dies shortly thereafter, and Bors

returns to Camelot.

Malory follows the major source of this tale with greater fidelity than that of any other

of the eight tales.[2] He follows the French Queste from its beginning to its ending without

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[1] The Vulgate Queste survives in 39 manuscripts. The most recent edition is La queste del Saint Graal: Roman du XIIIe siècle, ed. Albert Pauphilet (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1999).

[2] The fullest comparison between Malory's "Sankgreal" and the Vulgate Queste is Sandra Ness Ihle, Malory's Grail Quest: Invention and Adaptation in Medieval Prose Romance (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1983).

omitting or altering any of its key events. The most notable change that he makes in his material is abbreviation of the exegesis of the knights' adventures given by various hermits. In addition to including a greater percentage of his major source than in other tales, Malory adds far fewer elements from minor sources than in any other tale.

The first of Malory's few additions occurs before the beginning of the actual quest for the Grail. When Galahad draws the sword from the stone that floats down the river to Camelot, he says,

> "Now have I the swerde that somtyme was the good knyghtes Balyns le
> Saveaige, and he was a passynge good knyght of hys hondys; and with thys
> swerde he slew hys brothir Balan, and that was grete pité, for he was a good
> knyght. And eythir slew othir thorow a dolerous stroke that Balyn gaff unto
> kynge Pelles, the whych ys nat yett hole, nor naught shall be tyll that I hele
> hym." (863.3-9)

The story of Balin, which Malory relates in "The Tale of King Arthur," is not a part of the Vulgate Cycle but came to Malory from the Post-Vulgate Suite du Merlin.[3] Balin's story introduces the themes of the Dolorous Stroke, the Waste Land, and the Maimed King and therefore prefigures the Post-Vulgate Queste.[4] In the Post-Vulgate version, when Galahad heals the Maimed King at the end of the quest, the Maimed King says of his wound, "Veez ci li Cop Doloreus que li Chevalier as Deus Espees me fist."[5] However, there is no reference in the Post-Vulgate to Balin when Galahad draws the sword from the stone. Malory's allusion

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[3] See supra 61-73. In the Post-Vulgate version, Balin strikes the Dolorous Stroke against King Pelleham, not Pelles; in "The Tale of King Arthur," the king's name is spelled Pellam.

[4] Suite du Merlin 69-193.

[5] La Version Post-Vulgate de la queste del Saint Graal et de la mort Artu: Troisième partie du Roman du Graal, ed. Fanni Bogdanow, 4 vols. in 5 (Paris: Société des Anciens Texts Français, 1991-2001) 3: 321.

at that point therefore draws either on the Post-Vulgate <u>Suite du Merlin</u> or his own "Tale of King Arthur" rather than on the Post-Vulgate <u>Queste</u>. In fact, Malory is probably not using the Post-Vulgate <u>Queste</u> in conjunction with the Vulgate, for, unlike the author of the Post-Vulgate <u>Queste</u>, Malory fails to integrate Balin's story completely into his version of the Grail quest.

Even in the Vulgate Cycle, there is some confusion over the identity of the Maimed King. In <u>L'estoire del Saint Graal</u>, the Waste Land and the Maimed King are connected to the sword that will be called the Sword of Strange Hangings. This sword is drawn by a King Varlan, who is unworthy to do so, and used against his rival, King Lambor. God is so angered that Lambor has been wounded by that sword that the realms of both kings lie waste for many years. Lambor's son, King Pellehan, is wounded in a battle in Rome and is thereafter called the Maimed King, and it is prophesied that Galahad will heal him.[6] In the Vulgate <u>Queste</u>, Perceval's sister also tells the story of Varlan and Lambor, the Dolorous Stroke, and the Waste Land. However, she explains that the Maimed King is named King Parlan and that he was maimed by a spear when he dared to draw the Sword of Strange Hangings.[7] At the climax of the quest, Galahad heals him.[8]

Had Malory followed the example of the Post-Vulgate author, he would have removed the story of the Maimed King's injury at the drawing of the Sword of Strange Hangings. This would have made his version even more coherent than the Post-Vulgate, which also contains the story of Pelleham in Rome from <u>L'estoire del Saint Graal</u>. Instead, he contradicts the

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[6] <u>L'estoire del Saint Graal</u>, ed. Jean-Paul Ponceau (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1997) 2: 566.

[7] <u>La queste del Saint Graal</u> 204-10.

[8] <u>La queste del Saint Graal</u> 271-2.

story of Balin and Galahad's summation of it, by having Perceval's sister say to Galahad at the end of the story of the Sword of Strange Hangings, "Thus [. . .] was kyng Pelles, youre grauntsyre, maymed for hys hardynes" (990.13-4).

In a tale with as few minor sources as this one, Malory's use of his own earlier tale is conspicuous. The reference to Balin at this point shows Malory's attempt to create a coherent Arthurian history. His failure to avoid the contradiction of the cause of the Dolorous Stroke shows the difficulty of such an undertaking.

When the company returns from seeing Galahad achieve the sword from the stone, an old man appears and leads Galahad to the Siege Perilous. The cloth is removed from this seat, and writing is found that reads "Thys is the syege of sir Galahad the Hawte Prynce" (860.11). In the Vulgate Cycle, the letters on the chair read simply "Ci est li sieges Galaad,"[9] nor is Galaad ever called the "Haut Prince."

When Malory calls Galahad by this epithet, he is surely thinking about Galahalt, Lord of the Lontaignes Iles.[10] The friendship between this character and Lancelot is one of the major themes of the first section of the Vulgate Lancelot. However, Malory shows no sign that he was aware of this story. Malory's primary source for this character was the Prose Tristan, in which Galahalt also appears. During the tournament of Sorelois in that work, Galahalt is called "Haut Prince Galehaut, Seigneur des Loingtaines Isles."[11]

Despite the fact that calling Galahad "the Hawte Prynce" is apparently an error, it is another example of Malory's use of his earlier tales as minor sources. It also adds to the

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[9] La Queste del Saint Graal 8.

[10] See Works especially 655-62.

[11] B.N. fr. 99 f. 384^r.

evidence provided by Malory's tendency to use near homophones in place of direct

translation to show that he was sensitive to the sounds of language. The names Galahalt and

Galahad sound very similar, but their roles in the story are very different. This same tendency

apparently causes Malory's next instance of borrowing from a minor source.

Galahad's arrival signals the beginning of the Grail quest, and Arthur is quick to sense the

tragic potential that the quest poses for his court.

> "Now," seyde the kynge, "I am sure at this quest of the Sankegreall shall all ye
> of the Rownde Table departe, and nevyr shall I se you agayne holé togydirs,
> therefore ones shall I se you togydir in the medow, all holé togydirs! Therefore
> I woll se you all holé togydir in the medow of Camelot, to juste and to turney,
> that aftir youre dethe men may speke of hit that such good knyghtes were here,
> such a day, holé togydirs. (864.5-12)

This passage of Malory's invention is true to the spirit of the Vulgate <u>Queste</u>, in which Arthur

is similarly grieved at the prospect that many of his knights may never return.[12] It has been

suggested, however, that the phrase "holé togydirs," which Arthur repeats with such mournful

effect is an example of the influence of Hardyng's <u>Chronicle</u>.[13]

At the beginning of the Grail quest in the <u>Chronicle</u>, Arthur laments

> "O God, [if] deth wold brest myne hert on twayne,
> Who shall mayntene my crowne & my ryghtes,
> I trowe nomore to see you eft agayne
> Thus hole together, and so goodly knightes;
> Would God I might make myne auowe & hightes,
> To passe with you in what land so ye go,
> And take my parte with you both in well and wo."[14]

We have seen that Malory used this verse chronicle for several details in "The Tale of King

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[12] <u>La Queste del Saint Graal</u> 16-22.

[13] Felicity Riddy, <u>Sir Thomas Malory</u> (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1987) 116.

[14] Hardyng, <u>Chronicle</u> 134.

Arthur" and "The Tale of Arthur and Lucius."[15] Because Malory's material diverges from the version told by Hardyng after the Roman War, it is not surprising that we have found no evidence of his influence since "The Tale of Arthur and Lucius." However, as we shall see in further chapters, Malory shows Hardyng's influence elsewhere whenever the stories of the two authors coincide, and because Hardyng's Chronicle includes a version of the Grail quest in his Arthurian section, it is not surprising to see Malory influenced by Hardyng here too. The phase "holé togyders" is repeated three times in Malory at the same point in the narrative as it appears in Hardying. This seems to show that Malory took the phrase "holé togyders" from Hardyng, even if he seems to have taken nothing else from Hardyng's brief Grail Quest.

A final change that Malory makes in his adaptation of La Queste del Saint Graal is another example of his attempt to make the overall story consistent. In the Vulgate Queste, Perceval's sister introduces herself to Perceval as "vostre suer et fille au roi Pellehan."[16] Both the Post-Vulgate Queste and Malory contain this same scene but have Perceval's sister claim to be the daughter of Pellinor.[17] As we have seen, the evidence that Malory knew the Post-Vulgate Queste is scant and equivocal. Also Malory makes much of the clan rivalry that grows between the houses of Lot and Pellinor, and so could easily made the change independently of the Post-Vulgate on the basis of his adaptations of the Post-Vulgate Suite du Merlin and Prose Tristan.

The fact that Malory adapts the Vulgate Queste del Saint Graal so faithfully, removing little

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[15] Supra 29-39, 105-15.

[16] La Queste del Saint Graal 201.

[17] La Version Post-Vulgate 3: 43; and Works 985.6.

and adding little, is the more striking considering the freedom he allows himself in other tales. The Vulgate <u>Queste</u> has clear, direct storylines with few anonymous characters and therefore already resembles the kind of story that Malory liked to tell. Malory's alterations to his major source have nothing to do with the plot. The additions are either attempts to harmonise this tale with his earlier tales or are the product of sound echoes from his other sources. This is in contrast to Malory's next tale, in which he again allows himself a great deal of freedom.

CHAPTER EIGHT:
"THE TALE OF SIR LAUNCELOT AND QUEEN GUINEVERE"

As a narrative unit, "The Tale of Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere" is Malory's invention.

It consists of narrative threads from the first half of two major sources and a single episode

from a third. The first two sources are La mort Artu, the last romance of the Vulgate Cycle,

and the English stanzaic Le Morte Arthur, which is itself based on the Vulgate Mort Artu and

tells much the same story.[1] The third major source is probably part of the Vulgate prose

Lancelot, the central romance of the Vulgate Cycle, but could also have been Chrétien de

Troyes's Le chevalier de la charrete, which is the source for that episode in the Vulgate

Cycle.[2] Malory's treatment of the sources of this tale is similar to his treatment of the sources

of "The Tale of Sir Launcelot." In both tales, Malory takes episodes from his sources, creates

linking material, and includes an episode for which no clear source is known.

The narrative structure of this tale is built around the increasing tension of conflict and

resolution in the love affair of Lancelot and Guinevere.[3] In the aftermath of the Grail quest,

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[1] The Mort Artu survives in over 28 mansucripts. La mort le roi Artu: roman du XIIIᵉ siècle, ed. Jean Frappier, 3ʳᵈ ed. (Geneva: Droz, 1959) is the standard edition of this romance; Mort Artu: An Old French Prose Romance of the XIIIᵗʰ Century, ed J. D. Bruce (1910; New York: AMS, 1974) is occasionally closer to Malory's manuscript (Field, personal communication) and all citations will, therefore, be from Bruce's edition. The stanzaic Morte Arthur survives in a unique mansucript in the British Museum, Harleian 2252. Le Morte Arthur: A Critical Edition, ed. P. F. Hissiger (The Hague: Mouton, 1975).

[2] Lancelot: roman en prose du XIIIᵉ siècle, ed. Alexandre Micha, 9 vols. (Geneva: Droz, 1979-83) 2: 1-108; Chrétien de Troyes, Le chevalier de la charrete, ed. Mario Roques (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1970).

[3] R. M. Lumiansky, "'The Tale of Lancelot and Guenevere:' Suspense," Malory's Originality: A Critical Study of Le Morte Darthur, ed. R. M. Lumiansky (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1964) 205-32.

Lancelot returns with renewed heat to his love of Guinevere, which he had repressed during the quest. When scandal threatens, however, he begins to avoid the queen. This leads to a quarrel, in which she banishes him from the court. During a special dinner given by the queen, Sir Patrise is accidentally killed by a piece of poisoned fruit that was intended by Sir Pionell for Sir Gawain. Patrise's brother, Sir Mador de la Port, charges the queen with murder. None of the knights who were present at the dinner is willing to defend the queen, but Bors allows himself to be persuaded to fight unless a better knight arrives to take his place. Bors alerts Lancelot, who takes the battle and proves Guinevere's innocence.

This episode is followed by a tournament in which Lancelot wears the sleeve of Elaine, the Fair Maiden of Ascolat, as a disguise. This act inflames Guinevere's jealousy, but when Elaine is found dead of unrequited love for Lancelot, Guinevere realizes that Lancelot is innocent of loving another woman and feels sympathy for Elaine. The renewed bond between the lovers is confirmed when Lancelot wears Guinevere's token in the next tournament.

Here Malory leaves La mort Artu and Le Morte Arthur and takes the next episode of the tale from either the Vulgate Lancelot or Chrétien's poem. During the spring following this tournament, the villainous Sir Meleagant abducts Guinevere. Lancelot resorts to riding in a cart to arrive at Meleagant's castle and rescues her. With peace made, the queen's party spends the night, Guinevere and her wounded knights in one chamber, Lancelot and his friend Sir Lavayne in another. Lancelot makes his way into Guinevere's chamber and sleeps with her. In the morning, Meleagant sees the blood from a wound on Lancelot's hand on Guinevere's sheets, concludes that the queen had slept with one of the knights in her chamber, and charges the queen with adultery. Lancelot manipulates this charge so that Guinevere is technically innocent and defends the queen against it before Arthur's court.

The final episode of "The Tale of Launcelot and Guinevere" has no known source. In this episode, a Hungarian knight, Sir Urry, arrives at Arthur's court. Urry has wounds that will never heal unless they are "searched" by the best knight in the world. All of the Round Table knights, including Arthur himself, try to heal Urry's wounds, but the wounds are finally healed only when Lancelot reluctantly tries. "The Tale of Launcelot and Guinevere" ends therefore on an optimistic note with the successful completion of an adventure of exceptional difficulty. This is the more notable because "the marvels of Britain" were supposedly ended by the Grail quest.[4]

The first apparent use of a minor source, as often, involves the name of a minor character. When Guinevere banishes Lancelot from court following their quarrel at the beginning of the tale, Lancelot takes refuge with a hermit named Sir Brascias.[5] This character corresponds to an anonymous hermit in La mort Artu with whom Lancelot shelters when he is accidentally wounded by a hunting party.[6] A character named Sir Brascias appears in "The Tale of King Arthur" initially as a knight of Gorlois, the Duke of Cornwall, who later becomes one of Uther's knights. Brascias is Malory's form of Bretel, the name of the corresponding character in the Prose Merlin.[7]

Later in "The Tale of Launcelot and Guinevere," in the section Vinaver called "The Fair Maid of Ascolat," Lancelot is again wounded and is cared for by a hermit, whom Malory

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[4] Cf. Works 78.9-11.

[5] Works 1047, 1053, 1103.

[6] Mort Artu 66-8. The preudom may be the same as the uiel cheualier who treats Lancelot's earlier wound 15, 35-7; cf. Works 1104-7.

[7] Merlin: roman de XIIIᵉ siècle, ed. Alexandre Micha (Geneva: Droz, 2000), first appearance 208. Caxton's text gives the name as Brastias.

calls Sir Bawdewyn of Britain.[8] In both the <u>Mort Artu</u> and the stanzaic <u>Morte Arthur</u>, this

hermit, who may be identical with the hermit that Malory calls Brascias, is also anonymous.

We discussed Bawdewyn of Britain earlier, where we traced the source of this name to such

English poems as <u>The Avowing of King Arthur</u>, <u>Syre Gawene and the Carle of Carelyle</u>, and

<u>Carle off Carlile</u>.[9] He is a minor character who plays a small part in "The Tale of King

Arthur," "The Tale of Arthur and Lucius," and "The Tale of Sir Gareth."[10] His appearance

here and that of Brascias are examples of the ermitical life that Malory says existed in

Arthurian times:

> For in thos dayes hit was nat the gyse as ys nowadayes; for there were none
> ermytis in tho dayes but that they had bene men of worship and of prouesse,
> and tho ermytes hylde grete householdis and refreysshed people that were in
> distresse. (1076.14-7)

Although the appearance of Brascias and Bawdewyn could be seen as Malory's use of the

Prose <u>Merlin</u> and of the English tradition from which he took Bawdewyn as minor sources in

this tale, it is probably better understood as also another example of the trend that we have

noticed earlier in the <u>Morte Darthur</u>: Malory's use of details from his own earlier tales in an

attempt to create a consistent story. As we have seen in the last several chapters, his own

book, in other words, has become one of his minor sources.

The same impression is given by the many lists that Malory adds to his book. The

first example in this tale is the list of knights who attend Guinevere's dinner in which Sir

Patrise is killed. These are:

> sir Gawayne and his brethern, that ys for to sey, sir Aggravayne, sir Gaherys,
> sir Gareth and sir Mordred. Also there was sir Bors de Ganis, sir Blamour de

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[8] <u>Works</u> 1074-6, 1086.

[9] Supra 44-5.

[10] <u>Works</u>, especially 16, 18-9, 190, 195, 340.

Ganys, sir Bleobris de Ganys, sir Galihud, sir Eliodyn, sir Ector de Maris, sir
Lyonell, sir Palamydes, sir Ironside, sir Braundeles, sir Kay le Senysciall, sir
Madore de la Porte, sir Patrise, a knyght of Irelonde, sir Alyduke, sir
Ascomoure and sir Pynell le Saveayge, whych was cosyne to sir Lameroke de
Galis, the good knyght that sir Gawayne and hys brethirn slew by treson.
(1048.16-26)

Although the queen's dinner is an important part of both of Malory's major sources, neither

lists all of the attending knights in this way.[11] None of these knights makes his first

appearance in the Morte Darthur here, so Malory again seems to be drawing on his own

version of the story. The knights appear in two sets of almost alphabetical order, excepting

the preeminence of Gawain and his brothers, whose names are given in descending order of

age, which suggests that Malory may have been working from a master list.

Following the episode of the poisoned apple in Malory, Lancelot, on his way to the

tournament at Camelot, which Malory identifies as Winchester, stays at the castle of Ascolat.

There he becomes a mentor to the lord's younger son and becomes the object of the

unrequited love of the lord's daughter (1065-98). In both of Malory's major sources, the lord

of Escalot, his two sons, and his daughter are all anonymous.[12] Malory names them Barnard,

Tirry, Lavayne, and Elaine. Malory could have taken three of these names, Barnard, Tirry,

and Elaine as well as one of the names from "The Healing of Sir Urry," Sir Marrok, from a

late fourteenth-century English romance, Sir Triamour.[13] Sir Triamour is a non-Arthurian

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[11] Mort Artu 62-3; Le Morte Arthur lines 834-79.

[12] Mort Artu 7-34; Le Morte Arthur lines 137-52.

[13] Field, "Malory and Chrétien de Troyes," Malory: Texts and Sources (Cambridge: D.
S. Brewer, 1998) 236-45 on 238n notes that Barnard, Tirry, and Marrok could have come
from Sir Triamour.

romance built around a version of the folk motif of the "calumniated wife."[14] Despite the fact

that none of the characters in Sir Triamour have relationships similar to their counterparts in

Malory, the coincidence of the four names from a single tale is impressive.

Malory could, however, have found some of these names in other sources. Sir Tirry

also appears as one of the brothers who fights Sir Gawain and whose sister is the mother of

Gawain's son Sir Florence in the Arthurian romance "The Jest of Sir Gawain,"[15] which we

have already seen is a possible minor source of an earlier tale.[16] The fact that this romance is

Arthurian and already a possible source makes it probable that Malory saw the name there as

well. Another character named Elainne is described as the daughter of King Lot and sister of

Gavain in the Didot Perceval, and she is called Helaine in the Prose Tristan.[17] Although

Malory shows no evidence of having known the Didot Perceval, he certainly knew the Prose

Tristan, so he might have noticed the name given to Gawain's sister. In "The Tale of

Launcelot and Guinevere," Elaine is the sister of Lavayne, whose name has no known source.

Although Lavayne plays the same role as his anonymous counterpart in Malory's

major sources, his part and his personality are so much expanded in Malory that he is

virtually an original character: his counterparts in La morte Artu and Le Morte Arthur have no

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[14] "Syr Tryamowre," Of Love and Chivalry: An Anthology of Middle English Romance, ed. Jennifer Fellows (London: J. M. Dent, 1993) 147-98.

[15] "The Jeaste of Syr Gawayne," Syr Gawayne, ed. Sir Frederic Madden (1839, New York: AMS, 1971) 207-223 lines 233-74.

[16] Wilson, "Malory's Early Knowledge of Arthurian Romance," University of Texas Studies in English 29 (1950): 33-50 on 45; and supra 115-17.

[17] The Didot-Perceval, ed. William Roach (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1941)105, 110, 112, cited in West, Prose Index; Eilert Löseth, Le roman en prose de Tristan, section 282c.

part approximating Lavayne's role in Malory's "Knight of the Cart" episode. In that episode, Lavayne arrives at Meleagant's castle after the situation has been resolved, returns with the queen and her party without Lancelot, and offers to fight Meleagant in Lancelot's place. In both of Malory's possible sources for this episode, Gawain plays this role.[18] Lavayne also resembles the Gawain of the Vulgate Lancelot and Le chevalier de la charrete in his prowess and his loyalty to Lancelot. Malory's Gawain was influenced by the darker view of the character offered by the Prose Tristan and Post-Vulgate Cycle, and this lead him fairly often to give Gawain's creditable deeds in his sources to other knights in the Morte Darthur.[19] As well as influencing Lavayne's role, Gawain may have influenced the name that Malory gave this character. No source for this name is known, but it clearly resembles Gawayne, just as his role resembles Gawain's in Malory's sources. If Malory was thinking about Gawayne when he named Lavayne, then he may have noticed that Gawain's sister is called Elaine in the Prose Tristan and therefore given that name to the fair maiden of Ascolat. If the name Elaine reminded him of Sir Triamour, then names that he found in that romance may have lead him to give the members of Elaine's family the names that he does.

Malory's next list of names is the roll call of the opponents of Arthur and the king of Scotland at the tournament of Winchester.

> An whan thys cry was made, thydir cam many good knyghtes, that ys to sey the kynge of North Galis, and kynge Angwysh of Irelonde, and the kynge with the Hondred Knyghtes, and Galahalt the Haulte Prince, and the kynge of Northumbirlonde, and many other noble deukes and erlis of other dyverse contreyes. (1065.5-12)

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[18] Lancelot, 2: 1-108; Chrétien de Troyes, Le chevalier de la charrete lines 5153-58, 6740-6899. Vinaver notes that Lavayne plays the role of Gauvain in the Charrete, note to 1125.9-10.

[19] Cf. Field, "Malory and Perlesvaus," Texts and Sources 226.

The King of North Galis, the King with the Hundred Knights, and Galahalt the Haulte Prince are not in Malory's major sources. The King of North Galis and the King with the Hundred Knights are both prominent secondary characters in the Vulgate Cycle, especially the Lancelot, and in the Prose Tristan. Galahalt, as we have seen before, is an important character in the Lancelot and a secondary character in the Prose Tristan. However, as with the list of knights at Guinevere's dinner, all three characters have appeared often in the Morte Darthur, and therefore their appearance here is most likely to be another example of Malory's use of his own earlier tales as a minor source.

The death of Elaine, the fair maiden of Ascolat, is a poignant moment in this tale. Before her death, she confesses that she is dying of unrequited love of Lancelot. Her confessor advises her to "leve such thoughtes." She replies,

> "Why sholde I leve such thoughtes? Am I nat an erthely woman? And all the whyle brethe ys in my body I may complayne me, for my belyve ys that I do none offence, though I love an erthely man, unto God, for He fourmed me thereto, and all maner of good love comyth of God. And othir than good love loved I never sir Launcelot du Lake. And I take God to recorde, I loved never none but hym, nor never shall, of erthely creature; and a clene maydyn I am for hym and for all othir. And sitthyn hit ys the sufferaunce of God that I shall dye for so noble a knyght, I beseche The, Hyghe Fadir of Hevyn, have mercy uppon me and my soule, and uppon myne unnumerable paynys that I suffir may be alygeaunce of parte of my synnes. For, Swete Lorde Jesu [. . .] I take God to recorde I was never to The grete offenser nother ayenste Thy lawis but that I loved thys noble knyght, sir Launcelot, out of mesure. And of myselff, Good Lorde, I had no myght to withstonde the fervent love, wherefore I have my deth!" (1093.1-1094.3)

This entire passage has no counterpart in Malory's major sources, and therefore is a natural place to seek for minor sources.

A recent article suggests that these lines recalls Genesis 2.7 where God forms woman

out of man and the prologue to "The Wife of Bath's Tale."[20] Genesis 2.7 reads "And the Lord

God formed man of the slime of the earth, and breathed into his face the breath of life; and

man became a living soul." There is no sustained correspondence between the biblical

passage and Malory's.   The most that could be said is that perhaps the idea that God formed

Elaine to love an earthly man might indicate an unconscious echo of Genesis that would not

be implausible or inconsistent with what we see of Malory's adaptive process.

In the lines from "The Wife of Bath's Prologue" there are no verbal parallels to

Malory's passage but a similar idea:

> Tell me also, to what conclusion
> Were membres maad of generacion,
> And of so parfit wys a wright ywroght?
> Trusteth right wel, they were nat maad for noght.
> Glose whoso wole, and seye bothe up and doun
> That they were maked for purgacioun
> Of uryne, and oure bothe thynges smale
> Were eek to knowe a femele from a male,
> And for noon oother cause – say ye no?
> The experience woot wel it is noght so.
> So that the clerkes be nat with me wrothe,
> I sey this: that they maked ben for bothe;
> That is to seye, for office and for ese
> Of engendrure, ther we nat God displese.
> Why sholde men elles in hir bookes sette
> That man shal yelde to his wyf hire dette?
> Now wherwith sholde he make his paiement,
> If he ne used his sely instrument?
> Thanne were they maad upon a creature
> To purge uryne, and eek for engendrure.[21]

In Malory's passage, Elaine is defending her excessive love of Lancelot by saying that

she loves Lancelot the way God intends men and women to love each other, and that she has

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[20] Janet Jesmok, "Reading Malory Aloud: Poetic Qualities and Distinctive Voice," Arthuriana 13.4 (2003): 86-102.

[21] Geoffrey Chaucer, "The Wife of Bath's Prologue," The Riverside Chaucer, ed. Larry Benson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987) 105-16, lines 115-34.

not offended God by losing her virginity. On the other hand, the Wife of Bath is defending

sexual activity in general by saying that God made men and women as sexual beings. The

overlap of ideas, therefore, is not great, and the context and emphasis are very different.

Although Malory seems to have had Chaucer's poetry in mind while writing this tale, as we

shall see, in this instance, the parallel is not compelling.

At the end of Malory's version of the "Fair Maiden of Ascolat" episode, Lancelot is

present, along with Arthur and Guinevere, when Elaine's barge arrives at Camelot. This

gives these characters a chance to interact at this emotionally loaded point that they do not

have in either of Malory's sources. Once Elaine's letter establishes that she died because

Lancelot would not return her love, Guinevere's jealousy turns to sympathy:

> "Sir," seyde the quene, "ye myght have shewed hir som bownté and
> jantilnes whych myght have preserved hir lyf."
> "Madame," seyde sir Launcelot, "she wolde none other wayes be answerde
> but that she wolde be my wyff othir ellis my paramour, and of thes two I wolde
> not graunte her. [. . .] For, madame," seyde sir Launcelot, "I love nat to be
> constrayned to love, for love must only aryse of the harte selff, and nat by none
> constraynte.
> "That ys trouth, sir," seyde the kynge, "and with many knyghtes love ys fre
> in hymselffe, and never woll be bonde; for where he ys bonden he lowsith
> hymselff." (1097.14-27)

The conception of love expressed in this passage is similar to the one set forth by Chaucer's

Franklin in The Canterbury Tales:[22]

> Love wol nat been constreyned by maistrye.
> Whan maistrie comth, the God of Love anon
> Beteth his wynges, and farewel, he is gon!
> Love is a thyng as any spirit free.
> Wommen, of kynde, desiren libertee,
> And nat to been constreyned as a thral;

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[22] Field, "Malory's Minor Sources," Malory: Texts and Sources (Cambridge:D. S.
Brewer, 1998) 27-31 on 29-30.

And so doon men, if I sooth seyen shal.[23]

The similarities between the two passages are the use of the verb <u>constrain</u> and the metaphor of love escaping from those who would imprison him. The "many knyghtes" of Malory's passage with whom "love us fre" is matched by women and men in Chaucer's passage who "desiren libertee."

Malory's apparent use of Chaucer here resembles his apparent use of "The Wife of Bath's Tale" in "The Tale of King Arthur."[24] In both cases, there is nothing to suggest that Malory was working with a manuscript in front of him and it is best to think of him as having had the echo of Chaucer's poetry in his mind. The most natural interpretation of this is that Malory had read at least some of <u>The Canterbury Tales</u> some time before his imprisonment and that they had made enough of an impression on him for him to remember near-quotations and include them in his own book. As we shall see, it is possible that Malory also had "The Knights's Tale" in mind when writing the next episode of this tale.

On the other hand, it has been suggested that this apparent echo of Chaucer may be the result of a common reliance on a proverbial expression.[25] Evidence that such a proverbial expression was current is found in the fifteenth-century poem <u>Peter Idley's Instructions to His Son</u>, which contains the lines "ffor love is free and will not be constreyned/ All suche mariages wold be refreyned."[26] If this instance were the only example of Malory's potential borrowing from Chaucer, then the possibility that it is a coincidental common allusion to a

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[23] Geoffrey Chaucer, "The Franklin's Tale," <u>The Riverside Chaucer</u> 178-89, lines 764-70.

[24] Supra 60-71.

[25] Felicity Riddy, <u>Sir Thomas Malory</u> (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1987) 16<u>n</u>.

[26] <u>Peter Idley's Instructions to His Son</u>, ed. Charlotte D'Evelyn (London: Oxford UP, 1935), 196.

proverb would be stronger. However, the collective force of the instances in this tale and in

"The Tale of King Arthur," and perhaps "The Tale of Sir Tristram" is much stronger than any

single example.

The maiden of Ascolat's death is consistent in all versions of the story. However,

unlike his two major sources Malory includes a scene in which the dying Elaine gives

instructions to her father for the disposition of her body.

> And whyle my body ys hote lat thys lettir be put in my right hand, and my
> honde bounde faste to the letter untyll that I be colde. [. . .] and there lette me
> be put within a barget, and but one man with me, such as ye truste, to stirre me
> thidir. (1094.9-1095.2)

It has been observed that Malory's version borrows these details and phrases from his own

"Tale of Sir Tristram."[27] When Harmaunce, king of the Red City, is treacherously killed, his

last orders to his household knight Sir Ebell are to send his body down the Humber to

Lonezep with a letter describing how he died:

> And whan he was dede, he commaunded me or ever he were colde to put that
> lettir faste in his honde, and than he commaunded me to sende forthe that same
> vessell downe by Humber streyme, and that I sholde gyeff thes marynars in
> commaundemente never to stynte tyll they cam unto Lonezep, where all the
> noble knyghtes shall assemble at this tyme. (713.24-39)

The echo of Ebell's phrase that he would place the letter "faste in his honde" in Elaine's

instruction to have her "honde bounde faste to the letter" as well as the general similarity of

the two events shows that Malory was probably remembering the earlier episode when he

wrote "The Fair Maid of Ascolat."[28]

Another similar episode from earlier in the Morte Darthur which may have been in

Malory's mind is the death of Perceval's sister from "The Quest of the Holy Grail."

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[27] Earl R. Anderson, "Malory's 'Fair Maid of Ascolat,'" Neuphilologische
Mitteilungen 87 (1986): 237-54, on 241.

[28] Cf. Works 513-17nn.

Perceval's dies when she allows herself to be bled so that her blood can heal the lady of a castle. She asks Perceval to put her body in a boat, which she says will arrive at the city of Sarras ahead of the three Grail knights (1102-3).

> Than sir Percivale made a lettir of all that she had holpe them as in stronge aventures, and put it in hir ryght honde. And so leyde hir in a barge, and coverde hit with blacke sylke. And so the wynde arose and droff the barge frome the londe, and all maner of knyghtes behylde hit tyll hit was oute of ther syght. (1004.8-13)

This situation is not as close to Elaine's as is that of Harmaunce, but both instances are close enough to that in "The Fair Maid of Ascolat" to have been Malory's inspiration.

The river pilot that Elaine requests is another detail in Malory's version that is not found in his two major sources. This man, described as a "poure man," duly rows Elaine's boat to Camelot. Lancelot, on King Arthur's advice, oversees her funeral:

> and so uppon the morn she was entered rychely. And sir Launcelot offird her masse-peny; and all tho knyghtes of the Table Rounde that were there at that tyme offerde with sir Launcelot. And than the poure man wente agayne wyth the barget. (1097.34-1098.2)

Even though Malory generally makes this episode more realistic, for example by localizing Astolat as Guildford and by identifying the river as the Thames, it has been suggested that he added this pilot under the inspiration of stories about Charon, the ferryman of the dead in Classical literature.[29]

Malory's sources contain a number of overt classical allusions, but Malory usually omits them. In the post-Vulgate Suite du Merlin, Merlin tells Nimue the story of the lake of Diana, whom after her death, "tout les edefiemens."[30] The stanzaic Morte Arthur mentions the legendary connection between the British and the Trojans.[31] Further, in the version of

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[29] Anderson 241-3.

[30] Suite du Merlin 286.

[31] Le Morte Arthur line 3374.

Arthur's war with King Rion in the Vulgate <u>Suite du Merlin</u>, Arthur slays Rion in single combat and takes his sword, which is the sword of Hercules and was forged by Vulcan.[32] Malory did not use the Vulgate <u>Suite du Merlin</u> as a major source, but it along with the Post-Vulgate <u>Merlin</u> would have given Malory a precedent for the inclusion of classical characters. It is true that Malory retains two allusions to Troy as the home of Cador's ancestors from the alliterative <u>Morte Arthure</u> (213) and to "Ector of Troy and Alysaunder, the myghty conquerroure" (1201), but the fact that he usually omitted classical allusions suggests that his level of interest in classical literature was probably fairly low. Alternative explanations, therefore, must be preferred when possible.

The scholar who proposes this theory does not commit himself to naming the source of Malory's knowledge about Charon. He suggests, however, that Malory's description of the pilot as a "poure man" could be "related" to a passage from <u>Aeneid</u>, which also seems to have influenced John Lydgate's description of Charon in <u>The Fall of Princes</u>:[33]

> terribili squalore Charon: cui plurima mento
> canities inculta iacet; stant lumina flamma;
> sordidus ex umeris nodo dependet amictus.[34]

Although it cannot be denied that the river pilot who guides Elaine's body to its destination and who departs after Lancelot has paid Elaine's mass penny is similar to Charon in those respects, the theory that Malory was conscious of this requires too many assumptions. There is no evidence that Malory knew enough Latin to read the <u>Aeneid</u>, and it is not clear that he would have described Charon as poor if he had taken his information on this character from

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[32] <u>Vulgate Version</u> 2:230.

[33] Anderson 243.

[34] Virgil, <u>Aeneid</u>, ed. and trans. H.R. Fairclough, rev. Goold, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1999) Book 6: lines 299-301.

Lydgate, who associates Charon with covetousness:

> Off couetise the cruel maryner
> Is callid Charon, which with Flegonte,
> Bi many a steiht & many fel daungeer
> Sailleth in the floodis of furious Acheronte,
> Vnder that dirked and cloudi orizonte,
> Wher auarice ches whilom nigardshipe
> For tresoureer his cofres for to keepe.[35]

Also, of course, Charon did not carry dead bodies to their funerals but rather the souls of the departed who had already received proper burial to Hades. Naturally Malory must have known a great deal that will never be provable from the Morte Darthur, but scholars cannot go beyond what the evidence can establish as probabilities. In this case, whether Malory could have been aware of the classical figure or not, the poor man who guides Elaine's barge to Westminster, stays for her funeral, and then leaves after Lancelot has paid Elaine's mass penny seems more likely to be another example of his concern for realism than a reflection of Charon.

The section that Vinaver calls "The Great Tournament" has no counterpart in Malory's two major sources, although it incorporates elements that are in both of those sources. In this section, Arthur calls a Christmas tournament at Westminster. When Lancelot prepares to go, Guinevere "charges" Lancelot to wear her token. On their way, Lancelot and Lavayne stay with a hermit, and while they are there, Lancelot is accidentally shot by a huntress. Despite this wound, however, he manages to participate at the tournament, in which he opposes Arthur's knights. When a number of Arthur's knights try to overwhelm Lancelot, Gareth intervenes on Lancelot's behalf. Arthur initially criticises Gareth for changing sides, but

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[35] John Lydgate, Lydgate's Fall of Princes, ed. Henry Bergen, 4 vols. EETS, e.s. (121-4) 3:450, lines 4341-7.

when Gareth explains that he felt the need to aid Lancelot because Lancelot had knighted him

and was attacked so overwhelmingly, Arthur approves of Gareth's actions.

It has been suggested that this episode may have been inspired by a passage in

Hardyng's Chronicle.[36] After Hardyng's version of the Grail quest, Galahad's heart is buried

at Glastonbury, and the knights hold a feast:

> And when this feaste was come vnto an ende,
> The kyng Arthure also and queene Gwaynour
> To all estates greate gyftes gaue and sende,
> As they were wonte eche yere afore,
> For his great honoure encreased more and more;
> Of hyghe knyghthode, houshold, and all largesse,
> Aboue all princes moste famous he was doutlesse.[37]

It has been argued that because this feast is the last great gathering of Arthur's knights, this

scene might have inspired the addition of the Great Tournament, which is described as

Arthur's last celebration.[38] Although this level of similarity does exist, there are more

differences than similarities in the structures of these episode and in their functions within

their larger stories. Principally, "The Great Tournament," in which Lancelot is against

Arthur's knights, and in which Gareth defects to Lancelot's side, is not a simple celebration

of Arthurian chivalry but reflects building tensions that are not a part of Hardyng's story but

which Malory took and increased from his major sources.[39] Because "The Great

Tournament" seems to advance the themes that Malory has retained from his major sources

and has only a casual resemblance to the feast for Galahad in Hardyng, there seems no need

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[36] Edward Donald Kennedy, "Malory and his English Sources," Aspects of Malory, ed. Toshiyuki Takamiya and Derek Brewer (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1981) 27-55, on 47.

[37] Hardyng 136.

[38] Kennedy 47.

[39] Lumiansky, "The Tale of Launcelot and Guenevere" 205-32.

to posit Hardyng's <u>Chronicle</u> as a source at this point.

In "The Great Tournament," Malory includes an episode that clearly comes from his two major sources, Lancelot's accidental wounding by the leader of a party of huntresses. In the two major sources, however, Lancelot is wounded not by a huntress but by a party of the king's hunters. Of this huntress Malory says,

> So at that tyme there was a lady that dwelled in that foreyste, and she was a grete hunteresse, and dayly she used to hunte. And ever she bare her bowghe with her, and no men wente never with her, but allwayes women, and they were all shooters and cowde well kylle a dere at the stalke and at the treste. (1104.3-8)

Malory's change of the hunter's gender is a surprise. A band of huntresses naturally suggest the Classical goddess Diana, but it is hard to imagine what would have brought this character to Malory's mind at this point, if indeed she was. The only suggestion so far proposed is that Malory was influenced by one or more of Chaucer's <u>Canterbury Tales</u>.[40] "The Franklin's Tale," which, as we have seen above, probably influenced Malory, mentions Diana and her temple, and "The Knight's Tale" has a much more elaborate description of Diana's temple which is compared at length to that of Mars and of Venus. In "The Knight's Tale," Palamon and Arcite are rival lovers of Emily, who, although she would prefer not to wed either, must wed the one who wins her in single combat. The evening before the combat, she prays to Diana:

> "Chaste goddesse, wel wostow that I
> Desire to ben a mayden al my lyf,
> Ne nevere wol I be no love ne wyf.
> I am thow woost, yet of thy compaignye,
> A mayde, and love huntynge and venerye,
> And for to walken in the wodes wilde,
> And noght to ben a wyf and be with childe."[41]

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[40] Anderson, "Malory's 'Fair Maid of Ascolat'" 243-5.

[41] Chaucer, "The Knight's Tale," <u>Riverside Chaucer</u> lines 2304-10.

In addition to professing her love of hunting here, Emily has taken part in a hunt with Duke Theseus earlier in the story (1683-7).

To say that the huntress who wounds Lancelot is a representation of Diana or that the wound that she inflicts on him is a symbolic punishment for the death of Elaine of Ascolat,[42] would seem to stretch the evidence. However, "The Franklin's Tale," at least, seemed to be on Malory's mind when he was writing this tale, and so "The Knight's Tale" may have been as well. The example of Emily as a huntress would give a plausible explanation for Malory's otherwise puzzling change of the gender of the hunters in his major sources.

Malory's next episode, "The Knight of the Cart," is a complete departure from the Vulgate Mort Artu and the stanzaic Le Morte Arthur. "The Knight of the Cart" must have come to Malory from the Vulgate Lancelot or from its own source for this episode, Chrétien de Troyes's Le Chevalier de la Charrete, or perhaps from both. Malory's version is a very free rendering of his source or sources, and scholars have therefore been unable to say with certainty which version was Malory's primary source.[43] However the fact that Malory uses the Vulgate Lancelot as the major source of his third tale and shows awareness of it in these final tales makes its perhaps more likely than Chrétien's poem to have been the major source.

One of Malory's most notable innovations in this episode is the much-discussed Love and Summer passage, which prefaces his version of this story. This lengthy reflection on ancient and modern love is reminiscent of many pieces of medieval literature.

> And thus hit passed on frome Candylmas untyll after Ester, that the moneth
> of May was com, whan every lusty harte begynnyth to blossom and to
> burgyne. For, lyke as trees and erbys burgenyth and florysshyth in May, in

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[42] Anderson 244-5.

[43] See, however, Vinaver's notes to 1125.9-10, 1131.6-8, 1131.24, and 1137.19-22.

lyke wyse every lusty harte that ys ony maner of lover spryngith, burgenyth, buddyth, and florysshyth in lusty dedis. For hit gyvyth unto all lovers corrayge, that lusty moneth of May, in somthynge to constrayne hym to som maner of thynge more in that moneth than in ony other monethe, for dyverce causys: for than all erbys and treys renewyth a man and woman, and in lyke wyse lovers callyth to their mynde olde jantylnes and olde servyse, and many kynde dedes that was forgotyn by neclygence.

For, lyke as wynter rasure dothe allway arace and deface grene summer, so faryth hit by unstable love in man and woman, for in many persones there is no stabylité: for we may se all day, for a lytyll blaste of wynters rasure, anone we shall deface and lay aparte trew love, for lytyll or nowght, that coste muche thynge. Thys ys no wysedome nother no stabylité, but hit ys fyeblenes of nature and grete disworshyp, whosomever usyth thys.

Therefore, lyke as May moneth flowryth and florshyth in every mannes gardyne, so in lyke wyse every man of worshyp florysh hys herte in thys worlde: firste unto God, and next unto the joy of them that he promysed hys feythe unto; for there was never worshypfull man nor worshypfull woman but that they loved one bettir than anothir; and worshyp in armes may never be foyled. But firste reserve the honoure to God, and secundely thy quarell muste com of thy lady. And such love I calle vertuouse love.

But nowadayes men can nat love sevennyght but they muste have all their desyres. That love may nat endure by reson, for where they bethe sone accorded and hasty, heete sone keelyth. And ryght so faryth the love nowadayes, sone hote sone colde. Thys is no stabylyté. But the olde love was nat so. For men and women coude love togydirs seven yerys, and no lycoures lustis was betwyxte them, and than was love trouthe and faythfulnes. And so in lyke wyse was used such love in kynge Arthurs dayes.

Wherefore I lykken love nowadayes unto sommer and wynter: for, lyke as the tone ys colde and the othir ys hote, so faryth love nowadayes. And therefore all ye that be lovers, calle unto youre remembraunce the monethe of May, lyke as ded quene Gwenyver, for whom I make here a lytyll mencion, that whyle she lyved she was a trew lover, and therefor she had a good ende. (1119-20)

Scholars have proposed a large number of possible sources for this passage, reflecting the fact that the connection between May and love is a common convention.

Perhaps the two most widely known of these possible sources are by Chaucer. His Troilus and Criseyde and his Legend of Good Women have both been suggested.[44] The lines from Troilus that may have influenced Malory are,

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[44] Andrea Clough and Field respectively; cited in Field, "Malory's Sir Phelot" 346n.

> But right so as thise holtes and thise hayis,
> That han in wynter dede ben and dreye,
> Revesten hem in grene whan that May is,
> Whan every lusty liketh best to pleye;
> Right in that selve wise, soth to seye,
> Wax sodeynliche his herte ful of joie,
> That gladder was ther nevere man in Troie.[45]

Here is the same connection between the renewal of plant life with the coming of Spring and the renewal of romance. This, however, will be common to each of the proposed sources. The apparent echo of Chaucer's "every lusty liketh best to pley" in Malory's "every lusty harte begynnyth to blossom" is not close enough to be conclusive. Only the fame of Chaucer's work and the fact that Malory seems to have had Chaucer in mind while writing this tale makes this suggestion at all likely.

In the case of The Legend of Good Women, the influence is thought to be more in the pattern of ideas than in the exact wording of them. The following passage, however, is cited as similar to Malory's:

> [. . .] in the joly tyme of May,
> Whan that I here the smale foules synge,
> [. . .]
> As I seyde erst, whan comen is the May,
> That in my bed there daweth me no day
> That I n'am up and walkynge in the mede
> To sen these floures agen the sonne sprede
> [. . .]
> Forgeten hadde the erthe his pore estat
> Of wynter, that hym naked made and mat,
> And with his swerde of cold so sore hadde greved.
> Now hadde th'atempre sonne al that releved,
> And clothed hym in grene al newe ageyn.[46]

The verbal parallels here are not as close as they are between the Malory passage and the

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[45] Chaucer, Troilus and Criseyde, The Riverside Chaucer lines 351-7.

[46] Chaucer, The Legend of Good Women, The Riverside Chaucer, G-text, lines 36-7, 45-8, 113-7.

passage from Troilus and Criseyde. However, the pattern of ideas between the two may be

related. It is thought that

> Both begin in May, both remark on it as a time when plants begin to spring,
> Malory says it renews both men and women, and Chaucer shows it having a
> renewing effect on the narrator. Both praise love as practised in olden times,
> particularly for its "stability," which they contrast in Malory's case with
> modern practice and in Chaucer's with the discreditable stories he has been
> accused of telling about women. Both talk about virtuous love and relate it to
> Christian realities, and they apply what is effectively the same key term to
> opposite sides of the same distinction. Chaucer has the god of love praise
> women of the classical period who were willing to die or even kill themselves
> for love rather than take a new love, "nat for holiness" but "for verray vertu,"
> even though they were pagans. Malory says twice that honour must be
> reserved to God, and then the lover should "flourish" his heart to his lady, and
> that is "vertuouse love."[47]

It is true that these parallels exist, but because the two common elements of love and the

changing seasons are too common to count as evidence of direct influence, it is also possible

that the other parallels are coincidences that follow from the first two.

A third possible source is John Lydgate's poem "The Dysposicion of þe World," from

A Pageant of Knowledge.[48] One stanza reads,

> Tytan somwhyle fresshly doþe appere,
> Then commeþ a storme & doþ hys lyght deface,
> The soile of somer with floures glad of chere
> Wynters rasure doþe all awey rase;
> All erþely þynges sodenly do passe
> Whyche may haue here no seker abydyng,
> Eke all astates false fortune doth manase,
> How shuld a man þan be stedfast of lyuyng?[49]

Malory apparently incorporates the lines "The soile of somer with floures glad of chere/

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[47] Field, "Malory's Sir Phelot" 355-6.

[48] Anderson 253-4. The full text of "The Dysposicion of þe World" is given in the
Appendix.

[49] John Lydgate, "A Pageant of Knowledge," The Minor Poems of John Lydgate, ed.
H. N. McCracken, 2 vols., EETS es 107 and os 192 (1911-34), 2:733.

Wynters rasure doþe all awey rase," reversing them in his passage: "For, lyke as wynter rasure dothe allway arace and deface grene summer, so faryth hit by unstable love in man and woman" (1119). As for the rest of the poem, the correspondence is much less exact. Some of the themes are similar to those in the Morte Darthur. The line "Euery seson varyeth, frendshyp ys unstable," for example, from the stanza preceding the one quoted and the theme of the poem that this worldly fortune is transient in contrast with the world to come is illustrated by the fall of the Round Table and by the penitent life that Guenevere and Lancelot live after the fall. The apparent direct quotation, however, is the most impressive correspondence between Malory and any of the potential sources, and it is the strongest piece of evidence so far of the influence of a non-Arthurian text on the Morte Darthur.

A fifth work that may have influenced Malory in this passage is the Vulgate Suite du Merlin:[50]

> Che fu a lentree de mai au tans nouel que cil oisel chantent coer & seri . & toute riens de ioie enflambe & que cil bos & cil uergier sont flori & cil pre rauerdisent derbe nouele & menue & est entremellee de diuerses flors qui ont douce odour . & ces douces aigues reuient en lor canel . & les amors noueles font resbaudir ces valles & ces puceles qui ont les cuers iolis & gais por la douchor del tans qui renouele[51]

This passage has the same connection to the renewal of Spring and the renewal of love that Malory's does, and more strikingly, it is in an Arthurian work that Malory used elsewhere in the Morte Darthur. This would have given him an example of how such a passage could be incorporated into a prose Arthurian romance.

Other works that have been suggested are The Floure and the Leafe and another poem

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[50] Field, "Malory's Sir Phelot" 346.

[51] Vulgate Version 2: 134.

of Lydgate, <u>Reson and Sensuallyte</u>[52] Both of the passages in question have a general

similarity to the Malory passage, and any combination of them could potentially be sources.

However, in the absence of corroborating evidence, it is more probable that the various

similarities between them and the Love and Summer passage are simply the product of

coincidence in the expression of a favourite medieval theme.

Malory's passage is clearly an example of a traditional motif which may have been

influenced by any number of earlier examples of this tradition. The Chaucer poems,

Lydgate's "The Dysposicion of þe World," and the <u>Merlin</u> are the strongest contenders of all

the proposed possibilities. Malory must have read the passage in the <u>Merlin</u>, and Lydgate's

poem apparently supplied a direct quotation to Malory's passage. As we have seen, there is

evidence that <u>The Canterbury Tales</u> were on Malory's mind when he was writing this tale,

and therefore he may have been thinking about other poems by Chaucer as well. Beyond this

it is difficult to go.

Malory's next significant departure from his major sources is the manner in which Meleagant

abducts Guinevere. In the two earlier versions, Keu extracts from Arthur a rash boon which

allows him to fight Meleagant in single combat for the right to take Guinevere, which Keu

loses, and Meleagant is closely pursued by Lancelot and Gauvain. In Malory's version,

however, Meleagant ambushes the queen and her knights while they are on a pleasure

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[52] J.D. Pheifer, "Malory's Lancelot," <u>Noble and Joyous Histories English Romances 1375-1650</u>, eds, Eiléan Ní Cuilleanáin and J.D. Pheifer, (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1993), 157-93, at 185-6; Felicity Riddy, <u>Sir Thomas Malory</u>, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1987) 142<u>n</u>; J. K. B. Withrington, "The Death of King Arthur and the Legend of His Survival in Sir Thomas Malory's <u>Le Morte Darthur</u> and Other Late Medieval Texts of the Fifteenth Century," D.Phil. Diss. (U of York, 1991) 64. Texts of the relevant passages of these works are included in the Appendix; they may also be found in the Appendix to Field "Malory's Sir Phelot" 355-61.

expedition and are all unarmed. Certainly Malory was adapting his material in order to make it fit within the framework that he intended. As we have seen elsewhere, however, that does not preclude the use of minor sources as inspiration for his adaptations.

It has been suggested that Meleagant's ambush may have been based on a scene in Sir Triamour.[53] In that romance, King Ardus of Aragon goes on a pilgrimage to the Holy Lands, entrusting his beloved wife to his steward, Marrok. In Ardus's absence, Marrok tries to seduce the queen but is rejected. When the king returns, Marrok, in revenge, falsely swears that the queen is pregnant with another man's child. Ardus banishes the queen, who eventually finds refuge in Hungry.[54] Although the situation in Sir Triamour shares the general similarities of the treacherous knight and the maligned queen, however, Marrok's assault on his queen is verbal and is very unlike the attack Meleagant and his men make on Guinevere's unarmed knights. Meleagant's ambush, therefore, seems more likely to be Malory's original adaptation.

The final episode of "The Tale of Launcelot and Guenevere" is "The Healing of Sir Urry." This episode, like "The Tale of Sir Gareth," has no known source but a number of partial analogues, two of the best of which are from the Perlesvaus and the Vulgate Lancelot.[55] In the Perlesvaus, Lancelot heals a wounded knight named Meliot by retrieving the sword that wounded him from the Chapele Perilleuse.[56] This episode is the basis of Lancelot's healing of Sir Meliot in "The Tale of Sir Launcelot" (281-2).

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[53] Field, "Malory and Chrétien de Troyes" 238n.

[54] "Syr Tryamowre" lines 65-222.

[55] Pheifer, "Malory's Lancelot" 180-1.

[56] Perlesvaus, eds. Nitze and Jenkins 342-9.

The episode in the Lancelot seems to be related to that of the Perlesvaus, as the wounded knight has a variant of the same name in both. Lancelot's first adventure after being knighted is the healing of Melion, a knight who appears in Camelot in a litter with two spears stuck into his body and part of a sword blade in his head.[57] He can be healed only if a knight removes the weapons and agrees to avenge him against all who say that they love the knight who wounded Melion more than they love Melion himself. Arthur and the rest of his knights refuse on the grounds that such a task, as Arthur says, "n'est pas chose par adventure c'uns chevaliers ne .II. ne .III. ne .XX. ne .XXX. peussent a chief mener."[58] However, Lancelot agrees and battles against several knights on Melion's behalf throughout the first section of this romance.

Obviously there are many differences between this episode and "The Healing of Sir Urry." Yet, there are enough similarities to support the idea that Malory used this episode from the Lancelot as his inspiration. Both knights arrive at Arthur's court in a horse-litter, both are wounded in the head and in the body, both fail to be helped by Arthur or his knights until both are finally helped by Lancelot. In the Lancelot, this episode is its hero's first adventure, and it shows his chivalry to be superior to that of Arthur and his court. In the Morte Darthur, "The Healing of Sir Urry" is Lancelot's final adventure before the fall of the Round Table and shows him to be "the beste knyght of the worlde" on the eve of the disaster. Furthermore, some of the differences between the two are such as may be expected if Malory had adapted the story from the Lancelot. Malory could easily have taken the ongoing adventure and made it into a single, dramatic event, and he could have altered the story so that Arthur and the other knights try but fail, rather than give a sensible but unchivalric reason

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[57] Lancelot 7: 264-78-1: 202.

[58] Lancelot 7: 264.

for not trying. Also he could well have thought the name "Melion" to be too close to "Meliot," whose healing Malory had already related, which might have lead him to change the wounded knight's name.

This episode is in the first section of the Lancelot, called the "Galehaut." The episodes of "The Tale of Sir Launcelot" are taken from the final section, the "Agravain," Malory's "Knight of the Cart" is probably taken from an episode in the middle section, the "Charette," but because Malory never uses material from the "Galehaut" section as a major source, it is possible that he worked from a manuscript of the Lancelot that lacked the first section.[59] The resemblance between these two episodes may not be close enough to constitute proof that Malory did know that "Galehaut," because it is impossible to be sure of how much of the situation came from the same unknown source or sources as the names Urry, his sister Fyleloly, and his nemesis Alpheus. However, it seems unlikely that the Lancelot would have been the original healer of Urry, and therefore, Malory was probably influenced by either the Perlesvaus or the "Galehaut."

One of the most notable features of "The Healing of Sir Urry" is the long list of knights who try to heal Urry before Lancelot finally succeeds. It has also been suggested that Hardyng's Chronicle may have contributed to this feature of this episode.[60] The feast that Hardyng describes in which Galahad's heart is buried at Glastonbury, which was suggested as a possible source for Malory's "Great Tournament" earlier, is thought to have influenced this episode as well. After relating the feast, Hardyng gives a forty-nine line long list of Arthur's knights.[61] This list illustrates the grandeur of Arthur's realm in the final episode before the

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[59] See Works 1407-12.

[60] Kennedy, "Malory and his English Sources" 47-8.

[61] Hardyng 136.

Roman War, which leads to the end of Arthur's reign in Hardyng's version. "The Healing of Sir Urry" stands in a similar position as the final adventure before Arthur's fall, and therefore Malory's long list of the knights attempt to heal Sir Urry might have been inspired by Hardyng's list.

Malory has shown his fondness for lists of knights before this, and yet there is some additional evidence in three names of minor characters that appear in both lists: Morganoure, Degrevaunt, and Collegrevaunce.[62] Not only do these three names occur in both lists, but the possibility that Malory drew from a list such as Hardyng's provides a simple explanation for the last two. Degrevaunt appears only in the romance Sir Degravant in addition to Malory and Hardyng. As for Collegrevaunce, his appearance here is surprising because he was killed in "The Quest for the Sangreal" (973). If Malory were following Hardyng's list and adapting it for his purpose, he could have taken Degrevaunt from Hardyng, having forgotten the previous death of Collgrevance.

The reasonable alternative for the presence of Sir Degrevaunt, that Malory took it from its eponymous romance, has also been proposed.[63] This is possible, of course, but because there is no other evidence that Malory knew this romance but many pieces of evidence that he used Hardyng's Chronicle, the simplest hypothesis must be that Malory took the name, as he did other details, from Hardyng.

As we saw above, Malory seems to have taken several details from the romance Sir Triamour, and it has been suggested that this romance contributed the fact that Sir Urry comes from Hungary, and the appearance of Marrok in "The Healing of Sir Urry."[64] Hungary

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[62] Kennedy 48.

[63] Benson, Malory's Morte Darthur 42.

[64] Field, "Malory and Chrétien" 238n.

is the setting of much of <u>Sir Triamour</u>, and so may have contributed this detail if it were not in Malory's source for the name. In addition to the <u>Morte Darthur</u> and <u>Sir Triamour</u>, the name Marrok appears in the two poems, <u>The Carle off Carlile</u> and <u>Syre Gawene and the Carle of Carelyle</u>, both of which we have seen as possible minor sources to earlier tales, and it also appears in the alliterative <u>Morte Arthure</u>. This is, therefore, another example of a detail that could have come from more than one source.

However, Malory would not have found the fact that Marrok was "the good knyght that was betrayed with his wyff, for he [i.e. "she"[65]] made hym seven yere a warwolff" (1150.27-9) in any of the proposed sources. This situation echoes the Breton lai <u>Bisclavret</u> by Marie de France. A lost variation of this lai may have had Marrok as the protagonist, perhaps, or perhaps Malory changed the name either purposefully or by accident of memory. The name "Sir Lamyell" which is also in the Urry list, provides further evidence that Malory had read Breton lais. This name seems to be a variation of Sir Launfal, who under such permutations as <u>Landeval</u>, <u>Lambewell</u>, and <u>Lamwell</u> is the hero of fifteenth and sixteenth-century Breton lais in English derived from Marie de France's twelfth-century <u>Lanval</u>.[66]

The number of characters in the list that seem to have come from minor sources underscores the point that even if Malory took the names Urry, Fyleloly, and Alpheus from a single source in which Urry benefits from supernatural healing, there is no reason to assume that Lancelot was the hero or that it was set in Arthur's court, and it almost certainly did not contain such a list of Arthur's knights. Although a lost romance could have had all of these

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[65] See <u>Oxford English Dictionary</u> s.v. "heo." The usage of "he" for "she" in Middle English is thought to be exclusively South-Western, Central West Midland. Malory's family was possibly influenced by the South-Western dialect. "He" for "she" is well attested in the Glossary of <u>Works</u>, s. v. "he."

[66] See Field's note on Lamyell in the Index of Names in <u>Works</u>.

elements, they are also typical of Malory's style. Until such a romance is discovered, the more likely theory will be that this episode is essentially an original creation of Malory's, put together from the episode in the Vulgate <u>Lancelot</u> with names added from one or more lost minor sources, to which Malory added his attempt to compile a complete list of the Round Table knights.

"The Tale of Launcelot and Guenevere" is unlike any other tale in the <u>Morte Darthur</u>. In this tale Malory combines three major sources and an unusually large number of minor sources, and this is the tale that provides the clearest evidence of use of non-Arthurian material. Malory also continues his ususal practice of taking details such as character names from other Arthurian romances and using his own earlier tales as minor source. The freedom that Malory allowed himself in this tale is not only unprecedented in the <u>Morte Darthur</u>, it is also not repeated. As we shall see, when Malory came to his final tale, he returned to a more characteristic relationship between his sources.

CHAPTER NINE: "THE DETH OF ARTHUR"

The final tale of the Morte Darthur, "The Deth of Arthur," like "The Tale of Launcelot and

Guenevere," is based upon a part of the Vulgate Mort Artu and the stanzaic Morte Arthur.[1]

The final tale relates the downfall of the Round Table and the deaths of most of the primary

characters. It opens with a discussion between Gawain and his brothers, in which Agravain

and Mordred, under the pretext of concern for their uncle's honour, wish to reveal the

relationship between Lancelot and Guenevere. Gawain, Gaherys, and Gareth counsel against

it and refuse to participate, but Agravain and Mordred persist. They suggest that Arthur test

their accusation by spending the night on a hunting trip, during which Agravain, Mordred,

and their knights will try to catch Lancelot and Guenevere together. They succeed in catching

Lancelot unarmed in the queen's chamber, and when they reject Lancelot's offer to discuss

the matter with the king upon his return, Lancelot fights his way out, killing all of his

assailants except Mordred, who flees. Lancelot and his kinsmen retreat to Joyous Garde

ahead of Arthur's homecoming.

Arthur sentences Guenevere to be burned at the stake. Lancelot and his kinsmen

agree that he has a duty to rescue her, but in the melee he accidentally kills Gaherys and

Gareth, who are both unarmed. Arthur besieges Joyous Garde, and Lancelot reluctantly

defends himself. When the Pope intercedes, Lancelot willingly returns Guenevere to Arthur.

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[1] Mort Artu: An Old French Prose Romance of the XIIIth Century, ed J. D. Bruce
(1910; New York: AMS, 1974); Le Morte Arthur: A Critical Edition, ed. P. F. Hissiger (The
Hague: Mouton, 1975). For discussions on the relationship of these two major sources to
Malory's version, see Vinaver, Commentary, Works 1615-26; Wilfred L. Guerin, "'The Tale
of the Death of Arthur:' Catastrophe and Resolution," Malory's Originality 233-74; and Larry
Benson, Malory's Morte Darthur 235-48.

However, the death of Gaherys and Gareth has aroused an implacable urge for vengeance in Gawain, so, when Lancelot returns to his lands in France, Gawain persuades Arthur to pursue. In the war, Gawain twice goads Lancelot into single combat. Lancelot is victorious both times and gives Gawain a severe head wound, but refuses to kill him. Gawain, however, refuses to surrender. The impasse is resolved after a fashion when Arthur receives news that Mordred, whom Arthur had appointed as regent, has had himself declared king.

Arthur and his forces therefore return to England. Mordred contests their landing, and in the battle Gawain's wound is reopened, which leads to his death. Repenting his earlier vendetta, Gawain writes a letter asking Lancelot to visit his tomb and to come to Arthur's aid. After his death, Gawain's spirit warns Arthur to postpone the final battle against Mordred until Lancelot can arrive. Arthur arranges a truce to discuss terms, but, during the discussion, a knight draws his sword to kill an adder, and battle ensues in which both forces are annihilated. Arthur slays Mordred, but is fatally wounded as well. Bedevere returns Excalibur to the water, and Arthur is taken away in a barge by a group of queens dressed in black. Bedevere wanders aimlessly until he arrives at an hermitage where the body of a king had recently been brought by Morgan le Fay and two other queens.

Lancelot receives Gawain's letter and travels to Britain, too late. He visits Gawain's tomb, speaks to Guenevere for the final time, and at last arrives at the hermitage where Bedevere is residing. They both decide to stay and become hermits themselves. Lancelot's kinsmen eventually find him there and become hermits too. Guenevere dies in a convent, Lancelot in his hermitage, and Sir Bors, Sir Ector, Sir Blamour, and Sir Bleoberis on Crusade in the Holy Land, which brings the Morte Darthur to its end. Only a handful of minor sources have been proposed for this tale, which may suggest that, as in the case of "The Tale of the

Sankgreal," Malory found a narrative in his major sources that he felt required little elaboration.

In this last tale, as in the first, Hardyng's <u>Chronicle</u> seems to be the most important single minor source. Therefore, as before, it will be convenient to consider its possible contributions as a whole and then to consider the remainder of suggested minor sources in the order in which they occur. In every case here, the question is not of the assumption of a character or an episode but of the borrowing of phrasing.

The first possible instance of Hardyng's influence in this tale is in the wording of Gawain's address to Arthur in which he petitions for war against Lancelot.[2] Gawain addresses Arthur as "My kynge, my lorde, and myne uncle" (1186.1). This appears to echo a phrase in Hardyng in which the narrator concludes a diatribe against Mordred by condeming him for betraying "Thy lorde and eme, and also thy kyng souerayn."[3] Although the character and the context are different, the wording is so similar as to make coincidence unlikely.

A very similar case occurs near the end when Arthur learns about Mordred's treachery and prepares to abandon his siege of Benwick to return to Britain.[4]

> [R]yght so cam tydyngis unto kynge Arthur frome Inglonde that made kynge Arthur and all hys oste to remeve.
>   As sir Mordred was rular of all Inglonde, he lete make lettirs as thoughe that they had com frome beyonde the see. (1221-27)[5]

These lines seem to echo Hardyng's description of Arthur's removal from Rome at the end of

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[2] Kennedy, "Malory and his English Sources" 43-4.

[3] Hardyng 149.

[4] Wilson, "More Borrowings from Hardyng" 210.

[5] The paragraph break corresponds to a blank line and two-line initial capital in the Winchester and a book division in the Caxton.

his successful campaign to return to Britain, here also to resist Mordred's rebellion:

> All that wynter at Rome he did soiourne,
> In palays of Mayns palacium;
> The somer cā y^t home he might retourne,
> At whiche somer so when it was come,
> Tydynges came to Arthure hole and some,
> That duke Mordred was kyng of all Britayn,
> And wedded Gwaynour to his wyfe certayn.[6]

The phrases, "Tydynges came to Arthure," and "so cam tydyngis unto kynge Arthur;" "That

duke Mordred was kyng of all Britayn," and "as sir Mordred was rular of all Inglonde,"

mirror each other and therefore seem to indicate that Malory again borrowed some of

Hardyng's wording.

Another instance involves Lancelot's prayers at the tomb of Arthur and Guenevere.[7]

After Lancelot has been a hermit for six years he receives a vision that causes him to travel to

the abbey at which Guenevere has become a nun. There he finds that Guenevere has recently

died. Thereafter,

> syr Launcelot never after ete but lytel mete, nor dranke, tyl he was dede, for
> than he seekened more and more and dryed and dwyned awaye. For the
> Bysshop nor none of his felowes myght not make hym to ete and lytel he
> dranke, that he was waxen by a kybbet shorter than he was, that the peple
> could not knowe hym. For evermore, day and nyght, he prayed, but somtyme
> he slombred a broken slepe. Ever he was lyeng grovelyng on the tombe of
> kyng Arthur and quene Guenevere. (1257.1-9)

Both the Vulgate <u>Mort Artu</u> and the stanzaic <u>Le Morte Arthur</u> depict Lancelot's deep grief at

Arthur's passing, but neither say that Lancelot remained at Arthur's or Guenevere's tomb

"day and night." Malory's wording again seems to have been influenced by Hardyng. Of

Arthur's tomb he says,

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[6] Hardyng 145.

[7] Kennedy, "Malory and his English Sources" 43.

> And preastes were aboute his toumbe alwaye
> In prayers greate, and holy meditacion,
> With heare the fleshe repressyng night and daye,
> Three dayes eche weke at breade and water aye,
> They fasted & lyued in great sorowe and penaūce.[8]

Lancelot is one of the priests whose conduct Hardyng is describing, so that Malory could easily have adapted the scene to apply to Lancelot alone. In addition to describing Lancelot as mourning by the tomb "day and night," the two authors are also alike in describing the fasting that in Malory leads to Lancelot's death, which is not mentioned in either the Mort Artu or Le Morte Arthur.

When Lancelot dies, he is buried in his castle of Joyous Garde, of which Malory states,

> Somme men say it was Anwyk, and somme men say it was Bamborow. (1257.27-8)

Vinaver notes that this identification may have been the result of Malory's own experience: in 1462 Malory participated in the sieges of both Alnwick and Bamborough as one of the followers of Edward IV.[9] Joyous Garde was traditionally put along the Humber,[10] and so Malory's independent linking of it with these two place-names must have had something to do with this episode from his life. However, he would have found information in Hardyng that could have drawn his mind in that direction.[11] Malory was aware that Joyous Garde also had the alternative name of Dolorous Garde,[12] and Hardyng relates that a pre-Arthurian king,

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[8] Hardyng 147.

[9] Works 1257n; cf. Field, The Life and Times of Sir Thomas Malory 26-30.

[10] C. E. Pickford, "The River Humber in French Arthurian Romance," The Legend of Arthur in the Middle Ages, eds. P. B. Grout et al. (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1983) 149-159.

[11] Field, "Malory's Minor Sources" 28.

[12] Works 1202.29-30; cf. Lancelot 7: 311-419.

Ebranke, built Bamburgh Castle on Mount Dolorous.[13] This seems to suggest that Malory

had Hardyng in mind when he says that "somme men say it was Bamborow."

Finally, Ector's threnody to Lancelot seems indebted to the eulogy of Hardyng's

narrator for Arthur.[14] Sir Ector, Lancelot's brother, says of him,

> A Launcelot! [. . .] thou were hede of al Crysten knyghtes! And now I dare say
> [. . .] thou sir Launcelot, there thou lyest, that thou were never matched of
> erthely knyghtes hande. And thou were the curtest knyght that ever bare
> shelde! And thou were the truest frende to thy lovar that ever bestrade hors,
> and thou were the trewest lover, of a synful man, that ever loved woman, and
> thou were the kyndest man that ever strake wyth swerde. And thou were the
> godelyest persone that ever cam emonge prees of knyghtes, and thou was the
> mekest man and the jentyllest that ever ete in halle emonge ladyes, and thou
> were the sternest knyght to thy mortal foo that ever put spere in the reeste.
> (1259.9-21)

There is nothing really comparable to this passage in Malory's major sources for this tale. In

the Mort Artu, the former archbishop of Canterbury eulogizes Lancelot by saying that the

angels have certainly taken Lancelot to heaven because he has done penance "sor toutes

choses," and Lancelot's epitaph reads that he was "li miudres cheualiers ki onkes entrast el

roiame de Logres, fors seulement Galaas, sen fil."[15] In the stanzaic Morte Arthur, the scene is

invested with more emotion, but Ector's lament does not contain the touching portrait of

Malory's version:

> Syr Ector of hys wytte nere wente,
> Walowed and wronge as he were wode;
> ....
> Sythen on there knees they knelyd downe,
> Grete sorow it was to se with syght,
> "Unto Jhesu Cryste aske I a boone,
> And to hys moder, Mary bryght;
> Lord, as thow madyste bothe sonne and mone,

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[13] Hardyng 49.

[14] Kennedy, "Malory and his English Sources" 43.

[15] Mort Artu 261-62.

And God and man arte moste of myght,
Brynge thys sowle unto thy trone,
And evyr thow rewdyste on gentyll knyght."[16]

A closer analogue to Malory is found in Mordred's lament for Gawain from the

alliterative Morte Arthure:

He was þe sterynneste in stoure that euer stele werryde,
....
Mane hardyeste of hande, happyeste in armes,
And þe hendeste in hawle vndire heuen riche,
Þe lordelieste of ledynge qwhylls he lyffe myghte,
Fore he was a lyone allossede in londes inewe.
Had thow knawen hym, sir kynge, in kythe thare he lengede,
His konynge, his knyghthode, his kyndly werkes,
His doyng, his doughtynesse, his dedis of armes,
Thow wolde hafe dole for his dede þe dayes of thy lyfe![17]

Although this has long been acknowledged as one of Malory's sources for this scene,[18] the

tribute that Hardyng's narrator pays to Arthur may also have been an influence:

There was neuer prince of giftes more liberal,
Of landes geuyng, ne of meate so plenteous,
Agayn his fooen was moste imperiall,
And with his owne subiectes moste bounteous;
As a lyon in felde was moste douteous,
In a house a lambe of mercy euer replete,
And in iudgement euer eguall was and discrete.[19]

Both of these passages have about an equal general similarity to Malory, and the fact that

Gawain and Arthur are both described as lions in the alliterative Morte Arthure and Hardyng

could have led Malory's mind from the one to the other. However, neither passage provides

the strong verbal parallels that we have seen in the previous examples, in part because this

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[16] Le Morte Arthur lines 3930-45.

[17] Morte Arthure lines 3872-85.

[18] See Works 1259.9-21n.

[19] Hardyng 148.

passage is much longer than the above examples. According to the alliterative poem's

Mordred, Gawain is "þe sterynneste in stoure that euer stele werryde," and Malory's Lancelot

is "the sternest knyght to thy mortal foo that ever put spere in the reeste." This is much closer

to the equivalent line in Hardying that Arthur is "Agayn his fooen [. . .] moste imperiall."

However Hardyng's Arthur is "In a house a lambe of mercy euer replete," and Lancelot is

"the mekest man and the jentyllest that ever ete in halle emonge ladyes." Although the idea is

similar, the expression is very different. Throughout the passage, Malory seems to be using

his own words and his own organization of thought. In such a case, the passages from the

alliterative <u>Morte Arthure</u> and Hardyng's <u>Chronicle</u> should be seen as at most inspirations

rather than sources.

The cumulative effect of the rest of the examples cited above, however, is to provide

ample proof of Malory's debt to Hardyng. This means that we can now say that Malory

borrows from Hardyng in every tale that has an analogue in the Arthurian section of

Hardyng's <u>Chronicle</u>.

In this final tale, Malory also continues his method of using other minor sources as well. The

first instance of a possible minor source other than Hardyng concerns Malory's general

conception of the fall of Arthur's kingdom. Unlike the situation in the <u>Mort Artu</u>, in which

many factors contribute to the downfall, including Arthur's loss of the favour of God and of

Fortune, Malory's narrator explicitly places the blame on the treachery of Agravain and

Mordred.[20] It has been suggested that Malory was influenced in this by the Post-Vulgate

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[20] <u>Works</u> 1154, noted in Sandra Ihle, "The Art of Adaptation in Malory's Books Seven
and Eight," <u>Interpretations</u> 15 (1984): 83.

version of the Mort Artu.[21] In the Post-Vulgate too, the role of Mordred's treachery is

emphasised and the allusions to Arthur losing favour with Fortune are removed.[22] However,

as the author of this suggestion also states,

> Admittedly some of the similarities, such as Malory's omission of so many
> references to God and Fortune in the Vulgate Mort Artu and increased
> sympathy for Arthur could be due to Malory's other major source for his final
> tale, the stanzaic Morte Arthur as well as Malory's own conception of Arthur's
> character; but some of the ideas, such as the added emphasis on mischance,
> incest, and Mordred's responsibility could have come from the early part of
> the Post-Vulgate Roman that Malory definitely knew.[23]

This seems more probable than the influence of the Post-Vulgate Mort Artu. The Post-

Vulgate version of the Mort Artu differs from Malory's version in such particulars as the

death of King Mark and the final fate of the remaining Round Table knights. Because the

Post-Vulgate story is so different to Malory's and because Malory's is so similar to the

stanzaic Morte Arthur, it seems superfluous to posit the Post-Vulgate as a source.

Malory's next possible use of minor sources is in the list of knights who accompany Agravain

and Mordred in their attempt to trap Lancelot in the queen's chamber. Neither of Malory's

major sources includes a list of these knights, but the stanzaic Morte Arthur mentions that

there were twelve of them.[24] Of the twelve names that Malory gives these knights only one,

Mador de la Port, is in the major sources. Neither La mort Artu nor the stanzaic Le Morte

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[21] Edward Donald Kennedy, "Malory's 'Noble Tale of Sir Launcelot du Lake,' the
Vulgate Lancelot, and the Post-Vulgate Roman du Graal," Arthurian and Other Studies
Presented to Shunichi Noguchi, eds. Takashi Suzuki and Tsuyoshi Mukai (Cambridge: D. S.
Brewer, 1993) 107-29, on 116-18.

[22] La version post-Vulgate de la Queste del Saint Graal et de la Mort Artu: troisième
partie du Roman du Graal 3:388-535.

[23] Kennedy, "Malory's 'Noble Tale of Sir Launcelot du Lake'" 118.

[24] Le Morte Arthur line 1811.

Arthur mentions Colgrevaunce, Gyngalyne, Mellyot, Petipace, Galleron, Melyon, Ascomore,

Cursesalyne, Florence, Lovell, or Gromore somer Joure at all. Melyon first appears in "The

Tale of Sir Tristram," where Malory takes him from his major source for that tale; Ascomore

and Lovell derive from Malory's major sources to "The Tale of Arthur and Lucius," in which

they first appear.

   As is usual with Malory's lists, most of the characters have appeared earlier in the

Morte Darthur,[25] but two of them, Cursesalyne and Gromer somer Joure, seem to appear here

for the first time. Although it may be a surprise to see Malory introducing characters, even

minor ones, for the first time in his final tale, such an action on his part would not be

unprecedented. Several of the characters in "The Healing of Sir Urry" appear there for the

first time and never appear again. It is possible, however, that Malory did not intend

Cursesalyne or Gromer somer Joure to make their initial appearance here. The Vinaver-Field

Index of Proper Names notes that Cursesalyne is "Probably identical with Crosseleme"

(1676), a knight whose sole appearance is in the list of knights who try to heal Sir Urry

(1148.19), and as mentioned above, Gromer somer Joure may be identical with Grummor

Grummorson.[26]

   Crosseleme does not seem to play a part in extant French romances or in English

romances prior to Malory,[27] but Curseslayne might be a variation of Cursalen, a knight who

fights for Arthur against the Roman Empire in the chronicles of Geoffrey, Wace, and

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[25] For Colgrevaunce, see supra 47-9; Gyngalyne, 155-56; Mellyot, 51-2 Petipace, 50-1; Galleron, 165-67; Florence, 109-10.

[26] Supra 144-46.

[27] Ackerman, Index; West, Index.

Laȝamon.[28] Of these three, Wace would probably have been the most accessible to Malory but there is no evidence that Malory read any of them. However, if he had read Wace, it might not have left discernible evidence. Because it is in French, Wace's book might not have left the verbal echoes apparent from Hardyng's Chronicle, and its version of the Arthurian story was the outline followed by many of Malory's major sources. Both of these names, therefore, and whether they are meant to refer to the same character remain mysteries.

We have discussed Gromer somer Joure earlier as a character who appears only in Malory and in The Wedding of Sir Gawain, and who is connected to or identical to Grummor Grummorson.[29] In his Index, Vinaver suggests that Gromer Somer Joure may be a corruption of two names, Helyans de Gromoret and Elior.[30] Even though such a corruption may be hard to envision, this suggestion at least points in the direction of Malory's familiar Arthurian sources. Helians de Gromoret appears in the Prose Tristan.[31] Kaz de Gromoret appears in the Prose Tristan and in the Old French Les Prophécies de Merlin, which there is no evidence that Malory knew.[32]

However, this strange name is much more plausibly explained by the recent

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[28] Geoffrey of Monmouth, Historia regum Britannae, ed. Neil Wright (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1985) 156, 168, 172; Robert Wace, Le Roman de Brut, ed. A. J. Holden, 3 vols. (Paris: SATF, 1970-73) lines 10261, 12383, 12749, 12753; Layamon, Brut or Hystoria Brutonum, eds. W. J. R. Barron and S. C. Weinburg (New York: Longman, 1995) lines 12146, 13614.

[29] Supra 64-70 and 144-46.

[30] Works 1682.

[31] Löseth, Le roman en prose de Tristan, section 395a.

[32] Löseth, Le roman en prose de Tristan, section 282b; Les Prophécies de Merlin, ed. Lucy Allen Patton, 2 vols. (New York: Heath, 1926) 1: 405.

suggestion that it is a corruption of "Goumerés sans Mesure" from L'Âtre périlleux.[33] The corruption of "Goumerés sans Mesure" into "Gromer somer Joure" seems more likely to have been the result of mishearing rather than misreading, and the name so created would have been transmitted to The Wedding of Sir Gawain,[34] from which Malory apparently took it. Given the rarity of this name and the other evidence adduced in favour of the theory that Malory wrote The Wedding of Sir Gawain, Malory, whose French was not perfect,[35] might have been the one who misheard the name "Goumerés sans Mesure," thereby creating the character who appears in both The Wedding and the Morte Darthur. This theory is consistent with the evidence that we considered earlier that Malory borrowed the Sir Phelot episode in "The Tale of Sir Launcelot" from L'Âtre périlleux.[36] Whether Malory wrote The Wedding or not, the unusual appearance of Gyngalyne, who also appears in that romance, in this list too seems to indicate that Malory had that poem in mind when he compiled it.

On somewhat less unsure ground, it has been suggested that Malory's description of Gawain's may show that Malory was indebted to the most influential book of the Middle Ages, the Bible.[37] Malory says of Gawain, "And so at the owre of noone sir Gawayne yelded up the goste" (1232.16-17). This echoes the usual English translation of Matthew 27:50:

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[33] Karen Hunter Trimnell, "'And Shold Have Been Oderwyse Understond': The Disenchanting of Sir Gromer Somer Joure," Medium Ævum 71 (2002): 294-301.

[34] Trimnell 297-99.

[35] For a discussion of Malory's French, see Margaret Malpas and P. J. C. Field, "French Words and Phrases in Sir Thomas Malory's Le Morte Darthur," Texts and Sources 32-46.

[36] Supra 125-26.

[37] Field, "Malory's Minor Sources" 30-1.

"And Jesus, again crying with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost." The reading of this verse in the 1388 Wycliff translation and the 1526 Tyndale translation shows that the phrase could well have been available to Malory,[38] and the conditions of Gawain's death are not totally dissimilar to that of Christ. Like Christ, Gawain dies slowly while in pain, thinking of others, and forgiving Lancelot, who struck the blow that led to his death.[39] Although Gawain's character throughout the <u>Morte Darthur</u> is pointedly un-Christlike, especially when compared to the Grail knights, and his inability to forgive Lancelot for the accidental killing of Gaherys and Gareth has created the opportunity for Mordred's treason, his repentance causes a dramatic change in his character that might have drawn Malory's mind to biblical passages such as the one dealing with the repentance of the thief who was crucified next to Jesus,[40] which in turn would probably have brought the death of Jesus to mind.

However, although this argument is appealing, it is undermined by Malory's other uses of this phrase in the <u>Morte Darthur</u>. When Uther dies at the beginning of Malory's work, it is said of him, "and therwith he yelde up the ghost" (12.7-8). Also, once Tristram's mother has given birth to him she "gaff up the goste and dyed" (372.27). Although the death of Tristram's mother in childbirth might be described as like that of Christ insofar as both deaths give life to others, Uther's death clearly shows that Malory applied this phrase to characters who are not like Christ in any meaningful way. The <u>Oxford English Dictionary</u> and the <u>Middle English Dictionary</u> show that this phrase had become idiomatic,[41] and Malory's use of

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[38] <u>The Gospels: Gothic, Anglo-Saxon, Wycliffe, and Tyndale Versions</u>, ed. Joseph Bosworth (London: Gibbings, 1907).

[39] Field, "Malory's Minor Sources" 31.

[40] Luke 23.40-3. Luke 23.43 also contains the phrase "he gave up the ghost."

[41] <u>Oxford English Dictionary</u> s. v. ghost, yield; and <u>Middle English Dictionary</u> s. v. gost.

it seems to confirm this view. It is still possible that Malory took this phrase from the Bible,

but it cannot be proved.

If Gawain's death may have reassuring Biblical echoes, that of his brother Mordred does not.

In the final battle Arthur and Mordred engage each other in combat:

> And whan sir Mordred saw kynge Arthur he ran untyll hym with hys swerde
> drawyn in hys honde, and there kyng Arthur smote sir Mordred undir the
> shylde, with a foyne of hys speare, throwoute the body more than a fadom.
> And whan sir Mordred felte that he had hys dethys wounde he threste hymselff
> with the myght that he had upp to the burre of kyng Arthurs speare, and ryght
> so he smote hys fadir, kynge Arthure, with hys swerde holdynge in both hys
> hondys, uppon the syde of the hede, that the swerde perced the helmet and the
> tay of the brayne. And therewith Mordred daysshed downe starke dede to the
> erthe. (1237.12-22)

The striking image of Mordred thrusting himself up Arthur's spear is not to be found in either

the Mort Artu or the stanzaic Morte Arthur. It has been suggested that Malory adapted this

detail from The Original Chronicle of Andrew Wyntoun.[42] This passage describes a

confrontation in Gasklune in Scotland that according to Wyntoun occurred in 1392 between

unarmoured Highland raiders and Lowland knights. In this battle, Lowland hero Sir David

Lindsay engages his enemy:

> Swa, on his hors he sittande þan,
> Throw þe body he straik a man
> Withe his spere doune to þe erde.
> Þat man helde fast his awyn suerde
> In til his neif, and vp thrawande
> He pressit hym, noucht aganstandande
> Þe sterap-lethir and þe but,
> Thre ply or foure, abuf þe fut

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[42] C. O. Parsons, "A Scottish 'Father of Courtesy' and Malory," Speculum 20.1
(1946): 51-64.

He straik þe Lyndissay to þe bane.[43]

In arguing this theory, Coleman Parsons says "That Malory may have read Wyntoun or have

learned of the Gasklune fight through oral tradition brought back to England by some knight

who had visited Scotland or that Sir David Lyndsay himself, on one of his trips to the sister

kingdom [. . .] can only be a matter of conjecture."[44] In addition to the conjectural nature of

the method of transmission, the two passages have little in common except the fact that a man

is stricken with a spear by a man on horseback and returns the blow with a sword. Arthur

may still be on horseback when he strikes Mordred, as is Sir David in Wyntoun, but Sir

David's opponent apparently does not "threste hymselff with the myght that he had upp to the

burre" of Sir David's spear. And of course the leg wound that he inflicts on Sir David is not

similar to the fatal head wound Mordred inflicts on Arthur. Because the resemblance

between the two encounters is weak and there is no reason to suppose that Malory was

familiar with the Wynton passage, the evidence does not appear to favour this theory.

Following the final clash, Arthur is taken away to the Vale of Avalon. However, when

Bedivere arrives at the hermitage in which he will become a hermit, he finds a body has been

brought there, and he concludes that it is Arthur's. This is very similar to the situation in the

stanzaic Morte Arthur,[45] but Malory departs from the poem to say,

> Thus of Arthur I fynd no more wrytten in bokis that bene auctorysed, nothir
> more of the verry sertaynté of hys dethe harde I never rede, but thus was he lad
> away in a shyp wherin were three quenys; that one was kyng Arthur syster,
> quene Morgan le Fay, the tother was the queen of North Galis, and the third

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[43] The Original Chronicle of Andrew Wyntoun, ed. F. J. Amours, S. T. S., vol. 57, 1903-14, 371-4.

[44] Parsons 63.

[45] In the Mort Artu, the hermit is certain that the body is Arthur's. Mort Artu 251.

was the quene of the Waste Londis. Also there was dame Nynyve, the chyff lady of the laake, whych had wedded sir Pellyas, the good knyght [. . .].

Now more of the deth of kynge Arthur coude I never fynde, but that thes ladyes brought hym to hys grave, and such one was entyred there whych the ermyte bare wytnes that sometyme was Bysshop of Caunturbyry. But yet the ermyte knew nat in sertayne that he was veryly the body of kynge Arthur.

For thys tale sir Bedwere, a knyght of the Table Rounde, made hit to be wrytten; yet som men say in many partys of Inglonde that kynge Arthure ys nat dede, but had by the wyll of Oure Lorde Jesu into another place; and men say that he shall com agayne, and he shall wynne the Holy Crosse. Yet I woll not say that hit shall be so, but rather I wolde sey: here in thys worlde he chaunged hys lyff. And many men say that there ys wrytten uppon the tumbe thys vers: Hic iacet Arthurus, Rex quondam Rexque futurus. (1242.3-29)

Malory is largely summing up the account that he has received not only from the stanzaic Morte Arthur but from the Mort Artu as well. However, neither of Malory's major sources acknowledges the possibility of Arthur's survival, and so in saying that "som men say in many partys of Inglonde that kynge Arthure ys nat dede, but had by the wyll of Oure Lorde Jesu into another place" Malory is claiming to have access to another source.

The legend of Arthur's survival had existed in several forms long before Malory's time.[46] The literary tradition of Arthur's survival dates back at least to Geoffrey of Monmouth. In Geoffrey's Historia regum Britanniae Arthur is carried away in a barge to be healed,[47] as in Malory and his two major sources. In Geoffrey's story, however, Arthur does not return, either dead or alive. In his Vita Merlini, Geoffrey has Merlin state that Arthur is in the care of nine sisters in the island of Avalon.[48] Other versions of the legend circulated, apparently in oral tradition, in Wales and Brittany claiming that Arthur lay in a cave waiting

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[46] R. S. Loomis, "The Legend of Arthur's Survival," Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages, ed. Loomis (Oxford: Clarendon, 1959) 64-71; see also Mary Scanlan, "The Legend of Arthur's Survival," diss., Columbia U, 1950.

[47] Geoffrey of Monmouth, The Historia regum Britannie, ed. Neil Wright (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1984) 131.

[48] Geoffrey of Monmouth, Vita Merlini, ed. and trans. Basil Clarke (Cardiff: U of Wales P, 1973) lines 908-40.

to be awakened, or that he still lived, transformed into a raven. Malory may have been alluding to any or all of these traditions when he says that "som men say in many partys of Inglonde that kynge Arthure ys nat dede, but had by the wyll of Oure Lorde Jesu into another place." However, Malory's language is so hauntingly vague that it is impossible to tell which version or versions of Arthur's survival he may have been referring to.

Malory, however, is specific when it comes to Arthur's epitaph, and so it may be possible to trace its source. Malory gives the inscription as "Hic iacet Arthurus, Rex quondam Rexque futurus" (1242.29). In the stanzaic Morte Arthur, Arthur's epitaph is merely said to be inscribed on Arthur's tomb "with ryche letters rayled aryght."[49] In the Mort Artu, Arthur's epitaph is given as "Chi gist li rois Artus, ki par sa valor mist en se subiection .xij. roiaumes."[50]

The version of Arthur's epitaph as Malory gives it appears in a number of other sources. It appears in the text of the alliterative Morte Arthure, in the poem called Arthur in a manuscript anthology in Longleat House MS 55, in John of Fordun's Chronica Gentis Scotorum, as a marginalium in the sole surviving manuscript of the earlier and longer version of Hardyng's Chronicle, and as a marginalium in one manuscript family of Lydgate's Fall of Princes.[51] It was once widely thought that the alliterative Morte Arthure was the overwhelmingly probable source of Malory's epitaph, since it is his major source for his second tale.[52] However, because the epitaph appears only at the end of the poem and in

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[49] Le Morte Arthur line 3531.

[50] Mort Artu 251.

[51] John Withrington, "The Arthurian Epitaph in Malory's 'Morte Darthur,'" Arthurian Literature VII, ed. Richard Barber (Cambridge: Boydell and Brewer, 1987) 103-44.

[52] E. g. Works 1242.3-33n.

another hand than the rest of the poem in the single manuscript in which the poem is now

preserved,[53] it is likely to have been an addition to the main body of the text. Since Malory

used a different manuscript from the one that survives now, it seems unlikely that the epitaph

was in the copy that he used.[54] All of the texts that carry the version of Arthur's epitaph that

Malory uses date from the fifteenth century, and it therefore seems to have become traditional

by this time. John Withrington has concluded that Malory's source was from this tradition,

from perhaps a text of Lydgate's Fall of Princes that contained the marginal gloss.[55]

The possibility that Malory took the epitaph from Lydgate is strengthened by the echo

of Lydgate's "The Dysposicion of þe World" from A Pageant of Knowledge that we noted in

the last chapter.[56] It is perhaps worth adding that it would be surprising for Malory thus to

reject the epitaph as given by his authorized French book unless he thought that he had a

better authority. On the other hand, the phrase, "And many men say that there ys wrytten

uppon the tumbe thys vers"[57] would seem more naturally to imply tradition, or at least

tradition in addition to Lydgate. This is as far as the evidence allows us to go at present.

It has, however, sometimes been suggested that the verse that Malory cites was an

inscription added in the late thirteenth century to the tomb of Arthur that was allegedly

discovered in Glastonbury around 1190.[58] However, the verse inscribed on Arthur's tomb

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[53] Morte Arthure 4347-49n.

[54] Withrington 112; see also Field, "'Above Rubies': Malory and Morte Arthure 2559-61," Texts and Sources 196-8.

[55] Withrington 141-2.

[56] Supra 196-67.

[57] Vers is not in Winchester and appears only in Field's revised edition of Works.

[58] J. L. N. O'Loughlin, "The Middle English Alliterative Morte Arthure," Medium Ævum 4 (1935): 153-168, on 168, cited in Hamel, Morte Arthure, note to line 4347.

following its translation on the occasion of a visit by Edward I and Queen Eleanor in 1278

apparently read:

> Hic iacet Arthurus, flos regum, gloria regni,
> Quem mors probitas commendat laude perhenni.
> Arthuri iacet hic coniux tumulata secunda
> Que meruit celos uirtutum prole secunda.[59]

There is no evidence that Arthur's tomb ever actually carried the verse cited by Malory and

others, despite the tradition that apparently existed by the fifteenth century.

In his final tale, Malory uses minor sources in a way that we have found to be typical of his

method. He borrows wording from them and he adds names of minor characters. The number

of minor sources used in this tale is relatively small, and the reson for this is probably the

same as the reason for the rare use of minor sources in "The Tale of the Sangreal." The

combination of the Vulgate Mort Artu and the stanzaic Morte Arthur gave him a clear

storyline with few anonymous characters, and therefore he did not need to supplement them

with many minor sources. Malory may have departed from his usual practice in his apparent

use of oral tradition for his equivocal statements about Arthur's passing and perhaps by the

epitaph on Arthur's tomb, which attests to the prevalence of this oral tradition.

Now that Malory's use of minor sources has been analysed for each of his tales, it is

time to turn to our conclusions.

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[59] The Chronicle of Glastonbury Abbey: An Edition, Translation and Study of John of Glastonbury's Cronica sive Antiquitates Glastoniensis Ecclesie, ed. James Carley (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985) 182, cited in Withrington, "The Arthurian Epitaph in Malory" 217.

CHAPTER TEN: CONCLUSIONS

Malory's use of his sources, both his major and his minor, varies from tale to tale. In his first, second, fifth, and sixth tales, he follows a single major source fairly closely, and he may have done so as well with the lost source of the fourth tale. In his third, seventh, and eighth tales, Malory combines two or more major sources to create new narrative units. The common feature that characterizes Malory's handling of his major sources is that each one supplies the significant elements of plot for its equivalent tale of the Morte Darthur.

All of Malory's major sources told stories that could be fitted into an overall cyclic scheme resembling that of the Vulgate Cycle and Post-Vulgate Cycle. The Post-Vulgate Suite du Merlin provided a set of adventures alternative to those in its Vulgate counterpart, and the alliterative Morte Arthure tells a version of the Roman War story, which also appears near the end of the Vulgate Suite du Merlin. The Prose Lancelot, of course, is part of the Vulgate Cycle, and Malory's use of it was probably influenced by the similar use of the Lancelot by the Post-Vulgate Cycle. The Prose Tristan was designed to be a counterpart to the Lancelot. The Queste de la Saint Graal and the Mort de la roi Artu are the final branches of the Vulgate, and the stanzaic Le Morte Arthur tells much the same story as the Mort Artu.

The one major source that may not initially appear to fit into this pattern is the lost source of "The Tale of Sir Gareth," which probably resembled the episodic romances that Malory elsewhere uses only as minor sources. Even so, Malory's use of this source is not inconsistent with a cyclic structure similar to that of the Vulgate. In the Prose Lancelot and the Prose Tristan, stories of other knights of Arthur's court are interlaced with the storyline of its main heroes, and although it is a commonplace of Malory criticism that he reduced

interlace in favour of a more linear structure,[1] he shows in his redaction of the Prose <u>Tristan</u> and elsewhere that he was not wholly averse to this method of storytelling. His use of the source of "The Tale of Gareth" as an episode in the <u>Morte Darthur</u> is therefore not inconsistent with an overall structure modelled on the Vulgate Cycle.

Malory's desire to fit his tales into this structure explains why he did not make more use of some of his minor sources. The <u>Perlesvaus</u>, which supplied the Chapel Perelous episode in "The Tale of Sir Launcelot," is either the most minor of Malory's major sources or the most major of his minor sources. As we have seen, it may also have supplied the initial inspiration for Marhalt's quest at the end of "The Tale of King Arthur," for which no source has hitherto been suggested. In addition, however, the <u>Perlesvaus</u> contains much more that Malory might have wished to use, including a version of the quest for the Grail. However, in its version of the Grail quest, Perlesvaus alone is worthy to achieve the Grail, although Gawain is nearly worthy. In contrast, Lancelot is depicted as being unrepentant in his adulterous relationship with Guenevere and so does not achieve even the partial vision that both the Vulgate and Malory allow him. Later in the <u>Perlesvaus</u>, Kay kills Arthur's and Guenevere's son Lachau and joins Arthur's enemies, and Guenevere dies of sorrow for her lost son. Clearly this storyline could not be reconciled with a version of the Arthurian story based on the two final romances of the Vulgate Cycle, and therefore it could not be fitted into the cyclic structure that Malory intended.

That, however, was not Malory's only criterion for his major sources. For example, the Sir Phelot episode in "The Tale of Sir Launcelot" appears to have been modified from an episode in <u>L'Âtre périlleux</u>, which therefore would have a relationship to the third tale similar

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[1] Vinaver, <u>Works</u> lxiv-lxxiii; cf. Benson, <u>Malory's</u> Morte Darthur 39-40.

to that which the <u>Perlesvaus</u> has to the first. Unlike the <u>Perlesvaus</u>, however, the major plot line of <u>L'Âtre périlleux</u>, which relates an adventure of Gawain, could have been made into a tale similar in scope to "The Tale of Sir Gareth." The same could be said of other episodic romances that Malory used as minor sources such as <u>Erec et Enide</u>, <u>Yvain</u>, and <u>The Wedding of Sir Gawain</u>.

The fact that Malory did not make more of minor sources such as these says something about the nature of the book that he wanted to write. Although he wanted to produce a comprehensive and coherent Arthurian cycle,[2] Malory clearly wanted that cycle to be much briefer than either the Vulgate or Post-Vulgate.[3] Each of the major characters, including both Gawain and Ywain in the first tale, has a small number of individual adventures, and Malory clearly felt no need to tell extended adventures beside those found in his major sources for secondary knights, such as he may have considered Erec. His interest in giving individual adventures to each of the major characters could explain Malory's choice of the Post-Vulgate <u>Suite du Merlin</u> against its Vulgate counterpart.

As with his major sources, Malory's use of minor sources varies from tale to tale throughout the <u>Morte Darthur</u>. In Tales VI and VIII, Malory uses very few minor sources, while in his first tale, he may have used as many as eleven. Such a discrepancy might be thought to say something about the order of composition of the tale of the <u>Morte Darthur</u>, that Malory wrote Tales VI and VIII before he became aware of the minor sources that he used elsewhere in his book. This idea is similar to Terrace McCarthy's hypothesis about the

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[2] Field, "Malory and his Audience," <u>New Directions in Arthurian Studies</u>, ed. Alan Lupack (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2002) 21-32, on 24-27.

[3] Cf. such phrases as "So breffly to make an ende" (39.20); "So, to shortyn this tale" (380.11); and "And so, for to shortyn this tale" (1153.17).

compositional order of Malory's tales discussed earlier and has the same weakness.[4] Writing

the tales of the Grail quest and the fall of Arthur's realm before deciding to write the rest of

the story of Arthur is inherently less plausible than the alternative, which is that the major

sources of these tales provided Malory with a narrative that he felt little need to supplement.

Because Malory's use of minor sources is so various, it is best to discuss his use of them in

each tale separately.[5]

The way Malory adapted the Prose Merlin and the Post-Vulgate Suite du Merlin in his first

tale suggests that by the time he wrote it he already had an independent vision of the

Arthurian story and was not constrained by the letter or the spirit of his main source. He felt

free to begin his story with the events leading up to Arthur's birth rather than Merlin's, which

allowed him to omit what the Merlin said about the reigns of Vortigern, Pendragon, and much

of Uther's reign; he felt free to substitute episodes from other romances or from his own

imagination for episodes in his major source; and he felt free to add details from several other

sources.

For "The Tale of King Arthur," as for the Morte Darthur as a whole, Hardyng's

Chronicle is probably the most important of these minor sources. The point in the Prose

Merlin at which Malory's story begins, its abbreviated account of Uther's reign, its

identification of Uther's final battle as St Albans, its identification of Winchester as the

location of the Round Table and therefore as Camelot, all very probably derive from

Hardyng's influence. The number of correspondences between the two authors makes it hard

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[4] Supra 24-5.

[5] The following section offers summation of evidence already considered. Detailed discussion of the evidence and references will be found in the relevant chapters.

to argue that Malory did not use Hardyng's <u>Chronicle</u>, and, as we have seen, evidence of Malory's use of Hardyng is to be found throughout the <u>Morte Darthur</u>.

However, some instances of Hardyng's influence that scholars have posited for this tale are less probable. It does not seem likely that the overall structure of the <u>Morte Darthur</u> is based on Hardyng's version to any great extent, nor that Malory took Arthur's Round Table Oath from Hardyng. This last, rather, is almost sure to have been modelled on the charges historically read to the Knights of the Bath, which is closely parallelled by the Round Table Oath. Malory was also probably influenced by the Vulgate <u>Lancelot</u>, in which all new knights of the Round Table are said to take an oath.

The appearance of Brien of the Iles and Meliot of Logres as minor characters makes Malory's use of the <u>Perlesvaus</u> in this tale also close to certain. If Malory had not used <u>Perlesvaus</u> in other tales, this conclusion would be less certain, but as it is, any alternative explanation would be needlessly complex. With this in mind, it is reasonable to assume that other episodes in "The Tale of King Arthur" that resemble <u>Perlesvaus</u> in detail more than any other known romance, such as the beginning of Marhalt's battle with Taulard and Ywain's rescue of the Lady of the Rock, may well have come from that romance.

The Prose <u>Tristan</u> is another strong probability. Several times in "The Tale of King Arthur," Malory portrays Sir Gawain as less noble than his counterpart in the Post-Vulgate <u>Suite</u>. Because this change to his character is not demanded by the plot, it likely derives from the almost villainous depiction of Gawain in the Prose <u>Tristan</u>. An early acquaintance with that romance could also account for Malory's location of Tintagel in Cornwall, which is left unspecified in the Post-Vulgate <u>Suite</u>. The location is, however, also given in Hardyng.

If Gawain's character suffers in Malory's treatment, Ywain and Marhalt gain by it. Ywain was first made famous by Chrétien de Troyes's poem <u>Le chevalier au lion</u>. Although

there is ample evidence that Chrétien's romances were known in the England of Malory's day,[6] scholars have been slow to recognize them as potential sources for Malory. Despite this, Gawain's overture to Ettard shows a strong correspondence to Lunete's appeal to her lady on Yvain's behalf at the end of Chrétien's poem. Malory's "Tale of Launcelot" also seems to borrow details from this poem, which makes this case for its influence in "The Tale of King Arthur" difficult to reject.

"The Wife of Bath's Tale" offers analogues to details from Sir Balin's story. It is more obviously an analogue to much of the Wedding of Sir Gawain, which Malory may have written. The author of the Wedding must have read Chaucer's tale, and if Malory is the author of the Wedding then he almost certainly wrote it before writing "The Tale of King Arthur," and therefore could easily have been influenced by it in his version of Balin's tale. However plausible this sequence of events may be, the verbal parallels between "Wife of Bath" and "Tale of King Arthur" are not close enough to make the matter certain. The same must be said of the verbal parallels between Chaucer's "Clerk's Tale" and the section of "The Tale of King Arthur" devoted to Arthur's wedding. However, the cumulative effect of these instances combined with others later in the Morte Darthur suggests that Malory was familiar with at least some of The Canterbury Tales.

Malory's statements that the Holy Grail still contained the blood of Christ were probably inspired by an English tradition that also appears to have left its influence on other English versions of the Grail story. Malory seems to be influenced by this tradition again in his description of the Grail in "The Tale of Sir Tristram."

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[6] The evidence is collected in Ad Putter, "Narrative Technique and Chivalric Ethos in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight and the Old French Roman Courtois," diss., U of Cambridge, 1992, 6-15.

Malory certainly knew the alliterative <u>Morte Arthure</u> very well, as it is the major source for his second tale, and he probably knew it before he wrote "The Tale of King Arthur." Whether Malory used that poem as a source for what he says about Mordred's fostering, however, is less clear. Some lines are certainly missing from the only extant manuscript of the poem, and such lines could have been Malory's source. This would explain his phrase, "as it rehersith aftirward and towarde the ende of the Morte Arthure." This theory is made a little more likely by the suggestion that the <u>Morte Arthure</u> influenced Malory's characterization of Arthur in the scene featuring the first Roman embassy. However, until such time as a better copy of the alliterative <u>Morte Arthure</u> surfaces, this too must remain uncertain.

Other Middle English poems such as <u>Arthour and Merlin</u>, <u>Ywain and Gawain</u>, and <u>The Carl of Carlisle</u> also offer convenient possible sources for details in "The Tale of King Arthur," but in each case the details involve names and variant spellings of the names of very minor characters. The <u>Carl</u> contains the name Petipace, which Malory gives to one anonymous character in the <u>Suite</u>, and a Bishop Baldwin whose name resembles Malory's Bawdewyn of Britain, the name that Malory gives to another anonymous character, and it is apparently old enough to be Malory's source, but these two characters are too minor to be traced with certainty. Bishop Baldwin is a prominent character in the <u>Carl</u>, so he might naturally have come to Malory from there, but if so Malory would have had to decide to portray him as a knight rather than a bishop. Further, Malory's spelling of names of traditional Arthurian characters such as Colgrevance and Gryflet cannot be linked with any confidence to a single source. Such spellings as exist in the surviving versions of the <u>Morte</u>

<u>Darthur</u> might not even always be Malory's.[7] Because both the Winchester manuscript and Caxton's printed copies are at least two removes from Malory's holograph, traditional names may have been altered, even unconsciously, by scribes.

Even more uncertain candidates are <u>The Avowing of Arthur</u>, and "The Marriage of Sir Gawain." Baldwin of Britain rather than Bishop Baldwin appears in the <u>Avowing</u>, but its date of composition, put between 1375 and 1475, means that it could post-date the <u>Morte Darthur</u>. "The Marriage of Sir Gawain" is still less likely to be old enough to be a source for Malory; it survives only in a seventeenth-century manuscript and may itself be based on <u>The Wedding of Sir Gawain</u>.

Finally, despite the suggestions of various scholars, there is really no evidence that Malory used Vegetius's <u>De rei militari</u>, <u>Lybeaus Desconus</u>, or <u>Sir Launfal</u> in "The Tale of King Arthur." The tactics that Arthur's forces use in "The Tale of King Arthur" are more realistic than those used in the counterpart scenes in the <u>Suite</u>, as if Arthur were following the advice of <u>De rei militari</u>. However, given Malory's tendency towards realism and the lack of any verbal echoes of <u>De rei militari</u> in the <u>Morte Darthur</u>, these very general resemblances fall far short of proof. <u>Lybeaus Desconus</u> and <u>Sir Launfal</u> are the equivalent of bibliographical ghosts: they were only ever proposed through a scholar's mistake.

In "The Tale of Arthur and Lucius" Malory used minor sources in much the same way that he did in "The Tale of King Arthur." He used them to add details that let him fit the story of his major source into the larger Arthurian story as he wanted to tell it, including the addition of

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[7] See e. g. Toshiyuki Takamiya, "'Ascolat' in the Winchester Malory," <u>Aspects of Malory</u> 125-6, and note that one of the Winchester scribes changes Garlon to Garlonde eight out of nine times, <u>Works</u> 80-4.

characters and the naming of anonymous characters. Malory's use of Hardyng's <u>Chronicle</u> is

not surprising, considering that it includes a version of Arthur's Roman War and that he had

used it in "The Tale of King Arthur." Perhaps less expected is Malory's use of the Vulgate

<u>Suite du Merlin</u>. His use of the Post-Vulgate <u>Suite</u> as the basis for "The Tale of King Arthur"

might have been thought to imply either that he had no access to the Vulgate <u>Suite</u> or that he

had rejected it as a source. The evidence, however, shows that he did have access to it and

that he found its placement of the Roman War in the Arthurian story and its triumphant

ending more satisfactory than the sequence of events in his major source.

Malory's placement of the Roman War so early in Arthur's career is connected to the

question of why Malory ended his first tale where he did, which scholars continue to debate.

The fragmentary condition of all the manuscripts of the part of the Post-Vulgate Romance of

the Grail that correspond to his first tale might suggest that he ended "The Tale of King

Arthur" where his source manuscript stopped. That might not have been the case, however.

The Post-Vulgate's version of Arthur's war against Claudas and Frollo, which is the episode

that leads to the introduction of Lancelot, may have also inspired Malory to place the Roman

War where he does and to introduce Lancelot into the story as a young knight.

Despite Lancelot's brief appearance as a child in the first tale and the fact that his

arrival at court is announced at the end of the first tale, his appearance in the second tale is

essentially his first appearance in the <u>Morte Darthur</u>. He is an adult in this tale, as he is in the

major source and also in the Post-Vulgate <u>Suite du Merlin</u>. As we have seen, Malory based

the structure of his work on the Vulgate Cycle. However, the Vulgate Cycle relates in detail

the story of Lancelot's childhood, his first arrival at Arthur's court, his knighting by Arthur,

and the beginning of his love affair with Guenevere, stories that Malory does not adapt, and

this raises the question of whether Malory had read the Vulgate <u>Lancelot</u> by this time.

However, evidence from "The Tale of King Arthur," such as Merlin's more explicit warning to Arthur about Guenevere's future adultery, and from "The Tale of Arthur and Lucius," such as the allusion to the conflict between Lancelot's family and Claudas, strongly implies that Malory had already read the Lancelot when he wrote his first two tales.

Another perhaps surprising addition to the list of minor sources for "The Tale of Lucius" is the Perlesvaus. When Malory assimilates the Bryan of the Morte Arthure to Bryan de les Ylyes, he is equating the character from the English poem with one from the French romance. Given that the Perlesvaus influenced the name of one minor character, it becomes possible that the name Calobrus from the Perlesvaus influenced Malory when he appropriated the Morte Arthure's version of the name of Arthur's sword, Caliburn, for the name of a knight.

Finally, Malory's identification of Sir Florens as the son of Gawain and the sister of Sir Brandelis cannot derive from "The Jeaste of Syr Gawayne" as we have it, but it may derive from a fuller or earlier version of that story or from a misremembered detail from the First Continuation of Chrétien's Perceval. Use of the First Continuation is made a little less implausible by use of Chrétien's romances in "The Tale of Sir Launcelot."

"The Tale of Sir Launcelot" probably represents Malory's most radical handling of a single major source, and because Malory took only a few of the many plot lines out of the tightly interwoven fabric of the Lancelot, there are far too many differences between Malory's version and the Vulgate for all of them to be considered here. Some of them, such as removing the begetting of Galahad from the events that immediately follow Lancelot's victory at Baudemagus's tournament, or turning the fatal battle against the knight in whose pavilion Lancelot sleeps into a non-fatal wounding, seem to result mainly from Malory's

independent vision of Arthurian history rather than from minor sources. Other differences, such as such as the change from three to four queens who capture the sleeping Lancelot, would signal the likely use of a minor source in other tales, but in the third tale this is rendered less certain by the complexity of the manuscript tradition of the Vulgate Lancelot. However, the unexpected but clear influence of Chrétien de Troyes's Erec et Enide, Le Chevalier au lion, and the anonymous L'Âtre périlleux show that Malory continued his usual practice of using minor sources. In this tale especially, there could well be minor sources yet to be discovered.

The difficulties in determining the scope of minor sources caused by Malory's relationship to his primary source became even greater in "The Tale of Sir Gareth." After over a hundred years of learned discussion, frustratingly little can be said for certain about the sources of Malory's "Tale of Sir Gareth." The urge to compare it to its major source could be placated if one could show that Malory did not have a major source for it of the kind that he used in his other seven tales, but scholars are denied even that consolation. The most that scholarship can say with certainty is that Malory must have had a major source that has since been lost, and that source must have resembled the Fair Unknown tales modified by folklore elements and perhaps by a story like Ipomadon. Malory will have been aware of the Post-Vulgate story that has been called "Gaheriet's Beginning," and that story might have encouraged him to include an adaptation of another story about Gawain's youngest brother in his Morte Darthur. If so, this would be yet another example of the structural influence of the Post-Vulgate on Malory's work. Although this lost source was probably an English poem,[8] the names Gareth

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[8] Field, "Source of Gareth" 254-60.

and <u>Kenadown</u> suggest that it had been influenced by Welsh material. These elements were probably not added by Malory, because he is unlikely to have replaced the form of the name of Gawain's brother that he found in so many of his major sources without the authority of his major source for this tale.

However, some features of "The Tale of Gareth" are characteristic of Malory's usual method of borrowing from minor sources in other tales. The biggest set of these is in the episode of Gareth's confrontation with the Red Knight, Sir Ironside. Malory may well have borrowed them from the "Joie de la Cort" episode from <u>Erec et Enide</u> by Chrétien de Troyes. Of course, without Malory's major source for this tale, this must remain speculation, but the evidence of the other tales also suggests that Malory had read Chrétien's romances. In "The Tale of Gareth," the walls of magic have been removed and the antagonist is bound by a promise to his lady not by a curse. These differences are typical of the changes that Malory makes when he borrows episodes from minor sources, but they are not typical of translation of French romances into English.[9]

Furthermore, because Malory habitually gave names taken from minor sources to characters left anonymous in his major sources and added several lists of knights to his major sources, it is probable that several of the knights listed in "The Tale of Gareth," especially in the tournament scene, are derived from minor sources. Episodic verse romances, as the source of "The Tale of Gareth" is thought to be, often include lists of knights from such sources as the Vulgate <u>Lancelot</u> and the Prose <u>Tristan</u>, but Malory almost certainly would not have been able to resist the urge to augment from his other reading such existing lists as may have been in his source, as he did in his adaptations of the Vulgate <u>Merlin</u> and Post-Vulgate

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[9] Cf. e.g. the French <u>Le Bel Inconnu</u> and the English <u>Lybeaus Desconus</u>.

Suite du Merlin.

The source for "The Tale of Gareth" is likely to remain lost, and as only its recovery could establish its scope for certain, many questions will have to go unanswered. However, despite the loss of the major source, there is no reason to believe that Malory did not follow his usual habits of composition in this story, and there is some evidence to indicate that he did. Just as he did throughout the Morte Darthur, Malory seems to have worked from an existing romance and added details and perhaps entire episodes from minor sources.

Malory's adaptation of the Prose Tristan in the fifth tale is similar in many ways to his adaptation of the Merlin and its Post-Vulgate Suite. As in his first tale, he begins with the birth of his hero rather than at the beginning of his major source, he produces an ending that, although based on earlier material, is largely original, and he adds details from a number of minor sources, including his own earlier tales. One example of this is his description of the extent of Arthur's realm at the beginning of "The Tale of Tristram."

As usual, the minor sources supplied a number of minor characters. The names Bodwyn and Archades probably come from a later part of the Prose Tristan, which Malory did not use as a major source, and Pleyne de Amoris and Pleyne de Fors almost certainly come from a lost romance. Malory probably took the name Galleron from Gawain and the Carl of Carlisle or from The Anturs of Arthur. His form of the name Gingalyn most likely came from either The Wedding of Sir Gawain or from its source. He also seems to have taken Isode's refusal to allow Tristram to avoid tournaments for her sake from the similar situation in Chrétien's Erec et Enide.

The Vulgate Lancelot and Of Arthour and Merlin are less certain minor sources for this tale, although Malory certainly knew the former and probably knew the latter. The Castle

Arundel which appears in <u>Of Arthour and Merlin</u> has little in common with the Castle

Arundel in the <u>Morte Darthur</u> and the existence of the real Castle Arundel would have been

common knowledge. Yet, as we have seen, Malory seems to have taken names from <u>Of</u>

<u>Arthour and Merlin</u>, and so he may have taken Arundel from that source as well. The castles

named Blank and Case in the <u>Morte Darthur</u> are so named in the <u>Lancelot</u>, but these castles

also have these names in some of the <u>Tristan</u> manuscripts and so the simplest assumption is

probably that they had them in Malory's source as well.

Whether Malory took elements from his version of the baptism of Palomides from the

Post-Vulgate <u>Queste</u> is harder to assess. Because the Post-Vulgate survives only in fragments

and because Malory appears to have abandoned it after his first tale, it is certainly possible

that Malory did not have access to the later parts of that cycle. Yet the Post-Vulgate version

of Palomides's baptism could have given Malory a model for his episode in which

Palomides's baptism is connected to his battle against a superlative knight, and in which

Tristram and Galleron serve as godfathers.

Finally, the evidence that Malory used <u>The Boke of St Albans</u>, <u>Sir Orfeo</u>, <u>Golagros</u>

<u>and Gawane</u>, Lawmon's <u>Brut</u>, the <u>Livre d'Artus</u>, or the Prose <u>Cligès</u> is so slight as to be

negligible.

The size of "The Tale of Sir Tristram" means that the number of minor sources that

Malory seems to use is proportionately small. Apart from that, Malory's use of minor sources

in this tale seems fairly typical. The most important innovation, perhaps, is an increasing

tendency to use his own earlier tales as minor sources for the later ones.

In "The Tale of the Sangreal," Malory uses almost no minor sources. He apparently borrows

a phrase from Hardyng's <u>Chronicle</u>, he applies the title "The Hawght Prince" to Galahad from

the Prose <u>Tristan</u>, where it is applied to Galehaut, and he alludes to the story of Balin either from the Post-Vulgate <u>Suite du Merlin</u> or from his own version of the story in "The Tale of King Arthur." Although he knew Hardyng and <u>Perlesvaus</u>, probably the Grail story in the Prose <u>Tristan,</u> and maybe the Grail story in the Post-Vulgate, he does not synthesise their narratives with those of his major source, the Vulgate <u>Queste del Saint Graal</u>.

The fact that Malory adapts the Vulgate <u>Queste</u> so faithfully is all the more striking considering the freedom he allows himself with the sources of his next tale. The Vulgate <u>Queste</u> has a clear, direct storyline with few anonymous characters and therefore already resembles the kind of story that Malory liked to tell. The fact that Malory's most important omissions come from the hermits' instructions has frequently led scholars to conclude that Malory did not sympathize with the otherworldly religious tone of his source.[10] While it is true that "the humiliation of the Arthurian world before [the] austere Christianity"[11] of the Vulgate <u>Queste</u> is less severe in Malory's adaptation, that must be set against the fact that Malory otherwise adapts the Vulgate romance so faithfully. His fidelity to his major source is the more striking since this tale is the second longest tale of the <u>Morte Darthur</u>: at 190 pages in Vinaver's three-volume edition, "The Tale of the Sangreal" is surpassed only by "The Tale of Sir Tristram" (at 481 pages). The natural inference is that despite the sympathy Malory clearly had for the Round Table knights and their ideals, his overriding motive was his belief, expressed in the explicit with which he ended the tale, that this version of the Grail quest is "one of the trewyst and [...] holyest that ys in thys worlde" (1037.10-11).

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[10] E. g. Vinaver argues that "[Malory's] one desire seems to be to secularize the Grail theme as much as the story will allow," <u>Works</u>, Commentary, 1535; Benson, <u>Malory's </u>Morte Darthur, states that Malory "drastically alters [the Vulgate <u>Queste</u>'s] thematic meaning" 210.

[11] J. Neal Carman, "The Sword Withdrawal in Robert de Boron's <u>Merlin</u> and in the <u>Queste del Saint Graal</u>," <u>PMLA</u> 53 (1938): 593-5, on 594.

"The Tale of Launcelot and Guenevere" is perhaps the most original tale in the <u>Morte Darthur</u>. Its very existence as a discrete unit is an innovation, and it is the tale that provides the clearest evidence of use of non-Arthurian material. Three of the minor sources proposed for this tale, Lydgate's <u>Pageant of Knowledge</u>, Chaucer's "Franklin's Tale" and "Knight's Tale," all non-Arthurian, are among the most certain minor sources of this tale. Besides these, <u>Sir Triamour</u>, which is also non-Arthurian, could have supplied the names of a number of the minor characters in this tale. Malory also continues his usual practice of taking details such as character names from other Arthurian romances. The freedom that Malory allowed himself in this tale is unprecedented in the <u>Morte Darthur</u> and is also not repeated. As we shall see, when he came to his final tale, he reverted to a more characteristic relationship with his sources.

The source or sources of many of the names for "The Healing of Sir Urry" remain unknown, but the central premise of Lancelot's healing of a knight after he fails to be helped by the rest of Arthur's court could well have been suggested by the healing of Melion in the Vulgate <u>Lancelot</u>. If so, however, Malory altered this episode almost beyond recognition. Yet, in the absence of a clear source for this episode, this theory best explains Lancelot's role while making the fewest assumptions.

Malory's "Love and Summer" passage has a large number of potential sources. The clear echo of Lydgate's <u>Pageant of Knowledge</u> in the passage is similar to the near-quotations of Chaucer that appear in this tale and in others. The evidence in this tale adds to an accumulating body of small pieces that together suggest that Malory was familiar with the writings of medieval England's premier poet. It is also similar to a passage in the Vulgate <u>Suite du Merlin</u>, which, as we have seen, he used as a minor source for his "Tale of Arthur

and Lucius." Other analogues to the "Love and Summer" passage can be found in several Middle English poems, but because the equation between the renewal of love and the month of May was so common in the Middle Ages, none of them can be considered sources on our present evidence.

Although Malory seems to have used an unusually wide variety of minor sources for "The Tale of Launcelot and Guenevere," there seems to be no reason to believe that he was influenced by stories about Charon and Diana, whether from Lydgate's <u>Fall of Princes</u>, from <u>The Aeneid</u>, or from any other source. Nor does Malory's apparent familiarity with <u>The Pageant of Knowledge</u> make the theory that he was influenced by Lydgate's picture of Charon much more likely.

Malory seems to have used his own earlier tales as minor sources several times in this tale. The names Brascias, Bawdewyn of Britain, and Marrok, and the way that the letter of Elaine of Ascolat is fastened to her hand are examples of instances in which Malory could be seen to be using the major sources of his earlier tales as minor sources in this one. In a sense this must be correct, but because he is therefore reusing elements that he put in earlier tales he could also be said to be borrowing from his own earlier tales.

In his final tale, Malory uses minor sources in a way similar to the way he uses them in "The Tale of the Sangreal." The combination of the Vulgate <u>Mort Artu</u> and the stanzaic <u>Morte Arthur</u> gave him a clear storyline with few anonymous characters, and he seems to have felt little urge to supplement them with many minor sources. He did, however, consult Hardyng's <u>Chronicle</u> as he had done in other parts of his book that have corresponding passages in Hardyng. In this case Malory borrows some wording from Hardyng. He also seems to borrow a phrase to describe the death of Gawain that may have came from the Bible, although

it had probably become almost proverbial by Malory's time. Further, as in earlier tales, he adds lists of minor characters, but it seems that by this point in his work that Malory had amassed a collection of such names that are often taken from minor sources in earlier tales, so that these earlier tales once again in effect become minor sources. Malory may have departed from his usual practice in using oral tradition, as suggested by his equivocal statements about Arthur's passing and perhaps by the epitaph on Arthur's tomb.

Now that Malory's use of minor sources has been analysed for each of his tales, it is possible to attempt a complete list of his minor sources. Although the evidence does not support all of the minor sources that scholars have proposed, the list of minor sources for which there is solid evidence shows Malory to be more widely read than is sometimes thought.

Malory's Minor Sources
French:
Chrétien's Erec et Enide (III, IV, V) Le Chevalier du lion (I, III) and perhaps his Chevalier de la chariot (VII), Perlesvaus (I, II), L'Âtre périlleux (III), Prose Tristan (I,IV,VI), Vulgate Suite du Merlin (II, VII), Prose Lancelot (II, IV, V), Post-Vulgate Suite du Merlin or Tale I (VI), and perhaps Post-Vulgate Queste (V, VI).
English:
Hardyng's Chronicle (I, II, VI, and VIII), Chaucer's Canterbury Tales ("Wife of Bath" and "Franklin's Tale" I, "Knight's Tale" VII), Of Arthour and Merlin (I), Ywain and Gawain (I), The Carl of Carlisle (I), Torrent of Portyngale (I), Gawain and the Carl of Carlisle or Anturs of Arthur (V), Ipomadon (IV), Wedding of Sir Gawain (V,VIII), Lydgate's Pageant of Knowledge (VII), Sir Triamour (VII).

> Oral:
>
> Charge to the Knights of the Bath (I), The Grail Containing the Blood of Christ (I, V),
>
> Arthur's Epitaph (VIII), Legend of Arthur's Survival (VIII).

There appears to be no such thing as a typical minor source for Malory. Most of them are English, but nearly as many are in French, and there is no simple distinction between Malory's use of French and English minor sources, nor even between prose and verse sources. For example, Malory borrows phrases from both Hardyng and Chrétien's Erec; he borrows an episode from both the Perlesvaus and Chrétien's Yvain. In addition, Malory also often uses his major sources as minor sources, making the boundary between major and minor sources far from absolute. The range of Malory's minor sources is surprising. Malory has long been credited with being an enthusiast for Arthurian literature, but evidence of his knowledge of non-Arthurian literature has been elusive.

Hardyng's Chronicle is undoubtedly Malory's single most important minor source. Malory uses it in four tales (I, II, VI, and VIII). These are the tales that depict Arthur's birth and rise to power, his war against the Roman Empire, the quest for the Grail, and the eventual fall of Arthur's realm. Although the Chronicle has few admirers today, Malory must have thought well of it, for he uses it for every tale for which his work and Hardyng's correspond.

Of course, it is not surprising that someone as interested in romance as Malory would have read non-Arthurian romances such as Torrent of Portyngale and Sir Triamour as well as the Arthurian romances that were his major influences. Nor is there is anything inherently surprising about someone of Malory's time and literary interests having read Chaucer and Lydgate, of course, but one would not assume that non-Arthurian reading would be reflected in the Morte Darthur. Furthermore, when Malory shows traces of Chaucer and Lydgate, he is

not borrowing stories or characters but echoing their language. This implies that, rather than having the works of these authors before him while he wrote, Malory had previously read and internalized their works, and as a man who carried Chaucer's and Lygate's verse in his head, Malory now looks a less narrow reader than formerly.

What is true of Malory's non-Arthurian sources may be true of some of his Arthurian sources as well. Although during the imprisonment in which he wrote the <u>Morte Darthur</u>, Malory could easily have had generous access to his major sources at least, it is unlikely that he would have had immediate access to each of his minor sources. The use that is made of many of the minor sources implies that Malory sometimes and perhaps often was working from memory rather than from a text in front of him. Because the only sure criterion of source use is the discovery of verbal parallels, however, the less-precise verbal parallels produced by memory can make it harder to assess whether Malory used a minor source. Even in dealing with his major sources, Malory's memory seems to have sometimes misled him. In the first tale, for example, Malory apparently confuses Pelleas, the knight who hopelessly loves the lady Ettard, with Pelles, the grandfather of Galahad, and in "The Tale of Sir Tristram" he has Lamerok say incorrectly that Balin rather than King Pellinor killed Gawain's father, King Lot. These apparent lapses suggest that Malory was used to relying on his memory, which paradoxically he therefore must have found generally to have been accurate.[12]

One perhaps surprising result of this study is further support for the theory that Malory is the author of <u>The Wedding of Sir Gawain</u>. This poem's own minor sources include Chaucer's "Wife of Bath's Tale," Chrétien's <u>Erec et Enide</u>, and <u>L'Âtre périlleux</u>, all of which, as we have seen, are probable minor sources for the <u>Morte Darthur</u>. Both the fact that

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[12] For memory in the Middle Ages, see Mary Carruthers, <u>The Book of Memory: A Study of memory in Medieval Culture</u> (Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 1990).

the poet combines sources, which is unusual for most romance writers but is characteristic of Malory, and that the poet shares all of his sources with Malory must be added to the other points of resemblance between the authors of these two works. The theory that Malory is the author of The Wedding of Sir Gawain has not been widely accepted, but none of its detractors has fully engaged with the arguments so far proposed. The new points of contact uncovered by this study will now also need to be explained.

The reliance on sources that makes Malory so unusual puts his narrator in an interesting position regarding authority within the story itself. Although Malory's narrator rarely seems to be at the mercy of his sources, his attempt to combine the information of these disparate sources into a complete whole leads the narrator of the Morte Darthur into the kind of discrepancies and inconsistencies that have been the subject of much academic discussion.[13] Malory's narrator, therefore, is not himself the source of textual authority but is rather more an historian who must use authorities in an attempt to recreate an authentic account of Arthurian times.

Of course, as we have seen, Malory felt anything but bound by his sources. The various branches of the Vulgate Cycle contain fictions of authenticity that invite the readers to imagine that they are reading actual accounts from Arthur's time.[14] Interestingly, Malory never repeats these passages that claim that his "Frenche boke" is itself a translation of Latin chronicles dictated by the characters involved. The fact that Malory was willing to adapt his sources as freely as he did strongly implies that he did not believe the Vulgate's claims, and

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[13] E. g. Field, "Author, Scribe, and Reader: The Case of Harleuse and Peryne," Malory: Texts and Sources 72-88; and idem, "Malory and His Audience," New Directions in Arthurian Studies, ed. Alan Lupack (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2002) 21-32.

[14] See E. Jane Burns, Arthurian Fictions: Rereading the Vulgate Cycle (Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1985).

yet the authority that he claims for his version is that of the "Frenche boke." This apparent

paradox shows may be compared to his spurious references to the "Frenche boke," behind

which he often hides his creativity, to show that like his thirteenth century French

predecessors, Malory was willing to create fictions of authenticity for his own work.

A wide variety of Arthurian tales in verse and prose, romance and chronicle, French and

English were available to Malory's compatriots. Those who could read French could choose

between the Vulgate, Post-Vulgate, and the cyclic Prose Tristan, all of which claimed to be

faithful translations from the authorized Latin chronicles of Arthur's time. There were as

well a number of even later prose romances such as Palamedes, the Compilation of

Rusticiano da Pisa, Les Prophécies de Merlin, and even a prose Yvain.[15] These romances are

all in addition to the numerous English romances that flourished in the fourteenth and

fifteenth centuries. It is not known, of course, to what extent typical fifteenth-century

followers of Arthurian literature would have been familiar with all of these, or whether they

would have been able to distinguish between, say, the Vulgate and Post-Vulgate as rival

cycles. Although there was often intertextual relationships between various Arthurian

romances that go beyond the shared setting and cast of characters, that relationship varies so

much among the romances that generalisations are hard to draw. However, Caxton's preface

to his edition of the Morte Darthur implies that English readers felt the lack of a full account

of the life of King Arthur in English. It may be, therefore, that there was a general distinction

between the episodic English verse romances and the more substantial prose romances, of

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[15] For these later romances, see Cedric E. Pickford,"Miscellaneous French Prose Romances," Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages 348-57; for the Prose Yvain see Norris J. Lacy, "The Enigma of the Prose Yvain," Arthurian Studies in Honour of P. J. C. Field (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2004) 65-71.

which only the first two branches of the Vulgate Cycle were available in English versions.

Fifteenth century England also knew a number of prose romances relating the lives of subjects such as Charlemagne and Alexander the Great that were, like Malory's, relatively brief compilations and redactions of older romances, and many of these were, like Malory's, printed by Caxton.[16] In this sense, Malory's distillation of many sources into a new brief cycle may be seen as typical of his time, and Malory may have considered himself to be following in the footsteps of these slightly older contemporaries. However, the creators of the new romances typically combined a small number of major sources into the new work. Malory's combination of sources makes him, as far as is known, unique among romance writers of any language.

The fact that Malory felt thus motivated shows a devotion to this genre and a dedication to his work far beyond that of the typical medieval romancer. Clearly Malory wanted to create something that was not to be found among his array of sources: "The Whole Book of King Arthur and His Knights of the Round Table." Of course the Old French prose cycles contain an accounts of the entire lives of several of the Arthurian characters, but these cycles are as much focussed on the history of the Grail as on Arthur himself, who does not make an appearance until far into the <u>Merlin</u>. By beginning with the events that directly lead to Arthur's birth and by ending with the events that immediately follow Arthur's death, Malory creates the only medieval work that is centred on Arthur's whole life. His use of the array of minor sources is another consequence of Malory's attempt to make his work comprehensive. The level of detail that Malory derives from these minor sources creates a world with greater verisimilitude and that is grounded in reality to a much greater extent than

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[16] This context for Malory's work is discussed in Benson, <u>Malory's</u> Morte Darthur 21-8.

the world of the Old French prose cycles.

Malory's most consistent motive for using minor sources, of which the addition of the name Gromer Somer Joure to the list of knights of Gawain's affinity is only one example, is to provide names to characters left anonymous in his major sources, sometimes making two named characters out of a single anonymous character. Although these characters are rarely given distinctive personalities, the mere fact of naming them gives them a reality and an importance that their unnamed counterparts do not have in the major sources. The cumulative effect of this naming process is the creation of a large cast of minor knights, who in many cases end up allying themselves to one of the major characters. This is significant because Malory retains and emphasises the plot lines that show the growing enmity among the great knightly houses. By the end, the number of named minor knights who are beholden to either Gawain or Lancelot has grown formidable, and their presence implies, realistically in fifteenth-century terms, that the great magnates are dependent on the lower gentry for support as the lower gentry are dependant on the great magnates for patronage. Malory's relatively large interest in these characters is understandable, as he was a member of the gentry class himself.[17]

The study of the minor sources of the Morte Darthur clarifies the process by which Malory created his work. It shows him to have carried a fairly eclectic body of literature in his mind and to have worked at least partly from memory. It shows him to have been interested in the characters of his own social class. Finally, it shows the breadth of his enthusiasm for

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[17] For discussions of the influence of Malory's social class on the Morte Darthur, see Hyonjin Kim, The Knight without the Sword: a Social Landscape of Malorian Chivalry (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2000) and Raluca L. Radulescu, The Gentry Context for Malory's Morte Darthur (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2003).

Arthurian literature and the depth of his commitment to provide a comprehensive account of

the Arthurian story, that has been accepted by later generations as being more fully than any

possible rival "the hoole book of kyng Arthur and of his noble knyghtes of the Round Table."

APPENDIX: ANALOGUES TO MAL0RY'S
"LOVE AND SUMMER" PASSAGE

a.   For knights ever should be persevering
To seeke honour without feintise or slough,
Fro wele to better, in all maner thing;
In signe of which, with leaves aye lasting
They be rewarded after their degree,
Whose lusty green May may not appaired be,

But aye keping their beauty fresh and greene,
For there nis storme that may hem deface,
Haile nor snow, wind nor frosts kene;
Wherfore they have this propertie and grace,
And for the floure within a little space
Woll be lost, so simple of nature
They be, that they no greevance may endure

The Floure and the Leafe, ed. Derek Pearsall (London: Nelson and Sons, 1962) lines 548-60.

b.   The monþes vary, eueryche haþ his sygne
And harde hit ys all wedyrs for to know,
The tyme somewhyle ys gracious & benygne,
An vppon hilles and valeys þat ben low
The iiij. wyndes contrariosly do blow
In every storme man ys here abydyng,
Som to release, & som to overthrow,
How shuld man þan be stedfast of lyuyng?

The worldly answer, fortune transmutable,
Trust of lordshyp a feynt sekernes,
Euery seson varyeth, frendshyp ys unstable,
Now myrthe, now sorow, now hele, now sekenes,
Now ebbe of pouert, now flodys of ryches,
All stont in chaunge, now losse, now wynnyng,
Tempest in see & wyndes sturdynes
Makeþ men vnstable & ferefull of lyuyng.

Tytan somwhyle fresshly doþe appere,
Then commeþ a storme & doþ hys lyght deface,
The soile of somer with floures glad of chere
Wynters rasure doþe all awey rase;

All erþely þynges sodenly do passe
Whyche may haue here no seker abydyng,
Eke all astates false fortune doth manase,
How shuld a man þan be stedfast of lyuyng?

Beholde & see þe transmutacion,
Howe þe seson of grene lusty age,
Force of Iuuentus, strong, hardy as a lyoun,
Tyme of manhode, wysdom, sad of corage,
And howe Decrepitus turnyth to dotage,
Cast all in a balance, & foryete noþyng,
And thow shalt fynd þis lyfe a pylgremage,
In whyche þer ys no stedfast abydyng.

Then lyft vp thyne ey vnto þe heuyn,
And pray þe Lord, whyche ys eternall,
That syt so ferr aboue þe sterres seuyn,
In hys palace most imperyall,
To graunt þe grace, here in þys lyfe mortall,
Contricion shryft, & howsyll at þy departyng,
And, er þou passe hens, remyssion finall
Towarde þe lyfe, where ioy ys euerlastyng. Explicit. Amen.

John Lydgate, "A Pageant of Knowledge," The Minor Poems of John Lydgate, ed. H. N.
        McCracken, 2 vols., EETS es 107 and os 192 (1911-34), 2: 733-4.

c.   Ther is full lytell sikernes
            Here in this worlde but transmutacion,
            The sonne by þe morowe gyvyth bryghtnes,
            But towardes eve his bemes gon downe.
            And thus all thynge, be revolucion,
            Nowe ryche, now pore, now haut, now base,
            By resemblaunce to myn opynyon,
            That now is heye some tyme was grase.

            Take hede nowe in this grene mede,
            In Apryll howe thes floures sprynge,
            And on theyr stalke splaye and sprede
            In lustye May in eche mornynge;
            But whan Iuyn cometh, the ben droppynge,
            And sharpe sythes lygge them full base,
            Therefore I seye, in my wrytynge,
            That nowe is heye som tyme was grasse.

            Thes rede roses and the whyte
            At mydsomer bene full fresche & soote,
            Then folke gretly them delyte

Ther may nothynge here longe contynue
For to endure in his freshenys,
The whelle so turnythe of Dame Fortune
By chaungynge of her doublenes,
For olde defasethe all fayrenys
And all beawtie bryngyth full base.
So here a sample and a lyknes
That now is heye some tyme was grase.

Wymen that bene most freshe of face
And moste lusty in all theyr corage,
Proses of yeres can all defface,
And chaunge the colours of theyr vysage,
"Chekemate to beawtye," eyth rymplyd age,
When theyr fayrnys is browght full base;
Behold ensample in yowr passage
That now is hey some tyme was grase.

[. . .]

Nowe it is day, nowe it is nyght;
Nowe it is fowlle, nowe it is feyre;
Nowe it is derke, nowe it is lyght;
Nowe clowdye mystes, nowe bryght ayre;
Nowe hope in luve, nowe false dispayre;
Nowe on the hylle, now brought full base;
Nowe clymben hiegh vppon the steyre,
That nowe is heye some tyme was grase.

Nowe clothed in blake, nowe clothed in grene;
Nowe lustye, nowe in sobernes;
Now clothe of golde that shynyth shene,
Nowe rede, in token of hardynes,
Nowe all in white, for clennes,
Nowe sise, nowe synke, nowe ambbes aas;
The chaunce stondes in no stabulenes,
That now is hey some tyme was grase.

Nowe thes tres blosome and blome,
Nowe the leves fade and falle;
Nowe suger, nowe swete synamome,
Nowe tryakle, nowe bytar galle;
Nowe yowthe, nowe age þat dothe apall;
Nowe ioye, nowe myrthe, nowe alas;
And thynke a-mongest thes chaungis all

That nowe is heye: some tyme was gras.

Lydgate, "That Now is Hay Some-tyme was Grase," <u>Minor Poems</u>, 2: 809-13.

d.   For trouthe and feyth ben al agoo,
      Yt was not wont for to be soo
      In tyme of the kyng Arthour,
      The noble, worthy conquerour,
      Whom honour lyst so magnyfye,
      For of fredam and curtesye,
      Of bounte, and of largesse,
      Of manhode, and of high prowesse,
      To remembre alle thinges,
      He passyde al other kynges.
      [. . .]
      "In whos tyme, y [the goddess Diana] dat avaunte,
      I had of frendes grete plente
      [. . .]
      For love was tho so pure and fre,
      Grounded on al honeste
      Withoute engyn of fals werkyng
      Or any spot of evel menyng,
      Which the trouthe lyst nat feyne,
      How the knyghtes of Breteyne,
      Most renomyd and most notable,
      With Arthour of the rounde table,
      The myghty famous werriours,
      Lovede the dayes paramours,
      Gentilwymmen of high degre,
      Nat but for trouthe and honeste,
      And hem self to magnyfye
      Put her lyf in Iupartye
      In many vnkouth straunge place,
      For to stonde more in grace
      Of ladyes, for ther high empryse.
      And al they mente in honest wyse,
      Vnleful lust was set a-syde.
      Women thanne koude abyde,
      And lovedan hem as wel ageyn
      Of feythful herte hool and pleyn,
      Vnder the yok of honeste,
      In clennesse and chastite,
      So hool that Venus, the goddesse,
      Hadde tho noon Interesse.
      [. . .]
      But certes now it ys no wonder,

Thogh I complleyn and sighe ofte,
Syth I am doun and she alofte
[. . .]
For love, allas, and that is wrong,
Hath now no lust nor appetyte
But in thinges for delyte.
Thus by constreynt of hir lawe
Venus al the world doth drawe.

Lydgate, <u>Reson and Sensuallyte</u>, ed. Ernest Sieper, EETS e. s. 84, 89 (1901-03), lines 3139-234.

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