Before Malory

Reading Arthur in Later Medieval England

Richard J. Moll

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Preface and Acknowledgments

This study began as a series of happy accidents. Patricia Eberle suggested that I might find John Hardyng's *Chronicle* interesting and challenging, and as I forced my way through his seemingly unending text I found myself growing very fond of the crotchety old man. As I was thinking about Hardyng's Grail quest and the contrast and conflict between his sources (Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia* and the prose Vulgate cycle), I happened to reread *The Awntyrs off Arthure*, and I was surprised to see the same conflict playing itself out in the text and in contemporary scholarship. Here was a narrative which clearly placed itself within Arthurian history as described by Geoffrey, yet it was consistently interpreted as though it were set in the prose Vulgate's account of Lancelot and his affair with the queen. I've been fascinated by the tensions created by Arthurian generic diversity ever since. I also stumbled upon several of the main sources for this study. While visiting friends in Cambridge I took the opportunity to look at Thomas Gray's *Scalacronica* and was again surprised to find him struggling with the same generic tension. The Arundel version of Robert of Gloucester (discussed in chapter 7) happened to be included on a roll of microfilm which I had ordered to look at a different manuscript. These chance encounters with medieval texts have given me the chance to see a pattern of interpretation which has received very little attention.

This study focuses on the conflict between narrative traditions about Arthur, but I suspect that as more chronicles are studied and edited other nexus of traditions will be found. Troy, Alexander, Charlemagne, and Guy of Warwick, to name but the most obvious narratives, all occupy similar spaces between history and romance, and the same negotiations between literary traditions may have been carried out in different sets of

romance and chronicle texts. Chronicles, thankfully, are no longer be-
ing read simply as sources for romances, and the recent foundation of a
Medieval Chronicle Society is but one example of the ways that work on
these issues, and all issues related to medieval historiography, is being
nurtured and supported. I also suspect that the continued study of
medieval chronicles will at times challenge or modify some of the views I
present here. Arthurian historiography in the twelfth and thirteenth
centuries has been, and is being, studied with provocative and exciting
results, and I hope that this study will help us to view fourteenth- and
fifteenth-century chronicles not as bad adaptations of their predeces-
sors, but as thoughtful reactions to, and participators in, the literary
culture of their time.

While struggling with these issues I've been aided by my own commu-
nity of intelligent, widely read scholars and it is my pleasure to recognize
them now. John Leyerle, my doctoral supervisor, has given his careful
attention to this project for some time, and I can only hope that his
attentive and sensitive reading habits are reflected on these pages. Patricia
Eberle, as I said, has the dubious distinction of recommending John
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over the years. Edward Donald Kennedy read an early version of the
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and indeed my own development as a medievalist, owes much to all of
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Numerous libraries have provided me with microfilm and allowed me
access to their manuscript collections and I'd like to thank the British
Library, the Cleveland Public Library, the College of Arms in London,

Lambeth Palace Library, the Parker Library at Corpus Christi College (Cambridge), Princeton University Library, and Trinity College Library (Dublin). The Interlibrary Loan office at the University of Toronto brought me many nineteenth-century editions from around the world, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill kindly allowed me to use their extensive collection of microfilmed Middle English manuscripts. I should note that transcriptions from manuscript sources are my own and I have expanded contractions silently and modernized punctuation and capitalization. For clarity's sake, I have taken similar liberties with nineteenth-century editions of medieval texts. Except where noted, all translations are my own, but for Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia* and the various books of the Vulgate cycle I have consulted Lewis Thorpe's *History of the Kings of Britain,* and the *Lancelot-Grail* project, which was completed under general editor Norris Lacy.

Finally, my greatest debt is to Margaret McGlynn, who has read these pages more times than I can count, with a minimum of complaining. Throughout this long process she has offered her support and her keen critical eye and for these and many other reasons, this book is dedicated to her.

This community is obviously not responsible for any errors which might remain in the book, so instead of the conventional statement of personal culpability, I'll close with a quote from the preface of the Blome–Stansby Malory:

> And therefore Reader I aduertise thee to deale with this booke as thou wouldest doe with thy house or thy garment, if the one doe want but a little repaire thou wilt not (madly) pull downe the whole frame, if the other hath a small spot or a staine thou wilt not cast it away or burne it; Gold hath its drosse, Wine hath its lees; man (in all ages) hath his errours and imperfections.

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Introduction:
Facts and Fictions

The modern reader must overcome an inherent disadvantage when attempting to analyse Arthurian literature from medieval England. Having been exposed to films such as Boorman's *Excalibur*, and modern literature, such as Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* or White's *Once and Future King*, the contemporary reader approaches the medieval tradition with a firm picture of who Arthur is and what he did. The modern image of Arthur is constantly reinforced by the steady stream of new Arthurian material; works by Marion Zimmer Bradley, Stephen Lawhead, and Mary Stewart are only some of the best-known items on a bibliography that seems to expand daily. What these examples of modern Arthuriana tend to share is a narrative that is ultimately derived from Thomas Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*. In these texts Arthur usually pulls a magical sword from a stone, is instructed by the prophet Merlin, heads a fellowship of knights who achieve the quest for the Grail, and is finally betrayed, first by his best knight, Lancelot, and then by his own son, Mordred, the ill-fated child of Arthur's incest. Before the king dies, one of his knights reluctantly throws Excalibur into a lake where it will be retrieved again at Arthur's eventual return. This narrative is well known, and, despite recent innovations (particularly a new focus on the women of Arthur's court), what is most striking about it is the perception that it is the authentic Arthurian narrative, and that a combination of most of these elements must be present in order for a text (whether literary, visual, or dramatic) to be truly Arthurian. Indeed, Thomas Malory is often viewed as the culmination of Arthurian traditions in medieval England, and when he was put into print by William Caxton the supremacy of his account of Arthur's reign would seem to have been assured.

The modern supremacy of Malory's narrative, however, probably owes

more to Tennyson and the pre-Raphaelites than to Caxton. Despite the initial flurry of publishing activity,[1] for most of its existence Malory's text was just one of two narratives which coexisted within English literary culture. It was not until the revival of medievalism in the nineteenth century that Malory's narrative almost fully displaced its competition. The relationship between these two narratives can perhaps be seen most clearly in the last pre-modern edition of the *Morte D'Arthur*, the so-called Blome–Stansby Malory, which was published in London in 1634. This edition contains a lengthy 'Preface, or Aduertisement to the Reader, for the better illustration and vnderstanding of this famous Historie.'[2] After describing the early history of Vortigern, Aurelius, and Uther Pendragon, the preface turns to Arthur himself. The narrative that the editor provides was well known at the time, but because it differs from the text he was actually printing, and because it differs so markedly from modern conceptions of Arthur, it is worth quoting at length:

> *Arthur* was brought vp and educated. He raigned King of Britaine in *Anno*, fiue hundred and sixteene. In his Raigne he curbed the insolent power of the domineering Saxons, he wanne and subdued Denmarke and Norway, he ordained and instituted the Order of the Round Table at Winchester, which was Honoured with the number of one hundred and fifty Knights. He was victorious beyond the Seas against Saracens, and by his Conquests made many of those misbeleeuing Pagans acknowledge the true God. Whilest he was abroad in these noble and Heroicall Imployments, his Nephew (*Mordred*) whom hee had put in trust with the Gouernment of his Realme, being puffed vp with Ambition, and possessed with Treason, he caused himselfe to be crowned; and vsurped the Kingdome; which King *Arthur* hearing of, hee made quicke expedition into this Land, and landed at *Douer*, where the Traytor *Mordred* was with a mighty Army to impeach and hinder the Kings arriuall. But in spight of all trayterous and rebellious opposition, King *Arthur* landed his troupes, and after two set battailes he slue *Mordred*, and with the losse of his owne life, wonne a glorious victory, and being dead, was buried at the Towne of Glastenbury in Somersetshire, after hee had raigned sixteene yeares, to whom next succeeded in the Britaine Throne *Constantine* the fifth, being a Kinsman to King *Arthur*, and sonne to *Cadors* Duke of Cornwall.[3]

In a medieval chronicle this account would be unexceptional. Arthur's battle against Lucius of Rome has been replaced by a crusade against the Saracens, but the sequence of events – Arthur's birth, rise to power,

continental conquests, lengthy campaign against Rome (in this case Saracens), betrayal, return, and death – could be found in any Brut narrative from the later Middle Ages. But in this instance the narrative is remarkable, and this precis of Arthur's reign seems strangely out of place in the preface to an edition of Thomas Malory's *Morte D'Arthur.* Malory was certainly familiar with this Brut narrative. Even if he had not read the *Brut* itself, which seems unlikely,[4] he had read this story in John Hardyng's *Chronicle* and he had adapted much of it into his own work from the alliterative *Morte Arthure.* But the fact that the alliterative *Morte*, which obviously tells of Arthur's death, was adapted as the second of eight tales in Malory's book demonstrates just how different a story Malory constructed. Although Malory's *Morte D'Arthur* does not tell the same story as the Blome–Stansby preface, or indeed the chronicles on which the preface relies, the chronicle narrative was, and remained, very popular.

Chronicles, of course, claimed to be factually accurate, and even those which told the story of Arthur were generally regarded as such. Despite a few dissonant voices, it was not until the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that the historical validity of the Brut narrative was widely questioned and eventually discredited. The many episodes in Malory's work which are not found in earlier chronicles were introduced over time by authors of romances, most notably the great French cycles of prose narratives now known as the Vulgate and post-Vulgate. Despite the popularity of these romance narratives, episodes which varied from the account quoted above never achieved the status of history, as the editor of the Blome–Stansby Malory indicates: '... in many places fables and fictions are inserted, which may be a blemish to the reputation of what is true in this History, and it is vnfitting for vs to raze or blot out all the errours of our Ancestours, for by our taking consideration of them, wee may be the better induced to beleeue and reuerence the truth.'[5] For this seventeenth-century editor, therefore, Malory's work contains some historical value, but the reader is invited to sift through the fictions to find the facts: 'Gold hath its drosse, Wine hath its lees; man (in all ages) hath his errours and imperfections.'[6]

It may be argued that this editor lives in an enlightened age, when a more critical understanding of the past was being developed. He himself asserts as much, imploring his readers not to blame Malory and his contemporaries for their shortcomings. 'Wee perceiue their darknesse,' he says, 'through our light.'[7] But what of Sir Thomas Malory and the many authors before him who wrote of King Arthur? Did they too draw a

firm distinction between the historical and fictive accounts of King Arthur, and, if so, how did they conceptualize the relationship between factual and fabulous narratives?

In fact, both Malory's contemporaries and his literary ancestors made this distinction. Authors of romances, for whom factual truth was a secondary issue, did not mark a clear boundary between their own adventures and historical traditions, but chroniclers did attempt to preserve the integrity of their historical narratives. Modern debates about the historicity of Arthur tend to revolve around his very existence, but medieval historians accepted his reality. They debated what exactly Arthur did, and, like the Blome–Stansby editor, they feared that fables and fictions 'may be a blemish to the reputation of what is true' in history. Romance texts, particularly the Vulgate cycle on which Malory relied so heavily for source material, were therefore differentiated from historical texts, thus leaving the Grail, Lancelot, Percival, Lionel, and many other famous knights in the limbo of fiction.

This state of affairs, in which alternate accounts of historical events were openly debated in an ongoing tradition of historical writing, is virtually unparalleled in medieval historiography.[8] John E. Housman correctly noted that 'one could think of worse starting-points for a general theory of the relationship between poetry and history than Arthurian criticism,'[9] but the present study is far less ambitious than Housman's proposed project. Rather than explore the poetics of history and romance, this study seeks to examine attitudes toward Arthurian narrative through the perspective of the relationship between those two narrative traditions. Housman's comparison of poetry (by which he means 'romance') and history implies a generic distinction between the two literary forms, but many of the genre distinctions common in modern discussions of medieval literature, such as history, chronicle, romance, and epic, require substantial modification in order to accommodate the various forms of English historical writing. Historical texts in England were composed according to a medley of models; they could be written in either prose or verse, rhyme or alliteration, Latin or either of the vernacular languages, and they could deal with themes of personal achievement and honour, as well as national and religious concerns. Arthurian history alone encompassed all of these categories and more. It is perhaps more useful, therefore, to think of traditions based on narrative rather than to draw distinctions based on rigid concepts of genre.[10] The alliterative *Morte Arthure*, for example, has the outward appearance and form of a romance, yet its narrative conforms to the chronicle

tradition established by Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae*, rather than to the romance tradition established by the French prose Vulgate cycle.

A distinction based on narrative tradition has the apparent benefit of being easy to define. The chronicle tradition (also referred to as the Brut tradition) is limited to those narrative elements found in Geoffrey's *Historia*, while the romance tradition encompasses all Arthurian narratives which include material not found in Geoffrey's text. The difference between the Blome–Stansby preface and the book it precedes is an effective example. This differentiation, however, is not absolute. Early adapters of Geoffrey's text added elements which are as much a part of the Brut tradition as anything in the *Historia*. The most obvious example is the Round Table which was first introduced by Wace, but which was included by almost every subsequent chronicler who discussed Arthur's reign (including the Blome–Stansby editor). The phrase 'romance tradition' is also deceptively simple. The Vulgate cycle presents an alternative narrative of Arthur's career and the adventures of his knights but episodic adventures of individual knights, written in French, English, Latin, and other languages, were also popular and augmented the cycle's account. Romances not only contradict the chronicle tradition, they at times contradict one another, and their various narratives formed an ongoing tradition which evolved over time.

These caveats deal only with the internal stability of the traditions, but romance and chronicle traditions also influenced one another. As we shall see in chapter 1, the chronicle narrative provided two periods of peace in which fictive narratives could be contained, and a conscientious chronicler could use the periods of peace to discuss and import romance material. Wondrous narratives, whether drawn from the lengthy French prose cycle or from individual romances and *lais*, could be utilized by chroniclers who were aware that the narrative elements they employed were not part of the historical tradition. Chroniclers such as Thomas Gray (discussed in chapters 2 and 3) and John Hardyng (discussed in chapter 6) sought to maintain the integrity of the historical account of Arthur's reign, but could not resist the temptation to introduce and adapt material from outside that tradition, even while attempting to present it as something other than history. Romances could therefore be made to comment upon, and influence the interpretation of, the Arthurian past without jeopardizing the authority of a historical narrative.

Authors of individual adventures also saw in the periods of peace a

narrative space which could easily be co-opted to act as the setting of chivalric adventures. Although set within a historical time and place, such an adventure was implicitly distanced from the historical narrative, as the tradition demanded that these were times about which little was known, and what was known was neither truth nor falsehood. Freed from the constraints of historical veracity, romance authors could utilize the years of peace as periods in which to explore a wide variety of themes and concerns against the backdrop of the reign of Britain's greatest king. Although the individual work makes no claims to historical veracity, such encounters between history and romance had implications for the audience's consideration of both the individual adventure and the British past. Chapter 5 will explore two such romances, *The Awntyrs off Arthure* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight.*

The alliterative *Morte Arthure* (explored in chapter 4) falls somewhere in the middle. As was noted above, the alliterative *Morte* has the outward appearance of romance, even as it retells the historical version of Arthur's reign. The poem, however, uses romance characters and romance-style episodes to comment on the imperial concerns of the larger Brut narrative. Finally, chapter 7 looks at several manuscripts from the fifteenth century: three of the *Brut* and one of Robert of Gloucester's *Metrical Chronicle.* These manuscripts show that individual scribes also participated in the negotiations between chronicle and romance which characterize Arthurian historiography throughout the late medieval period.

The study of Arthurian chronicle traditions leads to some lesser-known authors who wrote Arthurian narratives in a variety of forms. Several of the texts discussed here, such as Gray's *Scalacronica* or Hardyng's *Chronicle,* have not yet been fully edited, while others, such as the Arundel version of Robert of Gloucester, managed to go unnoticed in the editions which have been completed. As a result, many of the texts that are examined here are not generally investigated in current scholarship. In fact, few of them were influential even in their own day. But what makes these texts fascinating is not how widely they were read in the Middle Ages, but how widely read their authors were. Chroniclers such as Sir Thomas Gray and John Hardyng display a breadth of Arthurian learning and reading which rivals that of Sir Thomas Malory. These two lay authors not only had an extensive knowledge of the chronicle traditions of late medieval England, but they were fully conversant with romance narratives and forms. Thomas Malory's *Morte D'Arthur* looks less like the inevitable culmination of medieval Arthurian traditions when it is remembered that Gray and Hardyng both wrote Arthurian stories very different from

that composed by Hardyng's more famous contemporary. If we, as modern readers of Arthurian literature, truly wish to understand the interpretive context of a medieval Arthurian text, we need to listen to what medieval readers have to say. Arthurian chronicles offer us a rare glimpse of readers-turned-writers, who not only record the narratives they have read and heard, but actually tell us what they thought of them. A closer look at some of these texts should give us a better understanding of the literary context for Arthurian narratives before Malory began his great work.

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1

The Years of Romance

But poets, though they disfigure the most certain history by their fictions, and use strange liberties with truth where they are the sole historians, as among the Britons, have commonly some foundations for their wildest exaggerations.

David Hume, 1732[1]

The late medieval Brut tradition relies on Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae* for its form, structure, and the vast majority of its content. But even before Geoffrey wrote his influential work there was some doubt about what was true concerning King Arthur. In an oft-quoted passage, William of Malmesbury (c. 1125) complained that, even as he wrote, the history of Arthur was obscured in a cloud of fable. During his account of Ambrosius, William mentioned the bellicose Arthur and added 'Hic est Artur de quo Britonum nugæ hodieque delirant; dignus plane quem non fallaces somniarent fabulæ, sed veraces prædicarent historiæ.'[2] At a later point, William mentioned in passing that Gawain's tomb was uncovered in Wales during the reign of William the Conqueror. The whereabouts of Arthur's tomb, however, remained unknown, 'unde antiquitas næniarum adhuc eum venturum fabulatur.'[3] William's comments point to two possibly related traditions concerning Arthur: his expected return, and the British *nugæ*, which may have included adventures concerning the king. William, however, was content to ignore these tales and he simply reconciled his two sources (Gildas and pseudo-Nennius), and claimed that Arthur was the contemporary of Ambrosius, and that he had helped sustain his people during the Saxon invasion. William was unwilling to include any material beyond that.

Writing only a decade after William, Geoffrey of Monmouth added considerably to the amount of information available concerning Britain's ancient past. Geoffrey's *Historia regum Britanniae*, completed in 1138,[4] gives an account of events from the arrival of Brutus in Albion to the coming of the Anglo-Saxons. The *Historia* culminates with the reign of Arthur, Britain's greatest king. His narrative would become the standard historical account of Arthur's reign for some five hundred years, as the *Historia* quickly spread over all of Europe. It still survives in at least 215 manuscripts,[5] but Geoffrey's narrative was even more widely disseminated than the impressive distribution of the text itself would indicate. The *Historia* was used as a source by many later authors and its story was preserved in numerous translations and adaptations. The most popular vernacular version of Geoffrey's history is found in the anonymous prose *Brut*. Written in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century, the French text survives in at least fifty manuscripts, the English translation in over 170.[6] In addition to the *Brut*, Geoffrey's text was also translated by Wace, Geoffrey Gaimar, Robert of Gloucester, and many others. These texts were in turn translated and adapted by subsequent chroniclers, leading Robert Hanning to assert that '[u]ntil the sixteenth (and in some quarters the seventeenth) century, British history *was* Geoffrey's *Historia*, expanded, excerpted, rhymed, combined, or glossed.'[7] Geoffrey's representation of Arthur, therefore, circulated with the many adaptations of his work, and these chronicles 'were the primary source of knowledge in medieval England concerning King Arthur and the Arthurian era.'[8]

This is not to say that French romances were unknown. Many chroniclers routinely discuss competing narrative traditions, though none, perhaps, as forthrightly as Jacob van Maerlant. In the 1280s the Flemish chronicler and poet composed the *Spiegel Historiael* at the request of Floris V, count of Holland and Zeeland. The work is essentially a translation of Vincent of Beauvais's universal chronicle, the *Speculum Historiale*, but in the treatment of Arthurian Britain, Maerlant deviates from his source.[9] Although Vincent had repeated the standard narrative of Arthur's reign, he added that 'Cuius mirabiles actus etiam ora linguæque personant populorum, licet plura esse fabulosa videantur.'[10] Maerlant, however, is much more precise and states that he will not add any material which he cannot find within the chronicle tradition:

Van Lancelote canic niet scriven,
Van Perchevale, van Eggraveine;

Maer den goeden Waleweine
Vindic in sine jeesten geset,
Ende sinen broeder den valscen Mordret,
Ende van Eniau den hertoge Keyen,
Daer hem die Walen mede meyen.[11]

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

Dien dan dei boerde vanden Grale,
Die loghene van Perchevale,
End andere vele valscher saghen
Vernoyen ende neit en behaghen,
Houde desen Spiegle Ystoriale
Over die truffen van Lenvale;
Want hier vintmen al besonder
Waerheit ende menech wonder,
Wijsheit ende scone leringhe,
Ende reine dachcortinghe[12]

Throughout the text, Maerlant draws attention to aspects of the Arthurian romance tradition which Vincent did not include and which he chooses not to add. Concerning Joseph of Arimathea, Maerlant dismisses the liars who have written of the Grail which he considers to be nothing,[13] and he makes similar dismissals of other romance characters:

Van Perchevale, van Galyote,
Van Egraveine, van Lancelote,
Vanden coninc Ban van Benowijc
Ende Behoerde dies ghelijc,
Ende van vele geveinseder namen,
Sone vandic altesamen
Cleene no groot inden Latine:
Dies docht mi verlorne pine,
Dat ict hier ontbinden soude.[14]

It is not surprising that Maerlant shows such detailed knowledge of Arthurian romance. Twenty years earlier he had translated large portions of the prose Vulgate as *Die historie van den Grale*. Willem Gerritson believes that Maerlant's insistent dismissal of romance material repre-

sents his disillusionment with the text that he had translated as a youth. Gerritson describes the chronicler as feeling cheated: 'Much of what the French poets had written (and consequently much of what he, Maerlant, had transmitted in good faith) now proved to be only a pack of lies.'[15] Gerritson asserts that when Maerlant 'wrote his *Historie van den Grale* he obviously did not know the *Historia Regum Britanniae*,'[16] but this is by no means certain. The distinction made between different narrative material merely demonstrates that by the 1280s Maerlant was aware that conflicting Arthurian narratives existed. Whether he was aware of this when translating the Vulgate romance is unknown,[17] but when writing history he was certain to assure his readers that he had excluded all material which did not qualify as historically accurate. In this, Maerlant is unusual. Continental authors rarely comment on which Arthurian material could be included in a chronicle and which excluded. Even fewer wrote about specific romance characters and events which were omitted.

The situation was slightly different for late medieval insular chroniclers. Although it was rare, even in Britain, for a specific character or event to be singled out as unhistorical (Mordred's incestuous conception being a notable exception), insular historians were much more careful than their continental counterparts to distinguish the historical Arthur from the character found in romances. The discussion about what actually happened in Arthur's reign and what should be excluded from a chronicle is remarkably consistent, and many chroniclers deal with the question within their Brut narratives. The issue tends to be raised at the same point in the narrative, a twelve-year-long period of peace during Arthur's reign. Although Geoffrey of Monmouth had not raised the question himself, he unwittingly established the *locus* in which those who followed him could carry on the debate.

Like many medieval chronicles, Geoffrey's *Historia* is primarily concerned with military actions. Isidore of Seville had said that 'Historia est narratio rei gestae,'[18] and in most medieval historiography the *res gesta*, or *geste*, as it would be called in both English and French, almost always involved military deeds. Times of peace, therefore, are often ignored. During the reign of Arthur, Geoffrey mentions two extended periods of peace. The first occurs after Arthur subdues Britain and conquers Ireland and the Scottish Isles. Geoffrey simply states that 'Emensa deinde hyeme reuersus est in Britanniam statumque regni sui in firmam pacem renouans moram .xii. annis ibidem fecit.'[19] The next time of peace occurs after the defeat of Frollo and the conquest of western Europe. Geoffrey states that Arthur ravaged Europe with fire and sword and then

'Emensis interum .ix. annis, cum totius Gallie partes potestati sue summisisset, uenit iterum Arturus Parisius tenuitque ibidem curiam ubi conuocato clero et populo statum regni pace et lege confirmauit.'[20]

The seemingly precise chronology of both of these periods of peace allows Geoffrey to bring verisimilitude to the events he describes and seems designed to lend credibility to his narrative. History, however, abhors a vacuum, and vernacular adapters of Geoffrey's text were obliged to explain what happened during these periods of supposed inactivity. Wace first addressed the issue of Geoffrey's periods of peace in his *Roman de Brut* (c. 1155), which includes the earliest surviving appearance of King Arthur in vernacular historiography. Faced with a twelve-year period of inaction in the *Historia*, Wace makes two significant additions to his source. The first is to note that 'Fist Artur la Runde Table / Dunt Bretun dient mainte fable.'[21] The Table/fable couplet economically expresses Wace's anxiety concerning British tales of Arthur, and in his second major interpolation to this episode he articulates his own apprehension over the historicity of the varied Arthurian traditions which had already begun to accumulate around the figure of the king. He writes:

En cele grante pais ke jo di,
Ne sai si vus l'avez oï,
Furent les merveilles pruvees
E les aventures truvees
Ki d'Artur sunt tant recuntees
Ke a fable sunt aturnees.
Ne tut mençunge, ne tut veir,
Ne tut folie ne tut saveir.
Tant unt li conteür cunté
E li fableür tant flablé
Pur lur cuntes enbeleter,
Que tut unt fait fable sembler.[22]

According to Wace, the period of peace contains events which have been so exaggerated that he can no longer distinguish between the *veraces historiæ* and the *fallaces fabulæ*. Unable to distinguish fact from fiction, Wace draws attention to the difficulties inherent in the period and passes over it in silence.

Wace's reflections have been interpreted in a number of ways. Gabrielle Spiegel asserts that Wace views his own work as neither entirely truth nor

falsehood. By claiming that Wace's statement refers to the whole of the *Roman*, rather than the twelve years alone, she establishes an opposition between prose historiography and the verse chronicles of Wace and Benoît de Sainte-Maure: 'Both Benoît de Sainte-Maure's *Roman de Troie* and Wace's *Roman de Brut* locate their tales within a literary space suspended between history and fable, where, Wace proclaimed, the reader will find "ne tut mençunge, ne tut veir" ... Neither wholly a lie nor wholly true, the image of the past offered in the *romans* of Benoît and Wace is a fiction that purports to tell the truth about past facts, and thus is a fiction implying that its fiction is not simply a fiction. By means of this "fictional factuality" the *roman* formulates its own reality, which exists somewhere in the interstices between fable and history.'[23] This interpretation, however, seems untenable. Wace's digression clearly refers only to the twelve-year period of peace, and its purpose is to indicate that he will not include the adventures which occurred during that time. It is these adventures which are 'Ne tut mençunge, ne tut veir,'[24] and by denying the veracity of these tales, Wace seeks to establish himself as a careful historian and assure the authority of the material which he does include. As Lesley Johnson correctly argues, 'Wace validates his narrative by developing the image of his narrating persona as a discriminating clerkly figure who alerts the attention of his audience to material beyond his knowledge, and outside his text.'[25] Rather than formulating a 'reality' in which the entire narrative takes place, the *Roman de Brut*'s digression on the twelve years creates a narrative space within the chronicle tradition in which dubious narratives could exist, albeit without any claim to historical veracity. Exactly what kind of narratives Wace is referring to, however, is a matter of conjecture. It is likely that he is aware of a body of Arthurian narratives which supplements the narrative found in Geoffrey, possibly the sort of *nugæ* to which William of Malmesbury referred. The tone of his statements indicates that these narratives have been so elaborated that they now involve wonders and great deeds which are beyond belief.

For Wace, then, the narrative found in Geoffrey was distinct from the marvellous adventures which he relegated to the twelve years of peace. We might speculate that these adventures involved knights, and that they were similar to the tales which typically make up the matter of romances. Early readers of Wace certainly felt that he was referring to romances; one ambitious scribe of the *Roman de Brut* inserts all five Arthurian romances of Chrétien de Troyes in the middle of Wace's renunciation of extra-Galfridian material. The addition is not haphazard, however, and

the scribe introduces the romance material with the statement 'Mais ce que Crestiens tesmogne / Porés ci oïr sans alogne.'[26] The romances are included without prefaces, thus minimizing the intrusive nature of the texts (the preface of *Cligés*, however, is included), and the scribe concludes his digression and returns to the *Roman de Brut* by altering the epilogue of the *Charrete*, the last romance included: 'Segnor, se jo avant disoie, / Ce ne seroit pas bel a dire, / Por ce retor a ma matire.'[27] At first glance, this scribe seems to work against the text he is copying. Chrétien's romances stand in defiance of Wace's dismissal of what the *conteürs* and *fableürs* have written, and the manuscript seems to suggests that Wace is wrong, and that the work of Chrétien belongs within history. But in the end, Wace's voice prevails. Chrétien's romances might be told in the middle of a chronicle, but they remain 'Ne tut mençunge, ne tut veir' and are thus distinct from history. In this way, Wace takes advantage of the period of peace described by Geoffrey to find a place for exaggerated tales (like those of Chrétien), but while those tales are set within history, they are not part of history.

The influence of Wace's reflections on Arthurian narrative were far-reaching and many chroniclers writing within the Brut tradition adapted his comments to their own age. The growth of Arthurian romance narratives throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, most significantly the French prose Vulgate cycle, meant that an alternate account of Arthur's reign coexisted with that found in twelfth-century chronicles and histories. This new version of the Arthurian story not only added additional elements, such as the Grail quest or Lancelot's adventures, but fundamentally altered Geoffrey's narrative. In Geoffrey, Arthur is waging a campaign against Rome when he hears of Mordred's treachery, but in the Vulgate the adultery of Lancelot and Guenevere is ultimately responsible for the fall of the Round Table. As a result, English chroniclers who adapted and translated Wace in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were faced with a much more complex relationship between 'fable' and 'history.' Fables not only added to the narrative, they at times contradicted it. Historians and chroniclers who followed Wace's lead, therefore, repeatedly used the twelve years of peace, and to a lesser extent the nine years of peace which followed the conquest of France, to consider the implications of conflicting Arthurian narratives.

Wace's *Roman de Brut* was very popular and it was widely used as a source by later chroniclers. Several chroniclers merely translated Wace's passage on the twelve years, as did an anonymous chronicler in English prose: 'on þat grete contray þat Y of sygge – Y not wat ȝe haueþ yhurde –

þer were þe mervelous ydo and iproued, and þe auentures yfounde, þat of Arthur was ytolde, þat buþ to fables yturned; ne alle lesyng ne alle soþe, ne alle foly ne alle wysdom, wat þat þuse tellerys tellyþ and wat þat þuse fabeleres fableþ for to fayre hyre tales, þat alle yleche semed fables.'[28] This chronicle, which survives in a unique manuscript in the College of Arms, is a close translation of Wace's text, and the chronicler's rendering of the passage does not indicate any original thought or opinion. One of the most popular vernacular chronicles in England, the Anglo-Norman *Brut*,[29] also simply adapts Wace's discussion of the twelve years of peace. After the establishment of the Round Table it claims that knights 'de toutz lez terres qe honor de chiualerie vendront a quere, vindrent a la court Arthur. En mesme cele temps q'il regna issint en pees furent les merueilles prouez & les auentures trouer dont homme ad souent counte & oie.'[30] When the *Brut* was translated into English, however, this passage was removed and the chapter ends with the praise of the Round Table and the claim that knights 'of alle þe landes þat wolde worshipe and chyualry seche, comen to Kyng Arthurus court.'[31]

An adaptor of the *Short Metrical Chronicle* also paraphrased Wace's thoughts on the twelve years of peace. London, British Library, Royal MS. 12. C.XII, a manuscript completed between 1320 and 1340, contains a copy of the *Short Metrical Chronicle* which extends into Edward II's reign and ends with the beheading of Piers Gaveston in 1312.[32] While the original form of the chronicle merely stated that Arthur had fought as far as the gates of Rome, the Royal version gives a brief description of the war with 'Luces,'[33] Arthur's betrayal by 'Moddred,' who is called 'his cosyn,'[34] and his final campaign to regain Britain.[35] Oddly, the Royal version asserts that Arthur lived ten years after the final battle.[36] Apart from Arthur's unexpected longevity, these passages are too general and well known to be ascribed to any individual source, but other additions seem to point to Wace. The Arthurian section of the Royal version opens with a passage of praise for Arthur, and continues:

Whyl kyng Arthur wes alyue
Jn Bretaigne wes chyualerie
Ant þe in Bretaigne were yfounde
Þis gret auentures ich onderstonde
Þat ʒe habbeþ yherd her þis
Ofte siþes & soth hit ys
Wyth kyng Arthur wes a knyht
Wel ychot Eweyn he hyht

Þer nes mon in al þe londe
Þat durste in fith aʒein him stonde.[37]

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

The fourteenth-century scribes and translators who paraphrased or adapted Wace's ruminations demonstrate that the distinction between history and romance was recognized, even if these particular scribes did not add anything to Wace's opinion. Robert Mannyng, however, elaborated on Wace's thoughts to account for the development of Arthurian narrative in his own day. Mannyng's writing career seems to have spanned the years 1303 to 1338, during which time he was associated with the Gilbertines, first at Sempringham, then at Sixhills.[38] His *Chronicle* is divided into two parts, although it is conceived of as a single work. The second part (which follows the death of Cadwallader) is a translation of Peter Langtoft's *Chronicle*, but for the first part, which traces British history from Troy to its last king, Mannyng uses Wace as his primary source. Mannyng chose Wace because, he claims, Wace's translation of Geoffrey is more accurate than Langtoft's:

and ryght as mayster Wace says,
I telle myn Inglis þe same ways,
ffor mayster Wace þe Latyn alle rymes
þat Pers ouerhippis many tymes.[39]

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

Lordynges þat be now here,
if ʒe wille listene & lere
alle þe story of Inglande
als Robert Mannyng wryten it fand

> & on Inglysch has it schewed,
> not for þe lerid bot for þe lewed,
> ffor þo þat in þis land won
> þat þe Latyn no Frankys con,
> ffor to haf solace & gamen
> in felawschip when þai sitt samen.⁴⁰

As Turville-Petre points out, the word 'lewed' did not necessarily carry negative connotations. 'The word could be used pejoratively, but usually was not; it referred to a lack of knowledge of languages, a lack that was expected and appropriate among lay people.'⁴¹ Later in the prologue Mannyng reinforces the point when he compares his work to his sources:

> Als þai haf wryten & sayd
> haf I alle in myn Inglis layd
> in symple speche as I couth
> þat is lightest in mannes mouth.⁴²

For Turville-Petre, 'there is no element of condescension [in Mannyng's prologue]; the *lewed* have chosen to be simple, and the poet who has followed them in this choice shares this virtue with them, writing "in symple speche as I couthe."'⁴³

Mannyng's *Chronicle*, therefore, is intended for a lay audience whose primary language is English. Even before Mannyng discusses Arthurian narratives during the twelve years of peace, he establishes his own identity as a faithful historian who will not give credence to popular narratives not found in Wace's authoritative account. To this end, Mannyng departs from his narrative several times to address popular stories which he expects this lay English audience to know. As he begins to the tell the famous story of Vortigern and Rowena, the daughter of Hengist, he adds an aside concerning an alternate version of the tale:

> Þis lewid men seie & singe,
> and [telle þat hit was mayden Inge];
> writen of Ingge no clerk may ken
> bot [of] Hengest douhter [R]onewenne.⁴⁴

Inge is not found in either Wace or Geoffrey of Monmouth. In those texts, it is Hengist's daughter Rowena who gives Vortigern a drink and teaches him the Saxon word *wassaille*, but Mannyng's comments indicate that the story of Inge was a popular tale which explained the change of

name from Britain to England (or *Inge-land*). The Lambeth manuscript
of the *Chronicle* has been significantly revised and the reviser, apparently
also aware of the story, foreshadows the change of Britain's name at this
point, adding the lines:

> ffro Angle a Contre in Saxonye
> Comen alle Hengistes compaynie
> So þat for Angle y vnderstond
> Bretayne was cald Engelond.[45]

Although the revision supports Mannyng by denying Inge's influence on
the name of England, Mannyng himself does not give an account of the
change of name until much later at the coming of the Saxon king Engle,
saying that 'for þis Engle þe lond þus wan, / England cald it ilk a man.'[46]
Mannyng does not let this etymology stand, however, and at this late
stage in British history he again returns to the false story of Inge, saying:

> Bot of Inge sauh I neuer nouht
> in boke writen ne wrouht;
> bot lewed men þer of crie
> & maynten þat ilk lie.[47]

For the 'lewed' men, the story of Inge, which associated the change of
the name of Britain with Vortigern's betrayal and the introduction of the
English word *wassaille*, was so well know that Mannyng denounced it
twice. The story of Inge did have some currency, and several versions of
the *Short Metrical Chronicle* also include an account of the maiden.[48]
Mannyng was either unaware of, or failed to give credence to, this
version of the tale. In all likelihood, however, Mannyng, who says that
'lewid men seie & singe' of Inge,[49] knew the tale from an oral source.
The *Short Metrical Chronicle* also alludes to the tale being sung:

> In þat tyme wite 3e wel
> Com wesseil & drynkheil
> Into þis lond withoute wene
> Þoru a maide bry3t & schene
> He was icluped maide Inge
> Of hure can many man rede & synge.[50]

Just as Mannyng denies the 'lewed' tale of Inge, he also alludes to the
tale of Havelok which he expects his English audience to know. After

telling the story of Alfred and Gunter, Mannyng includes a short digres-
sion on Havelok:

> Bot I haf grete ferly þat I fynd no man
> þat has writen in story how Hauelok þis lond wan:
> noiþer Gildas, no Bede, no Henry of Huntynton,
> no William of Malmesbiri, ne Pers of Bridlynton
> writes not in þer bokes of no Kyng Athelwold
> ne Goldeburgh his douhtere, ne Hauelok not of told.[51]

After mentioning some of the key elements of the story (the stone at
Lincoln castle, Havelok's wife Goldeburgh, the fisher Gryme) Mannyng
complains that he is unable to ascertain the truth of what 'þise lowed
men vpon Inglish tellis'[52] and concludes:

> Of alle stories of honoure þat I haf þorgh souht,
> I fynd þat no compiloure of him tellis ouht.
> Sen I fynd non redy þat tellis of Hauelok kynde,
> turne we to þat story þat we writen fynde.[53]

Unable to corroborate the story of Havelok with established authorities,
Mannyng remains faithful to the history found in Peter Langtoft. Havelok
remains, in Mannyng's account, a popular tale without the weight of
history. The Lambeth reviser again shows his knowledge of the popular
tales to which Mannyng refers. Instead of the explanation as to why the
Chronicle does not include Havelok, the Lambeth text contains an inter-
polation of eighty-two lines which tells the Havelok story as history.[54]

Mannyng thus presents himself as a chronicler attempting to preserve
an accurate historical record according to the written authorities avail-
able to him. In the case of Inge, the Lambeth reviser attempts to rein-
force Mannyng's refutation of the tale by including an alternate account
of the renaming of Britain. In the case of Havelok, the reviser works
against Mannyng, excising his doubts about the tale and inserting the
story which Mannyng apparently knew, but rejected.[55] Throughout the
two episodes, however, Mannyng attempts to preserve the version of
history which is supported by textual authority against the popular oral
tales told by 'lewed men' in English.

As with Inge and Havelok, Mannyng is aware of additional material
about Arthur and he begins his Arthurian section by hinting at the

exaggerations which had become part of Arthurian tradition:

> Som of his thewes I wille discrie
> (I trowe I salle not mykelle lie).[56]

Throughout the narrative of Britain's greatest king Mannyng attempts to assert the authority of the chronicle narrative over romance elements. This is not to say that Mannyng is uninfluenced by romance narratives. Mannyng's Gawain is consistently described as 'þe curtais,'[57] a characteristic emphasized in romance.[58] Upon Gawain's return to Britain from Rome Mannyng alludes to additional independent tales about Gawain:

> Now is Wawan comen home
> & Loth is fayn of his come;
> noble he was & curteis
> honour of him men rede & seis.[59]

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

> Þe emperour was slayn o chance
> þorgh þe body with a lance.
> I kan not say who did him falle,
> bot Sir Wawayn, said þei alle.[60]

Mannyng likewise provides Ywain with a larger role than either Wace or Geoffrey of Monmouth had given him. In early chronicles Ywain is mentioned only once; after the death of Angusel, Ywain succeeds to the throne of Scotland and performs great deeds in the battle with Mordred.[61] In Mannyng's *Chronicle* Ywain is mentioned at Arthur's coronation feast,[62] and his resistance to Mordred is increased. Ywain has been fighting with Mordred even before Arthur's return:

> He [i.e., Arthur] gaf Iwein in heritage
> & he mad Arthur homage.
> Iwein had lauht grete honour,
> agayn Modred he stode in stoure.[63]

The Lambeth reviser, however, goes beyond Mannyng's statement that

Yvain had already received honour against Mordred in battle. He adds:

> & dide & seyde Moddred gret schonde
> Þe while Arthur was out of londe.[64]

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

Despite Mannyng's knowledge of romance material, he does not allow Arthurian romance to alter his narrative. When Mannyng reaches the passage about the twelve years of peace following the conquest of Britain he goes beyond Wace and discusses the state of Arthurian narrative in his own time. Mannyng claims that Arthur did 'ordeyn þe rounde table / þat [ȝit] men telle of many [a] fable'[65] but it is after the establishment of the table that Mannyng directly addresses the question of the twelve years of peace and alternative narratives:

> [I]n þis tuelue ȝeres tyme
> felle auentours þat men rede of ryme;
> in þat tyme wer herd & sene
> þat som say þat neuer had bene;
> of Arthure is said many selcouth
> in diuers landes, north & south,
> þat man haldes now for fable,
> be þei neuer so trew no stable.
> Not alle is sothe ne alle lie,
> ne alle wisdom ne alle folie;
> þer is of him no þing said
> þat ne it may to gode laid.[66]

The passage is a rough translation of Wace's original, but Mannyng has added a few details. First, the tales that are half-truths are written in 'ryme.' It would be easy to draw the simple conclusion that Mannyng distinguishes between the veracity of prose and the mendacity of verse, but it must be noted that both Mannyng's history and his sources are verse chronicles. Ad Putter, in fact, thinks otherwise when he states that '[w]here Wace had talked scornfully of unreliable rumours, Mannyng thought of verse romances, put down in writing (men *read* them), and

consequently endowed with an authority that, while doubted by "somme," goes unquestioned by the author himself.'[67] Putter's argument, however, conveniently ignores the last four lines of the passage quoted above (though not quoted by Putter) in which Mannyng, like Wace, characterizes alternative narratives (whether oral rumours or rhymed romances) as half-truths.

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

And gude it is for many thynges
for to here þe dedis of kynges,
whilk were foles & whilk were wyse,
& whilk of þam couth mast quantyse,
and whilk did wrong & whilk ryght,
& whilk mayntend pes & fyght.[68]

Tales of Arthur which are untrue, claims Mannyng, could also be used as *exempla* and therefore put to the same good use. Mannyng's other major work, *Handlyng Synne*, also contains many tales which are not true and yet he expects his readers to use them for the benefit of their souls.[69] As we shall see in the following chapters, Arthurian romances did carry a didactic tone of which Mannyng would have approved.

Mannyng's discussion of the reliability of Arthurian narrative is not limited to the twelve years of peace. Wace's ruminations prompt him to add a short passage which is suggested by the preface to the *Historia regum Britanniae*:

Geffrey Arthur of Menimu
wrote his dedis þat wer of pru
& blames boþe Gildas & Bede,
whi of him þei wild not rede.[70]

Geoffrey had complained of Gildas, Bede, and Latin authors in general,[71] but as Lesley Johnson points out, Mannyng's habit of citing sources is just one of his methods of establishing his own authority: 'this citation in the *Chronicle* allows Mannyng to register the discrepancy over Arthur's historical subjectivity without thereby undermining Geoffrey of Monmouth's authoritative status and therefore the version of British and

Arthurian history which he supplies.'[72] Like Wace, therefore, Mannyng takes advantage of Geoffrey's historical gap to bolster the veracity of his own narrative. He concludes that:

> In alle londes wrote men of Arthoure;
> his noble dedis of honoure,
> in France men wrote & ȝit write;
> here haf we of him bot lite.[73]

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

Mannyng's most innovative change, however, is to elaborate on the second period of peace. As we saw from Geoffrey, Arthur settles in Paris for nine years after the defeat of Frollo. Wace, in a close translation of Geoffrey, merely stated that 'Es nef anz que il France tint, / Mainte merveille li avint,'[74] but in Mannyng the scene is expanded. After establishing peace Arthur sends home his older trusted followers, but keeps the young knights in France:

> Þo þat were ȝong & wilde
> & had noiþer wife ne childe
> þat lufed to bere helm & shelde,
> nyen ȝere in France he þam helde.[75]

The youths that accompany Arthur in this time of peace resemble the *juventus* described by Georges Duby: 'The youth is always on the point of departure or on the way to another place; he roams continually through provinces and counties; he "wanders over all the earth." For him the "good life" was "to be on the move in many lands in quest of prize and adventure."'[76] For Mannyng, this group of youths forms the fighting force of Arthur's conquests. As Arthur departs for Denmark he is accompanied by those '[Þat weren ȝonge & couthe] of fight, / þat lufed more were þan pes.'[77] Similarly, when Arthur sets out to conquer Ireland he summons 'all þe ȝongest bachelers / þat wele myght & best couth / stand in were & were of ȝouth.'[78]

In the second period of peace, Arthur surrounds himself with the

'ʒong & wilde,' and another period of adventures ensues. Mannyng briefly describes not only the adventures of Arthur's court, but also the codification of their achievement:

> Many selcouth by tyme seres
> betid Arthur þo nyen ʒeres.
> Many proude man lowe he brouht,
> to many a felon wo he wrouht.
> Þer haf men bokes, alle his life,
> þer ere his meruailes kid fulle rife;
> þat we of him here alle rede,
> þer ere þei writen ilk a dede.
> Þise grete bokes, so faire langage,
> writen & spoken on France vsage,
> þat neuer was writen þorgh Inglis man;
> suilk stile to speke no kynde can.
> Bot France men wrote in prose,
> als he did, him to alose.[79]

Between these two periods of peace Mannyng presents a scheme for reading all of Arthurian literature. Verse romances, which are not trust-worthy, are located in the first period, while deeds described in prose romances (the 'grete bokes' in prose presumably being the Vulgate cycle) were performed in France and are therefore situated in the second period of peace. Both Johnson and Putter assume that Mannyng accepts the French prose narratives as historical. For Johnson, 'Mannyng's reference to the intersection between these French prose narratives and his own work ... suggests that their contents cannot be separated from the tradition in which he was working.'[80] Putter adds that '[r]omance and history are thereby made to complement rather than contradict each other.'[81] Apart from a few stylistic matters discussed above, however, Mannyng's Arthurian narrative is a close translation of Wace with no additional narrative material from either verse or prose romances. Mannyng himself makes no claims concerning the veracity of the latter group of narratives, but his failure to include any tales drawn from these sources, and their parallel to the earlier fables, at least implies that Mannyng questions the truth of these 'selcouth' stories.

Mannyng's opinion of romance material in French prose thus remains uncertain. He clearly undermines the veracity of verse romances in the twelve years of peace by asserting that they are 'Not alle ... sothe ne alle

lie.' The French prose works receive no such condemnation, but he has chosen to treat them in the same way he treated Havelok and Inge, through silence. Turville-Petre offers an interpretation of the nine years of peace which is not concerned with the historicity of the narratives, but rather the politics of their creation. 'Two things are happening here,' he claims: 'One is that Arthur's victory over the French is being associated with current anxieties over Anglo-French relations and the dominance of the French [in England]. The other is that Mannyng is laying claim ... to Arthur as a hero for 'Englischmen.' He is a hero of 'þys lond,' and not to be appropriated by the French.'[82] Such a reading privileges the native chronicle tradition over foreign romances, and Mannyng's emphasis on the language of Arthurian material outside the Brut tradition (it is 'writen & spoken on France vsage') implies that his lay English audience may not have access to it. Mannyng claims that although the French books are written 'þer,' 'we' all read them 'here,' but Mannyng's seemingly inclusive 'we' does not include the immediate audience of the *Chronicle*, the 'lewed' folk 'þat þe Latyn no Frankys con.' While his own translation makes the French histories of Wace and Peter Langtoft, available to English readers, his refusal to translate French romance is a tacit rejection of it. Rather than providing authority for the material that he relegates to the periods of peace, the descriptions of events in both periods remain nothing more than marginalized allusions to vaguely defined narrative forms.

Mannyng's discussion of the two periods of peace thus expands on Wace's digression and offers a paradigm for discriminating between competing traditions in the early fourteenth century. Many of Mannyng's contemporaries, however, did not take advantage of Wace's catagories and merely translated or adapted the story found in Geoffrey of Monmouth without commenting on the historicity of narrative material outside that basic text. Robert of Gloucester, Peter Langtoft, and Thomas Castleford each follow this basic pattern, but even these vernacular authors were influenced by extra-Galfridian texts. Both Robert of Gloucester and Peter Langtoft, for instance, emphasized Merlin's role as an enchanter and Gawain's dominant trait of courtesy.[83] Both chroniclers also turned to Henry of Huntingdon to elaborate their accounts of Arthur's death.[84] These, however, are matters of detail, and they do not affect the basic narrative.

Other fourteenth-century texts, however, did allow romances to distort the Galfridian narrative of Arthur's reign. The Auchinleck manuscript's version of the *Short Metrical Chronicle* includes the only

chronicle narrative which mentions Lancelot's adultery with Guenevere. The Auchinleck manuscript, which was compiled in the 1330s,[85] contains the most radically altered version of the *Short Metrical Chronicle*, and it presents a picture of Arthur's reign that differs from that found in most Bruts. Here, Arthur is not Uther's son, but is summoned from Wales to free the British from Fortiger, who has seized the crown after Hine's death. The account opens with a passage of praise for the king, and then begins to describe a civil war in Britain:

> Þerafter aros wer strong
> Þurch þe quen in þis lond
> Launcelot de Lac held his wiif
> Forþi bitven hem ros gret striif.[86]

Lancelot builds Nottingham castle to house the queen and a system of caves under the castle to protect her in case Arthur attacks. After Arthur attempts to banish Lancelot, the two men meet at Glastonbury to discuss the situation and hold a Round Table.[87] This Lancelot story, although too brief and vague to be associated with any one source, has its origins in some version of the prose Vulgate. The reign ends without a resolution to the situation when the Round Table is interrupted by a knight carrying a magic mantle.[88]

The very confused narrative of Rauf de Boun's *Le Petit Bruit* (c. 1309) also shows the influence of romance.[89] In addition to the chronicle's emphasis on the marvellous, it names 'Perseval' and 'Gawayne' as examples of knights of great renown, citing 'l'autre Bruit' as a source.[90] It is difficult to take this source seriously, however. According to this version Uther and Arthur are Anglo-Saxon kings who follow Adeluf I (one of the three incarnations of the real Saxon king, Ethelwulf). Both the Auchinleck manuscript and *Le Petit Bruit* tell versions of Arthurian history that are heavily indebted to romance, but they are also anomalies that do not seem to have infuenced any subsequent historians.

The Vulgate also affected English historiography in ways which are only tangentially related to Arthur. John of Glastonbury's *Cronica sive Antiquitates Glastoniensis Ecclesie* makes use of the Vulgate's *Lestoire del Saint Graal*, to describe Joseph of Arimathea's journey from the Holy Land to Britain.[91] John provides citations for this material and has no qualms about associating his work with the Vulgate: 'Ioseph ab Armathia nobilem decurionem cum filio suo Iosephes dicto et aliis pluribus in maiorem Britanniam que nunc Anglia dicta est venisse et ibidem vitam

finisse testatur liber de gestis incliti regis Arthuri.'[92] John states that the story of Joseph's travels is retold in the book at the beginning of Lancelot's, Gawain's, and Galahad's quest for the vessel 'quod ibi vocant Sanctum Graal.'[93] In John's *Cronica,* however, it is not the Grail, but vials of the blood and sweat of Christ that Joseph brings to Britain, and although the narrative embedded within the Grail quest is retold, John does not include any elements of the quest itself. John's history of the abbey was written in the early 1340s, shortly after Mannyng had warned against romance material, but he was not the first person to associate Joseph of Arimathea with Glastonbury.[94] The monks at Glastonbury had already demonstrated their aptitude for adapting romance material to historical texts. A copy of Geoffrey's *Historia* transcribed at Glastonbury early in the fourteenth century is preceded by a brief Arthurian adventure, the 'Quedam narracio de nobili Arthuro.' This interpolation is a Latin translation of the Chapel Ride episode from the French *Perlesvaus,* and the same episode was later incorporated by John of Glastonbury into his own *Cronica.*[95] The interests of the monastery, it seems, helped the monks to blur the distinction between fact and fiction, but it is worth noting that the monks' cavalier use of romance traditions within historical writing was not mirrored beyond the abbey walls.

As these fourteenth-century texts show, romance was impinging on history even as Mannyng wrote. His attempts to preserve the integrity of the Brut narrative might resemble Cnut trying to hold back the tide, except that Mannyng's vision of Arthurian history prevailed. Wace's division of Arthurian traditions into the historical and the wondrous may not have been inviolate in the fourteenth century, but Mannyng's adherence to that paradigm put him in the historical mainstream. After Mannyng, a variety of chroniclers turned to Wace to discuss the relationship between conflicting accounts of Arthur's reign and to adapt his opinion to their own age. The chroniclers who question the historicity of romance narratives are all generally true to their word. Despite the temptation to import romance material into their historical accounts, they dismiss extra-Galfridian material and relegate it to the two periods of inactivity which Wace established for narratives which lacked historical authority. A generation after Mannyng wrote his *Chronicle,* the knight Thomas Gray would use the distinction between the historical and the fictive not only to defend Arthurian history, but also to augment the thematic concerns of his own Brut narrative.

2

The *Scalacronica* of Sir Thomas Gray of Heton

Fame has done no Prince more injury than this, for by representing him so
far beyond all proportion, she has made him Monstrous.

Aylett Sammes, 1676[1]

Even though Robert Mannyng rejects Arthurian romances, he provides
some evidence for the popularity of these works in England. The ro-
mances of Arthur that 'France men wrote in prose' are works that
Mannyng says 'we of him here alle rede.'[2] But if Mannyng's 'we' does not
include his imagined audience of monolingual Englishmen, who does it
include? Mannyng, who as a member of a religious order was presum-
ably not part of the primary audience for romance material, acts as a
bridge between French and Latin learning and his audience. But Mannyng
does not reveal all, and he chooses which of his sources should be
presented in an accessible language. In contrast, Sir Thomas Gray of
Heton was a member of courtly society and, as we shall see, an avid
reader of French romance literature. Gray began his Anglo-Norman
chronicle of English history in 1355, and the *Scalacronica* displays an
impressive knowledge of both romance and historiographical traditions.
Unlike Mannyng's 'lewed' audience, Gray's audience had to read French,
and they therefore had the ability to explore continental romance on
their own if they had the inclination and access to the books. Despite the
fact that Gray wrote within a generation of Robert Mannyng, therefore,
he faced a different challenge with respect to historical authority. Mannyng
could control his audience's reaction to conflicting narratives by dismiss-
ing the oral tales of Inge and Havelok because they did not agree with his
written sources and by refusing to make French romances available to his

English audience. He simply chose not to write down or translate any-thing that contradicted Wace. Gray's audience had access to French romance texts, and Gray had to assert the historical validity of the Brut tradition by demonstrating its superior textual authority. Gray's integra-tion of historical and romance traditions in the Arthurian portion of the text thus provides rare insight into the attitudes towards Arthurian nar-rative in English aristocratic society.[3]

Thomas Gray could be relatively certain that the audience for the *Scalacronica* was also familiar with Arthurian romance. The popularity of the tradition among the nobility is well attested by surviving wills and book lists. Juliet Vale has examined the widespread ownership and circu-lation of books in and around the household of Edward III.[4] Queen Isabella, for example, owned at least ten romances at the time of her death. These include Arthurian texts ('de gestis Arthuri,' 'de Tristram et Isolda,' 'de Perceual et Gauwayn') as well as *chansons de geste* and material on the Trojan war.[5] Among the 160 books mentioned by John Fleet, keeper of the privy wardrobe at the Tower from 1322 to 1341, '59 were listed as *libri de romanciis*.'[6] Thomas Gray's own daughter, Elizabeth Darcy, also lists romances in her will, dated 1412. Among the books left to Thomas Grey de Heton (her nephew, by her brother Thomas) are a 'librum voc' Sainz Ryall, and alterum librum voc' Lanselake.'[7]

Interest in romance material was not limited to those who spoke French. Despite Robert Mannyng's refusal to translate prose romances, the four-teenth century did see the first English translations of portions of the prose Vulgate cycle. *Arthour and Merlin*, translated in the first half of the century, presents the Vulgate *Merlin* to an English reading audience.[8] It may be significant that this romance is found in the Auchinleck manu-script, which also contains the version of the *Short Metrical Chronicle* most influenced by romance. The alliterative *Joseph of Arimathea*[9] was written in the third quarter of the century, while the stanzaic *Le Morte Arthur*,[10] an adaptation of the last book of the Vulgate, was completed c. 1400.

Given the interest in romance literature in fourteenth-century En-gland, it is not surprising that it had an influence on chivalric practice. Aristocratic society expressed its own identity as a nobility based on military prowess through chivalric display, and the quintessential display of chivalric pageantry, the tournament, drew many of its forms and customs from Arthurian romance. Tournaments modelled on the age of Arthur (often referred to as a round table)[11] had been held since the thirteenth century and such events held numerous possibilities for the dramatic recreation of Arthurian chivalry. On the continent, Ulrich von

Lichtenstein was particularly fond of romance themes in tournaments, and in 1240 he jousted in the arms of Arthur while his retainers wore the costumes of various knights of Arthurian romance, such as Lancelot, Yvain, and Tristan.[12] English knights shared this enthusiasm, and a spectacular round table was held by Roger Mortimer at Kenilworth in 1279. Thomas Gray mentions the tournament and the number of knights that attended: 'Et Roger Mortimer teint la Round table, se centisme dez chiualers a Kenlynworth; a quel reuel d'armes de peise vindrent lez cheualers errauntz de plusours estranges pays.'[13] Edward I was also an enthusiastic supporter of tournaments with Arthurian themes. Lodewijk van Veltham, writing in 1312, describes an elaborate festival which Edward supposedly held in the mid-thirteenth century. According to this account, Edward and his knights adopted Arthurian titles and costumes. Each knight jousted against representations of the wrongs he had suffered from certain towns, and while most were successful, the knight who portrayed Kay became an object of jest, as his saddle girths were cut for the amusement of the spectators. The meal that followed was interrupted between each course by messengers describing adventures in Ireland, Wales, and Cornwall.[14] As Loomis has shown, this narrative is highly suspect and may refer to the festivities surrounding Edward's marriage to Margaret in 1299, rather than his marriage to Eleanor of Castile in 1254.[15] Whatever the occasion, van Veltham's description of such elaborate Arthurian festivities demonstrates not only the acceptance, but also the expectation of such spectacles at the time van Veltham wrote.

Van Veltham's account implies that the expectation of Arthurian themes not only influenced the actual performance of chivalric spectacle, but also the recording of such events. The *Annales Angliae et Scociae*, written early in the fourteenth century, also describes the marriage of Edward and Margaret. After an elaborate description of the marriage rite in the cathedral of Canterbury, the author includes a description of the entertainments which followed. Rather than provide an original account of the events, however, the author simply transcribes Geoffrey of Monmouth's description of Arthur's Pentecost festivities. Names of characters have been changed, but otherwise 'there is almost no alteration in the sentences selected from Geoffrey's imaginative twelfth-century report of a sixth-century festivity.'[16] While Geoffrey's account of Arthur's court may have been imaginative, it was not taken as such by the author of the *Annales*. The decision to draw the description of a contemporary event from Geoffrey's *Historia*, therefore, reflects not only the chronicler's

desire to associate Edwardian pageantry with its Arthurian predecessor, but also the chronicler's recognition that the Arthurian past acted as a model for contemporary courtly activity. The chronicler turns to the authoritative account of Arthur's reign as though to a script of chivalric performance.

Edward III, like his grandfather, had a taste for Arthurian tournaments, as is shown by the round table held at Windsor in 1344. The Cotton manuscript of Adam Murimuth's chronicle tells how Edward resolved to found a new order of the Round Table. At the conclusion of a successful tournament, Edward attended mass, after which he announced his intention by swearing on the gospel and on relics that 'mensam rotundam inciperet, eodem modo et statu quo eam dimisit dominus Arthurus quondam rex Angliæ.'[17] Although plans were made for the order, and construction begun on a hall to house the 300 knights who would be its members, the idea was eventually abandoned, presumably in favour of the Order of the Garter. This occasion, however, has often been associated with the establishment of the Garter, and the *Scalacronica*, written within two decades of the event, makes this connection. Unfortunately, this portion of Gray's chronicle has been removed from the manuscript, but the gap can be filled with Leland's English paraphrase: 'King Edward made a great fest at Wyndesore at Christemes, wher he renewid the Round Table and the name of Arture, and ordenid the order of the Garter, making Sanct George the patrone thereof.'[18] Events such as these bound the chivalric activities of contemporary aristocratic society to the pageantry of the Arthurian past and emphasized the position of Arthurian history as a precedent for both the leisure and military activities of English and European nobility.

Less spectacular deeds also show the influence of romance literature outside the carefully orchestrated performance of the tournament. Froissart tells the story of the English knights at Valenciennes who wore a patch over one eye, thus fulfilling vows that each man would see out of only one eye until he had achieved some deed of arms worthy of his lady.[19] In 1398, seven French knights who had vowed to wear a diamond for three years challenged seven English knights to a series of combats *à outrance*.[20] Any knight who defeated one of the French knights would receive the diamond, but a defeated knight was obliged to give a golden rod to each member of the French group as a token for their ladies.[21] Thomas Gray's own grandson was involved in individual challenges and jousts. He and Richard de Ledes challenged two Scottish knights to six courses on horseback, with lances. They were granted licence to fulfil

their challenges before the king's brother, Ralph, earl of Westmorland, in June 1404.[22]

Perhaps the most chivalric example of a vow fulfilled is provided by Thomas Gray himself. Gray tells the story of Sir William Marmion which, as his editor comments, 'breathes a spirit of chivalry and is narrated with a force which competes with the glowing pages of Froissart.'[23] 'En quele hour a vn graunt fest dez seignurs et dames en le counte de Nichol, vn damoisel faye aportoit vn healme de guere od vn tymbre de vn cel endorez a Willam Marmyoun, cheualer, od vn letre de comaundement de sa dame q'il alast en la plus perillous place de la graunt Bretaigne et q'il feist cel healme estre conuz.'[24] The gathered lords agreed that Norham castle was the most dangerous place in the country so Marmion set out for the castle, which had been beseiged for four days by Alexander Moubray. The warden of the castle was Sir Thomas Gray, father of the chronicler. 'Le dit Thomas auoit bien entendu la maner de sa venu, si ly dist en haute, "Sire cheualer, vous y estez venuz cheualer erraunt pur faire cel healm estre conuz, et si est meutz seaunt chos qe cheualery en soit fait a cheual qe a pee, ou couenablement ceo purra faire, mountez uostre cheual, veez la voz enemy, si ferrez cheual dez esperouns, va assemblere en my lieu dez eaux, si renay ieo Dieux si ieo ne rescouroi toun corps viue ou mort, ou ieo murreray."'[25] Although Marmion was badly beaten, Gray did sally forth from the castle to save him, and 'Lez femmes du chastelle enamenerent lez cheueaux a lours homs, qi mounterent, firent la chace, abaterent ceaux q'ils purroint ateindre.'[26]

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

Gray's Autobiographical Prologue as Chivalric Self-Fashioning

It was within this environment of chivalric display that the *Scalacronica* was written. Its author was a member of the chivalric nobility which

looked to romance for models of ideal conduct: his daughter owned at least two volumes of the Vulgate, and his father and grandson both participated in adventures inspired by romance literature. Sir Thomas Gray's decision to write the chronicle in Anglo-Norman indicates that he intended it to be read by an aristocratic audience, an audience different from the one Mannyng sought to reach. Although the *Scalacronica* does not appear to have influenced other medieval texts, what we know of the history of the manuscript seems to indicate that it continued to circulate in aristocratic society.[27] The surviving manuscript is a late fourteenth-century copy and possibly contemporary with the author. One of the ownership marks in it is a short poem and signature:

Si dieu plet
A moy cest livre partient
G. vst kyldare[28]

M.R. James suggests that this may be Gerald, 8th earl of Kildare, who succeeded to that title in 1477.[29] There is no reason to assume this, however, as many of the earls of Kildare were named Gerald, including Gerald fitz Morice who married Agnes Darcy, daughter of Elizabeth and Philip Darcy, before 18 November 1397.[30] The manuscript, therefore, probably passed from the author to his daughter, Elizabeth Darcy, and from her, whether directly or indirectly, to her own daughter, and hence into the family of the earls of Kildare. Either this Gerald fitz Morice, or any of the succeeding earls, may have inscribed the book with the ownership poem.[31] However the book came into the possession of the earls of Kildare, it remained in their library until at least 1525 when it was included in a library list.[32]

The *Scalacronica* has long been recognized as a work written in the chivalric mode and as such it precedes both Froissart and the Chandos Herald. Among works written in England, John Taylor claims that 'the *Scalacronica* is chivalrous history at its best and its most representative.'[33] Although there is no record of Gray's participating in tournaments personally, we may well assume that he is 'a knight into whom had been instilled the principles of the chivalric code.'[34] Sir Thomas Gray, like his father, was the warden of Norham castle and distinguished himself in military affairs, both on the Scottish border and on the continent.[35] It is, however, through Gray's extensive reading that we can best judge his participation in courtly culture.

Taylor describes Gray as 'no *littérateur*,'[36] but the *Scalacronica* reveals

that its author was a widely read man in touch with the tastes of his time. In addition to standard historical works, Gray also made use of material from various romance traditions. The chronicle contains a detailed account of the Trojan war which is drawn ultimately from Benoît de Saint Maure's *Roman de Troie*.[37] This is followed immediately by a description of the wanderings of Aeneas, drawn from the *Roman d'Eneas*.[38] Gray also makes extended use of romances dealing with Alexander the Great[39] and narratives of Scota, the eponymous founder of Scotland.[40] As we shall see, Gray also provides a detailed account of the Havelok story which attempts to harmonize several different versions of the tale.[41] In addition to this material, Gray's Arthurian narrative relies on a wide variety of historical and romance narratives including French lais and both verse and prose romances.[42]

The literary nature of Gray's enterprise is affirmed at the very beginning of the chronicle by the elaborate prologue which both outlines the purpose of the *Scalacronica* and describes its own creation. Writing in the third person, the chronicler prefers to keep his identity elusive: 'Et sy ne voet pas au plain nomer soun noune, qe cest cronicle translata de ryme en prose, mais prisoner estoit pris de guer al hour q'il comensa cest tretice.'[43] He does, however, provide his name in an acrostic poem.

Soit viij. ioynt apres xix,[nic]
Si mettez xij. apres xiiij.[me]
Vn & xviij. encountrez,
Soun propre noun ensauerez,
Vij. a xvij. v mettez,
Le primer vowel au tierce aioignez,
Soun droit surnoun entrouerez,
Solunc l'alphabet.[44]

Thus the author identifies himself as 'Thomas Grai.' He also tells us that 'il fust prisoner en le opidoun Mount Agneth, iadys Chastel de Pucelis, ore Edynburgh, surueist il liuers de cronicles en rymaiez et en prose, en Latin, en Frraunceis, & en Engles, de gestez dez auncestres, de quoi il se meruailla.'[45] Gray was, in fact, a prisoner at the time he began to compose the chronicle. As warden of Norham Castle in 1355, he spotted a Scottish raiding party, led by William of Ramsay, carrying booty back to Scotland. Leading a small force against the Scots, Gray and his companions were ambushed by William, lord of Douglas, and captured. John Fordun includes a record of the skirmish in his *Chronica Gentis Scotorum*,

refering to Gray as 'miles nobilis.'[46] According to this account, the English were surprised by the sight of Douglas's men, and 'fugere cum honore non valentes, animas suas in propriis manibus committebant, Scotos viriliter debellando.'[47] Andrew Wyntoun also describes the fight, and characterizes Gray as 'þis stout knycht Schir Thomas.'[48] When Gray spots the ambush he knights his son and encourages his men:

> Syne sayd he: 'Fallowis, we mon fycht;
> Forthy beis of gud comfort all;
> Lat nane repruf quhat euer befall.
> To fecht is mensk and schame to fle;
> Ilk man help oþer in neid,' quod he.[49]

Gray spent almost two years as a captive while waiting for his ransom to be paid. He spent his time well, however, and obviously had access to an impressive library. He found the history of Britain 'en escript en diuers liuers en Latin et en Romaunce,'[50] and, surprised at how little he had considered that history, Gray determined 'a treter & a translater en plus court sentence lez cronicles del Graunt Bretainge, et lez gestez des Englessez.'[51]

The chivalric nature of Gray's undertaking is emphasized by his representation of autobiographical details. The poem in which Gray hides his name in an acrostic also includes a description of his coat of arms. It begins by affirming his status as a knight:

> Se estoit del ordre enlumine de bons morez,
> As veues, as pucelis, et a saint eglise succours;
> Soun habite, sa droit vesture,
> Estoit autre tiel de colour,
> Com est ly chape du Cordeler,
> Teynt en tout tiel maner.
> Autre cote auoit afoebler,
> L'estat de soun ordre agarder,
> Qe de fieu resemble la colour;
> Et desus, en purturature,
> Estoit li hardy best quartyner
> Du signe teynt de la mere;
> Enviroun palice un mure,
> De meisme peynt la colour.[52]

As Stevenson states, '[t]he account which is here given of his armorial bearings is too indefinite to be reduced, with certainty, to the terms of modern heraldry,'[53] but it bears sufficient resemblance to the arms recorded for Sir Thomas Gray to be reconstructed: gules, a lion rampant, and a border engrailed argent.[54]

Gray identifies himself as a member of an order devoted to the protection of widows, maidens, and the Church. This is typical of discussions of the nature of knighthood, and it is offered, with only slight variation, by the Lady of Lake as she instructs Lancelot in a knight's obligations: 'il doit Sainte Eglize garantir et desfendre et maintenir. Ch'est li clergiés par quoi Sainte Eglize doit estre servie, et les veves femes et les orphenins.'[55] Gray may not be thinking of the Lady's speech in particular, but his vocabulary invokes an image of knighthood which is concerned with both military and religious affairs. The comparison of the colours in his heraldic device with the Franciscan habit not only invokes his own name, Gray, but it also emphasizes the parallels between the religious life and knighthood as a secular order.

This romance ideal is further emphasized by the very vocabulary Gray employs. His coat of arms is described not in the language of heraldry, but in the language of exploits and adventure. Gules (red) is the colour 'de fieu' while the lion rampant is 'li hardy best quartyner.' This image of knighthood, as represented by his coat of arms and as depicted in the obligations of the military order, is an ideal of courtly behaviour inspired

by romance conventions. Military service, of the sort performed by Gray on the Scottish borders, is only a small part of the self-image he presents.

If knighthood is depicted according to romance, rather than military, conventions, the description of his place of captivity also binds Gray not to contemporary military affairs along the Scottish marches, but to the golden age of chivalry surrounding Arthur's court. Gray does not simply state, as was the case, that he was held in Edinburgh Castle. Rather, he is held 'en le opidoun Mount Agneth, iadys Chastel de Pucelis, ore Edynburgh.'[56] Geoffrey of Monmouth, who provides 'Castellum Puellarum' as an alternative name for the 'oppidum montis Agned,'[57] does not associate the site with any particular city, but it was quickly identified as Edinburgh. In 1142 King David I began to use *Castellum Puellarum* as an official designation for Edinburgh in his charters. The title was also used by the authors of the Breton lai of *Doon* and the romance of *Fergus*.[58] By invoking this apparently ancient name for the city, Gray ties his literary project to the past through the very geography of his captivity. The Castle of Maidens also ties the *Scalacronica* directly to the chivalry of the Arthurian court. In prose romances it is the site of the great tournament at which Lancelot is reunited with Hector and his cousin Lionel. As Lancelot arrives at the castle 'li tornoiemens estoit ja tos pleniers, si i faisoit l'en de molt beles jostes et de molt perilloses.'[59] The romance tradition also associates the castle with captivity. In the *Queste*, Galahad frees the castle from seven brothers who imprison passing maidens. After it was prophesied that a single knight would defeat the brothers, one of them established the custom that 'ne passeroit il ja mais damoisele par devant cest chastel que il ne detenissent jusqu'a tant que li chevaliers vendroit par qui il seroient vencu. Si l'ont einsi fait jusques a ore, si a puis li chastiax esté apelez li Chastiax as Puceles.'[60] The Castle of Maidens also figures prominently in the Latin romance *De ortu Waluuanii*. In this adventure Gawain proves himself worthy of Arthur's court by freeing the Lady of the castle from her abductors.[61] As the site of one of the great tournaments recorded in the prose Vulgate, and a site associated with captivity, the Castle of Maidens resonates with both the *Scalacronica*'s chivalric atmosphere, and the captivity of its author.[62]

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

auys vn nuyt en dormaunt qe Sebile la sage ly surueint, et li dist q'el ly moustra voi a ceo q'il estoit en pense; et ly fust auys q'el ly amena en vn verger, ou encountre vn mure haut, sur vn peroun, trouerent vn eschel de v. bastouns adressez, et sur le peroun desoutz l'eschel ij. liuers au coste.'[63] With the introduction of the dream-vision, the *Scalacronica* connects itself to a long line of consolation literature. The *Scalacronica*'s allegorical prologue has its ultimate origins in Boethius's *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, but this was not necessarily Gray's immediate exemplar. Apart from the prologue, the text does not appear to show any first-hand familiarity with Boethius's work.[64] Like Boethius, Gray seeks instruction as a means of coping with captivity, but other chivalric figures, both historical and fictional, also wrote while imprisoned. In the prose Vulgate, for example, Lancelot spends his time painting the history of his love affair with Guenevere while imprisoned by Morgan le Fay. After Lancelot is captured by Morgan, he chances to see a man painting a mural. 'Il oevre la fenestre et voit leanz .I. home qui poingnoit .I. ancienne estoire et desus chascunne ymage avoit letres, si connoist que c'est l'estoire d'Eneas, comment il s'anfoui de Troie. Lors se porpense que se la chambre ou il gisoit estoit portraite de ses faiz et de ses diz, moult li plairoit a veoir les biaux contenemenz de sa dame et moult li seroit grant alegement de ses maux.'[65] Other knight prisoners who turned to writing include King James I of Scotland, who composed the *Kingis Quair* while held captive at the English court; Edward, duke of York, who translated *The Master of Game* while a prisoner as Pevensey Castle; Charles d'Orleans, whose writing career flourished while he was a captive in England from 1415 to 1440; and, of course, Sir Thomas Malory who identifies himself as a prisoner knight in the *Morte D'Arthur*.[66] The narrator of *The Wedding of Gawain and Dame Ragnell* also begs God to deliver him from sorror, 'Ffor he is be-sett with gaylours many, / That kepen hym fulle sewerly.'[67] Although Gray stands at the head of this list chronologically, it may be argued that Gray's decision to occupy his captivity in literary pursuits was based on an understanding of his role as a knight prisoner which was influenced by literary models. Just as Marmion and Sir Thomas Gray senior well understood the roles that they should play in the adventure of the helm, so the chronicler submits to a chivalric model which suggests that writing is a suitably ennobling pastime for a captive knight.

Gray thus uses both his location and his captivity to emphasize the chivalric nature of his narrative. His choice of a guide through his dream vision is also appropriate for his historical undertaking. It is not Boethius's Lady Philosophy who comes to instruct the captive knight, but the Sibyl,

a figure who held an important place in the prophetic literature of the Middle Ages. Sibylline prophecy claimed to predict the birth of Christ, and as such it 'met a widely felt need for a bridge between Christian and pagan revelation.'[68] The revelation of prophecy not only provided clues to the prognostication of the future, but made possible the understanding of any distant knowledge, including the distant past. Historical knowledge, therefore, from the story of creation to an account of Arthurian Britain, was as much a product of prophetic revelation as the writings of Merlin or Thomas of Ercildoun. Thus Richard Southern argues that prophecy 'was the chief inspiration of all historical thinking,'[69] and by invoking the Sibyl, Gray makes explicit the link between the historical and the prophetic.[70] The poem which hides the author's identity in a letter puzzle may indicate Gray's familiarity with the elaborate acrostic poems common in Sibylline prophecy.[71]

Having thus established the appropriateness of his place, and of his guide, Gray completes the prologue with a description of the chronicle's goals and sources. As previously mentioned, the dreamer and his guide approach a wall against which rests a ladder. The legs of the ladder rest on two books: '"Moun amy," ceo disoit la veil Sebile, "veiez cy sen et foly, le primer liuer la bible, le secounde la gest de Troy, queux ne greuerount a toun purpos a surueoir."'[72] Gray's ladder of history rests on a foundation of both the ecclesiastical and the secular past, as the Bible and the 'gest de Troy' combine to tell the history of European Christendom. The Sibyl encourages Gray to see in these sources both the 'sen et foly' in history. Francis Ingledew argues that Gray's image 'evidences the ambivalence the issue of Troy could provoke when the Sibyl describes the Trojan scripture as a story of "foly" and opposes it to the "sen" of the Bible.'[73] Likewise, Lee Patterson implies that 'sen' modifies 'la bible,' while 'foly' modifies 'la gest de Troy,' and that they should be translated as truth and falsehood respectively: 'And in his *Scalacronica* ... Sir Thomas Gray began with a vision of the ladder of history resting upon two books, the Bible and "la gest de Troy." But once having established this familiar equivalence, Sir Thomas hastily revised it: according to the Sibyl who is his guide, "veiez cy sen et foly, le primer livre la bible, le secounde la gest de Troy."'[74] Gray, however, is not opposing the two texts, as both Ingledew and Patterson assume. History, as represented by the ladder, rests on both books, and both books contain examples not of truth and falsehood, but of wisdom and folly. Hence both books (notice the plural 'queux' in the clause omitted by both critics) will prove useful in Gray's historiographic task. This is, in fact, a common theme of prologues and

prefaces to medieval chronicles. Mannyng, for example, claims 'And gude it is for many thynges / for to here þe dedis of kynges, / whilk were foles & whilk were wyse.'[75] The image of the ladder, therefore, encourages Gray to view history as a collection of exempla, some of which are to be followed, others to be avoided.

The ladder itself has five rungs. The dreamer begins to climb the ladder and as he steps on each rung he is able to see a different chronicler at work. As he steps on the first rung he sees 'escriuaunt vn mestre': '"Beaux amy," ceo dist Sebille, "veez ycy Gauter erchedeken de Excestre, qe le Brut traunslata de Bretoun en Latin par ditz de Keile & de Gildas, de ditz de qi poez auoir ensampler com de le Bruyte, lez gestz de Bretouns, le primer liuer de croniclis de cest isle."'[76] As Gray continues to climb the ladder he sees three other chroniclers: Bede, the monk of Chester who wrote the *Polychronicon* (that is, Ranulph Higden), and the vicar of Tilmouth who wrote the *Historia Aurea*.[77] Gray is not allowed to step on the final rung, 'qar il signify lez auenementz futurs,'[78] and the Sibyl recommends that he read divines, particularly the work of Thomas of Otterburne,[79] to learn of future events.

Walter of Exeter is in error for Walter, archdeacon of Oxford, whom Gray correctly identifies later in the chronicle.[80] The name is a veiled reference to Geoffrey of Monmouth and the Brut tradition. Geoffrey claimed that 'Walterus Oxinefordensis archidiaconus, vir in oratoria arte atque in exoticis historiis eruditus, quendam Britannici sermonis librum uetustissimum ... proponebat.'[81] There seems to be a small tradition of referring to Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia* by referring only to this Walter. Geffrei Gaimar, in the epilogue to his *Estoire des Engleis* (c. 1135–40), claims that he had access to 'Le bon livere de Oxeford / Ki fust Walter l'arcediaen.'[82] An anonymous translator of the *Historia* into English also identifies Walter as the author of the work.[83] The other sources for the history of British kings are also obscure. Gildas's reputation as a historian expanded throughout the later Middle Ages and far surpassed the meagre historical information provided by the *De Excidio*. Geoffrey's *Historia* cites Gildas on several occasions, and Gray himself refers to him as an authority on the story of Albina and her sisters.[84] In all likelihood, however, Gray is reacting to Gildas's name and reputation rather than to any particular text. The work of Keile is also based on a mistaken identity. Stevenson suggests that 'we are probably to understand the work of Walter Calenius, the individual archdeacon of Oxford referred to.'[85] This seems unlikely, however, since everything Gray knows about Walter of Oxford probably comes from the prologue to Geoffrey's work,

which does not mention the surname Calenius. It is also probable that Keile is the same figure whom, with the spelling 'Quyle,' Gray lists along with Merlin and the Sibyl as divines who predict the eventual return of British rule.[86]

Having instructed Gray on the sources he should use to compile his chronicle, the Sibyl tells him to name it the *Scalacronica*. The name obviously evokes the central image of the dream vision, the ladder of history. John Leland, in his paraphrase of the text, speculates that the title may have a more personal meaning. In identifying the author he writes, 'I gesse, that one of the Greys of Northumbreland was autor of it by the imagination of the dreame that he showith of a ladder yn the prologe. The Grayes give a lader in their armes.'[87] Although there is no record of Thomas Gray bearing a ladder in his coat of arms, by the reign of Henry V his descendants were wearing gules, a lion rampant azure, a border engrailed of the last, with a crest of a scaling ladder argent (that is, a silver lion rampant on a red field, encircled by a waving border, with a gold ladder mounted on top).[88] This is essentially the coat of arms described by Gray in his prologue with the addition of the ladder crest. It is possible that the crest was added later in reaction to the composition of the *Scalacronica*, but this is by no means a necessary conclusion. Although crests were worn throughout the fourteenth century, the recording of crests was sporadic before the fifteenth century. Thomas Gray, therefore, may have included a crest in his heraldic device which was simply not recorded.

The prologue of the *Scalacronica* thus describes the creation of the text and the four authorities from which Gray draws the four *livers* of his own history. Although the division into four books is not visually represented in the manuscript,[89] Gray does repeat this scheme again before beginning his account of the Trojan war: 'Hom doit sauoi qe cest cronicle est contenu en qatre liuers. Le primer est le Bruyt du primer venu de Brutus tanqe le temps Cadwaladre, le darayn Roy dez Bretouns. Le secound liuer est de lez gestes dez Saxouns ...'[90] Gray even refers to the scheme at the end of the Arthurian section of the chronicle, saying that he will return to the question of reliable sources 'en la fine du darain chapitre de cest Bruyt, procheigne deuaunt le lyuer de gestis Anglorum.'[91] Despite the repetition of this simple scheme, Gray's method is much more complex. The chronological framework for Gray's Brut section is not a version of Geoffrey of Monmouth, as suggested by the reference to Walter of Oxford, but the short version of Higden's *Polychronicon*.[92] Gray paraphrases Higden's text, paying particular attention to details relating

to England, but he makes use of more extended narratives outside Higden to treat material which is of special interest to him. As noted above, Gray relies on romances of Troy and Aeneas early in the chronicle and he borrows from the Anglo-Norman *Brut* for his account of Havelok. Gray was also unsatisfied with the Arthurian history provided by Higden, and he turns to several sources, including both chronicles and romances, to create a composite history of Arthurian Britain.

Arthur and the Chivalric Past

Gray's Arthurian narrative is basically that found in the Brut tradition. Although Gray knew the Anglo-Norman prose *Brut* and used it later in his own chronicle, it does not exercise much influence on the Arthurian section.[93] Instead, Gray's Arthurian history is drawn from several chronicle sources, principally Wace's *Roman de Brut* and the vulgate version of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia*. The two texts are mixed freely, and neither version has priority. The speech delivered by Dubricius before the battle of Bath, for example, seems to be drawn from Geoffrey of Monmouth,[94] as is the list of knights present at the Pentecost tournament.[95] On the other hand, Gray agrees only with Wace when he states that the returning Saxons ravaged 'Somerset et Dorset,'[96] and his description of Mordred's treachery echoes Wace's account.[97] Although Gray states that Guenevere's father, the king of Briscay, had established the Round Table,[98] he still follows Wace when he explains its shape. Each of the king's knights was so excellent that they were equal to kings, and 'pur ceo fit il sa table round, qe nul seast plus haut d'autre.'[99] In Wace, Arthur institutes the Round Table to establish equality among his own knights so that 'Nuls d'els ne se poeit vanter / Qu'il seïst plus halt de sun per.'[100] In general, however, Gray's method of paraphrasing his sources does not allow the reader to determine which source he is following, and his integration of the two chronicles is virtually seamless.

Proper names, especially those of minor characters, are often confused. Thus when Gray describes Arthur's generosity following the conquest of France he states that 'a Borel dona il Le Maine & le pays de Auinoun, a Cosdyn dona il Burgoin,'[101] which translates Wace's 'Le Mans a Borel sun cusin, / Buluine duna a Ligier.'[102] Gray also has a fondness for locating major events according to contemporary nomenclature. Arthur's first battle is at the river Douglas 'qe ore est apel le Done,'[103] and after the defeat of the Saxons Cerdic flees to Calidon wood, 'ou pris est ore Barlinges.'[104] These brief asides, which may be

drawn from local tradition rather than any written source, emphasize the fact that Arthurian history and chivalry were performed across the landscape of (northern) Britain and, similar to his use of the site of his captivity, bring the deeds of the past closer to his contemporary readers. Gray's conception of that past, however, is not based on historical works alone, and several romance narratives and conventions find their way into his Arthurian history.

Gray deals with romance conventions freely, referring to individual romances and to common romance motifs. Like Wace and Mannyng, Gray discusses the two distinct periods of peace in which marvellous adventures happened to Arthur's knights. The first twelve-year period follows the establishment of the Round Table: 'En quel temps apparust en bretaigne tauntz dez chos fayez, qe a meruail, de quoy sourdi les grauntz auentures qe sount recordez de la court Arthur. Com cely q'auiot delit de oyer de chevaleries q'en auindrent en acomplicement, de les et de lez fair meismes, com plus playnement oyer pust hom en le graunt estoir de ly!'[105] The 'chos fayez' that Gray refers to are available to his audience as written texts, just as Mannyng indicated that deeds of Arthur's knights were recorded in 'ryme.'[106] Gray also agrees with Mannyng, who said that all Arthurian literature could 'to gode laid,'[107] when he implies that listening to these tales of wonders helps to inspire the listener to similar feats.

Gray then outlines several romance motifs as he describes the type of story to which he is referring: 'Hom dit qe Arthur ne seoit ia a manger deuaunt q'il auoit nouels estrangers. Hom le pooit bien dire, qar taunt venoient espessement, qe a payn estoint tenuz estraungers.'[108] Like Mannyng, Gray also implies that it is the young bachelor who participates in adventures when he makes reference to another typical romance motif: 'Lez iuuenceaux qi queroient la viaunde de la cosyne alafoitz trouerent tiel auenture entre la sale et la cosyne qe, deuaunt acomplicement de eles, ils qestoient saunz barbes, lez auoint parcruez, et bons cheualeres estoint deuenuz deuaunt lour reuenu.'[109] Gray's conception of these adventures is in accordance with romance conventions. Arthur's refusal to eat before he sees or is told a wonder is a common literary motif which appears in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*[110] and elsewhere.[111] The convention, however, is not merely a literary artifact. Gray's own account of the adventure of William Marmion and van Veltham's account of Edward I's tournament, both of which include meals which are interrupted by adventures, demonstrate the use to

which the convention could be put in contemporary courtly society. The serving squire who becomes a great knight is also the stock in trade of the 'fair unknown' story. Gray's rather vague reference to a source, which amounts to popular report ('Hom dit qe'), along with his use of the phrase 'chos fayes,' implies that he does not take these narratives too seriously as historical records. The inclusion of the material, however, clearly sets the origins of these chivalric models in the Arthurian past. Contemporary knights and ladies who participate in tournaments and adventures modelled on romance literature are therefore placed within a tradition going back to the golden age of British chivalry.

The second period of peace is treated rather differently. After the defeat of Frollo, Gray includes a romance style adventure in which Arthur encounters the giant Rinin. During the nine years of peace the giant sends messengers demanding that Arthur shave his beard and send it to him so that it might be added to his cloak 'q'il auoit fait dez barbes d'autres Roys q'il auoit conquys.'[112] Instead of delivering his beard, Arthur agrees on a time and a place for single combat and defeats the giant, thus saving his honour and his beard.[113] The story is drawn from Wace, or possibly directly from Geoffrey. As in those accounts, Rinin is 'vn geaunt dez mountayns de Aramim,'[114] but Arthur's encounter with the giant does not happen during the nine years of peace in either of Gray's sources. In these earlier chronicles the story is told after Arthur has defeated the giant of St Michael's Mount. Arthur comments that he has fought no stronger opponent except for the giant Rithon, who gathered the beards of his enemies, and he briefly describes the adventure.[115] The fight with the giant of St Michael's Mount takes place at the outset of the Roman campaign and thus follows the second period of peace, but Arthur does not say when he fought with Rithon. The story is also found outside of chronicles as it was included by Jacques de Longuyon in the Alexandrian romance *Les Voeux du Paon*. Jacques pauses from the action of the poem to include an account of the Nine Worthies with Arthur among them:

D'Artus qui tint Bretainge va le bruit tertoingnant
Que il mata Ruiston .j. jaiant en plain champ,
Qui tant par estoit fort, fier et outrecuidant
Que de barbes a roys fist faire .i. vestemany,
Liquel roy li estoient par force obeïssant;
Si volt avoir l'Artus, mais il i fu faillant![116]

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

> Then Roystone þe riche kyng, full rakill of his werkes,
> He made a blyot to his bride of berdes of kynges,
> And aughtilde Sir Arthures berde one scholde be;
> Bot Arthure oure athell kynge anoþer he thynkes,
> And faughte with hym in the felde till he was fey worthen.[117]

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

Gray's source for this episode may simply be either Wace or Geoffrey, but he has rearranged his material to fit the demands of his text. Faced with another period of peace in which adventures occurred, Gray looks for an enterprise to include, but one which is already part of the chronicle tradition. The Rithon story, complete with monstrous giant and single combat, is a near perfect fit. Gray does adapt the narrative to provide the story with an appropriate setting. Rinin is not only a giant, but also a king whom they encounter in 'haut Saicsne,'[118] and after the defeat of the giant Arthur has his beard carried back to his army as a trophy.[119] The scene has also taken on new meaning in the context of Arthur's first continental campaign. By claiming Rinin's beard, the symbol of tribute, Arthur asserts his own sovereignty over his European foe. The battle for beards, there-fore, is transformed from a romance interlude into a serious episode which emphasizes Arthur's own authority over newly conquered lands.

The second period of peace is also an appropriate setting for Arthur's knights to engage in chivalric pursuits. While Arthur 'demure hors de Bretaigne ix. aunz'[120] he holds several courts at which he rewards his followers: 'Il reguerdona touz qe bien ly auoint seruy, qe trope serroit a tout counter, et de touz ses auentures la maner, qe plusours ly auindrent, qe ne sount pas en cest recountez.'[121] Here, however, Gray focuses on conventional deeds performed in tournaments: 'Arthur teint graunt court ou graunt mervailles en avyndrent, qe nul temps solaient faire, qe bien plust au Roy. De queux Gauwayn s'entremist fortement, qe tresseouent tres bien ly auenit, com recorde est en sez estoirs.'[122] The marvels alluded to here seem to be nothing more than exemplary feats

of arms performed at court. This description actually accords well with events in both Geoffrey and Wace, in which a tournament follows the period of peace, and Gray's description does not represent a major addition.[123] Like Mannyng, however, Gray does allude to an 'estoir' which contains a full account of the court's continental exploits.

Despite Gray's refusal to include these tales in the *Scalacronica*, his version of Arthurian history is infused with a chivalric mood through the constant references to courtly activity. These include details drawn from Wace, such as the Pentecost tournament where the knights participate in sports and jousts while 'Lez dames furount as kirnels, qe graunt deduyt y ont le iour.'[124] Other details are also introduced by Gray himself. Immediately before Arthur's army sets out against Lucius, Gray pauses to comment on the chivalric conduct of Arthur's court. 'En le temps Arthur,' says Gray, 'auindrent maintz meruaillis de enchauntementz & chos fayez.'[125] The peace of Arthur's kingdom, he argues, allowed each knight to desire nothing 'fors a cheualery, qe chescun s'ensocilla a fair chos desconuz, qe portasent renome.'[126] Through these deeds a knight not only gained rewards of gold and gems, but he also could prove his virtue, 'et pur ceo furount appellez lez cheualers errauntz.'[127] Gray singles out Gawain for special praise, but Arthur is also the model of a chivalric knight: 'L'estoir deuise qe Arthur estoit beaux, amyable & bien formiz.'[128] The passage, which is largely conventional, continues in the same vein, following Wace's description of Arthur's attributes.[129] At the establishment of the Round Table, however, Gray adds that Arthur was also comfortable as the leader of a chivalric court: 'il daunsa, chaunta, iousta & tournya, festia lez dames.'[130]

Courtly activity is not reserved for times of peace, and even after the defeat of Lucius, Arthur sojourns in Burgundy for the winter before marching on Rome itself: 'En quel soiourn il tenit court real de la table round, ou auindrent graunt auentures, qe acomplis furount des cheualers erraunz, ou Gawayn s'entremist fortement.'[131] Gray's only statement praising a purely military form of chivalry comes during his account of the first battle between Arthur and the Romans. The battle is unexpected and only mounted knights are able to reach the field in time: 'Se entre attasserent, qe a plus bele tourney n'estoit vnqes vieu, qar nuls n'estoit fors chiualer & esquier, saunze archier ou petouns.'[132] Not surprisingly, Gray's concept of nobility is intimately tied to the military order with which he identifies. Chivalric conduct throughout the *Scalacronica*, whether in the court or on the field, is the purview of

aristocratic society. In his Arthurian history Gray creates both a courtly and a military model for knights, like William Marmion, who were the contemporary 'cheualers erraunz.'

Gray's reliance on romance convention and mood is not, however, restricted to vague allusions to literary motifs and chivalric behaviour. Unlike the chroniclers discussed in the previous chapter, Gray makes extended use of both prose and verse romance material even while claiming that he cannot include it. Gray makes direct use of only one verse romance when he inserts the story of Caradoc's mantle into the *Scalacronica* following the challenge from Rome. After Arthur sends the senators back to Rome, 'Meisme la nuyt estoit enuoie en la court od vn damoysele iolyue le mauntil Karodes.'[133] The story of Caradoc's mantle was widely known in the Middle Ages. It is found in a French *lai*, and in both Norse and Icelandic sagas; it was translated into English, German, and Czech. Variants of the story also figure in larger romances, such as the German *Lanzelet*, the *Percival* continuations, and in the Welsh triads.[134] The version of the story in the *Scalacronica* does not seem to be drawn from any single source, although there are slight verbal similarities with the French *Lai du Cort Mantel*.[135] In the *Lai*, Arthur refuses to eat until he has seen some adventure. The table is set,

> mes au roi Artus n'est pas bel
> quẽ il ja menjast ne beũst,
> por ce que haute feste fust,
> ne que ja nus s'i aseïst,
> desi quẽ a la cort venist
> aucune aventure nouele.[136]

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

> La dame qui l'ait afublé
> se elẽ a de rien meserré
> vers son bon seignor, s'ele l'a,
> li manteaus bien ne li serra.
> Et de puceles autresi:
> cele qui vers son bon ami
> avra mespris en nul endroit,
> ja puis ne li serra a droit,
> qu'il ne soit trop lonc ou trop cort.[137]

The test then proceeds as might be expected, with each lady of the court revealing her indiscretions.

In Gray's account, the description of the mantle and the test itself are both radically abbreviated. In the *Scalacronica* the mantle is brought to the court: 'qe out tiel vertu qe il ne voroit estre de droit mesure a nul femme qe vousait lesser sauoir a soun marry soun fet & pense. De quoi en out graunt rise, qar y ny out feme nul en la court a qei le mauntil estoit de mesure: ou q'il estoit trop court, ou trop long, ou trop estroit outre mesure, fors soulement al espous Karodes.'[138] The test, according to Gray, is contrived by the father of Caradoc, in order to prove the faithfulness of his son's wife.[139] This fact seems to be drawn from the first *Perceval* continuation which contains a similar test involving Caradoc.[140] In the end, the mantle is deposited in Glastonbury where it is made into a priest's robes: 'de meisme le mauntel fust fet vn chesible puscedy, com est dit, qe vnqor est a iour de huy a Glastenbery.'[141]

The abbreviated description of the adventure, which has similarities with several surviving versions of the tale, may suggest that Gray is writing from memory and not from a written source. His authority for the role of Caradoc's father is popular report ('com fust dit'), and he relies on the same authority for the location of the mantle ('com est dit'). There seems to have been a tradition which placed the mantle in Glastonbury, and the author of the Auchinleck version of the *Short Metrical Chronicle* makes the same claim. In that text, Arthur and Lancelot have met at Glastonbury:

> A messanger to þat fest was come
> Þat het Cradoc Craybonis sone
> He hadde a mantle wiþ him brouȝt
> To no cokkewold wiif nas it nouȝt
> Who so wil to Glastingesbiri gon ariȝt
> Þat mantle he mai se wele ydiȝt.[142]

It is not difficult to understand why Glastonbury became associated with the mantle. The *Lai* simply claims that it is '[e]n Gales, en une abaïe,'[143] and Glastonbury already had significant Arthurian associations. Another cloak within Arthurian tradition was also made into a chasuble, and may account for this unique feature in Gray's version of the story. In Beroul's *Tristan* Iseut goes to the church of St Samson in Cornwall after her reconciliation with Mark. Dinas gives her 'Un riche paile fait d'orfrois.'[144]

> Et la roïne Yseut l'a pris
> Et, par buen cuer, sor l'autel mis.

Une chasublē en fu faite,
Qui ja du tresor n'iert hors traite
Se as grans festes anvés non.
Encore est ele a Saint Sanson:
Ce dīent cil qui l'ont veüe.[145]

Gray's chasuble at Glastonbury may be his own invention, or a tradition may have developed in imitation of the St Samson robe, but by the fifteenth century the mantle was believed to be at Dover, as both Caxton and Raimon de Perillos attest.[146]

Gray's mantle episode may be derived from several sources, but in the *Scalacronica* it is a unified interpretive guide. In the French *Lai* the story borders on the fabliaux, as Kay comments in a bawdy fashion on the sins of the ladies who cannot wear the cloak. As such, the *Lai* is a humorous narrative which highlights the foibles of courtly society, and particularly the conventions of *fin amour*. The joke is not simply at the expense of Arthur and his court, but the many courts to which the valet has brought the mantle. The warning which ends the poem, that the mantle has been found and is again travelling throughout the land, is aimed not at the past, but at the present.[147] In this context of courtly dalliance it is easy to read Guenevere's own failure to wear the mantle as a comment on her affair with Lancelot. Certainly the author of the Auchinleck *Short Metrical Chronicle* understands the tale in this light. There, when Caradoc arrives with the mantle, he interrupts the Round Table at which Arthur and Lancelot are to be reconciled. Gray's version of the tale, however, is not set within such a context and this affects the interpretation of the episode. Although Guenevere is not mentioned by name during Gray's mantle episode, the position of the story highlights her infidelity over all others. The mantle arrives, it will be remembered, after the challenge from Rome has been delivered, but before Arthur and his knights embark on the campaign. Before leaving Britain, 'Le roy bailla a Mordret, soun neuew, soun realm et sa femme Genoire a garder, com en qy il se bien assoit, de quoy enauenit graunt mal.'[148] The mantle story, placed in the middle of the preparations for the Roman campaign, must be read as a warning of the consequences of that campaign. Guenevere's infidelity is not, in this context, an occasion for polite dalliance, but it is a serious breach of trust between the king and queen, a breach of oaths between Mordred and his uncle and lord. Although Arthur and his knights find only humour in the adventure ('De quoi en out graunt rise'), the message of the mantle in this historical setting is one of betrayal and impending disaster.

The episodes that Gray draws from the cycles of prose romances have a similar interpretive purpose. Prose Arthurian romances first appear in Gray's chronicle immediately following the death of Uther. In the account found in Geoffrey and Wace, Arthur is immediately chosen king after his father's death, but in the *Scalacronica* the barons resist Arthur's coronation because of the mystery surrounding his conception: 'vnqor lez grauntz du realme enauoit dout, pur ceo qe le temps de soun neisement estoit trop pres la solempnete du matremoin le Roy, & pur ceo qe l'auenture n'estoit pas discouert pur l'onour la royne, viuaunt le roy.'[149] Arthur is therefore compelled to prove his heredity and his right to the throne. As in the prose *Merlin,* the test of kingship is the sword in the stone, and Gray is the first author to include the episode in a historical work. Dubricius says the mass while the barons attempt to settle the question of succession. Those leaving the monastery discover the stone: 'issu de monster, cum tesmon ascun cronicle, ils trouerent vn graunt peroun adresse al huis del eglise, & dedenz fiche vn espey clere od letres eneymalez desus, qe disoit, "Escaliburne ay a noun. Qi me ostera du peroun serra Roys de Bretaign."'[150] Gray's description of the tournament which follows reduces that found in the prose *Merlin*; he omits all mention of Kay, and a lengthy sermon delivered by Dubricius is also excised. Verbal similarities between the account found in the *Scalacronica* and in the prose *Merlin* are indeed loose, but they do indicate that the scene is ultimately based on the French romance. The *Merlin* reads: 'qui sen issirent hors del monstier ou il ot vne place wide & il fu adiourne si virent j. perron deuaunt le monstier si ne porent onques sauoir de quel piere cestoit & ou milieu de cel piere auoit vne englume de fer.'[151] In the *Merlin* Dubricius is called to see the sword in the stone. He discovers that it has writing on it, but unlike the *Scalacronica*, here the writing is only reported, not quoted: 'si disoient les letres que cil qui osteroit ceste espee seroit rois de la terre par l'ection ihesu crist.'[152] The sword is named in the *Merlin*, but only later, as Arthur battles against his rebellious subjects. As Arthur fights with the sword from the stone it glows like burning torches and 'les lettres qui estoient escrites en l'espee disoient qu'ele auoit non Escalibor.'[153] In Gray's account, each of the 'seignours et chiualers' attempt to draw the sword, but only Arthur, who 'soun primer enarmer estoit,' is able to pull it free.[154] The young knights continue to murmur until 'fust descouert de Vrsyne la maner de soun naisement.'[155] Ursyne's final intervention is found in the *Merlin*, but not in either Wace or Geoffrey.[156] The memory of Ursyne, who was present at Uther's seduction of Igerne, confirms the legitimacy of Arthur and serves to reinforce the miracle of the sword in the stone.

Material drawn from prose romances does not appear again in Gray's account until the end of Arthur's reign. In the Brut tradition Gawain dies in the first battle, fighting against the traitor Mordred, but according to the Vulgate cycle's *La Mort le Roi Artu*, Gawain dies immediately before this battle as a result of wounds caused by Lancelot. As Gawain languishes in bed before the battle, he calls Arthur to him to say his last goodbyes and the king asks if Lancelot has killed him: 'Sir, oïl, par la plaie qu'il me fist el chief, et si en fusse ge touz gueriz, mes li Romain la me renouvelerent en la bataille.'[157] In the Brut tradition, however, there is no Lancelot, and Gawain is not wounded seeking revenge for the deaths of his brothers. In Gray's account the two versions are mixed. Gawain does not fight against Lancelot, but he does receive a head wound in the final battle against Rome. Bedivere, Kay, Heldyn, and Ginchars are listed among the dead, and with them 'Gawayn nawferez malement.'[158] The list of the dead is drawn from Wace, but neither Wace nor Geoffrey mentions Gawain at this point.[159] The wound to Gawain, however, makes possible his death, which, although reminiscent of his death in the Vulgate *La Mort le Roi Artu*, comes after the first battle against Mordred, 'ou Angusel de Escoce fust mort & Gawain ly vaillaunt, com fust dist, de vn auyroun desus la coste de la test, qe ly creuast la play, q'il out receu a la batail ou l'emperour fust mort, q'estoit sursane.'[160] In the post-Vulgate *Mort* Gawain dies on the English side of the channel, but a closer analogue to this scene is found in the Middle English stanzaic *Morte Arthur*. The poem is set in the romance tradition, and Gawain receives a head wound during his combat with Lancelot. Even so, his death in the stanzaic poem bears a striking resemblance to the *Scalacronica*. It occurs during the battle against Mordred:

Syr Gawane armyd hym in that stounde;
   Allas! to longe hys hede was bare;
he was seke and sore vnsond;
   hys woundis greuyd hym full sare;
One hytte hym vpon the olde wounde
   With a tronchon of an ore;
There is good Gawayne gone to grounde,
   That speche spake he neuyr more.[161]

The stanzaic *Morte* was written shortly after the *Scalacronica*, but it is unlikely that it borrows from Gray's account. It seems more probable that both texts ultimately rely on the early French prose romance now

known as the Didot-*Perceval.* The romance ends with a brief *Morte Arthur* which draws heavily on the Brut tradition. As Arthur returns to Britain, Gawain leads a flotilla with twenty thousand men against his brother, Mordred. The so-called Didot manuscript merely mentions that Gawain died in the battle, but the Modena manuscript provides more details: 'Et saciés que a Gavain i meschaï, car il n'avoit pas son hiaume lacié, et uns Saisnes tenoit un aviron et en feri Gavain el cief et l'abati mort.'[162] The peculiar detail of the oar, which brings an abrupt and uncourtly end to Gawain's life, indicates some sort of textual relationship between the three texts. Of the three, only the *Scalacronica* makes claims to historical veracity, but at this point, as Gray departs from the Brut tradition, he signals his reliance on a romance source by undercutting the authority of the borrowed details. Gray records the story 'com fust dist,' thus emphasizing its oral and ephemeral nature, and opposing it to the textual authority of the Brut.

Gray's emphasis on the head wound suffered by Gawain may also be responsible for his relocation of the final battle 'au port de Douyre.'[163] Both Wace and Geoffrey state that Arthur landed at Richborough upon his return to Britain, but Gray follows the Vulgate *Mort* which claims that he landed 'souz le chastel de Douvre.'[164] Gray goes even further and claims that after the battle Arthur remained at Dover 'tanqe il auoist fest enterrer Gawayn & Angusel.'[165] In the later Middle Ages, Gawain's skull was preserved at Dover, and both William Caxton and Raimon de Perillos mention the item.[166] Thomas Malory also describes Gawain's burial at Dover, and he claims that the skull still showed evidence of the head wound: 'and thenne the kynge lete entiere hym in a chappel within Dover Castel. And there yet alle men maye see the sculle of hym, and the same wound is sene that Syr Launcelot gaf hym in bataill.'[167] There is no reference to the relic as early as the fourteenth century, but if a skull was preserved at Dover, and if it did have a wound at the time Gray wrote, his alterations to the Vulgate episode bring the artefact in line with the Brut.

The largest borrowing from prose romance, however, comes at Arthur's own death. As is typical of both romances and histories, Arthur is mortally wounded while fighting Mordred. The *Scalacronica*, however, includes several peculiar scenes involving Yvain. The hero of Chrétien's romance normally plays a very small role in the Brut tradition. After the death of Angusel, Yvain, son of Urien, is crowned king of Scotland and gains renown in the final battle, but neither Wace nor Geoffrey give details of Yvain's actions.[168] In the Vulgate *Mort,* Yvain is one of the last surviving major characters and he performs numerous feats in the final

battle before being killed as he helps Arthur remount.[169] The final battle
in Gray's account follows Geoffrey of Monmouth, but the role of Yvain
has been significantly augmented: 'Hiwain se payna molt de bien fair.
Arasa le baner Mordret, le presenta au Roy ... Hiwain se aforsa taunt qe
Mordret fist murriere, qe ly monstra a Roi, qi le fist decoler et enporter
la test sur vn launce parmy la batail, purponaunt qe la melle serroist tost
finy del hour qe le cheuetaigne fust confoundu.'[170] Instead of fleeing,
however, Mordred's army fights more boldly after the death of their
leader: 'Mais la parti Mordret ne enpristrent gard, mes recomencerent si
cruelment qe, de toutez lez melles ou Arthur auoit este, n'estoit vnqes en
tiel fraiour, que deuaunt q'il lez auoit descoumfist, auoit perdu la flore
de sa cheualery, apoy touz ceaux de la table round qi illoqes estoit, et la
iuuent de bretaigne, par queux il auoit sez victoirs.'[171] The passage is a
skilful mingling of Geoffrey, who does not moralize, with Wace, who does
not describe the battle. Thus the rally of Mordred's troops is drawn from
the *Historia*: 'nec tamen ob causum eius diffugiunt certi sed ex omni
campo confluentes quantum audacia dabatur resistere conantur,'[172] while
the lament for the loss of Arthur's knights comes from the *Roman de Brut*:

> Dunc peri la bele juvente
> Que Arthur aveit grant nurrie
> E de plusurs terres cullie,
> E cil de la Table Roünde
> Dunt tiel los ert par tut le munde.[173]

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

Even as this passage uses Geoffrey and Wace, it departs from those
sources by expanding the role of Yvain. Yvain's prominence in the

Scalacronica does not end with the final battle. In both Wace and Geoffrey, Arthur travels alone to the Isle of Avalon after the final battle in order to heal his wounds. In Gray's account Arthur leaves the field 'et, od Hiwayn soulement, se trey en l'ile de Aualon.'[174] Once there, 'com ascuns cronicles tesmoignaunt, comanda Hiwayn aler a la lay pur veoir s'il poait aparceyuoir ascun rien, et qe il portast Askaliburn soun espey et le gestat en la lay. Qi ly reuenit dysaunt q'il auoit aparsu vn bras braundisaunt meisme l'espy amount l'eaw, dedenz la ryuer.'[175] The scene, so well known to modern readers, is not part of the Brut tradition, but is ultimately drawn from the Vulgate *Mort*. In the prose romance it is Griflet who travels from the field with Arthur and, after failing to follow Arthur's orders twice, finally throws the sword into the water where 'il vit une main qui issi del lac et aparoit jusqu'au coute, mes del cors dont la mein estoit ne vit il point; et la mein prist l'espee parmi le heut et la commença a branler trois foiz ou quatre contremont.'[176] When Gray's Yvain returns with the news, Arthur asks to be taken to the shore where the sword disappeared. Yvain travels with the king to the shore where 'ils aparceurent vn batew venaunt fortement ou ils estrurent, ou estoit vn veille femme au gouernail et autres .ij. femmes a ministres le batel.'[177] Arthur commends Yvain to God and boards the boat, never to be seen again.

Yvain's various roles in the final events of Arthur's reign are significant alterations to the Brut tradition which do not have a known source. Other texts, however, do share some aspects of Gray's narrative. The decapitation of Mordred was first described by Henry of Huntingdon in his *Epistola ad Warinum*.[178] In this précis of Geoffrey's *Historia*, written only one year after Geoffrey completed the text, Henry gives an unusual account of Mordred's death. After chasing Mordred, Arthur finally catches him in Cornwall and 'dixit "Vendamus socii mortes nostras. Ego enim iam caput nepotis et proditoris mei gladio auferam. Post quod mori deliciosum est." Dixit. Et gladio per aciem uiam sibi parans in medio suorum Modredum galea arripuit, et collum loricatum uelut stipulam gladio resecauit.'[179] Robert of Gloucester also describes Mordred's decapitation and Arthur's speech to his army. After the death of many of his knights, Arthur addresses his men:

To þe lutel folc þat he adde he spac atte laste.
'Sulle we,' he sede, 'vre lif dere ar we be ded
& icholle sulle min dere ynou, wanne þer nis oþer red.
Habbe iche aslawe þe false suike, þe luþer traytour,

Hit worþ me þanne vor to deye gret ioye & honour.'
He drou calibourne is suerd & in eyþer side slou
& vorte he to þe traytour com mad him wey god ynou.
He hente verst of is helm, & suþþe, mid wille god,
Anne stroc he ȝef him mid wel stourdy mod,
& þoru hauberc & þoru is coler, þat nere noþing souple,
He smot of is heued as liȝtliche as it were a scouple.
Þat was is laste chiualerye, þat vaire endede ynou.[180]

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

Vor þat folc so þikke com, þe wule he hor louerd slou,
Aboute him in eche half, þat among so mony fon
He aueng deþes wounds, & wonder nas it non.[181]

The coincidence of events, including Arthur's speech, the beheading of Mordred, and the fact that his neck was severed as easily as corn (*scouple*), indicates that Robert's description was drawn from the *Epistola*, or from a copy of Geoffrey's *Historia* which contained the account.[182] One version of Robert of Glouceter's *Chronicle*, however, bears an even closer resemblance to the account found in the *Scalacronica*.

Extensive interpolations were added to Robert of Gloucester's *Metrical Chronicle* by an anonymous redactor in 1448.[183] Many of the later additions are in prose, but during Arthur's reign several additions were written in the same verse form used by Robert. One such interpolation involves Yvain's role in the final battle against Mordred, and it begins after Mordred kills the king of Denmark. Since it is not in any edition of Robert, it deserves quotation at length:

Mordred much peple slogh, and his men that tyde,
Eslaf, kinge of Denemarch he slogh in Arthures route.
So afte Ywan afterward he gan to chace a boute,
that was is [i.e., Mordred's] cosyn germayn, and forto sle hym ther,
couertede wel the more for armes that he ber.
Such a stroke he hym yaf euene vppon the sheld
that the bokeles of gold flogh in to the feld.
Iwayn smot hym a yen, in that ilke stounde,
that he fel of his hors doune to the grounde.
Thanne com ther on renne of Arthures menne,

& as he was vpwarde with a sper gurd hym thurgh thenne.
Nathales vut vp he ros and venged hym selfe tho,
that his hed fro the body he gurde ther a two.
Mordred fel doun a ye to deye on the grounde.
'Alas' sayde sire Iwayn 'cosyn, this ilke stounde,
that euer the shape was to do that ilke foule synne
thurgh which so many man is loste, & destruyd is our kynne.
Much sorwe & sorynesse is ther thurgh falle
the knyghtes of the table thurgh the vndo buth alle.'
Mordred thenne for sor & sorwe deide in the stede.
Iwayn rod to Arthur sone & this tydyng hym sede.
Arthur let smyte of his hed & let bere hit aboute
& shewe hit that hure enemyes hadde the more doute.
But for al that, the Saxones stifly gonne with stonde.
Arthure euer leide on faste with Calibourne an honde.
Certik Saxones kynge dude euer his power
to haue a do with Arthur & drogh hym ner & ner.
So that Certik his sper so to hym bar,
that vppon Arthures body hit al to brak thar.[184]

This passage replaces the scene from Robert of Gloucester quoted above.[185] While it shares some details with Robert of Gloucester's account, most notably the decapitation of Mordred, several aspects of this version are unique. The adaptor has stressed the relationship between Yvain and Mordred who are 'cosyn germayn.' This element is drawn from the prose romances, where Yvain's mother is one of Igerne's daughters, rather than from the chronicle tradition. The pathos which this adds, especially as Yvain laments the destruction of his family, and Mordred dies 'for sor & sorwe,' is dramatic. The role of Cerdic is also expanded, as he strikes the blow which apparently kills Arthur. Cerdic is usually seen as an ally of Mordred in the Brut tradition, but his role here is otherwise unknown.

In addition to these original features, the passage also shares many characteristics with Gray's account: the prominence of Yvain, the decapitation of Mordred at Arthur's order, and the rally of the Saxons after Arthur orders Mordred's head to be carried before the battle are all found in the *Scalacronica*. As we have seen, the rally of the Saxons may be drawn from Geoffrey's *Historia*, but the role of Yvain in the episode is apparently unknown outside these two accounts.[186] The scene is much more detailed in the Arundel manuscript than in Gray's version, and is

unlikely to be dependent on the *Scalacronica*. Since Gray predates the
Arundel interpolation it is clear that influence did not travel the other
direction either. Rather, it seems likely that both chronicles rely on an
unknown source for this, and possibly other, similarities.

Unfortunately, the Arundel manuscript is imperfect, and the story of
Arthur's death has been removed. If the Arundel manuscript shared
Gray's account of Yvain throwing Excalibur into the lake, it has been lost.
The passage quoted above ends at the bottom of a folio and is followed
by the tantalizing catch-phrase 'Arthur smit.' Instead of any record of
Arthur's final actions, however, two folios are wanting, and the manu-
script continues in prose with the prophecy of the six kings, drawn from
John Mandeville's translation of the prose *Brut*, before returning to
Robert of Gloucester's chronicle with the reign of Constantine.[187] De-
spite the lacuna in the Arundel manuscript, Gray's unusual account of
Arthur's death, in which Yvain again plays a central role, is found in
another source. *The Parlement of the Thre Ages* contains a brief account of
Arthur's reign which is heavily influenced by romance. Arthur and
Mordred meet at a moor near Glastonbury:

> And ther Sir Mordrede hym mett be a more syde,
> And faughte with hym in the felde to alle were fey worthen
> Bot Arthur oure athell kyng and Ewayne his knyghte.
> And when the folke was flowen and fey bot thaymseluen,
> Than Arthure Sir Ewayne athes by his trouthe
> That he swiftely his swerde scholde swynge in the mere,
> And whatt selcouthes he see the sothe scholde he telle;
> And Sir Ewayne swith to the swerde and swange it in the mere,
> And ane hande by the hiltys hastely it grippes
> And brawndeschet that brighte swerde and bere it awaye;
> And Ewayne wondres of this werke and wendes bylyue
> To his lorde there he hym lefte, and lokes abowte,
> And he ne wiste in alle this werlde where he was bycomen.
> And then he hyghes hym in haste and hedis to the mere,
> And seghe a bote from the banke and beryns thereinn;
> Thereinn was Sir Arthure and othire of his ferys,
> And also Morgan la Faye that myche couthe of sleghte;
> And there ayther segge seghe othir laste, for sawe he hym no more.[188]

The scene is obviously similar to the account in the *Scalacronica*. Yvain
throws the sword into the water, and, unlike Griflet in the prose ro-

mance, he does so the first time. The slight verbal parallels, such as the *Parlement*'s use of the word 'brawndeschet,' are of no consequence, however, since they could be drawn from either Gray's account, or from that of the prose *Mort.* The *Parlement* has been tentatively dated to the end of the fourteenth century,[189] so again, it is unlikely that this is a source for Gray. Rather, it is possible that the *Parlement* shares the same source with the *Scalacronica* and the Robert of Gloucester adaptor. Such a source would portray Yvain in a greatly expanded role in the final battle, and may have included his role in the final moments of Arthur's life.[190]

Although it seems most likely that a single source lies behind Gray's account, he indicates that he is using a variety of sources: 'Ascuns cronicles tesmoignount qe Huweyn recorda en cest maner le departisoun de Arthur. Ascuns gestez de Arthur recordount qe ceo estoit Morgu la fay, sore Arthur, qe plain esoit de enchauntementez. Mais touz lez cronicles recordount qe Merlin prophetiza de Arthur qe sa morte serroit doutous.'[191] 'Ascuns cronicles' which focus on Yvain are here contrasted with 'Ascuns gestez' which name the woman in the boat as Morgan le Fay. The prose *Mort* identifies the woman at the helm as 'Morgan, la sereur le roi Artu,'[192] as does the *Parlement.* The *Parlement*'s description of Morgan, 'that myche couthe of sleghte,' also seems to echo Gray's own assertion that some *gestez* describe Morgan 'qe plain esoit de enchauntementez.' It is probable, therefore, that the proposed source lies behind the appearance of Morgan in both English authors' chronicles, rather than the prose *Mort.* The *Mort* (if indeed that is the text referred to as 'ascuns gestez') is presented as an alternative version of events and stands in contrast to the authoritative version provided by Gray.

The *Scalacronica*, therefore, represents a departure from the chronicles of Wace or Mannyng. Those authors knew episodes relating to Arthur which they did not consider historical, and they chose not to include them. Gray also knew that some stories about Arthur were fiction, but he still mined extra-Galfridian sources for additional Arthurian material. Throughout these additions Gray either borrows only episodes which do not conflict with the Brut tradition, or, when a conflict does arise, he modifies his material in order to preserve the integrity of the Brut. Gawain's head wound, for example, is received in the final battle against Rome, not in a single combat with Lancelot. Lancelot is thus removed from the episode and remains outside of history. But even as he includes this material Gray sets it apart from his historical project. Gray's citation of sources for these episodes indicates his unease concerning romance

material. The sword in the stone episode, the establishment of the Round Table before Arthur's reign, Arthur's order to throw Excalibur into the lake, and the episode of the boat with its three ladies are all attributed to 'ascuns cronicles.'[193] The phrase is used on one other occasion in Gray's Arthurian history when referring to an error in Peter Langtoft's *Chronicle*.[194] The use of 'ascuns chronicles' thus throws specific pieces of information into doubt, and it allows Gray to make use of material from outside the Brut tradition without giving it the full weight of historical veracity. The themes and atmosphere of romance narratives are thus allowed to colour the interpretation of Arthur's historical character, but those narratives are themselves denied the status of history. Like Wace's marvels within the twelve years of peace, Gray's use of romance material brings these narratives into his historical account, but they remain only half-truths.

Even though the additions from the prose romance cycle remain outside the authority of history, they still serve two basic functions. First, they emphasize the roles of two popular knights, Gawain and Ywain. Gawain was particularly popular in the north of England, and all four alliterative Arthurian romances use Gawain as the central figure. As we have seen, Gray portrays him as the best of Arthur's knights and the story of his head wound adds pathos to his death. Ywain is another popular knight from romance who figures in the historical record and whose exploits Gray augments, thus enhancing the chivalric nature of Arthur's reign. Secondly, Gray's romance additions accentuate the image of Arthur's sword, Excalibur. Emphasized at the beginning and end of Arthur's reign, the sword acts as a symbol of sovereignty, and its mysterious appearance and disappearance also adds to the chivalric mood of the narrative.

Gray's use of the verse romance of Caradoc conforms to this pattern. The episode colours the reader's interpretation of Arthur's fall as the chastity test points to a weakness of *trowthe* at Arthur's court with both political and sexual implications. That weakness will turn into a breach as Arthur leaves the country undefended against Mordred's ambition and lust. Despite its interpretive value, however, the story is twice attributed only to popular report ('com fust dit,' 'com est dit'),[195] and thus denied the veracity of history. In the same way, Gray dismisses Arthur's habit of waiting for adventures before eating by attributing it only to common gossip ('Hom dit qe').[196]

The romance elements of the *Scalacronica*'s Arthurian narrative, despite their variety, all perform much the same functions. The Arthurian

world is infused with an atmosphere of chivalry and adventure and can thus act as a model, and a warning, for contemporary courtly society. Taylor argues that 'chivalrous writings invariably had a didactic purpose. By their record of heroic deeds they sought to inculcate in the readers a taste for virtue and the chivalric qualities.'[197] The romance episodes inserted into the *Scalacronica* reinforce this didacticism. The disruptive impact of Mordred's breach of trust is foreshadowed in the story of Caradoc's mantle, while the destruction of the flower of chivalry is accentuated through the augmentation of Gawain's reputation for courtesy and military excellence. While serving these thematic ends, the romance material is carefully and consistently distanced from the historical tradition.

The *Scalacronica*'s negotiation of the relationship between chronicle and romance assumes an audience familiar with both traditions. Gray not only recognizes that there were fictions about Arthur, 'com plus playnement oyer pust hom en le graunt estoir de ly,'[198] but he imagines an aristocratic audience that had access to those texts. Like Mannyng, however, he refuses to grant fictive stories the authority of history and he defends the borders of the Brut tradition against romance incursions. The Brut, however, also faced challenges from within. Defending the Brut did not merely involve holding romance outside. Some contemporary historians questioned the narrative that Geoffrey of Monmouth had established, and Gray applies the same critical attitude to texts which would diminish the image of Arthurian Britain that the Brut presented.

3

Defending Arthur

How much better is it (casting awaye trifles, cutting off olde wiues tales, and superfluous fables, in deede of stately porte in outwarde shew, but nothing auayleable vnto credite, beeing taken away) to reade, scanne vpon, and preserue in memorie those thinges which are consonant by Authorytie.

John Leland, *Assertio inclytissimi Arturii*, 1544[1]

The Brut tradition faced two hazards in the fourteenth century. As we have seen, one of those hazards came from romance literature, which threatened to dilute Geoffrey's narrative with unauthorized fictions. The second hazard came from within the genre of history itself as doubt about the story that Geoffrey told resurfaced. Thomas Gray recognized both threats, and after holding romance to the margins of his historical narrative, he defended that narrative against those who would diminish it.

For most modern readers, John Leland's *Assertio inclytissimi Arturii* is the quintessential defence of the Brut tradition. First published in 1544, Leland's *Assertio* is a detailed response to Polydore Vergil's attack on King Arthur and it is the most complete and thorough early modern text of its kind. It is easy to look at Leland's effort and lament his lack of critical judgment, but the *Assertio* is a major step forward in historiographical method, even if almost every conclusion that Leland reaches is wrong.[2] Despite Leland's sometimes questionable interpretations, the *Assertio* 'provides for the modern reader a detailed statement of intelligent sixteenth-century English opinion about the Arthurian legends.'[3] Polydore Vergil, of course, represents a much more sceptical view. Despite his reputation as the man who denounced Arthurian traditions,

Vergil's *Anglica Historia* (first published in 1534) does not argue that Arthur never existed. Vergil, who also advanced historiography in England, simply argued that continental sources contradicted the Brut's claim that Arthur conquered most of Europe. Vergil also argued that since Gildas, the earliest source available, did not mention Arthur, we must assume that he was not as great as later tradition held him to be. Vergil, in other words, questioned the extent of Arthurian influence, not the fact that there was such a king.

As revolutionary as Vergil's methods seem, there was nothing new in his conclusions. Despite the fact that Gray and many other chroniclers considered Geoffrey of Monmouth's narrative an accurate record of Arthur's deeds, the *Historia* did not receive universal acceptance even in the Middle Ages. Reaction to Geoffrey's work was immediate and in 1139, only one year after its completion, Henry of Huntingdon was shown a copy of the *Historia* at Bec in Normandy. Henry, who had recently completed his own *Historia Anglorum*, was fascinated by the text and soon wrote to his friend Warin. The *Epistola ad Warinum*, which was incorporated into later versions of Henry's *Historia Anglorum*, includes a summary of Geoffrey's work in which Henry speaks of 'Artur ille famosus'[4] and briefly summarizes Geoffrey's account with only a few variations.[5] As Neil Wright has demonstrated, however, some of the changes that Henry made were designed to bring Geoffrey of Monmouth's text in line with his own *Historia Anglorum*. 'The *Epistola*, then, is not simply a précis; Henry's modifications, however tentative, deserve to be recognized as a first, faint adumbration of the misgivings with which some medieval historians ... received Geoffrey's *Historia*.'[6]

The most serious misgivings about Geoffrey's history were entertained by William of Newburgh. Although William's own *Historia Rerum Anglicarum*, written in the 1190s, begins long after the period of British rule, at the Norman conquest, he still devotes most of his prologue to attacking Geoffrey's history of British kings. William complains that in his own time a writer has emerged who weaves *ridicula figmenta* with history.[7] William focuses on Arthur and questions his marvellous birth, the chronology provided by Geoffrey (William asserts that Ethelbert was the king at the time Geoffrey places Arthur on the throne), his extensive conquests, and his establishment of archbishoprics when Bede clearly stated that there were only bishops in Britain before the arrival of Augustine.[8] William also notices that ancient authorities do not mention Arthur: 'Quomodo, inquam, vel nobiliorem Alexandro Magno Britonum monarcham Arthurum, ejusque acta, vel parem nostro Esaiæ Britonum

prophetam Merlinum, ejusque dicta, silentio suppresserunt?'[9] Finally, William questions Geoffrey's account of Arthur's death and concludes that he was simply a liar who wrote in order to flatter the British.[10] William's attacks, although sarcastic, are not unthinking. The prologue 'epitomizes William's major concerns as an historian: What is acceptable as a true or plausible account; how to deal with unlikely or quasi-divine phenomena; and how to detect fraud.'[11]

Other twelfth-century authors denounced the *Historia*, but William of Newburgh's was the most detailed attack against Geoffrey's version of Arthurian history.[12] Despite this early reaction, however, Geoffrey's text survived. Nancy Partner suggests that 'William's contempt helped to "fix" Geoffrey of Monmouth's immortality ... because he was just too interesting to dismiss,'[13] while R. William Leckie argues that the *Historia* gained authority simply by growing older. He notes that by the end of the twelfth century 'the Galfridian version of events had contributed so much to the image of Britain's past that the account was not generally seen as an overt challenge to prevailing views. The *Historia* had become part of Insular historical tradition to be treated with the same respect accorded Anglo-Saxon material.'[14] In the fourteenth century, however, Ranulph Higden again raised doubts about Geoffrey's account of Arthur.[15]

Ranulph Higden's *Polychronicon* is a universal history drawing on a wide range of sources. His Arthurian section is a complex mixture of William of Malmesbury, Henry of Huntingdon, and Geoffrey of Monmouth. He lists the twelve battles fought by Arthur in Britain and quotes William of Malmesbury's statement that Arthurian history deserves to be praised in true accounts rather than exaggerated in the false tales of the British.[16] Then, preceded by '*Ranulphus*' to indicate his personal opinion, Higden adds that 'In quibusdam chronicis legitur quod Cerdicus cum Arthuro sæpius confligens, si semel vinceretur, alia vice acrior surrexit ad pugnam.'[17] This version of events, in which Arthur eventually grants Cerdic Wessex, is found in 'quibusdam chronicis' and in 'chronicis Anglorum.' Higden contrasts this with events depicted 'secundum historiam Britonum' in which Arthur battles against Mordred and is buried in Avalon.[18] After a brief statement concerning the exhumation of Arthur at Glastonbury (drawn from Giraldus Cambrensis), Higden expresses his own doubts about the extent of Arthur's conquests.

Higden's doubts about the Galfridian narrative are based on a comparison with other texts. Geoffrey alone (*solus Gaufridus*) states that Arthur conquered thirty kingdoms. In addition, Geoffrey states that Arthur slew Lucius Hiberius in the time of Emperor Leo, but there is no

other record of a procurator named Lucius, nor of a king of France named Frollo.[19] Even Geoffrey admits that it is surprising that Gildas and Bede do not mention Arthur, but, says Higden 'immo magis mirandum puto cur ille Gaufridus tantum extulerit, quem omnes antiqui veraces et famosi historici pœne intactum reliquerunt.'[20] Higden can only conclude that, like other historians who write of Charlemagne or Richard, the Welsh Geoffrey exaggerated the deeds of his nation's hero. These misgivings are not emotional reactions to Geoffrey's *Historia*, but are based on carefully reasoned comparisons with other chronicles that comment on the period.

Higden's *Polychronicon* was a popular work, and many Latin chroniclers used the text, including his comments on the Arthurian period, within their own histories. As we have seen, Sir Thomas Gray also used Higden for his chronological outline of British history, but, instead of Higden's austere and diminutive Arthur, Gray turned to the Brut tradition for an Arthur derived from Geoffrey of Monmouth. Gray does not pass over Higden's doubts silently, however, nor does John Trevisa, another fourteenth-century translator of the *Polychronicon*. After his Arthurian history, in which he distinguishes between the Brut and romance traditions, Gray defends the Brut tradition against Higden's attack.

Thomas Gray's Defence of Arthur

Even though Thomas Gray borrowed from romance more than any previous chronicler, he was still an ardent defender of Geoffrey of Monmouth's narrative. Perhaps what is most striking about Gray's defence of the Brut tradition is his willingness to rationalize his source material. This begins as he describes the British Hope. The doubt surrounding the death of Arthur has led to tales of his return and 'lez Bretouns & lez Galoys ount creaunz q'il reuendra.'[21] Unlike most chroniclers of the fourteenth and fifteenth century, however, Gray does not simply dismiss this belief but attempts to provide a plausible interpretation of the prophecy that Arthur would return: 'Par auenture cest parol purra estre pris en figure; ceo est a entendre qe ascun de condicioun de Arthur purra vnqor venir, qe hom purra comparer a ly, qe ceo soit autrefoitz Arthur en valour.'[22] Gray is also willing to find rational explanations during his discussion of historiographic traditions.

The defence of the Brut tradition begins with Gray's familiar dismissive phrase: 'Ascuns cronicles ne fount mensioun de Arthur.'[23] This phrase acknowledges Higden's main concern, but Gray counters this

silence by offering some physical evidence to support his version of Arthurian history. He mentions 'la graunt mervail qe a iour de huy dure: du Karole dez Geaunz, qe hom appele le Stonhinge, meruaillous peres de graundour qe sount sur lez playns de Salisberis, qe Merlin fist aporter par sez enchauntementz hors de Ireland en le temps Aurilius et de Uter, le pier Arthur.'[24] This attempt at an archaeological argument is weak by modern standards. Geoffrey's *Historia* provided an explanation for the existence of Stonehenge (Uther had carried it from Ireland with the assistance of Merlin), but there is no evidence other than the monument itself that Geoffrey's account is accurate. The majority of Gray's argument, however, is more novel. As he struggles with issues of linguistic proficiency and moral and political bias, Gray begins to formulate his own method of critical historiography. Like Trevisa, who would approach the same subject a generation later, Gray's refutation of Higden is primarily based on a comparison of historical texts. Throughout the defence of the Brut tradition Gray focuses on the competing narrative that Bede provides in the *Historia Ecclesiastica*. Learned clerks, he claims, 'pensent qe ceo ne soit de Arthur fors chos controuez & ymaginez pur ceo qe Bede, ly venerent doctour, et puscedy qi de soun dit enout pris ensaumple de lour tretice, com le *Historia Aurea* & le *Polecraton* n'en parlent rien de ly.'[25] Gray's defence is uncharacteristically disorganized and repetitive, but he sets out to prove that in almost 'toutes cronicles de touz Chrestiens de touz pays' Arthur's name is recorded among the 'plus allose [et] vaillaunt dez roys Chrestiens.'[26]

The defence of Arthur can be divided into two different strategies. The first strategy involves marshalling specific arguments to explain the silence of Bede and to bolster the authority of the Galfridian narrative. Gray begins by speculating as to why Bede did not mention Arthur: 'Et par auenture en cas Bede ne tenoit pas Arthur pur roys pur ceo q'il estoi engendre en auowtri, pur quoi a regner en heritage ne luy fust auys.'[27] Bede may also have remained silent because of the strangeness of the tale itself: 'y ne plust a Bede a faire mencioun ne memoir de sez gestez pur ceo qe touz resemblonit chos fayes, vayns & fantasies.'[28] Gray responds that the chroniclers of France, Spain and Germany marvellously describe Arthur's actions, 'par quoi meutz est a nous privez a croir sa noblesce pusqe lez estraungers le rementivent en lour gestes memoriales auctentiqement.'[29] He concludes by arguing simply that more chronicles include Arthur than omit him, and where the majority is, there is 'la verite, par reson.'[30]

In addition to foreign chronicles, Gray also cites the 'gestis de Bretaigne'

which state that Arthur was the most renowned king of Britain and, according to some, that he killed 370 men in one battle 'et si combaty xij. foitz en ost batail.'[31] The distinction between British and Anglo-Saxon historical traditions forms the crux of Gary's reaction to Bede as he attributes political motives to his venerable competitor: Bede did not mention King Arthur because he was only concerned with the Saxons: 'purra bien estre qe il ne auoit talent de recorder lez noblescez dez Bretouns, qe par auenture ne lez conysoit my, pur ceo qe meismes estoit Saxsoun, entre queux ny out vnques graunt amour.'[32] Gray goes on to argue, however, that some Saxon chroniclers did mention Arthur, but they refused to name him: 'vncor en ascuns de lour gestez ils tes-moigneront qe vn y estoit Arthur, qe ils appelleront, en lour ditez, vn bataillous dustre du cheualery bretoun, qe par auenture en case ne voloint ils en taunt blemer par mencioun memorial l'estat lour Roys com de affermer & nomer par noume reale l'estat lour aduersairs.'[33] The phrase 'bataillous dustre' translates 'dux bellorum,' first used in the *Historia Brittonum.* The author, sometimes referred to as Nennius, de-scribes the twelve battles in which Arthur fought, but he does not call him a king. Rather 'ipse dux erat bellorum.'[34] Like many medieval readers, Gray seem to have thought that the *Historia* was written by Gildas. Later in the *Scalacronica,* when describing the kingdoms of the Heptarchy, Gray mentions that it was during the reign of Cerdic that Arthur ruled: 'Cest cronicle tesmigne q'en cest hour estoit Arthure, qe ils appellent vn bataillous Duk du chualery de Bretaigne, qe solonc Gildas se combaty xii foitz oue Saxsouns. Mais solonc le Bruit cesti Arthur descoumfist Cerdic, enchasa lez Saxsouns pur soun temps.'[35] The Saxons, claims Gray, referred to Arthur as a war-leader, and thus denied him the royal title and failed to record the dominant position he held in Britain.

   Politics gives way to linguistics, as Gray also argues that Bede did not have the ability to deal accurately with the history of the British. Bede, like every other historian, relied on the sources available to him and 'estoint ditz en Latin, ou la gest Bretoun estoit dit en Breton, tanqes Gauter, Archedeken de Oxenfordre, le traunslata en Latin, com est troue en sez ditez.'[36] Why then, asks Gray, should it be a marvel 'si Bede ne en fist mencioun, pusqe du dit langage n'auoit conisaunce.'[37] The language of Geoffrey's ancient British book guaranteed its authority and, although unseen by later chroniclers, was used as an assurance of the veracity and antiquity of the narrative which Geoffrey supposedly drew from it. Higden himself had argued that historians who did not

have access to Geoffrey's very ancient book were not as authoritative as those who did.[38]

Gray's final argument returns to the political nature of history as he questions the motives of both Saxon and British chroniclers: 'Qe lez entrepretours saxsouns ne remencinerent en lour cronicles apoy rien de noblesce de gestez dez roys Bretouns apres la venu de Hengist, mais soulement la prosces de sa conquest & la successioun de sez saxsouns. Ou le Bruyt fet mencioun dez regnes dez roys Bretons linielement tanqe le temps Cadwaladre lour darayne roy qe ne especify geres deuaunt cel temps de nul principal regne de rois Saxsouns tout. Soint ascuns roys Saxsouns nomez en cest Bruyt, pur acompler la prosces, vncor en le dit bruyt n'estoint tenuz fors subreguli.'[39] Gray delays completing this argument until 'la fine du darain chapitre de cest Bruyt, procheigne deuaunt le lyuer de gestis Anglorum.'[40] When the argument resumes, Gray states again that the *Brut* fails to mention the names of Saxon kings and that Saxon historians ignore the British kings. Gray does recognize, however, that this flaw in historiography is not just an ancient problem. Contemporary history, claims Gray, is full of conflicting narratives written by opposing factions, 'com en le temps del escriuer de cest cronicle estoit de lez Reaumes de Fraunce, Descoce, & de Cesille. Qi de Fraunce se disoint Roys? Edwarde Roy Dengleter le tierce apres la conquest qi tenoit de Fraunce Roys et de ses enherdauntz ensi estoit apellez et en soun estile & pur comune wigour dez soens, ensi nomez Phelip de Valoys & soun fitz apres ly tout ensi sure le dit realme; lez clamerent a regner et com tiels estoient obeyez de lour enherdauntz.'[41] Similar examples are drawn from David Bruce and Edward Balliol, both of whom claimed to be king of Scotland, and Robert, count of Provence (and his heirs) and Frederick of Sicily, both of whom claimed the throne of Sicily. The supporters of each claimant write histories which give their candidate the royal title. The same may be true for the history of the conflict between the British and the Saxons: 'Pur ceo lez cronicles Saxsouns engles ne fount mencioun de nul gouernail real sur caux, fors soulement de lour propre Roys, lez successours Hengist & dez autres sez compers, as quex la graunt bretaigne estoit departys.'[42]

Gray's discussion of the topic continues for several folios and is highly repetitive.[43] Throughout the section, however, Gray attempts to account for authorial bias within his sources. Unwilling to discard either tradition, Gray concludes that both are authoritative, but chronicle different nations within the island: 'est a sauoir qe le temps de regne de cesty Cadwaladre, le darain Roy de Bretaouns solom le Bruyt, estoit bien

longment apres le comencement de primer regne des Saxouns. Coment qe lez cronicles varient & desacordent en le temps, especifiaunz chescun lour roys, qi enemys estoint!'[44]

Gray's solution, therefore, returns to the politics of dark-age Britain, and this is the basis for the second part of his defence. According to Gray, the British and the Saxons co-existed after the arrival of Hengist, with the Saxons holding only sub-kingdoms. As radical as this solution sounds, it was not new. Gray may have adapted the idea from a passing comment made by Robert of Gloucester. After Uther defeats the Saxons in Britain, Robert comments that the British and the Saxons coexisted, although uneasily:

> Þe Saxons hom adde ymad in þis lond ywis
> Kinges in þre stede, þat al to on ycome ys.
> Hengist was verst king in Kent & Elle in Souþsex,
> And suþþe last was Certik, king of West sex.[45]

After a brief description of the arrival of these various Saxons, Robert provides a few details about the relationship between the two nations:

> Þus were in worre & in wo ymeng þe Saxons,
> Some tyme aboue & some bineþe, her myd þe Brutons.
> Ac al aboue neuere hii nere ar after þe King Arthure,
> Ac suþþe hii wonne al clene out, as ȝe ssulle after yhure.[46]

Although Gray struggles trying to describe the politics of Arthurian Britain and the historiographical problems that arise from it, he did prepare the reader for this interpretation in advance. After the betrayal of Vortigern by Hengist, Gray states that Hengist established the seven kingdoms and invited his subjects to join him from the continent, 'as quex estoit assigne a chescun vn pays a regner.'[47] After naming the seven kingdoms he then states 'Et coment qe le Bruyt deuise qe lez Saxsoins furount enchacez apres lour primer venu par Aurilius, par Vter & par Arthure, et par autres lour successours, la verite est.'[48] According to this interpretation, the Saxons and the British co-existed within Britain with the British as overlords until the death of Cadwallader. Only then did the Saxons finally complete their conquest.

Evidence of this co-existence comes after the death of Arthur. Gray includes the tale of Havelok which, according the the Anglo-Norman *Brut*, occurs during the reign of Constantine.[49] Gray narrates the epi-

sode but, like Mannyng, is uncertain of its historical veracity, saying that it is 'apocrophum.'[50] Despite this disclaimer, Gray attempts to provide a possible explanation for some of the historical discrepancies. The most glaring historical problem is the fact that, according to the Havelok story, two kings who are not part of the historical record rule Northumbria and Lincoln during the time of Constantine. It could be, argues Gray, that Athelbright and Edelsy followed the usage of Germany, so that all the sons of nobles 'departerount le heritage, et chescun portera le noun de duke ou count apres discese lour piers.'[51] Because of this there were many petty lords in Britain who were not mentioned in chronicles 'en ascun parcel del heritage lours piers, com en cest cas, par auenture firent ceux dieus roys.'[52] This practice of inheritance explains how the petty kingdoms of the Saxons continued even during the final years of British rule. It also explains why petty Saxon 'kings' are never mentioned by British chroniclers.

Gray's defence of the Brut tradition is not a carefully reasoned argument by modern standards, but it does demonstrate his willingness to subject historical sources to a kind of critical inquiry. When he returns to Higden's text there are only two remaining issues. Higden had commented that there was no Emperor Lucius or French king Frollo.[53] Gray responds that 'purra estre qe l'emperour auoit en Latin autre noun qen en Bretoun, com en Flemenk, Johan est apelle Hankin.'[54] Gray is also left with the abbreviated Arthurian narrative which Higden had provided. Before returning to Higden's list of emperors and popes, Gray includes Higden's own account of Arthur's reign, dismissing it with his familiar 'Ascuns cronicles': 'Ascuns cronicles tesmoignent qe Cerdrik le Saxsoun comensa a regnere en Westsex en le temps Arthur, et en le temps Justician l'emperour, et qe Mordret relessa au dit Cerdrik Wilkschir, Somerset, Dorset, Deuenschir. et Cornewaill.'[55] Higden's Arthurian narrative, never named and merely alluded to, is not allowed to conflict with the narrative that Gray has chosen to substitute. Whatever authority Cerdic might have in the historical record, his authority in Britain is as a sub-king who rules under Arthur.

John Trevisa's *Polychronicon*

A generation after Gray wrote the *Scalacronica*, John Trevisa approached the same material. Unlike Gray, Trevisa did not allow himself the option of omitting Higden's refutation of the Brut tradition. Like Robert Mannyng, John Trevisa is best known as a translator, but of Latin, rather

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

Although John Trevisa was possibly the most prolific translator of his day, very little is actually known about him. [56] He was born in Cornwall about the year 1342, and he entered Exeter College, Oxford, in 1362. After moving to Queen's College in 1369 he was briefly expelled in uncertain circumstances from 1378 to 1382. [57] During the 1380s Trevisa seems to have divided his time between Berkeley in Gloucestershire, and Oxford. He became vicar of Berkeley in about 1390 and probably died in 1402. Almost all of Trevisa's literary output was translation. The *Polychronicon* is his earliest datable work and he tells us that he completed the translation on 18 April 1387. [58] Trevisa's other major translation, Bartholomaeus Anglicus's popular *De Proprietatibus Rerum*, can also be precisely dated. He finished this work, he says, on 6 February 1398. [59] These two texts alone, both massive encyclopedic works, attest to Trevisa's industry, but he also produced translations of *De Regimine Principum* of Aegidius Romanus, the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, Richard Fitzralph's *Defensio Curatorum* and William of Ockham's *Dialogus inter Militem et Clericum*. [60]

About half of the manuscripts of Trevisa's *Polychronicon* are prefaced by two original pieces, the *Dialogus inter dominum et clericum* and a short *Epistola*. [61] In the *Epistola* Trevisa addresses Sir Thomas Berkeley who commissioned the translation: 'ȝe speke and seyde þat ȝe wolde haue Englysch translacion of Ranulf of Chestre hys bokes of cronikes. Þarvore Y wol vonde to take þat trauayl and make Englysch translacion of þe same bokes as God graunteþ me grace.' [62] The *Dialogus* acts as a preface to the *Polychonicon* and it is a fictional representation of the moment when Sir Thomas requested the translation from his vicar. Although it is the implied conceit of the work that Dominus and Clericus are Berkeley and Trevisa, it would be a mistake to regard the *Dialogus* as a record of an actual event. Rather, the *Dialogus* is a literary composition in which the 'conception and inception of the work of translation is dramatized before the reader.' [63] The discussion, however, is less about the translation of this work than about translation in general. The *Dialogus* is an argument, in the form of a disputation, between Dominus, who argues that the book should be translated so that more men may read it and learn what it contains, and Clericus, who argues against translation. When Clericus argues that 'ȝe cunneþ speke and rede and vnderstonde

Latyn. Þanne hyt nedeþ noȝt to haue such an Englysch translacion,'
Dominus responds:

> *Dominus*: Y denye þys argument, forþey Ich cunne speke and rede and
> vnderstonde Latyn þer ys moche Latyn in þeus bokes of cronyks þat Y can
> noȝt vnderstonde, noþer þou wiþoute studyinge and auysement and lokyng
> of oþer bokes.[64]

As Clericus continues to argue, the discussion degenerates into name
calling. When Clericus argues that 'hy þat vnderstondeþ no Latyn' could
simply ask what is in the book, Dominus responds that 'Þou spekst
wonderlych, vor þe lewed man wot noȝt what a scholde axe.'[65] When
Clericus argues that the Latin book 'ys boþe good and fayr' and there-
fore should not be translated, Dominus responds that 'Þis reson ys worþy
to be plonged yn a plod and leyd in pouþer of lewednes and of schame,'[66]
but when Clericus persists with this reason Dominus is his most insulting:

> *Dominus*: A blere-yȝed man, bote he were al blynd of wyt, myȝte yseo þe
> solucion of þis reson; and þey a were blynd a myȝte grope þe solucion, bot
> ȝef hys velyng hym faylede.[67]

The Bible itself, argues Dominus, was translated from Hebrew into Greek
and then into Latin, even though 'þe Hebreu ys boþe good and feyre.'[68]
Clericus finally agrees to translate the work, but he still has one question:
'Wheþer ys ȝow leuere haue a translacion of þeuse cronyks in ryme oþer
yn prose?' Dominus answers simply: 'Yn prose, vor comynlych prose
ys more cleer þan ryme, more esy and more pleyn to knowe and
vnderstonde.'[69] Like Mannyng, who wrote of the need to write in 'symple
speche,' Trevisa's primary goal is clarity of understanding. He continues
the discussion of translation in the *Epistola* and again his concern is that
the work be easily understood: 'For to make þis translacion cleer and
pleyn to be knowe and vnderstonde, in som place Y schal sette word vor
word and actyue vor actyue and passiue vor passyue arewe ryȝt as a
stondeþ withoute changyng of þe ordre of wordes. But yn som place Y
mot change þe rewe and þe ordre of wordes and sette þe actyue vor þe
passiue and aȝenward. And yn som place Y mot sette a reson vor a word
to telle what hyt meneþ. Bote vor al such chaungyng, þe menyng schal
stonde and noȝt be ychanged.'[70] Trevisa is largely successful in achieving
his goals and produces a text which is 'generally intelligible, idiomatic,
and accurate.'[71]

Despite Trevisa's assumed role of the faithful translator, he does divert from Higden's text to comment on methodology and the material that Higden includes. This is not unusual in medieval translation, but 'Trevisa's translation of the *Polychronicon* differs dramatically from all his other translations in the number and magnitude of the notes that he has inserted.'[72] An example is the oft-quoted passage in which Trevisa describes the change from the use of French in grammatical instruction to the use of English.[73] Trevisa, however, does not merely explain Higden's text, he also argues with some of Higden's, or his sources,' statements. When, for instance, Higden records Alfred of Beverley's division of England into thirty-six shires, Trevisa takes offence that Cornwall is omitted and complains: 'Hit is wondre why Alfred summeth the schires of Engelond somdel as a man þat mette,' and concludes that if Alfred would not recognize Cornwall 'he wot nouȝt what he maffleþ.'[74] Trevisa is always careful to set these personal observations off from the text he is translating by prefacing them with his own name, just as Higden had done for his personal comments.

Trevisa's views of Arthurian history are revealed twice in his comments on Higden's text. In the first instance Higden, quoting Giraldus Cambrensis, describes Caerleon. He writes: 'Hic magni Arthuri, si fas sit credere, magnam curiam legati adiere Romani.'[75] Trevisa translates the passage as 'Þere þe messangers of Rome come to þe grete Arthurus curt, ȝif it is leeful for to trowe,' but he adds a personal comment on Giraldus's doubts:

> *Trevisa.* ȝif Gerald was in doute where it were leful for to trowe þis opere noo, it was nouȝt ful greet reedynesse to write hit in his bookes; as som men wolde wene. For it is a wonder sweuene i-mette for to write a long storie, to haue euermore in mynde, and euere haue doute ȝif it be amys byleue. ȝif alle his bookes were suche, what lore were þerynne, and nameliche while hit makeþ non euidens for neiþer side, noþer telleþ what hym meueþ so for to seie?[76]

Trevisa's annoyance with Giraldus is evident, but his reasons are less obvious. The choice to object to a doubt raised concerning Arthurian history is significant, but it is Giraldus's method that draws the translator's reproach. Why, asks Trevisa, should the reader believe anything that Giraldus says if he provides no argument or evidence to support his doubt? By drawing attention to Giraldus's methodological flaws Trevisa establishes himself as an authority on historical method and, by implica-

tion, reaffirms the truth of the Arthurian court's presence at Caerleon. This persona will be used again by Trevisa when Higden raises more doubts about Arthurian history. Disagreeing with Higden's account, Trevisa enters upon a second digression in defence of the Brut tradition of Arthur's reign.

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

> *Trevisa.* Here William telleþ a magel tale wiþ oute evidence; and Ranulphus his resouns, þat he meveþ aȝenst Gaufridus and Arthur, schulde non clerke moove þat can knowe an argument, for it followeþ it nouȝt.[77]

As in the case of Giraldus Cambrensis's doubts about Arthur's court at Caerleon, Trevisa looks for 'evidence' and an argument that 'meveþ' the historian to a given opinion. The Oxford-trained cleric treats the interpretation of historical material as a disputation (just as he had treated the argument about translation in the *Dialogus*) and he evaluates Higden's argument by applying it to scriptural interpretation: 'Seint Iohn in his gospel telleþ meny þinges and doynges þat Mark, Luk, and Matheu spekeþ nouȝt of in here gospelles, ergo, Iohn is nouȝt to trowynge in his gospel. He were of false byleve þat trowede þat þat argument were worþ a bene ... So þey Gaufridus speke of Arthur his dedes, þat oþer writers of stories spekeþ of derkliche, oþer makeþ of non mynde, þat dispreveþ nouȝt Gaufrede his storie and his sawe, and specialliche of som writers of stories were Arthur his enemyes.'[78] Omission, argues Trevisa, does not prove non-existence, and the argument is especially faulty when the authors who fail to mention Arthur are his 'enemyes.' Presumably Trevisa is referring here to Bede and continental authors, historians of the Saxons and the French whom Arthur had conquered.[79] Fowler argues that 'the armor of scriptural inerrancy is employed in the defense of Arthurian tradition,'[80] but the choice may not be purely theologically motivated. Trevisa, as we have seen, complained of Giraldus's historical method and his doubts about the narrative contained in Geoffrey of Monmouth. Trevisa may have known Giraldus's famous story of the monk who was plagued by demons. According to Giraldus, the monk's

companions experimented with the demons: 'Contigit aliquando, spiritibus immundis nimis eidem insultantibus, ut Evangelium Johannis ejus in gremio poneretur: qui statim tanquam aves evolantes, omnes penitus evanuerunt. Quo sublato postmodo, et Historia Britonum a Galfrido Arthuro tractata, experiendi causa, loco ejusdem subrogata, non solum corpori ipsius toti, sed etiam libro superposito, longe solito crebrius et tædiosius insederunt.'[81] Trevisa's use of the Gospel of John exactly mirrors Giraldus's technique. Where Giraldus had set the veracity of scripture, represented by the Gosepl of John, in apposition to the mendacity of Geoffrey's narrative, Trevisa uses scripture, and in particular the narrative elements found only in John, to reaffirm the veracity of Geoffrey's unique version of Arthurian history.

Trevisa also wonders that Higden complains that Frollo and Lucius do not appear in other histories for 'ofte an officer, kyng, oþer emperour haþ many dyvers names, and is diversliche i-nempned in meny dyvers londes.'[82] Housman speculates that this argument may refer to the 'similarities between Gilda's [sic] and Bede's account of Aurelius Ambrosianus and Geoffrey's Arthur' or to 'characters both in history (Octavianus-Augustus) and in romance to whom this remark applies.'[83] It is also possible that Trevisa is thinking of the practice of providing alternate names for interpretative purposes. Higden himself had written of the practice as it was used with the Trojans, and Trevisa translated the passage: 'Ofte names beeþ i-sette for a manere of doynge. As when we wole mene þat þe Troians beeþ feerful, we cleped hem Frigios; and ʒif we wole mene þat þey beeþ gentil and noble, we clepeþ hem Dardans; ʒif we wil mene þat þey beeþ stronge, we clepeþ hem Troians; ʒif hardy, we clepeþ hem Hectores.'[84] It is more probable, however, that, like Thomas Gray, Trevisa recognizes that names change with language. Leo and Frollo may be found in continental sources, but their names have been so altered through the ages that they are now unrecognizable to English readers.

Trevisa also uses Higden's own chronicle to argue his case against Higden. William of Malmesbury, as Higden himself had said, had not seen Geoffrey of Monmouth's source, the ancient British book: 'and in þe þridde book, capitulo nono, he [i.e., Higden] seiþ hymself þat it is no wonder þey William Malmesbury were desceyved, for he hadde nouʒt i-rad þe Brittische book.'[85] The passage that Trevisa is referring to concerns the hot springs at Bath and the discrepancy between Geoffrey of Monmouth and William of Malmesbury:

Ranulphus. Sed Gaufridus Monemutensis in suo Britannico libro asserit regem Bladud hujus rei fuisse auctorem. Forsan Willelmus, qui Britannicum librum non viderat, ista ex aliorum relatu aut ex propria conjectura, sicut, et quædam alia, minus scripsit exquisite.[86]

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

Trevisa's final argument is also his most vague. He merely states that 'ʒit þey Gaufridus had nevere i-spoke of Arthur, meny noble naciouns spekeþ of Arthur and of his nobil dedes.'[87] Like Mannyng and Gray, therefore, Trevisa is aware of Arthurian narrative from other countries, but he is too vague to give us any indication of what those narratives are. He is also aware of Arthurian narratives which he does not consider historical, but he argues that the lies told about Arthur do not discredit the truth of the historical narrative: 'But it may wel be þat Arthur is ofte overpreysed, and so beeþ meny oþere. Soþ sawes beeþ nevere þe wors þey madde men telle magel tales, and som mad men wil mene þat Arthur schal come aʒe, and be eft kyng here of Britayne, but þat is a ful magel tale, and so beeþ meny oþere þat beeþ i-tolde of hym and of oþere.'[88] By denying the British hope of Arthur's return Trevisa is following the historiographical trend of the fourteenth century,[89] but the other 'magel tales' that are told about Arthur are distinct from the historical tradition and are also not to be believed.

John E. Housman, who first drew attention to this passage, argues that Trevisa 'tended to confuse history and romance much more than Higden.' He argues that '[i]t seems pretty certain that Trevisa took Arthurian romance, not only of the Brut family but also of the "Mort Artu" class, considerably more seriously than Higden.'[90] Although it is clear that Trevisa accepted the narrative found in Geoffrey of Monmouth ('the Brut family'), his attitude towards the prose Vulgate ('the "Mort Artu" class') is less obvious. Trevisa admits that Arthurian stories are exaggerated and that the true historical narrative has been transformed into 'magel tales,' and in this he is in agreement with Wace, Mannyng, and other chroniclers who comment on the twelve years of peace. The 'meny oþere' stories told of Arthur that are 'magel tales' could be either in verse or prose (Trevisa does not distinguish), but there is nothing to indicate that Trevisa accepted as fact any Arthurian narrative beyond 'the Brut family.'

Trevisa's reasons for defending Arthurian narrative have been the subject of some debate. Housman assumes that the Cornish Trevisa has a 'Celtic axe to grind' and that this led him 'to defend the authenticity of Geoffrey and, by implication, that of Arthur against belittling Englishmen.'[91] This argument has been tacitly accepted by Fowler, who states that 'our Celtic translator appends one of his longest notes' to Higden's Arthurian section.[92] Ronald Waldron, however, has convincingly argued that Trevisa's Celticism is doubtful at best. For Waldron, '[w]hat Trevisa is advocating ... is a cautious acceptance even of conflicting accounts, because rational explanations can sometimes be found to reconcile apparent contradictions.'[93]

While Waldron is correct in stating that Trevisa does not act out of an emotional sense of Celtic pride, his interpretation of Trevisa's argument is too neutral. Trevisa's arguments favour Geoffrey of Monmouth's narrative, and we may assume that he preferred the Brut tradition to the narrative Higden provides. His method is to build on the image he has established for himself as a thorough historian. Comparison of sources provides evidence that supports Geoffrey's narrative (the 'Brittische book' and the histories of 'meny noble naciouns') while the omission of Arthurian history in other sources (such as Bede and continental writers) is easily explained. Just as he dealt with Giraldus Cambrensis's doubts about Arthurian history, Trevisa has looked for evidence and the reasons that 'meveþ' the historian, and he finds Higden's method to be faulty.

Trevisa and Gray, therefore, can be seen as Robert Mannyng's kindred spirits. Trevisa and Mannyng both hope to bring popular historical texts to a wider, lay audience and all three show a desire to preserve the integrity of Arthurian history as it is found in Geoffrey of Monmouth. Gray may struggle through his defence of the Brut, but the Oxford-trained cleric applies the method of the disputation to evaluate argument and evidence clearly and concisely. For all these authors, defending the Brut involves not only the comparison of historical material, and the affirmation of Geoffrey's narrative, but also the rejection of 'magel tales' which exaggerate the deeds of Arthur and his knights.

Sir Thomas Gray's refutation of doubts surrounding the veracity of Arthurian history is more developed than any other medieval chronicler, and, although Trevisa's defense of the Brut tradition is extensive, we must look as late as John Leland's *Assertio* to find a similar document. Leland's text actually recalls some of these earlier arguments. Trevisa had maintained that 'magel tales' do not diminish the truth of Geoffrey's

story, and Leland states that 'It is no noueltie, that men mixe triflinge toyes with true thinges, and surely this is euen done with a certaine employment that writers might captiuate ye simple common people with a certaine admiration at them when they heare of marueylouse matters. So was *Hercules*, so was *Alexander*, so *Arthure*, and so also *Charles* commended.'[94] Leland not only echoes Gray, but also cites him on numerous occasions as he develops his own defence of Arthur. In most cases Gray is cited as a source of information (the location of Caradoc's mantle, the death of Angusel, the location of Camlann),[95] but Leland also summarizes Gray's own defence of the Brut tradition, particularly his theories concerning Bede's silence: 'Many yeares againe, *Graius* the Authour of the booke *Schalecronicon* (as I suppose) had great contention with this rable of backbyters. Unto him was *Beda* obiected, who passed ouer *Arthure* with great silence. Paraduentures this holy man refused to mention ye Prince, because he was borne in adultery.'[96]

Leland makes extensive use of Gray's *Scalacronica*,[97] yet little of what Gray had to say was unique in the Middle Ages: similar arguments were made by Trevisa, and Caxton would cover much of this ground in the fifteenth cenutry. These writers were working independently, and it is unlikely that a common source underlies their texts, nor is it likely that Gray stands at the head of a textual tradition of historical inquiry. The *Scalacronica* was not widely read in the Middle Ages, and its influence seems to be restricted to the sixteenth century when antiquarians like Leland and Wotton extracted the text. Rather, the arguments that Gray and Trevisa raise seem to be part of the learned culture of late medieval Arthurian historiography. Conscientious readers used the physical remains of Arthur's reign to defend his historicity, but they also critically compared the various narratives of the king to construct an historically authentic image of his reign. Texts were not simply weighed according to age or the language of their composition. Rather, both Gray and Trevisa recognized the biases and limitations of their fellow historians. They thus discuss points of view, political bias, and linguistic and textual limitations, all in an attempt to extract the truth from conflicting historiographic traditions.

4

History *curiously dytit*

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

As Spenser's Red Cross Knight stares at the vision of the heavenly Jerusa-
lem, Contemplation directs him to return to earthly exploits and fame,
even though participation in his quest involves sin. The Knight, later
identified as Saint George, is assured that he will have time for repen-
tance, and that his place in the heavenly city is prepared. The alliterative
Morte Arthure, one of the great works of the fourteenth-century allitera-
tive revival, also addresses the relationship between sin and worldly
achievement. As it does so, the *Morte* engages in a complex negotiation
between the chronicle narrative it retells, and the romance conventions
it employs. Emphasizing Arthur's place within the structure of British
history, the *Morte* uses Arthurian romance to create meaning out of
Arthurian history. But while Spenser's Red Cross Knight is promised a
place in the heavenly city, the alliterative poem's Arthur has been blamed
by modern critics for his worldly conduct.
    Despite widely varying interpretations of the *Morte Arthure*, modern

criticism has focused on two issues which have been seen as central to the poem's meaning: the genre of the poem and the extent to which Arthur is culpable for the fall of the Round Table. William Matthews, in the only book-length study of the *Morte* to date, recognized that modern generic distinctions do not easily fit the poem, and he noted that '[c]hronicle, romance, heroic poem, [and] epic, are some of the terms applied to it, often in hyphenated pairings.'[2] Matthews settles on the term 'tragedy' to describe the work's genre, but this term has been questioned.[3] Connected with the question of genre is the question of Arthur's culpability. Many critics argue that Arthur's fall is caused by the sinful nature of his wars, although there is some disagreement about when Arthur's war's become unjust, and hence sinful.[4] At the other end of the spectrum, some scholars have argued that the distaste with which modern readers receive the harsh realities of medieval warfare has clouded critical judgment. For these critics, Arthur's wars against both the emperor and his own contumacious vassals in Lorraine and northern Italy are justified according to medieval law and custom.[5] There are even a few critics who argue that culpability is not a major concern of the poem at all.[6]

The widely divergent interpretations of the poem, often supported by the same group of quotations and external sources, suggest that the questions being asked of the alliterative *Morte Arthure* may not be indicative of the author's own concerns. The question of genre, in particular, seems to be a non-starter, as there is simply no modern term for a medieval text which tells a historical story using a style which we are more accustomed to seeing in romance fictions. As E.D. Kennedy observes, 'the author probably did not have the interest in genre that postmedieval readers have had.'[7] Commenting on English romance in general, W.R.J. Barron wisely noted that '[i]f the function of classification is to aid literary comprehension and if the traditional categories have not proved helpful in that respect, it might be more fruitful ... to look for literary community between groups of texts rather than thematic, metrical or other "external" bases.'[8] The 'literary community' to which the *Morte Arthure* belongs is elusive. It is obviously related to *The Awntyrs off Arthure* and Thomas Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*, since both of these texts use the poem as a source.[9] The immediate community of the poem, however, is the large body of chronicles based on the Brut tradition, and its relation to these works remains uncertain, as the exact source of the alliterative *Morte* has not been firmly established. It is, however, obviously derived from some version of the Brut narrative, and Wace's *Roman de Brut* is one of its ancestors.[10] The *Morte* also shares some

scenes with sources which have not been previously examined. Yvain's boast that he will touch the emperor's standard 'Þat borne es in his banere, of brighte golde ryche, / And raas it from his riche men and ryfe it in sondyre,' and his eventual fulfilment of that vow,[11] echoes the similar scene in the *Scalacronica* where, in the battle against Mordred, 'Hiwain se payna molt de bien fair, arasa le baner Mordret.'[12] Both the *Scalacronica* and the *Morte Arthure* also include references to Caradoc; in Gray, as we have seen, Caradoc arrives before Arthur embarks against the Romans, while in the *Morte*, Caradoc delivers the news of Mordred's treachery after the Romans have been defeated.[13] Gray also points to the period between the defeat of the Romans and the arrival of news from Britain as a period of further adventures: 'En quel soiourn il tenit court real de la Table Round, ou auindrent graunt auentures, qe acomplis furount des chualers erraunz, ou Gawayn s'entremist fortement.'[14] The alliterative *Morte* poet uses this period to add the siege of Metz and the campaign in northern Italy, but he also inserts the Gawain-Priamus episode, in which Gawain 'weendes owtt ... wondyrs to seke.'[15]

These similarities are vague, and it is unlikely that the *Scalacronica* should be thought of as a source for the alliterative poem, but the similarities may point to a literary community which made their transmission possible. We have already seen that manuscripts which contained romances, and Arthurian romances in particular, were owned and passed from generation to generation among the English nobility and gentry, and the same can be said for historical works. Arthurian manuscripts could also, of course, circulate laterally as they were certainly loaned among friends and peers. An excellent example of this method of manuscript circulation is provided by Angus McIntosh in his discussion of the provenance of the alliterative *Morte Arthure*. A letter from the second or third quarter of the fifteenth century is found in the margin of a medical manuscript: 'Praying ȝow yat ȝe will resayfe and kepe to we speke samyn of Syr William Coke preste of Byllesbe ane Inglische buke es cald Mort Arthur, as ȝe may se wrytten of my hand in ye last end of ye buke. Also if ȝe will ony word send vnto me at ony tyme, send itt be trew and tristy persons to John Salus house of Lyn, on of ye four and twenty wonyng in ye schekir. And if yar come ony tristy frendis of ȝouris be-twise, I wold pray ȝow to send me ye forsaid Inglische buke ... And if yor none come, kepe [the book] styll ȝour selfe to we speke samyn.'[16] McIntosh optimistically observes that 'We cannot of course be sure even that the "Inglische buke" was a copy of the *alliterative* poem. But it seems to me highly probable that it was.'[17] Even if we take a more

cautious approach and merely identify the text as an Arthurian work, we can still make significant observations. This single record of a loaned book places the Arthurian text in at least five sets of hands: the writer (presumably the owner of the manuscript), the recipient, the priest, John Salus, and the 'tristy frendis' who act as courier.[18] The event is localized in Lincolnshire where, according to linguistic evidence, McIntosh places the ancestor of Robert Thornton's copy text of the alliterative *Morte Arthure*.[19] Lincolnshire and the surrounding area begins to look like a significant area for Arthurian manuscripts. Sir Thomas Gray may have begun writing the *Scalacronica* in Edinburgh, but he completed the text after his release, and his family's principal holdings in Heton, are just west of Lincolnshire. Gray's knowledge of several versions of the Havelok story, which is closely associated with the town of Lincoln, also demonstrates his interest in Lincolnshire material. The *Parlement of the Thre Ages*, the Arthurian narrative of which is related to Gray's *Scalacronica*, contains few dialectical clues to localize it, but it is generally thought to be from west of Lincolnshire in the north Midlands. One of the two surviving copies of the poem, however, is found in a manuscript transcribed by Robert Thornton.[20] These late-fourteenth-century texts, therefore, appear to be clustered in and around Lincolnshire.

More than narrative elements, however, these texts also demonstrate a shared chivalric ethos which colours their depiction of Arthur's reign. As we have seen, Thomas Gray makes significant alterations and additions to enhance the chivalric atmosphere of the *Scalacronica*'s Arthurian history, and the *Parlement*, which includes references to the Seige Perilous and Ywain's disposal of Excalibur, also displays a chivalric mood which is lacking in the typical Brut narrative. As we shall see, the alliterative *Morte* also adapts the Brut narrative in such a way as to increase the chivalric nature of Arthur's reign. The conception of a chivalric atmosphere, however, certainly does not require textual existence to circulate, and it is quite possible that this attitude toward Arthurian history was conveyed orally and informally.

George R. Keiser has traced the extensive literary network surrounding Robert Thornton, scribe of Lincoln Cathedral Library, MS 91, which contains the only surviving copy of the *Morte Arthure*. Keiser concludes that Thornton's activities brought him 'into contact with a wide range of clergy, lawyers, and gentry who might well have provided him direct or indirect access to books from the libraries of clerics and educated laymen from both York and rural Yorkshire.'[21] Although it is tempting to draw direct lines of influence through the kinds of relationships Keiser

reveals, the web of associations may simply suggest a literate community based on land and familial relationships in which tales and attitudes towards popular narratives could circulate both orally and in textual form. We have already seen how Gray's defence of the historical Arthur shares many features with Trevisa and Caxton, neither of whom makes direct use of Gray's text. Although it may seem a romantic notion, it is easy to suppose that history was a popular topic of conversation, as Edward IV's *Black Book* seems to indicate: 'Thes esquiers of houshold of old be acustumed, wynter and somer, in after nonys and in euenynges, to drawe to lordes chambres within courte, there to kepe honest company aftyr theyre cunyng, in talkyng of cronycles of kinges and of other polycyez, or in pypyng, or harpyng, synging, other actez marciablez.'[22] We can well imagine that Arthurian history in particular was a common topic during such discussions and that these and other social occasions, such as a tournament with an Arthurian theme or the feast William Marmion was serving before it was interrupted by a fairy messenger, provided an easy medium for attitudes towards popular narratives to circulate. Thomas Gray stresses the usefulness of retelling tales of adventure in his Arthurian history,[23] and John Hardyng specifically states that such tales are 'Full meruelous to yonge mennes wytte' and that the Arthurian hero told the court his adventures 'To cause his felaws to do eke the same / Thair auenture to sek and gete a name.'[24] Both Gray and Hardyng seem to be superimposing contemporary practice on the Arthurian world, and it is at just such scenes of informal tale-telling that attitudes and information about Arthurian history could circulate and be discussed.

A parallel may be drawn from contemporary Scottish literature. John Barbour certainly felt that the adventures of Robert Bruce would act as a catalyst for discussion. After an adventure in which Bruce fights 200 men at a narrows (one at a time), Barbour tells the story of Thedeus of Thebes, who fights a similar battle. He then asks his audience to consider who was the greater hero:

3e yat yis redys, cheys yhe
Quheyer yat mar suld prysit be
Ye king, yat with awisement
Wndertuk sic hardyment
As for to stynt him ane but fer
Ye folk yat twa hunder wer,
Or Thedeus, yat suddanly

> For yai had raysyt on him ye cry
> Throw hardyment yat he had tane
> Wane fyfty men all him allane.[25]

Barbour reminds his audience that both fought at night, and that both had only moonlight, but while Bruce fought more men, Thedeus actually killed more of his adversaries:

> Now demys queheyer mar lowing
> Suld Thedeus haiff or ye king.[26]

Barbour's digression recognizes his audience's interest not only in chivalric exploits, but also in the subtleties involved in determining the various degrees of chivalric honour. The digression may be merely conventional, but in it we see the poet's expectation that his audience is willing to entertain such questions. Similar discussions of Arthurian chivalry would necessarily involve Arthurian narrative, and much of the circulation of Arthurian narrative may be irrecoverable simply because it took place during these informal exchanges.

The informal dissemination and discussion of Arthurian materials would have included both romances and the very popular chronicle narrative. Although the known chronicles do not provide an exact source for all the material in the alliterative *Morte Arthure*, it shares with them the basic Arthurian narrative which, as we have seen, was generally considered a historically accurate account of Arthur's reign. Many critics, however, have attempted to minimize the historical nature of the narrative. Göller, seemingly unaware of the sources of the poem, states that 'the opening boudoir scene of the stanzaic *Morte Arthur* ... has been replaced by the battlefield,'[27] and Peck asserts that the poet idiosyncratically 'takes his story from the chronicles of Wace and Layamon, rather than the later, more popular romances.' He concedes that '[p]erhaps his reason is that he wants the story to seem more like history.'[28] Matthews complains that the poem's 'chronicle-like versions of battles and campaigns and its tendency toward episodic digressions might be excused by the nature of its sources or justified by medieval fashions in narrative and rhetoric, but they still tend to divert attention from the main narrative and from the principal theme.'[29] He does allow, however, that the poem's use of precise dates and its attention to topography, armour and shipping are 'all indications that the poet intended his story to be taken as

historical truth.'[30] Other critics do not allow even this. Patterson, commenting on the poet's call to 'Herkenes now hedyr-warde and herys this storye,'[31] states that '[t]he point is not to make a claim for veracity – although based largely on Wace's translation of Geoffrey, the poem includes, as we shall see, large chunks of ostentatiously fictive material – but to insist that its focus is upon the historical world and its meaning.'[32] Similarly, Hamel claims that '[u]nlike earlier redactors ..., the [*Morte Arthure*]-poet must surely have viewed his materials as fictions (or quasi-fictions) to be shaped to his own *conjointure* and themes.'[33] Modern criticism, in other words, recognizes the poem's reliance on the chronicle narrative, but has failed to recognize the implications of this decision. This has led to serious misunderstandings of elements of the text, such as the relationship between Mordred and Arthur. Lee Patterson's argument, that the past provides an uncertain legitimacy to the present, is largely based on the mistaken belief that Mordred is Arthur's own son through incest,[34] and Russell A. Peck seems to believe that even Wace and Laȝamon considered Mordred to be Arthur own son: 'They would obscure the blood tie, if possible, for it seems embarrassing. Our poet stresses it, for it seems honorable.'[35] Charles Lionel Regan, however, has shown that there is not 'as much as a hint, from either the poet or a character, that the traitor is Arthur's son,'[36] and the point has been emphasized by Hamel.[37]

What we see in these reactions to the historical nature of the *Morte Arthure*'s narrative is a failure to recognize the 'literary community' to which the poem belongs. This is not to argue that the source of the poem can be found in any one Brut text. Rather, it suggests that the poet's handling of the historical Arthurian narrative may be constructively compared to contemporary authors who deal with the same topics. Authors like Thomas Gray or Andrew Wyntoun are not sources for the *Morte Arthure*, but they participate in the intellectual and literary environment within which the alliterative poem was created. Although based on the Galfridian narrative, the *Morte Arthure* does deviate from the surviving chronicles both in tone and in the addition of several narrative episodes. These deviations from the Brut tradition do not imply, as both Hamel and Patterson seem to suggest, that the author of the poem considered his narrative to be fictitious. The treatment of extra-Galfridian material by Thomas Gray, and Andrew Wyntoun's attitude towards stylistic concerns in the work of Huchown, may shed light on the *Morte Arthure*-poet's use of episodic digressions from the Brut narrative. Com-

parison with these works may also show that the alliterative *Morte*'s digressions augment, rather than divert attention from, the poem's principal themes.

Andrew Wyntoun on Huchown's *gret Gest of Arthure*

It has been some time since Andrew of Wyntoun's *Original Chronicle of Scotland* has been seen as a major text in alliterative *Morte* criticism. Like the chronicles discussed above, Wyntoun's *Chronicle*, written shortly before 1424, also addresses the distinction between historical and romance traditions of Arthurian narrative. Wyntoun turns to the topic during his dicussion of the mysterious Huchown of the Auld Ryall. Almost everything that we know of Wyntoun is derived from his *Chronicle*.[38] He was a canon-regular in the Augustinian Priory of St Andrew's and in 1393, or shortly thereafter, he was made Prior of St Serf's in Lochleven. He began writing the *Chronicle* at the suggestion of Sir John Wemyss of Leuchars and he was still writing in 1420. He died some time before 1424 at an advanced age.

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

As Gwydo de Calumpna quhile,
The pohete Omere and Virgile,
Fairly formyt there tretyß,
And curiously dytit there storyis.[39]

A second type of historical writing, however, is plain:

Sum vsit bot in plane maner
Off aire done dedis thar mater
To writ, as did Dares of Frigy,
That wrait of Troy all þe story,

Bot in till plane and opin stile,
But curiouse wordis or subtile.[40]

Wyntoun begs the forgiveness of his audience in a typical modesty *topos* and apologizes for the 'sempilnes' of his own work,[41] finally pleading that 'simpilly / I maid at þe instance of a larde / That has my seruice in his warde, / Schir Iohne of Wemys be rycht name.'[42] Wyntoun's prologue, therefore, like Robert Mannyng's, aligns his *Original Chronicle* with the 'plane and opin stile' of Dares, rather than the 'curiously dytit' works of Homer, Virgil, and Guido.

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

For few writtis I redy fand
That I couth draw to my warand.
Part of þe Bibill with þat at Peris
Comestor ekit in his ʒeris,
Off Crosyus and Frere Martyne,
With Scottis and Inglis storyis syne ...[43]

Despite its brevity this is an accurate description of the main sources used by Wyntoun. 'Frere Martyne' is Martinus Polonus, who compiled his *Chronicon Pontificum et Imperatorum* in the 1270s. The *Chronicon*, a schematic work that briefly outlines world history, enjoyed great popularity in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries both on the continent and in Britain.[44] The text is usually in parallel columns, or on facing leaves, with one column containing a list of popes and events relating to the church, while the second column contains a list of Roman emperors and political events. Wyntoun utilizes the *Chronicon* throughout his *Original Chronicle*, but it is the dominant source for Book V, which includes the account of Arthurian history.[45]

The impetus for Wyntoun's history of Arthur is found in Martinus where, under Pope Hylarius (the contemporary of Emperor Leo I), a brief account of the British king is included: 'Per idem tempus, ut legitur in historia Britonum, in Britannia regnabat Arthurus, qui benignitate et probitate sua Franciam, Flandriam, Norvegiam, Daciam ceterasque marinas insulas sibi servire coegit. In prelio quoque letaliter vulneratus, secedens ad curandum vulnera in quandam insulam, deinceps Britonibus de vita eius usque hodie nulla certitudo remansit.'[46] A variant version of

Martinus's *Chronicon* shows the influence of Wace and specifically mentions the knights associated with Arthur's court. The single entry under Emperor Leo I reads: 'Per hec tempora fuerunt viri famosi milites tabule rotunde ut dicitur.'[47] This brief notice of Arthur was enough for some chroniclers. Apart from naming the island, John Capgrave did not elaborate on Martinus, but actually condenses his source as he translates the Arthurian entry: 'In þese dayes was Arthure kyng of Bretayn, þat with his manhod conqwered Flaunderes, Frauns, Norwey, and Denmark, and aftir he was gretely woundid he went into an ylde cleped Auallone, and þere dyed. The olde Britones suppose þat he is o-lyue.'[48] For Wyntoun, however, the history of Arthur provided by Martinus was insufficient, and, like Thomas Gray, he looked outside his main source for a complete account of the king's reign.

Instead of the brief notice of Arthur, Wyntoun includes a lengthy description of Arthur's reign which he derives from 'the Brute' and the 'Gestis Historiall' of 'Huchone of þe Auld Ryall.'[49] Wyntoun's descriptions of 'the Brute' are too vague to direct the reader to any one version of British history. Obviously he is referring to a Galfridian narrative, and it is likely that he is using one of the vernacular redactions rather than the *Historia regum Britanniae* itself.[50] The figure of 'Huchone,' or Huchown as he is better known, is even more obscure, but even though Huchown's Arthurian work is lost, it is still possible to analyse Wyntoun's attitude towards his fellow historical poet.

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

> He maid þe gret Gest of Arthure,
> And þe Anteris of Gawane,
> The Epistill als of Suete Susane.[51]

The final text listed by Wyntoun is almost certainly the alliterative *Pistill of Suete Susane*, but the other two titles have drawn the most attention. Based on these attributions and similarities with Wyntoun's description of Arthurian history, the 'gret Gest of Arthure' was confidently identified as the alliterative *Morte Arthure* in the late eighteenth century. Further attributions followed: the 'Anteris of Gawane' was obviously *Sir Gawain*

and the Green Knight (and therefore Huchown also wrote the other three poems in the *Pearl* manuscript), and it was equally obvious that it was also *The Awntyrs off Arthure* and *Golagros and Gawain*. The attributions continued to accumulate until Huchown was credited with writing almost every piece of alliterative verse, with the exception of *Piers Plowman* (which, thankfully, had a named author). The various theories and conjectures were finally and forcibly laid to rest by Henry Noble MacCracken in 1910.[52]

When we put the question of Huchown's identity, and the identity of his works, aside, the passage does not lose its interest. Wyntoun's Arthurian history begins by listing seventeen countries conquered by Arthur.[53] These countries 'And all þe Ilis in þe se / Subiect were till his pouste.'[54] Arthur, however, refuses to give tribute to Rome and this prompts the empire to send a message to the British king:

> Quharfor þe stait of þe empyre,
> That muffit were in to gret ire,
> The hawtane message till him send
> That in Arthuris Gestis is kend,
> That Huchoun of þe Auld Ryall,
> Maid his Gestis Historiall,
> Has tretit fere mare cunnandly
> Than sufficient to tell am I.[55]

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

> Bot in our mater to proceid,
> Sum þat hapnis þis buke to reid
> Will call þe autour to rekles,
> Or may fall argw his cunnandnes,
> Sen Huchone of þe Auld Ryall,
> In till his Gestis Historiall,
> Callit Lucyus Hyberius emperour
> Quhen king of Brettane was Arthour.[56]

Wyntoun admits that other chroniclers do not mention an Emperor Lucius and he lists Orosius, Martinus, Innocent, and Josephus as authorities who contradict Huchown.[57] Wyntoun excuses himself, however, by appealing to the *Brut*:

> Bot of the Brute þe story sais
> That Lucyus Hyber in his dais
> Wes of þe empyre procuratour,
> And nouthere callit him king, na emperour.
> Fra blame þan is þe auctour quyte,
> As he befor him fand to write;
> And men of gud discretioun
> Shuld excuß and loif Huchoun.[58]

Thus Wyntoun, the faithful translator and chronicler, has simply written what he found, and he should not be blamed for the faults of his sources. Wyntoun also excuses Huchown, but his reasons are different. Huchown 'cunnand wes in litterature'[59] and his task in writing was different from Wyntoun's own:

> He wes curyouß in his stile,
> Faire and facund and subtile,
> And ay to plesance and delite,
> Maid in meit metyre his dite,
> Litell or ellis nocht be geß
> Wauerand fra þe suthfastnes.[60]

In terms which he had used to describe Guido delle Colonne, Homer, and Virgil,[61] Wyntoun argues that Huchown is more concerned with poetics than exact historical accuracy, and this distinction allows him to excuse the inaccurate title that Huchown gives to Lucius:

> Had he callit Lucyus procuratour,
> Quhare he callit him emperour,
> It had mare grevit the cadens
> Than had relevit the sentens;
> For ane emperour, in properte,
> A commandoure may callit be;
> Lucyus sic mycht haue bene kend
> Be þe message at he send.[62]

For the 'facund and subtile' Huchown, 'cadens' is more important than 'sentens.' Huchown's 'curyouß' style is implicitly contrasted with Wyntoun's own simplicity, and the laboured couplet with which he

opens this defence of Huchown is testimony to the fact that the chronicler Wyntoun will sacrifice poetics for factual accuracy.

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

> O God of science and of lyght,
> Appollo, thurgh thy grete myght,
> This lytel laste bok thou gye!
> Nat that I wilne, for maistrye,
> Here art poetical be shewed,
> But for the rym ys lyght and lewed,
> Yit make hyt sumwhat agreable,
> Though som vers fayle in a sillable;
> And that I do no diligence
> To schewe craft, but o sentence.[63]

For the dreamer describing his vision, the craft of poetry is less important than the accurate description of his experience: he will sacrifice metrical perfection for factual accuracy, and, like Wyntoun, he says that he will do so in a metrically defective passage. The irony, of course, is that the 'sentence' of *The House of Fame* is that accurate transmission of knowledge is a near impossibility. For Wyntoun, however, accuracy is a hallmark of the chronicler's 'sentence,' and the simple style, complete with faulty verses, is as much a guarantee of that accuracy as the citation of venerable authorities.

MacQueen also sees Wyntoun's digression on Huchown as a discussion of literary style, but he argues that Wyntoun sees himself writing within the same tradition as Huchown: 'A "curious" style to give pleasure by its complexities, a metre appropriate to the subject, an eye for truth which nevertheless within reason was subordinated to the cadence of the verse – these are the qualities singled out by Wyntoun as characterizing the good narrative or historical poet, and he is obviously writing for an audience prepared to discuss and accept such distinctions.'[64] What MacQueen fails to recognize, however, is that Wyntoun is not identifying his work with Huchown's, but that he is establishing a distinction between his own chronicle and the narrative history of Huchown.

Gervase of Canterbury articulates this distinction in his discussion of

chronicles and histories: 'Forma tractandi varia, quia historicus diffuse et eleganter incedit, cronicus vero simpliciter graditur et breviter.'[65] For Gervase, both the chronicle and the history seek to relay truth, but the history uses 'ampullas et sesquipedalia verba' in order to persuade its hearers or readers.[66] John Lydgate praises the *Historia Destructionis Troiae* of Guido delle Colonne, for just this trait:

> For he enlvmyneth by crafte & cadence
> This noble story with many fresche colour
> Of rethorik, and many riche flour
> Of eloquence to make it sownde bet.[67]

The addition of rhetorical colours, therefore, was not only accepted by Lydgate, but anticipated and appreciated. It will be remembered that Wyntoun includes Guido among his ancient authorities who 'curiously dytit there storyis.'[68] Wyntoun's digression on the poet Huchown demonstrates that he expects the same rhetorical colours in this vernacular author, but he also sets those embellishments apart from his own project. The passage, therefore, is not a 'literary manifesto,'[69] nor is it an 'apology for poetry.'[70] Wyntoun employs the modesty *topos* and begs that the faults of his own verse be excused, but in praising the poetry of Huchown's 'Gestis Historiall,' he also establishes the accuracy of his own text as 'chronicle.'

Wyntoun concludes his discussion of historical writing and Arthurian narrative by summarizing the 'Gestis' of Huchown.[71] The description is a paraphrase of Galfridian history and it ends with Arthur's final battle against Mordred, his sister's son 'Quhare he and his Round Tabill quyt / Wes vndone and discomfyt.'[72] Wyntoun then leaves Huchown and states that he can find no information about Arthur's death.

> Sen I fand nane at þar of wrait,
> I will say na mare na I wait.
> Bot quhen at he had fochtin fast,
> Efter þat in ane Ile he past,
> Saire woundit, to be lechit þare,
> And eftir he wes sene na mare.[73]

This passage marks Wyntoun's return to Martinus Polonus[74] and, after a brief mention of Constantine, the chronicle continues with its list of popes and emperors. The digression on Huchown not only provides Wyntoun with an Arthurian narrative more complete than that provided

by his main source, Martinus Polonus, but it also allows him to define more clearly his own historical project. Unlike Huchown, Wyntoun is not concerned with metrical perfection. His concerns are more prosaic: the orderly, careful, and factual record of events from the past. More like Martinus's *Chronicon* than Huchown's 'gret Gest,' the *Original Chronicle*, claims Wyntoun, will not sacrifice 'sentens' in favour of 'cadens.'

Andrew Wyntoun wrote a generation after the composition of the alliterative *Morte Arthure*[75] and it is not necessary to argue that Huchown's 'Gestis Historiall' is the *Morte Arthure* in order to recognize that the alliterative poet also 'wes curyouß in his stile, / Faire and facund and subtile.'[76] Minor deviations from the Brut may simply demonstrate that the poet, like Huchown, was more concerned with 'cadens' than 'sentens.' The distinction that Gervase of Canterbury makes between chronicles and histories accurately describes the stylistic differences between a work like that of Geoffrey of Monmouth and the alliterative *Morte Arthure.*

The minor divergences from the accepted tradition which Wyntoun was willing to forgive in Huchown's *geste* do not, however, describe all the additions that the *Morte Arthure*-poet made to the Galfridian narrative. Lee Patterson, as discussed above, points to the many 'ostentatiously fictive' scenes that have been added to the Brut narrative. The alliterative poem is not the only work that expands on a historical source and yet claims to retell history accurately, but discussions of literary additions are rare in medieval histories. The early twelfth-century *Vita Sancti Malchi* by Reginald of Canterbury, however, provides an extraordinary discussion of historical *amplificatio.* The life is based on St Jerome's *Vita Malchi,* but, written in Leonine hexameters, Reginald's verse is significantly longer than Jerome's austere prose. The differences are not merely stylistic, as Reginald has added numerous episodes drawn from a wide range of secular and religious literature. He explains these additions in a letter which is included with a copy of the work sent to a friend at Rochester named Baldwin: 'Item rogat auctor multumque precatur lectorem ne in singulis versibus aut verbis aucupetur historiae veritatem. Minimum plane aut omnino nichil referre arbitratus est utrum ea quae ostendere intendebat per vera an per veri similia ostenderet.'[77] Reginald goes on to say that a stubborn reader may wish to distinguish between truth and falsehood in his account. In that event, he directs his readers to Jerome's narrative as the authoritative version. 'Cucurrit ille via regia nec ab alveo declinavit historiae. Nos instar rivuli currentes, modo ripas tenuimus, modo arva rigavimus, dum ea quae per historiam non erant, per artem edidimus.'[78] Reginald concludes by stating that when writing

of the character of Malchus he has told the truth, 'At in reliquis, multa nos, ut suum est versificantium confinxisse non negamus.'[79] For Reginald, the additions to his account 'are all directed to making it a more entertaining and diverting story,'[80] but the basic narrative and the truth of that narrative remain the same. Reginald recognizes that versifiers were accustomed to add to their stories, but he accepts this habit as part of the literary process.[81]

Wyntoun and Gervase of Canterbury demonstrate that *amplificatio* was an accepted part of some kinds of historical writing, and Reginald shows that this amplification could go beyond mere rhetorical flourishes to include the addition of entire episodes or scenes. As Reginald's imagery of a river overflowing its banks makes clear, the elaboration of source material was in the service of meaning, and it was accepted that authors of historical material could and would expand on their sources to emphasize thematic concerns. We have seen how Thomas Gray includes material from outside the chronicle tradition in order to highlight the chivalric nature of Arthur's reign, but whereas Gray consistently undermines the authority of his additions by invoking unreliable and vague sources, the author of the alliterative *Morte Arthure* seamlessly joins additional material to the Galfridian narrative. The purpose of these additions, however, is the same as Gray's or Reginald's, in that they act as interpretive tools which augment meaning and colour the reader's interpretation of the narrative provided. This is not to argue that the *Morte Arthure* is Huchown's 'gret Gest of Arthure,' nor that a new generic designation, Gervase's *historia*, should be applied to the work, nor that the work is in some sense hagiographic. Rather, such a reading simply recognizes that the *Morte Arthure* is essentially a historical poem, like Barbour's *Bruce* or Blind Hary's *Wallace*,[82] and that the decisions that a poet makes when writing a historical work have different implications than if the work were recognized as pure fiction. Thomas Gray and Reginald of Canterbury seem to agree that episodes which are introduced into a historical narrative are in the service of existing meaning: the story of Caradoc's mantle emphasizes the theme of betrayal; the sword in the stone emphasizes Arthur's legitimacy and the chivalric nature of his reign. These themes were present in the narrative before the additions were made, and in the same way the author of the alliterative *Morte* reinforces his themes of the glory and transience of sovereignty through strategic alterations and augmentations to the Brut narrative.

The Alliterative *Morte Arthure*

The alliterative *Morte Arthure* begins in the middle of Arthur's reign with the coronation feast that follows the nine years of peace. With minor alterations, it follows the chronicles' account of the challenge from Rome, Arthur's crossing to the continent and his battle with the giant of St Michael's Mount. The war with Lucius also follows the typical pattern: Gawain's embassy to the emperor ends in open battle, as does the subsequent attempt to convey prisoners to Paris. Finally, Arthur's forces engage and defeat Lucius's main army. Before Arthur hears news of Mordred's treachery, however, there are major additions to the narrative, including the siege of Metz, Gawain's adventure with Priamus, a briefly described campaign in northern Italy, and Arthur's elaborate dream of Fortune's Wheel and the Nine Worthies. The poem then picks up the basic narrative and describes the news of Mordred's usurpation of the throne, Arthur's return to Britain, the loss of his knights, and his own death in the final battle.

The theme of mutability, so common in Arthurian narratives, pervades the *Morte Arthure*. This theme was established by the first great Arthurian narrative, Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae*. Robert Hanning convincingly argues that while 'recounting the successive reigns of the British monarchs, [Geoffrey] repeatedly inserted variants of several basic situations – feuds among brothers, British expeditions to Rome, the illicit loves of kings, etc. – which have far-reaching national consequences.'[83] These recurring patterns, argues Hanning, emphasize the cyclical nature of British history in the *Historia* as the actions of individual kings lead to the continual rise and fall of British sovereignty. Arthur, the greatest king in the *Historia*, participates in many of the patterns described by Hanning. Most significantly for the alliterative *Morte Arthure*, Arthur's greatest achievement is his struggle against Rome. That conflict, however, echoes earlier conflicts within the *Historia*. Hanning argues that 'because the Arthurian climax [of the *Historia*] comes during a trip to Rome – that is, during an episode which has cyclically repeated itself throughout British history – the immediate response to it which Geoffrey elicits from the reader is also both prepared and heightened by knowledge of the earlier segments of British history.'[84] The reader, aware of the similar conflicts between Britain and Rome involving Brutus, Brennius and Belinus, Constantine, and Maximianus 'suddenly perceive[s] with greater clarity the entire pattern of British history.'[85]

It is no coincidence that the author of the *Morte Arthure* begins his poem with the challenge from Rome, and he expects his readers to be familiar with the importance of this event within British history.[86] The poem further accentuates this theme by portraying Arthur as the greatest of conquering kings and his court as the epitome of chivalry. The poet achieves this result through a combination of techniques. Certain scenes have been modified or intensified, but entire episodes have also been added to highlight Arthur's regal bearing, the courtly behaviour of his knights, and their reliance on models of sovereignty and chivalry provided by the British past. As Arthur's reign is contextualized within the larger pattern of the Brut narrative, the fall of the Round Table, as in other chronicle accounts, is blamed on the fickle nature of Fortune's wheel and the cyclical nature of British history. Such a reading argues against the position that Arthur's sins cause his fall. The poem makes it clear that Arthur does sin, and that those sins must be atoned for, but there is no indication that these sins contribute to the destruction of the court or the Round Table.

The image of Arthur presented in the alliterative *Morte* is that of a warrior king, not the singing and dancing courtier depicted in Thomas Gray's *Scalacronica* or in other romances. Larry Benson states that the Arthur of the alliterative poem is 'undimmed by the chivalric mist in which the romancers enclosed him. This is an Arthur who is pre-eminently heroic, a king whose most noble title is "conqueror," who knows little of tournaments but a great deal about war and nothing of courtly love but everything of friendship and loyalty.'[87] Although the uni-dimensionality of Benson's portrait could be questioned (his departure from Guenevere, for example, is influenced by the conventions of courtly love),[88] it is clear that Arthur is concerned primarily with affairs of state. A courtly mood does exist in the poem, but it falls to Arthur's knights to provide examples of individual chivalry. Despite Göller's belief that 'it is safe to say that the idea of warfare based on chivalric laws was recognized as outdated by the fourteenth century,'[89] we have already seen that Sir Thomas Gray and his contemporaries were not only avid readers of chivalric exploits, but also attempted to apply the models of chivalry to their own conduct in court and on the field. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that the *Morte Arthure* claims both that its words will be 'Plesande and profitabill to the pople þat them heres,'[90] and that knights of the Round Table:

> ... chefe ware of cheualrye and cheftans nobyll,
> Bathe ware in thire werkes and wyse men of armes,

Doughty in theire doyngs and dredde ay schame,
Kynde men and courtays and couthe of courte thewes.[91]

The Round Table is praised as an example of both military and courtly excellence, and characters from romance literature appear at the very beginning of the tale. After Arthur receives the challenge from Rome, he and his knights retire to council. Various knights encourage Arthur to wage war, and several of them, such as Cador and Hoel, make elaborate vows.[92] Among the vowers, Yvain asserts that he will touch the standard of the emperor, a vow which he more than fulfills:

Thane sir Ewayne fytz Vriene full enkerlye rydez
Onone to the emperour, his egle to towche;
Thrughe his brode bataile he buskes belyfe,
Bradez owt his brande with a blyth chere,
Reuerssede it redelye and away rydys,
Ferkez in with the fewle in his faire handez
And fittez in freely one frounte with his feris.[93]

Yvain's role is further expanded. As in the prose Vulgate, he plays an important part in the final battle and he is one of the last of Arthur's knights to die.[94] Erec, presumably the hero of Chrétien de Troyes' *Erec and Enide*, is associated with Yvain throughout the latter stages of the poem, and this further emphasizes Yvain's association with romance conventions. 'Sir Ewayne and sir Errake, þes excellente beryns,' appear together across the battlefield until Arthur discovers them both among the dead.[95] Eric's appearances in the poem are always linked to Yvain through alliteration.

Yvain is a knight from the chronicle tradition, and, although he is associated with Chrétien's Erec, his appearance in the poem is entirely expected. The knight who speaks after him at the council, however, is firmly associated with the romance tradition and his appearance is surprising:

'By Oure Lorde' quod sir Launcelott 'now lyghttys myn herte –
I loue Gode of þis lone þis lordes has avowede!
Now may lesse men haue leue to say whatt them lykes
And hafe no lettyng be lawe.'[96]

Lancelot's role is conspicuously small in the poem. He refers to himself

as one of the 'lesse men' before making his own vow that he will personally joust with the emperor.[97] His contribution to the war effort, 'sex score helmes,'[98] also points to his diminished status in the poem, and through the reduction of Lancelot's status the poet asserts that his is not a tale of adultery. He does ensure that Lancelot's honourable reputation remains intact through Cador, who refuses to retreat from superior Roman forces, saying that 'Sir Lancelott sall neuer laughe, þat with þe kyng lengez, / That I sulde lette my waye for lede appon erthe!'[99] Ywain's increased role along with the appearances of Lancelot and Erec in the poem serve much the same function as Gray's vague allusions to literary motifs. They remind the reader of the more explicitly chivalric narratives found in the romances of Chrétien and the prose Vulgate, but at the same time those romance narratives are denied the authoritative status of history.

Another of Chrétien's knights, Cligés, also appears in a rather striking role. Although *Cligés* was probably the least known of Chrétien's works, the hero of the romance appears throughout the *Morte Arthure*. His most significant scene occurs as he escorts Roman prisoners to Paris. Cador, who is in charge of the party, sends three knights forward as scouts. The three scouts spot a Roman ambush in their path:

> Fyndez them helmede hole and horsesyde on stedys,
> Houande on þe hye waye by þe holte hemmes.
> With knyghttly contenaunce, sir Clegis hym selfen
> Kryes to þe companye and carpes thees wordez:
> 'Es there any kyde knyghte, kaysere or oþer,
> Will kyth for his kynge lufe craftes of armes?'[100]

Cligés continues with his challenge, saying:

> 'We seke justynge of werre, ʒif any will happyn,
> Of þe jolyeste men ajugged be lordes,
> If here be any hathell man, erle or oþer,
> That for þe emperour lufe will awntere hym selfen.'[101]

The Romans respond that Arthur will regret that he has tried to take the 'renttez of Rome,'[102] and Cligés capitalizes on the reply to question the nobility of his adversaries:

> 'A' sais sir Clegis þan 'so me Criste helpe,
> I knawe be thi carpynge a cowntere þe semes!

Bot be þou auditoure or erle or emperour thi selfen,
Appon Arthurez byhalue I answere the sone:'[103]

Cligés' insulting dialogue continues, as he addresses the leader of the
Romans, the king of Surry, in the language of markets and exchange,
claiming that Arthur has 'araysede his accownte and redde all his rollez'
and that 'þe rereage' which the Romans owe will 'be requit.'[104] He then
challenges them to prove their knighthood:

'We crafe of ȝour curtaisie three coursez of werre,
And claymez of knyghthode; take kepe to ȝour selfen!
ȝe do bott trayne vs to-daye wyth trofelande wordez –
Of syche trauaylande men, trecherye me thynkes.'[105]

Although the challenge of a joust of war (that is, with ordinary weapons)
is declined by the king of Surry, the challenge alone places Cligés in a
tradition of individual chivalry which seems at odds with the military
situation. The king of Surry refuses to participate in single combat, and
he returns Cligés' insult by questioning whether his arms are recogniz-
able, thus challenging Cligés' own status as a knight:

'... þou bees noghte delyuerede
Bot thow sekerly ensure with certayne knyghtez
Þat þi cote and thi creste be knawen with lordez,
Of armes of ancestrye entyrde with londez.'[106]

Cligés declares that the Romans are stalling out of cowardice. His arms
are readily recognizable:

'Myn armez are of ancestrye enueryde with lordez
And has in banere bene borne sen sir Brut tyme,
At the cité of Troye, þat tyme was ensegede,
Ofte seen in asawtte with certayne knyghttez,
Fro þe Brute broghte vs and all oure bolde elders
To Bretayne þe braddere within chippe-burdez.'[107]

By appealing to the siege of Troy as the origin of his own heraldic device
Cligés traces his descent back to the origins of heraldry itself. The
knights of Troy are often described as the first to employ coats of arms, as
in an anonymous poem on the Nine Worthies in which Hector places the

origins of heraldry at Troy: 'Ther were armys first ordenyt with honour and joye / Vnto the ordyr of knyghthode to bere in all londys.'[108] Cligés' nobility, and the nobility of the British in general, is assured through this illustrious pedigree.[109] The originary moment of heraldry, however, is the unstable moment of the greatest disaster in medieval historiography. As surely as the Trojans represent the highest achievement of chivalric society, so too they represent the greatest fall, and while Cligés asserts his own nobility through his Trojan ancestry he also evokes the cyclical pattern of British history, a pattern in which Arthur likewise participates.

The knight who receives the fullest treatment in the *Morte Arthure* is undoubtedly Sir Gawain. Maureen Fries claims that Gawain's increased role is 'totally unprecedented in the chronicles where he had been a minor figure without importance,'[110] but, as we have seen, Gawain's popularity as a figure of romance had increased his prominence in the chronicles of both Robert Mannyng and Sir Thomas Gray. It is true, however, that the Gawain of the *Morte Arthure* is not the typical model of courtesy that he had become in the romance tradition. In the *Morte Arthure*, Gawain's reputation for amorous affairs has been eliminated, and his contribution to the initial council scene, a praise of peace and the delights of court, has also disappeared.[111] Instead, Gawain is concerned with the chivalric goal of gaining military renown or 'wirchipe.' Thus, in the foraging scene, Florent cedes command of the party to Gawain so that his 'wirchipe' will not be wounded.[112] Even in Gawain's final battle against Mordred he attempts to establish a beach head so that he might win 'wirchipe ... for euer,'[113] and he performs in such a way as to 'wrekys at his wirchipe.'[114]

Gawain's presence in the early portions of the poem is in fact reduced from the chronicle sources. Although he still participates in the embassy to Lucius, it is in the major addition of the Priamus episode that Gawain's chivalry is displayed. The episode has received a great deal of attention, and critical attitude is divided. Göller believes that the scene attempts to debunk the 'clichés of romance' and that by 'bringing romantic fiction into a strongly realistic context, the author is confronting the audience with the idea that chivalric jousting was nothing more than a ridiculous game.'[115] This reading is supported by Fichte, who claims that the episode represents the 'meaninglessness' of heroic endeavour,[116] while Finlayson states that the episode is used 'to contrast the purposeless ritual of the typical romance combat with the serious *chanson de geste* preoccupation of the rest of *Morte Arthure*.'[117] In contrast, Christopher Dean sees Gawain in a more positive light. He characterizes the episode

as 'pure romance' in which Gawain 'must not be thought of as a soldier on a military campaign, but as a chivalric knight seeking adventures.'[118]

Despite these divergent opinions, critics share a belief that the Priamus episode is placed apart from the larger military concerns of the poem. During the siege of Metz, Arthur sends out a foraging party. They arrive in a meadow which is 'full of swete floures'[119] where the party stops to rest:

> Thane weendes owtt the wardayne, sir Wawayne hym selfen,
> Alls he þat weysse was and wyghte, wondyrs to seke.[120]

The use of the word 'wondyrs' implies that the episode will be an *aventure*, and, separated from his companions, Gawain encounters the knight Priamus. As in the exchange between Cligés and the king of Surry, Priamus's nobility is established by the lengthy description of his coat of arms, the chief of which apparently invites other knights to 'chalange who lykes.'[121] Gawain greets the sight of the as yet unnamed knight 'with a glade will'[122] and after a brief exchange they joust. The knights are evenly matched, and on the first pass 'Bothe schere thorowe schoulders a schaftmonde large. / Thus worthylye þes wyes wondede ere bothen.'[123] The combat continues until Priamus is wounded in the side and Gawain cut by an envenomed blade. Only then does Gawain ask who his opponent is. Priamus gives his name and claims that his father is a great king:

> 'He es of Alexandire blode, ouerlynge of kynges,
> The vncle of his ayele sir Ector of Troye,
> And here es the kynreden that I of come –
> And Judas and Josue, þise gentill knyghtes.'[124]

Here again, nobility is tied to Troy, this time through Hector. Even the name of the Greek knight echoes Priam, the father of Hector. In fact, in the final lines of the poem Priam is referred to as 'sir Pryamous.'[125] Priamus's genealogy is even more impressive as he includes Alexander, Judas Maccabee, and Joshua among his ancestors. Like Cligés' appeal to Troy, however, the four Worthies that Priamus mentions (two pagan and two Hebrew) recall the larger theme of rise and fall which operates throughout the poem. The association with the earlier scene is emphasized as Gawain denies his own nobility, claiming 'knyghte was I neuer, / [Bot] with þe kydde Conquerour a knafe of his chambyre.'[126] Priamus responds:

'Giffe his knaves be syche, his knyghttez are noble!
There es no kynge vndire Criste may kempe with hym on;
He will be Alexander ayre, that all þe erthe lowttede,
Abillere þan euer was sir Ector of Troye!'[127]

Finally Gawain abandons the romance convention of concealing his identity and, like Priamus, admits his relationship to Arthur, one of the Worthies:

'My name es sir Gawayne, I graunt þe for sothe;
Cosyn to þe Conquerour, he knawes it hym selfen.'[128]

The episode ends happily. Both knights are cured by the magic waters which Priamus carries; he and his followers, who have been working as mercenaries for the Romans, join the British; and the combined forces gain a major victory over the duke of Lorraine. The scene, however, remains unsettling as the chivalry of Gawain and Priamus has been measured against the failed projects of Hector and the other Worthies. As in the Cligés episode, the poet's point of comparison for chivalric prowess is an ancestry whose own chivalric achievements failed to maintain lasting sovereignty. That Arthur's own sovereign position shares this unstable foundation is made clear by Priamus, who predicts that Arthur 'will be Alexander ayre.' Arthur's own association with the Worthies will be emphasized throughout the rest of the poem.

While Arthur's knights accentuate the chivalric nature of his reign, he remains a king whose primary concern is political expansion and military conquest. This image of the king is emphasized in the opening passage of the poem in which Arthur holds a Round Table after he has settled his realm and subdued foreign lands. The list of countries that Arthur has subdued includes more than thirty lands throughout all of Europe.[129] Similar to his kingly status Arthur's own character is described in impressive terms. Having received the message of the Roman ambassadors,

The kynge blyschit on the beryn with his brode eghn,
Þat full brymly for breth brynte as the gledys;
Keste colours as kyng with crouell lates,
Luked as a lyon and on his lyppe bytes.[130]

The ambassadors 'for radnesse ruschte to þe erthe, / Fore ferdnesse of

hys face.'[131] When they attend the sumptuous feast of the Round Table, Arthur claims that 'We knowe noghte in þis countré of curious metez' and apologizes for 'syche feble' fair.[132] The senators ignore Arthur's false modesty and proclaim that 'There ryngnede neuer syche realtee within Rome walles!'[133] Even after the ambassadors return to Rome their praise of Arthur and his kingdom is great:

'He may be chosyn cheftayne cheefe of all oþer,
Bathe be chauncez of armes and cheuallrye noble,
For whyeseste and worthyeste and wyghteste of hanndez,
Of all the wyes þate I watte in this werlde ryche.'[134]

This is the image of Arthur presented throughout the poem. He is primarily a king who maintains a regal bearing and does not participate in individual chivalric exploits. The obvious exception to this rule is the episode involving the giant of St Michael's Mount, but even here the poet has altered his sources to transform the scene from a simple battle between a heroic king and a giant into a defence of Arthur's sovereignty.

The episode begins as Arthur crosses the English channel and dreams of a terrible battle in which a dragon overcomes a bear in a fierce battle. Upon awakening Arthur asks his philosophers to interpret the dream. They say that the dragon represents Arthur himself, while the bear is given two possible significations:

'The bere that bryttenede was abowen in þe clowdez
Betakyns the tyrauntez þat tourmentez thy pople;
Or ells with somme gyaunt some journee sall happyn
In syngulere batell by ȝoure selfe one,
And þow sall hafe þe victorye, thurghe helpe of oure Lorde'[135]

The meaning of the dream becomes clear only as the poem progresses. After landing in Normandy a Templar approaches Arthur to tell him of trouble in the land:

'Here es a teraunt besyde that tourmentez thi pople,
A grett geaunte of Geen engenderde of fendez.'[136]

The appearance of the giant and the near repetition of the phrase 'tyrauntez þat tourmentez thy pople,' associates the coming adventure with both interpretations of Arthur's dream.

The giant has laid waste to the countryside and abducted the 'Duchez of Bretayne,' who is Guenevere's cousin.[137] He has also robbed the area of its wealth, and

'Mo florenez in faythe than Fraunce es in aftyre,
And more tresour vntrewely that traytour has getyn
Than in Troy was, as I trowe, þat tym þat it was wonn.'[138]

The poet emphasizes the damage that the giant has done to Arthur's realm, and the king decides to seek him out not only for the sake of the duchess of Britanny, but 'for rewthe of þe pople.'[139] In both Geoffrey's and Wace's account of the scene there is little mention of the people. It is the abducted woman, Helena, who prompts Arthur's involvement.[140] By broadening the impetus for action beyond the damsel in distress the poet minimizes the appearance of a chivalric *aventure*. This tendency continues as Arthur first ascends the mountain. The king meets an old woman who is lamenting over the grave of the murdered duchess. The woman does not believe that Arthur can be victorious and compares him to figures who are known for their individual feats of arms:

'Ware thow wyghttere than Wade, or Wawayn owthire,
Thow wynnys no wyrchipe, I warne the before!'[141]

Indeed Arthur is neither Wade nor Gawain, and as such his purpose is not to gain individual 'wyrchipe.' The major modifications of the scene highlight the political ramifications of the episode.

The giant of St Michael's Mount has been transformed in a number of notable ways. Unlike the chronicles, the poem focuses on the atrocities that the giant has committed, such as the eating of Christian children.[142] Finlayson argues that the poet's emphasis on this aspect of the giant's character overshadows the rape and murder of the duchess and that 'we can dispose of the idea that the episode is simply to be a romance interlude in a heroic poem; it is obviously more in keeping with the serious religious tone of the *chanson de geste*.'[143] Although Finlayson is right to downplay the importance of the duchess in the scene, his emphasis on the religious overtones is largely based on a single line of description, 'Cowles full cramede of crysmede childyre,'[144] and two lines from Arthur's fifteen-line challenge:

'Because that thow killide has þise cresmede childyre,
Thow has marters made and broghte out of lyfe.'[145]

Rather than establishing the religious nature of Arthur's actions, how-
ever, the destruction of the children of Arthur's realm is reason enough
for him to defend those under his sovereign authority. That the combat
between Arthur and the giant should be read as one over sovereignty is
clearly indicated by the other major alteration to the scene.

In the accounts of both Geoffrey of Monmouth and Wace, Arthur
defeats the giant of St Michael's Mount and then comments that he had
never fought a more difficult opponent except for the giant Ritho, who
possessed the cloak of beards. We have already seen how Thomas Gray
used the story of Ritho to emphasize Arthur's sovereign control over
Europe during the nine years of peace.[146] The alliterative poet does not
tell the Ritho story independently, but he superimposes the major trait
of Ritho, the cloak of beards, onto the giant of St Michael's Mount. The
lamenting woman warns Arthur that the giant is not interested in rents
or gold, and that he desires only to live outside the law, 'as lorde in his
awen.'[147] The giant's expression of his own sovereignty bears quoting at
length:

'Bot he has kyrtill one, kepide for hym seluen,
That was sponen in Spayne with specyall byrdez
And sythyn garnescht in Grece full graythly togedirs;
It es hydede all with hare hally al ouere
And bordyrde with the berdez of burlyche kyngez,
Crispid and kombide, that kempis may knawe
Iche kynge by his colour, in kythe there he lengez.
Here the fermez he fangez of fyftene rewmez,
For ilke Esterne ewyn, howeuer that it fall,
They sende it hym sothely for saughte of þe pople,
Sekerly at þat seson with certayne knyghtez;
And he has aschede Arthure all þis seuen wynntter.
Forthy hurdez he here to owttraye hys pople,
Till þe Bretouns kynge haue burneschete his lyppys
And sent his berde to that bolde wyth his beste berynes.
Bot thowe hafe broghte þat berde, bowne the no forthire,
For it es butelesse bale thowe biddez oghte ells.'[148]

The combat between Arthur and the giant is no random *aventure* but has
been orchestrated by the giant himself. Arthur's refusal to pay the 'fermez'
(royal rents) of his beard has brought the giant into the land in an
attempt to collect. Arthur responds to the woman that he is prepared to
fight and defend his beard:

'ʒa, I haue broghte þe berde' quod he 'the bettyre me lykez,
Forthi will I boun me and bere it my seluen.'[149]

The combat itself is described in detail, and Arthur, of course, wins in the
end. He orders that the giant's head be sent to his army and shown to
Hoel and that the treasure be gathered together:

'If thow wyll any tresour, take whate the lykez;
Haue I the kyrtyll and þe clubb, I coueite noghte ells.'[150]

Arthur himself keeps only the cloak of beards and the giant's iron club,
the symbol of his usurped sovereignty and the means through which he
maintained his tyrannous authority. When Arthur returns to his army
their greeting further emphasizes his position as king:

'Welcom, oure liege lorde! to lang has thow duellyde.
Gouernour vndyr Gode, graytheste and noble,
To wham grace es graunted and gyffen at His will,
Now thy comly come has comforthede vs all.
Thow has in thy realtee reuengyde thy pople.'[151]

This transformation is striking for several reasons. The episode can now
be associated with both interpretations of the dream of the dragon and
bear. Not only does it involve a giant that Arthur fights in single combat,
but that giant is also a 'tyrauntez þat tourmentez' the people.

The interpretation, however, also applies to Lucius, and the alter-
ations to the episode encourage the reader to compare the giant with the
emperor. In both cases, the conflict is over sovereign rights. The giant
seeks Arthur's beard as a symbol of his submission; Lucius seeks Arthur's
submission to Rome. The giant has come to the mountain to complete
his cloak; Lucius has come into Gaul to reestablish his position as sover-
eign over Europe. The issue of sovereignty in both cases also involves the
payment of rents. The old woman says of the giant that 'the fermez he
fangez of fyftene rewmez,' while Arthur, in response to Lucius, states that
he plans to reside in France and collect the rents owed to him. He will:

'Regne in my realtee and ryste when me lykes,
Be þe ryuere of Roone halde my Rounde Table,
Fannge the fermes in faithe of all þa faire rewmes
For all þe manace of hys myghte and mawgree his eghne.'[152]

Michael Twomey, in his brief discussion of the episode, argues that the 'justness of Arthur's war against Lucius is demonstrated symbolically in Arthur's single combat with the giant.'[153] Using the facts that the opponent is a giant, a tyrant and 'engendrede of fendez,'[154] Twomey claims that 'Defeating the giant is not a chivalric *aventure* but an important step in just war against Lucius,'[155] but this is true of all versions of the episode. The originality of the alliterative poem lies in the poet's decision to focus the thematic significance of the scene on the issue of sovereignty. The combat is not simply a first step in a just war; rather the giant has been transformed to foreshadow Arthur's relationship with an emperor who would usurp his kingly rights.

From its outset the war with Lucius is presented as one of competing notions of sovereignty. The ambassadors begin their message to Arthur by proclaiming his subordinate position:

'Sir Lucius Iberius, the Emperour of Rome,
Saluz the as sugett vndyre his sele ryche.'[156]

Arthur's response is to proclaim his own superior claim to be ruler of Rome:

'I haue title to take tribute of Rome:
Myne ancestres ware emperours and aughte it þem seluen –
Belyn and Brenne, that borne were in Bretayne,
They ocupyed þe Empyre aughte score wynnttyrs,
Ilkane ayere aftyre oþer, as awlde men telles.'[157]

Gawain's impolite embassy to Lucius continues the debate about which claimant holds title to Rome:

'And þe fals heretyke þat emperour hym callez,
That ocupyes in errour the empyre of Rome,
Sir Arthure herytage, þat honourable kynge,
That all his auncestres aughte bot Vter hym one.'[158]

The emphasis on competing notions of sovereignty as well as the relationship between the Roman campaign and the battle with the giant are made explicit after the battle with Lucius. Two surviving senators appear before Arthur and recognize his position as sovereign. They arrive without armour, bow before him 'and biddis hym þe hiltes,' thus abandoning

their war against him.[159] They also address the king:

> 'Twa senatours we are, thi subgettez of Rome,
> That has sauede oure lyfe by þeise salte strandys,
> Hyd vs in þe heghe wode thurghe þe helpynge of Criste,
> Besekes the of socoure as soueraynge and lorde.'[160]

The two are shaved in recognition of their submission:

> Thane the banerettez of Bretayne broghte þem to tentes
> There barbours ware bownn with basyns on lofte;
> With warme watire, iwys, they wette them full son:
> They shouen thes schalkes schappely theraftyre
> To rekken theis Romaynes recreaunt and ȝolden,
> Forthy schoue they them to schewe for skomfite of Rome.[161]

The shaving scene is apparently unique in accounts of Arthur's war with Lucius and it recalls the cloak of beards gathered by the giant of St Michael's Mount. In her notes, Hamel asserts that the scene demonstrates Arthur's decline. 'The culmination of this episode,' she claims, 'is the shaving of the suppliant senators, for no other reason than to humiliate them and Rome ... Arthur has indeed become the giant's alter ego.'[162] The humiliation of the senators, however, is not the only point of the scene. Just as Arthur recognized the significance of the cloak of beards and so requested it, along with the club, as his share of the giant's treasure, so here he emphasizes his position as sovereign over Rome by accepting the swords and beards of the suppliant senators. Arthur had accepted the giant's imagery of the beard as tribute and now applies that imagery to the war with Rome.

Despite the minor digressions and the change of focus, the poem's account of the war with Rome adheres closely to the chronicle narrative. Following the defeat of the Romans, however, the poem contains several episodes which are original, namely, the siege of Metz, Gawain's foraging expedition, the campaign in Italy, and the dream of Fortune. As we have seen, Gray implies that the period between the battle with Lucius and the news of Mordred's treachery included untold adventures. There was also 'some lead in the fourteenth-century tradition that Arthur carried his campaign into Italy.'[163] Robert Mannyng writes that after the defeat of Lucius Arthur remained in Burgundy:

Alle þe wynter duellid þer in,
tounes he did many bigyn;
in somer he þouht to Rome haf gone
if he had lettyng of none.
He was passed þe mountayns playn
bot Modrede did him turne agayn.[164]

John of Glastonbury also includes a record of Arthur's activity between the victory over Lucius and his march on Rome. In this account, Arthur crosses to Gaul when challenged by Rome, 'multasque alias prouincias subiciens bellum cum Romanis habuit et post subsequentem hiemem in partibus illis moratus multas ciuitates subiugare uacauit. Redeunte uero estate Arthurus uersus Romam tendens cum suo excercitu eam sibi subiugare affectauit.'[165] It is in these additional campaigns that most critics see the decline of Arthur's justifications for war. For Finlayson, the siege of Metz marks the turn from just to unjust war, while Twomey places the turn slightly later, at the battle for Como.[166] As Porter points out, however, the decision to invade these territories is not based on a sudden enthusiasm for imperialistic expansion. 'It has in fact been announced at the very beginning of the poem in Arthur's formal reply to the Roman ambassador where he rejects the Roman claim to overlordship and states his own hereditary right to be Emperor of Rome.'[167] Arthur proclaims that he will not only meet the emperor in open combat, but that he will continue the fight to reclaim his inheritance:

'In Lorrayne ne in Lumberdye lefe schall I nowthire
Nokyn lede appon liffe þat þare his lawes emes,
And turne in to Tuschayne whene me tyme thynkys,
Ryde all þas rowme landes wyth ryotous knyghttes'[168]

Before laying siege to Metz, Arthur announces that the duke of Lorraine 'renke rebell has bene vnto my Rownde Table.'[169] Lorraine and the towns in northern Italy 'are all clearly depicted in the poem as parts of the Roman Empire to which Arthur lays claim,'[170] and in the battles against these towns Arthur asserts his sovereignty over contumacious vassals. The severity of the campaign has often been cited as proof of Arthur's moral decline, particularly the passage describing his movement through Italy:

> Walles he welte down, wondyd knyghtez,
> Towrres he turnes and turmentez þe pople;
> Wroghte wedewes full wlonke, wrotherayle synges,
> Ofte wery and wepe and wryngen theire handis,
> And all he wastys with werre thare he awaye rydez.[171]

As Porter points out, however, 'contemporary accounts of the laws governing the conduct of war hardly bear out these conclusions.'[172] In fact, judging by contemporary practice, Arthur is less severe than he might have been, accepting the submission of the duchess after Metz has been taken by arms,[173] and ordering the good treatment of the people of Como:

> That no lele ligemane that to hym lonngede
> Sulde lye be no lady ne be no lele maydyns,
> Ne be no burgesse wyffe, better ne werse,
> Ne no biernez mysebide that to þe burghe longede.[174]

Commenting on these scenes, Juliet Vale asserts that '[b]y the standards of the law of arms which the poet seems to have in mind Arthur is very far from the cruel and covetous tyrant that he has been held to be.'[175]

The poem, therefore, portrays an Arthur who asserts his sovereign rights against the challenge from Rome and over his own rebellious vassals in Lorraine and Italy. Arthur's greatest achievement comes at the end of the Italian campaign as he rests near Viterbo. A cardinal comes to him and offers him the imperial crown, asking him to come to the pope:

> In the ceté of Rome as soueraynge and lorde,
> And crown hym kyndly with krysomede hondes,
> With his ceptre, [forsothe], as soueraynge and lorde.[176]

At this moment Arthur sits at the height of his majesty, but he will not be recognized as the sovereign of Rome. Rather, he is visited by a dream of Fortune before he rides triumphantly into the city, and the events that the dream predicts overtake his imperial ambition.

Arthur describes the dream of Fortune to his philosophers. He has dreamed that he was in a wild wood, filled with wolves, wild boar, and lions who licked their teeth, 'All fore lapynge of blude of my lele knyghtez.'[177] Afraid, Arthur flees to a meadow filled with vines of silver and grapes of gold. A beautiful duchess descends from the heavens and 'Abowte cho whirllide a whele with hir whitte hondez.'[178] Although the

woman is never named, her wheel identifies her as Fortune. Eight kings cling to the wheel, six of whom have fallen from its heights while two others attempt to climb. The fallen Worthies, as they will be identified, collectively lament:

'That euer I rengned on þi rog, me rewes it euer!
Was neuer roye so riche that regnede in erthe;
Whene I rode in my rowte, roughte I noghte ells
Bot reuaye and reuell and rawnson the pople,
And thus I drife forthe my dayes whills I dreghe myghte;
And therefore derflyche I am dampnede for euer!'[179]

As H.A. Kelly points out, the phrase 'dampnede for euer' cannot indicate that all the kings are damned to Hell, for the three Hebrew Worthies are traditionally freed during the harrowing.[180] The dream must be viewed as a-temporal, and as such the laments of the Worthies refer only to their positions on the wheel, not the salvation or damnation of their souls according to Christian theology. The phrase, therefore, is properly understood in the light of Caesar's statement that he is 'dampnede to þe dede.'[181] In the individual descriptions of the Worthies there is little to suggest that their falls were caused by anything other than the fickle nature of Fortune. The six fallen Worthies, three Hebrew and three pagan, each give additional brief personal statements of regret that they had put their trust in the wheel. Of the six, only Joshua blames his fall on personal sin:

'Now of my solace, I am full sodanly fallen,
And for sake of my syn ȝone sete es me rewede!'[182]

It is hard to understand why Joshua, the man who led the Israelites into the promised land, should be singled out for his sin. Kelly argues that Joshua is the victim of 'character assassination by alliteration' and that the line should be ignored,[183] while Hamel also views the phrase as anomalous.[184] Despite Joshua's self-condemnation, the image of the Worthies is generally neutral as they simply describe their former greatness and lament their fall. Hector's speech is typical:

'On ȝone see hafe I sitten als souerayne and lorde,
And ladys me louede to lappe in theyre armes;
And nowe my lordchippes are loste and laide foreuer!'[185]

The depiction of David is genuinely positive, as he clings to a Psalter, a harp and a sling:

> 'I was demede in my dayes' he said 'of dedis of armes
> One of the doughtyeste that duellede in erthe.
> Bot I was merride one molde on my moste strenghethis
> With this mayden so mylde þat mofes vs all.'[186]

The pattern of rise and fall which the wheel represents assumes that the two climbing Worthies, the Christians Charlemagne and Godfrey de Bouillon, will also be thrown down. The fallen Worthies, therefore, present a cross-section of those who place their trust in the wheel, and, much like the victims of tragedy in *The Monk's Tale*, not all of them deserve to have 'yfallen out of heigh degree.'[187] Those who choose to ride the wheel, whether the wicked (if we believe Joshua's statement), the neutral, or the good, are all abandoned by Fortune in the end. As Judas Maccabee says in another poem of the Nine Worthies, 'And yit botles hit is with dethe for to fyght, / For dethe dowtles is herytage to eueryche a man.'[188]

Following the description of the Worthies, Arthur approaches the duchess. She greets him, saying that 'all thy wirchipe in werre by me has thow wonnen.'[189] In fact, Fortune has aided Arthur not just throughout the events told in the poem, but earlier in his career as well, during his campaigns in France and against Frollo.[190] The duchess further honours Arthur by placing him at the top of her wheel:

> 'Scho lifte me vp lightly with hir leue hondes
> And sette me softely in the see, þe septre me rechede;
> Craftely with a kambe cho kembede myn heuede,
> That the krispan[d]e kroke to my crownne raughte,
> Dressid one me a diademe that dighte was full faire
> And syne profres me a pome pighte full of faire stonys,
> Enamelde with azoure, the erth thereon depayntide,
> Serkylde with the salte see appone sere halfes,
> In sygne þat I sothely was souerayne in erthe.'[191]

Arthur's position in the dream mirrors his position in life. He holds sovereignty over Rome and plans to conquer the rest of the world. The sceptre and the orb that the duchess give him represent his regal authority. Arthur walks through the meadow with the duchess in this state of

splendour until noon. At midday, however, the duchess's mood changes and she grows angry with her most recent favourite. Saying that Arthur has enjoyed her favour enough, 'Abowte scho whirles the whele and whirles me vndire, / Till all my qwarters þat whille whare qwaste al to peces.'[192]

Upon hearing the dream Arthur's philosopher immediately explains its significance: '"Freke" sais the philosophre "thy fortune es passede."'[193] Rather than condemning Arthur for his campaigns, however, the philosopher simply encourages the king to prepare for his imminent death:

'Thow arte at þe hegheste, I hette the forsothe –
Chalange nowe when thow will, thow cheuys no more!
Thow has schedde myche blode, and schalkes distroyede,
Sakeles, in cirquytrie, in sere kynges landis.
Schryfe the of thy schame and schape for thyn ende!'[194]

The philosopher recognizes that Arthur is now at the peak of his achievement and that he will prosper no longer. He also recognizes that Arthur's conquests have involved the deaths of innocents and that he should atone for those deaths, but there is nothing in the philosopher's speech, except proximity, which indicates that the deaths of innocents have caused Arthur's fall. Joshua, it will be remembered, sees his sin as justification for his fall and says that 'for sake of [his] syn' he is denied his once high place, but his lament is unique and not echoed by either Arthur or the interpreter of his dream. Arthur's place has been in the world, and, however just the cause, his wars have brought him into sin, the 'rewthe werkes' of which the philosopher encourages him to repent.[195] Only after he has given up the pursuit of earthly conquest can he, like the Red Cross Knight, wash his hands 'from guilt of bloudy field.' Critics who claim that the philosopher condemns Arthur's conquests are forced to acknowledge an inconsistency in the poet's attitude toward the king. Höltgen writes that 'now the poet shows himself to be a Janus figure: his Christian piety must condemn Arthur's bloody acts of war; his nationalistic enthusiasm for heroic and chivalric achievements must glorify the same deeds. Two hearts beat in his breast: the one predicts eternal damnation ... the other eternal fame.'[196] Arthur's fall, however, need not be seen as a condemnation of his earthly achievement, only its necessary outcome. Like Troy, the Arthurian world can be looked upon as both the pinnacle of chivalric glory and an example of Fortune's mutability.

After encouraging Arthur to found abbeys in France as penance, the philosopher identifies the kings in the dream and tells Arthur to 'Take kepe ȝitte of oþer kynges, and kaste in thyne herte, / That were conquerours kydde and crownnede in erthe.'[197] The adjectives used to describe the Worthies are uniformly positive: 'conquerours kydde,' 'cheualrous,' 'jentill,' 'full nobill,' 'joly,' 'þe dere.' Charlemagne and Godfrey are also praised for the recovery of Christian relics and the Holy Land itself.[198] Far from condemning the Worthies, the philosopher praises them and includes Arthur among their number:

'Forethy Fortune þe fetches to fulfill the nowmbyre,
Alls nynne of þe nobileste namede in erthe.
This sall in romance be redde with ryall knyghttes,
Rekkenede and renownde with ryotous kynges,
And demyd one Domesdaye for dedis of armes
For þe doughtyeste þat euer was duelland in erthe –
So many clerkis and kynges sall karpe of ȝoure dedis
And kepe ȝoure conquestez in cronycle foreuer!'[199]

Although the philosopher points to the place held by the Worthies in historical tradition, they remain significant in the poem not so much for their deeds or their achievements, but rather for the magnitude of their falls.[200] Theirs is a tradition of stunning decline, and it is this trait which links them to Arthur.

As individual examples of mutability the Worthies recall the *memento mori* tradition popular in England at the end of the fourteenth century. The *memento mori* encourages the listener to contemplate the fleeting nature of this life and prepare for the next world. Edward the Black Prince was perhaps the greatest example of military chivalry in the fourteenth century, but in the end Edward prepared for his death and contemplated the next life. His tomb in Canterbury Cathedral, erected about 1376, bears an epitaph which is composed in the first person. It demands that passers-by listen to what the 'corps' has to say, and that:

Tiel come tu es autiel je fu,
Tu seras tiel come je su.[201]

The epitaph continues and contrasts the Prince's existence on and in the earth saying:

En terre avoy graunt richesse,
Dount je y fis graunt noblesse,
Terre, mesons et graunt tresor,
Draps, chivalx, argent et or;
Mais je suys or poevre et cheitifs,
Parfond en la terre ou je gis.[202]

Like the speeches of the Worthies, the epitaph of the Black Prince, which he himself commissioned, does not condemn his chivalric activities. Rather, it recognizes that individual chivalry and achievement end with death, and that every man, including the heir to the English throne, must prepare for that eventuality. In the same way, the philosopher's directive to prepare for death does not condemn the life that Arthur has led; rather, it recognizes that Britain's greatest king shares his fate with every man.

In addition to the personal message of the *memento mori*, the Worthies also recall the larger pattern of the Brut, which has its origins at Troy, and in which Arthur fully participates. It is the tragedy of Arthur that his claim to sovereignty is based on British history, the pattern of which includes not only great rises to power, but also dramatic declines. Arthur's claims to the sovereignty of Rome are based on conquerors long since dead; Cligés' claim to noble arms is through Brutus and Aeneas, both fugitives from lost lands, and even Priamus's assertions that Arthur will be 'Alexander ayre,' or that he will be 'Abillere þan euer was sir Ector of Troye,' are not auspicious foundations for a lasting reign. Indeed, the turn of Arthur's fortune has already deprived him of his sovereignty, and even as he recounts the dream 'some wikkyd men' have begun to ravage his realm.[203]

The news of Mordred's treachery arrives the next day as Arthur, dressed in royal finery, wanders away from his men. The chronicle tradition does not name the messenger, but in the alliterative poem Arthur meets a pilgrim, on his way to Rome, who is identified as 'sir Cradoke.'[204] Arthur warns the pilgrim that he should not travel in an area torn by war, but Caradoc says he will visit the pope:

'Thane sall I seke sekirly my souerayne lorde,
Sir Arthure of Inglande, that auenaunt byerne.'[205]

Arthur recognizes that the pilgrim is British by his speech and asks how he knows the king. Caradoc answers:

> 'Me awghte to knowe þe kynge; he es my kidde lorde,
> And I, calde in his courte a knyghte of his chambire.
> Sir Craddoke was I callide in his courte riche,
> Kepare of Karlyon vndir the kynge selfen.'[206]

James L. Boren argues that '[i]n this case (as with the extreme case of the giant) the physical seems to mirror the spiritual, and Cradock's failure to recognize Arthur may be indicative of his (Arthur's) spiritual degeneration.'[207] Caradoc's failure to recognize the king, however, is not due to Arthur's moral decline, but his political decline. Caradoc states that he is looking for his 'souerayne lorde' and that he 'awghte to knowe þe kynge,' but now, abandoned by Fortune, Arthur no longer maintains his sovereign dignity. Arthur still has the dress of a king, but his authority is no longer recognized.

Caradoc's message is unwelcome. Mordred 'es wikkede and wilde of his dedys':

> 'He has castells encrochede, and corownde hym seluen,
> Kaughte in all þe rentis of þe Rownde Tabill.'[208]

Not only has Mordred usurped the throne, he has formed alliances with Arthur's enemies to defend the realm. Even these are not his worst crimes:

> 'He has weddede Waynore and hir his wieffe holdis,
> And wonnys in the wilde bowndis of þe weste marches,
> And has wroghte hire with childe, as wittnesse tellis.'[209]

It is appropriate that Caradoc should deliver this message. We have seen how both Thomas Gray and the Auchinleck *Short Metrical Chronicle* made use of the story of Caradoc's mantle to emphasize the theme of betrayal in their Arthurian narratives. Here, Caradoc has been divested of his mantle, but his presence carries the same message.[210] As in the *Scalacronica*, the appearance of Caradoc evokes images of treachery and deceit which mingle the sexual with the political. Mordred has committed adultery with his king and uncle's wife, but he has also betrayed his oath to care for the country and usurped his king's royal rights. After the dream of Fortune and the arrival of Caradoc, there is nothing left but to follow the narrative to its terrible conclusion.

Arthur returns to Britain to fight his rebellious warden. The first

skirmish with Mordred, a sea battle, is followed by Gawain's attempt to establish a beach-head, but the chivalry of Arthur's knights can no longer sustain his sovereign authority. In his attempt to win 'wirchipe ... for euer'[211] Gawain and his men are surrounded and outnumbered.[212] Finally, Gawain faces Mordred on the field and the two engage in single combat, but Gawain is unable to kill the traitor:

> Alls his grefe was graythede, his grace was no bettyre!–
> He schokkes owtte a schorte knyfe schethede with siluere
> And scholde haue slottede hym in, bot no slytte happenede:
> His hand sleppid and slode o slante one þe mayles,
> And þe toþer slely slynges hym vndire.[213]

Mordred gets the upper hand and strikes Gawain 'Thorowe þe helme and þe hede, one heyghe one þe brayne. / And thus sir Gawayne es gonn, the gude man of armes.'[214] The significance of the loss of Gawain is emphasized by the eulogy delivered by the traitor himself. When asked by King Froderike who he has killed, Mordred answers:

> ... Beknowe now þe sothe:
> Qwat gome was he, this with the gaye armes,
> With þis gryffone of golde, þat es one growffe fallyn?
> ....
> He was makles one molde, mane, be my trow[t]he!
> This was sir Gawayne the gude, þe gladdeste of othire
> And the graciouseste gome that vndire God lyffede;
> Mane hardveste of hande, happyeste in armes.'[215]

Mordred's appeal to heraldry, as in the scenes with Cligés and Priamus, acts as an affirmation of Gawain's nobility.[216] Gawain is also identified as the man who had been the 'happyeste in armes.' The adjective 'happyeste,' of course, is a cognate of 'hap' which the *Middle English Dictionary* defines as 'A person's lot (good or bad), luck, fortune, fate.' As an adjective, however, it implies good fortune and the Middle English 'happi' is defined as 'Favored by fortune, fortunate.' The designation 'happyeste in armes,' applied here to Gawain, recognizes that his success in battle has resulted from his good fortune.[217] The fact that Gawain's fortune has passed is further alluded to during the battle with Mordred through repeated use of 'hap' cognates. When Gawain decides to attack Mordred's forces the poet remarks:

> Oure men merkes them to, as them myshappenede;
> For hade sir Gawayne hade grace to halde þe grene hill,
> He had wirchipe, iwys, wonnen for euer![218]

In his final battle with Mordred, as quoted above, he 'scholde haue slottede hym in, bot no slytte happenede.' Other aspects of the scene emphasize Gawain's loss of good fortune. Despite his frenzied attack, he will lose the battle because 'Fell neuer fay man siche fortune in erthe!'[219] Later we are told that although he fights like a lion, 'ȝit sir Wawayne for wo wondis bot lyttill.'[220] Arthur also uses 'hap' in his lament for his fallen knight:

> 'Dere kosyn o kynde, in kare am I leuede,
> For nowe my wirchipe es wente and my were endide.
> Here is þe hope of my hele, my happynge of armes;
> My herte and my hardynes hale one hym lengede –
> My concell, my comforthe þat kepide myn herte!'[221]

Abandoned by Fortune, and plagued by mishaps, Arthur's laments that 'All [his] lordchipe lawe in lande es layde vndyre.'[222]

As Arthur finally confronts Mordred he asserts that he will fight the traitor 'alls I am trew lorde!'[223] The combat is not simply between a lord and his contumacious vassal. As Arthur wields Excalibur and Mordred wields Clarent, a sword not mentioned in any other version of the tale, the issue of sovereignty is highlighted again in this final battle. Clarent, an alternative symbol of regal authority, has been stolen from Arthur's own wardrobe by Mordred who ransacked the 'cofres enclosede þat to þe crown lengede, / With rynges and relikkes, and þe regale of Fraunce / That was fownden on sir Froll.'[224] The symbols of sovereignty that Arthur won through conquest have been, in turn, taken from him in Mordred's attempted usurpation. Arthur's own attempt to regain sovereignty is, as he seems to realize by the poem's end, doomed to failure. Fortune will no longer aid him, and his knights are no longer the 'happyeste in armes.' All Arthur can do is care for his own soul and salvage the kingdom for his heir.[225]

Despite his fall, and the fall of the Round Table, the poem consistently praises the king's efforts to attain and maintain sovereignty. In her review of William Matthews's book, Helaine Newstead writes of 'the poet's evident enthusiasm for the great king, whose heroic exploits constantly arouse his sympathetic admiration. Arthur is "oure kynge," his knights

are "oure chiualrous men."'[226] The failure of Arthur's ambition in no way diminishes his stature, nor does the disintegration of the Round Table invalidate Cligés' claim to nobility, or Gawain's desire for 'wirchipe.' It is not necessary, therefore, to condemn Arthur's imperial project in order to recognize the tragic elements of the poem. In defining medieval tragedy Benson writes that the 'hero, like all men, will inevitably fall to death or wretchedness even though he be flawless, for the lesson of medieval tragedy is simply that man is not the master of his own destiny.'[227] In the alliterative *Morte Arthure*, the British king is presented as the greatest example of a Christian sovereign and his Round Table as the pinnacle of chivalry, but neither the king nor the court over which he presides is exempt from the mutability of history. The message that echoes throughout the poem is that a king's sovereignty, and the chivalry required to maintain it, are by their very nature transient.

This theme is not unique to the alliterative poem, and the author relies on an audience familiar with the cyclical pattern of British history which precedes Arthur's reign. Robert Hanning, despite his convincing examination of the cyclical pattern of history in Geoffrey's *Historia*, argues that the theme was not repeated. 'Of course, it was one thing to copy Geoffrey's narrative,' he writes, 'and quite another to understand or emulate the premises of his historiography. Of the latter phenomenon there are few, if any, examples in the later medieval centuries.'[228] But the author of the alliterative *Morte Arthure* does emulate Geoffrey's thematic concerns. The poet prompts his audience's response by employing several strategies which emphasize this aspect of Arthurian history. The challenge of Cligés and the Gawain–Priamus episode both augment the chivalric quality of Arthur's reign while invoking the failed chivalric enterprises of the Nine Worthies and the British past. That past is again recalled in the final lines of the poem:

> Thus endis Kyng Arthure, as auctors alegges,
> That was of Ectores blude, the kynge son of Troye,
> And of sir Pryamous the prynce, praysede in erthe:
> For thethen broghte the Bretons all his bolde eldyrs
> Into Bretayne the brode, as þe Bruytte tellys. *& explicit*[229]

At the same time, the transformation of the giant of St Michael's Mount, the additions of the seige of Metz, the Italian campaign, and the dream of Fortune all emphasize the fact that the successes of the Roman cam-

paign have placed Arthur 'at þe hegheste.'[230] Implicit in this exalted position is the knowledge that his fall is imminent.

The alliterative poet develops these themes by altering and expanding upon the material found within the Brut tradition. The amplification of the Brut narrative, however, does not imply that the poet doubted the historicity of the chronicles from which he worked. Andrew Wyntoun praised Huchown's poetic skill even as he acknowledged that his 'Gestis Historiall' were not, strictly speaking, historically accurate. Like Sir Thomas Gray's *Scalacronica*, these texts demonstrate how a historian could make use of romance material to enhance the *sentence* of a historical project. Huchown and the alliterative poet might be 'Wauerand fra þe suthfastnes,' but the Brut itself is not thereby diminished. Both authors, therefore, demonstrate a willingness to manipulate the historical matter within the Brut tradition in order to enrich the interpretive options of the Arthurian past.

5

Adventures in History

... which is but one of his Wonderful deeds, whereof there are so many reported, that he might well be reckoned amongst the Fabulous, if there were not enow true to give them credit.

                                                     Sir Richard Baker, 1674[1]

A closer look at some of the lesser-known chronicles of medieval England has shown that romances did influence historical texts, but that that influence was not random or haphazard. We have seen that discussions of alternate stories, often little more than allusions to narrative forms and styles, were consistently placed within the two periods of peace, while specific romance episodes, such as the adventure of Caradoc's mantle or the encounter between Gawain and Priamus, could be employed to direct the audience's interpretation of the Arthurian past. Influence, however, was exerted in both directions, and the chronicle narrative affected the representation of Arthur in English romances. In his study of the stanzaic *Le Morte Arthur*, for example, E.D. Kennedy has argued that even when translating French romance material, an English poet 'would surely have considered the chronicles which the English accepted as part of their history.'[2] The poet's familiarity with English chronicles, according to Kennedy, accounts for the generally positive image of Arthur found in the stanzaic *Morte*,[3] and for specific changes made to his source, such as the series of battles between Arthur and Mordred rather than the single battle at Salisbury, as in the French *Le Mort le Roi Artu*. As Kennedy shows, the pattern of multiple battles is drawn from the chronicle tradition's three battles which originated with Geoffrey of Monmouth.[4]

Despite the influence of the chronicle tradition, the stanzaic *Morte*

Arthur is firmly located in the romance narrative of the prose Vulgate, retelling the story of Guenevere's adultery with Lancelot and the subsequent fall of the Round Table. Unlike the stanzaic *Le Morte Arthur* and its alliterative counterpart, however, most romances do not deal with the larger narrative of Arthur's reign, but instead focus on a single knight and his adventures. That larger narrative, however, remains ever present. As readers, we bring our own expectations of the Arthurian world to an episodic adventure, but which Arthurian world is appropriate? The chronicle and romance traditions offer very different narratives against which to judge a knight's performance. In many cases, casual references to an Arthurian setting do not clearly indicate which Arthurian narrative the romance employs as a background. The romance of *Sir Degrevant*, for example, uses Arthur and his court as a backdrop for a story which seems independent of either the chronicle or romance Arthurian narrative. The reader cannot tell in which tradition the story belongs, and it probably does not matter.[5] In contrast, the setting of Chaucer's *Wife of Bath's Tale* is a self-consciously ahistorical one:

> In th'olde dayes of the Kyng Arthour,
> Of which that Britons speken greet honour,
> Al was this land fulfild of fayerye.
> The elf-queene, with hir joly compaignye,
> Daunced ful ofte in many a grene mede.[6]

This fanciful opening is far removed from the serious reckoning of conquests, lands, and rents with which the alliterative *Morte Arthure* begins, and may indicate that the romance's account of sexual politics is to be read not against the history of the chronicle tradition, but against the fictions of the prose Vulgate cycle.

As popular as the Vulgate was, however, we have seen that the chronicle narrative was widely disseminated in a variety of texts, and that this version of Arthur's reign was as well known, if not more so, than the account found in its romance counterpart. It is not surprising, therefore, that English romances of individual adventure could also use the narrative found in the Brut tradition as a background. This is not to say that the authors of romances sought to present the adventures of individual knights as historically factual; rather, an author could enrich a romance by implying a relationship between the hero's individual adventure and the larger narrative of Arthur's reign. Such a relationship is exploited by the authors of *The Awntyrs off Arthure* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*,

both of whom direct their readers to consider the respective adventures of Gawain within the chronicle narrative. In neither of these works is the whole narrative of Arthur's reign retold, but the poets use subtle allusions to keep the Brut tradition in the audience's mind as Gawain's adventures unfold.

The emphasis placed on the historical Arthur seems to be a tendency of the fourteenth-century alliterative revival, of which both poems, like the alliterative *Morte Arthure*, are products. Barron claims that the poets of the revival viewed Arthur in a manner distinct from their French contemporaries. For the English alliterative poets, Arthur's 'fundamental role as the once and future king – founder of a Britain that had been great and would be great again, firmly rooted in history as part of a dynastic succession stretching from Aeneas to Cadwalader, one-time conqueror of England's continental rivals – informed and coloured his every appearance, in chronicle or romance, dignifying trifling actions and obscuring ignoble ones.'[7] Unlike the alliterative *Morte*, these two adventures focus on Sir Gawain, rather than Arthur himself. The poems have undergone a great deal of critical scrutiny, and *Sir Gawain* in particular has been the subject of arguably more scholarly prose than any other poem of the revival. Rarely, however, do critics carefully consider either poem in relation to the narrative of Arthur's whole reign. Those critics who do read the poems within a narrative context have generally looked to the romance tradition, and have interpreted both as oblique comments on the adultery of Lancelot and Guenevere. But English poets could also direct an audience's attention to the chronicle and thus explore themes of personal covetousness and *trowthe* within the interpretive context of British historiography.

The Awntyrs off Arthure

More than any other English romance, *The Awntyrs off Arthure* clearly establishes its relationship to the chronicle tradition. In the *Awntyrs*, Arthur not only frames the action of the poem's two episodes, but the entire narrative of Arthur's fall is outlined by Guenevere's dead mother in an ominous prophecy. The lessons of the poem, therefore, not only reflect upon the immediate action of the romance, but on the entire Arthurian world and the values that it perpetuates.

Ralph Hanna III's assertion that the *Awntyrs* is actually two poems has been adequately refuted by A.C. Spearing's studies of the unity of the work,[8] but the poem remains structured around two distinct adventures.

In his work Spearing stresses the fact that the *Awntyrs* must be viewed as a diptych, in that the actions in one episode comment on the other.[9] At first glance Guenevere and Gawain are initially taught a lesson about charity and then given the chance to act on their new-found knowledge, but a close study of the iconography of death which is evoked by the poet in the first half of the work, and the poem's use of the alliterative *Morte Arthure*, will undermine the seemingly optimistic pattern of a lesson which is first learned and then applied.

The two episodes of *The Awntyrs off Arthure* were long thought to be unrelated. In the second section Gawain engages in a fairly typical adventure involving a challenge and combat. The first adventure is more novel, and it involves a visit from Guenevere's dead mother. The ghastly depiction of the ghost, although placed in an unusual literary setting,[10] is a conventional representation of death, and the *Awntyrs* engages with this iconography, as do other texts closely related to the poem. One of the most striking examples of this ghastly iconography is found in the well-known legend of the Three Living and the Three Dead. The legend in which three men come upon the ghosts of their three dead fathers is represented in English by the early fifteenth-century *De Tribus Regibus Mortuis*,[11] and it shares many features with the *Awntyrs*. The image is also found in religious lyrics which, as Douglas Gray has shown, became highly formulaic in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[12] This iconography reflected the growing preoccupation with death which Huizinga notes as a characteristic of the age.[13] Gray associates these convention with narrative necessity: 'There were two ways in which the *memoria* of death could be made vivid, so that the reader might be shocked into penitence. The poet could stress the physical facts of the decay of the body, and he could present man's encounter with death in a dramatic way. The two are, naturally enough, sometimes combined. There are poems in which the dead man "speaks" to us, and tells us the gruesome details of decomposition, and we sometimes find depictions of worm-covered skeletons accompanied by warning *tituli*, as if they were speaking to the beholder.'[14]

The *Awntyrs*' reliance of one *memoria* of death, the *Trentalle Sancti Gregorii*, is well known and mentioned by most editors of the poem.[15] David Klausner has expanded this theory and demonstrated that a large body of 'adulterous mother' exempla also influenced the *Awntyrs* poet. He concludes that it is 'clear that the author of *Awntyrs* has based his tale to a considerable extent on the *Trentalle*. It is also evident that he was

familiar with some exemplar of the family of sermon tales which lay behind the *Trentalle*.'[16] Klausner's theory could be expanded even further to include the large body of literature which Douglas Gray examines.

De Tribus Regibus Mortuis, although not a source for the *Awntyrs*, shares many general features with this body of literature, and many specific features with the *Awntyrs* in particular.[17] Both are written in thirteen-line stanzas which employ a complicated pattern of rhyme and alliteration. *Tribus Regibus* involves a hunt in which three kings, separated from their hunting party by a sudden change in weather and a thick fog, are surprised by the appearance of their dead fathers. *The Awntyrs off Arthure* also opens with a hunt during which Gawain and Guenevere are separated from the hunting party when a sudden storm rises and the ghostly apparition of Guenevere's dead mother appears. Both poems depict their ghostly visititations using conventional iconography. Literary portrayals of the didactic dead tend to emphasize several traits. First is the tendency to describe the process of decomposition in graphic detail. In *De Tribus Regibus Mortuis*, for example, the first dead king speaks of the vermin that infest his grave and his tattered funeral clothes:

'Lo here þe wormus in my wome! Þai wallon and wyndon.
Lo here þe wrase of þe wede þat I was in wondon!'[18]

The second dead king commands his son to 'Lokys on my bonus þat blake bene and bare!'[19] Similarly, the ghost in the *Awntyrs*, who appears in physical form, is described in grisly detail. We are told that 'Bare was þe body, and blake to þe bone.'[20] Later the vermin that infest the body are also described:

Skeled withe serpentes alle aboute þe sides;
To telle þe todes þereone my tonge were fulle tere.[21]

The ghost herself even describes her state, complaining of 'þe wilde wormes, þat worche me wrake.'[22]

The talking dead also demonstrate a preoccupation with commemorative masses as a means to shortening their time in purgatory, and they often rebuke the living for not having the necessary masses said. In *De Tribus Regibus Mortuis*, the first dead king laments the fact that the three living have been raised to the royal seat:

'Bot we haue made ȝoue mastyrs amys
Þat now nyl not mynn vs with a mas.'[23]

The *Awntyrs* ghost also asks that masses be said for her. When Guenevere asks how she may ease her mother's suffering, the ghost answers:

'Were thritty trentales done,
By-twene vnder and none,
Mi soule socoured withe sone,
And broughte to þe blys.'[24]

As the ghost departs she repeats her request for masses, saying that:

'Masses arne medecynes to vs þat bale bides;
Vs þenke a masse as swete
As eny spice þat euer ye yete.'[25]

Finally, the talking dead portray themselves as examples for the living. The example is valid, they claim, because the living will soon be among the dead themselves. In *De Tribus Regibus Mortuis*, the third dead king commands, 'Makis ȝour merour be me! My myrþus bene mene.'[26] Guenevere's mother makes a similar warning during her conversation with the queen:

'For al þi fresshe foroure
Muse one my mirrour,
For, king and Emperour,
Thus shul ye be.'[27]

By emphasizing the fact that the dead are a 'mirrour' for the living, all of the talking dead stress the transience of life itself. The grisly details of decomposition and the concern for masses also force readers to reflect on their own mortality. Although the *Awntyrs* ghost is unusual in that she also implores Guenevere to be kind to the poor (advice which Guenevere does not seem to notice), her representation is otherwise conventional.[28]

This literary construct appears to have been well established by the time the *Awntyrs* was composed in the early fifteenth century,[29] but these elements are not confined to literature alone. Many of the same concerns are displayed in funerary practices of the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The epitaph of William and Beatrice Chichele of

Northamptonshire, for example, contains many of the elements found in literary representations of the talking dead:

> Such as ye be such wer we
> Such as we be such shall ye be
> Lerneth to deye that is the lawe
> That this lif now to wol drawe.
> Sorwe or gladnesse nought letten age
> But on he cometh to lord and page.
> Wherfor for us that ben goo
> Preyeth as other shall for you doo
> That God of his benignyte
> On us have mercy and pite
> And nought remember our wykedness
> Sith he us bought of hys goodnesse.[30]

The *memento mori* which opens this epitaph was used extensively through-out the later Middle Ages, as in the famous epitaph of Edward the Black Prince, 'Tiel come tu es autiel je fu, / Tu seras tiel come je su.'[31] The theme of transience became associated with medieval tombs in an even more surprising way. The transi-tomb, a sepulchral monument that physi-cally represented the literary construct, appeared late in the fourteenth century. Instead of merely depicting the idealized form of the deceased, the transi-tomb included a second, grotesque depiction of the decom-posing body.[32] The transi-tomb is thus a graphic representation of the transitory nature of existence: 'Above on the tomb slab lies the effigy in the glorious panoply of bishop or knight. Below, the walls of the tomb and coffin are cut away to reveal the emaciated corpse within, naked on its winding sheet. Sometimes the stomach lies hollow and empty, eviscer-ated by the embalmer's knife, sometimes worms creep about the body upon their busy occasions.'[33] The earliest known transi-tomb, that of Franiçois de la Sarra (d. 1363), depicts the body being devoured by toads and worms.[34] The first transi-tomb in England was built by Henry Chichele, Archbishop of Canterbury, in 1424 in Canterbury cathedral. He was interred in the tomb after his death in 1440.[35]

The iconography of the transi-tomb, the epitaphs that speak to passers-by, and the representation of the talking dead in literature, all emphasize the natural progression from life to death. They invite the reader or viewer to consider the fleeting nature of life and to prepare for death by realizing that worldly achievements are ephemeral. The *Awntyrs* ghost

shows a similar concern for the passing of riches. She asserts that 'Quene was I some wile, brighter of browes,'[36] and lists the 'palaies,' 'parkes,' 'townes,' and 'toures' over which she once ruled.[37] Her possessions in life, however, do her no good, as 'Nowe ame I cauȝte oute of kide to cares so colde.'[38] The ghost's comparison of her former high estate and her present fall from that position, reminds us of the laments delivered by the fallen worthiess in the *Morte Arthure*'s dream of Fortune. 'On ȝone see hafe I sitten als souerayne and lorde,' complained Hector, 'And nowe my lordchippes are loste and laide foreuer!'[39]

Unlike the transi-tomb or the tomb-stone epitaph, however, the ghost in the *Awntyrs* is not simply a mirror for any passer-by. Within the narrative she is placed specifically in apposition to Guenevere, and the poet goes to great lengths to demonstrate their association. The most obvious affinity between the two is their relationship by blood. The ghost twice states that she is Guenevere's mother. When she first addresses Guenevere she cries 'Lo! how delful dethe has þi dame diȝte!'[40] and later she laments, 'I bare þe of my body; what bote is hit I layne?'[41] The effect of this relationship is striking. As Speirs put it, '[e]ach is confronted with herself in the other – the daughter as she will be, and the mother as she once was.'[42] The ghost also directly compares herself to her daughter, saying that she was once 'Gretter þene dame Gaynour.'[43] At the same time she warns Guenevere to prepare for her end, saying, 'Þus dethe wil ȝou diȝte, thare you not doute.'[44] The women are also associated by their respective positions in society. Guenevere is the present queen, while her mother also was 'Cristenede and krysommede, withe kynges in my kyne.'[45]

These outward parallels and associations are also more subtly emphasized by the poet's use of his stanza form. Throughout the poem stanzas are linked together by means of verbal repetition. At times, as Klausner notes, this iteration can be very effective and ominous.[46] The poet's use of concatenation not only binds the work together by linking stanzas, it also helps to draw closer the parallels between Guenevere and her dead mother, as words and phrases are applied to either character at stanza breaks. The first use of this device occurs at the appearance of the apparition, as the ghost approaches Gawain and the queen:

'Alas! now kindeles my care,
I gloppen and I grete!'

Then gloppenet and grete Gaynour the gay[47]

The next use of the technique is more effective, as the ghost addresses
Gawain:

> 'I ame comene in þis cace
> To speke with your quene.
>
> Quene was I some wile, brighter of browes ...'[48]

Throughout their conversation, words and phrases of the one are re-
peated by the other at stanza breaks and at the wheel of the stanza. Often
the grammatical sense of the phrase has changed, as in this exchange
between the queen and her mother:

> 'If þou be my moder, grete wonder hit is
> That al þi burly body is brouȝte to be so bare!'
> 'I bare þe of my body; what bote is hit I layne?'[49]

Through these devices the poet carefully draws the association between
Guenevere and her mother, the talking dead. Unlike the depiction of
the worthies in the alliterative *Morte Arthure*, this is more specific than a
general statement about the transience of human life. Despite her posi-
tion as queen of the realm at the height of her power, Guenevere herself
will be just as her mother is now, a rotting corpse whose riches will be of
no use.

The theme of transience and metamorphosis continues in the second
half of the adventure with the apparition.[50] Gawain interrupts the ghost
to ask a question. The form his question takes implies that he already
knows the answer:

> 'How shal we fare,' quod þe freke, 'þat fondene to fighte
> And þus defoulene þe folke, one fele kinges londes,
> And riches ouer reymes with outene eny righte,
> Wynnene worshippe in werre þorghe wightness of hondes?'[51]

The ghost answers Gawain's question by prophesying the destruction of
the Round Table. Unlike most medieval prophecies, her narration is not
cloaked in the obscure animal imagery which often seeks to obscure
meaning.[52] Rather, the prophecy is a simple, straightforward exposition
of the Arthurian story.[53] Her narrative, however, is not based on the
romance tradition, but on the chronicles, and this must be a conscious

decision of the poet. The reader, therefore, is not presented with an image of Lancelot's betrayal or Gawain's revenge pushing the Round Table to ruin. Rather, another image of mutability, the Wheel of Fortune, is blamed for Arthur's fall.

The ghost's short monologue achieves its ominous effect through a careful attention to temporality. She begins by describing the present situation:

> 'Your king is to couetous, I warne þe, sir kniȝte;
> May no mane stry him withe strength, while his whele stondes;'[54]

The ghost then turns to the past, retelling the achievements of the Round Table:

> 'Fraunce haf ye frely with your fight wonnene;
> Freol and his folke fey ar þey leued;'[55]

Next, she turns to the future:

> 'Yet shal þe riche remayns with one be aure-ronene,
> And with þe rounde table þe rentes be reued.'[56]

Arthur's success, however, will be short lived, and she begins to describe the fall of the Round Table,

> 'Gete þe, sir Gawayne,
> Turne þe to Tuskayne;
> For ye shul lese Bretayne,
> With a king kene'[57]

and Gawain's own death,

> 'Gete þe, sir Gawayne,
> The boldest of bretayne;
> In a slake þou shal be slayne,
> Siche ferlyes shulle falle.'[58]

The prophecy, in total, traces Arthur's war with Lucius, his approach to Rome, and his return to Britain at the news of Mordred's treachery. Although the ghost never mentions the traitor by name, a brief descrip-

tion of the final campaign against Mordred is included which ends, as
though full-circle, in the present:

> 'Þei shullene dye one a day, þe doughety by-dene,
> Suppriset with a surget; he beris hit in sable,
> With a sauter engreled of siluer fulle shene.
> He beris hit of sable, soþely to say;
> In riche Arthures halle
> The barne playes at þe balle,
> Þat outray shalle you alle
> Delfully þat day.'[59]

Reiteration again serves to link the wheel of the stanza, which depicts the
present situation, to the earlier lines, which depict events in the future.
Mordred's heraldic description also links the traitor of the future to the
innocent child of the present.

As William Matthews has shown, elements of the ghost's prophecy,
such as the reference to Frollo and Mordred's heraldic device, indicate
that the *Awntyrs* poet knew and borrowed from the alliterative *Morte
Arthure*.[60] But Matthews goes on to say that the 'details that prove the
indebtedness of this prophecy ... are less significant than the echo of
motifs in which *Morte Arthure*'s originality chiefly lies, the tragedy of
fortune and the theme of penitence.'[61] Indeed, the ghost goes beyond
the alliterative *Morte* and explicitly states that the fall of the Round Table
is a result of Arthur's actions. Unlike the philosopher in the alliterative
Morte, the ghost in the *Awntyrs* accuses Arthur of being 'to couetous,' and
it is this ambition that will lead to the turning of Fortune's wheel. The
ghost makes a direct appeal to the Wheel of Fortune in her description
of Arthur's fall:

> 'May no mane stry him withe strength, while his whele stondes;
> Whane he is in his mageste, moost in his miȝte,
> He shal lighte ful lowe one þe se sondes'[62]

Fortune is described as false for her influence which is felt by all nations.
Arthur's rise on her wheel has necessitated the fall of other rulers:

> 'Thus ȝour cheualrous kynge chefe schalle a chaunce;
> False fortune in fyghte,
> That wondirfulle whele wryghte;

Mase lordis lawe for to lyghte.
Takes witnes by Fraunce.

Fraunce hafe ȝe frely with ȝour fyghte wonnene
The Frollo and þe Farnaghe es frely by-leuede.'[63]

In this way the apparition of Guenevere's mother appeals to Fortune, another image of mutability and change, to explain Arthur's fall.[64] Just as the ghost complains that once she was a queen and now 'in a lake loȝ am I lighte,'[65] so she warns that although Arthur is now king, 'He shal lighte ful lowe one þe se sondes.'[66]

This warning is made more ominous by its careful adherence to the chronicle tradition. A fifteenth-century audience would have recognized the ghost's narrative as authentic Arthurian history. Although certain particulars correspond only to the alliterative *Morte Arthure*, the prophecy carefully avoids romance elements, and thus the authenticity of the ghost's narrative is assured. Failure to recognize this fact has caused some critics to lay undue emphasis on the ghost's warning against 'luf paramour.'[67] A reading of the poem which relies on the story of Lancelot, however, assumes that the Arthurian setting for the poem is drawn from the Vulgate cycle.[68] In the *Awntyrs* the events of Arthur's fall conform to the Brut tradition, and the prophecy relies on the audience's knowledge of the historical Arthur not only for its narrative, but also for its theme of the cyclical nature of history.

The prophecy of Arthur's Roman campaign and its outcome thus takes on added significance as the careful attention to historical detail helps to place the actions of the romance within Arthurian history. Matthews notes that 'the ghost's prophecy in [*The Awntyrs off Arthure*] is imagined as occurring after the conquest of France and before the campaign against Lucius: this timing and the association of the events with Carlisle and its social pleasures might mean that [the *Awntyrs*] was conceived as a prologue to [the *Morte Arthure*], the events taking place some time before Lucius' challenge.'[69] Arthur, the ghost tells us, has already defeated Frollo and conquered France. The adventure, therefore, takes place in the nine-year period of peace before the challenge from Rome. This temporal space, as we have seen, had already been established as a period in which wonders could occur. Like the twelve years of peace at the beginning of Arthur's reign, English chroniclers identified the nine-year period of peace which followed the conquest of France as a time of chivalric adventures. Following a hint in Geoffrey and

Wace, Robert Mannyng had stated that 'Many selcouth by tyme seres / betid Arthur þo nyen 3eres.'[70] For Mannyng, these adventures happened in France and were recorded in prose texts,[71] but for Sir Thomas Gray, the adventures were more general. Gray merely stated that Arthur held royal courts 'De queux Gauwayn s'entremist fortement, qe tresseouent tres bien ly auenit, com recorde est en sez estoirs.'[72] Like English chroniclers, therefore, the *Awntyrs* author has taken advantage of a time within the historical tradition which was set apart for feats of individual chivalry. The period he has chosen immediately precedes the challenge from Rome with which the alliterative *Morte Arthure* begins.

Even if the adventure is not specifically thought of as a prologue to the *Morte*, it is clearly set within a historical time and place. Arthur's realm has been extended across the known world, and the challenge from Rome, as predicted by the ghost, will lead Arthur to participate in the cyclical pattern of history which we saw expressed in the alliterative *Morte Arthure*. His fall, in other words, is close at hand, but at the moment of the adventure his sovereignty is at its greatest. Thomas Gray emphasized Arthur's exalted position by transferring the account of the giant Ritho to this period of adventures. In the *Scalacronica* the cloak of beards, the physical manifestation of European sovereignty, is won by Arthur during the nine years of peace.[73] The author of the *Morte Arthure* also uses the cloak as a symbol of sovereignty, but he transfers it to the giant of St Michael's Mount. Arthur demonstrates his position on the wheel by winning the cloak and thus affirming his authority over the fifteen realms of Europe at the very beginning of the Roman campaign.[74] The prophecy in *The Awntyrs off Arthure* serves much the same function as the cloak of beards in both the *Scalacronica* and the *Morte Arthure*. It establishes the moment at which Arthur is 'moost in his mi3te.'[75] In both historical accounts, however, the cloak of beards establishes Arthur's status within an ongoing narrative. In the *Scalacronica*, it represents the culmination of Arthur's career; in the *Morte*, it is the starting point of Arthur's fall. The entire adventure of *The Awntyrs off Arthure*, however, takes place during the critical moment when Arthur is at the apex of his career. That moment is encompassed by two powerful representations of mutability: the ghost of Guenevere's mother, whose representation is based on the same conventions utilized by the transi-tomb and the legends of the talking dead, and her appeal to Fortune's wheel. Both of these emphasize the transience of worldly achievement at the very moment that Arthur's sovereignty is at its height.

After completing her recitation of future history the ghost retreats,

reminding Guenevere to remember the poor, and have masses said for her soul.[76] The weather clears and the hunting party reassembles. Klausner, who follows the Thornton text, notes that the court's reaction to the adventure is less than enthusiastic. Guenevere 'tells them of her experience, but it is passed over in a line; they wonder at it but do not take it to heart.'[77] Alternate readings of the line are even more shocking. After hearing of the adventure, the Douce manuscript describes the courtiers' reaction, saying 'The wise of þe weder for-wondred þey were.'[78] Rather than heed the message of life's mutability, the Arthurians wonder at the changeable weather of northern England. The court retires to Carlisle and the second adventure begins without warning.

In the second episode Guenevere has the opportunity to act on the ghost's admonitions to show charity and be less covetous. As the knights retreat to Carlisle for a feast they are again interrupted in their courtly pursuits by an unexpected challenge. These intruders, the knight Galeron and his lady, are more familiar to the court, and their own courtly aspect is emphasized in a lengthy description.[79] The lady is 'þe worþiest wighte þat eny wede wolde,'[80] while 'The knighte in his colours was armed ful clene, / Withe his comly crest, clere to be-holde.'[81] They come with a challenge, however, and accuse Arthur of stealing the knight's lands in an unjust war, thus displaying the same covetousness of which the ghost also accused him. Galeron complains:

> 'Þou has wonene hem in werre, with a wrange wille,
> And geuen hem to sir Gawayne, þat my hert grylles.'[82]

The case will be decided by combat, and the trial is delayed until the following day. The battle itself is described at length and in detail. Although both knights are sorely wounded, the poet takes as much time to describe the damage done to their arms and armour:

> Hardely þene þes haþelese one helmes þey hewe,
> Þei betene downe beriles, and bourdures bright;
> Shildes one shildres, þat shene were to shewe,
> Fretted were in fyne golde, þei failene in fighte;
> Stones of Iral þey strenkel and strewe,
> Stiþe stapeles of stele þey strike done stiȝte.[83]

Spearing argues that the battle 'perfectly expresses the nature of the aristocratic life, which consists in a generous willingness to waste those

material possessions that seem to be its essence.'[84] More specifically, however, those possessions are wasted in a battle which is fought to defend Arthur's covetous actions.

The conflict is finally resolved just as Gawain gains the upper hand. When Galeron is seized by the collar, his lady appeals to Guenevere to 'Haf mercy one yondre kniȝte.'[85] Guenevere, apparently having learned the lesson of the ghost, implores Arthur to 'Make þes knightes accorde.'[86] Before Arthur can act, however, Galeron admits defeat and freely gives up his claims:

'Here I make þe releyse, renke, by þe rode,
And by rial reysone relese þe my righte'[87]

He then turns to Arthur and makes a similar release: 'Of rentes and richesse I make þe releyse.'[88] Arthur, a little late, commands peace between the knights. He gives Gawain a reward of treasures and grants him several more lands,[89] on the condition that Gawain settle with the knight 'And relese him his riȝte, / And graunte him his londe.'[90] Gawain, in return, gives Galeron back his lands, saying: 'I shall refeff him in felde, in forestes so faire.'[91] The poem concludes as Galeron joins the Round Table, and Guenevere, like the three living kings in *De Tribus Regibus Mortuis*, remembers her promise and provides that 'a mylione of masses' are said for her mother's soul.[92]

To Matthews, the plot is neatly circular and fulfilling. He describes the poem as containing two strands. The first, which concerns Guenevere's luxury and pride, is resolved through her pity for the wounded knights and the masses said for her mother's soul.[93] The second strand is concerned with Arthur's covetousness, but even here Matthews sees resolution as '[i]mperial conquests, won with wrong, are canceled out in a display of Christian charity, so that one might believe that the troubled ghost could have taken almost as much comfort from the effect of her moral advice as from the masses with which the poem ends.'[94] Spearing agrees with Matthews's conclusion,[95] but remembers the unresolved prophecy of the first adventure. Although he believes that the poem 'celebrates a noble way of life,'[96] he also realizes that the prophecy of Arthur's fall must be held in the audience's consciousness. It was, therefore, 'a stroke of genius to make the glorification of what was doomed come after the prophecy of doom.'[97] For all this, he still feels that medieval poets, and the *Awntyrs* poet in particular, 'saw in courtly civilization, for all its limitations, an admirable resilience, which enabled it to

continue the game even while knowing that it was only a game, and it must come to an end.'[98] Phillips also sees the second half of the poem as genuinely positive, but she denies that there are moral lessons to be learned from the ghost. The ghost's preoccupation with penitence and the feeding of the poor does not, according to Phillips, imply that the poet values good works for their own sake. Rather, 'the text presents spiritual and moral values as if their chief rationale is the protection of the aristocratic soul after death.'[99] The ghost's prophecy, therefore, recognizes that military conquests are subject to the vagaries of fortune, but it does not condemn them. The prophecy's references to 'rentes' that are gained and lost by the Round Table are, according to this reading, echoed in Galeron's successful attempt to regain his feudal rights.[100]

There are, however, indications throughout the poem that the message of transience and mutability pervades the second episode more fully than either Spearing or Phillips would allow. As Galeron and his lady enter Arthur's hall, the lady addresses Arthur as 'Mone makeles of mighte.'[101] The line recalls the ghost's grim prediction that 'Whane he is in his mageste, moost in his mi3te, / He shal lighte ful lowe.'[102] Indeed, the image of Arthur in majesty atop the Wheel of Fortune is recalled by the stanza which follows the lady's challenge:

> The mane in his mantylle syttis at his mete,
> In paulle purede with pane, fulle precyousely dyghte,
> Trofelyte and trauerste wythe trewloues in trete;
> The tasee was of topas þat þer to was tyghte.
> He glyfte vpe withe hys eghne, þat graye ware and grete,
> Withe his burely berde, one þat birde bryghte.
> He was the souerayneste sir, sittande in sette,
> Þat euer any segge soughe, or sene was with syghte.
> Thus the kyng, crowned in kythe, carpis hir tille:
> 'Welecome, worthyly wyghte!
> Thou salle hafe resone and ryghte;
> Whythene es this comly knyghte,
> If it be thi wille?'[103]

This stanza not only establishes Arthur as a mighty and opulent king, it also has a crucial structural significance.

Following Alastair Fowler's lead,[104] Spearing discovered that, in accordance with a pattern in Renaissance poetry, the *Awntyrs* has as its central

stanza a passage which describes the king sitting in sovereignty. The
stanza just quoted (the twenty-eighth out of fifty-five) clearly describes
the king in a central position. The central line of the stanza (and of the
entire poem) emphasizes that position: 'He was the souerayneste sir,
sittande in sette.'[105] 'We have then an exact symmetry,' claims Spearing,
'with the king enthroned in his full majesty as ruler, host, and judge at
the precise centre of a poem which also mentions him in its first and last
lines.'[106] The circularity of the narrative is thus accentuated by the
repetition of the phrase 'In the tyme of Arthur ane aunter by-tydde,'[107]
and this pattern is reinforced by the apparent resolution of both strands
of the narrative, the covetousness of Arthur and the masses necessary for
the ghost's peace. At the centre of this narrative sits Arthur, both literally
and structurally. The very structure of the poem, therefore, mirrors
Fortune's wheel, as Arthur sits in majesty, the 'mone makeles of mighte,'
completely unaware of the prophesied fall which is approaching.

With this view the resolution of the poem begins to look less stabilizing
and the question of Galeron's integration into Arthurian society remains
vexed.[108] Galeron freely releases his lands before Arthur orders the two
knights to be reconciled. It is therefore not clear what Gawain means
when he says that he will 'refeff him in felde, in forestes so faire.'[109] First
appearances indicate that Galeron now holds his lands as a fief from
Gawain through an exchange which resembles surrender and regrant.
Even Galeron's new status as a knight of the Round Table seems small
compensation. The audience last hears of Galeron in a passage with
troubling implications:

> Þei made sir Galerone þat stonde
> A kniȝte of þe table ronde,
> To his lyues ende.[110]

Phillips argues that the passage represents a sense of closure and perma-
nence,[111] but the audience need not remember that Galeron also ap-
pears in the boat with Gawain, in the ill-fated sea battle at the close of the
Morte Arthure,[112] to recognize that Galeron's 'lyues ende' is not far away.
As the prophecy reminds us, the knights of the Round Table, with
Galeron now among them, 'shullen dye one a day' in the final battle with
Mordred.[113]

Gawain's reward for the adventure presents a similar problem. He is
granted a large amount of land to make up for the land he has returned
to Galeron. Spearing speaks of Arthur's generosity in that 'he now

voluntarily gives up great tracts of land in Wales, Ireland, and Brittany in order to bring peace with honour to the two warring knights.'[114] To an early fifteenth-century audience, however, these gifts did not come without a price. Owen Glendower led an active rebellion in Wales from 1400 to 1408 in a vain attempt to throw off English subjection. Richard II had been constantly busy in Ireland throughout the final years of his reign, and England's holdings in Brittany were challenged continually throughout the Hundred Years War. As Ingham points out, '[t]his apparent solution displays the problems of annexation and promises the recurrences of battles. Of course those who hold title to these lands in Wales will likely travel, as Galeron has done, to reclaim their lands from Gawain's possession.'[115] Even the poet's choice of Galeron, the Scottish knight, as the antagonist of the poem, reflects the general weariness with the long-standing border warfare between the two countries.[116] It will be remembered that, upon his entrance to the court, Galeron's Frisian horse '... was a-fered, for drede of þat fare, / For he was seldene wonte to se / The tablet flure.'[117] Mills glosses this as a 'table decorated with fleurs-de-lis': an ostentatious reminder of Arthur's foreign conquests.

The *Awntyrs*-poet, therefore, presents a pessimistic view of the benefits to be gained from foreign expansion, as the images of fortune and mutability pervade the seemingly optimistic adventure of the second half of the poem. Through these images the reader is forced to be ever aware that Arthur's military achievements, although impressive, were subject to the cyclical nature of worldly affairs. Arthur's very status as 'the souerayneste sir, sittande in sette,' implies that he will soon be brought low through the machinations of Fortune, but unlike the alliterative *Morte*, the *Awntyrs* blames Arthur for his own fall. His covetousness, revealed through his expansionist ambitions, makes him susceptible to Fortune's wheel and implicates him in the cyclical pattern of British history. The *Awntyrs* is not unique, however, and as we shall see *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* also implies that the Arthurian court is somehow culpable for its own fate. As Gawain enters the realm of adventure, he is forced to realize that his own participation in a pattern of bliss and blunder may not be historically determined, but may the be result of a weakness within himself and the fellowship he represents.

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

Unlike *The Awntyrs of Arthure, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* has been the subject of a great deal of critical scrutiny. Still, the poem is usually

read in isolation, as though it were not concerned with, or influenced by, the larger narrative of Arthur's reign. The few critics who have studied *Sir Gawain* in its Arthurian context have focused on its relationship to the Vulgate cycle.[118] This line of inquiry has centered on the various Arthurian characters who populate Camelot throughout the poem. Richard C. Griffith, for example, argues that Bertilak is to be identified as Bertolais, a character from the Vulgate who conspires to place the false Guenevere on the throne.[119] According to this theory, Bertilak's Lady is, in fact, the false Guenevere, thus providing a rationale for the adventure beyond Morgan's animosity. As suggestive as this theory is, the sinister and dangerous Bertolais bears little resemblance to the good-natured host or even to the Green Knight who, despite his aggressive appearance, obviously does not intend real harm to Gawain since he does not kill him when he is both entitled and able to do so. If the audience is expected to identify Bertilak with his Vulgate namesake, the association is loose at best, possibly suggesting manipulation and trickery.

Robert Kelly presents one of the most extended attempts to situate the adventure within the Vulgate narrative. Kelly distinguishes between the romance and chronicle traditions and argues that *Sir Gawain* 'appears to take place in Vulgate time.'[120] Accepting Griffith's theory, Kelly focuses on the names of minor characters who appear in the tale and suggests that an elaborate system of allusions ties the story to the larger issues of the Vulgate cycle. The first list of names in the poem gives details of the seating arrangement at the Round Table and includes 'Gawan,' 'Gwenore,' 'Agrauayn a la dure mayn,' 'Bischop Bawdewyn,' and 'Ywan, Vryn son.'[121] Kelly argues that the appearance of the brothers Gawain and Agravain evokes the final scenes of the Vulgate when Agravain, against the advice of Gawain, reveals the queen's adultery.[122] The brothers are also cousins of Yvain whose mother, in the Vulgate, is one of the daughters of Igerne. These implied relationships, claims Kelly, evoke Arthur's own conception through the device of Igerne's deception.[123] Similar allusions are detected for the group of knights who attend Gawain's departure from Camelot,[124] and Bertilak's revelation of Morgan le Fay's involvement in the adventure.[125] Although Kelly's study is intricate and intriguing, the names included could easily represent a random sampling of Arthurian characters. In all, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* includes nineteen names (Bertilak's Lady is never named). Gawain, Guenevere, and Arthur, as well as Merlin and Uther, who are mentioned at the end of the poem in association with Arthur's conception,[126] are characters who belong equally to the chronicle and romance traditions.

Bishop Bawdewyn (Baldwin) and Errik (presumably Chrétien's Erec) do not appear in the Vulgate. Many of the remaining names are regularly found in formulaic lists. *Sir Launfal*, for example, contains a lengthy list which names characters who are also found in *Sir Gawain* including 'Gawayn,' 'Agrafrayn,' 'Launcelet du Lake,' 'Ewayn,' and 'Bos.'[127] The alliterative *Morte Arthure*, a poem obviously set in the chronicle tradition, contains many of the same names, often in the same alliterating pairs: *Sir Gawain* mentions 'Launcelot, and Lyonel' while the *Morte* includes 'sir Lyonell, sir Lawncelott';[128] *Sir Gawain* has 'Sir Boos and Sir Byduer' and the *Morte* states that 'The kynge biddis sir Boice, "Buske the belyfe: / Take with the sir Berill and Bedwere the ryche"';[129] and just as *Sir Gawain* names 'Aywan and Errik' so the *Morte* includes 'sir Ewayne and sir Errake.'[130] *The Parlement of the Thre Ages* also includes the alliterative pair 'Sir Ewayne, Sir Errake' and a brief account of Morgan le Fay.[131] As Kelly himself admits, many of the characters found in *Sir Gawain*, such as Dodinal and the Duke of Clarence, regularly appear in lists in the Vulgate cycle.[132] In short, the names are no sure way to extract meaning, as they are varied and possibly random. The collection of characters in *Sir Gawain* could just as easily be interpreted as representing the chronicle tradition of Arthur's court. Gawain and Yvain, two important knights in the chronicles, sit on either side of the king and queen.[133] Lancelot, who could evoke the romance tradition of adultery and betrayal, is named but his role, as in the alliterative *Morte*, is diminished to the point that he is indistinguishable from the other knights of Arthur's court. Kelly's assertion that '[o]ne can be certain that the author has the French romance in mind and not the chronicle-history tradition because Agravain does not appear at all in Geoffrey of Monmouth'[134] is also suspect. Not only does this logic necessarily defeat his own argument (Bawdewyn and Errik do not appear in the Vulgate), but many characters from romance found their way into chronicles which are ultimately based on Geoffrey's *Historia* without compromising the historical narrative. An adapted version of Robert of Gloucester's *Chronicle* actually lists the sons of Lot as 'Mordred & Gawayn, / Gaherres and Guerrees and also Aggrauayn.'[135]

Like Kelly, M. Victoria Guerin has argued that the association of characters in *Sir Gawain* encourages the audience to read the poem against the narrative of the Vulgate. For Guerin, Arthur's personal sin of incest is evoked throughout the poem and shapes our interpretation of Gawain's adventure.[136] Guerin begins her chapter on the poem stating that '[b]y the late fourteenth century, the approximate date of *Sir Gawain*

and the Green Knight's composition, Mordred's parentage was no longer a guilty secret in the Arthurian corpus.'[137] As we have seen, however, Mordred's incestuous origin is not a part of the very popular chronicle tradition, despite Guerin's attempts to find a reference to it in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia*.[138] Most chroniclers, such as Robert Mannyng, simply call Mordred Arthur's 'sistir sonne,'[139] while some, such as John Fordun or John Hardyng, specifically deny the story of Arthur's incest.[140] It is possible that some members of a fourteenth-century English-speaking audience may have been ignorant of the tradition. The contemporary stanzaic *Le Morte Arthur* is the only English work to mention Mordred's incestuous origins, although the concern which both Fordun and Hardyng display in their denunciation of the tradition implies that the story had some currency, even if it was not accepted. Any attempt to read the poem against a backdrop of incest assumes that this was a well-known and accepted aspect of the Arthurian tradition in England, and Guerin's attempt to argue that the appearance of Morgan, Gawain's aunt, implies incest within the wooing scenes is simply untenable. As Larry Benson correctly states, '[t]here is no hint of the adultery, incest, and treachery that finally brought ruin to the Round Table, and familiar characters whose names might serve as allusions to these vices are carefully omitted' from *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.[141]

An audience approaching *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, therefore, may have read or heard the adventure without the Vulgate story in mind. I certainly do not mean to suggest that the *Gawain*-poet was ignorant of the romance tradition, or that he expected his audience to suppress their own knowledge of that tradition as they read. Rather, I want to argue that the poet forces his readers to at least consider Arthurian history and to allow its themes and preoccupations to colour their reaction to Gawain's adventure. *The Awntyrs off Arthure* paraphrased Arturian history in the ghost's prophecy and thus provided an interpretive context for its adventure, but *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* does not give us very much information about the Arthurian court outside of the adventure itself. As readers, we must look to other clues to help us form an interpretive context for Gawain's experience. The names of Arthurian characters in *Sir Gawain* cannot be used to determine against which tradition of the Arthurian court the adventure is set. They suggest an Arthurian world of courtly splendour, but the reader must look elsewhere to define that backdrop more specifically, and the elaborate Trojan introduction to the tale allows the audience the option of reading the poem within the context of British historical traditions. The lengthy

allusion to the fall of Troy suggests that the poem might be concerned with the larger issues of British history, and the passage merits quotation at length:

Siþen þe sege and þe assaut watz sesed at Troye,
Þe borȝ brittened and brent to brondez and askez,
Þe tulk þat þe trammes of tresoun þer wroȝt
Watz tried for his tricherie, þe trewest on erthe:
Hit watz Ennias þe athel, and his highe kynde,
Þat siþen depreced prouinces, and patrounes bicome
Welneȝe of al þe wele in þe west iles.
Fro riche Romulus to Rome ricchis hym swyþe,
With gret bobbaunce þat burȝe he biges vpon fyrst,
And neuenes hit his aune nome, as hit now hat;
[Ticius] to Tuskan and teldes bigynnes,
Langaberde in Lumbardie lyftes vp homes,
And fer ouer þe French flod Felix Brutus
On mony bonkkes ful brode Bretayn he settez
        wyth wynne,
    Where werre and wrake and wonder
    Bi syþez hatz wont þerinne
    And oft boþe blysse and blunder
    Ful skete hatz skyfted synne.[142]

The destruction of Troy is again evoked in the last full line of the poem:

Syþen Brutus, þe bolde burne, boȝed hider fyrst,
After þe segge and þe asaute watz sesed at Troye,
        iwysse,
    Mony aunterez here-biforne
    Haf fallen suche er þis.[143]

Such a careful and extended rhetorical device merits close attention, as it establishes a tone within which the rest of the adventure unfolds. What has been called the Troy frame, however, is often examined in isolation from the rest of the poem. Burrow, who dismisses the stanza, claims that it merely 'introduces an adventure which has no significance at all for the history of the kings of Britain.'[144] Finlayson suggests that the frame is significant, but that it is intended to distract the reader through a purposely deceptive scheme which is designed to confuse. 'The formal opening of *Sir Gawain*,' he claims, 'is quite unusual for a courtly or

adventure romance, and its "historical" material (whatever its ultimate significance) might be expected to lead its hearers to anticipate a "chronicle" romance, such as *The Destruction of Troy, The Wars of Alexander*, or the alliterative *Morte Arthure*.'[145] Silverstein, on the other hand, sees the passage not as deceptive, but as significant in itself and argues that it 'places the story in a familiar and serious context and suggests to its knowledgeable hearers the nobility of its line.'[146] In a similar vein Patterson notes that through the cyclical nature of the events outlined in the first stanza the poet intends 'to tell us that his story's range of relevance includes the pattern of British history as Geoffrey [of Monmouth] described it.'[147] A closer look at the Troy frame, and its relationship to Gawain's encounter with the Green Knight, will support both Silverstein's and Patterson's theories and show how the adventure participates in a pattern of associations in which meaning is created through the recollection of the historical narratives of Troy and Arthur.

What is most striking in the opening stanza is the cyclic nature of history which it establishes in its brief account of Trojan migrations. The fall of Troy, brought about by the treachery of Aeneas, is barely completed when that same traitor is transformed into 'þe athel and his highe kynde' who travel to the west isles.[148] The treason at Troy stands in stark contrast to the 'bobbaunce' with which Romulus builds Rome. Other lands also grow out of the ashes of Troy as Ticius founds Tuscany, and Langaberde establishes Lombardy. Finally Brutus, the exiled patricide, here designated as Felix,[149] establishes Britain 'wyth wynne.' The fall of Troy has been instrumental in the growth of nations in the west as new people rise out of the catastrophes of others. The poet implies that the pattern of fall and rise continues in Britain as he concludes the stanza, 'And oft boþe blysse and blunder / Ful skete hatz skyfted synne.' The first stanza thus places Britain within the context of European history, but it is a representation of history 'which envisages civilization as alternating between "bliss" and "blunder."'[150] Even as the poet extends the pattern of bliss and blunder back into the past to the chivalric achievements of pre-lapsarian Troy, so the pattern continues towards the Arthurian period, which is introduced in the second stanza.[151]

The second stanza continues to describe Britain after the arrival of Brutus and his followers. The Trojans, we are told, were a quarrelsome people who loved strife:

Ande quen þis Bretayn watz bigged bi þis burn rych,
Bolde bredden þerinne, baret þat lofden,
In mony turned tyme tene þat wro3ten.[152]

The poem quickly leaves the violent Trojans, however, and gets to the matter at hand, the wonders of Arthurian Britain:

> Mo ferlyes on þis folde han fallen here oft
> Þen in any oþer þat I wot, syn þat ilk tyme.
> Bot of alle þat here bult, of Bretaygne kynges,
> Ay watz Arthur þe hendest, as I haf herde telle.[153]

As Andrew comments, while there is nothing specifically negative in the stanza, the juxtaposition of elements is unsettling. He suggests 'that the logic of a progression from the enjoyment of causing harm to the noblest of British kings is apt to be at least potentially problematic.'[154] Indeed, the cyclic nature of the opening stanza suggests that Arthur's nobility is as susceptible to fall as the nobility of Troy, and this is supported by the audience's foreknowledge of the king's fate. This suspicion is further enforced by the third stanza which provides details of the state of Arthur's court. The 'gentyle kniȝtes' of the Round Table and 'þe louelokkest ladies' engage in the festivities of a Christmas feast.[155] The joy and vigour of the scene is firmly established by the youth of the court for 'al watz þis fayre folk in her first age.'[156] The youth and vitality of the Round Table stands in comparison to the bliss of earlier foundations, but the cyclical pattern established by the opening stanzas predicts that this 'first age' of bliss will be followed by subsequent ages of blunder.

If the poem's opening stanzas encourage the reader to place the scene within the time frame and the thematic pattern of Galfridian history, it would have to be placed within the twelve years of peace which follow Arthur's initial successes. Arthur and Guenevere are married and the Round Table has been established. It is in this period that Wace sets the adventures which he claims have been exaggerated beyond belief, and Robert Mannyng, as we have seen, also describes these adventures told in rhyme:

> in þat tyme were herd & sene
> þat som say þat neuer had bene;
> of Arthure is said many selcouth
> in diuers landes, north & south,
> þat man haldes now for fable.[157]

The *Gawain* poet seems to point to this period when he states that his own narrative is a fable set within British history:

Forþi an aunter in erde I attle to schawe,
Þat a selly in si3t summe men hit holden,
And an outtrage awenture of Arthurez wonderez.[158]

Whether the poet is specifically invoking the passage in either Mannyng
or Wace is uncertain. Many chroniclers, as we have seen, included simi-
lar statements at this point in the narrative, and the twelve years of peace
had become a period specifically reserved for adventures outside the
Galfridian tradition. Sir Thomas Gray also makes use of this time which
is distinct from the historical narrative. He not only stresses the youth of
Arthur's court but claims that 'En quel temps apparust en bretaigne
tauntz dez chos fayez, qe a meruail, de quoy sourdi les grauntz auentures
qe sount recordez de la court Arthur.'[159] He goes on to say that during
this period 'Hom dit qe Arthur ne seoit ia a manger deuaunt q'il auoit
nouels estrangers,'[160] and indeed the *Gawain* poet tells us that

        ... [Arthur] wolde neuer ete
Vpon such a dere day er hym deuised were
Of sum auenturus þyng an vncouþe tale,
Of sum mayn meruayle, þat he my3t trawe,
Of alderes, of armes, of oþer auenturus,
Oþer sum segg hym biso3t of sum siker kny3t
To joyne with hym in iustyng, in jopardé to lay,
Lede, lif for lyf, leue vchon oþer.[161]

The localization of the narrative within history is supported by the
fifteenth-century stanzaic poem *The Greene Knight.* This less sophisticated
retelling of the adventure does not include the elaborate Trojan frame,
but it establishes its place in history by paraphrasing the Brut narrative:

List! wen Arthur he was King,
He had all att his leadinge
    The broad Ile of Brittaine.
England and Scottland one was,
And Wales stood in the same case,
    The truth itt is not to layne.

He drive allyance out of this Ile,
Soe Arthur lived in peace a while.[162]

As Ad Putter remarks, '[a]nyone with a knowledge of Wace's *Brut* or a

prose *Brut* would have realized that the "peace" alluded to by the poet of *The Grene Knight* corresponds to the twelve-year period of the chronicles.'[163] The author of the stanzaic poem clearly situates the adventure within the chronicle tradition and encourages his readers to interpret the adventure in light of the Galfridian narrative.

The Trojan introduction and the early scenes of Arthur's court thus establish a disturbing pattern against which the audience is invited to read Gawain's adventure. The 'bliss' of Camelot in its first age has been compared not only to the equally joyful foundations in Italy, but also to the 'blunder' of Troy's fall. The logic of this pattern implies not only the fall of Camelot, but the failure of Gawain, its representative knight. The cyclical pattern which stresses the transience of worldly achievement is established in the opening stanzas of the poem and reemphasized throughout the work. The very structure of Gawain's adventure is based on the cycle of a single year, and the elaborate rhetorical descriptions of the seasons and the two ladies also reenforce the repetitive pattern of British history and Gawain's adventure.

The cyclical structure of the beheading game has been the topic of considerable critical attention,[164] but it need be considered only briefly here. The game of exchanged blows frames the action of the poem and encompasses one complete year, from the Green Knight's arrival at Camelot during New Year festivities to Gawain's own arrival at the Green Chapel. Within this cycle the adventure's structure is complicated by the three days at Hautdesert which contain their own pattern of repeated wooing, hunting, and the game of exchanged gifts. The design of Gawain's adventure, with its expectation of the hero's decapitation, easily coincides on a smaller scale with the Troy frame's pattern of 'bliss' and 'blunder' in British history. The ominous nature of this pattern is invoked by the description of the seasons which opens Fitt II.

Although the knights of the Round Table resume their Christmas games, 'A ȝere ȝernes ful ȝerne'[165] and the changing of the seasons overcomes the festivities of the 'ȝonge ȝer.'[166] Lent causes men to dine on harsh food until 'þe weder of þe worlde wyth wynter hit þrepez.'[167] With spring comes 'þe rayn in schowrez ful warme'[168] and eventually the 'solace of þe softe somer.'[169] The description of summer recalls the pattern of history as one is allowed 'To bide a blysful blusch of þe bryȝt sunne.'[170] Finally, harvest time warns of the return of winter and the completion of the cycle:

Þe leuez lancen fro þe lynde and lyȝten on þe grounde,
And al grayes þe gres þat grene watz ere;

Þenne al rypez and rotez þat ros vpon fyrst,
And þus ȝirnez þe ȝere in ȝisterdayez mony
And wynter wyndez aȝayn, as þe worlde askez.[171]

The movement from the barrenness of winter to the full bloom of summer and back to winter, when the fruits of the harvest lie rotting, is a moving metaphor for the mutability of worldly glory, and a poor omen for Gawain's adventure. Andrew remarks that the poet 'creates a powerful impression of threat and foreboding, partly through the poignancy with which the general fact of mutability is suggested, partly through his shaping and manipulation of the narrative.'[172] Themes of abstract mutability, represented here by nature's progression through the seasons, coincide with the poem's vision of history, in which human achievement, including Gawain's adventure, is transitory.

The theme of mutability is recalled later in the poem at Bertilak's castle, when Gawain is introduced to the two ladies of the house. The host's wife, who is 'þe fayrest in felle,'[173] is presented with a second lady, 'an auncian hit semed,'[174] at her side.

Bot vnlyke on to loke þo ladyes were,
For if þe ȝonge watz ȝep, ȝolȝe watz þat oþer;
Riche red on þat on rayled ayquere,
Rugh ronkled chekez þat oþer on rolled.[175]

The description continues, comparing the youth and beauty of the one lady with the age and decrepitude of her companion.[176] Derek Pearsall has pointed out the conventional nature of this description by contrast,[177] but the passage also has significant thematic importance as it presents 'a forceful illustration of the homiletic theme that age is a mirror of the frailty of the flesh.'[178] The description of the ladies, however, is not an isolated piece of *amplificatio*. All three of the elaborate amplifications – the account of the fall of Troy and the westward movement of Trojan *imperium*, the description of the changing seasons and the digression on the two ladies – present images of mutability: the bliss and blunder of history, the harvest and rot of nature, the youth and old age of mortal man. It is within a thematic framework established by these images that Gawain journeys out of the youthful court of King Arthur to fulfill the pattern of his beheading game.

We have already seen how the alliterative *Morte Arthure* combines the theme of transience inherent in the Nine Worthies with the concept of fortune. The *Gawain*-poet invokes a similar concept in his poem which is

filled with images of mutability. It is Gawain himself who appeals, not to random fortune, but to inscrutable destiny, often citing his own 'destiné' or 'wyrde.' Gawain resigns himself to his fate before setting out in search of the Green Chapel, in a passage which comes immediately after the description of the changing seasons. Arthur's knights attempt to keep good cheer, Gawain among them:

> Þe knyȝt mad ay god chere,
> And sayde, 'Quat schuld I wonde?
> Of destinés derf and dere
> What may mon do bot fonde?'[179]

Despite the adventure that Gawain has undertaken, he seems willing to seek out and face his destiny, whatever the outcome.

Gawain's willingness to encounter his destiny, whatever it might be, is reflected throughout the poem. On the lady's third visit to his bed she finds Gawain muttering in his sleep, 'As mon þat watz in mornyng of mony þro þoȝtes, / How þat destiné schulde þat day dele hym his wyrde.'[180] Despite this apparent unease, Gawain is determined to meet his fate, even when offered an opportunity to avoid the Green Knight. His guide to the chapel advises him to flee, but Gawain refuses to take advantage of the offer:

> 'Bot I wyl to þe chapel, for chaunce þat may falle,
> And talk wyth þat ilk tulk þe tale þat me lyste,
> Worþe hit wele oþer wo, as þe wyrde lykez
>   hit hafe.'[181]

Even after he has presented his neck to the Green Knight and flinched at the first stroke, Gawain impatiently demands that his fate be fulfilled:

> 'Bot busk, burne, bi þi fayth, and bryng me to þe poynt.
> Dele to me my destiné, and do hit out of honde.'[182]

Gawain expects that his destiny is to receive a blow from the Green Knight, thus fulfilling the cyclic nature of the beheading game and the patterns which have been established by the poem's imagery. But, unbeknownst to Gawain, his actions have altered that pattern. The beheading game, as is suggested from the outset, is actually a test of Gawain's 'trawþe.' In framing the rules of the game the Green Knight demands

that Gawain should participate in a game of exchanged blows:

> 'And þou hatz redily rehersed, bi resoun ful trwe,
> Clanly al þe couenaunt þat I þe kynge asked,
> Saf þat þou schal siker me, segge, bi þi trawþe,
> Þat þou schal seche me þiself.'[183]

Gawain agrees to these terms and swears to abide by them 'for soþe, and by my seker traweþ.'[184] The court feels that he should break his oath, and that 'Warloker to haf wroʒt had more wyt bene,'[185] but Gawain remains true despite the danger and the guide's last minute offer of escape. Even after flinching, in the scene quoted above, Gawain reaffirms his resolve to maintain his 'trawþe,' demanding that the Green Knight strike,

> 'For I schal stonde þe a strok, and start no more
> Til þyn ax haue me hitte: haf here my trawþe.'[186]

While Gawain has remained faithful to the exchange of blows in the beheading game, he has been less successful in the seemingly less important game of the exchange of winnings. Like the beheading game, this game is entered into with the language of a formal contract:

> 'ʒet firre,' quoþ þe freke, 'a forwarde we make:
> Quat-so-euer I wynne in þe wod hit worþez to yourez,
> And quat chek so ʒe acheue chaunge me þerforne.
> Swete, swap we so, sware with trawþe,
> Queþer, leude, so lymp, lere oþer better.'
> 'Bi God,' quoþ Gawayn þe gode, 'I grant þertylle.'[187]

The same 'forwardez'[188] are settled for the second day and again Gawain fulfills the bargain:

> 'Now, Gawayn,' quoþ þe godmon, 'þis gomen is your awen
> Bi fyn forwarde and faste, faythely ʒe knowe.'
> 'Hit is sothe,' quoþ þe segge, 'and as siker trwe,
> Alle my get I schal yow gif agayn, bi my trawþe.'[189]

On the third day the bargain is struck again because, as the host says, 'I haf fraysted þe twys, and faythful I fynde þe.'[190]

Gawain agrees to the third exchange of winnings, but his attention has been on the lady, against whose advances he has been defending himself. On the third day of wooing, he is resolved to remain faithful to his host. He does not want to seem churlish to the lady, but he cares 'more for his meschef ʒif he schulde make synne, / And be traytor to þat tolke þat þat telde aʒt.'[191] Barron remarks that '[i]n the context of the formally established relationship between Gawain and Bertilak as guest and host ..., the use here of *traytor* seems to me exact, a technical term for one who breaks his feudal troth, and, if by adultery with his lord's wife, doubly a sinner, both against *clannes* and against the Christian basis of the feudal oath.'[192] Gawain, however, does not commit adultery with the lady and thus upholds part of his obligations to his host. But the wooing has been a distraction, both for the hero and the audience, and Gawain, apparently relieved to escape with his chastity, ignores his other obligation to Bertilak. When the lady explains the protective property of her green girdle Gawain sees it as 'a juel for þe jopardé þat hym iugged were,'[193] and accepts it as a love token, despite the fact that he will need to conceal it from his host.

The emphasis on 'trawþe' with which each of these bargains is established is reiterated at the end of the poem as the Green Knight explains the significance of Gawain's various adventures. After receiving a nick in the neck, Gawain prepares to fight, but the Green Knight is satisfied that the terms of the agreement have been fulfilled:

'Ne kyd bot as couenaunde at kyngez kort schaped.
I hyʒt þe a strok and þou hit hatz, halde þe wel payed.'[194]

The two feints and the third nick to the neck are also explained in terms of their contractual agreements:

'... with ryʒt I þe profered
For þe forwarde þat we fest in þe fyrst nyʒt,
And þou trystyly þe trawþe and trwly me haldez,
Al þe gayne þow me gef, as god mon schulde.'[195]

The same was true for the second agreement, but 'At þe þrid þou fayled þore, / And þerfor þat tappe ta þe.'[196] While the Green Knight admits that Gawain refused his wife, and praises him as 'þe fautlest freke þat euer on fote ʒede,'[197] he knows that Gawain failed to exchange the green girdle:

'Bot here yow lakked a lyttel, sir, and lewté yow wonted;
Bot þat watz for no wylyde werke, ne wowyng nauþer,
Bot for ȝe lufed your lyf; þe lasse I yow blame.'[198]

The light judgment which the Green Knight passes on Gawain is mir-
rored in the reaction of the court upon the hero's return. When Gawain
tells his story and displays the girdle, which he sees as 'þe token of
vntrawþe þat I am tan inne,'[199] the knights do not condemn their
companion. Rather:

Þe kyng comfortez þe knyȝt, and alle þe court als
Laȝen loude þerat, and luflyly acorden
Þat lordes and ladis þat longed to þe Table,
Vche burne of þe broþerhede, a bauderyk schulde haue,
A bende abelef hym aboute of a bryȝt grene.[200]

The laughter of the court at Gawain's failure recalls the story of Cara-
doc's mantle in the *Scalacronica*. In Gray's account, the mantle, which will
not fit an unchaste woman, fits only one woman of the court. Gray places
the sexual infidelity which is revealed by the test of the mantle in apposi-
tion to Mordred's impending treachery, another breach of 'trawþe.' The
comparison between the mantle and Mordred is highlighted by both the
sexual nature of the test and its proximity to Arthur's campaign against
Rome, and it reflects on both Mordred's usurpation of the crown and his
incestuous union with Guenevere. Instead of pausing to consider the
implications of the adventure with mantle, the court breaks into 'graunt
rise'[201] before beginning preparations for their encounter with the Ro-
man emperor. Similarly, Gawain's companions view his adventure with
the Green Knight as a success, because he has escaped with his head.
While the Round Table laughs, Gawain judges himself more harshly, and
accuses himself of 'cowarddyse and couetyse boþe!'[202] He further re-
bukes himself as one who formerly had been the model of knighthood:

'Lo! þer þe falssyng, foule mot hit falle!
For care of þy knokke cowardyse me taȝt
To acorde me with couetyse, my kynde to forsake,
Þat is larges and lewté þat longez to knyȝtez.
Now am I fawty and falce, and ferde haf ben euer
Of trecherye and vntrawþe: boþe bityde sorȝe
    and care!'[203]

The disparity between these reactions is largely one of perspective. The Green Knight and the court view the adventure as the test of a single knight, and as such Gawain has performed well, if not perfectly. Gawain, however, sees his adventure in light of the larger historical process. In his misogynist speech Gawain cites Adam, Solomon, Samson, and David as men from the past who have been led into sin and destruction by the temptation of women.[204] Just as Arthur's dream places him among the worthies (and the pattern of history they represent), so Gawain's speech places him within a history of men who have been brought into blunder by tempting women.

That the audience is intended, at least partially, to share Gawain's perspective is indicated by the poet. When Morgan le Fay is identified as the instigator of the adventure, the poet provides a brief synopsis of one scene in Arthurian history, the deception through which Arthur was conceived:

> Ho is euen þyn aunt, Arþurez half-suster,
> Þe duches doȝter of Tyntagelle, þat dere Vter after
> Hade Arþur vpon, þat aþel is nowþe.'[205]

By identifying Igerne as the duchess of Tintagel,[206] the poet economically invokes both her unwitting adultery and the place of her deception. The passage also contrasts the dubious origins of King Arthur with his current status, for despite the treachery of his birth, he 'aþel is nowþe.' If this were not enough to remind the reader of the opening passages of the poem in which the traitor, 'Ennias, þe athel,' flees Troy, the poet returns to that scene less than one hundred lines later in the final long lines of the poem:

> Þus in Arthurus day þis aunter bitidde,
> Þe Brutus bokez þerof beres wyttenesse;
> Syþen Brutus, þe bolde burne, boȝed hider fyrst,
> After þe segge and þe asaute watz sesed at Troye,
>   iwysse,
> Mony aunterez here-biforne
> Haf fallen suche er þis.[207]

Arthur and Aeneas are both historical figures who overcome treacherous beginnings to prove themselves noble in the end. The *Gawain*-poet invokes both Arthur and the story of Troy at the beginning and the end

of the poem and thus reminds the reader of these examples of a movement from 'blunder' to 'bliss.' These allusions emphasize the rotation of history and its inevitable return to 'blunder,' but they also tell us that Gawain is not wrong to consider his own participation in that pattern.

For Alfred David, 'Gawain's story is "an outtrage awenture of Arthureʒ wondereʒ," a product of romance and fantasy, an adventure in a different category from the fall of Troy, which to men of the Middle Ages was one of the great human catastrophes. But for the *Gawain* poet the pattern of greater events is figured in the lesser, even as the cycle of the seasons symbolizes the human condition on earth.'[208] David is careful to point out that the relationship between Gawain and Aeneas is one of vague association rather than direct parallel, and the same can be said of Gawain's adventure and Arthurian history itself. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* focuses on treachery and a breach of 'trawþe' between a knight and his lord, and as such it resonates with various episodes from British history. The poet invokes Aeneas's betrayal of Troy and the fortunate outcome of that great fall, but this merely establishes the pattern. Gawain's adventure necessarily associates the hero's 'vntrawþe' with the sexual innuendo of Bertilak's Lady, and it is difficult not to interpret the romance in light of the fall of the Round Table. Just as Sir Thomas Gray used the adventure of Caradoc's mantle to comment on Mordred's usurpation of the queen and the throne, so the *Gawain*-poet has mingled images of adultery with issues of 'trawþe' in a work which encourages its readers to consider the individual adventure of Gawain within the larger patterns of Arthurian history. Gawain is no precursor of Mordred, nor is he the heir to Aeneas's treachery, but all three, claims the *Gawain*-poet, participate in the 'bliss and blunder' which plagues the Brut narrative.[209] The beheading game is, in the end, an insignificant interlude in the Arthurian reign. As such it is aptly relegated to the twelve years of peace where 'Not alle is sothe ne alle lie, / ne alle wisdom ne alle folie.'[210] But Gawain's adventure has pointed to a flaw in the Round Table, a weakness of 'trawþe' in the court, and if Arthur's knights had learned something from this adventure, rather than merely laughing at Gawain's self-condemnation, they too might have been able to affect their destiny.

Like *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, *The Awntyrs off Arthure* revels in the elaborate descriptions of the 'bliss' of Arthurian chivalry, but it also evokes the inevitable 'blunder' of the fall of the Round Table. For the authors of both romances, the Round Table remains the most noble example of chivalric achievement in Britain. With the advantage of

hindsight, however, these poets were keenly aware that all chivalric achievement was subject to mutability and the final approach of death. Both poets discuss the theme of mutability in a single, fictional adventure, but they also offer British historiography as a useful tool for considering the romance within a larger Arthurian context. Even so, the two poems handle the theme of 'bliss and blunder' quite differently. Sir Gawain fails in his adventure with the Green Knight because of a breach of 'trawþe,' a flaw which has serious implications for Arthurian society. He also succeeds in some measure by refusing the advances of Bertilak's Lady and is thus able to avoid the personal 'blunder' of decapitation. In the *Awntyrs*, Gawain fares better, but his success is in support of the king's imperial expansion and covetousness, and it is these characteristics, the poem claims, which will lead to the downfall of Arthur's kingdom.

6

Making History: John Hardyng's *Metrical Chronicle*

The two adventures discussed in the previous chapter display a complex interplay between the romance and chronicle traditions of Arthurian narrative. The subtleties of this relationship were not lost in either Sir Thomas Gray's *Scalacronica* or the alliterative *Morte Arthure*, but in the mid-fifteenth century a chronicler approached the Arthurian story with a far less sophisticated pen. The two versions of John Hardyng's *Chronicle* combine the chronicle and romance traditions of Arthurian narrative with a zeal rarely found in medieval historiography. Hardyng sees in the reign of Arthur a historical precedent for his pressing political concern: the need for England to assert its sovereign authority over Scotland. Hardyng's concept of precedent, however, is slightly different from that of Thomas Gray. In the *Scalacronica* Gray used subtle allusion and inference to portray an ideal courtly world which could act as an model for his contemporaries' chivalric pursuits. In Hardyng's *Chronicle* the Arthurian world is presented as the direct lineal ancestor of contemporary chivalric orders and society, and Hardyng stresses the relevance of Arthur's reign to contemporary issues through apostrophes directed at his audience. After the death of Uther, for example, Hardyng addresses Henry VI as 'O souerayn lorde,' and instructs him to

Thynke of this poynte, in all youre dygnyte,
And lette no sleuthe disteyne youre soueraynte;
Bot euere fresshe and grene for to defende
The peple hole whiche god hath to you sende.[2]

Hardyng does not limit himself to this direct approach, however, and he also demonstrates a relationship between the chivalric practices of the past and those of the present by associating the fellowships of the Grail and the Round Table with contemporary military orders. The distinction between the political and the chivalric blurs in Hardyng's account of the distant past and in his reflections on the present. In Hardyng's text the possibility of a unified Britain, which includes Scotland, becomes inextricably intertwined with the chivalric pursuits of the knightly class.

Despite the lack of craft with which Hardyng sets forth his political and social agenda, he does reveal an acute awareness of the incompatibility of the material that he attempts to combine. The romance elements of Hardyng's text are not presented as mere thematic embellishments which the audience is encouraged to recognize as fictive. In order to be politically useful it was necessary that Hardyng's Arthurian narrative be accepted as historically accurate, and thus, while his additions to the chronicle account are ostensibly similar to those found in the *Scalacronica*, his attitude towards the authority of his alterations is radically different from Gray's ambiguous appeal to 'ascuns cronicles.'[3]

John Hardyng's perception of the history of Britain was primarily shaped by the appeal to history which grew out of the Great Cause, and his political views are the result of his life on the Scottish border. He was born in 1378 to a respectable northern family, and at the age of twelve he entered the household of Henry Percy, known as 'Hotspur' to the Scots.[4] While in the service of Percy, he fought against the Scots at Homildon, Cocklaws and, as he tells us, 'at divers rodes and feeldes.'[5] In 1403 he fought beside Percy at Shrewsbury in the ill-fated revolt against Henry IV. After Percy's death at Shrewsbury, Hardyng received a royal pardon and entered the service of Sir Robert Umfraville, with whom he continued his military career along the Scottish border, and later in France with Henry V where he fought at Agincourt. His career as a soldier ended in 1418 when, at the request of Henry V, he made his first journey north in an attempt to collect evidence regarding England's overlordship of Scotland.

Hardyng's research into the feudal relationship between England and Scotland is part of an ongoing debate which began with Edward I. The opportunity to develop a claim to sovereignty over Scotland presented itself in 1286 when King Alexander III died, leaving no one but his infant granddaughter Margaret as heir-apparent to the Scottish crown. Her death in 1290, while en route to Scotland from Norway, left the throne of Scotland vacant and the realm in a perplexing position. In a state of

confusion, the nobility of Scotland asked Edward I to referee a contest among twelve claimants to the throne in a debate now known as the Great Cause. Edward decided to take this opportunity to assert his own claims to Scottish sovereignty, and he forced the claimants to swear homage to him as the overlord of Scotland. Edward based his claim to this position on historical precedent.

In March 1291, two months before the beginning of the Great Cause, Edward sent letters to various monastic houses asking for chronicle evidence concerning the relationship between the crowns of England and Scotland.[6] The first appeal to history in the debates between Scotland and England was a hurried, unorganized affair, and Edward's proof consisted of some papal bulls and English chronicle extracts from 901 to 1252. By the end of the decade the Scots retaliated, both through force and by appealing to Pope Boniface VIII who, in 1299, issued the letter *Scimus fili* in which he rebuked Edward and advised him that sovereignty over Scotland did not belong to England but rather to the papacy.[7] Edward, in turn, wrote to the pope in 1301 outlining the reasons why he believed that the king of England should be the overlord of Scotland. He refined the original arguments of the Great Cause and, as an afterthought,[8] attempted to strengthen his case by including an account of the British founding narrative, complete with both Brutus and Arthur.

Having received a copy of Edward's letter from Boniface, the Scots replied in kind with the *Processus*, written by Baldred Bisset, which was probably given to Boniface late in 1301 or 1302.[9] This document refutes Edward's letter point by point, appealing to natural and canon law. But, more importantly for the study of early British historiography, it also includes the Scottish version of the founding of Britain, in which Scota and Gaythelos settle Scotland before Aeneas left Troy, and a refutation of English claims based on King Arthur.

This historical polemic influenced chronicle writing throughout the fourteenth century in both England and Scotland. In England, Ranulph Higden repeated the English claims relating to Brutus in his *Polychronicon*, while in Scotland, John Fordun expanded the legend of Scota and Gaythelos more than any previous Scottish writer.[10] Goldstein argues that this debate continued to be a dominant motivating force in Scottish historiography throughout the Middle Ages.[11] It was against the backdrop of this ancient debate that Hardyng began his own search for evidence of England's historical sovereignty over Scotland. He was in some ways successful, and he delivered three documents to Henry V in 1422, including a series of homages done by the claimants to the Scottish

throne during the Great Cause. In 1440, possibly after a subsequent trip to Scotland, seven more documents were delivered to Henry VI. It was also in the 1440s that Hardyng began writing the first version of his chronicle, and in 1457 he presented it, along with six more documents, to Henry VI. After failing to receive a sufficient reward for either the chronicle or the documents from the Lancastrian king, Hardyng rewrote the chronicle with a pro-Yorkist bias, planning to present it to Richard of York. Although he did deliver several documents to Richard's son, Edward IV, in 1463, it is unlikely that he actually completed the second version of the *Chronicle* before his own death.[12] There are no records of John Hardyng beyond 1463, and it is assumed that he died soon after; he was at least eighty-four years old.

Many of Hardyng's documents are still extant. With the exception of the homages done by the claimants to the throne, they are all forgeries. The way in which they were doled out is suspicious enough, but many errors in the documents, such as post-conquest armorial bearings decorating a pre-conquest charter, clearly betray their origins.[13] Francis Palgrave described them as being 'in a character not properly belonging to any age or time' in a style 'as would result from an individual possessing archæological knowledge, and yet using it according to the uncritical character of his age.'[14] Hardyng's modern editor, Henry Ellis, suggested that he was deluded into buying these forgeries,[15] but most scholars agree that Hardyng himself was the forger. Almost all of the documents appear within the *Chronicle* in some form, usually as proof that Scotland is subject to England.

Both versions of the *Chronicle* begin with the story of Albina and her sisters and end in the fifteenth century. The first version is found in a unique copy of approximately 19,000 lines, while the second, substantially shorter at just over 12,000 lines, is found in fifteen manuscripts and fragments as well as a printed edition of 1534.[16] They are both written in English rhyme-royal stanzas, and both include descriptions of the best routes for invading Scotland.[17] Hardyng also drew detailed maps of Scotland, and copies of these are appended to the first version and several manuscripts of the second version.[18] The bulk of Hardyng's history of Arthur is drawn from a comparative use of both Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia* and Wace's *Roman de Brut*. In addition to these sources, as Harker points out, he had access to other chronicles including the prose *Brut* and, possibly, Robert Mannyng's *Story of Inglond*.[19] Although the unique manuscript of the first version of the *Chronicle* may be the only copy ever made, the second version, as the number of extant

copies suggests, was very influential, and it was used as a source by Holinshead and other chroniclers, as well as by literary figures such as Sir Thomas Malory, Edmund Spenser, and William Shakespeare.[20]

The surviving copies of the *Chronicle* not only demonstrate Hardyng's interest in documentary evidence,[21] but also show his knowledge of the appeal to history which grew out of the Great Cause. Edward I's letter to Boniface is appended to the first version of the text, as is the letter prepared by the barons of England in support of Edward's claims.[22] This may have been suggested by John Fordun's *Chronica Gentis Scotorum.* Fordun not only included a complete account of the Scota legend, but he too was interested in the Great Cause and appended a copy of Bisset's *Processus* to his work. It is even possible that Hardyng had read Walter Bower's more nationalistic *Scotichronicon*, though this is by no means assured. Hardyng's use of source material also indicates a detailed familiarity with the historical debate. Throughout the *Chronicle* he incorporates the English arguments into his narrative, and includes some Scottish material which he uses to his own ends. For the most part, however, the arguments of the Scots are denounced without direct reference to the Scots themselves. Perhaps most significantly, he also adds totally new material to the debate.

Edward's letter of 1301 had relied on the Galfridian narrative's account of Arthur to support English claims to sovereignty over Scotland. The letter did not give a detailed account of Arthur's deeds, but simply stated that 'Arthurus rex Britonum princeps famosissimus Scociam sibi rebellem subjecit, et pene totam gentem delevit et postea quemdam nomine Anguselum in regem Scocie prefecit.'[23] Baldred Bisset had found major flaws in Edward's use of the Arthurian narrative, and these are outlined in his *Processus*: 'Quod dicit de Arthuro non procedit. Arthurus de adulterio fuit genitus, nec cuiquam successit; sed quicquid optinuit in variis locis per potenciam et violenciam acquisivit. Per quam nedum Scociam, sed eciam Angliam, Walliam, Hiberniam, Galliam, Norwegiam et Daciam occupavit. Quo per Modredum filium Loth regis Scocie et heredem Britannie interfecto, Scocia sicut alia regna sibi subjugata ad statum pristinum redierunt, et ad propriam libertatem.'[24] Three points are stressed by the Scottish argument: first, Arthur's illegitimacy made him an unlawful ruler; second, his power was expanded by conquest and force; and third, after his death, without an heir, all of the conquered territories returned to their former states of liberty. Hardyng answers each of the points in the Scottish argument by stressing certain aspects of the traditional Arthurian narrative and by inventing relevant informa-

tion. These alterations to the Brut tradition, however, merely modify the received narrative, and no material is introduced which is in conflict with Geoffrey's *Historia* or its successors.

Bisset's first statement, regarding Arthur's illegitimacy, was picked up by later Scottish historians. Fordun writes that 'Cum enim Vther ... perisset, filius ejus Arthurus factione quorundam in regno successit, quod tamen illi debitum de jure non fuerat, sed Annæ sorori potius vel suis liberis.'[25] Fordun goes on to say that Anna was 'procreata legitimo, consuli Loth Scoto ... nupta fuit: ex qua duos filios genuit Galwanum nobilem et Mordredum.'[26] Fordun uses Geoffrey of Monmouth as his source for this section, but while Geoffrey speaks of the 'necessitas' of placing Arthur on the throne,[27] he never mentions that the throne was contested in any way. Fordun believed that Geoffrey's use of the word 'necessitas' implied that the nobility of Britain were forced to elect Arthur because, at the age of fifteen, he proved a better candidate for the position than his younger cousins, Gawain and Mordred. Fordun never states why he feels that Arthur's claim is illegitimate, but two facts lead the reader to conclude that Arthur was a bastard. First, Uther, unlike most other kings mentioned in Fordun's chronicle, is never said to have married, despite the long-standing tradition that he had wed Igerne. Second, the description of Anna, who was 'procreata legitimo,' seems extraneous unless it is placed in apposition to Arthur, who was not. Later historians would elaborate on Bisset's statement and Fordun's implications. Concerning the crown of Britain, Walter Bower adds '... quod tamen illi debitum de jure non fuerat quemadmodum natus in adulterio de Igerna conjuge Gorlois ducis Cornubie in castro Tintagol inaudita arte Merlini vatis.'[28]

In response to these attacks, Hardyng treats Arthur's birth in great detail. He stresses the fact that Uther and Igerne were married before the birth of Arthur, thus making him a legitimate heir under both English common law and canon law.[29] He also states that 'at the daye he wedded hir and cround, / And she ferforth with childe was then begonne,'[30] and later that 'at hir tyme the quene had borne a sonne' that was 'to bee his fathers heyre.'[31] These statements, although not in conflict with Geoffrey, are added to his account and stress Arthur's legitimacy.

Hardyng also allows Arthur to defend his own blood line. In Geoffrey's *Historia*, following the challenge from the Roman senators, Arthur retreats into council with his lords where he outlines his ancestral claim to independence from Rome in several lengthy speeches.[32] This informa-

tion is also found in Hardyng's *Chronicle*, but material has been added to
Geoffrey's account. In the *Chronicle* Arthur begins his defence by describing Brutus's original state of freedom in Britain, despite the fact that
Brutus is not mentioned in either Geoffrey or Wace at this point. Most
significantly, Hardyng changes the format of Arthur's reply. Instead of
giving a speech before his nobility, Arthur traces his ancestry in a letter
which he sends to Rome. The appeal to history in letter form, and the
inclusion of the Brutus myth in that letter is reminiscent of Edward's
letter to Boniface in 1301, and here Hardyng may be borrowing material
directly from the appeal.[33]

The Scots' second defence, that Arthur had become lord of Scotland
through force, and not through law, was part of a larger anti-Arthurian
tradition in Scotland. The Scottish alliterative poem *Golagros and Gawain*,
for example, presents Arthur as a conquering oaf. Written about 1470,
the poem depicts Arthur on pilgrimage. The king decides to subdue Sir
Golagros when he learns that the knight has no lord. When Arthur's
knights attempt to talk him out of the rash plan, he exclaims that
Golagros will pay homage to him 'Or ellis mony wedou / Ful wraithly sal
weip.'[34] As in the two alliterative poems discussed in the previous chapter, it falls to Gawain to defend Arthur's claims. Even in defeat, however,
Golagros will not yield. He states:

'Me think farar to dee,
Than schamyt be, verralie,
Ane sclander to byde.

'Wes I neuer yit defoullit, nor fylit in fame
Nor nane of my eldaris, that euer I hard nevin.'[35]

This scene is even more striking when it is remembered that in the
source, the French *Chastel Orgueilleus*, Arthur attacks the castle to free a
knight of the Round Table, while in *Golagros* he wishes to subdue the
castle's lord.[36] Similarly, *The Cronycle of Scotland in a Part*, written in the
reign of James II, describes Arthur as 'that tyrant [who] maid us were
agayne his faith and alye.'[37] At the time that Hardyng was composing his
Chronicle, therefore, there was a tradition in Scottish historiography and
romance literature which depicted Arthur as a cruel, conquering king.

Scottish writers had good reason to view Arthur in this light. Edward I
had written that Arthur 'subjecit' the Scots and 'pene totam gentem
delevit,' and Geoffrey of Monmouth had described Arthur's wars with

the Scots and Picts who were allied with the Saxon invaders.[38] Hardyng maintains this image in the first version of the *Chronicle*, where Arthur is forced to fight against the 'Scottes and peghtes that euere were fals and fell.'[39] In the second version, however, he chooses to downplay this element of Geoffrey's account. In Hardyng's shorter version, Arthur 'sought þe Saxons in Scotland,'[40] but the conflict with the Scots is uncharacteristically brief. After Arthur drove the Scots and Picts 'into oute ysles' they quickly 'became his men.'[41] The Scots, in fact, are shown among Arthur's most devoted followers. Hardyng increases the importance of several Scottish knights, not for their own sakes, but rather as vassals of Arthur. The first of these knights is Lot of Lothian. Hardyng writes that, after Uther had married Igerne and established the Round Table,

> The kyng sent forth syr Loth of Lowthian,
> A worthy prince, hardy and bounteous,
> ....
> The first knight that was electe, right fortunous,
> Of the table round, that ofte with theim did fight.[42]

Both Geoffrey and Wace recount that Lot married Arthur's sister Anna and that he commanded the British army, but only Hardyng links him with the Round Table. Lot's role is expanded further when Arthur is in need of military assistance:

> Of Scotlande, then of Lowthyan by ryght,
> The kyng was then, that [L]oth of Lowthian hight,
> The fyrste knyght was so of the table rounde,
> To Arthure true & also his lyegeman founde.[43]

Arthur is given such a firm hold over Scottish territory that he chooses who should succeed to the throne of Lothian when Lot departs for Norway. Arthur makes 'Gawayne / The kyng [of Lothian], to hold of hym by homage then.'[44]

In addition to the increased importance of Gawain and Lot, other aspects of Hardyng's narrative indicate the control that Arthur had in Scotland. The first three knights of the Round Table are all Scottish knights, including King Angusel of Albany. According to Edward I, Angusel was placed on the throne by Arthur, but Hardyng's King Angusel willingly submits to the benevolent Arthur.[45] This is reinforced in a rubric of the first version: 'Note how Arthure toke of the kynges of

Albany homage.'[46] Hardyng also emphasizes that Arthur was free to hold court anywhere in Scotland he wished.[47] In short, Hardyng establishes Arthur as the unquestioned ruler of Scotland, a position which he gained without conquest.

The third Scottish attack on Arthur concerned heredity. Bisset claimed that, since Arthur had no heir, Scotland returned to its former state of freedom after his death. Bisset goes so far as to claim that Mordred was in fact the 'heredem Britannie.'[48] Fordun also states that Mordred had a claim to the British throne 'et hac forte de causa movebat bellum Modredus contra Arthurum in quo alteruter fatis cessit.'[49] Mordred's claim to the throne was through his mother Anna, the legitimate child of Igerne.[50] It is unlikely that either Fordun or Bisset seriously intended to argue that the Scots (for Mordred was the son of Lot) had a contemporary claim to the throne of Britain, but this argument does help to ennoble Mordred's war against Arthur. The claim also helps to ennoble Mordred himself. Fordun was aware of the alternate version of Mordred's birth, in which Arthur is Mordred's father through incest. He writes that 'quem aliter ex adverso genitum nonnulli tradunt, sed non tenet.'[51] For Fordun, Mordred is something of a hero and therefore cannot have been the product of incest. For just the opposite reason Hardyng also omits this story. In the first version of the *Chronicle* he writes that 'som bokes sayne Arthur was so vnwyse / That he hym [i.e., Mordred] gatte on his syster dame Anne.'[52] Later in the *Chronicle*, however, Hardyng dismisses this claim.

> Bot dethes wounde, as cronycle doth expresse,
> Modrede hym gafe that was his systere sune,
> And as some sayne his owne sonne, als, doutlesse.
> Bot certaynte thare-of no bokes kune
> Declare it wele that I haue sene ore fune.
> Bot lyke it vs by all estymacioun
> That he cam neuere of his generacion.[53]

The revised version of the *Chronicle* has no mention of this account of Mordred's birth, thus freeing Arthur from the stigma of incest.

Bisset's second claim concerning heredity was that Scotland returned to its state of freedom after Arthur's death. In order to counter this argument Hardyng provides Arthur with a legitimate heir by claiming that Cador, the duke of Cornwall, was Arthur's half-brother, since both were the sons of Igerne. According to Hardyng, upon Arthur's

death the crown passed to Constantine, Cador's son:

> And [Arthur] gaue Britayne that was full solitarie,
> To Constantyne, duke Cader sonne on hye,
> His neuewe was, for Cader was his brother,
> As well is knowen they had but one mother.[54]

This, in fact, was not well known. Hardyng and Thomas Gray are the only English chroniclers to claim that Arthur had a half-brother or a legitimate heir. In the *Scalacronica* Arthur 'bailla soun realme a Costentin, le fitz Cador de Cornwail soun freir, a garder tanqe il reuenist.'[55] Gray restates this relationship after Arthur's death. Constantine succeeds to Arthur's throne because he is 'fitz Cador de Cornewail, soun frere depar sa mere.'[56] Both Gray and Hardyng seem to be taking advantage of the quandary which confused Fordun and other chroniclers. Geoffrey's ambiguous description of Constantine's relation to Arthur (he is called his *cognatus*) allowed Hardyng to interpret the passage in the most favourable light.[57]

Through these minor alterations Hardyng defends Arthur (and English claims based on his reign) against the claims of Scottish polemicists and chroniclers. In the *Chronicle*, Arthur is portrayed as a legitimate king who ruled peacefully and left his kingdom to his nephew. Hardyng systematically refuted Scottish attacks by adding material to the debate, such as Arthur's legitimate heir, and by emphasizing traditional aspects of the narrative, such as Arthur's own legitimacy. These modifications to the chronicle tradition support Hardyng's political agenda, but they do not represent any major deviation from the accepted account. In only one instance does Hardyng attempt to reinforce the legitimacy of his claims by citing a source: the possibly invented fact that Cador and Arthur were half brothers is accompanied by the weak tag, 'As well is knowen.' Other references to source material serve to dismiss unsavoury details drawn from alternate traditions. 'Som bokes sayne' that Arthur was Mordred's father, but our well-read chronicler has seen or found 'no bokes' that support this allegation with certainty. The Brut tradition remains unscathed by this minor intrusion of romance material.

Hardyng's Adventurous Knights

Hardyng's careful attempt to distinguish between the historical and fictive accounts of Mordred's paternity is, however, betrayed by his own

text, which does include a great deal of romance material. Like the modifications to the Brut tradition, the material drawn from romance serves to increase the glory of Arthur's reign and reinforce Hardyng's basic thesis of the unity of Britain under the English king. But unlike the modifications to the Brut tradition discussed above, the inclusion of lengthy episodes from prose romances introduces conflict within the Arthurian narrative itself. The romances from which Hardyng borrows lacked the authority of proved history, so Hardyng provides authority for much of the material that he introduces to his text. The additions that Hardyng makes to his *Chronicle* are treated rather differently in the two versions and we will begin by looking at each version seperately.

Hardyng first displays his knowledge of Arthurian romance well before the Arthurian period. The first version's account of Ebrauke's foundations of York and Edinburgh includes several lengthy digressions into Arthurian romance. The passage is unique to the chronicle tradition and bears quoting at length:

A cyte than he made that hight Ebrauke,
Aftere his name, whiche now that Yorke so highte:
A castell stronge, sette on the north se banke,
Whiche he dyd calle Mounte Dolorouse, so wighte,
That now Bamburgh ys castell of grete myght.
In whiche there ys a toure hatte Dolorouse Garde,
Bot by what cause I can nought wele awarde.

Bot thus I haue in olde bokes red and sene:
That Ebrauke, whan he was put to the flight,
Fore his socoure than thydyr came, I mene.
By other bokes I haue eke sene be sight,
Fore Launcelot loue a lady dyed fulle bright,
Whiche in a bote, enchaunted fore the nones,
Drofe vp thare, so named he tho wones.

And in the londe fore-sothe of Albany,
The Mayden Castell strongly than dyd he make,
Callynge it so on his language, fore-thy,
That he had thare his luste with maydens take
In yowth, whan that hym lyste with thaym to wake,
Whiche now so hatte Edynburgh ryghte by name.
All Scotland thurgh it hath now alle the fame.

High on þe mounte Agneth so was it sette,
A castell stronge and of grete altitude,
To whiche thare were thre score maydens sette
By a geant fore his solycitude
Agayn thaire will, for thaire grete pulcritude
And bewte, als, that hym liste with thaym play,
Whom fore thaire sake Syr Ewayn slew, men say.

And thaym he dyd delyvere of that seruage
And put that place so fulle in obeyssance
Of Kynge Arthure, it was his heritage
As souereyn lorde. And so, fore þat myschaunce,
That maydens were there kepte to ther greuaunce,
So was it calde Mayden Castell aftire warde
Many a day, ful longe, by that awarde.[58]

The establishment of these cities and castles is ultimately drawn from
Geoffrey of Monmouth,[59] and most chroniclers in the Brut tradition
include some statement about Ebrauke's city-building activities. The
material relating to Lancelot and Yvain, however, has been added by
Hardyng. The story through which Hardyng explains the name of the
tower Dolorous Garde is drawn from the Vulgate *La Mort le Roi Artu*, but
in this source it is not associated with any Scottish city. In the French
romance, the Maid of Escalot dies for love of Lancelot and floats down a
river to Camelot where her body is discovered by Arthur and Gawain.[60]
Although Lancelot's castle in the Vulgate is called Dolorous Garde, the
name is not associated with this event. The Castle of Maidens, and the
Arthurian source of its name, is even more complex. As we have seen,
Edinburgh was identified as the Castle of Maidens shortly after Geoffrey
first mentioned the location, and the appellation seems to have been
well known.[61] Yvain, however, is only marginally associated with the castle
in the Vulgate, where it is Galahad who puts an end to the custom of
imprisoning ladies there. The Latin romance *De Ortu Waluuanii* does
include an episode in which Gawain frees ladies who are besieged in the
castle, and it is possible that 'Ewayn' is a scribal mistake for 'Gawayn.'[62]
Neither of these alternate eponymous stories is provided with substantial
authority. The 'other bokes' which tell the Lancelot story are not pre-
sented as any more authoritative than the 'olde bokes' which say that
Ebrauke sought refuge in his own city. Similarly, Yvain's rescue of the
maidens is attributed to popular opinion ('men say') rather than to any

written text. The stories, therefore, merely suggest that Arthur's realm extended into Scotland, and they do not insist that they be taken as serious history. This digression into romance is not common in Hardyng's text and all other references to Arthurian romance are set within the Arthurian period. The entire digression into alternate names has been omitted in the second version of the text.[63]

Within the Arthurian period, Hardyng's interest in romance material is extensive and he integrates a wide variety of romance details, episodes, and characters into his chronicle. As in many other chronicles, material from outside the Brut tradition is focused in the two extended periods of peace in Arthur's reign, and the twelve-year period of peace is used to locate the individual adventures which characterize both French and Middle English romance. Arthur reestablishes the Round Table after his initial wars to secure Britain:

> The table Rounde of knyghtes honorable
> That tyme was voyde by grete defycience;
> So few thay were thurgh werres fortunable.[64]

Arthur renews the Round Table by enlisting new knights. Hardyng's list of knights is largely drawn from Geoffrey's *Historia.*[65] These knights live by a rule which defines their chivalric conduct and which obliges them 'all wronges to represse / With thare bodyse where law myght not redresse.'[66] Hardyng also includes a lengthy digression, similar to Wace's reflections on events during the period of peace, in which he explains how material about the Arthurian period survives into his own day. Under the rubric, 'How knyghtes of the Table Rounde sought and acheved auentures,' he writes:

> Whiche knyghtes, so, had many auenture,
> Whiche in this boke I may not now compile,
> Whiche by thaym selff, in many grete scriptur
> Bene tytled wele, and bettere than I thys while
> Can thaym pronounse, ore write thaym with my style,
> Whose makynge so by me that was not fayred
> Thurgh my symplesse I wold noght were enpayred.
>
> For alle thare actes I haue not herde ne sene,
> Bot wele I wote thay wolde all comprehende
> More than the Byble thrise wryten dothe contene;

Bot who that wyll laboure on itte expende
In the grete boke of all the auentures
Of the Seynte Grale he may fynde fele scriptures

Whiche specyfy full mony auenture,
Full meruelouse to yonge mennes wytte,
Of whiche myne age ow now to haue no cure.
Bot rathere thaym to leuen and omytte
To my maysters, that can thaym intermytte
Of suche thynges thurgh thaire hiegh sapience
More godelily than I can make pretence.[67]

Like Wace before him, Hardyng acknowledges a body of Arthurian
material that he does not feel that he can include. Hardyng claims that it
is inappropriate for a man of his advanced years to write about chivalric
adventures, but he does not address the historical accuracy of these tales,
only his own literary ability. He also cites two different sources for these
tales: individual stories which are contained in books 'by thaym selff' and
the 'grete boke' of the 'Saynte Grale.' It is unclear to which individual
stories he is referring, but as they are single adventures, and since he
alludes to their being heard, it is likely that he is referring to romances
of individual achievement like *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight.*

The authoritative source for these tales, however, and Hardyng's ma-
jor source for romance material, is the book of the 'Saynte Grale.' The
citation of this text must refer in part to the Vulgate *Queste del Saint Graal,*
and Hardyng would turn to the *Queste* for a great deal of narrative
material. 'The grete boke ... Of the Seynte Grale,' however, is obviously
more than simply the *Queste.* Richard Roos uses the same term in his will
made March 1481/2. Included among his chattels is a 'grete booke
called saint Grall bounde in boordes couerde with rede leder and plated
with plates of laten.'[68] Carol Meale has pointed out that this manuscript,
signed by Roos, Alianore Hawte (to whom Roos left the book), and E.
Wydville (the next owner), still survives. It is BL MS Royal 14. E. III, and
it contains not only the *Queste,* but also the *Estoire* and the *Morte.*[69]
Hardyng's use of the phrase 'grete boke ... Of the Seynte Grale,' like
Roos's, appears to refer simply to a large volume which contained vari-
ous books from the Vulgate cycle.

Despite the references to written sources, Hardyng also discusses the
oral transmission of adventurous stories. As in Thomas Gray's *Scalacronica,*
the *Chronicle* stresses that the telling of tales before meals was a popular
pastime at Arthur's court. Hardyng writes:

And euery day, afore the kynge at mete,
Amonge his prynces in open audience,
An auenture of armes and a fete
Reported was, so fore his reuerence
That dyd that dede, by suche experyence,
And forto moue his yonge knyghtes corages,
Suche auenturs escheuen in theyre viage.[70]

The purpose of tale-telling is the encouragement of young knights, and Hardyng emphasizes the fact that 'specualy all knyghtes of iuuentude / Drew to his courte and his excelsitude.'[71] The youth of Arthur's court are also named by Hardyng as he includes a second list of knights who were inducted into the Round Table fellowship throughout the twelve years of peace. Under the rubric 'how he made new knyghtes of þe Rounde table for cause many were spent in þe werre,' Hardyng includes a number of Arthurian characters drawn from both prose and verse romances:

Syre Gawene, sonne to Lothe of Louthian,
Who kynge was than of Louthian throughoute,
And Syr Launcelot Delake, that noble man,
And Kynge Pelles of Northwales, than was stoute
Syr Persyuall, whom mony men dyd doute,
Lybews Dysconne, and Syre Colygrenaunt,
Syr Leonell, Degre, and Degreuaunt

Bors and Etcor, Syre Kay, and Bedwere,
Guytarde, and Bewes of Corbenny, so wyse,
Syre Irelglas, and Mordrede als in fere,
Who Gawayns brothere was, of ful grete emprise.[72]

These knights also participate in the adventures of Arthur's court:

In whiche tyme so of reste and grete soiorne,
The knyghtes all of the Table Rounde
Grete auenturs cheved and dyd perfourne
And brought tyl ende thurgh-out all Bretayne rounde.[73]

Many of the knights listed, such as Lancelot, King Pelles, Percivall and Bors, figure prominently in the prose Vulgate, but Lybeus Disconnus and Degrevaunt are better known for their own romance narratives.

Calogrenant appears in Chrétien's *Yvain*, and 'Degre' may refer to the hero of either *The Squire of Low Degree* or *Sir Degarre*.[74] This group of knights, therefore, differs significantly from the first group, not simply because the list is drawn from outside the Brut tradition, but because the list is specifically made up of knights who are renowned in popular romance. This second group of knights is subject to the same rule as the first, including the provision that they should meet each year to retell their adventures:

> And at that feste the reule and ordynance
> Was so that thay shulde tell thayre auenture;
> What so thaym fell that yere, and what kyns chaunce,
> That myght be sette in romance ore scripture.
> And none auaunt acounted, bot nurture;
> To cause his felaws to do so eke the same,
> Thair auenture to seke and gete a name.[75]

The second version of the *Chronicle* does not allude to individual tales during the twelve years of peace, nor does it include a list of knights drawn from the Vulgate cycle and popular verse romances.[76] Rather, this version includes an abbreviated set of the rules of Arthur's court, including the fact that his knights fought against enchantment. Each knight was expected

> Agayne enchauntmentes his body for to wage,
> Agayne whiche crafte of the deuelles rage,
> Theim to destroye, and all kinde of sorcerye,
> Of whiche were many that tyme in Brytaynye.[77]

The rule in the second version is also more concerned with the courtly aspects of the knight's vocation. Young knights are encouraged 'of dyuerse landes to learne the language, / That elles wolde lyue at home in ydylnesse.'[78] These courtly pursuits, claims Hardyng, not only increase a knight's military reputation, but also increase his stature in the eyes of courtly ladies, 'For doute it not ladies ne gentylwemen / No cowardes loue.'[79] As in the first version, Arthur's knights are required to tell their adventures, 'how hym byfell / In his trauayle, or of his misauenture, / The Secretorye should put it in scrypture.'[80] This practice is again intended 'to steare & moue yonge knightes corage, / To seche armes and warrys of worthynesse.'[81]

For Hardyng, the telling of individual tales at Arthur's court serves the

same function as the dissemination of historical narratives, his own text included. In the prologue to the second version of the *Chronicle*, Hardyng turns to Chaucer's *Parlement of Fowles* for an image to describe the benefits of historical knowledge:

> As out of olde feldes newe corne groweth eche yere,
> Of olde bokes, by clerkes newe approued,
> Olde knyghtes actes with mynstrelles tonge stere
> The new corage of yonge knightes to be moued:
> Wherefore, me thinketh, old thinges shuld be loued,
> Sith olde bokes maketh young wittes wise,
> Disposed well with vertues exercyse.[82]

Both of Hardyng's accounts of the first period of peace, therefore, focus not simply on the chivalric achievements of Arthur's court, but also on the necessity of retelling those deeds for the benefit of younger generations of knights. The adventures themselves, at least during the twelve years of peace, remain untold.

Prose Romances and the Grail

While Hardyng does not draw heavily from episodic romances for his Arthurian history, he does make extensive use of the prose Vulgate cycle. *Lestoire del Saint Graal* is used in both the Arthurian portion of the *Chronicle* and earlier at the arrival of Joseph of Arimathea at Glastonbury. Hardyng also borrows from the Vulgate in his account of the founding of the Round Table. While most texts in the Brut tradition follow Wace, who maintained that Arthur established the Round Table in celebration of his marriage, Hardyng states that Uther established the table at his wedding to Igerne:

> A feste riall he made at his spousage,
> And by advyse of Merlyne ordynance
> The rounde table amonge his baronage
> By gan to make, fore fygure and remembrance
> Right of the table, with all the cyrcumstance,
> Of the saynte Grale, whiche longe tyme so a fore
> Ioseph made, in Aramathy was bore.[83]

This passage echoes the *Merlin* in which Merlin instructs Uther on the significance of the Table. '[N]ostre sire,' claims Merlin, '[Joseph] com-

manda que il feist vne table' in signification of Christ's last supper.[84] Now, 'vous establires la tierces table el non de la trinite.'[85] Hardyng again turned away from the standard Brut narrative at the end of his Arthurian history and drew details of Arthur's passing from the Vulgate *La Mort le Roi Artu*, again referred to as the 'seynt Grale':

> Bot of his dethe, the story of seynt Grale
> Sayth that he dyed in Aualon, full fayre,
> And byried there his body was all hale,
> With-in the blake Chapell, whare was his layre,
> Whiche Geryn made whare than was grete repayre,
> For seynt Dauyd, Arthurs vncle dere,
> It halowed had in name of Mary clere.[86]

In the shorter version we are told that Arthur is buried at the Black Chapel at Glastonbury, where Gerin becomes a monk. Then:

> ... Launcelot Delake came, as he rode
> Vpon the chace, with trompette and clarion;
> And Geryn tolde hym ther, [all] vp and downe,
> Howe Arthure was there layde in sepulture,
> For whiche with hym to byde he hight full sure.
>
> And so they abode together in contemplacion.[87]

The Vulgate *Mort Artu* does say that Arthur was buried in the black chapel, but it is Griflet who chooses to become a monk and to remain by the tomb,[88] while Lancelot chooses to live as a hermit with his cousin Bliobleris and the archbishop of Canterbury.[89] The inclusion of this material presents a problem for Hardyng. Lancelot's role in Arthurian romance contradicts a great deal of the material of Arthurian chronicles, and, like other chroniclers, Hardyng minimizes his appearances. Apart from a reference to Galahad's conception, Lancelot is otherwise mentioned only in lists throughout the *Chronicle*.[90] Hardyng, however, is able to incorporate this material from the Vulgate without compromising the narrative integrity of his history. In fact, by placing Lancelot in a monastery with his dead king, rather than in a hermitage, Hardyng gains control over the episode and uses it for his own narrative ends.[91] At the conclusion of the Vulgate cycle the reader's attention is focused on Lancelot and his personal penance, but at the end of Hardyng's account

of Arthur's reign the reader is focused on the burial of the king as his knights remain with the body at Glastonbury. Hardyng does not need to eliminate Lancelot from his narrative because the Vulgate *Lancelot* is the one romance from the cycle that Hardyng does not use extensively. Harker speculates that he simply did not know the work. 'At the risk of argument *ex silencio*,' she writes, 'Hardyng seems not to have been familiar with the *Lancelot del Lac*.'[92] It seems unlikely, however, that a man as well read in Arthurian literature as Hardyng should be unfamiliar with a text so central to the romance canon. Rather, the adventures of the *Lancelot* are either the kind of individual achievements which he cites but refuses to include in the twelve years of peace, or they deal with Lancelot's love of the queen. In either case, they have no place in Hardyng's historical text and it is possible that he knew the work, but chose not to draw from it.

The majority of Hardyng's borrowings from the prose Vulgate come from the *Queste del Saint Graal*. Hardyng's Grail quest is situated in the second, nine-year period of peace,[93] and it is the most elaborate alteration to the Brut tradition in Hardyng's *Chronicle*. E.D. Kennedy has convincingly argued that Hardyng incorporates the Grail material as another response to the Anglo-Scottish historiographical debate. For Kennedy, Hardyng's inclusion of the Grail 'appears to have resulted from his anti-Scottish sentiments and his consequent desire to enhance the spiritual authority of Arthur's reign.'[94] During the Great Cause and in the years that followed, the Scots had based their ecclesiastical independence on the legend of St Andrew. According to this story, a monk in Greece, Reguli, was instructed by an angel to steal certain relics of the saint and carry them to Scotland where he would found a church. The legend of St Andrew placed the establishment of Christianity in Scotland in the fourth century.[95] Edward I attempted to demonstrate God's favour for his cause by citing the miraculous intervention of St John of Beverly during a battle with the Scots, but as Kennedy points out, this 'was hardly a match for the Scots legend of St Andrew.'[96] In the early fourteenth century the legends of the Grail 'lacked the presumed authenticity of the Scottish story of Andrew's relics' and Edward I did not make use of them.[97] By the fifteenth century, however, some Grail material had entered historical tradition, and Glastonbury was claiming that it had been established by Joseph of Arimathea in apostolic times. Hardyng was anxious to demonstrate that York had ecclesiastical jurisdiction over Scotland,[98] and the history of the Grail lent spiritual authority to both Arthur's reign and England itself.

Both of the major elements of the history of the Grail (Joseph of Arimathea's journey to Britain and Galahad's subsequent quest) are added to both versions of the *Chronicle.* Hardyng was not the first author to include references to either aspect of the Grail material in a historical work. We have already seen how the story of Joseph of Arimathea entered historical texts such as John of Glastonbury's *Cronica*,[99] but the Arthurian elements of the Grail were also being told in a historical context. *The Parlement of the Thre Ages* contains a brief account of the Siege Perilous, wherein Merlin establishes the Round Table,

> And sett the Sege Perilous so semely one highte,
> There no segge schold sitt bot hym scholde schame tyde,
> Owthir dethe within the thirde daye demed to hymseluen,
> Bot Sir Galade the gude that the gree wan.[100]

The Parlement, as we have seen, contains a great deal of romance material and it is not surprising that it would turn to the Vulgate *Queste* to augment its vision of British history. John Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* also includes a brief description of the Siege Perilous. Like Hardyng, Lydgate tells how 'A clerk ther was to cronicle al ther deedis,' and how these adventures, when 'Rad & songe, to folk gaff gret confort.'[101] Arthur's knights, says Lydgate, take their seat at the Round Table according to rank:

> Oon was voide callid the se pereilous,
> As Sang Real doth pleynli determyne,
> Noon to entre but most vertuous,
> Of God prouided to been a pure virgyne,
> Born bi discent tacomplisshe & to fyne,
> He allone, as cheeff and sovereyne,
> Al auentures of Wales & Breteyne.[102]

As in Hardyng, Lydgate's 'Sang Real' certainly refers to the *Queste del Saint Graal,* while the bulk of Lydgate's Arthurian narrative, although greatly expanded from the brief account of Arthur found in Boccaccio's *De Casibus,* is basically drawn from the Brut tradition. John of Glastonbury's use of the story of Joseph of Arimathea and Lydgate's small inclusion of the Siege Perilous in the *Fall of Princes,* a text with which Hardyng was probably familiar, may have opened the way for Hardyng's extensive use of the *Queste del Saint Graal.*

Unlike his predecessors, Hardyng does not merely allude to the Grail and the adventures associated with it, and his far-reaching use of the *Queste* within a historical text required a great deal of care. The story of the quest, as presented in the prose Vulgate, is largely self-contained, but by incorporating such a large narrative block into the life of Arthur, Hardyng risked altering the structure of his Arthurian history. He avoids this by carefully altering some of the Grail material to make it compatible with the chronicle tradition. The first alteration that Hardyng makes to the prose Vulgate relates to Galahad's parentage. In the *Lancelot*, Lancelot is tricked into sleeping with King Pelles's daughter, and Galahad is conceived through their union. This trick is possible because Lancelot believes himself to be with Guenevere, who is his true love. After being drugged, Lancelot is told that the queen has summoned him, and he is led to Pelles's daughter's room 'et cil connut ceste em pechié et en avoutire et contre Deu et encontre Sainte Eglyse.'[103] Hardyng alters this episode so that upon Galahad's arrival at court we are told that he was

> The godelyest wyght afore that men had sene,
> Whom Launselot gat, by hole and full knowlage,
> Of Pelles doughtere.[104]

Hardyng's reference to 'hole and full knowlage' may be a poetic translation of *connut* but he has avoided any mention of *pechié* or *avoutire*. At first reading the passage simply distances Galahad from the sin of adultery committed by his parents in the Vulgate version of the tale. The shorter version of the *Chronicle*, however, is more specific. In the second version of his text Hardyng claims that Galahad was

> The goodlyest afore that men had seen,
> Whom Launcelot gat, in very clene spousage,
> On Pelles doughter.[105]

The change from 'hole and full knowlage' to 'very clene spousage' implies that Lancelot must be aware of his actions during the conception of Galahad. Indeed the first version's reference to 'full knowlage' may simply indicate that Lancelot knew who he was with. For Hardyng, this is a narrative necessity, as logic dictates that Lancelot could not have been tricked into believing that he is with the queen, because in the chronicle he has no amorous relationship with Guenevere.[106] By representing Lancelot and Pelles's daughter as married, or at least aware of their

actions, Hardyng eliminates the amorous relationship with Guenevere and ensures the integrity of the chronicle tradition.

The second and major alteration to the Vulgate changes the very nature of the quest. As Kennedy has noted, the Vulgate *Queste* unfavourably compares the earthly chivalry of Arthur's court with the spiritual chivalry of the Grail, but this view does not conform to Hardyng's own social agenda. In Hardyng's *Chronicle* the quest is an adventure which is 'creditable to Arthur and his court.'[107] The chivalry of the Grail is not placed in opposition to the worldly chivalry of the Round Table, but is virtually indistinguishable from it. Unlike the Grail quest in the Vulgate, which signals the decline of Arthur's realm, Arthur receives only honour in Hardyng's version, and, following the quest, Arthur holds yet another feast at which he displays his 'hyghe knyghthode, houshold, and all largesse.'[108] The Grail material is thus transformed to serve much the same function as Hardyng's other modifications to the Arthurian section of his history. It increases the honour of Arthur and, by implication, argues against Scottish attacks on the legitimacy of his reign.

The first version of the *Chronicle* achieves its positive image of the Grail quest by focusing on a genealogy of British chivalry and heraldry which goes back to Joseph of Arimathea, thus tying together the various borrowings from prose romances. Joseph of Arimathea's creation of the heraldic device known as the Saint George's cross is explicitly tied to Galahad's quest when he first takes up the shield. Upon arriving at Avalon Galahad finds the shield and weapons, and encounters a group of monks who explain their significance:

Bot than thay sayde in bokes thay founde it wreton,
Kynge Eualache the shelde of olde there lefte,
Whiche is all white, as ye shall se and wyton,
With crosse of blode fro Iosep nose byrefte,
Who sayde there shulde no wyght than bere it efte
With outen deth, mayme, ore aduersite,
Bot oon that shulde leue in vyrgynyte.[109]

Galahad, of course, is able to wield both shield and sword because of his virginity and his birth. Because of his ancestry, he alone is the one who

... shulde acheue the seynte Graall worthyly,
And kynge so be of Sarras, with outen doute,
Of Orboryke also duke, verryly,

By heritage of auncestry thrugh-oute,
And cheue he shulde, amonges all the route,
The sege perilouse in the table rounde,
That neuere myght knyght withouten dethes wounde.[110]

Having connected Galahad to the original Grail guardians, Hardyng quickly passes over the bulk of the Grail quest itself. In the first version Hardyng is content with the prophesy delivered by Joseph that Galahad would achieve the Grail. 'What shuld I more say of thys worthy knyght,' asks Hardyng, 'That afterward acheued this prophecy? / Fore as it spake so was he aftere right / And verifyed.'[111] Hardyng reconsidered his brevity in the second version and expanded the Grail quest to two lines:

But when that he had laboured so foure yere
He founde in Walys the Saintgraal full clere.[112]

Even the adventures in the Grail castle are merely alluded to. After Percival returns to court he tells

Howe Galaad had acheued the auenture
In kyng Pellis householde with great honoure,
That called was þe saint Graal by scrypture.[113]

Instead of dealing with the mysteries of the Grail, Hardyng moves Galahad directly into the Holy Land where he becomes king of Sarras and establishes a new order of the Saint Grail:

Whare he sette vp the table of Seynte Grale,
In whiche he made an ordre vyrgynale
Of knyghtes noble, in whiche he satte as chefe
And made suche brethere of it as were hym lefe:

Syre Bors was oon, an othere Syre Percyuall,
Syre Claudyus, a noble knyght of Fraunce,
And othere two nere of his blode, with all,
Thre knyghtes als, withouten variaunce,
Of Danmarke so, of noble gouernaunce,
And thre knyghtes als of Irelonde excelente.
Whiche twelue were all of noble regymente.[114]

The list of knights who join Galahad's new order is drawn from the Vulgate *Quest*, but there Claudius and the eight anonymous knights supply the bodies necessary to reenact the Last Supper and receive the Eucharist directly from Josephus.[115] Hardyng's table of the Saint Grail is much more mundane, and the rule of the order closely resembles the secular rule of Arthur's own Round Table. Only the demand of chastity separates Arthur's Round Table from Galahad's Grail fellowship:

> Whose reule was this, by Galaad constytute:
> To leue euermore in clennesse virginall;
> Comon profyte alway to execute;
> All wronges redresse with batayll corporall,
> Whare law myght nought haue course iudiciall;
> All fals lyuers his londe that had infecte
> Fore to distroy, or of thaire vice correcte;
>
> The pese to kepe; the laws als sustene;
> The fayth of Criste, the kyrke also protecte;
> Wydows maydyns ay whare fore to mayntene;
> And chyldre yonge, vnto thare age perfecte,
> That thay couthe kepe thaym selfe in all affecte.
> Thus sette it was in hole perfeccioun,
> By gode advise and full cyrcumspeccion'[116]

Harker speculates that the *Queste*'s mention of Galahad's silver table may have suggested to Hardyng the establishment of a new chivalric order.[117] The table of the Saint Grail, however, is no random foundation, but is designed to knit together an ongoing tradition of British chivalry. Hardyng explains this tradition following the death of Galahad, whose heart is returned to Britain to be buried at Glastonbury beside Joseph of Arimathea:

> And there to sette his shelde that Iosep made,
> Whiche was the armes that we Seynt Georges call,
> That aftire thare full many yere abade,
> And worshypt were thurgh out this reme ouer all.
> In so ferre forthe that kynges in especiall
> Thaym bare alway in batayle whare thay wente,
> Afore thaym euere fore spede in thare entente.[118]

By stressing the association between Joseph's creation of the Saint George cross and the heraldic practice of English kings, Hardyng implies a relationship between the chivalry of the Arthurian world and contemporary English knights. That association is made abundantly clear in the stanzas which follow:

Of whiche ordre of Seynte Graal so clene,
Were aftere longe founded than the templers
In figure of it, writen as I haue sene.
Oute of the whiche bene now hospitulers
Growen vp full hiegh at Rodes with outen peres.
Thus eche ordre were founded vpon othere,
All as on, and echone others brothere.

So was also the Table Rounde araysed
In remembrance all of the worthy table
Of the Seynte Grale, whiche Josep a fore had raysed
In hole fygure of Cristes soupere comendable.
Thus eche ordoure was grounded resonable
In grete vertu and condygne worthynesse,
To goddes plesyre and soules heelfulnesse.[119]

By implication the English kings of Hardyng's own time are included in this genealogy of chivalric orders. It was widely believed that the Order of the Garter was the culmination of Edward III's decision to refound the Round Table. The Order, of which Hardyng's lord Umfraville was a member, had as its device the Saint George cross surrounded by a blue garter.

While the short version of the text does not mention the Templars nor the Hospitalers, it does create a tradition of British heraldry and imply a relationship with contemporary knighthood. The account of Galahad's journey to the east is much abbreviated:

Where thenne he made . xii. knightes of the order
Of saynt Graal, in full signifycacyon
Of the table whiche Ioseph was the founder,
At Aualon, as Mewyn made relacyon;
In token of the table refyguracyon,
Of the brotherhede of Christes souper & maundie
Afore his death, of hyghest dignytee.[120]

In this abbreviated account, Hardyng does not explicitly re-associate the Round Table with either the Grail table or Joseph's table at Glastonbury,[121] nor does he reassert the contemporary relevance of the Saint George cross. The heraldic practice of British kings is instead asserted throughout the second version of the *Chronicle.* Hardyng, for example, affirms the contemporary significance of the Saint George cross when listing the arms carried by Uther. In addition to the dragon and the arms of Brutus, Uther also bears the arms of King Lucius,

> The same armes that kyng Constantynus,
> At his batayll against Maxencius,
> So bare alwaye, þat saynt George armes we call,
> Whiche Englyshemen nowe worshippe ouer all.[122]

The arms are also mentioned during the account of Constantine. The pseudo-British emperor adopts the device during his battle to seize Rome.[123] The antiquity of the arms is also stressed at the very moment of their creation by Joseph of Arimathea. Hardyng describes the 'shelde of siluer white, / A crosse endlong and ouertwhart full perfect,' which Joseph first gave to Arviragus:

> These armes were vsed through all Brytain
> For a common signe, eche manne to knowe his nacion
> Frome enemies, whiche nowe we call, certain,
> Sainct Georges armes, by [Mewyns] enformacion:
> And thus this armes, by Iosephes creacion,
> Full long afore sainct George was generate
> Were worshipt heir of mykell elder date.[124]

The continuity of British chivalry is thus woven into the very fabric of history as the Saint George cross acts as a banner around which successive generations of British kings and knights rally. The continuity of the heraldic device is also reinforced visually in one manuscript: BL Douce MS 345 contains marginal drawings of the Saint George arms at the point they are created by Joseph, when King Lucius adopts the shield, and again when Constantine assumes the device before attacking Rome.[125] Finally, the example of the Round Table, the physical manifestation of British chivalry, remains in a very concrete form for Hardyng's contemporary audience. Although Arthur will chase Mordred into Cornwall, the last major encounter takes place at Winchester, and Hardyng la-

ments the end of Arthur's court during the penultimate battle against the king's nephew:

Of the round table, that longe had been afore,
Many worthy knightes there were spended,
For Arthures loue, that might not been amended.

The rounde table at Wynchester beganne,
And there it ended, and there it hangeth yet;
For there were slayn at this ylke battayl than,
The knightes all that euer did at it sitte.[126]

The effect of both versions of the *Chronicle* is to imply a direct lineal relationship between the Arthurian world and chivalry in Hardyng's own day. Whether that line is represented by the genealogy of chivalric orders, as in the first version, or by the physical survival of Arthur's Round Table, the Arthurian world becomes an exemplary benchmark against which Hardyng's contemporaries should be measured. That benchmark measures both social and political spheres, just as Arthur's achievement was to create an ideal chivalric society within a united Britain. Hardyng stresses the unity of Britain at the time of Arthur's death, where the king 'gaue Britayne that was full solitarie, / To Constantyne, duke Cader sonne on hye.'[127] The united Britain, which included England, Wales, the islands and, most significantly, Scotland, soon disintegrates under Constantine's weak regime. According the Hardyng, a united Britain can only survive when the king and the nobility live by the rule established for their order.

The Quest for Authority

Hardyng's vision of Arthurian history is unique, and despite his attempts to integrate the Grail material its inclusion seriously blurs the distinction between history and fiction throughout the *Chronicle*. Unlike the *Scalacronica*, however, the *Chronicle*'s romance intrusions are designed to be accepted as authentic and to carry the full weight of historical precedent. Hardyng's social concerns are obviously related to the civil unrest which characterized England during the later years of his life, and he looked to the past for models which could be applied to the turbulent present. In order to recapture the spiritual authority and the national unity which distinguished Arthur's reign, contemporary knights are

encouraged to return to the principles of the chivalric rules encoded in the Round Table and the Grail fellowship. It was important, therefore, that the Grail material be accepted as history, and Hardyng goes to great lengths to provide authentication for his version of the Arthurian story.

As we have seen, one of Hardyng's strategies is to explain how information about the quest survives to his own day. He repeatedly mentions the telling of tales, and states that the adventures of the knights were recorded by a scribe in Arthur's court. During the quest for the Grail, he writes:

> That every yere the knyghtes at Whissonday
> To Arthure came, so by his ordynance,
> And tolde hym all thaire auentures, ay,
> Whiche he did putte in boke fore remenbrance.[128]

An impetus for this preoccupation with tale-telling can be found in the prose Vulgate *Queste del Saint Graal,* as the conclusion of the *Queste* contains a record of its own creation. After Bors returns from the Holy Land, Arthur asks to be told about the adventure and its successful completion: 'Et quant Boorz ot contees les aventures del Seint Graal telles come il les avoit veues, si furent mises en escrit et gardees en l'almiere de Salebieres, dont Mestre Gautier Map les trest a fere son livre del Seint Graal por l'amor del roi Henri son seignor, qui fist l'estoire translater de latin en françois.'[129] In Hardyng's account, however, Bors does not return and it is therefore Percival

> Who tolde hym all the wondere auentures
> That neuere man myght acheue, bot he alone,
> Whiche kynge Arthur than putte in hole scriptures,
> Remembred euere to be whan he were gone.[130]

Despite Hardyng's continued references to oral tales delivered and recorded at Arthur's court, the rubrics of the first version of the *Chronicle* make repeated references to more traditional source material. Many of the references to written texts within the Grail section, however, are particularly problematic. The first such rubric, like the references to tale-telling, leads us back to the epilogue of the prose Vulgate and Walter Map: 'How, whan his knyghtes of the Rounde Table were present, that Galaad sette and acheued the sege perilouse in the Rounde Table, *as the grete story of þe Saynt Graal proporte wiþ þe story of the grete auentures of Arthure*

and his knyghtes, contene after Waltier of Oxenford, þat put in wrytynges in policraticon þat he made of Cornewail and Wales.'[131] This rubric is problematic because the italicized portion has been added by a second hand.[132] The original rubric has been partially scraped away in order to facilitate this addition. Corrected rubrics such as this appear sporadically throughout the manuscript but they are relatively rare.[133] All other references to source material in the rubrics of the Grail section of the *Chronicle*, however, conform to this pattern. The five altered rubrics on the three folios which contain the Grail quest clearly demonstrate the corrector's interest in this episode of Hardyng's history. The next rubric reads: 'How the Seynte grale appered in kynge Arthur hows at souper, and how Galaad made avowe to seke it to he myghte knowe it clierly. To whom his felaws gafe thaire seruyce a ȝere, *as is contened in þe storie of the seint Grale, writen by Giralde Cambrense in his Topographic of Wales and Cornwail.*'[134] The next rubric, which precedes the chapter in which Galahad wins his arms, also refers to Giraldus,[135] as does a later rubric which describes Percival's return to court.[136] The final rubric to have been altered is even more surprising: 'What the reule of ordoure of Saynt Graal was here is expressed and notifyed, *as is contened in þe book of Josep of Arymathie, and as it is specified in a dialoge þat Gildas made de gestis Arthure.*'[137]

These altered rubrics present the reader with several problems of interpretation because it is unclear if these additions are authorial. James Simpson claims that the correcting hand is contemporary with the hand responsible for the rest of the manuscript,[138] and Felicity Riddy assumes that the additions are at least approved by Hardyng, if not written by Hardyng himself. 'Whoever was responsible for the last-minute glossing,' she observes, 'was an obsessive tinkerer who knew the kinds of material that Hardyng had been reading or should have read, and who was forgetful, careless or a manufacturer of evidence. Hardyng seems to have been all three.'[139] The suspicion that the corrector is in fact Hardyng is supported by the fact that he shows detailed knowledge of Arthurian material beyond that contained in the *Chronicle*. In a rubric which has been added by the corrector, Arthur's arms are described: 'Arthure bare a baner of Sable, a dragoun of golde, and a baner of Oure Lady, and the thrid baner of Seynt George, þat were Galaad armes, for remembrance of Galaad, and þe fourt baner of goules, thre corouns of golde.'[140] At this point in the text only the banner with a dragon is mentioned. Although the devices of three crowns and the significance of the Saint George cross are discussed elsewhere in the text,[141] the *Chronicle* does not otherwise mention the tradition that Arthur wore an image of Mary. Other

rubrics written by the corrector also point to Hardyng. One rubric late in the *Chronicle* presents the lesson 'that honoure & ese wylle noght bene to-gidir, þerfore who wille haue honour laboure contynuly and cese for no distresse and lette noght sleuth bene 30ur guyde.' The reader is encouraged to look to 'Syr Robert Vmfreuile, my lorde,' as an example.[142] The rubric appears to have been written by the same hand as the corrections mentioned above, and Hardyng served under Umfraville both in the Scottish marches and in France. Finally, the very state of the manuscript suggests that the corrections were made by Hardyng himself, or under his direction. The surviving manuscript was in all likelihood the presentation copy which Hardyng oversaw through its final production. Although it is therefore likely that Hardyng is responsible for the corrections, their purpose is obvious whether or not he is their author.[143] They appeal to supposedly venerable names in an attempt to authenticate the romance material in the *Chronicle*.

The 'Waltier of Oxenford' of the first altered rubric is probably Walter Map, archdeacon of Oxford from 1196/7 until his death in about 1209 and the supposed author of the Vulgate *Queste* and the *Mort Artu*.[144] The anonymous author of the *Chronycle of Scotland in a Part*, a contemporary of Hardyng, also refers to the Vulgate cycle as the work of Walter Map, but in this anti-Arthurian account neither it, nor the Brut tradition, is given any authority: 'And sekirly thare is mekle thing said of this Arthur quhilk is not suth, and bot fen3eit, as thai say that he slew Frello King of France, and als Lucius the procuratour of Rome: for in his dayis thar was nane sik, as all storyes of France beris witnes; and sik mony othir besynes ar maid of him, as Maister Walter Mape fen3eit, in his buke of ane callit Lanslot the Lake.'[145] Hardyng, however, has already mentioned a Walter, archdeacon of Oxford, earlier in the *Chronicle*, and in this instance he could not be referring to Walter Map. He includes the story of Bladud, father of Lier, who kills himself by attempting to fly from a tower with artificial wings. He writes that

... by his crafte he dyd devyse a werke,
A fedyrhame with whiche that he wold fly.
And so he dyd, as Waltier, sykyrly,
The Archedeken of Oxenford ful graythe,
In story whiche he drewe so gates saythe.[146]

A similar reference is found in the second version of the *Chronicle* at the death of Brutus.[147] This is obviously not Walter Map, but it could be an

obscure reference to Geoffrey of Monmouth, who is Hardyng's ultimate source for both of these stories.[148] As we have seen, several chroniclers, including Gray and Gaimar, cite Walter of Oxford when they are in fact using Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia*.[149] This may also explain the problematic reference to the 'policraticon' of Cornwall and Wales. The *Historia* is primarily concerned with events in Cornwall and Wales and could plausibly be referred to as a 'Polychronicon of Cornwall and Wales.' That the title *Polychronicon* is open to scribal error is clearly shown by Thomas Gray, who calls Higden's history the 'Polecraton.'[150] Since both Walter Map and Geoffrey's Walter were archdeacons of Oxford in the twelfth century, and since both had strong Arthurian associations it seems likely that Hardyng has confused the two figures in an attempt to establish authoritative sources. Indeed, the author of the *Chronicle of Scotland* also mixes material primarily associated with Geoffrey of Monmouth (in other words, Frollo and Lucius) with Walter Map's supposed authorship of the Vulgate cycle.

Hardyng's three references to Giraldus Cambrensis seem more straightforward but are just as confusing. Giraldus twice wrote at length on the exhumation of Arthur at Glastonbury, but there is no surviving record of any interest in the Grail on his part.[151] It is possible that Hardyng was aware that Giraldus's work contained information relating to Glastonbury and that the rubrics are based on this. Hardyng's reference to the 'Topographic of Cornwail and Wales' probably indicates the *Descriptio Kambriae* which contains very little Arthurian material. One of Giraldus's most famous Arthurian passages, however, comes from the *Itinerarium Kambriae* in which he describes a man who was plagued by demons. When the gospels are given to the man the demons fly away, but when Geoffrey's *Historia* is placed in his lap, the demons return more loathsomely than ever.[152] A worse authority could hardly have been chosen, since Giraldus's Arthurian interests are slight and he is outwardly hostile to Geoffrey of Monmouth, the ultimate source for much of Hardyng's information. It can only be assumed that Giraldus Cambrensis was chosen as a source based on the reputation of the name, or on faulty research, rather than any detailed knowledge of his work.

The final authorities mentioned in the rubrics are 'þe book of Josep of arymathie' and 'a dialogue þat Gildas made de gestis Arthur.' Felicity Riddy speculates that the reference to Gildas may be a confused citation of pseudo-Nennius. She notes that the '*Historia Brittonum* is frequently attributed to Gildas in medieval manuscripts; the dialogue "de gestis Arthur" is conceivably "de gestis Brittonum," an alternate title for the

Historia Brittonum.'[153] This explanation is possible, but it seems more likely that the reference to Gildas is the product of another poor reading of Giraldus Cambrensis. In the *Descriptio Kambriae,* Giraldus explains why Gildas did not mention Arthur in his *De Excidio Britonum.* Giraldus explains that Gildas wrote unflatteringly about the British because of his strained relationship with Arthur: 'dicunt [B]ritones, quod propter fratrem suum Albaniæ principem, quem rex Arthurus occiderat, offensus hæc scripsit. Unde et libros egregios, quos de gestis Arthuri, et gentis suæ laudibus, multos scripserat, audita fratris sui nece, omnes, ut asserunt, in mare projecit.'[154] A similar story is found in the twelfth-century *Vita Gildae,*[155] but it too is a poor choice for a source. Both records of Gildas's supposed work concerning the deeds of Arthur also describe the destruction of the work itself. John of Glastonbury's *Cronica* tells part of the story in its account of Arthur, but there is no mention of a history by Gildas. He is merely referred to as 'Britonum historiographus' and after Arthur kills his brother the two are reconciled.[156] It is also possible that Gildas's name is attached to this piece of information simply because of its authority. Gildas is regularly cited throughout the *Chronicle* as a source for the most unlikely information, including the rebuilding of Troy by Hector's son, the death of Brutus Grenesheeld (son of Ebrauke), Bladud's skill in necromancy, the length of Dunwallo's reign, the arrival of Vespasian, and the conversion of Britain in the time of Lucius.[157]

As for 'þe book of Josep of arymathie,' the *Chronicle* cites a similar source when Joseph arrives in Britain in a rubric which reads 'How Joseph of Arymathy cam in to bretayn ... as it is contened in the book of Joseph of arymathi lyfe and of his gouernaunce.'[158] This citation could easily refer to any of the sources which recount the popular Glastonbury legend. The story is told in the Vulgate *Lestoir del Saint Graal,* but it is also possible that the reference is related to John of Glastonbury's *Cronica.*

Whatever Hardyng thinks he is referring to, James Carley has convincingly argued that the citations in the rubric are actually associated with John of Glastonbury's work. The rubric to chapter 18 of the *Cronica* reads 'Incipit tractatus de Sancto Ioseph ab Arimathia,' and chapter 20 includes the rubric 'Hec scriptura reperitur in gestis incliti regis Arthuri.'[159] The chapters deal with the origins of the Grail, and John claims to have learned the information from a book of the deeds of King Arthur 'vbi albus miles exponit Galaat filio Lancelot misterium cuiusdam mirabilis scuti quod eidem deferendum commisit quod nemo alius sine graui dispendio ne vna quidem die poterat portare.'[160] The altered rubric in which Hardyng names Gildas and a book of Joseph of Arimathea

as a source occurs at the beginning of the Grail quest, immediately after Galahad receives his shield at Glastonbury. Carley argues that the references to 'þe book of Josep of arymathie' and 'a dialoge þat Gildas made de gestis Artur' are modelled on a lost text which also supplied John of Glastonbury's rubrics to the 'tractatus de Sancto Ioseph ab Arimathia' and the book 'de gestis incliti regis Arthuri.'[161]

It is tempting to suppose that an elaborate joke has been designed and that Hardyng is subverting the notion of textual authority, but there is nothing in Hardyng's text to indicate such subtleties. Given his reputation as a historian and forger, it is more likely that the contradictions and mistakes in the altered rubrics are the result of his own attempts, late in the production of the manuscript, to provide authority for his suspect history.

The second version of the *Chronicle* varies considerably from the first, both in its treatment of romance material and in its appeal to authorities. The nine-year period of peace is significantly curtailed. After a brief account of the campaign in France to defeat Frollo, Hardyng writes:

Nine yere he helde his throne riall in Fraunce,
And open hous, greately magnified
Through all the world, of welthe and suffisaunce
Was neuer prince so highly gloryfied:
The round table with princes multipled,
That auentures then sought cotidianly,
With greate honour, as made is memory.[162]

The assertion that adventures occurred daily during Arthur's nine years in France recalls Robert Mannyng's claim that it was during this period that the adventures found in French prose romances transpired.[163] In Hardyng's second version, however, the vague allusion to the memory of these adventures is in sharp contrast to both Mannyng's specificity and the first version's attempts to supply concrete citations for material added to the Brut tradition. The vagueness which characterizes the second version's description of adventures in the two periods of peace is reflected throughout the rest of the revised version of Hardyng's Arthurian history, which tends to cite only anonymous 'chronicles.'[164] It is further compounded in his revised Grail quest, where the short version of the chronicle names none of the sources cited in the rubrics of the long version. Rather, it relies solely on the authority of the mysterious Mewyn, 'the Britayn chronicler.'[165]

Mewyn is named twice in the Arthurian portion of Hardyng's second version. He is first associated with Joseph of Arimathea's foundation of the Round Table and the Siege Perilous:

> Whiche Ioseph sayd afore that tyme ful long,
> In Mewyns booke, the Britayn chronicler,
> As writen is the Britons iestes emong,
> That Galaad the knight, and virgyne clere,
> Shuld it acheue and auentures in all fere
> Of the seynt Graale, and of the great Briteyn.[166]

Mewyn is again associated with Joseph in the second citation. Here he is used as a source for the fact that Joseph established a fellowship at Avalon:

> Where thenne he [i.e., Galahad] made. xii. knightes of the order
> Of saynt Graall, in full signifycacyon
> Of the table whiche Ioseph was the founder,
> At Aualon, as Mewyn made relacyon;
> In token of the table refyguracyon,
> Of the brotherhede of Christes souper & maundie
> Afore his death, of hyghest dignytee.[167]

Mewyn's appearance in Hardyng's *Chronicle* has elicited a great deal of speculation. John Leland, in his description of Glastonbury's library, first suggested that Hardyng's Mewyn was derived from Melkin, a prophet in John of Glastonbury's *Cronica.* W.W. Skeat upheld this position, as has James Carley in several articles and in his edition of the *Cronica.*[168]

Mewyn is cited as a source for a wide variety of information, but throughout the chronicle his appearances are focused on material related to Glastonbury. The one exception to this rule comes during Hardyng's discussion of the origins of the Scots, who arrive after Joseph of Arimathea. He begins his account of Scottish origins with the story of Marius, king of the Britons, and his battle with Rodrik, king of the Picts. He agrees with Geoffrey who describes the arrival of the Picts under Rodrik (or Sodric as Geoffrey names him). Geoffrey states that after the battle with the Britons the surviving Picts were given Caithness by Marius, but the Britons refused to give them wives: 'At illi ut passi fuerunt repulsam, transfretauerunt in Hyberniam duxeruntque ex patria illa mulieres ex quibus creata sobole multitudinem suam auxerunt. Sed hec

hactenus, cum non proposuerim tractare historiam eorum siue Scotorum qui ex illis et Hibernensibus originem duxerunt.'[169] Hardyng uses this mention of the Scots to propose his own account of Scottish origins. His version of the story closely follows Geoffrey's:

> Then to þe Peightes left a liue, he gaue Catenese,
> To dwell vpon and haue in heritage,
> Whiche weddid wher with Irish as I gesse,
> Of whiche after Scottes came on that linage:
> For Scottes bee, to saie their langage,
> A colleccion of many into one,
> Of whiche the Scottes were called so anone.[170]

Hardyng cannot let this etymology stand alone. The story of Scota was by this time widely used by the Scots as a defence against claims to sovereignty based on the Brutus legend. He therefore mentions the Scota story, but in an unflattering light:

> BVt Mewynus, the Bryton chronicler,
> Saieth in his chronicles orther wise;
> That Gadelus and Scota in the yere
> Of Christ seuenty and fiue, by assise,
> At Stone inhabitte as might suffise,
> And of hir name that countre there aboute
> Scotlande she called that tyme with outen doubt.
>
> This Scota was, as Mewyn saieth the sage,
> Doughter and bastarde of king Pharao þat daye[171]

Felicity Riddy believes that the name Mewyn results from a misreading of Nennius, who does mention the Scota legend.[172] Hardyng's date of AD 75, however, differs from both pseudo-Nennius and Scottish versions of the tale. Fordun, for example, claims that Gaythelos left Egypt 336 years before Aeneas left Troy, thus giving the Scottish hero precedence over Brutus, his English counterpart.[173] Even though this story is not ostensibly related to Glastonbury, E.D. Kennedy argues that Hardyng includes this story in order to place the arrival of the pagan Scots in apposition to the arrival of the evangelizing Joseph of Arimathea.[174] The account of Scottish origins follows the story of Joseph, and the citation of Mewyn further reinforces the contrast between the Christian foundation of

Glastonbury and the pagan foundation of Scone. Hardyng highlights the political aspect of the Scota legend by reminding his readers of the Stone of Scone that Scota brought, and on which, as he says, 'Scottish kynges wer brechelesse set' during their coronation.[175] He then states that Edward brought it away to Westminster where it was placed under the feet of English kings during their coronation 'In remembraunce of the kynges of Scottes alway, / Subiectes should bee to kynges of Englande ay.'[176]

Mewyn's other appearances both deal specifically with Glastonbury. In one, Mewyn is credited with identifying Saint George's arms. The red cross on a white field, as we have seen, is first made by Joseph of Arimathea at his death and left to the British king Arviragus. It is this device 'whiche nowe we call, certain, / Sainct Georges armes, by [Mewyns] enformacion.'[177] Mewyn is again associated with Joseph's red cross shield in the reign of Lucius, Arviragus's son. Hardyng returns to the shield as a device carried by the British king:

Who bare before the baptyme of propertee,
His auncestres armes, and after with consolacion,
He bare the armes, by his baptizacion,
Whiche Ioseph gaue vnto Aruigarus,
As the Briton saith, that hight Mewynus.[178]

Finally, Mewyn is also cited as the source for the fact that Joseph converted King Arviragus:

IOseph conuerted this kyng Aruigarus,
By his prechyng, to knowe þe lawe deuine,
And baptized hym, as writen hath [Mewinus],
The chronicler, in Bretain tongue full fyne.[179]

Riddy argues that the conversion story must be Hardyng's own because Arviragus does not convert in John of Glastonbury's *Cronica*.[180] Hardyng's account, however, is similar to the prose Vulgate, in which Agrestes takes the place of Arviragus. In both *Lestoire* and the *Lancelot*, Agrestes pretends to convert to Christianity before returning to paganism.[181] Hardyng appears to have combined the accounts found in John of Glastonbury and the Vulgate. In his *Chronicle*, Arviragus converts, but Agrestes, presented as a separate character, repudiates his conversion.[182]

Felicity Riddy argues that throughout the *Chronicle* Hardyng makes a series of errors which result in the five seperate citations of Mewyn.[183] It

is clear, however, that Mewyn is not invoked randomly, but that he is always closely associated with events at Glastonbury, events which often deal specifically with Joseph of Arimathea. Despite this uniformity of use, Riddy argues that John of Glastonbury's Melkin could not be the source for the figure of Mewyn because '"Mewynus" is not mentioned in the Long Chronicle where, if he were Melkin, he might be expected to occur.'[184] But, as I have shown elsewhere, Mewyn does appear in the first version in a way which reveals his ultimate origins in Melkin the bard.[185] Early in the first version of the *Chronicle* Hardyng outlines Trojan inheritence patterns which were practised in Britain by Brutus and his sons:

> At Mewytryne, some tyme a place of fame,
> In Bretons tyme, in whiche was oon Mewyne;
> So wyse poete that tyme was non of name,
> That florisht so ful longe afore Merlyne.
> Who in his boke so wrote for dissiplyne
> The lawes of Troy, to this day vnreuersed,
> Amonges the whiche is that I haue rehersed.[186]

In the first version, therefore, Mewyn is again associated with Glastonbury, which Hardyng calls 'Mewytryne.'[187] As in the second version, the citation of Mewyn in the first version seems to be derived from John of Glastonbury's *Cronica*. Chapter 21 of the *Cronica*, introduces the prophecies of Melkin with the rubric 'Ista scriptura inuenitur in libro Melkini qui fuit ante Merlinum.'[188] Hardyng's phrase 'That florisht so ful longe afore Merlyne,' translates the final clause of John's rubric.

The details of Hardyng's Grail narrative also suggest his reliance on John of Glastonbury. Although he knows other Grail traditions, he follows John who states that Joseph brought 'duo fassula alba et argentea cruore prophete Ihesu et sudore perimpleta.'[189] In Hardyng's first version, Joseph brings two relics with him when he first establishes a house at Glastonbury:

> And two fvels full of the swete, to sayne,
> Of Jhesus Cryste, as rede as blode of vayne,
> Whiche he gadered and brought with hym away,
> And layd in erth with hym at his laste day.[190]

This fact, drawn from the Glastonbury *Cronica*, contradicts the Vulgate version of the tale which Hardyng includes later in the work when the

Round Table is established by Uther. There the Grail is described as

> The dysshe in whiche that Criste dyd putte his honde,
> The Saynte Grale he cald of his language,
> In whiche he kepte of Cristes blode he fonde
> A parte alway, and to his hermytage
> In Bretayne Grete it brought in his viage,
> The whiche was thar to tyme of Kyng Arthure,
> That Galaad escheued his auenture.[191]

The two vials of Christ's blood and sweat were John of Glastonbury's attempt to transform the Holy Grail into a 'completely respectable and highly venerable Christian relic.'[192] Hardyng, who was familiar with both versions of the foundation story, either did not associate the vials with the Grail or simply forgot that he had already included an alternate version of the story by the time he came to associate the Round Table with Joseph of Arimathea's mission.

These similarities suggest that Hardyng had direct access to portions of John of Glastonbury's *Cronica*, and that Mewyn, as he appears in both the first and the second versions of Hardyng's text, is drawn from the same source. With the exception of the Scota legend, each of Mewyn's appearances associates him closely with Glastonbury in general, and often with Joseph of Arimathea in particular. Even in the Scota material, Mewyn is used to draw comparisons between the Scottish pagan foundation at Scone and the British Christian foundation at Glastonbury.

All of the material attributed to Mewyn, however, is not derived from Melkin's surviving prophecies or even from other sections of John of Glastonbury's *Cronica*. It appears as though the references to Mewyn in the second version share many characteristics with the references to Giraldus Cambrensis in the rubrics of the first version. Like Giraldus, Mewyn was an author who was already associated with Arthurian traditions at Glastonbury, and this seems to have been enough for Hardyng to attribute all manner of information to a particular source. Unlike Giraldus, however, Mewyn had the advantage of antiquity, since he 'florisht so ful longe afore Merlyne,' and he wrote 'in Bretain tongue full fyne.'[193] The obscure author Mewyn, therefore, allows Hardyng to integrate the Grail material into his *Chronicle* with the full authority of his very own 'quendam Britannici sermonis librum uetustissimum.'[194]

Both versions of Hardyng's *Chronicle*, therefore, employ elaborate strategies to authenticate the romance interpolations. The first version relies

on a scattershot approach, with abundant and varying sources establishing authority for Hardyng's eclectic Arthurian history. The second version of the text relies on the mysterious and inaccessible Mewyn to sanction its narrative. Both strategies of authorization focus on the Grail material which Hardyng introduced to the Brut tradition. The first version's altered rubrics, as we have seen, are concentrated around the material borrowed from the Vulgate's history of the Grail, as are the references to Mewyn in the second version. The attention devoted to the Grail narrative in both versions of the text highlights the suspect nature of the tale as a historical record and points to Hardyng's own anxiety over the mingling of romance and historical traditions. John of Glastonbury may have adapted the story of Joseph of Arimathea and the Grail for immediate and local political gain, but in Hardyng that material was readapted into a national history, not only increasing the prestige of Glastonbury Abbey, but also providing a historical precedent for English political and ecclesiastical domination of the British Isles.

The effect of these alterations to the Brut narrative is to produce a uniformly positive image of King Arthur. In Hardyng's account Arthur is so successful that he achieves his greatest ambition and is crowned emperor of Rome before hearing of Mordred's treachery.[195] The invariably positive image of Arthur is most clearly shown after his death. Hardyng delivers a lengthy lamentation in which he blames Fortune alone for Arthur's fall. Hardyng was aware of the tradition which represented Fortune as a punishing force. Indeed, in the second version of the *Chronicle* he appeals to this image of Fortune when the British finally lose Britain to the Saxons:

> Behold Bochas what princes haue through pride,
> Be cast downe frome all their dignitee,
> Wher sapience and meekenes had bee guyde
> Full suerly might haue saued bee,
> And haue stand alwaye in might & greate suertee;
> If in their hartes meekenes had bee ground,
> And wisedome also thei had not be confound.[196]

'Bochas' is almost certainly not Boccaccio's *De Casibus*, but rather Lydgate's *Fall of Princes*, a text which does promote the image of a punishing Fortune. When Hardyng writes his lamentation for the death of Arthur, however, he does not turn to Lydgate for his image of Fortune, but to Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*. He thus presents an image of capricious

Fortune which strikes at those who do not always deserve to fall:

> O thou fortune, executrice of werdes,
> That euere more so with thy subtylite
> To all debates so strongly thou enherdes,
> That men that wolde ay leue in charite
> Thou dooste perturbe with mutabilite,
> Why stretched so thy whele vpon Modrede,
> Agayne his Eme to do so cruell dede,
>
> Whare thurgh that hiegh and noble conqueroure,
> With outen cause, shulde so gates perisshit be
> With so fele kynges and prynces of honoure,
> That all the worlde myght neuer thare bette se?[197]

Using the same 'hap' cognates found in the alliterative *Morte Arthur*, he continues to focus his attention on Mordred:

> Bot O Modrede, that was so gode a knyght,
> In grete manhode and proudely ay approued,
> In whom thyne eme, the nobleste prynce of myght,
> Putte all his truste so gretely he the loued,
> What vnhappe so thy manly goste hath moued
> Vnto so foule and cruell hardynesse,
> So fele be slayne thurgh thyne vnhappynesse?[198]

Fortune has turned against both the king and his knights, but in John Hardyng's idealized past even the arch-villain Mordred is merely the instrument of a random force. The 'vnhappynesse' of Arthur's kingdom expressed itself in civil war, and as Hardyng watched the internal discord of contemporary England escalate it is easy to see why he sought reconciliation above all else. The civil war which destroyed Arthur's kingdom continued until the weakened British eventually lost the island to the invading Saxons, and after the death of Aurelius Conan, the successor of Constantine, Hardyng warns his contemporaries of the dangers inherent in civil war and Fortune's turning wheel:

> Be warre, ye lordes, that ben in hygh estates,
> And cherisshe not contenciouns no debates
> In youre countrese lesse it be youre confusion;

For fals fortune, with hyre permutacion,
Full lyghtely will caste doun that ys aboue,
Whose nature is to chaungen and remoue.[199]

The Percies, the Umfravilles, Henry VI, and Richard of York were all successive patrons of the soldier with literary aspirations, and each of them fell victim to Fortune's spinning wheel. But Hardyng's cure for the calamities of his age is not a political one. Rather, the rules of both the Round Table and the Grail fellowship commanded those who belonged to the order of knighthood, 'The common profyte euer more to sustene,'[200] and Hardyng looked to this idealized image of chivalry for solutions to contemporary discord. Only by returning to this basic precept of chivalry could Britain once again be reunited, and a true order of the Round Table reestablished.

7

Fifteenth-Century Scribes

... and shall we of this Island be so possest with incredulitie, diffidence,
stupiditie, and ingratitude, to deny, make doubt, or expresse in speech and
history, the immortall name and fame of our victorious *Arthur.*
<div align="right">Preface to the Blome–Stansby Malory, 1634[1]</div>

The chroniclers we have examined so far construct their narratives of
British history from a wide variety of sources. The originality of any given
text lies less in the story itself than in the careful compilation and
arrangement of existing material. Although we generally think of medi-
eval Brut chronicles as translations of earlier texts, it is obvious that these
writers are not merely translators, even given the wide-ranging freedom
which is typical of medieval translation. It may also seem obvious that
authors like Thomas Gray or John Hardyng are very different from
simple scribes who slavishly copied an authoritative text. However, the
scribes of medieval historical texts are often not merely copyists. Some
fifteenth-century scribes engaged with their historical exemplars and
reacted to the interplay between history and romance. The manuscripts
they produced demonstrate that individual scribes of historical works
knew romance material, and, although they are bound to a single base-
text more than the authors we have examined, scribes were often eager
to integrate additional material and thus demonstrate their own broad
reading habits. As we shall see, scribes knew some of the conventions
which had been established for the integration of romance material, but
they tend to be less careful about maintaining the distinction between
history and romance than the authors of the texts they copied. Even so,
scribal romance intrusions continue to be marked off as something

other than history and relegated to the two periods of peace in Arthur's reign. What is particularly intriguing about the manuscripts produced by these scribes is that they reveal that the community of Arthurian readers extended beyond the court culture represented by Sir Thomas Gray and John Hardyng.

Robert of Gloucester, Arundel MS 58

We have already glanced at the mid-fifteenth-century copy of Robert of Gloucester's *Metrical Chronicle* currently held in London at the College of Arms.[2] The manuscript is a copy of the *Metrical Chronicle* with substantial prose and verse additions from a variety of sources. The manuscript's scribe was obviously well read and he adds a great deal of information to Robert's Brut narrative which is drawn from multiple sources and traditions. The scribe augments his copy text with additional historical material, but, like Thomas Gray and John Hardyng, he also turns to the cyclic romances to amplify Robert's narrative. Even as he changes Robert's text, however, this fifteenth-century scribe is careful to respect the tradition in which Robert wrote.

The additions to the text are not limited to the Arthurian portion. In fact, verse and prose additions to the later sections of the manuscript have already received some scholarly attention. Most famously, the manuscript contains a copy of the Middle English *Richard, Coeur de Lion* rather than Robert's plodding account of the king.[3] The scribe also used William of Malmesbury extensively, and he incorporates lengthy passages from both his *Historia Anglorum* and *De Antiquitate Glastoniensis,* which is called 'the book of olde doynges which William monek of Malmesbury made of the minstre.'[4] Geoffrey of Monmouth is also used to supplement Robert's narrative. Throughout the Arthurian portion of the text the redactor seems to be working with a copy of Geoffrey's *Historia* at hand, and during battle scenes in particular, the scribe often provides details which are not found in his base text. Robert of Gloucester, for example, skips over the lists of twelve divisions into which Lucius divides his troops, but the Arundel redactor turns to Geoffrey and includes these details.[5] After the reign of Cadwallader, he again turns to Geoffrey to add a prose passage in which he laments the internal strife which brought about the end of British rule. Unlike the Britons, he states, the Saxons lived in peace among themselves, at least for a while: 'But the Englisshe men wroghte mor wisloker, and echon held togederes as ayenst the Brutones, for hii were strengthede wel. Natheles, after when

thurgh pees they hadde plente, of which plente com pruyde, thurgh which euery kynge stryuede with other.'[6] The redactor encourages his readers to read the full account of English strife in the works of William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon, but he warns that 'they hadde noght the bok of Brutones langage þat Water Erchedekne of Oxenforde broghte out of Brutayne, which bok I, Geffrey Monemouthe, knowynge the langage of Brutones, haue busyed me to translate hit out of Bruton langage in to Latyn, and also the prophecies of Merlyn.'[7] As the attribution to Geoffrey suggests, part of the passage is drawn from an epilogue found in many manuscripts of the *Historia*.[8] Geoffrey's epilogue, however, does not make a specific claim about linguistic ability, and the addition of this detail may reflect the tendency to defend the Brut tradition that we saw in Gray's *Scalacronica*. The scribe takes Geoffrey's advice, and the many prose additions to Robert's account of the Anglo-Saxons rely heavily on William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon. The reference to the prophecies of Merlin is also an addition to both Robert of Gloucester's text and the Galfridian epilogue. Here again the passage reflects the scribe's actual procedure, and he did add at least one set of Merlinic prophecies to Robert's text, and seems to have added more.

Merlinic prophecy was an integral part of the Brut tradition. In Geoffrey's *Historia*, Merlin delivered a series of prophecies to Vortigern which circulated both separately and as a chapter with its own prologue. Wace refused to translate Merlin's prophecies 'Quant jo nel sai interpreter,'[9] and many chroniclers, following Wace, also omit them. A second group of prophecies known as the 'Prophecy of the Six Kings' was integrated into the Anglo-Norman *Brut* to fill this gap. The prophecies are inserted into the narrative rather abruptly after Arthur subdues the Scots.[10] Although Robert of Gloucester's text follows Wace and includes neither of these pieces of Merlinic prophecy, the Arundel scribe seems to have inserted both. As in Geoffrey's *Historia*, the Arundel scribe's Merlin delivers his first prophecy in the reign of Vortigern. Unfortunately, the manuscript has been vandalized and the text of the prophecies does not survive. During the account of Merlin's birth the manuscript breaks off suddenly at the bottom of folio 43v with Merlin's mother describing her nocturnal visits from an incubus:

'And of on thyng ich wote whan ich al one was
In priue chaumbres with oute falawes þer come to me in by cas'[11]

An entire gathering appears to be missing between folios 43 and 44: the

catchphrase, 'A wonder,' at the bottom of folio 43v is not picked up on folio 44, and the medieval foliation at the bottom of the folios jumps from xl to xlix.[12] Folio 44 does not begin with Robert's text, but rather begins:

> And translatyd in to Latyn out of Bretoun
> Thurgh Geffrey of Monemouth, clerk of renoun,
> At byddynge of a Byssop of Lyncoln, Alisaunder,
> & after by Stephyne the Kynge hadde moch sclaunder.
> But in bokes of Brut a Frenshe þat beth wryte
> Of Merlynes prophecies more may me wyte
> Of the last fyue kynges þat sholde in londe be,
> & who so wylneth wyte ther he may se.
> Much of this fell afterward as ye mowe hure.[13]

The fragmentary attribution refers to both of the prophecies from the Brut tradition. Geoffrey of Monmouth's Latin translations of Merlinic prophecy are certainly those found in the *Historia*.[14] The chapter of the *Historia* in which the prophecies appear contains a brief prologue in which Geoffrey claims that he translated the prophecies at the request of Bishop Alexander. As mentioned above, Robert of Gloucester's *Chronicle* does not include these prophecies from Geoffrey. Instead, Merlin explains the battle between the red and white dragons and briefly prophecies the coming of Arthur, 'þe bor of cornewaile.'[15] After this much diminished prophecy, Robert asserts that 'Al þis biuel afterward, as ȝe ssolleþ ihure,'[16] and it is at this point that the passage quoted above returns to Robert's text.

The missing portion of Robert's *Chronicle* amounts to seventy-six lines of verse. Given that the Arundel manuscript typically contains thirty-six lines to the folio, the missing passage from Robert's *Chronicle* accounts for about one full folio (recto and verso) of the eight which have been lost. Luckily, the manuscript's table of contents provides some clue of what was once there. It reads:

The seven folios of prophecies listed in the table of contents is far longer than the brief prophetic passages found in Robert's original text. It is

likely, therefore, that the eight missing folios, or 576 lines of verse, contained a lengthy set of prophecies, and we may speculate that the scribe turned to the original Latin source to supplement what he saw as the deficiencies of Robert's text.

The fragmentary attribution also mentions a second set of Merlinic prophecies which described 'the last fyue kynges þat sholde in lande be' and which were found in 'bokes of Brut a Frenshe þat beth wryte.' These are easier to identify, but here too we are dealing with a fragmentary portion of the manuscript. As we saw in the discussion of Thomas Gray's *Scalacronica*, the final battle between Arthur and Merlin is cut short by another lacuna in the Arundel manuscript.[18] Arthur is stabbed by 'Certik' at the bottom of folio 75v, but folio 76 begins in the middle of the prophecy of the six kings:

> and shal the dragoun & he bynde hure tailes to gedre. And then shall come a lyon out of Irlond and shal falle in company with hem. Then shal the land that shal be cleped Engelond tremble as a leef of aspe.[19]

The prose prophecy, written in two columns in the top third of the folio, continues to its conclusion before the manuscript returns to Robert's verse:

> Thanne shal the lond be departed in thre parties: that is to seye to the wolf, to the dragoun, and to the lyon, and so hit shal be for euer more. And thanne this lond shal be cleped the lond of conquest, and so shullen the rightfull eyris of Engelond endy.
>
> Constantyn was the kynge, and, as ye mogh hure,
> The Saxones werred faste on hym, while hii myghte dure.[20]

This prophecy is certainly drawn from the 'bokes of Brut,' but it is not, as the scribe suggests, from the French *Brut*. Rather, the prophecy of the six kings is taken from the English translation of the *Brut* attributed to John Mandeville.[21] The prophecy of the six kings was widely known and circulated independently, but it is most commonly found in the French and English *Bruts*, where it is placed in the midst of Arthur's reign, during his campaign to defeat the Scots. In the Arundel text the prophecy has been relocated to the end of Arthur's reign, but, with the beginning of the prophecy lost, it is unclear how it was inserted into the narrative.

In borrowing the prophecies from Arthur's Scottish campaign, how-ever, the scribe's attention was drawn to the episode, and he deviates from his source when describing the wondrous lake into which the Scots retreat during their war against Arthur. As Arthur struggles to secure the crown, he and his men chase the Scots to a lake which is fed by sixty brooks. In the lake is an island with sixty rocks which are home to sixty eagles. Robert of Gloucester merely comments on the eating habits of the birds, as do the various versions of the prose *Brut*,[22] but the Arundel redactor looks to Geoffrey of Monmouth to elaborate on the prophetic properties of the eagles:

> Euery yer this egles wolleth, at a certayn tyme,
> Come thuder & make an huge noyse, & ther hii wol deuyne
> Of aventures that shul falle that yer to the londe,
> Of werre or pes by hure doynes, men mowe vnderstonde.[23]

The narrative returns to Robert's text at this point to provide details about the capitulation of the Scots, but it again leaves Robert to describe other wondrous lakes in Scotland. After Lot has been made king of Scotland, Hoel, an ally of Arthur, is curious about the nature of the lake of eagles:

> Howel, Kynge of Brutayne, tho this ile gan byholde,
> And seide for a meruaille hit myght be tolde,
> And wondrede that so many wateres to on pole come there,
> And noman wiste hederward hii come were,
> And of the egles nestes ther, and of hure diuynynge.
> Arthur than answered al in laghwynge.
> 'A nother pole is faste her by of more meruaille,' he sede.
> 'XX fot is of lengthe, and also muche of brede,
> but v fet he is depe as Y understonde,
> & the put was neuer made of werke of mannes honde.
> Foure manere of fisshes beth in this pole ther,
> And euery manere of fissh holt his quarter,
> And non passeth of his stede in to other's place there,
> & that men helde a meruaille when they ther were.'
> Tho he hadde Brutayne bright and Scotland also,
> Holly to his owene wille, a nother he thoght do.[24]

Both the account of the eagles and the description of the pool and fishes

are drawn from Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia*.[25] The prose *Brut* includes the prophecy of the six kings, but it otherwise agrees with Robert of Gloucester, saying only that the eagles were loud. The Arundel scribe has therefore created a very complex composite version of the scene. Beginning with Robert of Gloucester for the basic narrative, he has added from Geoffrey the wondrous nature of the two lakes. He has also made use of Mandeville's translation of the *Brut* at this point, moving the prophecy of the six kings from the description of the Scottish lakes to the end of Arthur's reign. The elaboration of the wondrous details surrounding the lakes thus compliments the two interpolations of Merlinic prophecy. Both sets of prophecies have been lost from the manuscript, but their original inclusion by the scribe demonstrates his interest in prophetic material as he has apparently added two major pieces of prophecy to Robert of Gloucester's text.[26] The wondrous nature of Arthur's reign is thus emphasized as it is infused with natural marvels and visions of the future.

The Arundel scribe does not limit himself to chronicle sources when he augments Robert's text. Early in Arthur's reign, after Uther is buried 'By side the toun of Ambresbury, at Stonhenge y-wis,'[27] the scribe turns to the Vulgate cycle for a fully developed account of the episode in which Arthur draws Excalibur from a stone. As soon as Arthur becomes king the scribe abandons Robert's text:

> Arthur, Vtheres sone, of wham we by fore tolde,
> Was whenne his fader deide xv yer olde.
> & by cause he was by-gite & bore somwhat a-yenst the lawe
> Wel the lasse he was of told, & lite forth y-drawe.
> And for this cause the barones gan hem vnderstonde,
> And ne heolde him nought right heir of Brutayne londe.
> Her by-fore ye haueth hurde hogh Arthure was by-gite:
> I wol yow telle hogh he was bore, yf yow luste to wite.[28]

The redactor's aside to the audience and his invitation to learn a new tale is reminiscent of popular romances, which often begin with such authorial addresses.[29] This brief remark sets the following story off from the historical narrative and marks it as something other than history. This impression is strengthened by the accompanying rubric which attributes the episode not to the Brut tradition, but to the Vulgate: 'Coronacio Arthuri, secundum sent Graal. Nota de historia Galfridus Monemouthe.'[30]

What follows is, indeed, the stuff of romance. The manuscript returns to Arthur's conception to explain again how Uther married Igerne and it provides a much abbreviated version of events as they are described in the Vulgate *Merlin*. The redactor does not describe Ulfin's lengthy and important role in the councils that advise Uther,[31] but merely says that his barons 'consailled hym that he shold ... take Igerne to wyue,'[32] and that Lot should marry Igerne's daughter:

> The kynges spousailles were do euene the eyghteth day
> After that he furste in chambre with the countesse lay.
> Kyng Loth on his wiff gat Mordred & Gawayn,
> Gaherres and Guerrees / and also Aggrauayn.[33]

As in the *Merlin*, Arthur is taken away from his parents at birth and put into the care of Antor where he is raised as a brother to Kay. The interpolation then returns to the moment of Uther's death and provides a lengthy description of the sword in the stone episode, in which Arthur repeatedly proves himself king by removing the magical sword. When the barons finally accept Arthur as king, Merlin makes a banner for him:

> Thenne made Merlyn a baner to the kynge.
> In this ilke banere was gret bytoknynge.
> I-mad he was al aftre like a dragoun
> With a croked taill hongynge a doun.
> This dragoun was forth brought & sett vpon a spere:
> Wonder me hadde ther of, so leight hit was to bere.
> A gret brennynge lye come out of his mouth.
> Hogh this craft was do noman telle couth.[34]

With Merlin's aid, Arthur is able to overcome his foes as he wields the sword pulled from the stone:

> Thenne the kynge Arthur folwede the chas
> With the swerd of the ston, that as bryght was
> As theigh ther a hadde be xx torches her brennynge.
> Escalibern the sweord hight, that is to seynge:
> Cutte tre, ire and stel, and so hit wolde do.[35]

In the *Merlin*, this description of the sword appears in the middle of a lengthy battle against kings Neutres and Lot, but in the Arundel text the

battle lasts only twenty-one lines (including the lines quoted above), and the kings who oppose Arthur are never named. Lot, after all, will be an important ally of Arthur's when the manuscript returns to the Brut tradition.

After defeating his enemies 'To Cardoil Arthur tournd a-ye with his men alle, / And thre hundred newe knyghtes he made with his hond.'[36] After almost five full folios and more than four hundred lines the romance interpolation ends and gives way to Robert of Gloucester's text:

Arthur thenne bygan such a man to be,
that me myghte in no londe nowhar his per se.[37]

The return to Robert's text does not go unnoticed, and a rubric signals the resumption of the Brut tradition at this point: 'Tunc de Historia Galfridus Monementh.'[38] The sword in the stone episode certainly adds to the romance mood of Arthur's reign, but the scribe holds the interpolation outside of his historical narrative. The scribe's romance-style authorial aside and the rubrics of the manuscript thus serve much the same function as Thomas Gray's citation of 'ascuns cronicles' when he included the same episode. The scribe is also careful to harmonize the interpolation to his base text. Lot is not killed by Arthur while he secures his rule in Britain, thus leaving him free to participate in the Brut narrative that follows.

The Arundel scribe again leaves the Brut during his account of Arthur's death. Yvain, as we have seen, plays a larger role in the final battle than is typical of Brut narratives. As in Gray's *Scalacronica*, the Arundel manuscript's Yvain is vigorously active in the final battle against Mordred and actually kills the villain, his cousin, on the field.[39] Unfortunately, the death of Arthur is lost due to the mutilated state of the manuscript. The final battle is cut short because of the removal of the prophecy of the six kings. If the scribe followed Thomas Gray and the *Parlement of the Thre Ages*, and included an account of Excalibur being thrown into the lake, or the scene in which Arthur is borne away in a barge with three ladies, those episodes have been lost.[40]

Other elements from romance texts are brought into the manuscript without as much care. Before Arthur receives the challenge from Rome he holds a court at which his knights participate in jousts and games. The manuscript follows Robert of Gloucester and describes the value of the chivalric life:

Forto telle of the nobleye that ther was do,
Though my tonge were of stel nolde suffice ther to.
Wommen tolde of no knyght tho as in loue and druerye,
But he were in armes preued atte leste thrye.
That made tho the wommen the chaster lyf to lede,
And knyghtes the staleworthe and the beter in dede.[41]

At this point, however, the manuscript leaves Robert to describe the court and its members, particularly Gawain and Mordred:

Of ladies, knyghtis and squyers were foule y-shent,
But hii were ioly and gay and yiue to armes entent.
While Arthur atte mete sat that ilke day
Wawayn stod to-fore hym in ful rycht aray,
That hym was fro Rome send fro a damisele,
A noble senatoures doghter that hym louede wele.[42]

Gawain's amorous entanglements fit well with his romance persona as a philanderer, although the statement is too vague to be associated with any particular text. It is possible that it refers to the *De ortu Waluuanii* which describes Gawain's youth at the Roman court, but it could also refer to any of a number of vernacular texts in which Gawain engages in courtly dalliance. The scribe does not linger over Gawain, however, but turns quickly to his brother:

Wawayn thanne a brother hadde, Mordred was his name.
Of bounte and armes he ber a gret fame.
Quene Gonnore hure loue caste to hym ward,
Wher fore sheo let make hym hure styward.
He was wis & wel ytaght, and faire he couthe speke.
He stod that day byfore the quene while sheo was atte mete.
Sone after this noble mete ech wende in his syde.[43]

The description of Mordred is also an addition to this manuscript, but it seems to work against popular romance traditions. According to the Arundel text, Guenevere is romantically involved with Mordred not only before his usurpation, but before the challenge from Rome. This elaboration not only insulates the narrative from the romance affair between Guenevere and Lancelot, it also helps to explain Mordred's actions and

ameliorate his villainy. This process continues during the final battle as Mordred is again portrayed sympathetically. As Ywain and Mordred meet on the battlefield Ywain laments that through Mordred's actions 'so many man is loste, & destruyd is our kynne.' Upon hearing these accusations 'Mordred thenne for sor & sorwe deide in the stede.'[44] The cumulative effect is to provide a much less degenerate Mordred whose actions, although deplorable, are at least understandable.

The Arundel Robert of Gloucester, therefore, makes extensive use of material outside of Robert's text and it draws on both historical and romance traditions to augment its Arthurian narrative. With the exception of the sword in the stone episode, which seems to be placed beyond historical authority, the two traditions create a unified image of Arthur's reign. Despite this, the redactor privileges the Brut tradition over the romance in both of his accounts of the periods of peace. Following the pattern established by Wace, the Arundel redactor uses the twelve-year period of peace in Arthur's reign to address the relationship between historical and romance traditions. After the conquest of Ireland the scribe expands Robert's statement that other kings feared Arthur. He then turns to Arthur's period of rest:

> In this ilke xii yer of his restynge
> Wondres fele ther byfelle and many selcouth thynge,
> Ke [i.e., which] in the boke of Seint Graal me may rede and se,
> But that thes clerkes holdeth noght as for auctoryte.
> For much fel by sorcerie and enchauntement also
> Thurgh Merlyn, so that lettred men toke non hede ther-to.[45]

As has become conventional, the Arundel scribe places wonders and other adventures in Wace's period of peace. Exactly where this passage originates, however, is difficult to determine. The scribe's mistaken use of the Anglo-Norman 'Ke' implies that he is translating a French text as he writes, but no known French source makes direct reference to the book of the 'Seint Graal' at this point.[46] Like his contemporary, John Hardyng, the scribe directs his readers to the 'boke of Seint Graal' for additional tales which occurred in this period. Unlike Hardyng, however, this scribe undermines the authority of the Vulgate cycle by characterizing its contents as 'selcouth' tales about 'enchauntement.' The scribe is not alone in this conviction, he tells us, because 'lettred men toke non hede ther to,' and he implies that he agrees with this learned opinion. The questions raised about the Vulgate reflect the same unease with

which the scribe borrowed from the cycle for his account of the sword in the stone. The questions about Merlin, however, seem at odds with the scribe's practice: twice he has made substantial additions to Robert's text which involve Merlin and his prophetic abilities. It may be worth noting, however, that both of the pieces of Merlinic prophecy were borrowed from the Brut tradition. If, however, the scribe was concerned about Merlin's 'sorcerie and enchauntement' it disturbed him enough to refrain from adding to Merlin's magical (as distinct from prophetic) abilities, but it did not upset him enough to excise Merlin's role in either the conception of Arthur or the transportation of Stonehenge.

The nine-year period of peace is more difficult to assess because the manuscript is again incomplete. Unlike the other instances discussed above, however, it does not appear that any text is missing at this point; rather, the scribe seems to have left the work unfinished. The break in the text occurs during the battle with Frollo, king of France. The Arundel scribe follows Robert until half way through the fight. Frollo is knocked from his horse, and Arthur turns to finish him off:

> As sone as he by-turne hym [i.e., his horse] myght, he drogh his sweord ther,
> Fort a-saille hym ther with, but the othur was vppe er,
> And smot his stede in the breste, and yafe hym dethes wonde,
> So that bothe stede and kynge both lay to the grounde.[47]

While Robert's text continues to describe how Arthur recovers from the fall and defeats Frollo, the Arundel manuscript breaks off at this point with twelve lines left blank at the bottom of the folio. Folio 64, which follows, is also left blank, although the top portion of the leaf has been ripped out, leaving only four lines at the bottom. The verso of what is left of folio 64 picks up Robert of Gloucester's text, fifty-six lines later, with Arthur back in Britain:

> Wodes and wateres ther aboute were a grete plente,
> For huntynge and for haukynge, in alle murthe to be.[48]

The verso of folio 64 contains only four lines of text, but it appears that the line above these verses was blank before the leaf was ripped out of the manuscript (possibly to be used as scrap). Although there are fifty-eight lines missing from Robert's text, the scribe has left space for eighty lines of verse in the manuscript. The missing passage of Robert's *Chronicle* tells how Arthur governed in France after the defeat of Frollo and how

he rested for nine years in Paris before returning to Britain. We have already seen how Robert Mannyng and John Hardyng both use this period of Arthur's reign to discuss the adventures of the Round Table and to investigate the relationship between narrative traditions. Thomas Gray used the nine years of peace as a suitable place to include Arthur's adventure with the giant with the cloak of beards, and the *Awntyrs off Arthure* is also set within this period. That the scribe of the Arundel manuscript intended to do something similar seems likely. At the head of the blank space where the text breaks off is the rubric 'The rounde table of Arthure.'[49] Apparently the scribe intended to discuss the table at this point, even though Robert did not mention it. What exactly the scribe planned is, of course, unknown: he may have intended to rework the whole episode, or to include a short prose analysis of the nine years in the twenty-two spare lines he left in the manuscript.[50] What seems clear, however, is that he felt the nine years of peace was a suitable place to expand on Arthur's Round Table.

The Arundel redactor demonstrates that Hardyng is not unique in the fifteenth century. Like both John Hardyng and Thomas Gray, the scribe of Arundel MS 58 approached history as a process of compilation and discrimination, but while Gray marginalizes his romance borrowings and Hardyng attempts to provide authority for his narrative interpolations, the Arundel scribe is careful in only selected instances. All three men, however, turn to the twelve-year period of peace (and possibly the nine-year period as well) to discuss how the Brut tradition relates to romance narratives. The difference between these texts is that the Arundel scribe is more closely bound to Robert of Gloucester's *Metrical Chronicle* than either Gray or Hardyng are to Geoffrey of Monmouth or Wace. Arundel MS 58 remains a transcription of Robert's text, and the scribe always returns to that essential source. Within the framework of the *Metrical Chronicle*, however, the Arundel redactor is able to bring his own considerable reading to the narrative. The scribe's reading list, which includes a Vulgate *Merlin* and a *Morte* in which Ywain beheads Mordred, is very similar to Thomas Gray's, and like Gray he creates a new version of the Arthurian past which is infused with prophecy and wonder, while maintaining the integrity of the Brut tradition.

The Prose Brut: The Trinity/Cleveland Abbreviation and Lambeth Palace Library, MS 84

The fifteenth century also saw the wide dissemination of the English prose *Brut*, and it is not surprising that this text, which survives in over

170 manuscripts, should have undergone scribal revision. A radically abbreviated and revised version of the text now survives in two copies: one in the John G. White Collection of the Cleveland Public Library and the other in Dublin at Trinity College.[51] The Cleveland copy dates to the late fifteenth century, perhaps c. 1470, while the Trinity manuscript is twice dated 1474 and is signed by John Barlow, who was perhaps the scribe.[52] Most of the text amounts to little more than a paraphrase of the Middle English *Brut*, but the Arthurian narrative has undergone two stages of revision. Both manuscripts contain interpolations from the romance tradition, and most of these interpolations are shared by both copies and were thus added before either of the surviving manuscripts were produced. The Trinity manuscript, however, has had even more romance material added to its version of Arthur's reign. As we should expect at this point, both stages of revision reveal that the redactors attempted to distinguish between the Brut tradition and material which has been added from romance.

Several of the interpolations to the abbreviated *Brut* are minor. After the death of Uther, for instance, the abbreviated *Brut* presents an image of Britain very similar to that found in Thomas Gray's *Scalacronica*: 'Vter was poysonyd and dyed in Vrelane, and was byryed at Stonhynge byside his brother. Whan Engest regnyd he ordeynyd vij kynges in Brytayn, and whan he was ded þey fled in to dyuers parties, for all þey were Saxons and Sarsyns. Of whom, in tyme of Vter, Henz, þat was kynge of Westsex londid at ȝermouth; Port, þat was kynge of Southsex, londed at Portis[mouth], Elle, þat was kynge of Essex, londid at Sondewich. And ech of hem had a grete oost.'[53] The list of Saxon kings recalls Robert of Gloucester's account of the establishment of Saxon kingdoms during the reign of Uther.[54] As in the *Scalacronica*, its inclusion here rationalizes the differences between British and Anglo-Saxon traditions.

Most of the additions to the abbreviated *Brut*, however, are drawn from romance. The first romance intrusion occurs, as might be expected, at the period of peace which follows the conquest of Britain and Scotland: 'Aftyrwarde he cam to London and so to Wynchestre, and where Vter his fader had begunne a Rounde Tab[le] of þe most noble kynȝtes of all Brytayne, Artor weddid Gueymor of þe Romaynes kynde.'[55] The *Brut* does mention the establishment of the Round Table, but it follows Wace and claims that Arthur builds the table because 'alle þe knyȝtes weren so gode þat no man knew þe werste.'[56] This *Brut*, however, follows the Vulgate cycle's *Merlin* in claiming that Uther founded the table.[57] The *Brut* also records Arthur's marriage, but it does not include the fact that Guenevere was of Roman descent.[58] Guenevere's parentage, however, is

a well-known feature that could have been drawn from a variety of sources. During these same festivities, the abbreviated *Brut* also describes Lot's children: 'And he [i.e., Arthur] made Mordret Erle of Leycester. Gawen, Gaheries and Gaheriet, þat were sones to Kynge Loth, were but younge þat tyme.'[59] Mordred and Gawain, of course, are found in the Brut tradition, but, apart from romance texts, only the Arundel variant of Robert of Gloucester lists Gaheries and Gaheriet among Lot's sons. Cador and Lot are made knights of the Round Table, 'And, like as Aurilanibros and Vter hilde euery yere þer moste principall ffeste at Stonhynge at Mont Palidor, so did Arthur holde his ffest of þe Rounde table euery yere at Camelok, Carlion or in oþer placis at Wytsontide.'[60]

The variety of romance elements here might suggest that this redactor does not distinguish between fiction and history. Uther's establishment of the Round Table, the list of Lot's sons, and even the mention of Camelot, a city which, apart from a reference in Hardyng's *Chronicle,*[61] is otherwise found only in romance narratives, all point to a redactor who gives equal weight to both traditions. As he approaches the end of Arthur's reign, however, the redactor becomes more discriminating. He states that 'Arthur gate the cite of Rome,' but he is recalled to Britain before he is able to take the imperial crown.[62] This is in keeping with the *Brut*, and as he describes Arthur's death the redactor shows a more careful use of romance traditions. Before the final battle 'Arthur had many clere tokynes þat he shulde be slayne of Mordret, and as oþer stories recorde, Mordred was son to Kynge Arthur geten vn his owne sustyr Quene Anne.'[63] The 'clere tokynes' of Arthur's death echo Gawain's ghostly visitations in the Vulgate cycle,[64] but they do not contradict the Brut narrative and are allowed to stand unchallenged. The unflattering allusion to Arthur's incest, however, is held outside of the Brut tradition. Like John Hardyng, who at the same point in his *Chronicle* raised the issue of Arthur's incest only to dismiss it by stating that the 'certaynte thare of no bokes kune / Declare it wele,'[65] the redactor distinguishes between his account, in which Mordred is twice named as the son of Lot, and 'oþer stories' which include the scandal.

Finally, the abbreviated *Brut* alters Arthur's fate after the last battle. As in the *Brut*, the battle between Mordred and Arthur is devastating, and 'all þe knyȝtes of þe Rounde Table þat were þat tyme in Brytayn were slayn in that batayle.' Oddly, the redactor adds 'excepte Sagremour.'[66] Segramour, who is not mentioned before this, owes his unexpected survival to a brief notice in the Vulgate *Mort Artu.*[67] The redactor turns to the same source for Arthur's final scene: 'Oþer stories reherse more

pleynly all þe doynges of þis batayle. Arthur was led in a barge in to þe Ile of Auyon and þer he dyed in the ȝere of grace vCxliij, þere byryed at Glastenbury where he was principall ffounder.'[68] Even though the *Brut* does not mention Arthur's burial at Glastonbury,[69] it was a well established part of the tradition, and we have seen it in many different texts already. Like Thomas Gray before him, this redactor borrows liberally from the Vulgate cycle of romances but he does not allow those borrowings to distort the Brut narrative: the many additions remain minor, and they do not affect the narrative. Contradictions, such as the coming of the Saxons, are rationalized to fit the Galfridian story, or, when that fails (as in the case of Arthur's incest and alternate accounts of his death), are attributed to 'oþer stories,'[70] and thus denied the authority of history.

In addition to these minor changes to the *Brut* (which are found in both versions of the text), the Trinity scribe (or his exemplar) makes further use of romance traditions. The Trinity copy is characterized by small deviations from the Cleveland text which add minor details or clarify obscure passages. The Cleveland copy, for example, refers to Igerne's husband as 'Therle of Cornwail,' or simply, 'the Erle,'[71] but on three different occasions the Trinity manuscript specifically names him 'Gorlois' or 'Gurlois.'[72] The Cleveland copy claims that Octa and Offa conquered the 'most part of alle the lond' and that Hengist instituted seven kings in 'this lond.'[73] In both cases, the Trinity text is more specific, claiming that Octa and Offa conquered 'þe most parte of all Brytayne' and that Hengist placed kings 'in Brytayn.'[74] Throughout the early years of Arthur's reign, the Cleveland text describes the aid provided by Arthur's cousin, 'Orell' while the Trinity text correctly identifies the king of Brittany as 'Howell.'[75] Other changes to the Trinity text merely add minor pieces of information. After Hoel builds a chapel to honour his dead niece, for example, the Trinity scribe adds that he 'callid it þe Mount Tombe Elyne.'[76] When Lot, king of Lothian, is married to Anna, the Trinity scribe adds that 'Lothean was þat tyme callid Leonys,'[77] and after Arthur conquers Norway, the Trinity scribe adds that he also conquered 'all þe ilis þerabowte' and that he 'þan made Loth, þat was king of Irlonde, king of Norwey.'[78] These changes are minor and some are from different parts of the Brut tradition. The name of Elaine's tomb, for example, could have come from the *Brut* itself,[79] or, like Lot's political fortunes, it could be indebted to Geoffrey of Monmouth directly.[80] There may be no need to look for a specific source, however. The details that are added are generally part of the

Brut tradition and may represent nothing more than the scribe's own knowledge.

The most surprising interpolation in the Trinity text, however, comes after the Roman war. After hearing of Mordred's treachery, 'Arthur hastely retornyd. Gawen was hurt in the hed where þe emperour was sleyne, and dyed at Dover.'[81] The Trinity manuscript's death of Gawain echoes the account found in the *Scalacronica*. According to Gray, Gawain is killed 'de vn auyroun desus la coste de la test, qe ly creuast la play, q'il out receu a la batail ou l'emperour fust mort, q'estoit sursane.'[82] In both scenes Gawain's head wound, which ultimately causes his death at Dover, was received while fighting the Roman emperor, but no such wound is mentioned in the Brut tradition, while in the Vulgate, Gawain is wounded while fighting Lancelot.[83] The changes made by the Trinity redactor, like those made by Thomas Gray, remove Lancelot from the action and ensure that he is not implicated in Gawain's death. The Trinity text does not mention Lancelot before Gawain's death, but at this point the redactor adds that 'Launcelot and Bors and there lynage were depertid fro Arthur more þan thre ʒere before.'[84] On a narrative level this line explains why Lancelot does not fight with Arthur against Mordred, but it serves a broader function. The quintessential knight of romance, whose affair with Guenevere is never suggested, is named only to describe his absence. Lancelot is thus removed both from the narrative of the Trinity manuscript and from any active role in British history.

The abbreviated *Brut* shows the complicated process in which history and romance were negotiated by both a redactor who condensed his source, and by a scribe who then added to the text from his own reading and knowledge.[85] A copy of the English prose *Brut*, now in Lambeth Palace, shows a similar process and it contains several lengthy interpolations which were added to the text during its original composition and subsequently over a period of many years.[86] The scribe makes several Arthurian additions, including a lengthy account of Merlin's conception and birth.[87] Within Arthur's reign, the scribe notes that 'þe sollempnite of the purificacioun of Oure Lady [was] newe dedefied,'[88] and he also makes several minor changes to Arthur's death scene. The *Brut* states that after being wounded Arthur 'let him bene born in a liter to Auyoun, to bene helede of his wondes.'[89] The Lambeth scribe adds to the sentence: 'And than he leete carie hym selfe vnto Avilon, þat is cleped þe Ile of Aples, there to be helyd of his woundys.'[90] The scribe makes an additional minor change to the final lines of the *Brut*'s Arthurian history, which merely state that Arthur died in AD 546. To this simple statement

the Lambeth scribe adds 'and lithe at Glastingbury whan he had reigned xxviii yeris.'[91] Both of these additional details about Avalon were well known and it is quite likely that the scribe knew both the name 'þe Ile of Aples' and the Glastonbury association from popular report rather than from any particular textual source.

These interpolations are minor, but the Lambeth scribe also makes one major change to his Arthurian history. As we have come to expect, significant changes to the text are placed within the twelve years of peace. The *Brut* tells that during this period knights 'of alle þe landes þat wolde worshipe and chyualry seche' came to Arthur's court.[92] The Lambeth scribe alters this description to include knights 'þat woolde abyde & assaye aventures & honour of chyualrye.'[93] As though to illustrate the kinds of adventures knights assayed, the scribe also uses the twelve years of peace as a place to describe Arthur's adventure with the wildcats of Cornwall:

> And tho he cam ayen, & dwellyd in his owne lande xij yerys in reste & pees, and werryd vpon no man, nor no man vpon him.
>   And tho kyng Arthure destroyed þe wylde cattys þat were in a parke in Cornwayle, and in þat parke were wylde cattis þat woolde ouercome & sle men of armys, and therfore ther dyrste no man walke ther-in.[94]

The adventure of the cats, which is found only in this manuscript, continues with Arthur himself slaying the beasts. While the scribe makes no claims concerning the veracity of the story, he does add that 'sum sey þat he [i.e., Arthur] was slayne with cattys, but þat seyng is nat trewe.'[95] While Lister Matheson proposes several analogues for the tale,[96] the fact that the scribe has relegated the adventure to the period of peace is also significant. The adventure with the cats occurs at the same moment that Wace discusses extra-Galfridian narratives, that Robert Mannyng places rhymed adventures which are neither wholly truth nor falsehood, that Thomas Gray chooses to describe the fair-unknown motif and the tradition that Arthur would not eat before he had seen an adventure, that both John Hardyng and the Arundel variant of Robert of Gloucester direct their readers to the book of the 'Seint Graal' for additional adventures at Arthur's court, and that the *Gawain*-poet and *The Greene Knight*-poet place their contest between the Green Knight and the young court.

The consistency of the uses to which this period of peace was put is remarkable. For over three hundred years, both chroniclers and the

authors of romance placed fictional adventures within this period of history which was distinguished as a moment in the Arthurian past when facts gave way to adventure and authority gave way to interpretation. Wace had identified it as a time of adventure only a generation after Geoffrey first described it as a time of peace, and John Hardyng and these anonymous scribes continued to identify it with the Vulgate and other episodic adventures throughout the fifteenth century. What is particularly striking about the periods of peace is that, although they are treated similarly in different texts, they are not treated uniformly. The Lambeth *Brut*, which Lister Matheson characterized as 'the considered historical view of Arthur of an intelligent, widely-read Englishman,'[97] places the adventure with the cats in one of those spaces; Hardyng and the Arundel scribe locate the adventures of the Vulgate cycle there; and Thomas Gray and Robert Mannyng saw it as a the site of episodic romances. The tendency to place adventures in the years of peace is not, therefore, a result of textual transmission. Rather, it is a narrative paradigm which was recognized by authors and scribes alike. It is likely that knowledge of the paradigm was also shared by readers of both histories and romances. Certainly the authors of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and *The Awntyrs off Arthure* expected their audiences to recognize and interpret the setting of Gawain's adventures. Authors, scribes, and readers, therefore, form a broad community of 'intelligent, widely-read Englishmen' who are prepared to critically engage Arthurian narrative and negotiate the subtle relationship between history and romance.

Conclusion:
Reading about Arthur

Yet blazing *Arthur*, as haue some, I might be ouer-seene:
He was victorious, making one amongst the worthies neene:
But (with his pardon) if I vouch his world of Kingdomes wonne,
I am no poet, and for lacke of pardon were vndonne.
His *Scottish, Irish, Almaine, French,* and *Saxone* Battels got,
Yeeld fame sufficient: these seeme true, the rest I credit not.

<div align="right">William Warner, 1612[1]</div>

The authors and scribes we have looked at shared a received narrative of
Arthurian history which existed beside, and was informed by, material
which was ostensibly fictive. These Arthurian writers share not only a
narrative, but also several important characteristics of interpretation,
among them a tendency to view Arthurian history as an *exemplum* of
mutability. At the same time, all of these authors also stress the central
position that Arthur holds in the depiction of Britain's chivalric past.
From Sir Thomas Gray to *The Awntyrs off Arthure,* Arthur's court is a
model for contemporary knights and the pinnacle of chivalric grandeur.
Like the image of Troy, however, the Arthurian world contains a double
resonance: at once an exemplar to be emulated, the history of Arthur's
court also teaches that worldly glory must come to an end. The cyclical
view of British history, established so forcefully by Geoffrey of Monmouth,
informs many subsequent interpretations of the Arthurian world.

    With very few exceptions, authors of Arthurian history in fourteenth-
and fifteenth-century England also share a surprisingly uniform inter-
pretation of the relationship between the Brut tradition and romance
narratives. It has become a critical commonplace to assert that '[r]omance

and other categories become indistinguishable in the minds of those who wrote and read them'; that '[t]he authors of historical works sense no gap between the actions they describe in chronicle or biography and those in imaginative literature.'[2] As we have seen, however, the most popular chronicles of Arthur's reign simply ignore information from outside the Brut tradition, but those writers who do discuss the relationship between the two traditions consistently cast doubt on the veracity of romance material.[3] Chroniclers who borrow from episodic adventures or the great prose cycles create a distinction between the traditions they attempt to integrate. Thomas Gray distances his romance additions from his Brut narrative and thus denies them historical authority, while John Hardyng's attempts to provide authority for his borrowed episodes betray his own anxiety about the veracity of his material. Both of these chroniclers, however, share a conviction that fictive material can be used to direct a reader's interpretation of Arthurian history, and Andrew Wyntoun was willing to praise Huchown for just this kind of 'Gestis historiall.' Not simply a truthful recorder of things done, the medieval chronicler is able to shape his audience's understanding of the past, and the implications of the past for the present, through the amplification of history with material drawn from romance. While manipulating the relationship between history and romance, the chronicler relies on his audience to recognize the subtle play between fact and fiction, and to distinguish between the events of the past and the thematic embellishments of the author. For the authors of individual romances the relationship is even more complex. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and *The Awntyrs off Arthure* interweave fictive adventures with the narrative of the 'Brutus bokez' in order to utilize the interpretive conventions of British history within an individual romance. The lines of influence, however, work in both directions, and both *Sir Gawain* and *The Awntyrs* encourage the reader to re-evaluate Arthurian history in light of an Arthurian fiction.

Despite their many differences, therefore, the chronicles and adventures examined in this study exhibit thematic similarities which imply a community of writers sharing basic assumptions concerning Arthurian material. These authors also share the expectation of an audience willing to engage Arthurian history on a critical level which recognizes the distinction between a historical narrative and a fictive embellishment. More textually oriented similarities reinforce the impression of a literary community. It is unlikely that John Hardyng read Gray's *Scalacronica*, but both authors shared a similar reading list, which included not only other

chroniclers, such as Wace, Geoffrey, and Higden, but also romance texts, such as the prose Vulgate cycle, and individual romances like *Lybeus Disconus* and *Sir Degrevaunt.* Harker argues that Hardyng also read Robert Mannyng's *Chronicle* and 'some member of the Alliterative *Morte Arthure/*Malory complex.'[4] While many of the similarities that Harker points to may be the result of coincidence rather than direct borrowing, the fact remains that Hardyng's reading in Arthurian literature is extensive, and not atypical. The fifteenth-century redactions of Robert of Gloucester and the *Brut* discussed in the previous chapter also demonstrate that scribes shared this reading list and were able to draw on histories and romances far beyond their base text.

The reading habits of John Hardyng, an older contemporary of Sir Thomas Malory, should be of interest to scholars who have attempted to establish how the better-known Arthurian writer composed his lengthy, composite book. Many of the French texts (and possibly some of the English texts) that Malory incorporated into the *Morte D'Arthur* were also used by Hardyng. Discussions of Malory's access to his sources usually begin with William Matthews's statement that no contemporary library in England could have provided Malory with all of the material he required.[5] Carol Meale, however, has noted that our knowledge of contemporary libraries, whether monastic or private, is very poor. Inventories and wills, although useful, are imperfect methods of gauging either the size or the composition of book collections. Meale also shows the relative ease with which a single book could circulate among a group of literate men and women. She points to the Lambeth Palace copy of *The Awntyrs off Arthure*, which 'contains the names of several individuals who seem to have formed a kind of literary circle amongst the Essex gentry in the early sixteenth century.'[6] The letter of a Lincolnshire book owner attempting to secure the return of his 'Inglische buke ... cald Mort Arthur'[7] also demonstrates the ease with which a single work, in both of these cases an Arthurian work, could circulate among a large number of individuals. With such easy movement of written material, it is possible to see how John Hardyng, a minor retainer in several different great families, could have gained access to the manuscripts he needed to compose his lengthy *Chronicle,* the Arthurian portion of which amounts to only about one tenth of the whole work. Sir Thomas Malory, we can assume, could have had at least equal access to the necessary texts.

Thomas Malory and John Hardyng, it seems, were members of a literary community which shared not only certain knowledge of, and assumptions concerning, Arthurian history, but also the physical texts

necessary to gain that knowledge. By literary community I mean some-
thing less formally defined than Brian Stock's notion of a 'textual com-
munity,' and more unified than Felicity Riddy's use of Stock's phrase.[8]
The literary community I propose is made up of men and women who
read historical texts and romances in such a way as to be engaged in an
act of informed interpretation as they read. Such a community includes
not only the men who turned from reading to the active creation of texts
(men such as Sir Thomas Gray, John Hardyng, and Sir Thomas Malory),
but also those who confined themselves to the consumption of narrative
matter. Chaucer assumes such a community when he ironically asserts
the veracity of his tale about courtly chickens:

> Now every wys man, lat herkne me;
> This storie is also trewe, I undertake,
> As is the boke of Launcelot de Lake,
> That wommen holde in ful greet reverence.[9]

This joke, from the climax of *The Nun's Priest's Tale*, relies on an audience
who can distinguish between historical and fictive Arthurian narratives,
between the *Brut* and the *Lancelot*.[10]

Members of this community may be associated with one another
through formal educational institutions such as the monastery or the
university, but the associations would also be based on loose networks of
textual transmission, often involving familial and land relationships of
the sort uncovered by Keiser's studies of Robert Thornton's literary
contacts. The community is not uniform, and we have seen how certain
elements of Arthurian narrative can be geographically localized. The
expanded role of Yvain in Arthur's final campaign, for example, seems
to be an element peculiar to the area surrounding Lincolnshire. It may
only be chance survival, but both of the lengthy medieval chronicles
written by English laymen, Thomas Gray's *Scalacronica* and John Hardyng's
Chronicle, are also of northern origin. The four alliterative Arthurian
poems also share a historical backdrop to their fictive adventures. Tem-
porally, this community may be said to begin with Henry of Huntingdon's
early surprise at finding a copy of Geoffrey's *Historia* at Bec. It is with the
popularization of vernacular historiography in the fourteenth century,
however, that Geoffrey's narrative came to an audience large enough to
create a dynamic reading community.

Our understanding of such a community is necessarily limited to those
members who left written traces of their attitudes toward their reading

material, but few readers turn from being consumers of historical material to creating their own text based on their readings. Vestiges of this community, however, can be found in the surviving manuscripts of historical works. The manuscripts of John Hardyng's *Chronicle*, for example, show that his attempts to provide authority for his version of Arthurian history were only partially successful. As mentioned earlier, the second version of the *Chronicle* was not completed in Hardyng's lifetime, and the manuscript tradition reveals numerous lacunae in the second half of the rhyme royal stanzas.[11] These omissions are most common in the fifth line, 'the point in the rhyme royal stanza that is most tricky in terms of rhyme, the third *b* rhyme.'[12] This pattern leads A.S.G. Edwards to conclude 'that Hardyng, in his twilight years (he was over eighty), was unable to complete his work in these localised respects before his death.'[13] Given this situation, scribes either ignored the missing lines or simply inserted appropriate lines to complete the stanza. These lines provide some insight into the manner in which Hardyng's text was received, and there are several such lacunae in the Arthurian section of the *Chronicle*.[14]

The missing lines rarely affect the sense of the stanza and usually the scribal additions are purely descriptive. Two such descriptions, however, indicate that the scribes were unsure to which tradition Hardyng's *Chronicle* belonged. When describing the first knights of the Round Table, Grafton's printed text lists

> The thre kynges foresayde of Scotlande,
> Two kynges also of Walys, full chyualrous,
> Howell, the kyng of lesse Briteyne lande,
> And duke Cador of Cornewayle corageous,
> *And worthy Gawen, gentyll and amarous.*[15]

This reading is shared by the Egerton and University of Illinois manuscripts, but the italicized line does not appear in other manuscripts and is not authorial. Harley has substituted '*Knyghtes of the Rounde Table were made aunterouse*' while Princeton's Garret manuscript reads '*Thou3t with all his my3t to do victorious.*' Other manuscripts simply leave the line blank, or shorten the stanza to six lines.[16] There is more behind Grafton's scribal reference to Gawain, however, than the need to fill a blank line. The scribe who inserted a passage about Sir Gawain was responding to the popularity of the knight in English romance, and the adjectives with which he chose to describe Gawain ('gentyll and amarous') indicate an

awareness of his dominant characteristics, characteristics which remained more common in romance than in chronicle. A later passage illustrates the same point. At Arthur's coronation feast Hardyng describes Sir Kay, the king's steward. Grafton again agrees with the Egerton and University of Illinois manuscripts which read:

> His stewarde was, that had with mekell ioye,
> A thousande knightes *to serue early and late*
> *Ententyfly, not feynt, wery ne mate.*[17]

Again, the italicized lines are not authorial. The Garrett manuscript follows Grafton for the second line quoted, but the third line reads '*Soche a kyng was Arture yn his estate.*' The Harley scribe, however, includes a line that acts as a corrective to the romance tradition that many readers would have known. His lines read: 'A thousande knightes *with hym consociate / Manlie iauntill louynge no debate.*'[18] This scribe seems to be aware of the romance tradition that Kay is known for his foul tongue. Jacob van Maerlant also includes Kay among the historical characters from Arthurian tradition, but he notes that 'hem die Walen mede meyen.'[19] The Harley scribe's description of the steward 'louynge no debate' makes little sense without this background information.

The scribes of Hardyng's incomplete exemplar are participating in a tradition of negotiation which dates back to the scribe of BN fr. 1450. Just as that scribe incorporated Chrétien's romances into his copy of the *Roman de Brut*,[20] so Hardyng's scribes attempt to reconcile their own conception of the Arthurian past with the chronicler's idiosyncratic text. The scribes are reacting not only to Hardyng's incomplete text, but also to a body of Arthurian material which contains certain well known characteristics, such as Gawain's amorous reputation and courtesy, or Kay's lack of these noble traits. These scribes, in other words, perform in miniature the same process of negotiation and reconciliation which has characterized the various chroniclers and poets discussed throughout this study. The same process is carried out by the owner/scribe of the Lambeth Palace prose *Brut*, and by the scribes of Arundel 58 and the two copies of the abbreviated *Brut*.

We also see the reading members of this community in glosses and marginalia. This evidence is by its very nature sparse and disjointed, and it is difficult to make observations about individual glossators. Still, glosses can help clarify the paradigm of interpretation and a glossed copy of the Anglo-Norman *Brut* further shows the uses to which the

periods of peace could be put. Lambeth Palace Library, MS 504 describes the coronation festivities which punctuate the nine-year period of peace. As is typical of the Anglo-Norman *Brut*, the feast was 'la plus bele & la plus solempne & dura trois iours continuesment oue graunt ioye & oue graunt honour.'[21] The next sentence will describe the arrival of the challenge from Rome on 'Le tierz iour,' but a glossator has marked the end of this sentence (and thus the end of the period of peace) with an arrow indicating an insertion point. Across the top of the folio is the gloss: 'Hic Johannes Mandeville inserit enigma 24 militum.'[22] Two things strike us. First, the glossator claims to have read a copy of John Mandeville's translation of the *Brut* which inserts additional material, but the sole manuscript attributed to Mandeville does not contain anything out of the ordinary in its description of the feast.[23] Second, the interpolation that this glossator has seen is tantilizingly called the 'enigma 24 militum.' What this glossator has read, unfortunately, is probably unrecoverable. The *enigma* may be a puzzle, or it may indicate some sort of allegorical text, such as 'The Twenty-Four Knights of Arthur's Court' which is found in several manuscripts of the Welsh *Triads*. The list is divided into eight sets of triads, each of which describes the knights' 'innate peculiarity of achievement beyond other people.'[24] It is tempting to suppose that the lists of 'Three Golden-Tongued Knights,' 'Three Virgin Knights,' or 'Three Just Knights'[25] are the *enigma* that the reader has seen. It is also possible that the *enigma* is a more traditional narrative involving a large number of knights. Thomas Gray also described festivities held during this period of peace 'De queux Gauwayn s'entremist fortement, qe tresseouent tres bien ly auenit, com recorde est en sez estoirs.'[26] Perhaps one of these *estoirs* is the source of the *enigma*. We could also look to Hardyng, who included the Grail quest during the nine-year peace, an 'enigmatic' adventure if ever there was one. Unfortunately, the 'enigma 24 militum,' and its relationship to Mandeville's *Brut*, remains a mystery.[27]

Glosses in the manuscripts of Hardyng's text also show how readers reacted to his narrative. One reader seems to have taken a special interest in the Grail sections of the first version of the *Chronicle*. Not only does this reader correct the Grail portion of the text, he also writes 'ye seynte grale- what it is'[28] beside Hardyng's account of the last supper, and he notes Hardyng's citation of a source of information about the Grail, 'Gildas de gestis Arthur.'[29] This reader thus engages in interpretation as he reads, noting the description of the Grail and the undoubtedly surprising piece of information that Gildas wrote about Galahad's achievement of the adventure. A reader of BL Egerton MS 1992, a copy of the

second version of Hardyng's *Chronicle*, also leaves evidence of his interpretation of Hardyng's text. He scribbles 'False' beside both of the rubrics which deal with Lancelot's arrival at Arthur's tomb,[30] an episode which echoes the prose Vulgate. This same reader was apparently a proponent of Ranulph Higden's version of Arthurian history, and he writes 'False' beside each rubric which deals with the Roman campaign.[31] These glosses show two readers who interpreted Hardyng's text with reference to material from outside the *Chronicle* itself. The reader of the first version used Hardyng to expand his knowledge of the Grail, a knowledge which was presumably gained primarily through romance. The reader of the second version found Hardyng's narrative to be in conflict with another text that he knew and with which he seemingly agreed. These two readers would doubtless disagree with one another, as the romance additions to Hardyng's text, so interesting to the first reader, seem to be dismissed, along with much of the Galfridian account, by the second. But the method with which they approach the act of reading a historical text is essentially the same.

The most aggressively glossed copy of Hardyng's *Chronicle* is in the Princeton University Library. The glosses rarely relate to specific events in the *Chronicle*. Rather, they routinely appear on the inner margin of the verso and add dates and information to the Brut narrative that Hardyng records. Thus in the reign of Ebrauke we learn that 'In isto tempe Ebrauc, David regnavit in Judea et Siluius Latinus in Italia,'[32] and during the reign of Arviragus we are told, 'Nota anno gracia xxx, sens Johanes Bapt baptiʒa Ihesu in Iordane.'[33] In the same gloss we learn of St Stephen's martyrdom and St Paul's mission to the unfaithful. The gloss on the next folio describes Mary's assumption, the death of Agrestes, and the death of Lazarus (for the second time).[34] The glossator names Bede and Flores (that is, the *Flores Historiarum*) as his sources,[35] and during the reign of Aurelius, for example, a single gloss uses both. First, Bede is used as a source for the battle 'in obsidione Badonici Mount' which happened in 492, 'xliiii anno ab aduentu Anglorum,'[36] and then the *Flores Historiarum* provides the detail that two years later 'duo ducie Saxonum, Cerdicus & eius filius Kymricus, quibus nauibus aduenti, applicuerunt apud Cerdichestre in Yeremouth.'[37] Other Saxon arrivals are also mentioned: Port, Elle, and other kings who are listed with the kingdoms they established.[38] Never does the glossator suggest that these arrivals contradict the narrative of Aurelius, Uther, and Arthur that they supposedly annotate. Instead, Hardyng's verse and the British kings it describes dominate the page, while the Anglo-Saxon kings, relegated to

the margins, remain subordinate to the British narrative, just as Thomas Gray's Anglo-Saxons were subordinate to the overlord Arthur.[39]

Other marginalia demonstrate readers' interest in the British hope of Arthur's return. A reader of the alliterative *Morte Arthure* was unsatisfied with the finality of Arthur's death and adds 'Hic jacet Arthurus rex q[u]ondam rexque futurus' at the end of the poem.[40] Readers of Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* also include the epitaph as a marginal gloss. Lydgate ends his Arthurian section by describing the tradition that Arthur will return. He concludes:

The Parchas sustren sponne so his fate;
His epitaphie recordeth so certeyn:
Heer lith kyng Arthour, which shal regne ageyn.[41]

Four of the manuscripts of the *Fall* include the Latin epitaph as a marginal gloss beside this passage, but the gloss is in a variety of forms. Withrington concludes that since these epitaphs are all in scribal hands 'they are manifestly part of a manuscript tradition.'[42] What is not clear, however, is whether the epitaph is authorial, or whether it was originally added as a gloss to Lydgate's English version. Finally, we see the epitaph added in the late stages of the production of the first version of Hardyng's *Chronicle*. After Arthur's death, Hardyng writes that he was buried at Glastonbury, 'Nought wythstondynge Merlyn seyde of hym thus / His deth shuld be vnknow and ay doutous.' Beside this line the correcting scribe has written 'Hic iacet Arthurus rex quondam rexque futurus.'[43] As with the other altered rubrics in Hardyng's text, it is uncertain if Hardyng is the author. What the rubric demonstrates, however, is that someone, whether the author or a later scribe, incorporated this piece of information late in the production of the manuscript.[44] The epitaph seems to have circulated in a variety of textual milieu, and may have also circulated orally.

If, as Lister Matheson claims, the Lambeth *Brut* represents 'the considered historical view of Arthur of an intelligent, widely-read Englishman,'[45] and John Hardyng displays 'wide-ranging literary knowledge and taste,'[46] then the same can be said about many of the glossators, authors, and scribes discussed in this study. These readers may be the exceptions, in that they applied their literary and historical interests in a creative effort, but they may also be typical, in that they had access to, and made use of, such diverse material. Thomas Gray, the alliterative *Morte*-poet and John Hardyng assume knowledgeable audiences, and

they are thus able to hold well-known fictive romances to the periphery of historical narrative, even as romance colours the authors', and presumably the readers', understanding of Arthur's reign. The romance narratives, in other words, are interpretive tools available to these authors and readers, just as the cyclical nature of British history and the transience of human achievement are tools through which Arthurian history is read and understood. These tools are shared by the literary community, and the author of an Arthurian work can rely on an audience willing to apply them to both chronicles and romances.

The literary community that read Arthurian chronicles was also available to William Caxton when he chose to print a new narrative of Arthur's reign, but Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte D'Arthur* represents a shift away from the differentiation between factual and fictive representations of Arthur's reign. Instead, Malory offers a unified vision of the Arthurian past in which the historical record of the alliterative *Morte Arthure* has been integrated into a narrative which conforms to the pattern established by the French prose romance cycle. Even Malory's harmonized text contains elements which betray the distinction between the two traditions. A complete examination of Malory's use of conflicitng traditions is beyond this study, so a single short example must suffice. As in the Vulgate and other romance texts, Malory's Mordred is not only Arthur's nephew but also his own son through incest. Malory is careful to explain the relationship during the consumation scene: 'So they were agreed, and he begate vpon her Mordred, and she was his syster on the moder syde, Igrayne.'[47] Arthur is, of course, ignorant of this relationship at the time, and again Malory is careful to explain the mistake: 'but al this tyme Kyng Arthur knewe not that Kyng Lots wyf was his syster.'[48] This much of the narrative is in keeping with the Vugate cycle and is a relatively close translation of the post-Vulgate *Suite de Merlin*. While the Arthur of history is a friend of Lot and the two join together to fight the Scots, in Malory, as in the romance, Arthur fights against Lot early in his career. In the *Suite de Merlin* Lot maintains his animosity against Arthur because the king ordered the slaughter of the male children of the realm. Lot, believing Mordred to be his own son, refuses to be reconciled with Arthur: 'se je le hac, che n'est pas mierveille, car il a fait tout de nouviel la gringnor desloiauté que rois fesist onques, si en a adamagié tous les haus hommes de cest regne, et moi meismes en a il apovroiié d'un hoir meismes que Diex m'avoit envoiié. Si ne regarda onques a chou qu'il estoit mes fiex, qui estoie li plus haus hom de son regne et se estoie si ses amis que je avoie sa serour a feme, et chou que mes enfes

estoit ses niés.'[49] Lot's speech is rich in irony as he fails to realize that Arthur ordered the slaughter of the children in an attempt to kill Mordred, who is in fact Arthur's child, not Lot's. This could be confusing for an audience familiar with both traditions, and when Malory adapts this passage he changes Lot's rationale. Here, Lot is fully aware that Arthur has bedded his own sister, who is also Lot's wife. Rather than give Lot a defiant speech, the narrator explains his animosity during the battle itself: 'Allas, he [i.e., Lot] myghte not endure, the whiche was grete pyte, that so worthy a knyght as he was one shold be ouermatched, that of late tyme afore hadde ben a knyght of Kyng Arthurs and wedded the sister of Kyng Arthur. And for Kyng Arthur lay by Kyng Lots wyf, the whiche was Arthurs syster, and gat on her Mordred, therfor Kyng Lot held ayenst Arthur.'[50] By recalling Arthur's incestuous relationship with his sister, Lot's wife, Malory provides an unambiguous explanation for Lot's hostility and clarifies Mordred's origins. The explanation, which does not appear in Malory's source, the post-Vulgate *Suite de Merlin*, thus assures the reader that the *Morte D'Arthur* is a romance. As we have seen, chroniclers such as Hardyng, Fordun, and the redactor of the Trinity *Brut* stress the fact that Mordred, the son of Lot and Anna, is merely Arthur's nephew. In both cases the ancestry of Mordred is used to establish within which tradition the text works.

When William Caxton printed his version of the Arthurian story he chose Sir Thomas Malory's prose romance, but he was familiar with a wide variety of Arthurian traditions. In his prologue to *Godeffroy of Boloyne* Caxton compares Godfrey to the other Christian worthies:

> But in especial, as for the best and worthyest, I fynde fyrst the gloryous, most excellent in his tyme, and fyrst founder of the Round Table, Kyng Arthur, kyng of the Brytons, that tyme regnyng in this royamme, of whos retenue were many noble kynges, prynces, lordes and knyghtes. Of which the noblest were knyghtes of the Round Table, of whos actes and historyes there be large volumes, and bookes grete plente and many. O blessyd Lord, whan I remembre the grete and many volumes of Seynt Graal, Gahalehot, & Launcelotte de Lake, Gawayn, Perceual, Lyonel, and Tristram, and many other, of whom were ouer longe to reherce, and also to me vnknown! But th'ystorye of the sayd Arthur is so gloryous and shynyng, that he is stalled in the fyrst place of the mooste noble, beste and worthyest of the Cristen men.[51]

Caxton's prologue, written in 1481, reveals not only the printer's wide

knowledge of Arthurian material (despite his claim to ignorance), but also his willingness to accept a wide variety of material as authentic. By the time Caxton wrote the prologue to the *Morte D'Arthur* he was more cautious.

Caxton's prologue to the *Morte D'Arthur* begins with an account of a meeting between the printer and a select group from the literary community who make up his audience and customers: 'many noble and dyuers gentylmen of thys royame of Englond camen and demaunded me many and oftymes, wherefore that I haue not do made and enprynte the noble hystorye of the Sayntgreal and of the moost renomed Crysten kyng, fyrst and chyef of the thre best Crysten and worthy, Kyng Arthur, whyche ought moost to be remembred emonge vs Englysshemen tofore al other Crysten kynges.'[52] Again, Caxton outlines Arthur's position among the Nine Worthies, and he concludes that 'The sayd noble ientylmen instantly requyred me t'emprynte th'ystorye of the sayd noble kyng and conquerour Kyng Arthur.'[53] These gentlemen appeal to Caxton's sense of nationalism, claiming that he should be willing to print Arthur's deeds before Godfrey of Bouillon 'consyderyng that he was a man borne wythin this royame and kyng and emperour of the same, and that there ben in Frensshe dyuers and many noble volumes of his actes and also of his knyghtes.'[54] Caxton's response, however, is surprising: 'To whome I answerd that dyuers men holde oppynyon that there was no suche Arthure, and that alle suche bookes as been maad of hym ben but fayned and fables, bycause that somme cronycles make of hym no mencyon ne remembre hym noothynge ne of his knyghtes.'[55] Joseph Levine asserts that Caxton's 'skepticism was unexpected and peculiar,' because '[t]o raise a question of fact and examine it in close detail as though it mattered was not ... the ordinary impulse of the Middle Ages.'[56] We have seen, however, that medieval authors were concerned with the veracity of their historical records, as were their readers. What is surprising in Caxton's response is not that he recognizes the difference between fact and fiction, but that he expresses a doubt about Arthur's very existence. Ranulph Higden had also noted that continental historians did not mention Arthur, but he only uses this evidence to cast doubt on the extent of Arthur's conquests, and chroniclers who followed Higden also accepted Arthur as a real figure from British history, even though they rejected the wild claims of the Brut tradition. Caxton, who had printed John Trevisa's translation of the *Polychronicon*, certainly was familiar with this tradition of measured scepticism.[57]

As quickly as Caxton raises the question of Arthur's existence, he

dispels it. The gentlemen 'answerd, and one in specyal sayd, that in hym that shold say or thynke that there was neuer suche a kynge callyd Arthur myght wel be aretted grete folye and blyndenesse.'[58] This defender of Arthur lists several 'euydences of the contrarye' which demonstrate both Arthur's existence and his prominence: the physical survival of his tomb at Glastonbury is mentioned first, and Higden's *Polychronicon* is cited as proof that the body was 'founden and translated into the sayd monasterye.'[59] Other appeals to textual authority follow: 'Ye shal se also in th'ystory of Bochas, in his book De Casu Principum, parte of his noble actes and also of his falle; also Galfrydus in his Brutysshe book recounteth his lyf.'[60] Caxton's appeal to venerable Latin authorities, although he almost certainly knew Boccaccio via Lydgate,[61] is a typical authorizing technique. Finally, Caxton appeals to the physical remains of Arthur's court: his seal in beryl at Westminster Abbey, Gawain's skull and Caradoc's mantle at Dover, Lancelot's sword, and the only relic which survives to this day, 'at Wynchester, the Round Table.'[62]

It has been suggested that this meeting is a fiction, designed by Caxton to suggest a noble, educated audience's interest in the publication of an Arthurian work. As Christopher Dean reminds us, the printer had a vested interest in the book, and his comments should not be accepted at face value.[63] But the evidence that is brought forward in defence of Arthur, whether it is devised by one of the 'noble ientylmen' or by Caxton himself, accords well with the sort of evidence we have seen used by other defenders of the Brut tradition. Both Thomas Gray and John Trevisa appealed to textual authorities in their attempts to refute Higden's doubts, and Gray even resorted to citing the physical evidence of Geoffrey's story, the survival of Stonehenge on Salisbury plain. It should also be noted that, even if Caxton is the author of this defence, it is the sort of argument that the printer expected from his audience of gentlemen, and one which he felt his readers would accept and understand. Levine feels that Caxton's proof demonstrates that 'the distinction between history and fiction did not really make much difference' in late medieval England. Caxton's attempt at historical analysis 'failed, of course, because the evidence was counted, not weighed. But what else could Caxton do?'[64] Levine, however, is too hard on the printer. Caxton's method is unsophisticated, but it is nevertheless an attempt to evaluate history in light of the available testimony, and it displays Caxton's critical awareness of the importance of marshaling evidence, however uncritical his acceptance of that evidence may be.

Within the narrative of the prologue, the printer is convinced by the

method and agrees that 'I coulde not wel denye but that there was suche a noble kynge named Arthur.'[65] Like Robert Mannyng, over 150 years earlier, Caxton seems annoyed that the British king (or, indeed, the English king) was praised in French and Welsh literature rather than in English: 'And many noble volumes be made of hym and of his noble knyghtes in Frensshe, which I haue seen and redde beyonde the see, which been not had in our maternal tongue. But in Walsshe ben many, and also in Frensshe, and somme in Englysshe, but nowher nygh alle.'[66] Moved by the argument which is mounted in favour of a historical Arthur, and inspired by a patriotic zeal (however contrived) which seeks to make all of the Arthurian volumes available to an English-speaking audience, Caxton agrees to print a narrative of the king.

Caxton's comments thus participate in the ongoing commentary on Arthurian narrative. His appeal to Latin authority and his references to the relics of the Arthurian past are reminiscent of other authors and historians who defended the Brut tradition. In Caxton, however, there is something new. The first half of the prologue establishes an opposition between 'dyuers men,' who claim that Arthur did not exist, and 'one in specyal,' who defends all Arthurian narrative. By listing Lancelot's sword and Caradoc's mantle alongside Gawain's skull and the Round Table at Winchester, the gentleman attributes historical authority to both romance and chronicle traditions. The prologue, therefore, initially presents a simplistic dichotomy: Arthur is either a fable, or both romance and chronicle traditions are true. In this, the framework of the debate is at variance with English historiography. Only near the close of the prologue does Caxton present a more nuanced option to his readers. Relying on the critical skills of his audience, Caxton suggests that belief in Arthur need not be absolute; although all Arthurian narrative is useful, not all of it is necessarily historically accurate. Caxton relies on his audience's participation in a literary community which is prepared to examine Arthurian narrative in a critical and informed manner, as he invites his readers to examine his book and distinguish the facts from the fictions: 'And for to passe the tyme thys book shal be plesaunte to rede in, but for to gyue fayth and byleue that al is trewe that is conteyned herin, ye be at your lyberte.'[67]

We began with the preface to the Blome–Stansby Malory, and we can now see that 150 years after Caxton the editor makes much the same appeal to his audience. '[I]n many places,' he claims, 'fables and fictions are inserted, which may be a blemish to the reputation of what is true in this History.'[68] This editor was not alone, and Caxton's advice was

heeded by early modern readers who continued to subject Arthurian narrative to critical scrutiny, to distinguish between what was true in Malory's book, and what was just 'plesaunte to rede.' Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century historians such as Aylett Sammes, William Warner, and even David Hume (whose texts have been used as epigraphs to individual chapters) continued to debate which parts of Arthurian tradition could be accepted as history and which should be discarded as fiction. Although the historiographical method used in the debate changed during the modern period, some things remained the same. It is remarkable that as David Hume categorized the debate in the eighteenth century he would look back some six centuries to William of Malmesbury, the first historian who tried to divide *fallaces fabulæ* from *veraces historiæ*: 'This is that Arthur so much celebrated in the songs of Thalliessin, and the other British bards, and whose military achievements have been blended with so many fables, as even to give occasion for entertaining a doubt of his existence.'[69]

William's formulation remains useful for Hume because it so succinctly expresses the complexities of interpreting medieval Arthurian narrative. For the pre-modern reader, Arthur was a figure from factual history, but he was also a figure from fictive romance. Medieval authors of both chronicles and episodic adventures admitted this paradox, but many viewed it as an opportunity rather than a hinderance. Secure that their readers would recognize the uneasy and complex relationship between Arthurian history and romance, chroniclers and poets explored Britain's past through its most glorious king. In so doing, they created and exploited a space within Britain's history of 'bliss and blunder' in which Arthur could reside as both a military king with imperialistic ambitions and as a courtly hero who led the flower of British chivalry.

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Notes

Introduction

1 As David Carlson notes, 'there had been an edition [of Malory] every generation or so,' with six editions published between 1485 and 1634. David R. Carlson, 'Arthur before and after the Revolution: The Blome–Stansby Edition of Malory (1634) and *Brittains Glory* (1684),' *Culture and the King: The Social Implications of the Arthurian Legend,* ed. Martin B. Schichtman and James P. Carley (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 234.

2 Thomas Malory, *The most ancient and famovs history of the renowned Prince Arthvr, King of Britaine ...* (London: Printed by W. Stansby for I. Blome, 1634), unpaginated. (STC 806.)

3 Ibid. For a discussion of this edition and the authorship of the preface, see Carlson, 'Arthur before and after,' 240–5.

4 Felicity Riddy, *Sir Thomas Malory* (Leiden: Brill, 1987), 32.

5 Malory, *The most ancient and famovs history,* 1634, unpaginated.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

8 The closest comparable debate may be medieval reactions to the historicity of the *Aeneid.* See Jerome E. Singerman, *Under Clouds of Poesy: Poetry and Truth in French and English Reworkings of the Aeneid, 1160–1513* (New York: Garland, 1985).

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

10 Ruth Morse points to the benefit of ignoring modern preoccupations with genre, and focusing on medieval conventions and intentions in historical writing. 'The result of the identification of medieval conventions and intentions will be that we cease to criticize these works for being on the one

hand unpoetic, flat, and essentially boring, and on the other hand, fanta-
sies which wreak havoc with the facts of the historical past.' Ruth Morse,
'"This Vague Relation:" Historical Fiction and Historical Veracity in the
Later Middle Ages,' *Leeds Studies in English* 13 (1982): 94.

1: The Years of Romance

1 David Hume, *The History of England,* new ed., 8 vols. (London, 1732), I:24.
2 'This is Arthur, about whom the trifles of the British still chatter; one clearly
   worthy, not to be dreamed of in the lies of fables, but to be extolled in the
   truths of history.' William of Malmesbury, *De Gesta Regum Anglorum,* ed.
   William Stubbs, RS 90, 2 vols. (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office,
   1887–9), 1:11.
3 'whence ancient dirges falsely claim that he is yet to come.' William of
   Malmesbury, *De Gesta Regum Anglorum,* 2:342.
4 For the dating of the *Historia* see Neil Wright, introduction, *The* Historia
   Regum Britannie *of Geoffrey of Monmouth I: Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS 568,* ed.
   Neil Wright (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1984), ix–xvi.
5 For a discussion of the dissemination of Geoffrey's work, see Julia Crick,
   The Historia Regum Britannie *of Geoffrey of Monmouth IV: Dissemination and
   Reception in the Later Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, U.K.: D.S. Brewer, 1991),
   passim. Crick points out that simply in terms of surviving manuscripts,
   Geoffrey's work ranks among the five most popular histories, together with
   the works of Valerius Maximus, Orosius, Justinus, and Josephus. Crick,
   Historia, 9.
6 For a complete list of manuscripts of the Middle English *Brut,* see Lister
   M. Matheson, *The Prose Brut: The Development of a Middle English Chronicle,*
   Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, vol. 180 (Tempe, AZ: Medi-
   eval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1998), xxi–xxxi, and passim. For a
   bibliography of location lists of the Anglo-Norman *Brut,* see Matheson,
   Prose Brut, xviii–xx, n. 1. See also Lister M. Matheson, 'King Arthur and the
   Medieval English Chronicles,' *King Arthur through the Ages,* ed. Valerie M.
   Lagorio and Mildred Leake Day (New York and London: Garland, 1990),
   1:253–4.
7 Robert Hanning, *The Vision of History in Early Britain: From Gildas to Geoffrey
   of Monmouth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), 174. See also
   Christopher Dean, *Arthur of England: English Attitudes to King Arthur and the
   Knights of the Round Table in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Toronto:
   University of Toronto Press, 1987), 11.

8 Matheson, 'King Arthur,' 248.

9 For a valuable discussion of Maerlant's use of Vincent of Beauvais and Geoffrey of Monmouth, see Willem P. Gerritson, 'Jacob van Maerlant and Geoffrey of Monmouth,' *Arthurian Tapestry: Essays in Memory of Lewis Thorpe*, ed. Kenneth Varty (Glasgow: British Branch of the International Arthurian Society, 1981), 368–88. I would like to thank Frank Brandsma for bringing Maerlant's text to my attention, and Judith Deitch for her assistance with the translation.

10 'His marvellous acts resound in the mouths and tongues of the people, although many seem to be fictions.' Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum Historiale, Speculum Quadruplex* (Graz, Austria: Akademische Druck-u. Verlagsantalt, 1965), 4:799.

11 'I cannot write about Lancelot, nor about Percival, nor about Agravain. But I find recorded the deeds of Gawain the good, and of his wicked brother Mordred, and the duke of Hainault, Kay, of whom the French make a mockery.' Jacob van Maerlant, *Spiegel Historiael,* ed. M. de Vries and E. Verwijs, 4 vols. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1863–79), bk 5, ch. 49, vv. 18–24.

12 'It would serve whoever is annoyed and displeased by the silly fiction of the Grail, the lies about Percival, and the many other false tales, to prefer this *Spiegel Historiael* over the trifles of Lanval, for here one finds truth especially, but also many marvels, both wisdom and pure doctrine, as well as moral recreation,' Maerlant, *Spiegel Historiael,* bk 1, ch. 1, vv. 55–64.

13 Maerlant, *Spiegel Historiael,* bk 7, ch. 39, vv. 61–4.

14 'Of Percival, of Galahad, of Agravain, of Lancelot, of Kings Ban of Benoic, and of his equal Bohors, and of many other made-up names, I have found nothing either small or large in the Latin. Still, it troubles me to lose these, that I should separate them from the tradition.' Maerlant, *Spiegel Historiael,* bk 5, ch. 54, vv. 51–9. See Gerritson, 'Jacob van Maerlant,' 379–82, for a discussion.

15 Gerritson, 'Jacob van Maerlant,' 376.

16 Ibid., 383.

17 It seems unlikely that Maerlant, well read and interested in Arthurian narrative, could have been ignorant of Geoffrey's very popular chronicle in the 1260s. Julia Crick notes that '[t]he largest single concentration of *Historia*-manuscripts anywhere ... is, surprisingly enough, in the Low Countries.' Crick, *Historia,* 210.

18 'History is the narrative of a thing done.' Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiarum sive originum,* ed. W.M. Lindsay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911), 1:xli. Cited by book and chapter.

19 'Winter having passed, [Arthur] returned to Britain and established all of
his kingdom in a firm peace and remained there for the next twelve years.'
Geoffrey, *Historia*, ch. 153.

20 'Nine years having passed, when he had subdued all parts of Gaul to his
power, he came again to Paris and held a court there where, having called
the clergy and the people, he established the state of the kingdom peace-
fully and legally.' Geoffrey, *Historia*, ch. 155.

21 'Arthur made the Round Table, about which the British tell many a fable.'
Wace, *Roman de Brut: A History of the British*, ed. Judith Weiss (Exeter: Exeter
University Press, 1999), 9751–2 (cited by line number). Weiss also includes
a facing-page translation of the text, which I have not used. Weiss's text is
'in essence that edited by Ivor Arnold in 1938' with 'many small changes to
it which restore readings in the manuscripts he used' (Weiss, preface, ix).
For Arnold's text (which has the same line numbering), see Wace, *Roman
de Brut*, ed. I. Arnold (Paris: Société des anciens textes français, 1938–40).
For a review of critical opinion on the genesis of the Round Table, see
Beate Schmolke-Hasselman, 'The Round Table: Ideal, Fiction, Reality,'
Arthurian Literature 2 (1982): 41–75.

22 'In this great peace of which I speak (I don't know if you have heard) there
were marvels proved and adventures found, which have been so often told
about Arthur that they have been turned into fables, neither all falsehood,
nor all truth, neither all foolish, nor all wise. So much have the story tellers
told stories, and so much have the fablers told fables, in order to embellish
their stories, that everything has been made to seem like a fable' (Wace,
Roman de Brut, 1999), 9787–98. Johnson notes that this passage 'poses
certain problems of translation because Wace plays off the language of
events and happenings with those of their literary report: thus "truvees"
[9790], for example, may mean either "happened" or "composed."' Lesley
Johnson, 'Robert Mannyng's History of Arthurian Literature,' *Church and
Chronicle in the Middle Ages*, ed. Ian Wood and G.A. Loud (London:
Hambledon Press, 1991), 139, n. 21.

23 Gabrielle M. Spiegel, *Romancing the Past: The Rise of Vernacular Prose Histori-
ography in Thirteenth-Century France* (Berkeley: University of California Press,
1993), 62. Spiegel may have translated *pais* in line 9787 as 'country,' rather
than 'peace,' but since she does not quote the opening lines of the pas-
sage it is unclear how she arrives at her interpretation. The context of the
passage, however, set within the twelve years in which 'Regna Artur paisi-
blement' ['Arthur reigned peaceably'] (Wace, *Roman de Brut*, 9731), makes
it clear that the passage refers to the great peace, rather than to the great
country.

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

25 Johnson, 'Robert Mannyng's History,' 139–40.

26 'But you can hear Chrétien's testimony here without delay.' Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale [hereafter BN], MS fr. 1450, fo. 139v. Quoted and translated in Sylvia Huot, *From Song to Book: The Poetics of Writing in Old French Lyric and Lyrical Narrative Poetry* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), 30. For a discussion of this manuscript, and other early French romances that use the twelve years of peace, see Putter, 'Finding Time,' 4–6.

27 'Lords, if I said more, it wouldn't be worth saying, and so I'll return to my subject.' BN MS fr. 1450, fo. 225. Quoted and translated in Huot, *From Song to Book,* 31. The manuscript presents a vision of British history which begins with Troy and the scribe has included *Le Roman de Troie, Le Roman d'Eneas, Le Roman de Brut* (with the Chrétien romances inserted), and a shortened version of the *Sept Sages de Rome* in the same manuscript. The various works have all been modified, particularly in their prologues and epilogues, to create a single continuous narrative. For a discussion of this manuscript, see Singerman, *Under Clouds of Poesy,* 129–34, and Huot, *From Song to Book,* 27–32.

28 'The Middle English "History of the Kings of Britain" in College of Arms Manuscript Arundel 22,' ed. Laura Gabiger, diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1993, 103–4. Note that this manuscript translates Wace's *pais* as 'contray' rather than the more common 'peace.' For a discussion of this manuscript, see Robert A. Caldwell, '"The History of the Kings of Britain" in College of Arms MS, Arundel XXII,' *PMLA* 69 (1954): 643–54.

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

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

31 *The Brut; or, The Chronicles of England,* ed. Frederic W.D. Brie, EETS, o.s. 131 and 136 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1906, 1908), 78.

32 For a discussion of the manuscript and the dialect of this version of the

text, see Zettl, introduction, *An Anonymous Short Metrical Chronicle,* ed.
Edward Zettl, EETS, o.s. 196 (London: Oxford University Press, 1935),
xiv–xvi, cvii–cx. Because of the editiorial difficulties of the text, all refer-
ences to the *Chronicle* are to Zettl's edition by both page and line numbers.

33 *Short Metrical Chronicle,* 69/283–9.
34 I.e., his kinsman. Ibid., 69/290–6.
35 Ibid., 70/297–301.
36 Ibid., 70/302–3. See Zettl, introduction, lxiii, n. 1, for a discussion of this
    passage.
37 *Short Metrical Chronicle,* 69/271–80.
38 Almost all that we know about Robert Mannyng of Brunne is provided in
    the prologues to his two surviving works, *Handlyng Synne* and the *Chronicle*
    (also known as the *Story of Inglande*). For Mannyng's biography, see Ruth
    Crosby, 'Robert Mannyng of Brunne: A New Biography,' *PMLA* 57 (1942):
    15–28, and Idelle Sullens, introduction, *The Chronicle,* by Robert Mannyng,
    Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, vol. 153 (Binghamton, NY:
    Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1996), 13–22. He was a native
    of Bourne (or Brunne) in Lincolnshire and possibly a canon in the Gil-
    bertine order. In the prologue to *Handlyng Synne* he states that he was in
    residence at the Gilbertine house in Sempringham where, in 1303, he
    began to translate the Anglo-Norman *Manuel des Pechiez.* (Robert Mannyng,
    Handlyng Synne, ed. Idelle Sullens, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and
    Studies, vol. 14 [Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and
    Studies, 1983], 60–76. Cited by line number.) Although his status among
    the Gilbertines is unclear, he seems to have been employed as a poet and
    translator while living at the priory for fifteen years. In the prologue to the
    Chronicle he tells us that he wrote at Sixhills during the reign of Edward III.
    In the conclusion to the work Mannyng apologizes for running out of
    material, and tells us that he finished in 1338. (Mannyng, *Chronicle,* 1.135–
    44; 2.8353–8. Cited by line number. Except where noted, all references
    will be to the Petyt manuscript with corrections from the Lambeth manu-
    script in square brackets [...].) Various scholars have attempted to identify
    Mannyng further, but these studies remain inconclusive. See Ethel Seaton,
    'Robert Mannyng of Brunne in Lincoln,' *Medium Ævum* 12 (1943): 77 and
    Matthew Sullivan, 'Biographical Notes on Robert Mannyng of Brunne and
    Peter Idley, the Adaptor of Robert Mannyng's *Handlyng Synne,*' *Notes and
    Queries* 239 (1994): 302–4. For Sullens's cautious reaction to these studies,
    see her introduction, 16–19.
39 Mannyng, *Chronicle,* 1:61–4.

40 Ibid., 1:1–10.
41 Thorlac Turville-Petre, *England the Nation: Language, Literacy, and National Identity, 1290–1340* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 31.
42 Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1:71–4.
43 Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*, 36. Turville-Petre discusses the use of 'lewed' and 'symple' in Mannyng's prologue on 28–37.
44 Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1:7427–30.
45 Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1, addition in Lambeth following 7432.
46 Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1:14197–8.
47 Ibid., 1:14215–18.
48 The *Short Metrical Chronicle*'s account seems to be a late addition as the Royal manuscript does not contain it. Zettl argues that the story of Inge was substituted in a lost exemplar *x* in place of the story of Hengist, as found in the Royal manuscript. Zettl, introduction, lxviii. The *Short Metrical Chronicle*'s story of Inge is a compressed version of the story of Hengist and Rowena (Mannyng's *Ronewene*) in which the *Metrical* character Inge plays both roles. After announcing that 'Þis lond haþ hadde names þre,' (*Short Metrical Chronicle*, 13/282) London, British Library [hereafter BL], Add. MS 19677 (which is typical of the four versions which include the tale) outlines the career of Inge. After the reign of Arthur the maiden Inge arrives in Britain from Saxony and asks for a plot of land which can be surrounded by a bull's hide. By cutting the hide into a thin thong she is able to gain enough land to build a castle. After the castle is completed, she invites the king and his men to a feast. When Inge offers the king a drink and says 'Wassail,' her men slaughter the guests and Inge takes possession of the island, which she renames after herself: '& after hure name ich vnderstond / He cluped þis lond Engelond' (*Short Metrical Chronicle*, 14/319–20). The three other manuscripts that relate the story agree (cf: pp. 75–8) while the Royal manuscript tells the more traditional story of 'Hengistus' and 'Rowenne' (*Short Metrical Chronicle*, 75/331–40). For a comparison of the five versions of the period, see Zettl, introduction, lxviii–lxxiii. Inge's resemblance to Hengist (the trick of the bull's hide, the slaughter of guests) indicates that some confusion has occurred between the two characters. 'Inge' may in fact be a misreading of 'Henist' (often spelt 'Hingist,' as in the Auchinleck manuscript [*Short Metrical Chronicle*, 58/653, 59/671, etc.]) with the 'H' omitted.
49 Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1:7427.
50 *Short Metrical Chronicle*, 13/275–80.
51 Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 2:519–24.
52 Ibid., 2:527.

53 Ibid., 2:535–8.
54 Ibid., 2, addition in Lambeth following line 538. The Lambeth interpola-
   tion, lines 1–82, replace lines 2:519–38 of the Petyt manuscript.
55 Although likely, it is not, of course, certain that the two passages were
   altered by the same reviser.
56 Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1:9612–13. Mannyng is here translating 'Les thecches
   Artur vus dirrai, / Neient ne vus en mentirai.' ['I will show you the faults
   and virtues of Arthur, for I would not lead you astray with words.'] Wace,
   Roman de Brut, 9015–16.
57 Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1:10243.
58 For a discussion of Gawain's reputation for courtesy, see B.J. Whiting,
   'Gawain: His Reputation, His Courtesy and His Appearance in Chaucer's
   Squire's Tale,' *Mediaeval Studies* 9 (1947): 189–234.
59 Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1:10479–82. Cf. passage in Wace, *Roman de Brut*, 9820ff.
60 Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1:13403–6. This detail may be drawn from Peter Lang-
   toft, *The Chronicle*, ed. and trans. Thomas Wright, RS 47 (London: Long-
   mans, 1866–8), 218, or the Vulgate *Lestoire de Merlin, The Vulgate Version of
   the Arthurian Romances*, ed. H. Oskar Sommer, vol. 2. (Washington:
   Carnegie Institution, 1908–16), 440.
61 Geoffrey, *Historia*, ch. 177, and Wace, *Roman de Brut*, 13189–200.
62 Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1:10883.
63 Ibid., 1:13639–42.
64 Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1, addition in Lambeth following line 13642.
65 Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1:10359–60.
66 Ibid., 1:10391–402.
67 Putter, 'Finding Time,' 7.
68 Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1:15–20.
69 Mannyng refers to the *exempla* in *Handlyng Synne* as 'Talys,' 'chauncys' and
   'Merueylys.' Mannyng, *Handlyng Synne*, 131–3.
70 Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1:10405–8.
71 Cf. Geoffrey, *Historia*, ch. 1.
72 Johnson, 'Robert Mannyng's History,' 142.
73 Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1:10415–18.
74 'In the nine years which he spent in France many marvels came to him.'
   Wace, *Roman de Brut*, 10143–4.
75 Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1:10757–60.
76 Georges Duby, 'Youth in Aristocratic Society,' *The Chivalrous Society*, trans.
   Cynthia Postan (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press,
   1980), 113. Duby's quotes are from *L'Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal*. Duby
   discusses such a group in twelfth-century France, and many of his com-

ments apply to Arthur's companions. The members of the group, characterized by impatience, turbulence and instability, are described individually by the adjective *juvenis* (young) or collectively by the substantive *juventus* (youth). They are generally noble, knighted, and without children, although a youth could be married. Duby states that the 'stages of "youth" can therefore be defined as the period in a man's life between his being dubbed knight and his becoming a father.' Duby, 'Youth in Aristocratic Society,' 113. For definitions of *juvenis* and *juventus*, see 112–13.

77 Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1:10492–3.
78 Ibid., 1:10268–70.
79 Ibid., 1:10761–74.
80 Johnson, 'Robert Mannyng's History,' 145.
81 Putter, 'Finding Time,' 8.
82 Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*, 84.
83 See Robert Huntington Fletcher, *The Arthurian Material in the Chronicles*, 2nd ed. (New York: Burt Franklin, 1973), 196–201, for further examples concerning these two authors.
84 See Fletcher, *Arthurian Material*, 202, and Robert of Gloucester, *The Metrical Chronicle*, ed. William Aldis Wright, RS 86, 2 vols. (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1887), 4568–82.
85 For a discussion of the manuscript (National Library of Scotland, Adv. MS. 19.2.1, no. 155) and the dialect of this version of the text, see Zettl, introduction, xvi–xviii, cxviii–cxxiii.
86 *Short Metrical Chronicle*, 70/1071–4.
87 Ibid., 71/1085–1102.
88 Ibid., 71/1103–8. This scene will be discussed below), p. 51.
89 This short history was written in 1309 by Rauf de Boun for Henry de Lacy. Nothing is known about the author although he may have belonged to the Bohun family. See Diana B. Tyson, introduction, *Le Petit Bruit*, by Rauf de Boun, ed. Diana B. Tyson, Anglo-Norman Text Society, Plain Text Series, 4 (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1987), 1–2. For the Arthurian portion of this chronicle, see Rauf de Boun, *Le Petit Bruit*, 11–13.
90 Rauf de Boun, *Le Petit Bruit*, 12 and 13.
91 For a discussion of John's use of the Vulgate, see James P. Carley, introduction, *The Chronicle of Glastonbury Abbey: An Edition, Translation, and Study of John of Glastonbury's Cronica sive Antiquitates Glastoniensis Ecclesie*, ed. James P. Carley, trans. David Townsend, rev. ed. (Woodbridge, U.K.: Boydell, 1985), l–lii.
92 'The book of the deeds of the glorious King Arthur bears witness that the noble decurion Joseph of Arimathea came to Great Britain, which is now

called England, along with his son Josephes and many others, and that
there they ended their lives.' John of Glastonbury, *Cronica*, 52. The transla-
tion, by David Townsend, is on facing pages.

93 '... which is there called the Holy Grail.' John of Glastonbury, *Cronica*, 54.

94 For the development of this association, see Valerie M. Lagorio, 'The
Evolving Legend of St. Joseph of Glastonbury,' *Speculum* 46 (1971): 209–31
(reprinted in *Glastonbury Abbey and the Arthurian Tradition*, ed. James P.
Carley [Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2001], 55–81). The story is also contained
in the *Magna Tabula* kept at Glastonbury. See Jeanne Krochalis, '*Magna
Tabula*: The Glastonbury Tablets (1),' *Arthurian Literature* 15 (1997): 140
(reprinted, with glossary and explanatory notes, in *Glastonbury Abbey and the
Arthurian Tradition*, 435–567). For the dating of John of Glastonbury's
Chronicle, see Carley, introduction, xxv–xxx.

95 For a discussion of this episode and its various uses at Glastonbury, see
James P. Carley, 'A Glastonbury Translator at Work: *Quedam Narracio de
Nobili Rege Arthuro* and *De Origine Gigantum* in Their Earliest Manuscript
Contexts,' *Nottingham French Studies* 30.2 (1991): 5–12. This article has been
reprinted in *Glastonbury Abbey and the Arthurian Tradition*, 337–45.

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

1 Aylett Sammes, *Britannia Antiqua Illustrata: or, The Antiquities of Ancient
Britain* (London, 1676), 404.

2 Mannyng, *The Chronicle*, 1:10765–74.

3 As the first layman to write a vernacular chronicle of England, Gray de-
mands our attention, yet his work has received almost no critical notice.
The only edition of the work is Thomas Gray, *Scalacronica*, ed. J. Stevenson
(Edinburgh: printed for the Maitland Club, 1836). Stevenson prints only
the prologue and the portion of the text following the year 1066 (fos.
145ff). Brief excerpts from the Arthurian portion of the text have been
edited by Maria Luisa Meneghetti, *I Fatti di Bretagna: Cronache Genealogiche
Anglo-Normanne dal XII al XIV Secolo* (Padua: Editrice Antenore, 1979), 50–1,
67–71, and Thomas Wright, 'Influence of Medieval upon Welsh Literature:
The Story of the Cort Mantel,' *Archæologia Cambrensis: The Journal of the
Cambrian Archæological Association* 3rd ser. 9 (1863): 10. Portions of the text
are translated as Thomas Gray, *Scalacronica: The Reigns of Edward I, Edward II
and Edward III*, ed. and trans. Herbert Maxwell (Glasgow: J. Maclehose,
1907). Citations to the *Scalacronica* will be by folio and column. The com-
plete text exists in a single manuscript, Cambridge, Corpus Christi College
MS 133. For a description of this manuscript, see Montague Rhodes James,

A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912), 305; Nigel Wilkins, *Catalogue des manuscrits français de la bibliothèque Parker (Parker Library) Corpus Christi College, Cambridge* (Cambridge: Parker Library Publications, 1993), 55–9, and J.C. Thiolier, 'La *Scalacronica*: Première Approche (MS 133),' *Manuscrits français de la bibliotheque Parker*, ed. Nigel Wilkins (Cambridge: Parker Library Publications, 1993), 121–4. Cambridge, Jesus College MS QG10 is listed as an incomplete copy of the *Scalacronica* by Montague Rhodes James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of Manuscripts in the Library of Jesus College* (Cambridge and London: C.J. Clay & Sons, 1895), 92–3, and J. Vising, *Anglo-Norman Language and Literature* (London: Oxford University Press, 1923), 95, but, as Meneghetti points out, this manuscript is, in fact, a copy of the Anglo-Norman *Brut* (*I Fatti di Bretagna*, 49). J.C. Thiolier's discussion of the text is inconclusive and he concludes that the number of manuscripts 'n'a pas encore été fixé de façon définitive.' Thiolier, 'La *Scalacronica*,' 122. BL Harley MS 905 also contains extracts from the *Scalacronica* transcribed by the sixteenth-century antiquarian Nicolas Wotton. These extracts, however, contain material after the Arthurian period and do not affect this study. For a description of the manuscript and a list of the portions extracted, see *A Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts in The British Museum* (London: G. Eyre & A. Strahan, 1808–12), I: 470.

4 Juliet Vale, *Edward III and Chivalry: Chivalric Society and Its Context, 1270–1350* (Woodbridge, U.K.: Boydell, 1982), 48–51. Some of this material is looked at again in more detail in Carter Revard, 'Courtly Romances in the Privy Wardrobe,' *The Court and Cultural Diversity: Selected Papers from the Eighth Triennial Congress of the Courtly Literature Society*, ed. Evelyn Mullally and John Thompson (Cambridge: Brewer, 1997), 297–308. See also Elspeth Kennedy, 'The Knight as Reader of Arthurian Romance,' *Culture and the King: The Social Implications of the Arthurian Legend*, ed. Martin B. Shichtman and James P. Carley (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 70–90, Richard W. Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 30–3.

5 Vale, *Edward III*, 50. Quoting PRO E101/393/4, fo. 8.

6 Vale, *Edward III*, 49. It was not only royalty who took an interest in romance literature. The will of Margaret Courtenay, countess of Devon, lists a 'livre appelle Tristram ... et un livre appelle Artur de Bretaigne ... et un livre appelle merlyn,' while the will of Isabel, duchess of York, lists, among her other books, a 'launcelot.' See, K.B. McFarlane, 'The Education of the Nobility in the Later Middle Ages,' *The Nobility of Later Medieval England: The Ford Lectures for 1953 and Related Studies* (Oxford: Clarendon

Press, 1997), 236, n. 5. The wills are dated 1390/1 and 1392 respectively. See also 235–7. For studies on the ownership of French romance material, see the bibliography provided by Edward Donald Kennedy, 'Gower, Chaucer, and the French Prose Arthurian Romances,' *Mediaevalia* 16 (1993): 79, n. 3.

7 Alfred Gibbons, *Early Lincoln Wills: An Abstract of all the Wills & Administrations Recorded in the Episcopal Registers of the Old Diocese of Lincoln* (Lincoln: James Williamson, 1888), 118. The book called 'Sainz Ryall' is certainly a 'Holy Grail.'

8 *Arthour and Merlin*, ed. O.D. Macrae-Gibson, EETS o.s. 268 and 279 (London: Oxford University Press, 1973–9). For this work's adaptation for an English audience, see Elizabeth S. Sklar, '*Arthour and Merlin*: The Englishing of Arthur,' *Michigan Academician* 8 (1975–6): 48–57.

9 *Joseph of Arimathea*, ed. David A. Lawton (New York: Garland, 1983).

10 *Le Morte Arthur: A Romance in Stanzas of Eight Lines*, ed J. Douglas Bruce, EETS e.s. 88 (London: Oxford University Press, 1903).

11 A 'round table' was generally fought with blunted weapons. Unfortunately, the nature of the earliest round tables is not known, but 'the later association of the sport with Arthur leaves little doubt that these tables were of Arthurian origins.' Ruth H. Cline, 'The Influence of Romances on Tournaments of the Middle Ages,' *Speculum* 20 (1945): 204. On the influence of romances on tournament practice, see also Roger Sherman Loomis, 'Edward I, Arthurian Enthusiast,' *Speculum* 28 (1953): 117–21; E. Sandoz, 'Tourneys in the Arthurian Tradition,' *Speculum* 19 (1944): 389–420; Vale, *Edward III*, 25–41, 57–75; Jacques d'Armagnac, 'Armorial des Chevaliers de la Table Ronde,' ed. Lisa Jefferson, in 'Tournaments, Heraldry and the Knights of the Round Table: A Fifteenth Century Armorial with Two Accompanying Texts,' *Arthurian Literature* 14 (1996): 69–157; and Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 93–4.

12 Cline, 'Influence of Romances,' 208.

13 'And Roger Mortimer held the Round Table, one hundred knights at Kenilworth; to which revel of arms of peace came knights errant of many foreign lands.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 192.

14 An English paraphrase of the festivities described by Lodowijk van Veltham is provided by Loomis, 'Edward I, Arthurian Enthusiast,' 118–19.

15 Loomis, 'Edward I, Arthurian Enthusiast,' 120. See also Vale, *Edward III*, 14–15.

16 Laura Keeler, *Geoffrey of Monmouth and the Later Latin Chronicles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1946), 55. Keeler reprints the two passages in parallel at 56–7.

17 '... he would establish a round table in the manner and state which the lord Arthur, once king of England, had established it.' Adam Murimuth, *Continuatio Chronicarum*, ed. Edward Maunde Thompson, RS 93 (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1889), 232. At the tournament held at Dunstable in 1334 Edward III also fought incognito in the arms of Sir Lionel. Vale speculates that the choice of Lionel, knight of the Round Table and cousin of Lancelot, 'was perhaps determined by the presence of "lions" (technically leopards) on the royal arms of England.' Vale, *Edward III*, 68.

18 Leland's paraphrase of Gray is printed by Stevenson as an appendix: John Leland, 'Notable Thinges,' *Scalacronica*, by Thomas Gray, ed. J. Stevenson (Edinburgh: printed for the Maitland Club, 1836), 300. A gap of some twelve folios occurs in the manuscript between folios 222 and 223. Leland may have seen this manuscript before the text was excised or he may have had access to a different text. Thiolier claims that marginalia in the manuscript is in Leland's hand. Thiolier, 'La *Scalacronica*,' 151, n. 47.

19 For further examples, see Keen, *Chivalry*, 117.

20 That is, using ordinary weapons of war.

21 Richard Barber and Juliet Barker, *Tournaments: Jousts, Chivalry and Pageants in the Middle Ages* (New York: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1989), 125.

22 George Edward Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage*, ed. H.A. Doubleday, et al. (London: St Catherine's Press, 1910–40), VI: 136. Citing *Patent Rolls*, 5 Hen. IV, 2, m. 8.

23 Stevenson, introduction, *Scalacronica*, xxii.

24 'In that time at a great feast of lords and ladies in the county of Lincoln, a fairy damsel carried a helm of war with a gilt crest on the same to William Marmion, knight, with a letter, commanding from his lady that he should go to the most dangerous place in Great Britain and that he should make that helm known.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 210.1.

25 'The said Thomas well understood the manner of his coming, so he said to him aloud, "Sir knight, you have come here, a knight errant, in order to make that helm known, and since it is more proper that chivalry should be performed on horse than on foot, where conveniently it can be done, mount your horse, see your enemy there, strike the horse with spurs, charge into their midst, I will renounce God if I do not rescue your body, dead or alive, or I will die."' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 210.2. Andy King focuses on the latter portions of the *Scalacronica* and argues that Gray adhered to a very practical model of chivalry. See Andy King, 'A Helm with a Crest of Gold: The Order of Chivalry in Thomas Gray's *Scalacronica*,' *Fourteenth-Century England I*, ed. Nigel Saul (Woodbridge, U.K.: Boydell, 2000), 21–35.

26 'The women of the castle brought out horses to their men who mounted and entered the chase, striking down those whom they could overtake.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 210.2.

27 The will of Elizabeth Darcy, the daughter of the chronicler, contains a reference to 'unum librum de romans vocat' Leschell de Reson' ('a book of romance [i.e. written in French?] called The Ladder of Reason.' Gibbons, *Early Lincoln Wills*, 118). The title *Leschell de Reson* is otherwise unknown, and it is possible that it refers to the *Scalacronica*. The title may be a corrupted version of *Leschel d'histoire*, or *Leschel de cronique*, or it may simply indicate that the text was meant to be read as a repository of lessons in *reson*. The book was left to Philip, son and heir of John, late lord Darcy, possibly her nephew, on the condition that he assist the executors of her will. Otherwise the book passed to Sir Thomas Grey of Heton, the son of her brother Thomas. This Thomas Grey was executed in 1415 for conspiring to kill Henry V. Unfortunately, the record of Grey's chattels, which would have been seized after his execution, does not survive. If he did come into possession of the *Scalacronica* it is likely that it passed back into the family of his aunt after his death. Grey's co-conspirators were Richard, earl of Cambridge (father of Richard, duke of York) and John Lord Scrope. The most detailed examination of the plot is found in James Hamilton Wylie, *The Reign of Henry the Fifth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914–29), I: 515–38. The conspirators were eventually confronted by Henry in a scene dramatized by William Shakespeare in *Henry V*, act 2, scene 1.

28 'If it please God / this book belongs to me, G. vicomte Kyldare.' The inscription appears on one of the several folios which precede the chronicle, *Scalacronica*, Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. iiiv.

29 James, *Descriptive Catalogue of Manuscripts in the Library of Corpus Christi College*, 306.

30 For this genealogy, see G.W. Watson, 'Ormond and Kildare,' *Miscellanea Genealogica et Heraldica* 5th ser. 8 (1932–4): 229–31.

31 Nigel Wilkins claims that a cryptogram on fo. ir is that of Philippa, daughter of Henry IV. This, however, results from Wilkins's misreading of James's catalogue. James merely identifies the cryptogram as a 'mark' and it remains anonymous. In James's catalogue a footnote refering to Philippa is printed under the cryptogram, but the note refers to an entry in MS 132. Wilkins seems to have mistaken this footnote for a caption. Cf. Wilkins, *Catalogue des manuscrits*, 55, and James, *Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Corpus Christi College*, 305.

32 Mícheál Mac Craith, *Lorg na hIasachta ar na Dánta Grá* (Baile Átha Cliatha [Dublin]: An Clóchomhar Tta, 1989), 231. I would like to thank Linda Gowans for bringing this book list to my attention.

33 John Taylor, *English Historical Literature in the Fourteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 172.

34 Ibid.

35 For a sketch of Gray's career, see Stevenson, introduction, *Scalacronica*, xxvii–xxxii.

36 Taylor, *English Historical Literature*, 172.

37 A complete edition of the *Scalacronica* would be necessary before undertaking a detailed discussion of Gray's sources and the following attributions are tentative. Gray may be using an intermediate source, such as Guido delle Colonne. For Gray's description of the Trojan war, see Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fos. 8v–11v.

38 Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fos. 12–15v, 28–9v. A complete gathering (fos. 16–27v) has been misbound and deals with Caesar's conquest of Britain. It properly follows fo. 51v. Gray's text follows the pattern typical of compilations which combine narratives of Troy, Eneas, and the Brut. For a discussion of this pattern, see Singerman, *Under Clouds of Poesy*, 129–34.

39 Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fos. 41–5.

40 Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fos. 49v–50v. Gray tells this story again during his account of the Great Cause. Here he inserts the complete text of 'lez cronicles d'Escoce' which traces Scottish history from its foundation to the end of the thirteenth century. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fos. 193ff.

41 Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fos. 83r–84v.

42 It will be remembered that Gray's daughter, Elizabeth Darcy, included books called 'Sainz Ryall' and 'Lanselake' in her will. The fact that she is free to dispense of these books at her death implies that she brought them into the marriage. This, along with the fact that they were left to her nephew, suggests that they were family volumes, perhaps left to her by Gray himself. See above, p. 32.

43 'And thus he who translated this chronicle from rhyme into prose does not wish to name his name openly, but he was taken a prisoner of war at the time that he began this treatise.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 1.1

44 'Let the eighth [h] be joined after the nineteenth [T], / So place the twelfth [m] after the fourteenth [o] / The first [a] and the eighteenth [s] encounter; / you know his proper name. / Place the seventh [G] to the seventeenth [r], / The first vowel [a] join to the third [i]; / you have found his right surname. / according to the alphabet.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fos. 1.1–2.

45 '... he was a prisoner in the fortress of Mount Agneth, once called the

Castle of Maidens, now called Edinburgh, and he surveyed the books of chronicles in rhyme and in prose, in Latin, in French and in English, of the deeds of ancestors, of which he marvelled.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 1.2.

46 'a noble knight.' John Fordun, *Chronica Gentis Scotorum / Chronicle of the Scottish Nation*, ed. William F. Skene, trans. F.J.H. Skene (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1871–2), I: 372. Translations are my own.

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

48 Andrew of Wyntoun, *The Original Chronicle*, ed. F.J. Amours, Scottish Text Society 63, 50, 53, 54, 56, 57 (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood, 1903–14), VIII. 6361. Cited by book and line number.

49 Wyntoun, *Original Chronicle*, VIII. 6366–70. Unfortunately, the portion of the *Scalacronica* which included the events surrounding Gray's capture and imprisonment is lost.

50 '... in writings in diverse books in Latin and in French.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 1.1.

51 '... to treat and to translate in more concise sentences [i.e., to paraphrase] the chronicles of Great Britain and the deeds of the English.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 1.2. David Ditchburn suggests that Gray probably used the royal library and that he may have had access to a collection of volumes purchased for David II in 1330. David Ditchburn, *Scotland and Europe: The Medieval Kingdom and Its Contacts with Christendom, c. 1215–1545*, Vol. 1, *Religion, Culture and Commerce* (East Linton, U.K.: Tuckwell, 2000), 120–1.

52 'Thus he was enflamed of the order of good conduct, and of aid to widows, to maidens, and to Holy Church. His habit, his right clothing, was otherwise of the same colour as is the cope of the Franciscan [i.e., gray], dyed completely in this manner. Another coat he had pulled over to uphold the status of his order, which resembled the colour of fire and on it, in illustration, was the hardy beast quartyner, dyed in sign of the mother; around the border a wall, painted with the same colour.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 1.1. I have chosen to translate 'mere' as 'mother' rather than 'sea.' Gray's father wore the same arms as the chronicler, with the exception that the lion and border were in gold. It is possible that the chronicler's arms were changed to silver in response to the arms of his mother's family. Gray's mother was Agnes de Beyle, but I have, unfortunately, been unable to find a record of her family's heraldic device.

53 Stevenson, introduction, *Scalacronica*, xxxv.

54 Joseph Foster, *Dictionary of Heraldry: Feudal Coats of Arms and Pedigrees* (London: Bracken Books, 1989), 100. Gray's coat of arms is reproduced from the frontispiece to Maxwell, trans., *Scalacronica.*

55 '... he ought to guard and defend and maintain Holy Church. That is, the clergy, by whom Holy Church is served, and widows and orphans.' *Lancelot: roman en prose du XIIIe siecle,* ed. Alexandre Micha, Textes littéraires français (Geneva: Droz, 1978–83), VII: 253.

56 '... in the castle of Mount Agneth, once [called] the Castle of Maidens now Edinburgh.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 1.2. Gray again associates the Castle of Maidens with Edinburgh in his account of the reign of Ebrauke: 'il edifia dieus Cites & vn chastel devers Albanye. or Escoce. L'un Euerwik, la autre Clud, qe puis out a noun chastel de puscelis, ore Edynburgh, & Dunbretayne' [he built two cities and a castle next to Albany, now Scotland. The one (was) Everwick, the other Clud, which once had the name Castle of Maidens, and is now called Edinburgh, and Dunbreton]. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 32.1.

57 Geoffrey, *Historia,* ch. 27.

58 Roger Sherman Loomis, 'From Segontium to Sinadon – The Legends of a *Cité Gaste.' Speculum* 22 (1947): 531.

59 '... the tournament was already underway; there were performed the truly splendid and dangerous jousts.' *Lancelot,* II: 123.

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

61 For this episode, see *The Rise of Gawain, Nephew of Arthur (De ortu Waluuanii nepotis Arturi),* ed. and trans. Mildred Leake Day, Garland Library of Medieval Literature, ser. A, 15 (New York and London: Garland, 1984), 112–20.

62 For John Hardyng's use of this material, see below, pp. 167–9.

63 'And as he was very pensive concerning the said need, it seemed to him one night while sleeping that Sibyl the sage surveyed him, and said to him that she had shown him the path that he had thought on; and it seemed to him that she led him in an orchard where, against a high wall, on a stone, they found a ladder set with five rungs, and on the stone, under the ladder, [they found] two books on their sides.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 1.2.

64 At the appropriate point in his history, Gray does mention that 'Boicius de concelacioun fist sez liuers' (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133,

fo. 68v.1), but this brief note is simply drawn from Higden's *Polychronicon*. Ranulph Higden, *The Polychronicon*, ed. Churchill Babington and Joseph Rawson Lumby, RS 41 (London: Longman, 1865–86), V: 318–22.

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

66 For a brief discussion of knight prisoners, see William Matthews, *The Ill-Framed Knight: A Skeptical Inquiry into the Identity of Sir Thomas Malory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 138–41. Thomas Usk, although not a knight, composed his *Testament of Love*, an allegorical dream vision, while imprisoned in 1387.

67 *The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell*, ed. Laura Sumner, *Sources and Analogues of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales*, ed. W.F. Bryan and Germaine Dempster (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941), 844–5. Cited by line number.

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

69 Southern, 'History as Prophecy,' 160.

70 For a discussion of the prologue's use of the Sibyl, see Francis Ingledew, 'The Book of Troy and the Genealogical Construction of History: The Case of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae*,' *Speculum* 69 (1994): 665–8.

71 See, for example, Augustine, *The City of God against the Pagans*, ed. and trans. George E. McCracken et al., Loeb Classics (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann, 1963–72), XVIII. xxiii. Cited by book and chapter.

72 '"My friend," the old Sibyl said to him, "see here wisdom and folly, the first book the Bible, the second the gest of Troy, which would do your purpose no harm to survey."' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 1.2–1v.1.

73 Ingledew, 'Book of Troy,' 668, n. 12.

74 Lee Patterson, *Chaucer and the Subject of History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 94–5.

75 Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1.15–18. William Caxton makes a similar claim in his prologue to Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*, even though he questions the historical accuracy of the text: 'For herein may be seen noble chyualrye, curtoyse, humanyte, frendlynesse, hardynesse, loue, frendshyp, cowardyse, murdre,

hate, vertue, and synne. Doo after the good and leue the euyl, and it shal brynge you to good fame and renomme.' William Caxton, prologue, *Caxton's Malory: A New Edition of Sir Thomas Malory's Le Morte D'Arthur*, ed. James Spisak (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 3. For a brief discussion of the exemplary nature of history as expressed through this rhetorical convention, see Hanning, *Vision of History*, 124–6.

76 '"Good friend," said the Sibyl to him, "see here Walter, archdeacon of Exeter [i.e., Oxford], who translated the Brut from British into Latin according to the writing of Keile and of Gildas, from the writings of whom you can have an exemplar as of the Brut, the gestes of the British, the first book of chronicles of this island."' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 1v.1.

77 Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 1v.1–2.

78 '... because it signifies future events.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 1v.2.

79 Thomas of Otterburne is depicted in the dream as a Franciscan monk standing beside the ladder, supporting it as Gray climbs. Often confused with the fifteenth-century Thomas of Otterburne, the work of this Thomas is now lost. On the lost work of Thomas of Otterburne, see Taylor, *English Historical Literature*, 21–2.

80 Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fos. 82.1 and 96.2.

81 'Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford, a man learned in both the art of public speaking and the history of foreign countries ... presented him with a certain very ancient book in the British language.' Geoffrey, *Historia*, ch. 23.

82 '... the good book of Oxford that belonged to Archdeacon Walter.' Geffrei Gaimar, *L'Estoire des Engleis by Geffrei Gaimar*, ed. A. Bell Anglo-Norman Text Society, 14–16 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), 6458–9. Cited by line number. For a discussion of the epilogue's relation to Geoffrey of Monmouth, see Ian Short, 'Gaimar's Epilogue and Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Liber vetustissimus*,' *Speculum* 69 (1994), 323–43.

83 'For of þe story of þe kyngys of Brytayne þat now yclepyd [ys] Englond y wol ʒow telle, wyche þat Walter, Archedene of Oxenforde, a worthy clerk 7 a man wel vlernyd in olde storyes of Englond [fond], 7 he dede hyt translaty out of spech of Brytonys into Latyn.' London, College of Arms MS Arundel 22. fo. 8, quoted in Caldwell, 'History of the Kings of Britain,' 645. Although Geoffrey of Monmouth is never mentioned in the prologue, which is derived or adapted from the *Historia*, Walter is named as the translator of the work three times. Jehan de Waurin, the Flemish chronicler, also refers to 'Gaultier de Oxenee' for material relating to Arthur's fall. Jehan de Waurin, *Recueil des croniques et anchiennes istoires de la Grant*

Bretaigne, present nomme Engleterre, ed. William Hardy, RS 39 (London: Longman, 1864–91), I: 438. For Hardyng's use of Walter of Oxford, see below, pp. 184–7.

84 Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 32v.

85 Stevenson, introduction, *Scalacronica,* v.

86 Cadwallader has a dream which he describes to the king of Little Britain, Alanus. The king searches his books and finds that the dream 'concordauntz as ditez Merlyn, et auxi as ditez de Quyle, le bon deuynour, et a ceo qe Sebile escript.' ['... agreed with the sayings of Merlin, and also with the sayings of Quyle, the good diviner, and with what the Sibyl had written.'] Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 95v.2. Gray has confused Wace's French to produce the name of 'Quyle.' In Wace, the dream 'Se concordot as diz Merlin / E Aquile le bon devin / E a ço que Sibille escrit.' ['agreed with the sayings of Merlin, and the Eagle, the good diviner, and with what the Sibyl wrote.'] Wace, *Roman de Brut,* 14813–15. This is the eagle who prophesied at Shaftesbury; cf. Geoffrey, *Historia,* ch. 206.

87 Leland, 'Notable Thinges,' 259.

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

89 Large drop capitals of seven or eight lines do divide the chronicle into distinctive sections, but they do not correspond to Gray's four books. See, for example, the large 'Q' with which the Arthurian section begins: Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 68v.2.

90 'One ought to know that this chronicle is contained in four books. The first is the *Brut* from the first coming of Brutus until the time of Cadwallader, the last King of the Britons. The second book is the *gestes dez Saxouns* ...' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 9v.2.

91 '... at the end of the last chapter of this *Brut,* immediately before the book

of the *gestes Anglorum.*' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo.
82v.1.

92 Gray does not refer to Higden by name, calling him only 'le moigne de
Cestre' (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 1v.2). Higden's
name was not associated with the *Polychronicon* until the second, intermedi-
ate version of the text began to circulate in the 1340s. V.H. Galbraith has
shown that the short version of the *Polychronicon* (CD versions in the Rolls
Series edition) did not contain the acrostic by which Higden identified
himself. See V.H. Galbraith, 'An Autograph MS of Ranulph Higden's
Polychronicon,' *Huntington Library Quarterly* 23 (1959): 14. The *Scalacronica*
contains information drawn from the *Polychronicon* which is only found in
the CD versions. Gray, for example, mentions that 'Johan Mercurius fust
pape 2 aunz apres Boneface' ['John Mercurius was pope for two years after
Boniface'] before his account of Arthur. This passage translates the CD
version of Higden which reads 'Johannes papa, qui et Mercurius, successit
post Bonefacium annis duobus ...' ['Pope John, who also was called Mer-
curius, succeeded after Boniface for two years']. In the longer version of
Higden this passage comes after the history of Arthur and the name 'Mer-
curius' is not mentioned. Cf. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133,
fo. 68v.1–2 with Higden, *Polychronicon*, V: 338–40.

93 For a discussion of the Anglo-Norman *Brut*'s influence on Gray's account of
Henry III and Edward I, see Thiolier, 'La *Scalacronica*,' 123.

94 Cf. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 70v.1 and Geoffrey
Historia, ch. 147.

95 Cf. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 73v.1–2 and Geoffrey,
Historia, ch. 156.

96 Cf. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 70.2 and Wace, *Roman
de Brut*, 9245–6.

97 Cf. 'q'il auoit pris a soun lice la Royne Genoire, la femme soun vncle, com
sa espouse' ['that he had taken to his bed the Queen, Guenevere, the wife
of his uncle, as his spouse'] (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133,
fo. 79v.2), and 'Prist a sun lit femme du rei, / Femme sun uncle e sun
seignur' ['He took to his bed the wife of the king, the wife of his uncle and
lord'] (Wace, *Roman de Brut*, 13028–9).

98 Fletcher describes this innovation as 'a monstrous romance or ballad idea'
but offers no explanation as to where the detail originates. Fletcher,
Arthurian Material, 225. John Stow, apparently following Gray, has the same
detail. See Fletcher, *Arthurian Material*, 266.

99 'for this reason he made his round table, so that none might sit higher than
another.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 71v.1.

100 'None of them could boast that he sat higher than his peer.' Wace, *Roman de Brut*, 9757–8.
101 'To Borel he gave Le Mans and the land of Avignon, to Cosdyn he gave Burgoin.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 73.2.
102 'Le Mans was given to Borel his cousin, Boulogne to Ligier.' Wace, *Roman de Brut*, 10164–5. Cf. also Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 77v.1 and Wace, *Roman de Brut*, 11971ff, where Bos is divided into two characters by Gray, called Bort and Boese. See also pp. 43–4 above for Gray's confusion concerning the prophet Keile.
103 '... which now is called the Don.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 69v.1.
104 '... where now is situated Barlinges.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 70.2.
105 'In this time wondrously appeared in Britain many fairy-wonders, from which arose the great adventures which are written down of the court of Arthur. How he who delights to hear of chivalrous deeds, which arise in the accomplishment of those things, also performs those very things, as one may more plainly hear in the great history of them!' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 71v.1.
106 See above, p. 24.
107 Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1.10403.
108 'It is said that Arthur would not eat before he had strange news. This may well be said because they came with such numbers that they barely considered them strange.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 72.1
109 'The youths who fetched food from the kitchen at the same time found such adventure between the dining room and the kitchen that, before the completion of them, they set out beardless, the adventures developed, and they became good knights before their return.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 72.1.
110 *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, ed. J.R.R. Tolkien and E.V. Gordon, 2nd ed. rev. by Norman Davis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 90–9. Cited by line number. The first *Perceval* continuation also employs this device before the beheading match in the Caradoc episode. In the short version, Arthur comments that he will not eat 'Devant que estrange novele' ['before strange news'] is brought to him. *The Continuations of the Old French Perceval of Chretien de Troyes*, ed. William Roach et al. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, American Philosophical Society, 1949–1983), III.i: 142.
111 See Gerald Bordman, *Motif-Index of the English Metrical Romances* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1963), 76–7.

112 '... which he had made of the beards of other kings whom he had con-
quered.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 73.1.

113 Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 73.1.

114 'a giant from the mountains of Aramim.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi
College MS 133, fo. 73.1. Cf. 'Artur a lui se combait, / El munt d'Arave le
conqui,' Wace, *Roman de Brut*, 11587–8; 'Rithonem gigantem in Arauio
monte,' Geoffrey, *Historia*, ch. 165. In the Vulgate *Merlin* King Rion has a
similar cloak of beards, but he not a giant, nor is he associated with any
mountain. *Lestoire de Merlin*, 92ff.

115 Cf. Wace. *Roman de Brut*, 11561–91 and Geoffrey, *Historia*, ch. 165.

116 'Of Arthur who held Britain, the Brut testifies / that he overcame Ruiston
a giant in open field, / who was so strong, fierce and insolent / that he
had made a cloak of the beards of kings. / Each king was made obedient
to him by force. / He wished to have Arthur's [beard], but he failed in
that!' Jacques de Longuyon, *Les Voeux du Paon, The Buik of Alexander*, ed.
R.L. Graeme Ritchie, Scottish Text Society, n.s. 17, 12, 21, 25 (Edinburgh:
William Blackwood and Sons, 1921–9), 7548–53. Cited by line number.
The Scottish *Buik of Alexander*, a translation of *Les Voeux du Paon*, also
contains the story at lines 9981–8 (printed on facing pages). The story of
the giant with the beards dominates Jacques's description of Arthur, and
even the tale of the giant of St Michael's Mount receives only one line in
his account of the king. It is possible that a complete version of the tale
circulated separately.

117 *The Parlement of the Thre Ages, Alliterative Poetry of the Later Middle Ages: An
Anthology*, ed. Thorlac Turville-Petre (London: Routledge, 1989), 481–5.
Cited by line number.

118 '... upper Saxony.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 73.1.

119 Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 73.1.

120 '... remained outside of Britain for nine years.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi
College MS 133, fo. 73.2.

121 'He rewarded all who had served him well, which would be too long to
record completely, and the manner of all the adventures which some of
them carried out, which are not recounted in this work.' Cambridge,
Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 73.2. The syntax of the passage is con-
fused. It translates Wace's 'A ses humes rendi lur pertes / E guereduna lur
desertes; / Sun servise a chescun rendi / Sulinc ço qu'il aveit servi' ['To
his men Arthur reimbursed their losses and rewarded their deserts; he
gave to each his service according to that which he had performed'].
Wace. *Roman de Brut*, 10149–52.

122 'Arthur held a great court where great marvels occurred which were not

accustomed to happen at any time, which well pleased the king [and] in which Gawain stood out above the rest, which he repeatedly did very well, as is recorded in his histories.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 73v.1.

123 Cf. Wace, *Roman de Brut*, 10147ff and Geoffrey, *Historia*, ch. 155.

124 'The ladies were on the battlements, where they had great pleasure that day.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 74.2. Cf. Wace, *Roman de Brut*, 10525ff.

125 'In the time of Arthur there happened many marvels of enchantment and fairy wonders.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 75v.1.

126 '... except chivalry, in which each would excerise his ingenuity to do some unknown deed which might carry renown.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 75v.1.

127 '... and for this reason they were called knights errant.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 75v.1. The passage may be inspired by Gawain's famous defence of peace in reaction to the challenge from Rome. Cf. Wace, *Roman de Brut*, 10765–72.

128 'The history relates that Arthur was handsome, amiable and well formed.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 69v.1.

129 Cf. Wace, *Roman de Brut*, 9013ff.

130 '... he danced, sang, jousted, tourneyed, dallied with the ladies.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 71v.1.

131 'In which sojourn he held a royal court of the Round Table, where great adventures happened which were accomplished by knights errant, where Gawain stood out above the rest.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 79v.1–2.

132 'They pressed together, and a more worthy melee was never before seen, because there were none except knights and squires, with no archers or footmen.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 77v.1.

133 'That same night the mantle of Caradoc came into the court with a pretty maiden.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 75.2.

134 For discussions of the extent of the story, see Wright, 'Influence,' passim; Francis James Child, introduction, 'The Boy and the Mantle,' *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, ed. Francis James Child (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1885–98), V: 257–74, and Marianne E. Kalinke, introduction, *Mottuls Saga*, ed. Marianne E. Kalinke (Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzels Forlag, 1987), xxi–xxxiii.

135 The French *Lai* is dated to approximately 1200. See Philip Bennett, introduction, *Mantel et cor: deux lais du XII* *siècle*, ed. Philip Bennett (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1975), xx–xxii, and Emmanuele

Baumgartner, 'A propos du *Mantel Mautaillé,*' *Romania* 96 (1975): 315–32.

136 '... but it was not agreeable to the king either to eat or to drink, because it was a high feast, nor even might he sit before some new adventure had come to the court.' *Le Lai du cort mantel,* ed. Philip E. Bennet, *Mottuls Saga,* ed. Marianne E. Kalinke (Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzels Forlag, 1987), 90–5. Cited by line number. On Arthur's habit of not eating until he had seen an adventure, see above, p. 46.

137 'The lady who puts it on, if she has sinned in any way against her good lord, if she has one, the mantle will not fit her well. And towards damsels also: she who against her good lover has erred in any way it will never be right for her afterwards, but it will be too long, or too short.' *Lai du cort mantel,* 203–11.

138 '... which had such virtue that it would not be the right fit for any woman who [did not] wish to allow her husband to know her deed and thought. From which there was great laughter, because there were no women at all in the court on whom the mantle was a proper fit: it was too short or too long or too tight beyond measure, except only on the wife of Caradoc.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 75.2.

139 'pur qoi, com fust dit, estoit enuoye a la court depar le pier le dit Karodes, qi fust dit vn enchaunteour, de prouer la bounte la femme soun fitz.' ['because, as it was said, it was sent to the court by the father of the said Caradoc, who was called an enchanter, in order to prove the goodness of his son's lady.'] Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 75.2.

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

141 'Of this same mantle was afterwards made a chasuble, as is said, which is still preserved at this day in Glastonbury.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 75.2 - 75v.1.

142 *Short Metrical Chronicle,* 71/1103–8.

143 'in Wales in an abbey.' *Lai du cort mantel,* 889.

144 '... a rich cloth embroidered in gold.' Béroul, *The Romance of Tristran,* ed. and trans. Norris J. Lacy (New York and London: Garland, 1989), 2987. Cited by line number.

145 'The queen Iseut took it / and placed it reverently on the altar. / It was later made into a chasuble, / which never left the treasure / except on

feast days. / It is still at St. Samson's– / those who have seen it say so.'
Béroul, *The Romance of Tristran*, 2989–95. On this item, see E.M.R. Ditmas,
'More Arthurian Relics,' *Folklore* 77 (1966): 97–104.

146 Caxton, prologue, *Caxton's Malory*, 2. Raimon de Perillos, *Viatage*, cited in
C. Brunel, 'Le *Viatage de Raimon de Perillos al Purgatori de sant Patrici* et la
légende du Mantel mauntaillé,' *Mélanges de linguistique de littérature romanes
à la mémoire d'István Frank* (n.p.: Universität des Saarlandes, 1957), 88. For
a discussion of these traditions, see Kalinke, introduction, *Mottuls Saga*,
xxviii, and Brunel, 'Le *Viatage de Raimon de Perillos*,' 87–8.

147 *Lai du cort mantel*, 891–6.

148 'The king entrusted to Mordred, his nephew, his realm and his wife
Guenevere to protect, in whom he placed his trust, from whom came a
great evil.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 76.1.

149 '... yet the great men of the realm had doubt because the time of his birth
was too close to the solemnity of the marriage of the king, and because the
adventure [of his conception] was not revealed for the honour of the
queen, while the king lived.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133,
fo. 68v.2.

150 '... coming out of the monastery, as some chronicles testify, they found a
great stone set before the hall of the church, and stuck in it a beautiful
sword with letters enamelled on it, which said, "I am named Excalibur.
Who pulls me from the stone will be King of Britain."' Cambridge, Corpus
Christi College MS 133, fo. 69.1.

151 'Some people went outside the monastery where there was an open place
and it was dawn. They saw a stone before the monastery and they could
not tell what kind of stone it was, and in the middle of it was an iron anvil.'
Lestoire de Merlin, 81.

152 'the letters said that who pulled this sword out would be king of the land
by the choice of Jesus Christ.' *Lestoire de Merlin*, 81.

153 '... the letters which were written on the sword said that it had the name
Excalibur.' *Lestoire de Merlin*, 94. Note that the Middle English *Of Arthour
and of Merlin* also moves this inscription to the moment when the sword is
first found in the stone: 'On þe pomel was ywrite / "Icham yhot Estalibore
/ Vnto a king fair tresore."' *Of Arthour and of Merlin*, ed. O.D. MacRae-
Gibson, EETS o.s. 268 & 279 (London: Oxford University Press, 1973,
1979), 2816–19. Cited by line number.

154 '... was armed for his first time.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS
133, fo. 69.1.

155 '... the manner of his [i.e., Arthur's] birth was revealed by Ursyne.' Cam-
bridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 69.2.

156 Cf. *Lestoire de Merlin*, 89–90.
157 'Sire, yes, by the wound that he gave me to the head, and I would have been all healed, but the Romans rewounded me in the battle.' *La Mort le Roi Artu: Roman du XIIIe siècle*, ed. Jean Frappier, 3rd ed. (Geneva: Droz, 1964), 221.
158 '... Gawain, badly wounded.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 79.2.
159 Cf. Wace, *Roman de Brut*, 12995–13009 and Geoffrey, *Historia*, ch. 176.
160 '... where Angusel of Scotland was killed, and Gawain the valiant, as was said, by an oar to the side of his head, which broke open the wound that he had received at the battle where the emperor was killed, which was not healed.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 80.1. In both Wace and Geoffrey Gawain's death is merely recorded without any description of the cause. Cf. Wace, *Roman de Brut*, 13100–3 and Geoffrey, *Historia*, ch. 177.
161 *Le Morte Arthur*, 3066–73.
162 'And I tell you now, ill befell Gawain: his helmet was not laced on, and a Saxon wielding an oar dealt him a blow to the head that struck him dead.' *The Didot-Perceval, According to the Manuscripts of Modena and Paris*, ed. William Roach (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1941), 2577–9. Cited by line number of the Modena MS. The translation is from *Merlin and the Grail: Joseph of Arimathea, Merlin, Perceval: A trilogy of prose romances attributed to Robert de Boron*, trans. Nigel Bryant (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2001), 170. The three romances have long been thought to represent a prose rendering of Robert de Boron's verse, but Bryant questions whether the *Perceval* is not an original composition in prose (Bryant, introduction, *Merlin and the Grail*, 2–8). Composed in the early thirteenth century, this short cycle does not include an account of Lancelot or his affair with the queen. I would like to thank Linda Gowans for directing me to the Didot-*Perceval*, and for her advice on prose romances generally.
163 '... to the port of Dover.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 79v.2.
164 '... under the castle of Dover.' *La Morte le Roi Artu*, 219. Cf. Wace, *Roman de Brut*, 13079 and Geoffrey, *Historia*, ch. 177. The stanzaic *Morte* also locates the final battle at Dover. See *Le Morte Arthur*, 3038–143.
165 '... until he had interred Gawain and Angusel.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 80.1.
166 Caxton, prologue, *Caxton's Malory*, 2 and Raimon de Perillos, *Viatage*, cited in Brunel, 'Le *Viatage de Raimon de Perillos*,' 88.
167 Malory, *Morte D'Arthur*, 587. Malory, of course, is writing within the romance tradition in which Gawain's wound is caused by Lancelot.

168 Cf. Wace, *Roman de Brut*, 13189–200 and Geoffrey *Historia*, ch. 177.

169 *La Morte le Roi Artu*, 232–43.

170 'Yvain exerted himself greatly in deeds of arms. He took the banner of Mordred and presented it to the king. ... Yvain pressed so much that Mordred was killed, and he showed him to the king. The king ordered him [i.e., Mordred] beheaded and he ordered that the head be carried on a lance throughout the battle, thinking that the melee would be all over from the time the chief was dead.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 80v.1.

171 'But Mordred's army were not seized by fear, but recommenced so cruelly that, of all the melees where Arthur had been, he was never before in such a tumult, so that before he had overcome them he had lost the flower of his chivalry, almost all those of the Round Table who were there and the youth of Britain through whom he had his victories.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 80v.1–2.

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

173 'There perished the beautiful youth whom Arthur had nourished and who had conquered many lands, and also those of the Round Table, for whom such praise is throughout the world.' Wace, *Roman de Brut*, 13266–70.

174 '... and, with Yvain only, he went to the Isle of Avalon.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 80v.2.

175 '... as some chronicles say, he ordered Yvain to go the the lake to see if he could see anything, and that he should carry Excalibur his sword and throw it in the lake. [Yvain] returned to him saying that he had seen an arm brandishing that sword above the water in the middle of the river.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 80v.2.

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

177 'they saw a boat coming quickly to where they were, in which there was an old woman at the helm and two other women as crew for the boat.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 80v.2.

178 On Henry's *Epistola*, see below, p. 65.

179 '... he said, "Companions, let us put a high price on our deaths. I will now cut off the head of my nephew and betrayer with my sword. After that, death will be sweet." Thus he spoke, and using his sword to make a way

through the enemy line, he took hold of Modred's helmet, in the midst of his men, and severed the armoured neck with one stroke of his sword as if it were a head of corn.' Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, ed. and trans. Diana Greenway (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 580.

180 Robert of Gloucester, *Metrical Chronicle*, 4568–79.

181 Ibid., 4580–2.

182 It is not clear if Henry invented the scene of Mordred's death, or whether the copy of the *Historia* which he used contained such a scene. If the scene was in his exemplar, it would represent a very early variant which does not survive in an extant manuscript. See Neil Wright, 'The Place of Henry of Huntingdon's *Epistola ad Warinum* in the text-history of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britannie*: a preliminary study,' *France and the British Isles in the Middle Ages and Renaissance: Essays by Members of Girton College, Cambridge, in Memory of Ruth Morgan*, ed. Gillian Jondorf and D.N. Dumville (Woodbridge, U.K.: Boydell, 1991), 81–2.

183 For the date of the manuscript, see Matheson, *Prose Brut*, 260–3. This manuscript will be discussed fully in chapter 7.

184 College of Arms Arundel MS 58, fo. 75v. Punctuation and capitalization have been modernized.

185 The interpolated passage replaces material in Robert of Gloucester, *Metrical Chronicle*, 4566ff. Because of the incomplete state of the manuscript it is unclear where the interpolation ends. Thomas Hearne's edition of Robert of Gloucester claims to include variants from the Arundel manuscript, but citations are restricted to linguistic variants. Hearne seems to have been interested only in linguistic changes, and whole scenes which were added by the adaptor, including this scene involving Yvain, go unnoticed in Hearne's edition. Robert of Gloucester, *Chronicle*, ed. Thomas Hearne, *The Works of Thomas Hearne* (Oxford: printed at the Theatre, 1810), I: 223–4.

186 The Arundel manuscript also contains an interpolation which provides a detailed account of the sword in the stone scene by which Arthur proves his right to the throne. College of Arms, Arundel MS 58, fos. 53v–58v.

187 Medieval foliation at the bottom of the leaves jumps from lxxx to lxxxiii, while the early-modern foliation, at the top right-hand corner, continues without a break from 75 to 76. Although inspection of the manuscript shows only a single leaf to have been cut, it seems certain that two leaves are missing between 75v and 76. The text of the original chronicle resumes with the reign of Constantine at Robert of Gloucester, *Metrical Chronicle*, 4598.

188 *Parlement of the Thre Ages*, 495–512.

189 R.E. Lewis, 'The Date of the *Parlement of the Thre Ages*,' *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 69 (1968): 380–90. Lewis uses the descriptions of clothing as a means of dating the poem.

190 It is possible that the missing folios from the Arundel manuscript contained an account of Ywain throwing the sword into the lake.

191 'Some chronicles testify that Ywain recorded in this manner the departure of Arthur. Some gestes of Arthur recorded that it was Morgan le Fay, sister of Arthur, who was full of enchantment. But all the chronicles record that Merlin prophesied of Arthur that his death would be in doubt.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 81. A fourth historical text, *Ly Myreur des Histors* by Jean de Preis, contains a reference to the boat. After the final battle, 'Atant entrat Artus en une bateal, ly et Gawain, et s'en alarent en l'isle de Avalon, en casteal Morgaine, sa soreur, pour garir ses plais. Et welt-ons dire que c'est feierie' ['Then Arthur entered into a boat, he and Gawain, and they went to the Isle of Avalon, to the castle of Morgan, his sister, in order to heal his wounds. And some say that she is a fay']. Jean de Preis, *Ly Myreur des Histors*, ed. Ad. Borgnet and Stanislas Bormans, 6 vols. (Brussels: M. Hayez, 1864–80), II. 245. Jean de Preis (also known as d'Outremeuse) compiled his history in the late fourteenth century. He includes two very different versions of Arthur's reign; one which closely follows the Brut tradition, and one which includes many romance elements, including a great deal of detail concerning Tristan. For a discussion, see Fletcher, *Arthurian Material*, 222–4.

192 Gray's version is much abbreviated. Cf. *La Morte le Roi Artu*, 250.

193 Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fos. 69.1, 71v.1, 80v.2 and 81.1.

194 When Gray first identifies Frollo he states that he 'out a noun Frolle, en ascuns cronicles Tumas Fulon' ['had Frollo for a name, in some chronicles Thomas Fulon.'] Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 72v.1. Langtoft states that the realm of France was 'en garde de sir Thomas Foloun' ['... in the care of Sir Thomas Foloun.'] Langtoft, *Chronicle*, 162. For a discussion of Langtoft's error, see Fletcher, *Arthurian Material*, 183, 200, n. 9 and 212.

195 Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 75.2

196 Ibid., fo. 72.1.

197 Taylor, *English Historical Literature*, 156.

198 'as one can more fully hear in the great history of [Arthur].' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 71v.2.

3: Defending Arthur

1 John Leland, *Assertio inclytissimi Arturii / A Learned and True Assertion of … Arthur,* trans. Richard Robinson, in *The Famous Historie of Chinon of England,* by Christopher Middleton, ed. William Mead, EETS o.s. 165 (London: Oxford University Press, 1925), 27. Leland's original Latin text printed at 91–150.

2 For a discussion of Leland's method and his contribution to historical method, see James P. Carley, 'Polydore Vergil and John Leland on King Arthur: The Battle of the Books,' *King Arthur: A Casebook,* ed. Edward Donald Kennedy (New York and London: Garland, 1996), 185–204.

3 Carley, 'Polydore Vergil and John Leland,' 187.

4 'The famed Arthur.' Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum,* 578.

5 Henry mentions the fact that the Bretons believe that Arthur will return, and his description of the final battle against Mordred contains scenes not found in Geoffrey. See above, p. 57.

6 Wright, 'Place of Henry,' 91. For the changes made by Henry, see Wright, 'Place of Henry,' 83–7.

7 William of Newburgh, *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II, and Richard I: Containing the First Four Books of the Historia Rerum Anglicarum,* ed. Richard Howlett, RS. 82 (London: Longman, 1884–9), I: 11.

8 William of Newburgh, *Chronicles of the Reigns,* I: 14–17.

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

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

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

12 On other early reactions to Geoffrey's text by Giraldus Cambrensis and Alfred of Beverly, see Dean, *Arthur of England,* 15–18. Dean argues that Henry of Huntingdon's reaction was even more negative than Wright suggests. 'Henry's reaction may not have been pure amazement at the discovery but rather indignation, tinged with some reluctant admiration for the clever fraud.' Dean, *Arthur of England,* 16.

13 Partner, *Serious Entertainments,* 65.

14 R. William Leckie, *The Passage of Dominion: Geoffrey of Monmouth and the Periodization of Insular History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 100–1.

15 For the use of Geoffrey's *Historia* in Latin historiography, see Keeler, *Geoffrey of Monmouth,* passim.

16 'Hic est Arthurus de quo nugæ Britonum delirant, dignus plane quem non
   fallaces fabulæ sed veraces historiæ prædicarent' ['This is Arthur about
   whom the trifles of the Britons chatter, one clearly worthy to be extolled in
   truthful histories rather than false fables']. Higden, *Polychronicon*, V: 330.
   Cf. William of Malmesbury, quoted above p. 11.
17 'In some chronicles it is read that Cerdic often fought with Arthur, and if
   he was overcome once, the next time he rose to the fight stronger.' Higden,
   Polychronicon, V: 330.
18 Higden, *Polychronicon*, V: 332. The earlier version of this passage (repre-
   sented by CD in the Rolls Series edition) makes it clear that this is a refer-
   ence to Geoffrey of Monmouth: 'Hoc anno secundum Diniensem et
   secundum Gaufridus.' ['In this year, according to Diniensem and accord-
   ing to Geoffrey.']
19 Higden, *Polychronicon*, V: 334.
20 'I wonder more why that Geoffrey extolls so much someone who all
   true and famous historians from the past barely mentioned.' Higden,
   Polychronicon, V: 336. Cf. 'but I holde more wondre why Gaufridus preyseþ
   more so moche oon þat al þe olde famous, and sooþ writers of stories
   makeþ of wel ny3 non mencioun.' John Trevisa, trans., *The Polychronicon*, by
   Ranulph Higden, ed. Churchill Babington and Joseph Rawson Lumby, RS
   41 (London: Longman & Co., 1865–86), V: 337.
21 '... the British and the Welsh believe that he will return.' Cambridge,
   Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 81.1.
22 'Perhaps this speech can be taken figuratively; it is to be understood that
   someone of the condition of Arthur might yet come, that one could com-
   pare with him, that he would be, at this time, an Arthur in valour.' Cam-
   bridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 81.1.
23 'Some chronicles do not make mention of Arthur.' Cambridge, Corpus
   Christi College MS 133, fo. 81.1.
24 '... the great marvel which endures to this day: the Giant's Dance, which is
   called Stonehenge, marvellous stones of great size which are on Salisbury
   Plain, which Merlin made to be carried by his enchantments out of Ireland
   in the time of Aurilius and of Uther, the father of Arthur.' Cambridge,
   Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 81v.1.
25 '... thought that there was nothing of Arthur except contrived and imag-
   ined deeds because Bede, the venerable doctor, and the others afterwards
   who took example from his writings in their treatise, such as the *Historia
   Aurea* and the *Polychronicon*, do not speak of him.' Cambridge, Corpus
   Christi College MS 133, fo. 81.1–2. The *Polychroncion* does, of course, speak
   of Arthur and '*Polecraton*' may be the *Policraticus* of John of Salisbury.

26 '... all chronicles of all Christians in all countries ... the most praised and vailiant of Christian kings.' Gray, *Scalacronica*, 81.2.

27 'And perhaps Bede did not consider Arthur a king because he was conceived in adultery, on account of which he did not recognize that he reigned lawfully.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 81v.1. Bede does not make such an argument and neither does Higden. On the use of this argument by Scottish chroniclers, see below, pp. 161–3.

28 'it did not please Bede to make mention or memory of his [i.e., Arthur's] deeds because all resembled fairy tales, vanities and fantasies.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 81v.1.

29 'on account of which it is more fitting for us to believe in his nobility, since the foreigners recount it authentically among their memorable deeds.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 81v.2.

30 '... the truth, by reason.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 81v.2.

31 '... and fought the host twelve times in battle.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 81v.2. Cf. 'qui contra Saxones duodecies victor fuit' ['who was victor against the Saxons twelve times']. Higden, *Polychronicon*, V: 328.

32 'It could well be that he did not have the talent to record the nobility of the British, that perhaps he did not know them because he himself was a Saxon, between whom there was no great love.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 81v.2.

33 '... yet in some of their *gestes* they testify that there was an Arthur, whom they call, in their writings, a warlike duke of British chivalry, who, perhaps, in case they did not in any way wish by a historical mention to blemish the state of their kings, so as to affirm and name by the royal name the state of their adversaries.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 81.1.

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

35 'This chronicle testifies that at this time Arthur flourished, whom they call a warlike Duke of British chivalry, who according to Gildas fought twelve times with the Saxons. But according to the Brut this Arthur overcame Cerdic, [and] harassed the Saxons throughout his time.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 115v.2. Gray does seem to be confused

about the author of the work. Bede is his primary source, but he does not mention Arthur. The *Historia* does mention Arthur and identifies him as a 'bataillous Duk,' but Gildas, the supposed author, is most certainly British.

36 '... they were written in Latin, whereas the British geste was written in British, until Walter, archdeacon of Oxford, translated it into Latin, as is found in his writings.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 82.2.

37 '... if Bede did not mention Arthur since he did not have an understanding of the said language.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 81.2.

38 Twice Higden argues against the opinion of William of Malmesbury citing the fact that William did not have access to the very ancient book. See Higden, *Polychronicon*, II: 58, IV: 416. These passages will be discussed in more detail below.

39 'The Saxon historians do not record in their chronicles almost any of the nobility of the deeds of the British kings after the coming of Hengist, but only the process of his conquest and the succession of the Saxons. At the same time the *Brut* makes mention of the reigns of British kings lineally until the time of Cadwallader, their last king, and does not mention before that time any principal reign of the Saxon kings at all. Some Saxon kings are named in this *Brut* [i.e., the *Scalacronica*] in order to complete the process, yet in the said *Brut* they do not hold anything except sub-kingdoms.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fos. 82.2–82v.1.

40 '... the end of the last chapter of the *Brut*, immediately before the book *de gestis Anglorum*.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 82v.1.

41 '... as in the time of the writing of this chronicle were the realms of France, Scotland and Sicily. Who in France do they call kings? Edward, king of England and third after the conquest, held himself the king of France, and was so called by his followers and in his own writings, and with the same vigor as these, so Phillip of Valois and his sons after him were named over the said realm; they clamored to rule and as such were obeyed by their followers.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 107.1–2. Note that at the same time John Fordun makes similar complaints about his own conflicting sources. Fordun, *Chronica Gentis Scotorum*, I. 110–12.

42 'Perhaps the Anglo-Saxon chronicles do not mention any royal governor over them except only their own kings, the successors of Hengist and of his other peers by whom Great Britain was divided.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fos. 107.2–107v.1

43 See Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fos. 106v–109.

44 'it should be noted that the time of the reign of this Cadwallader, the last king of the British according to the *Brut*, was a long time after the beginning of the first reign of the Saxons. How the chronicles vary and conflict

in this time, especially with each other's kings, who were their enemies!'
Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 96v.1.

45 Robert of Gloucester, *Metrical Chronicle*, 3425–8.

46 Ibid., 3437–40.

47 'to whom was assigned each a country to rule.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 60.2.

48 'And it is the truth as the *Brut* describes that the Saxons were harassed after their first coming by Aurilius, by Uther and by Arthur and their other successors.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 60.1.

49 For the text of the Anglo-Norman *Brut*'s version of the Havelok story, see G.V. Smithers, introduction, *Havelok the Dane*, ed. G.V. Smithers (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), xxv–xxvi.

50 Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 84v.1. Gray again calls the story 'apocrofum' at fo. 83.1. On Mannyng's doubts concerning the story, see above pp. 21–2. Turville-Petre argues that 'it is clear that the story of Havelok, although wholly fictional, was unhesitatingly accepted as a history in the early fourteenth century, but this ignores the doubts of both Mannyng and Gray. See Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*, 144.

51 '... divided the inheritance and each carried the name of duke or count after the death of their father.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 83.2.

52 '... in some parcel of the inheritance of their fathers, as perhaps happened in this case to the two kings.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 83.2. Gray's willingness to rationalize is also demonstrated in his treatment of Havelok's wife. Gray knows at least two versions of the story in which her name varies. He states that she 'auoit a noun Argentile en Bretoun, Goldesburgh en Saxsoun' ['... had for a name Argentile in British, Goldesburgh in Saxon']. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 83.2. For a discussion of the variants in the names of characters, see Smithers, introduction, *Havelok*, xxxi. Gray's version of the story has not been noticed by earlier critics.

53 Higden, *Polychronicon*, V: 334.

54 '... it could be that the emperor had another name in Latin than in British, as in Flemish John is called Hank.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 82v.1.

55 'Some chronicles testify that Cerdic the Saxon began to reign in Wessex in the time of Arthur, and in the time of Justician the emperor, and that Mordred granted to the said Cerdic Wiltshire, Somerset, Dorest, Devonshire and Cornwall.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 82v.1. Cf. Higden, *Polychronicon*, V: 330–2.

56 David C. Fowler, *Life and Times of John Trevisa, Medieval Scholar* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995), 23. The following account of Trevisa's life is drawn from this work. See also David C. Fowler, *John Trevisa* (Aldershot, U.K.: Variorum, 1993), passim, and A.S.G. Edwards, 'John Trevisa,' *Middle English Prose: A Critical Guide to Major Authors and Genres,* ed. A.S.G. Edwards (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1984), 133–46.

57 Fowler, *Life and Times of John Trevisa,* 27–32.

58 Trevisa, *Polychronicon,* VIII: 352.

59 John Trevisa, trans., On the Properties of Things: *John Trevisa's Translation of Bartholomæus Anglicus* De proprietatibus rerum: *A Critical Text,* ed. M.C. Seymour et al. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), II: 1396.

60 For a discussion of the Trevisa canon and the relationship between these texts, see Fowler, *Life and Times of John Trevisa,* 118–212.

61 Trevisa's *Polychronicon* survives in fourteen manuscripts. For a discussion of these manuscripts and their relationship to one another, see Arthur C. Cawley, 'The Relationships of the Trevisa Manuscripts and Caxton's *Polychronicon*,' *London Medieval Studies* 1.3 (1939/1948): 463–82, and Ronald Waldron, 'The Manuscripts of Trevisa's Translation of the *Polychronicon*: Towards a New Edition,' *Modern Language Quarterly* 51 (1990): 281–317.

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

63 Ronald Waldron, 'John Trevisa and the Use of English,' *Proceedings of the British Academy* 74 (1988): 174.

64 Trevisa, 'Original Prefaces,' 290.

65 Ibid., 291. Cf. Mannyng's discussion of his own audience of 'lewed' readers. See above, pp. 19–20.

66 Trevisa, 'Original Prefaces,' 291.

67 Ibid., 291.

68 Ibid., 292.

69 Ibid., 293.

70 Ibid., 294.

71 Traugott Lawler, 'On the Properties of John Trevisa's Major Translations,' *Viator* 14 (1983): 274. For a general discussion of Trevisa's translation of the *Polychronicon,* see 268–74.

72 Fowler, *Life and Times of John Trevisa,* 178.

73 Trevisa, *Polychronicon,* II: 159–61.

74 Ibid., II: 91.

75 Ibid., II: 76. The expression of doubt in this passage ('si fas sit credere') is
   an interpolation of Higden's and not found in Giraldus's text. Trevisa, how-
   ever, obviously believed that Giraldus Cambrensis doubted that Arthur's
   court was at Caerleon and that Higden has faithfully used Giraldus's text.
   Higden again represents Giraldus as anti-Galfridian in his discussion of
   Cadwallader. Under the rubric *'Giraldus, distincione prima, capitulo xvii'*
   Higden writes 'Sed et opinionem Walensium qua dicunt se denuo reges
   rehabere cum ossa Cadwalladri a Roma fuerint reportata, fabulosam
   reputo, sicut et historiam Gaufridi in fine.' Higden, *Polychronicon*, VI: 160.
   Cf. 'Walsche men telleþ þat þey schulde eft have kynges whan Cadwaldrus
   his boones beeþ i-brouȝt from Rome, but I holde þat but a fable, as I doo
   þe storie of Gaufridus in þe ende.' Trevisa, *Polychronicon*, VI: 161.
76 Ibid., II: 77.
77 Ibid., V: 337.
78 Ibid., V: 337–9.
79 Trevisa may also be thinking of Gildas as one of the enemies of Arthur.
   Giraldus Cambrensis had related the story in which Gildas is Arthur's
   chaplain. After Arthur kills Gildas's brother, however, Gildas turns against
   Arthur and the Britons. '... dicunt [B]ritones, quod propter fratrem suum
   Albaniæ principem, quem rex Arthurus occiderat, offensus hæc scripsit.
   Unde et libros egregios, quos de gestis Arthuri, et gentis suæ laudibus,
   multos scripserat, audita fratris sui nece, omnes, ut asserunt, in mare
   projecit. Cujus rei causa, nihil de tanto principe in scriptis authenticis
   expressum invenies.' ['... the Britons say that on account of his brother
   the prince of Albania, whom King Arthur killed, he wrote these invectives.
   Whence, as they assert, having heard of the death of his brother, he threw
   into the sea the many excellent books which he had written concerning
   the deeds of Arthur and the praises of his people. This is the reason that
   nothing is found recorded of such a prince in authentic writing.'] Giraldus
   Cambrensis, *Descriptio Kambriæ, Opera*, ed. J.S. Brewer and James F. Dimock,
   RS 21 (London: Longman, 1861–98), VI: 209. Housman argues that 'Pretty
   clearly this last shaft is aimed at William of Newburgh, and other writers
   hostile to the "British hope."' Housman, 'Higden, Trevisa, Caxton,' 213.
   I think this unlikely, however, since Trevisa himself admits that stories of
   Arthur's return are 'magel tales' and his argument here concerns more
   ancient authorities.
80 Fowler, *Life and Times of John Trevisa*, 187.
81 'Once when evil spirits were fiercely attacking him, a copy of the Gospel of
   John was set in his lap; and the demons all vanished instantly, like birds to
   the wing. Then they took away the Gospel and replaced it with a copy of

Geoffrey Arthur's *History of the Britons,* just to see what would happen; the demons settled more numerously and more loathsomely than ever, not only over his whole body but even on the book too.' Giraldus Cambrensis, *Itinerarium Kambriae, Opera,* ed. J.S. Brewer and James F. Dimock, RS 21 (London: Longman, 1861–98), VI: 58.

82 Trevisa, *Polychronicon,* V: 339.

83 Housman, 'Higden, Trevisa, Caxton,' 213.

84 Trevisa, *Polychronicon,* II: 255.

85 Ibid., V: 339.

86 Higden, *Polychronicon,* II: 58. Trevisa, of course, translated this passage: 'R. But Gaufre Monemutensis in his Brittische book, seiþ þat Bladud made þilke bathes. Vppon caas William, þat hadde nouȝt i-seie þat Brittisshe book, wroot so by tellynge of oþere men, oþer by his owne gessynge, as he wroot oþer þinges somdel vnwiseliche.' Trevisa, *Polychronicon,* II: 59. Higden makes the same argument when faced with conflicting accounts of a standing stone in Westmorland. William, says Higden, is deceived, 'nec mirum, cum ipse Britannicum librum non legisset.' Higden, *Polychronicon,* IV: 416. Cf. 'But it is no wonder, for he hadde nouȝt i-rad þe Brittisshe book.' Trevisa, *Polychronicon,* IV: 417

87 Ibid., V: 339.

88 Ibid.

89 For fourteenth-century reactions to the 'British hope,' see Dean, *Arthur of England,* 27–8.

90 Housman, 'Higden, Trevisa, Caxton,' 213.

91 Ibid., 214. See also Housman's erroneous speculations concerning Trevisa's birthplace, which he believes to be Carados (212, n. 3).

92 Fowler, *Life and Times of John Trevisa,* 187.

93 Ronald Waldron, 'Trevisa's "Celtic Complex" Revisited,' *Notes and Queries* 234 (1989): 307. For Waldron's discussion of Trevisa's Celticism, see 303–7.

94 Leland, *Assertio,* 84.

95 Ibid., 29, 32, 47, 48, 50.

96 Ibid., 85.

97 In his English paraphrase of the *Scalacronica,* Leland provides a thorough summary of Gray's defence, including the refutation of Bede, Bede's moral and political bias, Bede's linguistic limitations, and the evidence of Stonehenge. See Leland, 'Notable Thinges,' 260.

4: History *curiously dytit*

1 Edmund Spenser, *The Fairie Queene,* ed. A.C. Hamilton (London and New York: Longman, 1990), I.x.60.

2 William Matthews, *The Tragedy of Arthur: A Study of the Alliterative 'Morte Arthure'* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1960), 94.

3 After some modification of Matthews's terminology, Larry Benson agrees with this generic description, while H.A. Kelly argues that the concept of tragedy was unavailable to the fourteenth-century author and therefore dismisses both Benson and Matthews. See Larry D. Benson, 'The Alliterative *Morte Arthure* and Medieval Tragedy,' *Tennessee Studies in Literature* 11 (1966): 75–87; H.A. Kelly, 'The Non-Tragedy of Arthur,' *Medieval English Religious and Ethical Literature: Essays in Honour of G.H. Russell*, ed. Gregory Kratzmann and James Simpson (Woodbridge, U.K.: D.S. Brewer, 1986), 92–114. Kelly's argument is based primarily on the use of the word 'tragedy' in fourteenth-century England and not the themes which are now considered tragic (see esp. 92–6). Kelly does give a useful, though polemic, description of the many critics who have applied the term 'tragedy' to the poem (108–10). One of the most prolific critics to examine the poem, John Finlayson, consistently argues that in its depiction of heroism and religious themes the poem should be seen as a *chanson de geste*. See, for example, John Finlayson, 'The Concept of the Hero in *Morte Arthure*,' *Chaucer und seine Zeit: Symposion für Walter F. Schirmer*, ed. Arno Esch (Tubingen: Niemeyer, 1968), 249–74; '*Morte Arthure*: The Date and a Source for the Contemporary References,' *Speculum* 42 (1967): 624–38; and 'Arthur and the Giant of St. Michael's Mount,' *Medium Ævum* 33 (1964): 112–20. Finlayson's position is presented in brief in the introduction to his edition of the work, *Morte Arthure*, ed. John Finlayson, York Medieval Texts (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1967), 5–19. For other discussions of genre, see Britton J. Harwood, 'The Alliterative *Morte Arthure* as a Witness to Epic,' *Oral Poetics in Middle English Poetry*, ed. Mark C. Amodio and Sarah Gray Miller (New York: Garland, 1994), 248–52; James L. Boren, 'Narrative Design in the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*,' *Philological Quarterly* 56 (1977): 310–11.

4 Matthews is the most severe critic of the character of the king and argues that Arthur's actions are blameworthy from the very beginning, while Finlayson believes that only after the death of Lucius do Arthur's wars become unjust, and hence sinful. See also Karl Heinz Göller, 'Reality versus Romance: A Reassessment of the *Alliterative Morte Arthure*,' *The Alliterative Morte Arthure: A Reassessment of the Poem*, ed. Karl Heinz Göller (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1981), 15–29. Michael Twomey and Larry Benson offer two middle-ground approaches. See Michael W. Twomey, 'Heroic Kingship and Unjust War in the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*,' *Acta* 11 (1986): 133–51; and Benson, 'Alliterative *Morte Arthure*,' passim.

5 See Juliet Vale, 'Law and Diplomacy in the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*,'

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

6 Lee Patterson, for example, argues that the poem is an examination of historical writing and the historical process itself, while Martin Ball applies narrative theory to arrive at the rather banal conclusion that Arthur falls because he left Mordred in charge. See Lee W. Patterson, 'The Historiography of Romance in the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*,' *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 13 (1983): 1–32; chapter 6 ('The Romance of History and the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*') of Lee W. Patterson, *Negotiating the Past: The Historical Understanding of Medieval Narrative* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), 197–230; and Martin Ball, 'The Knots of Narrative: Space, Time, and Focalization in *Morte Arthure*,' *Exemplaria: A Journal of Theory in Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 8 (1996): 355–74.

7 E.D. Kennedy, 'Generic Intertextuality in the English *Alliterative Morte Arthure*: The Italian Connection,' *Text and Intertext in Medieval Arthurian Literature*, ed. Norris J. Lacy (New York and London: Garland, 1996), 41.

8 W.R.J. Barron, 'Arthurian Romance: Traces of an English Tradition,' *English Studies* 61 (1980): 5.

9 *The Awntyrs off Arthur* will be discussed below in chapter 5. One of the four copies of *The Awntyrs off Arthur* is also in the Thornton manuscript, Lincoln Cathedral MS 91, which contains the only surviving copy of the *Morte Arthure*.

10 Branscheid argued that Geoffrey of Monmouth was the primary source, augmented by numerous vernacular accounts, most notably Wace and Laȝamon (P. Branscheid, 'Uber die Quellen des stabreimenden *Morte Arthure*,' *Anglia* 8 (1885): 179–236), while Imelmann supported Wace as the primary source, with additions from Geffrei Gaimar and the French prose Vulgate (Rudolph Imelmann, *Laȝamon: Versuch über seine Quellen* [Berlin: Weidmannsche, 1906]). More recently, Finlayson has claimed that Wace alone served as the primary source (introduction, *Morte Arthure*, 31–2), Matthews has suggested a lost French verse adaptation of Wace (*Tragedy of Arthur*, 179–92), and Mary Hamel lists Geoffrey, Wace, Laȝamon and Robert Mannyng as sources (introduction, *Morte Arthure: A Critical Edition*, ed. Mary Hamel [New York: Garland, 1984]), 34–8). Sullens, however, in her edition of Mannyng's *Chronicle*, questions the assertion of Mannyng's influence (introduction, *Chronicle*, 68–70, esp n. 91).

11 *Morte Arthure*, 361–2, 2066–72. Cited by line number. I will cite Hamel's edition throughout. Hamel's tendency to emend the text based on the Winchester MS of Malory's *Morte D'Arthur* has led some reviewers to question her method. Finlayson, in his generally favourable review of the edition, characterizes about half of Hamel's emendations as 'either unnecessary to sense or rhythm or based on questionable hypotheses.' John Finlayson, rev. of *Morte Arthure: A Critical Edition*, ed. Mary Hamel *Speculum* 63 (1988): 938. The emended lines do not affect my reading of the poem.

12 'Ywain exerted himself well [and] seized the banner of Mordred.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 80v.1.

13 Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 75.2, *Morte Arthure*, 3487–3517.

14 'During this sojourn he [i.e., King Arthur] held a royal court of the Round Table where happened great adventures which were accomplished by knights errant, where Gawain exerted himself strongly.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 79v.1–2.

15 *Morte Arthure*, 2513–14.

16 Cambridge, University Library, MS Dd.XI.45, fo. 142. Quoted in Angus McIntosh, 'The Textual Transmission of the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*,' *Middle English Dialectology: Essays on Some Principles and Problems*, ed. Margaret Laing (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1989), 182.

17 McIntosh, 'Textual Transmission,' 182.

18 Mary Hamel has pointed to this letter's possible associations with the family of Lion, sixth Baron Welles. Hamel argues for a relationship between the borrowed book and 'A boke cald mort artho' mentioned in a book list written on the flyleaf of a manuscript belonging to the Welles family (BL Royal MS 15. D. II). Mary Hamel, 'Arthurian Romance in Fifteenth-Century Lindsey: The Books of the Lords Welles,' *Modern Language Quarterly* 51 (1990): 341–61.

19 McIntosh, 'Textual Transmission,' passim.

20 The alliterative *Morte Arthure* may also draw on the *Parlement* for its description of the Nine Worthies. See Hamel, introduction, 43–4.

21 George R. Keiser, 'Lincoln Cathedral Library, MS 91: Life and Milieu of the Scribe,' *Studies in Bibliography: Papers of the Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia* 32 (1979): 176. See also George R. Keiser, 'More Light on the Life and Milieu of Robert Thornton,' *Studies in Bibliography: Papers of the Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia* 36 (1983): 111–19.

22 *The Household of Edward IV: The Black Book and the Ordinances of 1478*, ed. A.R. Myers (Manchester: Manchester Unviersity Press, 1959), 129.

23 See above, p. 46.

24 BL Lansdowne MS 204, fos. 71, 72.

25 John Barbour, *Barbour's* Bruce: *A fredome is a noble thing!* ed. Matthew P. McDiarmid and James A.C. Stevenson, Scottish Text Society, 4th ser. 15, 12, 13 (Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society, 1980–5), VI. 271–80. Cited by book and line number.

26 Barbour, *Bruce*, VI. 285–6.

27 Göller, 'Reality versus Romance,' 16. In her review of this volume, Hamel raises similar complaints about Göller's reaction to the poem. Mary Hamel, 'The Regensburg *Morte Arthure*,' rev. of *The* Alliterative Morte Arthure: *A Reassessment of the Poem*, ed. Karl Heinz Göller, *Review (Charlottesville)* 5 (1983): 159.

28 Russell A. Peck, 'Willfulness and Wonders: Boethian Tragedy in the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*,' *The Alliterative Tradition in the Fourteenth Century*, ed. Bernard S. Levy and Paul E. Szarmach (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1981), 156.

29 Matthews, *Tragedy of Arthur*, 178.

30 Ibid., 96.

31 *Morte Arthure*, 25.

32 Patterson, 'Historiography of Romance,' 14.

33 Hamel, introduction, 36.

34 Patterson, 'Historiography of Romance,' 23, 30; Patterson, *Negotiating the Past*, 217, 222, 229.

35 Peck, 'Willfulness and Wonders,' 161. See also 173–4, 177.

36 Charles L. Regan, 'The Paternity of Mordred in the Alliterative Morte Arthure,' *Bulletin Bibliographique de la Société Internationale Arthurienne* 25 (1973): 154.

37 Hamel addresses this issue in her review of *The Alliterative Morte Arthure: A Reassessment of the Poem*. Several of the contributors to the volume fall victim to this fallacy, and Hamel includes a lengthy discussion of the topic, 'in an effort to scotch this apparently unkillable snake once again.' Hamel, 'The Regensburg *Morte*,' 170–1.

38 For a brief biography of Andrew of Wyntoun, see Amours, introduction, *Original Chronicle*, I: xxx–xlii. The account which follows is based on Amours.

39 Wyntoun, *Original Chronicle*, I, prol. 15–18. Cited by book and line numbers. Amours printed the Wemyss and Cotton MSS on facing pages; except where noted all references are to the Wemyss text.

40 Wyntoun, *Original Chronicle*, I, prol. 19–24.

41 Ibid., I, prol. 47–51.

42 Ibid., I, prol. 54–7.

43 Ibid., I, prol. 115–20. 'Crosyus' is apparently a scribal error for 'Orosyus.'

44 William Matthews, 'Martinus Polonus and Some Later Chronicles,' *Medieval Literature and Civilization: Studies in Memory of G.N. Garmonsway*, ed. D.A. Pearsall and R.A. Waldron (London: Athlone Press, 1969), 275. Martinus (also known as Martin of Trappau) was born in Silesia but he spent most of his life in Rome where he became papal chaplain and apostolic penitentiary. For a brief biography, see Peter J. Lucas, introduction, *Abbreuiacion of Cronicles*, by John Capgrave, EETS o.s. 285 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), lxxiii. Taylor includes Martinus among the chroniclers who 'formed the basis of a "historical consciousness" which lasted until the end of the Middle Ages.' Taylor, *English Historical Literature*, 53.

45 For a discussion of Wyntoun's use of Martinus, see Matthews, 'Martinus Polonus,' 276–7.

46 'At this time, as is read in the history of the British, in Britain reigned Arthur, who kindly and honestly brought together France, Flanders, Norway, Denmark and other islands in the sea into his service. Also, mortally wounded in battle, he retired to a certain island to heal his wounds. From then until now, the Britains remain uncertain concerning his life.' Martinus Polonus, *Chronicon Pontificum et Imperatorum*, ed. Ludwig Weiland, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptorum*, Tomus xxii (Hanover: Imprensis Bibliopolii Avlici Hahniani, 1872), 419.

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

48 Capgrave, *Abbreuiacion of Cronicles*, 69.

49 Wyntoun, *Original Chronicle*, V. 4323, 4309–10.

50 MacCracken lists the '[a]t least six extensive passages taken by Andrew from the *Brut*.' He also dismisses the notion, based on a misreading of Wyntoun, that John Barbour had translated a version of the *Brut* into Scots. Henry Noble MacCracken, 'Concerning Huchown,' *PMLA* 25 (1910): 511, n. 1.

51 Wyntoun, *Original Chronicle*, V. 4332–4.

52 This is not the place for a detailed discussion of the Huchown controversy. For an entertaining and biting critique of the various theories, see MacCracken, 'Concerning Huchown,' 507–34.

53 Wyntoun, *Original Chronicle*, V. 4281–6.

54 Ibid., V. 4287–8.

55 Ibid., V. 4297–304.

56 Ibid., V. 4305–12.

57 Ibid., V. 4317–22. 'Innocent' is probably a scribal error. The Cotton MS reads 'Wyncens' (i.e., Vincent of Beauvais).

58 Wyntoun, *Original Chronicle*, V. 4323–30.

59 Ibid., V. 4331.

60 Ibid., V. 4335–40.

61 See above, p. 88.

62 Wyntoun, *Original Chronicle*, V. 4341–8. This is also reminiscent of Trevisa's argument that historical characters may have different names and titles.

63 Geoffrey Chaucer, *House of Fame*, *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry Benson, et al., 3rd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), 1091–1100. Cited by line number.

64 John MacQueen, 'The Literature of Fifteenth-Century Scotland,' *Scottish Society in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Jennifer M. Brown (New York: St Martin's Press, 1977), 187.

65 'The form of writing is varied, since the historian proceeds diffusely and elegantly, but the chronicler proceeds simply and briefly.' Gervase of Canterbury, *The Chronicle of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II, and Richard I, Opera Historica*, ed. William Stubbs, RS 73 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1879–80), I: 87.

66 'bombast and foot-and-a-half-long words.' Gervase of Canterbury, *The Chronicle*, I: 87.

67 John Lydgate, *Troy Book*, ed. Henry Bergen, EETS e.s. 97, 103, 106, 126 (London: Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1906–35), prol. 362–5. Cited by line number.

68 Wyntoun, *Original Chronicle*, I, prol. 18. On the use of rhetorical embellishment in historical writing, see Ruth Morse, *Truth and Convention in the Middle Ages: Rhetoric, Representation and Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 148–89.

69 MacQueen, 'Literature,' 187.

70 R. James Goldstein, '"For He Wald Vsurpe Na Fame": Andrew of Wyntoun's Use of the Modesty Topos and Literary Culture in Early Fifteenth-Century Scotland,' *Scottish Literary Journal* 14 (1987): 8.

71 Wyntoun, *Original Chronicle*, V. 4353–72.

72 Ibid., V. 4371–2.

73 Ibid., V. 4377–82.

74 Cf. the passage from Martinus Polonus, quoted on p. 89.

75 Although the dating of the poem is not significant for the argument of this chapter, I have accepted Benson's date of 1399–1402. See Larry D. Benson,

'The Date of the *Alliterative Morte Arthure*,' *Medieval Studies in Honor of Lillian Herlands Hornstein*, ed. Jess B. Bessinger, Jr. and Robert R. Raymo (New York: New York University Press, 1976), 19–40.

76 Wyntoun, *Original Chronicle*, V. 4335–6.

77 'Further, the author begs and earnestly beseeches the reader not to search in each verse or word for the truth of history. In the author's opinion, it matters little or nothing whether he shows what he intends to show by means of the truth or the probable.' Reginald of Canterbury, *The* Vita Sancti Malchi *of Reginald of Canterbury*, ed. Levi Robert Lind (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1942), 40. For a discussion of this work and the English translation, see A.G. Rigg, *A History of Anglo-Latin Literature, 1066–1422* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 24–30. I would like to thank Professor Rigg for bringing this text to my attention.

78 'He [i.e., Jerome] ran along the royal way and did not diverge from the channel of history. I run along like a stream, sometimes keeping to the banks, sometimes watering the fields; things that did not exist in history I produced by art.' Reginald of Canterbury, *Vita Sancti Malchi*, 40.

79 'But in other matters, I do not deny that, as is the custom of versifiers, I have invented much.' Reginald of Canterbury, *Vita Sancti Malchi*, 41.

80 Rigg, *History of Anglo-Latin Literature*, 27.

81 While most writers recognized that *amplificatio* was part of historical writing in verse, not all saw it as historically valid. Benoît's *Roman de Troie* was not accepted by Jean Flixcourt who retranslated Dares and Dictys in 1262. In his prologue he writes: 'Pour che que li roumans de Troies rime continet molt de coses que on ne treuve mie ens u latin, car chis quie fist ne peust autrement belement avoir trouvee se rime, je, Jehans de Fliccicourt, translatai sans rime l'estoire des Troiens et de Troies du latin en roumans mot a mot ensi comme je le trouvai en un des livres du libraire Monseigneur Saint Pierre de Corbie.' ['Because the rhymed romance of Troy contains many things which are not to be found in the Latin (because he who made it could not otherwise beautifully have made his rhymes), I, Jean of Flixecourt, translated without rhyme the history of the Trojans and of Troy from Latin into romance word for word just as I have found it in one of the books of the library of my lord St Peter of Corbie.'] '*Li Romans de Troies*: A Translation by Jean de Flixcourt,' ed. G. Hall (diss. University of London, 1951), 2, as quoted and translated by Morse, *Truth and Convention*, 228 and 286. For a discussion of attitudes towards verse and prose, see Spiegel, *Romancing the Past*, 55–69.

82 Caroline Eckhardt excludes these poems from her definition of 'chronicle' which she claims is 'an extensive account of events regarded as historical.

However, I will exclude heroic poems on the exploits of individual kings, such as the alliterative *Morte Arthure* or Barbour's *Bruce*. In genre, works like those are more appropriately classed with epics and romances and other hero-tales than with chronicles.' Caroline D. Eckhardt, 'The Presence of Rome in the Middle English Chronicles of the Fourteenth Century,' *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 90 (1991): 190–1. Although the *Morte* should not be considered a chronicle (i.e., an episodic narrative of a vast historical period) Eckhardt's definition does not take into account the historical nature of the poem.

83 Hanning, *Vision of History*, 141.

84 Ibid., 148.

85 Ibid., 149. See Hanning, *Vision of History*, 144–9, 162–70, for a full discussion of the importance of Rome in the *Historia*.

86 Patterson argues that the appearance of Frollo in the dream of Fortune (*Morte Arthure*, 3345–6, 3404–5), 'bespeak[s] a poem in process.' Patterson, 'Historiography of Romance,' 12, n. 36. I think it more likely, however, that this indicates that the poet is confident his audience knows the Brut narrative.

87 Benson, 'Alliterative *Morte*,' 75–6.

88 *Morte Arthure*, 693–716. In 1967 Finlayson stated that the scene 'is more likely to have been inspired by some particular exemplar which had a strong influence on the poet, than to have been occasioned merely by the general influence of the form which he seems deliberately to have eschewed' (Finlayson, '*Morte Arthure*,' 636), but in 1968 he claimed that the 'very presence of such a scene, totally unnecessary in a *chanson de geste*, is owed to the pervasive influence of romance' (Finlayson, 'Concept of the Hero,' 256). For a discussion of the importance of the scene, see George R. Keiser, 'Narrative Structure in the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*, 26–720,' *The Chaucer Review: A Journal of Medieval Studies and Literary Criticism* 9 (1974): 139–41.

89 Göller, 'Reality versus Romance,' 21.

90 *Morte Arthure*, 11.

91 Ibid., 18–21.

92 This scene may be modelled on the *Voeux du Paon*, but Finlayson has argued that a more direct source may be the intermediary *Vows of the Heron*. See John Finlayson, 'Two Minor Sources of the Alliterative "Morte Arthure,"' *Notes and Queries* 207 (1962): 132–3, and Hamel, introduction, 44–6. Maureen Fries suggests that the scene may be loosely based on an episode from the prose *Lancelot*. See Maureen Fries, 'The Poem in the Tradition of Arthurian Literature,' *The* Alliterative Morte Arthure: A Reassessment of the Poem, ed. Karl Heinz Göller (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1981), 34–5.

93 *Morte Arthure*, 2066–72.

94 Ibid., 4161–73.

95 Ibid., 4161. See also 4075 and 4262. The same alliterative pairing is found in *The Parlement of the Thre Ages*, 476.

96 *Morte Arthure*, 368–71. Hamel glosses line 369 as 'I praise God for this contribution.' For the textual difficulties associated with this line, see Hamel's notes, *Morte Arthure*, pp. 268–9.

97 *Morte Arthure*, 371–81. This vow is fulfilled at 2073–80.

98 Ibid., 380.

99 Ibid., 1720–1.

100 Ibid., 1647–52.

101 Ibid., 1657–60.

102 Ibid., 1667.

103 Ibid., 1671–4.

104 Ibid., 1675–80.

105 Ibid., 1681–4. Hamel glosses *trauaylande* as 'wayfaring,' thus maintaining the mercantile metaphor of the dialogue.

106 *Morte Arthure*, 1688–91.

107 Ibid., 1694–9.

108 'A Poem on the Nine Worthies,' ed. Thorlac Turville-Petre, *Nottingham Mediaeval Studies* 27 (1983): ll. 3–4. According to *The Boke of Saint Albans*, printed in 1486, Japhet first devised a heraldic device, which was 'a ball in token of all the world,' but 'Cote armure was made and figurid at the sege of troye where in gestys troianorum it telleth thatt the first begynnyng of the lawe of armys was, the wiche was effugured and begunne before any lawe in the worlde, bott the lawe of nature, and before the .X. commawndementis of god.' Juliana Berners, *The Boke of Saint Albans* (Amsterdam and New York: Da Capo Press, 1969), no pagination. A heraldic treatise composed c. 1454 states that 'þe begynnyng and grownde of armez was furst fownde at þe gret assege of nobyll Troye bothe with in þe cyte & with owt,' where it was agreed 'þat euery man þat dyde a grete acte of armys shulde ber vp on hym a marke in tokyn of hys dowghtyness þat þe pepyll myght haue þe mor knowlege of hym.' After the seige 'þe lords went forthe in to dyuers londs som to seke mo aduenturys. And in to [Eng]lond came Brute & hys knyghtys with her marcys & inhabytes þe londe & aftyrwarde be cause þe name of markes was rude thay torned yt in to armes & called hem armys be cause þat markys wer getyn thorowgh myght of manys armys in as muche as the name was fayrer. A cote of armys ys callyd an habyt of worshyppe.' BL Harley MS 2259, fos. 11–11v. For '[Eng]lond' the manuscript appears to have 'piglond.' For a brief discussion of the position of Troy in the history of heraldry, see Sylvia L. Thrupp, *The Merchant*

Class of Medieval London (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), 295–7.

109 In Chrétien's *Cligés*, the hero is in fact Greek and not, therefore, a descendant of the Trojans.

110 Fries, 'The Poem in the Tradition,' 36.

111 B.J. Whiting accurately summed up Gawain's reputation from earlier prose and verse romances: 'Gawain is the casual, good-natured and well-mannered wooer of almost any available girl. If she acquiesces, good; if not, there is sure to be another pavilion or castle not far ahead.' Whiting, 'Gawain: His Reputation,' 203.

112 *Morte Arthure*, 2739.

113 Ibid., 3769.

114 Ibid., 3821.

115 Göller, 'Reality versus Romance,' 23.

116 Jörg O. Fichte, 'The Figure of Sir Gawain,' *The* Alliterative Morte Arthure: *A Reassessment of the Poem*, ed. Karl Heinz Göller (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1981), 116.

117 Finlayson, 'Concept of the Hero,' 268.

118 Christopher Dean, 'Sir Gawain in the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*,' *Papers on Language and Literature: A Journal for Scholars and Critics of Language and Literature* 22 (1986): 120.

119 *Morte Arthure*, 2508.

120 Ibid., 2513–14.

121 Ibid., 2521–4. For a discussion of the textual problems with the passage, see Hamel's notes (*Morte Arthure*, pp. 337–8).

122 *Morte Arthure*, 2525.

123 Ibid., 2546–7.

124 Ibid., 2602–5.

125 Ibid., 4344.

126 Ibid., 2620–1.

127 Ibid., 2632–5.

128 Ibid., 2638–9.

129 Ibid., 30–47.

130 Ibid., 116–19.

131 Ibid., 120–1.

132 Ibid., 223–5.

133 Ibid., 228.

134 Ibid., 530–3.

135 Ibid., 823–7.

136 Ibid., 842–3.

137 Ibid., 852.

138 Ibid., 885–7.

139 Ibid., 888.

140 Cf. Geoffrey, *Historia*, ch. 165; Wace, *Roman de Brut*, 11309–16. Wace does mention the suffering of the peasants, but he too focuses on Helena.

141 *Morte Arthure*, 964–5.

142 Ibid., 1045–52.

143 Finlayson, 'Arthur and the Giant,' 114.

144 *Morte Arthure*, 1051.

145 Ibid., 1065–6. The description of the children as 'cresmede' may, as Finlayson assumes, mean that they are baptized, but it may also indicate that they are of royal descent, thus emphasizing the theme of sovereignty in the episode. The religious overtones throughout the episode largely rely on the running joke of the giant as saint. Finlayson, like many other critics, takes pains to compare the *Morte Arthure* to *Beowulf* and his attempt to associate the giant with Grendel is unconvincing. See Finlayson, 'Arthur and the Giant,' 114–15.

146 See above, pp. 47–8. In the *Morte Arthure* Arthur does mention the earlier fight, but the second giant is unnamed and no longer associated with the cloak of beards (1174–7). For Finlayson this transformation simply concentrates 'the best elements of the two adventures' and diminishes the possibility of 'boring repetition' and of 'reducing Arthur from a real monarch to a rather monotonous giant-killer.' Finlayson, 'Concept of the Hero,' 255.

147 *Morte Arthure*, 997.

148 Ibid., 998–1014.

149 Ibid., 1033–4.

150 Ibid., 1190–1.

151 Ibid., 1200–4.

152 Ibid., 423–6.

153 Twomey, 'Heroic Kingship,' 137.

154 *Morte Arthure*, 843.

155 Twomey, 'Heroic Kingship,' 137.

156 *Morte Arthure*, 86–7.

157 Ibid., 275–9.

158 Ibid., 1307–10.

159 Ibid., 2310.

160 Ibid., 2314–17. Before Arthur encounters the giant the old woman advises him to assume a similarly submissive posture: 'And þow my concell doo, / þow dosse of thy clothes / And knele in thy kyrtyll and call hym thy lorde.' *Morte Arthure*, 1023–4.

161 Ibid., 2330–5.
162 Hamel, *Morte Arthure*, p. 328.
163 Matthews, *Tragedy of Arthur*, 132.
164 Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1.13463–8. In John Hardyng's fifteenth-century *Chronicle* the battles with Lucius actually take place in Italy. BL Lansdowne MS 204, fo. 81v.
165 'he subdued many other provinces as well while he made war with the Romans, and after the following winter, since he had remained in those territories, he spent some time in the conquest of many cities. But when the summer returned, Arthur turned with his army towards Rome with the intention of subjugating it to himself.' John of Glastonbury, *Cronica*, 80.
166 See Finlayson, introduction, *Morte Arthure*, 12–13; Finlayson, 'Concept of the Hero,' 265–6; and Twomey, 'Heroic Kingship,' 139.
167 Porter, 'Chaucer's Knight,' 60.
168 *Morte Arthure*, 429–32.
169 Ibid., 2402.
170 Porter, 'Chaucer's Knight,' 60.
171 *Morte Arthure*, 3152–6.
172 Porter, 'Chaucer's Knight,' 62. See, generally, 61–5.
173 *Morte Arthure*, 3044–61.
174 Ibid., 3124–7.
175 Vale, 'Law and Diplomacy,' 39. For a similar opinion, see Kelly, 'Non-Tragedy,' 110–11.
176 *Morte Arthure*, 3184–6.
177 Ibid., 3235.
178 Ibid., 3260.
179 Ibid., 3272–7.
180 Kelly, 'Non-Tragedy,' 100.
181 *Morte Arthure*, 3299.
182 Ibid., 3314–15.
183 Kelly, 'Non-Tragedy,' 101. Kelly maintains the view that 'the poet is rather crude in his priorities,' 102.
184 Mary Hamel, 'The Dream of a King: The Alliterative *Morte Arthure* and Dante,' *Chaucer Review* 14 (1979–80): 302.
185 *Morte Arthure*, 3291–3.
186 Ibid., 3320–3.
187 Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*, VII. 1976.
188 'A Poem on the Nine Worthies,' 39–40.
189 *Morte Arthure*, 3342.
190 Ibid., 3343–6. The appearance of Frollo here, and again at line 3404,

clearly indicates the poet's familiarity with the Arthurian narrative that preceeds the events described in the poem. It also implies that his audience was expected to be familiar with these events as well.

191 *Morte Arthure*, 3349–57.

192 Ibid., 3388–9.

193 Ibid., 3394.

194 Ibid., 3396–400.

195 Ibid., 3453.

196 Karl Joseph Höltgen, 'King Arthur and Fortuna,' trans. Edward Donald Kennedy, *King Arthur: A Casebook*, ed. Edward Donald Kennedy (New York and London: Garland, 1996), 131.

197 *Morte Arthure*, 3406–7.

198 Ibid., 3407–37.

199 Ibid., 3438–45. This is the second reference to possible source material in the text. The first also uses the terms 'romawns' and 'cronycles' (3200, 3218) but there is not enough context to determine if the poet distinguishes between the two terms. Thus Patterson's assertion that the poem 'recognizes that there are two streams of Arthurian writing, "romaunce" (lines 3200, 3440) and "cronycle" (lines 3218, 3445), but locates itself at the source of both by designating them as later developments and calling itself a history' is an interesting but unprovable suggestion. Patterson, *Negotiating the Past*, 213. There is absolutely no evidence for Britton Harwood's assertion that the poem 'calls one of its sources, Wace's *Brut*, "romawns" ... and another of its sources, Laʒamon's version of Wace, a "cronycle."' Harwood, 'Alliterative *Morte*,' 248.

200 For a similar argument, see Patterson, *Negotiating the Past*, 224–7. Patterson's reading of the poem, I feel, overestimates the futility of historical action and is moulded by a desire to exhibit a false ambiguity by constructing conflicting points of reference within the poem. For example: 'Participation in the historical world is simultaneously proscribed and required, both revealed as without value and imposed as a duty. But for this duty to be taken up, the poem suggests, the emptiness of the historical process must be simultaneously acknowledged and repudiated. It is just this double act of recognition and evasion that the dream of Fortune both records and, in its reception, occasions.' Patterson, *Negotiating the Past*, 227.

201 'As you are, I once was / As I am, you will be.' 'Epitaph of the Black Prince,' quoted by John Cammidge, *The Black Prince: An Historical Pageant* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1943), 454.

202 'On earth I had great riches, / There I had great nobility, / Land, homes

and great wealth, / Clothing, horses, silver and gold; / But now I am poor and a catiff, / For in the earth I now lie.' 'Epitaph of the Black Prince,' quoted by Cammidge, *Black Prince*, 454.

203 *Morte Arthure*, 3447.

204 Ibid., 3487.

205 Ibid., 3499–500. Leslie Johnson argues that the episode contrasts the two ways by which one may go to Rome. Caradoc the pilgrim, in this interpretation, stands in contrast to Arthur the crusader. Leslie Johnson, 'King Arthur at the Crossroads to Rome,' *Noble and Joyous Histories: English Romances, 1375–1650*, ed. Eiléan Ní Cuilleanáin and J.D. Pheifer (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1993), 87–111.

206 *Morte Arthure*, 3509–12.

207 Boren, 'Narrative Design,' 316.

208 *Morte Arthure*, 3523, 3525–6.

209 Ibid., 3550–2.

210 The scene of Caradoc's arrival has attracted a great deal of critical attention, but no one has noticed the significance of Caradoc himself. Matthews notes Caradoc's association with the mantle story, but draws no conclusions. Matthews, *Tragedy of Arthur*, 100, n. 45. Hamel, in her notes, simply points out that both Laʒamon and the *Mort Artu* contain references to Caradoc at different points in the narrative. Hamel, *Morte Arthure*, 368. Martin Ball does speculate about why such a minor character is introduced so casually, but concludes that 'it is a narrative device which acts to establish a familiarity between the narratee and Craddoke.' Ball, 'Knots of Narrative,' 364.

211 *Morte Arthure*, 3769.

212 Clark argues that the action of Gawain's landing is modelled on the Battle of Hastings, while Johnson, arguing against a written source, claims that the scene is based on the oral formulaic theme of the Hero on the Beach. See George Clark, 'Gawain's Fall: The Alliterative *Morte Arthure* and Hastings,' *Tennessee Studies in Literature* 11 (1966): 89–95, and James D. Johnson, '"The Hero on the Beach" in the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*,' *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 76 (1975): 271–81.

213 *Morte Arthure*, 3851–5.

214 Ibid., 3857–8. Note that, as in the *Scalacronica*, Gawain dies of a head wound after a sea battle. See above, pp. 54–5.

215 *Morte Arthure*, 3867–9, 3875–8.

216 Note that Mordred's own nobility is called into question as he attempts to disguise himself, 'Because of his cowardys' by changing his arms in the final battle (*Morte Arthure*, 4180–6). Previously, when Arthur named

Mordred as regent, Mordred asked that he be allowed to accompany Arthur to the continent because those who go will be 'wyrchipide hereaftyre' (*Morte Arthure*, 685).

217 Beverly Kennedy provides an overview of the use of 'hap' cognates in Thomas Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*. She argues that a 'happy' knight is one favoured by God, and that the 'unhappy' knight has lost God's favour because of his sinful actions. See chapter 5, 'Happy and Unhappy Knights,' in Beverly Kennedy, *Knighthood in the* Morte Darthur, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1992), 214–75, esp., 230–44. This providentialist point of view, as Kennedy points out, is only one possible meaning of 'happy,' and it does not seem to be at work in the alliterative *Morte Arthure*. It will be remembered that as Arthur boldly walks before the walls of Metz he proclaims 'Sall neuer harlotte haue happe, thorowe helpe of my Lorde, / To kyll a corownde kynge with krysom enoynttede.' *Morte Arthure*, 2446–7. Arthur, of course, is mistaken and it may be significant that he characterizes Mordred's followers as 'harlotes halfe.' *Morte Arthure*, 3643.

218 *Morte Arthure*, 3767–9.

219 Ibid., 3828.

220 Ibid., 3833.

221 Ibid., 3956–60. Arthur's lament for Gawain has often been taken as an indication of his guilt, particularly Arthur's line 'He [i.e., Gawain] es sakles, supprysede for syn of myn one.' *Morte Arthure*, 3986. In the passage, however, the issue is not Arthur's guilt, but Gawain's innocence. Arthur twice asserts that Gawain is 'sakles' and that his blood should be 'schrynede in golde.' The image of Gawain as a martyred saint, I feel, overshadows any attempt by Arthur to accept the blame for his death. (See *Morte Arthure*, 3980–96.) Even if Arthur's words are to be taken at face value (including his statement that his kingdom 'Was wonnen thourghe sir Wawayne and thourghe his witt one!' *Morte Arthure*, 3964) it is not at all clear what sin Arthur is confessing.

222 *Morte Arthure*, 4276.

223 Ibid., 4192.

224 Ibid., 4206–8.

225 Ibid., 4326–347.

226 Helaine Newstead, rev. of *The Tragedy of Arthur: A Study of the Alliterative 'Morte Arthure*,' by William Matthews, *Romance Philology* 16 (1962): 119.

227 Benson, 'Alliterative *Morte*,' 79.

228 Hanning, *Vision of History*, 174.

229 *Morte Arthure*, 4342–6.

230 Ibid., 3396.

5: Adventures in History

1 Richard Baker, *A Chronicle of the Kings of England* (London, 1674), 4.

2 Edward Donald Kennedy, 'The Stanzaic *Morte Arthur*: The Adaptation of a French Romance for an English Audience,' *Culture and the King: The Social Implications of the Arthurian Legend*, ed. Martin B. Shichtman and James P. Carley (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 93.

3 Ibid., passim.

4 Ibid., 92.

5 The Lincoln manuscript of *Sir Degrevant* opens by stating 'With Kyng Arthure, I wene, / And Dame Gaynore þe quene, / He was knawen for kene, / Þis commly knyghte.' Arthur's court seems to be used simply as a setting which evokes a chivalric atmosphere. *The Romance of Sir Degrevant*, ed. L.F. Casson, EETS, o.s. 221 (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 17–20. Cited by line number.

6 Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*, III. 857–61.

7 Barron, 'Arthurian Romance,' 22–3.

8 See A.C. Spearing, '*The Awntyrs off Arthure*,' *The Alliterative Tradition in the Fourteenth Century*, ed. Bernard S. Levy and Paul E. Szarmach (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1981), 183–202; A.C. Spearing, 'Central and Displaced Sovereignty in Three Medieval Poems,' *Review of English Studies* 33 (1982): 247–61. These studies have been largely superseded by Spearing's study of the poem in A.C. Spearing, *Medieval to Renaissance in English Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 121–42. See also Helen Phillips, '*The Awntyrs off Arthure*: Structure and Meaning. A Reassessment,' *Arthurian Literature* 12 (1993): 63–71. For an opposing view, see J.O. Fichte, '*The Awntyrs off Arthure*: An Uncounscious Change of the Paradigm of Adventure,' *The Living Middle Ages: Studies in Medieval English Literature and its Tradition: A Festschrift for Karl Heinz Göller*, ed. Uwe Böker et al. (Regensburg: Mittelbayerische Druckerei-und Verlags-Gesellschaft, 1989), 129–36.

9 Spearing, *Medieval to Renaissance*, 129–31.

10 Phillippa Tristram notes that it is 'very rare to find the macabre in Arthurian romance at any date,' and she notes *The Awntyrs of Arthure* as the one exception. Philippa Tristram, *Figures of Life and Death in Medieval English Literature* (London: Paul Elek, 1976), 237, n. 22.

11 *The Three Dead Kings, Alliterative Poetry of the Later Middle Ages: An Anthology*, ed. Thorlac Turville-Petre (London: Routledge, 1989). Cited by line number. The *Lazarus* play in the mid-fifteenth century *Towneley* plays shares many of the characteristics discussed below. See *The Towneley Plays*, ed.

Martin Stevens and A.C. Cawley, EETS, s.s. 13 and 14 (London: Oxford University Press, 1994), I: 425–31.

12 Douglas Gray, *Themes and Images in the Medieval English Religious Lyric* (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), 190ff.

13 'No other epoch has laid so much stress as the expiring Middle Ages on the thought of death. An everlasting call of *memento mori* resounds through life.' J. Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, trans. F. Hopman (Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin, 1987), 134.

14 Gray, *Themes and Images*, 190–1.

15 George Neilson first mentioned the borrowing from the English A-version of the *Trentalle*. See George Neilson, 'Crosslinks between *Pearl* and the *Awntyrs off Arthure*,' *Scottish Antiquary* 16 (1902): 67–78.

16 David N. Klausner, 'Exempla and the *Awntyrs of Arthure*,' *Mediaeval Studies* 34 (1972): 316.

17 Turville-Petre has noted the similarities between the *Awntyrs, De Tribus Regibus Mortuis*, and a third poem, *Somer Soneday*. Although he admits the difficulties in determining direct borrowing among alliterative poetry, he argues that structural and thematic similarities indicate some form of close connection. *Somer Soneday* is also written in a thirteen-line alliterative stanza and also involves a hunting party. In this case, the main character is separated from the party and has a vision of Fortune's wheel. Turville-Petre writes that '[e]ven if it is impossible to be certain that the connection between the three poems is a direct one, the similarities are too many to be fortuitous, and they show the existence of a "school" of poets using the thirteen-line stanza to express similar themes.' Thorlac Turville-Petre, '"Summer Sunday," "De Tribus Regibus Mortuis," and "The Awntyrs off Arthure": Three Poems in the Thirteen-line Stanza,' *Review of English Studies* n.s. 25 (1974): 12.

18 *Three Dead Kings*, 98–9.

19 Ibid., 106.

20 *The Awntyrs off Arthure, Scottish Alliterative Poetry in Riming Stanzas*, ed. F.J. Amours, Scottish Text Society, 27 and 38 (London: Johnson Reprint Corp., 1966), 105. Except where noted, all references will be from the Douce manuscript (D) by line number. Because of the textual difficulties of the poem, the Thornton manuscript (T, on facing pages) and the Princeton manuscript (P), formerly known as the Ireland manuscript, are occasionally referred to. For an edition of the Princeton manuscript, see *Ywain and Gawain, Sir Percyvell of Gales, The Anturs of Arther*, ed. Maldwyn Mills (London: Everyman, 1992), 161–82. The Lambeth manuscript provides no useful variants and has not been recorded here. Note that line numeration

in Mills's edition of the Princeton text is slightly different from the other editions used here.

21 *Awntyrs*, 120–1.

22 Ibid., 216.

23 *Three Dead Kings*, 103–4.

24 *Awntyrs*, 218–21. The reference to 'thritty trentales' obviously recalls the *Trentalle Sancti Gregorii.* Many of the exempla drawn together by Klausner also display these common characteristics.

25 *Awntyrs*, 321–3. Given the conventions of the talking dead, Guenevere may be being chastised for not having the masses said for her dead mother.

26 *Three Dead Kings*, 120.

27 *Awntyrs*, 166–9.

28 The ghost begs 'haue pite one þe poer, þat pleses heuen king; / Siþene charite is chef.' *Awntyrs*, 251–2. See also lines 172–8, 319. In *De Tribus* the third dead king laments the fact that he was cruel to the poor while alive, but it is not as insistent as in the *Awntyrs* (*Three Dead Kings*, 121).

29 For the dating of the poem, see Ralph Hanna, introduction, *The Awntyrs off Arthure*, ed. Ralph Hanna III (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1974), 1, and Spearing, *Medieval to Renaissance*, 122–3. Neither critic attempts to refine the dating of the poem beyond the limits 1400–30.

30 The epitaph is mid-fifteenth century. Quoted by Gray, *Themes and Images*, 200.

31 'As you are, I once was / As I am, you will be.' 'Epitaph of the Black Prince,' quoted by Cammidge, *Black Prince*, 454. See above, pp. 116–17, for the full epitaph.

32 For the history of this style of monument, see Kathleen Cohen, *Metamorphosis of a Death Symbol: The Transi-Tomb in the Late Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973).

33 Lawrence Stone, *Sculpture in Britain: The Middle Ages*, 2nd ed. (Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin, 1972), 213.

34 The tomb was constructed in La Sarraz, Switzerland. See Cohen, *Metamorphosis of a Death Symbol*, figs. 31 and 32.

35 Cohen, *Metamorphosis of a Death Symbol*, 15. Henry Chichele was the brother of William Chichele (whose epitaph is quoted above). For an illustration of Chichele's tomb, see Cohen, *Metamorphosis of a Death Symbol*, fig. 13.

36 *Awntyrs*, 144.

37 Ibid., 148–50.

38 Ibid., 151.

39 *Morte Arthure*, 3291–3. For a similar opinion, see Phillips, '*Awntyrs off Arthure*,' 81–2. Patricia Clare Ingham compares the ghost's representation

with 'the figuration of power, land, and the hag' in loathly lady stories, particularly John Gower's 'Tale of Florent.' See Patricia Clare Ingham, *Sovereign Fantasies: Arthurian Romance and the Making of Britain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 181–4.

40 *Awntyrs*, 160.

41 Ibid., 204. In T the ghost states her relationship a third time: 'I ame the body þat þe bare,' 89.

42 John Speirs, *Medieval English Poetry: The Non-Chaucerian Tradition* (London: Faber and Faber, 1957), 257.

43 *Awntyrs*, 147.

44 Ibid., 170.

45 Ibid., T, 138. The reading here is from T. D's '"Cristened and knowene"' is not supported by P, nor does it provide the parallel at 224, where Guenevere repeats the phrase. I follow Mills, who glosses the passage as 'Christened and annointed.' Helen Phillips's detailed argument concerning the theology of baptism seems unnecessary to explain the passage. The ghost would have to be baptized in order to enter the Christian dispensation, she was 'krysommede' at the time that she ascended the throne. See Helen Phillips, 'The Ghost's Baptism in the *Awntyrs off Arthure*,' *Medium Ævum* 58 (1989): 54.

46 Klausner, 'Exempla,' 318–19.

47 *Awntyrs*, 90–2.

48 Ibid., 142–4.

49 Ibid., 202–4. For further examples of this practice, see also lines 195–6, 208–9, 221–2, 229–30, 234–5, 247–8.

50 The conversation with Gawain (which is actually a monologue) appears to have been seen as a separate section of the poem by the scribe of P who wrote 'a fytte' in the margin beside line 260. For a discussion of the structure of the poem based on this scribal division into fitts, see Phillips, '*Awntyrs off Arthure*,' passim.

51 *Awntyrs*, 261–4.

52 See, for example, Merlin's prophecies in Geoffrey, *Historia*, chs. 112–17.

53 There is no indication as to why the ghost has the power of prophecy. Dante, in the tenth canto of the *Inferno*, speculates that the damned are granted only the vision of the future, so that as time comes to an end their intellect will cease to exist. This theory, however, is not specifically analogous since the *Awntyrs* ghost is in purgatory, not hell. See Ralph Hanna III, '*The Awntyrs off Arthure*: An Interpretation,' *Modern Language Quarterly* 31 (1970): 288.

54 *Awntyrs*, 265–6.

55 *Awntyrs*, 274–5. Cf. the reading in T: 'The Frollo and þe Farnaghe es frely by-leuede'; This line, supported by P, indicates that the poem relies on the alliterative *Morte Arthure*. Cf. 'Fore Froill and Ferawnt, and for thir ferse knyghttis.' *Morte Arthure*, 3404. For the textual difficulties of this line, see Hamel's notes, *Morte Arthure*, p. 365.

56 *Awntyrs*, 280–1.

57 Ibid., 283–6.

58 Ibid., 296–9.

59 Ibid., 305–12.

60 Matthews, *Tragedy of Arthur*, 156–8.

61 Ibid., 160–1.

62 *Awntyrs*, 266–8.

63 Ibid., T, 269–75. The reading from T, supported by P, has been accepted. D does not mention Fortune or her wheel at this point (although the wheel is mentioned at line 266). In this version, Arthur is 'Falsely fordone in fighte, / With a wonderfulle wighte' (*Awntyrs*, 270–1).

64 It will be remembered that *Somer Soneday* has many thematic similarities with the *Awntyrs* and with *De Tribus Regibus Mortuis*. In that poem, however, the image of transience is not a dead parent but Fortune's Wheel. See Turville-Petre, 'Three Poems,' passim.

65 *Awntyrs*, 164. Compare also the 'listes and delites, / Þat has me liȝte and laft loȝ in a lake.' *Awntyrs*, 213–14.

66 Ibid., 268.

67 Ibid., 213.68

68 It has been argued that the ghost's reference to 'luf paramour, listes and delites' (*Awntyrs*, 213) is intended to draw a further parallel between Guenevere and her dead mother. Klausner states that 'the implications of that example could not be missed' (Klausner, 'Exempla,' 320) while Hanna is more specific, saying that it is the 'involvement in adulterous love as the widest extension of one's interest in dalliance and chivalric service [which has] sent Guinevere's mother to Hell. In this warning must be implied a judgment upon the famous love of the queen for Lancelot, a love which leads to the weakening and dismemberment of the chivalric company' ('An Interpretation,' 290). Even Takami Matsuda, who recognizes the historical elements of the text, states that 'the figure of the ghost has an explicit connection with the sins of pride and lechery ... which in turn becomes an implied criticism of Guinevere whose illicit relationships with the knights of the Round Table precipitate the destruction of the kingdom.' Takami Matsuda, 'The *Awntyrs off Arthure* and the Arthurian History,' *Poetica: An International Journal of Linguistic-Literary Studies* 19 (1984): 51. As I have argued above, however, the *Awntyrs* is placed within a historical

setting in which the Guenevere/Lancelot story did not exist. If there is an association to be made, it is to Guenevere's lechery in marrying Mordred, her husband's sister's son. In the historical tradition Guenevere is often a willing participant in Mordred's treachery.

69 Matthews, *Tragedy of Arthur*, 209, n. 6.

70 Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1.10761–2.

71 For a discussion of Mannyng's use of this period, see above, pp. 26–8.

72 'In which Gawain stood out above the rest, which he repeatedly did very well, as is recorded in his histories.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 73v.1. For Gray's discussion of the nine year period of peace, see above, pp. 47–9.

73 See above, pp. 47–8, for an account of Gray's use of this adventure.

74 See above, pp. 105–8, for an account of the alliterative *Morte*'s use of this adventure.

75 *Awntyrs*, 267.

76 Ibid., 319–25.

77 Klausner, 'Exempla,' 322.

78 *Awntyrs*, 334. T reads, 'The wyes on swilke wondirs a-wondirde þaire were,' while P agrees with D.

79 *Awntyrs*, 365–403.

80 Ibid., 365.

81 Ibid., 378–9.

82 Ibid., 421–2.

83 Ibid., 586–91.

84 Spearing, *Medieval to Renaissance*, 139.

85 *Awntyrs*, 622.

86 Ibid., 635.

87 Ibid., 640–1.

88 Ibid., 646.

89 Ibid., 664–71.

90 Ibid., 675–6.

91 Ibid., 685.

92 Ibid., 706. Cf. 'A mynster þai made with masse / Fore metyng þe men on þe mosse.' *Three Dead Kings*, 139–40.

93 Matthews, *Tragedy of Arthur*, 160.

94 Ibid., 161.

95 'The pattern is formally completed by the admission of Galeron to the Round Table, and Guenevere's arrangement for the "mylion of masses" (706) that she had promised to her mother's ghost.' Spearing, *Medieval to Renaissance*, 141. See also Spearing, '*Awntyrs*,' passim. In his later study he adds several qualifications which will be discussed below.

96 Spearing, *Medieval to Renaissance*, 132.

97 Ibid., 141.

98 Ibid.

99 Phillips, '*Awntyrs off Arthure*,' 84.

100 For Phillips, 'The *Awntyrs* poet sees military activity not as quests and adventures in a political vacuum, but as a constant contest for territorial lordship.' Phillips, '*Awntyrs off Arthure*,' 72.

101 *Awntyrs*, 348.

102 Ibid., 276–8. The parallel is even stronger in T, where the lady refers to Arthur as 'Mane moste of myghte.'

103 *Awntyrs*, T, 352–64. D is missing a line and employs direct speech at the beginning of this stanza. The reading from T, supported by P, has therefore been adopted. The sense of the stanza is the same in both manuscripts.

104 Alastair Fowler, *Triumphal Forms: Structural Patterns in Elizabethan Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 21–5.

105 *Awntyrs*, T, 358.

106 Spearing, *Medieval to Renaissance*, 129. Spearing uses this information only to establish the structural integrity and unity of the poem. See also Spearing, 'Central and Displaced Sovereignty,' passim.

107 *Awntyrs*, 1. Cf. *Awntyrs*, 714–15.

108 Hanna believes that Guenevere's concern for proper religious authorities (i.e., the masses said for her mother), rather than practical charity, indicates that she has failed to learn the lesson of contrition and self discovery: 'The queen's failure to comprehend the ghost's message of Christian relevance clearly should be understood as one of the elements which eventually produce the fall of the Round Table.' Hanna, 'An Interpretation,' 290.

109 *Awntyrs*, 685.

110 Ibid., 700–2.

111 Phillips, '*Awntyrs off Arthure*,' 81.

112 '... he [i.e., Arthur] cryes one lowde, / To Gawayne, to Galyran, thies gud mens bodyes.' *Morte Arthure*, 3635–6.

113 *Awntyrs*, 305.

114 Spearing, *Medieval to Renaissance*, 140–1.

115 Ingham, *Sovereign Fantasies*, 186. If, as I have suggested, the *Awntyrs* takes place during the nine year period of peace, Arthur has already conquered these territories, so no one is losing lands to Gawain, but Ingham's point still holds.

116 Spearing believes that here we have an ideal English resolution to the

Scottish problem: the Scottish knight accepting the feudal overlordship of the British/English king. Spearing, *Medieval to Renaissance*, 140. I tend to disagree. The debate between Galeron and Arthur has nothing to do with the lengthy historiographical debates which revolved around Arthur in the fourteenth century. If anything, they reflect the Scottish belief that Arthur's conquests were unjustified and not legally binding. See below, pp. 163–5. John Barnie comments that, in the contemporary debate surrounding the act of war, 'educated men tended to be more concerned with the failings of society as a whole. It was the general rather than the particular which concerned them, and it led them to debate contemporary problems within a more abstract and theoretical context.' John Barnie, *War in Medieval English Society: Social Values in the Hundred Years War, 1337–99* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1974), 120–1.

117 *Awntyrs*, 399–401.

118 For a survey of this scholarship, see Robert L. Kelly, 'Allusions to the Vulgate Cycle in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*,' *Literary and Historical Perspectives of the Middle Ages: Proceedings of the 1981 SEMA Meeting*, ed. Patricia Cummins et al. (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 1982), 183–4.

119 Richard R. Griffith, 'Bertilak's Lady: The French Background of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*,' *Machaut's World: Science and Art in the Fourteenth Century*, ed. Madeleine Pelner Cosman and Bruce Chandler, *Annals of the New York Acad. of Sciences*, 314 (New York: New York Acad. of Sciences, 1978), 249–66.

120 Kelly, 'Allusions to the Vulgate,' 184.

121 *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* [hereafter *SGGK*], 107–13.

122 Kelly, 'Allusions to the Vulgate,' 185–6.

123 Ibid., 185.

124 *SGGK*, 551–5. Cf. Kelly, 'Allusions to the Vulgate,' 186–8.

125 *SGGK*, 2444–64. Cf. Kelly, 'Allusions to the Vulgate,' 188–90.

126 *SGGK*, 2448 and 2465.

127 Thomas Chestre, *Sir Launfal*, ed. A.J. Bliss (London and Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1960), 13–19. Cited by line number.

128 *SGGK*, 553; *Morte Arthure*, 4266. See also *Morte Arthure*, 3637–8 for the same two characters.

129 *SGGK*, 554; *Morte Arthure* 1263–4. See also *Morte Arthure*, 1605–6 for the same two characters.

130 *SGGK*, 551; *Morte Arthure*, 4075. See also *Morte Arthure*, 4161 for the same two characters.

131 *Parlement of the Thre Ages*, 476, 511.

132 Kelly, 'Allusions to the Vulgate,' 187 and 196, n. 20.

133 *SGGK,* 107–13.

134 Kelly, 'Allusions to the Vulgate,' 185.

135 College of Arms Arundel MS 58, fo. 53.

136 M. Victoria Guerin, *The Fall of Kings and Princes: Structure and Destruction in Arthurian Tragedy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 196–232.

137 Guerin, *Fall of Kings and Princes,* 196.

138 Guerin's evidence for Mordred's incestuous conception in the *Historia* is Geoffrey's authorial aside that he will not comment on Mordred's usurpation of the throne and marriage to Guenevere. Guerin follows Griscom's edition of Cambridge, University Library, MS Ii.1.14 (1706) which reads: 'De hoc quidem, consul auguste, galfridus monumotensis tacebit.' ['Concerning this matter, noble duke, Geoffrey of Monmouth will remain silent.'] Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The Historia Regum Britanniae,* ed. Acton Griscom (London, New York, Toronto: Longmans, Green & Co., 1929), 496. Guerin argues that here 'Geoffrey offers one enigmatic remark which suggests a secret that he chooses not to reveal.' She goes on to state: 'Whatever Geoffrey's unspoken reference, it must be sufficiently well known to be surmised by his readers, so that he must acknowledge its existence, yet there must be some factor which causes him to omit it from the *Historia.* The legend of Arthur's incestuous begetting of Mordred would meet both of these requirements.' Guerin, *Fall of Kings and Princes,* 10. The passage, however, obviously does not refer to an extra-textual secret, but merely indicates Geoffrey's uneasiness over a story which includes Mordred taking his uncle's wife to bed. Since Geoffrey has just recounted Mordred's own usurpation and incest we can assume that this in itself fulfills Guerin's conditions, being a sufficiently well known and delicate narrative element. The point, however, may be moot, as the Bern manuscript, reported as a variant in Griscom's edition and used as a base-text by Wright, reads: 'Nec hoc quidem, consul auguste, Galfridus Mone-mutensis tacebit' ['Concerning this matter, noble duke, Geoffrey of Monmouth will not remain silent']. Geoffrey, *Historia,* ch. 177. Geoffrey then describes the effects of Mordred's usurpation. A complete textual history of the work needs to be completed before it is decided which reading is authorial. In either case, however, Guerin's interpretation seems to be untenable.

139 Mannyng, *Chronicle,* 1.13475.

140 See below, p. 165.

141 Larry D. Benson, *Art and Tradition in* Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1965), 98.

142 *SGGK,* 1–19.

143 Ibid., 2524–8.

144 J.A. Burrow, *Ricardian Poetry: Chaucer, Gower, Langland and the* Gawain *Poet* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), 96. For comparisons to analogous passages in other alliterative poetry, see Malcolm Andrew, 'The Fall of Troy in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and *Troilus and Criseyde,*' *The European Tragedy of Troilus,* ed. Piero Boitani (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 76.

145 John Finlayson, 'The Expectation of Romance in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight,*' *Genre* 12 (1979): 4–5.

146 Theodore Silverstein, '*Sir Gawain,* Dear Brutus, and Britain's Fortunate Founding: A Study in Comedy and Convention,' *Modern Philology* 62 (1965): 191.

147 Patterson, 'Historiography of Romance,' 10.

148 On Aeneas as the 'tulk' of line 3, see Alfred David, 'Gawain and Aeneas,' *English Studies* 49 (1968): 402–9, and J.D. Burnley, '"Sir Gawain and the Green Knight," Lines 3–7,' *Notes and Queries* 218 (1973): 83–4.

149 Compare Hardyng's statement upon Brutus's arrival: 'Into this londe he came so fortunate.' BL Lansdowne MS 204, fo. 15.

150 Andrew, 'Fall of Troy,' 79.

151 If *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* is intended to be read against the backdrop of the chronicle tradition, the seed of Arthur's downfall may have already been alluded to in the list of post-Trojan foundations. The establishment of Rome by Romulus is a straightforward allusion to the history of Troy, but the other two Italian foundations mentioned are more troublesome. Langaberde is the well-known eponymous founder of Lombardy, but he was not considered a Trojan, while the identity of Ticius is less certain. Silverstein speculates that Ticius is a mistake for one of two possible founders, Tuscus or Tirius (Silverstein, '*Sir Gawain,*' 194–6). He still questions, however, why Langaberde and Ticius, 'Trojans only tenuously at best, are placed together with Romulus the Trojan' (Silverstein, '*Sir Gawain,*' 205). He concludes that the references to these characters echo the alliterative *Morte Arthure*'s treatment of these Italian lands. After the defeat of Lucius, it will be remembered, Arthur continues his campaign in Italy. Upon hearing of Mordred's treachery he entrusts the campaign to Hoel and Hardolf. 'Sir Howell and sir Hardolfe here sall beleue / To be lordes of the ledis that here to me lenges: / Lokes into Lumbardye, þat thare no lede chaunge, / And tendirly to Tuskayne take tente alls I byde; / Resaywe the rentis of Rome qwen they are rekkenede' (*Morte Arthure,* 3583–7). For Silverstein it is the Italian claim, which is

'especially characteristic of *Morte Arthure*, which seems to be reflected in *Gawain*'s Trojan foundings' (Silverstein, '*Sir Gawain*,' 205). As suggestive as Silverstein's argument is, recent studies on the dating of the alliterative *Morte* make direct allusion to the text unlikely. Some fourteenth-century chroniclers, such as Robert Mannyng (Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1.13467), do push Arthur as far as northern Italy, but no earlier text specifically names Lombardy and Tuscany as Arthurian conquests.

152 *SGGK*, 20–2.

153 Ibid., 23–6.

154 Andrew, 'Fall of Troy,' 80.

155 *SGGK*, 37–59.

156 Ibid., 54.

157 Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1.10393–7. For Wace's comments on this period, see above, p. 15.

158 *SGGK*, 27–9.

159 'In this time wondrously appeared the many enchanted things, from which arose the great adventures which are recorded of the court of Arthur.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 71v.1.

160 'It is said that Arthur would not eat before he had strange news.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 72.1

161 *SGGK*, 91–8.

162 *The Greene Knight, Sir Gawain: Eleven Romances and Tales*, ed. Thomas Hales (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1995), 1–8. Cited by line number.

163 Putter, 'Finding Time,' 6.

164 For bibliography, see Martin B. Shichtman, '*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*: A Lesson in the Terror of History,' *Papers on Language and Literature* 22 (1986): 3, n. 2.

165 *SGGK*, 498.

166 Ibid., 492.

167 Ibid., 504.

168 Ibid., 506.

169 Ibid., 510.

170 Ibid., 520.

171 Ibid., 526–30. For an examination of the rhetoric of this passage, see Derek A. Pearsall, 'Rhetorical "Descriptio" in "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight,"' *Modern Language Review* 50 (1955): 131–2.

172 Andrew, 'Fall of Troy,' 91.

173 *SGGK*, 943.

174 Ibid., 948.

175 Ibid., 950–3.
176 Ibid., 954–69.
177 Pearsall, 'Rhetorical "Descriptio,"' 131.
178 *The Poems of the Pearl Manuscript*, ed. Malcolm Andrew and Ronald Waldron, York Medieval Texts (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982), 243 (note to lines 943–69).
179 *SGGK*, 562–5.
180 Ibid., 1751–2.
181 Ibid., 2132–5.
182 Ibid., 2284–5.
183 Ibid., 392–5.
184 Ibid., 403.
185 Ibid., 677.
186 Ibid., 2286–7.
187 Ibid., 1105–10.
188 Ibid., 1405.
189 Ibid., 1635–8.
190 Ibid., 1679.
191 Ibid., 1774–5.
192 W.R.J. Barron, *Trawthe and Treason: The Sin of Gawain Reconsidered: A Thematic Study of* Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (Manchester: Manchester University Press; Totowa, NJ: Barnes and Noble Books, 1980), 67.
193 *SGGK*, 1856.
194 Ibid., 2340–1.
195 Ibid., 2346–9.
196 Ibid., 2356–7.
197 Ibid., 2363.
198 Ibid., 2366–8.
199 Ibid., 2509.
200 Ibid., 2513–17.
201 'great laughter,' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 75.2.
202 *SGGK*, 2374.
203 Ibid., 2378–84.
204 Ibid., 2414–28.
205 Ibid., 2464–6.
206 Igerne is the wife of Gorlois, Duke of Cornwall, and is usually identified as the Duchess of Cornwall. Tintagel is the castle in which Uther deceives Igerne, but it is one of two castles owned by the duke.
207 *SGGK*, 2522–8.
208 David, 'Gawain and Aeneas,' 408.

209 Burnley notes that Aeneas's appearance in the poem 'is especially appro-
     priate, for in the courtly tradition, the values of which are to be ques-
     tioned by the ensuing story, the subsequent career of Aeneas and his
     treatment of Dido, would make him an outstanding example of the lack of
     faith.' Burnley, '"Sir Gawain,"' 84.
210 Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1.10400–1.

6: Making History

  1 Sammes, *Britannia Antiqua*, I: 212. Sammes is referring to a passage in
     which Hardyng cites Nennius as a source of information about Joseph of
     Arimathea.
  2 BL Lansdowne MS 204, fo. 67v. The first version of Hardyng's *Chronicle*
     survives in a unique copy, BL Lansdowne MS 204. The Arthurian portions
     of both versions of Hardyng's *Chronicle* have recently been edited by
     Christine Marie Harker, 'John Hardyng's Arthur: A Critical Edition' (PhD
     diss., University of California, Riverside, 1996). In the notes, the longer
     version of Hardyng's text will be referred to by its catalogue number, by
     folio number. Harker's thesis also includes a much needed edition of the
     Arthurian portion of the second version of Hardyng's text using all of the
     available manuscripts. Because of its greater availability, however, I will
     maintain the practice of referring to Ellis's edition: John Hardyng, *The
     Chronicle of Iohn Hardyng*, ed. Henry Ellis (London: G. Woodfall, 1812).
     Contractions retained by Ellis have been expanded without notice. Cita-
     tions of this text in the notes will simply be to the *Chronicle.*
  3 See above, pp. 61–2, for a discussion of Gray's use of this phrase.
  4 The most complete biography of Hardyng is found in Antonia Gransden,
     Historical Writing in England (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974–82),
     II: 274–87. Still valuable, however, is Charles L. Kingsford, 'The First
     Version of Hardyng's *Chronicle*,' *English Historical Review* 27 (1912): 462–9.
     Except where noted, the following account is drawn from these sources.
     Felicity Riddy adds considerably to our knowledge of Hardyng's life,
     particularly late in his writing career, in Felicity Riddy, 'John Hardyng's
     Chronicle and the Wars of the Roses,' *Arthurian Literature* 12 (1993): 93–7.
  5 Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 351.
  6 The most complete accounts of the origin of the 'appeal to history' are
     found in E.L.G. Stones, 'The Appeal to History in Anglo-Scottish Relations
     between 1291 and 1401: Part I,' *Archives* 9, no. 41 (1969): 11–21, and
     Edward I and the Throne of Scotland, ed. E.L.G. Stones and Grant G. Simp-
     son (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), I: 137–62. An excellent

assessment of the literary and historiographic impact of the Great Cause is found in R. James Goldstein, *The Matter of Scotland: Historical Narrative in Medieval Scotland* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 57–108.

7 Printed as document number 28 in *Anglo-Scottish Relations: 1174–1328*, ed. and trans. E.L.G. Stones (London: Nelson, 1965), 82–7.

8 Stones, 'The Appeal to History,' 20.

9 The Scots also produced a document known as the *Instructiones*, but it is unlikely that it was intended to be used in a public forum. For a full discussion of the purposes of these two documents, see R. James Goldstein, 'The Scottish Mission to Boniface VIII in 1301: A Reconsideration of the Context of the *Instructiones* and *Processus*,' *Scottish Historical Review* 70 (1991): 1–15.

10 Goldstein, *Matter of Scotland*, 108.

11 Ibid., 6.

12 Several lacunae in the second version of the *Chronicle* indicate that it remained unfinished. See A.S.G. Edwards, 'The Manuscripts and Texts of the Second Version of John Hardyng's *Chronicle*,' *England in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Daniel Williams (Woodbridge, U.K.: Boydell, 1987), 75–84. For a discussion of the circumstances of the composition of the second version, see Riddy, 'John Hardyng's Chronicle and the Wars of the Roses,' 91–108.

13 Francis Palgrave, introduction, *Scotland. Documents and Records Illustrating the History of Scotland*, ed. Francis Palgrave (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1837), ccxvi.

14 Palgrave, introduction, *Scotland*, ccxvi, ccxxiii.

15 See Ellis, introduction, *Chronicle of Iohn Hardyng*, viii–ix.

16 For a list of the manuscripts of the second version, see Edward Donald Kennedy, 'John Hardyng and the Holy Grail,' *Arthurian Literature* 8 (1989): 191, n. 16. This article is reprinted in *Glastonbury Abbey and the Arthurian Tradition*, ed. James P. Carley (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2001), 249–68.

17 BL Lansdowne MS 204, fo. 223v ff.; Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 422.

18 Several of these maps are reproduced in *Facsimiles of National Manuscripts of Scotland*, ed. Cosmo Innes (Southampton: Ordnance Survey Office, 1867–71), II: 68–70.

19 For Hardyng's use of Geoffrey and Wace, see Harker's discussion of sources ('John Hardyng's Arthur,' 9–18) and her notes, passim. See also Harker's more speculative discussion of Hardyng's use of the alliterative *Morte Arthure* in her Appendix B ('John Hardyng's Arthur,' 383–6).

20 See, for example, Edward Donald Kennedy, 'Malory's use of Hardyng's "Chronicle,"' *Notes and Queries* 214 (1969): 167–70; Robert H. Wilson, 'More Borrowings by Malory from Hardyng's "Chronicle,"' *Notes and*

Queries 215 (1970): 208–10; P.J.C. Field, 'Malory's Minor Sources,' *Notes and Queries* 224 (1979): 107–10; Edward Donald Kennedy, 'Malory and His English Sources,' *Aspects of Malory*, ed. Toshiyuki Takamiya (Cambridge: Brewer; Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Littlefield, 1981), 27–55; Carrie Anna Harper, *The Sources of the British Chronicle History in Spenser's* Faerie Queene (Philadelphia: John C. Winston, 1910), passim; Gillian West, 'Hardyng's *Chronicle* and Shakespeare's Hotspur,' *Shakespeare Quarterly* 41 (1990): 348–51. Despite its influence, Hardyng's *Chronicle* has only recently received scholarly attention. Modern historians have studied the *Chronicle* as a historical document but they have tended to be pejorative of the legendary material. Charles Kingsford wrote that 'here, where the author of necessity reproduces the material of older writers with little colouring of his own ... the Chronicle is of least interest.' Kingsford, 'Hardyng's *Chronicle*,' 470. Recently, however, Hardyng has undergone something of a revival as literary scholars have recognized his unique and important version of the Arthurian narrative.

21 Throughout the *Chronicle* Hardyng draws attention to his own attempts to retrieve documents. When describing Malcolm's homage to William Rufus he writes that the oath of fealty was 'By letter wrytten and sealed I vnderstand, / Whiche Hardyng gaue in to kyng Henryes hand, / Without reward or any recompence, / Of mayne labour, his costagis and expence.' Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 239. See also 21, 240, 247, 292, 305, 317.

22 BL Lansdowne MS 204, fos. 227v–230.

23 'Arthur, king of the Britons, a prince most renowned, subjected to himself a rebellious Scotland, destroyed almost the whole nation, and afterward installed as king of Scotland one Angusell by name.' 'Letter of King Edward I,' in *Anglo-Scottish Relations*, 98.

24 'What he says about Arthur is not valid. Arthur was born in adultery and did not [lawfully] succeed anyone; but whatever he won in various places, he acquired by force and violence. By these means he occupied not just Scotland, but also England, Wales, Ireland, Gaul, Norway and Denmark. When he was killed by Modred son of Loth king of Scotland, the heir to Britain, Scotland (just like the other kingdoms subjected to him) returned to its former state and to liberty of its own.' Baldred Bisset, '*Processus Baldredi contra figmenta regis Anglie*,' Walter Bower, *The Scotichronicon*, ed. and trans. D.E.R. Watt et al. (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1990–8), VI: 184. All citations from the *Processus* give page references to the Latin text. English translations are on facing pages. Although attested by the *Instructiones* and the *Processus* as found in manuscripts of Bower's *Scotichronicon*, Lot is not referred to as the 'king of Scotland' in copies of

the *Processus* found in surviving manuscripts of Fordun. Instead Lot is called the 'brother of the king of Scotland' and there is no mention of Mordred as 'heir to Britain.' See Bisset, '*Processus*,' 184 and 286 notes.

25 'when Uther had died ... his son Arthur, through the efforts of certain men, succeeded to the kingdom, which was not owed to him by law, but rather to his sister Anna, or her sons.' Fordun, *Chronica Gentis Scotorum*, I: 109.

26 '... conceived legitimately, and married to Loth, a Scottish consul ... and he had two sons by her – Gawain the noble and Mordred.' Ibid.

27 'Arguebat enim eos necessitas.' Geoffrey, *Historia*, ch. 143.

28 '... [that it] was not strictly his by right since he had been born out of wedlock, the son of [I]gerna wife of Gorlois duke of Cornwall in the castle of Tintagel by the unheard-of art of the prophet Merlin.' Bower, *Scotichron-icon*, II: 65. For a comparison of Fordun's and Bower's treatment of Arthur, see Susan Kelly, 'The Arthurian Material in the *Scotichronicon* of Walter Bower,' *Anglia* 97 (1979): 431–8. The nationalistic *Chronycle of Scotland in a Part* goes further, claiming that 'Arthur was gottyn on ane othir mannis wyf, be the Duk of Carnwell Vter; and sa was Arthur, spurius and a huris sone.' *The Cronycle of Scotland in a Part, Bannatyne Miscellany* (Edinburgh: Bannatyne Club, 1827–55), III: 39.

29 Part of the problem of Arthur's illegitimacy arose from a difference be-tween English common law and canon law. The differences between the legal systems were expressed in 'an ordinance of Pope Alexander III' (pope 1159–81) wherein it was decreed that 'children born before solemnization of matrimony, where matrimony followed, should be as legitimate to inherit unto their ancestors as those that are born after matrimony.' Glanville, who wrote just after Alexander's decree, states the common law view that 'nei-ther a bastard nor a person not born in lawful wedlock can be, in the legal sense of the term, an heir.' Joseph Jackson, *The Formation and Annulment of Marriage*, 2nd ed. (London: Butterworth and Co., 1969), 42.

30 Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 120.

31 Ibid.

32 See Geoffrey, *Historia*, chs. 158–9.

33 Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 140–2. Hardyng may be following the prose *Brut*, in which Arthur also sends a letter to Rome outlining his ancestry. In the *Brut*, however, Arthur's letter includes only Constantine and Maximian, and does not mention Brutus. *Brut*, 66.

34 *The Knightly Tale of Golagros and Gawain, Scottish Alliterative Poems in Riming Stanzas*, ed. F.J. Amours, Scottish Text Society, 27 and 38 (London: Johnson Reprint Corp., 1966), 297–8. Cited by line number.

35 *Golagros and Gawain*, 1035–9.

36 Flora Alexander, 'Late Medieval Scottish Attitudes to the Figure of Arthur: A Reassessment,' *Anglia* 93 (1975): 29. Alexander argues that, although there was an anti-Arthurian movement in Scotland, it is overly simplistic to describe all Scottish Arthurian material as negative towards him. It will be remembered that Andrew Wyntoun and John Barbour depict Arthur in a generally favourable light.

37 *The Cronycle of Scotland in a Part*, III: 38.

38 Geoffrey, *Historia*, chs. 148–9.

39 BL Lansdowne MS 204, fo. 69.

40 Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 122.

41 Ibid., 123.

42 Ibid., 120.

43 Ibid., 124.

44 Ibid., 126.

45 Ibid., 124.

46 BL Lansdowne MS 204, fo. 69v.

47 Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 124–6.

48 Bisset, '*Processus*,' 185. On the use of the phrase 'heredem Britannie' in the *Processus*, see above, pp. 300–1 n. 24.

49 '... and on account of this reason Mordred brought the war against Arthur in which both died.' Fordun, *Chronica Gentis Scotorum*, I: 110. Fordun seems to have had difficulty with this section and he composed several different versions. In one version he quotes William of Malmesbury, Henry of Huntingdon and most of Higden's account of Arthur, including his doubts concerning the extent of Arthur's conquests. Fordun, *Chronica Gentis Scotorum*, I: 111–12, note.

50 Fordun was confused by Geoffrey's account of Anna's ancestry and ends his Arthurian account with an unfavourable assessment of Geoffrey's skills. Bower agrees with Geoffrey and contradicts Fordun on the question of Anna's birth but repeats the condemnation of Geoffrey's skills as a historian. See Kelly, 'Arthurian Material,' 435.

51 '... some hold that [Mordred] was born in another manner, but that does not hold.' Fordun, *Chronica Gentis Scotorum*, I: 109.

52 BL Lansdowne MS 204, fo. 71v.

53 BL Lansdowne MS 204, fo. 86.

54 Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 146. See also Cador's earlier appearances in the text, when he arrives to help Arthur in his wars, and in a list of knights. In both of these instances Cador is called Arthur's brother, Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 122 and 137.

55 'entrusted his realm to Constantine, the son of Cador of Cornwall, his

brother, to guard until he returned.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 80v.2.

56 'son of Cador of Cornwall, his [i.e., Arthur's] brother by his mother.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 82v.2. This identification is made on two other occasions in the *Scalacronica*, when Cador is sent against Baldulf and at the battle of Bath. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 69v.2 and 70v.2. Unlike his sources, Gray also names Cador as one of the dead in the first battle at Dover, thus clearing the way for Constantine to inherit. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 80.1. In the alliterative *Morte Arthure* Cador is named as heir after the skirmish on the road to Paris. This explains why Constantine inherits the crown, but Cador is said to be Arthur's nephew, not his brother: 'Thow arte apparant to be ayere, are one of thi childyre; / Thow arte my sister sone, forsake sall I neuer.' *Morte Arthure*, 1944–5.

57 Hardyng may have been genuinely confused by the complex relationships described by Geoffrey. Geoffrey is not clear what he means by *cognatus* and his statement that Gorlois and Igerne had only one daughter, Anna, seems to undermine any attempt to call Cador the brother of Arthur. In his additional notes to Fletcher's *Arthurian Material*, R.S. Loomis suggests that, as Duke of Cornwall, Cador may be the successor, and hence son, of Gorlois. The Welsh *Brut Tysilio* agrees with Hardyng and calls Cador the son of Gorlois and Igerne, but it is unlikely that either Hardyng or Gray had access to this material. See Fletcher, *Arthurian Material*, 117–18, 251, and 282–3.

58 BL Lansdowne MS 204, fo. 20v–21.

59 Geoffrey, *Historia*, ch. 27.

60 *La Mort le Roi Artu*, 87–92.

61 See above, p. 40.

62 *Rise of Gawain*, 112–20.

63 Following this passage Hardyng includes another bizarre anecdote about one of Ebrauke's foundations which does not involve Arthurian characters, but which demands quotation:

> The cyte als he made than of Alclude,
> Whiche bare that tyme the fame of Albany:
> A Castell by was of grete fortitude,
> Whiche Dunbretayne now hight ful notably,
> Whare Saynt Patrike by-came man natifly,
> Fore whiche in itte neuere seth was sene vermyn,
> Ne yit non horse that ought myght donge there-in.

BL Lansdowne MS 204, fo. 21. It is unclear if Hardyng intends his readers to associate the name Dunbretayne with his story of horse dung.

64 BL Lansdowne MS 204, fo. 69v.
65 Cf. BL Lansdowne MS 204, fo. 70 with Geoffrey, *Historia*, ch. 156. The list
    has been borrowed, out of sequence, from Geoffrey's account of the
    plenary court which follows the nine years of peace in France. For a discus-
    sion of all the names in this list, see Harker, 'John Hardyng's Arthur,' 238–
    46.
66 BL Lansdowne MS 204, fo. 70.
67 BL Lansdowne MS 204, fos. 70v–71. In Hardyng's account Lot is made king
    of Norway immediately before this passage and the first campaign in
    France follows. In Wace's account both of these events follow immediately
    after the passage in which he questions the veracity of adventures which
    occurred during the twelve years of peace. Wace's passage is quoted above,
    p. 15. Hardyng's passage may have been inspired by an intervening version
    of the narrative, possibly Robert Mannying's.
68 The will is transcribed in Ethel Seaton, *Sir Richard Roos, c. 1410–1482:
    Lancastrian Poet* (London: R. Hart-Davis, 1961), 547–50.
69 See Carol Meale, 'Manuscripts, Readers and Patrons in Fifteenth-Century
    England: Sir Thomas Malory and Arthurian Romance,' *Arthurian Literature*
    4 (1985): 103, 103, n. 32. Meale believes that 'E. Wydevyll' is the signature
    of Elizabeth, but Sutton and Visser-Fuchs argue that this is in fact her
    brother, Edward. Anne F. Sutton and Livia Visser-Fuchs, *Richard III's Books:
    Ideals and Reality in the Life and Library of a Medieval Prince* (Stroud, U.K.:
    Sutton Publishing, 1997), 35, n. 59. Malory also uses this term to refer to
    the books of adventures produced at Arthur's court. After Bors returns
    from the Grail quest his adventures are recounted, and 'there Launcelot
    told the aduentures of the Sancgreal that he had seen. Alle this was made
    in grete bookes and put vp in almeryes at Salysbury.' Malory, *Caxton's
    Malory*, I: 505. This passage is inspired by the conclusion of the Vulgate
    Queste, 279–80. It may refer simply to any large volume which contains
    numerous adventures, rather than to a collection of books specifically from
    the Vulgate cycle. As we shall see in the next chapter, an interpolation
    added to Robert of Gloucester's *Metrical Chronicle* also refers to the 'boke of
    Seint Graal' in a passage inspired by Wace's twelve years of peace (College
    of Arms Arundel MS 58, fo. 62v), and Rauf de Boun, in *Le Petit Bruit*,
    attributes his version of Ebrauke's foundation of the Castle of Maidens and
    Mount Dolorous to 'la testemoinaunce Seint Graal, qi de cel article fait
    ascun mencion, dount celuy autour prent cel auctorité.' ['... the testimony
    of the Saint Grail, which makes some mention of this affair, from which this
    author takes his authority.'] Rauf de Boun, *Petit Bruit*, 6.
70 BL Lansdowne MS 204, fo. 71. Cf. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS

133, fo. 72.1 and see above, p. 46. For a discussion of the use of the term 'grete boke' in the fifteenth century, see Karen Cherewatuk, '"Gentyl" Audiences and "Greate bookes": Chivalric Manuals and the *Morte Darthur,*' *Arthurian Literature* 15 (1997): passim, esp. 208–9.

71 BL Lansdowne MS 204, fo. 70v.

72 Ibid., fo. 71–71v. The importance of lists of chivalric figures in Hardyng's text can be seen on fo. 83. Prior to the battle against Lucius, Hardyng lists the commanders of Arthur's knights. Each of the six stanzas on this folio begins with a large gold capital letter. This does not happen elsewhere in the manuscript.

73 BL Lansdowne MS 204, fo. 71v.

74 This may be the same character as Degore whose name is now on the Winchester Round Table.

75 BL Lansdowne MS 204, fo. 72.

76 The two lists of the first version have been combined in the second version at a later point in the narrative, following the Grail quest and before the arrival of the Roman ambassadors. Hardyng, *Chronicle,* 136–8.

77 Hardyng, *Chronicle,* 125. Harker notes that the three aspects of the Round Table's rule may derive from *Lestoire de Merlin.* Harker, 'John Hardyng's Arthur,' 248–9.

78 Hardyng, *Chronicle,* 125.

79 Ibid.

80 Ibid.

81 Ibid.

82 Ibid., 32. Cf. 'For out of olde feldes, as men seyth, / Cometh al this newe corn from yer to yere, / And out of olde bokes, in good feyth, / Cometh al this newe science that men lere.' Geoffrey Chaucer, *Parlement of Fowles, The Riverside Chaucer,* ed. Larry Benson et al., 3rd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), 22–5. Cited by line number. Hardyng uses this same passage from Chaucer to explain why he has changed his political allegiances. In the second version, after he has recounted the genealogy of the Yorkist claim to the throne, Hardyng asserts that further research has led him to this revised opinion. He writes:

All these titles, the Chronicles can recorde,
If they be seen by good deliberacion;
Many of theim to these full well accorde,
As I haue seen with greate delectacion,
By clerkes wrytten for our informacion.
As in olde feldes, cornes freshe and grene grewe,
So of olde bookes commeth our cunnyng newe.

Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 22. Hardyng's debt to Chaucer in these lines has been noted by J.C. Maxwell and Douglas Gray, 'An Echo of Chaucer,' *Notes and Queries* 214 (1969): 170.

83 BL Lansdowne MS 204, fo. 66v.

84 'Our Lord commanded [Joseph] that he should make a table.' *Lestoire de Merlin*, 54.

85 '... you will establish the third table in the name of the Trinity.' *Lestoire de Merlin*, 54. This entire scene contains further echoes from the *Merlin*. See Harker, 'John Hardyng's Arthur,' 227–8.

86 BL Lansdowne MS 204, fo. 86v. Cf. *La Mort le Roi Artu*, 246ff.

87 Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 146.

88 Griflet lives only eighteen days after making this decision. See *La Mort le Roi Artu*, 252. Gerin, earl of Chartres, is mentioned in several other Arthurian works, including Geoffrey of Monmouth, as part of the embassy to Lucius. See Fletcher, *Arthurian Material*, 143, 232, 282.

89 *La Mort le Roi Artu*, 258ff.

90 As we have seen, Lancelot also appears in the first version during the digression on the building of the city of York.

91 On the relationship between the final stanzas of Hardyng's Arthurian history and the Vulgate *Mort*, see Harker, 'John Hardyng's Arthur,' 311–13.

92 Ibid., 15.

93 Ad Putter remarks on the similiarity between Mannyng's attempt to place French prose romances in the nine years of peace and Hardyng's own use of the *Queste*. Putter, 'Finding Time,' 8–9.

94 Kennedy, 'John Hardyng,' 205.

95 For the use of this legend in the Great Cause and John Fordun's *Chronica Gentis Scotorum*, see Kennedy, 'John Hardyng,' 193–7.

96 Ibid., 197. Hardyng, of course, includes an account of the miracle under the rubric: 'Nota a gret euydence & notable myracle, how the kynge of Englonde shulde haue homage & superiorite of Scotlonde by myracle of Seynt John of Beuerlay, as is writen in the life of hym thare.' BL Lansdowne MS 204, fo. 120.

97 Kennedy, 'John Hardyng,' 197.

98 Beside the rubric 'How the Archebisshop of Yorke shulde bene primate and metropolitane of Scotland' Hardyng includes two stanzas outlining Arthur's attempt to restore the Church in Scotland following the Saxon invasions. BL Lansdowne MS 204, fo. 69v.

99 The story of Joseph of Arimathea had a slow development as accepted history after a thirteenth-century monk added a reference to Joseph in William of Malmesbury's twelfth-century history of Glastonbury Abbey.

For a discussion of the development of the Joseph story within historical writing, see Lagorio, 'Evolving Legend,' 224–5, and Kennedy, 'John Hardyng,' 186–7, 197–9. Hardyng adapts much of his version of the early history of the Grail from the Vulgate *Lestoire del Saint Graal,* although he seems to have drawn additional information from a variety of sources.

100 *Parlement of the Thre Ages,* 470–3.

101 John Lydgate, *The Fall of Princes,* ed. Henry Bergen, EETS, e.s., 121–4 (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), VIII: 2780–3. Cited by book and line numbers.

102 Lydgate, *The Fall of Princes,* VIII: 2787–93. Several critics have suggested that Hardyng was familiar with Lydgate's *Fall of Princes.* See A.S.G. Edwards, 'The Influence of Lydgate's *Fall of Princes,* c. 1440–1559: A Survey,' *Medieval Studies* 39 (1977): 436; John Withrington, 'The Arthurian Epitaph in Malory's *Morte Darthur,*' *Arthurian Literature* 7 (1987): 131, n. 82 (reprinted in *Glastonbury Abbey and Arthurian Tradition,* 211–47); Clifford Petterson, 'John Hardyng and Geoffrey of Monmouth: Two Unrecorded Poems and a Manuscript,' *Notes and Queries* 27 (1980): passim.

103 '... [and he] knew her in sin and adultery and against God and against Holy Church.' *Lancelot,* IV: 210. Harker argues that this passage is drawn from the *Lestoire del Saint Graal.* Harker, 'John Hardyng's Arthur,' 272. The *Lestoire,* however, does not contain the echo of the word *connut.* Cf. *Lestoire del Saint Graal, The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances,* ed. H. Oskar Sommer (Washington: Carnegie Institution, 1908–16), I: 290–1.

104 BL Lansdowne MS 204, fo. 76.

105 Hardyng, *Chronicle,* 131.

106 Felicity Riddy, 'John Hardyng in Search of the Grail,' *Arturus Rex, vol. II: Acta Conventus Lovaniensis 1987,* ed. Willy Van Hoecke, Gilbert Tournoy, and Werner Verbeke (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1991), 424–5.

107 Kennedy, 'John Hardyng,' 203.

108 Hardyng, *Chronicle,* 136.

109 BL Lansdowne MS 204, fo. 77.

110 Ibid., fo. 77v.

111 Ibid.

112 Hardyng, *Chronicle,* 135.

113 Ibid.

114 BL Lansdowne MS 204, fo. 77v. For a discussion of these events, see Riddy, 'John Hardyng in Search of the Grail,' 425–6.

115 Cf. *Queste,* 267.

116 BL Lansdowne MS 204, fo. 78.

117 Harker, 'John Hardyng's Arthur,' 279.

118 BL Lansdowne MS 204, fo. 78v.

119 Ibid.

120 Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 136.

121 The Round Table has already been compared to Joseph's table at its establishment by Uther, and the Saint George cross has been listed as one of Arthur's banners. Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 120, 122.

122 Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 117.

123 Ibid., 99.

124 Ibid., 85. Ellis follows the practice of Grafton's printed edition and prints 'Nenyus' for 'Mewyns.'

125 London, BL Douce MS 345, fos. 20, 22, 26v.

126 Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 146.

127 Ibid., 146.

128 BL Lansdowne MS 204, fo. 77v.

129 'And when Bors told them the adventures of the Seint Graal, as he had seen them, they were put down in writing and kept in the library at Salisbury, where Master Walter Map extracted them in order to make his book of the Seint Graal for love of King Henry, his lord, who had the story translated from Latin into French.' *Queste*, 279–80.

130 London, BL Lansdowne MS 204, fo. 78.

131 Ibid., fo. 76. Italics added.

132 The second hand is heavy and shaky compared to the original rubrics and the letter forms *r* and *w* vary considerably. The corrector also makes greater use of *þ* than is common throughout the rest of the manuscript. For a description of these rubrics, see Withrington, 'Arthurian Epitaph,' 118–23.

133 A full edition of the whole manuscript would be necessary to accurately count the number of corrected rubrics which are not always apparent from microfilm alone. The corrector has added numerous complete rubrics, some of which include references to source material, but he actually adds to existing rubrics relatively infrequently. In approximately sixteen instances he adds source citations to existing rubrics, including references to 'Trogus Pompeus' as a source of information about Albina, 'Martyne Romayn' as a source for the legend of Constantine, the 'Policronica' by 'Seynt Columbe,' which tells of the Norman invasion, miscellaneous references to Bede, and of course the five references to sources of information concerning the Grail. See, for example, BL Lansdowne MS 204, fos. 15, 16, 42, 47v, 48v, 49, 52v, 53, 88v, 93, 148. The corrections are clustered around two episodes, the story of Constantine, another addition from outside the Brut tradition (fos. 47–9), and the story of the Grail (fos. 76–8).

134 London, BL Lansdowne MS 204, fo. 76v.

135 Ibid., fo. 77.

136 Ibid., fo. 78.

137 Ibid.

138 James Simpson's opinions are expressed in Felicity Riddy, 'Glastonbury, Joseph of Arimathea and the Grail in John Hardyng's *Chronicle*,' *The Archaeology and History of Glastonbury Abbey*, ed. Lesley Abrams and James P. Carley (Woodbridge, U.K.: D.S. Brewer, 1999), 318, n. 6. This paper has been reprinted in *Glastonbury Abbey and the Arthurian Tradition*, ed. James P. Carley, 269–84.

139 Riddy, 'Glastonbury,' 318, n. 6. For a similar opinion, see Withrington, 'Arthurian Epitaph,' 118–23.

140 BL Lansdowne MS 204, fo. 83.

141 The device of the three crowns is depicted in the margin of the manuscript. BL Lansdowne MS 204, fo. 67v.

142 Ibid., fo. 192.

143 I will assume throughout this discussion that Hardyng himself is the corrector.

144 See above, p. 184.

145 The *Cronycle of Scotland in a Part*, III: 39–40. Note that the author's argument against the Brut echoes that in Higden's *Polychonicon*.

146 BL Lansdowne MS 204, fo. 22v.

147 When recording Brutus's death, Hardyng provides several different versions of the length of his reign:

> Walter of Oxforde hath confessed,
>
> Foure and twenty yere, as he hath inpressed;
>
> And other sayne he reigned thre and fourty yere;
>
> But Marian saith thre score he reygned here.

Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 44.

148 For the stories of Bladud's and Brutus's deaths, see Geoffrey, *Historia*, chs. 30 and 23.

149 See above, p. 43.

150 Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 81.2. Note also that a contemporary copy of the prose *Brut* contains a gloss that refers to Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia* as his 'booke of Policronicon.' Lambeth Palace Library MS 84, slip tipped in between fos. 19 and 20.

151 See Giraldus Cambrensis, *Speculum Ecclesiae, Opera*, IV: 47–51, and *De Principis Instructione Liber, Opera*, VIII: 126–9.

152 Giraldus Cambrensis, *Itinerarium Kambriae, Opera*, VI: 58.

153 Riddy, 'Glastonbury,' 322, n. 17.

154 '... the Britons say that, offended on account of his brother, the prince of Albania, whom king Arthur had slain, [Gildas] wrote these things. Whence (as they assert), having heard of the death of his brother, he threw all the excellent books, many of which he wrote concerning the deeds of Arthur (*de gestis Arthuri*) and the praises of his countrymen, into the sea.' Giraldus Cambrensis, *Descriptio Kambriae*, VI: 209.

155 Caradoc of Llancarfan, *Vita Gildae*, *Two Lives of Gildas*, ed. and trans. Hugh Williams (Felinfach: Llanerch, 1990), 90–3.

156 John of Glastonbury, *Cronica*, 72.

157 BL Lansdowne MS 204, fos. 17, 22, 22v, 27, 39, 41v. Hardyng even points out when Gildas does not mention something of note. When he comes to write of Emperor Constantine he says:

> Bot now to speke more of this Constantyne,
>
> Of whom Gyldas ne Henry Huntyngdon
>
> In thaire cronycles lyste not to inclyne
>
> His lyfe fully to putte in mencion.
>
> I wote not what was thaire intencion,
>
> Seth he and thay were all of Bretons kynde;
>
> To hyde his actes me thynke thay were vnkynde.

BL Lansdowne MS 204, fo. 49. Note that Hardyng here echoes Geoffrey, who had complained that Arthur was not included in British histories. Geoffrey, *Historia*, ch. 1.

158 BL Lansdowne MS 204, fo. 39v.

159 'Here begins the treatise of St Joseph of Arimathea'; 'This passage is found among the deeds of the glorious king Arthur.' John of Glastonbury, *Cronica*, 46, 52.

160 '... where the White Knight explains to Galahad, son of Lancelot, the mystery of a miraculous shield which he enjoins him to carry and which no one else can bear, even for a day, without great loss.' John of Glastonbury, *Cronica*, 52. In the body of the text, John refers to the 'liber de gestis incliti regis Arthuri.' *Cronica*, 52.

161 James P. Carley, 'Arthur in English History,' *The Arthur of the English: The Arthurian Legend in Medieval English Life and Literature*, ed. W.R.J. Barron (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1999), 54.

162 Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 128. A similar passage is found in the first version beside the rubric 'How kynge Arthure dwelled nyne yere in Fraunce, in whiche tyme the knyghtes of þe Rounde Table sought and acheued many auentures.' BL Lansdowne MS 204, fo. 73.

163 Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 1.10761–74. See above, p. 27, for a full quotation.

164 For example: 'the soothe to sayne,' 'by all writyng,' 'as chroniclers wryten thus,' and 'as chronicles expresse.' Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 128, 129, 138, 147.

Sometimes Hardyng appeals to such a source at the moment he deviates from the Brut tradition. Thus Arthur's coronation in Rome is 'wroughte in greate storie,' his burial at Glastonbury is related 'As chronycles can tell.' Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 144, 147.

165 Ibid., 132.

166 Ibid.

167 Ibid., 136.

168 John Leland, *Commentarii de Scriptoribus Britannicus*, ed A. Hall (Oxford, 1709), I: 42, quoted in James P. Carley, 'Melkin the Bard and Esoteric Tradition at Glastonbury Abbey,' *Downside Review* 99 (1981): 4–5; W.W. Skeat, introduction, *Joseph of Arimathie*, ed. W.W. Skeat, EETS, o.s. 44 (London: Oxford University Press 1871), xl; Carley, 'Melkin the Bard,' 3–4; Carley, introduction, *Cronica*, liii–liv. The most serious objections to this theory have been forwarded by Felicity Riddy, who argues that a series of individual mistakes resulted in the five references to Mewyn. Riddy's discussion of the identity of Hardyng's various Mewyns is found in Riddy 'Glastonbury,' 319–24.

169 'But they [the Picts], since they had suffered this rebuff, crossed into Ireland and married women from that country by whom they augmented their numbers with offspring. But so much for this, since I do not propose to treat their history, nor that of the Scots who trace their origin from them and from the Irish.' Geoffrey, *Historia*, ch. 70.

170 Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 86.

171 Ibid.

172 See: Nennius, *British History*, ch. 15. Although not all manuscripts mention Scota by name, pseudo-Nennius does claim that her people left Egypt at the same time as the Israelites.

173 Fordun, *Chronica Gentis Scotorum*, I: 8–11.

174 Kennedy, 'John Hardyng,' 199.

175 Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 87.

176 Ibid., 87. Edward was aware of the powerful ideological force that the Stone of Scone provided. When he learned that Bruce had been crowned at Scone, even though the Stone had been removed, he sought papal authorization to remove the entire abbey. See Goldstein, *Matter of Scotland*, 74–5.

177 Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 85. Ellis, following the Grafton printed text, prints 'Nenyus' for 'Mewyns' but the manuscripts all read 'Mewyns.'

178 Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 90.

179 Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 85. Ellis emends 'Mewinus' to 'Neninus' based on the usage elsewhere in Grafton's printed edition.

180 Riddy, 'Glastonbury,' 321.

181 See *Lestoire del Saint Graal*, 244–6 and *Lancelot*, II: 321ff.
182 There is a textual problem with this section of the second version. Harley 661 includes the passage which speaks of Agrestes' repudiation, but other manuscripts, according to Ellis, do not. The first version of the text contains the complete story, but an edition of this section which uses all available manuscripts of the second version is necessary to settle the issue. Cf. Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 84–5, BL Lansdowne MS 204, fos. 39v–40.
183 Riddy, 'Glastonbury,' 324.
184 Ibid., 320.
185 See Richard J. Moll, 'Another Reference to Hardyng's "Mewyn,"' *Notes and Queries*, 245 (2000): 296–8.
186 BL Lansdowne MS 204, fo. 18.
187 For the derivation of 'Mewytryne' from 'Inis-wytryn' and its associations with Mewyn, see Moll, 'Another Reference,' 297–8.
188 'This passage is found in the book of Melkin who preceded Merlin.' John of Glastonbury, *Cronica*, 54.
189 '... two white and silver vessels, full of the blood and sweat of the prophet Jesus.' John of Glastonbury, *Cronica*, 54.
190 BL Lansdowne MS 204, fo. 39v.
191 BL Lansdowne MS 204, fo. 66v. Cf. *Lestoire de Merlin*, 334–5, in which the Grail is described as the vessel in which Joseph collected Christ's blood.
192 Carley, introduction, *Cronica*, lii.
193 Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 85.
194 '... certain very ancient book in the British language.' Geoffrey, *Historia*, ch. 1.
195 Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 144–5. The first version follows the Brut tradition, and Arthur hears of Mordred's treachery after the defeat of the Roman army, but before he receives the imperial crown.
196 Ibid., 181–2.
197 BL Lansdowne MS 204, fo. 87. In Chaucer's poem the narrator, like Hardyng, laments the influence of Fortune on the lives of his characters: 'But O Fortune, executrice of wierdes, / O influences of thise hevenes hye!' Geoffrey Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde, The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry Benson, et al., 3rd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), III. 617–18. This and other borrowings from Chaucer were first noted by A.S.G. Edwards. See A.S.G. Edwards, 'Hardyng's *Chronicle* and *Troilus and Criseyde*,' *Notes and Queries* 229 (1984): 156; A.S.G. Edwards, '*Troilus & Criseyde* and the First Version of Hardyng's Chronicle,' *Notes and Queries* 233 (1988): 12–13.
198 BL Lansdowne MS 204, fo. 87.
199 Ibid., fo. 88.
200 Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 125.

7: Fifteenth-Century Scribes

1 Malory, *The most ancient and famous history*, 1634, unpaginated.
2 The manuscript is dated 1448, but this may refer to when it was bound in its current form rather than the date of composition. The manuscript contains a copy of the first recension of Robert of Gloucester, to which is appended a genealogy of Henry VI. A rubric preceding the table of contents reads: 'Thys boke, with hys Antecedens and consequens, was ful ended the vi day offe August*e* the 3ere of our*e* lorde a M CCCC xlviij. And the yere of oure soverayn lorde kynge Harry the vj affter the conquest the xxvi.' College of Arms, Arundel MS 58, fo. 1v. Even if this date refers to the time that the two texts were brought together, the Robert of Gloucester text could not have been completed much earlier. For a description of the manuscript, see Matheson, *Prose Brut*, 328–34.
3 College of Arms, Arundel MS 58, fos. 252–76.
4 Ibid., fo. 118v. The scribe includes an English translation of the foundation of the abbey, and Patrick's letter to the monks on fos. 89v–91v.
5 Ibid., fo. 72v. Cf. Robert of Gloucester, *Metrical Chronicle*, 4394ff, and Geoffrey, *Historia*, ch. 170.
6 College of Arms, Arundel MS 58, fo. 87.
7 Ibid.
8 Cf. 'At Saxones sapientius agentes, pacem et concordiam inter se habentes, agros colentes, ciuitates et opida aedificantes, et sic abiecto dominio Britonum.' ['But the Saxons were wiser, kept peace and concord among themselves, cultivated the field, built cities and forts, and thus threw off the domination of the British']; 'reges uero Saxonum Willelmo Malmesberiensi et Henrico Huntendonensis; quos de regibus Britonum tacere iubeo cum non habeant librum istum Britannici sermonis quem Gualterus Oxenefordensis archidiaconus ex Britannia aduexit, quem de hystoria eorum ueraciter editum in honore predictorum principum hoc modo in Latinum sermonem transferre curaui' ['The kings of the Saxons [I leave to] William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon; whom I advise to remain silent about the kings of the British, since they do not have the book in the British language which Walter, archdeacon of Oxford, brought out of Britain, which, truly written concerning their history, I have taken care to translate in this way into the Latin language for the honour of the aforesaid princes']. Geoffrey, *Historia*, chs. 207 and 208.
9 '... because I do not know how to interpret them.' Wace, *Roman de Brut*, 7540.
10 The Anglo-Norman *Brut* is not edited, but see the English *Brut*, 72–6. On the dissemination of the prophecy, see Thomas M. Smallwood, 'The Prophecy of the Six Kings.' *Speculum* 60 (1985): 571–92.

11 College of Arms, Arundel MS 58, fo. 43v. Cf. Robert of Gloucester, *Metrical Chronicle*, 2738–9.

12 Given that one full gathering is lost, it might seem likely that it was simply misplaced at some stage during rebinding. Indeed, the eight cancel stubs one might expect to find between fos. 43 and 44 are not there. Close inspection, however, shows that both fos. 42 and 43 have been seriously cut deep in the crease, presumably when the eight folios that followed them were cut out. If the manuscript was later rebound it would be only natural for the binder simply to throw away the remaining stubs

13 College of Arms, Arundel MS 58, fo. 44.

14 Cf. Geoffrey, *Historia*, chs. 109–10.

15 Robert of Gloucester, *Metrical Chronicle*, 2805.

16 Ibid., 2815.

17 College of Arms, Arundel MS 58, fo. 3. The table of contents refers to the medieval foliation.

18 See above, pp. 58–60.

19 College of Arms, Arundel MS 58, fo. 76.

20 Ibid. The couplet quoted corresponds to Robert of Gloucester, *Metrical Chronicle*, 4597–8.

21 Mandeville's translation, completed in about 1435, did not circulate widely. For the reliance of Arundel 58 on Mandeville's *Brut*, see Matheson, *Prose Brut*, 328–34. Mandeville's *Brut* survives in one manuscript (BL Harley MS 4690) and remains unedited. If the Arundel *Metrical Chronicle* does rely on Mandeville's *Brut* it is not using the Harley manuscript. During the Moldwarp prophecy the Mandeville manuscript reads: 'and after þattt he shall yeue þe þridde party in pees and þenne he shall lyue in grete sorow alle his lyfe' (BL Harley MS, 4690, fo. 26v). The Arundel manuscript, however, contains a fuller version of the sentence: 'And after that he shal yiue the thridde party to haue the ferthe party in pees. And thanne he shal lyue in gret sorwe all his lyff' (College of Arms, Arundel MS 58, fo. 76). Cf. 'And after þat he shal ȝeue þe þride part of his lande forto haue þe ferþe part in pees and reste; and after he shullen leue in sorw all his lif-tyme' (*Brut*, 76).

22 Cf. Robert of Gloucester, *Metrical Chronicle*, 3668–74 and *Brut*, 71.

23 College of Arms, Arundel MS 58, fo. 61. Cf. Robert of Gloucester, *Metrical Chronicle*, 3668–74. In the *Historia* the islands are home to eagles 'que singulis annis conuenientes prodigium quod in regno uenturum esset celso clamore communiter edito notificabant' ['who coming together each year make known, through a shrill cry emitted commonly, any prodigious event which will happen in the kingdom']. Geoffrey, *Historia*, ch. 149.

24 College of Arms, Arundel MS 58, fo. 61v–62. The passage is inserted into Robert of Gloucester's *Metrical Chronicle* between lines 3711 and 3712.

25 Geoffrey, *Historia*, ch. 150.

26 It is tempting to speculate that at least one of his readers also found the prophecies of interest, as both prophetic passages have been removed from an otherwise complete manuscript.

27 College of Arms, Arundel MS 58, fo. 53. Cf. Robert of Gloucester, *Metrical Chronicle*, 3465–6.

28 College of Arms, Arundel MS 58, fo. 53. The first line of this passage is drawn from Robert. Cf. Robert of Gloucester, *Metrical Chronicle*, 3467.

29 Examples of this trope could be multiplied ad infinitum, but see *Le Morte Arthur*, 1–8; *Wedding of Sir Gawain*, 1–6.

30 'The coronation of Arthur, according to the *Holy Grail.* Note Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia.*' College of Arms, Arundel MS 58, fo. 53.

31 Cf. *Lestoire de Merlin*, 69–73.

32 College of Arms, Arundel MS 58, fo. 53.

33 Ibid. Cf. 'Les noeches del roy & d'Ygerne furent au trentisme ior qu'il auoit geu od lui en sa chambre. & de la fille a la dame & del roy Lot issi messires Gauuains & Agrauains & Gerehes & Gaheries et Mordres' ['The nuptials of the king and Igerne were held on the thirtieth day after he had lain with her in her chamber. And from the daughter of the lady and king Lot issued Gawain and Agravain and Guerrehet and Gaheriet and Mordred']. *Lestoire de Merlin*, 73.

34 College of Arms, Arundel MS 58, fo. 58. Cf. 'Et Merlins douna au roy Artu vne baniere ou il ot moult grant senefiance. Car il i auoit j. dragon dedens si le fist fremer en vne lance & il ietoit par samblant fu & flambe par la bouce. Si auoit vne keue tortice moult longe. Cil dragons dont ie vous di estoit darrain si nesot onques nus ou Merlins le prinst. Si fu a meruelles legiers & maisnie' ['And Merlin gave to King Arthur a banner that had great significance. There was a dragon on it and he had attached it to a lance, and it was as though fire and flame spouted from its mouth. It had a long twisted tail. This dragon, about which I have told you, was made of brass, and no one ever knew where Merlin had got it. It was marvelously light and maneuverable']. *Lestoire de Merlin*, 93.

35 College of Arms, Arundel MS 58, fos. 58–58v. Cf. 'Qvant li rois Artus fu desestordis, si traist l'espee de feurre qui ieta ausi grant clarte comme se doi chierge i eussent este alumees. & ce fu cele espee qu'il ot prinse el perron. Et les lettres qui estoient escrites en l'espee disoient qu'ele auoit non Escalibor. & cest j. non Ebrieu qui dist en Franchois trenche fer & achier & fust. Si disent les lettres voir si comme vous orres el conte cha en

arriere' ['When Arthur had regained his senses he took the sword from the scabbard, which shone with such a great light as though two torches had been lit. And this was the sword that he had taken from the stone. And the letters which were written on the sword said that it was called Excalibur, and this is a Hebrew name, which means in French "cut iron and steel and wood." And the letters spoke the truth, as you will hear in the story a bit further on']. *Lestoire de Merlin*, 94.

36 College of Arms, Arundel MS 58, fo. 58v. Cf. *Lestoire de Merlin*, 94–5.

37 College of Arms, Arundel MS 58, fo. 58v. Cf. Robert of Gloucester, *Metrical Chronicle*, 3478ff.

38 'Now from Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia.*' College of Arms, Arundel MS 58, fo. 58v.

39 For the quotation of this passage in full, see above, pp. 58–9.

40 See above, pp. 58–60, for this manuscript's similarities to Gray's *Scalacronica.*

41 College of Arms, Arundel MS 58, fos. 65v–66. Cf. Robert of Gloucester, *Metrical Chronicle*, 3955–60.

42 College of Arms, Arundel MS 58, fo. 66.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid., fo. 75v.

45 Ibid., fo. 62v. The interpolation is inserted following Robert of Gloucester, *Metrical Chronicle*, 3748.

46 During the sword in the stone episode, the scribe makes a similar mistake. Antor asks that Arthur 'myghte the swerd of the peron a-say.' Over the word 'peron' the scribe has inserted the English word 'ston.' College of Arms, Arundel MS 58, fo. 55.

47 Ibid., fo. 63v. Cf. Robert of Gloucester, *Metrical Chronicle*, 3826–9.

48 College of Arms, Arundel MS 58, fo. 64v. Cf. Robert of Gloucester, *Metrical Chronicle*, 3888–9. The list of Arthur's knights which follows has also been substantially reworded.

49 College of Arms, Arundel MS 58, fo. 63v.

50 Immediately following this lacuna in the text is a list of knights who attended Arthur's court. Again, the scribe has reworked and rearranged the material, and added details from the Brut tradition. Robert, for example, lists only 'þe king of orcades & of denemarch,' but the Arundel manuscript names 'Esky of Denemarche, Germes of Orkenye' (cf. Robert of Gloucester, *Metrical Chronicle*, 3906, and College of Arms, Arundel MS 58, fo. 65). The Arundel redactor has also added several characters to the list, including 'Erl Borel of Mayne' and 'of Chartres Erl Geryn' (London, College of Arms, Arundel MS 58, fo. 65). These changes seem to have

resulted from a careful comparison of Robert of Gloucester's list with the original list found in Geoffrey of Monmouth (cf. London, College of Arms, Arundel MS 58, fos. 64v–65, Robert of Gloucester, *Metrical Chronicle*, 3890–3910, and Geoffrey, *Historia*, ch. 156). The scribe makes one change which indicates that he has used a Latin source. For Robert's 'Þe barons & kniȝtes þat of þis londe a day / At þis rounde table were noman telle ne may,' the Arundel manuscript reads 'Barones come eke of the reaume of lyte lasse degre: / Hure names in the Latin stories he so wele may se' (cf. Robert of Gloucester, *Metrical Chronicle*, 3901–2 and College of Arms, Arundel MS 58, fo. 65).

51 Cleveland, Cleveland Public Library, MS W q091.92 C468; Dublin, Trinity College MS 489. Both manuscripts remain unedited. The Trinity manuscript is paginated rather than foliated. For a description of the manuscripts and their relationship to other *Brut* texts, see Matheson, *Prose Brut*, 259–62.

52 'Þe me John Barlo' is written perpendicularly in the margin of p. 86; the last page (p. 216) reads 'John barloue 1474'; and the monogram 'JB' appears on 75 beside the date 1474. Lister Matheson notes that E.D. Kennedy 'dates the manuscript to the sixteenth century; I date it to the late fifteenth century.' Matheson, *Prose Brut*, 261, n. 1.

53 Dublin, Trinity College MS 489, pp. 79–80. Smudges on the manuscript obscure the second half of 'Portismouth.'

54 Robert of Gloucester, *Metrical Chronicle*, 3426–40. See above, pp. 71–2.

55 Dublin, Trinity College MS 489, pp. 82–3.

56 *Brut*, 78.

57 *Lestoire de Merlin*, 53–4. Note that John Hardyng also follows the Vulgate at this point and claims that the Round Table had been established by Uther. See above, pp. 173–4.

58 Cf. *Brut*, 77.

59 Dublin, Trinity College MS 489, p. 83.

60 Ibid.

61 BL Landsdowne MS 204, fo. 78v.

62 Dublin, Trinity College MS 489, p. 85.

63 Ibid., 86.

64 In the Vulgate *Mort*, Gawain, who died the previous day, appears to Arthur in a dream and warns him against attacking Mordred without the aid of Lancelot. The following night Arthur dreams that he is cast down from the Wheel of Fortune. See *Le Mort le Roi Artu*, 225–8.

65 BL Lansdowne MS 204, fo. 86.

66 Dublin, Trinity College MS 489, p. 86.

67 In the Vulgate *Mort,* Segramour is the last of Arthur's knights killed by
   Mordred. He is, however, survived by Griflet and Lucan. See *Le Mort le Roi
   Artu,* 244.
68 Dublin, Trinity College MS 489, p. 86.
69 Cf. *Brut,* 90.
70 Cf. Gray's use of 'ascuns cronicles.' See above, pp. 61–2.
71 Cleveland, Cleveland Public Library, MS W q091.92 C468, fo. 28v.
72 Dublin, Trinity College MS 489, pp. 77, 78. The manuscripts of the *Brut* are
   similarly divided. As Brie's notes show, some manuscripts name Gorlois,
   while others simply refer to him as 'þe Erl' (*Brut,* 66).
73 Cleveland, Cleveland Public Library, MS W q091.92 C468, fos. 28v & 29.
74 Dublin, Trinity College MS 489, p. 79.
75 Cf. Cleveland, Cleveland Public Library, MS W q091.92 C468, fos. 29–30
   and Dublin, Trinity College MS 489, pp. 81–2. The Cleveland text correctly
   identifies Howell during the episode of the Giant of Saint Michael's Mount
   (fo. 30). The name 'Orell' might represent a mistake in the Cleveland
   manuscript or its exemplar, rather than a correction in the Trinity text.
76 Dublin, Trinity College MS 489, p. 85.
77 Ibid., pp. 78–9.
78 Ibid., p. 83.
79 *Brut,* 85.
80 The pieces of information are too vague to be attributed to any source
   specifically. See Geoffrey, *Historia,* chs. 165, 154, and 155.
81 Dublin, Trinity College MS 489, p. 85.
82 '... by an oar on the side of his head, which broke open the wound that he
   had received at the battle where the emperor was killed, which was not
   healed.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 81.1. In both Wace
   and Geoffrey, Gawain's death is merely recorded without any description of
   the cause. Cf. Wace, *Roman de Brut,* 13100–3 and Geoffrey, *Historia,* ch. 177.
83 See above, pp. 54–5, for Gray's account of Gawain's head wound.
84 Dublin, Trinity College MS 489, p. 85.
85 It is, of course, possible that what I have treated as additions to the Trinity
   text are actually omissions from the Cleveland text. Neither manuscript is
   copied from the other, and the changes could have been made at any point
   in the manuscript transmission. I think it unlikely, however, that the differ-
   ences between the manuscripts resulted from a scribe who was offended by
   the passages in question, and excised them from his copy.
86 For a discussion of the manuscript and its production, see Lister M.
   Matheson, 'The Arthurian Stories of Lambeth Palace Library, MS 84,'
   Arthurian Literature 5 (1985): 70–2.

87 For a transcription of the passage and a discussion of its sources, see
    Matheson, 'Arthurian Stories,' 76–85.
88 Lambeth Palace Library, MS 84, fo. 42.
89 *Brut*, 90.
90 Lambeth Palace Library, MS 84, fo. 47.
91 Ibid.
92 *Brut*, 78.
93 Lambeth Palace Library, MS 84, fo. 42.
94 Ibid., fo. 41v, quoted in Matheson, 'Arthurian Stories,' 86.
95 Ibid.
96 Matheson, 'Arthurian Stories,' 86–9.
97 Ibid., 91.

Conclusion

1 William Warner, *Albions England*, Anglistica and Americana 131 (Hildesheim
    and New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1971), 90.
2 Richard W. Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe* (Oxford:
    Oxford University Press, 1999), 31.
3 The Auchinleck *Short Metrical Chronicle* and *Le Petit Bruit* are the exceptions
    to this rule.
4 Harker, 'John Hardyng's Arthur,' 16. See also Harker's discussion of
    Hardyng's 'Composition Context' in Appendix B, pp. 383–6.
5 Matthews, *Ill-Framed Knight*, 141. For a discussion of libraries in England
    and on the continent, see Matthews, *Ill-Framed Knight*, 52–7, 141–5.
6 Meale, 'Manuscripts, Readers and Patrons,' 106. The manuscript referred
    to is Lambeth Palace Library, MS 491.
7 Cambridge, University Library, MS Dd. XI. 45, fo. 142. Quoted in McIn-
    tosh, 'Textual Transmission,' 182. For a discussion and quotation of this
    letter, see above, pp. 83–4.
8 Riddy uses 'textual community' to signify 'the community of people who
    read the same text, who are brought together simply by the act of reading
    (or hearing); a community which the text itself creates insofar as it seeks an
    audience.' Felicity Riddy, 'Reading for England: Arthurian Literature and
    National Consciousness,' *Bibliographical Bulletin of the International Arthurian
    Society* 43 (1991): 315.
9 Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*, VII. 3210–13.
10 For Chaucer's knowledge of Arthurian texts, see Kennedy, 'Gower,
    Chaucer,' passim.
11 Edwards estimates about two hundred such omissions occur in Ashmole 34,

a manuscript which seems to be relatively close to the original text. Edwards, 'Manuscripts,' 79.

12 Ibid., 83.

13 Ibid.

14 Ellis's edition collates only three versions of the text: Grafton's 1543 edition, BL, Harley 661 and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Selden MS B. 10. Edwards identifies six families of manuscripts, providing six variant possibilities (including blanks) but a complete study cannot be undertaken until a proper edition of the text is completed.

15 Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 124 (page numbered 142). Italics added.

16 For manuscript variants, see Harker 'John Hardyng's Arthur,' 162. Italics added.

17 Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 129. Italics added.

18 For manuscript variants, see Harker, 'John Hardyng's Arthur,' 171. Italics added.

19 'of whom the French make a mockery.' Maerlant, *Spiegel Historiael*, book 5, ch. 49, vv. 24. For a discussion of Kay's character, see Linda Gowans, *Cei and the Arthurian Legend* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1988).

20 On this manuscript, see above, pp. 16–17.

21 'very exquisite and very solemn and it lasted three days continuously with great joy and with great honour.' Lambeth Palace Library, MS 504, fo. 32.

22 'Here, John Mandeville inserts the *enigma* of the twenty-four knights.' London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 504, fo. 32.

23 Cf. '... and þe feste lasted þree dayes with grete ioy & worship. The þridde day of þis feste ...' BL Harley MS 4690, fo. 28. For a discussion of Mandeville's *Brut* and the identification of Harley MS 4690, see Matheson, *Prose Brut*, 328–34.

24 *Trioedd Ynys Prydein: The Welsh Triads*, ed. and trans. Rachel Bromwich, 2nd ed. (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1978), 252. For the complete list, see 250–5. I'd like to thank Linda Gowans who offered this interpretation of the 'enigma 24 militum' in private communication.

25 *Trioedd Ynys Prydein*, 252.

26 'in which Gawain stood out above the rest, which he repeatedly did very well, as is recorded in his histories.' Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 133, fo. 73v.1.

27 Any discussion of Mandeville's relationship to the 'enigma' is pure speculation. This gloss, however, does raise the question of Mandeville's authorship of BL Harley MS 4690.

28 BL Lansdowne MS 204, fo. 66v.

29 Ibid., fo. 78.
30 BL, Egerton MS 1992, fo. 55v.
31 Ibid., fos. 51v, 52, 53, 54, 54v. Unfortunately, these examples are not long
    enough to give an idea of when these readers handled the books.
32 'In this time of Ebrauke, David reigned in Judea and Silvius Latinus
    [reigned] in Italy.' Princeton, Princeton University Library, Garret MS 142,
    fo. 29v.
33 'Note that in the year of grace, thirty, Saint John baptized Jesus in the Jor-
    dan.' Princeton University Library, Garret MS 142, fo. 41v.
34 Princeton University Library, Garret MS 142, fo. 42v.
35 See, for example, Princeton University Library, Garret MS 142, fo. 29v, 63v.
36 'in the seige of Mount Badon [which happened] fourty-four years after the
    coming of the Angles.' Princeton University Library, Garret MS 142, fo. 53v.
    Cf. 'Et ex eo tempore nunc ciues nunc hostes uincebant usque ad annum
    obsessionis Badonici montis, quando non minimas eisdem hositibus strages
    dabant, *quadragesimo circiter et quatro anno aduentus eorum* in Brittaniam'
    ['From that time on, first the Britons won and then the enemy were victori-
    ous until the year of the siege of Mount Badon, when the Britons slaugh-
    tered no small number of their foes about forty-four years after their arrival
    in Britain.'] Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. and trans.
    Bertram Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969), 54, and
    55. Italics added.
37 'two Saxon dukes, Cerdic and his son Kenric, arriving in several ships, came
    to *Cerdichestre.*' Princeton University Library, Garret MS 142, fo. 53v. Cf.
    'Certic et filius ejus Kineric cum v. navibus in Britanniam applicuerunt in
    loco qui postea de nomine ejus Certichesora ... dicebatur' ['Cerdic and his
    son Kenric came to Britain with five ships in the place which afterward was
    called after his name, *Certichesora*']. *Flores Historiarum*, ed. Henry Richard
    Luard, RS 95 (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1890) I: 249. It is
    of course possible that both of these references derive from an intermedi-
    ary source.
38 Princeton University Library, Garret MS 142, fos. 54v, 55v, 60v.
39 See above, pp. 71–2.
40 *Morte Arthure*, p. 251.
41 Lydgate, *Fall of Princes*, VIII: 3120–2.
42 Withrington, 'Arthurian Epitaph,' 132.
43 BL Lansdowne MS 204, fo. 86v. For a discussion of this passage, see
    Withrington, 'Arthurian Epitaph,' 119–21. Withrington includes an illustra-
    tion of the added rubric as figure 1.

44 For a general discussion of the epitaph and its variants, see Withrington, 'Arthurian Epitaph,' passim.

45 Matheson, 'Arthurian Stories,' 91.

46 Harker, 'John Hardyng's Arthur,' 385.

47 Malory, *Morte D'Arthur*, 54.

48 Ibid.

49 'if I hate him, it's no wonder, because he has just done the greatest disloyalty that a king ever did, and by it he has damaged all the great men of this realm, and me myself he has deprived of my own child that God had sent me. He never considered that it was my son (I who was the highest man of the kingdom, and so much his friend that I took his sister to wife), and that my child was his nephew.' *La Suite du Roman de Merlin*, ed. Gilles Roussineau, 2 vols. (Geneva: Droz, 1996), I: 102–3.

50 Malory, *Morte D'Arthur*, 70.

51 William Caxton, prologue, *Godeffroy of Boloyne, or, The Siege and Conqueste of Jerusalem*, by William, Archbishop of Tyre, trans. William Caxton, ed. Mary Noyes Colvin, EETS, e.s. 64 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1893), 2.

52 Caxton, prologue, *Morte D'Arthur*, 1.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid.

56 Joseph M. Levine, *Humanism and History: Origins of Modern English Historiography* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987), 41.

57 As Lister M. Matheson points out, Caxton 'had twice printed the standard historical account of Arthur in the *Chronicles of England*.' Matheson, 'King Arthur,' I: 264.

58 Caxton, prologue, *Morte D'Arthur*, 2.

59 Ibid.

60 Ibid.

61 Edwards, 'Influence of Lydgate,' 427–8.

62 Caxton, prologue, *Morte D'Arthur*, 2.

63 Dean, *Arthur of England*, 102–3.

64 Levine, *Humanism and History*, 45.

65 Caxton, prologue, *Morte D'Arthur*, 2. Elizabeth Kirk suggests that Caxton accepted the historicity of Malory's book and that his prologue reveals his uneasiness, not about the historical nature of the text, but about the moral that readers might draw from it. See Elizabeth Kirk, '"Clerkes, Poetes and Historiographs": The *Morte Darthur* and Caxton's "Poetics" of Fiction,'

Studies in Malory, ed. James W. Spisak (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1985), 275–95.

66 Caxton, prologue, *Morte D'Arthur*, 2.

67 Ibid., 3.

68 Malory, *The most ancient and famovs history*, 1634, unpaginated.

69 Hume, *History of England*, I: 24. For the passage from Willliam of Malmesbury on which this relies, see above, p. 11.

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