THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

ARTHUR AND THE SIN OF PRIDE: AN INTERPRETATION OF THE CHARACTER AND CAREER OF ARTHUR IN THE ALLITERATIVE MORTE ARTHURE

by

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA

May, 1980

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CHAPTER I

The alliterative Morte Arthure is preserved in a manuscript in the library of Lincoln Cathedral, in the hand of Robert of Thornton, "who penned a great part of it",[1] and signed it "R. Thornton dictus qui scripsit sit benedictus. Amen."[2] In the Preface to the Early English Text Society's 1865 edition of the poem, Rev. George C. Perry states that "the date of Archdeacon Thornton and his connection with Lincoln Cathedral can be ascertained pretty accurately, as among the archives of the Cathedral there is preserved an instrument or deed of considerable importance, attested by him as Archdeacon, which bears date 1439".[3] The Thornton manuscript contains the only known copy of the poem.

J. L. N. O'Loughlin believes that although only one copy of the alliterative Morte Arthure has survived, the poem "must once have enjoyed a considerable circulation."[4] O'Loughlin's conclusion results from his opinion that the Morte Arthure poet's description of the giant of Mont St. Michel influenced that of Nebuchadnezzar in Purity, as well as the fact that there is what O'Loughlin considers "unmistakable evidence that the prophecies in the Awntyrs

of Arthur . . . are based on the alliterative Morte."[5]

O'Loughlin's suggestion that the Morte Arthure originally existed in more than one manuscript is supported by the comparison made by E. V. Gordon and E. Vinaver of the Caxton and Winchester versions of Malory's Morte Darthur with the Thornton Morte Arthure. The Morte Arthure has long been recognized as the source of Malory's story of Arthur's campaign against Lucius,[6] and the Thornton text has been accepted as the version that Malory used. Gordon and Vinaver observe, however, that "there are in Malory's text many passages . . . unparalleled in the poem and yet undoubtedly having their basis in an alliterative text."[7]

Tania Vorontzoff's study of the two versions of Malory and the Thornton Morte Arthure leads her to the same conclusion. In an article entitled "Malory's Story of Arthur's Roman Campaign"[8] she states that both Caxton and Winchester contain readings that cannot be explained by the influence of the existing Morte Arthure. Vorontzoff's evidence, as well as that of Gordon and Vinaver, includes numerous comparisons that seem to prove that the text of Morte Arthure used by Malory differed from the tradition

preserved in the Thornton MS in that it kept lines lost in the Thornton MS, and also used certain passages in different contexts, "indicating extensive textual changes in one tradition or the other, or perhaps in both."[9]

William Matthews, however, rejects the possibility that Malory used another alliterative text of the Morte Arthure. In The Ill-Framed Knight: A Skeptical Inquiry into the Identity of Sir Thomas Malory[10] Matthews argues that it is wrong to assume that Malory's deviations from the Thornton MS result from his following another text. He points out that alliteration is to be found throughout Malory's work, even in places where he is translating from the French. Matthews concludes that Malory's deviations from the Thornton MS could be his own inventions, resulting from his facility in alliteration.

Matthews is correct in his judgment that the extensive emending of the alliterative Morte Arthure on the basis of Malory's prosing of it is "an unjustifiable procedure"[11], but his argument against the possibility that Malory worked from another text of the poem is not impressive. Matthews considers the deduction that Malory used a text of the Morte Arthure very different from that which appears in the Thornton MS to be "unnecessary"[12].

At no point, however, does Matthews produce any evidence to prove that such a deduction is incorrect.

The Morte Arthure is a product of the alliterative revival, which occurred in the West Midlands and the North of England. O'Loughlin explains that although the use of alliterative forms as a vehicle for narrative goes back to the great days of Anglo-Saxon poetry, "as late as the end of the twelfth century, the dominance of French models and fashions so discouraged the use of alliterative verse that it went out of fashion completely in the South and most of the Midlands."[13] In regions remote from London and less susceptible to French influences, however, the four-beat line with three or more alliterating words continued to enjoy popularity, but with "a public which could not or would not pay for the recording of these longish poems on parchment."[14] O'Loughlin notes the presence of a gap in the written tradition between the years 1200 and 1350. After 1350, however, "when things specifically English regained favour and . . . the poets of the West Midlands and the North found patrons who could afford to pay for copies of their effusions",[15] the alliterative tradition experienced a revival, and the Morte Arthure

is considered to be one of the masterpieces of this revival.

O'Loughlin considers the alliterative Morte Arthure a romance, and he observes that the poem's "Arthurian connexions are clearly with Geoffrey of Monmouth and . . . with a text of Wace closely related to that which Layamon used."[16]

John Finlayson agrees that the poem's source is a chronicle in the tradition which derives from Geoffrey of Monmouth, but he suggests that it is incorrect to term the work a romance. Finlayson calls the Morte Arthure "an isolated work"[17], and he observes that although the poem is frequently treated as if it were a romance, "it is, in fact, a rare example of a mode of poetry which had been replaced by the romance."[18] Finalayson considers the Morte Arthure's sentiments to be "almost purely heroic"[19], and he mentions the Old French chanson de geste, the Chanson de Roland, as a work that is comparable to the English poem in spirit.

Attempts to fix a date for the poem's composition have resulted in much controversy, and a precise dating for the Morte Arthure has not been arrived at. O'Loughlin

suggests 1360 and says that "the latest possible date for its composition is set by the handwriting and watermarks as 1430-40. Sources which the poet must have used - the Voeux du Paon (c. 1310), Somer Soneday (c. 1327) - fix the earliest limits."[20] Eagleson's study of the costume described in the poem establishes about 1360 as the date of composition, in O'Loughlin's opinion. He considers this date to be in "accord with the spirit of the work and its echoes of English expansionism at the time of the Treaty of Brétigny (1360)."[21] There is little doubt in O'Loughlin's mind that figures and events in contemporary English history stirred the poet's imagination.

More recently, however, John Finlayson has cast doubt on the suggestion that the Morte Arthure was directly influenced by contemporary history. Finlayson does not deny that certain events in Edward III's reign influenced the Morte Arthure poet, but he considers the influence to have been "peripheral":[22]

> Such an influence could come from any number of sources, the most probable being a romanticized record or records of those events, such as we have in the Chandos Herald's Life of the Black Prince (c. 1385). In the absence of verifiable large-scale borrowing of detailed incident from Edward's reign it is impossible to make any more positive assertion.[23]

Finlayson concludes that the poem was composed later than 1365, but he admits that this view "cannot be proved."[24]

Larry Benson complicates still further the issue concerning the Morte Arthure's date of composition by suggesting "a much later date, around the year 1400."[25] Benson's argument is based on what he considers to be the Morte Arthure poet's interest in northern Italy, and his "fairly accurate understanding of the political situation in northern Italy."[26] Although Benson admits that "alliteration rather than a desire for accuracy"[27] probably accounts for the poet's choice of place names, he points out that all of the cities that are listed in the poem as owing allegiance to the powerful "Sire of Milan" (l. 3134) were in fact controlled by the Duke of Milan at the end of the fourteenth century. Benson feels that the poem's English allusions support the same date as the Italian references. He argues that "the presence of the Montagues in Modred's army . . . indicates a date of composition after Richard was deposed in 1399 and after the attempted rebellion by Montague and the other great lords in 1400."[28]

The language used in the poem provides no evidence to

facilitate an accurate dating, [29] and the Morte Arthure student must be content with the conclusion that the poem was composed sometime between 1360 and 1400.

The alliterative Morte Arthure comprises 4346 lines in the alliterative long line, of which 4321 are devoted to an account of Arthur's wars against Lucius Iberius, Emperor of Rome, his recall to Britain by the news of Modred's treachery, and his last fight and death. The first twenty-five lines serve as an introduction to the narrative of Arthur's career, and do not mention him by name. The poet first invokes God's grace to "schelde us ffro schamesdede"[30] (l. 3) and to "gouerne us here" (l. 4), "that we may kayre til hys courte, the kyngdome of hevyne" (l. 6). He prays that his words "nothyre voyde be ne vayne" (l. 10), but "plesande and profitabille to the popule that theme hers" (l. 11). These introductory lines to the alliterative Morte Arthure are religious in tone and conventional in form; they have been described as a " 'minstrel' prologue".[31] In spite of their stylized nature, however, these lines include a word that poses a serious problem of interpretation - "awke" in line 13.

"Awke" seems to be at variance in meaning with the lines that follow it:

> Ȝe that liste has to lyth, or luffes for to here,
> Off elders of alde tyme, and of theire awke dedys,
> How they were lele in theire lawe, and louede God Almyghty,
> Herkynes me heyndly and holdys ȝow stylle,
> And I salle telle ȝow a tale, that trewe es and nobylle,
> Off the ryealle renkys of the Rownnde Table,
> That chefe ware of cheualrye and cheftans nobylle,
> Bathe ware in thire werkes and wyse mene of armes,
> Doughty in theire doyngs, and dredde ay schame,
> Kynde mene and courtays, and couthe of courte thewes.
>
> (11. 12-21)

The usual meaning of "awke" is "perverse, wrong".[32] In his 1915 edition of the Morte Arthure Erik Björkman interprets it to mean "out of the way, odd, strange",[33] but William Matthews sees this as an attempt to eliminate difficulties in interpretation, and to make the poem's introduction appear consistent in its high regard for the knights of the Round Table. There is no other recorded use of "awke" with the meaning suggested by Björkman. Both the Middle English Dictionary and the Oxford English Dictionary suggest "strange, rare, marvellous" as a meaning for "awke", but both provide this occurrence in the Morte Arthure as their only illustration. Relying on the usual meaning of the word, Matthews thinks that

"the effect of 'awke' in this crucial position could only have been to impose some measure of ambiguity upon all the splendour and heroic victories that follow."[34]

Although Matthews possibly places too much reliance on this one word, his view that Arthur's career is tarnished by it deserves consideration. Especially is this so because the king's dream of Fortune and the philosophers' interpretation of the dream bear out this judgment.

Two-thirds of the way through the alliterative Morte Arthure, when Arthur has reached the highest point in his career and is about to be crowned Emperor of Rome, he has a dream which he describes to his philosophers for their interpretation. In the dream, Dame Fortune, a "duches dereworthily dyghte" (l. 3251), crowns him (l. 3353), presents him with orb (l. 3354) and sword (l. 3358), and seats him in a silver chair (l. 3266) in the topmost position of her jewel-studded wheel (ll. 3382-90). Within an hour, however, Fortune's countenance changes, and Arthur is flung from the wheel, his "qwarters . . . qwaste" (l. 3389) and his "chyne . . . chopped in sondire" (l. 3390). The philosophers whose interpretation he

seeks explain that the dream is an indication that he will "fersely falle with-in fyve wynters" (l. 3402), and accuse him of being guilty of the sin of pride:

> Thow has schedde myche blode, and schalkes distroyede,
> Sakeles, in cirquytrie,[35] in sere kyngis landis.
>
> (ll. 3398-99)

Critics of the Morte Arthure have dealt with the problem of Arthur's guilt in various ways. J. L. N. O'Loughlin chooses to de-emphasize the philosophers' judgment, as well as the events that prompt that judgment. In his article, "The English Alliterative Romances" O'Loughlin describes the Morte Arthure as the portrayal of "the rise of a noble, valiant king, and his fall brought about by the Aristotelian hamartia of his begetting of Modred."[36]

O'Loughlin's view represents an aspect of one of the traditional accounts of the decay and destruction of Arthur and his Round Table,[37] but is is not an accurate evaluation of the tragedy as it is narrated in the alliterative Morte Arthure because it is not based on textual evidence provided by that poem. In the three instances in which the circumstances surrounding Modred's origins are mentioned, no reference is made to the possibility

that Arthur's incestuous begetting of Modred is the cause of the king's downfall. Arthur refers to Modred as "me sybb, my syster sone" (l. 645) and Gawain later calls him a "fals fosterede foode" (l. 3776). William Matthews, in The Tragedy of Arthur, suggests that another remark of Gawain's - "of sich engendure full littyll joye happyns" (l. 3743) - shows that the poet was aware of the story of Arthur's incest, but there is no evidence to suggest that the Morte Arthure poet attributed the king's fall to this sin. Apart from these three short references, no mention is made in the Morte Arthure of events relating to Modred's conception and birth, and as Matthews has observed, "nothing is made of the matter in the poem."[38]

John Finlayson's interpretation agrees with O'Loughlin's in its view of Arthur in the first part of the poem as a noble, honourable ruler, "the champion of Christianity against Evil, epic hero and redeemer of his people,"[39] but it differs in that Finlayson finds fault, not with Arthur's incest, but with the wilful nature of his wars in the latter part of the poem. Finlayson considers Arthur's sin to be a wrong action, the shift of his wars from just to unjust, and he sees this change as a reason

for Arthur's final tragedy.

Another treatment of Arthur's sinfulness is presented by William Matthews in The Tragedy of Arthur: A Study of the Alliterative Morte Arthure, a work that has been described by Valerie Krishna as "the most important recent study of the Morte Arthure."[40] Matthews believes that the Morte Arthure's vision of Arthur is paralleled by medieval attitudes towards Alexander the Great.[41] Matthews sees the Arthur of the alliterative poem as an Alexander figure, admirable, though sinful, and he believes that the poet's portrayal of his hero is ambivalent from the very beginning. Matthews advances the argument that Arthur's program from the outset is "one of conquest, subjugation, and expropriation,"[42] i.e., that all of his wars are unjust. He perceives a mounting though gradual progression in Arthur's covetousness, and it is his belief that the king's subsequent cruelty is foreshadowed as early as line 13, with the use of "awke". Matthews does not grant Arthur one moment of unblemished kingship.

My argument synthesizes certain aspects of Finlayson's and Matthews' interpretations, and contributes an analysis, based on textual evidence, of the increase of Arthur's

pride, from its subtle beginnings to its more obvious and blatant manifestations. I agree with Finlayson that Arthur is portrayed positively in the early lines of the poem, and that a change in the quality and manner of his campaigns does indeed take place. I do not, however, accept Finlayson's description of Arthur's transgression as an external action. With Matthews, I see the king's sin as a corruption of character that betrays itself gradually, but I do not entirely agree with Matthews' evaluation of Arthur's character as ambivalent in the first part of the Morte Arthure. In an effort to provide a contemporary context for Arthur's culpability, my discussion opens with a definition, in medieval terms, of the sin the philosophers accuse him of committing - pride.

CHAPTER II

The philosophers' judgment of Arthur - "Thow has schedde myche blode, and schalkes distroyede,/Sakeles, in cirquytrie, in sere kyngis landis" (ll. 3398-99) - is central to a correct understanding of the alliterative Morte Arthure. In the estimation of the philosophers, Arthur has caused the shedding of innocent blood and the destruction of human life not through thoughtlessness, expediency, or even cruelty, but through pride. An accurate perception of the incidents that lead up to this verdict may be facilitated by first examining the sin of pride and medieval attitudes towards it, as well as the connection that medieval thought made between pride and fortune.

The concept of sin in general and pride in particular predates Christianity and derives, according to Morton Bloomfield, from "a vast and complicated history which gathers ideas and traditions from practically all the important races of the Mediterranean and Near Eastern worlds."[1] Bloomfield believes that these ideas and traditions became crystallized in the Hellenistic Age, and he sees the sins as a product of Hellenism.

Bloomfield explains that the Orphic mysteries were the first pagan religion to develop a sense of sin similar to that made familiar by Christianity. The Orphics regarded the soul as heavenly in nature, but held captive in an evil body. Orphism was preserved for classical antiquity by Pythagoras and his followers, and this Pythagorian school of thought exerted a substantial influence on Plato and other Greek thinkers.

Plato's theory of ideas provided a new solution to the problem of evil on a philosophical level: it was possible to understand the difference between evil which was matter and good which was pure idea by assuming the former evil because it was just a reflection of the latter, and therefore less real.

Aristotle approached the problem differently than Plato did: he analyzed good and evil and classified virtues and vices. As Bloomfield explains, Aristotle's ethical thought was based upon a belief in the primacy of desire, and he conceived of virtue as a mean and evil as an extreme.[2]

Aristotle's catalogue of virtues and vices in the Nichomachean and Eudemian Ethics includes neither humility

nor pride.[3] Yet, the sin of hybris - presumption which leads to undue self-confidence and disregard for the gods - - is a commonplace of Greek literature, and according to Bloomfield, this literary concept shows similarities to the Christian concept of pride.[4]

The fact that hybris was, indeed, a recurring concept in Greek literature is made clear by James Adams' analysis of the works of two Greek authors, Pindar and Aeschylus. Adams comments that to the poet Pindar

> . . . sin is egotism, self-seeking . . . the over-stepping of the limits appointed for the individual in his relations both to his fellow-men and to the Gods. The duty of self-repression and the dangers of arrogance and pride are themes upon which the poet continually dilates.[5]

According to Adams, the tragedian Aeschylus considered sin to be "ὕβρις, . . . , overweening pride or insolence, showing itself outwardly in the attempt to encroach on the rights of others or the Gods. It is . . . a kind of disease or madness, which fastens on the soul of the sinner, confounding his intelligence so that he can no longer distinguish between right and wrong."[6]

The Latins, according to the Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique, used the word superbia often in their literature, meaning by it excessive self-esteem:

". . . excessive élévation de l'âme et . . . grandeur immodérée."[7] Superbia was a vice, but not a serious one: "Il désigne, selon l'étymologie, surabondance ou surcroît."[8] After the concept superbia had been systematically defined and firmly fixed in the Catholic theological system, however, it acquired a meaning similar to that attributed to the Greek hybris. The fact that there is a resemblance between the two concepts is made clear by the Dictionnaire's explanation that in Catholic thought, the singular malice of pride is that it constitutes rebellion against God.[9]

The definition of superbia given by St. Augustine (d. 430) was undoubtedly influential in establishing this meaning for the term. In the De Civitate Dei Augustine writes:

> Quid est autem superbia nisi perversae celsitudnis appetitus? Perversa enim est celsitudo, deserto eo cui debet animus inhaerere principium, sibi quodam modo fieri atque esse principium. Hoc fit cum sibi nimis placet. Sibi vero ita placet cum ab illo bono inmutabili deficit quod ei magis placere debuit quam ipse sibi.
>
> [Moreover, what is pride but a craving for perverse elevation? For it is perverse elevation to forsake the ground in which the mind ought to be rooted, and to become and be, in a sense, grounded in oneself. This happens when a man is too well pleased with himself, and such a one is thus pleased when he falls away from

> that unchangeable good with which he ought rather to have been pleased than with himself.] [10]

Similar to St. Augustine's interpretation of *superbia* is that of St. Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274). In the *Summa Theologica* St. Thomas designates *superbia* as the vice that opposes *humilitas*: "Humilitas proprie respicit subjectionem ad Deum . . . Unde e contrario superbia proprie respicit defectum hujus subjectionis." [Now humility properly refers to the subjection of man to God . . . Hence pride refers to the lack of this subjection.] [11]

In commenting on Ecclesiasticus X. 14: "Initium superbiae hominis apostare a Deo" St. Thomas writes:

> Apostare a Deo dicitur esse superbiae humanae initium, non quasi aliquod aliud peccatum a superbia existens, sed quia est prima superbia pars. Dictum est enim quod superbia principaliter respicit subjectionem divinam quam contemnit: ex consequenti autem contemnit subjici creaturae propter Deum.
>
> [To fall away from God is said to be the beginning of human pride, not because it exists as a sin distinct from pride, but because it is the first part of pride. For it has been said above that pride scorns subjection to God, and consequently it scorns to be subject to a creature for God's sake.] [12]

In view of the opinions of these and other theologians, therefore, in the Middle Ages pride meant a rebellion or falling away from God, the unchangeable good.

One aspect of early Christian practice that is helpful in gaining an understanding of medieval attitudes towards the sin of pride is the habit of drawing up lists of vices. Morton Bloomfield has pointed out that in antiquity the "ubiquitous belief in the power of the name"[13] and the conviction that the correct name gave the possessor power over the thing being named resulted in the practice of compiling lists of sins. The habit carried over into early Christianity, and a consideration of two lists of sins, the Cassianic and the Gregorian, yields some interesting insights into the position and importance of pride in early medieval thought.

John Cassian (d.c. 435), whom Bloomfield describes as the father of the concept of the capital sins in the west, placed pride, superbia, last in his list of the sins. In Book V of the Collationes he discusses the sins in the order: gula, luxuria, avaritia, ira, tristitia, acedia, vana gloria, superbia. The fact that superbia is listed last does not, however, mean that it is least in importance. Cassian is the first theologian to use the image of a tree and its roots in connection with the cardinal sins. Pride is the source or beginning of all

other sins, and is therefore listed last, at the bottom or root of the tree, as it were. Bloomfield points out that the origin of this concept is found in the Vulgate, Ecclesiasticus X. 15: "Quoniam initium peccati est superbia. Qui tenuerit illam adimplebitur maledictis, et subvertet eum in finem." [Pride is the beginning of sin. He who holds to it shall be filled with evil, and it shall overcome him in the end.] He thinks that although Cassian gives more emphasis in his analysis to the dangers of the monastic vices - gula, luxuria and acedia - than he does to superbia, he probably regarded superbia as the chief sin of all.

A century and a half later Gregory the Great (d. 604) changed the order of the sins by putting vana gloria at the beginning, and luxuria at the end. He added invidia, merged tristitia and acedia, and kept superbia separate, as the source of all the others. Vana gloria and superbia were later combined, and the list became: superbia, ira, invidia, avaritia, acedia, gula, luxuria. Bloomfield explains that in the Moralia Gregory uses a verse from the Book of Job to justify the pre-eminence he gives to superbia, although he was also "aware of the statement in

Ecclesiasticus X. 15 that pride is the root of all sin. Gregory pictures the seven sins as springing from the poisonous root of pride and attacking us as an army."[14] According to Bloomfield, the Gregorian list of sins was the most influential in the West, Dante, Chaucer and Gower using some variant of it.

As Bloomfield shows, the concept of avaritia as the root of all evil also has a Biblical origin - I Timothy vi. 10: "Radix enim omnium malorum est cupiditas: quam appetentes erraverunt a fide, et inseruerunt se doloribus multis." [For avarice is the root of all evils, and some in their covetousness have strayed from the faith and have involved themselves in many sorrows.] Gregory's emphasis on pride rather than avarice is explained as something "one might expect from a man who as pope called himself 'the servant of the servants of God'." [15] Bloomfield goes on to say, however, that "the preoccupation with pride was more than merely personal, for it captured the medieval mind for a long time. In the later Middle Ages avarice gained increasing emphasis as the cause of all sin, but it did not replace pride officially because by that time the Sins had official status."[16] This change

in emphasis is ascribed to sociological causes:

> We may perhaps say that Gregory and the early Middle Ages did not emphasize avarice as the chief of the Sins because society then possessed little absolute wealth and what there was consisted largely of land . . . Avarice does not need much to manifest itself, yet greater wealth must make for greater opportunities for avarice. And wealth in the form of money is more measureable than wealth in the form of land.[17]

Bloomfield explains that "in a disciplined and corporate society, which the Middle Ages held as an ideal, exaggerated individualism, rebellion against the will of God, was considered particularly heinous . . . A civilization in which order and balance were the chief ideals could not look upon the vice of pride lightly: it struck at the roots of society, both human and divine."[18]

In his survey of fourteenth century European literature Bloomfield includes numerous examples of works that describe pride as the principal sin. Nicole Bozon, an Anglo-Norman author, produced a poem entitled Le Char d' orgueil, in which pride constructs a chariot whose parts are the vices. In a collection of exempla entitled Les Contes moralisés (c. 1350) Bozon explains: "par orgoill fust destruit beauté en Absolon . . . force en Sampson . . . sen en Salomon . . . vitesce en Agaal . . . richesse

en Nabugodonosar . . . solilté en Gabaa . . . hariesece en Eleazar . . . poer en Oloferne . . . langage en Amon."[19]

An Italian poem entitled Dei vizii capitali, which is contemporaneous with Dante's Divina Comedia, deals with the sins in the Gregorian order and gives pre-eminence to pride. The first stanza reads:

> Prima è Superbia d'ogni mal radice
> per che l'uom si riputa valer meglio
> del suo vicina, et esser più felice
>
> [In Pride the root of every sin doth lie;
> Hence man himself doth hold in loftier fame
> Than others, and deserving lot more high.] [20]

In England, Robert Mannying of Brunne's Handlyng Synne (1303) describes pride as the eldest of the "dedly doghters of helle."[21] Dan Michel's Ayenbite of Inwyt (1310), a translation of Friar Laurent's Somme le roy, treats of the sins in the normal Gregorian order. "The discussion of pride and its boughs brings in the almost inevitable reference to Lucifer . . . Pride is the devil's own (or eldest) daughter and fights against God himself."[22]

The seven sins are an integral part of Langland's Piers Plowman. Bloomfield says that the many references to the sins in all texts of the poem represent "much variation in order . . . the only stable element is the head-

ship of pride, which appears in the premier place in every case."[23]

In the Middle Ages, then, pride was a grievous sin, the source of all the others, but to discover pride's connection with fortune, we must now consider the genesis of fortune.

Howard Patch explains that the earliest conception of Fortune was related to the idea of Fate. The goddess Fortuna was, quite simply, a bringer of destiny. Towards the end of the classical period, however, Fortune came to be identified with blind chance, and " . . . from meaning simply 'the one who brings our destiny', the term later came to signify the one who performs that action in a capricious way."[24] This concept of Fortune as fickle or inconstant carried over from the late classical period to the early Middle Ages.

The goddess survived into the Christian era, but not without major readjustments. St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas both rejected "the figure of the goddess, and they agree in pointing out that in the last analysis what seems to come from chance has really a proper cause of its own."[25] Other early Christian writers, though, "retained both

Fortune and the Christian God, without any precise attempt to reconcile the two conceptions."[26] In Dante's thought, however, the pagan and Christian traditions were synthesized harmoniously, and Fortune became an agent or representative of God in his dealings with men in this earthly life. Dante explains Fortune's role in Canto VII of the Inferno:

> Colui lo cui saver tutto trascende
> . . . . . .
> ordinò general ministra e duce
> che permutasse a tempo li ben vani
> di gente in gente e d'uno in altro sangue,
> oltre la difension d'i senni umani;
> per ch'une gente impera e l'altra langue,
> seguendo lo giudicio di costei,
> che è occulto come in erba l'angue.
> Vostro saver non ha contasto a lei:
> questa provede, giudica, e persegue
> suo regno come il loro li altri dèi.
> Le sue permutazion non hanno trigue:
> necessita la fa esser veloce;
> si spesso vien chi vicenda consegue.
> Quest' è colei ch'è tanto posta in croce
> pur da color che le dovrien dar lode,
> dandole biasmo a torto e mala voce;
> ma elle s'è beata e ciò non ode:
> con l'altre prime creature lieta
> volve sua spera e beata si gode.

> [He whose wisdom is transcendent over all
> . . . . . .
> ordained a general minister and guide,
> to change betimes the vain possession, from
> people to people, and from one kindred to another,
> beyond the hindrance of human wisdom:
> hence one people commands, another languishes;
> obeying her sentence, which is hidden like the
> serpent in the grass.

> Your knowledge cannot understand her: she provides, judges, and maintains her kingdom, as the other Gods do theirs.
>
> Her permutations have no truce; necessity makes her be swift; thus he comes oft who doth a change obtain.
>
> This is she, who is so much reviled, even by those who ought to praise her, when blaming her wrongfully, with evil words.
>
> But she is in bliss, and hears it not: with the other Primal Creatures joyful, she wheels her sphere, and tastes her blessedness.][27]

In this context of inconstant Fortune as God's handmaiden, some medieval writers who dealt with the theme of the rise and fall of men and of nations were inclined towards the opinion that even in this earthly life the principal of justice prevails, and that those who experience unhappiness and tragedy are themselves responsible for bringing it about. Others, however, retained the notion that Fortune capriciously brings ill-luck to those who have done nothing to deserve it. Chaucer's Monk's story of the innocent Earl of Pisa illustrates that this concept survived throughout the period. The Bishop of Pisa "hadde on hym [the Earl] maad a false suggestion" (l. 2417),[28] and the Earl and his three children are imprisoned and allowed to starve: "Thus ended is this myghty Erl of Pize/ from heigh estaat Fortune awey hym carf." (ll. 2456-57). Charles Moorman is of the opinion

however, that the doctrine of the wheel which Fortune turned according to whim rather than reason, "because it did not adequately explain the human predicament, never really became, no matter how carefully argued, a satisfactory, or even possible basis for tragedy."[29] Moorman believes that most of the tragedies in the Monk's Tale are in fact "examples of the way in which pride of place or of intellect, sheer foolhardy hubris, leads to a fall from station,"[30] and it cannot be denied that the pride-fortune relationship was well established during this period. Those medieval writers who considered that Fortune, because she is an agent or minister of God's justice, acts judiciously rather than capriciously, singled out the sin of pride most often as the vice that contributed to or preceded grave misfortune.[31] An examination of several medieval tragedies of fortune may lead to a clearer understanding of this connection between pride and an alteration in fortune.

In Christine de Pisan's Le Livre de la Mutacion de Fortune (1403) fortune is not personified, nor is there any attempt, in this work, to establish a causal relationship between pride and a change in fortune. Yet, in the

catalogue of princes and empires that suffer reversal, pride, in varying degrees of seriousness, inevitably precedes the reversal.

Part VI of La Mutacion de Fortune opens with the story of King Vezonés of Egypt:

> En celui temps un roy regnoit
> En Egipte, quo moult tenoit
> Grant seignourie et grant pouoir,
> El riche ert de gent et d'avoir;
> Vezonés estoit appellez
> Qui d'orgueil fu si affulez
> Qu'il dit "qu'il voilait tout conquerre
> Le monde, par force de guerre."
>
> [At that time a king reigned
> In Egypt, who possessed much,
> A great kingdom and great power,
> He had riches and subjects;
> He was named Vezonés,
> And he was so filled with pride
> That he said he wished to conquer
> The entire world through force of war.] [32]

Vezonés is later defeated by the Amazons, who in turn are vanquished by Hercules. Christine later describes the Romans as a cruel, proud people: "C'yert un peuple crueulx et fier."[33] Their battles are born of pride: "Aprés ces batailles finees/Qui par Grant Orgueil furent nees"[34], but they, too, eventually fall. Christine de Pisan never explicitly states that nations and rulers suffer defeat because of their pride, but pride consis-

tently precedes misfortune in La Mutacion de Fortune.

Ecolgue XII of Petrarch's Bucolicum Carmen tells the story of the defeat and fall from fortune of the Shepherd-King Pan:

> . . . Pan maximus olim Pastorum et silva late celeberrimus omni.
>
> [Pan, once the greatest of shepherds and widely renowned through the forest.][35]

Written in the summer of 1346, this Eclogue is a particularly fascinating analogue of the alliterative Morte Arthure because it deals with the French-English conflict at Crécy (August 26, 1346), a correspondence that has been suggested for the battle of Sessoyne in lines 1963-2289 of the English poem.[36] Pan is an allegorical representation of the French King,[37] and he is portrayed most unfavorably. He accepts money or tithes ("decimum") from Faustula, his illicit lover (the papacy at Avignon):

> Faustula sollicitum curarum parte levasset;
> Nam grege de magno decimum largissima quemque
> Obtulit, atque famen sedavit pinguibus edis.
>
> [. . . Faustula came to Pan's aid, relieving his burden;
> Freely she granted him tithes of a sizeable flock of well-fatted
> He-goats with which he was able to appease the multitude's hunger.][38]

In arrogance, Pan ignores the needs of his mother (the Church), his brothers (the princes of Christendom) and the flocks and forests (the Christian community):

> Mater ipsa dolens rogitat misereque sorori,
> In crepitans te, poscit opem, fratresque superbo
> Affusi mestique greges silveque precantur.
> Quem non movissent? Sed inesorabilis unus,
> Durus, inhumanus, ferus, horrens despicis omnes.
>
> [Likewise your sorrowing mother, on behalf of her needy sister,
> Begs and implores your bounty; your brothers prostrate before your
> Arrogance, add their pleas, and the flocks and the forests join them.
> No one but you could hear them unmoved; but, harsh and inhuman,
> Callous and stern, you bristle, despising them all as beggars.] [39]

The Eclogue closes with the image of Pan, vanquished and fettered, lamenting his fate:

> "Cernitis hec, superi, seu quidam intervenit umbre?
> Ceca rotat fortuna fidem, regit omnia fatum!"
>
> ["Immortals,
> Can you look down on such things or is your sight clouded? Blind Fortune
> Whirls a just man on her wheel and fate rules supreme over all things".] [40]

In view of Pan's numerous sins, the appearance of "fidem" is strikingly anomalous. In the notes to his edition of the Bucolicum Carmen Thomas Bergin explains that Petrarch's attitude towards the French monarchy

changed in the decade following the defeat at Crécy, and citing Enrico Carrara, he suggests that the concluding ten lines of Eclogue XII were written, as a revision of an earlier conclusion, or as an addition, either late in 1356 or in the following year. As a result of Petrarch's mellowed position, Pan is not pictured as "a villain justly punished for his crimes but rather a victim of inscrutable fate"[41] in the closing lines of the Eclogue. Villain or victim, however, arrogance is as integral a part of Pan's character before his fall as it is of the character of Vezonés and of the Romans in Christine de Pisan's Le Livre de la Mutacion de Fortune.

Giovanni Boccaccio's De Casibus Virorum Illustrium (1355-60) is the longest and most comprehensive of medieval collections of tragedies of fortune. The De Casibus has been called "a history of Fortune . . . it is a collection gathered throughout the centuries describing the most memorable and crushing blows dealt by fate to the illustrious personages of mythology and history."[42] In this work, the causal connection between pride and a reversal in fortune is stated explicitly. In the Introductory Note to the Early English Text Society's 1924 edition of

Lydgate's Fall of Princes Dr. Henry Bergen explains that Boccaccio's purpose in the De Casibus was to teach "princes the virtue of wisdom and moderation by holding up to them the example of misfortune provoked by egotism, pride and inordinate ambition."[43] Laurence de Premierfait's French translation (c. 1400) of Boccaccio's Preface to the De Casibus says:

> Qvant Ie enqueroye quel prouffit Ie peusse faire a la chose publique par le labeur de mon estude, Ie tournay mon engin a considerer les maintiens & les meurs des nobles hommes & femmes . . . Ie les appercu ordoyez en vains delictz & en plaisirs deshonnestes . . . . Ie les regardoye enorgueillir & rebeller comme folz & oultrageux contre dieu . . . Iay pense en mon cueur de demener mon present liure aulcunesfois par exemples, & de escrire quelle puissance ait dieu contre les orgueilleux . . . des le commencement du monde Iusques a nostre temps nous voulons briefment demener & descrire en appert les fortunes & les cas daulcuns roys, ducz & [de] autres nobles hommes a abbaissez de haultains esta[t]s.
>
> [When I enquire what public good I am able to perform through the labour of my studies, I turn my thoughts to a consideration of the manners and customs of noble men and women . . . I see them pursuing vain and dishonest pleasures . . . I see them growing in pride and foolishly rebelling against God . . . . I thought that I would describe several examples in my present book, and write what power God has against the proud . . . from the beginning of time to the present day, we may briefly describe and examine the fortunes of several kings, dukes, and other noble men and women, whom fortune lowered from

their high estates.] [44]

Lydgate's Fall of Princes (c. 1438) is a paraphrase of Laurence de Premierfait's French prose version of Boccaccio's work, and in it the story of Nimrod's fall conforms closely to the medieval belief that pride precedes misfortune. Nimrod is a bold and mighty king who constructs a high tower, in the hope that he will be secure "ageyn deluges, yiff any falle shall" (l. 1081). His reputation grows, and so does his pride:

> Wherthoruh Nembroth off pride and surquedie
> Dempte proudli, as in his auys,
> He transcendid all othre in noblesse,
> Thouhte hymsilff most myhti & most wise,
> Felawe to God, as be liklynesse.
>
> (11. 1162-66)

God punishes Nimrod by destroying his tower:

> The same Lord off his eternal myht,
> This tour which Nemroth list to edefie,
> He made with thondir & with leuene liht
> Theroff to falle a ful gret partie;
> The boistous wyndis and the rage skie,
> And Goddis power on the tother side,
> Gan thus a-bate a parcel off his pride.
>
> (11. 1170-76)

Angry and undaunted, Nimrod begins the construction of another tower. His efforts are in vain, however, because God causes a confusion of tongues among his workers.

Nimrod grows old and feeble, and his fortune changes:

> For a-geyn the pride off this Nembroth
> Froward Fortune gan his cours to varie,
> And God also was in maner wroth,
> Off surquedie that he was so contrarie.
>
> (11. 1247-50)

The tragedy of Nimrod is followed by an exclamation against pride, and an exhortation to the proud - "Ye all proude, most royall in your flouris/Which that most truste for to regne longe" (11. 1282-83) - to keep the example of Nimrod "afforn your eyen" (1. 1303), and to avoid inordinate pride, because "Pride apperteneth nothyng to manheede". (1. 1396)

Thus it seems that pride was not only a serious sin in the Middle Ages, it was also a sin that was usually punished and corrected by Fortune. A consideration of some of the tragedies of Christine de Pisan, of Petrarch's twelfth Eclogue in the Bucolicum Carmen, and of Lydgate's story of Nimrod has indicated that in the minds of these writers, pride quite often preceded a reversal in fortune, and was sometimes the direct cause of the reversal. Although the early events of Arthur's career as it is described in the alliterative Morte Arthure are devoid of sinful pride, an appreciation of the gravity of the

sin is a necessary prerequisite to a correct understanding of the changes that later take place in the king's behaviour and deeds. It is to that story of Arthur that we must now turn our attention.

CHAPTER III

John Finlayson has observed that in the alliterative Morte Arthure the hero's "greatness is created in the poem"[1], and indeed, much of the early part of the work is devoted to a description of the great and glorious aspects of Arthur's character and career. In the first half of the Morte Arthure the king is portrayed as a noble, honourable monarch, loved and respected by his knights and by his allies: "ffore he was demyde the doughtyeste that duellyde in erthe" (l. 219). The narrative opens with a description of Arthur at the height of his power in Britain. He is an established king who reigns from a rich and splendid court, and has managed to regain all of the lands that his father ruled:

> And he had couerede the coroune of the kyth ryche,
> Of alle that Vter in erthe aughte in his tyme.
>
> (ll. 28-29)

After having recovered Uther's territories, Arthur creates new knights and kings, and then proceeds to distribute the newly acquired regions in a manner that proves to be acceptable to those "that bowes to his banere" (l. 69):

> . . . he doubbyd hys knyghtez,
> Dyuysyde dowcherys and delte in dyuerse remmes;
> Mad of his cosyns kyngys ennoyntede,

In kyth there they couaitte crounes to bere.

(11. 48-51)

In addition to bestowing on them duchies and kingdoms, the king rewards those who have been loyal to him by hosting a sumptuous Christmas celebration in their honor at his castle in Carlisle. The poet tells us that there "whas neuer syche noblay, in no manys tyme,/ Mad in myd-wynter in the weste marchys!" (11. 76-77).

The unswerving loyalty Arthur commands from his knights and allies, and the love with which he reciprocates are not only evident, however, in rare and isolated instances throughout the poem, or in the reward of the occasional duchy or dinner. The mutual devotion of Arthur and his men is a persistent and essential element in the king's character, as well as in the characters of his knights. The esteem in which Arthur is held is expressed by King Aungers, one of those who comes to his aid when Lucius threatens:

> Thow aughte to be ouerlynge ouer alle other kynges,
> ffor wyseste, and worthyeste, and wyghteste of hanndes,
> The knyghtlyeste of counsaile that euer corone bare.

(11. 289-91)

There is no trace of jealousy in Aunger's words, and not the slightest indication that he is paying Arthur compliments in order to preserve a proper "pecking order". One is left with the impression that he is stating a simple fact: Arthur is the best, and ought to be at the top.

Insofar as Arthur is concerned, his devotion to and dependence on his knights is such that he claims he is nothing without them. They uphold his position and maintain his manhood in such a way that his honour is not his alone, but also theirs. In praising them for rallying to his side against the Roman Emperor, he exclaims,

> My menske and my manhede ȝe mayntene in erthe,
> Myne honour alle vtterly in other kyngys landes;
> My wele and my wyrchipe, of alle this werlde ryche,
> ȝe haue knyghtly conqueryde, that to my coroune langes;
> Hym thare be ferde for no faees, that swylke a folke ledes,
> Bot euer ffresche for to fyghte, in felde whene hym lykes.
> I acounte no kynge that vndyr Criste lyffes,
> Whilles I see ȝowe alle sounde, I sette be no more.
>
> (11. 399-406)

The king's candor and dedication are disarming. His words, however, mean much more than they say. Quite clearly, his love for his men is strong and compelling.

Not so obvious, but just as important is the underlying and inherent self-assurance and psychological strength that makes it possible for the man to give the credit for his own qualities to those who love him and are loyal to him. Arthur seems to give all of his kingly attributes away, but in effect, he loses none of them. Indeed, his self-effacing, all-encompassing magnanimity is the kingliest thing about him.

Another noble aspect of Arthur's character as it is portrayed in the alliterative Morte Arthure is his completely justified, but superbly contained anger. Arthur's wrath first manifests itself very early in the poem, immediately after his celebration at Carlisle has been rudely interrupted by a delegation from the Emperor Lucius. Lucius' emissaries burst in on the court "sodanly" (1. 80), and his senator demands tribute from the king, declaring that he will be "fechede with force, and ouersette fore euer" (1. 111) if he refuses to comply. The Roman senator's fulminations occupy twenty lines, but the king speaks not a word in reply. His magnificently controlled anger is made evident, however, in this description of his facial expression:

> The kynge blyschit one the beryne with his
> brod eghne,
> That fulle brymly for breth brynte as the gledys;
> Keste colours as kynge with crouelle lates,
> Luked as a lyone, and on his lyppe bytes!
>
> (11. 116-119)

Arthur will not answer in anger, or without first taking counsel with his dukes, peers and knights. The king says:

> Thus schalle I take avisemente of valiante beryns,
> Wyrke aftyre the wytte of wyes knyghttes:
> To warpe wordez in waste no wyrchipe it were,
> Ne wilfully in this wrethe to wrekene my seluene.
>
> (11. 148-51)

He restrains his wrath, and displays the noble breeding his enemy's messengers lack by treating them, in spite of their impertinence, to a magnificent feast and a lordly display of his wealth and generosity.

The passage in the Morte Arthure which describes the feast (11. 176-230) seems to be entirely original. The chronicles upon which the poet has drawn for other details of his story of Arthur make no mention whatsoever of a banquet. In Wace's Roman de Brut Arthur consults with his knights immediately after Lucius' spokesman has read the letter containing the Emperor's demands. The king then gives his answer, and after they have heard his reply, the Roman ambassadors simply take their leave of

the English court:

> "A Rome, dist il, poez dire
> Que je sui de Bretaigne sire.
> France tieng et France tandrai
> Et des Romains la desfandrai.
> Et ce sachiez veraiemant
> Qu'a Rome irai prochienemant,
> Non mie por treü d'aus demander."
> Li message d'Artur tornerent,
> A Rome vindrent si conterent
> Ou est et comant le troverent,
> Confetemant a lui parlerent.
>
> ["In Rome", he said, "you may say that I am sire of Britain. I hold France, and shall continue to hold it, and I shall defend it against the Romans. And know in truth that I shall come to Rome shortly, not to bring tribute, but to demand it." They took Arthur's message and returned to Rome, and they spoke much of him, and of what they had found.] [2]

Layamon mentions only that Arthur clothes the Roman emissaries in fine garments before sending them back to their Emperor:

> Arður his writ nom an honden. mid wiðer-fulle worden.
> and þan beornen hit bi-tahte. þae þa aernde hafde ibrohte.
> and seoððe he lette heom scruden. mid aelchere pruden.
> mid þan haexte scrude. þa he hafde on bure.
> and hehte heom faren sone. to Luces of Rome.
> and he cumen after wolde. swa raðe swa he mihte.
>
> [Arthur took his writ in hand, and with scornful words,
> delivered it to the men who had come on the errand;

> and afterwards he caused them to be clothed with every pomp, in the noblest garments that he had in his city, and he bade them to go quickly to Lucius of Rome, saying that he would come after them as quickly as he could.][3]

In the alliterative Morte Arthure the enormously detailed description of the banquet with which Arthur entertains the Roman ambassadors before replying to their message is, therefore, a deliberate addition to, or expansion of the poet's sources, and it exemplifies his portrayal of Arthur as a gracious, splendid monarch.

Arthur's graciousness ends, and his anger manifests itself again in the reply he delivers to the messengers after taking counsel with his knights. After declaring that he will not pay Lucius tribute but will, rather, wage war on him, Arthur expresses his intention to brutually kill the Roman ambassadors if they are not out of his kingdom within a week:

> Be now lathe or lette, ryghte as the thynkes,
> For bothe thi lyffe and thi lyme lygges ther-
> appone,
> Thofe sir Lucius had laide the lordchipe of Rome;
> ffor be thow foundene a fute with-owte the flode
> merkes,
> Aftyr the aughtende day, whene vndroune es
> rungene,
> Thou salle be heuedede in hye, and with horsse
> drawene,
> And seyne heyly be hangede, houndes to gnawene!
>
> (11. 458-64)

Arthur's angry threats seem shocking, and they are certainly not in keeping with the courteous restraint he has shown towards the emissaries thus far. His promises of cruelty are surprising, however, only when they are considered in isolation. In the poem's context, the king's indignation is righteous and justified, and his harshness appears less out of character. A close re-examination of the reasons for Arthur's wrath may help to put it in its proper perspective.

The king's New Year's festivities have been interrupted and his court has been disrupted by a demand for tribute that is illegal, and by a threat that he will be "ouersette fore euer" (l. 111) if he doesn't co-operate. In the council preceding his reply to Lucius' messengers Arthur explains to his allies that he himself has "title to take tribute of Rome" (l. 275). He declares that, although Rome was lost "in tyme of myne elders" (l. 272), his ancestors occupied Rome for eight score winters (l. 278), and his kinsman Constantine "conquerid it aftyre" (l. 282); Rome is Arthur's own "heritage" (l. 642). Arthur's hostility towards Lucius and his emissaries is justified, therefore, and his decision to take up arms against the Emperor

is entirely in keeping with Finlayson's delineation of a "just defence of the Right."[4]

In giving Arthur's claim to Roman territory legal sanction, the Morte Arthure poet has omitted certain material in his sources, and has thereby changed the emphasis of Arthur's disagreement with Lucius as it is described in Layamon and Wace. In both of these chronicle versions of the story of Arthur's dispute with the Roman Emperor, no real attempt is made to present the matter as other than a question of power politics. As John Finlayson has observed, in Layamon there is "a strong hint of desire for conquest being the dominant motive in Arthur."[5] Layamon's Arthur declares:

> Ich wilnie a mine ponke. to walden al Rome.
> and he wilneð me in Brutene. to binde swiðe uaste.
> and slaen mine Bruttes. mid his balu-reses.
> And ȝif hit on mi Drihten. þe scop daeiȝ es and nihttem.
> he scal his balde ibeot. saere abuggen
> 7 his Rome-leoden. þer-fore scullen reosen.
> and ic wulle raeh beon. þer he nu rixleð on.
> Wunieð nu stille alle. ic wulle suggen mine iwille.
> ne scal hit na man oðer i-don. ah hit scal stonden þer-on.
> He wilneð al. and ich wilni al. þaet wit beiene aȝaeð.
> habben hit nu and aȝe. þe hit aeð maeȝen iwinne.
> for nu we scullen cunne. wham hit Godd unne.

> [I wish in my thoughts to possess all Rome, and he wishes to bind me most fast in Britain, and slay my Britons with his evil attacks. But if God grants it, He who formed day and night, he shall therefore perish, and I will be bold there where he now rules. Be still, now, and I will say my will: no man shall do it otherwise, but it shall stand thereon. He desires all, and I desire all that we now both possess. May he have it now and ever, who may win it more easily, for now we shall know to whom God will grant it.][6]

In Wace, some concession of justice seems to be given to Lucius in Arthur's comment, "De Bretaigne treü demandent;/ Avoir le doivent" ["They demand tribute from Britain; they are in the right".][7] The Morte Arthur, however, grants no suggestion of justice, either moral or political, to Lucius. In the English alliterative poem, therefore, what had been in the chronicles merely the prelude to a struggle between two powers seeking world domination becomes a struggle of right against tyranny, with Arthur emerging as a symbol of Right and Justice.

Arthur's decision to meet with Lucius in combat is followed by his appointment of Modred as regent (11. 644-47), his leave-taking of Guinever (11. 693-716) and the departure of his fleet for France from the port of Sandwich (11. 720-55). While crossing the Channel Arthur has a dream in which a splendid though dreadful dragon defeats

"in syngulere battle" (l. 824) a bear who "be-takyns the tyrauntez that tourmentez thy pople;/Or elles . . . somme gyaunt" (l. 824-25).

A curiously anomalous and potentially ominous note is struck by the poet in the first two lines of his description of the king's dream, because the dragon who comes "to drenschene hys pople" is later identified as none other than Arthur:

> Hym dremyd of a dragone, dredfulle to be-holde,
> Come dryfande ouer the depe to drenschene hys pople.
>
> (11. 760-61)

These lines are repeated, with very minor changes, in the philosopher's interpretation of the dream:

> The dragone that thow dremyde of, so dredfulle to schewe,
> That come dryfande ouer the deepe, to drynchene thy pople,
> Sothely and certayne thy seluene it es.
>
> (11. 815-17)

The presence of "drenschene/drynchene", "to drown, overwhelm", is puzzling, and is not paralleled in Geoffrey of Monmouth's version of the incident, which is, as Finlayson has noted[8], the original account of this part of the Arthurian story. In Geoffrey's chronicle narrative,

the dragon-Arthur is terrifying, but splendid. He comes flying from the west, and his glowing eyes light up the countryside. There is no suggestion, however, that he is a destroyer of his people:

> Terriblem quoque draconem ab occidente aduolare.
> qui splendore oculorum suorum patriam illuminabat.
>
> [A terrible dragon came flying from the west,
> who, with the splendour of his eyes illuminated
> the countryside.] [9]

As Finlayson has observed,[10] Wace's account differs from that of Geoffrey only by the addition of a few rhetorical flourishes. Wace's version reads:

> D'autre part veoit un dragon
> Qui de vers occidant voloit
> Et de ses ialz flame gitoit;
> De lui et de la resplendor
> Reluisoit terre et mer antor.
>
> [Also he saw a dragon who flew from the west,
> and a flame came shooting from his eyes,
> and his radiance was such that he illuminated
> both land and sea.] [11]

In Layamon, the dragon that represents Arthus is less splendid and somewhat more frightening. He is a fire-drake, a spoiler of cities, but there is still no mention of the possibility that he may annihilate his own cities:

> Þa com þer westene. winden mid an weolcnen.
> a berninge drake. burȝes he suelde
> mid his feure he lihte. al þis lond-riche.
> me þuhte a mire sigȝ eðe. þat þa sae gon to berne.

of leite ȝof fure. þa þe drake ferede.

[Then from the west, winding out of the clouds,
came a burning dragon, cities he swallowed;
with his fire he lighted all the realm;
I thought that the sea began to burn of the
light and fire that the dragon carried.] [12]

The Morte Arthure keeps the dragon-Arthur image that is used in all of the chronicle versions, but in addition to coming in splendor, as in Geoffrey of Monmouth and Wace, and rather than being an indiscriminate destroyer, as in Layamon, the dragon-Arthur of the alliterative poem comes to waste his own people. Malory's version of the Channel-crossing dream quite clearly substantiates the accuracy of the Thornton text of the Morte Arthure, for the Winchester manuscript reads:

He felle in a slumberyng and dremyed how
a dredfull dragon dud drenche myche of his
peple and com fleyng one wynge oute of the
weste partyes.[13]

Matthews has noted that the general effect of the changes in the Morte Arthure version of this incident "is to tighten the dragon-Arthur symbolism and to emphasize the dragon's destructiveness."[14] One could add to this evaluation the observation that the alliterative poem's suggestion that the dragon-Arthur has come to destroy his own people introduces a negative element

into an otherwise relatively positive portrayal, and has the effect of alerting the reader to the possibility of the presence of a facet in the king's character that his impeccable behaviour has, to this point, given no indication of.

There is, however, nothing negative about the manner in which Arthur is portrayed in the giant of Mont St. Michel episode. He is consistently presented as a pious, humble ruler, a model of Christian kingship, the saviour of his people, not their destroyer. Even Matthews is forced to admit that "the king's objective in this fight is admirable."[15] Matthews attempts to make this episode conform to his general interpretation of Arthur's character as ambivalent from the beginning by suggesting that "in making Arthur forego the help of the two knights who assist him in other versions, the poet may have had in mind to prepare for the rash self-reliance that Arthur displays on later occasions."[16] The Mont St. Michel incident as it is narrated in the alliterative Morte Arthure does not, however, create the impression that the king is acting unwisely when he decides to seek the giant by himself. The reader is left with the feeling

that Arthur behaves correctly when he goes off on this mission alone; he is a Christian monarch and it is his duty to protect his people. His decision to leave Kay and Bevedere behind is admirable.

Matthews and Finlayson both agree that the Morte Arthure's description of Arthur's fight with the giant of Mont St. Michel constitutes one of the poem's major expansions. The giant is a blend of two monsters mentioned in the chronicles: the giant of Mont St. Michel and another who is mentioned as having worn a girdle of king's beards. Matthews believes that the poet considered this episode extremely important, for "he gives it far greater weight than it has in the chronicles."[17] The main lines of the poet's changes, in Matthew's view, are to "focus the interest upon Arthur, to aggrandize the giant's monstrosity, and to enlarge the suffering of his victims."[18]

In an article entitled "Arthur and the Giant of Mont St. Michael's Mount," John Finlayson observes that the Morte Arthure "seems to owe little but the general outline of the incident to either Wace or Layamon, much less to Geoffrey, and develops the episode in a manner which indicates that our author attaches far more significance

to the encounter than did the writers of the chronicles."[19] Finlayson comments that what is significant about the giant in the alliterative poem is that he is an enemy of Christianity and not only an abductor of defenceless women. When Arthur challenges the monster his first accusation is not that he has killed Helen, but that

> ' . . . þow killede has cresmede childyre,
> Thow has marters made and merkede oute of lyfe.'
>
> (11. 1065-66)

Finlayson concludes that the encounter is treated, in the Morte Arthure, as much more than an 'adventure'; it represents a universal struggle against evil. He feels that the incident as it is described in the chronicles is concerned with the deed rather than with the qualities and values displayed. In the Morte Arthure, however, Arthur's "actions are released from the bounds of pseudo-history, and spread beyond the limits of the individual to have social, moral and universal implications."[20]

A major part of Finlayson's argument in "Arthur and the Giant of St. Michael's Mount" is concerned with pointing out the moral significance of Arthur's victory, and he draws many examples from the Morte Arthure's text

in developing his discussion. Although Finlayson does not expand upon his idea of a social implication to Arthur's actions, this latter suggestion can also be amply illustrated from the poem's text.

Arthur's initial decision to meet with the giant in individual combat is made in response to an appeal for help from his subjects in France. The messenger who meets Arthur when he disembarks at Barflete asks,

> As thow arte ryghtwise kynge rew on the pople,
> And fand for to venge theme, that thus are rebuykyde.
>
> (11. 866-67)

A formula similar to "of/to (modifier) pople" appears six more times during the narrative of Arthur's fight with the giant. When the giant's deeds have been described to him, Arthur cries out "for rewthe of the pople" (1. 888). To the murdered duchess's foster-mother Arthur describes himself as a "messenger to this myx, for mendemente of the pople" (1. 989). After Arthur has seen the giant, the poet tells us that

> . . . this comlych kynge, by-cause of his pople,
> His herte bledez for bale one bente whare he standez.
>
> (11. 1053-54)

In addition, after the giant has been defeated a "clamour

fulle huge" (1. 1198) exclaims, "thow has in realtee reuengyde thy pople" (1. 1204). Four lines later the "conquerour cristenly carpez to his pople" (1. 1208) and eight lines after that Arthur orders that the giant's treasure "be done and delte to my dere pople" (1. 1216). The cumulative effect of these repeated references to Arthur's "pople" is to cause the reader to interpret Arthur's decision to meet with the giant as an indication not of a "rash self-reliance"[21] but of a highly-evolved sense of social responsibility.

Arthur's determination to assume the responsibility for his people's defence is in direct contrast to the suggestion in the Channel-crossing dream that the king is a potential destroyer of his people. If the philosopher who interprets the dream is correct in his explanation that the dragon who comes to "drenschene hys pople" (1. 761) is Arthur himself, then the king's character will, indeed, undergo drastic changes if the dream's prediction is to be fulfilled. At this point in the narrative, however, no such changes are in evidence. The appearance of "awke" in the poem's prologue is unusual, and the suggestion that the king has the capacity to annihilate

his own is disturbing. In actual fact, though, Arthur has not yet done anything that is wrong or even incorrect. Thus far, the king's actions have proven him to be nothing less than the epitome of all that is noble and good.

Arthur's attitude towards his victory over the giant of Mont St. Michel is entirely satisfactory, and once again he betrays not a trace of self-reliance, rash or otherwise. On the contrary, the king claims no credit whatsoever for himself and with complete humility he exclaims:

> 'Thankes Gode', quod he, 'of this grace, and no gome elles,
> For it was neuer mans dede, bot myghte of Hym selfene,
> Or myracle of hys modyre, that mylde es tille alle!'
>
> (11. 1209-11)

In addition to being totally devoid of haughty self-sufficiency, the king's behaviour after this triumph shows no evidence at all of greed. Neither Arthur nor his knights indulge in pillaging or spoil-taking after the victory over the giant. Arthur takes only the giant's girdle and club, and tells his men:

> If thow wylle any tresour, take whate the lykes;
> Haue I the kyrtylle and the clubb, I coueite noghte elles.
>
> (11. 1190-91)

Arthur's knights, however, are caught up in his spirit and are not inclined towards covetousness at this point, because we are told that all of the giant's treasure: "alle the myche tresour that traytour had wonnene" (l. 1214) is "done and delte" (l. 1216) to the comouns of the contré, clergye and other" (l. 1215). Arthur instructs his cousin to construct a convent and a church "on the cragg" (l. 1219), "Criste for to serfe" (l. 1220), and thus in a sense he leaves tribute after this victory, rather than taking or extorting it.

Arthur's first engagement with Lucius takes place in France - British territory, and although this first encounter is a major military undertaking, it is similar in several ways to the king's fight with the giant of Mont St. Michel. The irreproachable conduct Arthur displayed in that episode is repeated in this incident. Lucius lives up to his earlier determination to

> Sende freklye in-to Fraunce, that flour es of rewmes,
> ffande to fette that freke, and forfette his landez.
>
> (11. 556-57)

He enters France "with ostes of enmyse, orrible and huge" (l. 1240), "brynnez" the "burghes" (l. 1241) and "fellez" the "folke, and fanges their gudez" (l. 1249). Once

again, Arthur is influenced in his decision to engage in combat by a plea for aid from his subjects. Shortly after his arrival at Castle Blanc Arthur is approached by messengers from the Marshall of France who

> Be-soghte hyme of sucour, and saide hym thise wordez,
> 'Sir, thi marshalle, thi mynistre, thy mercy be-sekez,
> Of thi mekille magestee, fore mendemente of thi pople.'
>
> (11. 1234-36)

The battle results in success for the British. Just as after his triumph over the giant, however, Arthur seeks no credit for himself or his knights. His first impulse is to offer thanks to "Crist . . . and hys clere modyre" (l. 1559) because

> Desteny and doughtynes of dedys of armes,
> Alle es demyd and delte at Dryghtynez wille!
>
> (11. 1563-64)

There is no evidence of any significant material gain for the British as a result of this victory in France. Although the poet says that Arthur's knights "raughte in the rerewarde . . . /ffor raunsone of rede golde and realle stedys" (11. 1527-28), there is no explicit statement of the fact that they actually carry away any goods.

Their "reaching into the rear-guard" seems an expression of their desire or inclination, rather than a statement of fact. The king clearly persists in his determination to accept no tribute and extort no ransom. In an act of generosity that parallels his construction of a convent and church on Mont St. Michel, Arthur gives away his own city of Toulouse to the messenger who brings him news of the success (l. 1567). He declares, however, that he will seek no ransom for the prisoners-of-war that his knights have captured, and he expresses his intention to exile the captives:

> I salle disseuere that sorte, so me Criste helpe!
> And sett theme fulle solytarie, in sere kynges landez!
>
> (11. 1575-76)

Arthur declares that he considers it unbecoming for a king to accept ransom:

> ffor it comes to no kynge that conqueror es holdene
> To comone with his captifis fore coutys of siluer.
>
> (11. 1579-80)

Although Peter the Senator alone is worth a ransom of "sextie horse chargede/Of siluer" (11. 1549-50) Arthur is no merchant;[22] the king 'covets' instead the health of his wounded knight Sir Ewayne fitz Henry, and he sends to the

captured senator the message that "thare salle no siluer hym saue, bot Ewayne recoure" (l. 1572). His warning that the senator will lose his life unless Sir Ewain recovers seems less a manifestation of cruelty than an expression of the king's love for his injured knight and an indication of his adherence to the biblical dictum of "an eye for an eye".

To this point in the narrative, therefore, the king has given no evidence of the sinful pride or "cirquytrie" of which he is accused by his philosophers during their interpretation of his Wheel of Fortune dream. His conduct has been above reproach at all times and in all situations. At the conclusion of the next battle, however, a barely perceptible but extremely significant change in Arthur's behaviour can be detected. We will now concern ourselves with this change, and with the subsequent growth of Arthur's pride.

CHAPTER IV

The next meeting between Arthur's and Lucius' men takes place in France, and it is similar to the first battle in France and the encounter with the giant of Mont St. Michel in that the engagement takes place in Arthur's lands, and no ransom or spoils are taken. A group of British knights under Sir Cador depart for Paris with their prisoners, but are intercepted en route by a band sent from the Roman camp. The British are outnumbered; in spite of this Sir Cador dubs several new knights, and engages and defeats the Romans. He kills the king of Lebe and several other "cheftanes" (l. 1872), and this causes the remainder of the Roman knights to flee "to a cheefe foreste" (l. 1873) where they are "hewede doune" (l. 1879) by the British. The British lose fourteen knights (l. 1912) in the encounter, but they destroy many more than fourteen of the enemy: "ffyfty thosande of folke was fellide at ones!" (l. 1851) Sir Cador announces the victory to his king with these words:

> We hafe cownterede to day, in ȝone coste ryche
> With kyngez and kayseres, krouelle and noble,
> And knyghtes and kene men clenlych arayede!
> . . . . . .

Thare faughtte we in faythe, and foynede with
sperys,
One felde with thy foo-mene, and fellyd theme on
lyfe.
The kynge of Lebe es laide, and in the felde leudye,
And manye of his lege mene that yare to hym langede!
Other lordez are laughte of vncouthe ledes;
We hafe lede them at lenge, to lyf whilles the lykez.

(11. 1893-95; 1898-1903)

Arthur's reaction to this victory differs from his response to the first victory in France and the triumph over the giant of Mont St. Michel in a significant way: he offers no thanks to God for what is clearly a British gain. Arthur grieves for his dead soldiers (1. 1920) and he feasts the survivors (11. 1946-49), but he makes no reference to the One whose will decides the result of all "dedys of armes" (1. 1563). After the first victory in France Arthur had admitted that "alle es demyd and delte at Dryghtnez wille" (1. 1564), and had exclaimed "Crist be thankyde" (1. 1559) when he heard news of the British success. He attributed his success over the giant of Mont St. Michel to God's grace - "Thankes Gode . . . of this grace and no gome elles,/For it was neuer mans dede, bot myghte of Hym selfene" (11. 1209-10). Arthur's failure to acknowledge God's intervention and assistance is conspicuous when it is contrasted with the profound

humility and gratitude he had expressed earlier.

Furthermore, his omission clearly contradicts two aspects of the accepted chivalric code: the need to trust in God for success in battle, and the necessity to offer thanksgiving when victory has been achieved.

In his discussion of the theological virtues in Le Libre del Orde de Cauayleria (c. 1276) Ramón Lull explains that

> Hope is a vertue whiche moche strongly apperteyneth to thoffyce of a knyght. For by hope that he hath in god/he entendeth to haue vyctory of the batayll/By reason of thaffyaunce whiche he hath gretter in god than in his body ne in his armes/cometh to the aboue of his enemyes.[1]

The sixth book of the Orde de Cauayleria is devoted to an explanation of the spiritual significance of the arms belonging to a knight. The gauntlets represent thankfulness:

> And thus as the knyght with his gautelots handleth more surely the spere or his sword/ And that to the sygnefyaunce of the gautelots he lyfte vp on hyhe his hond Ryght soo ought he to lyfte them vp in thankyng god of the vyctory that he hath won.[2]

Arthur's failure to acknowledge God's role in this victory and his omission of a thanksgiving mark the beginning of a series of increasingly grave lapses.

Although the geographic site of Arthur's next battle is uncertain, an understanding of the discussion concerning the exact location of Sexone/Sessoyne[3] is useful in judging whether or not the king is just or unjust in undertaking this campaign. William Matthews has traced the site in the Morte Arthure's sources and analogues. He notes:

> The site of the battle is stated by Geoffrey to be Siesia (Sessia in the Bern MS). Various texts of Wace's Brut, however, give Saoise, Soesie, Soissie, and Suison; Layamon has Sosie; the prose-Merlin employs the variant Ceroise . . . ; Robert Mannying gives Sinesy; the alliterative Morte Arthure splits its two forms between Sexone and Sessoyne; and Malory's single use is Sessoyne.[4]

Two editors of the poem, Edmund Brock and Mary M. Banks, interpret the two forms Sexone and Sessoyne to mean Saxony. John Finlayson's edition considers Sexone/Sessoyne to mean Soissons, a city in France approximately sixty kilometers north-west of Paris, and William Matthews' choice is Val-Suzon, "37 miles southwest of Longres on the direct line to Autun."[5] Matthews points out that early forms of the name Val-suzon - Susionis, Suissons and Suson - are "reasonable variants of Siesia."[6] In addition, Val-Suzon "meets the . . . requirements of topography . . . as the true site of that great Arthurian

battle."[7]

It is interesting to note that all ten of the suggested sites - the three mentioned above (Saxony, Soissons, Val-Suzon) as well as the seven other possibilities considered by Matthews in his article "Where Was Siesia-Sessoyne?"[8] - fall within the boundaries of Arthur's jurisdiction as it is understood in the Morte Arthure. Soissons, Val-Suzon, Sessiacum, Seissus Fons, St. Benoist de Seyssieu, La Sessie, the river Cisse, Caussy and Sissonne are in France, and France is one of the "contreez many" (1. 27) that is listed as belonging to Arthur: "Bathe fflaundrez and ffraunce fre til hym seluyne" (1. 34). Saxony is a "part of Almayne"[9], one of the British king's possessions as well:

> By conqueste fulle cruelle they knewe hym fore lorde,
> . . . . . .
> Of Almayne, of Estriche, and other ynowe.
>
> (1. 43, 1. 45)

In her discussion of lawful and unlawful war in Le Livre des Faits d'Armes et de Chevalerie (1408-09) Christine de Pisan considers a war against oppression to be just. It is a war "for to withstonde the euyl that wold defowle grieue/& oppresse the londe the contree &

the people."[10] In theory, then, Arthur's engagement with Lucius in the British territory of Sexone/Sessoyne can be described as a justified defence of the Right. In practice, however, it turns out to be something quite different.

Lucius assumes again the role of the aggressor; it is his intention to enter Sexone first:

> My herte sothely es sette, assente ȝif ȝowe lykes,
> To seke in-to Sexone, with my sekyre knyghttez,
> To fyghte with my foo-mene, if fortune me happene.
>
> (11. 1963-65)

Arthur gets news of this decision, and hurries to Sessoyne by a shorter route: "sethyne in-to Sessoyne, he soughte at the gayneste" (1. 1977). The engagement is characterized by much loss of life on both sides. Sir Kay dies as a result of wounds received in Sessoyne, and Lucius himself is slain. The Romans are thoroughly defeated, and the bodies of Lucius and his chief men are sent to Rome in lead caskets with the warning that "syche tresoure as this" (1. 2351) is the only tribute Rome will ever receive from Arthur.

Once again, however, no thanksgiving for victory is forthcoming from Arthur. The king, in fact, assumes for

himself the attitude of a god in his dealings with the two Roman senators who come to him, humble in defeat, to beg for their lives. "Hodles" (l. 2308) and "barefote" (l. 2309) they

> Knelyde be-fore the conquerourin kyrtilles allone;
> With carefulle contenaunce they karpide these wordes,
> "Twa senatours we are, thi subgettez of Rome,
> That has sauede oure lyfe by theise salte strandez;
> Hyd vs in the heghe wode, thurghe the helpynge of Criste;
> Be-sekes the of socoure, as soueraygne and lorde;
> Grante vs lyffe and lyme with leberalle herte,
> ffor his luffe that the lente this lordchipe in erthe!"
>
> (ll. 2312-19)

The same man who acknowledged that victory over the giant of Mont St. Michel was given through "myghte of Hym selfene" (l. 1210) and that success in the first battle in France was achieved "be crafte of hyme selfene" (l. 1560) answers the entreaty with these words:

> "I graunte", quod the gude kynge, "thurghe grace of my selfene,
> I giffe3owe lyffe and lyme, and leue for to passe."
>
> (ll. 2320-21)

Through military skill Arthur has attained a position of earthly might, and he demonstrates his power by bestowing favours with arrogant self-sufficiency. He has lost sight

of the fact that wordly success and lordship come from God, and are gifts that are only "lente" (l. 2319) for a prescribed period of time. He has forgotten that a knight "ouȝt not to trust al in his armes ne in his strength/but he ouȝt so muche affye & trust in god . . . that by the helpe & ayde of god he vaynquysshe his enemyes."[11] Arthur has experienced good fortune in his wars, but at this point he severs himself from the source of all goodness and all fortune by committing the sin of pride.

In the Orde de Cauayleria Ramŏn Lull explains that the order of knighthood was founded to provide protection for the weak and humble. A knight who is "prowd . . . corrupteth his ordre which was begonne by Iustyce and humylyte for to susteyne the hũble ayenst the prowde."[12] Arthur not only fails to "susteyne" and protect the two senators who beg for his mercy, he allows them to be humiliated still further by permitting his barbers to shave them, in token of their submission:

> They schauene thes schalkes schappely ther-aftyre,
> To rekkene theis Romaynes recreaunt and ȝoldene.
>
> (11. 2333-34)

Arthur then proceeds to use the two men to advance his own purpose: he sends them to Rome, to announce his victory.

In fact, his granting of "lyffe and lyme" to the two senators is conditional upon their compliance with his desire to use them as messengers. He tells them, "I giffe ȝowe lyffe and lyme, and leue for to passe/So[13] ȝe doo my message menskefully at Rome" (11. 2321-22). The senators surrendered themselves to Arthur and acknowledged him as their "soueraygne and lorde" (1. 2317) with the hope that they would be treated with kindness: "With leberalle herte" (1. 2318). Instead they are dealt with ungraciously, and without a trace of the "myldefulness and pyte"[14] upon which "the lawe is altogyder grounded . . . amonge crysten folke."[15]

The change in Arthur's behaviour is reflected in the altered conduct of his men. For the first time in the narrative, it is stated explicitly that the British knights indulge in the taking of spoils. They plunder the rich camp of the Romans:

> They kaire to the karyage, and tuke whate them likes,
> Kamelles and sekadrisses, and cofirs fulle riche,
> Hekes, and hakkenays, and horses of armes,
> Howsynge and herberage of heythene kyngez;
> They drewe owt of dromondaries dyuerse lordes,
> Moyllez mylke whitte, and meruayllous bestez,
> Elfaydes, and arrabys, and olyfauntez noble,
> Ther are of the Oryent, with honourable kynges.
>
> (11. 2282-89)

Arthur "has the Romaynes ryche rebuykede foreuer" (l. 2374). He buries his fallen knights, and then holds a council to consider "how he may conquere by crafte the kythe that he claymes" (l. 2393). Arthur decides to alter his military strategy from protection of his own lands to acquisition of territory claimed by Rome - Lorraine, Lombardy and Tuscany. He says,

> Here es a knyghte in theis kleuys, enclesside with hilles,
> That I haue cowayte to knawe, be-cause of his wordez,
> That es Lorayne the lele, I kepe noghte to layne;
> . . . . . .
> Than will I by Lumbardye, lykande to schawe,
> Sett lawe in þe lande, þat laste salle euer;
> The tyrauntez of Tuskayn tempeste a littyll.[16]
>
> (ll. 2396-98; 2406-08)

Arthur will spare "the pope landez" (l. 2410), observing that "it es foly to offende oure fadyr vndire Gode" (l. 2412). His decision to avoid invading papal territory is motivated not by conscience or by a sense of morality, however, but by shrewd self-interest: " if we spare the spirituelle, we spede bot the bettire" (l. 2414).

John Finlayson considers this change in Arthur's military strategy to be a move from just wars to "wars of aggression and acquisition, the categories of unjust wars recognized by the Church and medieval military writers."[17]

Finlayson points out that "in most of the medieval works on chivalry, five main causes of war are defined: three of these, namely, for justice, against oppression and against usurpation, are lawful; the other two, for revenge or aggression, are wilful."[18] Finlayson believes that Arthur's war against the Romans, his destruction of the giant and his final battle against Modred fall into the categories of just or lawful wars. He observes, however, that after defeating the Romans, "Arthur embarks on a series of conquests which have no direct connection with his professed reason for going to war; that is, he now indulges in wars of aggression which, according to the handbooks of chivalry, are not lawful but wilful."[19] According to Finlayson's understanding of medieval military theory, Arthur's decision to "conquer various lands"[20] is sinful, and stands in direct opposition to divine law.

It must be noted, however, that much earlier in the poem Arthur expressed a desire to "delitte in his [Lucius'] lanndez, wyth lordes ynewe" (l. 422). There is, in fact, a very "direct connection"[21] between Arthur's present plan and his original, "professed reason for going to

war."[22] He told the Roman ambassadors who came to Carlisle to seek tribute from the British to inform Lucius that he intended to proceed

> To Melayne the meruaylous, and myne doune the walles;
> In Lorrayne ne in Lumberdye life schalle I nowthire
> Nokyne lede appone liffe, that thare his [Lucius]
> lawes ȝemes;
> And turne in-to Tuschayne, whene me tyme thynkys,
> Ryde alle thas rowme landes wyth ryotous knyghttes.
>
> (11. 428-32)

If Arthur's desire to be lord of Lorraine, Lombardy and Tuscany is sinful now (as Finlayson believes it is), it surely must have been sinful then.[23] As noted in Chapter III, however (pages 45 and 46), the early lines of the poem lend support to the legality of Arthur's claim to Roman territory. Arthur's ancestors "ware emperours" (1. 278) who occupied Rome for eighty years, although it was subsequently lost to the "alyenes" (1. 273). Arthur himself has "title to take tribute of Rome" (1. 275), and therefore his decision to win back his "heritage" (1. 642), "the kythe that he claymes" (1. 2393) does not strike the reader as unjust, or even inordinately aggressive.

Rather, it is the gradual shift in Arthur's moral stance, and the external manifestations of that alteration that are significant. As we have seen, some of this

change precedes Arthur's decision to march into Lombardy: he ceases to be thankful to God for his victories, his knights indulge in much plunder-taking after the victory in Sessoyne, and finally, Arthur assumes the role of a god in his granting of "lyffe and lyme" (l. 2321) to the two Roman senators. By itself, Arthur's decision to conquer various lands is neither illegal nor unjust; his methods, however, are both.

Arthur enters Lorraine and launches a ruthless attack on Metz, Lorraine's most renowned ("alofede", l. 2418) city, and his armies level the city indiscriminately. When his soul was in a state of grace, Arthur constructed "a kyrke" (l. 1219) and "a couent" (l. 1220) on Mont St. Michel. He has since eliminated God's presence from his soul by sinning, and now he "sembles his knyghtez" (l. 3032) for the destruction of God's houses:

> Mynsteris and masondewes they malle to the erthe,
> Chirches and chapelles chalke-whitte blawnchede.
> Stone [s]tepelles fulle styffe in the strete ligges,
> Chawmbyrs with chymnés, and many cheefe inns,
> Paysede and pelid downe playsterede walles;
> The pyne of the pople was pete for to here!
>
> (11. 3038-43)

To be sure, Arthur is gracious towards the "duchez" (l. 3042) of Metz and the "countas of Crasyne" (l. 3045).

He extends to them, their children, and their personal retinues a "chartire of pes" (l. 3058) and a dowry (l. 3089). The practice of such courtesies does not threaten his dominance in the newly acquired territory of Lorraine. A similar attitude towards the Duke of Metz, however, might pose a threat, and therefore Arthur sees to it that "the duke to Douere es dyghte, and alle his dere knyghtez/To duelle in dawngere and dole the dayes of hys lyue" (ll. 3066-67).

Arthur pushes his assault over the Alps into Lombardy, after winning the mountain garrison of St. Gothard (l. 3104). He subdues the city of Como, and holds his court there (l. 3128). The "syre of Melane" (l. 3134) cedes that city without a battle, sends to Arthur "grete sommes of golde" (l. 3136) and "precious stonys" (l. 3142) and promises "a melione of golde" (l. 3144) a year in tribute.

Arthur no longer refuses material reward for his military prowess. He does not actively seize tribute, nor does he even mention the subject; it is offered to him "withowttyne askynge" (l. 3146). He gives no evidence, though, of the reluctance he once showed for taking

"tresour" (l. 1190) and accepting "siluer" (l. 1580).

Arthur's campaign in Tuscany is as pitiless as his seige of Metz. He

> Takes townes fulle tyte with towrres fulle heghe;
> Walles he welte down, wondyd knyghtez,
> Towrres he turnes, and turmentez the pople,
> Wroghte wedewes fulle wlonke, wrotherayle synges,
> Ofte wery and wepe, and wryngene theire handis;
> And alle he wastys with werre, thare he awayne rydez,
> Thaire welthes and theire wonny[n]ges, wandrethe
> he wroghte!
>
> (11. 3151-57)

Arthur's indiscriminate destruction of civilian property ("thaire welthes and theire wonny[n]ges") breaks a tenet of the accepted military code. Christine de Pisan condemns such action as "an evylle extorcyon and a grete vyolence made wrongfully vpon the people . . . suche waste of goodes they make euen as they were veray wolues rauyshynge wythout conscyence as thoughe ther were noo god or that they neuer shulde deye."[24]

Indeed, the phrase "as thoughe . . . they neuer shulde deye" describes quite aptly the spiritual state Arthur has reached. At the opening of the seige of Metz the king approaches the walls of the city without protection:

> The kynge schonte for no schotte, ne no schelde askys,
> Bot schewes hym scharpely in his schene wedys.
>
> (11. 2428-29)

His rash courage prompts Sir Ferrere to caution him. Arthur responds with the haughty assertion that annointed kings may commit such follies, with God's protection:

> Salle neuer harlotte haue happe, thorowe helpe
> of my Lorde,
> To kylle a corownde kynge with krysome enoynttede!
>
> (11. 2446-47)

Arthur's arrogant answer clearly contradicts the "commonly held opinion that a ruler's divinely delegated powers were limited."[25] Arthur has changed from a humble monarch who believed that all "desteny" (1. 1563) was "delte at Dryghtynez wille" (1. 1564) to a conceited tyrant who thinks he is able to control his own "desteny".

Arthur feasts his men at Viterbo (1. 3164), where he is approached by a "cardynalle" (1. 3177), a messenger from the Pope, who brings the news that the Pope is prepared to "crowne hyme kyndly with krysomede hondes" (1. 3185). "Awughte score childrenne" (1. 3188) are delivered as hostages for the truth of his words. Arthur had earlier expressed his intention to "spare the spirituelle" (1. 2415). The cardinal's message makes it clear, however, that Arthur has broken this resolution :

> The konyngeste cardynalle that to the courte lengede
> Knelis to the conquerour, and karpes thise wordes,
> Prayes hym for pes, and profyrs fulle large,
> To hafe peté of the pope, that put was at-vndere,
> Be-soghte hym of surrawns, for seke of oure Lorde.
>
> (11. 3177-81)

The glossary of Krishna's edition of the poem gives "overthrown, laid low" as meanings for "put . . . at-vndere". Arthur has, therefore, reversed his earlier decision to spare papal territory, and he has, in fact, attacked "the pope landez" (1. 2410). In so doing, he has acted in defiance of the medieval belief that to war against the Church was to commit a "grete wronge". Christine de Pisan explains: " . . . the emperoure is subgecte to the pope . . . thenne sith that he is subgette vnto the pope It were grete wronge that subgette shulde doo ayenst the souerayne."[26] In addition, according to Christine, all those who consent to fight for their king in such a war share his guilt: "Soo ought not thenne nor may not the subgettes obey after ryght to the callynge of suche a werre/but yf they wil dysobeye god in persecutyng of hys chyrche."[27]

The fact that he has sinned by persecuting God's church is of no concern to Arthur at this point. His

attention is concentrated on the information that he will be crowned in Rome, and the news fills him with "myrthe" (l. 3197). He treats the papal hostages with expansive generosity (l. 3197) and exclaims to his own knights: "Rome es oure owene!" (l. 3207). His acceptance of the crown offered by the Pope is triumphant, but as Matthews points out, "this is not the end of his ambition."[28] Arthur declares that after his coronation he will set out to conquer the Holy Land: "We wille . . . grayth ouer the grette see with gud mene of armes,/To reuenge the renke that one the rode dyede!" (ll. 3213, 3216-17). He is determined to be master of the entire world: "I salle be ouerlynge of alle that one the erthe lengez!" (l. 3211)

Gone is the gratitude and self-effacing humility that characterized Arthur's actions in the early stages of his career as it is described in the alliterative Morte Arthure. His first two engagements were undertaken "bycause of his pople" (l. 1053); he is now intent on serving only his own interests, and fulfilling his own ambitions. By laying waste to civilian dwellings and church property he has become the destructive dragon-

Arthur of his Channel-crossing dream:

> The dragone that thow dremyde of, so dredfulle
> to schewe,
> That come dryfande ouer the deepe, to drynchene
> thy pople,
> Sothely and certayne thy seluene it es.
>
> (11. 815-17)

Arthur's movement from humble monarch to vainglorious tyrant is gradual, and his first few lapses from grace are not as grave as his later sins. His early failings are simple omissions: he doesn't acknowledge God's role in his victories, and he forgets to offer a thanksgiving. His granting of life and limb to the Roman senators - "thurghe grace of my selfene" (1. 2320) rather than "ffor his luffe that the lente this lordchipe in erthe" (1. 2319) - is a clear indication of pride and self-centredness. His subsequent treatment of the two men, however, is ungracious and unchivalrous rather than sinful. He is conqueror of Lombardy, and although his acceptance of tribute from the "syre of Melane" (1. 3134) contradicts his earlier disdain for the "couatys of siluer" (1. 1180), it is neither sinful nor illegal. However, Arthur's wanton destruction of civilians (11. 3153-54) and their property (11. 3156-57), of hospitals (1. 3038), churches (1. 3039), monasteries

(l. 3038) and papal holdings (l. 3180) constitutes a series of serious sins, and it is these actions that warrant the judgment passed on him by his philosophers:

> Thow has schedde myche blode, and schalkes distroyede,
> Sakeles, in cirquytrie, in sere kynges landis.
>
> (ll. 3398-99)

CHAPTER V

Following their accusation, the philosophers urge Arthur to repent of his sins: "I rede thow rekkyne and reherse vn-reasonable dedis/ Ore the repenttes fulle rathe alle thi rewthe werkes" (11. 3452-53); to confess them: "Schryfe the of thy schame" (1. 3400); and to perform acts of penitential satisfaction: "ffounde abbayes in ffraunce, the froytez are theyne awene" (1. 3403). These injunctions constitute the three main aspects of the medieval doctrine of penitence: the need for contrition for the sins committed, the actual act of confessing the offences, and the necessity of carrying out acts of penance to satisfy or compensate for the injustice committed against God through sin. In his study of sacramental penance in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Joseph A. Spitzig observes that the third of these requirements, the performance of acts of penitential satisfaction, "might well be called the point of twelfth century teaching. The authors of that century vividly insist upon satisfaction as the only means of escaping the terrible pains of purgatory."[1]

Interestingly enough, Arthur never gets around to

founding abbeys in France, or of carrying out any other penance. In the context of medieval doctrine concerning the sacrament of penance, we must conclude, therefore, that Arthur's soul will spend many years in purgatory. He fulfills the first two requirements, however, although his progress through these early stages of penitence is slow. William Matthews suggests that even though "the last part of the tale is profoundly religious, . . . how far he [Arthur] moves into a state of penitence is dramatically left uncertain."[2] This is not an accurate observation, as at the poem's conclusion there is not the slightest doubt that the king dies reconciled to the church he has warred against, and at peace with God:

> "Doo calle me a confessour, with Criste in his armes;
> I will be howselde in haste, whate happe so betyddys."
> . . . . . .
> And thus passes his speryt, and spekes he no more!
> The baronage of Bretayne thane, bechopes and othire,
> Grayes theme to Glaschenbery with gloppynnande hertes,
> . . . . . .
> Throly belles thay rynge, and Requiem syngys,
> Dosse messes and matyns with mournande notes:
> Relygeous reueste in theire rich copes,
> Pontyficalles and prelates in precyause wedys.
>
> (11. 4314-16; 4326-29; 4332-35)

Neither the church's position nor the state of the king's soul is left uncertain, therefore, but Arthur's movement towards reconciliation is halting, and his response to the spiritual advice of his philosophers is far from immediate.

The king's initial reaction is not contrition or sorrow for his many sins. He responds to the counsel he has received by clothing himself in robes of kingly magnificence:

> Thane rysez the riche kynge, and rawghte one his wedys,
> A reedde actone of rosse, the richeste of floures,
> A pesane, and a pausone, and a pris girdille;
> And one he henttis a hode of scharlette fulle riche,
> A pauys pillione hatt, that pighte was fulle faire
> With perry of the Oryent, and precyous stones.
>
> (11. 3456-61)

His jewelled garments contrast sharply with the shabby clothing of Sir Craddok, whom he meets as he stalks out of his camp, "with breth at his herte" (1. 3465):

> A renke in a rownde cloke, with righte rowmme clothes,
> With hatte, and with heyghe schone homely and rownde;
> With flatte ferthynges the freke was floreschede alle ouer,
> Many schredys and schragges at his skyrttes hynnges,
> With scrippe, ande with slawyne, and skalopis i-newe,
> Both pyke and palme, alls pilgrim hym scholde.
>
> (11. 3470-75)

Finlayson points out the possibility of a moral meaning to

the difference between Arthur's peacock finery and Craddok's mean apparel: "Implicit in the contrast may be a comparison of Arthur's pride with the humility he lacks."[3] That Craddok is arrayed as a pilgrim may also be significant in the context of St. Augustine's views concerning citizens of heaven, the City of God, and citizens of earth, the City of Man. According to Augustine, on earth a true citizen of heaven conducts himself as a sojourner or pilgrim:

> For the city of the saints is above, although here below it begets citizens, who sojourn till the time of its reign arrives, when it shall gather together all in the day of resurrection.[4]

In contrast, Arthur, whose body is decked in material finery, and whose mind is preoccupied with the earthly concern of revenging Modred's treachery: "I salle it revenge" (l. 3559), rather than with cleansing his soul of its sins, seems to fulfill the requirements of a full-fledged citizen of the City of Man.

It is only when he is holding the dead Gawain in his arms that Arthur finally admits outwardly his culpability and his sinfullness: "He es sakles supprysede for syne of myne one!" (l. 3986). His subsequent expression of sorrow, however, is not a lament for his sins, but a

continuation of his elegy for Gawain:

> "O rightwis riche Gode, this rewthe thow be-holde!
> This ryalle rede blode ryne appone erthe;
> It ware worthy to be schrede and schrynede in golde,
> ffor it is sakles of syne, sa helpe me oure Lorde!"
>
> (11. 3989-92)

A public expression of sorrow for his guilt never appears. Since contrition is a necessary prerequisite to confession, we must conclude, however, that genuine sorrow for his sins is indeed inwardly present in the king's heart, for he receives the sacraments of penance and communion on his death-bed. Thus, in spite of his deeds of destruction committed out of sinful pride, Arthur dies in a state of grace.

CONCLUSION

The Morte Arthure's portrayal of the legendary British hero is original and provocative, and different in certain aspects from the characterizations that are to be found in the poem's sources and analogues.

Although the Morte Arthure's major theme is the rise and fall of a Christian king, in this work Arthur's tragedy is far from being a simple medieval tragedy of fortune. The king is not a victim of fickle fortune, he is a victim of his own pride. However, not only are his sins spelled out and set down, in gradually escalating seriousness, but his good points are described as well. Though Arthur is a national hero of some stature, who, "for almost all English historians . . . was the paragon of English kings,"[1] the Morte Arthure poet makes no assumptions about his audience's knowledge of, or attitude towards, the British king. He goes to considerable effort to repeat and rehearse Arthur's goodness, and in a very real sense he re-creates the king's greatness for us within the poem's framework. As a result, Arthur's fall, when it comes, is not simply the consequence of an unavoidable, inevitable turn of Fortune's wheel, but "the true tragedy of a conqueror who has unfolded before

our eyes both as conqueror and as man, whose glory and weaknesses have been present to us in the poem."[2]

The focus of the poet's moral concern in the alliterative Morte Arthure is with the problem of war, and in this, his approach seems to be unique. Arthur's sin is pride, superbia, but his pride manifests itself only in the manner and conduct of his wars, and not in his personal relationships or his private life. Arthur begins his life of sin by omitting a simple thanksgiving after a successful battle, and he ends it by perpetrating on innocent civilians what can only be described as wilfull, wanton, destruction. William Matthews shows that in the mainstream of the English chronicle tradition, Arthur's annihilation of any and all enemies raises no doubts. He points out that in Geoffrey of Monmouth's Historia, the king's operations against the Picts and Scots fall into the category of genocide; yet, not a question is raised. The Scottish chronicles of course, present a critical view of Arthur's wars, and so do the English chroniclers Higden and Whethamstede. The latter two Matthews dismisses as scholarly sceptics, and they are certainly in the minority. In the great majority of chronicle accounts, Arthur's

liquidation of his enemies poses no problem. In the Morte Arthure, however, we have "a critical portrait of the national hero on the basis of deep concern with the moral problem of war."[3]

The problem that is posed is never resolved within the Morte Arthure's framework. Arthur fulfills the ritual of reconciliation by receiving confession and communion on his death-bed, but his conversion is a hasty, last-minute affair, and it is neither convincing nor satisfying. He gives no public expression of sorrow for the outrageous crimes he has committed against the public good. However, even though the author's moral dilemma finds no solution in the lines of his work, he has given his concern lasting and eloquent expression, and for this reason the English alliterative Morte Arthure deserves our attention.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER I

1 Morte Arthure, ed. Edmund Brock (London: The Early English Text Society, 1871, reprinted 1898, 1904, 1937) p. viii.

2 Ibid., p. viii.

3 Ibid., p. viii.

4 J.L.N. O'Loughlin, "The English Alliterative Romances", Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages: A Collaborative History, ed. R.S. Loomis (London: Oxford University Press, 1959) p. 526.

5 Ibid., p. 526.

6 Malory, Works, ed. E. Vinaver (London: Oxford University Press, 1971) p. vii.

7 E.V. Gordon and E. Vinaver, "New Light on the Text of the Alliterative Morte Arthure", Medium Aevum, VI (1937) p. 86.

8 Medium Aevum, VI (1937) pp. 99-121.

9 E.V. Gordon and E. Vinaver, "New Light on the Text of the Alliterative Morte Arthure", p. 88.

10 Berkely: University of California Press, 1966. See Appendix H, pp. 223-38.

11 Ibid., p. 238.

12 Ibid., p. 238.

13 J.L.N. O'Loughlin, "The English Alliterative Romances", p. 520.

14 Ibid., p. 520.

15 Ibid., p. 520.

16 Ibid., p. 523.

17 Morte Arthure, ed. John Finlayson, York Medieval Texts (London: Edward Arnold, 1967, reprinted 1971) p. 11.

18 Ibid., p. 11.

19 Ibid., p. 11.

20 J.L.N. O'Loughlin, "The English Alliterative Romances", p. 521.

21 Ibid., p. 521.

22 John Finlayson, "Morte Arthure: The Date and a Source for the Contemporary References", Speculum, XLII (1967) p. 638.

23 Ibid., p. 638.

[24] Morte Arthure, ed. John Finlayson, p. 33.

[25] Larry Benson, "The Date of the Alliterative Morte Arthure", Medieval Studies in Honour of Lillian H. Hornstein, ed. J.B. Bessinger Jr. and R.R. Raymo (New York: New York University Press, 1976) p. 20.

[26] Ibid., p. 24.

[27] Ibid., p. 24.

[28] Ibid., p. 36.

[29] Morte Arthure, ed. John Finlayson, p. 33.

[30] All quotations from the Morte Arthure (unless stated otherwise) are from Edmund Brock's edition of the poem, published in 1871 for the Early English Text Society by the Oxford University Press.

[31] Ronald Waldron, "Oral-Formulaic Technique and Middle English Alliterative Poetry", Speculum, XXXII (1957) p. 796.

[32] The Middle English Dictionary, ed. Hans Kurath and Sherman H. Kuhn (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1962) lists "perverse. wrong" as meaning (b) for "awke".

[33] Morte Arthure, ed. Erik Björkman (Heidleberg: Carl Winters Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1915), notes to line 13.

[34] William Matthews, The Tragedy of Arthur: A Study

of the Alliterative Morte Arthure (Berkely and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1960) p. 113.

35 "Cirquytrie" is a dialect variation of "surquedry", which the Oxford English Dictionary (London: Oxford University Press, 1933, reprinted 1961, 1970) defines as "arrogance, haughty pride, presumption". Lines 3398-99 of the alliterative Morte Arthure are quoted as one of the illustrations for this meaning.

36 J.L.N. O'Loughlin, "The English Alliterative Romances", p. 524.

37 In the French prose Mort Artu and the romances that derive from it, Arthur's incest is an integral, though minor strand in a complicated web of human error and sin that results in the downfall of Arthurian society. See Matthews, The Tragedy of Arthur, pp. 120-21.

38 Matthews, The Tragedy of Arthur, p. 123.

39 Morte Arthure, ed. John Finlayson, p. 17.

40 Morte Arthure, ed. Valerie Krishna (New York: Burt Franklin & Co. 1976) p. 21.

41 Matthews summarizes these attitudes in Chapter II of his book. He shows that Alexander the Great was regarded ambivalently: he was admired for his achievements, and considered a scourge on humanity for his wanton cruelty.

42 Matthews, The Tragedy of Arthur, p. 128.

CHAPTER II

[1] Morton Bloomfield, The Seven Deadly Sins (Michigan State College Press, 1952) p. 1.

[2] Ibid., p. 9.

[3] Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique, ed. A. Vacant, E. Mangenot, E. Amann (Paris: Libraire Letouzey et Ané, 1931) Tome 11, "Orgueil", p. 1411.

[4] Bloomfield, p. 9.

[5] James Adams, The Religious Teachers of Greece (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1908) pp. 125-26.

[6] Ibid., pp. 145-46.

[7] Dictionnaire de Theologie Catholique, "Orgueil", p. 1411.

[8] Ibid., p. 1415.

[9] Ibid., p. 1411.

[10] St. Augustine, The City of God Against the Pagans, ed. and trans. Philip Levine (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1966) Book XIV, 13.

[11] Summa Theologica, $II^a - II^{ae}$, q. CLXII, a. 5, quoted from the Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique, "Orgueil", p. 1416. (My translation).

[12] Summa Theologica, $II^a - II^{ae}$, q. CLXII, a. 7, ad 2^{um}, quoted from the Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique, "Orgueil", p. 1416. (My translation).

[13] Morton Bloomfield, The Seven Deadly Sins, p. 37.

[14] Ibid., p. 73.

[15] Ibid., p. 74.

[16] Ibid., p. 74.

[17] Ibid., pp. 74-75.

[18] Ibid., p. 75.

[19] Quoted from The Seven Deadly Sins, p. 144.

[20] Quoted from The Seven Deadly Sins, p. 160.

[21] Quoted from The Seven Deadly Sins, p. 172.

[22] Morton Bloomfield, The Seven Deadly Sins, p. 183.

[23] Bloomfield, p. 201.

[24] Howard Patch, The Goddess Fortuna in Medieval Literature, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1927) p. 10.

[25] Ibid., p. 16.

[26] Ibid., p. 17.

[27] Dante Alighieri, La Divina Comedia, ed. Giulio Einaudi (Torino: Piccola Biblioteca Einaudi, Serie Testi, 1975) Inferno, VII, 11. 73, 78-79, p. 31. Translation from The Divine Comedy trans. J.A. Carlyle, T. Okey, P.H. Wicksteed (Cambridge, Mass.: The Modern Library, 1932) Inferno, pp. 42-43.

[28] The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, ed. F.N. Robertson (Cambridge, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1961), the Monk's Tale.

[29] Charles Moorman, "Malory's Tragic Knights", Mediaeval Studies, XXVII (1965) p. 123.

[30] Ibid., p. 123. Moorman's view is valid insofar as most of the Monk's tragedies are concerned. The heroes of three of the shortest tragedies, however - Peter of Spain, Peter of Cyprus, and Hugelino of Pisa - are entirely innocent of any sin or fault.

[31] The notion that pride preceded a fall was undoubtedly influenced by the biblical proverb: "Pride goeth before destruction, and the spirit is lifted up before a fall." (Prov. XVI, 18)

32 Christine de Pisan, Le Livre de la Mutacion de Fortune, publié d'après manuscripts par Suzanne Solente (Paris: Société des Anciens Textes Français, 1957) Vol. 3, p. 5.

33 Ibid., p. 245.

34 Ibid., p. 267.

35 Petrarch, Bucolicum Carmen, trans. and ed. Thomas G. Bergin (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1974) Eclogue XII, 11. 3-4.

36 See Matthews, The Tragedy of Arthur, p. 185; see also Morte Arthure, ed. Valerie Krishna, p. 31, and George Neilson, Huchown of the Awle Ryale (Glascow: J. Maclehose, 1902) pp. 60-66.

37 The allegorical interpretation presented on these pages is paraphrased from Bergin's notes to this Eclogue on pages 250-52 of his edition of the Bucolicum Carmen.

38 Petrarch, Bucolicum Carmen, Eclogue XII, 11. 44-46.

39 Ibid., Eclogue XII, 11. 81-85.

40 Ibid., Eclogue XII, 11. 158-59.

41 Ibid., p. 250.

42 Quoted from Dr. Henry Bergen's Introductory Note to his edition of Lydgate's Fall of Princes (London: The Early English Text Society, 1924) No. 121, pp. x-xi.

[43] Quoted from the Introductory Note, Fall of Princes, p. xi.

[44] Quoted from Fall of Princes, pp. li-lii (My translation).

CHAPTER III

[1] Morte Arthure, ed. John Finlayson, p. 14.

[2] Wace, Roman de Brut, ed. I.D.O. Arnold and M.M. Pelan (Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck, 1962) p. 104. (My translation).

[3] Layamon, Brut, ed. G.L. Brook and R.F. Leslie (London: E.E.T.S., Oxford University Press, 1978) p. 660. (My translation).

[4] Morte Arthure, ed. John Finlayson, p. 81.

[5] John Finlayson, "The Concept of the Hero in Morte Arthure," Chaucer und Seine Zeit: Symposium für Walter F. Schirmer, ed. Arno Esch (Tübingen: Max Neimeyer Verlag, 1968) p. 258.

[6] Layamon, Brut, pp. 654 and 656.

[7] Wace, Roman de Brut, pp. 98-99.

[8] Morte Arthure, ed. John Finlayson, p. 122.

[9] Geoffrey of Monmouth, Historia Regum Brittaniae, ed. A. Griscom (London: Longman's Green and Co., 1929) p. 468. (My translation).

[10] Morte Arthure, ed. John Finlayson, p. 122.

[11] Wace, Roman de Brut, p. 110.

[12] Layamon, Brut, p. 668.

[13] Malory, Works, ed. Eugene Vinaver, p. 118. Vinaver's edition uses the sign \ /to distinguish alliterating lines.

[14] Matthews, The Tragedy of Arthur, p. 248.

[15] Ibid., p. 128.

[16] Ibid., p. 128.

[17] Ibid., p. 25.

[18] Ibid., p. 25.

[19] John Finlayson, "Arthur and the Giant of St. Michael's Mount", Medium Aevum, XXXIII (1964) p. 113.

[20] Ibid., pp. 117-18.

[21] Matthews, p. 128.

[22] Nor will he permit his knights to be merchants; Arthur warns them to "woonde for no siluyre" (1. 1615).

CHAPTER IV

[1] William Caxton, The Book of the Ordre of Chyualry, ed. Alfred T.P. Byles (London: Early English Text Society, 1926) No. 168, p. 91. Caxton's Ordre of Chyualry is a translation of a French version of Lull's work, and was printed between the years 1483 and 1485. There are ten existing manuscripts of French translations of the Orde de Cauayleria, and the dates of four of them coincide with the date of the Morte Arthure's composition:

1. St. John's College, Oxford, Codex 102 - late fourteenth century.
2. Bibliothéque Nationale, Paris, French MS. 1971 - late fourteenth or early fifteenth century.
3. Bibliothéque Nationale, Paris, French MS. 19810 - late fourteenth century.
4. British Museum, Additional MS. 22768 - first half of the fifteenth century.

[2] Ibid., p. 92.

[3] Sexone appears in line 1964; Sessoyne is used in lines 1977, 2657, 2907 and 3530.

[4] William Matthews, "Where Was Siesia-Sessoyne?" Speculum, XLIX (1974) p. 680.

[5] Ibid., p. 686.

[6] Ibid., p. 686.

7 Ibid., p. 686.

8 These are: Sessiacum, Seissus Fons, St. Benoist de Seyssieu, La Sessie, the river Cisse, Saussy and Sissonne.

9 William Matthews, "Where Was Siesia-Sessoyne?" p. 683.

10 William Caxton, The Book of Fayttes of Armes and Chyualrye, ed. A.T.P. Byles (London: Early English Text Society, 1932, reissued with corrections, 1937) No. 189, p. 11. Caxton printed this translation of Christine de Pisan's Faits d'Armes in 1489.

11 The Book of the Ordre of Chyualry, op. cit., p. 81.

12 Ibid., p. 44.

13 The glossary of Valerie Krishna's edition of the Morte Arthure points out that "so" is derived from the Old English "swa", and that it means, in this context, "just so, if".

14 The Book of Fayttes of Armes and Chyualrye, op. cit., p. 222. In her discussion of the manner in which prisoners of war are to be treated Christine explains that although the ancients ". . . had a lawe that they myght make theire prysoners to deye yf it pleased them/or selle them to whom they wolde/or make them to laboure in theyre seruyse . . . amonge crysten folke where the lawe is altogyder grounded vpon myldefulnes and pyte is not lycyte nor accordynge to vse of suche terannye whyche be acursed and reproued." (p. 222)

15 Ibid., p. 22.

[16] Lines 2406-08 are quoted from Valerie Krishna's edition. Edmund Brock's edition uses "Turkayne" rather than "Tuskayn" in line 2409; the latter seems the more logical reading.

[17] Ibid., p. 81.

[18] Ibid., p. 12. In a footnote on page 12 Finlayson lists the following as "among the most influential works on chivalry and warfare": Ramón Lull's Orde de Cauayleria, Honoré Bonet's Arbe des Batailles, Christine de Pisan's Les Faits d'Armes.

[19] Morte Arthure, ed. John Finlayson, p. 12.

[20] Ibid., p. 80.

[21] Ibid., p. 12.

[22] Ibid., p. 12.

[23] In The Tragedy of Arthur William Matthews argues that Arthur's ambitions were, in fact, wrong and sinful from the very beginning.

[24] The Book of Fayttes of Armes and Chyualyre, p. 218.

[25] William Matthews, The Tragedy of Arthur, p. 133.

[26] Fayttes of Armes, p. 192.

[27] Ibid., p. 192.

[28] The Tragedy of Arthur, p. 134.

CHAPTER V

[1] Joseph A. Spitzig, Sacramental Penance in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1947) p. 179.

[2] William Matthews, The Tragedy of Arthur, pp. 135-36.

[3] Morte Arthure, ed. John Finlayson, p. 99.

[4] St. Augustine, The City of God, Trans. Marcus Dods (New York: The Modern Library, 1950) p. 479.

CONCLUSION

[1] Matthews, The Tragedy of Arthur, p. 179.

[2] Morte Arthure, ed. John Finlayson, p. 14.

[3] The Tragedy of Arthur, p. 179.

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