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MALORY: TEXTS AND SOURCES

P. J. C. Field

D. S. BREWER

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Caxton's Roman War

Academic debate, like civil life generally, depends on minimum assumptions of good faith.[1] When a senior scholar comes to believe that those who disagree with him have colluded for twenty years in unprofessional practices, from ignoring evidence to ethnic prejudice against Cockneys, it is in everyone's interest to try to generate more light and less heat.

The subject is the status of the two major texts of Malory's *Morte Darthur*, the *casus belli* a paper given to the Exeter Arthurian Congress in 1975, and the outraged scholar Charles Moorman, who put his view in a paper delivered at Kalamazoo in 1993.[2] The difficulties were twofold. The Exeter paper, by the late William Matthews, addressed a textual-critical problem that, like Feste's chevril glove, seemed to be capable of being turned inside out by a good wit. The scholarly world, however, is organised to deal with precisely that kind of thing, and might have made short work of this one had it not been for the human factor.

At first, it seemed as if the scholars involved had the measure of that too, at least to a stranger. (Exeter was my first Arthurian conference, and I was not even a member of the International Arthurian Society.) Professor Matthews had died before the conference, but his paper was read by his friend Roy Leslie, and his principal opponent, Eugène Vinaver, who was frail and partially blind, had a place of honour accompanied by the international president of the Society, Helaine Newstead. Professor Newstead, as a French scholar, was an unexpected auditor for a textual paper on the *Morte Darthur*, and her appearance was my first intimation that the paper was to be something out of the ordinary. It had a stylish and sympathetic delivery from Professor Leslie, and it left the assembled Malory scholars shaken. No-one seemed to think Matthews's argument could be dismissed out of hand, and if he was right it seemed that Vinaver's acclaimed edition of Malory was based on the wrong text, and might have been undermined in other ways by false assumptions. On that edition, a scholar of the highest abilities had spent forty years, and in

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the twenty-eight years since its first appearance, the world's Malory scholars, of whom many, perhaps most, were present to hear the paper, had failed to see what might be wrong with it.

Malory's work had been in effect entrusted by the civilised and educated world to our talents collectively. Even if not all of us had all the virtues, between us we had fresh minds and immense learning, and The System, like The Market in economics, was supposed to compensate for the shortcomings of individuals. Right or wrong, it should not have taken twenty-eight years for Professor Matthews's idea to have emerged. Nor could the issue be declared a side-show for textual specialists. All literary critics are supposed to be able to tell the difference between works by different major literary figures, whatever use they make of their discoveries. Even those for whom authors are Officially Dead rarely proclaim them to be so putrescent as to be indistinguishable. It was part of Professor Matthews's case, however, that we had all attributed one of the two Malory texts to the wrong author. It was hardly surprising that for the rest of the conference a frequent subject of conversation was when we would see his paper in print. Death, some said, might cause problems: not every scholar keeps his work-in-progress in a state from which his bereaved family and friends can bring it up to a proper standard. However, Matthews was said to have had a group of graduate students who could find references, and some formidable people wanted to see that happen – in the taxi-queue at the end of the conference, Professor Newstead was discussing that very matter with Robert Lumiansky.

Nineteen years later, Vinaver, Leslie, Lumiansky, and Helaine Newstead are dead, and Matthews's paper has not been published, nor has any explanation for its non-appearance. There might be legal problems, as Professor Moorman observes: they could need settlement by a Californian court. There are moral and practical problems too, that may matter more for those beyond the reach of United States law. Professor Matthews's estate will have rights in his words: but he, dead or alive, has moral rights in his ideas. At Exeter they were given in a form he approved, which I trust justified the conference administration in giving me a tape-recording of the paper, Professor Leslie in giving me a photocopy of the version he spoke from, and myself in giving copies of one or other to colleagues and pupils who seemed to need them. However, it was clear from the paper that Professor Matthews also wished his argument to appear as an academic publication like his other books – certainly annotated, and perhaps revised in other ways. As long as that might happen, any attempt at a response might be not only unethical but futile, invalidated by some part of Professor Matthews's case that had been sacrificed to conference time-limits. We ought to be willing to wait; but if it became clear that no better version would ever be published, it would surely be right to publish the Exeter paper as the best we would get.

After nineteen years, I had come to feel that the balance had swung in favour of publication, when Professor Moorman revealed at Kalamazoo that Matthews's argument existed in a viable longer version, previously unknown

to me and I presume to most Malory scholars.[3] The legal, moral, and academic status of the Long Version were uncertain. A photocopy that reached me some months after the Kalamazoo conference looked something less than final: it had some hand-written corrections, a reference to a missing Appendix, a clutch of spectacular typing errors,[4] a couple of incomplete notes, and others giving parenthetical observations where references seemed to be needed. I also felt that the last section might not be as fully worked-up as the rest. It did not reveal, however, if Matthews felt it lacked anything, or which version he wanted to take precedence if they disagreed, as they sometimes do.

However, Professor Moorman, who was on first-name terms with the author, felt it proper to quote and reproduce substantial extracts from the Long Version in his Kalamazoo paper. No-one as far as I know protested that that was illegal, indecent, or likely to pre-empt debate, and a recognised journal in the field published Professor Moorman's essay. Since Professor Moorman criticized not only the arguments of those who disagreed with Professor Matthews, but also their conduct in not responding in detail to Matthews's arguments, I concluded that it would be overscrupulous to defer detailed discussion any longer.

Before Matthews's case can be assessed, some preliminary observations need to be made.[5] Textual criticism deals in probabilities, some more probable than others. It is certain, as Vinaver showed, that the two Malory texts – the Winchester manuscript (W) and Caxton's printed edition of 1485 (C) – derive independently from a common original.[6] There is no other rational explanation for the number of passages in each that are not in the other but have close counterparts in Malory's sources. When Lotte Hellinga discovered printing-ink offsets on W that had been made in Caxton's printing shop at some time in the years 1480–83, she was naturally tempted by the idea that he printed from it. Her own expertise in early printing showed that to be unlikely, since W contains no compositor's setting marks, so she suggested that Caxton had had W copied and printed from the copy. However, the hundreds of passages in C that have counterparts in Malory's sources but are missing from W show neither hypothesis is tenable. Surprising as it may be, Caxton must have had

3   The Long Version was published in another special issue of *Arthuriana* (7.1, Spring 1997), edited by Robert Kindrick and devoted to William Matthews's unpublished papers. It is cited below in its published form, with parethetical references to the typescript in which I first saw it.

4   Aficionados will particularly enjoy note 33 of the typescript, recording Ian [= Dan] John Lydgate as writing his *Life of Our Lady* at the behest of King Larry the Fifth.

5   For the next two paragraphs, see 'The Earliest Texts of *Le Morte Darthur*', elsewhere in this book.

6   The *Morte Darthur* is cited, unless otherwise indicated, from Sir Thomas Malory, *The Works*, ed. Eugène Vinaver, rev. P.J.C. Field, 3 consecutively paginated vols (Oxford 1990), by page and line; Caxton readings in the Roman War story are cited from the parallel text at the foot of the page in *Works* by page and line with a final C: e.g., p. 185.3C.

two manuscripts of the *Morte Darthur* in his printing shop, and based his edition on the one that did not survive.

Vinaver also believed that the archetype of W and C was not Malory's holograph but a copy at least one stage removed from it, and that there was at least one intermediate copy between the archetype and W, and between the archetype and C. His arguments for those things could be contested, but that very fact serves as a reminder that we cannot set an upper limit to the number of intermediaries that may have stood between Malory's original and the archetype, or between the archetype and the texts we have. Not every copying stage necessarily leaves traces in surviving texts.

That said, we may turn to Professor Matthews's case, beginning with the Short Version, which was finished and may be final, supplementing its argument where necessary from the Long Version. The Short Version begins like this:[7]

> Our basic question is – who was responsible for the revision that Caxton printed in 1485? An answer may more readily be found if we list the qualifications which the reviser needed to possess.
>
> *First*: he must have been able to see that the size, language, style and narrative form of the Winchester version of the Roman campaign were not consonant with the rest of the *Morte Darthur*.
>
> *Second*: he must have had the linguistic and writing skills needed for converting the Winchester version into the shorter and superior Caxton version.
>
> *Third*: he must have been a man sensitive to the changes in spirit that had been made in producing the more romance-like Winchester narrative from the more epic-like alliterative poem, the *Morte Arthure*.
>
> *Fourth*: he must have been willing and able to carry the same process of romanticization still further.
>
> *Fifth*: he must have been either a northerner or a man able to understand northern terms well enough to translate them competently when he wished; and orientated enough to the north to retain a fair number of dialect words and forms, and to add a few more.
>
> *Sixth*: he must have had both an awareness of, and access to, the same literary works as were the sources for the Winchester version, namely the alliterative *Morte Arthure*, the French prose *Merlin*, and Hardyng's *Chronicle*.

Matthews's first four points concern the mind and life of the reviser of C, his fifth the reviser's use of language (with which we may associate style), and his sixth the sources. The life-and-mind issues may be taken together. Matthews's central contention here was that Malory made the Roman War story in W more romance-like than it was in the alliterative *Morte Arthure*, that the reviser made it more romance-like still, and that Malory, who made the first set of

7   Cited subsequently as Short Version; I reproduce the paragraphing, punctuation, and emphases of the photocopy Professor Leslie gave me. Cf. Long Version p. 113 (32–3).

changes, was the most likely person to have made the second.[8] Such an argument could not of course decide the question in dispute, but Professor Matthews, who was a master of presentation, did not apparently offer it or related issues as proof, but as support for his fifth and sixth points. We must see how far they do that.

The lack of biographical information about everyone involved is comprehensively inhibiting. The problem might have been solved at a stroke by Malory Letters to match the Paston Letters or by Caxton's complete business correspondence: 'Dear Lady Malory, Master Caxton hath found an hedge-priest from Grimsby that will do the business with your late husband's book. . . .' But we have nothing like that, only probabilities based on thin evidence, which in history are rarely compelling.

Given the shortage of conventional biographical evidence, a decision about who reworked an alliterative English verse romance into semi-alliterative prose might be based on comparing similar reworkings by all possible candidates, including of course the original from which each reworking was made. We have no such reworkings, and the character of the original on which the Caxton Roman War story was based is a matter of dispute. That makes it impossible to say with confidence what would have been done by Malory or Caxton or any unknown third party. Attempts have been made on other, necessarily less secure, grounds to show that the life or mentality of one candidate or another made him a particularly plausible reviser. Matthews had no difficulty in showing how insubstantial was the case made out for Caxton by Vinaver, Sally Shaw, and others, and it is difficult to see how a comparable case for any one else could be more compelling: the corresponding part of Matthews's case for Malory himself certainly is not.[9] The problem is that almost all the things that the adverse parties have claimed to detect are arguably cultural or literary commonplaces. Sally Shaw, for instance, may well have been right in thinking the reviser tried to preserve religious and chivalric elements in his original, but not only Malory and Caxton but most of the population of late-fifteenth-century England might have wanted to do the same.

It is also inhibiting that we have so little evidence about the manuscript circulation and reader response to the *Morte Darthur* before 1485. The anomalies in Malory's Roman War story must have been acceptable to Malory himself for them to have come into being, and they must have unsettled someone later or they would not have been removed. Beyond that it is difficult to go. Malory, who put the anomalies into the story, might be thought the least likely person to have wished them out again; but even if we knew that he had come to want a story like the revised version in C, we could not be sure that he was the reviser. Fifteenth-century readers lacked (above all with vernacular prose

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romances) any modern sense of authorial rights, so any reader dissatisfied with the story might have set about 'improving' it, and we can only guess how many readers read the *Morte Darthur* before 1485, and what they thought of it.

It might be thought that, since printing creates multiple copies of evidence of a bulky and relatively durable kind, we could at least make reliable deductions about the part of Caxton's life concerned with the physical production of books. So Matthews suggested that Caxton could not be the reviser of the Roman War, because he was too busy in 1484 printing and publishing other books.[10] Since then, however, Lotte Hellinga has proposed a number of changes to the accepted chronology of Caxton's work that may affect that theory.[11] More important, natural though it may be to assume that a large book published in mid-1485 would have been prepared for the press in 1484, we have for once clear evidence that Caxton's printing house was doing substantial work on the *Morte Darthur* appreciably earlier. The printing ink Dr Hellinga discovered proves that W was being seriously worked on there at some time during 1480–83. If the work was in progress so early, it is difficult to rule out the possibility that it began earlier still.

Matthews argued that the reworking of the Roman War story should not be attributed to Caxton because Caxton's writing was habitually hasty, careless, and showed no interest in style, and he never reworked any other book as thoroughly as this part of the *Morte Darthur*.[12] How much reworking the reviser is thought to have done depends on one's assumptions about the character of the original he worked from, and that, as will appear later, is also in dispute. Even on minimum assumptions, however, this is a strong argument; but it assumes that Caxton behaved consistently. Among the things that might have made him behave uncharacteristically on this occasion, it has been suggested that his principal patron, Anthony Wydeville Earl Rivers, may have had a special interest in the project, because of his own chivalric tastes or to provide suitable reading for his nephew Edward, the Yorkist Prince of Wales, whose official tutor he was; that, among the 'noble jentylmen' who Caxton said had demanded that he print a version of the Arthurian story, Rivers was the 'one in specyal' who overwhelmed him with a comprehensive defence of Arthur's historicity; and that Rivers might have provided the manuscript from which Caxton worked.[13] Something produced for one's principal patron or one's future king might get very special treatment, with or without hints

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8 The view of Matthews's collaborator James Spisak in his 'Malory Revises His Vocabulary', *Poetica* (1984), 27–30.
9 Short Version, pp. 11 (Vinaver), 12 (Sally Shaw), 12–13 (Norman Blake) for Caxton; p. 17 for Malory.

10 Short Version p. 14, Long Version p. 117 (37–8).
11 *Caxton in Focus* (London 1982), passim.
12 Short Version pp. 11, 14–15, Long Version p. 118 (38–9).
13 See Richard R. Griffith, 'Arthur's Author: The Mystery of Sir Thomas Malory', in *Ventures in Research* 1 (1972), 7–43; idem, 'The Authorship Question Reconsidered', in *Aspects of Malory*, ed. T. Takamiya and D.S. Brewer (Cambridge 1981); *One in Specyal*, ed. Sydney Hart (Presteigne 1985), pp. 3–13 (and cf. *Works*, p. cxliv.16); and J.R. Goodman, 'Malory and Caxton's Chivalric Series, 1481–85', in *Studies in Malory*, ed. J.W. Spisak (Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1985), pp. 257–74.

rom the intended recipient. True or false, these theories show how difficult is
: to find certainty in the lives of Caxton, Malory, and those about them.

Again from internal evidence, Matthews argued that Caxton habitually
aid in his prefaces what he had done to texts he printed, and he did not say
hat he had substantially rewritten a section of the *Morte Darthur*, only that he
lad divided it into books and chapters and printed it 'after a copye unto me
lelyverd'.[14] Matthews could have added that the latter was a considered
tatement: it was made twice. However, even if he was the reviser, Caxton
night have made that statement and thought it true. A writer so energetic
night have thought that reworking a passage less than 8500 words long was
lot worth mentioning.[15] It constitutes less than 6% of the *Morte Darthur*,[16] and
lot everyone making a short statement that is true of 94% of something will
eel obliged to add qualifications about the rest.

There might also be reasons for Caxton, if he was the reviser, to have bent
he truth a little, particularly over one change in the Roman War section of the
Morte Darthur, which happens to be, of all the changes to that book, the one we
an attribute confidently to a particular person. In *W*, as Arthur sails across the
Channel he has an ominous dream about a fight between a dragon and a bear,
n which the bear is killed.[17] A philosopher tells him the dragon represents
limself, and the bear 'som tyraunte that turmentis thy peple'. In *C*, the bear is
six times) turned into a boar. The change must have been deliberate, and it
reated a bold political allusion:[18] the boar was the badge of King Richard III
ind the dragon that of Henry Tudor. The allusion would only have made
ense in or just before 1485, and it is difficult to see who could have been
esponsible for it but Caxton himself, who four years later was to use a compa-
able stratagem to pay a compliment to Henry Tudor's wife, Elizabeth of York:
le called the anonymous heroine of a romance he translated for Henry's court
Eglantyne', which symbolically meant the white rose of York and of
England.[19] In 1485, however, his motive seems less likely to have been devo-
ion to Henry, then an exiled pretender to the throne, than hatred for King
Richard, very possibly because one of Richard's first acts after he seized
lower in 1483 had been to have Earl Rivers executed. Caxton put the finishing
ouches to his edition three weeks before Richard was defeated and killed by
Henry at Bosworth. It is obvious enough why he did not mention his change
o the *Morte Darthur* in his preface.

The preface, however, also suggests a motive for Caxton being silent about

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4 Matthews, 'Caxton and Malory – A Defense', in *Medieval Literature and Folklore Studies:
   Essays in Honor of Francis Lee Utley* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1970), pp. 77–95; cf. *Works*, p.
   cxlv.23–7, 30–1.
5 My estimate is from Vinaver's text, which as a conflated text is longer than either *W* or *C*.
6 My estimate is 5.8% of Vinaver's text.
7 *Works*, pp. 196–7.
8 First pointed out to me by Professor Griffith.
9 Helen Cooper, 'Romance after Bosworth', in *The Court and Cultural Diversity*, ed. Evelyn
   Mullally and John Thompson (Cambridge 1997), pp. 149–57.

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any other change he might have made that was less peripheral to the text than
chapter-rubrics. It shows that he was aiming his *Morte Darthur* at readers who
were or would like to have been thought aristocratic. Almost all the preface
apart from the chapter-rubrics is devoted to the noble persons who asked him
to publish the book, the advantages it would bring noble persons, and its
dedication (being 'dyrected') to noble persons. Its publisher is merely
'Wyllyam Caxton, symple persone'. By, for instance, putting the book 'under
the . . . correctyon of al noble lordes and gentylmen', he implies that chivalry is
too high a matter for someone of his rank. Clearly, the more of such a book
came from a knight and the less from a Mere Person, the better.

The internal evidence then looks unpromising, but there is one possible
exception.[20] In *W*, Arthur's expedition against the Romans sails from Sand-
wich, arrives off the Normandy coast, 'and at the same tyde the kynge aryved
at Barfflete'.[21] *Barfleet* was what the English in the fifteenth century called Bar-
fleur in the Cotentin peninsula in western Normandy, and the reference to
Normandy confirms that that is what is intended. In *C*, however, the expedi-
tion sails from Sandwich, arrives off an unspecified coast 'and saylled tyl they
arryued atte Barflete in Flaundres'. Replacing Normandy with Flanders looks
like an attempt by someone who had not recognised Barfleur to make King
Arthur's destination more plausible, more directly across the Channel from
Sandwich. It displays, however, a classic feature of scribal error, incompatibil-
ity with the context: in the next sentence a husbandman comes to Arthur to
tell him that a giant in 'the countre of Constantyn besyde Bretayne' has
abducted the Duchess of Brittany and carried her off to his lair, which is
visible from where Arthur is standing.[22] A little later we learn that the lair is
Mont St Michel, which is indeed in *Constantyn* (the Cotentin), and on the
borders of *Bretayne* (Brittany), but neither Mont St Michel in the southwest of
the Cotentin nor Barfleur in the north-east is even nearly visible from any-
where in Flanders.

Matthews observed that after 'thirty years work in Bruges, Caxton cer-
tainly would never have written "Barflete in Flaundres" '.[23] It is a shrewd
point, strengthened by the nature of Caxton's work. A merchant in inter-
national trade and the Governor of the English Nation in his locality had
reason to know the ports in neighbouring countries as (for instance) a scribe
might not. Even so, 'certainly' is too strong – the subconscious mind can play
odd tricks, which is why it is dangerous to infer textual traditions from single
pieces of evidence; and Matthews himself reminds us that Caxton had been
careless enough in other books to perpetrate some startling howlers, *Carpen-
ters* for *Carpentani*, for instance, and *Boece* for *Boccaccio*.[24]

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20 Short Version, pp. 11–12.
21 *Works*, p. 198.2–3.
22 *Works*, pp. 199.9C, and cf. 200.1C.
23 Short Version, p. 12.
24 Short Version, p. 15. The last error was no doubt made possible partly because Caxton
   thought of Boccaccio as *Bochas* (*Works*, p. cxliv.25).

Moreover, unlikely as it may be that Caxton would have *composed* the phrase in question, what is at issue here is not composition but reworking someone else's words, which involves different rhythms, kinds of unfamiliarity, and probabilities. The boar-bear alteration shows Caxton had an urge to put his mark on Malory's book, and that urge could have prompted him to make another change, setting part of the story in a place where he had spent much of his life. If he knew Barfleur by its English name, that would have needed a momentary lapse of memory; but he did commit howlers, -*fleet* is much more of a Flemish place-name suffix than a French one, and long years in Flanders might have made him think of Barfleur by its French name if he thought of it at all. (He never mentions it by any name in his own prose.) It is even possible that he had never known the English name for Barfleur, or had forgotten it: it was after all 35 years since his countrymen were in and out of Normandy every campaigning season.[25] It may not be probable that he would have put Barfleet in Flanders, but it is some way from impossible.

However, surprising though it might be if Caxton had put Barfleet in Flanders, it would be more surprising still if Malory had done so. Malory was interested in and had a fairly good grasp of the geography of England, the English Channel, and the west of France, although his knowledge fell off sharply in the European hinterland and the Mediterranean;[26] and he got it right about Barfleur first time round. Most of what he says about the place in W is taken from the alliterative *Morte*, but he alone makes Barfleet a base for an attempted attack on Brittany.[27] The reviser of C changed the assembly area to Burgundy. Together, the two changes in C suggest less a momentary lapse of memory about Barfleet than a settled ignorance of a kind that cannot be attributed to Malory.

Two explanations for the addition of the phrase *in Flaundres* seem less unlikely than others. It might have been added by a scribe between the archetype and Caxton's copy-text, and despite the trouble taken in preparing his edition, overlooked in preparation and proof. That explanation, however, works against a hypothesis that Matthews wished to maintain, that C's source was either W itself or a copy effectively identical with it.[28] Alternatively, the phrase might have been added by Caxton, but to concede that would be at odds with Matthews's entire case.

To sum up on Matthews's first four points: the signs of haste seen in Caxton's other work would make it surprising if he had revised even part of the

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[5] R.A. Griffiths, *The Reign of King Henry VI* (London 1981), p. 696.
[6] Matthews cites a confusion about the European hinterland in Short Version p. 4. See also 'Malory's Place-Names: Roone and the Low Country', 'Malory's Place-Names: Westminster Bridge and Virvyn', and 'Fifteenth-Century History in Malory's *Morte Darthur*', all elsewhere in this book.
[7] *Works*, p. 194.12–14.
[8] Short Version p. 10, Long Version p. 113 (32). The printed form of the Long Version has been rewritten so that it makes this point even more emphatically than the typescript form.

Morte Darthur, and it is difficult to find any satisfying explanation of why Barfleur was said to be in Flanders, but the kind of evidence available on these points looks unlikely to show who revised Malory's Roman War story.

Matthews's fifth point was linguistic. He raised two issues, of which we may take style first, although he made it a coda following his formal conclusion.[29] Earlier scholars, he pointed out, had suggested that distinctive factors in the style of the Roman War in C were typical of Caxton's writing. The properly linguistic factors suggested included the use of familiar words, French loanwords, and Latinate terms in the place of alliterative poetic diction, and a general increase in dignity, shown particularly by the use of word-pairs. Matthews's response to this was not quite consistent. Most important, he implied that it is difficult to know what style to expect from Caxton or Malory in a task like this: Caxton's prefaces are rhetorical, as prefaces were expected to be, and his translations reproduced the style of their originals, but the Roman War is neither a preface nor a translation; and Malory's style varies a good deal, depending on his subjects and sources, so 'a critic may always have his own bases of comparison'.[30] These points rather undermine the particular objections Matthews raises against Caxton as reviser: that the French loan-words in C are not as rare nor the word-pairs as frequent or learned as the ones found in Caxton's other writings, and that W has as many word-pairs as C and more French loan-words (the latter from the alliterative *Morte*). The more general considerations on their own, however, suggest that it is unlikely that arguments of this kind will settle the matter in dispute either.

At a different stylistic level, Matthews usefully drew attention to the reviser having apparently clarified the story by adding 'topic sentences' and the like, citing a sentence spoken by the emperor, introducing the military summons of his vassals.[31] There is, however, an even more striking example in Arthur's response to the ambassadors, where the reviser seems to have added

> I wylle that ye retorne vnto your lord and procurour of the comyn wele for the Romayns and saye ye to hym Of his demaunde and commaundement I sette nothyng And that I knowe of no truage ne trybute that I owe to hym ne to none erthely prynce Crysten ne hethen but I pretende to haue and occupye the soueraynte of thempyre wherin I am entytled by the ryght of my predecessours somtyme kynges of this lond.[32]

This passage, like the emperor's speech, has no equivalent at the corresponding point in W or in the alliterative *Morte* as we have it, but its substance is given in W at a later point.[33] The reviser may have brought the material

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[29] Short Version pp. 18–19, Long Version pp. 119–22 (41–5).
[30] Short Version p. 19, Long Version p. 121 (44).
[31] Short Version p. 7, Long Version p. 108 (24), *Works*, p. 193.1–2C.
[32] *Works*, p. 190.3–9C.
[33] *Works*, p. 192.8–10, and cf. 192.6C.

forward out of a tidy-minded wish that the Roman ambassadors should receive a formal response from King Arthur to their initial demand for tribute. In the alliterative poem and in *W*, Arthur's only response is a vow to conquer Rome and a brusque order to leave the country at speed or face a criminal's death. (The last is implicit in *W*.) Given the topic sentences elsewhere, this alteration supports Matthews's contention that the reviser liked his narratives smooth as well as short.[34] It also seems to suggest a liking, of which Sally Shaw thought she found other signs in the Caxton Roman War, for etiquette and protocol.[35] Some readers may feel that, given how little the rest of the *Morte Darthur* makes of etiquette and protocol, such a preference was unlikely to be Malory's. Even if both factors were beyond dispute, however, both of them together would hardly constitute a profile from which we could identify a single person from among late-fifteenth-century England's potential revisers.

The second linguistic issue was lexical: *C* not only retains from *W* northern English words like *tene* 'sorrow', *grame* 'anger', and *nerehand* 'almost', but also adds northernisms that do not appear in the same contexts either in *W* or in the alliterative poem.[36] It is clear that Vinaver would have explained words that were too northerly for Caxton's dialect as deriving from the archetype, and having been omitted by the tradition that produced *W* but preserved by that which produced *C*. Since Matthews rejected the notion of an archetype, his explanation was very different, but he left it to appear from his next (and final) point.

First, however, we must consider the evidence he cited under this one. That, taking the Short and Long Versions together,[37] comprises eight words:

> *stuffed* hit with two honderd sarasyns   194.5C
> he *graythed* hym and came to the bataille   216.4–5C
> an *awke* stroke   230.8C
> shal not *conne* staunche thy blood   230.12C
> For *who someuer* is hurte   230.12–13C
> with his C knyghtes alwey kepte the *stale*   237.3–4C
> his lyege men shold defoule ne *lygge* by no lady   243.7–8C
> they of Melane herd that *thylk* cyte was wonne   243.11C

Three of these eight supposed northernisms must be disallowed because they are not dialectologically too northerly for Caxton. The verb *conne* 'know how', 'be able' and the pronoun *whosomever* 'whoever' both appear more than once in Caxton's own prose, the former in the construction above (with preceding

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[34] Short Version p. 7, Long Version p. 108 (24).
[35] 'Caxton and Malory', in *Essays on Malory*, ed. J.A.W. Bennett (Oxford 1963), pp. 135–6.
[36] Short Version p. 7; Long Version p. 106 (21). I convert Matthews's page references to (presumably) the 1967 edition of *Works* into page-and-line references to the 1990 edition, correct transcription errors, and resolve an abbreviation in the last citation.
[37] Short Version p. 7, Long Version p. 106 (21).

auxiliary and following infinitive), a construction not found in *W*;[38] and the demonstrative adjective *thylk* was used by Caxton in his translation of *The Four Sons of Aymon*.[39] It does not inspire confidence in Matthews's linguistic judgement to find 37.5% of his data specious.

Nor is it easy to take the verbs *lygge* 'lie' (in that spelling) and *stuff* 'strengthen', or the adjective *awke* 'backhanded' as northern in any real sense, since all appear in parts of *W* based on French sources, and we have it on the highest authority,[40] that of Angus McIntosh, that *W*'s orthography, apart from a little northerly contamination in the Roman War story, is characteristic of west Northamptonshire.[41] The noun *stale* 'armed company', however, appears in *W* only in the Roman War story, the verb *graythe* 'prepare' does not appear there at all, and all five words are found in the alliterative *Morte*. Even if three of the five words are dialectologically midland rather than northerly or northern, none appears in Caxton's own prose, and so they may reveal something about what he wrote or did not write.

The five words would not all be equally surprising in a work by Caxton. Both *stuff* and *stale* are French-derived military terms that sometimes appear in fifteenth-century writings by southerners: Lydgate uses the former and *The Chronicle of London* the latter.[42] *awke* is thinly recorded for the fifteenth century, but a revival in the sixteenth suggests it might have had a secret life earlier beyond the ken of lexicographers. *lygge*, however, and still more *grayth*, an Old-Norse-derived term that in its reflexive form (as in the passage from *C*) was current above all in alliterative poetry,[43] seem unequivocally too northerly for Caxton. Moreover, since *lygge* does not appear in *W* near the point at which it is used in *C* and *grayth* does not appear there at all, it is most unlikely that Caxton acquired them by contamination from elsewhere in his copy-text. That seems to leave us with two alternatives: that they, and perhaps *awke*, *stuff*, and *stale* too, were either inherited from the archetype or added by a reviser who was not Caxton.

The rarity of *lygge* and the absence of *grayth* in *W* makes the former the simpler hypothesis, but the latter cannot be ruled out even if Malory were the reviser, given Professor McIntosh's opinion that when writing the Roman War story Malory added the linguistic forms that were appropriate to northerly romance material but not part of his normal vocabulary because he felt them appropriate to a story drawn from alliterative romance. McIntosh said that those forms occurred in the Roman War story both in *W* and in *C*, and although he apparently accepted Vinaver's view of the textual relationships

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[38] Kiyokazu Mizobata, *A Concordance to Caxton's Own Prose* (Tokyo 1990), *s.v.*; Tomomi Kato, *A Concordance to The Complete Works of Sir Thomas Malory* (Tokyo 1974), *s.v.*
[39] *OED*, *thilk* adj.
[40] As Matthews recognised: Long Version, note 20 (typescript, note 18).
[41] Angus McIntosh, review of William Matthews, *The Ill-Framed Knight* (Berkeley 1966), in *MÆv* 37 (1968), 346–48.
[42] *OED*, *stuff* v1 2, 3; *stale* sb4 1.
[43] *MED*, *lien* v 1 and *greithen* v 5b.

involved, if Malory had worked as McIntosh suggested in original composition, he could have done the same in revision.

Although the possible interest in etiquette and protocol would suggest a reviser other than Malory, it looks as if the issues raised under Matthews's fifth point are no more likely to identify the reviser beyond doubt than the previous set.

Matthews's sixth point was that C contains a substantial amount of material not in W but taken from sources that underlie W: 62 items from the alliterative *Morte Arthure* recorded by Vinaver, Helen Wroten, or Matthews himself; 7 from Hardyng's *Chronicle* discovered by that most judicious of Malory scholars, Robert H. Wilson;[44] and 6 from the Old French 'Prose *Merlin*' – more properly, the Vulgate *Suite de Merlin* – discovered by Vinaver and Matthews.[45] In the Short Version, a mere preliminary presentation, Matthews was only able to give examples of this, without references. The Long Version, however, confirms that this material is very different from a single geographical identification or a couple of dialect forms. The points of correspondence are listed in Appendix I below; it can be seen that there are far too many for them to be the product of scribal whim or accident or some other freak cause.

The 54 points at which Vinaver thought C depended on the alliterative *Morte* are readily accessible: they are readings, ranging from single letters to passages several sentences long, asterisked in the transcript of the Caxton text in Vinaver's apparatus criticus. Vinaver incorporated 38 of them into the text of his editions, and marked the remaining 16 as superior to their counterparts in W even though he felt unable to put them in his text. Two or three of the former group and perhaps as many as nine of the latter might be challenged, but even if all twelve were suspect, the remaining 42 correspondences cannot possibly all be the product of coincidence. Since Helen Wroten's thesis is inaccessible and the correspondences he himself proposes are much weaker than Vinaver's, this is the strongest part of Matthews's evidence. The list, moreover, may not be complete: when I revised Vinaver's edition I made one more emendation of this type,[46] and there may be others yet to be proposed. In the alliterative poem, for instance, Arthur despatches a foraging expedition one Sunday at sunset, which after a long ride arrives in a meadow in the raiding area as the pre-dawn mist is appearing.[47] They must clearly have ridden through the night. W does not say when they depart, how long they ride for, or when they arrive in the meadow, only that Gawain leaves them after they

have arrived, at day-break.[48] C says they arrive in the meadow and 'rested them . . . alle that nyghte' before Gawain departs at day-break. That statement looks as if it depends ultimately on *Morte Arthure*.

The influence of the other two sources can be summarised more briefly. That of John Hardyng's *Chronicle* on the Roman War in C was first suggested by Robert H. Wilson.[49] The seven parallels he found showed that the only alternative to accepting the reality of that influence was to postulate a surprising number of coincidences. Although the influence of the Vulgate *Suite de Merlin* on the Roman War in W had been suggested by Vinaver and confirmed by Wilson, it was left to Matthews to prove its influence specifically on the C-version.[50] Of the six points of dependence he suggests, the two in Arthur's fight against the giant of Mont St Michel seem implausible: if Malory had thought of Arthur's earlier giant-fight as being against Rions of North Wales, he would surely not have said it was fought on *the mounte of Arrabé*.[51] The other four correspondences with the *Suite de Merlin*, however, to my mind prove Matthews's point on their own.

The Short Version set out the implications of this with succinct clarity.[52] Vinaver believed that material of this kind had been transmitted from source to the archetype, then lost from the tradition that produced W but preserved in the one that produced C. We may call this the inheritance hypothesis. Matthews observed that it meant that the Roman War story in W, although close to the alliterative poem and twice the length of the Caxton version, was a shortened version of Malory's original. That was not all. Vinaver had deduced from the inheritance hypothesis his most powerful editorial tool, which we may call the Vinaver Principle: that what appears in a source and a derived version of a text must (with certain exceptions) have been in the intermediate version, the author's original. If source-based material in C had been lost from the tradition that produced W by any straightforward process of physical mishap or scribal error, Vinaver should have been able to fit it all back neatly into his W-based text. He was not able to do that. As Matthews observed, some of Vinaver's insertions read awkwardly, and other passages could not be accomodated at all. From this Matthews deduced that, if the inheritance hypothesis were true, W must have been not just a copy of the archetype but a consciously revised version of it.

44 Wilson, 'More Borrowings by Malory from Hardyng's "Chronicle" ', N&Q 215 (1970), 208–10. In the Short Version, Matthews accidentally claimed Wilson's final discovery (*dispencys : spend*) as his own.

45 Vinaver, *Malory* (1929; Oxford 1970), pp. 134–5; Matthews, Short Version, pp. 8–9 (two examples only); Long Version pp. 109–12 (26–30).

46 *Eufrate* to *Eufrates*, at *Works*, p. 193.6.

47 *Morte Arthure*, ed. Mary Hamel (New York 1984), lines 2482–512.

48 *Works*, p. 228.20.

49 'More Borrowings', 208.

50 *Works*, pp. 186.23–187.5 and apparatus; Wilson, 'Malory's Early Knowledge', UTSE 29 (1950), 33–50. In the former, Vinaver incorporates into his text the C-passage that is the subject of Matthews's second point on the basis of the Vulgate *Suite* OR Wace OR a tradition proved by the existence of both: Matthews's other evidence is decisive for the first of those three options.

51 It is a mere curiosity that *araby* in *Morte Arthure*, as Hamel reminds us (line 1175n), derives from Geoffrey of Monmouth's *mons Aravius*, which is Snowdon in North Wales, not anywhere in Arabia. Since Malory did not restore the original name-form, we may presume he did not know the original meaning.

52 Short Version pp. 9–10, cf. Long Version pp. 112–13 (31–2).

Matthews argued that the inheritance hypothesis was not only complicated but unnecessary:

> The need to assume a variant form of the Winchester version disappears if one simply recognises what the full evidence suggests: that the reviser who wrote the version that appears in Caxton used, not only the Winchester version, but also the same three sources as Malory used, the alliterative poem, Hardyng's *Chronicle*, and the French prose *Merlin*.[53]

We may call this the revision hypothesis. Matthews took it further to claim that the three texts were not merely sources, but (with W) the only sources of C.[54] That has important implications. The Roman War was a widely known and frequently retold part of the Arthurian story, but although Matthews himself examined over a dozen other versions of it, neither he nor anyone else had found any sign in C of any other version.[55] As he said, if someone who was not the author had simply wanted to supplement a reworked W, it was very unlikely that he would by chance have picked the most important sources of W and no others. If he had wanted to use the same sources (and there was no obvious reason why he should), he would have had problems finding out what they were, getting access to them, and perhaps for a southerner with the difficult poetic diction of the alliterative *Morte Arthure*, understanding them.[56] Therefore the most likely reviser was the author, Malory himself.

To that, we may add that it is unlikely that any other possible reviser would have adopted Malory's way with Arthurian sources. Producing an 'authorised' version of a story by conflating three or four earlier versions requires a respect for the detail of past retellings most unusual in writers of mediaeval vernacular romance. Malory had that idiosyncrasy, but is improbable that anyone else involved in the transmission of his book had it too, or that any writer or publisher of the time believed that that strenuous process would make a book more attractive to a patron or a wider public.

That then is the Short Version of Matthews's case, and although the Long Version has observations of its own to make on the *Morte Darthur* as a whole, it adds nothing of consequence on the Roman War except examples and references. They seem to me to prove beyond reasonable doubt that the three main sources of the Roman War story in W did influence C, but to offer nothing new

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53 Substantially the same despite different wording in Short Version p. 10, Long Version (printed) p. 113, and Long Version (typescript) p. 32. By 'the French prose *Merlin*' Matthews means the Vulgate *Suite de Merlin*.

54 Matthews implies in the Short Version (pp. 8, 17) that the alliterative poem, Hardyng, and the Vulgate *Suite* were the *only* sources of W; but in the Long Version (p. 101 (14)) recognises that W also apparently draws on the Old French Prose *Lancelot* and Prose *Tristan* and the Middle English *Jeast of Sir Gawain*. I have adjusted my summary of his argument to allow for this.

55 Short Version p. 17.

56 Long Version pp. 118–19 (39–41).

in support of the crucial contention that that influence was introduced in revision rather than by inheritance. It could have made a great difference to Matthews's case had the Long Version, for instance, identified readings like *Barflete in Flaundres* that seemed to point to (or away from) one person or another as having had a hand in them in the passages apparently influenced by the three principal sources. The logic of what the Long Version says about the Roman War, however, remains that of the Short Version, which is essentially that we must assume that northerly vocabulary and material from W's sources were the product of revision rather than inheritance because the former hypothesis is simpler.

That argument is open to a double objection. The first is that the revision hypothesis is not simpler, for reasons shown diagrammatically below. If we accept that Malory cannot have written W, which was copied by two tolerably professional hands on paper that was apparently not manufactured until he was dead, and for simplicity's sake omit various lost intermediate manuscripts that both Vinaver and Matthews believed in,[57] the revision hypothesis requires a minimum of four Malory texts and three sources, with the sources being used twice. The inheritance hypothesis requires only three Malory texts and three sources, with the sources being used once.
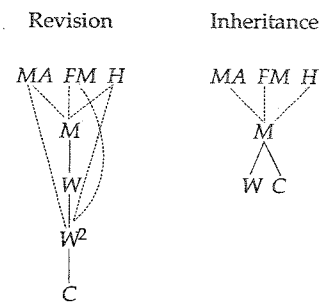
The second objection is more serious still: the real choice does not lie between these two hypotheses at all. Despite Matthews's eloquence, C cannot derive from W. The main reason for thinking that has been given earlier in this essay, and, surprisingly enough, Matthews himself accepted it in the Long Version. Describing the textual problems of the rest of the *Morte Darthur*, he made the very deduction about W and C that is made above, even adding a reason particularly pertinent in this context:

> Extra matter which depends upon the French sources (and there is a good deal of this) cannot be so explained [viz., as reviser's additions] . . . for

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57 Cp. *Works*, pp. c–cvi with Long Version p. 124 (48), but see Field, 'Earliest Texts' on the evidence for the existence of intermediate manuscripts.

Malory's way of selecting and rephrasing his sources was such that it is un-
likely that even he could have found his way again through the maze. Such
material must have been in the original.[58]

'The original' is of course an archetype of the kind postulated by Vinaver. The
Long Version, in other words, proposes one set of textual relationships for the
Roman War story and a different set for the parts of the *Morte Darthur* before
and after it. That state of affairs is so unusual that only very weighty evidence
could make it plausible. Matthews offers no evidence or explanation at all.

Until evidence is produced, we may assume that *W* and *C* derive from an
archetype throughout, and therefore that the most reasonable explanation for
the northern linguistic forms and passages dependent on the three sources in
C is inheritance from that archetype, as Matthews admits of their counterparts
in the rest of the *Morte Darthur*. That, however, destroys his only strong argu-
ment for Malory being the reviser of the Caxton Roman War story. It also seri-
ously weakens his only strong argument against Caxton having done so: that
Caxton's other work shows him unwilling or unable to revise. On the revision
hypothesis, the reviser did the jigsaw puzzle of fitting supplementary source
material into the story, a task whose gratuitousness would make it particu-
larly uncongenial to anyone who disliked even routine revision. On the
inheritance hypothesis, however, producing *C* would be less arduous, and
therefore proportionately less uncongenial. How much less arduous depends
on the nature of the archetype, which is open to dispute, but it might have
amounted to little more than shortening an awkward 8500 words. It is hard to
say that Caxton would have refused to do that in response to a hint from one
of the noble gentlemen who 'requyred' him to put the *Morte Darthur* in print.

The existence of an archetype, then, undermines Matthews's arguments for
Malory and against Caxton; but that does not mean Matthews was wrong, and
certainly does not prove Caxton was the reviser. It simply opens up the possi-
bilities: the Roman War story could have been revised by quite a number of
people, singly or in combination, including Malory and Caxton (presumably
in succession and in that order). The greater the number of texts, the more the
possibilities. The possibilities implied by the inheritance stemma above would
be more than doubled by the six *Morte Darthur* texts that Vinaver argued for,
and larger numbers would generate possibilities exponentially. The sources
do not help as much as they might. We could have more confidence in deduc-
tions made from the manuscripts Malory used, but it is generally agreed that
they are all lost. Matthews argued that Malory worked up the Roman War
story from the only known manuscript of the alliterative *Morte Arthure*, but to
my knowledge no other scholar has been persuaded to share that view.[59]

Long Version p. 129 (56); and cf. p. 124 (48).
Matthews, *Ill-Framed Knight*, p. 99; but on his central piece of evidence, see John Withring-
ton, 'The Arthurian Epitaph in Malory's *Morte Darthur*', *AL* VII (1987), 103–44, and on the

Unknown manuscripts may differ in unknown ways from the ones we have,
making arguments more complicated and conclusions less certain.

It is best to begin by addressing probabilities. Any reproduction of any
work in any medium may introduce textual corruption, by error or deliberate
alteration; but some kinds of writing command respect that makes deliberate
alteration unlikely, whereas others are so fluid that every text must be treated
as a distinct work. In the Middle Ages, the first category includes classical epic
and university text-books, the second traditional border ballads and some
kinds of lyric. Somewhere between the two comes vernacular romance; as the
surviving records show, it was sometimes altered and sometimes not.[60] With
any given romance, one can only try to do justice to whatever evidence there
may be.

Here, however, Vinaver's magisterial editions can be misleading. They say
surprisingly little about conscious alteration, largely because their editor was
a devotee of a school of textual criticism that believed it had found a 'sci-
entific' method of avoiding the arbitrary excesses of earlier editors. To Vinaver
that meant that, the conscious mind being unpredictable, editors should nor-
mally confine themselves to correcting errors produced by securely identifi-
able unconscious processes, by which he understood six particular types of
scribal error.[61] He did not deny that many other kinds of error occurred, but
thought discussion of them generally unprofitable. Some of the errors that he
was able to eradicate by the ingenious formula I have called the Vinaver Prin-
ciple must have been conscious, but if he could not explain them by processes
he recognised, he was usually reticent about how they arose. In consequence,
his great editions read like sustained assertions that scribes – or at least the
scribes who copied the *Morte Darthur* – either make certain unconscious errors
or reproduce their copy accurately. (Changes attributable to Caxton were
something of an exception, perhaps because he was a Man of Letters.)

It is plain however that scribes not merely could but did consciously
change the *Morte Darthur*.[62] Sometimes, they even changed it systematically.
Scribes, for instance, took exception to the name *Garlon* in the story of Balin in
the first tale, and to the description of the knight-companions of the Grail as
felawes in the sixth tale – readings attested by *C* and confirmed by the source in
each case – and changed them respectively to *Garlonde* (six times), and to
knyghtes (four times).[63] Identifiable and corrigible systematic change of that
kind is rare, but it is as well to remember that many, perhaps even most, of the

textual relationships generally, Hamel, Introduction, pp. 3–14; and ' "Above Rubies":
Malory and *Morte Arthure* 2559–61' and 'Malory's Mordred and the *Morte Arthure*', both
elsewhere in this book.
[60] See *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English 1050–1500*, ed. J. Burke Severs et al., I:
Romances (New Haven, Conn., 1967).
[61] Eugène Vinaver, 'Principles of Textual Emendation', in *Studies in French Language and
Mediaeval Literature presented to Professor Mildred K. Pope* (Manchester 1939), pp. 350–69.
[62] See my 'Note to the Third Edition', in *Works*, pp. 1753–68, passim.
[63] *Works*, pp. 80.13–84.1, 1001.11–35.17, and note to latter (p. 1764)

thousands of variants in Vinaver's apparatus criticus may record conscious changes, and are not remarked on simply because there is no way of telling which reading is original. Given Vinaver's judgement that the scribes of W were inclined to copy mechanically and C to 'improve' its text,[64] it is tempting to ascribe all apparently conscious changes provisionally to C, but although probabilistic judgments have their place, probabilities must give way when (as in the cases cited above) positive evidence can be produced.

It is of course accepted by all parties that C is the product of deliberate alteration, but it is to Matthews's credit that he raised the possibility that W was too, arguing, as is said above, that if the inheritance hypothesis were true, W must be a shortened and revised version of Malory's original. Matthews seems to have thought that conclusion absurd: to me it seems not only plausible but, in the light of the textual evidence, unavoidable. If we are to understand what it implies, however, we must consider the first page or so of the story separately from the rest.

'The first page or so' – a page and five lines in W, a page and two lines in C – comprises Arthur's first encounter with the Roman ambassadors, up to the point at which Arthur appoints one of his knights to look after them.[65] That takes up two pages, the rest sixty, in Vinaver's editions, but the former presents much more difficult problems: the most conspicuously difficult textual problems in the Morte Darthur. Vinaver's apparatus criticus is a nightmare, Robert H. Wilson called the passage 'puzzling' and declined to come to grips with it,[66] and it provided Matthews with the basis of his misguided theory. Any scholar may justifiably have qualms when approaching a passage that defeated those three, but I intend to propose a solution to its difficulties.

First, however, the rest of the story must be addressed. In W, it has certainly lost a number of readings. The best evidence for this is of course that on which Matthews based his case, the readings where W differs from C but the sources support C. For this part of the story, the text and apparatus of the latest version of Vinaver's edition between them give 55 such readings, 53 supported from the alliterative Morte, and 2 (absurdly) from Geoffrey of Monmouth's Historia regum Britanniae, although Geoffrey's Historia has not been shown to be a source and the alliterative Morte, Hardyng, and the Vulgate Suite, which have been, all support W.[67] We may discount the two. Matthews showed that one of the 53 cases was closer to the Vulgate Suite than to the alliterative Morte and that an additional passage in C also probably depended on the Suite, and

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64 Works, p. cix. See also my 'The Choice of Texts for Malory's Morte Darthur', elsewhere in this book.
65 The point of division is at Works, p. 187.6.
66 'More Borrowings', p. 209.
67 Bellinus and Brenius: Works, p. 188.4C. I should perhaps repeat what I said in Works (pp. 1747, 1752), that in that edition I attempted to correct matters of fact, and that I took Vinaver's marking of readings in the apparatus as matters of opinion.

Wilson showed that an additional passage apparently depended on Hardyng.[68] That brings the total number of readings up again to 55.

These 55 readings reveal something about the origins of both texts. The superiority of some of the readings marked in the apparatus may be illusory: two or three may have been misread, and in as many as seven other cases the similarity with the alliterative Morte to which the C-reading owes its asterisk may be the product of coincidence.[69] In the present context, however, such errors would not constitute a difficulty: rather the contrary. The remaining readings, it seems to me, can all be plausibly explained in one way or another. Sometimes it is hard to decide between alternative explanations, but that too is no difficulty in the present context, whatever it may be for editors. There are plainly cases of scribal error in W – probably under twenty all told – and they particularly, since they tend to be errors of omission, leave W shorter than it should be by some few words. Although it would be literally true to describe their effect overall as a shortening of W's original, however, it would be quite misleading: in the sixty pages of the modern edition, they are simply negligible. Similarly, there are what seem to me to be cases – certainly a dozen, perhaps twice that – in which W has casually 'improved' the phrasing of a difficult original. This is a rather high proportion for the Morte Darthur, but it would be a natural consequence of the difference in copy: elsewhere, the scribes found less to irritate them. The dozen or two 'improvements' might be called a revision, because many of them look like the product of a consistent urge (to normalise the language): but it would be misleading to use the same word for a process in which so much that is abnormal was left untouched as is used for the wholesale reworking found in C. It would be more accurate to say that this part of W has been subjected to some sporadic scribal inference. The evidence for other changes and possible changes in this part of W is less certain, but I found nothing in it to undermine that conclusion.

The first page-or-so is a very different matter, and the difficulties with understanding it are of a different order, but they can I believe be overcome if the Vinaver Principle is applied consistently. We must of course apply it not only to evidence that Vinaver knew, but to the whole body of evidence accumulated by Vinaver, Wilson, and Matthews about the three sources. That evidence is set out in Appendix II below.

Vinaver's W-based text for this part of the story includes four substantial C-readings supported by the sources. Two of them were among the longest that he introduced into any part of the Morte Darthur, excluding the making good of lacunae caused by the physical loss of whole leaves. No doubt they were what Matthews had foremost in mind when he said that the inheritance

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68 For the Suite, Lucius's speech before Sessoyne and Cador's phrase about idleness respectively; for Hardyng, the observation about expenses. For all three, see Appendix I.
69 As may the apparent dependence on Hardyng referred to in the previous note, which I take to be a coincidence created by recasting Arthur's brusque congé so as to make it conform more with fifteenth-century diplomatic protocol.

hypothesis implied that W was a shortened version of its original – a distinctly understated judgement here. There is no shred of palaeographical or codi-cological evidence to account for the omission of these passages: it is therefore natural to suppose that they were deliberately cut. Moreover, Vinaver marked another substantial passage from C in the very first few lines of the story as su-perior, on the strength of similarities to Geoffrey of Monmouth, Wace, and the Post-Vulgate *Suite de Merlin*, although he did not incorporate it into his text, perhaps because for him, with texts that were not proven sources for Malory 'superior' really meant 'interesting'. We now know, however, that that passage contains significant similarities with Hardyng's *Chronicle*, and that other C-readings nearby are also confirmed by one or other of the sources. The old passages and the new together form in effect a single long passage from C that should be inserted into the text, displacing of course the corresponding passage in W. When the incoming and outgoing passages are set against each other, as they are in Appendix II, it can be seen W has all C's key words, but in a different order that strongly suggests abbreviation. This part of W appears to be very much what Matthews deduced: a brutally shortened version of a common original represented by C. The previous passage in C, however – the opening eight words of the story – is one sixth of the length of the correspond-ing passage in W, and looks very like an abbreviation of it. Surprising as it may seem, at the beginning of Malory's Roman War story, the two surviving texts apparently drastically but alternately abbreviate their original.

They continued to do so. Broadly speaking, for the rest of this short section, each text in turn gives a fuller narrative (supported by one or more sources) that the other abbreviates or cuts out. C cuts Arthur's fury at the ambassadors' message, their terror, partial recovery, and restatement of their demands, and begins again with their setting out the consequences if Arthur rejects those demands. C gives that very fully, but cuts the middle clause, which is almost all that W preserves. W however gives a full account of Arthur's reply in direct speech, which C abbreviates in indirect speech; but W then cuts out the whole of the court's reaction to the incident, which C gives at length. The loss of the court's reaction might be due to homoeoartia, because both it and the next section of the story begin with *Than/Thenne*, but it is simpler to suppose that the process found in the rest of this section also operated in the last part of it.

It is surprising how well the passages fit together. As we have seen, it was part of Matthews's argument against the inheritance hypothesis that although Vinaver was able to fit some of the material from C into his text, some of his insertions read awkwardly and others could only be accomodated if the corre-sponding part of W were rewritten. However that may be of Vinaver's recon-struction, it does not apply to the one proposed here. If the alternating fuller passages are read in sequence as a single text, they need only the insertion of a single word (*and* before W's *bereve*) to make excellent sense. Although, as Mat-thews observed, both W and C make good sense as they stand, the recon-structed fuller text makes better sense still. Arthur's furious first reaction to the embassy in W is much more understandable if the ambassadors have not

merely demanded tribute but (as in C) demanded his homage too, called him a rebel, and gratuitously reminded him that their country conquered his. Second time round, the *brym wordys* of which he accuses them sound much less like W's brief business-like imperial promise to dethrone him (albeit in the second person singular) than like C's threat to *chastise* him and make an *ensam-ple* of him. The first phrase and perhaps the second too insult him by speaking of him as if he were a child about to be beaten. Unlike W's reduction, C's leaves no internal points of strain, but cutting Arthur's first response to the ambassadors, although remarkably neatly done, makes for an anomaly later: when the ambassadors tell the emperor that 'we . . . were ful sore aferd to beholde his countenaunce',[70] they echo words and facts that C has cut out.

This does not imply that the fuller parts of W and C give us Malory's words verbatim. It is an axiom of textual criticism, since even authors can make mis-takes in writing out their own work, that the status of even an authorial holo-graph is merely that of a witness to the text. Copies several stages removed, particularly those that show signs of drastic revision, are much less trust-worthy witnesses. Editors of Malory have reason to test the evidence of these two witnesses with particular care in this section of the text: despite Mat-thews's caveats about style, for instance, it seems to me very unlikely that Malory wrote C's 208-word first sentence as it stands. The elaborate hypotaxis and above all the pivotal second relative pronoun, used where modern English would require a demonstrative, are entirely uncharacteristic of his style and highly characteristic of some of Caxton's writing. From the concor-dances, that relative pronoun usage is unknown in Malory but very character-istic of Caxton: there are nearly 50 instances of it in Caxton's own prose.[71] Nevertheless, detailed support from proven sources confirms the substance of the reconstructed text of this section throughout, and strongly suggests that even though it may have been rephrased by someone else, it cannot be far removed from an original composed by Sir Thomas Malory.

The individual texts, however, are a different matter, and it will be easier to come to a conclusion about who revised C if we can say with any degree of probability who revised W. There is no evidence that will prove beyond doubt that the changes to the Roman War in W were not Malory's work,[72] but the most plausible explanation of the pattern of changes is surely that whoever produced the text of W found the text in the archetype a disagreeable surprise, and had a go at 'improving' things, but after a page or so gave up, except for sporadic alterations on a much smaller scale. That does not look like the be-haviour of an author: the style of the archetype can hardly have been a sur-prise to Malory. It seems therefore a reasonable working assumption that the changes to W, both in the drastically reworked opening section and later, are

[70] *Works*, p. 192.2–3C.
[71] Mizobatu, *s.v.*
[72] My 'Earliest Texts' gives a little evidence that suggests that Malory would not have had time to recast the whole *Morte Darthur*.

scribal. Until the contrary is proved we may for simplicity's sake take them to be the work of a single scribe, but we need not try to decide whether the scribe who copied out the Roman War story in *W* was responsible, or whether he simply reproduced changes made by a predecessor.

What has been established so far goes some way to clarify what the revision of the Roman War in *C* did, but little to establish who did it. The evidence of the sources suggests that the archetype was broadly similar to the reconstructed text for the first section, and to *W* after that. As with *W*, it is simplest to assume that the changes that produced *C* were made by one person. It may be worth saying, however, that if the archetype induced a powerful urge to change it in two people rather than (as previously assumed) one, it is more likely that that urge was shared by a still larger number of people, and so that *C* might have been the product of more than one set of alterations.

If *C* was produced in a single revision, Matthews's account of the difference between *W* and *C* seems a fair summary of what was done, although it may be open to some qualification as an account of what the reviser intended. As we have seen, the topic sentences suggest he was trying to produce a narrative that read rather more smoothly than his original, but his main purpose may merely have been to shorten the story, and the cutting down on heroic elements and the removal of heavy alliteration may have been an almost accidental by-product of that process. However, neither actual changes nor inferred motives do much to identify the reviser. The issues Professor Matthews raised under his six criteria seem to leave the argument at something close to a stand.

Since 1975, however, scholars responding to what was known of Professor Matthews's case have raised other issues that may make it possible to take the matter further. All of them bear in one way or another on style, and all of them have been addressed by Charles Moorman's paper, which was our starting point. Since Professor Moorman accused those who opposed Matthews's case of refusing to answer it, it would be particularly improper not to answer him. His insinuations about the motives of other scholars will be of no interest to third parties, but his factual inaccuracies are another matter. Readers who have no access to Matthews's case may be particularly misled. For instance, Moorman quotes from the Long Version what he says is Matthews's view of the relationship between the *C*-text of the Roman War story and its source.[73] It is in fact Matthews's account of the view he is attacking, a mere exordium to his own view, given later in the same sentence. Matthews's view was the one Moorman ridicules,[74] that Caxton's source was so like *W* as to make direct comparison valid: the discussions of the Roman War in both versions of Matthews's case take that for granted throughout. Matthews's discussion of the remainder of the *Morte Darthur*, as has been noticed above, gives a view that is

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[73] Moorman, 'Desperately Defending Winchester', pp. 27–8; cf. Long Version p. 113 (32).
[74] Moorman, p. 26.

at least capable of being reconciled with the scepticism Moorman professes, but Moorman is quoting from the discussion of the Roman War.

However, although shooting oneself in the foot may detract from the stylishness of a formal challenge, it does not absolve one's opponents from responding. The answer to Moorman's accusation that there is no basis for assuming Caxton's source to be so like *W* as to make direct comparison valid is that (1) *C* and *W*'s frequent identical readings in the Roman War and extremely frequent ones outside it, and (2) the fact that a significant number of passages in *C*'s version of the Roman War are clearly abbreviated from something very like their counterparts in *W* make it sufficiently probable that the archetype was close to *W* for that to be assumed when there is no evidence to the contrary. This was Vinaver's view, and as far as I am aware the only scholars who have disputed it have argued for an even closer relationship between *W* and *C*: lineal descent, and faithful transmission down the line. The most extreme form of the latter view was argued, although he does not say so, in Professor Moorman's previous essay on Malory, in which he says that *C* seemed to have been produced from *W* by a process very like that used by instructors correcting freshman composition.[75]

When Professor Moorman misrepresents the case he supports, it is not surprising that he is rarely entirely accurate about the arguments he opposes. His account of those arguments, however, includes another challenge, which, regardless of how he describes their case, his opponents must also answer. He asserts that issues of authorial identity can only be settled by arguments from substantives, whereas all those who have disputed Matthews's case have argued from accidentals. Accidentals, Moorman maintains, 'are the result of copying rather than composing'.[76] From the rest of his essay, that must mean 'scribes and compositors always completely rework all accidentals to their own norms'. Any weaker assertion would require him to address his opponents' arguments individually, which he does not do. However, in the strong sense implied, his assertion is false. Distinguishable layers of dialectological accidentals in the *Morte Arthure* manuscript, for instance, allowed Angus McIntosh to deduce the origins not only of the copyist of that manuscript but of two of his predecessors as well.[77] Matthews, as it happens, also thought that accidentals could decide authorship: a substantial part of his discussion of the *Morte Darthur* outside the Roman War is devoted to trying, albeit without much success, to identify the reviser from comparative studies of the grammar of *W* and *C*.[78]

It was McIntosh's achievement that led Derek Brewer to suggest to me that

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[75] Charles Moorman, 'Caxton's *Morte Darthur*: Malory's Second Edition?' *15CS* 12 (1987), 98–113, esp. pp. 101, 104–9.
[76] Moorman, 'Desperately Defending Winchester', p. 26.
[77] 'The Textual Transmission of the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*', in *English and Medieval Studies presented to J.R.R. Tolkien*, ed. Norman Davis and C.E. Wrenn (London 1962), pp. 231–40.
[78] Long Version pp. 124–5 (48–9).

dialectology might provide the wherewithall to test Matthews's case. Knowing that I knew less than Matthews, whose excursus into Malorian dialectology was a disaster, I sought advice from McIntosh himself, who suggested that the problem was made for Jeremy Smith, who was trained in the methods of the Edinburgh Middle English Dialect Project and whose principal research area was dialect variations in the Gower manuscripts. The Gower scribes sometimes reproduce their author's dialect and sometimes translate it into their own, with varying degrees of success in both cases. I was able to persuade Dr Smith to put his own work aside to make a preliminary assessment of the Caxton Roman War.[79] It is that assessment that Moorman described as one of the arguments 'against Matthews'. Fortunately, Smith's essay, unlike Matthews's, was in print, and although most readers may need an expert to tell them whether Smith was right to base his assessment on the 'fourteen common words' he did, they will see that there is nothing 'against' anybody in Smith's method or (unfortunately) in his conclusion, which left things precisely where they were before he started. Caxton translated his copy so thoroughly into his own dialect that what he took from it and anything he may have added are dialectologically indistinguishable.

Although Smith's main conclusion did not take matters forward, he made one useful discovery that Moorman should have noticed, in showing that Caxton's compositors apparently did not add any intermediate linguistic layers to his editions of Malory, or of other authors.[80] This is an important reduction in the complexity of the stylistic problem, which would help anyone who was able to get a purchase on it from another direction. The scholar who did that was Yuji Nakao, who investigated the distribution of certain subnominal particles and comparable accidentals in W and C. Professor Nakao presented his results in tabular form, where some will think they speak for themselves.[81] Professor Moorman, however, does not understand them, and as he may not be the only innumerate professor of English, an explanation may be justified.

Nakao examined six sets of data in W and C, all (like Smith's and Matthews's data) linguistically unobtrusive material that a copyist might normalise, partly normalise, or reproduce unaltered. Nakao's data, like Smith's and Matthews's, might reveal nothing, but six sets meant that there was at least a possibility of independent confirmation of anything that might be found.

The first set was the negative particle *ne*, which Malory used both adverbially (= Latin *non*) and conjunctively (= Latin *nec*). The former was unhelpful, because (among other reasons) it is not found in either text of the Roman War. The latter, however, is found more extensively both inside and outside the Roman War. Outside it appears 24 times in W, and 56 times in C: the larger

[79] Jeremy J. Smith, 'Some Spellings in Caxton's Malory', *Poetica* 24 (1986), 58–63.
[80] Smith, p. 62; compare Moorman, p. 26.
[81] 'Does Malory really Revise His Vocabulary? – Some Negative Evidence', *Poetica* 25–6 (1987), 93–109.

number being accounted for by C having kept nearly all W's examples and added roughly as many again of its own. Inside the Roman War, it is found once in W, and 27 times in C. When the relative lengths of the various parts of the two texts have been taken into account, one would have predicted two instances in the Roman War in W, but the difference between two predicted and one actual must be statistically insignificant. 27 times in C, however, is over sixty times as high as would have been predicted, and is not.

If scribes and compositors always completely rework all accidentals to their own norms, that extreme variation implies that Caxton had the Roman War set by one compositor (or team of compositors) and the remainder of the *Morte Darthur* by another. The first team may be easier to believe in than the second, since Nakao found that the frequency of occurrence of conjunctive *ne* in the Roman War was very similar to that in Caxton's original prose. The second team, however, who according to this hypothesis would have set the earlier and later parts of Caxton's *Morte Darthur* (97% of the book), present real problems. Where did they come from, and go to? Why did they stop and start again in the middle of formes?[82] And why has nobody noticed any difference between the compositorial, as opposed to the linguistic, practices of the two teams? In reality, I fear – to echo Matthews – the Second Team of Compositors is a walking shadow, a figure of dream.[83] The straightforward explanation of the difference in usage is that Caxton rewrote the part of the text in which the frequency is close to that in his original prose, but merely revised the part where the frequencies are much lower, which therefore retains much of the usage of his exemplar.

There is no need to expound the other five sets of data in detail. In each case the logic is the same, and the relationship between the material in W outside and inside the Roman War, in C outside and inside the Roman War, and in Caxton's own prose implies the same.

In large matters of taste, such as a liking for a romance-like rather than an epic tone in story-telling, the only distinguishable preferences may be those of the age, which almost everybody concerned with a text may share. Even less widely shared tastes, such as a liking for etiquette and protocol, may be found in many apart from the named persons on whom discussion naturally focusses. The half-dozen linguistic habits identified by Nakao, however, together provide a profile that is unlikely to have been shared by a large number of people in any group. We do not know how many people had access to the text of the *Morte Darthur*, but it seems reasonable to suppose that they formed a group small enough to make it unlikely that more than one of them had this linguistic profile. If that is so, the 'Caxton' in 'Caxton's Malory' will be no mere shorthand for some unknown scribe whose work came into the hands of England's first printer, or for one of the compositors who worked in his printing house, or even for compound effects created by layers of work

[82] In C, the Roman War starts on fol. h vij[v] and ends on k iij[r].
[83] Short Version p. 17, Long Version p. 119 (40).

carried out by such individuals and given to the world in the book that came off his presses. Rather, the profile that Nakao's research provides enables us to identify with probability one individual, William Caxton, as having revised the Roman War and retouched the remainder of Malory's *Morte Darthur*.

Since a statistical proof like Nakao's must be a matter of probability rather than certainty, it is desireable that it should be tested from as much other data as possible. The most desireable corpus not treated by Nakao is Caxton's vocabulary, those substantives on which Moorman thought any proof must be based. The reason that Nakao did not examine them is that (as he says), they had already been carefully treated by Shunichi Noguchi.[84] Moorman dismisses Professor Noguchi's essay as dealing with accidentals: how he was able to describe it in that way I cannot explain. In the Roman War in C, Noguchi found 19 single words, 6 word-pairs, and 6 phrases, idioms, or grammatical constructions that appear elsewhere (in some cases frequently) in Caxton's prose but appear nowhere in *W*. Although these findings lack the useful five-part articulation of Nakao's data, they constitute a significant find by criteria accepted by all parties to the debate. If the Roman War in C is Malory's work, printed by Caxton 'according to his copy', these words should not be in it. It is as hard to see how Moorman (or Matthews) would explain the presence of these Caxtonian words except by an implausible appeal to chance.

If the case argued here is sound, both surviving primary texts of Malory's Roman War story suffered not only from inevitable scribal and compositorial error but also from conscious alteration, particularly at the beginning. Only by the rigorous use of textual critical method, including of course the Vinaver Principle, can we hope to restore even in part what Malory wrote, rather than accept blindly what we have inherited from the incompetence or deliberate alteration of intermediaries.

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[84] 'Caxton's Malory', *Poetica* (1977), 72–84, supplemented by 'Caxton's Malory Again', *Poetica* (1984), 33–8.

APPENDIX I:
MINOR SOURCES OF THE CAXTON ROMAN WAR STORY

1: The alliterative *Morte Arthure*

54 cases from Vinaver's text and apparatus (see above)
5 cases 'noted by Helen Wroten'; perhaps the five listed in Matthews's Long Version p. 30:

> whoos pere ye sawe neuer in your dayes V198.3C < *MA* 1174
> and ther were slayne of the Romayns moo than ten thousand V211.8–9C
> < *MA* 1537
> couered with tharmes of the Empyre V226.14C < *MA* 2337
> two bodyes of kynges V226.15C < *MA* 2236–7
> as a lord ought to do in his owne countrey V242.9C < *MA* 2092 [read 3092]

3 cases noted in Matthews's Short Version p. 8:

> *kynges* V185.3C < *MA* 83, 288, 320, 543 [read 523]
> *obeyssaunce* V185.18C < *MA* 82–4
> *Emperour* V185.14C < *MA* 86 [But cf. *W*'s *Emperour* at V185.8.]

2: The Vulgate *Suite de Merlin*

Roman ultimatum to King Arthur V185–6C < *Merlin*, ed. H.B. Wheatley, E.E.T.S. o.s. 10, 21, 36, 112 (1865–99) pp. 639–40
Young knights want to attack the ambassadors, Arthur forbids it V186–7C < *Merlin* p. 640
Cador's phrase about idleness V187.18–20C < *Merlin* p. 640
Giant-fight, removal of date V204.13C < *Merlin* pp. '628, 639' [? read 338–9?]
Giant-fight, *gretter and fyerser* V205.1C. < *Merlin* pp. 338–9
Lucius's exhortation to his troops V219.9–12C < *Merlin* p. 660

3: Hardyng's *Chronicle*

prynces and . . . knyghtes V185.3–4C
in his throne Ryall V185.4–5C
in token V185.6C
reuerence V185.17C
procurour of the publyke wele of Rome V185.18C
sendeth . . . gretyng V185.19C–186.1C
and paye alle theyr dispencys V191.4–5C

For the corresponding passages in Hardyng, see John Hardyng, *The Chronicle*, ed. Henry Ellis (London 1812) p. 145.

APPENDIX II: KING ARTHUR AND THE AMBASSADORS

This appendix reproduces the two *Morte Darthur* texts on the verso pages with the three established sources in parallel on the facing recto pages.

The two Malory texts follow the photographic facsimiles, for the Winchester Manuscript text *The Winchester Malory*, ed. N.R. Ker (London 1976), fol. 71, and for the Caxton *Le Morte Darthur*, ed. Paul Needham (London 1976), fols h vij^v–viij^r, with one emendation as noted from *Caxton's Malory*, ed. James Spisak, 2 vols (Berkeley, Calif., 1983), p. 121.8. The extracts from the sources are from *Morte Arthure*, ed. Mary Hamel (New York 1984), pp. 103-8; John Hardyng, *The Chronicle from the First Begynnyng of Englande* (1543; facsimile, Amsterdam 1976), fols i viij^r–k i^r; and *Merlin or the Early History of King Arthur*, ed. H.B. Wheatley, E.E.T.S. o.s. 10, 36, 21, 112, pp. 639–40. I have supplied some punctuation to bring out the sense.

The extracts from the sources follow the order of the statements in the Malory texts to which they appear to correspond. Where that produces an order different from the one in which they stand in their originals, that is noted in the comments column on the verso pages. The words closest to the Malory texts are italicised, whether the closeness is in form or meaning or both. It is a theme of Vinaver's Commentary that Malory often allows his choice of a word to be determined by the form of a word in his sources with an entirely different meaning and purpose; it is entirely in keeping with this that *Royamme* 'kingdom' in C should have been triggered by *Ro(o)me* 'Rome' in one or more of the three sources.

These similarities are offered as a help to the beginning of a judgement, not as the end of one. For instance, when the ambassadors begin to tell Arthur what Lucius will do if Arthur does not obey, C's *yf thou refuse* corresponds to MA's *3iff thow . . . wythsytte*, and W's *other ellys* to Hardyng's *And els*. If Matthews is right, both of these correspondences may be direct derivatives, but if I am right, at least one must be the product of coincidence. It is for the reader to judge.

TEXTS

Winchester	Caxton	Comments
Hit befelle whan kyng Arthur had wedded quene Gwenyvere and fulfylled the rounde table, and so aftir his mervelous knyghtis and he had venquyshed the moste party of his enemyes, than sone aftir com Sir Launcelot de Lake vnto þe courte, and Sir Trystrams come that tyme also,	Whanne kyng Arthur had after longe werre rested	W is based on the previous tale in the *Morte Darthur*
and than so hit befelle that þe Emperour of Roome Lucius sente vnto Arthure messyngers	and helde a Ryal feeste and table rounde with his alyes of kynges prynces and noble knyghtes all of the round table there cam in to his halle he syttynge in his throne Ryal xij auncyen men berynge eche of them a braunche of Olyue in token that they cam as Embassatours and messagers fro the Emperour Lucyus whiche was called at that tyme Dictatour or procurour of the publyke wele of Rome whiche sayde messagers after their entryng & comyng in to the presence of kynge Arthur dyd to hym theyr obeyssaunce in makyng to hym reuerence [and] said to hym in this wyse	W summarises C *and* Spisak; *om.* C
commaundynge hym for to pay his trewage that his auncettryes haue payde before hym	The hyghe & myghty Emperour Lucyus sendeth to the kyng of Bretayne gretyng commaundyng the to knouleche hym for thy lord and to sende hym the truage due of this Royamme vnto thempyre whiche thy fader and other to fore thy precessours haue paid as is of record And thou as rebelle not knowynge hym as thy souerayne withholdest and reteynest contrary to the statutes and decrees maade by the noble and worthy Julius Cezar conquerour of this Royame and fyrst Emperour of Rome.	W's first demand for tribute VM's *And I the .. mysdon* is out of sequence

SOURCES

Morte Arthure	Hardyng	Vulgate *Suite*
Qwen that the *Kynge Arthur* by conqueste *had* wonnyn Castells and kyngdoms and contreez many, And he *had couerede the coroun* of the kyth ryche, Of all that Vter in erthe aughte in his tym –	But whils the kyng	[A]s Merlin spake to the kynge Arthur
a Crystynmese he haldes .. Wyth dukez and dusperes of dyuers rewmes, Erles and ercheuesqes .. Byschopes and bachelers and banerettes nobill .. on *ryall* araye he helde his *Rounde Table* .. So come in sodanly a senatour of Rome Wyth sexten knyghtes in a soyte sewande hym one. He saluȝed the souerayne and .. mad his enclines .. And syne agayne to þe gome he gaffe vp his nedys:	satte in his *trone royall* His *princes* all, *& knightes* of dignite Aboute hym there the *ambassade* emperiall Wer faire broughte vnto his royall dignite That princes wer .. Of *moste ripe age*, and reuerende chere With *olleffe braunches, in their handes* clere A token of *message*, and legacie .. [T]hei offered, of *Lucius* Hebery The letters then, on knees with *reuerence*:	ther com vp *xij princes* full richely be-seyn .. and *eche of theym bar a braunche of Olyve in his hande*, and that was a signe .. thei were *messagiers*; and in this maner thei com before the kynge Arthur that satte at the high table in the paleis, and his barouns him be-forn; and .. seide 'Kynge Arthur, we be .. sente .. *from Luce the Emperour*.' Than he drough oute a letter that .. be-gan in this maner:
'Sir *Lucius* Iberius, *the Emperour of Rome*, Saluz the as sugett vndyre his sele ryche ..	'Lucius of Roome, the emperoure Procurator for all the whole senate Of the publike profite chief gouernoure .. To Arthure kyng of Brytain .. Sendyng gretyng	'I Luce, Emperour of Rome, that haue the powste, and the signiourie of the Romayns, sende to myn enmy the kynge Arthur in-as-moche only as he hath agein me deserued and agein .. Rome ..
I make the somons in sale to sue for thi landys .. Þat thow bee redy at *Rome* .. That awe homage of alde till hym and his eldyrs .. Thare schall thow gyffe rekkynynge .. Why *thow arte rebell* to *Rome* and rentez them *wythholdez* .. That *Julius Cesar* wan wyth his jentill knyghttes.'	.. [W]e .. bid straightly and *commaunde* That .. Thou come to *Roome*, and paie that we demaunde The *truage*, whiche thou haste of thy power Of Brytain long *withholde* ..	And I the *comaunde* as Emperour .. that thow be byfore vs for to a-mende that thow hast mysdon. Thow hast *with-holde* .. the *trewage of Rome* .. *Iulius cesar oure auncestre* .. toke bateile in Breteigne and trwys was hym yolden .. and thow woldest it vs be-reve.

TEXTS

Winchester	Caxton	Comments
Whan kynge Arthure wyste what they mente he loked vp with his gray yȝen and angred at þe messyngers passyng sore. Than were this messyngers aferde and knelyd stylle and durste nat aryse, they were so aferde of his grymme countenaunce.		
Þan one of the knyghtes messyngers spake alowde and seyde, 'Crowned kynge, myssedo no messyngers, for we be com at his commaundemente as servytures sholde.'		
Than spake þe Conquerrour, 'Þou recrayed & coward knyghte, why feryst þou my countenaunce? There be in this halle, & they were sore aggreved, þou durste nat for a deukedom of londis loke in þeire facis.'		
'Sir,' seyde one of the senatoures, 'so Cryste me helpe, I was so aferde whan I loked in thy face that myne herte wolde nat serue for to sey my message.		
'But sytthen hit is my wylle for to sey myne erande, the gretis welle Lucius, the Emperoure of Roome, and commaundis the uppon payne that woll falle to sende hym the trewage of this realme that thy fadir Vther Pendragon payde,		Beginning of Malory's second pass through the matter. W's salutation; cf. C's supra. W's second demand for tribute; cf. first, supra.
oþer ellys he woll	And yf thou refuse his demande and commaundement knowe thou for certayne that he shal make stronge werre ageynst the thy Royames and londes and shall	
bereve þe all thy realmys þat þou weldyst.'	chastyse the and thy subgettys that it shal be ensample perpetuel vnto alle	MA's 3iff .. Fore euer out of sequence (from lines 104–11).

SOURCES

Morte Arthure	Hardyng	Vulgate Suite
The kynge blyschit on the beryn with his brode eghn .. Luked as a lyon and on his lyppe bytes. The Romaynes fore .. ferdnesse of hys face .. cowchide as kenetez .. Because of his contenaunce confusede them semede. Then couerd vp a knyghte and criede ful lowde: 'Kynge corounede of kynd .. Misdoo no messangere .. We lenge with sir Lucius .. It es lefull till vs his likynge till wyrche; We come at his commaundment ..' Then carpys the Conquerour .. 'Haa, crauaunde knyghte, a cowarde the semez, Thare some segge in this sale and he ware sare greuede, Thow durste noght for all Lumberdye luke on hym ones.' 'Sir,' sais the senatour, 'so Crist mott me helpe, the voute of thi vesage has woundyde vs all! .. By lukynge, withowttyn lesse, a lyon the semys.'		
'3iff thow theis somouns wythsytte, he sendes thie thies wordes: He sall the seke ouer the see wyth sexten kynges, Bryne Bretayn the brade and bryttyn thy knyghtys And brynge the.. as a beste .. whare hym lykes .. Þou sall be .. forfet fore euer.'	And els, we shall aproche to thy contree And what so thy foly hath vs bee refte .. we shall it make restored bee .. The liuelode, that thy father so the lefte Thou are like for thyne intrucion To lose and bee brought into confusion.'	and yef thou wilt not this do, I shall take from the all Breteigne, and all the londe that thou hast in bailly .. with so grete force of peple that thou shalt haue no hardynesse me to a-bide .. And I shall take the, and bynde and caste the in my prison.'

TEXTS

Winchester	Caxton	Comments
	kynges and prynces for to denye their truage vnto that noble empyre whiche domyneth vpon the vnyversal world.	VM's *Rome .. worlde* out of sequence
'Thow seyste well,' seyde Arthure, 'but for all thy brym wordys I woll nat be to ouer-hasty, and perfore þou and thy felowys shall abyde here seven dayes; and shall calle vnto me my counceyle of my moste trusty knyghtes and deukes and regeaunte kynges and erlys and barowns and of my moste wyse doctours, and whan we have takyn oure avysement ye shall haue your answere playnly, suche as I shall abyde by.'	Thenne whan they had shewed theffecte of their message the kyng commaunded them to withdrawe them And said he shold take auyce of counceylle and gyue to them an ansuere	
	Thenne somme of the yonge knyghtes heryng this their message wold haue ronne on them to haue slayne them sayenge that it was a rebuke to alle the knyghtes there beyng present to suffre them to saye so to the kynge And anone the kynge commaunded that none of them vpon payne of dethe to myssaye them ne doo them ony harme	Possible homoeoartia in *W*.
Than þe noble kynge commaunded Sir Clegis to loke that thes men be seteled	and commaunded a knyghte to brynge them to their lodgynge	

SOURCES

Morte Arthure	Hardyng	Vulgate *Suite*
		Rome that hath the power and seignourie ouer all the worlde.
Quod the kynge .. 'Sen I was corounnde in kyth .. was neuer creature to me that carpede so large!.. *Forthi sall þow lenge here* and lugge *with thise lordes this seuenyghte* .. Bot I sall tak *concell at kynges enoyntede*, of *dukes* and duspers and doctours noble, offe peres of þe parlement, prelates and oþer, off the richeste renkys of the Rounde Table; Þus schall *I take avisemente* of valiante beryns..'		
		In the paleis was grete murmur and noyse of hem that this hadde vndirstonde, and swor and seide thei sholde *dishonour* the *messagier* .. and a-noon thei sholde hem haue *don shame I-nough*, but as *the kynge seide* to hem full debonerly, 'Ffeire lordes, lete hem be, thei be .. sent by comaundement of theire lorde.'
He *commande sir Cayous* .. to *styghtyll* tha steryne men as theire statte askys.		