



# ARTHURIAN LITERATURE

XXIX

Edited by Elizabeth Archibald and David F. Johnson

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*Arthurian  
Literature*  
**XXIX**

Edited by  
ELIZABETH ARCHIBALD AND DAVID F. JOHNSON

D. S. BREWER

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## CONTENTS

List of Illustrations	vi
General Editors' Foreword	vii
List of Contributors	ix
I Edward III's Abandoned Order of the Round Table <i>Christopher Berard</i>	1
II King Arthur's Tomb at Glastonbury: The Relocation of 1368 in Context <i>Julian Luxford</i>	41
III Benedict of Gloucester's <i>Vita Sancti Dubricii</i> : An Edition and Translation <i>Joshua Byron Smith</i>	53
IV New Evidence for an Interest in Arthurian Literature in the Dutch Low Countries in the Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries <i>Sjoerd Levelt</i>	101
V Malory's Source-Manuscript for the First Tale of <i>Le Morte Darthur</i> <i>P. J. C. Field</i>	111
VI Malory's Sources – and Arthur's Sisters – Revisited <i>Linda Gowans</i>	121
VII Peace, Justice and Retinue-Building in Malory's 'The Tale of Sir Gareth of Orkney' <i>Ryan Naughton</i>	143
VIII Mapping Malory's <i>Morte</i> : The (Physical) Place and (Narrative) Space of Cornwall <i>Dorsey Armstrong</i>	161
IX The Fringes of Arthurian Fiction <i>Bart Besamusca and Jessica Quinlan</i>	191

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. The construction of the Slavenburg, *Divisiiekroniek*, fol. 17r; 108  
Utrecht, University Library, S fol. 1593 (Rariora), used by  
kind permission of the University Library Utrecht
2. Matthew Paris, *The Map of Britain*, BL Ms., Cotton 177  
Claudius D.vi, fol. 12v; used by kind permission of the  
British Library.
3. Detail from the Hereford Mappa Mundi; used by kind 178  
permission of the Dean and Chapter of Hereford and the  
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## GENERAL EDITORS' FOREWORD

The contents of Volume 29 of *Arthurian Literature* range from a mid-twelfth century Latin *vita* of the Welsh saint Dyfrig to the early modern Arthur of the Dutch, from Edward III's waning interest in the Order of the Round Table to the central thematic importance of Cornwall to Malory's *Morte Darthur*, and also across much of Europe.

In the first essay Christopher Berard contends that Edward III's experience of war during the Crécy campaign changed him from an enthusiastic supporter of the idealized, Arthurian code of knighthood to a proponent of 'total' warfare. By contrasting the ways in which the French and English kings employed Arthurianism for their respective causes, Berard sheds light on the literary ideal of chivalry as a social force in the age of Edward III. Julian Luxford looks at the circumstances surrounding the final translation, in 1368, of the tomb created for the remains of Arthur and Guenevere within Glastonbury Abbey. The relocation of this tomb to a place of extreme prominence and honour – before the high altar – reveals the strong interest in Arthur held by Glastonbury's abbot, Walter of Monington, at the time. Luxford gives the text and translation of the document describing the relocation of 1368 (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole 826), and argues that it is important testimony to a previously unsuspected deep interest in this major historical tradition. Joshua Byron Smith provides a full-function edition and translation of Benedict of Gloucester's Latin life of Saint Dyfrig, a figure who Smith argues is portrayed as 'an exceptional ecclesiastic and miracle-worker, but also as King Arthur's main spiritual support'. Writing at a time when interest in things Arthurian was on the rise, Benedict re-writes Arthurian history to make Dyfrig's piety and prayers an essential key to Arthur's success. Like Luxford, Sjoerd Levelt also demonstrates the persistence of an interest in King Arthur where previous scholarship had assumed it was lacking. There has been a scholarly consensus for many years now that production of new Middle Dutch Arthurian literature came to a complete halt in the fifteenth century. Levelt argues convincingly that this apparent lack of interest is deceptive, and offers new evidence, however 'sketchy and haphazard', for the persistence of Arthuriana in the Low Countries in the early sixteenth century, especially in historiographical materials.

Four essays focus on Malory. P. J. C. Field scrutinizes the evidence for our knowledge of the French manuscript sources for Malory's first tale, in particular the *Suite du Merlin*. After first surveying the manuscript evidence and previous scholarship on the subject, Field argues against Jonathan Passaro's conclusion, published in volume 26 of this journal

(2009), that Malory worked directly from the Cambridge manuscript of the Post-Vulgate *Suite* (Cambridge University Library Additional 7071). In the next essay Linda Gowans does the same for the earlier part of the *Merlin* story that Malory adapted, namely the *Merlin* proper. Both reach opposite conclusions to Passaro, but taken together these pieces demonstrate both the enduring interest in the subject and the fact that the final word has not been written on Malory's sources. The two essays that follow deal with the political and social dimensions of Malory's *Morte Darthur*. Ryan Naughton highlights the concept of 'retinue-building' in Malory's 'The Tale of Sir Gareth of Orkney'. Malory's foregrounding of Gareth's battles for peace and justice, Naughton argues, makes it possible for the reader to see reflected in this text 'the underlying apprehensions about poor governance during the social and political instability of the first half of the Wars of the Roses'. In her article, Dorsey Armstrong establishes the central role played by Cornwall in Malory's literary worldview, and demonstrates just how significant that region in the Arthurian landscape was in the *Morte Darthur* and other aspects of the Arthurian legend.

Finally, in a study that expands upon Beate Schmolke-Hasselmann's important study of French texts, *The Evolution of Arthurian Romance* (Cambridge, 1998), Bart Besamusca and Jessica Quinlan emphasize the pan-European aspects of medieval Arthurian literature. This wide-ranging survey looks at the 'fringes of Arthurian literature', considering key Arthurian characters in both familiar and less familiar languages, including Old Norse and Hebrew. Although there are some striking examples of innovation in the texts they discuss, 'a clear tendency is discernible both to repeat and develop narrative structures – plots, characters, themes and motives – which play a constitutive role in the French tradition'.

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**Christopher Berard** is a PhD candidate at the Centre for Medieval Studies, University of Toronto. He is writing his dissertation on historical instances of Arthurian imitation from 1270 to 1400 in their political and cultural contexts. His research interests include chivalry and violence, late medieval historiography and monarchical self-representation.

**Bart Besamusca** is Senior Lecturer in Middle Dutch literature at Utrecht University. He is the author of *The Book of Lancelot: The Middle Dutch Lancelot Compilation and the Medieval Tradition of Narrative Cycles* (2003). He supervised the research project *Arthurian Fiction: A Pan-European Approach*, which resulted, among other things, in an online research tool, accessible at [www.arthurianfiction.org](http://www.arthurianfiction.org), and the essay published in this issue of *Arthurian Literature*. He is currently supervising a cross-European research project which studies late-medieval Dutch, English, French and German multi-text manuscripts, focusing on the short verse narratives they contain ([www.dynamicsofthemedievalmanuscript.eu](http://www.dynamicsofthemedievalmanuscript.eu)).

**P. J. C. Field** is Emeritus Professor of English at Bangor University, and past president of the International Arthurian Society. His research interests centre on Malory, but he has written on Arthurian topics from Nennius to David Jones. His most recent book is an edition of the seventh and eighth tales of Malory's *Morte Darthur*, his last essay before this one a reassessment of the date of composition of the alliterative *Morte Arthure*, and he has just completed a new edition of Malory's *Morte Darthur*.

**Linda Gowans** is an independent scholar, author of *Cei and the Arthurian Legend* in D. S. Brewer's Arthurian Studies series (1988), and subsequently of work on the manuscript tradition of the Robert de Boron cycle and Arthurian material in Gaelic oral tradition. She was British Branch bibliographer for the International Arthurian Society for the years 1998 to 2007.

**Sjoerd Levelt** studied Dutch and English Medieval Studies at the University of Amsterdam, the University of California at Berkeley and the University of Oxford. He completed his PhD at the Warburg Institute, with a study of the late medieval chronicle tradition of Holland and its continuations in the early modern period. His book, *Jan van Naaldwijk's Chronicles of Holland: Transformation and Continuation in the Historical Tradition of Holland during the Early Sixteenth Century* (2011), was awarded the Society for Renaissance Studies Book Prize 2012.

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# I

## EDWARD III'S ABANDONED ORDER OF THE ROUND TABLE\*

*Christopher Berard*

On Thursday, 22 January 1344, rounding off in grand style a lavish tournament at Windsor Castle, King Edward III of England (r. 1327–1377) swore a ‘corporal oath’ (*corporale juramentum*) to restore the Order of the Round Table to the same ‘manner and standing’ as that of King Arthur, his legendary predecessor, provided he had the means. Receiving a *consimile juramentum* to ‘observe, sustain and promote’ the Round Table from the earls and accomplished knights in attendance, Edward III announced that the order’s first meeting would take place during Pentecost, and he commissioned the construction of a grand House of the Round Table at Windsor to serve as its centre.<sup>1</sup> Not to be outdone, Philippe VI of France (r. 1328–1350), Edward’s arch-rival, reportedly began building a Round Table of his own, hoping to divert German and Italian knights from flocking to Edward’s court.<sup>2</sup> Although most of the recorded outlay for the English house, £509 12s 11¾d, was spent in the days leading up to

\* For their helpful comments and suggestions, I wish to thank my dissertation advisors: Drs James P. Carley, Dorothea Kullmann, Mark Meyerson and Markus Stock, my fellow doctoral candidate Mr Ryan Buchanan Allen and Dr Constance Rousseau, who shepherded me into the field of Medieval Studies.

<sup>1</sup> Adam Murimuth, *Continuatio Chronicarum*, ed. E. M. Thompson, RS 93 (London, 1889), pp. 155–6 and 231–2 (p. 232): ‘In quo loco [Windsor] idem dominus rex et omnes alii insimul steterunt, et, oblato libro, dominus rex, tactis sacrosanctis, corporale præstitit juramentum quod ipse ad certum tempus ad hoc limitatum, dummodo sibi facultas arrideat, mensam rotundam inciperet, eodem modo et statu quo eam dimisit dominus Arthurus quondam rex Angliæ, scilicet ad numerum trecentorum militum, et eam foveret et manuteneret pro viribus, numerum semper in augendo. Ad quod quidem observandum, sustinendum, et promovendum in omnibus suis appendiciis, comites Derby, Sarisburia, Warewykia, Arundellia, Penbrokia, et Suffolkia ac alii barones et milites quam plures, quos probitas et fama promovit laude fore dignos, consimile fecerunt juramentum.’

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Walsingham, *Historia Anglicana*, ed. H. T. Riley, RS 28, 2 vols. (London, 1863–4), I, 263: ‘Eodem tempore, Philippus de Valeys, Rex Francia, hoc facto Regis Angliæ provocatus, coepit et ipse Rotundum aedificare Tabulam in terra sua; ut sic sibi attraheret militiam Alemannia et Italiae, ne ad Regis Angliæ Tabulam properarent.’

Pentecost (23 May) 1344,<sup>3</sup> the order did not assemble as planned, possibly because its meeting place remained a work in progress.<sup>4</sup> What may have been a temporary delay in May became an indefinite postponement by late November 1344, when papal arbitration at Avignon failed to resolve the latest conflict between the monarchs of England and France. Edward halted work on his costly project and prepared to launch a major continental campaign.<sup>5</sup>

On St George's Day (23 April) 1349, Edward III commemorated the victories of the aforementioned campaign, including that at Crécy (26 August 1346) and the capture of Calais (4 August 1347), by holding another great feast at Windsor Castle. This event did not mark the long-awaited re-establishment of the Round Table; rather, it inaugurated an entirely new chivalric order, the Order of the Garter, instituted under the patronage of St George and the Virgin Mary.<sup>6</sup> Although near-contemporary writers regarded the Garter as the realization of his earlier endeavour, Edward neither resumed work on the House of the Round Table nor made any explicit reference to King Arthur in the statutes of his revamped order.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>3</sup> See R. Barber, 'The Order of the Round Table', in *Edward III's Round Table at Windsor*, ed. J. Munby, R. Barber and R. Brown (Woodbridge, 2007), pp. 137–52 (p. 139).

<sup>4</sup> W. Mark Ormrod has suggested that Edward cancelled the Pentecost Round Table as a 'mark of respect' for the much-mourned William Montagu, earl of Salisbury, who, after having competed at the Windsor tournament, died on 30 January 1344. See W. M. Ormrod, *Edward III* (New Haven and London, 2011), p. 301. Relying heavily on the chronicles of Jean le Bel (c. 1360) and Jean Froissart (c. 1370–1400), Francis Ingledew has speculated that a scandal resurfaced around the time of Montagu's death that King Edward coveted (and possibly raped) the earl's wife, Katherine, countess of Salisbury. See F. Ingledew, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight and the Order of the Garter* (Notre Dame, 2006), p. 148: '...a known desire for the wife of one of the premier members of the very chivalric court he [Edward] intended to celebrate in his new order might break the momentum toward the order's foundation and disrupt the courtly esprit de corps as measured in its tournaments.' Nonetheless, work continued on the House of the Round Table until late November.

<sup>5</sup> Walsingham, *Historia Anglicana*, I, p. 263: 'Expensæ per hebdomadam erant primo centum libræ; sed ex post, propter nova quæ Rex suscepit de Francia, resecabantur ad novem libras, eo quod censuit pro aliis negotiis thesaurum plurimum comportandum.'

<sup>6</sup> See J. Vale, *Edward III and Chivalry: Chivalric Society and its Context 1270–1350* (Woodbridge, 1982), pp. 82–4. Geoffrey le Baker, a secular clerk from Swinbrook, Oxfordshire, provides the earliest surviving account (c. 1360) of this event (dated 1350). See *Chronicon Galfridi le Baker de Swynebroke*, ed. E. M. Thompson (Oxford, 1889), pp. 108–9.

<sup>7</sup> Central to my discussion of Edward III's institution of the Garter is the distinction between explicit and implicit reference to Arthur. Ormrod affirms that 'The visual imagery of the Order of the Garter included no direct allusions to Arthur' (*Edward III*, p. 307), as does M. Prestwich, *Armies and Warfare in the Middle Ages: the English Experience* (New Haven and London, 1996), p. 228: 'For Edward III, the plan to found an Order of the Round Table was clearly Arthurian ... Yet the Round Table was an abortive project. The Order of the Garter which replaced it was not obviously Arthurian.' Ingledew, however, speaks of the Order of the Garter as 'saturated' in what he terms the 'Arthurian symbolic field' (*Sir Gawain*, p. 109). He reads the historiographical conflation of the Round Table and Garter projects as proof that the 'Order of the Garter ... was in contemporary eyes the Edwardian Round Table by another name' (p. 99). See Ingledew, *Sir*

In contrast, the newly crowned King Jean II of France (r. 1350–1364) claimed Arthur's Round Table as inspiration for his competing chivalric confraternity, the Company of the Star (*l'Ordre de l'Etoile*), in 1352.<sup>8</sup>

Edward III's decision not to complete the Round Table project, resulting in a breach of his public oath and a waste of resources, is puzzling. Although the king purportedly believed in 1344 that establishing 'une pareille' to Arthur's Round Table was the best way 'pour plus essauchier [increase] l'onneur de ses chevaliers',<sup>9</sup> I shall contend that his wartime experiences on the Crécy campaign altered his attitude towards Arthurianism. Firstly, as will be shown, the Arthurian texts at hand in Edward III's court, especially Chrétien de Troyes' *Conte del Graal* (c. 1180) and the Lancelot-Grail Cycle of prose romances (1215–1230),<sup>10</sup> promoted an

*Gawain*, pp. 105–12. See below. The earliest extant statutes of the Order of the Garter date from 22 April 1415, but they appear to be based on an earlier list. See L. Jefferson, 'MS Arundel 48 and the Earliest Statutes of the Order of the Garter,' *EHR* 109 (1994), 356–85.

<sup>8</sup> Jean le Bel, *Chronique*, ed. J. Viard and E. Déprez, 2 vols. (Paris, 1904–5), II, 204–5: 'L'an de grace M CCC LII, le roy Jehan de France ordonna un belle compaignie, grande et noble, sur la Table Ronde qui fut jadis ou temps du roy Artus.'

<sup>9</sup> Jean le Bel, *Chronique*, II, 26–7.

<sup>10</sup> The roll of John Fleet (London, British Library, Additional 60584) states that Edward III owned fifty-nine *libri de romanciis* (from 1322 to 1341), including a 'romaunz de Meraugys et Sade' (possibly Raoul de Houdenc's *Meraugis de Portlesguez*) and a 'romant de perceval'. See Vale, *Edward III and Chivalry*, pp. 49–50, 128 n.121 and 169. An exchequer account (London, National Archives, PRO E 403/282 m. 10) dated 5 June 1336 records the king's payment of £66 13s 4d to Isabella of Lancaster, a nun of Amesbury, for a book of romance *ad opus domini regis* to be kept in Edward's chamber. See S. H. Cavanaugh, 'Royal Books: King John to Richard II', *The Library*, sixth series, 10 (1988), 304–16 (p. 312). Another documentary source (PRO E 101/393/4, fol. 8r) lists ten 'Libri romanizati' among Queen Isabelle's possessions in 1358, including: 'Unus liber qui vocatur Tresor & Bruyt in fine', 'Unus magnus liber coopertus cum coreo albo de gestis Arthuri', 'Unus liber cons' de sanguine regali', 'Unus liber de Tristam et Isolda' and 'Unus liber cons' de Perceval et Gauwayn'. See E. Rickert, 'King Richard II's Books', *The Library*, fourth series, 13 (1933), 143–7 (p. 145); Vale, *Edward III and Chivalry*, pp. 49–50 and 169–70. An entry in Isabelle's account book (London, British Library, Cotton, Galba E. XIV, fol. 50r) dated 10 December 1357 states: 'John of Paris, coming from the King of France to the Queen at Hertford, and returning with two volumes, of Lancelot and the Sang Réal, sent to the same King by Isabella'. See E. A. Bond, 'Notices of the Last Days of Isabella, Queen of Edward II. Drawn from an Account of the Expenses of her Household', *Archaeologia* 35 (1854), 453–69 (p. 468). 'Sang Réal' is probably a misreading of 'sangreal'; see R. Barber, 'What Was a Round Table?', in *Edward III's Round Table*, ed. Munby et al., pp. 69–76 (pp. 75–6). A Memoranda Roll for 1384/5 names books that Edward III had at the time of his passing. Included are 'vn Romance de Roy Arthure', 'vn Romance de Trebor', 'vn liure appelle Galaath' and 'vn autre liure comensant "Ap's ce q' Henriz"'. On the dorse are three additional items entered at the same date: 'vn bible', 'vn Romance de la Rose', and 'vn Romance de Percivall et Gawyn' (possibly Chrétien de Troyes' *Le Conte del Graal ou Perceval*). See R. S. Loomis, 'The Library of Richard II', in *Studies in Language, Literature, and Culture of the Middle Ages and Later*, ed. E. B. Atwood and A. A. Hill (Austin, TX, 1969), pp. 173–8 (p. 174); R. Middleton, 'The Manuscripts', in *The Arthur of the French: The Arthurian Legend in Medieval French and Occitan Literature*, ed. G. S. Burgess and K. Pratt (Cardiff, 2006), pp. 8–92 (pp. 36–7); R. F. Green, 'King Richard II's Books Revisited', *The Library*, fifth series, 31 (1976), 235–9 (p. 237).

idealized, ethical code of knighthood that was less than accommodating to Edward's recent, relatively groundbreaking use of an overwhelmingly plebeian, mercenary army and total warfare tactics. Secondly, and perhaps even more significantly, Arthurian literature prized reckless daring, 'knightly individualism' and chivalric distinction through equestrian feats of arms as opposed to martial discipline, cohesion and a willingness to engage in dismounted, defensive fighting – the essentials of Edward's tactical advantage.<sup>11</sup> A delineation of the contrasting manners in which the kings of England and France attempted to wield Arthurianism for their rival causes, and the inadvertent cultural effects thereof, will increase our appreciation for the literary ideal of chivalry as a social force during the first stage of the Hundred Years War.<sup>12</sup>

Scholarship on the establishment of the Order of the Garter offers reasons why St George, the warrior-saint, and the Virgin Mary were desirable patrons for the confraternity, but fails to account adequately for Arthur's exclusion. Juliet Vale has questioned why Edward III did not resume construction on the House of the Round Table and why he 'chose to abandon formal links with Arthur's Round Table'.<sup>13</sup> Citing the extensive refurbishment of St Stephen's, Westminster and Windsor (1350s) as evidence that fiscal concerns did not prevent Edward from fulfilling his oath, Vale proposes that the choice of St George and the Virgin Mary as patrons offered the Order of the Garter a religious *gravitas* that Arthur and a re-established Round Table could not achieve.<sup>14</sup> Yet, as a secular figurehead, Arthur was not in competition for the position of religious patron, and St George would not have replaced or displaced him. In fact, exclusive knightly associations with links to both Arthur and St George known as *Artushöfe* arose in Prussian towns along the Baltic in this very period.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>11</sup> D. Green, *Edward the Black Prince: Power in Medieval Europe* (Harlow, 2007), p. 42: 'Chivalric romances lauded individual deeds of prowess and reckless bravery – preferably performed on horseback. Crécy, Poitiers and Najera were victories constructed by collective, disciplined infantry and archers. In this sense, the Black Prince, the "flower of chivalry", contributed to the demise of chivalry on the battlefield. In all of the prince's battles, the enemy assault failed in part because it was too chivalrous, because it relied on knightly individualism and lacked co-ordination.'

<sup>12</sup> For interpretations consistent with the tenor of this paper, see J. Good, *The Cult of St George in Medieval England* (Woodbridge, 2009), p. 67: '... chivalric Arthurianism might have been suitable for tournaments, but it did not necessarily work in war, a fact recently proved at the battle of Crécy in 1346, when the English defeated the French by the rather unchivalric practice of archery'; Prestwich, *Armies and Warfare in the Middle Ages*, p. 228; S. K. Gertz, *Visual Power and Fame in René D'Anjou, Geoffrey Chaucer, and the Black Prince* (New York, 2010), p. 115.

<sup>13</sup> J. Vale, 'Arthur in English Society', in *The Arthur of the English: The Arthurian Legend in Medieval English Life and Literature*, ed. W. R. J. Barron (Cardiff, 1999), pp. 185–96 (p. 193).

<sup>14</sup> J. Vale, 'Arthur in English Society', p.193.

<sup>15</sup> See W. Störmer, 'König Artus als aristokratisches Leitbild während des späteren Mittelalters, gezeigt an Beispielen der Ministerialität und des Patriziats', *Zeitschrift für bayerische Landesgeschichte* 35 (1972), 946–71 (p. 965).

Famed for Christian warrior virtues not unlike those of St George, Arthur could easily have been incorporated as the official model for the Garter Sovereign in the new order's statutes.

If featured as Edward III's precursor, Arthur, the celebrated Christian *dux bellorum*, would have complemented the religious tone of the Order of the Garter, not detracted from it.

Firstly, in the *Voeux du Paon* (c. 1312), Jean de Longuyon honours Arthur as one of the *neuf preux* of chivalry, the first of three Christian worthies followed by Charlemagne and Godfrey de Bouillon.<sup>16</sup> Secondly, the longstanding tradition of Arthur's Marian devotion, elaborated upon in the *Quedam narracio de nobili rege Arthuro* (c. 1325–1340),<sup>17</sup> paralleled Edward III's own ardent veneration of the Blessed Virgin.<sup>18</sup> The Bridlington chronicler active during the English king's reign observed this correspondence and likened Arthur's shield bearing the image of the Virgin and Christ child to 'the chamber of Edward III's heart', figuratively inscribed with the same image.<sup>19</sup> Arthur's noted devotion to the Blessed Virgin coincided with the spiritual focus of the Order of the Garter, which was established to 'l'onneur de Dieu, Sainte Marie la glorieuse Vierge et Saint George'.<sup>20</sup>

Not only was Arthur's character consistent with the religious tenor Edward sought for his order, but the prose tradition of Arthurian romance also endowed the Round Table with strong Christian symbolism. According to the Lancelot-Grail Cycle, Merlin prompted Uther to construct the Round Table as the third in a succession of round tables (following Joseph of Arimathea's Grail Table and the table used at the Last Supper) in order

<sup>16</sup> See *The Parlement of the Thre Ages: An Alliterative Poem on the Nine Worthies and the Heroes of Romance*, ed. I. Gollancz (London, 1915), Appendix 6.

<sup>17</sup> The *Historia Regum Britanniae* (c. 1138) and its many redactions state that Arthur prayed to the Blessed Virgin for victory and that her image adorned the inside of his shield. See *A History of the Kings of Britain. An Edition and Translation of the De Gestis Britonum [Historia Regum Britanniae]*, by Geoffrey of Monmouth, ed. M. D. Reeve, trans. N. Wright (Woodbridge, 2007), p. 199. The *Quedam narracio de nobili rege Arthuro* portrays the corporeal vision of the Holy Mother and Child that Arthur received at Glastonbury as the impetus behind their inclusion on his shield. See J. P. Carley, 'A Glastonbury Translator at Work: *Quedam Narracio de Nobili Rege Arthuro* and *De Origine Gigantum* in Their Earliest Manuscript Contexts', *Nottingham French Studies* 30 (1991), 5–12.

<sup>18</sup> A patron of Marian cults, Edward III also reportedly placed himself under St Mary's protection. See W. M. Ormrod, 'The Personal Religion of Edward III', *Speculum* 64 (1989), 849–77 (pp. 857–8).

<sup>19</sup> 'Gesta Regis Edwardi Tertii Auctore Canonico Bridlingtonensi', in *Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II*, ed. W. Stubbs, RS 76, 2 vols. (London, 1882–3), II, 95: 'Legimus quod Arthurus rex Britonum anno ætatis suæ xvº ad regni regimen est admissus. Qui propter verum dilectionis indicium in scuto depictam gessit ymaginem Virginis gloriosæ. Rex iste junioris ætatis [Edward III], ut prædicatur, in regni solio sublimatus benedictæ Virginis speciem ob purum devotionis affectum secum defert sculptam in cordis triclino reverenter, cuius etiam nomen mellifluum in ipsius ore frequenter residet nominandum.'

<sup>20</sup> Jefferson, 'MS Arundel 48', 376, ll. 1–5.

to glorify the Holy Trinity. Founded upon the Christian virtues of humility and patience, the ‘third’ Round Table channeled the fraternal love of the Apostles, and of Joseph of Arimathea’s disciples, into the fellowship of Arthur’s knights.<sup>21</sup> In the *Queste del Saint Graal* (c. 1225), late on the day of Pentecost when the Knights of the Round Table are gathered in the great hall of Camelot, the luminous grace of the Holy Spirit descends upon them and a mystical Grail enters that hall and serves each knight whatever food he desires. Later in the romance, Christ reveals to Sir Galahad that the Grail is ‘the platter from which Jesus Christ ate the lamb with his disciples on Easter’.<sup>22</sup> Consistent with this tradition, Edward III selected the feast of Pentecost for the Round Table’s re-inauguration. Vale has argued that the series of oaths taken by Edward’s lords in support of his Arthurian venture ‘clearly echoes the swearing of the grail quest by the original knights of the Round Table’.<sup>23</sup> It seems likely that King Edward recognized the table’s potency as a religious symbol that could unite the English nobility under his authority. Given its association with the table used at the Last Supper, the Round Table, like the figure of Arthur, had strong Christian overtones that could have been integrated effectively into the chivalric order dedicated to the Virgin Mary and St George.

A second interpretation of Arthur’s alienation from the Order of the Garter holds that Edward III established this order to increase the loyalty of his subjects to him and to promote emerging English nationalism through the patronage of St George – a task that an Arthurian order, ‘by

<sup>21</sup> See *The Didot-Perceval*, ed. W. Roach (Philadelphia, 1941), p. 303, ll. 271–5 (Modena); *La Queste del Saint Graal*, ed. A. Pauphilet (Paris, 1923), p. 156; R. S. Loomis, *The Development of Arthurian Romance* (London, 1963), p. 128. In 1331, Edward III made an extended visit to Glastonbury abbey, which reawakened interest in King Arthur at Glastonbury and at the royal court. A legend blossomed maintaining that Arthur was from a sacred line of kings descended from Joseph of Arimathea, whose remains were thought to have been buried near the abbey. On 10 June 1345, Edward III issued a writ granting a certain John Blome of London provisional permission to search for the remains of Joseph at Glastonbury. See *The Chronicle of Glastonbury Abbey: An Edition, Translation and Study of John of Glastonbury’s Cronica sive Antiquitates Glastoniensis Ecclesie*, ed. J. P. Carley, trans. D. Townsend (Woodbridge, 1985), pp. xxv–xxxii; M. F. Braswell, ‘The Search for the Holy Grail: Arthurian Lacunae in the England of Edward III’, *Studies in Philology* 108 (2011), 469–87.

<sup>22</sup> *Queste*, ed. Pauphilet, p. 270: ‘Ce est, fet il, l’escuele ou Jhesucriz menja l’aiguel le jor de Pasques o ses deciples’; *The Quest for the Holy Grail*, trans. E. J. Burns, in *Lancelot-Grail: The Old French Arthurian Vulgate and Post-Vulgate in Translation*, ed. N. J. Lacy, 5 vols. (New York, 1995–6), IV, 85.

<sup>23</sup> Vale, *Edward III and Chivalry*, p. 68. Nicola Acciaiuoli (1310–1365), Grand Seneschal of Naples, was quite familiar with the plans of the English and French monarchical orders and modelled the Neapolitan Company of the Knot (1352/3–1362) even more directly after the ‘Grail-Seekers’ of the *Queste del Saint Graal*. The order had the ‘Holy Spirit of Right Desire’ as its patron, Pentecost as its feast day and three hundred as its intended membership size; yet, instead of seeking the Grail, the Knights of the Knot were to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre. See D’A. J. D. Boulton, *The Knights of the Crown: The Monarchical Orders of Knighthood in Later Medieval Europe, 1325–1520* (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 211–40.

its very internationalism', could not accomplish.<sup>24</sup> This interpretation does not address a special provision made in the Statutes of the Garter facilitating the induction of foreign knights, namely installation by proxy for those unable to attend the investiture ceremony.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, three of the founding members and four additional knights inducted during Edward III's reign were of foreign extraction. Both of these facts illustrate that the Garter, not unlike the celebrated Round Table, was intended to be international. Arthur, a native hero, had closer ties to England than St George, the patron saint of knighthood. Although Edward I (r. 1272–1307) had added St George's Cross to the banners of English royal saints and attached the saint's arms to the surcoat of his soldiers,<sup>26</sup> the early Christian martyr stood as an 'international patron of chivalry' until Edward III incorporated him into the Order of the Garter.<sup>27</sup> In fact, as recently as 5 June 1344, Pope Clement VI had granted his blessing to Duke Jean of Normandy (later Jean II of France) for the establishment of a congregation of two hundred knights in France that would assemble 'not for jousts or tournaments or for any other acts of arms, but for devotion to the same church, at least on the feasts of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Blessed George the Martyr in the month of April'.<sup>28</sup> The Company of the Star, whose formal establishment was delayed until 1352, retained the Blessed Virgin Mary and St George as its intended patrons until Edward appropriated the warrior saint for his own knightly society.<sup>29</sup> Thus, neither the need for religious solemnity nor the desire to promote nascent nationalism explains Arthur's exclusion from the Garter.

Another reading of Edward III's decision to abandon the Round Table project in favour of the smaller and more exclusive Garter treats the English victory at Crécy as a turning point after which the English king no longer needed to recruit three hundred plus knights or to increase his personal prestige by portraying himself as *Arthurus redivivus*.<sup>30</sup> This interpretation stresses that Edward III regarded the victory as validation

<sup>24</sup> Vale, 'Arthur in English Society', p. 194; Y. Renouard, 'L'Ordre de la Jarretière et l'Ordre de l'Etoile: Etude sur la genèse des Ordres laïcs de Chevalerie et sur le développement progressif de leur caractère national', *Le Moyen Age* 55 (1949), 281–300 (p. 297).

<sup>25</sup> Jefferson, 'MS Arundel 48', 381, ll. 196–220.

<sup>26</sup> Boulton, *Knights of the Crown*, p. 124.

<sup>27</sup> Ormrod, 'Personal Religion of Edward III', p. 859; B. Guenée, *States and Rulers in Later Medieval Europe*, trans. J. Vale (Oxford, 1985), p. 57; Good, *Cult of St George*, pp. 52–94; D. A. L. Morgan, 'The Banner-Bearer of Christ and Our Lady: How God Became an Englishman Revisited', in *St George's Chapel Windsor in the Fourteenth Century*, ed. N. Saul (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 51–61.

<sup>28</sup> *Letters de Clément VI*, in *Bibliothèque des Ecoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome*, ed. E. Déprez, ser. 3, t.3 (fasc 1, 1901), col. 31, no. 83, translated in Boulton, *Knights of the Crown*, p. 175.

<sup>29</sup> See Renouard, 'L'Ordre', 296–7; Boulton, *Knights of the Crown*, pp. 124 and 189; Morgan, 'Banner-Bearer', p. 59.

<sup>30</sup> R. Barber, 'The Order of the Round Table', in *Edward III's Round Table*, ed. Munby et al., pp. 151–2.

of his claim to the French throne. Indeed, the upset at Crécy did boost self-confidence in England and the realm's standing as a military power.<sup>31</sup> The garter, a chivalric device bearing France's royal colors of blue and gold, has often been taken to symbolize the righteousness of Edward's claim and the prowess of the Garter knights, most of whom were leading figures at Crécy.<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, since the Knights of the Round Table did not have established insignia, the use of the garter did not preclude Edward's new order from being Arthurian.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, the membership size of the original Order of the Round Table was not set in stone. Yet, Edward III did not then capitalize on his likeness to King Arthur who, according to the *Brut* tradition, conquered all of France after founding the Round Table.<sup>34</sup> Why?

The ongoing knightly fascination with courtly romance helps explain Edward III's initial desire to emulate Arthur and reestablish the Round Table as well as his later reluctance to fulfill his oath. The use of the Lancelot-Grail Cycle as source material for *Arthur and Merlin* (c. 1330), the alliterative *Joseph of Arimathea* (c. 1345) and the stanzaic *Morte Arthur* (c. 1400) and the production of *Yvain and Gawain* (c. 1350) from Chrétien's *Chevalier au Lion ou Yvain* (c. 1177) suggest a broadening appeal of the Arthurian romance genre both in and beyond the ranks of the English nobility.<sup>35</sup> Although undeniably a source of *solaas*, such tales of adventure also offered *sentence* regarding how knights might go about achieving lasting fame. In fact, recognition as the 'Tenth Worthy' was deemed the highest knightly honour in the fourteenth century,<sup>36</sup> and the 'chivalrous histories' of the period, with their frequent references to Arthur and Charlemagne, Gawain and Roland, no doubt fueled the ambitious late medieval knight's 'desire to be held in the same high regard, both by his contemporaries and by all future generations, as the heroes of history and romance'.<sup>37</sup> Among the Nine Worthies, the figure of King Arthur stood out as a particularly appealing model for later medieval princes because he 'was a ready-made emblem of the worthiest king – fantastically wealthy,

<sup>31</sup> A. Ayton, 'The Battle of Crécy: Context and Significance', in A. Ayton and P. Preston, *The Battle of Crécy* (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 1–34 (p. 29).

<sup>32</sup> See R. Barber, 'The Military Role of the Order of the Garter', *Journal of Medieval Military History* 7 (2009), 1–11 (p. 3).

<sup>33</sup> Boulton, *Knights of the Crown*, p. 113.

<sup>34</sup> See Wace, *Le Roman de Brut*, ed. and trans. J. Weiss (Exeter, 2002), p. 244, l. 9751 and p. 254, ll. 10131–2; *The Brut or the Chronicles of England*, ed. F. W. D. Brie, EETS OS 131 and 136, 2 vols. (London, 1906–8), I, 78–80; Boulton, *Knights of the Crown*, p. 108; P. Johanek, 'König Arthur und die Planagenets. Über den Zusammenhang von Historiographie und höfischer Epik in mittelalterlicher Propaganda', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 21 (1987), 346–89 (pp. 362–3).

<sup>35</sup> R. J. Moll, *Before Malory: Reading Arthur in Later Medieval England* (Toronto, 2003), p. 32; R. W. Kaeuper, *War, Justice, and Public Order: England and France in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1988), p. 192.

<sup>36</sup> See M. Keen, *Chivalry* (New Haven, 1984), pp. 121–4.

<sup>37</sup> Boulton, *Knights of the Crown*, pp. 11–12.

beloved by his people, surrounded by the best knights and ladies, and known to be just'.<sup>38</sup> Equally significant was Arthur's time-honoured image in historiography as a warrior-king and conqueror. If Edward III succeeded in portraying himself as a 'second Arthur' in 1344, he stood to gain much-needed popular support for his costly military campaigns. May McKisack has contended that, by assuming 'the rôle of a second Arthur, Edward harnessed the idealism of chivalry to his cause and bound to himself under an obligation of honour nearly all the greatest names in the land'.<sup>39</sup> Conversely, such self-fashioning might have been, in the words of Peter Coss, something of a 'double-edged sword, for by tying the king so closely to chivalric valour it created a standard to which a monarch had himself to aspire'.<sup>40</sup> As will be demonstrated below, whenever a magnate endeavoured to impersonate the legendary Briton, he exposed himself to critical scrutiny.

References to past heroes in fourteenth-century chronicles were not merely ornamental; they provided exempla of knightly behaviour against which the merits of more recent figures were assessed.<sup>41</sup> The aforementioned Pierre de Langtoft, an Augustinian canon of Bridlington in Yorkshire, used the *Ensaumple du noble rei sire Arthur* in his chronicle (c. 1307) as the premier paradigm of good kingship for Edward I. Lecturing on how a king ought to conduct a conquest, Pierre asserts that:

Ensample puit home prendre de Arthur li senez,  
 De touz jours fu primer en touz ses alez  
 A matin e à vespre, de grant honestetez,  
 Felons en companie, e gens des enemistez,  
 Solunc lour desert, touz les ad jugez.  
 Au fet e au consail estoit atemprés;  
 Prince plus curteis de teres conquestez  
 Entre Crestiens ne fut unques neez.  
 Par quei le vus di, la reson escotez,  
 Si nostre rei eust fet les puralez  
 Parmi Engleterre, cum il avoit grantez  
 Affermez par escrit, qe bien est testmoynez,  
 E de la tere d'Escoce partiz e donez  
 A ses barons Engleis, par droite quantitez,  
 La tere depesca fust en ses poestez,  
 E pardurablement les soens heritez.

(We may take the example of Arthur the wise; he was always the first in all his expeditions in morning and in evening, with great

<sup>38</sup> Gertz, *Visual Power and Fame*, p. 141.

<sup>39</sup> M. McKisack, 'Edward III and the Historians', *History* 45 (1960), 1–15 (p. 7).

<sup>40</sup> P. Coss, *The Knight in Medieval England, 1000–1400* (Stroud, 1993), p. 123.

<sup>41</sup> See M. Keen, 'Chivalry and English Kingship in the Later Middle Ages', in *War, Government and Aristocracy in the British Isles, c. 1100–1500*, ed. C. Given-Wilson, A. Kettle and L. Scates (Woodbridge, 2008), pp. 250–66 (p. 257).

uprightness; felons in company, and hostile people, according to their desert, he judged them all. He was temperate in deed and in counsel; a prince more courteous in conquering lands was never born among Christians. Wherefore I tell you, listen to reason, if our king had performed the perambulations through England, as he had granted and strengthened by writing, as is well witnessed, and of the land of Scotland had distributed and given to his English barons, by just quantities, the land would, since long ago, be here in his power, and his possession forever.)<sup>42</sup>

Leading by example, Arthur features as a veritable *dux bellorum* demanding both competency and the proper conduct of war from his men – two dictates of just war theory.<sup>43</sup> Pierre not only exalts Arthur as the princely paragon of wisdom, magnanimity and justice, he brandishes the king's legendary largesse as an instrument to censure Edward I for his parsimony. Yet, not all comparisons to Arthur were derogatory. As part of his obituary for Edward I, Pierre writes: 'De chevalerye après ly reis Arthure,/ Estait ly reis Edward des Cristiens la flure'.<sup>44</sup> Even in a eulogy for Edward I, Arthur remains the courtly king *par excellence*.

The authors of the Arthurian chronicle and romance traditions, *laudatores temporis acti*, employed the historicized 'golden age of chivalry' topos with such regularity that it, in turn, achieved recognition in the leading chivalric treatises of the Middle Ages as a genuine knightly ethos of a bygone age. Dominique Boutet, Joachim Bumke, Beate Schmolke-Hasselmann and Jane Gilbert have characterized the Arthurian literary tradition itself as a long-established and distinct discourse containing an inherently ethical Arthurian 'past' informed by – and simultaneously informing – the present.<sup>45</sup> According to Bumke, the 'negative description of contemporary life' is an 'appeal to model oneself after King Arthur and the knights of the Round Table, and to put into practice the courtly virtues

<sup>42</sup> *The Chronicle of Pierre de Langtoft*, ed. and trans. T. Wright, RS 47, 2 vols. (London, 1866–8) II, 326–30. I have modified Wright's translation for greater precision and elected to follow the variant reading indicated above (despesca [= de pieç'a], which is attested in two of the manuscripts consulted by Wright, C and D).

<sup>43</sup> See N. A. R. Wright, 'The Tree of Battles of Honoré Bouvet and the Laws of War', in *War, Literature, and Politics in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. C. T. Allmand (New York, 1976), pp. 12–31 (p. 15).

<sup>44</sup> *Chronicle of Pierre de Langtoft*, ed. Wright, II, 380–1. See T. Summerfield, 'The Arthurian References in Pierre de Langtoft's Chronicles', in *Text and Intertext in Medieval Arthurian Literature*, ed. N. J. Lacy (London, 1996), pp. 187–208.

<sup>45</sup> D. Boutet, 'Le prince au miroir de la littérature narrative (xii<sup>e</sup>-xiii<sup>e</sup> siècles)', in *Le Prince au miroir de la littérature politique de l'Antiquité aux Lumières*, ed. F. Lachaud and L. Scordia (Rouen, 2007), pp. 143–59; J. Bumke, *Courtly Culture: Literature and Society in the High Middle Ages*, trans. T. Dunlap (Woodstock and London, 2000), pp. 15–16; Schmolke-Hasselmann, *Evolution of Arthurian Romance*, p. 90; J. Gilbert, 'Arthurian Ethics', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Arthurian Legend*, ed. E. Archibald and A. Putter (Cambridge, UK, 2009), pp. 154–70 (pp. 154–5).

which they had already possessed'.<sup>46</sup> Gilbert maintains that the 'Arthurian moral space' became even more pronouncedly instructive in thirteenth-century works, many of which addressed the immediate historical present directly.<sup>47</sup> Nowhere is this trend more apparent than in the Lady of the Lake's address to Lancelot, in the prose *Lancelot* (c.1215), on the origin of chivalry:

Au commencement, qant li ordres de chevalerie commança, fu devise a celui qui voloit estre chevaliers et qui lo don en avoit par droiture d'eslection, qu'il fust cortois sanz vilenies, deboenneires sanz felenie, piteus vers les soffraiteus, et larges et appareilliez de secorre les besoigneus, prelz et appareilliez de confondre les robeors et les ocianz, droiz jugierres sanz amor et sanz haïne et sanz amor d'aidier au tort por lo droit grever, et sanz haïne de nuire au droit por traire lo tort avant. Chevaliers ne doit por paor de mort nule chose faire o l'an puise honte conoistre ne aparcevoir, ainz doit plus doter honteusse chose que mort sossfrir. Chevaliers fu establiz outrement por Sainte Eglise garantir ...<sup>48</sup>

(Originally, when the order of knighthood began, a man who wished to be a knight, and who was accorded that privilege by right of election, was told he should be courteous without baseness, gracious without cruelty, compassionate towards the needy, generous and prepared to help those in need, and ready and prepared to confound robbers and killers, he should be a fair judge, without love or hate, without love to help the wrong against right, without hate to hinder right in order to further wrong. A knight should not, for fear of death, do anything which can be seen as shameful: rather he should be more afraid of shame than of suffering death. The knight was established wholly to protect the Holy Church...)<sup>49</sup>

This passage may have inspired the descriptions of the origin of chivalry in Ramon Lull's *Libre del ordre de cavayleria* (c. 1276) and in Geoffroi de Charny's *Livre de chevalerie* (1350–1351).<sup>50</sup> The treatise on the laws

<sup>46</sup> Bumke, *Courty Culture*, p.16.

<sup>47</sup> Gilbert, 'Arthurian Ethics', p. 159.

<sup>48</sup> *Lancelot do Lac: The Non-Cyclic Old French Prose Romance*, ed. E. Kennedy, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1980), I, 142–3. For a comparable definition of 'l'ordre de chevalerie' as the 'plus haute ordre' ordained by God, which must be maintained 'sanz vilenie', see Chrétien de Troyes, *The Story of the Grail (Li Contes Del Graal), or Perceval*, ed. R. T. Pickens, trans. W.W. Kibler (New York, 1990), pp. 80–1, ll. 1612–8. For another noteworthy example of *laudatio temporis acti* (c. 1190–1225), see Renaut de Bâgé, *Le Bel Inconnu*, ed. K. Fresco, trans. C. P. Donagher (New York and London, 1992), pp. 64–7, ll. 1067–82.

<sup>49</sup> E. Kennedy, 'The Knight as Reader of Arthurian Romance', in *Culture and the King: The Social Implications of Arthurian Legend*, ed. M. B. Shichtman and J. P. Carley (New York, 1994), pp. 70–90 (pp. 81–2).

<sup>50</sup> See E. Kennedy, 'Social and Political Ideas in the French Prose *Lancelot*', *Medium Aevum* 26 (1957), 90–106 (p.103). Geoffroi de Charny (1304–1356) authored the prose *Livre de Chevalerie*, the metrical *Livre Chevalerie* and *Demandes pour la joute, les tournois et la guerre*, a list of discussion questions about knightly conduct written for the Company of the Star. See also

of war *L'Arbre des batailles* (1387), by the Benedictine monk Honoré Bouvet, is also reminiscent of the prose *Lancelot*:

A Dieu plaise de mettre es cuers des rois de ordonner comment en toutes guerres les povres laboureurs soient seurement et tenus paisibles, car aujourd'huy toutes les guerres sont contre les povres gens laboureurs, contre les biens et meubles qu' ils ont. Pourquoy je ne l'appelle pas guerre mais tres bien me semble estre pillerie et roberie. Aussi ce n'est pas la maniere de guerroyer selon l'ordonnance de deue chevalerie ne de l'ancienne coustume des nobles batailleurs lesquels sustenoient justice, dames vesves, enfans orphelins et povres gens. Et aujourd'huy partout ils font le contraire. Et qui ne scet partout bouter les feus, rober les eglises, occuper leur droit et emprisonner les prestres, il n'est past souffisant pour mener guerre. Et pour ce les chevaliers de maintenant n'ont pas la glorie et le los des anciens bachelers jadis regnans ne ja leurs faits ne devoient venir à grant perfections de vertu.<sup>51</sup>

(May it please God to put into the hearts of kings to command that in all wars poor labourers should be left secure and in peace, for in these days all wars are directed against the poor labouring people and against their goods and chattels. I do not call that war, but it seems to me to be pillage and robbery. That way of warfare does not follow ordinances of worthy chivalry or of the ancient custom of noble warriors who upheld justice, the widow, the orphan and the poor. And nowadays it is the opposite that they do everywhere, and the man who does not know to set places on fire, to rob churches and to usurp their rights and to imprison priests, is not fit to carry on war. And for these reasons, the knights of today have not the glory and praise of the old champions of former times.)<sup>52</sup>

Such complaints about a perceived decline from the putative golden age of knighthood in the leading chivalric treatises of the Middle Ages added weight to the literary ideal of chivalry.<sup>53</sup> When speaking of the 'old champions of former times', Bouvet probably had in mind the heroes of the Roman Republic whose military discipline so impressed fourteenth-century commentators that they furthered the myth that chivalry had its origins in Rome. Nonetheless, as Johan Huizinga long ago pointed out, 'In the minds of the fourteenth century, a vision of antiquity had hardly disengaged itself from the fairy-land sphere of the Round Table. Classical heroes were still tinged with the general colours of romance.'<sup>54</sup>

Geoffroi de Charny, *A Knight's Own Book of Chivalry*, intro. R. W. Kaeuper, trans. E. Kennedy (Philadelphia, 2005).

<sup>51</sup> Honoré Bouvet, *L'Arbre des Batailles*, ed. E. Nys (Brussels and Leipzig, 1883), p. 211.

<sup>52</sup> *The Tree of Battles of Honoré Bonet: An English Version*, trans. G. W. Coopland (Liverpool, 1949), p. 189.

<sup>53</sup> See J. Leyerle, 'Conclusion: The Major Themes of Chivalric Literature', in *Chivalric Literature: Essays on the Relations between Literature & Life in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. L. D. Benson and J. Leyerle (Toronto, 1980), pp. 131–46; Kaeuper, *War, Justice, and Public Order*, p. 196.

<sup>54</sup> J. Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, trans. F. Hopman (New York, 1954), p. 71.

Queen Philippa's New Year's gift (1333) to Edward III of a silver ewer enameled with the likenesses of Julius Caesar, Judas Maccabeus, Charlemagne, Arthur, Roland, Oliver and Lancelot du Lac validates Huizinga's claim and suggests a fondness for 'the old champions of former times' in Edward's household.<sup>55</sup>

Along with advancing a high-minded, chivalric ideology in broad terms, authors of Arthurian literature impressed on their knightly audience in-depth examples of and pronouncements about correct martial practices that were still influential in the fourteenth century.<sup>56</sup> Chrétien championed mounted combat as the noblest mode of knightly engagement in his *Chevalier au Lion*. Of the battle between Yvain and Esclados the Red, he writes: 'mes toz jorz a cheval se tienent /que nule foiz a pié ne vienent: /s'an fu la bataille plus bele' (They remained on horseback throughout and never fought on foot, and the battle was more splendid for it).<sup>57</sup> The author of *Yvain and Gawain* replicated this sentiment for a fourteenth-century audience, writing: 'Thai faght on hors stifly always; /The batel was wele more to prays'.<sup>58</sup> So iconic was the image of the knight on horseback that Walter of Milemete, in his treatise *On the Nobility, Wisdom and Prudence of Kings* (1327), felt it necessary to instruct the newly crowned Edward III:

Sicut enim murus castrum et ciuitatem protegit sic pedestris exercitus uiribus equitum subuenit ac eos ab hostibus defendit et ideo validus pedestris exercitus apud uos sit carus et dilectus licet equestris magis sit dignus et nobilis.

(For just as a wall protects the castle and the city, so does the army infantry support the strength of the cavalry and defend them from the enemy. And therefore a strong infantry force should be dear and beloved to you, although the cavalry may be of greater dignity and nobility).<sup>59</sup>

In the prose *Lancelot*, Pharien teaches his nephew that a knight attains 'la gloire et l'honneur des armes' by being the first to charge against the

<sup>55</sup> Vale, *Edward III and Chivalry*, p. 45.

<sup>56</sup> Richard Kaeuper raises the intriguing possibility that chivalric literature, especially the Lancelot-Grail Cycle, fostered lively discussion among its knightly audience about precisely how to fight with *courtoisie* and 'often suggest[ed], with greater or lesser degrees of subtlety, paths of reform'. See R. W. Kaeuper, 'Chivalry and the "Civilizing Process"', in *Violence in Medieval Society*, ed. R. W. Kaeuper (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 21–35 (esp. pp. 23 and 29).

<sup>57</sup> Chrétien de Troyes, *The Knight with the Lion or Yvain (Le Chevalier au Lion)*, ed. and trans. W. W. Kibler (New York, 1985), pp. 36–7, ll. 859–61.

<sup>58</sup> *Yvain and Gawain*, ed. M. F. Braswell (Kalamazoo, 1995), p. 101, ll. 655–6.

<sup>59</sup> Walter de Milemete, *De nobilitatibus, sapientibus, et prudentibus regum*, ed. M. R. James (Oxford, 1913), pp. 131–2; Walter of Milemete, *On the Nobility, Wisdom, and Prudence of Kings*, ed. and trans. C. J. Nederman, in *Political Thought in Early Fourteenth-Century England: Treatises by Walter of Milemete, William of Pagula, and William of Ockham* (Tempe, 2002), pp. 24–61 (p. 59).

enemy in battle (I, 85–6).<sup>60</sup> As will be shown below, some of Philippe VI's knights heeded this advice – much to their detriment – at Crécy.

Also fundamental to the Arthurian code of conduct, as Gornemant de Gohort teaches Perceval in Chrétien's *Conte del Graal* (ll. 1619–27), is the knight's duty to spare a knightly opponent at his mercy whenever possible.<sup>61</sup> The prose *Lancelot* affirms that its eponymous hero 'avoit tele costume que il n'oceist ja chevalier qui criast merci, s'il ne l'eust avant juré ou se fere ne li convenist' (had the custom of never killing a knight who begged for mercy, unless he had sworn beforehand to do so, or unless he could not avoid it).<sup>62</sup> Such a regard for life may seem entirely impractical, but relatively few defeated knightly combatants were put to death in twelfth- and thirteenth-century battles owing to their value as captives for ransom<sup>63</sup> and 'pro timore Dei notitiaque contubernii' (out of fear of God and fellowship in arms) – at least, according to Orderic Vitalis (d. 1142).<sup>64</sup> In the fourteenth century, the *droit d'armes*, a customary code of professional courtesy regulating interactions between men-at-arms, approximated the *notitia contubernii* and Arthurian chivalric magnanimity. At the siege of Limoges (1370), for example, three French knights surrendering to the duke of Lancaster reportedly expected merciful treatment according to the *droit d'armes*.<sup>65</sup>

Arthurian writers did more than encourage knights to be merciful, loyal and valorous: they criticized specific combat tactics that they deemed ignoble. Chrétien de Troyes asserts in his *Chevalier au Lion* that honour forbids a knight from intentionally injuring his opponent's horse (ll. 855–8). Renaut de Bâgé's popular *Bel Inconnu* (c. 1190–1225) and its fourteenth-century English cognate, *Lybeaus Desconus*, regard knights who make a joint assault on a single man as committing 'grete erreur'.<sup>66</sup> Anxiety about dubious battle tactics is also apparent in the *Gesta regum Britanniae* (c. 1236), attributed to William of Rennes, when Arthur struggles to justify his planned ambush of Lucius' retreating Roman forces:

Pugna tamen nostris erit instans dissona gestis:  
Nam nichil obscure, nichil egimus insidiose;  
Cuncta palam claroque die, nil nocte gerendum

<sup>60</sup> I wish to thank Dr Corinne Denoyelle for this reference.

<sup>61</sup> See Kaeuper, 'Chivalry and the "Civilizing Process"', p. 31.

<sup>62</sup> *Lancelot: Roman en prose du XIIIe siècle*, ed. A. Micha, 9 vols (Geneva, 1978–83) II, 56; *Lancelot Part IV*, trans. R. L. Krueger, in *Lancelot-Grail*, II, 19.

<sup>63</sup> See C. J. Rogers, 'The Age of the Hundred Years War', in *Medieval Warfare: A History*, ed. M. Keen (Oxford, 1999), pp. 136–60 (p. 144).

<sup>64</sup> Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, ed. and trans. M. Chibnall. 6 vols. (Oxford, 1969–80), VI, 240–1.

<sup>65</sup> Jean Froissart, *Chroniques*, ed. S. Luce. 15 vols. (Paris, 1869–1975), VII, 252.

<sup>66</sup> Renaut de Bâgé, *Le Bel Inconnu*, ll. 1067–82; *Lybeaus Desconus*, ed. M. Mills, EETS OS 261 (London, 1969), p. 143, l. 1107; Kaeuper, 'Chivalry and the "Civilizing Process"', p. 30.

Duximus. Ytalici semper fraudesque dolosque  
 Moliri norunt. Non est me iudice culpa  
 Fallere fallaces, fraudemque repellere fraude.

(The imminent battle will not be like our previous deeds. We have effected nothing covertly or by stealth. We have seen fit to do everything openly in broad daylight, and nothing by night; it is the Italians who have always been experienced in engineering stratagems and traps. In my view there is nothing reprehensible in deceiving the deceitful and countering trickery with trickery.)<sup>67</sup>

Honoré Bouvet also treats this topic in his *Arbre des batailles*, remarking: ‘Mais faire par engien, par cautele et par desceance victoire contre son ennemi est victoire en obscurité et par deception. Dont il est advis que telles victoires sont condampnées et contre raison.’ (But a victory gained over one’s enemy by craft, subtlety or deception, is a victory won in obscurity and deceit. Hence such victories appear to be condemned and against reason.)<sup>68</sup> The theorist did, however, allow for ambushes to be set in places where the enemy is accustomed to take his ease provided they are conducted in order to take him prisoner and not done in violation of a truce or prearranged martial encounter. The examples provided indicate that the figure of King Arthur symbolized the very highest order of martial virtue consistent with – if not surpassing – the expectations of the leading chivalric treatises of the Middle Ages.

Furthermore, the Knights of the Round Table, according to the prose romance tradition, were themselves held to two defining rules of personal conduct. Firstly, in the Post-Vulgate *Queste del Saint Graal*, Perceval reminds Gawain that Knights of the Round Table are not to attack knights unwilling to fight.<sup>69</sup> Secondly, in the Lancelot-Grail Cycle, Arthur requires each Round Table knight, about to depart on his year-long quest, to kneel before holy relics and swear to tell ‘au revenir de toutes les choses qui li seront avenues ... ou soit s’ounour ou soit sa honte. Et par chou porra on connoistre la proveche de chascun.’ (on his return all that had happened to him ... be it to his honour or his shame. And by this means was made judgement of the prowess of each).<sup>70</sup> Consequently, the Arthurian knight, whether at court or in combat, had to be mindful that he was subject to scrutiny, that demonstrations of exemplary virtue were the key to his

<sup>67</sup> William of Rennes, *Gesta Regum Britanniae*, in *The Historia Regum Britannie of Geoffrey of Monmouth V: Gesta Regum Britanniae*, ed. and trans. N. Wright (Cambridge, UK, 1991), pp. 224–5, II, 429–34.

<sup>68</sup> Honoré Bouvet, *L'Arbre des Batailles*, pp. 142–3; Coopland, *Tree of Battles*, p. 154.

<sup>69</sup> *La Version Post-Vulgate de la Queste del Saint Graal et de la Mort Artu: Troisième Partie du Roman du Graal*, ed. F. Bogdanow, 3 vols. (Paris, 1991) II, 335–6; *The Post-Vulgate Quest for the Holy Grail*, trans. M. Asher, in *Lancelot-Grail*, V, 184.

<sup>70</sup> *Merlin*, ed. G. Paris and J. Ulrich, 2 vols. (Paris, 1886), II, 98. For the translation provided, see Keen, *Chivalry*, pp. 192–3. Also see *Lancelot do Lac*, ed. Kennedy, I, 406.