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**Reflection of the Wars of the Roses in Thomas Malory`s
Le Morte D`Arthur: Literary-cultural analysis**

Bachelor paper

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**Odráz Války Růží v díle Thomase Maloryho
Le Morte D`Arthur: Literárně-kulturní analýza**

Bakalářská práce

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Abstract

The aim of this research paper is to analyse the Morte D'Arthur and find certain historical moments incorporated in the book. Firstly, as the goal of work follows a hypothesis that Thomas Malory reflected manifold incidents from the Wars of the Roses in the Morte D'Arthur, it was inevitable to understand author's position in this civil war, which meant investigating in the authorship. Ensuing from assumptions and facts of famous literary historians about all possible candidates, a conclusion was established that only Thomas Malory of Newbold Revel may be the author. On basis of this first finding, it was then possible to start an analysis of the work and Malory's motives. Since the sources of the Morte D'Arthur have been analyzed in many different scholarly works, these were then taken as the basis for the analysis itself. In the course of the analysis, various incidents were reported to possess a certain degree of similarity or even to be wholly identical. Finally, following the results of the research, it was stipulated in the conclusion that the hypothesis was approved.

Abstrakt

Záměrem této výzkumné práce bylo zanalyzovat Morte D'Arthur a najít určité historické momenty začleněné v tomto díle. Nejprve, jelikož cíl práce vycházel z hypotézy, že Thomas Malory zobrazil v Morte D'Arthur různé události z Války Růží, bylo nezbytné porozumět autorově pozici v oné občanské válce, což znamenalo dopátrat se autorství. Vyvozuje z předpokladů a fakt významných literárních historiků o všech uvažovaných kandidátech, došlo se k závěru, že jen Thomas Malory z Newbold Revel může být autorem. Na základě tohoto zjištění bylo posléze možné započít s rozborem díla a Maloryho motivů. Vzhledem k tomu, že prameny Morte D'Arthur byly rozebrány v mnoha různých odborných pracích, tyto pak byly použity jako základ samotnou analýzu. V průběhu rozboru bylo zaznamenáno u nejrůznějších událostí, že mají jistý stupeň podobnosti, ba dokonce, že jsou zcela totožné. Nakonec, vycházející z výsledků analýzy, bylo v závěru práce konstatováno, že hypotéza se prokázala jako pravdivá.

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Introduction

This final research paper investigates in a phenomenon often utilised in various kinds of fiction literature. It is implication of historical information of any kind into a story, which is entirely fictive, and using the story to express author's thinking about the historical incident, person, etc. This research paper is concerned with the use of this phenomenon in a book by Thomas Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur*.

The book is one the most famous fiction stories about legendary King Arthur, whose life and death predominantly compose the spine of Malory's tale. There are, as well, other passages and tales, in which Arthur is not in the centre of the plot. Most of these stories were translated by Malory from French models, which represent the major branch of author's all sources.

The other part of the source texts of Malory concerns English and Welsh poems, ballads, and other materials, which were only vaguely transformed as to the style, the language of the author, dialect respectively, or narrowing and extending on different occasions in the book.

The element of omitting some information at one place and adding more at another anticipates that the author combined both branches of sources vividly. Yet, neither combining nor translating is the only characteristic of the work. There is also a large number of passages describing certain incidents with much stronger detail than in the originals.

Even further some of the passages do not refer to anything that is present in their models, which is a proof, as stated hereinafter, that Malory implied his own original ideas in his work and shaped the story according to his personal view. Ensuing from this fact, the research paper attempts to determine author's motives and chiefly sources of inspiration to his originality. (See chap. 2)

Considering the possibility that Malory's motives and sources were closely connected to his personal experiences, it is inevitable to learn about the author himself before embarking upon any further analysis of his work. As for this fact, it is necessary to identify Thomas Malory first, for there are still many doubts cast on the legitimacy of the author of the *Morte D'Arthure*. This issue is largely dealt

herein concluding that the only suitable person for the authorship of the book is Sir Thomas Malory from Newbold Revel. (See chap. 1)

As to Malory's sources, an analysis of his work was fundamental. Based on reading the *Morte D'Arthur*, literary studies concerning this book, and various historical books describing the period in which Malory lived, an anticipation has been aroused that Malory implied in his work different historic moments from the Wars of the Roses and a period prior to those tempestuous times, which is richly supported with examples in the third part of this research paper. (See chap. 3)

Ensuing from results of the thereafter elaborated comparison, a conclusion is established in order to either confirm or negate a hypothesis that *Thomas Malory reflected manifold incidents from the Wars of the Roses in the Morte D'Arthur*.

1. The Legitimacy of the Authorship of Sir Thomas Malory

1.1. Identification of Sir Thomas Malory

Although the stories about King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table have been widely read since the time the book was first printed and became one of the treasures of English medieval literature, the author who delivered such a popular hero has, unlike Arthur, still not certainly been identified. The identification is even of greater importance, since Malory working with actualities from his contemporary society forms the core of the hypothesis of this research paper.

Subject to many researches elaborated mainly in the nineteenth and the twentieth century, “Thomas Malory” was discovered to be a name used by several men who were alive in 1469/70, the time of elaboration of the *Morte D’Arthur*. However, none of these men can be rightly ascribed the authorship of the book, since there is no reliable evidence available that can give a clear proof that any of the “candidates” may have been the right one.

Yet, in the late nineteenth century, *The History and Antiquities of Warwickshire*, a seventeenth-century study by Sir William Dugdale, served as a basis for an essay published by G. L. Kittredge in which the author promotes Sir Thomas Malory of Newbold Revel, one of the three men under serious consideration hitherto, and identifies him as the author of the fifteenth century romance. (Kittredge, pp. 11 – 12) This bold proposal build on evidence provided in a trusted historical document such as Dugdale’s was universally warmly accepted in the scientific circles and thus made the only correct one.

The other candidate, Thomas Malory of Maelor, referred to as “an exceptionally tenacious ghost created by John Bale” (Field, p. 7) whose accidental invention had been grounded on a fallacious conclusion that “the name Malory was derived from the place-name Maelor, and that Malory therefore came from that place” (Field, p. 7), may for the above stated reason be excluded. The third person considered, Thomas Malory of Papworth St Agnes, however, cannot be completely excluded, as his consideration ensues from the same examinations on the basis of which the acceptance of the Newbold Revel candidate does.

Nevertheless, subject to a large number of studies of candidates' genealogies and English histories including public records, the probability of Thomas Malory of Papworth being the author of the *Morte D'Arthur* has rapidly decreased. The reasons for omitting him lay in his failure to ever be imprisoned and his rank of esquire, which does not agree with author's mentioning of his social status in the *Morte D'Arthur*, as he there calls himself the "knight prisoner" (Malory, ed. Vinaver, pp. 110, 726) several times. Therefore, only few scholars nowadays disbelieve in the authorship of the Newbold Revel Malory.

1.2. A Doubtful Authorship of Sir Thomas Malory of Newbold Revel

One of the leading scholars querying Sir Thomas Malory of Newbold Revel being the author of the *Morte D'Arthur* was William Matthews, a renowned expert in Medieval English, who supported his doubts with three reasonable claims which found warm liking among other students of Malory's work.

Firstly, Matthews pointed at the fact that a man accused of such horrible crimes like rape, theft, extortion or attempted murder as stated in different public criminal records of the time could by no means be identified as the "author of the classical expression of chivalric idealism" (Ackerman, p. 182). (Matthews, p. 43)

There is, however, an opposing group of scholars who argue that Sir Thomas Malory of Newbold Revel was only a "victim of political manoeuvring" (DiPasquale, p. 168) of the then government. Robin Neillands explained in his study that the time of the Malory criminal records being taken happened to be the time when the state politics stagnated due to growing hostility of party factions in the House of Lords. (Neillands, pp. 52 – 64) Therefore, he resumed, it became necessary for the faction members and their affiliates using different kind of practice for weakening the opponent, in consequence of which the use of deceitful accusations among the nobility was embraced. (Neillands, p. 63) This advocacy is further analysed in a book by P.J.C. Field who explains that:

[...] the Lancastrian authorities had kept him [Thomas Malory of Newbold Revel] in prison without trial for almost a decade, ignoring what was technically a royal pardon and putting enormous penalties on his gaolers to

make sure he stayed there. [...] the only people able and willing to help him were the Yorkist lords. (Field, p. 30)

The thesis that Newbold Revel Malory's case was fabricated also corresponds with many historians' findings about corruption and protectionism maintained in the fifteenth century Parliament, House of Lords respectively. Being one of such, Alison Weir, an enthusiastic historian, describes in her work that a great number of accusations raised against noblemen in those politically unstable times were mere attempts to discredit and possibly dispose of those who were not in favour of the Court party. (Weir, pp. 126, 129 - 130, 171) McCarthy, agreeing with Weir's observation, expresses his doubts about Malory's guilt stating:

Being accused of crimes is not the same thing as being guilty of them... in troubled times even the most banal acts can be magnified if you are in the bad graces of those in power. (McCarthy, p. 163)

Thus, since there is no evidence given to prove what is recorded in the criminal records, one can hardly claim with certainty whether Malory was a victim of the contemporary political situation or whether he actually committed all the wrongs as stated in the documents preserved.

Taking all the accusations brought against Thomas Malory of Newbold Revel in consideration, there are some which may be seen as such manoeuvring. One crime in particular: the attempted assassination of Humphrey Stafford, the Duke of Buckingham, of which Malory was accused by him, may have been a good way to get quit of Stafford's local and parliamentary political opponent's partisan.

As Lander says, the Duke of Buckingham, the lord of Staffordshire, was eager to gain influence and increase power in the neighbouring shire governed by his fierce rival Richard Neville, who had just inherited Warwickshire after Henry Bauchamp's death via marriage with his sister. (Lander, pp. 42 - 43) Their quarrelling over the dominancy in the county and the political situation in late 1440s may have served well to creation of fertile soil for such a kind of "unfair game" between the two magnates and all other members of the local gentry, Malory included.

Nevertheless, according to Field, this assumption is highly inconsistent with the fact that the Duke of Buckingham was Malory's patron by that time and it was him chiefly who had assisted Malory in becoming a member of the parliament just a few months before the said ambush. (Field, p. 88) Thus, lacking any evidence or even any sense of logic, the theory that Buckingham accused Malory unjustly from whatever political reason is entirely forceless.

Other crimes ascribed to Thomas Malory may also have more implications than just the disapproving one expressed by Matthews. The rape, for instance, is believed by some critics of the accusations to be a "simple abduction," (Field, p. 97) for the term "raptus," by which the crime was recorded, used to have a different meaning from the one implied nowadays.

There are others, as DiPasquale says, who do not deny Malory's commitment of the said crimes, for much was written on the account of Sir Thomas Malory's criminal activity to be it possible for his case not to be at least partly true. (DiPasquale, p. 168) However, as DiPasquale continues, they claim that his actions were not wicked necessarily, as the conditions at the time asked for acting in such a manner. (DiPasquale, pp. 168 – 169)

As far as the case of theft is concerned, this justification also found support in Field, who has studied family correspondence and legal documents of the Malories of Newbold Revel and revealed some breaking information concerning relations between the Malories and their neighbours, who, as described in Matthews' book, accused Thomas Malory of theft of their stock. (Matthews, p. 44)

It is apparent from the documentation published by Field that the neighbour who indicted Thomas Malory had had a long lasting quarrel over property and local domination and had stolen much from the Malory family during previous decades. (Field, pp. 94 – 99) Knowing this fact, it is now easier to understand Malory's incentives for doing of what he was condemned and, to certain extent, it partly purifies him of the villainous label, he was assigned by Matthews.

Another objection raised by Matthews is also connected to the politics, for it concerns Newbold Revel Malory's political allegiance with the house of York.

According to Matthews, Thomas Malory of Newbold Revel was in close connexions with Yorkists whereas the author of *Morte D'Arthur* appears to favour Lancastrians in his book. (Matthews, p. 136)

Justifying Professor Matthews' statement, Field elucidates in his book that the Newbold Revel Malory was rather than in affinity of York in close relation with Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, who was still Yorkist in the beginning of the decade of 1460s but later became supporter of Lancastrians which may be and most likely is the reason for Matthews' conclusion. (Field, pp. 29 - 30, 131, 132)

The third and most serious finding of Matthews's investigation is Malory's age. Dugdale wrote in his work that Thomas Malory had served as an esquire in the retinue of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, at the siege of Calais in Henry V's reign. (Dugdale, p. 56)

However, considering that the siege probably took place in 1415 and that Malory was old enough by that time to go to war, he would have to be in his seventies or early eighties at the time of elaboration of the *Morte D'Arthur* which is dated 1470. This, as Matthews claims, makes him too old to be credited with composition of such a work. (Matthews, p. 67 - 68) He continues in his book with explanation:

Fifty-five or so is a mature age to commit rape and attempt assassination, but is by no means prohibitive. But seventy-five is no age at all to be writing *Le Morte Darthur* in prison. Nothing is impossible; but recalling the ages at which medieval authors normally sank into silence, recalling the vitality, energy, and even occasional gaiety of *Le Morte Darthur* and the long, persistent labor that it represents, one needs hardly to be sceptical to doubt that the work was written by an ancient of seventy-five. (Matthews, p.73)

Yet, Matthews, as Ackerman says, only confronted the Dugdale's thesis with a piece of information from a manuscript that dates the siege. (Ackerman, p. 182) Only after a thorough scrutiny of contemporary state records including a retinue roll of Beauchamp, which was used by Dugdale as a basis for his identification of Sir Thomas Malory, was found out that Dugdale described completely a different Thomas Malory, not the one of Newbold Revel.

Field supports this allegation with his findings, as a result of which he claims that Dugdale overlooked several important facts while compiling his work including his own confusion of the name Thomas Malory at two places in his book, which Field proves by giving substantial evidence in a form of a voluminous list of ancestors of both, Thomas Malory of Newbold Revel and his “opponent,” to cast clearance into this case. (Field, pp. 56 – 60)

Nevertheless, not having been acknowledged of Dugdale’s identification being amiss and troubled with concerns described above, Matthews arrived with entirely a revolutionary idea for the then scholarly world. He advanced a new candidate, Thomas Malory of Studley and Hutton Conyers in Yorkshire.

1.3. The Hutton Candidate

Mathews laid arguments considering, apart from the one of the author’s age, mainly the question of Malory’s access to French sources of the *Morte D’Arthur*. In his book *The Ill-Framed Knight*, Matthews gives evidence of Thomas Malory of Hutton being a prisoner in France after he had been captured near Bordeaux. (Matthews, p. 89) There he is thought to elaborate the masterpiece of English Medieval literature.

Considering, however, that there was only a little chance for any English library to have all the French romances that Malory used, McCarthy argues that the probability of any Continental library having a single romance in English, especially any of Welsh poems, is even lower. (McCarthy, p. 159)

Nevertheless, the most decisive and serious argument listing Thomas Malory of Yorkshire in the group of wrong candidates is that concerning his social rank. Field elucidates that as well as in the case of Papworth Malory, Hutton Malory was also referred to as a knight neither during his life nor after his death in 1475. (Field, p. 21)

In consideration of the fact that the fifteenth century social status of people was regarded by contemporaries as a very important part of one’s identity, which sometimes remained the only factor of one’s recognition among others of the same

name, it is very unlikely that such a title would not be mentioned in any kind of a legal document concerning the Hutton Malory's name.

To fortify this allegation, Field points out that Hutton Malory's brother, John, was credited this title in the very same documents in which his younger brother was not. (Fields, pp. 21) Thus, even a neglectful scribbler's mistake, which was suggested by Matthews to be the reason for omitting the title in case of Thomas Malory (Matthews, p. 121), may be excluded.

Another reason for excluding Thomas Malory of Hutton Conyers may be found in the work itself. It is a matter of language used for composition of the *Morte D'Arthur*, dialect respectively, which, as attempted to elucidate in the next chapter, cast serious doubts on the credibility of legitimacy of his authorship.

1.4. Linguistic Aspects on Determination of the Author of the Morte D'Arthur

For English in that time was not uniform across the island, dialects sometimes resembled entirely foreign languages. As Weir tells in her book, a man from west East Midlands was recognised as a complete stranger in a neighbour shire located in West Midlands and so was he treated. (Weir, pp. 16 – 18) She also reported that in some extreme situations, dialects differed from family to family in one neighbourhood. (Weir, p. 18)

The diversity of individual dialects grew with the distance between shires, especially between south and north. The Northern dialect, sometimes described as the most "innovative" (Johannesson, 2000), differed immensely from the "conservative" (Johannesson, 2000) South Eastern dialect spoken predominantly in Kent. On the basis of these facts, it is usually very easy to determine the place of origin of certain medieval texts and their authors.

Yet, the situation gets more complicated when the original manuscript disappears and one can only rely on copies of the script. In such case, tracking the author's original dialect thus localise him is almost impossible, for the scribes who rewrite the original often substitute forms of the original dialect with their own as to make reading the manuscript more intelligible for people in the region.

That is, unfortunately, exactly the case of the *Morte D'Arthur*. There are only two manuscripts preserved, both of which are copies. One copy was used as a first printed version of the work in 1485 by William Caxton. The other copy was rediscovered at the Fellows' Library of Winchester College only in the last century and is composed by two anonymous scribes.

However, any attempt to determine and locate the author of the original manuscript may only be done after a thorough analysis of both copies and even then it is rather improbable that any sufficient unambiguous result will emerge. Hoping to come to some reasonable conclusion, Matthews compared the copies and marked all passages or verses reflecting any similarities. On basis of his analysis, he then proposed a suggestion that the author must have come from Northamptonshire. (Matthews, 81)

Matthews's deduction ensued from the fact that the language in the Winchester manuscript which is far more authentic than the standardised version of the Caxton's manuscript, which, before being printed out, was largely edited by Caxton himself as he proudly avows in the preface of the book (Malory, ed. Caxton, pp. 9 – 14), resembles predominantly the dialect of that region.

Yet, Angus McIntosh, a late leading authority on Middle English dialectology, felt that the archetype of the manuscript contained some forms that were commonly in use farther to the north. (McIntosh, 346) Variation in spelling of the Winchester manuscript, as Denis Freeborn reports in his course book, indeed shows slight differences between individual scribes' dialects. (Freeborn, pp. 263 – 264)

However, David Crystal's *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language* incorporated as a basis for comparison of the dialects determines both dialects employed in the manuscript to be originated in the East Midlands. (Crystal, pp. 44 – 50) This corresponds with Professor McIntosh's observation that the language used in the Winchester manuscript appeared to be the dialect of Lincolnshire, a northern neighbour shire of Northamptonshire. (McIntosh, 346 – 347)

Hence, a logical suggestion would follow that the author must have come from Lincolnshire, writing his dialect, and the scribes then alternated all passages, verses or words alienating from the Northamptonshire dialect to their indigenous dialect. But Thomas Malory of Hutton came from Northern Yorkshire where the dialect commonly spoken and written was that descended from Northumbrian, the Northern Middle English. (See Encl. No. 1) It is therefore very unlikely that Malory would write completely a diverse dialect.

Another argument denouncing the Yorkshire candidate is expressed by Field who finds it very improbable that the scribes normalised some northerly forms as dialectically alien elements preserving others. (Field, p. 3) This claim gives rise to assumption that the author's dialect was similar to the scribes' one, which automatically excludes the Hutton candidate from the list.

Professor McIntosh, however, delivered a brilliant idea explaining how it could be possible that the author chose the East Midland dialect instead of his own, by which he did not foreclose the possibility for Thomas Malory of Hutton being the author. He claims:

Those forms did not represent author's native dialect but were more likely to be elements of the language of Malory's English sources, which he had adopted for their appropriation to a composition in the same mode. (McIntosh, p. 348)

That is not, however, the only possibility that enables the Yorkshire candidate being ascribed the authorship. The reason for that lays in another phenomenon of the fifteenth century English, dialect levelling. Next to standardisation, of which move Caxton was a leading protagonist as apparent from his copy of the manuscript and many other scripts manufactured in his printing works, dialect levelling comprised the "process of eliminating prominent stereotypable features of difference between dialects" (Dillard 1972, cited in Siegel, p. 364).

Lesley Milroy, a leading figure in linguistics, explains that although the two processes are often confused, levelling arises spontaneously in dialect contact situations. (Milroy, p. 1) As such, it is rather associated with koineisation, the

development of mixed dialects, whereas standardisation process involves institutional control.

Considering the facts given about the Middle English, anticipation may occur that the diversion between dialects of Yorkshire and the one of Northamptonshire, Lincolnshire respectively, was not as enormous as suggested. On the contrary, the two dialects may have variously been mixed on an individual or even regional level.

The language used for composition of a piece of work may have been chosen for different reasons than just for the “same mode” (McIntosh, p. 349), as the main theme implied resemblances with the time during which the work was compiled. (See chap. 3)

Coming from a noble family involved in local and occasionally even state politics, the author was most certainly aware of the situation in the realm and as such he knew very well what kind of work and for what purpose he decided to write. The language then, as well as other elements of the book (see hereinafter), may represent his political or moral sympathies, which setbacks the case of the Hutton candidate, as he could have been influenced either by the phenomenon of levelling or by personal political tendencies.

In short, there are many speculations and theories advocating either of the candidates to be the author of the *Morte D'Arthur* all aroused by various experts. Their arguments, however, are not but mere hypotheses ensuing from deductions relying on insufficient contemporary evidence and thus may not be considered valid. For this reason, the only substantial literary evidence in the case of the authorship is the issue of titling, which favours Sir Thomas Malory of Newbold Revel in Warwickshire and makes him, as Kittredge once stated (see above), the only conceivable candidate.

2. The origins of the Morte D'Arthur

2.1. The Sources of the Morte D'Arthur

The *Morte D'Arthur* is one of many works narrating the “Tales” (Vinaver 1954, cited in Lumiansky, p. 3) of King Arthur, his Knights of the Round Table, and their adventures, military and others. As Malory wrote his book in late fifteenth century, he had a great number of possible sources available for gathering inspiration or using them as a model for the plot of his own story.

According to Lumiansky, though there were many stories about King Arthur known in the times of Sir Thomas Malory, it is apparent that Malory only used several famous works elaborated mainly in the twelfth and the thirteenth century. (Lumiansky, pp. 4 – 7) Some of them were poems and some prose depending chiefly on a literary style more preferable in the regions of their elaboration at the time. Altogether there are two major branches of sources Malory drew upon.

One of the branches is a French collection of the twelfth century romances called the Vulgate Cycle. Wright explains that some of these then very popular romances composed predominantly by a personage of Chrétien de Troyes were rewritten a hundred years later as parts of the Pseudo-Robert de Borron Prose Cycle, a recasting of the Vulgate Cycle. (Wright, pp. 9 – 11)

Dealing with Merlin, King Arthur, and individual Knights of the Round Table, this collection of works became a substantial source text to Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*. Another French material, although separated, is an anonymous piece of prose *Tristan* telling a story of the knight bearing this name.

The other branch comprises two English-written poems, the alliterative *Morte Arthure* and the in-verse *Le Morte Arthur*. The former, being a heroic poem with no sentimental nor romantic account, is described by McCarthy as a “bogus military history un-French in spirit” (McCarthy, p. 140), as it only vaguely mentions Lancelot or Guinevere, whereas the latter seems to be the contrary due to its retaining of most of the romance of the foresaid queen and her loyal guard.

Yet, Thomas Wright argues in his study that the number of passages in Malory's work denoting his originality is large. To him, it is apparent in almost every

“Tale” that Malory was an inventor rather than an adopter. Wright gives evidence to this allegation highlighting characters in the French source being different from the identical ones in Malory’s book. (Wright, pp. 18 – 21)

However, this is not the only field being found inconsistent. Also the theme of some considerable sources, for instance the *Suite du Merlin*, the major source of Malory’s “Tale of King Arthur,” renders a significant diversion not only from its model romances of the Vulgate Cycle but from the *Morte D’Arthur* itself.

Fanni Bogdanow described the whole *Pseudo-Robert de Borron Prose Cycle* as a story dealing with completely a different issue from that dealt with in Malory’s work and therefore her suggestion that the French source ought to be called the “Roman du Graal” (Bogdanow, p. 325). (Bogdanow, pp. 325 – 335) Wright, supporting this thesis, indicates that “the Borron Prose Cycle is an extensive romance of the Grail” (Wright, p. 10), for which reason he believes that Malory made a great contribution to the story using his personal thoughts. (Wright, pp. 9 - 34)

Thus, to disclose Malory’s motives for writing the *Morte D’Arthur* and to find out whether he used his work to describe and critically portray the period of the Wars of the Roses as stated above, it becomes more important to understand not what remained unchanged from the borrowed models but what was added and altered by Malory himself.

2.2. Malory’s Originality

Though Malory unquestionably processed some well known works mainly from the so-called Vulgate Cycle and its recasts (see hereinabove), he rapidly altered the original stories and definitely brought some innovative ideas so as to appeal to a contemporary reader. Professor Lumiansky said in his study that “though Malory borrowed a great deal from his sources, his handling of these borrowings resulted in a highly original literary work.” (Lumiansky, p. 7) This has certainly been proved, considering his story and the prior ones differ entirely in various matters.

Firstly, the structure of narrative used in the sources is largely distinct from the narrative in the *Morte D'Arthur*. The sources use an "interwoven structure" (McCarthy, p. 141) with a typical pattern of incidents being mixed one with another. McCarthy reports that the main story is frequently interrupted in order to present other, minor incidents, which are then abandoned in favour of the again continued original story. (McCarthy, p. 141) Having sentence subordination as the main characteristics, such structure necessitates very long and complicated utterances making the form unintelligible and confusing.

By contrast, Malory implements very simple form of narrative in his work using coordination mostly and only rarely does he incorporate subordination. The reason for doing so is a strict chronology of events in the "Tales," which makes the narrative easier to be followed, even though stereotyped. McCarthy stated very aptly that Malory was not writing a book but narrating a tale. (McCarthy, p. 138) Agreeing with McCarthy, Christian Cotroneo adds that Malory was a "gritty storyteller." (Cotroneo, 1998) That may be a good reason why Malory did not find it necessary or even sensible to use a pompous and hardly accessible style.

Another sign supporting McCarthy's observation is distinction between indirect and direct speech. In the text it is only suggested by a colon mark and is therefore very hard to identify. Yet, it is even harder to distinguish the direct speech of individual characters in the work. Altogether, the story resembles an orally narrated tale where all the parts are introduced by one person, the narrator, whereas all its prosaic sources are praised highly as literary works with a strong emphasis on their form.

Secondly, the difference is apparent if considering the content of the story itself. The *Morte D'Arthur* omits much information compared to its sources and supplies it with new material completely estranged from the originals. As such, the "Tales" then bear some marks of borrowing, yet, those are only fragments and the work becomes original itself, as it implies entirely a diverse mood from the one carried in its models.

This fact is most visible in those parts of the work which do not correspond to the main story about Arthur and contain only little coherent information. The reduction is clearly evident in the “Book of Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere” (Malory, ed. Vinaver, pp. 609 – 663), for this subsidiary incident was abridged vastly in comparison with the French original and was also altered notably.

One reason for Malory doing so is, as Adams claims, believed by some to be his unfamiliarity with the complete *Lancelot*. (Adams, p. 127) McCarthy, however, points out that Malory randomly mentions events from different parts of the French romance, on the basis of which McCarthy suggests that the real cause for such a significant omission lays not in Malory’s unfamiliarity with the source but in his distaste for the “Harlequin-like” nature of the romance. (McCarthy, pp. 150 – 152) Nevertheless, Malory retains a strong sentiment in his work appealing on readers’ emotions.

On another occasion, it is advocated by Guerin that Malory invents his own story when writing the “Tale of Gareth.” (Guerin, p. 99) He argues that although there are some similarities with different French romances prior to this “Tale” if the form is concerned, there is no real likeness of the content. (Guerin, pp. 101 – 104) Malory also ascribes Gareth entirely new qualities, which are not present in the French manuscripts. (Compare Malory, ed. Vinaver, pp. 175 – 226; Vulgate Circle, *Le Roman en Prose de Tristan*, ed. Sommer, p. 22)

Another theory, which is also supported by Guerin and other literary scientists, is Malory’s gathering information from previous “Tales” already written in the book. He observes that certain passages in the “Tale of Gareth” and the “Book of Tristram de Lyones” seem alike. (Guerin, pp. 106 – 117)

Yet, Wilson opposes credibility of this theory by stating that Malory may have used some source, which did not survive and was lost in time. (Wilson 1948, cited in Lumiansky, p. 100) According to results of his study, Wilson claims that Malory used a source which in turn had as its sources “La Cote Male Tayle,” “Bel Inconnu,” and a now lost, but common, source of “Bel Inconnu” and “Libeaus Desconus.” (Wilson 1948, cited in Lumiansky, p. 102)

Based on these facts, it is clear that Malory did not just translate or similarly adopt the sources, though he mentioned following the French originals on several occasions in the book. He used the sources like many authors nowadays do when studying certain topic prior to writing a bestseller. So did Malory. He studied the “field” properly before embracing on elaboration of such a masterpiece. Therefore, one may discover various resemblances with many other works prior to the *Morte D’Arthur* but one may not deny Malory’s extensive contribution to its originality.

2.3. Malory’s Motives

Malory’s choice of such topic as the life and deeds of King Arthur had certainly originated in his primarily intended aim. One may argue what his intentions were. Looking from two diverse points of view, the *Morte D’Arthur* may be considered an interesting chivalric romance denoting Malory’s interest in courtly values and warfare as well as an insightful socio-ethical allegory, both of which may express author’s strong discontent with the current state of the realm’s morale. Cotroneo even claims that Malory portrayed in the book an acute interest in politics and kings’ maintaining power. (Cotroneo, 1998)

However, many individuals of the scholarly world insist on Thomas Malory having been by no means involved in the politics of the time and try to describe his work as a clear courtly romance full of chivalric traditions. Nevertheless, not even David Ford, who claims that there is just little history left in Malory’s book (Ford, 2007), cannot say that there is no trace of some purely historical information processed in the work. (See chap. 3)

Yet, Malory did not follow “historical” documents such as Monmouth’s *Historia Regum Britanniae* or Nennius’ *Historia Brittonum* telling the “true” story of King Arthur, as the information of Arthur mentioned in both the chronicles differ extensively from the based-on-a-legend romance. (Compare Monmouth, Book 8, chap. 24; Malory, ed. Vinaver, Book 1, p. 6) Still, as both Field and McCarthy agree, there are many parts in the *Morte D’Arthur* having resemblance with factual

incidents or persons either of Malory's time or of the English history. (McCarthy, pp. 152 – 168; Field, pp. 123 - 125)

It is probable that Malory used the information together with a pinch of modernism as a means of making the work as contemporary as possible. He obviously intended to address most of gentry and middle class people with his idea of chivalry and other honourable qualities, as the *Morte D'Arthur* implies a very strong ethos.

It is also possible that the work was written as an expression of the author's political allegiance. This claim is well supported by Matthews arguing that the passages from the *Morte D'Arthur* denoting either partial or complete similarity with various decisive moments from the time of Lancastrian rule (See chap. 3) represent Malory's sympathies with Lancastrians. (See chap. 1.2)

Nevertheless, Field argues that mentioning or pointing at some historical facts does not mean necessarily that the author's motives were political. (Field, p. 153) Terence McCarthy also denies Matthew's allegation insisting that the author of the *Morte D'Arthur* was not concerned with any kind of politics on either level, regional and state, for he wrote the work "with the outlook of the historian not the politician" (McCarthy, p. 156) and only intended to portray the disorder in the country and the total abandonment of chivalric values being the reason for the doom of the realm. (McCarthy, pp. 156 - 157)

Field agrees with this idea claiming that "Malory's sympathies were aroused less by causes than by individuals behaving chivalrously in difficult circumstances" (Field, p. 124) and thus should not be considered a partisan neither of the House of York nor the House of Lancaster. (Field, pp. 124 - 125)

On another occasion, Field admitted that Malory may have been influenced in his motives by his uncle Robert Malory, by whom little Thomas was brought up and who had been a professional crusader and a noble knight for almost all his adult age and had fought side by side with Richard, the Duke of York, in France for many years. (Field, pp. 80 – 82) Living with such a personage may almost certainly

have left some impression in mind of a young nobleman, especially when writing a large heroic epic such as the *Morte D'Arthur*.

Altogether, Malory wrote an extraordinary piece of art, in which he managed to incorporate all the features typical for a fifteenth century romance as well as his passion for history and battles. He used many different sources for doing so. Not only did he translate and adopt prior famous stories mainly of French origin, but he also used his inventiveness and enriched the original story with a great portion of action and adventure, leaving out magic and extensive sentiment, laying stress on factuality and rationality.

And it is the factuality that made many readers believe that Malory had comprised in his book many events from his time representing in his eyes the most adorable chivalric virtues as well as the most villainous acts. This belief, however, is not only a simple allegation, for the resemblance between incidents in Malory's story and corresponding events from the period of the Wars of the Roses has been proved repeatedly in many literary scientists' and historians' researches and comparisons just as the one analyzing and demonstrating the similarities in the following chapter.

3. The Reflections of the Wars of the Roses in the Morte D'Arthur

3.1. The Tale of King Arthur

This "Tale" narrates a story of birth, accession to the throne, and marvellous deeds of King Arthur as well as tales of the knights Balin and Gawain. Vinaver says that the source for majority of the first "individual romance" (Lumiansky, p. 5) can be found in the *Suite du Merlin*. (Works, Vinaver, p. 728) According to Gardner, this initial tale introduces the values of chivalry upheld by Malory. (Gardner, pp. 25, 28 – 29, 33)

Some passages of this "Tale" describe incidents markedly similar to events mentioned in Weir's, Lander's, and other historians' studies to be incidents from gentry and royal circles in the fifteenth century Britain. However, neither this romance nor the whole book describes based-on-truth stories, for the similarity with the actual incidents or persons is only lightly suggested throughout the narration and constitutes only an insignificant marginal feature of a great literary work, not its main part or purpose.

Still, there are various places in the narration denoting correspondence with similar or equal situations not only from the life of King Henry VI but also of King Henry V, his father. First example may be found at the very beginning of the whole story:

Thenne within two yeres kyng Uther felle seke of a grete maladye. And in the meanewhyle hys enemyes usurped upon hym and dyd a grete bataylle upon his men and slewe many of his peple. (Malory, p. 6)

This great "maladye" of King Uther corresponds with a terrible illness, from which King Henry V suffered last days of his life. As described in the book by Weir, he went on his last campaign to France but had already been incapable of going on horseback, thus, had to be carried in a litter on his way to the castle of Vincennes. (Weir, pp. 68 – 69)

The way he was carried is also mentioned in the "Tale" shortly after, denoting king's unbeaten pride and courage. Malory writes: "So it was done as

Merlyn had devised, and they caryed the kynge forth in an hors-lyttar with a grete hooste towarde his enemyes.” (Malory, p. 6)

Another similarity, this time, however, with King Henry V’s son, may be identified in Malory’s mentioning King Uther’s inability to speak due to his illness. It reads as follows:

And thenne he fyll passynge sore seke, so that thre dayes and thre nyghtes he was speechless; wherefore alle the barons made grete sorrow and asked Merlyn what counceill were best. (Malory, pp. 6 - 7)

It resembles markedly the mental collapse of King Henry VI in August 1453. As Neillands explains, it was, as well as in the case of King Uther, a depressive stupor or some kind of recurrent schizophrenia. (Neillands, p. 66) Henry’s illness, however, lasted considerably longer than the one of Uther.

Yet, another parable between these two kings follows after the striking strain. It is a matter of pronouncing an heir to the throne. In case of Malory’s version, it was Merlin with God’s help who returned the king his voice to enable Uther determine his righteous heir in presence of a panel of all barons. And Uther said:

‘I gyve hym Gods blissyng and myne, and byd hym pray for my soule, and righteously worshipfully that he clayme the croune upon forfeiture of my blessing.’ (Malory, p. 7)

According to Weir, this acknowledgement made by kings was necessary for council’s legitimating heir’s right to the throne, as it had been a national habit based on an ancient tradition. (Weir, p. 182) This ancient tradition found its place in Malory’s book as well. Malory even stresses the significance of the act of pronouncement by displaying Merlin the wizard, who was a wise man and king’s best counsellor, eagerly assisting in this issue of enabling Uther speak in front of the barons. (Malory, p. 7)

It is very interesting that Malory stressed the issue of legitimacy of Arthur by this ancient tradition, particularly when neither history prior to the Morte D’Arthur including, for instance, the *Historia Regum Britanniae* is acknowledged about such tradition considering Uther and his son. (Monmouth, Book 8, chap. 24)

On the contrary, it is a very important event in the life of Henry VI, who was not able to determine his son, Edward, Prince of Wales, his legitimate heir due to his breakdown for over a year. The period of Henry's recovering from his absence of mind then happened to be the time of the first rise of the Duke of York, Henry's opponent, who also had the right to the throne, as Neillands says, through his Plantagenet ancestry. (Neillands, pp. 19 – 20)

As Lander enlightens, Duke's affinity used this peculiar situation to spread rumours about Henry, his wife, and their child. (Lander, p. 53) One version, Weir describes, supported by many common people, who were not aware of king's disease, said that the child had been a changeling. (Weir, p. 182) Another version, according to Neillands, said that king's reason for not acknowledging his heir had been the child being a result of queen's adultery with her favourite, Duke of Somerset. (Neillands, p. 66)

Paston writes in his letters that this second version found audience predominantly among the gentry, who knew about Henry's extremely negative attitude to an intercourse. (Paston, cited in Weir, p. 184) This is supported by the fact that Queen Margaret conceived a baby no sooner than after eight years of marriage.

Only after pronouncing his son an heir was Henry's throne saved from York, who had become Protector of England and Chief Councillor to the King. However, according to Weir, York, although being aware of his origin, did not intend to seize the throne for himself by that time, as he claimed it later. (Weir, p. 184)

Neillands shows in his book that it was at the eleventh hour when the king woke up from his mental sleep and spoke in the presence of his wife, for the public opinion about York's right to the throne had overgrown the King's supporters. (Neillands, p. 67)

The significance of the parentage issue was also portrayed in Malory's book. It concerns King Lott and other kings who considered Arthur a "berdles boye that was come of lowe blood" (Malory, ed Vinaver, p. 11). Wherefore Merlin came with a necessary explanation assuring them fiercely:

'I shalle telle yow the cause, for he is kynge Uther Pendragons sone borne in wedlok, gotten on lgrayne, the dukes wyf of Tyntigail.' [...] 'After the deth of the duke more than thre houres was Arthur begoten, and thirtene dayes after kyng Uther wedded lgrayne, and therfor I preve hym he is no bastard.'
(*Malory, p. 11)

Mentioning the traditional way of acknowledgement as a necessity, Malory made a great effort to display the importance and righteousness of the heir's claim to the throne. This issue evidently poisoned Malory's mind. Matthews considers that Arthur, in this case, represented little Prince Edward, Henry' son. (Matthews, p. 49) Based on Matthews' thesis, this passage is the first of those expressing author's political sympathies, as he, impersonated in Merlin, defended Arthur's legitimacy.* (Matthews, p. 49)

Yet, Malory also had a great ability to play with the mood of his individual tales embodied in the story. It is apparent from the examples mentioned above that Malory was very personal in his approach. And it is visible throughout the whole book. (See below) Another example of such phenomenon lays in the middle of the tale about Merlin. In this case, however, the person portrayed is Edward IV, whose father, the Duke of York, had support of Malory through his cordial alliance with the Earl of Warwick. (See chap. 1.2)

Edward IV was known for his natural attractiveness, which he used very well to seduce women. Mancini, a chronicler of the period from Italy, described him in one of his letters as "licentious in the extreme." (Mancini, cited in Weir, p. 294) More, an English chronicler, wrote:

He was of youth greatly given to fleshly wantonness, for no woman was there anywhere whom he set his eye upon but he would importunately pursue his appetite and have her. (More, cited in Weir, p. 294)

However, as Weir claims, only two of his mistresses are known, whose relationship with Edward lasted for long. (Weir, p. 294) According to Weir, the affair with Elizabeth Lucy is of a particular importance, as she bore Edward a bastard son, Arthur Plantagenet. (Weir, p. 294)

Surprisingly, even Malory pointed at this fact in his book showing Arthur as a man of lust who does not refuse earthly love. Malory tells that Arthur succumbs to

King Lot's wife beauty and unaware that she is his sister, he lustfully gets a child on her. (Malory, p. 27) On another occasion mentioned previously in the book, Earl Lyonors' daughter came to do homage to Arthur, whereupon she provoked an irresistible passion in him. (Malory, p. 26) Malory continues:

And kynge Arthure sette hys love gretly on hir, and so ded she uppon hym, and so the kynge had ado with hir and gate on hir a chylde. And hys name was Borre, that was afir a good knight and of the Table Rounde. (Malory, p. 26)

Next to lust and virtues of earthly love, the issue also discussed largely in this "Tale" is revenge. Gardner points out in his summary that vengeance together with establishment and obeisance to the chivalric code was one of the triggers to most of the adventures in this "Tale." (Gardner, p. 26) His idea ensues from Malory's tales of some of the Knights of the Round Table in the first Book.

Malory portrays this motive as a natural human inducement ensuing from a strong emotional experience such as Gawain's father's death. (See below) In his book, it is important what cause evokes the motive in order to understand its nature, good or bad. According to Gardner, however, Malory condemns personal interests as low and dishonourable. (Gardner, p. 43)

The most disputable character, considering this theme, is definitely sir Gawain, who appears to be driven by such motive throughout the whole book and it is his vengeful feud with Launcelot that causes Arthur's loss in the final battle with Mordred.

The first mention of Gawain is in the Tale of The Knight with Two Swords where he is foretold by Malory to revenge his father's death on King Pellinor, as he and his brother Gaheris later slay King Pellinor. (Malory, pp. 48, 375) However, further in the book, Gaheris finds out that the man who Gawain and he have killed shamefully was not guilty of the crime, thus, an innocent one was slain. (Malory, p. 378)

This vengeful and unjust act by Gawain is regarded by Malory as the most villainous, for he even stresses the two brothers' guilt by Gaheris murdering his

mother and later by another slaughter, Gawain's traitorous murder of King Pellinor's son Lamerok (Lamorak). (Malory, pp. 377, 420)

Surprisingly, even such villainy as the one found in Malory's book may be traced in the history of the Wars of the Roses. Considering the circumstances under which both father and son were killed, King Pellinor's death corresponds with the death of the Duke of York at the battle of Wakefield in 1460 and his son's murder equals the murder of the Earl of Rutland, the Duke of York's son, who was killed in the aftermath of the battle.

Following contemporary histories, Lander explains that York was killed in a battle which was also an outcome of treason. (Lander, p. 89) According to Lander, the traitor, "Gawain," was Lord Neville, who raised men and with other lords from the county killed the duke in a dishonorable fight near the castle of Sandal. (Lander, p. 89)

In the case of his son's death, the similarity concerning the murderer of Lamerok points at John, Lord Clifford, who shamefully killed the young Earl of Rutland after he had left the battlefield. As Weir depicts in her book, Lord Clifford stabbed Rutland in his heart shouting: "By God's blood, thy father slew mine! So I slay the accursed blood of York!" (Weir, p. 256)

Also the number of the villainous knights in Malory's story is seemingly similar to the number of lords involved in the Wakefield affair. Malory tells us about four brothers, Gawain, Gaheris, Agravain, and Mordred, who figured in the case of the chase and murder of Lamerok. (Malory, p. 420)

Their brotherhood, however weak and unstable for most of the time in the book, became strong when they found a common enemy and joined power to defeat him. As far as the battle of Wakefield is concerned, it was, as Lander points out, the Earl of Westmorland with the Earl of Northumberland, Lord Clifford, and Duke of Somerset, who joined power and defeated their common enemy. (Lander, p. 89)

Considering that the first "Tale" represents only a little part of the whole book, it is likely that there will be more evidence on proving similarity of some

incidents in the book with moments from the history of the Wars of the Roses, however there are also whole chapters, where Malory only acts as a translator of the French originals. (See chap. 2.3)

3.2. The Tale of King Arthur and the Emperor Lucius

In this Tale, Malory narrates a testimony of King Arthur's most triumphal victory during his reign. Arthur fights against the Roman Emperor, who inquires him to submit a penalty as well as Arthur's father used to do. However, Arthur is a sovereign leader of England and as such decides not to pay anything. He drives his knights on the continent and matches Lucius in the field instead.

This is a brief synopsis of the initial part of the whole story, which, according to McCarthy, Malory based mainly on the alliterative *Morte Arthure* and supplied it occasionally with some additional French sources. (McCarthy, pp. 144 – 145) As Dichmann claims, however, the major source for completing this part was widely substituted by another Arthurian romance, a work by an Anglo-Norman poet Wace. (Dichmann, pp. 69 – 71)

Even here, however, may be found some resemblances with the Wars of the Roses, Lancastrian kings and their campaigns respectively. Yet, the passages where any similarity is clearly apparent are very rare due to the author's main focus in this "Tale," which rather concerns combating and "grete dedys of armys" (Malory, p. 129) of the main characters of this story than pointing at facts from British history. Still, there are at least three moments in this part where one may claim that Malory undoubtedly depicts some historical incidents from the lives of both Henry V and his son, Henry VI.

Firstly, it is a matter of French towns and lands, which Arthur had won over King Claudas, having been seized by the Roman Emperor. (Malory, p. 117) These settings are wholly similar to the circumstances of the second part of the Hundred Years War, as the lands that are at stake in this tale correspond to the regions in France that were under British rule in the early fifteenth century when King Henry V had reopened the war with the French. (Compare: Malory, p. 117; Weir, p. 66)

Back in England when Arthur is aware of Lucius' actions, he quickly establishes a powerful army and prepares for a counterattack. Arthur's claim for the French territory and his imminent campaign for its recapturing resemble King Henry V's strong determination to capture France. According to Weir, Henry V, as well as King Arthur in Malory's book, believed that God was on his side. (Weir, p. 59)

The idea that the "French" campaign of Arthur and his knights implies a description of Henry V's way to France and some of the decisive battles there is also incorporated in various literary historians' theories. Being one of such, Vinaver claims in his commentary on this "Tale" that the route, which Arthur takes on approaching Tuscany, resembles conspicuously the itinerary followed by Henry V on his way from Fécamp to Agincourt. (Works, Vinaver, p. 745)

Another occasion, from which it is apparent that Malory also elaborated some affairs from his contemporary society in this story, is the passage where the senators delegated to Arthur's court to demand a tribute from him return to the Emperor Lucius and tell him about Arthur and his intentions. (Malory, pp. 115 - 116) They reported to Lucius:

... "ye shall fynde hym your utter enemye; and seke ye hym and ye lyste, for into this londis woll he com, and that shall ye fynde within this half-yere, for he thynkys to be Emperour hymself. For he seyth ye have occupyed the Empyre with grete wronge, for all his trew auncettryes sauff his fadir Uther were Emperoures of Rome." (Malory, p. 116)

The senators' warning and persuading the Emperor about Arthur's intentions and a forthcoming war are quite the same as the efforts of the two most influential advisors at King Henry VI's court, the Duke of Somerset and the queen, who, as Weir describes, desired to dispose of the Duke of York and yet increase the influence over the King. (Weir, pp. 194 – 196)

As Benet wrote in his letter, "Somerset was plotting the destruction of York and told the King that the Duke of York wished to depose him and rule Enland himself," which, as Benet commented, was nothing but "manifestly false." (Benet 1455, cited in Weir, p. 194)

Considering Malory's political stance, this allegory does not correspond with Matthews' findings mentioned hereinbefore, as it suggests that Arthur, in this case, represents the Duke of York. However, the issue of Malory's allegiance is widely described in the first section and the possibility that the author may have connections on both sides of the War of the Roses is advocated there abundantly. (See chap. 1.2) As long as Malory's personal sympathies are concerned, McCarthy states that it is not difficult to imagine where they lay as for the qualities of both parties' leaders. (McCarthy, p. 160)

The last serious mention of an affair connected to some historical incident from Malory's presence in this "Tale" is the one about the seizure of a French town where Arthur was consequently entrusted the key from the town and praised by local gentry. (Malory, p. 143)

This moment stated as an important one in this passage of the book was also a very significant landmark in the life of King Edward IV, who represented King Arthur in this part. It was him entering London with a large army ready to take it by force. However, as Weir claims, he was welcomed as a savior by most citizens and was given the town key from the Lord Mayor of the city. (Weir, p. 274)

As for the second tale is concerned with battling mainly, it is hard to distinguish and trace any actions, that may be identified as events from Malory's life. Nevertheless, as McCarthy claims, it is very probable that Malory's love of warfare and hunting, which he worshiped all his life, was projected into his work. (McCarthy, 139 -140) One such example may be Malory's direct speech to the reader in the "Tale of Tristram de Lyones" where he, after describing Tristram's hunting and courtly qualities, says:

Wherefore, as me semyth, all jantyllmen that beryth olde armys ought of right to honoure sir Trystrams for the goodly teamys that jantylmen have and use and shall do unto the Day of Dome, that thereby in a maner all men of worship may discever a jantylman frome a yoman and a yoman frome a vylayne. For he that jantyll is woll drawe hym to jantyll tacchis and to follow the noble customys of jantylmen. (Malory, p. 232)

Although Malory was a devoted soldier, there are no chronicles, in which such information confirming the author's own experiences from battles being his main inspiration is mentioned. Therefore, though the degree of probability of any similarity is high, lack of evidence in this "Tale" causes the incidents mentioned above being the only ones remarked in historical sources.

The problem with lack of information is also a chief obstacle in disclosing any similarities in some of the following "Tales," as it is unclear, whether Malory implied his own experience, histories of English rulers respectively, or he just loosely translated the French originals or incorporated themes from the English sources.

Thus, it is inevitable to exclude the "Book of Sir Tristram de Lyones" and the "Tale of the Sankgreal," for it is apparent that Malory just combined several literary sources mainly of French origin and only occasionally added his peculiar ideas, which however did not include any historical facts.

Nevertheless, one incident has been found, that demands a detailed look, as it resembles an event from Queen Margaret's life. It is a short narration called "The Knight of the Cart" in the the "Book of Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere," which is the only story from the midst of the book pointing at some historical moment from the fifteenth century Britain.

3.3. The Book of Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere

This short "Tale" narrates a sad story of a romantic relationship between Guinevere and her best knight, sir Launcelot, and a bitter end of the fellowship of the Round Table. According to Lumiansky's observation, their (Guinevere and Lancelot's) relationship develops through the entire book since Launcelot comes back from the Roman campaign. (Lumiansky, p. 208)

Though the sources, as Lumiansky explains, of which only one was English and the rest were French, were followed by Malory in almost a verbatim way, he

contributed largely to the content of this "Tale" if only by reducing the extensive manuscript by Chrétien de Troyes. (Lumiansky, p. 206)

The whole story then seems as if Malory wanted to stress that it was the Queen, who brought the "Ideal Kingdom" to its end together with all the noble Knights of the Round Table, who, succumbed to low values, betrayed the ideal of chivalry and knighthood. This idea finds support in Lumiansky, who claims in his study that Guinevere was three times accused of horrible crimes and it was her case that led Launcelot against other, with jealousy filled knights. (Lumiansky, p. 208)

Malory may have done so to establish his opinion about the origin of all wrongs that were to happen to "Inglonde." (Malory, 1971) From the historical point of view, Guinevere may easily be recognised in this chapter as Margaret of Anjou, who also challenged hatred of the court. And as Lander points out, it was Margaret, who brought the country to the civil war, for she was engaged in the feud of the Duke of Somerset and the Duke of York and favoured the protectionist Court party. (Lander, p. 68 - 69)

On one occasion in the story, the adventure, which Guinevere unwillingly suffers when her cart is ambushed and she is kidnapped by ferocious Meleagant, shows a certain similarity with a malice that happened to Margaret. As Weir portrays, she was also travelling in a carriage when one of her servants robbed her and threatened to kill her and her son if it were not for a good and brave man, who saved her and with whom she rode to safety of the Harlech Castle. (Weir, p. 245)

Still, the similarity may not be equally considered an allegory as those mentioned hereinbefore because, in this case, the similarity with literary sources is much stronger than with any other incident from Malory's presence. It is also necessary to understand that Malory was a devoted Yorkist at the time of this incident taking place and had hardly any knowledge of such an event. Therefore, the last place in the book where one may find some "historical" information is the last story, the "Most Piteous Tale of Morte Arthur saunz Guerdon."

3.4. The Tale of Morte Arthur

Most historians and literary scholars refusing any speculations about Malory's book bearing any correspondence with the War of the Roses or any other historical information either personal or not from author's times admit that this "Tale" is one such exception to their theses. Not only does it carry similarities with moments from Malory's service in Warwick's army, but the story resembles the War of the Roses as a whole.

The beginning of this last "Tale" takes place at already troubled time for the Knights of the Round Table, as many of them had already embarked upon grievance to each other, especially Gawain's brothers Agravain and Mordred. (Malory, pp. 669) Thus motivated by hate towards the Queen and her best knight, they organized a perfidy and arranged it, so that they took those two "lovers" unawares. (Malory, pp.673 – 678)

From now on, the "Strife and Slander" (Malory, p. 673) grows and culminates when Launcelot kills two unarmed brothers of Gawain. (Malory, p. 683) Since this moment, it is not Arthur, but Gawain, "the man that Arthur in the world loved the most" (Malory, p. 709), who became the motivator for Arthur's campaign against Launcelot, as Arthur accommodated Gawain's vengefulness.

It is also in this very moment that the story starts to correspond with the initial events of the Wars of the Roses. In particular, one may find a parallel between Arthur being "led" by Gawain to a certain "vilany and shame" (Malory, p. 701) and King Henry IV being "ruled" by his and his wife's favourite, the Duke of Somerset. As Neillands stated in his book, it was King's benevolence to Somerset and his political power which made York act openly against his sovereign lord. (Neillands, pp. 66 – 72)

However, Malory does not excuse York's action, which fact is obvious on a glance through this part, as he does not in the whole book. For this is the last section, which, presumably, was written at the end of 1460s, it was already the time of Malory being a supporter of the House of Lancaster and thus of Henry VI. (See chap. 1.2)

This fact is clearly visible in the next part, when traitorous Mordred, who had been made the governor of England by his father, overtakes the power in the country while the King is fighting for the cause of his favourite, sir Gawain. (Malory, pp. 700, 707 – 708) This is an evident parallel with York's governing period leading to a quarrel between him and the King. (See chap. 3.1, p. 23)

At this place in the book, it is apparent who the traitor in Malory's opinion is and so it is in reality. Another proof for that lays in locating the lords, who joined the rebellious army against their king and their reasons for doing so. According to Malory, Mordred sent "all the baronny of thys londe" (Malory, p. 708) a letter of summoning, whereof many lords came to aid him in his quest, as they long had been dissatisfied with King Arthur, for with him "was never other lyff but warre and stryff, and with sir Mordrede was grete joy and blysse" (*Malory, p. 708) .*

Malory's words as if being cut out from the book of Weir, who states therein that most of nobility did not support Henry IV's war in France and neither they welcomed his policy in the country. (Weir, chap. 14) On the contrary, as she adds, people salved York and his party for his good qualities in matters of state policy and for the respect he had among nobles. (Weir, pp. 215 – 217)

To manifest his sympathies even more, Malory speaks directly to the reader in this passage and rebukes the English people for not realising the treason of York – Mordred, him including, for he himself once supported the traitor. (See chap. 1.2) Malory writes:

Lo ye all Englysshemen, se ye nat what a myschyff here was? For he that was the moste kynge and nobelyst knyght of the worlde, and moste loved the felyshyp of noble knyghtes, and by hym they all were upholdyn, and yet myght nat thes Englyshemen holde them contente with hym. Lo thus was the olde custom and usayges of thys londe, and men say that we of thys londe have nat yet loste that custom. Alas! Thys ys a greate defaughte of us Englysshemen, for there may no thyngge us please no terme. (Malory, p. 708)

Malory fertilises the thesis of his allegiance when the story comes to battling near Salisbury. He describes that most of those, who joined Mordred's army were from London and the South of England, namely from Sussex and Surrey, Essex,

Suffolk and Norfolk. (Malory, p. 711) These counties, as stated in Lander's history of the Wars of the Roses, belonged among the counties supporting the Yorkists. (Lander, 72 – 75)

An interesting mention made by Malory, which is not found in any of the sources, is Mordred being supported by those, who favoured sir Launcelot. (Malory, p. 711) This may not be important considering that it is but a one sentence. However, knowing that Malory was devoted to the Earl of Warwick, whose assistance, as Weir claims, was a decisive element of York's success (Weir, pp. 277 – 278), one may assume that such mention might have more than just subordinate role.

McCarthy proposed in his book a theory that the last battle in the *Morte D'Arthur* represents Malory's memories of the Battle of Towtown, 1461. (McCarthy, p. 164) This thesis finds its bases in the book, as Malory tells the reader about the battle being the bloodiest one with only few survivors. He describes:

And never syns was there seyne a more dolefuller batayle in no Crysten londe, for there was but russhynge and rydyng, foynyng and othir, and many a dedely stroke. [...] And so he loked aboute hym and cowed se no mo of all hys oste and good knyghtes leffte no mo on lyve but two knyghtes. (Malory, p. 713)

Also his mention of robbing the dead and "finishing" those who were not dead yet reminds of the most significant battle of the Wars of the Roses, where, as Haigh remarks, no prisoners were taken on either side. (Haigh, p. 133 – 134)

The last place in the book, where any resemblance may be seen, is located in the "Dolorous Death" tale. Here, Malory at once describes a journey to Joyous Gard, Launcelot's castle in England, which "somme men say it was Anwyk, and somme men say it was Bamborow" (*Malory, p. 724).*

According to Vinaver, Malory may have described his own experiences, as he went to Northumberland helping the Earl of Warwick to besiege castles of Bamburgh, Alnwick, and Dunstanburgh and his journey lasted the same long. (Works, Vinaver, p. 778) That is to say the last of all similarities with the times of Malory in the *Morte D'Arthur*.

Conclusion

This research paper develops an idea that Thomas Malory portrayed some of his experiences or incidents from his present into the *Morte D'Arthur*. Apart from this main goal of proving such allegation, two other important findings have been established in this paper. Both of these, one being related to the author and the other to the way he worked, are closely interconnected and affected positively the research on investigation and confirmation of the above stated thesis.

Firstly, it is an identification of the author, which was necessary in order to be able to claim that some of the incidents in the book were of Malory's life. After a number of secondary sources dealing with this issue have been studied, a conclusion was established at the end of the first section that following the evidence available, the only thinkable person to be credited with the authorship of this book is Sir Thomas Malory of Newbold Revel. (See chap. 1)

Secondly, it is a discovery that Malory did not always follow his sources in the course of creating his work, which even more fertilized the theory that he used motives from his life. (See chap. 2.2) An analysis of the *Morte D'Arthur* was elaborated in the second part of this paper to give closer look at Malory's sources.

After mentioning his mostly French models, it was vital to eliminate features demonstrating his originality and creativity and attempt to trace their origins and purpose for Malory using them. Subsequently, it became apparent that the reason for their implication was mostly connected to his personal motives and intentions with the work.

It is also suggested in this section that Malory's motives were political. (See chap. 2.3) This allegation is therein supported by findings of famous literary historians. However, this theory is refused immediately, as the parts in the book mentioning such information may be understood confusingly.

As the explanation follows, Malory described different events good or bad in nature related not only to one person, whereof it is unlikely for him to be preferable to any of resembled personages. Therefore, many scholars perceive this as a reasonable cause for denoting Malory a historian rather than a politician.

Finally, ensuing from the research elaborated in the third part, the most significant finding considering the aim of this paper has been established. It is the fact, that Malory certainly used some incidents and motives from the fifteenth century England, especially from the Wars of the Roses period. The strong advocacy provided by comparison of the content of Malory's book and scholarly histories of the period under consideration is grounded on the number of similarities observed.

The number of examples, in which the situations mentioned in the *Morte D'Arthur* resemble events from Malory's times, is not enormous, yet neither it is insignificant. Some incidents are more similar to those historical ones than others, of course. The place where the phenomenon of portraying or allegorising some events from either political or any other sphere of author's contemporary society is probably most visible is in the first and the last "Tales" of his book. (See chap. 3.1, 3.4)

To conclude the results of the analysis investigating the resemblances as mentioned hereinabove, since individual parallels between incidents from the book and those from the due time of British history have been found similar beyond controversy, the research paper stipulates that the hypothesis, which reads that *Thomas Malory reflected manifold incidents from the Wars of the Roses in the Morte D'Arthur*, as stated at the beginning, is approved.

Résumé

Tato závěrečná výzkumná práce se zabývá fenoménem často užívaným zejména ve středověku, ale především v dobách, kdy jakákoliv politická narážka či neblahá zmínka o někom významném, jako je například panující vladař, v literatuře znamenala pro autora takového díla pronásledování a postih. Jedná se o užití historických informací ve fiktivní literatuře jako prostředku pro vyjádření autorových idejí a názorů. Tyto informace musely mnohdy být až přímo zakamuflovány do nepatrných náznaků. Tato bakalářská práce se pak zabývala tímto jevem konkrétně ve významném literárním díle z patnáctého století, Smrt Artuše, napsaném Sirem Thomasem Malorym. Hned na začátku práce se však objevila první překážka, a to autorova identita. Pro analýzu, jejímž záměrem je prokázat autorovu snahu o vyjádření jeho názorů politických a jiných, je nezbytné znát okolnosti, za kterých autor psal, a podmínky, v nichž žil. Avšak rozpolcenost názorů o autorství v literárněhistorických kruzích zapříčinila, že nejprve musela být vyhodnocena všechna dostupná data týkající se autorství a jedině na základě jejich analýzy bylo možné jednoznačně stanovit, kdo je oprávněným autorem. Identifikace autora byla dost obtížná, neboť informace byly čerpány převážně ze sekundárních zdrojů, které, se mnohdy až diametrálně lišily. Nicméně autor tohoto významného díla byl nakonec jednoznačně určen v osobě Thomase Maloryho z Newbold Revelu. Ve druhé části práce se autor zabývá knihou samotnou a analyzuje zde zdroje, které Malory pro sepsání své knihy použil. Dále se zde polemizuje nad možnými motivy autora, které ho vedly při kompletaci díla. Na tuto část pak přímo navazuje část třetí, kde je dílo důkladně rozebráno a rozděleno do segmentů odpovídajících jednotlivým částem knihy, je podrobena komparaci a konfrontaci s událostmi z Války Růží, respektive z doby jí předcházející. Výsledkem je zajímavá komparace zdánlivě nesouvisejících dějů, z níž je odvozen překvapivý závěr. Na základě tohoto závěru je pak v poslední části práce, kde jsou výsledky vyhodnoceny, prokázána hypotéza, která praví, že dílo Thomase Maloryho, Smrt Artuše, v sobě odráží historické události spojené s Válkou Růží.

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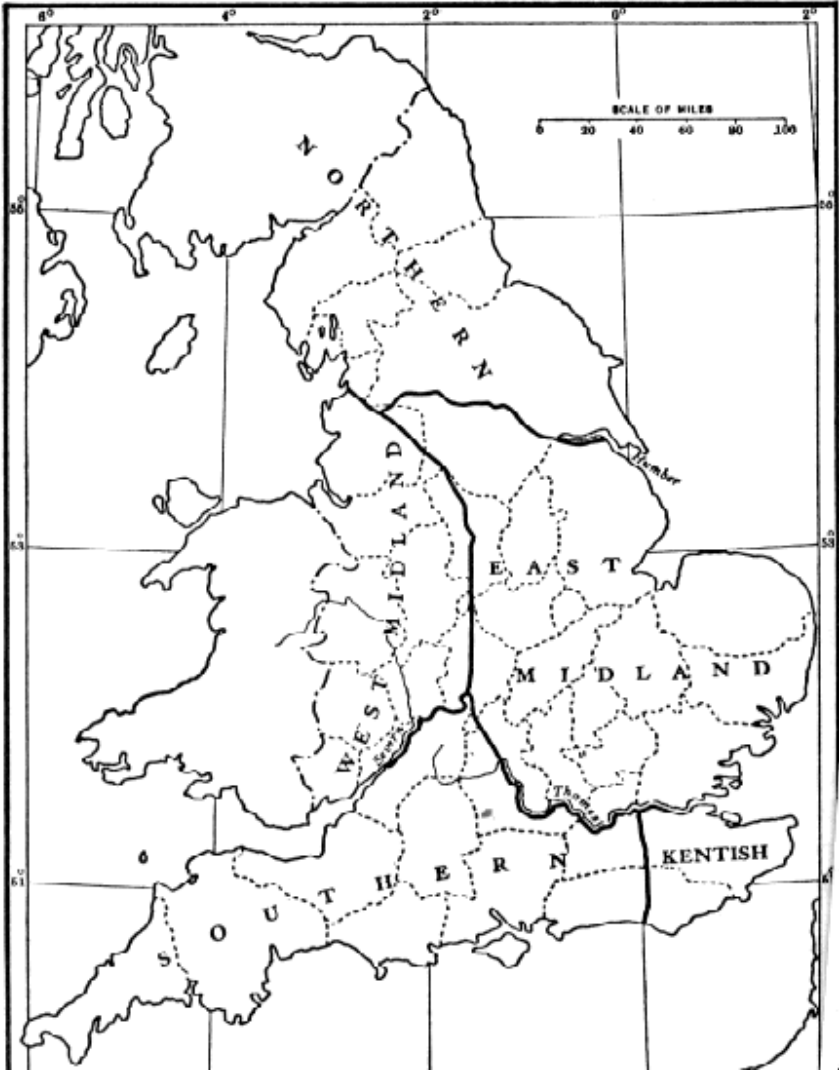
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Appendices

List of Appendices

1. Division of Middle English dialects, map (Benson, 2000)

Appendix No. 1:



ÚDAJE PRO KNIHOVNICKOU DATABÁZI

Název práce	Reflection of the Wars of the Roses in Thomas Malory`s Le Morte D`Arthur: Literary-cultural analysis. Odras Války Růží v díle Thomase Maloryho Le Morte D`Arthur: Literárně-kulturní analýza.
Autor práce	Tomáš Kocourek
Obor	Anglický jazyk pro hospodářskou praxi
Rok obhajoby	2008
Vedoucí práce	Mgr. Olga Roebuck, M.Litt.
Anotace	Záměrem této výzkumné práce bylo zanalyzovat Morte D`Arthur a najít určité historické momenty začleněné v tomto díle. Jelikož cíl práce vycházel z hypotézy, že Thomas Malory zobrazil v Morte D`Arthur různé události z Války Růží, bylo nezbytné porozumět autorově pozici v oné občanské válce, což znamenalo dopátrat se autorství.
Klíčová slova	Thomas Malory, King Arthur, Knights of the Round Table, Wars of the Roses, Henry VI, analysis, literature, history.