# *'Lyouns Full Lothely'* : Dream Interpretation and Boethian Denaturing in the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*

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# *'Lyouns Full Lothely'*: Dream Interpretation and Boethian Denaturing in the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*

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The Boethian use of animals to depict human degeneration through sin features in Arthur's two dreams. Arthur fails to interpret these dreams as signifying the loss of his true nature and of his kingdom. (BM)

As a poem describing the continental wars of a British king, the Alliterative *Morte Arthure* cannot fail to call to mind Edward III and his wars in France.[1] However, the usurpation of the king's throne which the *Morte Arthure* portrays reminds one not of Edward, but of Richard; by the same token, internal hints of Lancastrian bias suggest that the poet's Arthur represents not Richard, but Henry.[2] Given the obvious affinity of the poem's subject with events from the mid-fourteenth to early-fifteenth centuries, critics have rarely failed to note the possibility that the *Morte Arthure* may comment on contemporary events.[3] However, the ready identification of Arthur with Edward, Richard, *and* Henry highlights the extraordinary interpretive challenges in this poem. The *Morte Arthure* cannot easily be reduced to a simple political *roman à clef*. A literary critique of the poem is hardly less fraught. The greatest challenge may be the range of genre conventions on which the poem draws, and the baffling shifts in tone which it presents. Geraldine Heng comments that the *Morte Arthure* 'has confounded scholars by its insatiable absorption of whole genres themselves, its greedy consumption of taxonomies, topoi, and stances from multiple literary genres into the ever-enlarging menu of chivalric romance.'[4] My aim here is to explore principles of dream interpretation which the *Morte Arthure* shares with late medieval literary dream visions to reveal a thematic coherence in the animal imagery from Arthur's two prophetic dreams. Such interpretation suggests that Arthur's two prophetic dreams exploit a common scheme of animal imagery to present the king's degeneration to a bestial state. This imagery, I suggest, draws on the discussion of wickedness in Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*, one of the original models for the philosophical dream vision. In line with its commentary on contemporary political upheavals, the poem borrows Boethian imagery to comment on the spectacle of immoral kingship.

At the height of his power following the defeat of the Roman Emperor Lucius, and in the wake of a devastating campaign in northern Italy, Arthur has



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received word from Rome that he is to be crowned emperor by the Pope in a week's time (3176–85). Pleased with the imminent fulfilment of his imperial ambitions, Arthur retires *with a blythe herte* (3219) to his bed, where he has a disturbing dream. Upon awakening, Arthur gives an exact account of the dream to certain 'philosophers' he has in his company:

> Me thoughte I was in a wode, willed, myn one,
> That I ne wiste no waye whedire þat I scholde;
> Fore woluez and whilde swynne and wykkyde bestez
> Walkede in that wasternne, wathes to seche.
> Thare lyouns full lothely lykkyde þeire tuskes,
> All fore lapynge of blude of my lele knyghtez (3230–35)

Arthur continues with the narration of his dream, recounting that he proceeded to a *locus amoenus*, where he had a vision of the Nine Worthies, famous kings from Jewish, classical and medieval history. The kings were bound to Fortune's Wheel, and Arthur watched as the Worthies were raised to the heights of power, only to fall again to disgrace according to the wheel's rotating movement (3250–3337). Arthur was himself subsequently placed by Fortune on her wheel, raised, then crushed beneath its rotations.

This startling combining of the topos of the Nine Worthies with a Boethian vision of Fortune's Wheel is not a feature of the Arthurian narrative inherited from earlier treatments in Latin, French, or English. The weight which can be accorded the Dream of the Nine Worthies as an index to the poet's concerns encouraged Larry D. Benson to interpret the whole of the *Morte Arthure* as a medieval tragedy of Fortune.[5] The Middle Ages derived its notions of Fortune especially from Book 2 of the *Consolation of Philosophy*. Though she acknowledges the presence of Boethian thought in the poem, Mary Hamel draws on the appearance of the animals in Arthur's dream to reach a conclusion very different from Benson's. Hamel suggests that the Dream of the Nine Worthies is pointedly moral, that is, the vision conveys more than the periodic rise and fall of kings according to the inexorable turning of Fortune's Wheel.[6] Arthur's imminent fall from power will be the consequence of his sinful behavior. In support of her moral reading of the dream, Hamel argues that the beasts which Arthur sees are an allusion to the beasts which confront the Pilgrim Dante in the first Canto of the *Inferno*.[7] Dante encounters a leopard, a lion and a wolf, beasts expounded by Dante's early interpreters as representative of the sins of lust, pride, and avarice respectively.[8] Of these animals, the leopard is missing from Arthur's dream and is replaced by the *whilde swynne* 'boars' which, in medieval iconography, represent wrath.[9]

On first consideration, this moral understanding of Arthur's dream is in contrast to the somewhat more matter-of-fact interpretation which the poet has put into the mouths of the king's philosophers. According to the latter, the beasts which Arthur has seen represent a threat to his throne in Britain:

> Bot the wolfes in the wode   and the whilde bestes
> Are some wikkyd men   that werrayes thy rewmes,
> Es entirde in thyn absence   to werraye thy pople,
> And alyenys and ostes   of vncouthe landis (3446–49)

The audience is surely meant to understand that Arthur's nephew Mordred and his allies are the *wikkyd men* to whom reference is made. Hamel suggests, however, that on the level of moral interpretation which would agree with the analogy provided by the *Inferno*, the beasts of Arthur's dream may stand for either Mordred's sins, or, equally well, Arthur's own.[10] This interpretation, though not identical with the philosophers' initial dream exegesis, is nonetheless substantially in agreement with their own ensuing pious admonitions to Arthur:

> I rede thow rekkyn and reherse   vnresonable dedis,
> Ore the repenttes full rathe   all thi rewthe werkes;
> Mane, amende thy mode   or thow myshappen,
> And mekely aske mercy   for mede of thy saule! (3452–55)

The argument that Arthur's fall is due to his own moral failing looks back to and refines William Matthews's reading of the poem as a medieval tragedy, in which Arthur falls due to the sin of pride.[11] The view of the poem as a tragedy of a sinful king has been hotly contested.[12] But whether Arthur sins or not, the motif of Fortune's Wheel in the Dream of the Nine Worthies signals the presence of Boethian thought in the poem. However, the inconstancy of Fortune is only one feature of Philosophy's instruction in the *Consolation of Philosophy*, one by which she prepares Boethius for the more substantial lessons which commence in the succeeding books. In Book 4 Philosophy presents a theory of sin and punishment which has nothing to do with Fortune; this instruction, moreover, represents human sin with resort to animal imagery. Addressing the dilemma of why evil men appear to prosper, Philosophy vigorously denies the wicked any true power to effect their own good, nor even to exist as men:

> Hoc igitur modo quicquid a bono deficit, esse desistit. Quo fit ut mali desinant esse quod fuerant. Sed fuisse homines adhuc ipsa humani corporis reliqua species ostentat: quare versi in malitiam, humanam quoque amisere naturam. Sed cum ultra homines quemque provehere sola probitas possit, necesse est ut quos ab humana condicione deiecit infra homines merito detrudat improbitas; evenit igitur ut quem transformatum vitiis videas hominem aestimare non possis. Avaritia fervet alienarum opum violentus ereptor: lupi similem dixeris. Ferox atque inquies linguam litigiis exercet: cani comparabis. Insidiator occultus surripuisse fraudibus gaudet: vulpeculis exaequetur. Irae intemperans fremit: leonis animum gestare credatur
>
> [In this manner, then, whatever falls from goodness, ceases to exist. This means that the wicked cease to be what they were. However, the very form of

the human body which remains shows that they were men up to that point: by turning to wickedness, they have lost their human nature. But since only goodness can raise anyone above mankind, wickedness, of necessity, deservedly thrusts beneath mankind those whom it has cast down from the state of being men. It follows that you cannot judge him to be a man whom you see transformed by vices. The violent plunderer seethes with avarice for another's wealth: you would say he was like a wolf. The wild and restless man wears out his tongue in disputes: you will compare him to a dog. The man who lies in secret ambush rejoices in his false thefts: let him be on par with little foxes. He who cannot control his anger roars: let him be thought to bear the soul of a lion]. (*Consolation*, 4.3.15–18 [47–61])[13]

Boethius here draws on a philosophical argument concerning the self-punishment of the wicked that goes back at least as far as Plato's *Gorgias*.[14] That being the case, the transformation of man into beast pictured is somewhat more substantial than a mere metaphor. It is the nature of all beings to seek the good, and because the wicked do not know how to seek the good, but, in their ignorance, indulge in sin, they cease to be human:

Ita fit ut qui probitate deserta homo esse desierit, cum in divinam condicionem transire non possit, vertatur in beluam

[Thus it happens that the man who has abandoned goodness and has ceased to be a man, since he cannot pass over to the divine state, is turned into a beast]. (*Consolation*, 4.3.21 [67–69])

## *Vertatur in Beluam*:

### BEAST IMAGERY AND THE UNDERMINING OF THE BEAST OTHER

If Hamel's analysis of the beasts in Arthur's dream is accepted, we might expect sin, and not merely fortune, to be among the poet's interests. However, in spite of Matthews's thesis that Arthur's fall was conditioned by moral failing, the poem is notable for its lack of any overt condemnation of Arthur's martial excesses. The critical reaction to Matthews's argument draws strength from precisely the fact that the tone of the poem would appear to be, not ambivalence as to Arthur's martial ambitions, but enthusiasm for his model behavior in war.[15] This is not to claim, however, that a critical judgement of Arthur cannot be present at a subtle level. Lesley Johnson, for example, has explored how a belief in Arthur's rectitude in war must be balanced against the essential incompatibility of his martial venture with his repeated efforts to picture his campaign as an act of pilgrimage.[16] I suggest that a preoccupation with the morality of Arthur's imperial ambition is, similarly, woven into the patterns of ambiguous beast imagery in the poem. Arthur repeatedly encounters images of animals which, according to iconographic equivalences

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with his own forces, can be interpreted as bestial reflections of himself. In consequence of the nexus of Boethian themes in the poem, the images of beasts which the Britons encounter retain their Boethian connotation with human sin. This recurring pattern of imagery functions as a figurative *leitmotif* expressive of Arthur's deep moral failings.

The poet introduces beast imagery first in the dream which Arthur has on his crossing to France, at the very commencement of his campaign on the Continent:

> And with þe swoghe of þe see   in swefnynge he fell.
> Hym dremyd of a dragon   dredfull to beholde,
> Come dryfande ouer þe depe   to drenschen hys pople,
> Ewen walkande [one wynge]   owte of the weste landez,
> Wanderande vnworthyly   ouere the wale ythez (759–63)

The terror inherent already in this vision of the dragon is heightened by the appearance of a great bear, the affective impact of whose terrible appearance on Arthur is well conveyed by the poet:

> Thane come of þe oryente   ewyn hym agaynez
> A blake bustous bere   abwen in the clowdes,
> With eueryche a pawe as a poste   and paumes full huge,
> With pykes full perilous,   all plyande þam semyde;
> Lothen and lothely   lokkes and oþer,
> All with lutterde legges,   lokerde vnfaire,
> Filtyrde vnfrely,   wyth fomaunde lyppez,
> The foulleste of fegure   that fourmede was euer (774–81)

Arthur watches as the dragon and the bear tear into one another in their aerial combat, out of which the dragon emerges the victor. This Dream of the Dragon and the Bear has received less attention from critics than the Dream of the Nine Worthies, perhaps, in part, because it is an element of the Arthurian narrative inherited from Geoffrey's *Historia Regum Britanniae*. As in the later case of the Nine Worthies, the Dream of the Dragon and the Bear receives a ready interpretation within the poem itself, when its meaning is explicated to Arthur by his 'philosophers.' These explain that the dragon represents Arthur himself, and that the bear represents an enemy whom he will overcome, either the Emperor Lucius, or some monster he will meet on the Continent (814–31). The philosophers may not, however, have the last word on the interpretation of the dream. Karl Heinz Göller suggests that the poet plays with the etymology of Arthur's name to have Arthur represented by both the dragon and the bear. The spelling *Arthur* demonstrates the possible derivation of the name's first component from Welsh *arth* 'bear.'[17] I am not entirely confident that this etymology was 'common knowledge' as Göller suggests, but it does find its way into a twelfth-century northern English copy of the *Historia Brittonum*.[18] There is also the fact that Arthur's

name occurred in the variant spelling *Arcturus* as early as Geoffrey's *Vita Merlini*.[19] This spelling clearly associates the king with the constellation Arctus 'the Bear,' and, even more convincingly, with the star Arcturus 'Bear-Ward' associated with Arctus in the northern sky.[20] In any case, of the two fighting animals, the bear is the more 'beastly,' and Göller suggests that it represents Arthur's 'dark side.'[21] Göller's interpretation invites the modern reader, who feels at home with the notion of an unconscious, to see in the Dream of the Dragon and the Bear the surfacing of a battle between two aspects of Arthur's personality, a conflict within himself. The dragon might be the 'noble' side of his character, the bear, perhaps, the 'bestial.'

Given the appeal of Göller's identification of an ambiguity in Arthur's dream, it is good to remember that medieval psychology did not possess a notion of an unconscious. Moreover, dreams portending a future event did not emerge from the subject's psyche, but were given to the dreamer by God.[22] If Arthur's philosophers represent the voice of dream interpretation contemporary with the poet, we could concede that their unravelling of the symbolism of Arthur's dream is, effectively, a gloss for the modern reader as to how medieval dream theory would interpret the Dream of the Dragon and the Bear specifically. One has a suspicion, however, that the poet's ostensible provision of a gloss for his own striking imagery is not entirely genuine. While revelatory dreams are central to the unfolding of the poem, the *Morte Arthure* is not a medieval dream-book.[23] Here, it seems more likely that the poet draws on the conventions of medieval dream interpretation to comment ironically on the ability of the protagonists—the philosophers and Arthur both—to interpret, or here more precisely misinterpret, the information of their senses. The philosophers' sincerity aside, it remains possible that the poet's Bear is, indeed, Arthur.

Right through to the Dream of the Nine Worthies in the second half of the poem, the poet continues to draw on the beast imagery established earlier in the Dream of the Dragon and the Bear. The beasts of Arthur's dreaming, however, subsequently inhabit the real world of the young emperor's ambitious advance across the lands of Christendom on his 'pilgrimage' to Rome. Arthur's battle against the Giant of Mont St. Michel (840–1191) is an example of this continuing scheme of beast imagery. Like the Dream of the Giant and the Bear, the adventure against the Giant is inherited from Geoffrey, and, likewise, has been greatly expanded. Göller is undoubtedly correct in interpreting the Giant in this expanded version as a feudal parody of Arthur himself.[24] The giant is the feudal lord *of fyftene rewmez* (1005), much like Arthur who has liegemen *of fyftene rewmez* (837). Like Arthur, the Giant enjoys eating with an exaggerated sense of conspicuous consumption, and the poet pauses over the giant's feast of human flesh with as much care as he shows Arthur's feasting. Göller notes additionally how the Giant is an

amalgam of the characteristics of numerous animals (including a bear), whose grotesqueness recalls the horrid picture of the bear from Arthur's dream:[25]

> His frount and his forheuede all was it ouer
> As þe fell of a froske, and fraknede it semede;
> Huke-nebbyde as a hawke, and a hore berde,
> And herede to þe hole eyghn, with hyngande browes.
> Harske as a hunde-fisch, hardly who so lukez,
> So was þe hyde of þat hulke hally al ouer.
> Erne had he full huge and vgly to schewe,
> With eghne full horreble and ardaunt, for sothe;
> Flatt-mowthede as a fluke, with fleryande lyppys,
> And þe flesche in his fortethe fowly as a bere (1080–89)

Göller argues that Arthur's attack on the Giant recalls in its details the manner in which the dragon attacked the bear, and that the poet deliberately accentuates how this episode responds to the prophecy of Arthur's dream. It follows that the combat with the Giant represents an elaboration of the motif witnessed already in that dream. That is to say, Arthur's battle is with bestial aspects of himself.

Matthews suggests that the characterization of the Giant of Mont St. Michel, a composition of various animal parts, owes to the description of monsters and strange animals which were a favourite element of the popular Alexander narrative of the Middle Ages.[26] This '*Wonders of the East*' component of the Alexander story had been established in England at least as far back as the eleventh century, when the *Wonders* and the *Letter of Alexander to Aristotle* were translated into Old English.[27] Giants do not belong exclusively to Alexander lore, yet elements of Alexander tradition abound in the poem.[28] More than a matter of simple source analysis, an allusion to Alexander at this moment throws light on the poem's unfolding patterns of beast imagery. If Arthur's fight with the Giant includes allusions to the *Wonders* narrative, the scene furthers the parallel between Arthur and Alexander, and thereby evokes Arthur's more sublime imperial designs in imitation of that greatest of emperors. However, as the episode plays out, the ennobling parallel with Alexander drawn by the beast imagery is undermined by the affective force inherent in the imagery itself. To be exact, the grotesqueness of the Giant and his rape and murder of the Duchess of Brittany disturb any romance vein which the adventure might have possessed. The rape of the Duchess is noticeably more violent in the *Morte Arthure* than in the sources.[29] Likewise, any positive light which the episode might have thrown on the king is muted by the comic turn of the battle itself. The detailed account of Arthur rolling on the ground in the hairy Giant's embrace succeeds in lending Arthur somewhat less than an emperor's dignity. The effect is undermined especially by the poet's lingering on the Giant's sexual appetite, the numerous references to

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penetration throughout the fight, and Arthur's action of slicing the Giant's genitals into two halves. In the end, Arthur does not even bother to kill the Giant himself, but leaves the task to his knights.

Behind this gruesome and simultaneously comic episode lies the near certainty that the Giant is a parody of Arthur himself. Thus, the initial move to give this incident a heightened exoticism in the fashion of the *Wonders of the East* is powerfully undermined by the identification of the Giant with the protagonist. The expectation of an Alexander adventure is frustrated by the frankly non-exotic adventure of Arthur fighting a parodic reflection of himself. The parallel to the functioning of beast imagery in the Dream of the Dragon and the Bear is clear. Moreover, the prophecy inherent in the dream has come true in its first manifestation. Arthur has engaged in the first contest of his imperial campaign and has unwittingly enjoined a symbolic battle with himself.

Beast imagery occurs also in another of the poem's notable allusions to Alexander romance, that is in the composition of the army of the Roman Emperor Lucius. On the most basic level, Lucius's army is lent an exotic character by the vast geographic range on which it has drawn for its soldiers. This emperor has assembled his army with appeals sent to India, Armenia, Turkey, Arabia, Syria, and Persia among others, who fight alongside pagan Prussians and Genoese *engenderide with fendez* (2111). This army resembles the Persian army of King Darius, Alexander's nemesis, which, similar to Lucius's army, is culled from the four corners of the vast Persian Empire.[30] Yet the exotic feature of Lucius's forces most germane to the present argument is the remarkable prominence of eastern animals, which move with his forces and lend his army a distinctive character. The army includes camels, elephants, dromedaries and all the beasts which would recall Darius's Persian host:

> Thay kaire to þe karyage    and tuke whate them likes—
> Kamells and cokadrisses    and cofirs full riche,
> Hekes and hakkenays    and horses of armes,
> Howsynge and herbergage    of heythen kyngez;
> They drewe owt dromondaries    of dyuerse lordes,
> Moyllez mylke-whitte    and meruayllous bestez,
> Elfaydes and arrabys    and olyfauntez noble
> Þat are of þe Oryent,    with honourable kynges (2282–89)[31]

The elephants in this army are especially reminiscent of the host which Alexander faces in the decisive battle of his push into the East, in his engagement with the Indian prince Porus. The Alexander provenance for this material in the *Morte Arthure* is unmistakable in the comic scene where Arthur has Lucius's lifeless body placed on an elephant and sent back to Rome as tribute (2338–39). Arthur's choice of this animal of all others is a not-too-subtle comment on his own opinion of his exotic enemy. The

elephant, in Alexander romance a symbol of the might and dignity of the eastern empires, becomes for Arthur a conveyance for his scorn of his enemy's eastern opulence.

Through these various means, the poet emphasizes the exotic, or simply eastern character of Lucius's forces. One could argue that this exoticization may be intended to blur the obvious fact that Arthur's campaign is an imperialistic advance on Rome, the principal city of western Christendom. On the other hand, the exoticization of Lucius's army is a patent device to bring Arthur into comparison with Alexander. Yet at the same time that this exoticization is pursued, the poet undermines the otherness of Lucius's army by means of a further exploitation of beast imagery, namely the familiar presence of animals on battle standards and heraldic devices. The most remarkable of these is Lucius's imperial standard. This standard is first mentioned as Arthur's men report to the king the news of Rome's invasion of France:

> He drawes in to douce Fraunce, as Duchemen tellez,
> Dresside with his dragouns, dredfull to schewe (1251–52)

Lucius's standard is mentioned again as he readies his troops before the battle of Sessye:

> Dresses vp dredfully the dragone of golde,
> With egles al ouer enamelede of sable (2026–27)

The fact that Arthur's enemy Lucius bears a dragon standard needs close examination. In the literary tradition on which the *Morte Arthure* drew, the dragon had long been associated with Arthur. Of special note is the dragon star which was a prophetic token of the ascendancy of Uther Pendragon in Geoffrey's *Historia*. Geoffrey's Arthur unambiguously bears the mythological animal as his standard: 'ipse quoque rex…aureum draconum infixit quem pro vexillo habebat'.[32] The dragon emblem had been adopted, moreover, by English kings in evocation of Arthur from Richard I and as late as Edward III.[33] We would expect a natural metonymic equation of Arthur and the dragon in consequence of its traditional literary use as Arthur's standard. The literary record, however, proves at this point to be unexpectedly complicated. Mary Hamel argues convincingly that the poet of the *Morte Arthure* in fact borrowed the dragon standard from the description of the Emperor Nero's standard, borne by Vespasian, from *The Siege of Jerusalem*:

> Lauȝte leue at þat lord, leften his sygne,
> A grete dragoun of gold, and alle þe [g]yng [after][34]

Hamel argues that Vespasian's standard itself derives ultimately from the French *Florence de Rome*, where 'Oton,' the Emperor of Rome, carries just such a device. The historical Holy Roman Emperor Otto IV in fact did carry

a dragon standard in 1214, but, confusingly, this was in imitation of his uncle Richard I of England.

The historical uses of the dragon standard aside, Hamel would see the Emperor's dragon as derived from *Florence de Rome* and *The Siege of Jerusalem* especially. However, Hamel's explanation for the resultant multiple levels of meaning in this dragon is not wholly convincing. She suggests that the Emperor's standard belongs to a late stratum of composition, which she would attribute to the changing popular connotations of the dragon following the rebellion led by the Welsh prince Owain Glyn Dŵr. The Welshman had placed the dragon on his standard at the siege of Caernarfon in 1401.[35] This explanation requires that we accept that the poet revised the poem very soon after Glyn Dŵr's siege of the city. The matter is further complicated, however, by the clear avoidance of a one-to-one correspondence with any one historical or literary use of the dragon device in the poem itself. For example, the dragon is encountered again on the shield of the Viscount of Rome:

> He drissede in a derfe schelde    endenttyd with sable,
> With a dragon engowllede    dredfull to schewe,
> Deuorande a dolphyn    with dolefull lates (2052–54)

In Hamel's view, the Viscount's shield too, on which a dragon swallows a dolphin, draws on the *Siege's* dragon, whose golden mouth rests agape in order to swallow men:

> A dragoun was dressed,    drawyn a lofte,
> Wyde gapande, of gold,    gomes to swelwe[36]

One can add that the Viscount's shield may also be deliberately evocative of the arms of the notorious Giangaleazzo Visconti, the Sire of Milan (d. 1402), whose arms depict a serpent devouring a man.[37] Hamel suggests that the contemporary adoption of the dragon standard by both Visconti and Glyn Dŵr, two rulers inimical to contemporary English interests, could account for the devaluation of the symbol.

As it happens, the dragon arms borne by the Viscount of Rome afford another instance of a protagonist confronting a reflection of himself. In the earlier 'avowing scene,' Valyant, the king of Wales, has identified the Viscount as his special enemy in consequence of his having imprisoned some Welsh pilgrims, Valyant's own men, at Viterbo on their way to Rome (320–29; see also 2044–65). In view of Hamel's suggestion that the shifting of the dragon symbol from Arthur to his enemy dates to Glyn Dŵr's rebellion, it is interesting that it is the anachronistic Welsh king Valyant who faces the Viscount and his dragon arms in battle. If there is any plausibility to the hypothesis of a topical revision in the wake of the Welsh rebellion, it is significant that the dragon symbol is here pitted against the poem's only unambiguously Welsh protagonist. Even if the historical Glyn Dŵr is

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removed from consideration altogether, the historical identity of the Britons with the contemporary Welsh was hardly forgotten at the turn of the fifteenth century. Although the Viscount, of course, is not British, the traditional British dragon he bears on his shield makes him the martial, bestial reflection of the Welsh king Valyant whom he faces in battle. Not wanting the irony to be missed, this boldly alliterating poet has even given the Viscount the epithet 'valiante' (2050).

Although ingenious, the theory of late revision alone cannot account for so profound a change as the transference to Arthur's enemies of a symbol undeniably associated with Arthur in tradition. Hamel admits that this incomplete revision has left a 'certain ambiguity,' but this understates the case.[38] Following the Dream of the Dragon and the Bear, the dragon is a functioning symbol in the poem. Rather than see the ambiguity as merely a consequence of topical revision, the transference of the dragon to Lucius and the Viscount should be considered also in the context of the ambiguous beast imagery that has been considered already above. Among Lucius's exotic eastern army of elephants and dromedaries which Arthur's army encounters, the British king faces, most devastatingly, the dragon. Yet this dragon is not exotic in any sense, but is unquestionably a device of Arthur's own army. The dragon of Arthur's dream has already been explained, moreover, by Arthur's philosophers to represent Arthur himself. Through this employment of the dragon, the Alexander-derived exoticism of the Roman army is deliberately ironized. The irony may be intended to underline the fact that the chief city of western Christendom is not, in fact, a fitting target for an imperial conquest, nor Arthur's opposite in Rome an enemy in any unambiguous sense. The initial exoticization of Lucius's army certainly represents the point of view of the Britons and Arthur himself, who patently views his campaign as following in the tradition of Alexander's conquests in the East. The recognition that Arthur and his Britons have misinterpreted the nature of their campaign is well within the capacity of the audience, provided they are able to grasp the import of the beast imagery correctly.

This discussion began with a consideration of whether the *lyouns full lothely* which Arthur sees in his Dream of the Nine Worthies represent himself, or, perhaps, his sins. The identity of Arthur with the lions is inescapable when we consider that the image is picked up again later, as Arthur mourns disconsolately over Gawain's lifeless body. The Dream's *lyouns*, which 'lick their fangs' with the blood of Arthur's men, can be compared with the description of Arthur himself stretched over Gawain's corpse:

> Than swetes the swete kynge  and in swoun fallis,
> Swafres vp swiftely,  and swetly hym kysses
> Till his burliche berde  was blody berown,
> Alls he had bestes birtenede  and broghte owt of life (3969–72)

Hamel comments that 'one realizes suddenly that these dream-lions must in some way be identified with Arthur himself.'[39] One can agree unreservedly with Hamel's observation, as the poet has taken pains to ensure that the point is not likely to be missed. Arthur's men, scandalized at the sight of Arthur's bloodied face, admonish Arthur for his debasement of himself: '"Blyne" sais thies bolde men, "thow blodies þi selfen!"' (3975). Any possibility that an audience would fail to note the extraordinary transformation in Arthur is precluded with a third reference to blood, in this case, put into Arthur's own mouth: '"For blode," said the bolde kynge, "blinn sall I neuer"' (3981–82).

Given the ubiquity of lions in the poetic imagination of medieval Europe, the identification of Arthur with a lion in this episode may imply a complexity that obviates any simple interpretation. For example, the association of the lion with pride in medieval iconography, noted by Hamel in reference to Arthur's dream, can be balanced with the signification which could be cited from the commentary on the *Aeneid* attributed to Bernardus Silvestris, where it says that the lion represents the sin of cruelty.[40] This commentary itself demonstrably drew on Boethius's own argument that sin turns men into animals. Yet the poet's fixation on Arthur's bloodied face may, for its own part, recall another occurrence of the lion in Boethius's poetic imagery. In this case, the lion is used to portray, not the effects of sin on man, but the inevitable return of all beings to their innate nature:

> Quamvis Poeni pulchra leones
> vincula gestent manibusque datas
> captent escas metuantque trucem
> soliti verbera ferre magistrum,
> *si cruor horrida tinxerit ora,*
> resides olim redeunt animi
> fremituque gravi meminere sui,
> laxant nodis colla solutis
> primusque lacer dente cruento
> domitor rabidas imbuit iras
>
> [Although Carthaginian lions bear chains and receive food from human hands, and, accustomed to beatings, fear their cruel masters, *if blood should once touch their bristling mouths*, their long-inactive courage returns, and with a heavy roar they remember themselves; they shake their necks free from their bonds, and their trainer is the first to quench their rabid fury, torn by their bloodied teeth]. (*Consolation*, 3. m2; italics are mine)

The emphasis on the lion's bloodied mouth (*ora*) in this metrum points to Arthur's own bloodied mouth and beard and suggests that the poet has, again, recalled Boethius's animal imagery.[41] Otherwise, a recollection of

Boethius in this episode can only be inferred from the analogous interest in Boethian Fortune in the Dream of the Nine Worthies. Boethius's concern for human sin, however, is reintroduced in this episode by Arthur himself, who sees himself as guilty for Gawain's death: '"He es sakles, supprysede for syn of myn one"' (3986).

Sin is not, however, Boethius's own concern in his simile of the lion in this metrum. On the contrary, Boethius considers here not the denaturing effects of sin, but the indestructibility of a being's nature. The metrum is drawn from an exposition of the Platonic notion of knowledge as reminiscence. Boethius demonstrates that the desire for the true good is inborn in men's minds, but that their clouded minds stray from their innate disposition to seek this good. However, it is the disposition of nature that all things return to their original state. Men, therefore, return to their innate understanding of what is their own good.[42] A reader struggling to assimilate the whole of Boethius's argument in the *Consolation* may, at this point, become confused. Having drawn on a simile of a lion to demonstrate how all beings return to their innate nature, Boethius uses beast imagery later in Book 4, including the example of the lion, to demonstrate how sin causes a man precisely to lose his nature. To recall the passage: *versi in malitiam, humanam quoque amisere naturam* [by turning to wickedness, they have lost their human nature] (4.3.15).

Given the astonishing range of genre conventions on which the *Morte Arthure* draws, it is a safe inference that the poet, if interested in the philosophic resonances to be attained from allusions to the *Consolation*, felt no need to represent Boethius's system with absolute coherence. Boethius's lion-simile is entirely positive, as the lion's savage nature is its true nature. However, one has little expectation that the Arthur transformed into a lion over Gawain's corpse has turned to his true self. If there is any coherence to the poet's imagery at this moment, it draws not on the theme of the return to nature, but on Boethius's employment of beast imagery to portray a man's loss of humanity through sin, that is, the motif of *vertatur in beluam* [he is turned into a beast].

## DREAM INTERPRETATION AND FAILED COGNITION

The motif of *vertatur in beluam* has been located especially in Arthur's encounters with fierce beasts in his dreams, which have been inadequately interpreted for him by his 'philosophers.' That being the case, it pays to consider medieval dream interpretation in its own right. As Arthur's dreams are literary entities, I consider the tradition of dream interpretation in the medieval philosophical dream vision especially. The dream vision was widely used in Medieval England, and one would need resort to special pleading to suggest that the conventions of the genre would not have been familiar

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to the poet who wrote the *Morte Arthure*, nor the psychology of dreaming which the visions embodied. According to Kathryn L. Lynch's analysis of the philosophical dream visions of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the poets modeled the journeys of their dreamers on what contemporary psychology imagined was the epistemological journey of the human mind to knowledge.[43] In Lynch's view, the inspiration for the form of the medieval philosophical dream vision was Boethius's *Consolation* itself. The epistemology, however, went back as far as Aristotle and Galen, and 'conceived of knowing as a procession of steps, each performed by a different faculty, each with its specific object of analysis.'[44] It was believed that the forms of God's creation could be these objects of analysis, and that if these objects were grasped in the proper order by the proper faculty, the subject could attain to knowledge of God through cognition itself. Most medieval versions of this theory took imagination, reason, and memory into consideration as the operative faculties—the actual systems worked out by medieval psychologists, however, are not immediately relevant. Crucial to my present discussion is the insight that the dream vision was conceived to reproduce just this cognitive 'procession of steps.' A dream guide or physician presents the dreamer with an ordered series of forms of God's creation to lead the dreamer to knowledge. This series is generally presented poetically as a landscape of allegory, and the dreamer is conceived as a pilgrim traveling through this land on a journey to God's truth.

The connection to be made between the *Morte Arthure* and the dream vision rests, most importantly, on the features which the latter shares with Arthur's two prophetic dreams, as recounted by himself to his philosophers. In the theory of dreams exploited in the dream vision, knowledge of God's truth cannot be grasped through simple attendance to what the dreamer sees. On the contrary, it is characteristic of the vision that the dreamer is at first presented with sensory data he is not able to understand, a 'luxuriance of images' in Lynch's phrase; Paul Piehler, drawing on modern psychology, has called these 'seminal images.'[45] Lynch explains the significance of such images in the dream vision: 'Their meaning will be clarified and explicated as the doctrine offered in the course of the poem gradually gives the dreamer the required knowledge, or more exactly, as it stimulates the growth of knowledge from the seeds of awareness represented by the images themselves.'[46] It is clear that the content of Arthur's two dreams, though presented as belonging to the non-literary dream of the real world, conform to the convention of a 'luxuriance of images' and correspond to the 'seminal images' of the dream vision proper. Not being able to interpret the images he has dreamed, in both cases Arthur seeks the guidance of his philosophers. In the first instance, however, the philosophers do not offer a full explanation, as they fail to see that the fight of the Dragon and the Bear portends Arthur's own self-

destruction. In the second case, the philosophers tell Arthur that the wild beasts of his dream represent 'some wikkyd men that werrayes thy rewmes' (3447). This interpretation again misses the fact that, to one familiar with Boethian/Dantean imagery and its interpreters, the beasts also represent Arthur himself and his sins.

In the dream vision, the dreamer conventionally has a guide or physician to lead him through his visions progressively towards truth. In the *Morte Arthure,* Arthur is without a competent dream guide and fails to grasp the meaning of his dreams on the two occasions they are given him. Although the *Morte Arthure* is not a dream vision, but, on the contrary, a chronicle poem which purports to recount historical events, Arthur's two dreams bookend those events, framing nearly the whole of Arthur's campaign with a series of 'seminal images.' The progression through a dreamscape is reproduced, not in the convention of an unfolding vision, but in the pattern of beast imagery which runs through the poem. For the whole of the campaign, Arthur and his army run riot through a narrative landscape which is described in the language of the bestial 'seminal images' which also populate Arthur's dreams. The Dream of the Dragon and the Bear establishes the theme whereby the subject, in imagistic terms, confronts a bestial reflection of himself; the beginning of the Dream of the Nine Worthies from the second half of the poem re-establishes the theme, in case it has been forgotten along the way.

The theme needed to be re-established, moreover, as it has clearly escaped Arthur's own attention. The succession of beast images which Arthur encounters has not, in the fashion of a dream vision, led to the cognition of a truth, to whit, that sin is transforming him into a beast. On the contrary, from the point of view of the Britons, the poem is, ironically, an orderly succession of failed cognitions, or, rather, failed recognitions. The Britons do not fail to miss an opportunity to recognize themselves in the countenances of the beastly Other they encounter. The failed recognition of the self is ingeniously demonstrated in the episode with which Arthur's imperialistic march across Europe is finally ended in his meeting with the British pilgrim Craddok. Having received word from the Pope of his imminent anointment as Emperor, and after his Dream of the Nine Worthies, Arthur clothes himself in fine robes and goes out to walk alone in the meadows to gather his thoughts. Here he meets Craddok, one of his own knights, who does not recognize him as his own 'souerayne lorde' (3499) whom he knows to be in the region. Instead, Craddok scorns Arthur's rich appearance, which is so much in contrast to his own simple pilgrim's dress (3492–93).

Matthews argues that this encounter owes to the example of a similar moment from the *Voeux du Paon*, in which Alexander, arrayed in full battle dress, walks in the forest and meets the old man Cassamus, who is dressed in solemn black.[47] Alexander addresses Cassamus in Persian, and, accordingly,

is not immediately recognized. The man attacks Alexander with angry words when he learns his identity, but the two reconcile as Alexander promises to help the man in his fight against Clarus of India. I agree with Matthews that this episode is the ultimate origin of Arthur's meeting with Craddok, but the English poet's peculiar transformation of the scene expresses his own concerns. First, Arthur does not dress for battle as Matthews implies, but his dress is frankly ostentatious and effeminate, clearly intended to befit his new status as Roman Emperor-in-waiting:

> And one he henttis a hode   of scharlette full riche,
> A panyd pillion-hatt,   þat pighte was full faire
> With perry of þe Oryent   and precyous stones (3459–61)

The oriental opulence of Arthur's dress is no accident: it marks his further identification with his own putative enemy. In a further recollection of the *Voeux*, Arthur addresses Craddok in the local language, here the 'langage of Rome / (Of Latin corroumppede all),' 3477–78,by which is meant, presumably, Italian.[48] There is an irony in Arthur's use of a, to him, non-native tongue which is absent from the source in the *Voeux du Paon*. Craddok is British, as Arthur only belatedly observes: 'for þou arte Bretowne bierne, / as by thy brode speche' (3508). There is a suggestion here that Craddok's own response to Arthur's Italian greeting may be made in English, or, not impossibly, Welsh.[49] The irony in this exchange is unmistakable. Arthur's initial failure to recognize a countryman is so complete that he even makes a mild threat of extortion to the pilgrim (3481–86). Craddok, for his part, is no more able to recognize the opulent eastern sovereign before him than Arthur has been able to recognize himself throughout his campaign. Like so many encounters in the poem, the meeting of Craddok and Arthur represents a meeting of false adversaries who, beneath an illusory otherness, are ironic reflections of one another.

The religious element introduced into this exchange by the pilgrim Craddok again raises the question whether the poem comments negatively on the sins of the king. Beast imagery and its implicit moral commentary are absent in this episode. However, by coincidence or design, the episode recalls Boethius's very discussion of the denaturing effects of sin on a man, in which he had so memorably demonstrated the transformation of sinful men into beasts.[50] In the introduction to this discussion, Boethius claims:

> est enim, quod ordinem retinet servatque naturam; quod vero ab hac deficit, esse etiam, quod in sua natura situm est, derelinquit
>
> [that which keeps its order and preserves its nature, exists; whatever falls from this, ceases even to be, since it is in its own nature that existence is made possible]. (*Consolation*, 4. 2.36 [110–12])[51]

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In demonstration of this principle, Boethius recasts the argument into poetic terms in the metrum which immediately follows. As an example of the man who has lost his nature in consequence of sin, Boethius depicts the king who has become a tyrant:

> Quos vides sedere celsos solii culmine reges,
> purpura claros nitente, saeptos tristibus armis,
> ore torvo comminantes, rabie cordis anhelos,
> detrahat si quis superbis vani tegmina cultus,
> iam videbit intus artas dominos ferre catenas;
> hinc enim libido versat avidis corda venenis,
> hinc flagellat ira mentem fluctus turbida tollens,
> maeror aut captos fatigat aut spes lubrica torquet
>
> [Those lofty kings you see seated on high thrones,
> brilliant in shining purple and enclosed with solemn arms,
> threatening with savage mouth, gasping in the frenzy of their hearts,
> if someone should strip from them in their pride their vain, splendid garments, he will see that these lords wear tight chains within;
> for there, lust stirs [a king's] heart with greedy poisons,
> there wrath whips his mind, as violently casting up waves,
> and either grief holds them captive and exhausted, or inconstant expectation torments them]. (*Consolation*, 4. m2)

There are several points in which this portrait of a tyrant would appear, eerily, to anticipate the portrait of Arthur in the *Morte Arthure*. These tyrants 'brilliant in shining purple' and 'vain, splendid garments' cannot help but recall the Arthur so decked out in finery that he is unrecognized by Craddok. Kings 'threatening with savage mouth, gasping in the frenzy of their hearts,' likewise recall Arthur, his face bloodied, raging over Gawain's corpse. In like fashion, the 'inconstant expectation' which 'torments' the deformed king recalls Arthur's own vision of himself poised atop, then crushed beneath Fortune's Wheel; in anticipation of this Wheel, 'torquet,' which I translate figuratively as 'torments,' means 'twists' in its primary meaning, and may here also be read in its common extended meaning, 'turns.' Perhaps the most interesting feature of this metrum is the conclusion, where Boethius illustrates the consequence of the metaphysical condition that a man denatured by sin no longer 'exists.' The practical consequence for a king so denatured is that he is ineffectual:

> Ergo cum caput tot unum cernas ferre tyrannos,
> non facit quod optat ipse, dominis pressus iniquis
>
> [Therefore, since, as you see, one head is beset by so many tyrants [i.e. sins], the king pressed by so many severe masters does not do what he himself desires].

REX QUONDAM

One can ponder whether the denatured King Arthur who has striven so hard to be an Alexander, and who waits to be crowned Emperor in Rome, is still Arthur. What is certain is that he is no longer King. Craddok has brought him the news from Britain of Mordred's usurpation of the throne (3523–56). Craddok's subsequent relation of Mordred's entry into Arthur's conjugal bed and his begetting on Guinevere of the children which Arthur himself was never able to father, calls into question, somewhat more delicately, whether Arthur is still a man.[52] With the existence of Arthur's kingship and, arguably, manhood put in doubt with this crisis, the poet returns to the last significant piece of animal imagery in the poem. Mordred has given up his arms which depict the saltire of St Andrew's cross, and has adopted, instead, the shield arms of a lion:

> Bot the churles chekyn   hade chaungyde his armes—
> He had sothely forsaken   þe sawtoure engrelede
> And laughte vpe thre lyons   all of whitte siluyre,
> Passande in purpre,   of perrie full riche. (4181–84)

The poet claims that Mordred has changed his arms out of cowardice, but one can hardly have forgotten the *lyouns full lothely* from Arthur's dream, which were explained to him by his philosophers to represent men left behind in his kingdom. Mordred's lions here identify him with the *lyouns* from Arthur's dream, but, by the same device, Mordred is identified with the lions' other signified, Arthur himself.[53]

The poet, again, in this final instance ironically plays with multiple levels of signification in changing beast imagery. Arthur has failed to recognize himself denaturing with sin throughout his imperialistic campaign. Here, in the final encounter of Arthur's failed kingship, the question may be, not whether Arthur observes a bestial reminder of his own denaturing, but whether, in a Boethian existential sense, he has ceased to be altogether. The Mordred whom Arthur faces is, to all appearances, henceforth the very man who was the once and future king of Britain. Mordred does not only sit on Arthur's throne, carry Arthur's sword Clarent, bear Arthur's arms and father Arthur's children—Mordred, astonishingly, even possesses the Christian conscience which Arthur has lost:

> Ʒit þat traytour alls tite   teris lete he fall,
> Turnes hym furthe tite   and talkes no more;
> Went wepand awaye   and weries the stowndys
> Þat euer his werdes ware wroghte   siche wandrethe to wyrke.
> Whene he thoghte on þis thynge,   it thirllede his herte;
> For sake of his sybb blode   sygheande he rydys.
> When þat renayede renke   remembirde hym seluen
> Of [þe] reuerence and ryotes   of þe Rownde Table,

He remyd and repent hym of all his rewthe werkes (3886–94)

The *rewthe werkes* 'foul deeds' of which Mordred repents are the same *rewthe werkes* which the philosophers, after the interpretation of his Dream of the Nine Worthies, exhorted Arthur to repent of, but which he never did (3453).[54] In the later episode where Arthur laments over Gawain's dead body, Arthur belatedly recognizes that he has sinned. The Christian expression of repentance, however, is shockingly marred by his mistaking Gawain for a Christ figure, after which he swears by Christ and Mary, 'þe mylde Qwene of heuen' (4041), to exact a very un-Christian vengeance.[55] The invocation of Mary here comes too late, and ironically underlines that the object of Arthur's devotion throughout his campaign has not been Mary, but, on the contrary, Fortune. The Mordred who repents of his own 'rewthe werkes' forgoes the adventure of conquest, turns his attention to his own kingdom, provides heirs, and, ironically, shows the promise to be the moral, Christian king who Arthur, on his imperialistic crusade against Rome, has ceased to be.

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NOTES

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1 I cite Mary Hamel's edition, *Morte Arthure: A Critical Edition* (New York and London: Garland, 1984). All quotations of the text are cited in-text by line numbers.
2 For Arthur as a type for these English kings, see especially Larry D. Benson, 'The Date of the Alliterative *Morte Arthure,*' *Medieval Studies Presented in Honor of Lillian Herlands Hornstein*, ed. J.D. Bessinger, Jr. and R.K. Raymo (New York: New York University Press, 1976), pp. 20–29, reprinted in *Contradictions: from Beowulf to Chaucer. Selected Studies of Larry D. Benson*, ed. Theodore M. Andersson and Stephen A. Barney (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1995), pp. 155–74; see also Hamel, *Morte Arthure*, p. 95 n171.
3 The question of contemporary referencing, of course, hinges on the date of the poem; see Benson, 'Date of the Alliterative *Morte Arthure,*' whose date 'in or shortly after the year 1400' has become the standard reference.
4 Geraldine Heng, *Empire of Magic: Medieval Romance and the Politics of Cultural Fantasy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003) p. 116.

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5 Larry D. Benson, 'The Alliterative *Morte Arthure* and Medieval Tragedy,' *Tennessee Studies in Literature* 11 (1966): 75–87.
6 Mary Hamel, 'The Dream of a King: The Alliterative *Morte Arthure* and Dante,' *Chaucer Review* 14 (1980): 298–312.
7 See *Inferno* 1.28–60. Hamel, 'Dream of a King,' 304; Hamel modifies her position at *Morte Arthure*, 387, but still believes that the poet had Dante fresh in mind and that there is an allusion to the *Inferno*.
8 Hamel, 'Dream of a King,' 304.
9 See further below, n. 40.
10 Hamel, 'Dream of a King,' 305.
11 William Matthews, *The Tragedy of Arthur* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: The University of California Press, 1960)
12 See, especially, the reaction to Matthews's thesis in J. Eadie, 'The Alliterative *Morte Arthure*: Structure and Meaning,' *English Studies* 63 (1982): 1–12; and Benson, 'The Alliterative *Morte Arthure* and Medieval Tragedy.'
13 Boethius, *De consolatione philosophiae. Opuscula theologica*, ed. Claudio Moreschini (Munich and Leipzig: Teubner, 2000), cited by book, prose/metrum and subsection; for prose quotations I follow John Marenbon's practice and add a reference to the line numbers of the Loeb edition with facing page translation, H.F. Stewart, E.K. Rand and S.J. Tester, ed. and trans., *Boethius. The Theological Tractates. The Consolation of Philosophy,* 2nd. ed. (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Loeb, 1973). Translations here are my own.
14 See Pierre Courcelle, *Late Latin Writers and Their Greek Sources*, trans. Harry E. Wedeck (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969), pp. 307–08. For Boethius's adaptation of the Platonic argument, see John Marenbon, *Boethius* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 114–17.
15 For Arthur's adherence to the laws of just warfare, see Juliet Vale, 'Law and Diplomacy in the Alliterative *Morte Arthure,*' *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 23 (1979): 31–46; and Elizabeth Porter, 'Chaucer's Knight, the Alliterative *Morte Arthure* and Medieval Laws of War: a Reconsideration,' *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 27 (1983): 56–78.
16 Lesley Johnson, 'King Arthur at the Crossroads to Rome,' in *Noble and Joyous Histories: English Romances, 1375–1650*, eds. E. Ní Chuilleanáin and J.D. Pheifer (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1993), p. 99 [87–111].
17 Karl Heinz Göller, 'The Dream of the Dragon and the Bear,' in *The Alliterative* Morte Arthure: *A Reassessment of the Poem*, ed. Karl Heinz Göller (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1981), pp. 134–35 [130–39].
18 '*Artur* latine translatum sonat ursum horribilem' [*Arthur* in Latin is translated 'horrid bear']; see David Dumville, 'Celtic-Latin Texts in Northern England c. 1150–1250,' *Celtica* 12 (1977): 33 [19–49].
19 See Rachel Bromwich, *Trioedd Ynys Prydein: The Welsh Triads*, 2nd ed. (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1978), supplementary note on p. 544 (the abbreviated version of this note in the recent 3rd edition is less useful).
20 Bromwich, *Trioedd Ynys Prydein: The Welsh Triads*, p. 544.

21 Göller, 'Dream of the Dragon,' p. 139.

22 The Middle Ages recognized a variety of dream types, including the meaningless dream supplied by the dreamer's imagination; Arthur's dream is clearly of the higher variety, a *somnium* in the scheme given by Macrobius; for the Macrobian and competing systems, see Stephen Kruger, *Dreaming in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 14 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), esp. pp. 17–34.

23 For the divide between the dream-book tradition and dream interpretation in literary tradition, see Kruger, *Dreaming*, pp. 123–24.

24 Göller, 'Dream of the Dragon,' p. 138.

25 Göller, 'Dream of the Dragon,' pp. 137–38.

26 Matthews, *The Tragedy of Arthur*, p. 60.

27 See Andy Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters of the Beowulf-Manuscript* (Cambridge, UK: D.S. Brewer, 1995), especially pp. 116–139.

28 The principal success of Matthews's book is to reveal the pervasiveness of allusions to Alexander in the *Morte Arthure*; see especially 'Macedon into Caerleon,' pp. 32–67; for Benson's general approval of Matthews's thesis, see his review of *The Tragedy of Arthur* in *Speculum* 36 (1961): 673–75.

29 For a comparison with the earlier versions, see Kateryna A. Rudnytzky Schray, 'The Plot in Miniature: Arthur's Battle on Mont St. Michel in the Alliterative *Morte Arthure,*' *Studies in Philology* 101 (2004): 1–19.

30 See Matthews, *Tragedy of Arthur*, p. 63.

31 See also lines 616–18, where *couerde camellez with tours enclosyde in maylez* can be traced back to castles and towers mounted atop elephants in Alexander romances; compare *The Siege of Jerusalem*, ed. Ralph Hanna and David Lawton, EETS no. 320 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003): [dromedaries] 'wir harnays of mayle,/ Eche beste with a big tour,' (454–55), which the editors derive from Alexander romances; see note to line 449; see also Hamel, *Morte Arthure*, p. 277.

32 Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The Historia Regum Britannie of Geoffrey of Monmouth. I: Bern Burgerbibliothek MS. 568*, ed. Neil Wright (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1985), §168.

33 J.S.P. Tatlock, 'The Dragons of Wessex and Wales,' *Speculum* 8 (1933): 223–35; Tatlock argues that Geoffrey's assignment of the symbol to Arthur may in fact have owed to the example of the standard having been used by Anglo-Saxon kings.

34 Hanna and Lawton, *Siege*, 283–84; note also lines 329–32; see Hamel, *Morte Arthure*, pp. 46–52, for the following discussion.

35 See C. Given-Wilson, ed., *The Chronicon of Adam Usk* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 146.

36 *Siege* 393–94. I reproduce the text as quoted by Hamel, p. 48, from Köbling's earlier edition; Hanna and Lawton print '[þe] go[llet] to s[che]we,' but concede that the verse may be corrupt beyond repair; see their note to line 394.

37 See Benson, 'The Date of the Alliterative *Morte Arthure,*' for this reference to the Visconti family in the *Morte Arthure*. Karl Lippe flatly rejects this identification

with the Visconti family's device; see Lippe, 'Armorial Bearings and their Meaning,' in *Reassessment*, pp. 100–01 [96–105].

38 Hamel, *Morte Arthure*, p. 54.

39 Hamel, *Morte Arthure*, p. 384.

40 Hamel, 'Dream of a King,' 305. The relevant passage occurs at *Aeneid* 6.179: 'Itur in antiquam siluam, stabula alta ferarum'; the commentary: 'FERARUM id est hominum in ferinam naturam vitio transformatorum. Vocat enim philosophia luxuriosos sues, fraudulentos vulpes, garrulos canes, truculentos leones, iracundos apros, rapaces lupos, torpentes asinos.' See J.W. Jones and E.F. Jones, ed., *The Commentary on the First Six Books of the Aeneid of Vergil Commonly Attributed to Bernardus Silvestris* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1977), p. 62.

41 This proposed recollection of Boethius is not inconsistent with the fact that the episode derives, more immediately, from the *Mort Artu*, for which, see Hamel, *Morte Arthure*, p. 384.

42 See, especially, *Consolation*, III.2.

43 Kathryn L. Lynch, *The High Medieval Dream Vision: Poetry, Philosophy, and Literary Form* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988).

44 Lynch, *Dream Vision*, p. 28.

45 Paul Piehler, *The Visionary Landscape: A Study in Medieval Allegory* (London: Edward Arnold, 1971), pp. 15, 21–30, cited in Lynch, *High Medieval Dream Vision*, pp. 68–69.

46 Lynch, *Dream Vision*, p. 69.

47 Matthews, *Tragedy of Arthur*, pp. 57–59.

48 For this language, see J. Burrow, 'A Maner Latyn Corrupt,' *Medium Aevum* 30 (1961): 33–37.

49 As to the greater likelihood of the former, compare the exchange between Gawain and Priamus, the former's 'Inglische' and the latter's 'lange of Lorrayne' (*AMA* 2529–31).

50 *Consolation*, IV.3; see above.

51 See Marenbon, *Boethius*, pp. 115–17, for this difficult existential analysis of the punishment of the wicked.

52 The threat posed Arthur's manhood by Mordred has been discussed in different terms by Jeff Westover, 'Arthur's End: the King's Emasculation in the Alliterative *Morte Arthure,*' *Chaucer Review* 32 (1998): 310–24.

53 See Hamel, *Morte Arthure*, p. 391.

54 See above.

55 See Matthews, *Tragedy of Arthur*, pp. 149–50, for this episode's parody of Joseph of Arimathea's capturing of the blood of Christ in the Holy Grail from the *Estoire del Saint Graal*; see also Hamel, *Morte Arthure*, pp. 384–85, who accepts the validity of the allusion, but differs in her interpretation of the episode's significance.