



Towards the Digital Winchester: Editing the Winchester Manuscript of Malory's *Morte Darthur*'

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ABSTRACT

Seventy years since the epoch-making discovery of the Winchester manuscript, the unique manuscript of Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte Darthur*, scholars have eventually recovered from the severe shock of the discovery, and have started to study the manuscript as 'a historical artefact'. The original form of the manuscript, however, is still now unavailably inaccessible, considering the wealth of evidence bearing on it. In this essay, Malory scholarship before and after the discovery is overviewed, and a new digital edition of Winchester is proposed.

KEYWORDS

Sir Thomas Malory, the Winchester manuscript, electronic editing, digitisation, Eugène Vinaver, BL Add. MS 59678, William Caxton, manuscript studies

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the main aims of modern textual criticism is to restore what authors intended to write. This task, however, is not straightforward, as the documentary evidence in manuscripts or printed editions often does not retain authors' intentions. A history of textual criticism, as Lee Patterson says, can be written in terms of "the shifting allegiances" between documentary evidence and editors' judgement (1985: 56). Eighteenth-century literary figures often "borrow[ed] the author's pen and venture to speak for him" (Vinaver, 1990: cviii). Alexander Pope "took from the various Quartos any reading which pleased him and inserted them into his

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edition of Shakespeare" (Vinaver, 1990: cvii). Samuel Johnson's romantic remark may represent how free some editors felt to alter documentary evidence at that time:

The allurements of emendation are scarcely resistible. Conjecture has all the joy and the pride of invention, and he that has once started a happy change, is much too delighted to consider what objections may rise against it (Raleigh, 1931: 60).

Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte Darthur* (1469-70) was one of the literary works that suffered interpolation and expurgation by the editors who "borrowed the author's pen".

II. DISCUSSION

William Caxton published the first edition of Malory's *Morte Darthur* in 1485. He was the first editor who admitted his editorial practices. He says that he divided the text into books and chapters in order to help the readers' understanding (Malory, 1976a: sig. 1π3v).² Since then, errors and conscious alterations accumulated every time the book went through the press until William Stansby's sixth edition (1634), in which the 'corrections' to the text are proudly advertised :

In many places this Volume is corrected [...] for here and there, King Arthur or some of his Knights were declared in their communications to swear prophane, and use superstitious speeches, all (or the most part) of which is either emended or quite left out, by the paines and industry of the Compositor and Corrector at the Presse (Gaines, 1990: 12).

Stansby's expurgations were probably essential for the book to be favourably accepted by his society, in which "products of the barbarous, non-classic, and Catholic Middle Ages" were very much devalued (Parins, 1988: 11). In the 17th and 18th centuries, the Arthurian legend in general was very much "condemned" by "Neoclassical" literary criticism (Brewer, 1981: 3). As a consequence, the *Morte Darthur* was not published at all for nearly two hundred years. Then in 1816, two editions of the *Morte Darthur* appeared as a response to the revival of interest for this particular legend. These two editions, however, were both based on Stansby's 1634 edition, which was textually corrupted. Moreover, one of them was further edited "to render the text to fit the eye of youth; and that it might be no longer secreted from the fair sex" (Parins, 1988: 8). The first sign of textual approach towards the *Morte Darthur* can be seen in Robert Southey's edition (1817), which according to him was "a reprint with scrupulous exactness from the first edition by Caxton" (Parins, 1988: 99-100). Southey, however, was actually only in charge of the introduction and notes of his edition, and the text was prepared by a sublibrarian at the London Institution, William Upcott. The text produced was indeed far from 'scrupulous exact'. The most serious editorial interpolation was probably part of the text Upcott had to "piece together [...] from a variety of sources", as the Caxton copy lacked eleven leaves (Gaines, 1990: 18). The nineteenth century literary world had to wait for H. Oskar Sommer's diplomatic edition (1889-

91) to "set the scholarly standard" (Gaines, 1990: 25). Sommer's edition aimed to follow "the original impression of Caxton in every respect [...] with absolute fidelity, word for word, line for line, and page for page, and with some exceptions [...] letter for letter" (Sommer, 1889-89: II, 17). These two editors also made a significant contribution to Malory's source studies. Malory's *Morte Darthur* is an adaptation, in a shortened form, of English and French romances. Southey initially had a plan of "chapter-by-chapter source study using the French romances" (Parins, 1988: 95). His plan never materialised, but he considered Malory's sources in the introduction to his edition. On the other hand, the third volume of Sommer's edition is devoted to Malory's source studies.

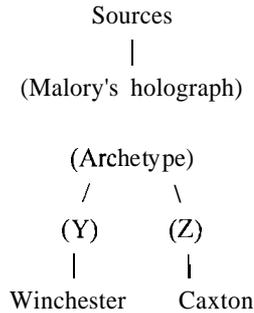
Eugene Vinaver in the 1920s started to prepare a critical edition of the *Morte Darthur*. Vinaver was the first editor who decided to attempt to go back to Malory's sources that preceded Caxton's edition in order to restore Malory's readings. There is no extant manuscript that we know Malory directly used. Vinaver, however, established Malory's sources as represented in the manuscripts available in the 1920s. Vinaver's critical edition was based on two extant Caxton's editions and, with the help of Malory's sources, was close to completion in 1934; no one thought any scholar could go beyond Vinaver's attempt in Malory's textual criticism.

Then in 1934, W. F. Oakeshott discovered in the Fellows' Library at Winchester College a manuscript of Malory's book written by two scribes.³ The major difference between the manuscript and Caxton's edition is that the Roman War episode in Winchester is twice as long as that in the Caxton. The system of textual divisions also differs: Caxton divided the text into books and chapters, whereas the Winchester scribes divided it by *explicitis* and *incipits*, and by Lombardic capital letters. There are also many minor variants between the two texts, such as different spellings, different word order and word divisions, and variant uses of prefixes and conjunctions.

Since this epoch-making discovery of the Winchester manuscript, the attention of Malory scholars has focused on these differences between the two primary versions, and a great deal of the scholarly effort has been spent in establishing "which best represents the 'genuine Malory'" (Roland, 2004: 37). Vinaver was the first scholar who dedicated his best efforts to establish the 'genuine Malory'. Oakeshott's discovery, which was reported in the columns of the *Daily Telegraph*, made Vinaver rush to Winchester (Oakeshott, 1963: 4-5). With the principle of using Malory's sources together with the manuscript, it suddenly became possible to get much closer to Malory's original intention than ever before. Vinaver abandoned his original project without hesitation, and re-started his editorial process, now using both the manuscript and Caxton's version.

Thirteen years later, in 1947, Vinaver's first edition, *The Works of Sir Thomas Malory*, appeared. Vinaver had exhaustively studied the sources and textual discrepancies between Winchester and the Caxton. He also established that some readings in the Caxton matched those of the sources but not the Winchester readings, whereas some readings in Winchester similarly matched those of the sources but not the Caxton. From this, Vinaver eliminated the possibilities

of lineal relationships between them, and concluded that the two texts derived ultimately from an archetype, and were in collateral relationship:⁴



Vinaver then ascribed two major differences between the two extant texts to Caxton's editorial hand (the textual divisions and the Roman War episode) and emphasised the opposite nature of the two producers in his Introduction to the *Works*:

The Winchester scribes copy their text mechanically and seldom, if ever, attempt to correct it. Caxton, on the other hand, is an editor rather than a scribe. He often tries to improve on his original where the latter seems to him to be deficient, although [...] he is rather apt to be content with a mere appearance of sense (Vinaver, 1990: cix).

Thus, he decided to use the Winchester manuscript as his base text. He was, however, fully aware that Winchester was not faultless:

Winchester MS. had been adopted for the present edition of Malory's works [...] not because it is in every respect the nearest to the original, but because it is so in some parts, and because as long as absolute 'truthfulness' is not aimed at, the less well known of the two versions, which is at least as reliable as the other, is fair as any choice can be (Vinaver, 1990: cxxi).

Vinaver also says that even if the readings of the base text are possible as they stand, an editor has to emend them when he can detect mistakes:

The term 'textual criticism' implies a mistrust of texts. It presupposes that in any copied text errors are inevitable and that the critic's main function is to correct them (Vinaver, 1976: 141).

He 'corrected' the text in Winchester whenever he believed that errors occurred, and also when the Caxton and Malory's sources suggested corrupted readings in the manuscript. Vinaver emended the reading in his base text rather frequently. In fact, his emendations to the base text appear 1.5 times per page in his edition,⁵ some of them being rather substantial. One of the best

examples is his system of textual divisions. As the title of his edition implied, Vinaver argued that the *explicit*s, suppressed by Caxton, provided the sense of ending, and that Malory had written "a series of eight separate romances", and not the single book presented by Caxton (Vinaver, 1990: xxxv-lvi). Vinaver divided the text into eight works and subdivided some of them into tales. He then discussed the narrative discrepancies, such as the appearance of Tristram before his birth or the reappearance of Tarquyn after his death, and observed that these discrepancies were found only between the eight works, but not within them; so he concluded that they could be explained only if it was assumed that Malory had written a series of eight separate romances. His divisions, however, did not necessarily follow the divisions in Winchester. Out of 111 Lombardic capital letters, which remain in Winchester, Vinaver used only 26 for his own work or tale divisions; 77 were signalled by paragraph marks, five by periods, and three by commas.

The discovery of the manuscript itself revolutionised the English literary world, in which Caxton's version had been believed to be authentic. The publication of Vinaver's *Works* was an additional blow to the scholars at the time. Robert H. Wilson expressed his surprise when he explained "the most striking conclusion" of Vinaver's (1948: 136); J. A. W. Bennett called Vinaver's edition "a book full of surprises" (1949: 161); C. S. Lewis, although he approved of Vinaver's "great edition", still preferred to quote from Caxton's version rather than from Vinaver's:

I enjoy my catliedral as it lias stood the test of time aiid demaiid no restoration. I have no more wish to discard Caxton for *Mulory* than to discard *Mulory* for the Frencli romaiices (einpliasis added; 1963: 27).

It is not surprising that a series of shocks entirely overshadowed the fact that Vinaver's aim was to restore what he believed Malory wrote, on the combined evidence of Winchester, the Caxton version and the sources. Lewis's comment is from *Essays on Mulory*, edited by J. A. W. Bennett, a volume of collected essays. Note that Lewis uses 'Malory' as a synonym of Vinaver's *Works*. Helen Cooper has observed that most of the contributors to this volume "use abbreviation W to indicate Vinaver's edition, without indicating whether it stands for 'Works' or 'Winchester'" (Cooper, 2000: 256). Sally Shaw's intelligent essay in Bennett's collection is still now one of the most significant responses to Vinaver's edition. She was the only contributor who made it clear that her intention was to compare Winchester, and not Vinaver's *Works*, with the Caxton. The title of her essay, however, is "Caxton and Malory", not "Caxton and Winchester", and her source of data for Winchester was limited to Vinaver's apparatus, as the manuscript was inaccessible. As Cooper says, the essays in this volume give readers a false sense that Vinaver's edition, Winchester and Malory's *Morte Durthur* all mean the same (2000: 256).

Malory's scholarship hence flourished vigorously with an attempt to defend Caxton's Malory and to refute Vinaver's theory, which was often identified with 'Winchester' and sometimes with 'Malory'. The first theory to be disputed was that of separate romances.

Vinaver's narrative observation soon turned out not to furnish a sufficient reason for Malory having written eight separate romances. D. S. Brewer, while acknowledging "the limited separateness of the tales", argued that Malory wrote "'the hoole book' as Caxton called it", because there was, in the whole book, "the unity of atmosphere and the continuous moral concern", "the chronological continuity of the main events and characters", "significant references back and forward to important characters and events" and "links between the various tales" (Brewer, 1963: 41, 61). Lumiansky and his disciples (1964) also argued that even if some tales were first written separately, creating an organic unity was Malory's final intention, whose view was partly accepted by Vinaver himself. Vinaver spent two sections refuting Lumiansky and his followers' arguments in his Introduction to the second edition in 1967. However, he admitted the possibility that while Malory was writing his tales, "the idea of putting them together and letting them be read one after another did occur to him" (Vinaver, 1990: xlv). Scholars have further studied the narrative of the work; not only have they proved the narrative coherence and continuity through the 'whole book', but have also revealed that there were as many discrepancies within tales as between them (Clough, 1986; Grimm, 1995; Knight, 1969; Moorman, 1965; Olefsky, 1969). Nowadays, there are probably very few scholars who would consider Malory's *Morte Dcirthur* as separate romances.

The most challenging dispute towards Vinaver's edition started in 1975 at the Exeter Eleventh International Arthurian Congress, when the late William Matthews' paper entitled *Who revised the Roman War episode in Malory's 'Morte Darthur'* was read on his behalf by Roy Leslie. Matthews argued that the reviser who turned Winchester's Roman War episode into Caxton's Book V was Malory himself. Though carefully restricted to Book V, his arguments implied that Malory was responsible for all the editorial procedures observed in Caxton's version. Toshiyuki Takamiya, who was in the audience among R. M. Lumiansky, Charles Moorman, P. J. C. Field, Shunichi Noguchi and Eugene Vinaver, recalls that there was no question after the paper, but a strange silence, and that all the Malory scholars went down to have drinks before dinner (Takamiya, 2002).

Matthews argued that portions of the Roman War episode in the Caxton, particularly the beginning of it, showed not only deletions but also additions of new material from the prose *Merlin*, the alliterative *Morte Arthure*, and Hardyng's *Chronicle*. Therefore, Matthews deduced that if Caxton was a reviser of Book V, he should have known exactly the same sources that Malory used:

Both the Winchester and the Caxton versions of the Roman War, however, are in themselves satisfactory texts. Rather than postulate a parent text that contained all the material that is in both of them, therefore, a text, which in turn was based on a conjectured lost form of the alliterative *Morte Arthure* (which also contained extra material), the simplest deductions to be made from the study of the sources are (1) that Malory drew from Hardyng's *Chronicle* and the prose *Merlin* as well as from the alliterative *Morte Arthure*; (2) that the reviser who wrote the Caxton version used not only the

Malory Manuscript but also the same three sources Malory used, the alliterative poem, Hardyng's *Chronicle* and the French prose *Merlin* (Matthews, 1997c: 113).

Matthews further discussed the qualifications of the reviser of Caxton's Book V, and developed a theory that Winchester was an abbreviated version of the alliterative *Morte*, and Caxton's was a more abbreviated version of Winchester with some additions from the sources. As both are abbreviated in a similar way, and as it was very unlikely that Caxton knew these sources, the most plausible explanation was that both versions were abbreviated by the same person: Malory, the author himself. Matthews concluded that the Caxton text had many traces of Malory's revisions, and was "a much better text" than the Winchester text:

[I]t [The Caxton] is still a much better text than that presented in the Winchester manuscript: more accurate, fuller, and, if our argument is correct, graced by Malory's own revision of the Roman War episode and possibly other small sections too (Matthews, 1997c: 130).

Matthews's aims were first to show that the Caxton was a more authentic version of Malory than Winchester and, secondly, to create an edition of Malory's *Morte Darthur* based on the Caxton. James W. Spisak accomplished the latter aim of Matthews's by publishing *Caxton's Malory: a new edition of Sir Thomas Malory's 'Le Morte Darthur' based on the Pierpont Morgan copy of William Caxton's edition of 1485* (1983). As its title clearly shows, it is edited with Caxton's version as its base text. As for the first aim of Matthews's, however, Spisak's edition does not discuss the authenticity of the Caxton, nor does it attempt to reproduce the 'genuine Malory'. He presents his edition as "an authentic text of *Caxton's Malory*" (emphasis added; Spisak, 1983: 627), and reproduces the Caxton version diplomatically except when the Caxton readings are clearly corrupted. Charles Moorman (1987) and Robert Lumiansky (1987) supported Matthews's view unanimously, but did not add anything new to what Matthews had already said.

Matthews's theory meanwhile was disproved by a series of studies. Yuji Nakao statistically examined the use of language in Winchester and the Caxton, and concluded that the language evidence is "clearly in favour of the theory that Caxton revised Book V" (Nakao, 1987: 108). Shunichi Noguchi's research on Caxton's vocabulary also strongly suggested that Caxton had revised Book V. Noguchi identified in Caxton's Book V vocabularies and grammatical constructions that appeared elsewhere (in some cases frequently) in Caxton's prose but did not appear elsewhere in Winchester (Noguchi, 1977, 1984). Field's study of the political history also supported Caxton as a reviser. Field reported an interesting alteration, which could have been made only by Caxton, in Caxton's Roman War episode. The bear—"som tyraunte that turmentis thy peple"—in Winchester (Malory, 1976b: 75v) is killed by a dragon that represents King Arthur, but in the Caxton, the 'bear' is turned into a 'boar' six times:

The change must have been deliberate, and it created a bold political allusion: the boar was the badge of King Richard III and the dragon that of Henry Tudor. The allusion would only have made sense in or just before 1485, and it is difficult to see who could have been responsible for it but Caxton himself (Field, 1995: 37).

Moreover, John Withrington pointed out that the passages in the Caxton, which were believed to be added from the sources, could be found elsewhere than in Malory's sources. *e.g.* in the Middle English Prose Brut and Lydgate's *Fall of Princes*. In Caxton's time, both "enjoyed immense popularity", and the former was especially significant as it was published twice by Caxton himself under the title of the Chronicles of *England* in 1480 and 1482 (Withrington, 1992: 359-60). A parallel between passages of Caxton's Roman War episode and the Chronicles of *England* was also examined by Yuji Nakao. Nakao concluded that it was Caxton who re-wrote Book V on the basis of his exemplar and the Chronicles of *England* (2000: 208).

Matthews thus failed to prove that the Caxton represented a more authentic Malory. His study, however, led scholars to re-examine Vinaver's theories and the manuscript itself, and led them to realise how different the Winchester manuscript was from Vinaver's edition. This realisation was also fostered greatly by the publication of the monochrome facsimile of the manuscript (EETS) and also of the Caxton version (Scolar Press) both in 1976, a year after Matthews's paper was read in Exeter. The publication of the Winchester facsimile was generated by the British Library's purchase of the manuscript from the Warden and Fellows of the Winchester College on 26 March 1976.

This change of the manuscript's home gave Lotte Hellinga, an incunabulist at the British Library, a chance to closely examine the manuscript. In 1977, Hellinga investigated the smudges and blots on the leaves of the manuscript. Her research with the Level Development Infra-Red Viewer revealed clear differences between the water-based ink, which was used for writing with a quill, and the oil-based ink used for printing with metal type. As a result, traces of printing ink became visible in 66 places (Hellinga, 1981: 220, n. 7). Among these, Hellinga identified the offsets of Caxton's type 2 and 4, which were used in his workshop between 1480 and 1483.

The possibility of a direct connection between Winchester and Caxton's workshop had already appeared soon after the discovery of the manuscript. Victor Scholderer identified the fragment of an indulgence printed on parchment by Caxton in 1489, which was used to mend a tear in folio 243 of the Winchester manuscript (Ker, 1976: ix). However, this physical evidence seems to have been treated unjustifiably lightly. Vinaver only commented in a footnote to his *Works*: "This suggests that the manuscript was at one time, probably somewhere about 1500, in the hands of a London printer" (1990: cii, n. 5).

Oakeshott also mentioned that in itself the presence of the fragment proved nothing (1977: 193). As a result of Hellinga's discovery, the presence of the fragment of the indulgence printed by Caxton would be interpreted in a different way. If the manuscript was in Caxton's workshop between 1480 and 1483, and also some time after 1489, there would seem to be a good probability that the manuscript was there continuously during this period, when the *Morte*

Darthur was on the press. The actual relationships of the extant texts seem to have been more complicated than Vinaver supposed.

Another contribution of Matthews's study was that it successfully put forward a new possibility of Malory's textual criticism. Vinaver considered that "the Winchester scribes copy their text mechanically and seldom, if ever, attempt to correct it" (Vinaver, 1990: cix). N. R. Ker, in his Introduction to the facsimile of Winchester, accepts Vinaver's view:

The leaves of the Malory are suspiciously tidy. One would say that this is a manuscript written either by very careful scribes or by scribes who did not bother to revise what they had written. Which kind of manuscript it is, is obvious almost at once. Some of its errors were taken over from the exemplar, no doubt, but many of them are the sort of silly mistakes we all make and which crop up afresli in each new copy (1976: xvii).

As shown above, however, Matthews deduced that the Roman War episode in Winchester "was itself a somewhat shortened version" (1997c: 112). From this, Field concluded that the Roman War episode in Winchester was a shortened and improved version by 'a scribe', most probably by the Winchester scribe (1995: 52). In other words, the Winchester scribes seem to have 'bothered to revise' the text in their exemplar.

Field further identified deliberate alterations by the scribes throughout the manuscript (Field, 1990: passim). Field further analysed all the variants between the two texts in the *Tale of Balin*, and came to the conclusion that out of 514 variants 24 represent Caxton's deliberate alterations, and 19 were the Winchester scribe's deliberate alterations (Field, 1998: 23). These figures clearly show that Vinaver simplified matters too much when he characterised Caxton as an editor and the Winchester scribes as almost automata without qualification. David Jones studied all the substantive variants between Winchester and the Caxton in the *Tale of Sir Gareth* and also demonstrated that "scribal interference [in Winchester] was greater than previously thought" (Jones, 1998: 135). Kato's studies in scribal practices in Winchester also have shown the Winchester scribes were conscious processors of the text rather than mechanical copiers of letters (Kato, 2004, 2005). These studies significantly pictured a previously unknown aspect of the Winchester scribes: they consciously altered the text.

Other features of the manuscript have also been studied since the 1970s. One of the features, which has attracted the scholarly attention, is the system of textual divisions in the manuscript. Murray Evans (1979) examined Malory's own words in *explicit*s, and differentiated Malory's claims that he would leave his own 'tales', which show the divisions of the narrative, from the claims that Malory would leave his 'sources', which do not divide the narrative. Evans then concluded that Malory's text was divided into five parts. On the other hand, Carol Meale (1996: 16-17), on the basis of the *mise-en-page* of the manuscript itself, divided Malory's text into four parts. Helen Cooper examined the manuscript, and considered Vinaver's theory was extreme. She even suggested the possibility of textual divisions in Winchester being authorial (Cooper, 2000: 262-64), but when she published her edition, she followed Vinaver's eight tale

divisions (Cooper, 1998). Field also argued that the *Morte Darthur* was "a single larger work" (Field, 1999: 231), but accepted Vinaver's eight divisions. These discrepancies among scholars in dividing the text are the reflection of discrepancies between the *explicit*s and the physical layout of the manuscript itself; not all the *explicit*s coincide with the most notable physical divisions.

There have also been efforts to understand Winchester as "a historical artefact" (Nichols & Wenzel, 1996: 1) and to place it in the fifteenth-century cultural context.⁶ Felicity Riddy (1987) located Malory in the manuscript culture when manuscript miscellanies were popular and considered that Malory's *Morte* was received by contemporaries as a work consisting of different parts which had coherence of some kind. Carol Meale (1996), on the other hand, compared Winchester with other books, which would have belonged to Anthony Wydville's library, and talked of the necessity of "collaborative research by scholars working in several different areas" in order to understand Malory in the historical cultural context. She also gave a detailed description of several features in Winchester, and drew attention to the differences in reading experiences of the manuscript and Vinaver's edition. Helen Cooper (2000) has also studied the nature of Winchester. She has discussed that the *marginalia* were not simply copied from the exemplar as Ker assumed, but were original to the manuscript, whereas the textual divisions, the punctuation system, the use of red ink and the abbreviation system were inherited from the exemplar, and possibly from Malory's original copy. Cooper's holistic study of Winchester made her realise that the Winchester scribes represented the earliest layer of reader response to the *Morte Darthur*. Other scholars, however, have not shared Cooper's views. Field (2001), for example, has discussed a *marginalium*, which was wrongly inserted in the body text of the archetype, and was most probably inherited from Malory's original copy. Thomas Hanks (2000) and Shunichi Noguchi (2000) have emphasised the importance of the punctuation system in the manuscript, and imply its authority, while Sue Holbrook (2000) has focused on the dissimilarity of the punctuation system of Winchester to that of the Caxton, which implies that it was original to the manuscript.

Seventy years since the discovery of the manuscript, it seems that Malory scholars have eventually recovered from the severe shock of the discovery and have started to establish new Malory scholarship. Free from a dispute on Vinaver's innovative theory or Matthews's controversial view, scholars are now intending to study the primary documents as they are. However, the original form of Winchester is still now unwarrantedly inaccessible, considering the wealth of evidence bearing on it. Special permission is needed for a scholar to consult the manuscript itself for preservation purposes. The monochrome EETS facsimile does not present the vellum leaf used to repair the manuscript, the traces of printer's ink on several pages, the watermarks, the dry-point glosses, or the extensive use of red ink. The red ink was used for various purposes: *marginalia*, Lombardic capital letters and scribal corrections, as well as marking proper names, place-names and some other words. The effect of the use of red ink, however, can be experienced only through three specimen pages available to the public: the

British Library Online Gallery provides an image of fol. 35r, and the EETS facsimile ff. 86v and 342r.⁷

It is difficult to work on textual matters using the facsimile, while all the Malory editions are heavily edited. The Winchester manuscript obviously contains scribal errors, and an editor is obliged to correct them if his/her aim is to reproduce what Malory wrote. Since Vinaver, three Winchester-based editions have appeared: Field's revised edition of Vinaver (1990), Cooper's student edition, and Stephen Shepherd's Norton Critical Edition (2004). Field's edition was "intended to be as far as possible Eugene Vinaver's rather than [Field's]" (Field, 1990: 1747), hence intended to approach as close as possible to what Vinaver believed Malory wrote. Helen Cooper's aim, on the other hand, is "to re-create for modern readers *something* of the experience of the original readers of the Winchester manuscript" (emphasis added; 1998: xxiii). She has successfully re-created 'something' of the experience. However, as her targeted audience was particularly students, she modernised spelling and punctuation, and also abbreviated the text. Her edition therefore does not serve the purposes of modern scholars who would want to study the 'sociology' of the Winchester manuscript.⁸ Stephen Shepherd's recent edition is the first attempt to reproduce all the textual divisions in Winchester faithfully. With reference to Cooper's view that the divisions were authorial and counterarguments towards this, Shepherd decided to reproduce the textual divisions by Lombardic capitals as well as paraph marks, because "such signs at the very least remain important descriptors of the earliest known reception of the *Morte Darthur*" (Shepherd, 2004: xiii). Shepherd also uses black-letter font to represent the rubricated words in the manuscript, a practice, which was also suggested by other scholars (Cooper, 2000: 273; Hanks, 2000: 296). Although his edition surely reproduces very similar reading experiences of the original readers of the Winchester manuscript, he considers that it is part of an "ambitious editorial attempt to recover the 'original Malory'" (Shepherd, 2004: xi). His edition, which aims to offer "original-language text with a number of new and [...] more authentic readings" (Shepherd, 2004: xi), is clearly not a reproduction of Winchester.

Meg Roland has addressed the importance of examining two versions as two different 'material texts' of Malory in its transmissive processes. As her major interest is on the Roman War episode, she proposes a parallel-text edition of the Roman War episode that would serve as a scholarly tool:

This is not to say that the material text is to be accepted as an unquestioned authority, but rather that it can be understood, not as a site of error, but as a tool for inquiry into the social history of the work (emphasis added; 2004: 38).

Noguchi also suggests the usefulness of having two separate editions, which are "very much like the one that actually existed in Malory's and Caxton's time" (2000: 309).

The new digital edition proposed is, therefore, the first attempt to reproduce the Winchester manuscript as a scribal copy, *i.e.*, as the first vehicle for Malory's text. The British Library, the HUMI Project at Keio University, Japan, and the University of Wales, Bangor, are

collaborating to create an electronic edition of the Winchester manuscript. This edition should facilitate an understanding of what a medieval reading experience of the Winchester manuscript itself may have been like, and hence should serve as a scholarly 'tool for inquiry into the social history of the work'.

HUMI has already captured high-quality full-colour digital images of the manuscript in the British Library (November and December 2003).⁹ HUMI's experience enabled to capture the images of entire Winchester as well as its varying features using different techniques. The original raw files are in TIFF format (2800 x 4072 pixels), and they will be left for archive purposes untouched at the HUMI server. HUMI has manipulated these images and has produced web-ready JPEG files (1400 x 2020 pixels, 580 - 650 kb/image).

Publishing these images has a value of its own: it would allow wide audiences to experience reading rubricated Malory's *Morte Durthur*. The use of red ink in Winchester is no doubt "remarkable" and it makes the personal names "jump out" at us, as Ker and Cooper rightly say (Ker, 1976: xiv; Cooper, 2000: 273). Together with these images, detailed annotation will be given to codicological features of the manuscript such as the physical makeup of the manuscript, its general appearance and layout, including the palaeographical information and features found in the margin. Close-up images captured by using special effects will be also accompanied with annotations: the vellum leaf used to repair the manuscript and the dry-point glosses, both of which have never been reproduced before; and the traces of printer's ink on several pages discovered by Hellinga and the watermarks, which have so far been reproduced only in monochrome photographs (Hellinga, 1981:139-41; Kelliher, 1981: 157). Provision of these materials with scholarly annotation will allow readers to evaluate these features, and to build further analyses.

The Winchester images will be linked page-by-page to a full searchable transcript, recording detailed information relating to spellings, abbreviation, decorative features and presentation as well as scribal mistakes and self-corrections. Scribal mistakes will not be emended in this edition, and will be recorded as they stand in the manuscript. They will, however, be marked up in XML, and a searchable, database-driven website will give access to the marked-up features in the transcription. The transcript will be tagged further: other scribal practices such as scribes' self-correction of the text, *marginalia*, *incipits* and *explicitis*, and Lombardic capitals will be also tagged and will be searchable. The project website will also give easy-to-find cross-references to other scholarly materials: Caxton's signature numbers and book/chapter divisions, and editions by Vinaver, Spisak, Cooper and Shepherd. At present, a reader who wishes to check a particular reading in the two versions must first consult Vinaver's edition, which gives cross-references to the manuscript folio numbers and Caxton's book and chapter numbers. but Vinaver's edition does not give signature numbers for Caxton. These references in the digital edition will help understand previous scholarship and will enable future scholarship. This edition also will tag proper names, place-names and some keywords in the transcription so as to make them searchable. Arthurian scholars will greatly be advantaged by

this database of the most important Arthurian text in English prose. These features with the images of Winchester and transcript will be presented within a single electronic interface, available freely on a website.

III. CONCLUSIONS

Today's manuscript studies should aim twofold: to restore the author's intention and to study the manuscripts as material artefacts. These two aims are interdependent and interrelated. Textual criticism of a text cannot be done without being informed by codicology and palaeography, and *vice versa*. This proposed Digital Winchester does not attempt to achieve these two aims for itself. Its aim is to serve as a scholarly tool both for the question of Malory's authenticity and for 'inquiry into the social history' of the *Morte Darthur*. By representing Winchester as the first vehicle in the transmissive process of Malory's *Morte Darthur*, it should foster a new generation of studies on the 'sociology' of the Winchester manuscript, as well as on Malory's textual criticism.

NOTES

1. Part of the current work grew out of the Introduction to my PhD dissertation (University of Wales, Bangor, 2004). I would like to thank Professor P. J. C. Field, Professor Toshiyuki Takamiya and Dr Raluca Radulescu, with whom I am collaborating on the proposed Digital Winchester project, for their valuable suggestions. I have also benefited from advice given by Dr. Peter Robinson, Mr. Masaaki Kashimura, Mr. Graeme Cannon, Dr. Orietta Da Rold and Professor Jeremy Smith while I was initiating this project. I would also like to thank the reviewers and editors of this volume for seeing this work through to publication.
2. Two copies of Caxton's edition have survived: a complete copy in the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, and a copy lacking eleven leaves in the John Rylands Library, Manchester. These copies have almost identical readings, but there are small discrepancies, which are listed in Vinaver (1990: cxxviii-cxxix) and Spisak (1983: 614-16). The phrase 'the Caxton' in this study is short for the complete copy of Caxton's *Morte Darthur* in the Pierpont Morgan Library.
3. Since its acquisition by the British Library (1976), the manuscript has been officially called 'The Malory manuscript'. This, however, can be misleading when discussing differences between the manuscript and Malory's original intention. Meg Roland has suggested that the BL might have decided to call it 'The Malory manuscript' hoping to assure that they had "acquired 'the real Malory'" (Roland, 2004: 46). In this study, in order to avoid ambiguity, BL Add. MS 59678 will be referred to by the name by which it first became widely known, as 'the Winchester manuscript', or 'Winchester' for short.
4. Malory's *Liolograph*, the archlietype, Y and Z are now lost.
5. Vinaver distinguishes his emendations from the body of the text by using brackets, and also by recording the Winchester readings in the apparatus. According to my scanning of the Works, there are 1814 emendations in Vinaver's text.

6. The importance of understanding "the material artefacts of medieval literature, the manuscript culture per se" was first proclaimed by Nichols in his Introduction to the 1990 special issue of *Speculum*, 'The New Philology' (1990: 7).

7. The image of fol. 35r, captured by the HUMl project, is available at:
<http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/themes/englishlit/morte.html>

8. McKenzie realised the danger of confining bibliography into objective and scientific status. In the 1985 Panizzi Lectures, he proclaimed that "bibliography is the discipline that studies texts as recorded forms, and the processes of their transmission, including their production and reception." He defined bibliography as "the study of the sociology of texts" (1985: 4-5).

9. Some images of the early books digitised by the HUMl project are available at:
<http://www.humi.keio.ac.jp/en/index.html>

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