The visual image of Arthur

Article

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The Visual Image of Arthur

The visualisation of a character in fiction depends on both the author and the reader or listener. Between them a considerable amount of imbalance inevitably exists; the author may have a clear mental image of the character he wishes to portray but since it is impossible to convey in words the entirety of his idea his verbal description is bound to be incomplete and this can lead to misunderstanding in the mind of the recipient. No matter how detailed his delineation may be, the gap that always exists in verbal communication provides a mental vacuum in which the imagination of the reader or listener can either catch at the author's intention or distort it.

Storytellers vary in their methods of drawing verbal pictures of people. There are those who make use of meticulous detail; others can evoke a vivid portrait by concentrating on one or more salient feature. Even so, the reader or listener, if he pauses to analyse his reaction, will realise that his own imagination is playing a vital part in filling in the picture. One thing is absolutely certain: the picture in the reader's eye is never exactly the same as that in the eye of the author, because the imaginative faculty is too mercurial and too diverse to be caught in a net of precise words.

The profoundest problem with regard to fictitious portraiture is: how does an individual author envisage his characters? Does he see them like visionary photographs or borrow them from real life or raise them up like airy nothings to which he gives semblances of reality or, stranger still, have no clear mental image at all? In the hands of a competent author any method can be successful. The method as such is not of the first importance because in every case the substratum is humanity as the author chooses to see it. Even when he opts to draw gods and goddesses, devils and demons or heroes and heroines, they are necessarily limited by human attributes. However exotic or surrealist a writer may be, he cannot get outside himself; all the ingredients of his imagination lie rooted in his experience of the human world. Because this is so every character in fiction is linked in some way or other with actuality.

What we now call the theory of fiction had its origins in what was believed to be historical fact. The tales told by the ancients were believed to preserve a verbal record of people who once lived, but folk-memory, although no doubt fairly clear in the beginning, became blurred with the passage of time and imagination gradually supplied the deficiences. During this long process rationalisation crept in; convenient norms were established; standard types of description were composed and adhered to for characters of various classes. Heroes, with whom we are here concerned, were cut to one general pattern, a pattern which, apart from the differences inherent in the social and other desiderata of successive centuries, has proved to be remarkably constant, chiefly because it was and still is founded on the staple human desire for something larger than life. In the real world the now conventional hero was once assumed to have been an historical figure; in the world of fiction he has become a concept of the ideal.

Such is Arthur, the pattern of the ideal warrior-king. He has played so prominent a part in the oral and written literature of our country for the last thirteen hundred years that his name has become a household word; yet he has no face. Who can visualise him except in terms of his or her own imagination? From the time when we first hear of him as a presumably historical figure, right through the Middle Ages, when his popularity was at its peak, no writer attempted to give a verbal portrait of him. At the same time, there is evidence that mental images of him were projected by some poets and prose-writers but they are so conflicting in conception that one is forced to conclude that the absence of any authentic or authoritative historical description of him presupposes either that he never existed in the flesh or that, if he did, his true identity has been lost under layers of later accretions.

In ancient British tradition, preserved for us in Nennius and extant Welsh texts, one can search in vain for any description of him. Nennius' dux bellorum usually conjures up a very vague and probably quite misleading image of some sort of Romano-British soldier. In the Mabinogion he is not mentioned. In Culhwch and Olwen, in which he figures largely, there is not one single reference to his face or figure; which is odd, seeing that this story contains precise, colourful descriptions of Culhwch, of Olwen and of numbers of Arthur's warriors. All we have to help us picture him is Glewlwyd's statement when he announces to Arthur the arrival of Culhwch at the gate: 'Never have I seen so handsome a youth and I have been all over the world; and two-thirds of my life are past and two-thirds of thine own'.[1] Therefore, for the author of Culhwch and Olwen Arthur was a man well on in years, even elderly, for a man was senior at about forty-eight and senex at sixty in the Middle Ages. In the Dream of Rhonabwy, admittedly a lively and clever satirical piece, he appears as a man of gigantic stature and colossal strength. When Iddawg presents Rhonabwy and his companions to him, he asks: 'Where did you find these little fellows?' and at the end of his extraordinary game of gwyddbwyll with Owein, the author tells us that 'he crushed the golden pieces that were on the board till they were all dust', an impossible feat in human terms; it is the kind of exaggeration reminiscent of Arthur's mythical, bear-like qualities. If to these scanty details are added the attributes ascribed to him in the Triads, the Saints' lives and the unique picture of him in the Prologue to The Lady of the Fountain, where he is lying in the middle of the floor on a 'couch of fresh rushes with a coverlet of yellow-red brocaded silk under him and a cushion and its cover of red brocaded silk under his elbow', while Queen Gwenhwyfar and her maids sit sewing at a window and Cei comes in from the kitchen with stoups of mead and 'a fistful of spits with chops on them', the image he presents is, on the one hand, that of a typical Welsh tribal chieftain and on the other that of a huge, ruthless fighter so steeped in slaughter that he was known not as one of the Three Subduers of the enemies of the Isle of Britain, nor one of the Three Battle-diademed nor one of the Three Battle-leaders but one of the Three Red Reapers; wherever he planted his foot, grass would not grow for seven years.[2]

When he fell into the hands of French poets and story-tellers, notably those of Chrêtien de Troyes, he underwent a remarkable change. He became in the first place an ancient British hero as seen through the eyes of foreigners; in the second, he was merged into the general European concept of the ideal Christian king. That Chrêtien should not have appreciated nor understood the imaginative insight peculiar to the genuine British/Welsh tales is to be expected; his cultural background was different and his genius lay in other directions. Where he obtained his sources no one knows but it has to be remembered that tales about Arthur had been circulating in Britain and Brittany long before Chrêtien was born or Geoffrey of Monmouth composed his *Historia Regum Britanniae*; in fact, six or more centuries, during which time the changes taking place in the social, political and religious life of both Britain and the whole of Western Europe would have materially altered his image. Ailred of Rievaulx, in his allusions to a local hero whom he disparagingly calls 'some Arcturus or other', speaks of dramatic performances, songs and prose tales about him which excited audiences to tears. This Arcturus or Arthur was possessed of a personal beauty that led people to love him: *amabilis pulchritudo*; his physical strength or courage was marvellous: *fortitudo mirabilis*; his nature charming and compassionate: *gratiosus ... affectus*.[3] It would seem therefore that in the hands of minstrels and poets Arthur, by the early twelfth century, had acquired, at least in the North of England, the appearance and character of the conventional hero of fiction: he was a remarkably handsome, dearly loved, peerless warrior, over whose wounds and misfortunes one wept. Peter of Blois, while borrowing this passage from Ailred, adds significantly to it: 'Any hero of dramas, poems and minstrels' songs,' he says, 'is a man who is wise, handsome, brave, lovable and altogether charming (*prudens, decorus, fortia, amabilis et per omnia gratiosus*) and tales about him and his adventures and misfortunes, just like those of Arthur, Gawain and Tristan (*sicut de Arturo et Ga(u)ganno et Tristanno*) wring the hearts of listeners with pity and bring tears to their eyes'.[4]

That is as far as we can go on available evidence but it is sufficient to warrant a deduction that Arthur had been given the general appearance and attributes of the classical tragic hero. Ailred and Peter however were Churchmen who strongly disapproved of Arthur, especially the Arthur who, some time in the future, was going to return to earth from the Otherworld. Consequently they refused to allow him the other specific characteristic which appears to have been ascribed to him in our earliest texts, namely, his Christianity. That we may try to understand this ascription which could have been lineally descended not from myth or legend nor from traditional theory of fiction but from an historical fact, we might profitably call to mind the situation in Britain at the time when Arthur was said to be, or supposed to be, living; that is, the sixth century. As far as the Empire as a whole was concerned, it was the golden age of Justinian and its culture was Christian. Britain, abandoned by Rome a century earlier, was under the rule of petty kings or tribal chieftains and harassed by persistent raids from Picts, Scots and Saxons. Even as early as the fourth century the Roman army in the west had begun to disintegrate; _foederati_ filled the ranks and Diocletian, under mounting pressure from the hostile barbarian tribes from Northern Europe, had adopted the policy of concentrating on the defence of the Empire's frontiers. To accomplish his aim he had introduced a new type of officer, the _dux_,[5] a purely military commander whose duty it was to guard the particular frontier to which he had been appointed. There was one for the whole of Britain, the _Dux Britanniarum_, but it seems to me that Arthur, the _dux bellorum_ of some two centuries later, was a desperate imitation of him, born of the military needs of Britain within her own borders; that is, if we are to understand that this title that _Nennius_ has given him was an official one. The more one thinks about _dux bellorum_ the more unsatisfactory it appears to be, for if Arthur were an official military commander, under whom did he serve? Or are we to understand that he was a _dux_ in his own right and, if so, what exactly was his status in British society? After the abdication of Diocletian in 305 and the death of Constantius Chlorus at York in 306, Constantine the Great developed this system of command and greatly strengthened the mobile field army; and because he was connected with Britain and had taken part with his father in the repulsion of the Picts and Scots beyond Hadrian's Wall, one cannot help feeling that the ascription to Arthur of a command along the area north and south of the Wall has something reminiscent of the appointment of a kind of frontier _dux_ about it.

Of Constantine, the first sole Christian Emperor of Rome, there are several verbal descriptions, two contemporary sculptures and a considerable body of legend. According to Eusebius 'no one was comparable to him for grace and beauty or height of stature; and he so far surpassed his compeers in personal strength as to be a terror to them'. He was 'suave and affable to all; amiable and loved by his soldiers', was possessed of 'outstanding wisdom, universal mildness, mercifulness and forbearance' and was 'noted for his magnificent gifts and largess'. At the Council of Nicea he 'proceeded through the midst of the assembly like some heavenly messenger of God, clothed in raiment which glittered, as it were, with rays of light, reflecting the glowing radiance of a purple robe and adorned with the brilliant splendour of gold and precious stones ... he surpassed all present in height of stature and beauty of form as well as in majestic dignity of mien and invincible strength and vigour'.

Theophanes was somewhat more moderate; for him Constantine was 'preeminent for masculine strength of character, penetration of mind, well-disciplined power of thought, absolute majestic beauty of countenance, mighty and successful in war, great in wars with the barbarians ... so firm and unshaken in faith that through prayer he obtained the victory in all his battles'. Are not all these qualities and attributes ascribed to the later Arthur? Do not these descriptions contain the essential characteristics of the traditional hero of fiction? According to another contemporary writer, Cedrenus, Constantine looked rather different in real life and the gold triple solidus, issued by Constantine himself and carrying his portrait on the reverse bears him out: he was 'of medium height, broad-shouldered, thick-necked, whence his epithet "Bull-necked". His complexion was ruddy, his hair neither thick nor crisp-curling, his beard scanty and not growing in many places, his nose slightly hooked and his eyes like the eyes of a lion. He was joyous of heart and most cheery of countenance'.[6] This real face and figure faded with the generation that had beheld it. After his vision of the Cross and his victory at the Mulvian Bridge in 312, whereby he became sole Emperor, Constantine provided the world with a statue of how he wanted to be remembered: a colossal seated figure of himself, seven times life-size, with a great spear in the form of a Cross grasped in his right hand. Fortunately, the head of this colossus can still be seen in Rome,[7] where it was originally erected. It is made of marble, is nine feet high and weighs between eight and nine tons. The face has a compelling grandeur, its gaze directed not on earthly things but far off, as though in communication with Heaven. For writers of the time it became 'the Divine Face' and 'the Sacred Countenance' (Fig.1). Similar colossi of himself were, in obedience to his command, erected in all the Roman provinces. Britain set up one of him in York, where he had been proclaimed Emperor six years earlier; but it was not as gigantic as the one in Rome, only twice life-size. The head of this one, too, has been preserved.[8] It was unearthed in the early years of the last century. The face, although eroded by weathering, because it is not made of marble but magnesian limestone, is still handsome and arresting. It is said that the statue probably stood outside the legionary fortress at York;[9] if so, it must have stood there until the fifth century at least; perhaps much longer; so that in the north of England, the name, fame and features of this great Roman Christian warrior and Emperor would have been familiar. During the whole of his reign Britain enjoyed peace and prosperity. Legends about him multiplied. Geoffrey of Monmouth spun a pseudo-history of him, maintaining that he had resided in Britain which, except for his brief stay in 307, he had not; that his mother, Helena, was the daughter of Coel, Duke of the Britons, which she was not; she was the daughter of a tavern-keeper in Drepanum, Illyria; and that she had three uncles with beautifully Romano-British names - Leolin, Treharn and Marius, whom Constantine took with him to Rome and made senators. As Custenin map Constantii et Helen Luitdauc, we find him inserted in the pedigrees of the Princes of Dyfed and a late Triad, based on Geoffrey, states that he was teit Arthur, Arthur's grandfather.[10] William of Malmesbury says that because he was born in Britain, Constantine hated the hot sun, ardores solis exosus erat;[11] but he was born in Nais, Illyria. It is William also who describes the sword of Constantine, containing a nail from Christ's cross in its hilt, a gift from the French king to our King Athelstan; which reminds us of Chrêtien's Erec et Enide. Among the offerings Erec made at the altar on his wedding-day was a pure gold cross which had belonged to 'King Constantine' and which contained a piece of the true Cross:

> et une croiz tote d'or fin
> qui fu ja au roi Costantin. (2325–26)

Clearly, Constantine was by no means forgotten in Britain eight hundred years after his time and, more importantly, his life was being mingled with that of Arthur.

Two hundred and thirty years separate the battles of Mount Badon/or Castell Guinnion and the Mulvian Bridge, yet they have one significant thing in common: both great victories were achieved under the Christian symbol. Lactantius, in his account of Constantine's vision, states that the heavenly voice told the Emperor to put the monogram of Christ, the Chi-rho, on the shields of his soldiers; Nennius says that Arthur bore the image of the Virgin on his shoulders; Geoffrey that he had the image of the Virgin painted on the inner side of his shield, which he bore on his shoulder; the Annales Cambriae that he carried the Cross of Christ for three days and three nights on his shoulders; William of Malmesbury that Arthur had the image of the Virgin sewn on his arms; Giraldus Cambrensis, repeating Geoffrey, adds that in battle Arthur used to kiss the feet of the image. There is obvious discrepancy here, together with some individual embroidering. Was the symbol under which Arthur fought the Cross or the picture/image of the Virgin? Did he carry it on his shield or on his shoulder? It has been suggested that confusion arose out of the words for 'shield' and 'shoulder' in Welsh: ysgwydd and ysgwyd respectively. This presupposed a British source for Nennius' statement which is, at least, possible, for he speaks of having used the traditio veterum nostrorum. On the other hand, he seems to have known the work of Eusebius because he states in one[12] of his Prefaces that it was one of his sources; and Eusebius in his Life of Contantine says that Constantine 'caused the sign of the Cross to be impressed on the very shields of his soldiers and commanded that his embattled forces should be preceded in their march not by golden images, as heretofore, but only by the standard of the Cross'. By the early ninth century, when Nennius was writing, the cult of the Virgin had spread to Britain but the discovery in 1975 at Water Newton (Huntingdonshire) of a hoard of Roman silver, much of it stamped with the Chi-rho, proves beyond all doubt that Constantine's Christian monogram was known here because the hoard is dated fourth century and is the earliest known group of Christian silver from the whole Roman Empire. I suspect that somewhere along the line of repetitive borrowing what once belonged to the story of Constantine at the Mulvian Bridge was transferred to that of Arthur at Mount Badon/or Castell Guinnion and that the picture/image of the Virgin was substituted for the Chi-rho which, as a symbol, had gradually given way to the Crucifix. It seems a reasonable assumption, seeing that the people who recorded the 'facts' about Arthur were clerics and that this is the sole early reference to Arthur as a Christian. Also, no description of Arthur as an historical figure appears to have been to hand. Constantine and Arthur went their separate ways in legend but the memory of Constantine, together with descriptions of his person, his great statue and details of his accountrements and dress left their mark upon the minds of people in these islands. Part of Arthur's 'Roman' appearance and his god-fearing character is founded upon them.

It can be argued that in the span of time between the days of Constantine and the century which witnessed the emergence of Chrêtien's ideal King Arthur, all kinds of influences could have intervened to obliterate the basic resemblance between them. Eight centuries is a long time but halfway through that period another great Christian warrior-emperor, Charlemagne, appeared who, like Constantine, renewed the (Holy) Roman Empire. Although destined to become legendary he was, like Constantine, very much an historic figure; like Constantine, and unlike Arthur, a picture of his person has come down to us in the words of Eginhard, his friend, secretary and chaplain: he was 'a large, robust man, seven times the length of his feet in height, round on the top of his head, with exceptionally large, lively eyes, a rather long nose, beautiful white hair (canitie pulchra) and a happy, cheerful countenance. Although his neck was short and thick and he had too much of a paunch, his carriage and gait were manly ...'. So much for the actual man but as with Constantine, when historical fact faded in the communal memory, legend took its place and his likeness too became the no-face of a literary ideal. In the Chansons de Geste he appears, as Arthur does in Culhwch and Olwen and later in the French romances, as a presence, a supporting background figure, a shadow in the mind, compounded of hazily-remembered facts, of typically medieval unfettered imagination and of the ancient but constantly renewed concept of perfect kingship, irradiated since the time of Constantine by the pure light of Christian doctrine. In the case of Arthur however there came to be the shimmering of Faerie and the persistent folk-belief that he was not dead and would come again.

With the expansion of the monarchy in Western Europe the theory of kingship grew to be a subject of intense interest and debate. Claudian's panegyric on the fourth consulate of Honorius formed the nucleus of it. 13 It was studied and quoted by numberless writers in both Europe and our own country, including such authorities as William of Malmesbury, John of Salisbury, Giraldus Cambrensis and Matthew Paris. Together with the life and legend of Constantine and later of Charlemagne it shaped, in great measure, the medieval concept of the perfect Christian king. The ideal king had to be a great warrior, possessing the same military virtues as the heroes of ancient time; he had to share the hardships of his soldiers and keep strict discipline; he was to love his fellow men and rule not by fear but by love; he was to remember that he was the cynosure of all eyes; above all, he had to be a true follower of Christ. Chrêtien sums it all up in his description of Arthur in Cligès:

> . . . le meillor roi del mont
> Qui onques fust ne ja mes soit (304-05)

These primary qualities were, in fiction at any rate, linked with the conventional qualities of the literary hero. Constantine, Arthur and Charlemagne conformed to the pattern: all were remarkably handsome, very tall, invincible, wise, generous and Christian. As conventional figures not one of them has a face. They were public undelineated images in all men's minds, endowed with the correct kingly virtues, arrayed in gold and purple and, when they were presented in paintings, with whatever face was considered to be the stereotype of the ideal; if that, for more often than not it was the standard face the artist had learned to draw. Individuals no doubt chose to imagine King Arthur's face according to their lights, as everyone does, even today; that is, if we imagine his face at all. But how far the standard face was the norm in the Middle Ages may be seen from contemporary illustrations. There are hundreds of them in the manuscripts. Professional and monkish illuminators drew their pictures according to set patterns; consequently we see King Latinus receiving Aeneas, Virgil flanked by the Muses, the Colossus of Constantine, Vortigern (Fig.2), Louis IX, King Arthur and scores of other monarchs all in the same pose:[14] seated, with robes folded and arranged in the same manner, hands in the same position, sceptre and orb held in the way we all know so well, for the pattern has remained with us to this day (Fig.3). Our queen at her coronation held the sceptre and orb in exactly the same way that Constantine did and as Arthur is depicted as doing. They are all pictorial definitions of kingship, the equivalent of the literary/political ideal. Arthur does not escape this conventional straitjacket until a change came over the literary and artistic worlds. As the centuries progressed towards the Renaissance, theories of fiction were modified and artists' pattern-books made way for greater freedom in composition. Arthur became less of an ideal and more of an individual. He appears with or without a beard, according to prevailing fashion (Fig.4); his crown, robes of state and armour reflect what the style of the period dictated.[15] Ultimately, by the fifteenth century, he is as the individual artist chooses to see him (Fig.5).[16]

With the fifteenth century and Malory's Le Morte d'Arthur medieval romance comes to an end. True to his original, Malory leaves Arthur's face and figure vague: all he says is that Arthur claimed descent from Constantine, 'Constantyne oure kynnesman'; that when he was wroth, 'he was the gastfullyst man that ever they on loked'; that when inclined to magnanimity, he displayed 'a knyghtly countenaunce'; when he drew the sword out of the stone, he was 'a berdles boye'; when he fought with giant Rhitho, he said, 'my bearde ys full yonge yet to make off a purphile'.[17] Whether he developed a good growth in maturity we shall never know because it is not mentioned. Faceless he still is, except for the beard, yet Malory adds little touches which bring him nearer to the heart of the reader: he weeps quite a lot; he laughs a lot, too; in fact, on one occasion he and Sir Lancelot laughed so much at Dinadin's jokes 'that unnethe they myght sytte'; best of all, his favourite exclamation on receiving news was the fifteenth-century Englishman's everyday, irreverent 'O Jesu!'.

And so the curtain comes down on Arthur. Four centuries later, when it rises again, he is in the hands of Tennyson and the Pre-Raphaelites. Once more poet and artist go hand-in-hand. The setting is neo-medieval but the concept more transcendental, the portraiture more precise. In place of Chrétien's

> ... le meillor roi del mont
> Qui onques fust ne ja mes soit

we have Tennyson's

> ... when he spake and cheer'd his Table Round
> With large, divine and comfortable words
> Beyond my tongue to tell thee, I beheld
> From eye to eye thro' all their Order flash
> A momentary likeness of the King;
> And ere it left their faces, thro' the Cross
> And those around it and the Crucified,
> Down from the casement over Arthur smote
> Flame-colour, vert and azure in three rays ...[18]

Here we have a nineteenth-century echo of Constantine's 'Divine Face' and 'Sacred Countenance'. On the more human plane the poet's verbal portrait of Arthur is personal and strictly contemporary; it is the Tennysonian/Victorian idea of the perfect English gentleman/hero of romantic fiction. The great King is 'fair/beyond the race of Britons and of men'; he has 'light and lustrous golden curls', 'a golden beard', 'a knightly growth that fring'd his lips' and 'wide blue eyes as in a picture'.[19] No poet had ever so particularised Arthur's features. Tennyson was one of those who envisaged his characters; and the painters of the Pre-Raphaelite School turned his descriptive ideas into pictures (Fig.6). The upshot was that between them a new version of the old standard pattern was established. William Morris designed a stained-glass window for the Exhibition of 1862 and took King Arthur for his subject (Fig.7). It was so excellently done that the other competitors virtually accused him of cheating; they said it was not genuinely modern but medieval glass touched up.[20]

The Arthur of romance therefore remains entrenched in the Middle Ages, the world of knights, tournaments and magic; of kingly ideals and high Christian endeavour. Since the publication of the Idylls of the King perhaps he has, in the eyes of many, his golden curls and wide blue eyes, for Tennyson's poetry, especially in the Passing of Arthur, has the hypnotic power of genius. Utterly different is the Arthur of Welsh legend and literature - half man, half myth, fierce warrior, bane of the Saxons, giant-killer, undescribed, faceless, ever-expected Deliverer and Messiah, pride and undying hope of the Britons; yet he and Chrêtien's Arthur are eternally inseparable. The one grew out of the other, two stems from the same root. Both are examples of what happens when men try to embody something out of the spirit world around them, which they know exists but cannot see.

CONSTANCE BULLOCK-DAVIES
BANGOR

NOTES

1. For the sake of those who cannot read the Welsh text I have used the translation of Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones, published by Dent in the Everyman edition.

2. Trioedd Ynys Prydein, ed. Rachel Bromwich, Cardiff 1961, nos.19, 21, 25; and 20.

3. Speculum Charitatis, PL, 195, col.565.

4. De Confessione Sacramentali, PL, 207, col.1088.

5. A.H.M. Jones, The Later Roman Empire, 284-602, Oxford 1964, II, chap.XVII.

6. The Church History of Eusebius and The Life of Constantine, trans. by A.C. McGiffert, in A Select History of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Oxford 1895, Vol.I., esp. 421-559.

7. In the garden of the Palazzo dei Conservatori.

8. It is now in the Yorkshire Museum, York.

9. Antiq. Journ. XXIV, 1944, 3.

10. No.51.

11. Gesta Regum Anglorum (Rolls Series), I, 149-50.

12. Praefatio in the Camb. MS. ... insuper et de cronicis sanctorum patrum, Isydori, scilicet, Ieronymi, Prosperi, Eusebii ...

13. IV. Cons. 213-52. See also Alan Cameron, Claudian Poetry and Propaganda at the Court of Honorius, Oxford 1970.

14. Aeneas: Codex Vaticanus Latinus 3225, 63. Reproduced in The Birth of Western Civilization, ed. Michael Grant, London 1964, pp. 246-7.
    Mosaic of Virgil: Musée du Bardo, Tunis. Commonly used as frontispiece in school texts of the Aeneid; also, in monochrome in the Loeb edition of Virgil's works.
    Head of Constantine: reproduced in The Roman Forum, Michael Grant, London 1970, p.160.

Vortigern: monochrome reproduced in Myths of Britain, Michael Senior, London 1979, p.190.
Louis IX: Psalter of St Louis, M.240, f.8. Pierpoint Morgan Library. Reproduction in The Horizon Book of the Middle Ages, London 1969, pp.34-35.
King Arthur: ascribed to Matthew Paris, Flores Historiarum, MS.6712, col.185, Chetham's Library, Manchester. Reproduced in The Arthurian Legends, Richard Barber, 1979, p.71.

15. E.g. Chronicle of St. Alban's, Lambeth Palace Library, MS.6, f.54v. Reproduced in Myths of Britain, p.161.

16. An excellent example may be seen in B.M. Royal MS.14 E.v. Boccaccio's De casibus virorum illustrium. Reproduced in monochrome as frontispiece to The Arthurian Legend in Italian Literature, E. G. Gardner, London 1930.

17. Page refs. are to Vinaver's edition, 1947: 188, 191, 241; and 17, 55.

18. The Coming of Arthur, 266-74. .

19. The Coming of Arthur, 329-30; The Passing of Arthur, 384; Merlin and Vivien, 58; The Passing of Arthur, 388; and 337-8.

20. Gerald H. Gow, William Morris, Designer, London 1934, p.82.

Figures referred to in the text:

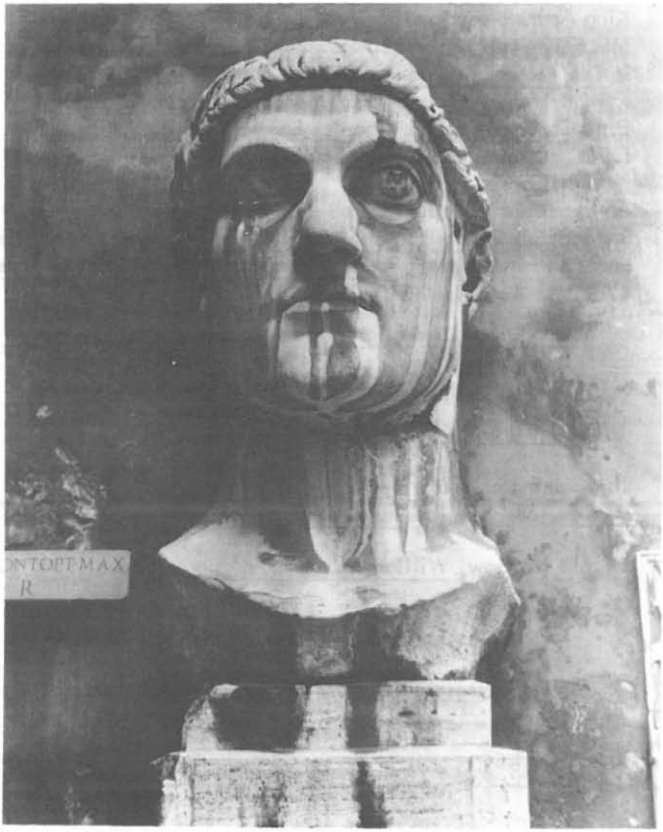

Fig. 1 Constantine. 'The Sacred Countenance'
(Photograph by permission of the Werner Forman Archive)

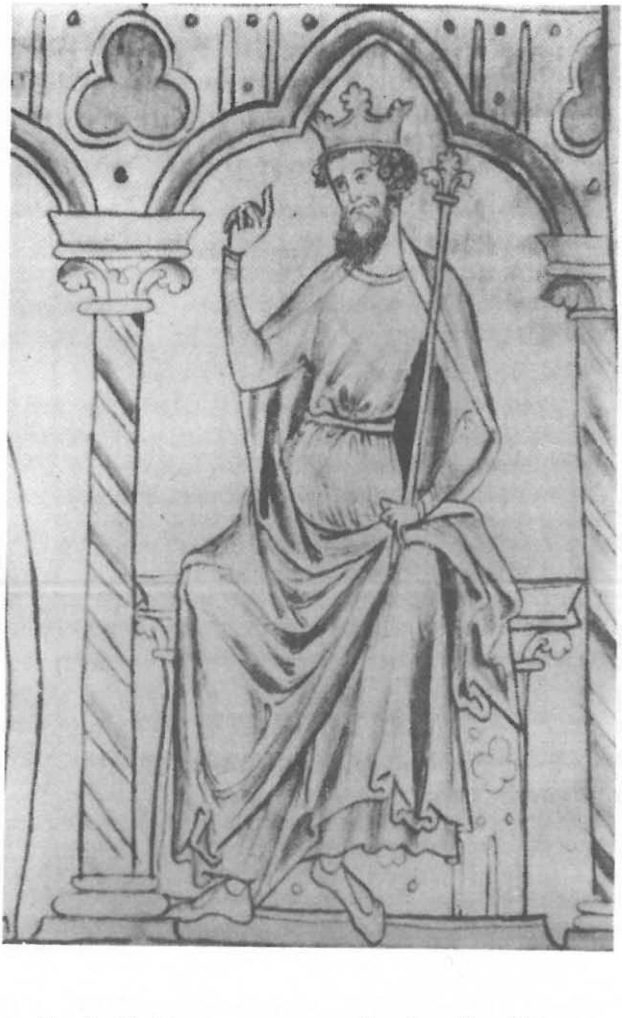

Fig. 2 Vortigern, as a conventional medieval king.
(Photograph by permission of the British Library)

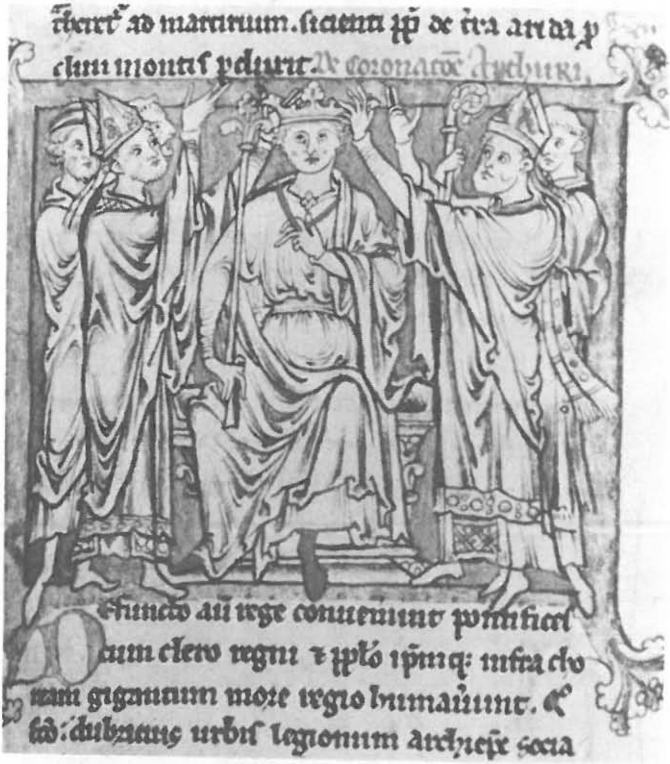

Fig.3 The Coronation of Arthur; ascribed to Matthew Paris.
(Photograph by permission of Chetham's Library)

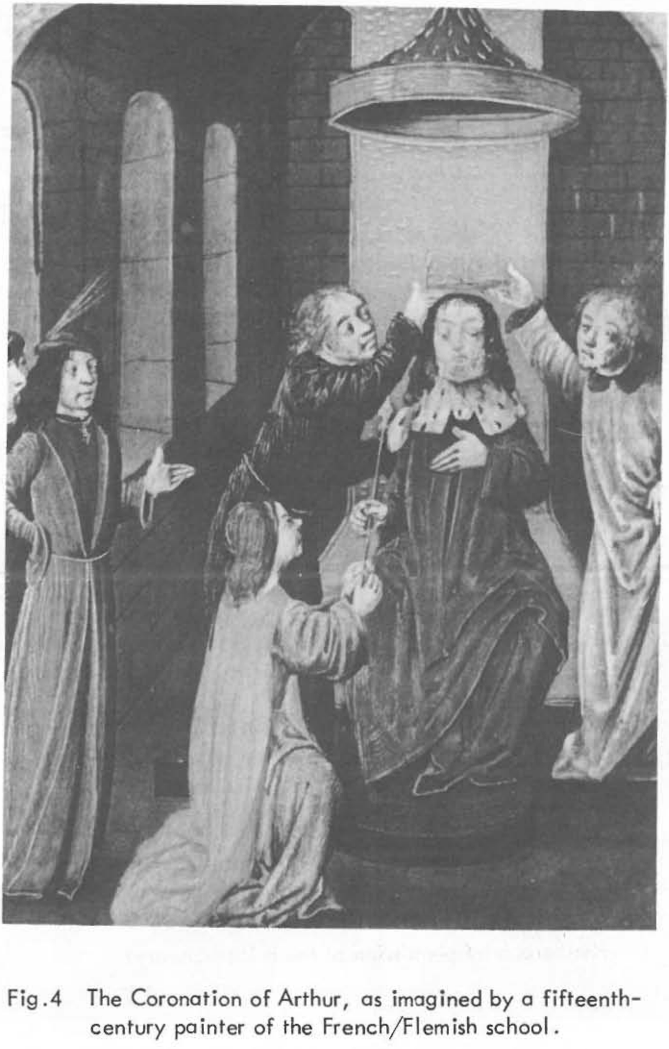

Fig.4 The Coronation of Arthur, as imagined by a fifteenth-century painter of the French/Flemish school.

(Photograph by permission of Lambeth Palace Library)

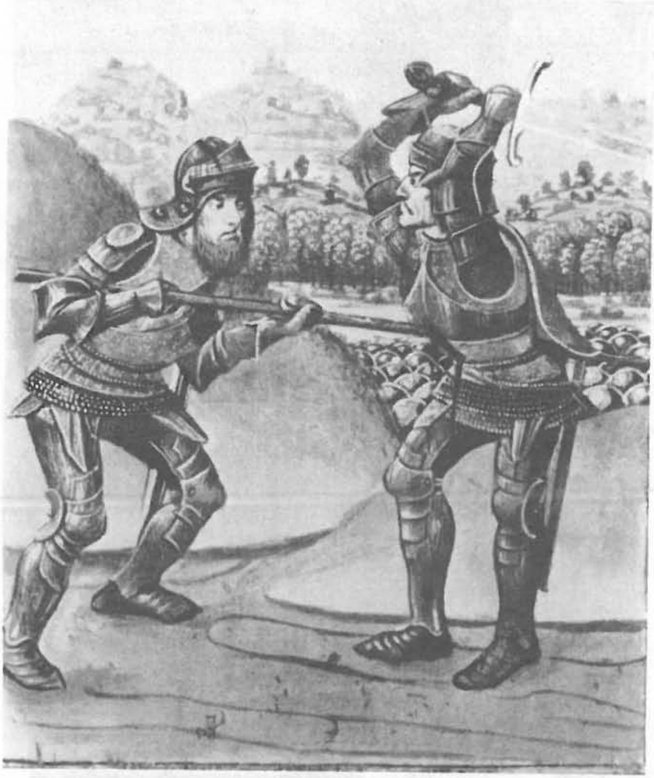

Fig.5 Arthur and Modred in mortal combat, c.1480.
(Photograph by permission of the British Library)

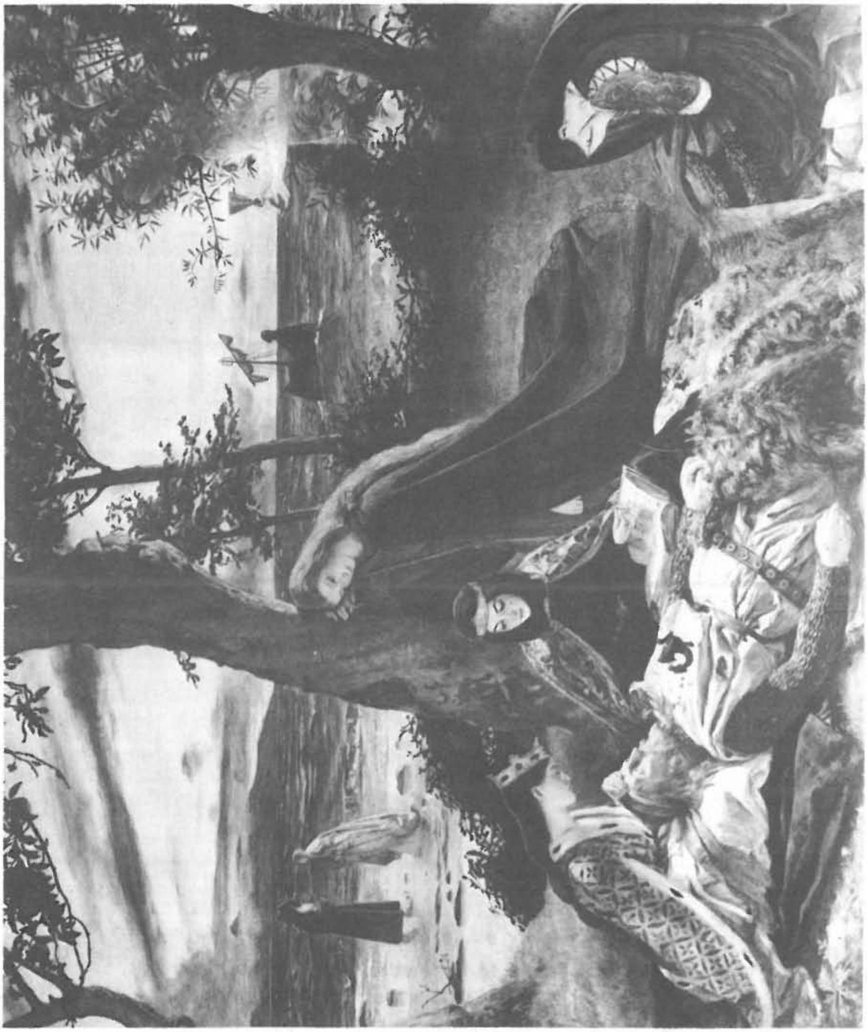

Fig.6 The Tennysonian Arthur: La Mort d'Arthur,
by James G. Archer.
(Photograph by permission of the City Art Gallery, Manchester)

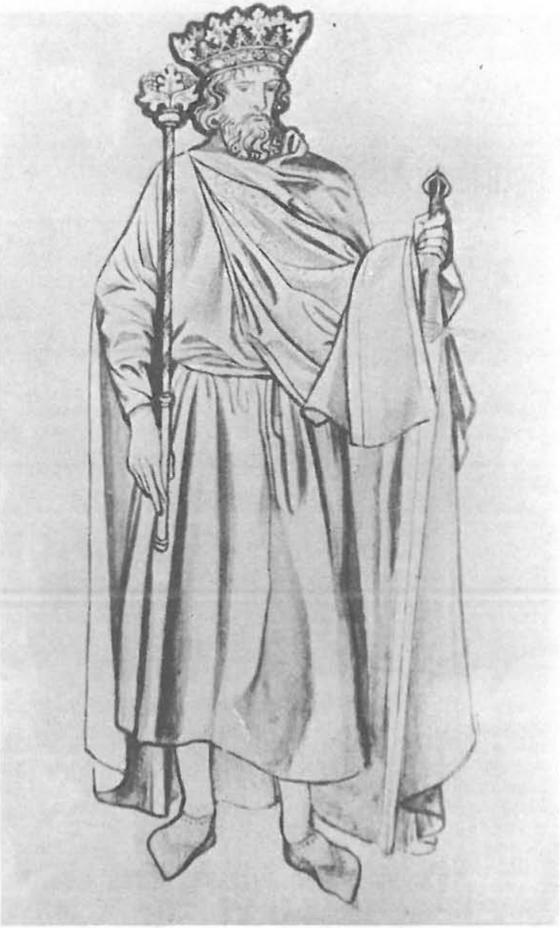

Fig. 7 The return to the medieval image: King Arthur, by William Morris.

(The Editors regret that they were unable to trace the copyright holder of this photograph.)