15TH CENTURY KING ARTHUR:
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SIR THOMAS MALORY’S RENDITION OF THE LIFE OF KING ARTHUR

Richard J. and Martha D. Denman presentation by Megan MacDonald
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Sir Thomas Malory (1415?-1471)
• Lord of Newbold Revel
• A self described “knyght presoner”
• Author of Le Morte Darthur

Le Morte Darthur
• Written around 1470 while Malory was incarcerated
• Legend of King Arthur from his conception to death
  • Malory purported it to be a translation of the “French Book”
  • It is actually loosely adapted from several French romances
• Written during the “Wars of the Roses”
  • Civil War in England c. 1455-1485
  • Saw five kings crowned in 30 years
  • Only around two weeks of fighting in total

“Hic jacet Arthurus rex quondam rexque futurus”
Here lies Arthur, once and future king
Malory’s Changes

- How King Arthur receives and reacts to advice and counsel
  - Gawain’s advice
- How King Mark reacts to advice and counsel
  - Ignoring advice
- References to the crusades
  - Various knights go on crusade at the end of the tale

Image from Le Morte d’Arthur by Thomas Malory, printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1498.
What This Means

Because of the changes Malory makes, regarding the way counsel and advice are received and the new role the crusades play, greatly affect the outcome of *Le Morte Darthur*, we can see that Malory was greatly interested in counsel and crusades.