

**THE INFLECTIONS AND SYNTAX
OF THE MORTE D'ARTHUR OF
SIR THOMAS MALORY: A STUDY
IN FIFTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH**

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The Inflections and Syntax of the Morte D'Arthur of Sir Thomas Malory: A Study in Fifteenth-Century English by Charles Sears Baldwin

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OF
SIR THOMAS MALORY

A STUDY IN FIFTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH

BY

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1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities. It emphasizes that proper record-keeping is essential for transparency and accountability, particularly in the context of public administration and financial management.

2. The second part of the document outlines the various methods and tools used to collect, analyze, and report data. It highlights the need for standardized procedures and the use of modern technology to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the information gathered.

3. The third part of the document focuses on the role of the audit committee and the internal audit function. It discusses the responsibilities of these bodies in monitoring the organization's performance, identifying areas for improvement, and ensuring compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

4. The fourth part of the document addresses the challenges and risks associated with the audit process. It identifies common pitfalls and provides guidance on how to mitigate these risks, such as ensuring the independence and objectivity of the auditors and maintaining clear communication throughout the process.

5. The fifth part of the document concludes with a summary of the key findings and recommendations. It emphasizes the need for continuous improvement and the importance of regular audits to ensure the organization remains effective and efficient in its operations.

PREFACE.

THE linguistic value of the *Morte d'Arthur* is equal to its literary value. The latter has been appreciated as deeply, if not yet as widely, as it deserves: it is the aim of the present work to realize the former. Malory's book is the type of the transition period between Chaucer and Spenser, of the progress of middle English toward modern English. As such it deserves closer study than it has hitherto received. In the only works that treat specifically of this period it has been lumped with other Caxton prints without respect to the unique claims of its unprovincial and scholarly character. Moreover the results obtained from a general examination of what has been called loosely the language of Caxton are quite insufficient. Römstedt's valuable *Englische Schriftsprache bei Caxton* treats only of phonology and, less completely, of inflections. The general survey of Caxton's inflections and syntax prefixed by Dr. Leon Kellner to his edition of Caxton's *Blanchardyn and Eglantine*, though often useful, is fragmentary and inadequate. Thus, for instance, no complete tables of strong verbs have yet appeared, and in syntax no discussion of the auxiliaries. Even the subjunctive and infinitive have been treated but imperfectly, and the particles hardly at all.

To develop a coherent account of the syntax, particularly of these neglected points of syntax, is the primary concern of the present work. The presentation of inflections,

though it aims to be exhaustive, is intended mainly to make sure this discussion of the syntax. Back of both lies phonology; but since Römstedt's best work was done here, and since here the individual value of the *Morte d'Arthur* is slightest — if, indeed, it is definitely ascertainable — the discussion of phonology has been made subordinate and incidental. The only deviation from this rule is the inquiry into the syllabic value of the plural *-es*, which has, therefore, been relegated to an appendix.

By limiting the discussion to one great text and to one main line of investigation, it has been possible to attain some degree of completeness. Moreover the collation of contemporary texts becomes, in great part, a cumbrous catalogue of dialectical variations, much more valuable for phonology than for syntax. Simplicity is perhaps preferable to completeness of this sort. Yet a series of interesting parallels from *The Wright's Chaste Wife* has been added in foot-notes. This text was chosen as being in several respects antithetical to the *Morte d'Arthur*. It is non-Caxtonian; it is non-literary, being a somewhat rude popular ballad; and it is provincial, being southern in dialect. Thus its divergences and its correspondences are equally significant. Other parallels have been drawn for points of special significance or difficulty, from Chaucer and from Shakspeare. But no attempt has been made at completeness in this regard, since the arrangement of the book is designed to facilitate reference and comparison.

For such reference and comparison, indeed, the book aims to be of service, not only to those engaged on the language of the fifteenth century, but to all students of English syntax. How far presentations of our modern syntax have been confused by ignorance or misapprehension of its historical development is painfully apparent. Even now historical syntax has gone but a little way. To

the small but happily increasing number of students in this field I shall be grateful for corrections and suggestions.

Citations from the *Morte d'Arthur*, whether single words or passages, are uniformly distinguished by italics. But in citations of any length the particular word in point is emphasized by difference of type. The references are by page and line to the reprint of Caxton's Malory edited by H. Oskar Sommer, and published by David Nutt. It is a pleasure to add that but for this great text the present work would have been practically impossible, and to acknowledge the incidental assistance of Mr. Sommer's notes and glossary.

In its original form this book was written as a dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Columbia College. The successive expansions of the work have left me more and more deeply indebted alike to the kindness and to the scholarship of Professor Thomas R. Price. To Professor G. L. Kittredge, of Harvard University, I owe many valuable notes on the manuscript, and to Professor A. V. W. Jackson and Professor Henry A. Todd, of Columbia College, the favor of corrections in proof. I am under obligations, also, to Miss Sadie E. Bawden, of Smith College, and to Miss Ellen A. Hunt, of Barnard College, for the accuracy of the citations and the index. To all these friends I desire to express my sincere appreciation.

From this grammatical study as a necessary point of departure, I hope to proceed with such annotations, literary and critical, as may make some of the best books of the *Morte d'Arthur* available for class use.

CHARLES SEARS BALDWIN.

COLUMBIA COLLEGE, April, 1894.